

# **Accessibility Advisory Committee**

**Meeting Minutes  
July 12, 2010**

## **Committee Introductions**

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

## **Review of Agenda**

Phil Posner stated that an update on the 7000 Series Railcars will be discussed in the near future under Old/New Business.

## **Review of Minutes**

Minutes were accepted as written.

## **Public Comment Period**

Audience member, Edee Fay Schwartz, suggested that Metro consider making mobility device securement mandatory rather than an option because it is a safety concern. Ms. Schwartz stated that on the SMART bus system of Detroit, MI, customers using wheelchair and other mobility device are required to be secured.

Audience member, Patrice Means-Marlow, commended the recent service she's been receiving from MetroAccess drivers.

## **MetroAccess Fare Policy**

Christian Kent provided the Committee with an update on MetroAccess fare policy and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Mr. Kent stated that the decision made by the Board was not done without the consideration of what the AAC recommended; which was to raise the fare as opposed to cutting service.

Mr. Kent stated that the Board also decided to grandfather existing customers who go outside of the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile corridor so that this fare change would not come with a service reduction for existing customers. Meaning for new MetroAccess customers, the option to go outside of the service area is no longer an option, but existing customers will be

able to continue with no changes in service.

Mr. Kent stated that the General Manager is still in the process of working on the MOU but stated the changes that were recommended for the Bylaws and the MOU are fine and the General Manager is working on getting the AAC more visibility as compared to the Riders Advisory Committee (RAC), so that the decisions and recommendations given by the AAC are more visible.

## **Implementation of MetroAccess Fare Policy**

Selene Dalton-Kumins provided the Committee with a more in-depth update on the MetroAccess Fare Policy. Ms. Dalton-Kumins explained that the fare increase is currently in Phase 1, effective June 27<sup>th</sup>, the fare increased to \$3, which is a flat fare. For travel outside of the ADA corridor, the fare increased by \$1 per zone.

Zone 1 increased from \$1 to a \$2 surcharge.

Zone 2 increased from \$2 to a \$3 surcharge.

Zone 3 increased from \$3 to a \$4 surcharge.

Zone 4 is now a part of Zone 3 and the maximum fare is \$7 and the base fare is \$3.

Ms. Dalton-Kumins stated that Phase 2 of the fare increase will be implemented pretty soon.

Ms. Dalton-Kumins mentioned that software improvements are currently being made that once implemented will give customers the ability to input travel and will be given the total cost of their scheduled trip and stated that information will be updated online as well as the MetroAccess IVR system.

Ms. Dalton-Kumins stated the MetroAccess Customer Guide has been updated with information on the Phase 1 fare increase and will be updated again as Phase 2 approaches.

Mr. Posner suggested that drivers be trained on the specific needs of assistance of MetroAccess customers.

Mr. Fleischman asked why isn't specific information regarding a customer not listed on the driver's manifest; e.g. white cane, service animal, etc.?

Ms. Dalton-Kumins stated that there is certain information in the customer's eligibility profile and can be reviewed by staff if anything needs to be added to a customer's profile.

Audience member, Edee Fay Schwartz, suggested that certain information on the manifest be spelled out and not abbreviated so all drivers will know exactly what is

needed; e.g. Blind or Visually Impaired as opposed to VI, Ambulatory as opposed to AMB1, etc.

Ms. Dalton-Kumins stated that she is in support of having the abbreviations spelled out but also states that all drivers are trained to know what the abbreviations mean.

Mr. Posner questioned the reason he continues to receive arrival calls on his home phone when he has specifically stated and given his cell phone as the number to call upon ride arrival. Mr. Ryan Parr informed the Committee that during the eligibility process, the phone number that is given is the default number that will be called during arrival no matter what number a customer gives during the time of a reservation. He stated to update that number to contact Eligibility to have it updated in the Trapeze system.

Mr. Semelfort asked about the fare increase of Phase 2 and how those individuals who are outside of the ADA area will know the amount of fare for their trips. Mr. Parr stated that the increase will be in increments of five cents. Ms. Dalton-Kumins stated that it is still being discussed on how it will be calculated but chances are that the fare will be \$7.00, which is the maximum fare.

Ms. Matchett asked who has the responsibility of ensuring that the drivers collect fare from customers before they board the vehicle. Ms. Dalton-Kumins stated the drivers are responsible for collecting the fares. Ms. Matchett emphasized that she'd like to routinely see the drivers collect the fares and will continue to raise this issue during the MetroAccess Subcommittee meetings.

Ms. Dalton-Kumins stated that MetroAccess will be focusing on emphasizing to its employees the changes in the fare but also reiterating the importance of having exact change and the importance of fare collection. The final draft of the written directive to be given to MV Transportation will be shared with the Subcommittee stating the above mentioned information amongst other issues.

## **MetroAccess Subcommittee Report**

Ms. Matchett stated how impressed she was with the updates made on the IVR system and stated that July 26<sup>th</sup> Subcommittee meeting is the exact date of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and would like for that information to be included on the IVR as well.

Mr. Semelfort requested that information be provided in the future regarding dropped phone calls.

Ms. Matchett presented the performance statistics as generated by LeRoy Hayford during the previous MetroAccess Subcommittee meeting.

## **Web Accessibility & Data Transparency**

Eleanor Evans stated her reason for coming to the Committee is to inform them about the changes and updates to the website that have been made. Ms. Evans stated the new scorecard has been made fully accessible and includes text descriptions, links to fully accessible PDFs where any charts or graphs have been converted to data tables. Ms. Evans also stated that the updates made have all successfully been tested on JAWS and Adobe Accessibility Measures software. Ms. Evans stated the Committee is more than welcome to browse the updates and welcomes all feedback.

Ms. Evans provided her contact information:

Email – [eevans@wmata.com](mailto:eevans@wmata.com)

Phone – 202.962.1139

Mr. Posner spoke on behalf of Committee Chairperson, Patrick Sheehan, and stated that Mr. Sheehan has difficulty with viewing PDFs that have tables in them, particularly bus maps.

Ms. Brown stated her difficulty in attempting to buy a SmarTrip card through the online store and Ms. Evans stated that the online store goes outside of the WMATA website but can inform the vendor about the issue. Ms. Brown provided Ms. Evans with her email address for follow-up.

Mr. Posner also mentioned that it has been brought to the attention of BUS that the most useless online tool is the bus route maps because stops aren't listed and customers are not able to tell where the stops are on the maps. Ms. Evans stated that a lot of work is currently being done on bus data and it will ultimately translate into better information on the web.

Mr. Posner also suggested that a possible improvement to the bus route map would be to list the intersection of the bus stop instead of line drawing. Ms. Evans stated more information should be available by the next committee meeting or two and will provide feedback.

Jamie Harvey presented the Committee with information on data transparency. Mr. Harvey stated that data transparency is a program that allows all of the data about our

services to be available to everyone, e.g. programmers and software developers, etc. to create programs and applications. Mr. Harvey stated that bus and rail data will be available in real-time format that will allow all bus stop locations and train information available.

Mr. Harvey stated the expected release date of the rail data is August 11<sup>th</sup> and some bus data will be released to select groups of developers to test it. Mr. Harvey informed the committee that they should invite anyone who may be interested in attending a meeting that will take place on August 11<sup>th</sup> as well.

Mr. Harvey asked the committee to share any thoughts; concerns or suggestions that they think will be helpful to increase web accessibility. Mr. Posner stated that it would be helpful if more information was provided online regarding which elevator and escalator is out of service, (for example: platform elevator to Shady Grove). Mr. Semelfort added that this information should be sent to those customers enrolled in ELLEN to keep them aware of the outages.

Mr. Posner stated it would also be helpful to have something in place that would prevent a customer from having to ask the station manager to call to request a shuttle bus in the event of an elevator outage and have to wait for it to arrive. Mr. Brownell added that additional information should be given as to where the shuttle bus will be located in the event of having to have a shuttle dispatched.

Ms. Brown stated her continued difficulty with utilizing the NextBus system online as well as while at an actual bus stop.

Mr. Dowling mentioned the electronic signage displays at the Pentagon station for the buses. He stated the displays are never accurate and the buses never arrive in the timeframes that are displayed. Mr. Harvey stated that a number of factors play into the reason some of the information is inaccurate. He stated that the information is an estimation based on the location of the bus where route information, traffic and other factors play a role in what is displayed on the signage.

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

Ms. Matchett invited all to attend the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Ave celebration that will be held in place of the monthly MetroAccess Subcommittee meeting on Monday, July 26, 2010.

Ms. Otto-Anderson asked the Committee for clarification as to what the Committee is asking WMATA to measure regarding the second Bus Idling Survey they're requesting. She stated that per the motion made at a previous AAC meeting, the committee agreed to send a letter to the General Manager requesting the commitment of Metro's resources to conduct field testing of bus idling, however, the committee has not yet submitted that letter to WMATA.

Mr. Fleischman stated that WMATA conducted a survey a study a few months ago regarding bus idling and it was determined that some transit properties have documented savings as a result of lowering bus idling. Ms. Otto-Anderson stated that per previous discussions the committee seems to be asking for a change in Metro's bus idling policy to determine if cost savings could be realized. Mr. Fleischman agreed.

Mr. Posner suggested that the Committee bring any concerns to the public comment period during the Riders Advisory Council (RAC) meetings to make them aware of the issues the disability community is facing so that the concerns can be addressed by the Board. Mr. Posner stated that he will be attending the next Board meeting and will bring this issue to the Board.

## **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.