

# **Accessibility Advisory Committee**

**Meeting Minutes  
March 1, 2010**

## **Committee Introductions**

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

## **Review of Agenda**

Emily Singer requested that procedures in the event of severe weather conditions be discussed.

Tom Dowling requested information about the progress of the Metro Channel project.

Phil Posner asked that Mr. Sheehan write a letter to the General Manager requesting information about elevators.

Michael Brownell asked for an update as to the status of the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by the General Manager.

Rayann Otto-Anderson responded that the MOU is currently being reviewed by the Office of General Counsel and the results will be shared with the committee when they are received.

Agenda was accepted as presented.

## **Review of Minutes**

Minutes were accepted as written.

## **Public Comment Period**

Audience member Betty Norwood expressed frustration with her experiences with MetroAccess.

Allison Anderson stated that she will follow up with Ms. Norwood.

Audience member Bill Orleans repeated his request for information on the names, jurisdictional representation, committee appointments and disability related information for current committee members. He asked that the General Counsel's reply to his requests be provided to him at the next AAC meeting.

## **MetroAccess Subcommittee Report**

Doris Matchett gave an overview of the MetroAccess meeting agenda and informed the committee that the 10 cents fare increase has been implemented. She stated that customers can use a debit card instead of a credit card to add value to their Easy Pay accounts for MetroAccess. There is no objection for customers to continue using cash. Late night call center staffing issues were mentioned which was taken note by MV transportation to see what improvements can be made. "Just in Time" training for new drivers was also discussed. Marilyn Lutter volunteered to provide on the spot information during new driver training. Improvements to the subscription policy were also discussed.

McKinley Young asked how management would know whether or not their goals are being achieved for new drivers during the new driver training.

Dwight Brashear of MV Transportation stated that all of the training provided is designed to show the progress that each new driver is making during the training process. Drivers must show adequate proficiency before moving to the next level of training. After training has been completed, evaluation is done while the MetroAccess drivers are rendering service.

Debbie Brown suggested that a class that uses different scenarios in addition to quizzes may be helpful in determining the effectiveness of the training.

Patrick Sheehan asked if the service is being used elsewhere. He also asked that the results of the training be shared with the MetroAccess subcommittee stating how beneficial the training is. Once the subcommittee reviews the findings, the information obtained can be shared with the AAC.

Mr. Brashear responded that the service is being used in other systems throughout the country and that there are certain components of the service that can be tailored to the locale.

Mr. Sheehan asked if the Just in Time training replaces classroom training.

Mr. Brashear stated that it is conducted in a classroom and there is always an instructor involved during any type of training.

Nicole Miller asked if the Office of ADAP reviewed the training programs.

Glenn Millis stated that MV Transportation has provided new training material which is currently being reviewed by ADAP.

Marilyn Lutter volunteered to participate in the training as a way of improving the way drivers communicate with customers who are visually impaired.

Mr. Sheehan stated that service animal involvement in the training would be an added value to the training.

Darrell Drake suggested that MetroAccess do a survey with riders who volunteer in the training to see how well the drivers perform in an effort to assess the effectiveness of the training.

Phil Posner stated that comments made during the Public Comment period at the MetroAccess subcommittee meeting were very positive when discussing MetroAccess service during the snow blizzard.

Ms. Miller asked for more information about the MetroAccess late night call center staffing issues.

Ms. Matchett responded that the staffing after midnight tends to be non-existent and that staff is researching how to better accommodate customers during that time frame to prevent customers from being stranded. Staff stated that they will address the subcommittee of their findings and recommendations in the near future.

### **MetroAccess Eligibility**

Rosalyn Simon gave a brief overview of proposed changes that will be forthcoming for the Office of Eligibility. The Department of Access Services is focusing on providing more convenient customer friendly services. One of the ways of doing so was by opening a new office at the Metro Headquarters building which allows customers to apply for MetroAccess services, reduced fare services and offer regional travel training services at various off-site locations. The travel trainers teach customers with disabilities how to use the fixed route bus and rail systems as well as identify environmental barriers to using the fixed route service. The environmental barriers encountered are then shared with the local jurisdictions.

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) is comprehensive civil rights legislation that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. The goal of the ADA is to promote integration, equal access, equal opportunity and is designed for people with disabilities to have the same access to different services and programs as the general public. The ADA is the law and requires a completely accessible fixed route system.

For people that cannot use the fixed route system for all or some of their trips, the law requires that complimentary ADA paratransit services be available to those individuals. It runs the same days and hours as the fixed route service.

There are 3 categories of eligibility. The first category is for persons with disabilities who cannot use the accessible fixed route system. The second category is when the accessible fixed route system is not available to persons with disabilities at the times when they are needed. The third category is for when there are environmental barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from accessing the fixed route system. Eligibility is functional and is based on an individual's functional ability to use the fixed route system. It is not based on an individual's disability.

There is a 3 step process for MetroAccess eligibility. The first step is to complete the application and have it professionally verified by a medical professional. The second is to attend an interview at the Transit Accessibility Center. The third, if needed, is to have a functional assessment at the Transit Accessibility Center.

Upon the completion of the 3 step process for eligibility, customers will be classified as eligible, temporarily eligible, or ineligible. Customers who are classified as eligible will be able to schedule all trips requested. A temporarily eligible classification is for a short term disability which could last from 3 to 12 months. An ineligible classification means that a customer will only be able to use the fixed route system. Currently, re-certification is every 3 years. There is a proposed change called "Conditional Eligibility" whereby the law states that individuals may be determined eligible to use the paratransit service all of the time, some of the time or under certain circumstances. Individuals may be found to be able to use the paratransit service for some trips and the fixed route service for other trips if they have met the criteria. Several examples were given.

Glenn Millis suggested that the committee forward questions about the eligibility presentation to Rayann Otto-Anderson so that they can be addressed during next month's AAC meeting.

## **ELES Briefing**

Cedric Watson gave a brief overview of the Office of Elevators and Escalators' in house program. Metro has one of the only elevator/escalator training laboratories in the country for transit agencies and offer a 4-year training program for mechanics and apprentices. Refresher training is provided to journeymen who graduate from the training program to ensure that their training and technological skills are current. Metro currently has 137 in-house mechanics that maintain 235 elevators and 534 escalators throughout the transit system. Emergency workers such as firemen, EMS workers and other rescue personnel throughout the region are also trained at the facility. The training teaches them how to evacuate people who become trapped in the elevators and on the escalators. When elevator outages occur, Metro informs customers about the outages

in several different accessible formats. Metro also has a safety awareness program for elevators and escalators. The second week of November is designated as Elevator/Escalator Safety Week. Some elevators now have auto dispatch to accommodate customers.

Mr. Sheehan stated that there is a policy within Metro that all new construction of stations will have dual elevator pathways.

Joyce Callahan asked was there a timeline for the Capital Project at Gallery Place Metro station with regard to the escalator maintenance and restoration back to service for the escalator that is currently out of service. She also requested more information about the reliability reporting on the Elevator/Escalator report and what is the impact on customers.

Mr. Watson responded that the escalator is due to return back to service on March 17, 2010. He explained that Metro's overall standard for escalator availability is 93% and how that percentage is calculated. Maintenance that usually takes up to 24 weeks is now reduced to 16 weeks under Metro's Capital Improvement Program.

Mr. Sheehan asked how customers could get information about elevator/escalator return to service timelines.

Mr. Watson responded that the information could be found on the Metro website as well as by cell phone text.

Emily Turner asked if there are enough mechanics to maintain the elevators and escalators.

Mr. Watson responded that Metro calculates that there is 1 mechanic for every 6 pieces of equipment and as the system grows, the number of mechanics will also grow.

Tapan Banerjee asked for clarification of the "mean time between failures" on the Elevator/Escalator report.

Mr. Watson responded that the total number of hours represents the average of each failure which is then combined for all failures throughout the entire system.

Mr. Posner suggested that there be a map and text directions on the Metro website to explain where the elevators are located at stations. He also suggested that the automated voice inside the elevators give additional information explaining where to find elevators prior to disembarking from the elevators.

Ms. Turner suggested that automated voice instructions on escalators mimic those that are used at the airport's moving walkways in reference of standing to the right of the

walkway be included at Metro stations.

Mr. Brownell suggested that “Out of Service” signs be placed at all levels of the station when an elevator is out of service to notify customers.

Ms. Brown suggested that there be a verbal announcement inside elevators to notify customers as to which door (front or rear) to exit if there is more than 1 exit door on the elevator.

### **Old Business/New Business**

Ms. Brown informed the committee that during the Metro Is Accessible meeting, wheelchair securement on buses was discussed and the committee members were asked to vote as to whether customers should be required to be secured. She asked for 2 volunteers from the AAC; 1 person that’s for requiring securement and 1 person that opposes the requirement of securement to be on that committee for discussion.

Mr. Sheehan suggested that Ms. Otto-Anderson check to see if that will be appropriate.  
*(Action item: responded to – not appropriate)*

Mr. Banerjee volunteered as being “for” the requirement of securement and Mr. Brownell volunteered as being “against” the requirement of securement.

### **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.