

**To:** Board of Directors

**From:** Leanne P. Redden, Executive Director

**Date:** May 7, 2019

**Re:** Update on the activities of the RTA Transit Access Citizens Advisory Board



**Regional  
Transportation  
Authority**

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The purpose of the RTA Transit Access Citizens Advisory Board (RTACAB) is to obtain community input on the full spectrum of programs and services offered by the RTA. The RTACAB's bylaws require that its Chairman make quarterly reports to the RTA Board of Directors regarding the progress of the Committee's work. RTACAB Chairman Greg Polman will provide an update at the May 2019 Board meeting. This update will be for informational purposes only and will require no vote.

The RTACAB met on April 1 2019. In addition to standing updates about activities related to Government Affairs, a number of topics were highlighted at the meetings, including:

**Presentation of Mobility Service Statistics**

Mark Koljack, Division Manager, Customer Programs, provided highlights of the Mobility Services Department Year-End 2018 Statistics report, which was provided to members in advance.

The ADA Paratransit Certification Program determines eligibility for the ADA Paratransit service operated by Pace in the RTA region. ADA Paratransit is an advance reservation, origin-to-destination public transportation service for individuals whose disabilities prevent them from using fixed route service for some or all of their travel. As of December 31, 2018, there were 66,994 eligible ADA Paratransit customers, a 3.5% increase year-end 2018 over year-end 2017.

From year-end 2014 thru Q4 2018, the average annual rate of growth in eligible customers was 4.2%, which is below the projected 6% average annual growth rate for the 5-year period beginning in 2014. Of note is that following several years of annual growth, the increase in eligible customers has slowed considerably.

The Customer Programs staff is responsible for answering customer calls and providing service to reduced fare and ride free customers at four City of Chicago Department of Family Support Services (DFSS) sites. At these sites, staff educate older adults and people with disabilities on the steps necessary to obtain the appropriate permit to ride at either half fare or free on CTA, Metra and Pace, and assist customers with replacing lost, stolen or damaged permits.

17,100 people visited one of four RTA/City of Chicago DFSS sites in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2018, a 23% decrease compared to 3rd quarter 2018. Customer Programs staff served 5,600 escalated telephone calls from customers in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2018 compared with 6,000 customers in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2018, a 5% decrease. In the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2018, a total of 48,100 additional customer service calls were answered at the Travel Information Center (TIC), a 12% decrease compared to the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2018.

The Travel Information Center (TIC) provides step-by-step travel itinerary information for the fixed route services of the CTA, Metra, and Pace. Currently located in the western suburbs, the TIC is open from 6:00 am until 7:00 pm six days a week. Customers looking for a route to their destination can call to ask for bus and train schedules, or real-time arrival information at a specific bus stop or train station.

Overall calls continued to decrease during the year with less calls for both travel information and fare programs during the fourth quarter of 2018.

The Mobility Management Program is responsible for providing a one-on-one Travel Training Program. The Travel Training Program provides one-on-one training to teach customers how to use accessible Metra, Pace, and CTA buses and trains. In the fourth quarter of 2018, 72 customers signed up for Travel Training and 55 trainees were served.

The Group Transit Orientation Program provides group presentations at agencies that serve people with disabilities and older adults throughout the RTA's six-county region. In the fourth quarter of 2018, 125 presentations were provided and staff attended 51 outreach events.

Presentations educate participants and agency staff on the accessibility of CTA, Metra, and Pace service, and demonstrate the benefits of using fixed route buses and trains as well as RTA's Mobility Services programs. In the fourth quarter of 2018, 2,242 customers attended presentations.

As of the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2018, a total of 59,900 customers with disabilities and 90,300 seniors had RTA Ride Free Permits. Disabled Ride Free customers increased by remained about the same compared to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2018, and Senior Ride Free customers increased by 1% compared to 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2018. As of the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2018, a total of 8,800 customers with disabilities and 193,400 seniors held Reduced Fare Permits. The number of Reduced Fare Permits for people with disabilities was about the same from the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2018 compared to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2018. The percentage of Senior Reduced Fare Permits decreased by 2% compared to 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2018.

The TIC answered 1,280,000 calls in calendar year 2018. Of the calls answered, 207,700 calls were inquiries related to the RTA fare programs. This was a 35% increase in the number of customers looking for reduced fare or ride free information compared to 2017. There were 1,072,300 travel calls answered in 2018.

### **2019 Get on Board Illinois Day**

Susan Massel, Director, Marketing and Communications, told the Board about the first annual Get On Board Day, which is the next generation of the Dump the Pump Day in which the RTA has traditionally participated. The event is sponsored by American Public Transportation Association and encourages people to support public transportation by showcasing its benefits to communities and the economy.

Ads pointing riders to the webpage GetOnBoardIL.org are currently being carried on CTA, Metra and Pace vehicles as well as on digital billboards that share the message that funding will improve the rider experience. Riders and others can go to the webpage to send an email and tweet to their statewide elected officials, asking them to support transit funding.

Besides the webpage, this RTA is hosting a Get On Board Day event next Thursday at Union Station. Chairman Dillard, Executive Director Leanne Redden and Commissioner Karen Tamely will speak and the leaders of the Service Boards will also be there.

#### **RTA 5310 Call for Projects Presentation**

Heather Tabbert Mullins, Division Manager, Local Planning and Program Management briefed the Board on the current RTA's 5310 Call for Projects. The RTA is inviting local governments, private non-profit organizations, and transportation providers to apply for Section 5310 funding through an open, competitive process initiated by the RTA. As the "designated recipient" the RTA is responsible for overseeing the Section 5310 program in Northeastern Illinois and developing an annual Program of Projects (POP).

The Section 5310 program is the only available source of federal transit funds for projects designed to serve older adults and people with disabilities that go beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The RTA estimates \$9m in federal funds will be available for award through this process. These funds are dedicated to expanding mobility options and removing barriers to transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Currently, the program is funding 10 projects.

Prepared by: Government Affairs and Mobility Services Departments  
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