



November 27, 2002

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS
THROUGH: ROGER SNOBLE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
FROM: JOHN B. CATOE, JR.
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
SUBJECT: ACCESS SERVICES – PEER COMPARISON

Metropolitan
Transportation
Authority

One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA
90012-2952

ISSUE

In the course of developing the ADA Paratransit Plan principles with input from the community of riders, considerable discussion arose regarding certain aspects of ADA paratransit service delivery standards. In response, Access Services, Inc. (ASI) recently completed a survey of twelve peer agencies that operate ADA paratransit in larger metropolitan areas across the country to assess how those peers addressed these specific issues.

DISCUSSION

One of the staff recommendations for item 42 in the November/December cycle seeks approval of the FY 04 Paratransit Plan principles. The FY 2002 Peer Performance Standards (Attachment A) and the Service Area Characteristics of Peer Systems (Attachment B) provide additional information regarding ADA paratransit in other locations. Attachment A covers two specific areas of interest to the community: (1) on-time performance, and (2) telephone hold times.

On-time performance is one of the most important elements of quality ADA paratransit service. All paratransit systems use a pick-up window, usually a 20 to 30 minute period (the typical national norm is 30 minutes) in which the vehicle may arrive and still be considered on time. Access Services uses a 20-minute window and reports that 91.9% of all passenger trips in FY 02 were picked-up on time. Most of the peer agencies reported figures between 90 and 95%, showing that on-time performance locally is not much different than in other large cities. On-time performance in the peer survey ranges from a low of 87.3% in Chicago to 94.5% in Pittsburgh. Only four of the twelve peer systems reported on-time performance higher than ASI.

Telephone hold times are another important statistic reflecting the customer's experience. Passengers must call to reserve an ADA paratransit ride, and the length of the wait to speak with a customer service representative and complete the call indicates how easy or difficult it is to make a reservation. In Attachment A, the peer systems providing telephone hold time data reported a range between twenty-nine seconds (Philadelphia) to a high of five minutes (Portland). When discussing this issue with the community, the goal was to recommend a reasonable standard that could be met by the providers and accepted by the community. The Paratransit Plan recommends a hold time standard of 4 minutes, with the caveat that once a reservationist begins speaking with the customer, there will be no additional hold time until the call is completed. Also the customer will be allowed to make multiple reservations in one call. Apparently, the current practice can include the customer being placed on hold multiple times. Thus, completing the call with one hold was the most important factor in recommending a change from 2 to 4 minutes.

Attachment A also includes data on shared rides, passenger no-shows, and cancellations experienced at the peer systems. The number of shared rides is not tracked by many of the peer agencies, although it is a valuable way to improve system efficiency. Shifting to designated phone reservation hours of 6 AM to 10 PM as recommended in the Paratransit Plan will allow the service providers to more efficiently schedule shared rides. By increasing the number of riders per trip and decreasing deadhead miles by more effective routing, cost efficiencies will improve. This will be another area where ASI can improve performance, and efficiency, with input from the community.

No-shows and cancellations became an integral part of the discussion with the community as ASI developed the FY 04 Paratransit Plan principles. Passenger no-shows and cancellations waste resources by taking a vehicle out of service. ASI has the lowest combined no-show/cancellation rate of any system in the survey, at 8.24%. This low rate is commonly thought to be a result of ASI's reservations policy that allows a customer to call from 24 hours up to 45 minutes before the ride. In general, the longer the lead time, the higher the no-show/cancellation rate. Reducing no-shows and cancellations keeps more vehicles in service and allows for greater productivity with the same amount of resources and minimizing this inefficiency will be a key goal for the implementation of the Paratransit Plan.

Attachment B provides some relevant information regarding service area size and population of the peer systems. ASI has one of the largest service areas of all the systems in the survey, both in geography and population.

NEXT STEPS

The peer survey conducted by ASI is the beginning of an effort to share information with peer systems. Peer information is difficult to collect and assess since many agencies use different definitions and terminology, and are often reluctant to share data. However, peer comparisons can be an effective tool to communicate with the community and policy boards. We will continue to work with Access Services and the industry to develop a more uniform reporting process nationally, including information on ridership, complaints, eligibility procedures, and costs.

Attachments

- A. FY 2002 Peer Performance Standards
- B. Service Area Characteristics of Peer Systems

Peer City (Transit Authority)	ON - TIME PERFORMANCE					HOLD TIME			OTHER STATISTICS		
	On - Time Performance		On-Time Performance During FY 2002	Definition of a "Late" Pick-UP	On-Time Performance Penalties/Incentives for Operations Contractor?	Hold Time Performance Standard	Hold Time Performance MM:SS	Penalties/Incentives for Operations Contractor Due to Hold Time?	Shared Rides	No-Shows	Cancellations
Portland, OR (Tri-Met)	Thirty-minute pick-up window (0 before, 30 after)	90%	92%	When the vehicle arrives 31 or more minutes after the due time	No	95% must be answered in less than 5 minutes (reservations are handled via contractor)	Currently meeting their goal	No	Does not calculate statistics	.02% ("door hanger" left; 3 N/S in 30 day suspension)	25%
Seattle (King County Metro)- Statistics reflect combination of both ADA and non-ADA service.	Carrier must pick-up the rider within a 30-minute pick-up window: 15 minutes before to 15 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time	90%	92.9% CY 2001	A vehicle is late if it arrives more than 15 minutes past the scheduled pick-up time	Not specifically. But, there are incentives for no missed trips in one month and for on-time performance above 90% and improvement in productivity above a specific threshold. Failure to meet performance standards may result in termination of contract for cause	3 minutes	2:48 CY 2001	No specific incentive or penalty. Failure to meet performance standards may result in termination of contract for cause	Does not calculate statistics	3% (for ADA & non-ADA paratransit service combined)	22% (for ADA & non-ADA paratransit service combined)
Washington D.C. (WMATA)	30 minutes pick-up window (15 before, 15 after)	92%	92.3%	When the vehicle arrives 16 or more minutes past the due time	Yes On-Time Performance is one of five conditions that need to be satisfied for incentives. The other four areas are: Phone Hold Time, minimum number of total complaints, minimum number of No-Show complaints and full compliance with Federal Drug & Alcohol testing program	92% of calls are to be answered within 2 minutes	No data Available	Yes (see on-Time Performance section)	Does not calculate statistics. Approximately 50%	22% (no-shows and cancellations combined)	(see no-shows)
New York City Transit (NYCT)	Carrier must pick-up between 5 minutes before and 25 minutes after scheduled pick-up time	90%	91.4%	When the vehicle arrives more than 25 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time	Yes	2 minutes	1:24	No	Does not calculate statistics	3.8%	14.8% Includes late cancels
Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA)	Twenty-minute pick-up window (5 before, 15 after)	95%	N/A	15 minutes past the scheduled pick-up time	\$500 for every percent point below 94%	No	No data Available	No	Does not calculate statistics	2.85%	14.99%

Attachment B: Service Area Characteristics of Peer Systems

Peer City (Transit Authority)	Service Area Population	Service Area Square Miles	Population Density	Service Area Description
Los Angeles (LACMTA)	9,800,000	1,966	4,985	Los Angeles County, excluding parts of County outside of ¼ mile corridor.
New York City (NYCT)	7,500,000	309	24,272	The five boroughs of New York City.
Chicago (CTA)	3,700,000	280	13,214	Chicago plus 38 suburban communities.
Washington (WMATA)	3,500,000	1,600	2,188	Montgomery Co, MD; Prince George's Co., MD; District of Columbia; Northern Virginia
Oakland (AC Transit/BART)	2,800,002	439	6,378	East S.F. Bay, Oakland, Berkley, Richmond
Orange County (OCTA)	2,700,000	798	3,383	County of Orange is bordered on the north by Los Angeles County and on the South by San Diego County. There are 34 cities in the county with numerous core business centers.
Miami (MDTA)	2,000,000	285	7,018	Most of Dade County and Hallendale in Broward county, Limited service to upper keys.
Houston (METRO)	1,900,000	780	2,436	Parts of Houston within ¼ mile from fixed bus route total 650 square miles.
Seattle (King County Metro)	1,700,000	840	2,023	Most of developed King county, The Eastern boundary is 1.5 miles beyond the nearest bus route. Service area changes per changes in fixed route service.
Philadelphia (SEPTA)	1,552,572	2,200	706	Philadelphia, Delaware, McGomery, Chester, and Bucks counties, PA
Cleveland (GCRTA)	1,400,000	458	3,057	Cuyahoga County which includes the metropolitan area and surrounding communities with Lake Erie to the north.
Pittsburgh (PA Transit)	1,350,000	729	1,852	All of Allegheny County (not just within ¼ mile of bus stop).
Portland (Tri- Met)	1,300,000	592	2,196	Most of the metropolitan Tri-County area.

Sorted by Service Area Population

Peer City (Transit Authority)	Square Miles Service Area	Peer City (Transit Authority)	Population Density	Service Area Description
Philadelphia (SEPTA)	2,200	New York City (NYCT)	24,272	The five boroughs of New York City
Los Angeles (LACMTA/ASI)	1,966	Chicago (CTA)	13,214	Chicago plus 38 suburban communities
Washington (WMATA)	1,600	Miami (MDTA)	7,018	Most of Dade County and Hallendale in Broward county. Limited service to upper keys.
Seattle (King County Metro)	840	Oakland (AC Transit/BART)	6,378	East S.F. Bay, Oakland, Berkley, Richmond
Orange County (OCTA)	798	Los Angeles (LACMTA/ASI)	4,985	Los Angeles County, excluding parts of County outside of ¼ mile corridor.
Houston (METRO)	780	Orange County (OCTA)	3,383	County of Orange is bordered on the north by Los Angeles County and on the South by San Diego County. There are 34 cities in the county with numerous core business centers.
Pittsburgh (PA Transit)	729	Cleveland (GCRTA)	3,057	Cuyahoga County which includes the metropolitan area and surrounding communities with Lake Erie to the north.
Portland (Tri-Met)	592	Houston (METRO)	2,436	Parts of Houston within ¼ mile from fixed bus route total 650 square miles.
Cleveland (GCRTA)	458	Portland (Tri-Met)	2,196	Most of the metropolitan Tri-County area.
Oakland (AC Transit/BART)	439	Washington (WMATA)	2,188	Montgomery Co, MD; Prince George's Co., MD; District of Columbia; Northern Virginia
New York City (NYCT)	309	Seattle (King County Metro)	2,023	Most of developed King county, The Eastern boundary is 1.5 miles beyond the nearest bus route. Service area changes per changes in fixed route service.
Miami (MDTA)	285	Pittsburgh (PA Transit)	1,852	All of Allegheny County (not just within ¼ mile of bus stop).
Chicago (CTA)	280	Philadelphia (SEPTA)	706	Philadelphia, Delaware, McGomery, Chester, and Bucks counties, PA

Sorted by Service Area Square Mileage

Sorted by Population Density

Attachment A: FY 2002 Peer Performance Standards

Peer City (Transit Authority)	ON – TIME PERFORMANCE					HOLD TIME			OTHER DATA		
	On – Time Performance		On-Time Performance During FY 2002	Definition of a “Late” Pick-UP	On-Time Performance Penalties/Incentives for Operations Contractor?	Hold Time Performance Standard	Hold Time Performance MM:SS	Penalties/Incentives for Operations Contractor Due to Hold Time?	Shared Rides	No-Shows	Cancellations
	Definition	Standard									
Chicago (CTA)	Carrier must pick up within 20 minutes of scheduled pick-up	90%	87.3%	When the vehicle arrives after the 20-minute window	Yes Distributed monthly to each transportation provider	No	2:30	No	Does not calculate statistics	1.6% Excludes late cancels	16.7% Includes late cancels
Cleveland (GCRTA)	Forty-minute pick-up window (20 before, 20 after)	95%	91% or 92% (did not have confirmation)	20 minutes past the scheduled pick-up time	No	No more than 3 minutes	No data Available	No Operation is in-house	Does not calculate statistics	2%	25% Cancel 30 minutes prior to the pick-up time
Houston (METRO)	15 minutes past the scheduled pick-up time or 1 minute past the patron’s appt.	90%	89%	15 minutes past the scheduled pick-up time or 1 minute past the patron’s appt.	Yes We assess liquidated damages on a case by case to recover lost revenue	4 minutes from 8:00 – 9:00 a.m., after 9:00 it is 1 minute	3:53	No Operation is in-house	100%	3%	13%
Los Angeles (LACMTA): Access Services, Inc. (ASI)	Carrier must pick up within 20 minutes of scheduled pick-up	92%	91.9%	20 minutes past the scheduled pick-up time	Yes Incentive starts at 94.1% Penalty starts at 89.9%	<u>Total Call Length</u> Standard is 4 Minutes (i.e. Initial Hold Time + Talk Time).	Avg. Total Call Length (i.e. Initial Hold Time + Talk Time) is 4:33.	Recently implemented Initial Hold Time Incentive and Penalty; Standard is 2 minutes. For FY 02, Penalties and Incentives based on Total Call Length rather than Hold Time.	22.6%	4.78%	3.46%
Miami (MDTA)	10 min. before or 20 min. after the negotiated pick-up time	N/A	N/A	If a vehicle arrives 21 min. or later from the negotiated pick-up time	Yes Based on customer complaints. Degree of penalty depends on how late the trip is	Less than 1 minute or 10% average rate of abandonment	No data Available	Yes Penalty – greater than 60 seconds or 10% average rate of abandonment. Incentive – Less than 30 seconds or 6% average rate of abandonment	Does not calculate statistics	6%	7.3%
Oakland (AC Transit/BART)	20 minutes window from pick-up time	89% - 90%	90.1% (Due to software changes, the number reflects only seven month data)	If vehicle arrives one minute or more out side the 20-minute window	Yes Incentive starts at 93% Penalty starts at 89%	2 minutes	2:18	No	Does not calculate statistics, but the goal is 1.68%	3.6%	16.8%
Philadelphia (SEPTA)	0 to 29 minutes from the negotiated Pick-up time	90%	88%	When the driver is late 30 minutes or more	Yes	2 minutes	0:29	Yes	45%	8%	17%
Pittsburgh (PA Transit)	Thirty-minute pick-up window (10 before, 20 after)	93%	94.5%	When the vehicle arrives 21 or more minutes after the scheduled pick-up time	No but they reduce the “market share” for poor-performing providers (i.e., they reduce their share of trips, which acts as a financial deterrent)	1 minute	1 minute	No, but they reduce market share (see Penalties/Incentives for On-Time Performance)	Does not calculate statistics	2%	8%