

Above & Beyond ADA

Metro's Response to Growing ADA Ridership

Executive Management and Audit Committee
System Safety and Operations Committee

June 2013



The Challenge

- ADA ridership is growing rapidly
- Metro has the most ridership by people in wheelchairs in the nation
- From 3,500 to 80,000 per month on buses alone in 10 years
- NY has 66,000/month on buses & rail
- Ridership stimulated by past improvements such as low floor buses



Handling the Growth

- There have been challenges but Metro is committed to building and operating the most accessible transit system in the U.S.
- Metro is taking many initiatives that go *above and beyond* the minimum accessibility requirements in the Federal ADA and State Title 24 requirements



Issue: Priority Seating Requirement

- Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires *priority seats* on every bus and rail vehicle for seniors & persons with disabilities
- FTA rules allow operators *ask* people to vacate priority seats but don't *require* people to move
- Conflicts are occurring because flip-up seats are designated as the priority seats



Response: New Signs & New Seats

- Seats will be identified as RESERVED for seniors and persons with disabilities
- Flip-up seats will NOT be designated as Reserved
- Reserved seats will be identified by color and pictogram
- *Above and beyond ADA*



Examples....



Issue: Walkers

- Walkers can't block aisles and must be secured – taking up an available wheelchair securement site

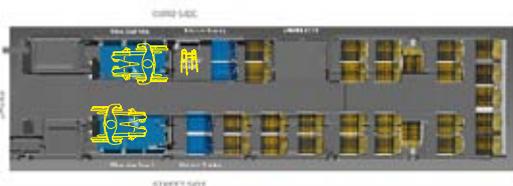


Response: Create Area for Walker

- Create a special area for a walker by installing a single flip up seat with extra space on next order of buses
- Allows one walker to be compartmentalized and not require taking up one wheelchair position
- *Above and beyond ADA*



Example:



Issue: ADA Requires 2 W/C Spaces

- The ADA requires 2 wheelchair positions in buses 22' or longer
- Metro has purchased articulated buses that are at least 50% longer than a 40' bus
- Capacity for ambulatory passengers increased, but capacity for wheelchair passengers has not kept up



Response: Investigate 3 Positions

- Metro will be working with suppliers to determine if 3 positions can be installed in future articulated buses and if retrofits are feasible in any existing buses
- *Above and beyond ADA*



Wheelchair Securement Systems

- Metro currently uses conventional 4 point securement systems that are:
 - Slow to connect to wheelchairs
 - Unable to handle three wheel devices
 - Difficult to use
- Most (¾) of wheelchair users refuse to have their wheelchair secured, risking injury to themselves and other passengers



Response: Introduce 3 Point System

- Requesting funding to allow new buses be equipped with Q'Pod a 3 Point System offering fast, easy and flexible securement for forward facing wheelchairs
- Investigate use of 3 Point system on some existing fleet
- Objective is to encourage more people to choose securement



Examples: Q'pod



Response: More Choice

- Rear Facing w/c position has been proven to be safe WITHOUT securement
- New buses will be equipped with DUAL positions that support forward facing 3 point securement; or rear facing without securement
- Ultimately a policy change – ride forward facing secured or rear facing unsecured
- *Above and beyond ADA*



Example: Dual Mode Position



Issue: Making Room for Wheelchairs

- The ADA requires that operators ask people sitting on Flip-up seats to move to allow wheelchairs to board – but can't order people to move



Response: New Identification

- All decals on buses and railcars will be replaced to designate flip up seat areas as being RESERVED for mobility devices
- All floor areas for wheelchairs will be finished in blue and marked with Accessibility Symbol
 - New buses and railcars first, retrofits as vehicles are rehabilitated
- *Above and beyond ADA*



Example: New Decal



Issue: W/C Space on Rail Cars

- The ADA does not have specific requirements for allocating space for wheelchairs on railcars
- On the Red/Purple Lines each car has one space that is shared between wheelchairs, bikes, strollers and luggage – it isn't large enough for a bike and wheelchair at the same time



Response: More Dedicated Space

- A dedicated space will be RESERVED on the subway for wheelchairs only
 - Bikes, strollers and luggage will get their own space at opposite end
- New LRV will have space for 4 wheelchairs in each articulated car. Up to 12 locations per 3 car train!
- New decals and floor markings
- *Above and beyond ADA*



Example: Railcar Floor Marking & Decal



Issue: Tactile Path not Required

- In rail stations current requirements for visually impaired include:
 - Tactile warning strip along edge
 - Tactile directional bars at waiting locations
 - Between car barriers
- ADA and Title 24 do not require tactile path from station entrance to waiting area!



Examples: Existing Provisions

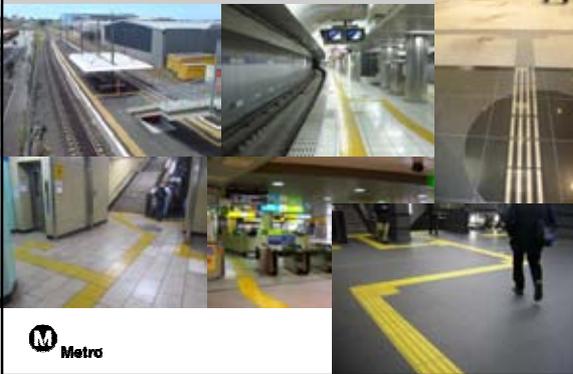
Between Car Barriers & Tactile Warning Strip



Directional Bars & Tactile Warning Strip



Example: Tactile Paths in Other Countries



Response: Review Suitability

- Tactile directional bars identifying waiting station are being installed in new stations and will be retrofit in stations that do not have them
- Interdepartmental Committee to advise the CEO on feasibility of placing tactile pathways in new rail stations and old stations
- *Above and beyond ADA*



Issue: TPIS Difficult to Read

- The Transit Passenger Information System (TPIS) in many rail stations has poor use of color, and uses fonts that do not meet ADA standards for fixed signs



Response: New Displays

- New larger fonts and fully contrasting colors compliant with ADA requirements for fixed signage will be operational by summer on these variable message signs



Example of TPIS

Existing TPIS

Planned TPIS



Issue: Latching Gates Limits Access

- The Metro Board has ordered that turnstiles be installed and latched at most rail stations to reduce fare evasion
- Latching turnstile at unmanned stations will reduce accessibility for some people



Response: Unique Local Solution

- A hands free device was developed based on input from Accessibility Advisory Committee & Rail Communications
- Allows people without full use of hands or arms to have gate remotely opened
- Now being installed at all turnstiles
- Potential for other applications in the future
- *Above and beyond ADA*



Example: Hands Free Gate Intercom



Issue: Who Boards/Alights First?

- Metro's long standing policy has been that persons in wheelchairs are first to board and last to alight
- But when there are 2 wheelchairs onboard, and one or both are alighting the one at the stop can't board until others alight.
 - Ambulatory people can board first and grab the space or seats, resulting in the person in the wheelchair being left behind



Response: Board *and* Alight First

- Metro has changed its policy to allow persons in wheelchairs to alight first and then be the first to board
- Ambulatory passengers who are in a hurry to alight may alight through the center doors while the operator assists the people in wheelchairs
- *Above and beyond ADA*



Example: Bus Card on Every Bus

Make it a safe trip for everyone. 

- Let riders in wheelchairs board first and exit first.
- Please move from reserved and wheelchair seating areas if requested.
- Bus operators will assist with wheelchair securement; it only takes a moment. Thank you for your patience.

 **If you have questions or concerns, call 213.922.6235.**



Safety Impact

- Each enhancement will improve safety:
 - Persons choosing to ride unsecured will be in a safe rear facing position
 - Persons riding forward will be secured
 - Greater availability of reserved seating will mean fewer seniors and persons with disabilities will be standing
 - Bikes and wheelchairs each have their own space on Red and Purple Lines
 - Safe location for walkers and grocery buggies



Budget & Service Impact

- Many of the changes discussed today will be incorporated within existing budgets
- A separate report will be brought forward next month identifying the funding source and reallocation if necessary
- It is anticipated these proactive measures will significantly improve the experience of riders with disabilities and reduce future civil rights claims



Conclusion

- Metro will meet *and* exceed the minimum requirements of the ADA to meet the travel needs of our customers
- These changes will not occur overnight, but they are happening now
- Board authorization will be sought to approve the measures requiring any extra funding in July



Questions



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