

Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC) Minutes
March 21, 2017

In Attendance: Cathy Bell, Ed Molloy, Sandra Probert; Therése Brzezinski; Hari Dhoundiyal; Kelly McClean; Gina Barbara, Mike Godino, Jack Khzouz (NICE), Sudesh De Silva (NICE), Kenny Woods (NICE), Lowell Wolfe (NC Transportation Planner)

Absent: Bob Schoenfeld

Meeting called to order by Chair at 10:00a.m.

- Minutes from Jan & Feb 2017 meetings accepted.

Jack Khzouz – NICE

- Recap: \$6.8 million deficit due to County reduction for the operational year. The Bus Transit Committee accepted NICE's proposed April 9th reduction of 10 routes to compensate for the funding deficit.
- Update: The State Operations Assistance Fund (STOA) of \$60 million had not been increased but as of Friday night the State proposed an increase of \$1 million. If proposal passes as expected, NICE can save 3 routes (N19, N57 and N78/79) with some alterations (i.e., the Great Neck Loop will use a shuttle vehicle.) Details are on the NICE website and Social Media. If proposal doesn't pass, the 3 routes will be eliminated as of June.
- Nassau Community College has proposed closing campus to traffic and will work with NICE to create signage, a possible mini-depot at Endo Blvd, and a possible bus-only path from Earle Ovington Blvd to Endo Blvd. Could happen as early as Sept 2017 and NICE would work out details regarding Able-Ride stops and safe walkways to cross parking lot.
 - Mike requested that NICE please keep ACB and LICB in mind when designing changes.
- Snow Events: Service was pulled from 1:00-6:00 during first event. Service was kept on road throughout the 2nd event with some alterations (i.e., issues/detours on North Shore.) NICE provided 24 hour media coverage with ongoing updates.
 - Please let Jack know directly if a stop is not accessible due to snow. It will be taken care of that day.

- New advertising will be on display on Para Transit vehicles. NICE receives a split of the advertising revenue (approx. \$100,000 currently) which goes directly to service. The new advertising company has increased the funding by 20% which could add up to \$150,000 for services.
- Jack briefly discussed how the NICE CFO presents budget to the County.
- Starting today, NICE will launch a taxi pilot (thank in large part to Mike's efforts) to assist with Able-Ride OTP. All Island Taxi will provide rides (approx. 30 per day) within certain parameters (under 5 miles, South of LIE, etc.) Vouchers will be offered to Able-Ride customers whose trips meet criteria. Note: taxis are accessible to those who can load their own mobility devices including folding wheelchairs, walkers, etc. This will help free up wheelchair accessible vehicles for those who need them. Customers will pay \$3.75, pre-paid tickets are accepted. Booking reservations will follow the same rules as Able-Ride (i.e., round-trip, no same day, etc.)
 - Jack reminded committee that this is a work-in-progress pilot and it won't be perfect. Please understand glitches and bumps will be addressed as they come.
- Ed asked if NICE is trying to recover payroll tax from MTA. Jack said there are lobbying efforts in place, but that currently 100% of tax goes to NYC. There was further discussion of the reality of labor costs increasing each year.
- Mobileye – a digital innovation company and pioneer in automated driving – is being used by NICE to install 360 degree cameras on 5 vehicles. (Project is funded by TransDev.) If pedestrians are in vicinity, drivers will be alerted by voice and lights to either slow to 5 mph or immediately brake. Stats will be compiled of where these occurrences happen most often and there will be data analysis of alerts. NICE has already seen a 20% increase in safe following distances being observed. They are studying ways to test the technology on autonomous braking, allowing for it during turns of less than 7 mph. The hope is to reduce NICE liability costs through possible proprietary technology.
- Mike asked about installing bike racks on buses. Jack – no plans currently, but NICE is developing ideas for overall transit service which could include bike share services. There is a liability issue in NC regarding bike racks.

- Gina asked about service to Jones Beach. Currently the service will remain as is – Fri, Sat, Sun and the Air Show. Cathy mentioned approaching Northwell for advertising because of the theater.
- Sandy asked that Able-Ride drivers be retrained regarding assisting people with mobility devices.

Sudesh De Silva – NICE

- Kenny Woods was announced as the new Call Center Supervisor.
- Shared the February Route Productivity Report.
- Reminder that reservationists will be stressing and enforcing the no-show/cancellation policy.
- Reservationists are currently gathering responses from customers regarding new taxi service.
- Hari asked if new mats had been ordered for the vehicles. Sudesh will check and get back to committee.
- Ed asked if there is a way for the call center to reduce wait time when calling about a late vehicle arriving outside of window; hold times are about 10 minutes on weekends. If customer has to go inside to call, the vehicle might show up and leave during this time. Also, difficult during inclement weather. Sudesh – there are fewer staffers on weekends, will seek ways to improve wait time. He stated that they are in the 2nd phase of IVR which should help with notifications of late vehicles.
- Sandy asked about late-night rides arriving at Mineola Station. Sudesh – Able-Ride hours of service mirror fixed route hours.
- Hari asked about cleaning schedule of vans/vehicles. Sudesh – buses/vans are swept/mopped/wiped down daily. Detailed cleanings are on rotation and occur once about every 3 months. If a vehicle needs cleaning, please email Sudesh directly.
- Sedans – hope to see seven arriving beginning of May. They will likely be either the Chevrolet Impala or Toyota Avalon. Looking to purchase 15 wheelchair accessible buses (4 w.c. positions.)

Kenny Woods - NICE

- Call Center statistics for February were presented.
- Center is fully staffed now – you will see improvements in call times.
- Hari asked about staffing reservationists later in day. Kenny - still not able to do this. There has been no progress with online reservations.

- Hari asked if it is still necessary to cancel a reservation prior to checking on whether a change in time is available. Kenny- yes, still necessary. There was discussion about how the system works in this regard. Kelly reminded that TeSheena had offered to suggest making this option available when system is updated.
- Group trips can be arranged by emailing Kenny.
- Mike asked that the center work to minimize the occasions when vehicles pass through a customer's destination area without dropping off customer only to double back later. There was discussion of why this occurs.

Meeting adjourned 11:26 a.m.

Next TAAC Meeting April 18, 2017.

Minutes submitted by Kelly McClean