

TPAG Meeting Minutes  
June 21, 2023

Attendees: Nahrin Sangkagalo, CMRPC; Nona Haroyan; Sharon Strzalkowski; Mary Haroyan; Carolyn Foley, PBSTM; Benji Kemper; Kathy Kulesza; Mike Kennedy; Doreen Goodrich, Sen Michael Moore office; Mark Binnall; Joe Bellil

**Meeting minutes** of April 19 were accepted as presented.

**Paratransit Report** was presented. One attendee noted that there haven't been any no-show suspensions for quite some time. One attendee asked for clarification of missed trip and capacity denial. It was explained that a capacity denial is a trip that is not made due to the transit authority problem like driver availability while a missed trip is a trip that did not arrive within the 20 minute pickup window and the rider did not take the trip. It was also noted that call backs which begin in the evening, sometimes continue the next morning. Care is taken to call back the riders with early pick ups first followed by trips with later pickups the next morning. The percent of trips cancelled by the rider remain mostly stable. When people apply for paratransit service, they are encouraged to contact their health care professional that they need to return the appropriate paperwork. The number of registered riders has remained level for a long time since applicants always come and go. Paratransit is promoted largely through word of mouth with new applicants arriving regularly year-round including students and people speaking other languages.

**Customer Service Report** was presented. In May there were 84 complaints closed. Of the 84 complaints, 71 were for fixed route and 11 were for paratransit. Of the 11 paratransit complaints 5 were for driver behavior, 2 were for trips that arrived early or late, 1 was for a safety issue and 3 were classified as other. One attendee asked about complaints regarding driver behavior. It was explained that part of the process to address the complaint includes discussing it with the driver and taking action as needed. Additionally, drivers have regularly scheduled trainings. Complaints regarding Yellow Cab drivers may be handled slightly differently. Most complaints are filed over the phone with call takers. One attendee reported that another rider was very pleased with the paratransit service they received during a difficult situation. Another attendee expressed appreciation at the accommodation of a last minute issue.

**Nomination of Officers** were not opened.

Revisions to the **TPAG Bylaws** made at the Feb and April meetings were discussed. Two comments were discussed and regarded as typo or grammar errors. These changes were to change officer from office as appropriate and to change 'he/she' to 'they' to be more inclusive. The group voted to accept the bylaws with the corrections mentioned.

The **TPAG Meeting Calendar** shows that the next meeting is Sept 20. Details on the date of the Oct meeting will depend on the results of the second vote on the proposed bylaw changes. A new calendar will be distributed at that time.

**Transportation Advocacy Coalition** did not meet in June. No report.

**WRTA Advisory Board** approved the FY24 budget. The Personnel Board has narrowed down the Administrator applicants to three people. The public will be invited to attend a separate meeting to meet the finalists. The WRTA Advisory Board Disability Rep noted some difficulties using the Via service regarding accessible vehicles. The group requested additional follow up information.

A website demo is on the agenda for tomorrow's meeting. Before going live, the website will be reviewed by people with disabilities for accessibility. The group requested a demonstration of the new website.

The Center for Living and Working will host a meeting to discuss **On-Demand Transportation** services.

The Transportation Committee for the **Bay State Council of the Blind** met with the Massachusetts Association of Regional Transit Authorities (MARTA) about standardizing the application process for ADA paratransit service throughout the state and improving the ability of ADA paratransit riders to travel across regional transit authority RTA boundaries. They seemed receptive to having more discussions.

**Next meeting** is Sept 20, 2023. Meeting will be held virtually.