To: RTA Transit Access Advisory Committee

From: Claire Serdiuk-Anderson Manager, External Affairs

Date: September 27, 2018

**Re: Minutes from the July 16, 2018 RTA Transit Access Citizens Advisory Board Meeting**

The RTA Transit Access Citizens Advisory Board (RTACAB) met on Monday July 16, 2018. Below is a summary of the items discussed.

**Welcome and Introductions**

Chairman Greg Polman called the meeting to order at 1:38 p.m. and asked all members of the board to introduce themselves.

**Reading and Approval of the January 17, 2018 Minutes**

The April 2018 meeting minutes were presented for adoption pending a correction. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Pat Mahone and seconded by Ashley Lucas. The advisory board approved the minutes unanimously.

**Public Comment Requests**

Chairman Polman then asked if there were attendees present, who want to address the committee during the public comment section and three individuals requested time.

**Standing Reports**

**Chairman’s Report**

Chairman Polman reported that he presented to the RTA Board in May of 2018. He told the members that Chairman Dillard asked Chairman Polman to keep the Board abreast of any complaints members of the disability community has with Uber, Lfyt or any other Transit Network Company (TNC).

**Government Affairs**

Claire Serdiuk-Anderson, Manager of External Affairs, updated the Committee on recent events in Springfield and Washington D.C. She explained that the focus of the RTA is being devoted to restoring the cuts the system incurred during the FY 2017 budget.

Serdiuk then explained how the recent Supreme Court decision in *South Dakota v. Wayfair* will affect the RTA. Specifically, the state will collect now an estimated $200 million in additional state revenue. This new use tax by this new class of retailers will likely result in approximately $4 million - $5 million annually for the RTA region in additional sales tax.

Any broader application of the RTA’s retailers’ occupation tax to these internet sales or other internet sales within the State would require a change in Illinois administrative law.

**Mobility Services Department Statistics**

Michael VanDekreke, Director of Mobility Services, asked if there were any questions pertaining to the Mobility Services Department Statistics, which were distributed prior to the meeting. There were none.

**Eligibility Review Board Recruitment**

Daphne Foster, Administrative Assistant for Customer Service, reported that the RTA is currently recruiting new community members to serve on the Eligibility Review Board (ERB). The RTA is required, by law, to maintain an appeals process for paratransit certification applicants that disagree with their certification decision. The new member must be knowledgeable about the functional abilities of individuals with disabilities; have a thorough understanding of fixed route transit and paratransit; and maintain objectivity in reviewing the appeals. ERB community members serve on the Board for a term of two (2) years and at the end of that term, staff may elect to extend the term by one (1) year each. Once selected, RTA will hold interviews and decide on our new ERB members.

Our goal is to have the new community representatives selected and in place by the beginning of 2019.

Chairman Pulman asked how many community members are currently on the list to be interviewed. Daphne responded five.

He then inquired about how the RTA ensures quality control to make sure individuals fulfill their duties. Foster explained that has not been a problem in the past, but that staff could decide to re-train any individual who might be having difficulties.

**Travel Information Center Update**

Vickie Bradley, Manager of TIC and Departmental Contracts, updated the committee on a project currently underway regarding the future operations of the RTA Travel Information Center (836-7000). Over the past few years there has been a significant decrease in the number of calls coming into TIC, from 5.1 million in 2013 to 1.1 million is 2017. Of those 1.1 million annual calls, the Center consistently receives the fewest number of calls on Sundays. Likewise, transit ridership is less on Sundays across all modes throughout the region.

RTA conducted surveys in September 2016 and June 2017, that asked a number of questions relating to caller’s travel needs. The results found that 44% of participants have a home computer to access the trip planner, 60% can plan a trip on a smart phone, 67% contact the TIC less than five times per month, 29% are people with disabilities and age 64 or younger with 48% not having a disability, and 52% of the participants are between 30-60 years of age.

Given the reduction in call volume, staffing challenges, and alternative transit services available, RTA has decided to eliminate Sunday hours beginning September 16th. This, in turn, will allow the RTA to increase staff wages to be more competitive and attract and retain qualified personnel for the other times open.

Jemal Powell commented that TIC has shown great improvement over the last few years, especially when it comes to accuracy in directions. He did ask if the RTA researched peer agencies to find out how they handle call center hours. Bradley explained staff looked at 10 peer cities across the country and Seattle, San Francisco and Miami are all closed on Sundays.

Adam Kerman objected to closing the TIC on Sundays and also objected to reducing any hours of operations. It is his belief that when an individual is calling for help during off peak hours, they are in need of the most assistance.

Kerman then questioned the location of the call center, arguing it should be in the Loop and employees should be transit riders. Bradley agreed and is open to moving the location once this current contract expires in 2019.

David O commented he did not want to see the TIC closed down and suggested raising wages for Saturday and Sunday employees.

Vice Chair Lynn O’Shea asked if TIC’s revenue has gone down in light of the call volume going down. Bradley explained, that TIC has a dedicated revenue source regardless of number of calls.

Bradley then explained that on average, employers experience a 5% abandonment rate of employees. The TIC’s abandonment rate for Sundays in currently 10% - 15%, meaning the cost to keep the TIC open on Sundays is becoming prohibitive.

Chairman Polman ended the discussion by tell staff the RTACAB would like to be kept up to date on any updates surrounding this matter.

**New RTA Mobility Management Video Series**

Michael VanDekreke did a presentation on RTA’s Mobility Outreach Program. Through group transit orientation presentations, the Mobility Outreach Coordinators educate customers with disabilities and older adults on fixed route accessibility, Ventra account and fare information, online trip planning and other local accessible transit options in an effort to lessen the stress on the region’s ADA Paratransit system.

In an effort to increase customer and community education, RTA has produced a Mobility Management Video Series. The series consists of six videos that inform customers with disabilities and older adults of the many accessible transit options in the region. The videos are meant to increase knowledge, reduce confusion about accessible options, and improve customer convenience.

The videos are online at <http://www.rtachicago.org/index.php/rider-resources/accessible->transit/1428/videos-rta-mobility-management-program.html

Jemal Powell commented that he thought the video did a very good job using description captioning.

**Reports from Service Board CAB/ADA Committees**

Jim Ferneborg, Metra staff representing Metra’s ADA Advisory Committee, reported that at Metra’s May 1st meeting there was a presentation on current capital projects at stations. It also gave members guidance on what determines which stations are picked for capital improvements. The next Metra CAB meeting will be on August 8th.

Angela Davis, Chair of the CTA ADA Advisory Committee, reported that the construction at the 95th street and Quincy and Wells street stations were on schedule. She also reported that at the next meeting, the Chicago Police Department will be giving a presentation on safety.

Jemal Powell, asked if there was going to be a walk through at the 95th street station for the visually impaired. CTA staff, Amy Serpe, answered there will be one.

Kerman then asked why the CTA was removing the escalator at the Pulaski Street entrance of the Irving Park Station. Serpe was not aware that was happening, but told Kerman she would inquire and get back to him.

Jemal Powell, representing Pace Suburban ADA Advisory Committee, reported there was a joint Pace Suburban and City ADA Committee meeting in May. At that meeting Pace’s new trip check policy was discussed. From now on, if a trip is more than 90 minutes late, the rider will receive a refund.

Adam Kerman, Co-Chairman of Pace CAB, reported that there was a public hearing on changes to 270 bus later that same day. As well as an upcoming open house on the Harlem Express Corridor.

Patricia Mahone, Chair of the Metra CAB, reported there was no July meeting due to lack of corium.

**Public Comments**

Scott Figved questioned the wisdom of public transit agencies engaging in business partnerships with TNCs given the extensive complaints from members of the disability community. He also suggested that CTA, Pace and Metra would benefit from installing more security cameras.

He also complained that because the Pace vendor operating paratransit reservations serving northern cook county is closed on Sundays, there is no way riders can make reservations for Monday morning. Jemal Powell agreed to discuss this complication with Pace and suggest that the vendor operate until 6pm Sunday evenings.

Heather Armstrong asked that the CTA invest money into making the Cumberland L station accessible.

Garland Armstrong asked that CTA put up detour signs around festivals 1-2 weeks before events so members of the disability community have more times to plan a new route. He also complained that the Pace Paratransit reservation vendor does not have street addresses for Cook County Forest Preserves. Thus making it difficult for riders to go to picnics and other events.

Melissa Fuller, Vice Chair of CTA ADA Advisory Committee, expressed her support for keeping the TIC open on Sundays. She gave two examples of her using the call center on weekends despite owning a smart phone and a computer.

**Adjournment**

Chairman Polman asked for a motion to adjourn at 3:30 p.m. Adam Kerman moved the motion and Samuel Knight seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, October 15, 2018.

**Attendees**

Voting Committee Members Present

Greg Polman, Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind- Chairman

Lynn O’Shea, AID – Committee Vice Chair

Roxanne Calibraro – Suburban Cook

Susan Borucki - McHenry County DOT

Ashley Lucas – Lake County DOT

Samuel Knight, Will County

David Ogunbode - Community Service Options

Jodi Hefler – DuPage County

Patricia Mahone-Metra CAB Chair

Adam Kerman, Pace CAB Chair

Non-Voting Committee Members Present

Jamel Powell - Pace ADA Advisory Committee (Suburbs)

Michael VanDekreke, RTA Staff Representative

Angela Davis – Chair CTA ADA Advisory Committee

Melissa Fuller - Vice Chair CTA ADA Advisory Committee

Other RTA/Service Board Staff Present

Claire Serdiuk-Anderson, RTA Staff

Amy Serpe, CTA Staff

Daphine Foster, RTA Staff

Jim Ferneborg, Metra Staff

Vicky Bradley, RTA Staff

Felisha Baker, RTA Staff

Public Present:

Ashley Hinton, MTM

Garland Armstrong

Heather Armstrong

Scott Figved