



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes: January 2, 2018

Attendees

Present: Denise Rush (1st Vice Chair), Elver Ariza-Silva, Tapan Banerjee, Carolyn Bellamy, Hazell Brooks, Charlie Crawford, Steven Kaffen, Mary Kay McMahon, Phillippa Mezile, Edward McEntee, Randall Pope, Doris Ray, Paul Semelfort, and Patrick Sheehan.

By Remote: Phil Posner (Chair)

Call to Order

1st Vice Chair Rush called the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Approval of Agenda, Board Report, and Prior Meeting Minutes

The meeting agenda was approved as amended to include a discussion related to forming a working group that will review and advise Metro on the MetroAccess Customer Guide and the MetroAccess Essential Policies brochure.

The December 4, 2017 meeting minutes were approved as written.

The Chair's Report to the Board, dated January 2, 2018 was approved as written.

For any future meeting, in which the AAC Chair will be a scheduled absence, the committee requested that the name of the 1st Vice Chair be listed on the meeting's agenda as the presiding officer. Ms. Bellamy stated that since we know the Chair will be out, there is no need to list his name on the agenda. Dr. Banerjee concurred, adding that the AAC by-laws allows for placing the name of the 1st Vice Chair when the Chair will be absent from a meeting.

MetroAccess Subcommittee

Mr. Semelfort, Chair, MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS), provided a summary of the MAS December 2017 meeting. The meeting included a discussion on the MetroAccess severe weather protocol, both for winter and summer, and it includes alerts to customers. There was also an overview of the MetroAccess Customer Guide revision. The committee provided staff with feedback, and a request to review the final document before it goes to print and distributed to the public. Ms. Rush added that during the meeting, the idea that a working group be formed for the development and review of the Customer Guide.

Mr. Semelfort also added that during the meeting the committee made a motion requesting hear from Mr. Kent in regards to Metro's Office of the Inspector General Report (OIG) investigation into MetroAccess, including the statistics being investigated. Dr. Banerjee stated that this subject is supposed to be on the next MAS agenda. He wanted to know if that is the case. Mr. Semelfort stated that he had not yet seen the January 2018 MAS agenda. Christiaan Blake, Director, Office of ADA Policy and Planning (ADAP), stated that while the MAS agenda is not finalized yet, it is possible that this item will not be on the agenda due to the situation being an ongoing investigation into MetroAccess, and not public materials have been released by the OIG. Mr. Blake stated that if the MAS agenda is released without the item listed, the MAS can amend the agenda at the start of the meeting to reinsert the discussion, if desired.

New Business – Working Group to Review Revised MetroAccess Policy Publications

Mr. Semelfort requested that those members who wished to volunteer for the Revised MetroAccess Policy Publications work group identify themselves. Volunteers included: Mr. Semelfort, Ms. Brooks, Mr. Crawford, Mr. McEntee, Ms. Bellamy, Ms. Rush, and Dr. Banerjee.

Ms. Bellamy stated that Mr. Semelfort, as Chair of the MAS, should serve as Chair of the work group. Mr. Semelfort accepted, but stated he cannot do the entire review by himself this time as he had done previously on the MetroAccess Customer Guide.

Mr. Sheehan recommended that an email go out to those AAC members not in attendance, to inform them of the work group, and give them an opportunity to volunteer as well. Ms. Bellamy added that Mr. Sheehan should be work group volunteer as well. Mr. Sheehan accepted this recommendation.

Bus and Rail Subcommittee

Mr. McEntee, Chair, Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS), presented a summary of the BRS December 2017 meeting. He stated that there was a discussion on the new 8000-series rail car. He stated that there are AAC recommendations currently under review including the addition of arm rest on the first front facing seats, changing the parking location wheelchairs; and improved audio. There are also improvements from the 7000-series that will be carried over to the 8000-series rail car. Mr. McEntee added that there was also a discussion on the Purple Line public hearings.

Mr. Sheehan asked what would be the next step(s) be for the AAC in regards to the 8000-series rail car; would it be for a recommendation to come from the BRS to the full committee. Mr. Blake stated that a follow-up discussion on the 8000-series rail car is on the January BRS agenda. The AAC has provided some initial recommendations; staff has responded to those recommendations; now the BRS gets to review and discuss the

response of staff, and decide what it will present to the full committee and express to the Board.

Ms. Mezile added that the BRS also had a discussion about Metro's action with regards to station ahead list signs (SALs) and there was a motion that stated Metro should cease and desist from the removal of any more SALs. Mr. Blake stated that this subject is also on the January BRS agenda.

Mr. Ariza-Silva asked if there is still time for the AAC to bring new recommendations regarding the 8000-series rail car. Mr. Blake said yes.

Ms. Brooks added that the BRS discussed the possibility of Metro installing weatherized strips at the edge of steps in the system.

Mr. Crawford added that the BRS also discussed a proposal to have the AAC recognize members of the press for positive news coverage on disability-related issues.

WMATA Internal Review of Metrorail Facility ADA Compliance

Mr. Blake discussed a recently completed audit by Metro's Department of Quality Assurance, Internal Compliance and Oversight (QICO). It was an audit of Metro's ADA compliance of rail facilities and equipment. The audit looked at 26 of Metro's rail stations. The key summary finding by QICO was that during the review, QICO did not identify any ADA non-compliance issues with physical equipment or station accessibility.

Mr. Blake added that the results of the QICO audit reflect three other ADA-related audits of Metro; all of which also concluded that there were no ADA non-compliance issues found. Mr. Blake stated that ADAP could not produce such a record of outstanding results alone. While ADAP helps Metro facilitate accessibility into the planning process, as well as the design review, construction, and acquisition process; follows-up with quality assurance; and receives advice from the disability stakeholder community, the outstanding audit results are also a product of customers serving as the eyes, ears, and hands extension of ADAP on a day-to-day basis. The more feedback the AAC, other disability stakeholders, and customers in general provide ADAP on the current status of Metro's rail, bus, and paratransit services, including the equipment, the more we can help our colleagues stay on top of things, so that any time someone wants to audit any of Metro's services, facilities, or equipment for ADA compliance, we are ready, which means the services, facilities, and equipment are available for customers with disabilities.

Mr. Kaffen stated that the results are impressive. He asked if ADAP uses a checklist of ADA items during its reviews of the system. Mr. Blake stated, yes there is the use of an ADA checklist for station inspections. Mr. Kaffen asked about the rotation of the station

inspection. Mr. Blake stated that the rotation is simply one that ensures each station gets an inspection each year.

Ms. Mezile asked if visual accessibility was included in the checklist. She stated that if everyone on the team has good vision, they might not be sensitive to the needs of people with low vision. She wants to be part of the ADAP team. Mr. Blake stated that as a traveling customer, she is already a part of the team. ADAP relies on customer feedback for each station. She asked if the recommendations are usually the same. Mr. Blake said they usually come up with the same outcome; no finding of ADA non-compliance, which means I am doing my job. However, each audit and auditor has their own unique interests, which lead to discussions of different aspects of accessibility.

Ms. Bellamy stated that she has asked ADAP three times about a bus stop at Georgian Woods Place. It was moved, and is not accessible. The stop was not moved back, and now people in wheelchairs cannot use the stop. He added that the bus stop indicator on the bus vehicles say Georgian Woods Place, but the stop isn't there. Ms. Bellamy asked what can the AAC do to move the stop back to its original location. Mr. Blake stated that the bus stop in question, like the vast majority of stops, is not on Metro's property. Therefore, Metro can advocate for the re-establishment of the stop, which ADAP has done, and will try again. The stop was "temporarily" moved during construction, but following the completion of the construction, was not moved back. Mr. Blake encouraged Ms. Bellamy to reach out to her local elected official to determine if other plans, projects, or priorities are at work leading to the location of the stop. Ms. Bellamy believes a message from Metro would be more powerful.

Christian Kent, Assistant General Manager, Access Services (ACCS), stated that Metro's role is to stop our bus where the bus stop sign is, and the location of the stop is coordinated between Metro and the jurisdictions, and as we discuss situations like this we need to be clear on what we are asking for. Mr. Kent added that if the committee is requesting ACCS/Metro to convey a message regarding the stop, we'll do it. He also added that as a committee, the AAC can send out communication as well. While AAC members may think Metro's voice is strong, the voice of the customer is very strong as well.

Dr. Banerjee asked if ADAP takes the concerns on people who attend AAC meetings, but are not members and follow-up on the issues in the system they raise. Mr. Blake said yes. He added that ADAP utilizes feedback from all customers. Dr. Banerjee also recalled times when station managers and bus drivers often could not answer questions regarding accessibility, therefore shouldn't the Metro employees be trained to know what the ADA is, and how to help customers with disabilities. Mr. Blake stated that in fact ADAP does provide ADA Awareness training to all new employees. ADAP also monitors the completion records for employees with mandatory follow-up trainings, and

finally, ACCS created a computer-based training titled "Serving Customers with Disabilities," that all Metro employees can take. Mr. Blake added that the QICO audit did state that station managers should be provided additional training on the location and use of the areas of rescue assistance (AORA) in their respective stations. Mr. Blake said that training is very important part of what we are trying to do, and for any future audits we want to have good, accurate, and readily available records with respect to the accessibility-related trainings staff has taken.

Mr. Ariza-Silva stated that it sounds like you have a great team working with you. But, when you look at the interaction between the AAC and your team, it is not the way things are supposed to be; the action and reaction action, things just take too long. You need to consider creating a consultant traveling team to go with you to identify accessibility issues and move things faster. In addition, your team and department needs to have more inclusiveness and diversity to include more people with disabilities to move things faster.

Mr. Blake stated that there are philosophical differences between the role of the AAC as a body, and the role of individuals being the eyes, ears, and hands extension of ADAP in the system. Mr. Blake said he believes the role of the AAC is to advise Metro on broad accessibility-related matters. This discussion tonight is in regard to the daily unique travel experiences of customers; and having the customers share feedback with Metro when accessibility issues are noticed.

Mr. Sheehan recommended that Eric Christensen, Chief of Internal Compliance, to whom QICO reports to, be invited to participate in a future AAC meeting, perhaps 3 or 4 months from now. Mr. Kent said we would be glad to convey AAC's invitation to Mr. Christensen.

Mr. Kent added that he agreed with Mr. Ariza-Silva in that ACCS should, as it does, have members on its staff who have disabilities.

Ms. Rush stated that AAC requests such as the white boards, which took over two years, the bus stop Ms. Bellamy has been taking about, and the new MetroAccess vehicle, these items are taking too long.

Ms. Ray asked for clarification; the independent audit was done by another Metro department, but it was on ADA compliance of fixed route. Mr. Blake said, "correct." Ms. Ray added that the people conducting the audit, therefore, needed to be conversant in the ADA. Mr. Blake, said "correct." Ms. Ray added that it is important that others in Metro understand the ADA. She added that some things the AAC and groups like the National Capitol Citizens with Low Vision are requesting are things that will make the system even more accessible and usable by the disability community, and I hear ADAP

state that you welcome that. Therefore, we should be proactive and not reactive. It is also promising to hear that the General Manager and the quality assurance folks are also checking to ensure Metro is in compliance. She also thanked Metro staff for the continued replacement of the red platform edge lights with the white lights.

Public Comment

A member of the public commented about recent changes to the #52 bus line and the stops served. She said many people who work at the Potomac Center Plaza Building that houses the Federal Communications Commission, Department of Education, and Immigration and Custom Enforcement have been impacted by the change. It picks up at the Smithsonian Metro station, makes a right on 12th street, but instead of making a left on D Street, it goes straight to the Wharf. The D Street stop use to serve people going to the Potomac Center Plaza Building. The new stop for this service is two blocks away, which is a problem for people with physical disabilities. She would like a bus stop installed between Maryland Avenue and the Potomac Center Plaza Building. She stated that this stop would not alter the route. David Shaffer, ADA Ombudsman, stated that he has discussed this request with Metro Bus Planning, and he will speak to the customer after the meeting.

Mr. Sheehan spoke about an AAC protocol regarding bus stop changes and the impact on customers with disabilities, and potentially forcing customers to use MetroAccess. Mr. Blake clarified that the agreement established related to identifying any bus route changes that would put a MetroAccess customer currently in the service area outside of the MetroAccess service area. For an assessment of a bus route or bus stop change that would make accessing the fixed route service more difficult for people with disabilities, that is done through the public hearing process. Mr. Kent agreed, adding that MetroAccess does not have information on customers with disabilities who are not MetroAccess customers.

Report – Meet and Greet between Maryland AAC Members and Maryland Metro Board Members

Mr. Semelfort stated that the AAC attendees were Mr. Crawford, Ms. Rush, Ms. Bellamy, Mr. Sheehan, Tino Calabia, and himself. He stated that the meeting began with a discussion about the Abilities-Ride program. Members provide a lot of specific feedback; looked for ways to influence the equalizing of the mileage; and the performance of Silver Cab in particular. He stated that it is viewed as a pilot program, and will look more closely at it after Year 1.

Mr. Crawford spoke of the high level of interest the Board members displayed, and they were very engaging. He still is not totally clear on the issue of drivers being able to wear gloves in circumstances where they have to assist a customer with physical

contact. He left the meeting believing that wearing gloves is not prohibited, but would like to have more discussion in the future to clarify.

Mr. Sheehan stated that he thought an important issue raised during the meeting was making real-time information for MetroAccess trips for customers. That issue will be a follow-up for the committee.

Ms. Bellamy stated her concerns about the cab companies. She heard the idea of pitting the two companies against each other. She heard that Silver Cab is providing free rides for some trips, which obviously would increase ridership. She does not want to pit the companies against each other. She wants the services to be equal. Also, she wants clarification on where the money is going from the savings being generated.

Mr. Kent responded with a explanation of the MetroAccess budget. He stated that money for Abilities-Ride trips is not money set aside. It is part of the MetroAccess budget, which is created by a forecast of ridership. The money for the budget is provided by the jurisdictions. Any savings from the Abilities-Ride program would result in Metro asking the jurisdictions for less money. Ms. Bellamy responded that she is afraid that too many people would use Abilities-Ride, but then would not be allowed to return to MetroAccess. Mr. Kent stated that cannot happen because MetroAccess eligibility is based on the customer's ability to use fixed route service, not the use of alternative services.

Ms. Rush stated that she was disappointed in the meeting, particularly because the AAC attendees did not give the Board members any real takeaways, we just expressed concerns. Ms. Rush also asked about the \$65 figure. Mr. Kent stated that the \$65 was the MetroAccess combined capital and operating cost. Mr. Kent also added that given all four members from Maryland attended, which is a powerful statement, the meeting was productive. He added that the AAC did issue requests, but more in a discussion format. He stated that the Board members heard the AAC members clearly.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

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STATUS OF COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Item Number or Action	Description	Meeting Date	Presenter	Status
2018 – 11	<i>Abilities-Ride (Update) Data for the 1st 90 days of the program</i>	1/2/18		
2018 – 10	<i>AAC Travel Initiative Follow up on Board and AAC member feedback to determine which items the AAC should pursue.</i>	12/4/17	Tino Calabia	Referred to BRS.
2018 – 12	<i>Review OIG Report on MetroAccess data</i>	1/2/18		

COMPLETED - COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Item Number or Action	Description	Meeting Date	Presenter	Status
2018 -1	<p align="center">Title VI Presentation <i>Overview of the proposed update for the Title VI Plan submission for 2017</i></p>	7/3/17	<p align="center">Presenter: Corinne Remy Office of Equal Employment Opportunity</p>	
2018 – 2	<p align="center">AAC Elections <i>By-laws require an election for AAC officers (two-year term)</i></p>	10/2/17	B. Moore Gwynn	
2018 – 3	<p align="center">2017 Ride WITH ME Initiative <i>Advise the membership and respond to any general questions about the event</i></p>	10/2/17	<p align="center">Elver Ariza-Silva & B. Moore Gwynn</p>	
2018 – 5	<p align="center">Abilities-Ride <i>Update on the program</i></p>	9/5/17	Christiaan Blake	9/5/17

COMPLETED - COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

2018 – 6	2017 Ride With Me Initiative <i>Update from selected member and respond to any general questions about the event</i>	10/2/17		
2018 – 7	Free Ride Program <i>Update on the program</i>	10/2/17	Frank Roth	
2018 – 8	AAC - BRS appointment	10/2/17		
2018 – 4	Paratransit Vehicle Vendor (Ford Motor Company) <i>New Paratransit vehicle development</i>	11/5/17	TBD	
2018 – 9	Federal Funding A discussion Federal grants	10/2/17	Presenter: Regina Sullivan Government Relations	