

# **Houston METRO Accessibility Innovation Short List**

## **April 2010**

### **METRORail – most accessible rail line**

- Sloped ramp offering easy access from both ends of level boarding platforms
- 16 level boarding platforms
- Railcars have hydraulic leveling system for level entry at doorways
- Four designated wheelchair areas, no securements required or riders using a wheelchair can choose to sit in any space available to them.
- Doors open at all stops.
- Announcements on platforms in English & Spanish when the train is arriving
- Informational announcements and next-stop announcements inside the railcars in English & Spanish.
- 24-inch wide truncated domed edges on all platforms.

### **REVENUE – most accessible fixed route and rail fare payment system**

- METRO Q® Fare Card technology-offering easy way to pay the fare on buses and METRORail
  - Only a tap with METRO Q® Fare Card pays the fare
  - Also the METRO Q® Fare Card is a paperless transfer for two hours
- Reloading the METRO Q® Fare Card is easy and readily available on buses, neighborhood store locations and on METRO's website

### **METROLift Paratransit**

- Using IVR (MACS) and the internet (MACS-WEB) give patrons additional ways to schedule, verify and cancel their METROLift trips
- Contracted service with local taxi-cabs companies supplements the paratransit service in three ways:
  - Daily - 156 accessible taxi-minivans help provide regular METROLift service
  - Daily - five contracted taxi companies are used to back-up paratransit service during peak times
  - Same day - subsidy voucher program (MSP) uses five local taxi companies

### **FIXED ROUTE BUS SERVICE**

- 1,254 accessible buses
- Automatic audio and visual announcements of major intersections, stops and transfer points along the bus route
- Automatic audio announcement of the buses' name & route number at the bus stop when the doors of the bus open
- Lifts or ramps for easy access
- Kneeling feature on many buses for easy access
- Two priority seating areas for the elderly and people with disabilities
- Easy-to-reach call bell and special securement belts designed to secure mobility devices of riders using a wheelchair or scooter in two securement areas

- Large bright destination signs on the front and side of the bus
- “Stop Requested” signs inside the bus for riders with hearing impairments

#### BUS STOPS

- Infrastructure improvements at over 10,000 bus stops, many include not only a bus pad and sidewalk link but curb cuts at all four corners of the intersections
- Accessibility improvements, including sidewalks, streets and intersections, on major streets throughout the Houston downtown area
- Bus stops signs are constructed on solid square metal poles differentiating them from other street signage to assist persons with visual impairments

#### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- “Choices” program – partnership with 150 school districts’ special education teachers, who provide travel training on the bus and light rail to students with disabilities in special education classes
- Bi-monthly meetings with the community listed on the METROLift Web site

#### SERVICE PLANNING

- Planners design service to assist with evacuation of special needs population (311/METRO Emergency Operational Center)
- 19 Transit Centers connecting bus routes in neighborhoods across the region for safe and easy transfers