



Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-962-6060

Meeting Minutes: July 6, 2015

ATTENDEES

Present: Dr. Phil Posner (Vice-Chair); Elver Ariza-Silva; Carolyn Bellamy; Brianne Burger, Darnise Bush, Heidi Case, Charlie Crawford, Marisa Laios, Phillippa Mezile, Edward McEntee, Mary Kay McMahon, Randall Pope, Denise Rush, Paul Semelfort, Anthony Stephens, Dr. William Staderman and Roger Stanley.

Call to Order

Vice-Chairman Posner called the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA, BOARD REPORT, AND PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

The meeting agenda was approved as amended.

The June 1, 2015 meeting minutes were approved as amended.

The Chair's Report to the Board, dated July 6, 2015, was approved as amended.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

A comment of high praise was given for MetroAccess drivers. The customer stated that MetroAccess drivers perform their duties in a professional and exceptional manner. The customer added that while drivers tend to multiple customers and their preferences, they still perform their duties really well. Staff thanked the customer for his comments.

A comment was made about MetroAccess courtesy calls for vehicle arrivals. The customer said he has requested to receive a courtesy call prior to his pick-ups; however, he has not received any such calls lately. The customer requested a review of his files to ensure his preference is properly listed. Denise Rush and Marisa Laios stated that they too have had similar experiences with the service recently. Allison Anderson, Operations Manager, MetroAccess Service, stated that she would investigate the issue and provide feedback.

A comment was made about MetroAccess vehicles leaving before the end of the pick-up window. The customer stated recently she had vehicle leave before she could get out of the door. The customer also requested a review of her history, noting that she is paying for the service and expects better service. Ms. Anderson stated that she would investigate the issue and provide feedback.

Carol Tyson, Disability Policy Director, United Spinal Association, made a comment about Metro's proposal to transfer several bus lines to local jurisdictions. She stated that nearly 50% of mobility device users who rent their living quarters do not have an automobile. They, along with many other people with disabilities, rely on public transportation to get to work, school, appointments, and to generally participate in

society. She added that access to transportation is a civil right. Ms. Tyson stated the transfer of bus routes to local jurisdictions could increase the likelihood that bus routes are eliminated if fiscal and other challenges arise. If any such eliminations occur, they would impact paratransit service to customers along the eliminated routes. To reduce this possibility, Ms. Tyson recommended that Metro have an agreement in place that would prevent local jurisdictions from cutting bus routes and the paratransit service connected to those routes. She stated that if this condition could not be met by any of the local jurisdictions, the bus routes should stay under Metro's control. Ms. Tyson stated that the loss of one route or even a cut in service hours can deeply affect the lives of people with disabilities. Dr. Posner stated that the AAC has been working on this issue and has discussed it with Metro's Board.

David Heller, Organizer, Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), echoed Ms. Tyson's comments about Metro's proposal to transfer bus service to the local jurisdictions. He stated that ATU has been doing extensive outreach to disadvantaged communities as well as the disability community. He added that the ATU recognizes that many people with disabilities use MetroAccess as their only source of transportation. Access to transportation is vital for many people, especially the economically disadvantaged, seniors, and people with disabilities. Mr. Heller stated that it is a right that no one should be without.

METRO'S DIVERSITY AND RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES

Ikemia Arrington, Metro's Senior Sourcing Officer for disability recruitment, in the Office of Talent Acquisition, discussed Metro's initiative to enhance the number of qualified individuals with disabilities in its workforce. She stated that Metro has placed great emphasis on diversifying its workforce. Through targeted outreach, Metro intends to not only promote awareness of its many job opportunities, but also to enable the successful navigation of Metro's online application, the interview process, and the onboarding process for successful candidates.

Ms. Arrington requested the AAC's assistance with the branding phase of the diversity outreach initiative. Through a short survey, members can select the brand that best fits Metro's Diversity Initiative. Ms. Arrington stated that several concepts for branding have been discussed, but feedback from the AAC is desired before Metro makes a final selection.

Heidi Case stated that in her work with the Equal Rights Center (ERC), she collects information on various disability organizations. She committed to sharing information about Metro's efforts to assist in growing the initiative. Ms. Arrington thanked Ms. Case in advance for her support, and added that connecting and collaborating with organizations in the disability community is an important aspect of this effort. Brianne Burger stated that she also has resource information to share. Ms. Arrington thanked Ms. Burger.

Elver Ariza-Silva expressed an interested in whether Metro was prepared internally to welcome individuals with disabilities in the work place. He stated that the disability community is ready and serious about work. Ms. Arrington stated that her group is leading efforts to educate and prepare Metro for this new initiative.

In a comment from the public, it was stated that training is also necessary at every level to ensure this initiative is a success. Many successful models from around the country make disability and inclusion a priority. Ms. Arrington agreed that training and staff development are important.

Anthony Stephens expressed an interest in whether Metro was required to meet the Department of Labor (DOL) 7 percent goal. Ms. Arrington stated that DOL regulations require all organizations receiving federal funds to increase the number of people with disabilities in their workforces. Metro has developed a metric to track the progress of the new initiative; however, to meet these ambitious goals, Metro needs everyone to participate in the recruitment efforts. In response to a question about updates on the progress of this initiative, Ms. Arrington stated that she plans to maintain a close relationship with the AAC and share periodic updates.

Edward McEntee expressed an interest in whether the hiring and training would include all disabilities, such as hidden disabilities. Ms. Arrington stated that Metro is interested in all qualified candidates, including people with hidden or intellectual disabilities, across all job classes.

Dr. Posner thanked Ms. Arrington for her presentation and stated that the AAC is looking forward to the opportunity to help shape Metro's Initiative to increase the number of individuals with disabilities in its workforce.

METRO'S PROPOSED 2016 BUS ROUTE CHANGES

Julie Hershorn, Planning Manager, Bus Planning (BPLN), discussed Metro's consideration of some bus route and bus service changes, which are part of BPLN's annual State of Good Operations report (SGO). She stated that the changes Metro is considering are design to ensure Metro is meeting ridership demand; improving on-time performance; increasing fare box recovery; improving reliability that reflects traffic conditions; increasing evening and weekend trips; and replacing unproductive routes.

Ms. Hershorn stated that the main goal of the proposed changes is to improve the customer experience through a better ride on Metrobus, and do so within current budgeted resources.

Ms. Hershorn stated that the considerations include changes in the following areas: District of Columbia (30 changes); Virginia (27); and Maryland (27). There is also the consideration of eliminating the 5A route. To garner public opinion on the changes, Metro will be conducting extensive outreach on the affected routes and at major Metrorail points, and will hold one public hearing. Ms. Hershorn stated that the public hearing will be conducted at Metro's Headquarters, and is tentatively scheduled for

Tuesday, September 15, 2015. Additionally, under consideration are some changes in fares on the Transit Link card; virtual transfers on Metrobus to the Silver and Blue lines at Addison Road or Capitol Heights stations and from the Q Line between Wheaton and Silver Spring stations.

Ms. Hershorn stated that because fixed route service is connected to the paratransit service, the proposed changes would have an effect on customers in Maryland, mostly in Prince George's County. Impacts to MetroAccess include an increase in availability on Sundays on the C2/C4 (Greenbelt-Twinbrook) and the V14/V15 (District Heights – Seat Pleasant) lines, and a decrease in service to certain retail stores in the Bowie area along the B31 route. The proposal eliminates the R3 (Greenbelt – Prince George's Plaza) route; however, the elimination may only affect a limited number of MetroAccess users because the route is served by a number of other buses. The W19 (Indian Head Express) bus route is proposed to be transferred to the Maryland Transportation Administration to operate commuter bus service. This would greatly reduce the availability of MetroAccess service. Mr. Semelfort stated that W19 serves Southern Prince George's County, which is a heavy MetroAccess use area. Ms. Hershorn stated that the W19 is a long route requiring a great deal of resources. She stated that overall the proposed changes are designed to provide more service to MetroAccess customers.

In response to a question about the timeline of Metro Board's review and possible approval, Ms. Hershorn stated that BPLN will present the proposal to the Board's Customer Service and Operations Committee in early July 2015, with a final report to be presented to the full Board later in the month.

To ensure bus routes are recognizable to the customers, Dr. Posner suggested that Metro add a brief description of the bus line to each bus number in the proposal. This would make it easier for customers to identify their bus route.

Ms. Rush stated that the proposal appears to impact bus service most in the southern area of Prince George's County. She stated that bus service in that area of the County is already sparse and the further elimination or reduction of services would have a huge impact on all customers, but especially customers with disabilities, seniors, and people who have limited incomes.

Carolyn Bellamy expressed interests in the one day customers will have to provide feedback on the propose service changes. She stated that customers should be the focus of Metro's outreach. Metro is proposing bus service cuts and there should be multiple meetings for customers to provide feedback. Ms. Hershorn stated that the WMATA compact requires at least one public hearing, and with Metro's new public participation plan (PPP), there will be multiple ways for customers to provide input. Through research on customer preferences, it was determined that customers prefer that Metro come to them to obtain their feedback on a particular service changes or issues. Under the PPP customers can share their feedback through email, surveys, phone, and regular mail.

Ms. Bellamy stated that this new approach appears to disenfranchise seniors since many do not have access to the Internet or participate in surveys over the phone due to the potential for fraud. She added that many seniors have limited income and forcing them to make it to a public hearing at Metro's headquarters is unfair to our most vulnerable customers.

Ms. Case agreed with Ms. Bellamy's statement regarding Metro's use of the internet and one public hearing for customer participation. She stated that Metro is not going to capture feedback from the groups most affected by the service changes. Ms. Case stated that many members of the public, in particular the disability community, are used to and prefer attending Metro's public hearings. She suggested that Metro post notices about the public hearings and affected routes on all MetroAccess vehicles and on the IVR. This would allow customers who make appointments by phone to be informed about the proposed changes and potential impact.

Jim Hamre, Director, BPLN, stated that the PPP is a Board-adopted process for expanding opportunities for riders to give input on Metro's decisions. This will be the second round of public hearings using the PPP. The AAC is welcome to discuss this issue with the Board.

Ms. Laios expressed an interest in whether the survey was accessible in many formats. Ms. Hershorn stated that BPLN is working with the Department of Access Services (ACCS) to ensure survey is accessible.

Ms. Rush requested a comparison of service on the current routes and the proposed changes, along with the impact on MetroAccess service. Christiaan Blake, Director, ADA Policy and Planning, stated that the AAC will be provided this information.

Ms. Case stated that the AAC is hearing about the proposed bus changes at the same time Metro is proposing service changes on Metrorail, which were initially proposed to balance Metro's budget this past year. She added that on several occasions, it was stated in the meetings that Metro's Board was not interested in cutting or limiting service throughout the system. Now that the budget has passed, it seems that staff is back-dooring these cuts and reductions.

Dr. Posner stated that he attended many of the subcommittee and Board meetings. He stated that there were robust discussions on service changes. The Board requested additional information and stated that service changes would be addressed during BPLN's mid-year service adjustment.

Ms. Case stated that she remembered the AAC's discussion during the budget hearings. She stated that the AAC leadership reported, on numerous occasions, that Metro's Board was not going to cut MetroAccess service. However, the current proposal does cut bus service, which affects MetroAccess.

Mr. Hamre pointed out that there is a difference between budget driven reductions Ms. Case referred to and proposed SGO service adjustments. Ms. Case stated that she attended the Board's Committee meeting where this issue of transferring services to local jurisdictions was discussed and members of the impacted jurisdictions were not happy.

Charlie Crawford stated that he would like to find ways to increase service availability to the maximum amount of people within the budget in an effort to provide access for all. Mr. Hamre stated that there was no additional funding provided for SGO proposals for the priority corridor network and therefore, quality of service may be impacted.

Ms. Bellamy reiterated her concerns about having only one public hearing. She encouraged Metro to have more than one public hearing to prevent customers from being disenfranchised. Mr. Hamre stated that BPLN is open to hosting several meetings on this issue in the community. He encouraged AAC members to invite BPLN to community meetings where this information can be presented and discussed.

Dr. Posner stated that it is the duty of members to share this information with their constituents and provide detailed feedback on the number of people affected by the proposed service changes. He stated that this information will be added to the Board report as well as discussed during the AAC quarterly leadership meeting.

Ms. Burger suggested that Metro conduct an online chat during the public hearing to increase access for those customers who cannot attend. Mr. Hamre stated that he would forward that suggestion to the appropriate office.

Mr. Hamre noted that Metro will hold a public meeting on July 7, 2015 for the 60 Line (Fort Totten – Petworth).

The AAC thanked Ms. Hershorn and Mr. Hamre for the report on the SGO proposed changes. Mr. Hamre stated that he appreciates the AAC active participation and support.

AAC ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS DISCUSSION

Ms. Case suggested that any discussion related to the election process be among AAC members only and not Metro staff. Dr. Posner stated that he agreed with Ms. Case's suggestion and upon motion, the AAC voted to discuss the election process internally among members with no advice or direction from staff. Mr. Blake stated that staff may still have some input, given that staff has to conduct the election, but staff will not object to the process agreed to by the members.

Ms. Case stated that current AAC leadership has done a wonderful job, and the AAC has advanced because of the direction the current leadership has provided. She added that the election process needs to include democracy, fairness, and equality. Ms. Case stated that she outlined several questions via email that must be addressed prior to a full discussion on elections: 1) Who is and who is not eligible to run in this election; 2)

How do people who are nominated get to share why they feel they would like to be that position and would be an asset; 3) Who will see and count the votes; 4) How and when will election results be reported. Her email also referenced a question by Dr. Posner that expressed an interest in whether people are eligible to be nominated for a second position if they are not chosen at a higher leadership level.

Ms. Case stated that during the review of the AAC By-laws, there were no changes related to terms of officers; therefore, it is her understanding that the current AAC leadership was ineligible to run in the election. She added that this is an opportunity for on-going advocacy and giving everyone a chance to participate. Several members pointed out that when the AAC changed its reporting relationship from the General Manager to the Board, all terms were reset. Ms. Case stated that this is not the case. She made a motion that new AAC leadership be elected and that the incumbent could not run again, and that there be a review of the leadership at the subcommittee level.

Mr. Blake advised that the motion and internal discussion among members should be to determine whether the current officers have served their term as outlined in the By-laws. He stated that it is important for the AAC to provide their interpretation before the discussion on the election process continues.

Ms. Bellamy stated that when the By-laws were under review, she raised this issue with members; however, at no time did anyone deem the issue significant enough to address.

Mr. Crawford stated that the rules are outlined in the By-laws. Given that, the AAC leadership was elected and served two terms, but no election was held for a third term, yet the AAC leadership still served, which could mean that there was a *de facto* term. Mr. Crawford added that he believes the current membership should have the opportunity to run again because, despite the *de facto* term, there was not an election.

Ms. Case stated that she had a discussion with other members in the leadership role about stepping down, and she finds it difficult to understand why the AAC leadership does not want to step down. Ms. Case stated that she hopes the AAC is making the best decisions for the constituency served.

Darnise Bush stated that the By-laws clearly stated the terms and if the current AAC leadership was not elected to a third term, they should have the opportunity to run in this election.

Ms. Case stated that the AAC leadership did serve a third term. The AAC leadership had access to the Board and other advantages when no other member did. She stated that Dr. Posner is speaking about their leadership direction for September as if this election is a done deal. Ms. Bush reiterated that if three consecutive terms have not been voted upon, then the current AAC leadership is eligible to run in the election.

Mr. Ariza-Silva asked why Ms. Case, who was part of the By-laws review process, did not address this issue at the appropriate time. Ms. Case stated that Patrick Sheehan has been in an AAC leadership role for 20 years. She added that she has served with other organizations and nowhere, but Metro, does a reset occur each time the By-laws are updated; this is not Robert Rules of Order.

Ms. Rush stated that it is important for all nominees to understand the duties and expectations of serving in a leadership role with the AAC. It is a commitment that no member should take lightly. In light of the membership's problems with attendance, Ms. Rush stated that AAC leadership roles require dedicated advocates.

Ms. Laios echoed Ms. Rush's comments about commitment. She stated that on a regular basis she attends meetings outside of the AAC because she recognizes that makes her a better member. AAC leaders must be individuals willing to fulfill all the requirements of a leader.

Mr. Ariza-Silva stated that the current AAC leadership has done an excellent job. It is important to have someone who can lead this group in a productive way. He stated that if members are not interested in the current leadership, then it is up to members to nominate someone else and vote.

Ms. Bellamy stated that the AAC has been losing focus with on-going procedural discussions and internal bickering. These discussions are taking away from the Committee's true purpose. Ms. Bellamy urged members to be mindful that Metro is changing. The Board has many new members and the AAC needs leaders who can strategically guide the committee and the constituency they serve forward towards better public transportation services at Metro.

Roger Stanley stated that members should consider the time, commitment, dedication, and effort needed to be a leader. If a member is not willing or cannot fulfill those obligations, then they do not need to be in a leadership role on the AAC. Mr. Stanley stated that the AAC should always operate as a T.E.A.M., meaning that Together, Everyone, Achieves, More. This is what is going to make this committee a success. It takes us all working as a T.E.A.M.

Mr. Semelfort stated that one of the best accomplishments he has seen with the AAC working as team has been with public comment. He stated that giving the community a voice to express themselves is empowering the community for change. While Metro staff provides members with information so we can be better informed, it is the AAC and the subcommittees, along with the disability community at-large, that does the work that has led to awesome results all customers can appreciate.

Dr. Posner stated that the By-laws were reviewed by Metro's attorneys. He suggested that the AAC seek a legal interpretation from David Shaffer, a Metro attorney working in ADAP. Mr. Blake stated that Mr. Shaffer's role in ADAP is as a policy officer not a legal advisor. Mr. Blake added that it is the ADA Office that is responsible for facilitating the

election process, and he wants the members to resolve this issue and vote on which way they would like to proceed.

Randall Pope noted that it is difficult to follow because he does not have the By-laws. Dr. Posner stated that new members receive this information at the new member orientation. Dr. B. Moore Gwynn, AAC Coordinator, stated that the new and reappointed member orientation will be held on July 13, 2015 immediately following the Bus/Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meeting.

Mr. Stephens recommended that the AAC open the elections for nomination for the following leadership positions: AAC Chair; Vice-Chair; and 2nd Vice-Chair. These nominations can include self-nominations, and the nominee must accept the nomination for only one position. Everyone will have an opportunity to campaign before the final vote in September.

Ms. Bellamy expressed an interest in a job description of the AAC leadership positions. Mr. Blake stated that ADAP will provide the information to members.

Upon motion, the AAC agreed to open elections for nominations for the AAC leadership positions. All members will receive a copy of the job descriptions; nominations can be made online or at any of the three AAC meetings in July; voting will take place on-line; and the results will be announced at the joint BRS and MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) meeting in September.

Ms. Mezile expressed an interest in whether the election ballot would be secret. Mr. Blake stated that each member will receive an individual email and will respond to him only. He will be the only person with access to the votes.

Ms. Rush made a comment about Ms. Case's email. She stated that many of her points were good, however the comments related to the AAC coordinator were insulting and not the consensus of AAC members. She added that many members appreciate the work that Dr. Moore Gwynn does for the AAC.

BUS/RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The BRS received an update on bus stop accessibility in the region. In 2014, Metro's Board adopted a new bus stop accessibility standard, adding pathway accessibility to the standard ADA definition of an accessible stop. Metro is looking to update its bus stop database and is developing a tool that would allow regional partners to update the database directly. Metro is also working on a smartphone application to allow customers and other community stakeholders to provide feedback on the accuracy of the database information on each bus stop.

Metro received a grant to improve bus stops around the region. ACCS has led the improvement of three stops with those funds. 161 MetroAccess customers live within 1/2 mile from the improved stops and now have an accessible option for travel on fixed

route service. ACCS has identified additional bus stop for improvement around the region.

The BRS also discussed its work plan and added the following new items to the list: Communication plan (audio and visual) and innovations in this area at other transit properties; and Metro's plan to enhance communication with the Deaf community. The BRS also expressed an interest in informational sessions on the following topics: transit ambassadors in Metrorail system, the logic of bus planning, and walkable communities.

METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The MAS discussed the TransportDC Program. The program began as Metro's Coordinated Alternatives to Paratransit Service initiative (CAPS-DC). TransportDC provides a same-day travel option for MetroAccess customers who reside in the District of Columbia and are traveling within the city limits. The difference between the TransportDC service and MetroAccess service is that the TransportDC will pick-up customers from a location and take them directly to their destination for a flat fare. Though Metro created the concept, the District of Columbia Taxicab Commission (DCTC) runs the program. Similar programs in Maryland and Virginia are being discussed.

Currently, there are two cab companies providing TransportDC service. The drivers of the cab companies are required to have sensitivity training to understand how to serve customers with disabilities. If there are service-related issues, customers must contact the DCTC. For general program information, customers can contact Metro's ADA office.

MAS briefly discussed BPLN's proposals to change the operation of some Metrobus service to local transit providers. The MAS also discussed its work plan and requested to revisit following items on the plan: eligibility for reduced fare cards for Conditionally Eligible customers.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ms. Bellamy expressed an interest in alternating the subcommittee's reports. She stated that the discussion topics often run over leaving the MAS with little time to present. Dr. Posner stated that the AAC leadership would begin alternating subcommittee reports. Additionally, Dr. Posner stated that he would be more mindful of the time, so each chair has adequate time to present.

In a follow-up on a motion from the June 2015 MAS meeting, the AAC discussed increasing the speaking time for public comment. Ms. Rush stated that the motion is to increase the public speaking time to 3 minutes for all meetings. Many members agreed, and upon motion, the AAC approved to change the time limit to 3 minutes for Public comment.

Dr. Moore Gwynn reminded members that due to the renovations in the JGB Board and meeting rooms, all August 2015 AAC, subcommittee, and work group meetings will be canceled. Staff will announce the dates for the September 2015 meetings soon.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.



Accessibility Advisory Committee

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Washington, DC 20001
202-962-6060

STATUS OF FY 2016 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info – 03	AAC Quarterly Leadership Meeting	9/14/15	AAC		
Info – 04	Survey	9/14/15	AAC	Presenter: Jason Minser	
Info - 05	Transportation Infrastructure	9/14/15	AAC	Discussion on the DGMO meeting with AAC Leadership	
Info - 06	Momentum and Long Range Plan (update)	10/5/15	AAC	Presenter: Jennifer Weeks	
Info – 07	Age-Friendly DC Task Force (Update)	10/5/15	AAC	Update (Follow-up discussion after event - November 2013).	

Note: Quarterly Meeting Recommendations are marked with an asterisk symbol.

COMPLETED - FY 2016 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info - 01	Proposed 2016 Bus Route Changes	7/6/15	AAC	Presenter: Julie Hershorn	7/6/15
Info - 01	25 th Anniversary of the ADA	7/6/15	AAC	Open Forum	7/6/15
Info - 02	Proposed 2016 Bus Route Changes	7/6/15	AAC	Presenter: Julie Hershorn	7/6/15

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