



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

Meeting Minutes: February 6, 2017

ATTENDEES

Present: Patrick Sheehan (Chair), Denise Rush (1st Vice Chair), Elver Ariza-Silva (2nd Vice Chair), Tappan Banerjee, Brianne Burger, Darnise Bush, Charlie Crawford, Larry Haile, Steven Kaffen, Brian Miller, Edward McEntee, Randall Pope, Doris Ray, Denise Rush, and Paul Semelfort.

Call to Order

Chair Sheehan 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.

The January 3, 2017 meeting minutes were approved.

The Chair's Report to the Board, dated February 6, 2017, was approved as amended.

PUBLIC COMMENT

A comment was made about the new MetroAccess ID cards. The customer stated that the documentation he received with the card was inaccessible. Christiaan Blake, Director of ADA Policy and Planning (ADAP) apologized and stated that Metro is updating its MetroAccess customer information to identify users who request materials and information in alternative formats. He reminded customers to report issues in service to ADAP at (202)962-1100.

A customer provided an update on her MetroAccess service since the last AAC meeting. The customer stated that her trips continue to be excessively long and she arrives at her destination late. Mr. Blake apologized and stated that a member of the MetroAccess team will provide follow on the issue prior to the end of the meeting.

A comment was made about the Abilities-Ride proposal. The customer stated that information about the proposed service has been limited. He encourage the AAC to request more information before Metro awards the service contract to a company.

A comment was made about training of MetroAccess drivers and staff. The customer stated that MetroAccess drivers and staff need more training on how to better work with customers with disabilities.

Another comment was made about excessively long trips on MetroAccess vehicles. Mr. Blake apologized and stated that a member of the MetroAccess team will provide follow on the issue prior to the end of the meeting.

A DISCUSSION WITH A BOARD MEMBER

Christian Dorsey, Metro Board Member greeted members of the AAC and the public. He stated that he has served on Metro's Board since January 2016, as an alternative member representing the Commonwealth of Virginia - Arlington County. Public transportation is important to the development and continued growth of our region. The GM's focus on safety, service and reliability is important to the County. Mr. Dorsey stated that Arlington County is flanked by the Orange and Silver lines Metrorail stations that serve two major corridors in his area: Ballston station which covers the Key Bridge to Falls Church; and the Pentagon, Pentagon City, Arlington Cemetery, and Crystal City stations covers the south side of the County.

Mr. Dorsey stated that the AAC has been an active member in assisting Metro in prioritizing and resorting safety, service and reliability. Restoring rider confidence by improving reliability will occur overtime as Metro changes the narrative of the customer experience. The Board is working to ensure the system is governed in a responsible way that includes sound fiscal management and budgets that adequately provide for services. He stated that none of the initiative that are designed to restoring rider confidence should disadvantage other groups that rely on the system.

Mr. Sheehan opened the floor to members for questions. He stated that in respect for Mr. Dorsey's time, AAC members from the Board members jurisdiction will be allowed to ask questions first and if time permits the floor will be open to the full committee for questions.

Mr. Sheehan stated that the loss of bus service due to Metro's financial hardships will have a negative impact on MetroAccess customers. The AAC recommended that before any bus service is cut that Metro review the serve to determine whether removal of the bus stop would impact service to a MetroAccess customers, people with disabilities and senior citizens who use the fixed route system. Mr. Dorsey stated that in Arlington County, they are reviewing some of the AAC recommendations for a greater understanding and any financial implication.

Doris Ray stated that Metro should have rail service that operates until midnight all the time. Mr. Dorsey stated that in his view the system should be open as much as possible while still being able to maintain a system that will ensure safety. He stated that Metro's preventive maintenance should include a review of inefficiency, work flow, and technology that could expand service hours.

Mr. Dorsey also congratulated Ms. Ray on being awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2016 Martha Glennan Disability Inclusion and Equality Award ceremony last December.

Ms. Ray stated that the bus service becomes more critical as the service hours of the Metrorail system are reduced. Mr. Dorsey stated that he is a supporter of bus service and is not interested in service cuts to bus that only takes into account a financial metric. The only way a productive bus route should be cut is when there are other alternatives that makes the bus service duplicative. If that is not the case, the bus service should remain in place for overall system equity because it's a critical piece in the accessibility of MetroAccess riders as well as fixed route customers including those with disabilities. Public transportation is a business that should be viewed more broadly than just the bottom line. As a Board member, Mr. Dorsey stated that Metro serves multiple objectives including public policy goals that should be factored into the decision making.

Edward McEntee stated that in Fairfax County, the bus service operates great during the work week; yet, becomes obsolete on the weekends. Additionally, the accessibility to some bus stops in Fairfax County are grossly inaccessible. Mr. Dorsey stated that one of roles of jurisdiction's transit system is to supplement Metro service within their own communities and create a better transit network. In Northern Virginia, Metrobus service is augmented by Arlington Transit (ART), City of Alexandria Transit System (ATC-DASH), and Fairfax County bus service (Fairfax Connector). Mr. Dorsey stated that Arlington County just approved a plan to bring all bus stops in the County to code so that all customers can access the bus system. Over the last couple of years the County has also made significant investments in those popular bus routes for weekend and late night service.

Given Metro's budget, Brian Miller expressed an interest in the continuing viability of the Dulles Silver Line extension and the Potomac Yard station. Mr. Dorsey stated that he views the new stations as long term investment that will be a source of ridership growth for Metro for decades. As an example, in the Tyson Corner area there are transit oriented development that includes business and residences within easy walks to the Metrorail stations. He stated that these stations will be an incredible source of ridership growth over the centuries.

Mr. Miller also stated that resources are critical to the transit system. He expressed an interest in ideas on how to make Metro a sustainable system. Mr. Dorsey stated that the jurisdictions that make-up the WMATA Compact along with the Federal government support the funding of the system. In Arlington County there have been discussions on adding a regional sales or meal tax to provide a new source of revenue that would secure funds for Metro as well as grow that investment to ensure Metro's long-term

solvency. Mr. Dorsey stated that the solution to sustain the transit system is easy but the political road is very hard.

Larry Haile expressed an interest in whether Metro and the jurisdictions considered using an mobility management approach for the bus system. Mr. Dorsey stated that Arlington County conduct a transit development plan every 5 years. The plan reviews the future transit needs based on capacity and efficiency of other transit providers including ride sharing opportunities and access to service.

Mr. Haile suggested that Metro and the jurisdictions consider using the following resources related to mobility management: Community Transportation Association of America and United We Ride.

Denise Rush stated that bus service in Prince George's County has been severely diminished. She suggested an assessment of the bus service so that it meets the needs of everyone in the County not just a few. Mr. Dorsey reiterated this comments about the roles of jurisdiction's transit system as a supplement to Metro service within their own communities and restoring rider confidence. He stated that Metro is often viewed as the entity to resolve all of the region's transportation issues. However, the locality play a key role in providing bus service to fill in the gaps for the way that residence live, work, and play. Mr. Dorsey encouraged AAC members to discuss with local lawmakers the intra-County bus service that should grow in terms of access and reach.

Charlie Crawford suggested that Metro consider using a funding stream like the lottery system to help with the region transportation's financial woes.

In a follow-up to Mr. Crawford's statement about funding, Mr. Sheehan stated that the AAC would like talking points from the Board. This would allow the AAC and the disability community to advocate for transportation funding with lawmakers. Mr. Dorsey stated that the Metro Board is working on general speaking points for advocating with lawmakers on public transportation.

Elver Ariza-Silva stated that riding with confidence is not only about security and safety it also means knowing that the system works (i.e. elevators, escalators, bus lifts, and signage) and that personnel across the jurisdiction are prepared and trained to assist people with disabilities in any situation including an emergency in the system.

To offer a better understanding of the essence of riding the system with confidence in the disability community, Mr. Ariza-Silva invited Mr. Dorsey to travel in the system using bus or rail with a person with a visible disability. Mr. Dorsey stated that the opportunity would be beneficial to understanding all the critical elements of accessibility that needs to be considered in providing service.

In follow-up, Ms. Ray stated that Endependence Center of Northern Virginia (ENCV) would also like to support the Board members efforts to be more aware of the critical elements of accessibility that needs to be considered in providing service.

With a round of applause, the AAC thanked Mr. Dorsey for a refreshing discussion on public transportation. Mr. Sheehan stated that transportation is vital to the quality of life. The AAC wants to work with the Board in solving issues that impact all customers including those with disabilities. The AAC has a keen interest on solutions that would be a cost benefit to the system because the customers that are able to use the accessible fixed route system the fewer rides on the paratransit service.

BUS STOP ACCESSIBILITY – TRIP PLANNER APPLICATION (Update)

Ed Wells, GIS Manager, Department of Information Technology (IT), provided an update on bus stop accessibility information available on Metro's Trip Planner. He stated that the database enables customers to obtain accessibility-related information about individual bus stops such as the presence of a shelter, connecting sidewalk, bench or other features. The information can be accessed through Metro's main webpage, by selecting the Rider Guide – New Riders tab, or by selecting the Schedules and Maps under the Service Nearby tab. Mr. Wells stated that his presentation would demonstrate the application of the trip planner for the public.

Mr. Kent requested that Mr. Wells provide more description in his demonstrate to offer customers who are visually impaired a sense of the functionality of the tool. He stated that in future demonstrations, Metro will use screen reader software to enable all customers' access to the information.

Mr. Well stated that after creating a route, customers can enter the bus stop's identification number (which is the same as the NextBus number), and receive a list of amenities, photos, and other accessibility information about the stops along the selected route. The application will also offer various images of the bus stop or surrounding neighborhood in a bird's-eye, aerial, or street view. In response to a question about whether the service applies to Metro stops only, Mr. Wells stated that customers will be able to use this application for any Metro stop. As an example, if Metro services a stop that is also serviced by Fairfax Connector, DASH or The Bus, the tool can be used.

Mr. Kent stated that the Metro's Trip Planner is an award winning technology. The American Public Transportation Association will feature this technology as an industry best practice at its upcoming 2017 Bus and Paratransit conference. He stated that the tool offers the ability to have a visual and descriptive panoramic view of an individual

bus stop and the surrounding area which gives all customers including those with disabilities a level of confidence when using the bus system.

Mr. Haile stated that Metro is one of a few transit properties nationwide that offer this bus stop information tool. The information is extremely helpful and crucial to any transit user.

Mr. Haile expressed an interest in whether the tool was available for use with other smart phone applications. Mr. Wells stated that the software and context is built on Metro's operating system. Metro would be open to sharing the design with smart phone application providers; however, the method is not as straightforward.

Mr. Ariza-Silva expressed an interest in updating the bus stop photos and other information. Mr. Wells stated that although his office provides some updates to the individual bus stops using Google street view maps a system-wide update on bus stop information is not financially feasible at this time.

Barbara Milleville, President, National Capital Citizens for Low Vision (NCCLV) stated that the tool is essential for low-vision customers that use the fixed route system. To assist with updating information, Ms. Milleville suggested that Metro use bus customers to update the photos and information. She stated that Metro can add a disclaimer to the information making customers aware that it is not an official photo.

Brianne Burger expressed an interest in whether Metro's busETA system used actual global positioning system (GPS) for its arrival time estimates, or was the arrival time based on the printed schedule. Mr. Wells stated that each Metrobus has GPS and Metro's Bus Operations Control Center receives updates on every 10 seconds and that information is published on the Metro's busETA webpage.

In response to a question about the accessibility of the tool, Mr. Wells stated that the tool is available online. The website has high low contrast and descriptive alternate text for screen readers' software.

Ms. Ray expressed an interest in whether the updated included changes for construction or removal of a bus stop. Mr. Wells reiterated his comments about the challenges of updating the tool.

Darnise Bush stated that the features listed are important to customers with mobility challenges.

Ms. Bush expressed an interest in whether the tool was available by cell phone and a landline. Mr. Wells stated that the tool is accessible using smart phone operating

system of IOS, Android, and Windows. Mr. Blake stated that the tool is only available via smart phone.

Mr. Crawford expressed an interest in whether the smart phone application titled Nearby Explorer was part of the database. Mr. Wells stated that the tool is listed on Metro's website.

Mr. Kaffen expressed an interest in whether the information could be condensed to offer more quick information. Mr. Wells stated that the tool offers point to point location information. The additional features are available if customers want additional information on the surrounding area.

Ms. Milleville expressed an interest in whether the map feature could be adjusted to allow printing in the zoom in portion of the map. Mr. Wells stated that he would investigate the issue and provide feedback.

Mr. Sheehan expressed an interest in whether the tool included audible pedestrian systems for intersections. Mr. Wells stated that he will follow up and provide feedback.

The AAC applauded Metro and the IT team for such an innovative tool that helps to restore confidence in the system. Many members agreed that the application is a good tool for all fixed route customers.

Mr. Sheehan stated that the meeting ran past the time it was due to end and the interpreter services us unable to stay, therefore, AAC will postpone the other agenda items and reports from the subcommittees until the next AAC meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Milleville expressed an interest in an update on lighting in the system. Mr. Blake stated that his office was working to scheduling presentations.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

STATUS OF COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info – 06	Age-Friendly DC Task Force (Update)	2/6/17	AAC	Update (Follow-up discussion after event - November 2013).	
Info – 22	Wayfinding (Demonstration and Tour)	3/6/17	BRS	Presenter: Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind and Click-and-Go	
Info – 23	Dulles Phase II	4/3/17	AAC	Presenter: Jay Neider Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority	
Info – 20	A discussion with Metro’s GM	5/1/17	AAC	Presenter: Paul J. Wiedefeld	

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

COMPLETED - 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 – 02	25 th Anniversary of the ADA	7/6/15	AAC	Open Forum	7/6/15
Info - 03	Proposed 2016 Bus Route Changes	7/6/15	AAC	Presenter: Julie Hershorn	7/6/15
Info - 05	Establishing A Customer Community	9/14/15		Presenter: Jason Minser	9/14/15
Info - 07	Metro's Diversity and Recruitment Initiatives	10/5/15		Presenter: Ikemia Arrington	10/5/15
Info – 08	Momentum and Long Range Plan (update)	12/7/15	AAC	Presenter: Jennifer Weeks	12/7/15

COMPLETED - COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info - 09	Maryland – Abilities Ride Proposed MetroAccess Alternatives	2/1/16		Presenter: Christian Kent/Christiaan Blake	2/1/16
Info - 04	AAC Quarterly Meeting with Board Executive Committee	2/1/16	AAC	New approach: Joint AAC/RAC meeting	2/1/16
Info - 10	Announcements 7000 Series	3/7/16	AAC	Presenter: Debo Ogunrinde	3/7/16
Info - 04	AAC Quarterly Meeting with Board Executive Committee	3/7/16	AAC	Feedback	3/7/16
Info - 11	A discussion with Metro's GM	4/4/16	AAC	Presenter: Paul Wiedefeld	4/4/16
Info – 12	Customer safety	5/2/16	AAC	Presenter: Chief Ronald Pavlik	5/2/16
Info – 16	A discussion with Metro's GM	9/6/16	AAC	Presenter: Paul J. Wiedefeld	9/6/16

COMPLETED - COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info – 17	A discussion with Metro’s Board Chair	10/3/16	AAC	Presenter: Jack Evans	10/3/16
Info – 18	Communication with Customers who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing	10/3/16	AAC	Presenter: Jim Hughes	10/3/16
Info – 21	Metro’s FY2018 Budget Presentation	12/5/16	AAC	Presenter: Dennis Anosike	12/5/16
Info – 19	A discussion with Metro’s GM	1/3/17	AAC	Presenter: Paul J. Wiedefeld	1/3/17

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