

Accessibility Advisory Committee

**Meeting Minutes
October 4, 2010**

Committee Introductions

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

Review of Agenda and Minutes

No new agenda items added. Michael Brownell informed the committee that he represented the AAC at the Council of Governments meeting which dealt with the task force for governance of Metro. Tapan Banerjee informed the committee that he and Mr. Brownell wanted to share a report they made at a meeting of the D.C. Circulator Transit Development Board. The agenda was approved with additions.

Mr. Brownell suggested that Paul Semelfort add his comments about last month's meeting to the governance portion of today's Agenda. Minutes were accepted as written.

Public Comment

Audience member, Patrice Means-Marlow asked why she should use Easy Pay if it is not going to be honored.

Carolyn Bellamy stated money must be in the Easy Pay account when the appointment is being made or the trip has to be paid for upon arrival of the MetroAccess vehicle.

Mr. Sheehan suggested that a report be given explaining the 4 methods involved in using the Easy Pay system and how they should be distributed to customers and particularly MetroAccess users.

Allyson Anderson stated there were brochures, FAQ's and a memo distributed to the customer base when the Easy Pay program was instituted. She will provide the information to Ms. Means-Marlow.

Mr. Sheehan suggested that updates of the full pay policy be provided during the next AAC meeting.

Audience member, Jeff Benson, stated that due to unpleasant experiences within the last year on the fixed route system he only uses MetroAccess. He also stated MetroAccess is too expensive for his budget which leaves him no choice but to ride his bicycle for travel. Mr. Benson complained about signage pertaining to service animals.

Mr. Sheehan informed him that if he is fully eligible for MetroAccess he can ride the fixed route system for free.

Audience member, Tony Trott, stated redundant elevators should be required at the Court House Metro station. There is a Center for Independent Living within close proximity which serves many individuals who use mobility devices. Because of frequent use of the station by people who use mobility devices, Mr. Trott suggested that the Court House station be moved up on the list of priority stations to have redundant elevators installed.

Mr. Sheehan stated that it is now Metro policy to install redundant elevators when new stations are constructed. He stated that the AAC has been working on having a second elevator installed in some stations that only have one elevator.

Audience member, Rosemary Ciatti, suggested more redundant elevators, dependability and security would encourage more riders to use the fixed route system. She suggested installing inclinators in stations.

Mr. Sheehan suggested there be a security briefing added to a future agenda which informs customers of how to respond in case of an emergency at the Metro headquarters building in light of the recent incident involving the building that houses MetroAccess.

MetroAccess Subcommittee Report

Paul Semelfort gave the Committee an overview of the MetroAccess performance report that was presented during the September MetroAccess Subcommittee meeting.

Mr. Semelfort stated Ms. Selene Dalton-Kumins spoke about the fare changes that will take place on November 1, 2010. Customers should start receiving newsletters shortly. There was also a safety presentation given to the subcommittee. Fare media will be limited to Easy Pay or cash only because of the variable fares. Information is being distributed by mail, IVR, mailing and community forums.

Ryan Parr informed the committee that Metro and MV Transportation tested the internal phone components because of the recent complaints regarding dropped calls at the MetroAccess call center. There were no problems detected from an internal standpoint. They have requested that Paycheck, which is the phone system provider, check their system to see if the problem is within their system. Detailed information has been given

to the phone system provider regarding the times of the dropped calls for further research.

During the 2nd floor flooding of the building in which MetroAccess occupies the 5th floor, an evacuation of the building was ordered. MetroAccess staff members were relocated to the Metro headquarters building and MetroAccess' phone system calls were redirected to those staff members.

McKinley Young asked if there were any backup plans for the schedule November 1st new fare policy.

Mr. Parr stated there are redundant servers available.

Joint Development Update

Tom Robinson updated the committee on the Silver Spring Transit Center project. It is due to be opened in the fall of 2011.

The Rhode Island Ave. project started in the spring. There is a multiphase arrangement with buses and access to the station. Right now they are entering into phase 3 which goes into effect on October 18, 2010 and will move the buses from in front of the station to slightly away from the front of the station for safety reasons. Some of the ways to notify customers are: there will be notices given out to the community, signs posted at the station, posts on the Metro website as well as other avenues.

The Rosslyn station project will have a lot of activity on North Moore Street. There will be a realignment of the bus bays along North Moore Street. All bus services at Rosslyn will continue. Changes to the stop locations were made to accommodate bus routes and the construction activity that will occur with the traffic activity. There will be one-way traffic going southbound on North Moore Street. The elevator will remain open during the construction of the building next to the metro station. There will be 3 new elevators and a new mezzanine entrance installed. Once they are completed, the existing elevator will be removed.

There was a new covered walkway installed at the White Flint station which meets ADA requirements and spans from the station to the parking garage.

There is also a new accessible path installed from Fisher Lane to the Twinbrook station.

The committee had no questions or comments on joint development activities.

Council of Governments Update

Michael Brownell reported that he represented the AAC at the WMATA Governance Review Taskforce meeting on September 17, 2010. Discussion included makeup of the WMATA Board of Directors and the consideration of changes and/or additions to the board. He discussed the makeup of the AAC, agenda items and recommendations about the makeup of the board.

Mr. Sheehan asked if there was any information that the RAC has about the Board of Trade and Council of Governments Review Taskforce which can be shared with the AAC. He also asked Mr. Brownell if there was any information as to when the Governance Task Force will release their report and recommendations regarding the future makeup of the WMATA Board of Directors.

Mr. Brownell responded there was no indication, but, that the RAC stated their input will be finished in approximately two weeks.

DC Circulator Update

Tapan Banerjee informed the committee of the DC Circulator meeting that he and Mr. Brownell attended. Topics that were discussed included the priorities of the DC Circulator and the activities of the centers and their corridor and transit planning. They were assembled into groups of 5 for activities which included mapping of different areas of Circulator service. They recommended service for different areas based on size, population and Metro station locations for short-term, mid-term and long-term time frames which were in increments of 2 year periods. Studies show that 63% of the population in the service area who do not have cars that use the Circulator. The goals are to have 100% of the people use the Circulator. There was a lot of focus on areas that are projected to be highly populated in the future.

Mr. Young asked if ADA concerns were a part of the planning process.

Mr. Brownell stated the buses are the most accessible in the area and that the focus was un-served areas and areas where the system could be expanded.

Mr. Banerjee stated other topics discussed were the senior population and disabled community.

Mr. Sheehan asked if there could be a bus checklist provided for Mr. Brownell & Mr. Banerjee to compare Circulator to Metrobus ADA compliance guidelines.

Ms. Holland congratulated Mr. Sheehan on winning the Dick Hedding Award.

Shuttle Service for Elevator Outages

Joseph Barber gave an overview of the Bus Operations Control Center (BOCC) procedures when shuttle service for elevator outages is required. Buses are not designated for elevator outages unless they are under a capital improvement program which is a long term elevator outage service. If there are no unused buses available when an elevator goes out of service, the bus division is notified. Buses are sometimes borrowed from the fixed route service and can be used for shuttle bus service when necessary.

Mr. Brownell stated he has problems locating a shuttle bus after the station manager calls for one because there is no specific area designated as to where the shuttle bus will be located to pick up customers. He also stated there is at least a 30-minute wait for a shuttle bus.

Mr. Barber stated that the station manager has to notify BOCC as to a specific location of where the shuttle should pick up passengers. Sometimes buses can take some time to reach its destination if there are none available in the immediate area.

Mr. Brownell asked if there could be signage posted directing customers to shuttle bus locations in the event of long term elevator outages.

Mr. Barber stated that could be arranged. He also stated that a supervisor is sent when shuttle buses are dispatched to a customer to ensure the customer is accommodated.

Mr. Sheehan asked how a customer would know where to catch a shuttle bus during a short term elevator outage.

Mr. Barber stated the station manager should notify BOCC of the specific area of where to send the shuttle bus. He welcomed feedback from the committee.

Mr. Sheehan suggested the rail department be asked to provide signage in the stations that direct customers to shuttle bus locations.

Mr. Brownell suggested automated announcements in the elevators as to where the shuttle bus would be located.

Debbie Brown suggested installing automated and visual announcements on shuttles to notify customers which bus is the designated shuttle bus.

Mr. Barber stated there should be a designated area away from fixed route bus stops that is marked with a permanent sign identifying the designated shuttle bus service area. Station managers should help visually impaired customers with locating bus shuttle areas.

Ms. Otto-Anderson stated a Braille sign could be placed at the bus shuttle area to meet ADA guidelines. She stated since there will be new MetroAccess bus stop signs installed at all Metro stations, that could also be a location for shuttle bus service.

AAC 2010 Work Plan Review

Ms. Otto-Anderson stated the FY2010 work plan covers July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010. There were a total of 18 items on the AAC work plan that were approved by the general manager. The AAC agreed to add 3 additional items from the RAC's customer service experience work plan for a total of 21 items. The AAC has discussed 20 of the items and provided good feedback. There is 1 outstanding item that has not been discussed which is a presentation and discussion with the committee from the Office of Rail Service (RAIL) which has been moved to the 2011 work plan. There were 8 additional items added to committee's work plan that the committee provided feedback on. Those items were as follows: APTA Peer Review of MetroAccess (Christian Kent), MetroAccess Eligibility (Glenn Millis), MetroAccess 2010 Budget (Glenn Millis), Guidelines for New Bus Stop Design (Jim Hamre), Eligibility Presentation from Simon & Simon about new eligibility policies, Revisions to the Bylaws & MOU, MetroAccess Budget (Selene Dalton-Kumins) and MetroAccess Bus Stop Signs.

Mr. Sheehan asked that an electronic summary of the AAC's 2010 Work Plan be sent to the committee for review.

Mr. Banerjee asked if a disaster plan will be discussed.

Ms. Otto-Anderson stated it will be on the 2011 work plan.

Old Business/New Business

Ms. Otto-Anderson will be sending the PDF of the AAC's letter to the GM. A copy of the letter was shared with members of the Board of Directors.

Mr. Sheehan, Mr. Brownell and Mr. Posner will be discussing items with the Board Customer Service and Operations committee concerning governance of the AAC.

Mr. Brownell stated there was an additional item added to the Bylaws regarding a conditional appointment for new members that are appointed to finish a departing member's term.

Mr. Young suggested changing the agendas so that committee members can discuss customer issues at the beginning of each MetroAccess subcommittee meeting.

Julius Fleischman suggested getting MetroAccess statistical reports by email instead of discussing them at the meetings.

Ms. Otto-Anderson asked for volunteers for the October 7th appeal hearings.

Marilyn Lutter suggested that train operators specify left or right side when informing customers which side to disembark from rail cars to the platform.

Ms. Otto-Anderson stated it has been brought to the attention of rail training personnel.

Ms. Holland stated Joyce Callahan had some concerns related to the Lift Bus Reports and would like the opportunity to further discuss them and get an understanding of how issues are handled.

Ms. Otto-Anderson asked should the AAC committee continue to receive the MetroAccess subcommittee minutes in hard copy at the AAC meeting since they are being distributed at the MetroAccess subcommittee meeting and by email.

The committee decided that MetroAccess subcommittee minutes will no longer be distributed at the AAC committee.

Debbie Brown suggested checking the complaints system phone line and the Metro website for workability.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.