MARTA MAC MEETING

11/14/2023

10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

>> Well, good morning, everybody. I'm glad that all of you could be in on this call, and this is the meeting of the MARTA advisory committee or access committee. And the committee is now being called to order. My name is Robert Smith, I am the chairman of this committee. And today's date is 11/14/23. And we want to hear from all of those who are part of this committee, and please let it be known the disability that you represent. So we are getting to the self‑introductions of the committee members. So you may begin announcing yourself.
>> Hello. I'm Bob Lossie, and I'm a member of MAC committee and also on the no‑show appeals committee, and I represent people in wheelchairs.
>> Okay. Thank you, Mr. Lossie.
>> Hi. This is Jordan Hall. I am also a member of the MAC committee and the customer service support team or group, and I'm representing individuals with disabilities across disability, but I am also specifically a wheelchair user as well.
>> Okay. Thank you, Ms. Hall.
>> Any other committee members?
>> Good morning. Brad Fain at Georgia Tech, region researcher representing Technology Solutions.
>> Thank you. Anyone else? Then we'll let MARTA staff introduce themselves.
>> Good afternoon. My apologies. Good morning, everybody, and double apologies for having connectivity issues. So I am on my phone. This is Richard Gonzalez, director of Mobility Services.
>> Thank you, Mr. Gonzalez.
>> Good morning. This is Paula Nash, I'm the executive director of Diversity and Inclusion.
>> This is Keith Chambers, director of Vertical Transportation for MARTA.
>> Okay. Mr. Chambers, glad to have you on.
>> Good morning, everyone. My name is Angelita Armour, the customer service field representative here at MARTA mobility.
>> Good morning, everyone. This is Charlie Jackson, senior director of customer experience innovation here in the customer service or customer experience department here at MARTA.
>> And I'm Denise Brown, I'm the equity administrator in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.
>> Good morning, everyone. I'm Margaret Bonds, and I'm the customer experience innovation program manager. I work with Charlie.
>> Okay. Thank you. Anyone else? Okay, hearing none.
>> Robert, I just want to remind everybody that only the panelists are unmuted. You do have a host of other MARTA employees that are also on the line, but they're not panelist, so they can't mute themselves, but they can put in the chat to me if they have a question or want to be unmuted.
>> Okay. Well, thank you, Denise. Appreciate it.
>> Hello, can you hear me? This is Denise Peterson.
>> Okay. Ms. Peterson, thank you.
>> We can hear you.
>> I am representing ASL communities. Sorry, I've been struggling with being in a webinar. I am speaking through a sign language interpreter.
>> Thank you.
>> Okay. Okay. Well, I am, again, Robert Smith, I am the chairman. I don't have any remarks, no more than we have a small agenda this morning. We want to get through it, so that's the only remarks that I have. And we'll get down to the subcommittee reports. None of our subcommittees met, so we don't have a report from neither one of our committees. And we'll move on down to Ms. Paula Nash, who is the executive director.
>> All right. Thank you, Robert. Just briefly, I wanted to talk about the mystery customer program. So as many of you know, MARTA was under an almost 20‑year court order consent decree dealing with the ADA. As part of that consent order, we were required to have a mystery customer program where we hire a company to have secret riders ride our system and notate potential ADA violations, and then they would send those violations or potential violations to us for actions to us here at MARTA for action. And as many of you‑‑I know we reported this at this committee before that, we are no longer up under that court ordered consent decree, and our latest mystery customer contract has just expired. However, the monitoring of potential ADA violations is still a very important thing for MARTA, so I wanted to make sure everybody knew that we are in the process of actually putting another mystery customer contract in place. In fact, we're inviting companies right now that do that kind of work to submit proposals, and we should have another contract in place in the next few months so that we can continue to monitor for potential ADA violations. And so I just wanted to let this committee know that, and also ask the committee that you partner with us, and that if you see any ADA concerns or issues, that you be sure to make us aware of it because we are here to try to correct any concerns and issues that any of our customers are experiencing. And that mystery customer program will be a big part of that, but we also need everyone else's help along with that. And with that, that is all I have. Thank you.
>> Okay. Thank you, Paula, you can rest assured we will keep you abreast of anything that we find that speaks to that so that we can get it corrected because I'm getting reports myself, but I'll say that later. But thank you again. Hope all the committee members heard that. If you have anything, please bring it forth so we can get it corrected. Okay. The next item is Mr. Charlie Jackson. He will give us an update. Mr. Jackson, are you there?
>> Yes, I am. Good morning, everyone.
>> Okay. Thank you, sir.
>> So I'm here in customer experience, and one of the things we will be looking at is ways we can improve the experience for riders of l all types including people that have physical or other challenges, and one of the‑‑so we're currently working on several different projects to try to improve Wayfinding and navigation across the board for all customers, and I wanted to give you‑‑I wanted to briefly describe three of the projects. I don't have a presentation, but I want to describe three projects that are under way and get your feedback individually or as a committee on some of those projects and be able to answer any questions as well. So there are three different projects, one is for tactile floor Wayfinding. A second one is of a using funds for augmented reality Wayfinding. And a third one is a project we're working on with Gwinnett County called ITS For Us, and that's to create safe pathways throughout Gwinnett County but ending up at the Doraville station. So I'm going to go through each of these just briefly and sort of describe what these projects are like and get your feedback. So the tactile floor Wayfinding, most of you, if you ride the MARTA rail, you're familiar with the tactile strips along the edge of the platforms, correct?
>> Yes, sir. We are familiar with that.
>> So what we‑‑what the agency has been doing is remodeling all of the rail stations, taking ten at a time, and so as part of those remodels, in most cases, the plan is to replace the flooring and the tile at the stations. So what that provided us was an opportunity to consider putting down tactile strips within the station to help people navigate their way around the station. Say, for example, when you get off the platform to be able to more easily find an elevator, escalator, or stairs using the tactile strips that are used on the edge of the platform. So we're investigating that right now, we're investigating vendors. We've looked at samples and samples of projects in New York City and in Seattle that is tactile Wayfinding, and so we're progressing with the thought of designing that into our new flooring that we put at the stations. And so this supports people with canes, but it also supports, you know, the other passengers who are just trying to navigate a station, in addition to the overhead sites. So that's one project that we're working on. The next project we're working on is a mobile app using virtual reality. So this would be is a mobile app that you would hold up if you wanted to be able to view the inside of a station, but it will show arrows, virtual arrows to point you in the direction of the stairs and escalators and elevators, but it would also support accessibility by having voice response built into it, as well as maybe tactile so that you would be able to get clear navigation directions on your mobile phone to get to those various parts of the station and navigate yourself around. And we would eventually include that on the MARTA On The Go app as a feature, so it's just part of our standard Wayfinding that we have at all of our stations and platforms. And the third one, the one that I mentioned about in Doraville, this is a safe travel journey that's being sponsored by Georgia DOT and Gwinnett County and the ARC, and that is for helping with navigations across Gwinnett County ‑ sidewalks, making sure the sidewalks are all accessible, making sure the pathways across streets are accessible. Including this in a mobile app and also, in the case of Doraville, putting locater beacons inside the stations to help people who may have visual challenges navigate the inside of the station using beacon technology. And so we're expected to sign an agreement with Georgia DOT to let them use our station for their beacons, and that will be a pilot project. It's part of a federal grant that they've received going forward. And so those are three of the major projects that we're looking at right now, and I'd like to get folks feedback if you're used to‑‑if you've seen projects like this in other places when you've traveled, or if you just have questions about these projects, I'd be happy to answer any of those.
>> Mr. Jackson, I'll give the members a chance to ask questions if they have any because I certainly have a few.
>> This is Jimmy. I have a question.
>> Okay, Jimmy.
>> Sure.
>> Go ahead.
>> Could you expand a bit on what the beacon looks like?
>> So these beacons are very small electronic devices that a lot of transit agencies may be able to put on their bus stop or somewhere else so that as you get closer to them, your phone will vibrate more and more so you could actually navigate to a precise position, but the signal from these devices only goes out about two or three feet. So in order to completely add this to a mobile app in a place like Doraville, they got to put them all throughout the stations, and each of those devices then talks to your mobile app, and then it will tell you, you know, go this direction or go that direction, and then you'll actually feel the vibration as you get closer to it.
>> Anyone else? Hearing none, Mr. Jackson, I have a few about the‑‑are you currently asking people with disabilities to participate in this project at Doraville, I think you said?
>> Yes. In all of these projects, we don't want to do anything without including anyone.
>> So you're using them. Do you have somewhat of an idea how that works because the beacon, as you call it, would work well. As far as blind people are concerned, myself, they have different types even in the at various corners, and I have worked with DOT on a lot of of their projects as long as those things they fix. And with the beeping and what you have to use‑‑I have to use my ears for is navigation, and I'm listening to the beep on my phone or as my phone vibrate, I got to know which way that it's coming. If my phone starts vibrating, I'll think well, am I receiving a call, or am I getting a signal from a beacon inside of the station. And, you know, one would have to listen very close and then having to navigate the traffic that's in the station. And the other concern that I have is when you say they are replacing the flooring, and that means the tactical strip that's on the edge of the platform be it side platforms or middle platforms. I know I use that whenever I'm in the station to let me know, you know, how close I am to the edge of the platform. I think it's about a foot, if I recall. You all are taking that up? I think that was armor tile, if I'm not mistaken. Are you all going to replace it with the same substance, or are you going with something else?
>> Let me start with the tactile strips first. Right now, some of the stations have gray strips for the safety on the edge of the platform. These are all going to be replaced with yellow so that it's more visible on the floor.
>> Will it be the same substance?
>> Yes, the exact same type of substance, you know, very durable, embedded in the flooring. Now, what we're talking about that's new on our projects is adding that to strips that continue on through the station to help people find their way to the elevators, the escalators, and the stairways directly, so they'll be able to follow the tactile strip all the way through the station. And it also helps‑‑and it helps all passengers who are trying to, say, find their way to the elevator.
>> Yes, sir. And I know the consistency throughout the station, all the stations. I've been to every last one of our rail stations and sometimes the bathrooms or the elevators or escalators is in different areas. It's not consistent enough, but if the strips that you are talking about are similar to the ones on the edge of the platform, if you‑‑how will you determine whether or not that strip will lead you to the escalators, stairs, or bathrooms, or elevator? Will there be a difference in the configuration? Will there be a difference in the texture so that you'll know oh, yeah, I'm at the elevators, or I'm at the escalators, or I'm at the stairs?
>> So that's some of the‑‑that's some of the feedback that we need from actual users. One of the things that has been done in pilots in other transit centers having decision points so that when you got to a place where you had to decide to turn right or to turn left, there would be some indicator there that would direct you to say the difference between an elevator and an escalator. And so those are some of the more important challenges that we have to work out. We're also looking at possibility of making them different color strips as well for, say, transfers between one line and the next line. So if you think of how complicated Five Point Station is, we would have them also in different colors.
>> Well, that wouldn't do me any good, but the fact of the matter is it would do a person with low vision probably distinguish that color is very needed inside the stations for them and society people as well, but I was just concerned about the configuration of the tile since you are going to apply it. And I would like to you said the Doraville station is where you have this ongoing project?
>> So the Doraville station is a completely different project. That's the one that's going to use beacons, and we're not‑‑MARTA is not in charge of that project, we didn't design it, it was put forth by Georgia Tech and Georgia DOT, and it's a pilot project, but they would install the beacons, which is a whole different way to navigate.
>> Okay. I would like to see how that work myself. And the station that you're talking about, the tiles which you haven't started just yet, what station is that?
>> So we intend to put them at all stations that‑‑
>> Okay. All stations. Like ten at a time, okay.
>> Except for the airport because the airport station is so small and navigating it is a lot simpler.
>> Okay. One concern I have is let's be consistent throughout the stations if we can because consistency is what people get used to, I know I do. So if we can stick with that, but I would like to check on this beam, I guess. I guess you have to consult Georgia Tech or consult MARTA since MARTA is allowing it to be put in their station. Maybe I can get with Ms. Brown or you all could send some information to Ms. Brown and then the MAC members that are interested can go to check this out.
>> Absolutely. That's what we want to do. In the past before coming to MARTA, I have run a couple of projects that involved beacons for Wayfinding, and so I'm not‑‑so I understand a lot about how beacons are used, but I'm not exactly sure what a company or what provider they're using here. They're developing a custom app from Georgia Tech to manage this, and the beacon portion of this is a small part of their overall project for Gwinnett County. I know they're putting censors at street crossings and censors for ‑‑
>> Yes, sir.
>> ‑‑ (indiscernible), things like that.
>> Yes, sir, I've been involved in lot of that. So before they apply it to the station, I wish that one of my concern is that you consult the MARTA Accessibility Committee so that ‑‑ like I said, so that members of our committee can come out to check that out, so. But those are the questions that I have for now. I don't know if any other committee members have questions for you Mr. Jackson.
>> Part of our purpose of being here today is to let folks know that these projects are going on and also to solicit participation in these projects.
>> Okay. Well, I don't think there's any more questions, Mr. Jackson. Is that the end of your‑‑
>> Yeah, we'll follow up with more information in text so that people could review it, and I guess if yall send out minutes then it will be in there. And once we get further down the road with some of these projects, we want to do two things, we wan want to involve members of the MAC committee, but we also want to make sure that folks are involved even at the design level before these projects get under way.
>> Yes, sir.
>> I'm sorry. This is Bob Lossie, and I was having trouble with the use. And this project only involves site impaired people, or does it, or does it help others?
>> Which part?
>> Well, I'm sorry. The floor tiles specifically that you were talking about, the different colors and that sort of thing. The different colors I can see even helping people that have no impairments at all using it to find things easily following the yellow brick road as it is.
>> Yeah, we want it to be accessible for all types of passengers, so people in stroller, people that have mobility challenges, people with luggage. You know, we have a lot of folks who are looking for elevators and escalators as they're transiting through the rail stations. And the same thing with all of our other projects. When we look at Wayfinding as a whole, we look at all the different types of passengers and what are some of the specific things we can do to improve mobility for each of those types of passengers, whether it's somebody with limited English proficiency, or whether it's someone in a wheelchair, or whether it's someone with four children, you know, traveling behind them.
>> Say, for instance, if I came to this meeting, me in a wheelchair, and not really understanding the difficulties of site, how could I give input to you? What would you hope for?
>> Well, we would hope from input directly from your experiences, so verses someone who had a visual challenge. So somebody in wheelchair there's all different types of people in wheelchairs and there's different challenges maybe on the size of the wheelchair, so it's that individual feedback we're soliciting for these projects. The one that's in Doraville extends all the way to Gwinnett County, and what they're looking at right now, they're mapping all the sidewalks in Gwinnett County to see whether or not they're all wheelchair accessible. So they're building that into the program.
>> Thank you.
>> Any other questions from committee members? Hearing none, Mr. Jackson, I want to thank you for that report, and we will be getting back to you.
>> Robert, we have a MARTA employee, Margaret Mullins wants to speak.
>> Thank you. And I'm not going to take up too much time, but I wanted to mention something that we're also working on as part of getting feedback from everyone, getting your design implications into the passenger journey. So if you were here, I think it was last meeting, Chris Wyczalkowski, who is the director of Customer Insights, presented the customer personas, and one thing we're doing with that is getting example passenger journeys for all our different personas. And so we wanted to ask any of you who might be willing to work with us to put together some passenger journeys from basically your perspective on riding MARTA, and it will be kind of like from every stage of your journey from trip planning to getting to your destination. You kind of describe, you know, the different pain points that you go through, sort of the different feelings and experiences that you have per stage of your journey, and what that does is we have kind of those journeys, and they can be used for design implications across MARTA for any project that people are doing. So we might share it with a team who is working on a website redesign or the team who's doing these tactile floors. You know, any other examples like that, like the new bus stops or putting in a cross walk. And what that does is kind of allow those members of those teams to consider, you know, each individual's passenger journeys and how the design should reflect, you know, addressing your pain point. So what we're going to do is send that information to Denise to send out to yall after this meeting, and if you want to participate with us which would be work with us to put together a passenger journey, then we would love to have your participation.
>> Great. Do we report directly to you, or do we go through Ms. Brown so that she can‑‑
>> I think we can do it really however it works for each person. You know, we could set up an individual meeting where we put down your passenger journey or, like, I can give you some examples and you follow those examples for yourself. So you can do it on your own time, or we can do it in a meeting together. It can be really however you want it to be.
>> Okay. And your position at MARTA? I assume you're with MARTA?
>> I report to Charlie. I'm the customer experience innovation program manager.
>> She's also the person putting together our Wayfinding standards across the agency and make sure that we incorporate everything.
>> Okay. Well, thank you both. I'll see if anyone else have any questions. Hearing none, we want to thank you both. Thank you both. Our next is our ADA report. Denise, do you know who is presenting that?
>> Angelita Armour is on the call.
>> Okay. Ms. Armour?
>> Yes, sir.
>> Are you on the call?
>> Yes. Can you hear me.
>> Yes, I can hear you just fine.
>> Okay. Thank you so much. So good morning, everyone. My name is Angelita Armour, the customer service field representative for MARTA at Mobility, and I'll be providing you with the ADA‑link customer complaints for the month of September 2023. So first we have authority‑wide complaints, that number is 786. Next we have the ADA‑link complaints which is 447 of that 786. We have ADA‑link complaints at 447 which is 56.9%. Of the 447 ADA‑link complaints, we have 274 of those that are actually ADA valid complaints which is 61.3%. Next we have breakdown by department. We have Mobility at 426. Mobility reservations at 9. Bus operations at 8. Mobility maintenance, we have 3. Police services and technology, we have 0. And one diversity and inclusion is all complaints totaling 447. Next we have our top complaints in all categories. We'll start with the late pick-ups at ‑‑
>> Ms. Armor. Can I ask you, this is over a three month period; is that correct?
>> This is just for September.
>> Oh, okay.
>> Yes. The late pick-ups we have are 153. Late drop-offs, we have 105. No‑shows, we have 38. Discourteous complaints, we have 15. Long wait time for the phone, we have 21. Tone of voice, we have 14. Excessive time on van, we have 16. Next we have top non‑mobility complaints. First we have incorrect reservations information at 5. Pass‑up and bus late at 2. Not let off at requested stop and refuse to be on bus at 1. And then, last but not least, we have accommodations. Authority‑wide, we have 52. And of the 52, we have 23 that are mobility at 44.2%. And that concludes the ADA‑link customer complaints report for September. Do you have any questions?
>> Well, I have some because I read the entire‑‑your entire report. Any committee members have any questions?
>> Robert?
>> Yes.
>> Do you want to go ahead to have Mobility to do their report, it'll go along with what Ms. Armour just reported?
>> Okay. We can do that.
>> That way he can answer any questions you have.
>> Okay. Stay with us, Ms. Armour.
>> Yes.
>> Mr. Gonzalez, Richard Gonzalez, you're going to give us a Mobility update report?
>> Yes, sir. So we got a little bit of a treat, and I'll still (audio distortion) ‑‑
>> You went out. We can't hear you Ricky.
>> Hello. I thought that was my phone, but, Mr. Gonzalez, we don't hear you. I hope that wasn't the treat.
>> I can see his screen, so he's trying to fix his technology.
>> Can everybody hear me now?
>> Yeah, there you are.
>> Yes, sir, we can hear you now.
>> Okay. All right. Okay. Okay, good. All right. No? Can you all hear me?
>> Yes.
>> Yes, we can.
>> All right. Thank you everybody for your patience. I have a little bit of a treat, and then after I do this, I can tie it with any questions on Ms. Armour's report. Tomorrow is "Industry Day" here at MARTA. We are preparing for the next evolution of the service and are getting ready to put out a request for proposals. So tomorrow, we're going to have about 50 people from different companies that are in transit to come down, see a presentation, tour the facility, so they can get an idea of our service. Now, this is just going to be a bear bones presentation to let them understand the structure of our service and not too much of a deep dive. The deep dive will come when we put out the RFP and we also address any of the questions they have. During the RFP process, there is a question and answer period, and that's when they can get more of the gritty details that will help them set up their proposal to us. So I'm going to show you the Mobility portion of the presentation tomorrow. I am going to try to share my screen, and let's see what happens when I do that. Okay. Let's do that. Okay. Can everybody see that?
>> Well, for those who can't see, I hope you will describe it to us.
>> I can see it.
>> So let us go ahead and let us begin from the beginning. All right. So hang on. Okay. There we go. So during this presentation‑‑I'm going to give this presentation to you like I would give it to them, and there would be also people to take over different portions of the presentation. Good morning, everybody. My name is Richard Gonzalez, I am director of Mobility Services here at MARTA. Thank you for coming to our "Industry Day." I'm very proud to show you what MARTA's mobility service consist of. Do not hesitate to ask me any questions. And today will be a presentation that goes how the service is structured right now presently, and I hope you can take away ideas that you could offer us during the proposal process that will really show us how to be more efficient and, dare I say, innovative. So right now, like I said, we're going to go into expectation standards, talk about training eligibility. All right. And then, by the way, you know, off script, so thank you for letting me practice in front of you because this will be a ‑‑ you know, any kinks that you can point out now will be helpful. So Mobility Values and Visions for Success but, you know, we do want to continue to improve our performance and collaborate with our shareholders, and that is people on the advisory committee and our own partners that are on this program. So we leverage our strength, and our strength is we have a very strong community here in Atlanta. I'm very proud of the partnership we have with other counties. This is a regional transportation authority, it's not just one county, and also grow with our ADA community and, yet, there is quite the ridership in our program. We're going to talk about some of our performance standards. We have OTP, potential ability customer pickup within 30 minutes from the scheduled pickup time. If we tell our customers that van is going to be there at 1 p.m., that means we have until 1:00 to 1:30 as our window. If you have more questions about our service standards, you could always go to 49 CFR 37.123(f)3, and that is a service, right here, complimentary of paratransit. And, you know, Section B, we're going to talk about that. Our target is that 90%, which is a very aggressive target, and I know we're going to get there. So the mean distance between failures that's what we average the week of the people on the road as long as before there is a breakdown which give me all the ‑‑ you know, like I said, you can reference CFR‑‑ 49 CFR to look more into that. Our target is at 15,000 miles, and we are meeting that target. Even with an older fleet, we're meeting that target, and that is excellent. Mobility (indiscernible), a trip in which the vehicle rides outside the 30‑minute window early or late and the passenger did not ride. That right there, our target is not to exceed .5% of our trips. And Mobility customer care ETA average call time wait, that right there is 122nd, it is our target, two minutes. And Mobility care ETA call abandonment rate, no more than 5.5% of our total calls. That right there is also a little aggressive, and someone is going to correct me. I believe it's after 30 seconds that counts the abandonment rate, but we're going to increase that to one minute. 30 seconds you're not really committed to the call, I think. So let's talk about our fleet. Our fleet right now has 53 L vans, those are the E450, 2018. The L vans, of course, are the larger vans with lifts. Our fleets also has 186 L vans that were purchased in 2019. We have 15 Chrysler Voyagers that ‑‑ they're not wheelchair accessible. And I got to say right now, and those are leased vehicles. Now, by the way, we have a procurement process for replacing our vans. Starting next year we have 52 new vans coming in every year. And also, I have 15 new Braun vans that we have not yet put into service, we're still getting the cameras worked out for them. So they should ‑‑ I keep saying this, and my apologies, but they should be in service some time soon. We're hoping to have seven in service next week. So the vans, the lifetime meter for the 2018 because the average mileage is 177,344 miles, and the life total meter for the 2019 are 163,571 miles. We are at‑‑for 2020, 488,991 performed trips carrying 606,103 passenger and 263,916 ETA calls. Year to date, we have 482,189 performed trips. 608,985 passengers and 288,974 ETA calls. This service is growing, ridership is growing, and that's why we look to you attendees to give us ideas, a proposal, that make us more efficient and accountable. All right. We have a great eligibility service certification process that many of you have gone through, so we're not going to ‑‑ I say this to my presentation on tomorrow as well, so we're not going to deep dive here into that, but that is a process that is our shining star, that works great, and we have fine people like Mr. Roosevelt and (indiscernible) that are managing that, and they're doing a great job so, you know. So I'm not going to go through all these numbers for that. Travel Training and Mobility Outreach, another shining star that we have to be proud of here. We have individual travel instruction, school events. We have train the trainer sessions and outreach events which are ongoing, and I got to say that staff is, you know, amazing in getting outreach to the community and performing this training and outreach. So Mobility eligibility training center that you've probably seen at the annex and has a rail car, a mock‑up rail car ticketing different floors that people travel across, (indiscernible) ‑‑ there we go ‑‑ street cuts and walkways. And we may be doing a tour of that tomorrow for the attendees, we're still trying to figure that out. And then there is a video that we will be showing them if they do not attend. If we don't go to that Mobility center, we have a video for them to watch. And then that that is going to be it. The rest, I'm going to hand it over to IT to talk about the technology aspect of the service that I won't be ‑‑ I will not be speaking to that. I am a operations guy, I am not a IT nerd guy. So that's it. And I look forward to know questions you may have as I adjust my camera.
>> Okay. Mr. Gonzalez, you put a lot of stuff out there for us and preparing for this. I guess you're calling it again a‑‑what was the name of this you are having tomorrow, I think you said?
>> We are calling it an "Industry Day." And it's not a ‑‑ Richard, I got to get this right‑‑it is not a request for formal information process because there's certain rules because you have an RFI that you have to follow. We're going to give the presentation, give the tours, have breakaway meetings if any of the attendees requested it. And then, you know, if we feel a need, we'll go through, like I said, the RFI process. We'll request for information, which is a very formal process, and there's rules involved because they're going to be giving you proprietary information. And, you know, it's not such an open forum where this will be more of an open give and take that we can have with the prospective bidders.
>> Okay. I ask the committee members if they have any questions of Ms.‑‑I mean, Ms. Armour's report as well as Mr. Gonzalez's presentation of this what he's going to be doing tomorrow? Any committee members with any questions?
>> This is Bob. It doesn't really fit in with tomorrow's event, and I'm not sure if it should be incorporated into this, but should I go ahead and mention it?
>> If you have any questions Bob about the service, this is the part that you can do that.
>> Okay. I know that you're having a terrible time finding drivers because of the situation in the country right now, and so it's beginning to affect me a lot. I don't even use MARTA that much these days because I haven't been going out, but I think it was five years ago I saw somebody with disabilities testing out this app that functions very similarly to the Uber service where you can see the MARTA mobility bus where it was and a minute‑by‑minute of when it was expected to arrive in front of you. Like the building I lived before I am now, there were two buildings on the property, but because the way the property was laid out, you could not see one building from the other. And many times the bus was parked in front of building one and thinking I was a no‑show, not realizing that I was sitting down at building two waiting patiently outside for him. So what has happened to that app?
>> Thank you. You're talking about the Transdev My Transit Management app. We hope to have that installed here soon. We have our tablets, but the issue is with IT that we are wrapping up now and have made progress, I'm very proud of that. That is something I will say that we're going to look forward to in the future, and I have a very knowledgeable team that knows about it, and as soon our final IT wrap up, that is going to be open to discussion. Our next MAC meeting, please make a note, and I welcome you, and I hope you ask me again about it.
>> The other thing that pertains to not having enough drivers, and I don't know if this would fit in the realm of what you do, but I have spoken to people that are drivers and they want to start a business where they own their own van that has a ramp in it and much like an individual might have, but it would fit several people. Anyway, a smaller van like that and subcontracting independent drivers, is that something that you would consider?
>> We are‑‑well, our Transdev partner, First Transit, formerly First Transit, is already doing that with Big Star and Silver Ride, and that is the exact model that they're using right now to help get more vans into this service. However, and I am going to‑‑I'm always honest with you guys, so I'll be honest with this. Some riders cannot stand those smaller vans. I don't know. I would prefer that to the big old vans, but a lot of riders prefer that traditional larger paratransit van, the cutaways we call them. It looks like a little camper thing on the back because they cut away the body and they put that on. And a lot of riders have a preference for that, a lot of the wheelchair riders have a preference for that van. So, you know, it's a balance. Someone request the larger van, we got to give it to them, it's a reasonable accommodation, but we are getting more of those smaller vehicles into the fleet. Silver Ride is bringing sedans to the fleet. Big Star is bringing those, as you said, those ramp‑installed wheelchair capable mini vans. So it is something that we're doing; however, if that rider is talking about starting his own ‑‑ the driver. If that driver is talking about starting his own business and contracting directly with MARTA, the path to that is actually to reach out to our present contractors and try to become a sub for them.
>> Okay. Thank you.
>> Any other members for questions for Mr. Gonzalez or Ms. Armour? If none, I have a few. Ms. Armour, I want to thank you again for your report, and I read the entire report, and I see the trend going upward when it‑‑in terms of complaints and things like that, and I noticed in your report, that's why I asked was these the quarterly reports, I think it's July, August, and September ‑‑
>> Yes.
>> ‑‑ and you mentioned it was September. And when you all see this trend going up, what do you all do? Do you communicate with Mr. Gonzalez that this is becoming an issue?
>> Yes, for the most part he's aware of‑‑yes, I'm sorry. But for the most part, he is aware of the challenges we're having throughout the system overall. Mr. Gonzalez, if you want to touch on that.
>> Thank you, Ms. Armour. And I'm going to let you guys know right now Ms. Armour's office is right next door to me, and she hears me every day. I am ‑‑ you know, I'm loud. It's the Latino in me, and I apologize, I'm very loud. And she sees me on every complaint, and also I get the complaint report at the end of the month, and she's really great about sticking her head around the corner and giving me verbals on issues that are a hot topic at that time. So then I get the KPI's, so I am aware. And, you know, that's the easy part. The hard part is, you know, fixing the problem. And I just want to say that complaints follow format, and now that the issues are going to be wrapped up by the end of next week, now that hopefully I'll finally get those 15 new vehicles on the road, performance is going to improve. We had a meeting today about group trips and making the service more efficient with our Transdev partners here today, and I am going to say that I believe that by the end of November, you're going to see a market improvement in this service, and I think our next MAC meeting will be one of positivity, and I'll be able to thank all of you for the input you gave, and I'm looking forward to that time.
>> Yes, sir. These are my concerns too. Not only, like I said, I read the read and saw it trending upward in the complaint department. And also, I ride regularly now, and I hear a lot of things that concerns me. One is that when people do call in and either calling ETA or they are calling MARTA reservations and they are getting ‑‑ they are told you are 20 seconds. One person who told me, he was told that he was 59th, the call. That was his time in the loop. The other concern that I have, and I've expressed this to Ms. Brown, about the different vendors that you have and whether or not that's being communicated to Ms. Brown's office and to let those and the riding public know as to what kind of vehicle is going to show up, was it the traditional MARTA van, the mini van, or the personal car. When a person who's blind don't know that and somebody shows up in a personal car and that operator says well, I'm from MARTA, and you're not being able to see the credentials nor the markings, if there are any on the car, and that used to be or we were told it was going to be communicated to the individual prior to their trip. I think you made mention of the day before at our last MAC meeting, and that's not happening. Because I'm just not speaking about one person, I'm involved with the blind community, and a lot of them tell me they are experiencing this. And the other thing that I was concerned about is the chatter that goes on over the airways. A lot of it, I don't think, the passengers should be listening to, especially when there's a conversation between the driver and the operator that's not going quite so well. I mean, the dispatcher. I mean, the operator and the dispatcher. I hear a lot of that. I experience a lot of that. I said this point I was going to let you know or get an audience myself and speak with you but just haven't had that to happen. I guess I would have to make a direct appointment with you. And I'm glad that you are having these other transit agencies over to discuss what's happened with our Mobility. I would like to be there, if I can. But nevertheless, those were just some concerns of mine because there's something building in the disability community when it comes to people getting fed up with a lot of the problems that are slowly creeping up. I know the ridership has increased, and not only that, the maintenance of the vehicles have suffered somewhat. And also, the ‑‑ you have one dispatcher trying to deal with a number of operators calling in during peak periods and otherwise. So that is disturbing. I hear that over the airways when the operators are trying to call ETA or either call dispatch to communicate. And you only have one ‑‑ and correct me if I'm wrong. I don't know how many dispatchers you have, but according to what I hear over the airways, it don't sound like you hear but one at the time that's trying to handle over 15 to 20 operators out there. And that's disturbing also because I know the thing is to get people to their location in a timely manner, and I hope that would be ‑‑ on‑time performance will be going up. And I've been meaning to, like I said, again, I've been meaning to get with you all these points so that I could offer some suggestion. I've been around a long time, so that's why I was saying when you're having this meeting tomorrow and trying to get input from these other transit companies as to how we can improve or what they see that we're doing that they can apply to their own, I appreciate that, but I think we need to get our own house in order, and it takes the customers, management, as well as the employees, to deal with this. And, like I said, when people don't know you have all these other vendors out there, people ‑‑ Silver Ride, Big Star, ATS, and so forth and so on, well, a lot of people in the community don't know this, so that's why you have a lot of concerns. So ‑‑
>> Of course. Of course.

>> ‑‑ (indiscernible).

>> And I have ‑‑ I'm sorry. Go ahead, sir. I apologize.
>> No, I'm done. I'm done. I'll listen to you.
>> I'm sorry. Okay. I was trying to (indiscernible) myself because I didn't want to seem. Okay. I welcome any time a one‑on‑one with anybody in this group, but especially you, sir, so don't hesitate to reach out to me to set up a meeting or something like that. And so a couple things I want to make sure that I am ‑‑ to address some of the things because he gave me a big plate full of it, but, yeah, we have traditional open radios, and if the dispatcher and the operator are talking, you're going to hear what they are saying to each other. There is one dispatcher for about every 20 operators and that is the industry norm. We have, like I said, four open channels. Come January, we're going to be getting a new radio system put in. Now, for the sedan, UZURV, they are supposed to notify you if that is ‑‑ a sedan, UZURV, is coming. Let me know if that's not happening. As far as notifying people the type of vehicle that's showing up, I don't know any other agency, and I've worked with a few that does that, you know, get the vehicle that's most efficient for you. If that is a concern, I would love to speak to riders one‑on‑one about that. And I have. You know, there are some that prefer the larger L van and believe their vehicle is perfect. However, if you do that too many times, and you're locking down vans, and it's no longer about what's the most efficient trip for you, it's well, I prefer this type of van. Well, okay, but they scheduled today, and you got what's called a vehicle violation because you only want that type of van. You might not be getting it at the time of the trip you like. As far as ETA goes, starting next week they will be fully staffed for their ETA, and they have been moved to a separate room here with new computers and new equipment, so that's going to go smoother. And also, there's what's called callback feature. That has been turned off because we found out it was actually hurting the ETA queue. So as the vehicles get their new tablets put in ‑‑ and, like I said, hopefully, several weeks that's going to be done ‑‑ the ETA trips will be going faster because they no longer will have to call the driver and say hey, where are you at man. And something to remember, you know, they call the driver on the radio, but if the driver is doing door‑to‑door service or putting a wheelchair on the lift, he can't answer the radio. So as the tablets get in there, they're going to be able to automatically, you know, see where the operator is and not have to call him and be able to make ETA calls much faster and knows it will be a faster turnaround on that. And, like I said before, the other issue that you got me with, I would love to have a conversation with you on that or anybody. Do not hesitate to reach out to me, and we'll set up some time. And as for tomorrow, you're welcome to show up if you like, but I just want to make sure you to understand what tomorrow is, a presentation by us and then breakaway meetings with the individual vendors that have questions. The real meat of this, and I especially ask you to participate, is that is when we have the RFP's, the proposals. That's where you can really get a idea of what they're offering and the ideas they have to bring have to the agency. Tomorrow is going to be more of a hey, this is what our service is about, anybody got any specific questions. You know, we have separate conference rooms. And, like I said, you have to be careful with that because ‑‑ and they have to be careful who they talk to because this is proprietary information. And, like I said, you go through the RFP process (indiscernible) the RFP is released. And I'm trying to avoid that which is why we're not doing the RFI. Kind of keeping this squeeky‑greeky. You know, I talk, and I've probably caused more questions than I've answered, but are there any questions about anything I just said? And my apologies. There was branding issues with Big Star and Big Star and Silver Ride, but they have ordered either A, magnets or B, some vinyl stuff they're putting on the vehicle that identify them as MARTA vans. You know, these aren't the traditional T and C's that take you anywhere and do anything outside this service, these are dedicated vehicles for MARTA. And, like I said, the branding will be improved, if not this week, by next week, but, you know, I welcome the feedback on that. If an unbranded vehicle shows up that is not UZURV, please let me know.
>> Yes, sir. And my question was if you know you are going to bring on a new vendor, would you communicate that to us in advance so that we can get the word out to those individuals who use the system, use the mobility system? We would like‑‑reasons for that is people have gotten so consistent with MARTA mobility because it was uniformed. The drivers had uniforms on. The knew it was a MARTA vehicle because you knew how it sound, but when you go to all types of vehicles, some are marked, some are not, some with different, you know, different names, and so if you don't know this in advance, I would appreciate it if it was a way that you could communicate that to Ms. Brown and Ms. Brown could communicate it to us so that we can get it out through the people we represent on the MARTA advisory‑‑I mean, the accessibility committee. We would appreciate that so that we can tell the people in the‑‑well, so called blind community, look, MARTA Mobility has a new vendor, and this vendor is ‑‑ because no one knew about Silver Line, nor no one knew about Big Star. Big Star, they thought it was a former grocery store, I said no, it's a new one that they have, and I only learned this from the operators. So we would appreciate it if we could get advanced notice because you are trying to do this to improve on‑time performance, so we would like to help in that way.
>> Thank you, sir. I will do‑‑if there are future partners brought on, I will do a better job of communicating that out.
>> Yes, sir. We will appreciate it. Are there any more questions of Ms. Armour or Mr. Gonzalez from the committee members?
>> I have one more thing. It's sort of a question, but it's possibly more of a comment. To me, MARTA's obligation is to A, get you to your destination safely and on time for an appointment. The fact that somebody goes eww, eww, eww, I don't want to ride in that van, that one is not big and pretty, I want to ride in the big one, I don't get that.
>> Bob, I appreciate ‑‑ Bob, I appreciate your ‑‑ thank you, sir. But I do think there should be ‑‑ again, as Robert said, a way of letting somebody know what is coming to pick them up so that they're not all fired up when it rolls up in front of their pickup zone. And then they have the obligation to say no, I want to ride in the big one. Sorry, we don't have it, because you're working with a different world now, and you can't get drivers. As I said earlier, (indiscernible) are the routes that I take on the fixed route bus dramatically, and I know that you have the same issue with Mobility, and you are just doing a remarkable thing to pull it‑‑to make it happen. And that's all.
>> Okay. Well, Bob, my comment is for those people who are just you can't be choosy because if the vans that show up is for the purpose of transporting you from point A to point B, I'll agree with that. But now if you are inspecting a MARTA mobility van and it don't show up and then any van shows up or somebody in a private car and the people don't know it, then‑‑
>> Yes, I agree with you on that.
>> That is the purpose not that they are ‑‑ not that they are saying well, okay, the car is here, do you want a ride, and so forth and so on, I'm saying that surprises some people. You know, if a driver doesn't have any markings on the vehicle and just show up at your door and say Mr. Lossie, I'm here to pick you up, and you couldn't see them, or you didn't know who they were in advance, but they just said they coming to pick you up.
>> No argument.
>> Yeah. So that's what I'm talking about. Those are the ones that I'm talking about.
>> I wasn't referring to your comment, I was referring to what Mr. Gonzalez said that they're having difficulty implementing the smaller vans with the ramp because people don't like it.
>> Right. Uh‑huh.
>> And ‑‑
>> Well, I'll agree with that. Okay. I'll agree with that because, you know, you have some people who can't lift their leg that high to get into some of the mini vans they have.
>> No, it has a ramp. It has a ramp, it's just a smaller van than they're used to.

>> Yeah, I know the one you're talking about, I'm talking about the one that's in use now. I don't know if you caught one of those vans or not.
>> As Mr. Gonzalez said, it's the smaller van that has a ramp. You didn't specifically say that, that's what I was referring to.
>> Oh, okay. Yeah. Yeah, with the ramp, yes, that will accommodate. Yeah, we in agreement on that.
>> So and even if somebody is on a rollie or a walker, they can utilize the ramp to get up if they can't manually step up.
>> There you go. That's it. That's it. I was just speaking of the vans that they're using now, those are the ones that don't have the ramp and won't be able to accommodate a wheelchair. Those are the ones.
>> Yes, I think he mentioned there were four different types of buses, and but the one I was speaking of was the Braun mobility bus. I think you said the L van. And the other one that is a like a regular passenger van but it's been chopped up, so they take the roof off and raise it up high, and they have to put the ramp on it, those two specifically. And he did say they have problems with the smaller van because they want the Mobility bus.
>> Well, are there any other committee members with questions? I've asked that before. And hearing none, thank you Mr. Gonzalez, thank you Ms. Armour for your reports. And I'm looking forward to getting with you Ms. Gonzalez and giving you, you know, information that I have. And as far as the thing tomorrow, like you said, if that just belong to the industry, then so be it, but I hope, I hope the purpose is to get as much information so that we can have improvements, or they can take away from what we have. I hope that is the case. So I want to thank you again for joining us on the MAC accessibility committee. Denise, is there anyone else?
>> I don't see anything in the chat. I don't see any hands raised.
>> Okay. That's it then. That's all that has to come before the MAC committee. So at this time, the MAC committee stands adjourned. Before we adjourned, Denise, would you give us our next meeting date, which is next year. This is the last meeting for this year 2023. Our next committee member ‑‑ our next committee meeting is?
>> It's January the 9th, and I want to let everyone know this meeting was recorded, it's going to be placed on the website. We also have a captionist who is on, and the transcript will also be available on our website. And I want to thank you (indiscernible) for the sign language interpreter and the captionist.
>> Okay. Well, thank you all. And this meeting is adjourned.