

Memorandum



New York City Transit

Date March 19, 2010

To New York City Transit Committee Members

From Thomas F. Prendergast, President

Re Access-A-Ride Service-Related Changes

This is an informational update on Access-A-Ride (AAR) proposed service-related changes required to address the MTA's unanticipated 2010 budget shortfall, following the public hearings. This memo reiterates the overall approach taken to achieve the cost reductions and clarifies how the service-related changes will be implemented.

The total of all proposed AAR service-related changes and other AAR cost reduction proposals is estimated to save \$40 million in 2010. Please note that the AAR service-related changes presented here are informational items.

Overview

In creating the 2010 Service-Related Change Proposals, NYCT Paratransit staff were mindful of the effect that any change in service has on current customers. The guiding principles for the creation of these proposals were as follows:

- Maintain compliance with ADA regulations
- Improve the cost efficiency of the service provided

The 2010 Service-Related Change Proposals are:

- Replace door-to-door service with feeder service to and from fixed-route transit, where applicable
- For customers with conditional eligibility based on weather and/or temperature conditions, determine their eligibility for service trip by trip, rather than by season

It is also noteworthy that use of vouchers will significantly increase the use of taxis and car services, including transferring more overnight service to taxis and car services and increasing the use of taxis through a prepaid card system.

2010 AAR Service-Related Changes

These proposals are valued at \$23.9 million.

Feeder Service

ADA regulations allow paratransit service for certain ADA paratransit-eligible persons to be provided through paratransit feeder service to and/or from an accessible fixed route. However, AAR currently provides door-to-door service for all trips. The proposal is to have paratransit service connect customers to fixed-route service whenever possible, so that the customer uses fixed-route bus, rail, or subway service for at least a portion of the trip.

The distance that customers can travel on their own (i.e., 2 blocks or 5 blocks) is part of the eligibility determination. If the customer can travel the distance to or from an accessible fixed-route service, then AAR service will transport them to that accessible service. The path to/from the fixed-route service will also be evaluated to make sure the customer is able to travel that path on their own. Transfers will also be taken into consideration. Each trip request will be evaluated against these criteria before determining whether to provide feeder service or door-to-door service or inform the customer that the entire trip can be accomplished by fixed-route bus or subway service.

AAR estimates that approximately 12% of annual scheduled trips (757,000 trips) can be accomplished through paratransit feeder service.

Trip-by-Trip Eligibility

Some persons receive conditional eligibility for paratransit service, which makes them eligible for service on some trips but not others. For example, the ability of some individuals to use fixed-route service is based on weather and/or temperature, so that their eligibility depends on the weather conditions in place at the time of the trip. Medical authorities have determined the ranges of climate temperatures that incapacitate individuals with certain medical conditions. Currently, such individuals are authorized to use AAR at any time during certain months of the year, when the problematic weather conditions are expected to occur (extreme cold or extreme heat). The proposal is to instead determine each individual's eligibility for each requested paratransit trip, using the medically-established temperature ranges, along with the National Weather Service forecast at the time of the reservation request.

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AAR estimates that this change will reduce the number of annual scheduled trips by approximately 0.36% (26,000 trips).

2010 AAR Non-Service-Related Cost Reduction Proposals

The non-service-related cost reduction proposals include the following:

- Improve scheduling efficiencies through the full re-optimization of daily driver schedules (re-planning of daily schedules based on the latest reservation updates) to use more efficient route combinations and to optimize shared rides
- Implement benefits from Automatic Vehicle Location Monitoring (AVLM) system, including elimination of carrier liaison positions in the Paratransit Command Center and reduction in time and carrier personnel required for the trip reconciliation process
- Significantly increase the use of taxis and vouchers for car service, including:
 - Transferring more overnight service to taxis and car services
 - Increasing the use of taxis through a prepaid card system
- Reduce non-vehicle mobilization costs provided to carriers
- Apply more rigorous determination procedures for ADA eligibility

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