

Accessibility Advisory Committee

**Meeting Minutes
February 1, 2010**

Committee Introductions

Thirteen committee members were introduced: Patrick Sheehan (Chair), Phil Posner (Vice-Chair), Paul Semelfort, Doris Matchett, Marilyn Lutter, Tom Dowling, McKinley Young, Michael Brownell, Elliott Lapin, Tapan Banerjee, Susan Holland, Emily Singer, and Joyce Callahan. Darrell Drake, Debbie Brown, Julius Fleischman, Nicole Miller and ex-officios, Sharon Moore and Carolyn Bellamy were absent.

Review of Agenda

Susan Holland requested information regarding the National Region Transportation Planning Board endorsement plan to improve bus stops. Rayann Otto-Anderson stated upon receiving information it will be forwarded onto the committee.

Phil Posner stated that information regarding the AAC recommendations for the 7000 Railcar series are expected be presented in April.

Agenda was accepted as presented.

Review of Minutes

Minutes were accepted as written.

Public Comment Period

Audience member Bill Orleans requested a presentation that was previously presented to the Board by Christian Kent. Mr. Orleans repeated his request for information on the names, jurisdictional representation, and disability related information for current committee members.

Audience member Victor Robinson commented that MetroAccess users who utilize the free-ride program are unable to use their MetroAccess ID cards like SmarTrip card to access Bus and Rail and wanted to know when the MetroAccess ID would have the SmarTrip feature.

Raquelle Gilbert informed the committee of two (2) upcoming emergency simulation drills on bus and rail. The drills are to take place on Friday, February 12th from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. and on Saturday, February 13th from 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. Two people volunteered

to participate in the drills.

Audience member, Patrice Means-Marlow, commended MetroAccess for the service she received during inclement weather.

MetroAccess Subcommittee Report

Doris Matchett gave an overview of the MetroAccess meeting agenda and informed the committee that there will be a 10 cents fare increase. Paul Semelfort stated his appreciation for the response he's received from the Office of Eligibility regarding the questions and concerns he voiced.

Susan Holland wanted to know the reason for re-hiring those MetroAccess drivers who were fired for violating the cell phone use policy. Phil Posner explained that the drivers were re-hired following an investigation which revealed that they were not in violation and were using their cell phones properly.

Patrick Sheehan announced that there are upcoming meetings to take place where the Regional Task Force on Paratransit will discuss the costs associated with MetroAccess and the eliminating of fixed-route service. These meetings will take place at the Jackson Graham Building on February 23rd, March 8th and March 15th from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

MetroBus Discussion

Jim Hamre stated that he is still working on getting the information on the cost of adding Braille to the signage on the bus stops.

Mr. Hamre also answered a series of questions inquired by committee member, Paul Semelfort, and are summarized below.

Q: What type(s) of ADA training do bus operators receive and how much training is administered?

A: *Operators receive a total of 320 hours (as new hire employees); with the first 120 hours in the classroom and in-field practical training with an instructor. The remaining 120 hours are spent in the field with Line Platform Instructor operating on actual bus routes. ADA Sensitivity and Refresher courses are administered by staff from the Office of ADA Programs and explained the Sensitivity courses are administered to new employees and refreshers courses are administered every two (2) years*

Q: What services/accommodations must bus operators provide upon request from persons with disabilities?

A: *All requests for the lift or ramp, kneeling of the bus, stop announcements,*

securement of mobility devices and requests for priority seating must be fulfilled. Although by law, bus operators are required to announce that the priority seating be made available upon request for those in need, they cannot enforce it.

Q: What is the procedure for securing passengers who use a mobility device?

A: *The current policy does not require a customer to be secured and the policy is being revised. Upon request, the bus operator must secure the customer and his or her mobility device.*

Q: Some operators do not fulfill requests from customers who wish to have the bus lowered/kneeled. How should customers voice or file a complaint?

A: *All kneeling requests should be accommodated. Mr. Hamre stated that feedback is welcomed and gave examples of what information to provide Metro in the event of having to voice a complaint or issue. The examples were to ensure to get the bus route, time of incident, bus number and the block number (if possible), which is the number posted outside of the bus and to call 202.637.1328.*

Q: Are bus operators supposed to wait until passengers are seated before moving the bus?

A: *Bus operators are to ensure the bus is not put in motion prior to any unstable, older adult or person with a disability has a firm grip or is seated.*

Additional questions and concerns were raised regarding the wheelchair securement issues. Mr. Sheehan suggested that the Metro Is Accessible subcommittee discuss the securement issues and follow-up with the full Committee.

Regional Travel Training Grant Update

Rikki Epstein provided the committee with an update on the Regional Travel Training Grant. It was explained that Metro will oversee the implementation of Comprehensive Individualized Level of Travel Training: A Regional Initiative (CIL Project), a federal grant project under the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom programs.

The two-year pilot project will provide comprehensive, individualized travel training for people with significant disabilities throughout the Washington, DC metropolitan region. Metro will work in partnership with the Virginia, Maryland and District of Columbia Centers for Independent Living (CILs). A major portion of the project will focus on helping low income people with significant disabilities learn how to travel to and from job sites and employment-related activities, and will include the provision of free Reduced Fare SmarTrip® cards containing funds to pay for rides on public transportation for eligible participants.

Metro's three project partners are the District of Columbia Center for Independent Living (Washington, DC), ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia (Arlington and Fairfax Counties and the Cities of Alexandria, Falls Church and Fairfax), and Independence Now of Maryland (Prince George's and Montgomery Counties). Each of the three CILs will hire two (2) full-time travel trainers (total of six for the region) to provide comprehensive, individualized travel training for people with significant disabilities who require more than the one-day individual Metro system orientations currently provided through the Metro Department of Access Services.

An important component of the project will be the provision of Metro Train the Travel Trainers Workshops for the project partners and associates, including the staff of the CILs and The Arc of DC, The Arc of Northern Virginia, The Arc of Montgomery County and The Arc of Prince George's County. In order to ensure sustainability of comprehensive travel training services throughout the region beyond the two-year project period, the Metro Department of Access Services will teach agency staff how to provide travel training to teach their consumers with disabilities how to travel safely and independently on public transportation.

Metro and the project partners and associates will conduct extensive outreach to consumers with disabilities to make them aware of the travel training options available throughout the region and refer them to the appropriate organization for service implementation. Referrals will be made to the CILs for comprehensive, long-term individualized travel training and referrals will be made to Metro for one-day individual and group Metro system orientations.

Revisions to Bylaws & MOU

Bylaws – Minor corrections were made to the Bylaws and the Committee voted and passed the Bylaws as amended with 11 positive votes.

MOU –The Committee approved the amended MOU and voted to forward it onto the General Manager.

During the discussion, Michael Brownell announced that it makes logical sense to continue to conduct the AAC meetings on the 1st Monday of each month and not move it to the 2nd Monday.

Old Business/New Business

In response to the Committee's request in January to begin recognizing Metro employees each month who have provided exemplary service to persons with disabilities and older adults, Ms. Otto-Anderson suggested that the committee form a

task force to review and select an employee who qualifies for the commendation based on their criteria. Ms. Otto-Anderson noted that some committee members were concerned that Metro staff would decide who gets the commendations. The committee agreed that they would form such a group to decide on monthly commendations.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.