

Update from Paratransit Working Group October 30, 2019

GoBus/Metrobus Review

The Transit Review is now nearing completion. Phase 2 has focused on Metrobus services and recommendations to improve efficiency and grow ridership. There have not been any new recommendations related to GoBus since Phase 1. We expect the final report to be presented to the Commission/Council before the end of the year.

Eligibility Assessments

Horizon Occupational Health Solutions has been hired to complete eligibility assessments for GoBus customers on behalf of Metrobus. The assessments should begin in the coming weeks. Customers will receive information about the assessments and what they can expect prior to them being contacted by Horizon. (The information will contain the FAQ document which was circulated to the Inclusion Committee back in March.)

Horizon will be provided with inclusive customer service training as well as a thorough orientation to GoBus and Metrobus to ensure they are aware of how both services operate and the specific barriers that people with disabilities face when using transit.

It is expected that once customers start receiving the letters about assessments, we will hear more feedback than we have to date.

We will be following up with customers throughout the assessment process to hear their feedback.

No-Shows

As of May 1, 2019 the definition of a no-show changed to reduce the notice required to cancel a trip from 90 minutes to 45 minutes. The rate paid for a no-show was reduced from \$25.30 (regular trip rate) to \$12.00. This has

resulted in significantly less no-shows (40%) and significant cost savings (approx \$10,000) each month.

Capacity Challenges

GoBus has been experiencing challenges with meeting demand during peak times, particularly on Wednesdays. Customers are experiencing late pickups; waiting longer for will-calls; customers are frustrated; dispatchers/drivers are frustrated. Generally we are seeing a decline in service quality during those peak periods.

Currently GoBus is booking more rides than either the buses or taxis can accurately deliver. We've asked that MVT only accept bookings that can be managed rather than accepting every booking requested (whether inside or outside the 24 hour booking window). We've also implemented a pilot project to help address the demand for will-call return trips from the Health Science Centre on Wednesdays. In addition, we're asking for customers' cooperation to book their travel outside of peak hours wherever possible, recognizing of course that this will not always be possible.

Privacy Complaints

We have received two privacy complaints recently regarding information that is shared with drivers. The first alleged that the information provided to drivers via tablets onboard the bus reveals customers' personal information (address, name, and destination). We've worked with the City Clerk's office to provide the necessary information to the OIPC. We also reconfigured the devices such that drivers are now able to manually turn off the tablet display when not in use.

The second complaint was about how information is shared with taxi drivers. Taxis are not equipped with the same tablets that buses use so they must rely on radio systems. Information shared from GoBus includes a customer's name, pickup location and destination – this is essential information for the GoBus service. We are currently looking for solutions to get the information to the driver without compromising customer privacy.