

# **Above & Beyond ADA**

**Metro's Response to Growing ADA Ridership**

**Metro Service Councils**

July 2013



**Metro**

# 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**
- **Looked at best practices world wide**

# 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....



**RESERVED FOR SENIORS AND  
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

Reservados para personas mayores y discapacitadas



# 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:



Revised layout with flip up seats in up position across middle two (2) wheelchair and one (1) walker.

# 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 ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) 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**

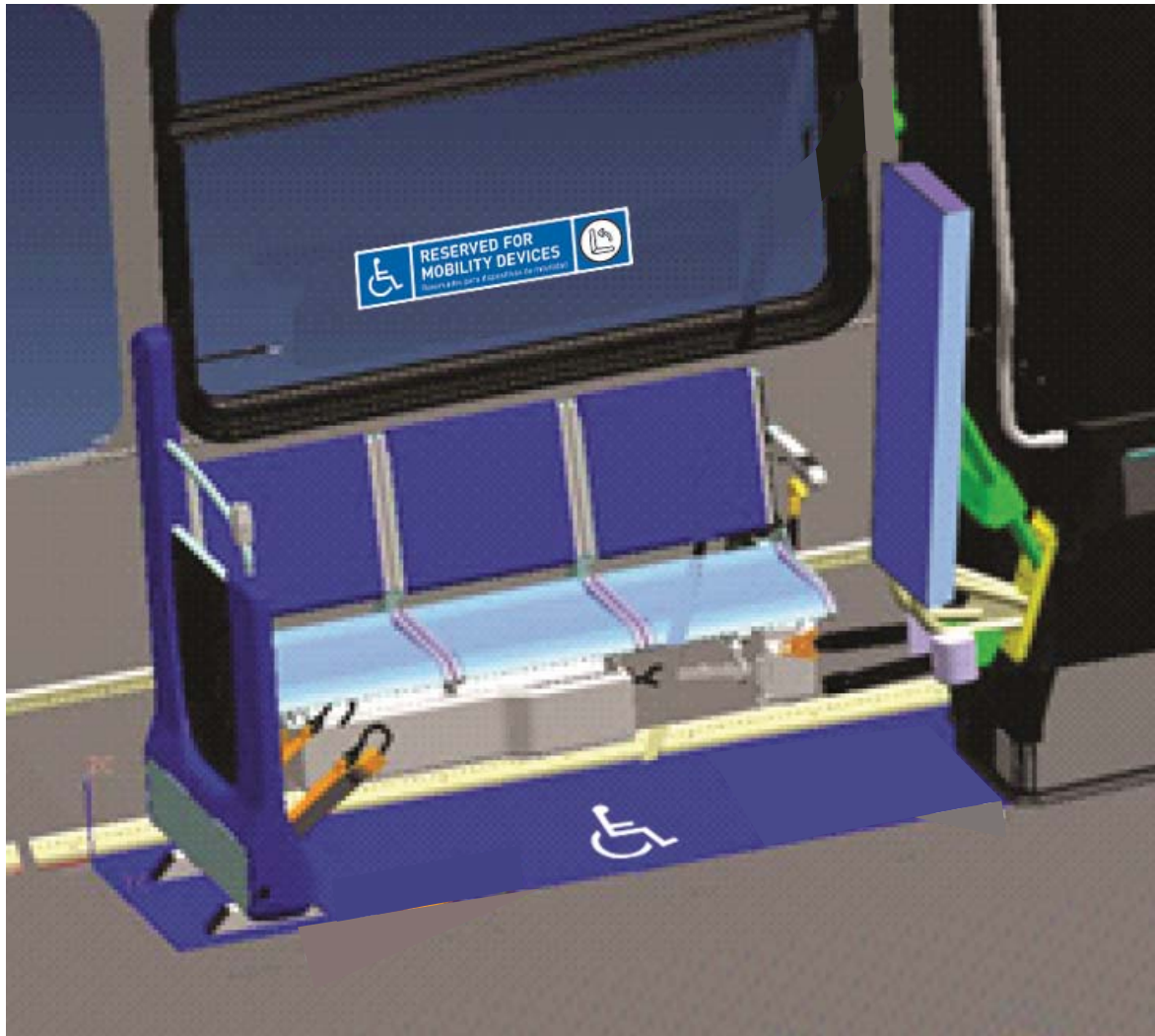
# Examples: Q'pod



# 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



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# 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

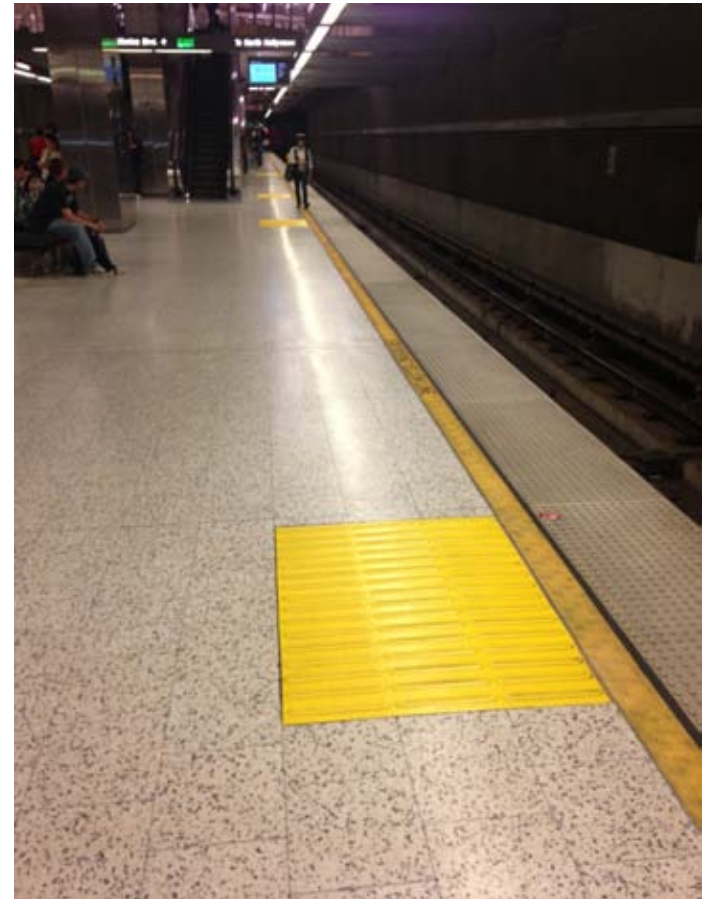
- **In rail stations current requirements for visually impaired include:**
  - Tactile warning strip along edge
  - Tactile directional bars at waiting locations
  - Between car barriers
- **ADA and Title 24 do not require tactile path from station entrance to waiting area!**

# Examples: Existing Provisions

## Between Car Barriers & Tactile Warning Strip



## Directional Bars & Tactile Warning Strip





# Example: Tactile Paths Elsewhere



New Zealand



Japan



Dubai



San Jose



Japan



Hong Kong

# 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: Destination not Called on Platform

- **Visually impaired have no way to know if a train is Red or Purple until after they board**
- **Unlike light rail cars the subways cars are not equipped with external speakers**

# Response: Install External Speakers

- **As subway cars are sent to rehab they will have new external speakers installed**

# 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.**



metro.net

- > 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**
- **Incremental cost of Q Pod and rear facing is about \$3.7 Million**
- **It is anticipated these proactive measures will significant 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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