ITEM 13 - Action
November 19, 2008

Briefing on the Report: "Independent Review of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) MetroAccess Service" and Transmittal of the Report to WMATA

Staff Recommendation: Receive briefing on major findings and recommendations from the review, as detailed in the enclosed draft report, and adopt Resolution R10-2009 transmitting the report to WMATA.

Issues: None

Background: In 2006 the TPB transmitted to WMATA the report: "Improving Demand Responsive Services for People with Disabilities in the Washington Region," which recommended an independent review of MetroAccess service quality, performance monitoring, rider input and the eligibility determination process. This review, which was guided by the TPB Access for All Advisory Committee and the Human Services Transportation Coordination Task Force, was conducted by TranSystems between May and September 2008.

TPB R10-2009
November 19, 2008

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

RESOLUTION TRANSMITTING THE REPORT "INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY'S (WMATA) METROACCESS SERVICE" TO THE WMATA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WHEREAS, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), which is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington Region, has the responsibility under the provisions of Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) for developing and carrying out a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process for the Metropolitan Area; and

WHEREAS, the TPB Access for All Advisory Committee has had ongoing concerns about the MetroAccess service for people with disabilities unable to use fixed route services;

WHEREAS, in 2003, the AFA recommended that a study of MetroAccess be conducted to identify the best and most cost-effective ways to serve the greatest number of people;

WHEREAS, on February 15, 2006 the TPB approved resolution R12- 2006 to transmit the report "Improving Demand Responsive Services for People with Disabilities in the Washington Region" to WMATA;

WHEREAS, one of the five priority recommendations from the demand responsive study was that an independent review of MetroAccess be conducted based on operational and management considerations that MetroAccess has had difficulties with in the past;

WHEREAS, the TPB FY2008 and FY2009 Unified Planning Work Programs identified the independent review as a work activity under the Human Service Transportation Coordination program element;

WHEREAS, the independent review was overseen by the TPB Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee, which is chaired by TPB member Catherine Hudgins, and the TPB Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force, which is chaired by TPB member Timothy Lovain;

WHEREAS, the TPB Access for All Advisory Committee and the Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force prioritized issues that the review should investigate and prioritized the most significant findings and recommendations from the report;

WHEREAS, in addition to discussion about the review at the committees' regularly scheduled meetings, three joint AFA Committee and Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force meetings were held on May 21, September 18 and October 15;

WHEREAS, the review was conducted between May and September 2008 by TranSystems and the KFH Group, Inc and included interviews of MetroAccess customers and a two-day on-site review of MetroAccess in July;

WHEREAS, the AFA Committee and Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force identified the following five recommendations from the report as priorities for WMATA to address:

- Reduce employee turnover in order to retain quality, experienced managers, call center staff and drivers, and add an additional scheduler;
- Reduce long ride-times and address excessively early and late drop-offs and pick-ups;
- Complete and adopt a long-term capital plan for the MetroAccess service to ensure that adequate vehicles and equipment will be available in future years. In the short term, WMATA should add 24 vehicles as soon as possible to increase the fleet spare ratio from 10% to 15%;
- Consider changing the future contract structure to lessen the concentration of responsibilities and operating functions in any one company and to provide for a more stable, experienced workforce; and
- Simplify the recertification process for individuals found to be unconditionally ADA paratransit eligible and whose functional ability is not expected to improve over time.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD transmits the report: "Independent Review of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) MetroAccess Service" to the WMATA Board of Directors and requests that the WMATA Board of Directors receive a presentation on the report findings and recommendations.

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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Memorandum

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Wendy Klancher
Senior Transportation Planner
Department of Transportation Planning

SUBJECT: Results from the TPB Independent Review of MetroAccess

DATE: November 13, 2008

This memorandum provides a brief summary of a comprehensive report prepared by TranSystems and the KFH Group entitled "Independent Review of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) MetroAccess Service" dated November 11, 2008. The full report, which provides many more detailed findings and recommendations than are provided in this summary, is enclosed with this mail-out item.

Background

The TPB's Access for All Advisory Committee has had long standing concerns with service quality offered by MetroAccess, the door-to-door service provided to individuals who because of a disability are unable to use the bus and Metrorail system. These concerns led to the TPB conducting a study on demand responsive services in 2006, entitled "Improving Demand Responsive Services for People with Disabilities in the Washington Region". This report was presented to the TPB on February 15, 2006 and transmitted by the TPB to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Board.

During 2006, WMATA and MetroAccess riders experienced a difficult transition to the new MetroAccess contractor, MV Transportation. As a result, the WMATA Board created an ad-hoc committee to look at how the recommendations from the TPB study could be implemented to improve the service. WMATA implemented several of the recommendations from the TPB study, including the change from curb-to-curb to door-to-door service. One of the priority recommendations from the TPB Demand Responsive Study was that the TPB conduct an independent review of management and operational issues that MetroAccess has had challenges with in the past.

How the Review was Conducted

The independent review was overseen by the TPB Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee, which is chaired by TPB member Catherine Hudgins, and the TPB Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force, which is chaired by TPB member Timothy Lovain. These committees identified issues that MetroAccess riders continue to face, and helped create the scope of work for a review which focused on four areas: 1) Service Quality and Performance Monitoring; 2) Rider Input and Customer Service 3) Policy and Planning and 4) Eligibility Determinations.

The review was conducted between May and September 2008 by TranSystems and the KFH Group, and included interviews with stakeholders and a two day on-site review of MetroAccess in July. WMATA's Department of Access Service and MV Transportation participated fully in the review. Three joint meetings of the AFA Committee and the Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force were held to discuss the review and prioritize significant findings and recommendations.

Significant Findings:

Of the improvements identified in the report, the following four items are some of the most significant. In general, riders commented that they have noticed these improvements in their experiences with MetroAccess:

- MetroAccess on-time performance (for pick-ups), missed trips and no-shows has improved over the last year;

- Staffing levels for reservationists, schedulers, dispatchers and contract monitoring has vastly improved since 2006;

- Customer complaints are being tracked and responded to more efficiently than they were; and

- WMATA is doing a better job in being clear with customers about MetroAccess policies, as shown, for example, in the outreach efforts done for the door-to-door service.

However, riders also commented that they still have concerns about long trips, untimely pick-ups and inexperienced drivers. Some of these concerns are a result of the following challenges identified by the review:

- Staff turnover of reservationists, dispatchers and drivers remains a concern at 121%, 89% and 111% respectively. Relatively low pay and benefits that MV Transportation offers combined with the difficulty of the job appears to contribute to this issue;

- Very early pick-ups and drop-offs are an issue; as are a small percentage of very long trips. The review identified some settings in the automated scheduling system that should be changed to address these issues;

- Eligibility determinations are taking several months to complete, apparently due to limited professional capacity provided to WMATA by contractors who conduct the in-person assessments. However, service is being offered to applicants while the determinations are completed; and

- For a large metropolitan area, the structure of the contract is unusual. MV Transportation acts as a broker or turn-key operation and also operates over 60% of the service. This means that MV Transportation is responsible for monitoring it's own service and has the entire responsibility for reservations, scheduling and dispatching functions. In other large metropolitan areas, the service providers and functions are typically broken out in contracts

with multiple companies to lessen the concentration of responsibilities and functions within a single company.

Recommendations

Recognizing that adopting all of the recommendations from the independent review could have cost implications for WMATA, the AFA Committee and the Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force prioritized the recommendations identified in the attached report. (It should be noted that some of the recommendations have the potential to increase efficiency and reduce costs.) Of the many recommendations in the report, the two committees felt that the following five recommendations should be brought to the TPB's attention:

- WMATA should work with the contractor to reduce employee turnover in order to retain quality, experienced managers, call center staff and drivers, and add an additional scheduler;

- WMATA should work with the contractor to reduce long ride-times and address excessively early and late drop-offs and pick-ups (through scheduling software adjustments and the development of revised on-time performance standards described in the report);

- WMATA should complete and adopt a long-term capital plan for the MetroAccess service to ensure that adequate vehicles and equipment will be available in future years. In the short term, WMATA should work with the contractor to add 24 vehicles as soon as possible to increase the fleet spare ratio from 10% to 15%;

- WMATA should consider changing the future contract structure to lessen the concentration of responsibilities and operating functions in any one company and to provide for a more stable, experienced workforce; and

- WMATA should simplify the recertification process for individuals found to be unconditionally ADA paratransit eligible and whose functional ability is not expected to improve over time. These individuals should be given a longer term of eligibility and require only a brief recertification form.

Other Issues

The AFA Committee and the Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force identified the following recommendations as particularly important since they are strongly associated with WMATA's responsibility to meet the paratransit requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

- WMATA should change the way that E&D Committee members are selected in order to address concerns about the Committee's objectivity and independence; and

- WMATA should ensure that customers who require information in particular accessible formats consistently receive materials in their preferred format (WMATA should develop and maintain a list of customer's preferred formats).

Next Steps

At the November 19 TPB meeting, the TPB will be asked to transmit the report to the WMATA Board. The AFA Committee and the Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force will continue to work with WMATA to ensure good MetroAccess service and on-going attention to cost efficient strategies for service improvement.

Independent Review of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) MetroAccess Service

DRAFT FINAL REPORT

Prepared for

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Prepared by

TranSystems Corporation
KFH Group

November 11, 2008

This report is available in an alternative format upon request. Please contact Wendy Klancher at wklancher@mwcog.org, (202)962-3321 or (202)962-3213 (TDD). Allow 7 working days for preparation of the material.

CONTENTS

Introduction

On February 15, 2006, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) and the Access for All Advisory Committee (AFA) issued a study on the MetroAccess Service and other paratransit services titled "Improving Demand Responsive Services for People with Disabilities in The Washington Region." The study had been prompted, in part, by AFA committee member concern about MetroAccess service quality and the escalating cost of the service.

The TPB/AFA study included 15 recommendations for improving MetroAccess and other paratransit services in the Washington Metropolitan area. One of those recommendations was to conduct an independent review of the MetroAccess service at a future date to monitor implementation of the recommendations, assess other actions taken by WMATA and the new service contractor, and determine if MetroAccess service quality had improved.

In April of 2008, the TPB engaged TranSystems and its subcontractor, the KFH Group, to conduct the recommended independent review of MetroAccess services. The scope of services called for a review of issues in four areas:

- Service Quality and Performance Monitoring
- Rider Input and Customer Service
- Policy and Planning
- Eligibility Determinations

Within these four areas, the scope listed 18 specific questions and concerns to be examined.

MetroAccess riders, local disability advocates, and local agency staff were contacted and information about their recent experiences with the MetroAccess service was obtained. A total of 14 individuals were interviewed by phone. A joint "kick-off" meeting of the TPB Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force and the AFA Committee was also held on May 12, 2008 to review the scope of the review, the approach planned for examining each area, and to get additional input on key service issues.

A summary of input received from riders, advocates and agency staff is provided in Attachment A. It is important to note that this input represented the experiences, opinions and perceptions of the individuals contacted. It was not considered "definitive" in developing findings. It did, however, help focus the review efforts on issues that required particular attention. Many of the issues raised are addressed later in this report. A few were outside the scope of the review. A complete summary of input received is provided in Attachment A, though, so that all public comments can be considered by the TPB and WMATA.

General information about each issue was also gathered from WMATA and its MetroAccess contractor, MV Transportation (MV). A two-day on-site visit was then conducted on July 15-16, 2008 to observe the MetroAccess service first-hand and to gather additional data. WMATA and MV Transportation staff were interviewed. Each area of the MetroAccess operation was also observed. Sample data and special reports were also developed.

This report summarizes findings of the independent review. Section 1 provides findings on Service Quality and Performance Monitoring issues. Section 2 summarizes findings on Rider Input and Customer Service issues. Section 3 addresses Policy and Planning issues. Section 4 provides finds related to Eligibility Determinations. In each section, the specific questions and issues raised by stakeholders and included in the TPB scope of services are first listed. Data, observations, findings and recommendations for each question/issue are then provided.

A Draft Report was prepared and submitted to the TPB on September 16, 2008. The Draft Report was distributed to the TPB Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force, the AFA Committee, and WMATA for review and comment. Two meetings of the committees were also held to discuss the Draft Report and to prioritize the findings and recommendations. This Final Report includes changes to address the comments received.

Executive Summary

Overall, this independent review found that significant progress has been made by WMATA in addressing many of the issues raised by the TPB and the community in 2006 regarding MetroAccess service quality and management. Several of the recommendations made in 2006 have been successfully implemented. Others are in the process of being implemented, and a few challenges remain. Following is a summary of the key findings and recommendations from the independent review. Additional related and detailed findings and recommendations are included in the text of the report.

These findings and recommendations were reviewed by the TPB AFA Committee and the Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force. A short-list of findings, remaining challenges, and recommendations that the committee members felt to be most important was developed. The short-list is provided at the end of this Executive Summary.

Service Quality and Performance Monitoring

- WMATA and MV Transportation have made significant progress in fully staffing and restructuring the MetroAccess call center. Between December 2006 and July 2008, staffing levels for all call center functions increased by 64 positions—a 125% increase. The number of Reservation Agents increased from 27 to 42, and the number of Dispatchers increased from 14 to 45. Dispatchers now handle 27 to 32 runs each, while in December of 2006 they were required to manage about 90 runs each. This increase in staffing has allowed for better oversight of daily service.

- Several new units have been created within the call center to better manage certain key functions. This includes a No-Show Desk, to better respond to no-shows and assist drivers in locating riders, and a “Where’s My Ride” unit to better respond to riders calling to check on their rides. More supervisors have also been added in reservations and dispatching to better monitor and manage these key functions.

- Increases in call center staff has improved telephone performance and reduced hold times. Ninety percent (90%) of trip reservation calls are answered in two minutes or less. The longest trip reservation hold time observed for a sample week that was analyzed in detail was 9:06. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of “Where’s My Ride?” calls are answered in two minutes or less, and the longest initial hold observed for the sample week was 8:51.

- Although not observed during the review, riders continue to report some long secondary holds times in the “Where’s My Ride?” call group when they are transferred internally to dispatchers or managers. The hold time monitoring system does not automatically track secondary holds. It is recommended that additional first-hand monitoring be done by WMATA and MV to track secondary hold times.

- Scheduling capacity has increased slightly, from four Schedulers in December 2006 to five Schedulers in July 2008. This increase roughly matches the increase in trips and scheduled runs. Schedulers still handle between 60 and 125 runs, roughly the same as in December 2006. It is recommended that one additional scheduler be added to allow for the development of more accurate and efficient vehicle runs.

- WMATA has also made significant progress in increasing the number of vehicles available for the MetroAccess service. Between December 2006 and July 2008, the number of WMATA-owned vehicles made available for the service has increased from 334 to 458, and the total fleet has increased from 374 to 498. The increase has allowed the spare ratio to be increased from 4% in December 2006 to 10% in July 2008. The current spare ratio is still low relative to industry standards, though, and it is recommended that 24 vehicles be added as soon as possible to increase the spare ratio to a more typical 15%.

- Reducing turnover and developing job experience in the call center remains a key challenge. Recent post-training turnover of Reservation Agents was running at 121% per year. Post-training turnover of Dispatchers was running at 89% per year. These high turnover rates lessen the amount of experience of staff in these key call center positions. The demands of the job, combined with limited compensation—particularly fringe benefits—appear to be factors that affect the turnover rates. Now that staffing levels have been increased, retaining quality, experienced staff should become a priority.

- Driver turnover and experience remains a key challenge. From July of 2007 through June of 2008, the post-training turnover among drivers employed at the two largest MV Transportation operations was running at 111% per year. High turnover rates appear to exist at other garages and in other subcontractor operations. Preliminary information from a national research study suggests that driver turnover in ADA paratransit averages about 30% across the country. The very high turnover rate in the MetroAccess service is likely impacting the service quality and productivity. Lower productivity means that more vehicle hours must be operated to meet the demand, which causes the total cost of the service to increase. High turnover is also costly to the contractors. MV Transportation estimates that it costs about $7,500 to recruit and train a new driver. Current turnover rates suggest that between 800 and 900 new drivers are now being recruited and trained each year. Relatively low compensation, combined with the demands of the job, are likely major contributors to driver turnover. Eleven specific recommendations for lowering turnover and building a more stable, high-quality, and productive driver workforce are provided in Section 1.3 of the report.

- Turnover among mid-level and upper-level managers at MV Transportation is also a concern. The MV Transportation operation has had three General Managers since 2006, and each of the two largest MV Transportation garages have had three general managers and two operations managers between July 2007 and June 2008.

High turnover in mid and upper management can impact service stability and consistency.

- A new system for recording complaints and tracking complaint handling has been implemented. This new system, Trapeze COM, integrates the information about all aspects of the complaint handling process.

- WMATA's Office of Customer Service is only staffed weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. On weekends, callers get a recorded message giving the office hours and asking them to call back during the week. There is no option to leave a message on the weekends. WMATA should consider giving callers the option to leave a message regarding their service issues on the weekends.

- A detailed review of 30 randomly selected complaints found that the primary cause of the complaint was identified in each case and responses to riders were provided within four days. However, corrective actions to address the issues identified were often not documented in the tracking system. It is recommended that improved follow-up be done on corrective actions, that information about corrective actions be recorded in the tracking system, and that this information be included in responses to complainants.

- First-hand observations calling the WMATA complaint line found that hold times can be very long. Eight calls were made at various times of the day and the average hold time was almost six minutes. Two calls resulted in hold times of more than 10 minutes, and one call resulted in a 21 minute hold time. It is important to note that, since WMATA's Office of Customer Service handles complaints for all types of services, these hold times are experienced by fixed route riders and other customers, not just MetroAccess riders. It is recommended that WMATA analyze telephone performance in the office and take appropriate actions to eliminate excessively long hold times.

- WMATA responds to complaints in the same way that complaints are received. Complaints by phone receive telephone responses. Written complaints receive written responses. It is recommended that written responses be provided if specifically requested by complainants, even if the complaint is received by phone. Some riders made not be able to file complaints in writing, perhaps due to disability.

- WMATA has made steady progress in improving on-time pick-up performance. During the period of transition from January 2006 through June 2006, riders were picked-up about 90.9% of the time. In FY 2008 (July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008), riders were picked-up 95.6% of the time.

- No-shows and missed trips have also been reduced. No-shows have been reduced from 6.7% of all trips scheduled in FY 2007 to 3.6% in FY 2008. Missed trips have been reduced from 0.74% of all trips scheduled in FY 2007 to 0.28% in FY 2008.

- Getting to appointments on time is an issue. An analysis of a random sample of 938 trips with appointments found that drop-offs were made on or before the appointment times 81% of the time. Drop-offs were late 19% of the time.

- Very early pick-ups and drop-offs also remain a concern. The analysis of 938 randomly-selected trips in May 2008 found that riders were dropped off more than 30 minutes before their appointment times 53% of the time, and more than 45 minutes early 28% of the time.

- An analysis of 5,393 trips in May 2008 found that ride times were one hour or less 83.2% of the time, were more than one hour 16.8% of the time, and were more than 90 minutes 5.6% of the time. A more detailed analysis of 30 trips from this sample with the longest travel times found that the routing seemed circuitous and excessively long in ten cases.

- A review of the travel time parameter settings in the automated scheduling system found that the parameters were set in a way that could result in trips being scheduled with ride times up to two-and-a-half times as long as the direct, non-shared-ride time, and up to three hours long. These long ride time allowances are also likely resulting in trip offers that are well before stated appointment times. It is recommended that these parameters be re-examined and reset to provide for more reasonable travel times and more reasonable pick-up time offers.

- WMATA has greatly increased staffing in the Office of MetroAccess Service, which manages and monitors the MetroAccess service. In 2006, there were three staff positions dedicated to managing and monitoring MetroAccess service. In July of 2008, there were 12 positions. Very detailed procedures have also been developed to monitor all aspects of the service. WMATA now appears to have adequate staffing and procedures to thoroughly monitor and manage the MetroAccess service.

- As part of a recent settlement agreement, WMATA contracts with a consulting firm to have the accuracy of MetroAccess service data and reported performance information checked. The most recent review, in April of 2008, found that on-time performance information is accurate. The review identified some issues with the way that missed trips were defined and tracked. WMATA is implementing the recommendations made in that report to address these missed trip reporting issues.

Rider Input and Customer Service

- WMATA has revised the MetroAccess Customer Guide. The current Customer Guide and other information on WMATA's website, such as the Frequently Asked Questions document, appear to accurately and clearly explain the MetroAccess service.

- WMATA did an excellent job obtaining input in preparation for the recent change from curb-to-curb to door-to-door service. Through a series of open public forums

as well as a newsletter, WMATA also thoroughly communicated this major change in service policy to riders.

- WMATA measures MetroAccess customer satisfaction as part of its system-wide customer survey process. Each month, 100 MetroAccess riders are randomly selected and surveyed by phone about their experiences with recently made trips. This telephone survey is conducted by a consulting firm that specializes in measuring customer satisfaction. Quarterly reports which summarize the monthly surveys are prepared by the consulting firm and provided to WMATA.

- On March 7, 2008, WMATA approved a new system-wide Policy/Instruction on providing information in accessible formats. The new Policy/Instruction delineates the agency's obligation to provide accessible information and the importance of providing this information. It also charges each department within WMATA to develop procedures to implement the Policy/Instruction. The Office of MetroAccess Service currently provides accessible information in response to individual requests. The Office is also investigating ways to use information about the need for accessible information, gathered during the eligibility determination process, to automatically generate information in an appropriate format. In addition to these efforts, it is recommended that the Office of MetroAccess Service develop and maintain a master list of individuals who have requested information in accessible formats and use this list when sending information to riders.

- To improve public perceptions of the independence and objectivity of the E&D Advisory Committee, and to expand its representation and effectiveness, it is recommended that WMATA consider changing the way that members are selected. Rather than selecting committee members in-house with the assistance of the current committee, it is recommended that WMATA make some positions on the committee available to local organizations that represent and serve persons with disabilities and seniors. Other positions on the committee could be made available to the jurisdictions who could appoint individuals not affiliated with local organizations. Nominations from the jurisdictions and local organizations could be made to the WMATA General Manager who would make the final appointment.

Policy and Planning

- To better plan for and budget for increases in MetroAccess demand, WMATA contracted with a consulting firm in 2007 to develop estimates of service demand through FY 2013. Through FY 2010, the study estimates increases in ridership ranging from 10.6% to 17.1% per year. After FY 2010, the study estimates annual increases ranging from 6.6% to 12.2%. The firm that prepared these estimates is a nationally-known econometric firm that specializes in studying ADA paratransit demand and the estimates provided seem reasonable.

- WMATA used the information provided in the demand study to develop its FY 2009 MetroAccess operating budget. The FY 2009 operating budget allows for a 14.9% increase in demand which is consistent with the estimates in the study.

- In recent years, WMATA has shown a commitment to fully-funding MetroAccess service. Total annual expenditures for MetroAccess have increased from $34.5 million in FY 2003 to over $57.8 million in FY 2007. The budget for FY 2008 was $62.8 million and the budget for FY 2009 is $68.2 million.

- For the first time, the FY 2009 budget included a separate capital budget for the MetroAccess service. WMATA is also in the process of developing a long-term capital replacement plan specifically for the MetroAccess service. Currently, capital budgets for MetroAccess must be approved each year. It is recommended that WMATA complete and adopt a long-term capital plan for the MetroAccess service to ensure that adequate vehicles and equipment will be available in future years.

- The FY 2009 MetroAccess capital budget provides for replacement of 100 vehicles plus 40 expansion vehicles. The 100 replacement vehicles seem appropriate given the current fleet. The 40 expansion vehicles represent an 8.1% fleet expansion. This should improve the spare ratio and should be sufficient to begin the operating year, but additional expansion vehicles will be needed during the operating year if the demand for service grows in FY 2009 by the expected 14.9%.

- To ensure that the gains that have been made to date continue in the next contract period, it is recommended that the changes that have led to improvement be incorporated in future RFPs and contracts. These include:
    - The new functions and staffing levels in the call center
    - The expanded level of service monitoring by the contractor as well as WMATA

- Future RFPs and contracts for MetroAccess service should also address the key recommendations made in this independent review and other recent studies. These include:
    - Developing a contract structure that allows staffing levels in the call center to be more easily adjusted as demand increases
    - Lowering turnover and developing a stable, experienced workforce
    - Setting a minimum fleet spare ratio
    - Revising the travel time standard and appropriately setting travel time parameters in the scheduling system
    - An on-time drop-off standard with associated performance incentives and disincentives
    - Clarification of the definitions of no-shows and missed trips

- Finally, to minimize risks associated with future contractor transitions and to strengthen the focus of the service design on service quality, it is recommended that

changes to the overall design of the service be considered. These service design changes should address:

- Lessening the concentration of responsibilities and operating functions in a single company
- Payment of service providers based on actual rather than blended rates

Eligibility Determinations

- The current process for being certified as "ADA paratransit eligible," and eligible to use MetroAccess service, can take several months. This appears to be due to limited professional capacity being provided to WMATA by contractors who conduct required in-person interviews and functional assessments.

- To address these certification delays, WMATA automatically provides "temporary presumptive eligibility" to all individuals who submit completed application forms. This ensures that individuals are provided service within 21 days of the receipt of a completed application, as required by the USDOT ADA regulations. It is not a desirable process, though, since some individuals granted "temporary presumptive eligibility" may have this eligibility rescinded if they do not qualify later.

- It is recommended that WMATA develop adequate interview/assessment staff capacity either by revising its contracts with existing contractors to call for dedicated staff, or by hiring qualified professionals to perform interviews and assessments in-house. A reduction in the number of interview/assessment sites will likely be needed to provide dedicated staff at these locations.

- It is recommended that WMATA simplify the recertification process for individuals found to be unconditionally ADA paratransit eligible and whose functional ability is not expected to improve over time. These determinations could be made during the initial interviews/assessments and individuals who meet these criteria could be asked to just submit a brief recertification form in the future. Not requiring these individuals to participate in subsequent interviews/assessments would greatly simply the recertification process and would reduce the costs of eligibility determinations.

- WMATA is planning to revise its current MetroAccess eligibility determination process. Staff indicated that there will be significant public input and that transition options and travel training for individuals whose eligibility may change under the new process will be considered. Given the importance of the eligibility determination process, it is recommended that WMATA carefully consider any changes and obtain significant input on any new process.

Priority Findings, Remaining Challenges and Recommendations

Members of the TPB AFA Committee and Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force reviewed the above detailed findings and recommendations. Findings and recommendations were prioritized. Committee members felt that the three ***most significant improvements*** made by WMATA were:

- On-time performance, missed trips and no-shows have improved over the last year.
- Staffing levels for reservationists, schedulers, dispatchers and contract monitoring has vastly improved since 2006.
- WMATA is doing a better job communicating with customers regarding MetroAccess policies as shown in the outreach efforts done for the door-to-door service.

Committee members also identified the following two issues as the ***most significant remaining challenges*** facing the MetroAccess service:

- Staff turnover of reservationists, dispatchers and drivers remains a concern at 121%, 89% and 111% respectively. Low pay and benefits that MV offers, combined with the difficulty of the job, appears to contribute to this issue.
- For a large metropolitan area, the structure of the MV contract is unusual in that MV is responsible for monitoring its own service (comprising 60% of total services provided) and has the entire responsibility for reservations, scheduling and dispatching functions associated with MetroAccess. Usually the service providers and functions are divided amongst multiple companies to lessen the concentration of responsibilities and functions within a single company.

Finally, committee members identified the following as their ***top five priority recommendations***:

- WMATA should work with the contractor to reduce employee turnover and to retain quality, experienced managers, call center staff, drivers and add an additional scheduler.
- WMATA should work with the contractor to reduce long ride-times and address excessively early and late drop-offs and pick-ups (through scheduling software adjustments and the development of revised on-time performance standards described in the report).
- WMATA should complete and adopt a long-term capital plan for the MetroAccess service to ensure that adequate vehicles and equipment will be available in future

years. In the short term, WMATA should work with the contractor to add 24 vehicles as soon as possible to increase the fleet spare ratio from 10% to 15%.

- WMATA should consider changing the future contract structure to lessen the concentration of responsibilities and operating functions in any one company and to provide for a more stable, experienced workforce.

- WMATA should simplify the recertification process for individuals found to be unconditionally ADA paratransit eligible and whose functional ability is not expected to improve over time. Provide these individuals a longer term of eligibility and require only a brief recertification form.

1 Service Quality and Performance Monitoring

In this part of the review, TranSystems was asked to address the following seven questions:

- What progress has been made by WMATA in ensuring that the contractor has adequate, experienced and stable staffing for scheduling, dispatch and reservations functions since 2007?
- What Progress has WMATA made in increasing the number of vehicles and drivers for the service and are there an adequate number of wheelchair accessible vehicles in DC and Prince George's County?
- What can be done to prevent high driver turnover rates?
- Are complaints being processed and responded to in a timely fashion?
- What is the on-time performance of MetroAccess based on drop-off rather than pick-up times?
- Does WMATA have the appropriate resources and staff to ensure adequate contract oversight and monitoring?
- Is performance data being reported and calculated appropriately and accurately and is MV correctly reporting the number of "missed trips"?

Observations and findings related to these questions are summarized below.

1.1 Call Center Staffing and Performance

To address the first question, the review team first gathered staffing information for the reservations, scheduling and dispatch areas from the review of MetroAccess that was conducted by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in December of 2006. This information provided a baseline to determine recent progress. WMATA and MV managers were then interviewed to determine what actions had been taken since that time to review staffing levels and ensure that those staffing levels are adequate. Current staffing information was then obtained from MV managers during the on-site visit.

The stability and experience of current staff was assessed by analyzing length of service and turnover rates in these areas. The training of reservations agents was also considered.

Finally, information was collected and observations made of the reservations, scheduling and dispatch areas to assess the adequacy of staffing and current functioning of each area. Telephone hold time information was also analyzed in the reservations and dispatch areas. First-hand observations of the reservations and dispatch areas were also made. Scheduling procedures were also analyzed.

Prior and Current Staffing Levels

The FTA review of MetroAccess indicated that in December of 2006 there were 27 Reservations Agents, and a Reservations Manager in the call center. There were also four Schedulers and a Scheduling Manager. The report also indicated 14 regular Dispatchers and two Taxi Dispatchers. There also was a Call Center Manager.

In 2006, WMATA contracted with Adams Consulting to conduct an operational review of the MetroAccess service and to make recommendations for improvement. The report that was prepared (Adams Report), suggested that the reservations, scheduling and dispatching areas were understaffed and recommended increases in staffing in each area of the call center.

Following the preparation of the Adams Report, WMATA and MV entered into negotiations to increase staffing in the call center. Cost estimates were prepared by MV for WMATA's review and a request for increased funding to fund additional call center positions was taken to the WMATA Board. On August 7, 2007, WMATA and MV signed a modification to the original operating contract (Contract Modification No. 9) that provided for increased staffing in the call center.

At the time of the July 15-16, 2008 on-site review, MV reported that there were 42 Reservations Agents, two Reservations Supervisors, and one Reservations Manager. There were also five Schedulers, a Subscription Scheduler, and a Scheduler Manager. In the dispatch area, there were 47 Dispatchers (including two Taxi Dispatchers)and six Dispatch Supervisors. There was also a Dispatch Manager position that was open (unfilled). In addition, there was a Director of the Call Center, who oversaw all of the call center functions, and a Call Center Training Manager.

Table 1.1 below compares call center staffing at the end of 2006 with staffing that was observed in July 2008. As indicated, there has been a significant increase. Total staffing in reservations, scheduling and dispatch was 115 in July of 2008, compared to only 51 in December 2006. There have been large increases in the number of Reservations Agents (15 added) and Dispatchers (31 added). Two Schedulers have also been added, one to assist with overall scheduling and one to manage the subscription trip template.

In addition to increases in prior positions, there have been several added functions and positions. A no-show unit has been created with two No-Show Clerks to accept, review and authorize no-shows reported by drivers. A separate "Where's My Ride?" unit with five agents has also been created to take calls from riders inquiring about the status of pick-ups. Six Dispatch Supervisors have been added to better oversee this area of the operations. Two Reservations Supervisors have also been added to be "on the floor" directly supervising Reservation Agents. And a Call Center Training Manager position has been created and filled to improve training of staff in the call center.

Overall, significant progress has been made in this area, both staffing-wise and organizationally.

Table 1.1 MetroAccess Call Center Staffing, December 2006 and July 2008

Position Title	# of Employees December 2006	# of Employees July 2008	Difference
Call Center Director	1	1	0
Call Center Training Manager	0	1	1
Reservations Manager	1	1	0
Reservations Supervisor	0	2	2
Reservation Agent	27	42	15
Scheduler Manager	1	1	0
Scheduler	4	5	1
Subscription Scheduler	0	1	1
Dispatch Manager	1	1 (open)	0
Dispatch Supervisor	0	6	6
Dispatcher	14	45	31
No Show Clerks	0	2	2
Where's My Ride Agents	0	5	5
Taxi Dispatcher	2	2	0
TOTALS	51	115 (1 open)	64

Turnover, Experience and Training

Employment records for call center positions were examined during the on-site visit. Voluntary resignation and termination records, in particular, were examined for the 12 months that preceded the on-site visit. The dates that employees were hired were compared to resignation/termination dates. If the resignations/terminations occurred within three weeks of the date of hire, it was assumed that the employee never completed training. If the resignations/terminations took place more than three weeks from the date of employment, this was considered a post-training resignation or termination. Estimated post-training annual turnover rates for each type of position in the call center were then calculated. The annual turnover rates were developed by comparing the number of post-training resignations/terminations to the current total number of employees in each area.

Table 1.2 shows resignation/termination and annual turnover rate information. Note that Taxi Dispatchers are counted as part of the Dispatcher total and the Scheduler information is for all types of schedulers.

Table 1.2 Estimate of Post-Training Resignations and Terminations and Annual Post-Training Turnover Rates for Call Center Positions

Position Title	Post-Training Resignations/ Terminations 7/1/07 to 6/30/08	Total # of Current Positions	Estimated Post-Training Annual Turnover Rate
Call Center Director	1	1	100%
Reservations Supervisor	3	2	150%
Reservationist	51	42	121%
Scheduler	2	6	33%
Dispatch Supervisor	1	6	17%
Dispatcher	39	45	87%
Where's My Ride Agent	1	5	20%

As shown, turnover was quite high during this 12-month period for many types of call center positions. A total of 51 Reservationists resigned or were terminated, which equates to a 121% annual turnover. Thirty-nine Dispatchers also resigned or were terminated after being trained, which equates to an 89% annual post-training turnover rate. It was also noted that 14 additional Dispatchers who were hired in this 12-month period resigned or were terminated within three weeks of employment—an indication that they did not complete training. Two of the six Schedulers also resigned or were terminated, and three Reservations Supervisors left or were terminated in the past 12 months.

The high turnover rates were discussed with the new Call Center Training Manager and the MV Transportation General Manager. The Call Center Training Manager indicated that the likely issue in reservations is that the job is very repetitive. In her experience, if Reservationists are not presented with new challenges or the opportunity to advance, they are more likely to leave. In Dispatch, it was her experience that the job is very stressful and employees tend to "burn out." The challenge here, in her opinion is to provide some job rotation to allow Dispatchers to be reassigned to other duties if they are getting to the point of burn-out. The Call Center Training Manager indicated that she and other MV managers were working on career advancement opportunities for Reservationists as well as temporary job reassignment options for Dispatchers. The General Manager also noted that management turnover was an issue. He noted that by the time prior managers realized that there was a problem and began to work on it, they might be reassigned or replaced. The General Manager noted increased efforts, starting in early 2008, to recognize employees for good performance, create an open line of communications for grievances and other issues, provide rewards and incentives, and build a positive workplace environment.

A review of employee compensation also indicated that relatively low wages and limited fringe benefits could be contributing to turnover. Employee data provided by MV indicated that Reservationists earn between $11.50 and $11.96 per hour, Dispatchers earn between at $14.00 and $15.06 per hour and Schedulers earn from $15.53 to $17.58 per hour. All employees begin accruing paid vacation time only after a six

month probationary period and accrue vacation time at the rate of one week per year for the first five years. Health care benefits are also available after six months of employment, but the required employee contributions are quite high. MV Transportation covers only about 25% of the cost of individual health care coverage in the first year and only about 7% of the cost of family coverage during the first year. After a year of employment, the company contribution is increased to about 50% for individual coverage and 15% for family coverage. Given the pay levels, this coverage is not affordable for many call center employees. An affordable plan option is provided, but the co-pays and maximum exposures are quite high.

To be able to better function in an environment of high turnover, MV managers indicated that they have strengthened the procedures and direction given to call center employees and have improved the quality of training. A good sized training room has been equipped with computers and reservations/scheduling/dispatch software to allow new employees to be trained and practice with sample trip data. The call center training manual has been upgraded and an improved reservations script has been developed. The review team examined the training facilities and materials, which appeared to be thorough and state-of-the art. The reservations script was also concise and well constructed. A copy of the script is provided in Attachment B. The review team was also impressed with the qualifications and enthusiasm of the new Call Center Training Manager.

Telephone Hold Times

One of the key determinants of the adequacy of call canter staff is telephone performance. Hold times reflect the adequacy of overall staffing in the reservations and "Where's My Ride?" areas. The standard adopted for MetroAccess telephone performance is to keep hold times to two minutes or less.

To assess the current level of telephone performance, the review team examined detailed telephone reports for the randomly selected sample week of Sunday, May 18, 2008 through Saturday, May 24, 2008. These reports showed total call volume, average hold times, maximum hold times, and the percentage of calls answered within two minutes for each half-hour period of the day. Key information from these reports is provided in Tables 1.3 and 1.4. Table 1.3 shows hold time information for calls to the reservations area. Table 1.4 shows key hold time information for calls to the "Where's My Ride?" call group.

As shown in Table 1.3, hold times in the reservations call group were reasonable for most of the sample week. The average hold time for each half-hour time period was under two minutes with only a few exceptions.

The longest holds during the weekdays were typically six minutes or under. Ninety percent (90%) of all calls were answered in under two minutes for five of the seven days in the sample week.

Table 1.3 Key Telephone Performance Information, Reservations Call Group, May 18-24, 2008

Day/Date	Average Hold Time	Longest Hold Time	% of Calls Answered Within 2 Min.	Time Periods with Average Holds Over 2 Min
Sun, May 18	2:23	8:04	79%	1-2 p.m.; 4-4:30 p.m. (4:33)
Mon, May 19	1:53	5:31	74%	3-4:30 p.m. (2:53)
Tues, May 20	1:29	5:26	93%	4-4:30 p.m. (2:19)
Wed, May 21	1:11	4:03	94%	None
Thurs, May 22	1:32	6:02	90%	4-4:30 p.m. (3:31)
Fri, May 23	1:15	5:25	94%	4-4:30 p.m. (2:13)
Sat, May 24	1:24	9:06	91%	4-4:30 p.m. (2:35)

Call times were slightly longer on the Sunday in that week. Average hold time was 2:23 and the longest hold was 8:04. Only 79% of all calls on that Sunday were answered in two minutes or less. Average hold times on that Sunday were more than two minutes for three of the half-hour call periods—from 1-2 p.m., and from 4-4:30 p.m. In one of the half-hour periods, the average hold time reached 4:33. It is recommended that WMATA and MV Transportation monitor hold times on other Sundays and increase staffing on Sundays if this sample day is typical.

There also was a definite peak in calls each day from 4-4:30 p.m. Riders seemed to be placing last-minute trip requests for the next day before the reservation office closed. Average hold times during this brief half-hour period exceeded the two minute standard on six out of the seven days in the sample week. On Monday, a longer peak was observed—from 3-4:30 p.m., with average hold times over two minutes for this entire 90 minute period. This long peak on Monday brought total performance for the day down to only 74% of calls answered within two minutes. Because it would be hard to staff for such a short peak period, it is recommended that WMATA inform riders that this is a very busy call time and encourage calls earlier in the day, if possible. Use of on-line trip booking should also continue to be encouraged as a way to allow riders to submit requests during this busy phone-in time. WMATA might also want to consider extending the reservation hours by an hour as a way to spread the peak. While some riders might simply push calls back another hour, accepting calls between 4:30 and 5:30 p.m. might be better for some riders who work or who find it difficult to place trip requests before 4:30 p.m.

As shown in Table 1.4, hold times for calls to the “Where’s My Ride?” call group were very reasonable. At least 96% of all calls each day were answered in two minutes or less. Average hold times were typically under one minute and the longest holds each day were three to six minutes, with one long hold of 8:51 on Friday. Only a few of the half-hour call periods during the sample week had average hold times of more than two minutes. Almost all of these were during very late night or early morning hours when only a skeleton dispatch staff was on duty. And even during these times, the average and maximum holds were reasonable. Separating the “Where’s My Ride?” function and

creating a special group to focus on these calls appears to have had a very positive effect on telephone hold times.

Table 1.4 Key Telephone Performance Information, "Where's My Ride?" Call Group, May 18-24, 2008

Day/Date	Average Hold Time	Longest Hold Time	% of Calls Answered Within 2 Min.	Time Periods with Average Holds Over 2 Min
Sun, May 18	1:01	6:16	97%	12-12:30 a.m. (2:33) 10:30-11 p.m. (2:22)
Mon, May 19	0:44	3:36	98%	1-1:30 a.m. (2:33)
Tues, May 20	0:44	3:18	98%	None
Wed, May 21	0:39	3:57	99%	None
Thurs, May 22	0:48	4:24	97%	2-2:30 a.m. (2:45) 11:30 p.m.-12 a.m. (2:42)
Fri, May 23	0:57	8:51	96%	10:30-11 p.m. (2:48) 11-11:30 p.m. (2:08)
Sat, May 24	0:57	5:10	97%	10-10:30 p.m. (2:13)

It should be noted, though, that standard hold time reports and telephone MIS systems do not capture secondary hold times. If a call is answered but then put on hold and transferred internally, the tracking and reporting system does not capture this secondary hold time. As noted below, first-hand observations were made to see if secondary holds were an issue. None were identified, but these first-hand observations were only for a limited time. Riders contacted in advance of the review did report some long secondary holds. Additional monitoring of this is therefore recommended. Given the limitations of the telephone MIS system, monitoring will need to be done through first-hand observations and the complaint investigation process.

First-Hand Observations of Each Area

The review team observed the reservations and dispatch functions for several hours on Tuesday and Wednesday, July 15 and 16. This included hours during morning and afternoon peak call and operating periods. The handling of calls and the management of runs, no-shows and other issues was observed. The scheduling function was also observed and schedulers were interviewed to determine what procedures they typically used to create final run schedules. Following is a summary of the review team's observations.

Reservations

The performance of several reservationists was observed. In each case, the reservationists seemed pleasant and efficient and closely followed the formal script for handling and booking trip requests. Each asked for and recorded special pick-up details, asked about mobility aids used, and asked about attendants and companions that might be accompanying the eligible riders. Each also did a thorough job of verifying

day/date, latest address and phone number, and capturing destination phone numbers, if available. Each also did a good job of repeating key information to callers at the end of the trip booking process.

Reservationists were also consistently asking callers if they had appointment times and if they wanted to book the first leg of their trip based on an appointment time or a pick-up time. As suggested in the script (see Attachment B), most agents would first ask if there was an appointment time or a specific time that riders wanted to arrive at their destinations. If there was, they would suggest that this time be used to book the trip. If there was no appointment or desired arrival time, they asked what time the riders wanted to be picked up.

The only areas noted for possible improvement were in the way that agents asked about appointment and pick-up times, and in the way that scheduled pick-up times were communicated to riders. In terms of appointments versus requested pick-up times, most agents did a good job of following the formal script. A few, though, shortened the conversation and asked something like "Do you have an appointment or pick-up time?" To experienced riders, this might be clear. But for new riders, this short-hand way of asking how the rider would like to book the trip might be confusing.

In terms of communicating the scheduled pick-up times, the formal script called for Reservationists to first note the precise scheduled pick-up time and then say "The driver can arrive as early as XXX and as late as XXX." Indicating the earliest and latest times in the pick-up window is important for reinforcing the fact that there is a pick-up window, not an exact pick-up time. Some Reservationists did indicate the window times when confirming trips with riders. Other, however, simply stated the exact pick-up time—"Be ready by 8:15 a.m." It is recommended that additional monitoring of compliance with these two parts of the script be performed by MV Transportation and WMATA. Re-training should then be provided as needed.

Active supervision and management of the reservations area was observed. During peak call times, the Reservations Supervisors walked the floor to provide assistance and direct supervision. Two LED displays showing the hold times in each call group—one in the reservations area and one in the "Where's My Ride?" area were closely monitored and agents were switched between these groups (i.e., changed the call group setting on their phones) to respond to increased calls in each area.

It was also noted that there is ongoing "remote" monitoring of the handling of calls. MV staff listens to a sample of calls each week, records any issues with performance, and arranges re-training as needed.

Where's My Ride?

Seven staff in the dispatch area are assigned to a "Where's My Ride?" (WMR) unit. Two work morning shifts (6 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.). The other five have staggered shifts starting at 9 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11 a.m., 12 p.m., and 2:30 p.m. and provide coverage until

11 p.m. each evening. During peak operating times, this provides for about four dedicated WMR Agents. Several additional Reservationists are also trained to read dispatch screens and handle WMR calls. At the time of the review, there were four dedicated WMR agents and another five Reservationists who were switched to WMR calls during peak hours.

The performance of the WMR unit was observed. As calls were received asking about the status of rides, the WMR agents would check the status of the run using the latest "performed" trip information received from drivers via the mobile data terminals (MDTs). If the information in the system was up-to-date (indicating a working MDT), the WMR agent would estimate the expected arrival of the vehicle. If the information was not current, the WMR agent would contact the driver using the Nextel system to get an estimated pick-up time. WMR agents seemed very proficient at using the Trapeze dispatch screens and making reasonable estimates of expected pick-up times.

It was noted that, prior to 2007, the WMR function was part of reservations. However, Reservationists did not have access to the dispatch screens and therefore did not have up-to-date run information. They therefore had to provide a general response or use the internal intercom system to get information from dispatchers. During peak operating hours, this could result in long secondary holds. It also added significantly to the workload of dispatchers.

At the time of the review, WMR agents had access to the needed dispatch screens, the ability to contact drivers directly if needed, and typically did not have to query dispatchers to be able to respond to WMR calls. The creation of a separate WMR group, with adequate tools, appears to have significantly improved the ability of the system to respond to rider inquiries about the status of pick-ups.

Long secondary holds caused by internal transfers of calls were not observed. However, it should be noted that riders contacted as part of this review did report some long secondary holds. It is therefore recommended that WMATA continue to monitor this part of the telephone service.

Dispatch

The dispatch operation was observed during the peak afternoon operating hours on July 15-16. The dispatch area was organized by provider with Dispatchers assigned to each provider in adjoining cubicles. There were morning and afternoon Dispatchers scheduled for each provider. There were also some midday Dispatchers assigned to some providers, depending on the run structure and coverage needs. Morning Dispatchers started between 3:30 and 6:30 a.m. and worked until 12 to 5:30 p.m. Afternoon Dispatchers started from 11:50 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and worked until between 7:50 to 9:30 p.m. Midday Dispatchers typically started between 5:00 and 7:30 a.m. and worked until 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. There was also one overnight dispatcher on duty from 5:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m.

Two Taxi Dispatchers were also scheduled on weekdays. One worked a morning shift starting at 4:30 a.m., and one worked an afternoon/evening shift that provided coverage until 9:30 p.m. These Dispatchers monitored trips assigned to non-dedicated taxi providers. They stayed in contact, as needed, with dispatchers at the taxi companies. The taxi dispatch function is discussed in more detail below.

In addition to the Dispatchers that managed provider runs, there were also five Recovery Schedulers (aka Same-Day Schedulers) who worked on an ongoing basis to place unscheduled trips onto runs. As noted in the "Scheduling" section below, a small number of trips might not be placed on runs each day and need to be scheduled as add-ons on the day of service. Other trips might become unscheduled if runs pulled out late, vehicle breakdowns occurred, runs became late and trips had to be reassigned, riders no-showed and requested later pick-ups, or rider's requested revised pick-up times for other reasons. The Recovery Schedulers assisted the Dispatchers with the same-day placement of these trips. The five Recovery Schedulers worked staggered shifts starting at 4 a.m. and provided coverage until 9:30 p.m. on weekdays. On Sunday, one Recovery Scheduler worked 12:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. There was not a Recovery Scheduler assigned to Saturday duty according the dispatch area schedule provided during the review visit.

There also were five employees in the dispatch area (four No-Show Dispatchers and one Supervisor) who worked during the main operating hours and handled no-show requests from drivers. Known as the "No-Show Desk," this separate unit had been in place since January of 2008.

For each no-show request, they would check the trip information (scheduled pick-up time and pick-up window), check the vehicle arrival time and the wait time to be sure the driver had arrived within the window and waited the required minimum of five minutes. They would also check the scheduled pick-up location and special pick-up instructions, and confirm the vehicle location to be sure the driver was at the correct location. They would then ask drivers if they had attempted to locate riders and would attempt to call riders if no contact had been made. After following all procedures, the No-Show Dispatchers would approve no-shows, as appropriate, and code the trips as either no-shows or missed trips, depending on the time of the vehicle arrival.

The dispatch area work schedule in effect in mid-July 2008 also showed six Dispatcher Supervisors. Two worked weekday morning shifts, three worked weekday afternoon shifts, and two worked weekend shifts. The weekend Supervisors also assisted with weekday coverage as needed.

Table 1.5 shows the staffing plan in the dispatch area that was in effect at the time of the review visit. The number of morning, mid-day and afternoon Dispatchers assigned to each provider is shown for each day of the week. The Overnight Dispatchers, Recovery Schedulers, No-Show Dispatchers, and Supervisors are also shown.

As shown, the staffing plan indicated 3-4 MV Beltsville Dispatchers on weekdays and 1-2 on weekends. Between 3-4 Dispatchers were assigned to MV Capital Heights runs on weekdays, with 1-2 on weekends. Between 1-2 Dispatchers were available to manage Diamond/MV Fairfax runs on weekdays. On weekends, there was one Diamond/MV Fairfax Dispatcher available for most hours. Late afternoon and evening coverage for Diamond/MV Fairfax appeared to be unassigned.

One Dispatcher managed Battles runs for all days and times except Sunday afternoons. The Battles Sunday PM shift was open. The plan also called for one dispatcher to always be available to manage MetroHealth runs, but the Monday PM, Saturday AM and Sunday PM shifts appeared open. The plan called for 1-3 Challenger Dispatchers on weekdays and 1-2 on weekends, but the Monday AM, Saturday PM, and Sunday PM shifts appeared to be open or unassigned.

Table 1.5 MV Transportation Staffing of the Dispatch Area, July 2008

Position	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
MV Beltsville AM	3	3	3	3	2	2 open	1
MV Beltsville Mid	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
MV Beltsville PM	2	3	2	3	3	1	1
MV Cap Heights AM	1 1 open	1 1 open	0 1 open	1 1 open	1 1 open	1	0 1 open
MV Cap Heights Mid	2	2	2	2	2	1	2
MV Cap Heights PM	2	2	2	2	2	0 1 open	0 1 open
Diamond/Fairfax AM	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Diamond/Fairfax Mid	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Diamond/Fairfax PM	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
Battles AM	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Battles PM	1	1	1	1	1	1	1 open
MetroHealth AM	1	1	1	1	1	1 open	1
MetroHealth PM	0	1	1	1	1	1	1 open
Challenger AM	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
Challenger Mid	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
Challenger PM	1	1	1	1	1	0	1 open
Taxi Dispatcher AM	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Taxi Dispatcher PM	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Overnight Dispatcher	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Recovery Schedulers	1-3	1-3	1-3	1-3	1-3	0	1
No-Show Dispatchers	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2	1	1
AM Supervisors	1	2	2	2	2	0	0
PM Supervisors	2 1 open	2 1 open	2 1 open	2 1 open	2 1 open	0	0
Weekend Supervisors	0	0	0	0	0	2	2

An Overnight Dispatcher was assigned each day of the week. Two Supervisors were scheduled for all days and times except Monday mornings, when only one morning Supervisor was scheduled. A third Supervisor position for weekday afternoons was open.

As noted above, the four Recovery Schedulers worked staggered shifts on weekdays, which provided for between 1-3 to be on duty on weekdays. One Recovery Scheduler was available on Sunday from 12:30-9 p.m. There was not a Recovery Scheduler included in the plan for Saturdays. One to two No-Show Dispatchers were scheduled on weekdays, and one was available on weekends.

As shown in Table 1.5, a number of dispatch shifts were unassigned or open at the time of the review. This appears to be due to the high turnover of Dispatchers. Several individuals were in training to fill these open positions. Coverage was arranged as needed using other Dispatchers, the weekend Dispatchers and Supervisors.

These dispatch staffing levels were then compared to the number of runs typically assigned to each service provider. An estimate of the number of runs managed by each Dispatcher during peak operating hours was then developed. This analysis indicated that the MV Beltsville Dispatchers typically managed 27-30 runs during the peak; the MV Capital Heights Dispatchers managed about 35 runs at peak times; the Diamond/Fairfax Dispatchers managed about 31-33 runs; the Battles Dispatchers about 27 runs; the MetroHealth Dispatchers about 26 runs; and the Challenger Dispatchers managed between 27 and 32 runs at the peak.

These ratios are in-line with generally accepted industry norms, which suggests that 30 runs per dispatcher is a good target. The ratios observed also show significant improvement in staffing over the past two years. In 2006, as documented in the TPB report, each dispatcher was handling about 90 runs during weekday peak operating periods.

First-hand observations on July 15 and 16, 2008 indicated that the various units in the dispatch area were functioning quite well. As noted in previous sections, the WMR unit took significant pressure off of Dispatchers by handling many late ride calls directly. The No-Show Desk also relieved Dispatchers of the need to review and authorize no-show requests from drivers. Because it was dedicated to this task, the No-Show Desk also appeared to be able to respond quicker to driver no-shows and therefore helped to reduce dwell time when no-shows occurred. The Recovery Schedulers were also able to assist Dispatchers when new options needed to be found for unscheduled trips.

With the support and assistance of the WMR unit, No-Show Desk and Recovery Schedulers, the regular Dispatchers appeared to be able to focus on run management. They were observed to regularly scan runs assigned to them to check for potential issues. They were able to work an hour or more out to identify and address potential problems.

Two LED displays in the dispatch area also assisted Supervisors in managing the dispatch function. One LED display showed all of the trips that were projected to run late or which were late. The second LED display showed all of the runs on which trips were overdue to be “performed.” This display focused Dispatchers and Supervisors on

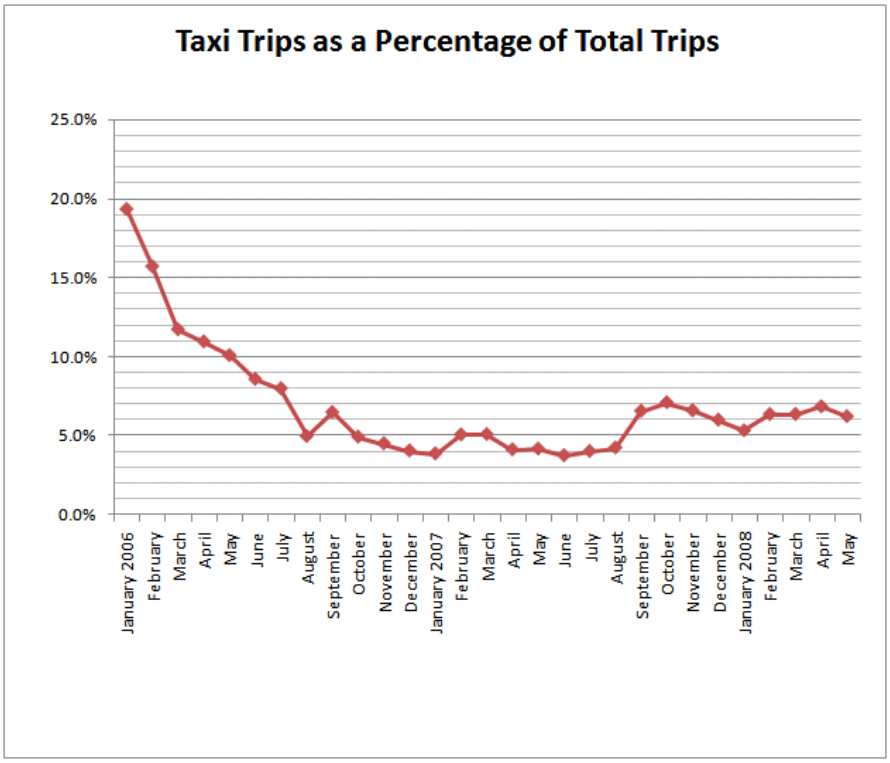
runs where drivers had failed to keep up-to-date on actual pick-up or drop-off times. It also identified runs where MDTs were not functioning. By tracking the information on this display, Dispatchers and Supervisors knew which runs to check-in on to get up-to-date information.

It should also be noted that the review was conducted two weeks after a major switch from curb-to-curb service to door-to-door service. Staff in the dispatch area indicated that the transition was going very smoothly and that minimal problems had been encountered. The No-Show Dispatchers, in particular, felt the change to door-to-door service had helped with locating riders and with reducing dwell times.

Taxi Dispatch

The review team interviewed the PM Supervisor of Dispatch to review the dispatching of the supplemental taxi service. MV Transportation uses three local taxi companies to help meet ridership demand. The use of taxis as measured by average weekday trips is currently more limited compared to the first year of the new contractor. The stated objective for taxi use is five percent or less. Figure 1.1 shows taxi trips as a percentage of total trips provided from January 2006 through May 2008.

Figure 1.1



The data shows a significant decrease in the reliance on taxi trips from January 2006 to October 2006. Taxi usage stayed at five percent or less until September 2007. It has increased to between six and seven percent since that time.

Trips are scheduled to taxis in two ways: through schedules sent the day before service and on the same day as add-ons. It was reported that about 60 to 100 trips are scheduled to taxis the day before service and about 200 to 250 trips are scheduled as add-ons.

Same-day taxi trips are provided to the selected taxi subcontractor via fax, with specific procedures put in place to ensure that the taxi company receives the trip information (see Section 1.6 discussion of Contract Oversight and Monitoring).

The role of the taxi dispatch function is to coordinate with the taxi companies relative to taxi trips on the day of service. This function is handled by the taxi dispatch "desk," which is staffed by one Dispatcher from 4:30 am to 1 pm and a second Dispatcher from 1 pm to 9:30 pm daily.

The Taxi Dispatcher does not have direct contact with the taxi drivers, as the dispatch function does with the contractor's own dedicated service. But rather, the Taxi Dispatcher coordinates directly with the taxi company dispatcher, who in turn has direct contact with the taxi drivers.

The taxi dispatcher handles the various same-day issues related to the MetroAccess trips scheduled to taxis, including cancellations, no-shows, and add-ons. For no-shows, the taxi driver contacts his company dispatcher who in turn contacts the contractor's taxi dispatcher, relaying the information from the taxi driver. The contractor's taxi dispatcher then tries to contact the rider and depending on the results of those efforts, provides authorization to the taxi company dispatcher for the taxi driver to mark the rider as a no-show. According to the PM Dispatch Supervisor interviewed, unauthorized no-shows are not currently a big issue for the taxi service. According to this Supervisor, the use of taxis is definitely beneficial for MetroAccess dispatch, particularly given the ability of the taxi companies to respond with limited advance notice.

Scheduling

During the site visit, the review team met with the Scheduling Manager and members of the scheduling staff to review information on staffing and to review scheduling procedures. According to the staffing spreadsheets provided in advance, the Scheduling Department is made up of seven people. There is one Scheduling Manager, five Schedulers and one Subscription Scheduler.

In order to fully understand the scheduling process, it is important to have a basic understanding of how scheduling is accomplished by MV Transportation using Trapeze. There are two types of schedules in Trapeze, a Template Schedule and a Live Schedule. A Template schedule is a schedule for a day of the week (Monday, Tuesday and so forth) and contains all of the subscription trips. It is used as a basis for the schedule for a specific day of service called the Live Schedule. A Live Schedule is for a

specific date (May 20, 2008 for example) and contains all of the subscription trips for a particular day plus all of the demand trips. It is the Live Schedule that the other five Schedulers work on, and that Dispatchers and Drivers work with on the day of service.

The Subscription Scheduler is responsible for entering the requests for subscription trips into Trapeze and, in some cases, schedule those trips to a run in the Template Schedule. This person does not work on scheduling trips on the Live Schedule. A subscription trip is a trip taken by a customer on a regular basis, usually to and from the same location at the same time and on the same days each week. The Subscription Scheduler handles subscription trip requests for both dedicated and for non-dedicated, non-taxi service. The non-dedicated, non-taxi trips are for service to agencies such as the ARC, We Care and SEEC. When these requests are received, the Subscription Scheduler enters the information into Trapeze but does not schedule them to a run. The new trip information is sent to the appropriate provider for scheduling. If the subscription request is for a dedicated trip, the Subscription Scheduler will schedule the trip to a run on the appropriate Template schedule. The scheduled time is provided to the customer. If the Subscription Scheduler is unable to find a scheduled time for a request she will ask the appropriate Scheduler for assistance. When a scheduled time is determined, the customer who requested the service will be notified. The Subscription Scheduler does not schedule the trip to the Live Schedule. The Schedulers are responsible for maintaining the promised time given to the customer for the subscription trips on the Live Schedules.

All of the scheduling for the next day of service is done in the Live Schedule and is handled by the five Schedulers. The division of scheduling responsibilities was explained as follows:

- One scheduler assigned to Virginia trips and trips going to/from the District of Columbia to Virginia – approximately 80 runs;
- One scheduler assigned to Montgomery County and trips to/from the District of Columbia to Montgomery County – approximately 77 runs;
- Two schedulers assigned to Prince George County trips and trips going to/from the District of Columbia – approximately 220 to 260 runs;
- One scheduler assigned to the District of Columbia trips – approximately 60 runs.

It was noted that the workload for schedulers has changed slightly over the past two years. The 2006 TPB report indicated that schedulers were each handling between 70 and 125 runs and recommended additional scheduling capacity. The workload detailed above indicated that each scheduler is managing between 60 and 120 runs.

This division of scheduling responsibilities by area responds to one of the recommendations made in 2006 by the Ad Hoc Committee established to assist with transition issues.

Although Schedulers are assigned to schedule trips in a specific geographic area, they can, as needed, schedule trips in areas other than their primary area of responsibility. The Scheduling Manager is available to assist where needed and when necessary.

MV Transportation has developed and documented a series of 17 steps to be followed when scheduling trips for the next day. The steps include a series of batch scheduling operations. Batch scheduling is a process by which a group of trips are selected and the software is asked to schedule the trips to selected runs. The batch scheduling process is fully automated and is accomplished without computer operator input on the placement of the trips. These steps can be explained using the following five general categories:

- **Unschedule demand trips** – when a customer calls to request a trip, the Reservation Agent schedules the trip to a run. The customer is given the scheduled time. Prior to starting scheduling for the next day these trips are removed from the runs and placed in the Unassigned List. They will subsequently be scheduled using the scheduled or promised time given to the customer.
- **Match the Template Schedule to the Live Schedule**. Matching is the process by which the subscription trips for the next day are scheduled onto the runs.
- **Work with special groups**. These special groups are trips to agencies such as We Care, ARC, or SEEC. This task is conducted to ensure that the trips to these agencies are on the appropriate runs.
- **Perform a series of batch scheduling routines**. Batch scheduling is a fully automated scheduling process run in Trapeze. These "batches" are run by area and by time. The areas correspond to each of the four areas listed earlier in this section. The two time periods are for trips occurring prior to 14:00 and trips occurring 14:00 and later.
- **The batch scheduling process does not schedule all trips onto runs**. According to the scheduling staff, after the batch scheduling routines are run anywhere from 300 to 800 trips are left unscheduled (there were 730 unscheduled trips on the day the review team met with staff). After 'batching" trips, Schedulers manually schedule as many unscheduled trips as possible. It is reported that, after manually scheduling trips, about 130 to 180 trips are left unscheduled before "cabbing" or assigning trips to non-dedicated taxis. After "cabbing," the staff reports leaving approximately 10 to 20 trips unscheduled at the end of the process. An unscheduled trip means that the trip is not on a dedicated run and has not been assigned to a taxi. It should be noted that trips for passengers who use wheelchairs, and trips for which no cab option is available are scheduled first. Having only 10-20 unscheduled trips at the beginning of the service day appears to be an improvement over past practice. Prior reports indicated much larger numbers of unscheduled trips.

The last two of the 17 steps of the process involve checking the runs for appropriate driver lunch breaks and making sure that "flip runs" are back in the garage in a timely fashion. Runs are checked to make sure that there are no lunches at 8:00 or between 15:00 and 16:30. Records indicate that 8:00 and 15:00 are times of peak demand. A "flip run" is a vehicle that is used on a morning run and on an afternoon run. In order for the afternoon pull-out to occur on time, the run must be back at the garage after the

morning run at least 45 minutes before the afternoon run is scheduled to leave the garage.

Schedulers were asked if they used any Trapeze Standard Reports to assist them in the scheduling process. It was indicated that four Trapeze Standard Reports are used to assist the scheduling process. The four reports are:

- Double Booking Report
- Optimize Report
- Slack Report
- Violation Report

The first report is used prior to starting the batch scheduling process. The Double Booking Report will identify trips for the same person that may have been booked twice in error. Any trips that have been booked twice in error are cancelled prior to starting the scheduling procedures. The last three reports are during any part of the scheduling process. The Optimize Report can be run to show trips going to the same address (by drop-off), and is a tool to assist the Schedulers in identifying trips that could be grouped together. The Slack Report identifies runs that have slack time that could be used to schedule any remaining unscheduled trips. For purposes of the report slack time means any time period, specified by the person running the report, where there is no activity occurring on a run. An activity is defined as a customer pick up or drop off. The Violation Report is a report that shows any scheduled trips that violate any of the scheduling rules as defined in Trapeze. The report checks for violations such as a person scheduled to be on board a vehicle longer than allowed, or if a pick-up is scheduled to occur late.

While the procedures established for scheduling are thorough, the staffing levels should be reviewed. As indicated above, there are five schedulers working on scheduling trips for next day service. Although the Scheduling Manager is available to assist in the process where needed, it is felt that five full time schedulers for the number of runs is not adequate. Three of the schedulers have areas which contain fewer than 100 runs – Virginia, Montgomery County and the District of Columbia. However the two schedulers assigned to Prince George County each handle in excess of 100 runs. The consultant team feels that the number of runs each Scheduler is responsible for on a daily basis for is too high for the scheduling staff to work at optimum effectiveness. Even using the tools available in the software the consultant team feels that there is likely not enough time for the schedulers to effectively perform a review of their runs prior to final printing of the runs. It is recommended that an additional scheduler be added to alleviate this issue.

1.2 Vehicles and Drivers

The second question posed to the review team was “What Progress has WMATA made in increasing the number of vehicles and drivers for the service and are there an adequate number of wheelchair accessible vehicles in DC and Prince George’s

County?" The team used the 2006 FTA review of the MetroAccess service to develop baseline vehicle and driver information as of December 2006. Information collected in advance and on-site from MV Transportation and WMATA was then used for comparative vehicle and driver data for 2007 and 2008.

Vehicles

Table 1.6 summarizes fleet information collected by the review team for 2006, 2007 and 2008. The FTA review indicated that there were a total of 374 vehicles used for MetroAccess service in December of 2006. This included 334 WMATA-owned vehicles and 40 provider-owned vehicles. The report did not indicate the number of sedans and lift-vans in the fleet.

The FTA report also indicated that the weekday peak pullout requirement for the service (i.e., the number of vehicles needed to cover runs during the peak operating time) was 361 vehicles. Given a total fleet of 374 vehicles, this provided for only 13 spare vehicles at peak operating times of the day, or only a 4% spare ratio. An additional 54 vehicles would have been beneficial in December of 2006 to allow for a 15% spare ratio—the commonly accepted industry spare ratio.

Prior to the review and while on-site, additional fleet information about the current fleet and the fleet in 2007 was obtained. MV Transportation managers indicated that in 2007, there was a total fleet of 425 vehicles. This included 360 vehicles provided by WMATA (266 lift-vans and 94 sedans), plus 65 lift-vans that MV Transportation leased and made available for the service. This meant that in 2007 there were 331 lift-vans (78% of the fleet) and 94 sedans (22% of the fleet). The peak pullout in 2007 was 394, which left 31 spare vehicles (an 8% spare ratio). An additional 28 vehicles would have been beneficial in 2007 to achieve a 15% spare ratio.

Table 1.6 MetroAccess Fleet Roster and Peak Pullout Requirements, December 2006, 2007 and July 2008

	December 2006 (FTA Report)	2007 (WMATA/MV)	July 2008 (WMATA/MV)
WMATA-owned vehicles	334	360	458
Provider-owned vehicles	40	65	40
Total Fleet	374	425	498
Lift-vans	NA	331 (78%)	354 (71%)
Sedans/minivans	NA	94 (22%)	144 (29%)
Weekday Peak Pullout	361	394	454
Spares	13 (4%)	31 (8%)	44 (10%)
Additional Vehicles Needed to Achieve 15% Spare Ratio	54	28	24

In July of 2008, at the time of the review, there were 458 WMATA-owned vehicles. This included 354 lift-vans and 104 sedans. There also were 40 vehicles provided for the service by Challenger and Diamond Transportation. All of the provider-owned vehicles

were either sedans or standard (non-ramped) minivans. In total, there was a fleet of 498 vehicles—354 lift vans (71% of the fleet) and 144 sedans/minivans (29% of the fleet). The peak pullout requirement in July 2008 was 454 vehicles. Therefore, there were only about 44 spare vehicles during peak weekday operating hours at the time of the review. This equates to a 10% spare ratio. In order to achieve a recommended 15% spare ratio, about 24 additional vehicles would need to be added.

This information shows mixed progress in expanding the fleet and addressing vehicle needs. The situation in July of 2008 was clearly better than in December of 2006. However, the number of spares is still low and more vehicles are needed to get to a 15% spare ratio.

Significant progress in expanding the fleet has been made recently. The master list of WMATA-owned vehicles shows 26 vehicles listed as 2007 models—19 vans and seven sedans—which indicates that this was the number of new vehicles added that year. The list shows 95 model year 2008 vehicles—85 vans and 10 sedans—which indicates that 95 vehicles were purchased in 2008.

It was noted that funding has been approved for the purchase of 140 vehicles in FY 2009. This includes 100 replacement vehicles programmed for purchase with local funding and 40 expansion vehicles to be purchased with JARC funding and other funding. Contract Modification #9, signed between WMATA and MV in August of 2007 also calls for the rehabilitation of 75 older lift-vans to allow these vehicles to remain in service for several more years. Capital replacement is discussed in more detail in Section 3.3 of this report.

The fleet mix has changed slightly. Lift-vans made up 78% of the fleet in 2007. In 2008, lift-vans made up 71% of the fleet. Twenty-three (23) more lift vans were added to the fleet in 2008, while 50 sedans were added. Even though the ratio of sedans has increased slightly, there does not appear to be an issue scheduling all riders who need accessible vehicles on runs. A lower percentage of lift-vans will, however, limit the flexibility of dispatch in responding to same-day service issues involving riders who need accessible vehicles.

One of the tasks planned for the review was to develop special reports comparing on-time performance and on-board ride times for ambulatory riders versus riders who use wheelchairs. These reports would provide one indication of whether or not the decreased accessibility of the fleet has impacted riders who require accessible vehicles. The reports proved more difficult than originally envisioned, however, and were not developed. Some limited analysis of on-board ride times for ambulatory riders versus riders who use wheelchairs was performed. This analysis showed that, for a random sample of 5,393 trips on May 20, 2008, trips over 90 minutes were experienced by 5.0% of ambulatory riders and 5.2% of riders who used wheelchairs. This difference appears to be insignificant and indicates similar ride times for the two groups. The analysis is discussed in more detail in Section 1.5 of this report.

It is recommended that WMATA and MV Transportation continue to pursue the development of the proposed special on-time and travel time reports so that the quality of service for both types of riders can be analyzed. Additional lift-equipped vehicles should be considered if the on-time performance experienced by riders who need accessible vehicles is significantly lower than ambulatory riders, or if the on-board ride times experienced by riders who require accessible vehicles is significantly longer.

Accessible Vehicles in DC and Prince George's County

One issue that the review team was asked to consider was whether there were an adequate number of accessible vehicles in DC and in Prince George's County. To analyze this, information about the mix of vehicles at each provider location was collected. Information about the areas served by each provider was also considered.

Table 1.7 shows the make-up of the fleets assigned to each service provider. It also shows the areas typically served by each provider. It is important to note that with a central call center, vehicles at the provider locations are not strictly limited to one area. They can be scheduled and used throughout the service area. It was noted, though, that some providers tend to have primary service areas. In Table 1.7, primary areas where provider vehicles are used are underlined and bolded. Other areas commonly served by each provider are also listed in regular font. These are only "typical" service areas, though. Again, it is important to recognize that vehicles at most provider locations can be scheduled and used throughout the service area.

Table 1.7 Fleet Mix by Provider and Typical Provider Service Areas

Provider	Typical Service Area	Lift-Vans Number (%)	Sedans Number (%)	Total Vehicles
MV Beltsville	**MC**/PG/DC	86 (60%)	58 (40%)	144
MV Cap Hghts	**PG**/DC	114 (87%)	17 (13%)	131
MV Fairfax	**VA**/DC	25 (78%)	7 (22%)	32
Battles	**DC**	25 (100%)	0 (0%)	25
Metro Health	**PG**/DC	35 (100%)	0 (0%)	35
Diamond	**VA**/DC	20 (62%)	12 (38%)	32
Challenger	**MC**	49 (50%)	49 (50%)	98
Totals		354 (71%)	144 (29%)	498

MC=Montgomery County
PG=Prince George's County
DC=District of Columbia
VA=Virginia

The number and percentage of lift-vans assigned to providers whose primary service area is Prince George's County seems more than adequate. MV Capital Heights and Metro Health were the providers identified as primarily serving Prince George's County. Between them, they have 149 of the 354 lift-vans in the total fleet (42%). Ninety percent (90%) of the vehicles assigned to these two providers are accessible.

Only Battles has DC as its main service area. And although all of the Battles vehicles are accessible, it has only 25 vehicles. However, vehicles from several of the other providers do also serve the DC area. Vehicles from the MV Capital Heights location are regularly scheduled to serve riders in DC. To a lesser extent, vehicles from the MV Beltsville location also serve riders in DC. And vehicles from MV Fairfax, Diamond and Challenger occasionally serve riders in the DC area.

If Battles and MV Capital Heights are considered the primary providers of service in DC, the number and percentage of accessible vehicles seems appropriate. Together, these two providers have 139 lift-equipped vans (39% of the total). The combined fleets are also 89% accessible.

It was noted, though, that the vehicles assigned to Battles were some of the oldest lift-vans. All 25 vehicles listed in the master fleet roster as being assigned to Battles were 2002 models. All had over 150,000 miles of service and eight had over 190,000 miles of service. It is recommended that WMATA and MV Transportation consider upgrading the fleet assigned to Battles. Priority should be given to replacing most if not all of the vehicles assigned to Battles with new vehicles obtained in the next capital procurement.

It was also noted that some of the taxi companies in Montgomery County and Northern Virginia have some accessible vehicles in their fleets, but that accessible taxi service currently does not exist in the District or in Prince George's County. The availability of accessible taxi service provides MV Transportation with another option for scheduling trips and for responding to same-day service issues for riders who use wheelchairs. A pilot project is being developed to introduce accessible taxi service in the District. If successful, this project should provide the MetroAccess service with another alternative for responding to service needs in the DC area. It is recommended that WMATA and MV Transportation consider ways to utilize these new accessible taxis when they are introduced into service.

Drivers

The adequacy of the driver workforce and progress made in maintaining an adequate and experienced driver workforce were also considered. The 2006 FTA report provided driver workforce information for most of the service providers[1]. It indicated that there were a total of 573 drivers at the other six providers and that there were 493 total weekday runs assigned to these providers. It then calculated a driver to weekday run ratio and suggested that a ratio of 1.25 to 1.3 drivers per weekday run is needed to cover seven day a week service. Table 1.8 shows information included in the FTA report. The report concluded that in December 2006 the driver workforces at MV Fairfax, Challenger and Metro Health Tech were adequate, but that there appeared to be driver shortages at the other provider locations. Battles, MV Beltsville, and MV Capital Heights were mentioned, in particular, as being understaffed or limited in driver availability.

[1] The 2006 FTA report included information for all providers except Diamond Transportation. Diamond was a relatively new provider and the FTA reviewers did not include information for this provider.

Similar information was gathered during the July 2008 review. Driver workforce information was taken from current "Driver Employee Lists" provided by MV Transportation. Total weekday run information was taken from an Excel spreadsheet provided by WMATA in advance of the on-site review titled "final route numbers for new bid 060908.xls." The information is included above in Table 1.8.

Table 1.8 Driver Workforces, Weekday Runs, and Drivers to Runs Ratios by Provider, December 2006 and July 2008

	December 2006			July 2008		
Provider	**# of Drivers**	**Total Weekday Runs**	**Drivers/ Runs Ratio**	**# of Drivers**	**Total Weekday Runs**	**Drivers/ Runs Ratio**
MV Beltsville	199	187	1.06	213	148	1.44
MV Cap Heights	139	119	1.17	233	163	1.43
MV Fairfax	48	38	1.26	35	33	1.06
Battles	37	42	0.88	59	45	1.31
Challenger	113	78	1.45	167	107	1.56
Diamond	NA	NA	NA	61	56	1.30
Metro Health	37	29	1.28	36	28	1.29
Totals	**573**	**493**	**1.16**	**804**	**571**	**1.41**

The July 2008 data suggests that MV Beltsville, MV Capital Heights and Battles, which were cited in the FTA report, have significantly increased their driver workforces and now exceed the ratio recommended by FTA. Challenger, Diamind and Metro Health also meet or exceed the FTA recommended ratio.

The July 2008 data indicates, though, that MV Fairfax still has a lower than recommended ratio of drivers to weekday runs. MV Fairfax listed only 35 drivers for 33 assigned weekday runs, a 1.06 ratio.

Because the MetroAccess service is centrally scheduled and dispatched, MV Transportation does have the option to reassign runs if driver shortages are an issue. In the short-term (daily), driver shortages might still be a problem, but over the course of several days, arrangements could be made to reassign runs if shortages were persistent. The overall total availability of drivers at all providers is therefore important to consider. Totals provided in Table 1.8 show that the system overall has 804 drivers for 571 weekday runs—a ratio of 1.41. This total system ratio is above the FTA recommended ratio.

WMATA and MV were aware of the driver shortage issues at MV Fairfax. They indicated that they were considering the consolidation of the MV Fairfax and Diamond Transportation operations at an existing WMATA facility in the area. This larger operation would provide some back-up and would partially address the problem. Additional efforts will still need to be made, though, build a more adequate workforce at MV Fairfax or to reduce runs assigned to MV Fairfax to better match the available workforce.

Run Coverage

To determine what impact the relatively low spare ratio and workforce issues had on run coverage, the review team examined daily operations reports for the randomly selected week of May 18-24, 2008. These reports indicated the number of runs "turned back to MV" due to a lack of either drivers or vehicles. They also indicated the number of runs that pulled out late due to either driver or vehicle issues. When runs are turned back, the trips on those runs must be same-day dispatched as add-ons by the central dispatch unit. Similarly, when runs pull-out late, the first trips on the runs may have to be reassigned as add-ons or may end up being performed late. Table 1.9 shows the information on "turned back" runs and late pull-outs for the sample week. Information is provided on turned back runs for all providers.

Table 1.9 Run Coverage for the Sample Week of May 18-24, 2008

Provider	# of Runs "Turned Back"	# of Late Pull-Outs
MV Beltsville	1	9
MV Cap Heights	0	39
MV Fairfax	5	0
Battles	13	0
Challenger	2	0
Diamond	0	0
Metro Health Tech	0	0
Totals	**21**	**48**

As shown, there were no turned back runs at MV Capital Heights, Challenger, Diamond, or MetroHealth Tech for this week. MV Beltsville only turned back one run. MV Fairfax turned back five runs, Battles turned back 13 runs, and Challenger turned back two runs..

All runs that were covered pulled out on time at MV Fairfax, Battles, Challenger, Diamond and Metro Health Tech for this week. There were nine late pull-outs at MV Beltsville and 39 late pull-outs at MV Capital Heights.

The review team also examined the actual pull-out sheets for this week to determine the cause of pull-out issues. These sheets show the vehicles and drivers assigned to each run, indicate if the scheduled driver performed the run, if coverage was needed due to same-day call-outs or scheduled outs, or if there were vehicle issues. It appeared that the turned back runs at MV Fairfax were due to driver shortages. The turn backs at Battles appeared to be due primarily to a lack of available vehicles.

Analysis of the detailed run pull-out sheets also indicated a high number of same-day driver call-outs at MV Beltsville and MV Capital Heights. This is a sign of driver workforce issues. Both operations maintain large extraboards, though, and were able to provide coverage throughout the week. For example, MV Beltsville had a daily extraboard of 11-33 drivers and MV Capital Heights had an extraboard of 12-23 drivers for this sample week.

Overall, given the total number of runs assigned each week, run coverage at MV Beltsville, Challenger, Diamond and Metro Health Tech was very good. The run closures at MV Fairfax indicate a need for more drivers and the closures at Battles indicate a need for an upgraded fleet. The late pull-outs at MV Capital Heights is also something that should be addressed.

1.3 Driver Turnover

High driver turnover was cited as an issue that needed to be reviewed. Recommendations for ways to decrease turnover were also requested. To determine the current level of driver turnover, the review team requested and received employee records from MV Transportation that listed all of the drivers hired since the start of the contract and the hire dates. The information also listed the resignation/termination dates of all drivers that had left the company. Hire and resignation/termination dates were then compared to determine if drivers had left the company during training (defined as within three weeks of the hire date), or if the resignations/terminations was "post-training." The total number of resignations/terminations for the period from July 2007 through June 2008 was then divided by the total number of drivers in the current workforce to estimate the annual post-training turnover rate for this period of time. Detailed data was available and this analysis was done for two of the three MV operations—Beltsville and Capital Heights. The results of the analysis are provided in Table 1.9.

As shown, a total of 335 MV Beltsville drivers resigned or were terminated after completing training between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008. With a total workforce of 213 drivers, this translated to a 157% annual post-training turnover rate. At MV Capital Heights, a total of 198 drivers resigned or were terminated after completing training. With 233 drivers at that site, this is an 85% turnover rate. For both operations, the combined turnover rate is 111%.

Table 1.9 Estimated Post-Training Annual Driver Turnover at MV Beltsville and MV Capital Heights Operations, July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008

Provider/Operation	Total Workforce (July 2008)	Left In Training (< 21 Days)	Post-Training Resignations/ Terminations (July 07-June 08)	Estimated Post-Training Annual Turnover Rate
MV Beltsville	213	105	335	157%
MV Capital Heights	233	101	198	85%
Totals	481	206	533	111%

A high number of trainees also appear to have not completed driver training. Employment records for the same period (July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008) indicated that a total of 206 driver trainees at these two locations left within three weeks of being hired.

The annual turnover rate is quite high. TranSystems is currently working on a national research study looking at ADA paratransit driver recruitment and retention. A survey was done which requested information about annual post-training turnover. Responses from 63 service providers indicated an average annual post-training turnover rate of 27%.

Similar information was not obtained from the other service providers. However, the "Driver Employee Lists" provided by WMATA did indicate the hire date of each driver at each of these provider locations. It was possible to get a sense of turnover by comparing the number of drivers hired in the past year to the total workforce. This type of analysis, based on hire dates, tends to underestimate actual turnover though, since some drivers hired in the past year may have resigned and would not appear on the current workforce roster. The information does allow for a calculation of the percentage of drivers in each workforce with one year of experience or less, which is shown in Table 1.10.

Table 1.10 MetroAccess Drivers With One Year Experience Or Less, July 2008

Provider/Operation	Total Workforce (July 2008)	Drivers on Roster with 12 or Fewer Months Experience	% New Drivers (≤ 12 Months Exp.)
MV Beltsville	213	120	56%
MV Cap Heights	233	124	53%
MV Fairfax	35	23	66%
Battles	59	28	47%
Challenger	167	102	61%
Diamond	61	22*(1)*	36%
Metro Health Tech	36	23	64%
Totals	**804**	**442**	**55%**

(1) Adjusted for drivers added for new runs between May and July 2008

As shown, 442 of the 804 drivers listed as being employed by MetroAccess dedicated service providers in July of 2008 had hire dates within the past year. This means that 55% of all drivers at these locations had one year or less experience. Diamond had the most experienced workforce with only 36% of operators hired within the last year. Battles also had a better than average percentage of more experienced operators, with 47% hired within the last year. Several providers had 60% or more relatively new drivers.

It is interesting to note that MV Fairfax, Challenger, and Metro Health Tech had higher percentages of new drivers in their workforces than did MV Beltsville and MV Capital Heights. This suggests that true annual turnover at these provider locations is probably similar to, or maybe slightly higher than, the annual turnover calculated for MV Beltsville and MV Capital Heights, which was 111% combined. Based on the measure of new operators, the annual turnover rate at Diamond and Battles is probably less than that experienced by the other providers.

High turnover can affect service quality and service efficiency. In an environment of high turnover, there can be a tendency to lower hiring standards to be able to get enough drivers to continue to meet pullout. Or, there can be a tendency to not terminate drivers for poor performance in order to maintain the workforce. Newer drivers also are less likely to know the area and are typically less productive than more experienced drivers. This later point is particularly important since WMATA pays for variable MetroAccess service operating costs on a per hour basis. With a high percentage of new, inexperienced drivers, it is very likely that WMATA is paying for more vehicle hours of service than would be needed with a more stable, experienced workforce.

High driver turnover is also very costly to MV Transportation. The General Manager indicated during on-site interviews that an analysis has been done by MV Transportation of the cost of recruitment and training of new drivers, and the analysis indicates a cost of $7,500 per new driver.

Following are several recommendations that should be considered by MV Transportation and WMATA for lowering the turnover rate and developing a more stable, experienced driver workforce. These recommendations were developed from a review of the literature on driver recruitment and retention, as well as review team experience.

Continue to provide stable dispatch support

The literature suggests that one cause of driver turnover is a perceived lack of support from dispatchers, or conflicts with dispatchers. It is possible that recent understaffing in the dispatch area caused tension between dispatchers and drivers or a sense that dispatch was not providing the support drivers felt they needed. Recent improvements in adequately staffing the dispatch area should help with this issue. Now that adequate staffing exists, focus should be given to dispatcher training and monitoring to ensure that dispatchers relate to drivers in a fair and supportive way.

Develop a run structure that considers workforce impacts and consider pay differentials for less desirable shifts

Another factor cited by drivers as a reason they leave is dissatisfaction with the work shifts they are assigned. With shift picks done based on seniority, longer-term drivers select the best shifts, and new drivers are left with evening, weekend, and other less than desirable shifts. Part of the workforce (the longer term drivers) will remain relatively stable, but there will be constant turnover among the drivers assigned the worst shifts. To improve retention of drivers who are assigned less desirable shifts, MV Transportation and WMATA should consider expanding premium pay. It was noted that the current labor agreement calls for a $2 per hour premium for all weekend work. A similar premium should be considered for late evening work.

Greater consideration to workforce impacts should also be given in the development of the overall run and shift structure. In addition to considering service quality and

productivity impacts, which are clearly important, the impact on driver turnover and workforce stability should also be considered to a greater degree. If a different run and shift structure could help to lower turnover, this should in turn have a positive impact on service quality and productivity.

Increased training in map reading and orientation to the area

One of the main reasons cited by drivers for leaving, and by managers and supervisors for having to let new drivers go, is a lack of map reading skills and a lack of knowledge of the service area. New drivers often become frustrated trying to keep a schedule when they are not as familiar with the area as they should be.

Advanced technology can assist with this problem. It was noted that WMATA has equipped MetroAccess vehicles with mapping technology that can be used by drivers to get to pick-up locations. However, map reading and use of available tools is often only a 2-4 hour module in training. MV Transportation should consider increasing the amount of time spent in training on map reading skills, use of the mapping technology, and orientation to the service area.

Reduced runs, supervisor support, and mentoring during first few months

Because newer drivers are likely not to know the area as well as more experienced drivers, efforts should be made to assign lighter schedules to newer drivers for the first few months of employment. This can be done by identifying "training runs," and scaling back the speed settings in the Trapeze system for these runs. Some systems set speeds on training runs at 75-80% of standard speed settings. It was noted that MV Transportation does this currently, but that high turnover and a high number of daily changes due to call-outs can make it difficult to ensure that the newer drivers end up with "training runs." Additional efforts in this are would probably be helpful.

MV Transportation should also consider having supervisors pay particular attention to newer drivers. If they encounter problems, they should be provided additional training and encouragement to work through these issues. Teaming newer drivers with experienced drivers so that the experienced drivers can check in with them and offer advice and support should also be considered.

Stable management and supervision

It is important that good managers and supervisors be hired and kept. Driver turnover can increase if there is poor supervision and management or if there is constant turnover in mid and upper-level management. Employment records for MV Beltsville and MV Capital Heights indicated some turnover in managers and supervisors. At MV Beltsville, two General Managers, an Operations Manager, and three Road Supervisors had left within the past year. At MV Capital Heights, two General Managers, one Operations Manager, and two Road Supervisors left between July of 2007 and July 2008.

Feedback, involvement and an effective grievance process

The literature on driver recruitment and retention also indicates that drivers tend to stay if they feel they are part of a team, are "in the loop" in terms of decisions and policies, have an avenue for expressing their ideas and issues, and are listened to when they raise issues. Ongoing communications, open-door management policies and regular meetings and team-building efforts should be emphasized. It was noted by the MV General Manager that this has been a priority starting in recent months. It is recommended that these recent efforts be continued and strengthened.

Job previews

The review of resignation/termination records indicated that many new operators leave within the first month on the road. This suggests that they may not really have a good idea of the nature of the job when they apply or enter training. MV Transportation should consider having trainees start by spending a day on the road with an experienced driver. This will give them a better idea of whether or not they want to pursue the job.

An honest appraisal of all of the aspects of the job should also be provided during the interview process. Applicants may feel they are applying for a "driving" job when, in fact, there is a lot more involved than just driving. An honest job preview can reduce the training drop-out rate as well as early post-training turnover.

Improved compensation—particularly fringe benefits

Adequate compensation for the work performed is a major factor in recruitment and retention. The level of compensation provided will determine the type and quality of recruits that are attracted. Low compensation may attract a higher proportion of recruits who take the job but will move on if better opportunities develop or once they realize the job is more difficult than anticipated and that, in their minds, ***the pay does not match the required effort***.

The current labor agreement between MV Transportation and ATU Local 1746, which affects all MV drivers, provides for a starting driver wage of $11.75, an increase to $12 after six months, and a maximum wage of $13.60 after four years of employment. Very limited fringe benefits are provided. After six months and for the next year of employment, the company contribution to health care coverage is only $110 per month (about 18-30% of the total cost of individual coverage and only 5-10% of the total cost of family coverage). After a year of employment, the company contribution increases to $220 per month. There is no paid vacation in the first year of employment. Paid vacation begins accruing at the beginning of year two. After two years of service, one week of paid vacation is provided. Two weeks of paid vacation are provided after five years of employment, and four weeks are provided after 10 years. Seven paid holidays are provided each year.

Given the cost-of-living in the area, and the very limited fringe benefits, it seems likely that the current level of compensation is contributing to recruitment quality and to turnover. MV Transportation and WMATA should explore options for improving compensation in the future. The potential gains in productivity that would likely result from a more experienced and stable workforce should be weighed against the added cost of higher compensation.

It was also noted that the agreement with ATU Local 1746 does not provide drivers with typical overtime pay. Instead, a "premium" of $3 per hour is paid if drivers work more than 50 hours. No premium pay is provided for the 41st to the 50th hour of work. The $3 premium also only represents 1.25 pay rather than the more typical time-and-a-half. Also, since the ATU Local 1746 agreement only covers MV Transportation drivers, it was unclear what pay and benefits are provided to other service providers.

Selective and targeted recruitment

If improved compensation can be provided, MV Transportation could then consider more selective and targeted recruitment. Candidates could be sought and identified who have an interest in working as drivers long-term. Individuals seeking to work with persons with disabilities and attracted to the job for that reason could also be attracted and identified. There is much literature that suggests that the most successful recruitment and retention programs "hire the attitude and then train for the skills."

Recognition and incentives

Recognition for a job well done is also very important to job satisfaction and retention. The MV General Manager indicated that recognizing drivers for good performance has been an emphasis in recent months. Incentive payments have been implemented for good attendance and on-time pull-outs and for other good performance. Other non-monetary recognition has also been expanded. These efforts are important and should be continued. Other opportunities to provide monetary incentives, which will both improve service and increase compensation, should also be developed. It is also important that any incentive programs be reasonable and achievable.

Improved work environment

Finally, we would suggest that consideration be given to improving the work environment. We did not visit the various garages, but driver lounges should be appealing and other worksite amenities should be provided. Condition of vehicles is also important, since drivers spend 8-12 hours a day in the vehicles. Continued efforts to replace older vehicles in the fleet should help in this area.

1.4 Complaint Processing

The fourth question posed to the review team was "Are complaints being processed and responded to in a timely fashion?" To address this question, the review team collected, prior to the site visit, complaint information for the five-month period of November 2007

through March 2008. This data was provided by jurisdiction and by the defined categories of complaints used by WMATA. Summary information for this time period was also provided; see Table1.11. On site, the team interviewed the contractor's Manager of Customer Relations, reviewing the steps that are taken to respond to complaints and then looked in detail at the handling of a random sample of 30 complaints from the month of May 2008.

Table 1.11 Complaint Data Provided by WMATA

COMPLAINT DATA BY JURISDICTION AND CATEGORY (YTD)
1 Nov 2007 thru 31 Mar 2008

COMPLAINT CATEGORY	ALEXANDRIA	ARLINGTON	CITY OF FALLS CHURCH	CITY OF FAIRFAX	DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	FAIRFAX COUNTY	MONTGOMERY COUNTY	PRINCE GEORGES
Accessibility Features	0	3	0	0	36	14	34	49
Appeals-NSC, Eligibility, Abusive Behavior	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	4
Customer Service Rep/Mgmt Conduct	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	4
Dispatch Errors/Conduct	3	3	0	0	60	45	57	71
Driver Conduct	2	4	0	3	135	85	127	183
Early/Late Vehicle	19	31	0	3	820	308	566	1090
Eligibility	2	2	0	1	28	14	23	22
Excessive OBT/Scheduling Error	10	6	1	0	233	145	179	376
IVR/Web Booking	1	1	0	0	8	3	19	10
Operating Policies	0	0	0	0	18	14	21	21
Request Removal NSLC Warning	0	2	0	0	14	4	11	19
Reservations Errors/Conduct	7	1	0	1	71	24	53	80
Safety	0	2	0	0	27	11	21	17
Vehicle Condition	0	0	0	0	17	12	13	30
Vehicle No-Show/Failed to Wait	23	36	2	2	525	196	415	587
Non Specific/ Blank	3	1	0	2	43	13	27	54
SUB TOTALS (By Jurisdiction)	**70**	**93**	**3**	**12**	**2037**	**888**	**1568**	**2617**

The consulting team also spoke with WMATA staff to understand their oversight of the contractor's complaint investigation efforts, including the Director of MetroAccess and the Customer Service Coordinator. Additional information obtained included the contractor's written procedures for investigating complaints and two sample letters in response to complaints.

Two types of complaints are the most frequent, based on the data provided in Table 1.11: Early/Late Vehicles (39% of total complaints for the five-month period) and Vehicle No-Show/Failed to Wait (24% of total complaints for the five-month period).

Complaint Handling Process

Complaints about MetroAccess can be submitted in three ways: by telephone, by letter, and by email. The majority of complaints are provided over the telephone. Telephone complaints to MetroAccess are channeled to WMATA's main Office of Customer Service, which is the first point of contact for all WMATA complaints – MetroAccess as well as bus, rail, parking lots, etc. When the Office of Customer Service receives a telephone complaint concerning MetroAccess, one of the ten staff in that department inputs the complaint directly into the MetroAccess complaint database, Trapeze COM, which is a module of the scheduling/dispatch software, Trapeze.

It was reported that while the vast majority of complaints come by telephone through the Office of Customer Service, a small percentage of complaints come directly to the MetroAccess Department or to the office of the Authority's General Manager, for example, a letter from a member of Congress. While all complaints are entered into Trapeze COM, complaints that come directly to MetroAccess or to the General Manager are typically handled by WMATA staff.

Trapeze COM has been configured for 17 categories of complaints, corresponding to the frequent types of complaints received. Complaints that are received via email and letter are also entered into the database, corresponding to the subject of the complaint.

It was noted that the use of Trapeze COM is a significant improvement over the former system of entering and tracking complaints. With the former process, complaints concerning MetroAccess were entered by Office of Customer Service staff into a classification scheme of many categories used for all modes, many of which were not relevant for MetroAccess. WMATA's MetroAccess staff then had to review the classification, often having to move complaints to the category appropriate for paratransit service. This complaint data was kept in a large Excel file, which housed the data on the specifics of the complaint as well as the investigation steps and final resolution with the complainant. The new system, with Trapeze COM and with the complaint categories re-organized specifically for MetroAccess, provides the information in an organized, easy-to-follow format, greatly facilitating the input of information, following the different steps of the process (e.g., customer information, trip information, incident details, etc.), and review of that information.

Response to complainants is the responsibility of the contractor's Customer Service/Relations department, except for the small percentage handled directly by WMATA. MV's Customer Service/Relations department is staffed by one Manager and seven Customer Service Representatives, with all seven positions currently filled.

Response to those who complain is done in the same manner as the complaint was provided to WMATA. That is, complaints provided via telephone are answered by telephone, complaints made by letter receive a response by letter and complaints received via email receive a response by email.

It was noted that some complainants, perhaps due to disability, may not be able to easily send a written complaint or an e-mail complaint. They may file a complaint by phone, but may wish to get a response in writing. It is recommended that if a rider specifically requests it, a written response be provided even if the complaint was received by phone.

Review of Sample Month

For the sampled month of May 2008, there were a total of 1,574 complaints received. Of these, 82.2% were designated to be valid, with 15.3% not valid, 1.1% had insufficient information with which to investigate, and 1.5% had "no designation." The not valid complaints include those where a rider complains, for example, that MetroAccess does not travel to Dulles Airport. The small percentage of trips with "no designation" includes those where the complaint investigation process has not entered a designation for the specific complaint. Typically, there are very few in this category and they are more likely to be seen, for example, at the end of a month when the investigation process is still underway and the customer service representative has not completed the process. It is noted that the contract performance standard related to complaints includes the total complaints that are made, including those that are later determined to be invalid and those with insufficient information to investigate.

The count and frequency of the complaints from May 2008 are shown in Table 1.12, with the most frequent relating to early/late vehicles (34.6%) and vehicle no-show/failed to wait (20.6%). This mirrors the most frequent type of complaints shown for the five-month time period shown above in Table 1.11.

Table 1.12: Complaints for May 2008, By Category

Complaint Category	Count	Percentage
Accessibility Features	12	<1%
Appeals for No-Show/Late Cancel Warning; Eligibility; Abusive Behavior	5	<1%
Customer Service Rep./Management Conduct	3	<1%
Discrimination	1	<1%
Dispatch Errors/Conduct	92	5.8%
Driver Conduct	184	11.7%
Early/Late Vehicle	544	34.6%
Eligibility	14	<1%
Excessive On-Board Time/ Scheduling Error	168	10.7%
IVR/Web Booking	7	<1%
Operating Policies	36	2.3%
Request Removal for No-Show/Late Cancel Warning	37	2.3%
Reservations Errors/ Conduct	96	6.1%
Safety	36	2.3%
Vehicle Condition	15	1.0%
Vehicle No-Show/ Failed to Wait	324	20.6%

Sample of 30 Complaints from May 2008

From May 2008, 30 random complaints were selected, and the response and timeliness of response to that sample were reviewed. The 30 complaints fell into seven categories; see Table 1.13.

Table 1.13: Sample Complaints from May 2008

Complaint Category	Count
Early/late vehicle	14
Excessive on-board time/scheduling error	6
Vehicle no-show/failed to wait	3
Safety	3
Eligibility	2
Dispatch error/conduct	1
Driver conduct	1

The detailed assessment of the 30 complaints conducted by the consultant team included review of the data stored in Trapeze COM, which provides details about the complaint, the trip that generated the complaint (if related to a specific trip), the specifics of the investigation by the Customer Service staff, and the resolution with the complainant. The assessment also included discussion with the Customer Service/Relations Manager about each complaint. This assessment found the following:

- 14 Early/late vehicle complaints: Investigation found seven of these complaints were due to dispatcher error. These complaints were forwarded to the dispatch staff at MV. The dispatch staff is supposed to respond to Customer Service, noting the corrective action taken. However, it appears there was no follow-up by Dispatch for these complaints. It was explained that during June, a new responsibility has been added in Dispatch, with one person responsible for responding to Customer Service and indicating the specific corrective action that is being taken. For each of these seven complaints, Customer Service responded to the complainant, providing an apology and free ride voucher, but no specific finding or resolution. Responses were within one to three business days for five complaints and within four business days for two complaints.

- Six of the complaints were due to driver error, and an additional problem for one of these late trips was a flat tire. Free ride vouchers were provided, with responses made within one to four business days. The exact follow-up with drivers was not, however, indicated.

- One complaint was due to a scheduling error, and this information was forwarded to Scheduling. However, there was no notation in the complaint file as to internal contractor action. Customer Service responded to the complainant within three business days.

- 6 Excessive on-board travel/ scheduling error: Investigation looked into the specifics of each trip, finding several different issues which caused the complaint, and for one complaint, the investigation found that the rider had used the wrong pick-up window and therefore was not ready for the vehicle when it arrived. The complaints were forwarded to the appropriate contractor department, however there was no response noted in Trapeze COM. Responses to the complainants were provided within one to four business days.

- 3 Vehicle no-show/ failed to wait: Investigation used the AVL and MDT data to determine the specifics of the incident. These investigations found that for two of the incidents, the vehicle did arrive within the on-time window, and for one of these two trips, the investigation found the vehicle waited the full ten minutes, which was the requirement at that time. In both cases, the rider was telephoned while the vehicle was on location. However, in one case, the dispatcher called the home number, while the rider was at a destination location. For the third complaint, the investigation found that the driver did not wait the full ten minutes. Customer Service responded to the complainants within one to three business days, and for two complainants, removed the no-show from their records.

- 3 Safety: This review found that Customer Service forwarded the complaint to the appropriate provider, with one indicating in response that the identified vehicle was not theirs. For a second complaint, involving a dedicated MV vehicle, the Safety Director's response was not documented in Trapeze COM. For the third complaint, the complainant did not provide any contact information for follow-up. For the two complaints with contact information from the complainant, Customer Service responded to the complainant within two to four business days.

- 2 Eligibility: Investigation and response to complaints about eligibility are handled by WMATA, as WMATA is responsible for the eligibility function. Information in Trapeze COM indicates that for one of the complaints, a response was provided after investigation. For the second, the information indicates that there was insufficient information about the incident to fully investigate, however the complainant was called with a message left, but the person did not call back to provide the additional information needed to investigate a complaint.

- 1 Dispatch error/ conduct: Investigation found that Dispatch erroneously re-scheduled the driver who was scheduled for a timely pick-up for the rider. Customer Service provided a response to the complainant within one day and a free ride voucher.

- 1 Driver conduct: This complaint, for a taxi driver, was investigated, with the complaint sent to the taxi company. The company responded, with a copy of the response in Trapeze COM, indicating that the driver was interviewed about the incident and apologizes. The taxi company also indicated that its training manager additionally spoke with the driver to ensure he understood the company's customer service approach. The contractor's Customer Service responded to the complainant within two business days.

Oversight of Complaint Process by WMATA

In addition to handling complaints received directly, WMATA staff reviews in detail each month a small percentage of complaints handled by the contractor, to assess the investigation process and the contractor's compliance with the contract standard concerning length of time to respond to complainants.

And very recently, WMATA staff has started working with a representative appointed through the recent legal settlement to review, among other things, certain complaints that the representative brings to WMATA's attention. With this effort, a specific WMATA staff person who is assigned to this responsibility reviews the representative's list of complaints, which has numbered approximately ten per week, and their disposition as handled by the contractor. This process is too new to point to any real findings, but it does provide another level of review over the contractor's efforts regarding the complaint process.

Summary Findings

The overall findings from the review of this function and the detailed look at 30 complaints indicate that the contractor's Customer Service staff investigates each complaint thoroughly, using the tools of technology to help (AVL, MDTs) and documenting the specifics that are discovered, and that they respond to complainants within no more than four business days (the contract standard is five business days), providing a free ride voucher when the complaint involves a late vehicle that resulted from contractor actions.

Customer Service staff also forwards complaints to the appropriate department or provider for a response. While the review of sampled trips found that the one complaint involving a subcontractor provider did have a specific response back from the subcontractor responding to the complaint, it appears that this is not always the case for complaints involving contractor departments or functions. For example, the Dispatch, Scheduling and Safety departments did not appear to provide a response back to the

Customer Service forwarded complaints, based on the sampled complaints reviewed in detail. For Dispatch, it is reported that this should be remedied with the new procedure implemented in June 2008, which has one Dispatch staff member responsible for responding to Customer Service when it forwards complaints to Dispatch. While a lack of "feedback" response documented in Trapeze COM from the other contractor departments to its Customer Service staff does not mean that the contractor does not act upon issues raised by complaints, such documentation would help ensure and memorialize a comprehensive approach to addressing complaints.

The findings also indicate that a small number of complaints (2 out of the sample of 30) appear actually to not be the fault of the contractor, based on the investigation by Customer Service. Using AVL and MDT data that show both vehicle location and time-stamps of vehicle arrival and departure information as well as scheduling information in Trapeze, complaints of vehicle tardiness or failure to wait at the pick-up can be assessed with a great deal of accuracy. In both cases where the complaint appears to be not valid, Customer Service responded with its findings to the complainant and in one case, excused the no-show as a courtesy to the rider. When the Manager of Customer Relations was questioned about these two trips, she indicated that both should have been designated as invalid for the monthly summary.

Telephone Access and Hold Times

Riders and advocates interviewed in advance of the on-site review expressed concern about the hold times experienced when calling to register a comment or complaint. These individuals indicated that hold times of 10-15 minutes are not unusual. They also noted that the WMATA Office of Customer Service is staffed only on weekdays. The review team discussed the telephone set-up with WMATA's Director of the Office of Customer Service, made several random calls to the office, and requested and reviewed telephone hold time information.

Ten Customer Service Representatives work in the Office of Customer Service. The office is open Mondays through Fridays, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. On the weekends, callers receive a message saying that the office is closed, giving the hours that the office is open, and asking them to call back during regular office hours. There is no option for leaving a message on the weekends. This could discourage some callers from calling back. It is recommended that WMATA consider adding a feature that would allow callers to at least leave a message describing their service issues.

To check on hold times, the review team examined telephone performance reports for the Office of Customer Service for the week of May 19-23, 2008. These reports showed an average hold time for the week of 1:48. Average hold times of more than two minutes were only recorded for the time periods from 8-8:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m.-12 p.m., 4:30-5 p.m. for that week.

Since these reports did not seem to reflect the experiences of riders contacted for input, the review team also placed eight calls to the Office of Customer Service at various

times of the day between August 5 and August 11, 2008. Hold times ranged from one minute to 21 minutes. The average hold time was 5:54 and the longest hold time was 21 minutes. These first-hand observations seemed to be more in line with rider input.

Given the first-hand experience of the team, and the input of riders, there appear to be long holds when calling the Office of Customer Service. It is recommended that WMATA monitor this issue and if long holds are documented, additional staffing or other approaches for reducing hold times be considered.

As noted above, all telephone calls, for all WMATA modes, go to the main Office of Customer Service. There is only one call group for all types of complaints. This means that the hold times experienced by MetroAccess riders are the same as those received for fixed route riders or other customers.

1.5 On-Time Drop-Offs and Travel Time

Another study question was "What is the on-time performance of MetroAccess based on drop-off rather than pick-up times?"

On-time drop-offs are not typically tracked or reported by MV or WMATA. Therefore, to address this question, the review team developed an estimate of on-time drop-off performance for a randomly-selected service day. The sample day that was selected was Tuesday May 20, 2008.

Before describing the methodology used to compile and analyze the information, it is important to understand the process for booking a trip with an appointment time. When booking a trip in Trapeze, a reservationist may enter an appointment time and/or a time that indicates the latest time a rider may arrive at their destination. This time is referred to as the LT time (Latest Time). To select our sample for the drop-off analysis we searched for trip records that contained an appointment time or a time in the LT field. Our search found 938 trips on May 20 that had an appointment time or a time in the LT field. We extracted the records to an Excel spreadsheet. We compared the actual arrival time at the destination to the appointment or LT time to determine if the drop–off occurred on-time, early, or late.

For the first step in the analysis, we checked to see how many passengers were dropped off for their appointment late. To do this we compared the actual arrival time to the time in the LT field. Any trip that had an actual arrival time later than the LT time was counted as late, whether it was one minute late or one hour late. Out of the 938 trips sampled, 178 trips or 19% of all trips with appointment times were dropped off late. Table 1.14 shows the breakdown of late trips in 15 minute increments.

The trips that are 15 minutes or more late make up almost 45% of all the late drop-offs. Of the 32 trips 30 or more minutes late, 12 of them were late between 45 and 59 minutes and 6 were late 60 minutes or more.

Table 1.14 Late Drop-Offs for Trips with Appointment Times

# of Minutes Late	# of Trips	% of Trips
0 to 14 Minutes Late	99	55.6%
15 to 29 Minutes Late	47	26.4%
30 Minutes or More Late	32	18.0%
Total Trips with Late Drop-Offs	178	100.0%

During telephone interviews with customers and advocates, the review team heard stories of customers being dropped off too early for appointments. It was also mentioned that when booking by appointment times that the pick-up times being offered were significantly earlier than the appointment time. To determine the extent of early drop-offs, the review team also analyzed trips with drop-offs that were considered too early. It was decided that a drop-off would be considered too early if it occurred more than 30 minutes prior to the stated appointment time. The review team compared the actual arrival time to the stated appointment or LT time in the trip record. Table 1.15 shows the breakdown of trips with appointment times that were dropped off early.

Of the 938 trips with appointment times, 403 or 53% were dropped off more than 30 minutes before the appointment time. The number of trips dropped off more than 30 minutes early makes up over half of all of the early drop-offs. Of the 213 trips that were dropped off more than 45 minutes early, 123 were dropped off between 46 minutes and 1 hour early. A total of 90 trips, or almost 10% of all trips with appointment times, were dropped off more than one hour before the appointment time. It should be noted that three of the trips appeared to have invalid or incorrect appointment time or arrival time. Combining the early drop-offs to the late drop-offs results in 581 trips (62%) scheduled by appointment time not being dropped off in a timely fashion.

Table 1.15 Early Drop-offs for Trips with Appointment Times

# of Minutes Early	# of Trips	% of Trips
Up to 30 Minutes Early	357	47.0%
Trips 31 to 45 Minutes Early	190	25.0%
More Than 45 Minutes Early	213	28.0%
Total Early Drop-Offs	760	100.0%

The parameter setting in Trapeze that governs how early or late a trip may be dropped off for trips booked by an appointment time was checked. The parameter is called Drop-Off Tolerance. The Drop-Off Tolerance is comprised of two numbers; the first called Drop-Off Tolerance Early specifies how many minutes before the appointment time a drop-off may be scheduled. The second is called Drop-Off Tolerance Late. The Drop-Off Tolerance Late specifies how many minutes after the appointment time a trip may be scheduled to be dropped off. A review of the settings for MetroAccess showed that the Late Drop-Off Tolerance was set to 0 minutes, meaning that a trip could not be scheduled to be dropped off later than the appointment time. The Drop-Off Tolerance Early was set to 90 minutes, meaning that, for example, a trip with a 9:00 AM appointment time could be scheduled to be dropped off as early as 7:30 AM. Using this

example, if the calculated ride time from the pick-up to the destination was 30 minutes, a pick-up time of 7:00 AM would be suggested. This could account for the reported instances of significantly early pick-ups for trips appointment times.

This would seem to suggest that the Drop-Off Tolerance Early is set too high and should be reduced. The review team believes that the 90 minutes early standard is not appropriate and that a setting of 30 minutes early or 45 minutes early would be more appropriate. However any change in parameters will affect the scheduling process by making it more difficult to accommodate all trips within the reduced window. Any changes need to be with the understanding that the necessary capacity needs to be available to meet the demand using the new parameter setting.

MetroAccess Long Ride Trip Analysis

Customers and advocates contacted in advance of the review also indicated some concern about excessively long rides and circuitous routing. An analysis of a sample of long rides for a sample day was performed to investigate this concern.

The approach to this task involved three components. The first component was to select trips from a sample day and compute the travel time from the pick-up location to the drop-off at the destination. Trips were categorized by total time on board the vehicle—60 to 89 minutes, and 90 minutes or more. The second component was to select 30 long trips at random and get detailed run information for the trip and the run that each trip was on. The last component was a review of the global On-Board Time (OBT) parameter, the On-Board Time Matrix (OBT Matrix), and a review the speed settings in the Trapeze system.

The day selected for the analysis was Tuesday, May 20, 2008. The sample of trips selected from the sample day totaled 5,393 trips. Excluded from the sample were trips for the non-dedicated, non-taxi runs. On-board travel time was calculated by taking the difference between the actual departure times at the pick-up and the arrival time at the destination. Trips were grouped by length of time on the vehicle—60 to 89 minutes, and 90 minutes or more. The long trips were also categorized by whether or not the customer was ambulatory or was non-ambulatory.

After completing that analysis, a Trapeze report called the Ride Length Report was prepared. The report listed by run number the trip information for passengers with trips over 90 minutes in length. A random sample of 30 trips was selected. The run that contained each of the selected trips was displayed and the run itinerary was displayed on the map. A number of factors were looked at such as length of trip, time of day, and other trips present on the run. Using Google Maps a direct ride time and distance was obtained. This was done to try and establish a baseline for a direct ride for each trip.

The last step of the analysis was to obtain the parameter setting for On Board Time, Speed, and speed by time of day.

Table 1.16 shows the breakdown of the long trips by time and by type of rider. As shown, 884 of the 5,393 trips on the sample day (16%) were longer than 60 minutes. A total of 279 trips, 5% of the total trips in the sample, were longer than 90 minutes.

Table 1.16 Long Trips for May 20, 2008

Length of Trip	Ambulatory	PCT.	Non-Ambulatory	Pct.	Total Trips	PCT.
61 to 90 Minutes	452	11.2%	153	11.2%	605	11.2%
91 Minutes +	202	5.0%	77	5.6%	279	5.2%
Total Long Trips	654	16.3%	230	16.8%	884	16.4%
Total Trips in Sample	4023		1370		5393	

Table 1.16 also shows that the percentage of trips 60 to 89 minutes in length is the same for both ambulatory and non-ambulatory riders. For trips greater than 90 minutes in length, the percentage of long trips is slightly higher for passengers who are non-ambulatory. However, the difference is not significant.

The second part of the travel time review was the analysis of runs that included long rides. The sequencing and location of pick-ups and drop-offs was analyzed to determine if the scheduled route was reasonable.

Table 1.17 on the following pages contains information about the 30 randomly-selected long trips and the associated runs. The addresses have been rounded to the nearest 100 block for customer privacy reasons. A brief description of what the review of the run revealed is also included. As shown, 10 of the 30 long trips (33%) appeared to have been long due, in part, to the scheduling of the run. If this 30 trip sample is representative, it suggests that 33% of the 884 long trips for the sample day (or about 5% of all trips on that day) were long in part due to the route that was scheduled or finally run.

Following is a brief discussion of the 10 trips that were felt to be long due, in part, to the run sequencing:

Customer ID 6 – this trip was identified because of the routing and the trip took 2 hours and 10 minutes. After picking up this customer in Upper Marlboro, two other pick-ups were added, one in Riverdale and one in College Park. These two customers were dropped off in Washington (Buchannan Street and 9th Street NW) before continuing to Silver Spring. The two passengers picked up after this customer added 9 miles and 50 minutes of travel time.

Table1.17 Sample of Metro Access Long trips for May 20, 2008

Customer ID	Pick-up	Departure Time	Drop-off	Arrival Time	Travel Time	Travel Miles	Google Time	Google Miles	Note
1	E Jefferson St, Rockville	17:01	Hil Mar Dr.	18:42	1:41	34	0:39	30	Direct ride pick-up to drop-off - last trip of the day
2	Colesville Rd, Silver Spring	16:22	Sylvia Dr., Clinton	18:17	1:55	25	0:46	33	Direct ride pick-up to drop-off - last trip of the day
3	Autumnwood Ln., Ft Washington	8:19	K St, NW Washington	9:49	1:30	15	:36	18	1 other pick-up heading into city. This trip plus the other pick-up both arrived to appt less than 1/2 hr before each
4	Temple Hill Rd, Temple Hills	4:56	Mercator Dr, Reston	7:05	2:09	48	0:46	36	1st trip on run, 2nd pick up in Ft Washington dropped off first in Fairfax before customer dropped off 5 minutes late for appt in Reston
5	McCormick Dr, Upper Marlboro	14:50	Green Castle Rd, Burtons ville	16:23	1:33	18	0:28	18	After pick-up vehicle traveled to Hyattsville for a pick up before proceeding to Burtonsville for cust. drop-off
6	Pennsylvania Ave, Upper Marlboro	15:27	Taber St, Silver Spring	17:37	2:10	31	:34	24	After pick-up, 2 subsequent pick ups and drop-offs made. The path of the vehicle was Upper Marlboro to Riverdale to College Park, to the 800 block of Buchanan St in Washington to the 4700 block of 9th St NW before the drop off in Silver Spring
7	Curtis Dr, Suitland	7:29	Annapolis Rd, Hyattsville	8:54	1:25	13	:20	10	Two pick-ups occurred after the cust. Was picked up. At the second subsequent pick up the driver waited 18 minutes for the customer to board before proceeding to drop customer 27036 off 9 mins late for appt.
8	Sperry Stream Way, Bowie	4:55	Chapek Rd, Ft. Belvoir	6:26	1:31	36	:54	34	Bowie to Hyattsville to Alexandria to Fort Belvoir - 1 other pick-up and drop-off along the way
9	Annapolis Rd, Bladensburg	6:42	Central Ave., Kettering	8:10	1:28	15	:20	9	Subsequent pick-up in Upper Marlboro before drop-off in Kettering. This trip was double booked, duplicated trip showed as a No Show on the run.
10	Webster Turn, Ft. Washington	7:23	Parkers Ln., Alexandria	9:05	1:42	11	:26	14	Direct ride pick-up to drop-off.

Customer ID	Pick-up	Departure Time	Drop-off	Arrival Time	Travel Time	Travel Miles	Google Time	Google Miles	Note
11	K St NW, Washington	16:40	Sargent Rd, NE	17:57	1:17	8	:19	5	Prior to picking up this passenger vehicle came from Capitol heights, picked up on K St. NW, went to another pick-up in the 100 block of Independence and then dropped that customer aon 22nd St NE before dropping at Sargent St.
12	Center Dr., Bethesda	18:26	Decatur St, Bladensburg	19:53	1:27	14	:26	20	Vehicle went from Bethesda to silver Spring for a pick-up to Hyattsville for a drop-off to Bladensburg.
13	12th St SW, Washington	17:19	Taylor St NW, Washington	18:54	1:35	6	:21	4	The interim pick-up and drop-off had 24 mionutes of dwell time. The routing in this sequence was linear going from southwest to northwest.
14	Queen Anne Bridge Rd, Upper Marlboro	5:57	N Capitol St NW, Washington	7:36	1:39	30	:34	24	This pick-up was the 1st of 3 pick-ups, the second of which took the vehicle to Greenbelt before coming back down to Landover and then to the drop-off on N Capitol St.
15	Whitewater Ct., Clinton	8:25	Irving St NW, Washington	10:17	1:52	22	:41	19	Although this pick-up is part of a sequence of logically and geographically placed pick-ups and drop-offs, the customer was 19 minutes late for an appointment.
16	Farrell Rd, Ft. Belvoir	16:15	Skyles Way, North Springfield	17:27	1:12	10	:30	17	Direct ride pick-up to drop-off
17	New Jersey Ave SE, Washington	16:24	Georgia Ave, Wheaton	17:55	1:31	13	:37	10	Direct ride pick up to drop-off. Last trip of the day.
18	Gracefield Rd, Silver Spring	8:23	Medical Center Dr, Rockville	9:45	1:22	17	:31	20	This trip was grouped with another where the 2nd pick-up was 3 blocks away and both drop-offs were in Rockville.
19	East-West Hwy, Riverdale	13:45	Mercury Dr, Rockville	16:14	2:29	44	:34	20	This pick-up was the 1st of 3 consecutive pick-up. The 2nd pick-up was in Rockville and the 3rd in Bethesda. The vehicle performed drop-offs in Hyattsville and Capitol Heights before dropping off on Mercury Drive.

Customer ID	Pick-up	Departure Time	Drop-off	Arrival Time	Travel Time	Travel Miles	Google Time	Google Miles	Note
20	Jersey Ct., Bowie	7:30	Pennsylvania Ave NW, Washington	9:22	1:52	18	:36	20	This trip was the 1st of 3 consecutive pick-ups,. The vehicle went from Bowie to Upper Marlboro to Banks Place in Washington to the 3000 block of G street before the drop-off on Pennsylvania Ave.
21	Jennings Mill Rd, Bowie	5:09	Sunrise Valley Dr, Reston	7:42	2:33	38	:57	45	This trip is part of a group of 3 trips that take the vehicle across the service area - starting in bowie and going to Upper Marlboro for 2 pick-ups and to Largo metro and 14th St SW for drop -offs before continuing to Reston.
22	Broadview Rd, Ft Washington	8:09	Connecticutt Ave, Kensington	10:45	2:36	30.4	:45	36	This trip is the 1st of 3 consecutive pick-ups and will be the last of the 3 to be dropped off. The run goes from the south of the city through the city before the drop-off in Kensington. The drop-off is 30 minutes after the appt. time.
23	Brooke Jane Dr, Clinton	6:31	12th St SW, Washington	8:04	1:33	24	:33	17	This is the 1st pick-up on the run and is grouped with a 2nd pick up in Clintom. The 2nd pick-up is dropped off before this customer at the Dialysis Clinic on 1st St. The custome is dropped off on 12th St 38 minutes late for an appoinment.
24	Venoy Ct, Mt Vernon	6:48	MLK Jr Ave SE, Washington	8:22	1:34	15	:25	16	Although this pick-up is part of a sequence of logically and geographically placed pick-ups and drop-offs, the customer was 12 minutes late for an appointment.
25	14th St NW, Washington	15:47	Oakmere Dr, Centreville	17:24	1:37	24	:51	30	This trip is grouped with another pick-up in Washington that is also going to Centreville.
26	Green Tee Turn, Upper Marlboro	8:35	Baltimore Ave, Beltsville	10:01	1:26	25	:37	24	This trip is grouped with a trip going from Marlton to Fort Washington before being droppoff in Beltsville

Customer ID	Pick-up	Departure Time	Drop-off	Arrival Time	Travel Time	Travel Miles	Google Time	Google Miles	Note
27	Belcrest Rd, Hyattsville	15:17	Quill Pointe Dr, Bowie	16:27	1:10	22	:25	11	This pick-up was grouped with a trip that had a drop-off in Hyattsville. After the drop-off in Hyattsville a same day add-on occurred. The add-on had a bowie drop-off but a pick-up in Washington. With this customer on board the vehicle went to the VA hospital in Washington before dropping both cutomers
28	Deer Meadow Ln, Rockville	6:55	1st NW, Washington	8:30	1:35	22	:42	19	This trip was grouped with another Rockville pick-up and was the first person to be dropped off. The 2nd pick up had a 25 minute dwell time.
29	Piney Branch Rd, Silver Spring	16:04	Medical Center Dr, Rockville	17:16	1:12	20	:27	18	This trip was grouped with another trip that had a drop-off in Rockville.
30	Malthus St, Brandywine	7:55	Church St, Rockville	9:28	1:33	25	:56	44	Direct ride pick-up to drop-off.

Customer ID 7 – this customer was the first of three logically placed trips. At the second pick-up in the sequence the driver waited 18 minutes for the customer to board before proceeding on to the next stop. The selected customer was 9 minutes late for their appointment.

Customer ID 11 – this trip was selected due to the sequencing or possible placement on the run of the pick-up. Prior picking up this customer the vehicle dropped off a customer in Capitol Heights. It proceeded to this pick-up on K Street (16:45 scheduled time) and then proceeded back to a pick-up on Independence Street (17:00 scheduled time). The vehicle proceeded to drop off these passengers, first on 22nd Street and then Sargent Street, for the selected customer. The concern here was the pick-up on Independence Street had the vehicle backtracking in the general direction of its previous drop-off in Capitol Heights, and it added 30 minutes of travel time to the trip for the selected customer.

Customer ID 14 – this trip was selected because of a subsequent pick-up that was added to the run. This trip was the first of three pick-ups to start the run at 6:00 a.m. This pick-up was in Upper Marlboro, the second in Greenbelt and the third in Landover before proceeding to drop the selected customer off on North Capitol Street in Washington. The issue with this sequence of trips is the addition of the second pick-up to the run, which added 30 minutes and 16 miles to the trip for the selected customer.

Customer ID 15 - this trip was part of a sequence of trips that were geographically and logically placed on the run. The problem was that the customer arrived for the appointment 17 minutes late after riding for 1 hour and 52 minutes.

Customer ID 19 – this was selected because of circuitous routing. According to the run this customer was picked up in Riverdale, rode to pick-ups in Rockville and Bethesda, then rode to a drop off in Hyattsville before being dropped off in Rockville. Total ride time was 2 hours and 29 minutes.

Customer ID 22 - this trip was selected because the ride time was 2 hours and 36 minutes, and the customer arrived 30 minutes late for the appointment. It should be noted that the trip was 30 miles and crossed the service area from Fort Washington to Kensington during morning rush hour.

Customer ID 23 – this trip was selected because the arrival time at the destination was 38 minutes late for an appointment and the sequencing of the drop off. This trip is the first of two picked up in Clinton for trips into Washington. The drop-offs for the two customers were about 2 miles apart and the selected customer was the first picked up and the last dropped off. Dropping the selected customer off first would have saved some time and perhaps would have resulted in a drop-off closer to the appointment time.

Customer ID 24 – this trip was selected because the customer arrived at their appointment 12 minutes late. It is the second of two pick-ups in Mount Vernon and part of a sequence of three customers who are routed logically and geographically. The problem with this sequence was with the pick-up prior to the selected customers' pick-up and the pick-up of a third customer. At each of those stops the driver arrived within the window, but wound up waiting 11 minutes for the first customer and 12 minutes for the third customer. The 23 minutes of dwell time for those two pick-ups caused the selected customer to be late for their appointment.

Customer 27 – this trip was selected because of the routing caused by a same day add-on trip. The original route was to be a pick–up in Silver Spring, a pick-up of the selected customer in Hyattsville, dropping off the first customer in Hyattsville before proceeding to Bowie to drop-off the selected customer. A trip was added on, after the pick-up of the selected customer. The added-on trip was from the VA Hospital in Washington to Bowie. While it made sense to add this trip in terms of the drop off location, the pick-up took the vehicle out of way by diverting it into Washington.

One of the very long trips examined, which took more than two hours, appeared to be reasonable. The trip for customer #4 took two hours and nine minutes. The trip crossed the entire service area, going 48 miles with only one other pick-up. Given the length of the trips, the time of day, and vehicle availability at that time of the day, the review team felt that the travel time was reasonable.

After reviewing the sample of trips two rules became apparent. The first is that any trip over two hours needs to be reviewed. The second is any routing of trips that result in a trip being late for an appointment needs to be reviewed. It should be noted that for each of the 10 trips identified, the MetroAccess shared-ride travel time was more than twice the direct ride time as computed by Google Maps. It should also be noted that in only two of the 10 trips identified was the miles traveled at least twice the direct ride time as computed by Google. This led the review team to review the parameters governing maximum ride time and the speed settings.

How trips are scheduled by Trapeze is a function of the assumed speed of the vehicles, and the length of time the system says a customer may ride. In the Trapeze program there is a global Maximum Ride Time parameter and an On-Board Time matrix that governs how long a person may be scheduled to ride on a vehicle. There is also an Average Speed parameter, which can be modified by length of trip and time of day.

Maximum Ride Time Parameter Analysis

There are two features settings in Trapeze that regulate maximum allowable ride time. The first feature is called the Maximum Ride Time parameter, and is a global setting for all rides scheduled in Trapeze. For MetroAccess, this global Maximum Ride Time is set to 90 minutes. This means that the maximum amount of time a passenger may be scheduled to ride before a ride time violation occurs is 90 minutes. The second feature is called the On-Board Time Matrix (OBT Matrix). This feature is designed to limit the

scheduled ride time based upon the length, in time, of a trip. The settings in the OBT Matrix override the global Maximum Ride Time setting.

Before explaining the MetroAccess On-Board Time Matrix, it is important to understand what occurs when a trip is scheduled in Trapeze. When a ride for a customer is scheduled, Trapeze calculates the direct ride time for the trip. The direct ride time would be the time it would take to travel from the pick-up to the drop-off without any additional shared rides. The On-Board Time Matrix allows you to set a maximum allowable ride time based upon the calculated direct ride time. The On-Board Time Matrix in use at MetroAccess is shown in Table 1.17.

Table 1.17 On-Board Time Matrix

Direct Ride Time	Factor	Maximum On-Board Time
0 to 30 minutes	60	1 hour
31 to 44 minutes	2.5	2 hours
45 minutes to 59 Minutes	2.5	2 hours
1 hour to 1 hour 14 minutes	2.5	3 hours
1 hour 15 minutes and more	2.5	3 hours

The way the matrix works is the calculated direct ride time is multiplied by the factor. The result of that calculation is compared to the maximum On-Board Time contained in the matrix for the range that the calculated direct ride time falls within. The allowable travel time will be whichever value is lower. What this OBT matrix means is that a trip that has a direct ride time of 30 minutes or less may be scheduled to ride for up to one hour before incurring a violation. That is because any trip time greater than zero, when multiplied by the factor of 60, will exceed one hour. For trips in the next range, 31 to 44 minutes, the maximum ride time will range from one hour and 18 minutes (31 x 2.5 = 77.5 minutes) to one hour and 50 minutes (44 X 2.5= 110 minutes) because both of those times are less than 2 hours. A trip with a direct ride time between 45 and 59 minutes may be scheduled to ride for between one hour 53 minutes (45 x 2.5 = 112.5 minutes) and two hours, since the value of any calculated direct ride time greater than 48 minutes times the factor of 2.5 exceeds two hours. A trip with a calculated direct ride time between one hour and one hour and 14 minutes may be scheduled to ride between two hours and 30 minutes (60 x 2.5 = 150 minutes) and three hours, since any trip with a direct ride time greater than one hour and 12 minutes times the factor of 2.5 exceeds 3 hours. A trip with a direct ride time of one hour and 15 minutes or more may be scheduled to ride up to three hours before incurring a violation since one hour and 15 minutes times 2.5 exceeds three hours.

The review team is concerned with the factor for the shorter trips (less than 30 minutes) and the factor for the longer trips (one hour or more). It is possible that a trip with a direct ride time of 15 minutes could be scheduled for as long as one hour. A trip with a direct ride time of one hour may be scheduled for up to two hours and 30 minutes, and a trip with a direct ride time of one hour and 15 minutes could be scheduled for as long as three hours.

It is recommended that WMATA and MV consider revising the OBT Matrix to ensure that very short and very long trips have reasonable ride times. For example, an additional range for very short trips (e.g. 0 to 15 minutes direct) might be created and parameters set to ensure that the maximum ride time is more reasonable (e.g., 45 rather than 60 minutes). Parameter settings for very long trips shouls also be revised to ensure that the ride times are more reasonable.

It is important to note that any change in the OBT Matrix will have a direct effect on scheduling. When a trip can be scheduled to ride for a longer period of time the opportunity to group more trips occurs. Changing to OBT Matrix by shortening the maximum ride times will likely make it more difficult to schedule trips on the existing vehicles. Any changes to this matrix must be well thought out and carefully planned and tested before implementation.

In addition, it is recommended that WMATA regularly pull a sample of trips with long scheduled ride times and evaluate the ride times to be sure that they meet ADA requirements. This periodic analysis will help indicate if the OBT Matrix settings are providing the desired results. In analyzing trips for compliance with ADA requirements, WMATA should also consider revising its formal travel time policy to be consistent with recommendations made by FTA following the compliance review conducted in 2006. The FTA recommendation was that instead of using a policy of one-and-a-half times the fixed route ride time, a policy based on actual fixed route ride times plus an allowance for walking to and from fixed route stops and stations be used. FTA further suggested that an extra time allowance might be included when the comparable fixed route trip would be made by rail (since rail travel times can be less than times for vehicles using congested streets.

Average Speed and Speed by Time of Day and Distance of Trip

Trapeze allows a site to set an average speed for vehicles that the software uses when scheduling the rides. The average speed can be further adjusted by time of day and length of trip. For example, the speed of the vehicles can be slowed down during rush hour to allow for more time for traffic. The speed for a longer trip (in miles) can be increased to allow for the use of an interstate or other limited access highway with a faster speed limit. Both the time of day and length of trip factors are expressed as a percent of the average speed. To illustrate we will use the average speed used for MetroAccess service of 17.5 miles per hour. Slowing the speed down during the rush hour by 25%, and slowing the speed for a trip between 0 to 2 miles by 25% would yield a computed speed of 9.8 miles per hour. The speed would be calculated this way:

17.5 miles per hour X .75 (for time of day) = 13.1 miles per hour
13.1 x .75 (for length of trip) = 9.8 miles per hour

Trapeze would assume that during rush hour, for a trip going less than 2 miles that a vehicle would travel at 9.8 miles per hour.

The Speed Matrix for MetroAccess is a fairly detailed one. It divides the day into 14 different time ranges. Depending upon the range the average speed is decrease by as much as 28% (16:00 to 19:00) or increased by 10% (4:00 to 5:00). The system speed is also slowed down by length of trip by as much as 65% (trips less than 1 mile) to being increased by 75% (for trips 28 miles or longer. What this all means is that depending upon the time of day and length of trip the system speed is as low as 4.4 miles per hour for a trip between 16:00 and 19:00 with a length less than one mile or as fast as 33.7 miles per hour for a trip between 4:00 and 5:00 with a length of 28 miles or more.

The complexity of the Speed Matrix used for MetroAccess appears to be appropriate given the size and nature of the service area. However the settings in the speed matrix should be reviewed to ensure that they accurately reflect conditions on the street.
It should also be noted that the average speed computed for trips will have an effect on the computation of direct ride time as discussed above. A slower average ride time will increase the length of the computed direct ride time, and by extension increase the maximum allowable ride as defined by two times the direct ride time. A faster average speed has the opposite effect.

It is recommended that the system speed settings be reviewed and analyzed for reasonableness. Changes should be made to the settings as needed. As noted with other parameter settings, changing the speed settings will have a direct and immediate impact on scheduling. Increasing overall system speeds will result in more trips being scheduled by the software, but may lead to unrealistic travel times. Slowing system speed down will result in fewer trips scheduled and longer scheduled ride times. Any changes to the speed matrix or average speed should be done with great care.

1.6 Service Oversight and Monitoring

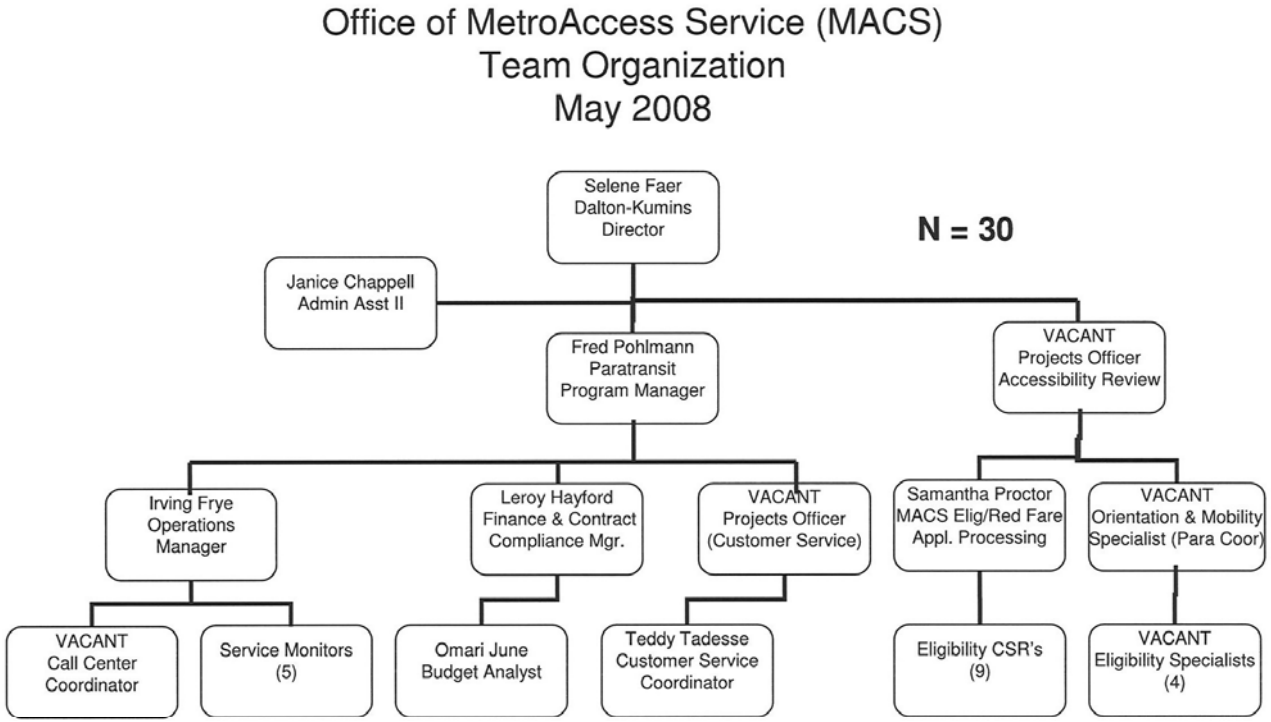
Another question posed for the review was “Does WMATA have the appropriate resources and staff to ensure adequate contract oversight and monitoring?” Findings related to this question are detailed below.

Staffing

Prior to the on-site review, WMATA provided information on its and the contractor’s staffing and organization. A copy of the organizational chart for WMATA’s Office of MetroAccess Service (MACS) is provided on the following page. As shown, there are total of 30 positions allocated to the office. At the time of review, 22 of these positions will filled and eight—mainly in the eligibility and travel training areas—were vacant.

As shown, there are two functional units under the Director. One unit oversees and administers service operations, monitoring, financing and contract compliance. The other unit administers and manages the MetroAccess eligibility process, travel training, and the reduced fare program.

Figure 1.2


Office of MetroAccess Service (MACS)
Team Organization
May 2008
N = 30
Selene Faer
Dalton-Kumins
Director
Janice Chappell
Admin Asst II
Fred Pohlmann
Paratransit
Program Manager
VACANT
Projects Officer
Accessibility Review
Irving Frye
Operations
Manager
Leroy Hayford
Finance & Contract
Compliance Mgr.
VACANT
Projects Officer
(Customer Service)
Samantha Proctor
MACS Elig/Red Fare
Appl. Processing
VACANT
Orientation & Mobility
Specialist (Para Coor)
VACANT
Call Center
Coordinator
Service Monitors
(5)
Omari June
Budget Analyst
Teddy Tadesse
Customer Service
Coordinator
Eligibility CSR's
(9)
VACANT
Eligibility Specialists
(4)

There are 12 staff in the unit that oversees the MetroAccess operation. This includes a Paratransit Program Manager and five Service Monitors whose primary function is to monitor various aspects of the operation. A Call Center Coordinator position is also included in this group, but was vacant at the time of the review. Finance, contract compliance and budget issues are handled by a Finance and Contract Compliance Manager supported by a Budget Analyst. There is also a Customer Service Coordinator in the group and an open position for a Customer Service Projects Officer.

The Director indicated that the Office's capacity to monitor and manage MetroAccess service has increased significantly in the past two years. Nine of the 12 staff positions in the operations, finance and contract compliance groups have been added in the past two years. Compared to other large paratransit systems that we have reviewed, the level of staffing appears to be adequate to allow for thorough service monitoring.

Service Monitoring Procedures

Additionally, the review team examined the scope of contractor monitoring that had been established by WMATA. During the on-site review, the consultant team interviewed the Director of MetroAccess as well as the Finance and Contract Compliance Manager, the Special Projects Analyst, and one of the Service Monitors, the latter three of whom are heavily involved in oversight and monitoring. During the interview, the consultants went through the list of reports to understand the degree to which the monitoring is being accomplished and whether the reports are being prepared and reviewed in order to monitor the contractor. A detailed summary of these monitoring procedures is provided in Attachment C.

The processes used by WMATA to monitor the MetroAccess service include an extensive array of reports and procedures to check and verify contractor services and billing. The monitoring process has been strengthened considerably in the past two years and was developed with outside consultant assistance. This was a significant effort, with detailed procedures and reports created to assist WMATA staff in monitoring various aspects of contractor performance, reporting, and billing. A total of 16 different specific procedures and/or reports were established, and WMATA staff and the consultant worked cooperatively over several months to define final report formats and procedures for the monitoring efforts. During this process, some refinements were made, with changes made to certain report titles and numbers. A checklist for these reports was prepared to organize and document the monitoring process. This checklist is provided in Table 1.18.

Table 1.18. Contract Monitoring Checklist

Item #	Contract Monitoring Task/ Report
1	**On-Street Monitoring** – compare observed times of trips to reconciled times in Trapeze. Verify at least 30 observed trips in Trapeze.
2	**Audit Taxi Invoices** – 1% MV audit. Request the 1% audit that MV performs on Taxi invoices. Select 10% or at least 30 trips listed as completed to verify in Trapeze.
3	**Audit Taxi Invoices** – Review and verify in Trapeze all trips in the 1% audit listed as a No Show or a Covered No Show
4	**Audit Taxi Invoices** – take a 10% sample (at least 30) trips in the 1% audit that are recorded as Missed or Excessively Late. Review and verify information in Trapeze.
5	**Audit Taxi Invoices** – obtain one day's set of trip tickets from each taxi provider. Select a 10% sample (at least 30 trips) and compare times on trip ticket to times entered in Trapeze. Check for customer signatures.
6	**Audit Taxi Invoices** – dedicated taxi runs. Obtain one day's dedicated taxi manifests. Select a 10% sample (at least 30 trips) and verify times in Trapeze. Check for customer signatures.
7	**Add-on and Cancellation faxes** – obtain one day's worth of faxes to taxi providers. Select a sample of at least 30 trips for review. Verify the transmission was timely, a confirmation call was made to verify receipt by the taxi company, and who at the taxi company confirmed the receipt.
8	**Non-Dedicated Provider Monitoring** – We Care Adult services – select a day to audit. Print out a list of passengers transported to the facility on that day from Trapeze. Send the list to We Care for verification of attendance.
9	**Non-Dedicated Provider Monitoring**-SEEC – select a day to audit. Contact SEEC for an attendance list for the audit day. Using a print out from Trapeze of passengers transported to SEEC on the audit day, compare the two lists.
10	**Non-Dedicated Provider Monitoring** – ARC – Contact ARC for an attendance list for the adult day. Using a pint out from Trapeze of passengers transported to SEEC on the audit day compare the two lists. Specify which ARC sites you are conducting the audit on.
11	**No-Show with Coordinates Report** (the report also shows cancels at door) – run the report for one day. Scan the report and look for trips where the driver arrived outside of the on-time window (especially late). Look for instances where the driver did not wait the appropriate amount of time. Review tracker notes for any indication that the no show was out of the control of the customer.
12	**Cancel/Rebook Report** – run the report for one day. Look for trips that were cancelled on the day of service and subsequently rebooked for the same day. Review the tracker notes for any indication that the trip may have been cancelled and rebooked because a driver was running late or missed a trip.
13	**Monitoring Schedules Report** – run the report for one day. Look for times when a run arrives at a trip that has an "ET" time (no earlier than time) associated with it. If the first trip on the run has an ET time, determine if the run pulled out too soon. Look for any trips where the departure time was before the requested ET time.
14	**Actual Pullout by Route** – run the report for one day. Compare the scheduled pull out to the actual pull out and compare the scheduled first pick up to the actual first pick up. Note any runs that pulled out early and arrived at the first pick up early. Also note any runs that pulled out late (more than 10 to 15 minutes).
15	**Early/Late Report** – run the report for the month. Add the number of trips greater than 31 minutes late to excessively late trips indicated on the monthly invoice.
16	**Monitoring Trip Schedules Report** (run for one day) –
A	Compare requested time to scheduled time. Verify the scheduled time within MetroAccess guidelines.
B	Compare Actual Pick up time to Actual Drop off time. Flag any trips that are greater than 90 minutes long for further investigation.
C	Compare Scheduled Pick up time to Appointment time. Flag any trips that are scheduled to last more than 90 minutes for further investigation.
D	Compare Actual Arrival Time to Appointment time. Flag any trips that arrive later than the appointment time or arrive more than 30 minutes before the arrival time for further investigation.
E	Scan the report for trips marked as No Shows or Cancel at Door. Verify the vehicle arrived within the on-time window and waited the appropriate amount of time at the pick up location.

Interviews held on-site for this independent review found that the monitoring, as established, was first done during January 2008, for the month of October 2007. This was essentially a "beta test" of the procedures and written documentation of efforts appeared to be thorough. Since then, WMATA staff has undertaken the monitoring procedures for the month of April 2008, with work substantially completed during the month of June and July, according to staff. Monitoring for a specific month begins one month after the month-end, allowing the contractor to "close out" its own reports for WMATA. Monitoring for April service, for example, would logically begin in June.

A primary reason that WMATA had not yet finished by mid-July, the monitoring and documentation of monitoring slated for June 2008, is that staff efforts during June were pulled to work with one of its consultants on efforts required under the recent legal settlement. A second reason relates to documentation of monitoring efforts that have been completed. This review found documentation of certain monitoring efforts on hand-written sheets, since all completed efforts have not yet been entered onto a common worksheet. Staff just recently had access to the common "shared" electronic worksheet that denotes and tracks the monitoring efforts, which now allows multiple users to access and enter data onto a common file, greatly easing documentation.

Of the monitoring and documentation of monitoring that have been completed (and as detailed in Attachment C), the consultant team found documentation for the first month monitored (and completed in January 2008) to be detailed and relatively thorough. This documentation includes, for example, notations where data collection was initially time-consuming or difficult (e.g., obtaining certain information from human service agencies served by non-dedicated providers), providing a road map of staff efforts. Interviews with staff involved in the monitoring also found that certain monitoring efforts have already resulted in contractor improvements (e.g., contractor procedures for faxing trips to taxi providers for supplemental trips).

The consultants also reviewed documentation and back-up source materials used for monitoring efforts for April's service, conducted during June and July. Where formal documentation was reviewed, again, this documentation appeared thorough, noting the selected sample day, the number of trips reviewed and the findings. Where formal documentation was not yet available, the consultant team looked at "raw data," such as listings of trips where WMATA staff had made notations based on their review. While efforts for April's monitoring are not yet fully completed and documented, much of the work has been done, and findings of interest have been brought to the attention of WMATA managers. It also appears that staff is still somewhat on a learning curve in carrying out the extensive monitoring efforts, as work is still underway to refine one or two reports, and that the time needed to carry out the defined monitoring is significant.

In summary, the contract monitoring efforts that have been set up for WMATA staff, and that are still relatively new and "in progress," provide a great deal of scrutiny over contractor reporting and operations. In at least several areas that are monitored, WMATA efforts have resulted in improved contractor actions and performance. It can also be said that WMATA staff members assigned to the new monitoring activities still appear to be incorporating those efforts into their position responsibilities and, in some cases, are still refining the process of extracting the data from Trapeze and formatting reports so that the reports highlight the intent of the monitoring activity.

1.7 Performance Data

The final question to be answered in this part of the review was "Is performance data being reported and calculated appropriately and accurately and is MV correctly reporting the number of 'missed trips'?"

During the past two years, WMATA has taken steps to ensure the accuracy of its reported MetroAccess operating and performance statistics. During the Spring and Summer of 2006, WMATA retained an outside consultant to review data collection. As a result of the study, a number of recommendations were made and implemented. Subsequent to that study, a follow-up project regarding the development of detailed monitoring was undertaken in 2007 with outside consultant assistance. The results of that project were described above in the Section 1.6. More recently, WMATA contracted with a Data Expert Consultant, as part of a settlement agreement with the Equal Rights Council of Greater Washington, to again review the accuracy of MetroAccess performance statistics. The Data Expert undertook a detailed review of MetroAccess service data and performance statistics in the Spring of 2008. Additional data reviews will be conducted each year for the next three years.

Although the first report submitted by the Data Expert in May 2008 is not public, WMATA agreed that the general findings of that report could be included in this report. The May 2008 Data Expert report found that pick-up times recorded in the system were largely accurate. Some questions were raised about a small number of times that appeared to be recorded while the vehicle was a short distance from the actual pick-up location, but this difference could be due to technology. There were also some questions raised about the coding of a small number of trips, but again, the trips in question did not significantly affect the level of performance reported. The on-time performance calculations of the Data Expert, which included the minor corrections were within one-tenth of one percent (0.1%) of the performance reported by WMATA.

The Data Expert did raise some questions about the way that no-shows and missed trips were defined and counted. These issues were largely due to definitions contained in the contract between WMATA and MV Transportation. The original contract defined missed trips as trips where the vehicle arrived 31 minutes or more after the end of the on-time pick-up window (or 46+ minutes after the scheduled pick-up time). The contract did not clearly indicate how to code trips that were not taken where vehicles arrived late (more than 15 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time), but less than 31 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time. It was discovered that in some cases, these trips were coded as no-shows.

The Data Expert suggested that trips not taken where the vehicle arrives after the end of the agreed-upon pick-up window should be coded as missed trips. The Data Expert also suggested that trips performed more than 60 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time should be considered "Excessively Late" rather than "Missed."

In response to the Data Expert Report, WMATA agreed to develop revised definition for coding trips where vehicles arrive after the agreed-upon pick-up window. WMATA proposed to call trips not taken where the vehicle arrives from 16 to 30 minutes after the end of the on-time window as "Late/Not Transported" trips, and to maintain the definition of "Missed Trips" to be trips where the vehicle arrives 31 minutes of more after the end of the pick-up window (whether the trip is made or not). This change should ensure an accurate identification of no-shows, but will leave some room for debate about whether trips coded as "Late/Not Transported" should be considered "missed."

Table 1.19 on the following page provided selected MetroAccess performance data for FY 2007 and FY 2008. As shown, the no-show and missed trip rates decreased significantly between FY 2007 and FY 2008. No-shows dropped from 6.7% of trips scheduled in FY 2007 to 3.6% of trips scheduled in FY 2008. Missed trips dropped from 0.74% to 0.28% of trips scheduled. Trip length and productivity remained about the same. On-time performance for pick-ups increased from 93.1% in FY 2007 to 95.6% in FY 2008. The percentage of trips provided on a subscription basis increased from 59.9% in FY 2007 to 60.7% in FY 2008. There were 8.6 complaints recorded for every 1,000 trips requested in FY 2008, up slightly from 8.1 in FY 2007.

Table 1.19. Selected MetroAccess Performance Data, FY 2007 and FY 2008

Performance Measure	FY 2007	FY 2008
Cancellation Rate *(1)*	21.6%	24.5%
No-Show Rate *(2)*	6.7%	3.6%
Trip-Making Rate *(3)*	0.34	0.39
Average Trip Length *(4)*	15 miles	15.5 miles
Productivity *(5)*	1.16	1.18
Operating Cost per Trip *(6)*	$44.07	$39.47 est.
On-Time Performance (Pick-Ups Only) *(7)*	93.1%	95.6%
Missed Trips *(8)*	0.74%	0.28%
Subscription Trips *(9)*	59.9%	60.7%
Complaint Rate *(10)*	8.1	8.6

(1) Early Cancels plus Late Cancels divided by Trips Requested (all services). MetroAccess Summary Spider Reports
(2) No-Shows divided by Trips Scheduled (all services). MetroAccess Summary Spider Reports
(3) Trips Completed divided by 2005 total service area population (3,780,000)
(4) "Avg Trip Dist." Item 3(n) in MetroAccess Summary Spider Reports
(5) Total Passengers divided by Total Revenue-Hours. MetroAccess Summary Spider Reports.
(6) "Service: Paratransit" cost (from Proposed Fiscal 2009 Annual Budget, Chapter 4. Operating Budget by Mode) divided by Trips Completed (from MetroAccess Summary Spider Reports
(7) "On-Time %." Item 5(d) in MetroAccess Summary Spider Reports
(8) Missed Trips divided by Trips Scheduled (all services). MetroAccess Summary Spider Reports
(9) "Subscription" from Operations – Yearly Spider Reports
(10) Total complaints received per 1,000 trips requested

2 Rider Input and Customer Service

The second part of the review focused on four questions related to the processes in place to obtain rider input about MetroAccess services and to record and address rider comments and complaints. The four questions identified were:

- Has an independent user group been established?
- Is customer satisfaction being monitored through surveys? If not, what are the options for doing this?
- Is clear, concise and correct information provided to riders in the Customer Guide, the website, in eligibility determination letters and in responses to complaints?
- Is information consistently provided in accessible formats to those who need it (i.e., for customers with visual impairments)?

Observations and findings related to these questions are summarized below.

2.1 Advisory Committee/Independent User Group

The February 15, 2006 report titled "Improving Demand Responsive Services for People with Disabilities in The Washington Region" and prepared by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) and the Access for All Advisory Committee (AFA), recommended that WMATA create a new user group focused specifically on paratransit. It was further recommended that this group bring together paratransit riders, representatives of the MetroAccess service providers and WMATA staff to discuss and address paratransit issues. This part of the review inquired about the implementation of these recommendations.

At the time of the study, WMATA sponsored an E&D Advisory Committee that addressed all issues of accessibility—including fixed route and paratransit issues. There was also a MetroAccess Subcommittee that considered paratransit issues. The TPB/AFA study recommended a separate advisory process because it felt that the input provided by the existing E&D Advisory Committee was "too limited, not sufficiently representative or independent of the transit agency, and not adequately responded to by decision makers."

The status of implementation of this recommendation was discussed with WMATA staff. It was indicated that, after considering the options, a decision was made by WMATA to maintain an advisory process that focused on all accessibility issues, rather than having separate committees for paratransit and other modes and issues. However, to respond to concerns about the effectiveness and make-up of the current process, a decision was made to reconstitute the E&D Committee.

Staff indicated that several positions on the E&D Committee were opened for possible new members on June 30, 2007. An open invitation was issued for letters of interest in

serving on the committee. Existing members whose terms were now open were also invited to submit letters detailing their interest and qualifications. Letters of interest were reviewed by WMATA ADA Programs Office staff and several candidates were interviewed. At the time of the review, it was noted that the July 30, 2007 openings had been filled.

Additional committee positions were identified as open starting June 30, 2008. A similar process was used to invite interest in these positions. WMATA staff indicated that recommendations for these positions were scheduled to be made in July 2008 and that selected members would start their new terms in August or September 2008.

WMATA staff noted that the primary goals of the reconstitution were:

- To continue to have a committee that addressed all access issues
- Maintain jurisdictional equity in the selection of new members
- Select members who could address issues faced by persons with various types of disabilities as well as seniors

WMATA staff indicated that once the process to reconstitute the committee was complete, the ADA Office would be working with the committee to review and revise the existing by-laws.

Thoughts on the Structure of the E&D Committee

During the process of gathering input on relevant issues to be addressed by this review, some concern was expressed by individuals contacted about the structure of the E&D Committee. In particular, there was some concern that the by-laws called for all committee members to be selected and appointed by the WMATA General Manager. This raised concerns about the independence and objectivity of the committee. There was concern that the process to reconstitute the committee would result in selections of individuals likely to agree with WMATA policies and positions and not individuals who may have been critical of WMATA services in the past. Some dissatisfaction was also expressed with the leadership of the Committee and it was noted that there has not been a rotation or change of the chairperson for several years.

Concerns about independence and objectivity are not uncommon where advisory committees are appointed by the governing agency. Even if existing members are involved in the screening and selection process, the selection can appear “closed” and biased. This is not to say that the current or past process has been biased, but this can be a public perception that WMATA should consider.

One approach for addressing this potential concern is to allow communities and local agencies to make some or all of the appointments, rather than limiting appointment to only those selections made by the WMATA General Manager. For example, WMATA could make available one appointment each to a variety of local organizations that represent persons with disabilities and seniors. Nominations could be accepted from these agencies, subject to approval and final appointment by WMATA. Committee

positions could also be made available to each jurisdiction—or several positions could be assigned to jurisdictions in a way that achieves jurisdictional equity. There could be a requirement that these positions should be filled by "unaffiliated" riders of WMATA services. This combination would achieve a balance of important agency representation and general public representation.

As WMATA and the newly reconstituted committee reviews the current by-laws, we would recommend that alternative advisory committee structures be considered. Structures that allow for more independence and less WMATA involvement in membership selection should be considered. It may also be helpful to require periodic rotation of leadership positions on the committee to facilitate fresh perspectives and broader involvement.

2.2 Customer Satisfaction Monitoring

The next questions in this part of the review were "Is customer satisfaction being monitored through surveys?" and "If not, what are the options for doing this?"

The processes in place to measure MetroAccess customer satisfaction were discussed with WMATA staff. It was noted that WMATA has a five-year contract with a private company—OpinionWorks of Annapolis, Maryland—to conduct monthly customer satisfaction surveys. This contract began in July of 2007.

OpinionWorks conducts about 100 telephone surveys per month. Riders are randomly selected. Given that there are about 14,000 registered MetroAccess riders, and assuming that about 25% of the total registered riders are regular users who ride at least once a month, the 100 telephone surveys represents about a 3% sample. In other large paratransit systems, sampling about 2-5% of riders is typical.

Monthly results are then tabulated and combined into quarterly customer satisfaction reports. The review team was provided a copy of the second quarterly report for FY2008, which covered the period from October 1 through December 31, 2007.

Each month riders are asked "Overall, over the past year, do you think MetroAccess service has gotten much better, a little better, not changed, a little worse, or much worse?" Table 2.1 shows results for the first two quarters of FY2008.

Table 2.1 Trends in MetroAccess Service as Indicated by OpinionWorks Surveys, First and Second Quarters, FY2008

	Responses Received from July 1–Sept. 30, 2007	Responses Received from Oct 1–Dec. 31, 2007
Gotten Much Better	30%	28%
Gotten a Little Better	38%	36%
Total Better	*68%*	*63%*
Not Changed	14%	
Gotten a Little Worse	6%	2%
Gotten Much Worse	4%	3%
Total Worse	*10%*	*5%*
Not Sure/Refused	8%	10%

In the first quarter of FY2008 (July 1 to September 30, 2007), riders were also asked to rate the importance of several service delivery issues on a scale of "1" to "10", with "1" being "Not at all important" and "10" being "Extremely important." The factors that were rated, the percentage of riders who rated the factors as important (from 8-10), and the percentage of riders rating the factors as the most important ("10") are shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Ratings of the Importance of Service Delivery Elements

	% of Riders Rating Issue "8"-"10"	% Rated as a "10"
Getting to your destination on time	90%	69%
How safe you feel during the trip	86%	60%
The driver knows where he or she is going	84%	62%
The courtesy of the driver	84%	59%
Picking you up within the promised pickup window	83%	59%
How easy it is to make the reservation	82%	57%
How helpful the driver is	81%	53%
How comfortable you are while on the vehicle	81%	51%
How long the ride takes	76%	49%

The report indicated that these ratings did not vary significantly from month to month in the first quarter, so they were accepted as typical ratings for subsequent quarters.

Finally, the survey asked riders to think about their most recent trip and to indicate how satisfied they were with the same none service factors for this trip. A "1" to "10" scale was used again with "1" indicating "Not at all satisfied" and "10" meaning "Completely satisfied." This question was asked in both the first and second quarters of FY2008. The percentage of riders each quarter who indicated satisfaction with each of the service elements (meaning a rating of from "8" to "10") is shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Percent of Riders Indicating Satisfaction (Ratings from "8" to "10") With Each Aspect of MetroAccess Performance

	8-10 Ratings 1st Qtr, FY08	8-10 Ratings 2nd Qtr, FY08
Getting to your destination on time	88%	88%
How safe you feel during the trip	85%	87%
The driver knows where he or she is going	81%	82%
The courtesy of the driver	80%	82%
Picking you up within the promised pickup window	83%	80%
How easy it is to make the reservation	82%	80%
How helpful the driver is	79%	80%
How comfortable you are while on the vehicle	76%	76%
How long the ride takes	75%	75%

By comparing the ratings of importance to the rating as satisfaction, the report was then able to indicate the things that riders rated as most important and whether or not they were satisfied with performance in these areas. The overall conclusions for these first two quarters were:

- "Four of the top five priorities in terms of importance received four of the five highest performance ratings"
- "Courtesy and safety earned very strong scores, with nearly nine in ten customers of customers giving those two items ratings from '8' to '10.'"
- "Driver helpfulness, knowing where they are going, and getting to the destination on time are in a "second tier" of importance."
- "Comfort and ease of making a reservation are in the second tier of importance, but rank a bit lower in importance to customers."
- "Staying within the pickup window appears to be a relative weakness, while being fairly important to customers."
- "By contrast, trip length, also rating a relatively low performance score, is not as important to customers."

Results of the survey are periodically presented by WMATA to the E&D Advisory Committee.

The review team found the survey useful and informative. Some additional questions, like "Getting through on the phones to place a trip request" and "Getting through on the phones to check on my ride," rather than just "How easy it is to make the reservation" might be considered in the future. Overall, though, the survey seemed well designed and seems like a thorough and appropriate way to gauge customer satisfaction on an ongoing basis.

2.3 Information and Communications to Riders

The third question for this part of the review was "Is clear, concise and correct information provided to riders in the Customer Guide, the website, in eligibility determination letters and in responses to complaints?" To address this question, the review team reviewed materials available from the WMATA website such as the new Customer Guide and information pertaining to the switch to door-to-door service. Sample eligibility determination letters and complaint response letters were also examined.

Customer Guide and Website Information

The Customer Guide was revised as of June 30, 2008 and reflects changes to the service as a result the start of door-to-door service. Overall, the Customer Guide is well written, and is clear and concise in explaining the MetroAccess service. The material specific to door-to-door service is also well written and clearly states the responsibilities of the customer and the drivers. A review of the other documents on the website indicated they were also clearly written and easy to understand.

A number of other documents are also available via the WMATA website. These include items such as Frequently Asked Questions, information on fares, free ride program, the application for service and eligibility requirements and the Customer Bill of Rights. The documents all appear to be clearly written and understandable.

Excellent information appears to have been developed and communicated to riders about the recent change to door-to-door service. In addition to holding two public forums to explain the new policy and to get feedback, a special newsletter explaining door-to-door service was developed, sent to riders and posted on the WMATA website.

Eligibility Letters

Copies of sample letters sent to individuals who apply for MetroAccess service were obtained and reviewed. This included letters:

- acknowledging receipt of applications and asking applicants to call to schedule an interview ("Application received" letter)
- informing applicants if the applications received were incomplete ("Incomplete" letter)
- granting "temporary presumptive eligibility" once a completed application is received ("Presumptive" letter)
- informing applicants who fail to call to schedule an interview and that their application is now incomplete and a new application must be submitted ("Unable to contact" letter)
- informing applicants they had been determined unconditional eligibility ("Approved" letter)

- informing applicants they had been determined conditionally eligible ("Conditional" letter)
- informing applicants they had been found not eligible ("Not eligible" letter)
- informing riders that their eligibility will expire in 60 days and reminding them to reapply to be recertified ("60 day" letter)
- informing riders that their eligibility will expire in 30 days (second notice) and reminding them to reapply to be recertified ("30 day" letter)
- Letters alerting riders that their eligibility has expired and that they need to reapply ("Eligibility expired" letter

Overall, the letters were clear and concise and adequately transmit the information intended. A few suggested changes are provided for WMATA's consideration.

- The current "Unable to Contact" letter includes the statement that "We have not heard from you in the past two weeks since our last letter was mailed to you, therefore we are unable to proceed with your eligibility determination." We would suggest that this be re-worded to something like "A letter was sent to you on __(date)__. That letter requested that you call within 14 days to schedule an in-person interview and assessment. Since we have not heard from you, we have stopped the processing of your application. If you still wish to be considered for MetroAccess service, you must submit a new application…."

- The "Conditional" letter informs applicants that WMATA determined their mobility device to be larger than 30 inches wide, 48 inches long, or more than 600 pounds when occupied. The letter does not, however explain why this is an issue. We would suggest that a sentence be added to the end of the first paragraph—something like "To ensure safe travel given the limitations of our equipment and service, it is WMATA's policy to not transport individuals using mobility devices or wheelchairs which exceed these dimensions and/or weight."

- The "Not eligible" letter starts out by telling applicants that they are "fixed route eligible" and then proceeds to tell them they are not eligible for MetroAccess service. Because some applicants may be confused by this, we would suggest that the first paragraph of this letter simply state that "Based on your application, assessment, and any applicable professional follow-up, it has been determined that you are not eligible for MetroAccess service because your disability does not prevent you from independently using Metrobus and Metrorail services." An appropriate encouragement to use fixed route services is then contained in the third paragraph of this letter.

- WMATA should consider adding a paragraph about the right of the applicant to appeal the decision to the "Conditional" letter. This paragraph could be similar to the one in the "Not eligible" letter. Information about the appeal process is attached to the "Conditional" letter, but the letter does not specifically cite the right to appeal and indicate that a summary of the process is attached.

Responses to Complaints

As detailed in Section 1.4 of this report, when complaints are received, responses are provided in the same manner that the complaint was provided to WMATA. That is, complaints provided via telephone are answered by telephone, complaints made by letter receive a response by letter and complaints received via email receive a response by email. The majority of complaints are received by telephone and the majority of responses are therefore also by telephone. The review of the complaint process (see Section 1.4) indicated that most complaints are thoroughly investigated and the findings of those investigations are then communicated to complainants. In some cases, though, detailed information about the causes of problems and actions being taken to address them is not developed. In these cases, complainants are sent an apology and free ride tickets, but the response does not communicate specific findings or actions to be taken. The review indicated that internal investigations by MV dispatch was an area that needed particular improvement. It was also noted that a new position was being created in the dispatch area to improve complaint investigations related to this part of the operation. The detail in complaint responses should improve as this part of the investigation process is strengthened.

2.4 Accessible Information

The last question in this part of the review was “Is information consistently provided in accessible formats to those who need it (i.e., for customers with visual impairments)?”

The issue of providing information in accessible formats was discussed with the Assistant General Manager, ACCS. It was learned that WMATA has recently issued an agency-wide policy and instructions on this issue. A copy of the new policy and instructions is provided as Attachment D.

The new policy and instruction makes clear the obligation that WMATA has to provide information in accessible formats upon request. The new policy also makes each department responsible for meeting this obligation and directs each department to develop procedures for implementing the policy.

For the MetroAccess service, it was noted that several key service documents can be found on the website in portable document format (pdf) as well as text format. Text format makes it easier for speech recognition software to work. The documents that are available in text (.txt) format are:

- MetroAccess ID Card Policy
- Door-to-Door Fact Sheet
- MetroAccess Customer Guide
- Access Matters Newsletter
- Monthly Operations Performance Report

It should also be noted that the Customer Guide is available on the website in audio (mp3) format—meaning that it could be downloaded to any mp3 device.

Beyond the information available on the website, staff at the Office of MetroAccess indicated that they provide information in accessible formats in response to individual rider requests. They do not, however, maintain a master list of riders who have asked for accessible information in the past. Therefore, large mailings to all riders will generate standard print material that is sent to all riders, including those who may have indicated a need for accessible information in the past.

Staff indicated that they are exploring ways to utilize information in the Trapeze system about individual rider needs for information in accessible formats. Applicants for MetroAccess are asked if they would like information sent to them in accessible formats as part of the eligibility determination process. Responses to this question are captured and are in the master rider database. WMATA is exploring whether the information in the rider database can be used to automatically generate appropriate communications when letters are prepared using the Trapeze system.

It is recommended that WMATA continue to explore options for using the information currently in the Trapeze system. Even if the information in the rider database cannot be used to automatically format letters and information appropriately, it should be possible to generate a report that lists all of the eligible riders who have indicated a desire to have information to be sent in an alternate, accessible format. WMATA should consider creating such a master list. As new riders are made eligible and current riders recertified, the list could be updated. Then, when information is sent to riders, this master list could be used to identify which riders need to have the information sent in accessible formats.

3 Policy and Planning

The third area of focus of the review was on the processes and instruments used by WMATA to plan for and administer the MetroAccess service. Three key questions were posed for the review. These were:

- How could the next contract be structured to improve service quality and monitoring?
- Is adequate planning being done to address the future demand for paratransit service?
- Is MetroAccess adequately funded and has a dedicated funding source been identified?

Following are data, observations and findings related to these questions.

3.1 Service Design and Future Contract Considerations

The current service delivery structure for MetroAccess service could be termed a "turnkey operator/broker." MV Transportation is the single contractor to WMATA and is responsible for all major functions of daily operations—including trip reservations, scheduling, dispatching, and vehicle operations. MV Transportation also directly operates most of the service, but also contracts out for the delivery of some of the service. At the time of the review, MV Transportation subcontracted with four "dedicated" service providers plus several "non-dedicated" service providers. The dedicated service providers—Battles, Challenger, Diamond and Metro Health Tech—operated vehicles that were dedicated solely to the MetroAccess service. They hired, trained and supervised the drivers, managed the daily pullout, maintained the vehicles, and in some cases provided vehicles to supplement the WMATA-owned fleet. The non-dedicated providers operated services in vehicles that were not dedicated entirely to the MetroAccess service and on which other riders might be accommodated. The non-dedicated providers include taxi companies as well as van operators serving local human service agency programs.

For the first five months of calendar 2008, about 74% of all MetroAccess trips were provided by dedicated service providers. Another 20% were provided by non-dedicated providers serving local human service agency programs. The remaining 6% of trips were provided by non-dedicated taxi providers.

At the time of the review, MV Transportation directly operated 344 of the 535 dedicated provider weekday runs (which suggests about 64% of the dedicated service) out of their Beltsville, Capital Heights and Fairfax garages. The four dedicated subcontractors operated about 191 dedicated weekday runs (roughly 36% of the dedicated service).

MV Transportation is paid a fixed cost plus a variable rate for the operation of the service. Some costs, including the operation of the call center, are reimbursed on a fixed cost basis. Variable costs associated with dedicated service, including most

vehicle operating/dedicated service provider costs, are reimbursed on a per hour basis. A "blended" per hour rate" is used, which is the average of all service provider rates. WMATA reimburses MV Transportation based on this blended rate. MV Transportation then pays subcontractors using their actual rates. Non-dedicated agency van service providers are paid per trip, with MV Transportation paid a "blended" rate and then paying subcontractors based on actual rates. Non-dedicated taxi costs are reimbursed on a per mile basis, and are a straight pass-through.

Key Issues to Consider in Next Contract

Based on information collected for this review, there appear to be several key issues that either impacted service quality in the past and were addressed or remain as challenges. These issues should be considered by WMATA as it prepares for future MetroAccess service procurements.

Staffing Adjustments in the Call Center

It appears that there were staffing issues in the call center for some time after the start of the current contract. These issues were addressed with contract modifications negotiated and signed in August of 2007. Because call center costs are part of the fixed cost and not the variable rate, contract modifications appear to be necessary to increase the number of reservationists, schedulers, dispatchers and other staff.

It is recommended that WMATA consider a contract structure that allows staffing levels in the call center to be adjusted as demand changes. As the number of trips per day increases and the number of calls increase, the contractor should be able to increase reservations, scheduling and dispatch staff without going through a time-consuming contract modification process.

This might be done by treating some call center costs as fixed. These might include the facility, utilities, building insurance and general management. Other call center costs, such as reservationist, scheduler, and dispatcher costs might then be paid on a variable rate basis. Staffing levels could automatically be adjusted as the number of trips increases. The required level of staffing could then be determined based on performance or service standards. For example, a requirement to meet telephone hold time standards would determine the number of reservationists, WMR agents, and other staff that handle calls from riders. The contract then might specify a maximum number of runs per scheduler FTE. And a maximum number of runs per dispatch FTE could be included.

As an alternative to using variable reimbursement to allow call center staffing to meet demand, the contract could call for quarterly reviews of demand and staffing levels in the call center. Again, certain performance and staffing standards could be identified. Trip demand and actual performance could then be reviewed every three to six months and contract modifications processed to allow for appropriate staffing adjustments.

Whichever method is used, it is recommended that the next contract address the need to make ongoing and frequent adjustments to call center staffing to adequately manage the number of trips requested and provided.

Call Center and Service Operations Improvements

As detailed in Section 1 of this report, WMATA and MV Transportation have made several positive improvements in the structure and functioning of the call center. These include:

- The establishment of the Where's My Ride? Unit
- The establishment of the No-Show Desk
- Improvements in call center supervision
- The use of LED displays to assist with hold time monitoring and trip dispatching
- Adding MDTs to non-dedicated service provider vehicles

To ensure that these improvements are not lost in any future contracts, these effective operating improvements and approaches should be included in future RFPs and contracts.

Revised Travel Time Standard and Guidance on Scheduling System Parameters

The current contract sets a single maximum travel time of 90 minutes. In response, the service provider has set the travel time parameter in the scheduling system to be a 90 minute maximum. As discussed in Section 1 of this report, this 90 minute maximum can contribute to circuitous routing for shorter trips, can lead to very early pick-up time solutions when booking trips based on an appointment time, and can contribute to very early drops-offs.

To address these potential issues, WMATA should reconsider its travel time standard and include a revised standard in the new contract. As recommended in Section 1 of this report, the standard for ADA compliance purposes should be that trips should be comparable to fixed route travel times, including time required to get to and from fixed route stops and stations. For operational purposes, this compliance standard should then be translated into a travel time matrix that established maximum ride times based on direct ride times for trips of various lengths.

On-Time Drop-Off Standard

It is also recommended that the new contract contain an on-time drop-off standard in addition to the current on-time pick-up standard. The on-time standard should be based on a drop-off window (e.g., zero minutes late and no more than 30 minutes early) to help ensure that riders get to appointments on-time and also are not dropped-off excessively early.

Under the current contract structure, schedulers and dispatchers are focused on making all pick-ups on-time, but may not be focused on getting riders to appointments on-time.

This is to be expected if on-time performance standards and associated incentives and penalties only address pick-ups. A singular focus on pick-ups can contribute to circuitous routing (i.e., diverting vehicles from reasonable routs to make additional pick-ups on-time) as well as very early or late arrivals for appointments.

On-time drop-off Incentives and penalties, commensurate with the on-time pick-up incentives and penalties, should also be established and included in the contract.

Clarification of the Definition of No-Shows and Missed Trips

As detailed in Section 1 of this report, there have been some issues with the definition and reporting of no-shows and missed trips. Some trips that were not taken by riders when the vehicles arrived late have been recorded and reported as no-shows. In recent months, WMATA and MV Transportation have worked to clarify the definition, tracking and reporting of no-shows and missed trips. The new definitions and reporting requirements should be included in future contracts.

Emphasis on the Provision of a Stable, Experienced and Efficient Workforce

This review identified high employee turnover as a remaining challenge. Post-training turnover among drivers appears to be about 110% per year. Turnover among the reservations staff is about 121% per year. Turnover among dispatchers is about 87% per year.

These high turnover rates can affect the experience, quality and effectiveness and productivity of employees and the overall service. They can also affect the final service costs that will be paid by WMATA. If WMATA continues to reimburse service providers on a per hour basis (which is recommended), a stable, quality workforce that is more productive and can meet service demand with fewer vehicles and fewer vehicle-hours of service than an inexperienced, less productive workforce. This can have a significant impact on total cost. For example, a workforce that can deliver service at 1.5 trips per hour rather than 1.2 trips per hour can deliver the same number of trips with 25% fewer vehicle hours. This can mean a 25% savings in variable costs.

It is recommended that the new contract stress WMATA's desire to hire a contractor or contractors that will recruit, train and retain a stable, experienced and quality workforce. There are several ways that this might be achieved. These are:

- Including the likelihood of having a stable, experienced and quality workforce as one of the proposal evaluation criteria, assigning significant points to this criteria, requiring that detailed wage and fringe benefit information be provided as well as descriptions of programs that will be implemented to assure good recruitment and retention, and then grading proposals using this information.
- Setting standards for the maximum level of post-training, ***voluntary*** annual turnover and establishing incentives and penalties related to these standards. Note that if this approach is used, only voluntary turnover should be considered. WMATA would not want to encourage contractors to weaken employee

performance standards and avoid needed terminations to meet an established standard.
- Establishing a livable wage standard and requiring that it be met.

In addition to provisions that ensure a more stable, experienced service delivery workforce, WMATA should consider contract requirements to ensure stable management. This review identified some issues with high turnover in mid-level and upper-level managers. Turnover in these positions can contribute to instability in operations.

One approach for ensuring more stable management might be to include penalties in the contract for the reassignment of key managers without WMATA approval. While WMATA cannot expect to prevent managers from voluntarily resigning, and should not want to prevent appropriate terminations, it would be reasonable to ask for a long-term commitment from key management staff. This commitment should include not transferring key managers to other operations within the company. A monetary penalty for doing this could be set as a way to discourage this practice.

More Specific Information On Fleet Capacity and Vehicle Acquisition

The RFP used to procure the current service appears to indicate a shared responsibility for the provision of vehicles needed to provide dedicated service. It indicated that a fleet of 118 existing vehicles would be provided to the contractor by WMATA. It then indicated that the contractor was to procure additional vehicles needed in dedicated service. While vehicles were to be procured by the contractor, the cost of vehicles was to be billed through to WMATA with title then transferring to WMATA at the end of the contract. The RFP also indicated a “maximum” spare ratio of 12%, but did not specify a minimum spare ratio.

It is our understanding that there may have been some issues with initial estimated of fleet requirements that contributed to an initial shortage of vehicles. Also, over the course of the contract WMATA has determined that it could be financially beneficial to purchase vehicles directly rather than through the contractor. Recent fleet purchases have been made directly by WMATA.

In any new RFP and contract, fleet needs and responsibilities for quickly obtaining additional vehicles, if needed, should be carefully considered. It is also recommended that a minimum as well as a maximum spare ratio should be specified.

Increased Monitoring of All Aspects of the Operation

As noted in Section 1 of this report, WMATA has significantly improved the monitoring of MetroAccess services in recent years. This includes monitoring by WMATA staff as well as additional required monitoring by the contractor. It is recommended that the new contract incorporate requirements to continue these efforts. Among the contractor monitoring that should be required is:

- Random ongoing verification of the accuracy of data reconciliation performed by the prime contractor
- Random, ongoing verification by the prime contractor of the accuracy of any data reconciliation performed by subcontractors
- Ongoing review and verification of subcontractor trip records and billings
- Random, ongoing monitoring of a sample of all types of calls (reservations, WMR, etc.) to ensure compliance with established procedures and to ensure employee performance
- Random, ongoing monitoring by each subcontractor of its driver performance
- Additional random, ongoing monitoring by the prime contractor of subcontractor driver performance
- Periodic reviews by the prime contractor of all service provider fleets to check vehicle condition, compliance with required maintenance practices, and the adequacy of maintenance records.
- Periodic, unannounced fleet inspections by the prime contractor
- Periodic reviews by the prime contractor of employee records to ensure compliance with hiring pre-qualifications, background checks, and post-hiring training

Less Concentration of Service in a Single Company

Finally, it was observed that a large part of the operation is being performed by a single company. MV Transportation now operates the call center as well as about 64% of the dedicated service delivery. This concentration of such a large part of the operation in a single company could make future transitions or future corrections to service issues more difficult.

Given the size and complexity of the WMATA area and the MetroAccess service, it is recommended that WMATA consider ways to involve multiple companies in the provision of MetroAccess service. This might include requiring that a more significant portion of the service delivery be contracted out rather than operated by the broker. Or, it could involve having one contractor operate the call center and separate contractors operate the service.

WMATA could also improve the “diversification” of the service by having one contractor to operate the call center and perform service monitoring and separate contractors to deliver the service. This model is used successfully in several of the largest cities in the country, including New York City, Seattle, WA, Portland, OR, and Denver, CO.

Payment of Service Providers Based on Actual Rather than Blended Rates

If a structure with multiple contractors, rather than a single contractor, is pursued, payment could be made to each provider based on actual costs rather than on “blended” rates. Payment based on actual rates would allow for more emphasis on service quality.

Under the current blended-rate structure, an incentive is created to assign work to the lowest-cost contractor—not necessarily the contractor with the best service quality. This can also force subcontractors to lower service quality and cut costs to be the lowest-cost, preferred provider. This can result in substandard vehicle maintenance, low driver compensation, workforce issues, and other service problems.

It is important to emphasize that this review did not find that this was necessarily happening under the current contract. It is, however, a dynamic created by the current contract structure that should be considered to possible avoid future problems.

3.2 Planning for Future Demand

The second review question in the policy and planning area was "Is adequate planning being done to address the future demand for paratransit service?"

During the on-site review, the review team interviewed the Assistant General Manager, ACCS about the subject of planning for future demand. It was noted that a consultant was engaged in 2007 to conduct a detailed analysis of MetroAccess demand and that a report had been finalized and issued in December 2007.[2] The report was provided to the review team and the methodology was evaluated. The methodology appeared rigorous and appropriate and the demand estimates appeared reasonable.

It was noted that, because the study had not been completed, WMATA relied on prior demand trends to estimate the demand for FY2008. Based on the historical trends, WMATA estimated and planned for an 8% growth in demand in FY2008. In fact, demand for MetroAccess service increased by 16% in FY2008.

Starting in FY2009 and in future years, WMATA indicated it will consider the demand estimates developed in the December 2007 consulting report. The estimates from the consulting report are provided in Table 3.1. Separate estimates were developed for door-to-door (DTD) service and for "base service," the prior policy of curb-to-curb service. Lower, Central and Upper forecast were developed for each service type and year.

For FY2009, which began on July 1, 2008, WMATA is assuming and has planned and budgeted for a 14.9% increase in demand. It was explained that this estimate was made before the implementation of DTD service and was based on the Lower Forecast "Base service" estimate from the study. With the implementation of DTD service, this estimate is now slightly higher than the Lower Forecast for DTD service and is halfway between the Lower Forecast and the Central Forecast for FY2009 assuming DTD service.

[2] HDR/HLB Decision Economics, Inc. *Paratransit Demand Statistical Analysis and Policy Scenario Analysis*, Final Report, December 2007, page 22.

Table 3.1. Percentage Increases In MetroAccess Demand Estimated In December 2006 Demand Study

Fiscal Year	Lower Forecast	Central Forecast	Upper Forecast
2008 (DTD)	12.0%	13.2%	14.2%
2008 (Base service)	13.7%	14.6%	15.6%
2009 (DTD)	14.5%	15.3%	16.3%
2009 (Base service)	14.9%	16.0%	17.1%
2010 (DTD)	10.6%	12.4%	14.2%
2010 (Base service)	11.1%	12.7%	14.6%
2011 (DTD)	7.6%	9.2%	11.4%
2011 (Base service)	7.4%	9.3%	11.7%
2012 (DTD)	7.4%	9.4%	11.9%
2012 (Base service)	7.4%	9.1%	11.4%
2013 (DTD)	6.6%	8.4%	11.6%
2013 (Base service)	6.7%	9.0%	12.2%

As indicated in Table 3.1, fairly significant annual increases in demand are expected for MetroAccess. To better meet the increasing need for transportation, WMATA indicated that it is pursuing a multi-modal strategy. This includes improvements in accessible fixed route service as well as increases in MetroAccess service. It also includes important support services like travel training, which can provide individuals with new travel options. Continued efforts to develop a "family of services" that can better meet the needs of individuals with disabilities is recommended. Such an approach is not only necessary for meeting to expected demand, but is consistent with the broader goals of the ADA.

3.3 MetroAccess Funding

The last question in this part of the review was "Is MetroAccess adequately funded and has a dedicated funding source been identified?"

Funding for MetroAccess, including vehicle fleet plans, was discussed in the interview with the Assistant General Manager, ACCS noted above.

Audited actual figures for MetroAccess administrative and operating costs for FYs 03-07 were obtained. This cost information is provided in Table 3.2.

Funding for the service is provided through the Authority's budgeting process. The approved budget for FY2008 provides $62,829,900, an increase of 8.7% from the prior year. The proposed budget for FY2009 is $68,250,400. The budgeting process is also being driven by the requirements of the recent legal settlement which required a budget increase of at least $4 million.

Table 3.2. MetroAccess Expenses, 2003 through 2007

Fiscal Year	Actual Total Expenses
2003	$34,467,400
2004	$38,109,100
2005	$42,262,100
2006	$52,280,300
2007	$57,819,200

Source: Approved annual WMATA budgets.

For MetroAccess, the budgeting process uses projections of demand as well as the rate schedule set in the contract with the private provider since this is the major cost component of MetroAccess expenses. This process has to account for two different rate increases since the fiscal year spans two calendar years, with a calendar year being the time unit for the contract terms. Budgeting looks at the contractor's fixed costs, which have annual rate increases, as well as the variable costs, which also have rate increases stipulated in the contract. These latter costs relate predominately to the number of vehicle service hours provided, which may vary depending on demand levels.

Significantly, for the first time, it is reported that WMATA has provided a separate capital budget for MetroAccess vehicles and related capital with the FY2009 budget. Previously, such capital purchases used funding from various sources, including operating funds through the contractor and JARC funds which provided capital for new vehicles in FY2008. This is a significant change for the Authority, and one which makes the budgeting and purchasing of MetroAccess vehicles more structured and formal. This will also be a more cost-effective approach, since purchasing vehicles through a contractor involves a mark-up by the private entity. It is also reported that additional savings are being realized through the practice of purchasing vehicles off the Virginia state contract. It is estimated that the savings realized through the use of the Virginia state contract is about $2,000 per vehicle.

The capital budget includes three years of funding for the MetroAccess fleet; however it is important to point out that funding is only approved for FY2009, as WMATA's Board must approve each year's capital budget. This means that the current capital budget, for FY2009, has been approved with the line item of $5 M for the purchase of up to 100 MetroAccess vehicles with associated technology equipment (MDTs, Drive Cam, etc.). This funding is all local funding from the WMATA compact jurisdictions, and as such, is not included in the Authority's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).

Additionally, it was reported that JARC funds have been made available to purchase 25 vehicles for FY2009. Additional WMATA capital funding is also being pursued to add

another 15 expansion vehicles. Together, these funding sources should provide for 40 expansion vehicles. This represents an 8.1% growth in the fleet in FY 2009.

The planned replacement of 100 vehicles in FY2009 seems reasonable given a 493 vehicle current fleet and assuming a five year useful life for vehicles. The number of expansion vehicles should help with the spare ratio and should be sufficient to start FY 2009. More expansion vehicles will be needed in FY 2009, though, if demand grows at the expected rate of 14.9% that year.

In terms of dedicated funding, WMATA remains the only major transit authority in the country without a dedicated funding source, which makes it very difficult to accomplish long range planning and budgeting. This lack of a dedicated funding source has been the subject of various recent reports, including by the Brookings Institute.[3]

The US House of Representatives has approved dedicated funding of $1.5 billion for WMATA for over ten years, if the three jurisdictions of DC, Maryland and Virginia also provide dedicated matching funds. The jurisdictions have done so, yet the legislation is now being blocked in the Senate, much to the frustration of local elected leaders and others in the local jurisdictions who support dedicated funding for WMATA.

Funding for MetroAccess is a commitment for WMATA, and to the extent that funding is provided for fixed route service, so, too, must funding be provided for ADA paratransit to ensure complementary service, according to WMATA. While this may not be termed *dedicated*, funding for ADA paratransit is an integral part of the Authority's budgeting and funding process.

[3] Puentes, Robert (2004). "Washington's Metro: Deficits by Design", The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program.

4 Eligibility Determinations

Finally, TPB requested that the review consider the process used by WMATA to determine who is "ADA paratransit eligible," and therefore eligible for MetroAccess service. Four questions related to the eligibility determination process were posed:

- How can the eligibility process be streamlined so the determinations don't take as long?
- Are customers made aware of being able to use MetroAccess if the eligibility determination is not made within 21 days?
- How will consumers be involved in changes to the eligibility determinations and what is the status on these planned changes?
- Will transition options and travel training be offered to current MetroAccess customers who are determined ineligible for service?

Information obtained about the eligibility determinations process is presented below.

4.1 Recommendations for Streamlining the Process

To use the MetroAccess service, individuals must apply and be determined "ADA paratransit eligible." Specific criteria for ADA paratransit eligibility are included in the ADA regulations promulgated by the U. S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) implementing the transportation provisions of the ADA. Eligibility is based on a functional inability to use fixed route service, due to a disability or disabilities.

Individuals seeking ADA paratransit eligibility must first complete an application form and return it to WMATA's Eligibility Certification Office. Staff review the application for completeness and return it if there is vital information that is missing (e.g., a completed professional verification of disability). If incomplete, applications are returned with cover letters indicating that it must be completed and resubmitted.

When completed applications are received, letters are sent to applicants indicating that they need to call the Eligibility Certification Office to arrange an in-person interview and functional assessment. WMATA has contracts with two rehabilitation and health care agencies—the National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH) and the Southeast Hospital (SH)—to conduct interviews and assessments. NRH has seven locations throughout the service area where interviews and assessments are conducted. SH has one location. Eligibility Certification Office staff receive information from these contractors on days and times when staff capacity is available. Working with this information, WMATA schedules interviews and assessments on the next available day and time and at the location that is convenient to the applicant.

If two weeks have passed since applicants are sent a letter asking that they call to schedule an interview and they have not yet called, a follow-up call is made by the

Eligibility Certification Office staff. If contact is not made, a letter is sent saying that their applications are now considered invalid and a new application must be submitted. WMATA staff noted that while the letter says the application is invalid, they will still hold applications for 60 days from the date they are considered complete. If applicants call within this time, they are not required submit new applications.

Once the interviews/assessments are conducted, results are returned to the Eligibility Certification Office. The results are reviewed along with information in the application form and a determination of eligibility is made. Final letters indicating the results of the determination are then sent by the Eligibility Certification Office.

The main issue related to eligibility determinations to be examined as part of this review was the amount of time required to complete the eligibility determination process. The USDOT ADA regulations requires that presumptive eligibility be granted if eligibility determinations are not made within 21 calendar days of the receipt of a "completed application." Determinations appeared to be taking much longer than 21 days. Recommendations for streamlining the process were requested. In addition, there was interest in assuring that individuals are aware of their right to service if the process takes more than 21 calendar days.

The review team discussed processing time issues with WMATA staff during the on-site visit. It was confirmed that in recent months it can take several months to process applications. The main issue cited in the delays was the lack of staff capacity provided by NRH and SH at the various interview sites. WMATA staff indicated that the next available times for interviews are typically 2-3 months from the day that applicants call to schedule. To address this issue, it was noted that all applicants who submit a completed application now receive a letter granting "temporary presumptive eligibility" until the interview/assessment can be conducted and a final determination is made. This letter is sent within 21 days of the receipt of completed applications. A copy of a sample letter is provided in Attachment E.

Based on the information gathered, the following recommendations are made for streamlining the process:

Develop dedicated assessor staff, either at contractor location(s) or in-house, so that interview and assessment capacity is assured.

As noted above, the main issue with the timeliness of eligibility determinations is that WMATA is dependent on its contractors to specify the staff capacity and time available to conduct interviews and assessments. The contractor staff appear to share other duties and are not available for set days and times. In most other systems where interviews and assessments are part of the eligibility determination process, dedicated staff is provided by contractors or provided in-house by the transit agency. WMATA should consider either revising its current contracts for interview/assessment assistance, or hiring qualified individuals to do interviews and assessments in-house.

To be cost-effective, WMATA will likely have to reduce the number of locations where interviews and assessments are conducted. It would likely be too costly to place dedicated staff at all eight of the current interview/assessment locations. While fewer sites will mean longer trips for applicants to interview sites, and more cost to WMATA to provide transportation to the centralized site(s), it will allow for dedicated staff in each area. This will allow WMATA to plan interview/assessment capacity to meet demand and will assure that this capacity is available. Having fewer locations should also improve the consistency of determinations.

It is recommended that WMATA review interview/assessment capacity needs in the future, and determine the number of site(s) that will allow for a balance of adequate capacity, cost-effective determinations, reasonable transportation costs, and customer convenience.

Attempt to contact the individual when a completed application is received in addition to sending a letter asking that they call to schedule an interview.

Another way to streamline the process would be to have Eligibility Certification Office staff attempt to contact applicants by phone to schedule interviews rather than sending out letters instructing applicants to call. Letters could be sent if a call is attempted and contact is not made.

It is important to note that this will not result in much improvement, though, until the staff capacity to conduct interviews/assessments is addressed. After a more expeditious process is developed, though, this should reduce processing time for many applicants by several days.

Simplify the recertification process.

It is recommended that WMATA consider asking assessors to not only indicate a recommendation for eligibility, but also indicate if applicants' functional abilities are likely to improve in the future when the initial interviews and functional assessment are conducted. WMATA should then track those applicants who are determined unconditionally eligible (meaning that they are not able to use fixed route services independently under any conditions) and whose functional ability is not expected to improve in the future. For these individuals, a simplified recertification process is recommended. That process should include a brief recertification form asking for updated contact information, updated information about mobility aids used, and asking if anything about their travel ability has changed since the last certification. Renewed professional verifications or repeat interviews/assessments should not be required. The recertification form should simply be used to update the files as needed and these individuals should be recertified.

Simplifying the recertification process will not only improve processing time for recertifications, it should also improve processing time for all applications. With fewer interviews and assessments required, WMATA will be able to focus available resources

on making new eligibility determinations in a more timely way. A simplified recertification process should also reduce the overall cost of eligibility determinations. Assuming that about 60-70% of all applicants are determined unconditionally eligible, and estimating that the functional abilities of about a third of these individuals will not improve in the future, about 20-23% fewer interviews and assessments can be expected in the future if this recommendation is implemented.

4.2 Rider Rights When Decisions Are Delayed

The second question regarding the eligibility determinations process was "Are customers made aware of being able to use MetroAccess if the eligibility determination is not made within 21 days?"

Given recent issues with timely determinations, WMATA has begun to grant "temporary presumptive eligibility" to all persons who have submitted a completed application. The letter that is sent indicates that temporary eligibility is being granted because of the ADA requirement to make determinations within 21 days of a completed application. This process appears to effectively protect the rights of applicants to receive service if determinations are not made within 21 calendar days.

The review team also examined application material and information on WMATA's website to see if the right to service after 21 days was mentioned in another other places. It did not appear to be included in the application materials or in the online information about MetroAccess.

Once WMATA has acted to reduce the application processing time, it is likely that "temporary presumptive eligibility" will no longer be automatically granted to all applicants. To ensure that information about the right to service after 21 days is communicated in the future, it is recommended that WMATA include this information in the "instructions" section of application forms. This information should also be included in the "MetroAccess eligibility requirements" section of the MetroAccess "Customer Guide" and in similar online locations that describe the eligibility determination process.

A finding that indicated that WMATA was not adequately informing applicants of the right to service after 21 days was included in the 2006 FTA review of the MetroAccess service.

4.3 Public Involvement in Process Changes

The third questions regarding eligibility determinations was "How will consumers be involved in changes to the eligibility determinations and what is the status on these planned changes?"

WMATA staff indicated to the review team that they intend to revise the eligibility determination process. A major goal of the revision will be to make the process more timely.

As of July 16, 2008, WMATA was in the process of hiring an Eligibility Coordinator to manage the process. A nationwide search was being conducted and it was hoped that an individual with significant experience in managing a successful ADA paratransit eligibility process from a system considered exemplary could be identified. Because WMATA wanted this person to be involved from the outset, the process to review and revise the current process had not been started. It was hoped that an Eligibility Coordinator would be hired by the end of the summer and that the review and revision of the current process could begin shortly after that time.

Given the importance of MetroAccess eligibility determinations and potential community interest in this issue, it is recommended that WMATA obtain significant community input on any new process changes. Process alternatives should be developed and considered with extensive input. A recommended new process should also consider community comments and suggestions. Extensive public information should be developed to explain any changes. The successful approach to communicating the recently implemented door-to-door service policy should be used as an example.

4.4 Transition Options and Travel Training

Finally, the review team was asked “Will transition options and travel training be offered to current MetroAccess customers who are determined ineligible for service?”

As indicated in Section 4.3 above, WMATA has not formally started the process of revising the current eligibility determination process. Therefore, decisions have not yet been made about the exact policies and procedures that will be included in any new, revised process. WMATA staff did indicate, though, that they understand the need for transition options and the importance and effectiveness of travel training. They indicated that these things would certainly be addressed in any new, revised eligibility process that is created.

As noted in Section 3.2 of this report, WMATA is pursuing a multi-modal strategy for better meeting the travel needs of riders with disabilities. Such an approach is important for meeting the expected growth in demand and also is consistent with the broader goals of the ADA. Travel training can be an effective support service that can provide individuals with increased travel options. National experience suggests that travel training is most effective when it is coordinated with the eligibility determination process. In addition to identifying the current abilities of applicants to use fixed route service, and the need for MetroAccess service, the eligibility process can be used to identify the potential of applicants to learn to use fixed route. Information about travel training and an offer to provide this service can then be made. It is recommended that WMATA and the community consider this type of coordination as part of the process to strengthens the current eligibility determination process.

Attachment A

Summary of Comments Regarding MetroAccess Service Received From Riders and Advocates, and Local Agency Staff Who Were Contacted

Rider, Agency and Stakeholder Input

As noted in the "Introduction" of this report, MetroAccess riders, community advocates and local agency staff were contacted for input on experiences with MetroAccess service. A total of 14 individuals were interviewed by phone. Input on key issues was also obtained at a "kick-off" meeting. Following is a general summary of the input received. It is important to note that this input represented the experiences, opinions and perceptions of the individuals contacted. It was not considered "definitive" in developing findings. It did, however, help focus the review efforts on issues that required particular attention. Many of the issues raised are addressed in this report. A few were outside the scope of the review. A complete summary of input received is provided, though, so that it can be considered by the TPB and WMATA.

- Several individuals indicated that, in their experience, the eligibility determination process was fair and accurate. Some commented, though, that a better understanding was needed of applicants with cognitive disabilities and psychiatric disabilities. It was noted that some applicants with cognitive disabilities may indicate that they can use fixed route service, but do not clearly indicate they cannot independently use fixed route. One individual noted that, in her experience, the in-person assessment was only a brief and general interview and it seemed the process could be more thorough.

- A number of people commented on the timeliness of the eligibility determination process. There was a general feeling that it could take a month or more to get an appointment for an interview/assessment. Most people indicated that they are still allowed to use the service if there are delays (through presumptive eligibility). One person noted confusion around recertification when there were delays. Even though he was made presumptively eligible, he continued to receive letters and calls saying his eligibility was expiring while he waited for an interview/assessment to be scheduled. A couple of people indicated that some riders with significant disabilities should not have to go through the recertification process and should be considered for longer term eligibility. A few people also indicated that they did not get notifed about the need to recertify.

- Mixed input was received on telephone hold times. Some individuals noted that hold times were reasonable and were two to five minutes at the most. Some indicated that hold times were longer just after the transition and had improved recently. Others indicated regularly experiencing hold times of 15-20 minutes or more. Concerns were also expressed about being placed on hold a second (or third) time when calling to check on a ride. A couple people indicated being disconnected while on these "secondary" holds.

- There was a general indication that riders were able to book trips both by appointment time or pick-up time. However, a number of individuals indicated that very early pick-up times are usually given if trips are booked by the appointment

time. Examples of pick-ups two to three hours before the appointment time were given for trips that were not that long in terms of distance. Most people commented favorably on the general trip reservation process, although a few cited a need for improved reservationist "telephone etiquette" or errors in the trip booking process.

- Several individuals indicated that inaccurate information is sometimes provided about the status of rides. Dispatchers sometimes provide general information indicating the vehicle will arrive shortly when the vehicle actually arrives much later and subsequent calls to re-check on the ride have to be made. One person indicated that dispatchers are sometimes rude and unprofessional.

- A few individuals expressed concern about scheduled times changing without their knowledge. One person indicated that this seems to happen with subscriptions trips as well as non-subscription trips. A desire to have steady, non-changing subscription trips was expressed to provide more consistency in daily routines. This was noted to be particularly important for riders with cognitive disabilities.

- Mixed responses were received regarding on-time performance. Some indicated good experiences. Others noted recent improvements and recent good experience. Others, though, indicated that trips are late 20-30% of the time. Several individuals indicated that vehicles arrive very early and then leave before the scheduled pick-up time. Several individuals also indicated that drop-offs can be very early and cited getting to destinations an hour or more before appointment times. One person indicated that on-time performance in the afternoon tends to be lower than in the morning. A couple of people cited same-day add-ons to scheduled runs as a cause of getting to appointments late.

- Several individuals indicated problems with pick-up connections. They noted that vehicles did not always arrive as scheduled and when they call to check on rides they are told the vehicle was there and they were marked as a no-show. Two persons with vision disabilities expressed particular concern with this issue. A couple of individuals also noted being marked as no-shows when vehicles arrived late or vehicles arrived and left too early.

- Several individuals indicated that most ride times are reasonable. Several also indicated, though, that rides times can sometimes be very long. Examples of rides that took two to three hours were cited. A couple individuals indicated that routing can be circuitous and that they sometimes go in an opposite direction or past their destination before being dropped-off.

- Several individuals indicated that most drivers are professional and helpful. Others indicated missed experiences, with some drivers being very good and others not being so good. A couple people noted that some drivers are inexperienced and do not seem to know the area. Others cited issues with drivers knowing how to properly secure riders who use wheelchairs. One person felt that drivers needed more training in working with riders with cognitive disabilities. A couple people also

mentioned issues with driver attitudes and a need for more sensitivity and customer service training. High turnover of drivers and poor attitudes due to job dissatisfaction were also mentioned.

- While most individuals felt the vehicles were in good condition, some indicated that there are older vehicles in the fleet that are not in good condition. Specific issues with air conditioners not working and securement equipment being dirty or missing were noted. A rough ride was mentioned by one person. A couple vehicle design issues were also raised. One person noted that on some vehicles, if there is more than one person using a wheelchair, one person has to be deboarded to allow the person behind then to get off. A lack of aisle space was also mentioned due to the positioning of some riders using wheelchairs.

- Some concern was expressed with the customer service/complaint process. Several individuals indicated no problems or no experience with the process, but others indicated that detailed follow-up is not always provided. One person estimated that a detailed response was received about two-thirds of the time, but that a general apology and free ride tickets are provided the rest of the time. Some concern was expressed about long hold times getting through to the customer service office. It was also noted that the office is only open weekdays and that there is no option to leave messages on the weekends. One person felt that staff in the office were apathetic. One person indicated that the process seems to have improved recently.

- All individuals felt that the public information provided by WMATA on the MetroAccess service was helpful and clear. Some concern was expressed, though, about getting information in accessible formats. One person indicated that his requests for accessible information have been responded to, but that sometimes there was a time delay. Two others noted that information automatically sent out to riders did not include sending information in accessible formats to those who WMATA should know need accessible information. One person indicated that they have not received accessible information when they specifically requested it.

- Finally, there was some concern expressed about the public input process and WMATA's E&D Committee. A few individuals contacted questioned the independence of the committee and expressed concern about the recent reconstitution of the committee. There was a sense that the process was too controlled by WMATA and longstanding members of the committee.

Attachment B

Reservation Agent Trip Booking Script

Reservation Agent Telephone Scripting

	February 11, 2008
Audience	MetroAccess Reservation Department
Description	Call Flow Script when reserving trips for MetroAccess Customers
	When customers call thru the IVR to schedule a trip(s), please refer to this job aid to walk you through the call flow process/steps to ensure that you manage and control your calls. ***NOTE: You must use "Thank you and "Please" after receiving information as well as asking for information from the customer.***
Step 1. *Greeting*	Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for calling MetroAccess
Step 2.	My name is _____; what day would you like to travel?
Step 3.	May I have your client Id number?
Step 4.	Ms. / Mr. _____can you please verify your address and telephone number?
Step 5. *Booking Information*	Will this be the address that you will be picked up from?
Step 6.	What entrance would you like to be picked up from? ***(Examples: front, side, back, Malls - food court or store name School & Hospitals - which building)***
Step 7.	What address would you like to go to? (a.) What kind of location is this? ***(Examples: Shopping Center, Hospital/doctor's office, bank, etc.)*** (b.) What entrance are you going to? ***(Examples: front, side, back, Malls - food court or store name School & Hospitals - which building)*** (c.) Do you have a telephone number # where you can be reached at this address?
Step 8.	(a) Do you use any mobility aids such as a cane, crutches, or oxygen? (b) Do you use a wheelchair?

Step 9.	Are you traveling with anyone or alone? (a) If **YES**, "Is that person traveling as your companion or PCA"? (b) If **NO,** continue to question 10.
Step 10.	Ms. / Mr. _____, do you have an appointment time you need to arrive at this location? (a) If **YES**, say 1. "May I suggest that you use this time as an appointment time to book your reservation to ensure that you arrive at your destination on time"? **OR** 2. "Do you have a specific time by which you need to arrive at this destination"? (b) If **NO,** say "What time would you like to be picked up? ***NOTE: Offer the first solution initially. If that solution is not acceptable by the customer, then offer the second solution only. Please make sure that you look at the weight for each solution.***
	Do you need to schedule a return trip? If **YES**, repeat steps 6 – 9 and 10b.
Step 12. ***Confirmation***	At this time I would like to verify your information to ensure that your reservation is correct. (a) You are requesting a reservation for DATE at TIME. You will be picked up from ADDRESS at LOCATION ***(front, side or back)***. The telephone number is _____. (b) You will be traveling to ADDRESS at LOCATION. (c) You are traveling with PCA, COMPANION, ETC and you need MOBILITY AIDS ***(if applicable).***
Step 13.	The available pick up time I have for you is _____am/pm; the driver can arrive as early as _____and as late as_____.
Step 14.	Ms. / Mr._____ your trip is scheduled for DATE at TIME and your confirmation number # is_____. Your second trip is scheduled for DATE at TIME. ***(Repeat for all trips).***
Step 15. ***Closing***	Is there anything else I can help or assist you with today? ***(If the answer is No, move on to Step 16).***
Step 16.	Thank you for calling Metro Access and have a nice day!

Attachment C

Detailed Findings of Review of Contract Oversight and Monitoring

This appendix provides details of the review of the contractor oversight and monitoring function. The consultant team went over each of the monitoring reports listed in Exhibit 1 and discussed its status and findings with the appropriate staff member that has responsibility for that aspect of monitoring. It was reported that any issues that are raised by the monitoring activities are brought to the attention of the Operations Manager and the Paratransit Program Manager, as well as the Director as appropriate.

1. On-Street Monitoring

- Documentation on this monitoring was reviewed for trips sampled in April 08. Trips on both dedicated and non-dedicated providers were monitored.
- During the month, of the 144 dedicated trips that were observed on the street, this task reviewed Trapeze data for 36 sampled trips, finding only very small discrepancies between observed times and reported time.
- According to the documentation, the variance was more present in vehicles without working Rangers (MDTs with AVL).
- During the month, of the 96 taxi trips observed, this task reviewed Trapeze data for 27 sampled trips.
- This documentation was differentiated by taxi company, finding that the reported information is accurate.
- It is noted that at least one of the taxi companies does not distinguish between arrive and depart times at the pick-up and drop off locations.

2. Audit Taxi Invoices to verify trip completed/performed status

- Available documentation on this monitoring effort (01-08) showed that a sample of 40 taxi trips were selected and compared to Trapeze records to verify trip status. Documentation showed that all trips were performed.
- For monitoring efforts conducted on April service, the contractor had provided its 1% audit of taxi invoices to WMATA, and WMATA's monitoring efforts checked a sample of those, with marks and notations made on the invoices sent by the contractor.
- Monitoring efforts found that the information on the sampled trips matched the information in Trapeze.

3. Audit taxi invoices to verify no-show/ covered no-show status

- The sampled invoices from April were also reviewed to verify no-show status and reporting.
- As above, this review saw the marks and notations on the invoices, with the monitoring efforts finding that the trips were coded correctly.

4. Audit taxi invoices to verify missed/ excessively late status

- WMATA staff has pulled the information needed for this monitoring effort for April trips, but the check has not been completed to-date.

5. Audit taxi invoices to compare times on trip ticket to times in Trapeze

- This review saw the documentation of this monitoring activity:
- April 16 was selected as the sample day.
- Vouchers (trip tickets) were sampled for each of the taxi providers, from 10 to 32, depending on the total vouchers for the company.
- For each of the taxi providers, WMATA indicated the consistency of the voucher times to the times in Trapeze, finding generally consistent data.
- For one of the providers, the documentation notes that there were few signatures.

6. Audit taxi invoices (for dedicated runs) to verify times in Trapeze/ rider signatures

- The review saw the documentation of this activity, with the selected sample day of April 18.
- Documentation shows that 38 trips were sampled on the selected day, and the reported times are consistent with Trapeze data however there were missing signatures.

7. Add-on and cancellation faxes to taxi providers

- This is a useful monitoring practice, according to WMATA.
- When this monitoring effort was first done, it was found that the contractor was not always following proper procedures. Since then, WMATA's review has found that proper procedures are being followed.
- The consultant team reviewed the sampled fax sheets that were used for the sample day of April 14 and saw WMATA's notations on the sheets that indicated WMATA's review and check of contractor compliance.

8. Non dedicated provider monitoring-We Care Adult Services

- Monitoring not done as originally planned as We Care director not willing to send list of clients for WMATA to check (cites Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act regulations), so WMATA is to send list of completed trips by client name to the director, who is to verify who came/did not come on the sampled day.
- Available documentation (from 01-08) showed that a list of clients for the sample day was sent to We Care, and that the agency staff verified attendance according to its different sites, finding one discrepancy, indicating a person counted as a rider but who did not attend the agency that day.
- This effort has not been completed for April.

9. Non-dedicated provider monitoring-SEEC

- Monitoring for this agency has been difficult given time lags in communication between WMATA and the agency, and requests for clarification by the agency concerning the need for the agency attendance information.

- According to the WMATA documentation, the agency has sent the necessary information for April and WMATA staff has gone through the listing, notating correspondence to contractor trip records.
- Findings thus far indicate that the agency shows more clients than appear on the contractor's listing of trips.
- Further work will be needed to investigate why there are differences.

10. Non-dedicated provider monitoring-ARC

- This agency has provided the requested information for April monitoring.
- Efforts for April's monitoring have not been completed, however this review saw WMATA's notations on the lists of agency clients, as efforts are underway to compare the agency lists to contractor records of trips provided.
- It was noted that efforts to monitor this agency's client trip histories are somewhat difficult given different ways that each of the agency's five sites records attendance.
- Available documentation (from 01-08) found more than 20 discrepancies between agency records and non-dedicated provider records from the contractor.

11. No-show with coordinates report

- It was reported that this is a useful report for monitoring purposes, showing no-shows and cancels at the door that are beyond the control of the rider.
- It is done by one of the service monitors.
- Available documentation (from 01-08) shows that on the sampled day, based on WMATA's review of Trapeze "tracker" notes, it appears that 12 out of the sample of 172 trips should not have been reported as rider no-shows.

12. Cancel/re-book report

- This is reportedly a very difficult and time-consuming monitoring report to complete, producing pages and pages of data and not providing what the intent of the report had been.
- WMATA is still working on this report to make it a useful monitoring resource.

13. Monitoring schedules report

- According to available documentation for the first month monitored (from 01-08), the review of the sample day assessed 100 trips, with 11 arriving before the "don't arrive before" time. None of these trips were the first trips on the runs.

14. Actual pull-out by route

- The sample day chosen for this monitoring effort was April 16 with more than 400 runs reviewed.
- This review saw the run sheets and marks made by WMATA to identify runs leaving early and late.

- WMATA efforts found very few runs that left early and none of these affected the first pick-up.
- These efforts found some runs that pulled out late but none affected the first pick-up.
- There has not been a formal summary of this effort yet.

15. Early/late report

- Available documentation of monitoring efforts for April shows that WMATA checked reconciled data from the Spider monthly early/late report and found data suggesting 256 late trips that were not included in the WMATA Summary data but were included in the early/late report.
- This issue was discovered in earlier monitoring efforts and the contractor has been tasked with ensuring that key data fields match. There is belief that there is a definitional issue with several of the data fields, so when the Summary is created, there may be mismatched definitions for the same fields and this may be the cause of the small differences in certain data fields.

16. Monitoring trip schedules report

- Based on documentation for the first sampled month (from 01-08), this monitoring report found the following: a 10% sample of trips was reviewed and all but 1 out of 542 in the sample were identical in terms of scheduled and requested time; 48 trips out of the 542 were more than 90 minutes long in travel time; from the sample, 105 trips had an appointment time and of these 6 were greater than 90 minutes; of the 105 trips with an appointment time, 14 trips were late and 44 trips were more than 30 minutes early. WMATA then took this information to the contractor, and reportedly there are current efforts to constrain some of the scheduling parameters, and in particular, ensure that the parameters focus on appointment times. Additionally, the contractor used some of this information in a training session for its dispatchers.

Additional, new reports

- Dispatch cancel query
    - This is a new report which WMATA is still working on.
    - Intent is to review a sample of trips and look for trips where the time cancelled is after the scheduled time, from 10 minutes after the scheduled time to after the end of the on-time window.

- Schedule change report
    - This is another new report.
    - This is an exception report, to be generated when the scheduled time is different than the negotiated time.
    - Since this is a rare occurrence, WMATA had to pull various sample days in April to find occurrences.
    - April 19 was found to have 5 trips with any difference between the negotiated and scheduled time, with 3 trips having a 15-minute difference.

Attachment D

WMATA Policy/Instruction On Providing Information in Accessible Formats

Attachment D

WMATA Policy/Instruction On Providing Information In Accessible Formats

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY
POLICY/INSTRUCTION

Subject	Classification	Lead	Date Approved	P/I Number
Producing and Issuing Materials in Accessible Formats for People with Disabilities	*Access Services*	*ACCS*	*3/7/2008*	*16.2.0*

1.00 POLICY

1.01 It is the policy of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (Metro) that all circulated materials be made available in alternative formats to people with disabilities upon request. In addition, all Metro public meetings of any size must be accessible to people with disabilities. This is consistent with the intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other federal requirements.

2.00 PURPOSE

2.01 The purpose of this Policy/Instruction (P/I) is to establish and maintain a uniform protocol for when and how to provide materials in accessible formats upon request and for when and how public meetings must be accessible for people with disabilities.

3.00 SCOPE

3.01 This P/I applies to all Metro departments and offices.

3.02 This P/I applies to all Metro circulated materials, whether made available to the public or to employees. This includes, for example, all Metro public hearing notices, timetables, brochures, newsletters, and staff notices.

3.03 All Metro public meetings of any size must be accessible to people with disabilities.

4.00 DEFINITIONS

4.01 ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

4.02 ACCS – Department of Access Services

4.03 ADAP – Office of ADA Programs

5.00 RESPONSIBILITY

5.01 It is the responsibility of all employees to adhere to the ADA and other federal requirements.

5.02 All Metro departments and offices are responsible for compliance with these policies.

5.03 The Assistant General Manager (AGM) of ACCS or his designee has overall responsibility for directing Metro compliance with the ADA.

5.04 The General Manager, Deputy General Manager, Officers, Assistant General Managers, Office Directors, managers and supervisors are responsible for and will be accountable for ensuring that these policies are carried out.

5.05 ADAP is responsible for providing guidance to all Metro departments and offices, and ensuring compliance with this P/I.

6.00 PROCEDURES

6.01 This P/I will be kept current to maintain approved and established procedures for providing materials in accessible formats upon request and for ensuring that public meetings are accessible to people with disabilities. Where it is necessary to revise the P/I to incorporate amendments to the ADA or its implementing regulations, revisions will be made within a reasonable time from the effective date of the amendments.

6.02 Making Circulated Materials Available in Alternative Formats upon Request

6.02.1 Metro materials will be provided in the format most usable to the person making the request. These may include, but are not limited to: large print, audiocassette, Braille, electronic file on computer disk or compact disc, or e-mail. Metro employees with disabilities also may request documents in an accessible format.

6.02.2 In selecting alternative formats, Metro must provide the format requested unless another method is equally effective. For example, a person requesting a Braille document should be provided the document in Braille unless another method, such as an electronic file when that person has software to convert the file into Braille or sound, will be equally effective at communicating the information.

6.02.3 It is permissible to require people with disabilities to make an advance request for documents in accessible formats as long as reasonable notice is given. Furthermore, documents announcing public meetings, or those distributed or displayed at meetings must be available in accessible formats upon request.

6.02.4 Metro will take steps to provide information to the general public about the availability of materials in alternate formats. Metro materials will display a notice that the material is available in alternate formats upon request.

Sample language: Metro materials that are available to the public are available in alternate formats for people with disabilities upon request. In order to make a request, please contact APPROPRIATE PHONE NUMBER, APPROPRIATE FAX NUMBER, APPROPRIATE TTY NUMBER (if available), or APPROPRIATE E-MAIL ADDRESS.

6.02.5 ADAP is responsible for providing guidance to all Metro departments and offices, and ensuring compliance with this P/I.

6.02.6 Individual offices and departments are responsible for making arrangements for and for the cost of producing accessible materials for distribution to people with disabilities, upon request, from budgets used for producing the materials for general distribution. Although providing documents in accessible formats may result in additional costs, a public entity may not place a surcharge on people with disabilities to cover these expenses. If a document is available to the public free of charge, it must also be available in an accessible format free of charge. If a fee is charged for documents provided to the general public, this fee must be the same for those documents when provided in an accessible format.

6.02.6.1 Audiotape – Written material is commonly recorded on audiocassette tapes, but may also be stored on CD-ROM. Documents read onto audiotape can be played back in most standard cassette tape recorders. Most people who are blind or have low vision have access to and can use audiotape recordings. The person who records the text should be someone with a clear, pleasant reading voice. Using a recorder of good quality with an external microphone generally produces satisfactory results. Besides speaking clearly and reading at an even pace, the individual who records the text may need to be familiar with its content. If the document is technical in nature, all terms should be pronounced correctly, and unfamiliar words should be spelled. Tape duplicators, found on many stereo cassette decks, make copies easily and inexpensively.

6.02.6.2 Large Print – Large print can improve document readability for persons with low vision. Large print can be produced using computers and readily available printers with scalable fonts. A size of 18-point type is considered standard for large print production. A plain font should be used and the text should be double-spaced and in boldface type to improve contrast.

6.02.6.3 Electronic Formats – Dissemination of materials in electronic formats is a viable means of helping to meet accessibility needs and requirements. These methods can include distributing diskettes or compact discs containing plain text and/or HTML files, e-mailing plain text files, or posting of materials on web sites, electronic bulletin boards or other Internet servers.

6.02.6.4 Braille – Braille materials are used by many, but not all, people who are blind. There are organizations that can transcribe written materials into Braille documents for a fee. Sending an electronic Word document to the organization and contracting for Braille transcription services is typically how this is done.

6.03 Ensuring All Meetings Open to the Public are Accessible

6.03.1 All Metro public meetings of any size must be accessible to people with disabilities. This includes ensuring that the building and room(s) to be used are physically accessible for people who use wheelchairs and other mobility devices.

6.03.2 Public meeting announcements, for such events as public hearings, town hall meetings, meet-and-greets, and board meetings must include directions on how people with disabilities can request sign language interpretation and any other reasonable accommodations that are necessary.

6.03.2.1 Sign Language Interpreters – A qualified sign language interpreter is an individual who is able to interpret effectively, accurately and impartially, both receptively and expressively, using any specialized vocabulary that may be necessary. There are numerous organizations that can provide sign language interpreters on a contracted hourly basis.

6.03.2.2 Computer-Aided Real-Time Reporting (CART) – This method makes information available to people who are deaf or hard of hearing by having the verbal input from a meeting directed to a computer screen, which displays a running transcript, much like closed-captioning on a television. There are organizations that can provide CART services on a contracted basis.

6.03.2.3 Assistive listening devices – These devices are a communication system that enables people who are deaf or hard of hearing to

better comprehend speech. The four main types of assistive listening devices are: Acoustic, Frequency Modulated, Induction (Loop) and Infrared. The JGB Meeting Room has a Frequency Modulated assistive listening system and there are two types of devices that meeting attendees can use for greater amplification.

6.03.2.4 Open or Closed Captioning – Open captions are captions that have been decoded, so they are part of the television picture, like subtitles in a movie. Open captions cannot be turned off. Closed captions are hidden in the video signal and are invisible without a special decoder to decipher them. Departments and offices that develop videos should consider whether to use open or closed captioning if the videos may be used at public meetings or may be disseminated to the public or to employees.

6.03.3 ADAP provides technical assistance on accessibility and related issues, and will refer offices and departments to professional organizations that can provide accessible services. For assistance, contact 202-962-1100 (voice), 202-962-2722 (fax), (202) 962-2033 (TTY), or adap@wmata.com.

7.00 EXCEPTIONS

7.01 None.

Attachment E

Sample Presumptive Eligibility Letter

PRESUMPTIVE LTR

[redacted]

Customer ID #: [redacted]

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for submitting your application for MetroAccess service. We have reviewed your application materials, but a final determination cannot be made until the functional assessment and review of medical documentation is completed.

In accordance with ADA regulations which specify that eligibility determinations must be made within 21 days of our receipt of your completed application, MetroAccess will grant you "temporary presumptive eligibility" until such time as a final determination of your eligibility can be made. As your completed application was received on 01/25/2007, you are considered eligible to use the service on a temporary basis.

The Reservations Department is open between 8:00am and 4:30pm, seven days a week. By providing the reservations agent the ID number at the top of this letter, you can begin using MetroAccess service. To reserve a MetroAccess trip, please contact us at 301-562-5360, select option 1.

If you have any questions related to eligibility, please contact us Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:30 pm, at 301-562-5360, and select option 4.

Sincerely,

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Samantha Proctor

Samantha Proctor
Eligibility Certification Supervisor
Office of MetroAccess Service