



**AAC**

## **Accessibility Advisory Committee**

### **Meeting Minutes: July 10, 2017**

#### **ATTENDEES**

Present: Denise Rush (1st Vice Chair), Elver Ariza-Silva (2nd Vice Chair), Tapan Banerjee, Carolyn Bellamy, Hazell Brooks, Darnise Henry Bush, Tino Calabia, Charlie Crawford, Steven Kaffen, Phillippa Mezile, Mary Kay McMahon, Anthony Oberg, Randall Pope, Phil Posner, Paul Semelfort, and Herbert Treger.

#### **Call to Order**

Vice-Chair Rush 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 June 5, 2017, meeting minutes were approved as amended.

The Chair's Report to the Board, dated July 10, 2017, was approved as amended.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ms. Rush made a comment about the lack of accessibility with the Spreaker website. She stated that the system was difficult to navigate when using a screen reader. Christiaan Blake, Director, Office of ADA Policy and Planning (ADAP), stated that the podcast website had lots of content and could benefit from improvements. For example, the labels identifying the meeting recordings can be enhanced. He stated that he will contact the company and make some recommendation for improvements.

In follow up, Carolyn Bellamy expressed an interest in the steps to make the podcast website accessible.

Phil Posner stated that he subscribed to all the meetings, and Spreaker sends an email each time a session begins on-air. He stated that he would share the instructions on how to subscribe to the podcast with the membership. These steps may make locating the information and listening to a meeting easier.

A comment was made about the Abilities-Ride proposal. The customer stated that status updates about the proposed service have been limited. He encouraged the AAC to request more information from staff before Metro awards the contract. Christian Kent, Assistant General Manager, Department of Access Services (ACCS), stated that the solicitation was still with Metro's Office of Procurement. ACCS anticipates providing the AAC an update in September.

Ms. Rush expressed an interest in the possibility of an August meeting on Abilities-Ride if the procurement process was completed before the scheduled September update. Mr. Kent stated that he does not anticipate the procurement process being completed before the AAC returns from its summer recess.

Dr. Posner expressed an interest in the timeline for the implementation of the traditional between-car barriers on the 7000 series railcar. Mr. Blake stated that Metro had to reconfigure the design. All existing 7000-series railcars will be retrofitted with the chain-link barrier design, and all new 7000-series railcars will be manufactured with the chain-link barrier design. The timeline for completion is early 2018.

In follow-up, Darnise Bush expressed an interest in any measures to prevent customers who are Blind from seeing the area as an entryway. Mr. Kent stated that the between-car clamshell-style design barriers on the 7000-series railcars were compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). However, upon the recommendation of the AAC and accepted by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Metro made the decision to retrofit all existing and newly manufactured 7000-series railcars with the traditional chain-link barriers.

A comment was made about the unevenness of some platforms and railcars. The customer stated that at some stations he had difficulty exiting the train because the platforms and trains are not level. Mr. Blake requested stated that Metro is addressing similar issues at other statins and encouraged all customers should report these issues to Metro's Customer Service at (202)637-1328 and ADAP at (202)962-1100 for follow up.

### **METRO'S TITLE VI PROGRAM**

Sharlene Reed, Senior Workforce Diversity and Compliance Officer, Department of Fair Practices, discussed Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. She stated that Title VI prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin by any program or activity receiving federal funds. As a recipient of federal funds, every three-years Metro must demonstrate its compliance with the provisions of Title VI. In 2012, the FTA enhanced requirements for compliance for the Title VI programs.

Ms. Reed stated that to comply with the enhanced requirements in the Title VI program, Metro has updated its Language Assistance Program, Public Participation Plan, and service monitoring, which includes fares and service. Metro is required to perform an equity analyses for major service changes, fares, or other adjustments. In performing an equity analysis for proposed major service changes, Metro must analyze the impact of the change on low-income and minority populations and set a trigger for when those evaluations should take place.

Ms. Reed stated that Metrorail frequency was increased to have trains operate every eight minutes on each line during weekday rush periods. Additional Red Line service will run between Grosvenor and Silver Spring arriving every four minutes on weekdays during the rush hour. At stations served by more than one line, Metro will operate trains every three to four minutes on weekdays during the rush hour. Metro will eliminate the Yellow Line's Rush Plus service.

Ms. Reed stated that Metro also updated its formal plan for public outreach. Outreach methods must engage all members within the community, including minorities, low-income populations, and populations with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). The plan now outlines specific proactive strategies that Metro will use to engage minority and low-income individuals. For example, Ms. Reed stated that Metro will conduct a needs analysis to determine if there are any new languages that should be incorporated into the public outreach plan. Metro will also begin to incorporate technology into the outreach format.

Charlie Crawford expressed an interest in specific actions Metro has performed in implementing the new plan. In terms of service changes, the Department of Fair Practices reviewed how the reduction of service would impact customers who are transit-dependent. The outcome of this review was incorporated into future decisions on service changes.

Hazell Brooks expressed an interest in the equity analysis. Ms. Reed stated that the analysis comprehensively examined the age of the Metrobus fleet, service, and travel time. This information is compared to the entire system to determine whether there would be any disparate impact with the service changes.

In follow-up, Ms. Brooks expressed an interest in whether the analysis accounted for the loss of ridership due to SafeTrack and other issues within the system. Ms. Reed stated that the analysis was conducted before SafeTrack. In the 2017-2020 analysis, SafeTrack will be included.

Ms. Brooks also expressed an interest in funding for the maintenance of SafeTrack. Mr. Blake stated that SafeTrack funds were from Metro's operating budget, and added that SafeTrack focused on safety and expediting maintenance that had been previously deferred. Mr. Kent stated that Metro is a 40-year-old public transportation system that is funded by the local jurisdictions. SafeTrack was necessary to get the system back to operable conditions. Metro will continue the routine maintenance schedule.

Herbert Treger expressed an interest in how jurisdictional funding of bus services is factored into Metro. Mr. Kent stated that the difference between the public bus system for the City of Alexandria – Driving Alexandria Safely Home (DASH) and Metrobus is that DASH operates a service around Alexandria. Metro connects the City of Alexandria to the rest of the region. The two bus services are not duplicative but complement one another. With Title VI, both services are taken into consideration. If one service is taken away, and the other service offers fewer transportation options or no alternatives, then there may be an impact on low-income users.

A comment from the public expressed an interest in whether the Title VI program considered the impact that the loss or reduction of bus service has on the quality of life of people with disabilities. Ms. Reed stated that she stressed that point during the discussions related to service. She encouraged members and the public to respond to Metro surveys (online, by phone or in-person) and reiterated her points about public participation.

In follow-up, a comment from the public stated that not everyone was able to read or view survey notices in the system. Metro should also consider making announcements related to the survey by radio or television.

Ms. Rush expressed an interest in whether MetroAccess customers were considered in the determination of bus service. Ms. Reed stated that ACCS coordinates with the Office of Integrated Planning (IPLN) to determine whether paratransit customers will be impacted by any changes on the bus.

Ms. Bush expressed an interest in whether the Department of Fair Practices was included in the discussion of the hours of operation and the impact on customers who work in the service industry. Ms. Reed stated that the Department was included in some of those discussions and after the decisions were made, they were instrumental in ensuring the notices of the changes were available in multiple languages.

Tino Calabria stated that Montgomery County has proposed two additional bus services to begin in 2020. He expressed an interest in whether the AAC played a role in advising the local jurisdiction on the new services.

Dr. Posner stated that each member on the AAC represents a specific jurisdiction, and all the jurisdictions have a disability commission and/or board. Additionally, Metro's Board has members who represent the local jurisdictions. Any of these groups would be an excellent resource to share a suggestion or make recommendations about Montgomery County new bus proposal.

The AAC thanked Ms. Reed for an update on Metro's Title VI plan.

### **AAC ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS**

Dr. B. Moore Gwynn, AAC Coordinator, gave a brief update on the AAC Chair. She stated that a few weeks ago Patrick Sheehan injured himself and broke his wrist in several places. His physician has placed him on leave for a few weeks to rest. Mr. Sheehan expects to be released by the physician to return to Committee work in mid-July.

In an overview of the role and structure of the committee, Dr. Moore-Gwynn welcomed new and returning members to the AAC. She stated that the AAC is a 20 member body. Through research and discussion, the AAC advises Metro's Board on issues of accessibility. To ensure meetings operate efficiently, the AAC and its subcommittees employ the use of a three-minute rule on comments, questions, and responses from all members. This process is also used for public comments.

With new membership, there is also the opportunity for members to serve in leadership roles. The AAC is seeking nominations for the AAC and Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) leadership. Nominations for the AAC leadership will take place from now through the September meetings. The job descriptions will be forwarded to all members. Elections for the AAC will take place electronically, and the new leadership will be seated by the October 2017 AAC meeting. Appointment to the BRS leadership will take place during the September meeting and approved at the October 2017 AAC meeting.

Ms. Bellamy expressed an interest in the eligibility of the current AAC leadership. Dr. Moore Gwynn stated that the AAC held elections for leadership positions in September 2015. The by-laws state that officers of the AAC shall no more than two two-year terms. Therefore, all AAC members are eligible to serve including the current leadership.

Ms. Bellamy nominated Dr. Posner for the AAC Chair position. She stated that he attends most Board and AAC meetings. He also works hard on behalf of the disability community.

The AAC also discussed its calendar. Although the AAC follows the Board's calendar, in July 2017, the AAC requested a change in the meeting schedule. Dr. Moore Gwynn requested that members review the calendar and suggest changes of dates in the meeting schedule.

Ms. Bush suggested that the date of September 2017 AAC meeting or the date of October 2017 BRS meeting be changed because both dates fall near a holiday.

Ms. Rush stated that the AAC has too much work to accomplish and suggested that the Committee do without any other changes to the calendar.

Paul Semelfort agreed, stating that customers expect the AAC and its subcommittees to hold meetings according to its schedule.

Upon motion, the AAC agreed to maintain the current meeting calendar.

To ensure the AAC maintains a strategic focus, the format of the work plans for the AAC and its subcommittees has changed. All work plan items require a description for each topic. Additionally, Dr. Moore Gwynn stated that the New Member Orientation is scheduled for July 17, 2017, immediately following the joint Bus/Rail and MetroAccess Subcommittee (BRS/MAS) meeting. The orientation will further familiarize new members with information on how the AAC and its subcommittees operate as well as Metro's policies and procedures.

### **BUS/RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**

The BRS discussed bus stops in Prince George's County with IPLN. Metro has a regional goal of having 100 bus stops improved yearly. Metro has been working on design schematics and permits from the various jurisdictions that control the right-of-way area to implement the standard for bus stops.

In 2014, Metro expanded its standard for bus stops to a stop with a 5-by-8-foot paved surface that connects to the curb and an accessible path to the nearest intersection. With the assistance of the Department of Access Services, Metro improved 10 bus stops in Prince George's County last year. Currently, Metro has plans to improve 51 more bus stops in Prince George's County.

The FY2018 budget proposal outlined several bus lines from Prince George's County that were reduced or eliminated. IPLN stated that at the public hearings, Metro received many comments related to the importance of bus services from Prince George's County residents. Instead of eliminating the routes, Metro will operate an all-day two-way service on the W14 (Bock Road Line) and the P18/19 (Oxon Hill Fort Washington Line) to the Southern Avenue Metrorail station. There will be no weekend service on the Bock Road and Oxon Hill Fort Washington lines.

The BRS thanked IPLN for the overview on bus stops in Prince George's County.

### **METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**

The MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) discussed the MetroAccess Customer Guide. The updated Guide will include service hours for Metro's Office of Customer Relations; useful numbers; details regarding the new MetroAccess card; and information on Metro Sales Offices accepting cash payments for EZ-Pay accounts.

The MAS suggested that the following items be included in the guide: new fare structure and service hours; frequently asked questions for Posey belt and seat belts; protocol for obtaining an EZ-Pay refund; list of Metrorail stations with assigned MetroAccess bus stop location information; and the designated pick-up/drop-off area at high-volume locations, such as Verizon Center, FedEx Field, and the Nationals Ballpark.

It is anticipated that revision will be completed by late summer or early fall.

The MAS also discussed MetroAccess Ranger GPS Mapping System. The Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) is an onboard computer that provides GPS mapping information on all MetroAccess vehicles. The MDT is the main form of communication for operators and the method by which they receive their manifest and trips. Metro made enhancements to the MDT software and display screen. These adjustments will allow operators to identify the start and end time of the customer's pick-up window, view pertinent data in a customer's profile, and view more descriptive instructions of the trip. The fares for customers have been strategically placed at the bottom of the screen to ensure all information, such as special instructions or waivers is reviewed by the operator. The updates to the onboard computer system will occur annually to reflect new streets and housing developments within the service area.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

The AAC discussed its invitation to Metro's Board and the GM/CEO to travel in the system using the fixed route system and MetroAccess with a person with a visible disability. Mr. Ariza-Silva stated that the letter had been developed and upon approval by the AAC, the letter will be forwarded to the Board before the August recess.

Dr. Posner suggested that the opportunity to travel via the Abilities-Ride program should be added to the letter.

Upon motion, the AAC approved the AAC Travel Initiative letter to the Board.

Ms. Rush expressed an interest in when the new MetroAccess vehicles will be placed into service. Allison Anderson, Operations Manager, MetroAccess Services stated that it is anticipated that the vehicles will be placed into service in the next 30 days.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Dr. Posner also made a comment about MetroAccess fares. The new fares on Metrobus and Metrorail were recently implemented. As a result, he stated that there have been some "unintended consequences" for calculating MetroAccess fares. Dr. Posner suggested that the item be added to the work plan for discussion and to formulate a strategy to address them.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.





**AAC**

**Accessibility Advisory Committee**

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**STATUS OF COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS**

Item Number or Action	Description	Meeting Date	Presenter	Status
2018 – 5	<b>Abilities-Ride</b> <i>Update on the program</i>	9/5/17	Christiaan Blake	
2018 – 4	<b>Paratransit Vehicle Vendor (Ford Motor Company)</b> <i>New Paratransit vehicle development</i>	TBD	TBD	

**COMPLETED - COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS**

Item Number or Action	Description	Meeting Date	Presenter	Status
2018 -1	<p><b>Title VI Presentation</b> <i>Overview of the proposed update for the Title VI Plan submission for 2017</i></p>	7/3/17	<p>Presenter: Corinne Remy Office of Equal Employment Opportunity</p>	
2018 – 3	<p><b>2017 Ride WITH ME Initiative</b> <i>Advise the membership and respond to any general questions about the event</i></p>	10/2/17	<p>Elver Ariza-Silva &amp; B. Moore Gwynn</p>	
2018 – 2	<p><b>AAC Elections</b> <i>By-laws require an election for AAC officers (two-year term)</i></p>	10/2/17	<p>B. Moore Gwynn</p>	