

Accessibility Advisory Committee

**Meeting Minutes
April 5, 2010**

Committee Introductions

Seventeen 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, Joyce Callahan, Julius Fleischman, Elliott Lapin, Susan Holland and Carolyn Bellamy were in attendance. Emily Singer and ex-officio member, Sharon Moore were absent.

Review of Agenda

Agenda was accepted as presented.

The Committee commended Mr. Sheehan and Mr. Posner for their participation in the recent Metro Budget Hearings.

Mr. Posner presented the Committee with a draft letter to the Board. The letter consisted of four (4) positive suggestions for Board review/action that will affect MetroAccess customers. The suggestions are listed below:

1. To increase the MetroAccess to up to twice the comparable fixed-route fare.
2. To reduce the MetroAccess service area to reflect actual fixed-route service areas reflecting actual time, day and location of the requested trip.
3. Increase the MetroAccess supplemental fares by up to \$5 for Zone 1, up to \$10 for Zone 2, up to \$15 for Zone 3 and up to \$20 for Zone 4.
4. Restrict the use of the Free Ride Program to only those MetroAccess certified persons with conditional eligibility and qualified PCA's (Personal Care Attendants) as defined by the ADA.

A motion to accept the letter to the Board was approved for signature by the Committee Chair, Patrick Sheehan.

Review of Minutes

Minutes were accepted as written.

Public Comment Period

Damian Gregory introduced himself as one of the six newly hired travel trainers under the Regional Travel Trainers Program or People with Disabilities.

Mr. Gregory stated that the two-year pilot program provides comprehensive, individualized travel training for at least 600 people with significant disabilities who require more than the one-day, individual Metro system orientations that Metro currently provides. Metro has been providing free, one-day, individual or group Metro system orientations for more than five years as part of its Metro is Accessible program. As a result, hundreds of people with disabilities have learned how to travel safely and independently on Metro's fully accessible Metrobus and Metrorail system.

MetroAccess Subcommittee Report

Subscription Policy Update: During the Subcommittee meeting, Omari June explained that a new procedure is in place for customers who wish to enroll in subscription trips. The customer will be transferred to a Subscription Specialist and must have established a trip pattern over a 30-day span to ensure the subscription is properly utilized. This update will not affect current customers who are already subscribed to the service.

Fare Increase: Ms. Dalton-Kumins stated that information has been readily announced through press releases, on the WMATA website and on the news. The fare increase went into effect Sunday, February, 28th and was increased by \$0.10, increasing the fare from \$2.50 to \$2.60 for MetroAccess customers.

New Driver Training: Ms. Dalton-Kumins MetroAccess has been selected as a pilot transit property to test a new driver training program. The instruction program is an interactive video facilitated by licensed and certified instructors that is intended to enhance driver understanding and adherence to corporate safety performance standards replace the current driver safety training.

MetroAccess Budget

Selene Faer Dalton-Kumins presented the Committee with brief comments regarding the MetroAccess budget and the recent Metro budget hearings. Ms. Dalton-Kumins stated that the Board has received a lot of feedback from each public hearing and stated the Committee provided a lot of good input for the Board to consider and address.

Questions were raised concerning how customers will be notified regarding the changes/cuts made, if any. Ms. Dalton-Kumins responded that the Board will announce

all service/budget cuts, if any, April 22nd.

Mr. Posner offered a solution that may help curb the budget issue for MetroAccess and stated that if each jurisdiction increased their contributions to Metro, which may assist with lowering the budget. Ms. Miller suggested that since budget cuts continue, perhaps the federal government should step in as overseers of Metro.

Metro Lighting Initiatives

David Newman from the POWR department presented the Committee with an overview of the inner workings and responsibilities of the POWR department.

Mr. Newman discussed projects that POWR has successfully implemented.

- The installation of the red LED platform lights at nine (9) additional platforms.
- Recently completed projects to increase the lighting to the escalator area at National Airport.
- Relamped all six parking garages/lots at the Vienna MetroRail station.
- Worked alongside IT in an effort to upgrade the cell phone network in twenty (20) of our busiest underground stations. Work remains for 27 remaining stations.
- Began modifying the new Emergency Trip Stations (ETS) with brighter and more efficient light bulbs.

Mr. Newman stated the goals and initiatives within the POWR department are:

Goals

- To support persons with disabilities and senior citizens through lighting initiatives designed to enhance safety and security.
- To develop business plans that supports those initiatives.
- And to develop a relationship with the disability and senior citizen community that will allow for positive feedback and interaction.

Initiatives

- To ensure that fifteen (15) stations are outfitted each year with the new red LED lights along each platform.
- To ensure that lighting outages in the corridors that lead to elevators are well lit.
- To ensure that the lighting above parking spaces reserved for our customers with disabilities is renewed within 72 hours of notification of outage.
- To respond to any ADA-related customer complaint within 48 hours of notification, Monday-Friday.
- To push for future “trial” installations of bulbs/fixtures above parking spaces reserved for customers with disabilities.

Metro has submitted a proposal to replace tunnel, track-bed and parapet lighting in our stations but is still seeking funding for the project. The project will increase illumination,

reduce energy costs and will also reduce Greenhouse gases.

Mr. Posner asked if the remaining MetroRail stations will have the blue lights installed as at the Foggy Bottom station. Mr. Newman explained that the lights at Foggy Bottom were installed by a lighting engineer and the lighting improvements installed in the mezzanine of the Judiciary Square were done by a contractor, in which each project was independently funded.

Ms. Callahan commended Mr. Newman on the new lighting improvements installed at Gallery Place-Chinatown.

Mr. Brownell mentioned noticing MetroRail parking areas are lit throughout the course of the day asked what the lighting policy is during daylight hours. He mentioned that turning them off during the day may help save Metro money. Mr. Newman stated that lights have to be on at a certain level but each jurisdiction has requirements for them to stay on for various reasons.

Ms. Lutter questioned why the decision was made to install red platform-edge lights in rail stations because it isn't helpful for individuals who are colorblind. Mr. Newman stated it was determined that red lights, instead of other suggested colors, like blue, tend to give a warning or caution effect that cautions customers to stay away from the platform edge.

Mr. Posner stated upon his research he was informed that the most common colorblindness is blue and green, which was probably one of the reason the color red was chosen.

Mr. Dowling asked with the installation of the cell phone networks in the stations and tunnels, if cell phones are supposed to work only while on station platforms or while in the tunnels as well. Mr. Newman stated that Verizon, T-Mobile, Sprint/Nextel and AT&T service were installed in 20 of MetroRail's busiest stations and are all supposed to work in the those 20 stations and tunnels.

Old Business/New Business

A status update on the MOU was requested by Tapan Banerjee. Ms. Otto-Anderson informed the Committee that Metro's Office of General Counsel is still in the process of reviewing the MOU but she will follow-up and provide the Committee with any further updates. Ms. Otto-Anderson also stated that Metro will continue to honor the current MOU beyond its expiration unless the committee sees any reason not to continue the relationship. She restated that because of proposed changes to the MOU affecting committee membership, recruitment will be on hold until those changes have been finalized and approved by Metro's Office of General Counsel.

Mr. Posner previously requested an update on the recommendations the Committee submitted to the Board regarding the 7000 series railcar. An update on the recommendations submitted is scheduled to be presented during the May 3rd AAC meeting.

Patrick Sheehan stated that the Committee would like General Manager, Richard Sarles, to attend the June AAC meeting to discuss the AAC agenda work plan.

Debbie Brown requested an update on the wheelchair securement policy. Tapan Banerjee stated that the Metro Is Accessible (MIA) Subcommittee previously voted to keep the policy as it is and that is to give each customer the option of securement. Mr. Sheehan suggested that the MIA Subcommittee draft a letter explaining the Subcommittee's decision made behind supporting that the current policy of giving customers the option of having their wheelchair or mobility device secured on MetroBus remain in place instead of making securement mandatory.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m.