



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

## **Accessibility Advisory Committee**

### **Meeting Minutes: June 6, 2016**

#### **ATTENDEES**

Present: Patrick Sheehan (Chair), Denise Rush (1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair), Elver Ariza-Silva (2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair), Dr. Tapan Banerjee, Carolyn Bellamy, Darnise Bush, Charlie Crawford, Steven Kaffen; Marisa Laios, Phillippa Mezile, Edward McEntee, Mary Kay McMahon, Doris Ray, Paul Semelfort, Anthony Stephens, and Dr. William Staderman.

#### **Call to Order**

Chairman 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 as amended.

The May 2, 2016 meeting minutes were approved.

The Chair's Report to the Board, dated June 6, 2016, was approved.

#### **IN MEMORIAM**

The AAC shared a moment of silence in memory of Senior Airman Peter Warren Pope, son of AAC member, Randall Pope. Senior Airman Pope unexpectedly passed away three weeks ago. Members expressed their heartfelt sympathy and prayers for Mr. Pope and his family.

#### **SAFETRACK**

Due to the overwhelming interest and questions from the disability community, the AAC discussed Metro's SafeTrack Plan. SafeTrack is designed to improve Metrorail safety and restore service reliability in an accelerated timeframe. The maintenance plan, which began on June 3, 2016, will continue for one year and impact every line in the system. During this time, Metrorail will close at midnight seven days per week to allow enhanced maintenance to key parts of the system.

The AAC forwarded a letter to the General Manager with four recommendations related to accessibility: (1) supplemental bus and paratransit service; (2) customer communication; (3) customer service; and (4) fare policy.

Christian Kent, AGM, Department of Access Services, opened a discussion on the SafeTrack plan and responses to the recommendations in the letter. He stated that that Metro's decision to implement SafeTrack was not made lightly. This full scale maintenance initiative is occurring now so future rail service will be more reliable. Mr.

Kent introduced two speakers to discuss SafeTrack, Jim Hughes, Acting Managing Director, Rail Transportation, and Jim Hamre, Director, Bus Planning (BPLN).

To inform the community about the year-long maintenance plan, Metro has developed a full outreach campaign that includes every local news and radio outlet; station announcements in multiple languages; information on Metro's main webpage; printed brochures that are available at the stations; and approximately 100 Transit Ambassadors staged throughout the system to assist customers with navigating the system. Metro also partnered with car and bike share programs as alternatives.

The Orange Line was the first scheduled for maintenance in the SafeTrack plan. Mr. Hughes stated that for 13 days, Metrorail will be single tracking between the Ballston and East Falls Church stations. The maintenance work in the first couple of days has been uneventful, and all other stations are operating smoothly. In response to a question about overcrowding, Mr. Hughes stated that there has been some overcrowding; however, Metro responded to the issue quickly by adding additional trains in the system.

Mr. Hamre discussed BPLN efforts to prepare alternative transportation options for customers during SafeTrack. He stated that, just as with the Metrorail, the first few days were uneventful. It is expected that ridership will increase in the days and months ahead. During each maintenance cycle, Metro is providing shuttle service. For example, during the peak hours, shuttle services will be provided on the Orange line between East Falls Church and Ballston, and between West Falls Church and Ballston. This will provide customers an alternative when the platforms are crowded. Shuttle service will also be ready for use as an immediate backup in the case something happens in the system.

Mr. Hamre stated that in this first maintenance cycle, Metro has also added to the following existing bus lines: 2A Dunn Loring; 3Y Lee Highway; 38B Ballston Farragut Square; and 5A Dulles. These additions are designed to allow customers to travel without using the Orange Line. Additionally, the Fairfax County Connector created a new bus route from Vienna to Pentagon to allow customers an alternative pathway, and enhanced the 599 Route from the Reston/Herndon area to Pentagon. In response to a question about feedback, Mr. Hamre stated that the feedback he has received indicates customers are taking advantage of the alternate transportation routes. In the Northern Virginia area, the bike share program has moved to certain locations giving customers even more travel options. Mr. Hamre stated the same approach will be used during the other 14 maintenance events. Metro is also collaborating with other local jurisdictions to coordinate or develop services to provide customers with alternatives while SafeTrack is underway.

William Staderman stated that he had a good experience on the first day of SafeTrack. Metro had plenty of signage and many helpful staff.

Doris Ray stated that her experience was mostly positive on the Orange Line stating that she did not have to wait very long for a center platform train. However while waiting, she noticed that the platform edge lights at the Courthouse and Metro Center rail stations were not illuminated to a level where all customers, including those with disabilities, could see the edge of platform. Christiaan Blake, Director, ADA Policy and Planning, stated that the issue of the platform lights is a quality assurance issue and his office would investigate the status of the lights at the two stations mentioned and follow-up with appropriate staff should immediate repairs be required.

Ms. Ray added that the announcements were clear, but the train operators were not announcing which side of the train the doors would be opening. For customers who are blind or have low vision, having that information is important to getting off the train at the right stop in a timely fashion.

Ms. Ray also stated that the elevator at the Courthouse Metrorail station is out-of-service. She stated that there was no notice that the elevator would be out-of-service, which further complicates travel for customers who need to use the elevators to navigate the system.

Ms. Ray suggested that during SafeTrack, Metro should add to the local Metrobus routes in Northern Virginia. As an example, she stated Metro should add service from the Seven Corners area to Washington Blvd over to the Yellow Line at Pentagon City. Mr. Hamre stated that Metro has no plans to add bus routes in the Northern Virginia area now. He added that Metro has increased the number bus vehicles by 40 and has more operators available to provide service, all in an effort to meet the higher demands in an efficient manner.

Steven Kaffen commended Metro on the well-planned alternatives to Metrorail during SafeTrack. He expressed an interest in how Metro was communicating the various changes in the maintenance plan with the various jurisdictions. Mr. Hamre stated that most jurisdictions have access to Metro's website about SafeTrack with links to other transportation services in that area. Additionally, Metro provides jurisdictions with information upon request.

Mr. Kaffen also expressed an interest in the quality control and lessons learned during the year-long maintenance work. Mr. Hughes stated that Metro is testing the system after each maintenance cycle to ensure proper operation. Additionally, Metro's Office of Quality and Assurance, along with FTA, are monitoring the SafeTrack work. Metro is documenting any lessons learned to ensure that the same issues do not continue to occur.

A comment from the public expressed an interest in inspections. Mr. Hughes stated that Metro has internal inspectors reviewing the work as it is completed, and a final inspection will be done when all of the work is complete.

In a follow-up on communication, Brianne Burger expressed an interest in information to customers who require visual communication. For several months, the AAC has been encouraging Metro to be more proactive in its approach with customers who are deaf. In an effort to increase communication, Mr. Hamre stated Metro has expanded signage to provide customers with more information about navigating the system during SafeTrack. Additionally, Metro has 100 Transit Ambassadors staged throughout the system to assist customers. Metro also has many handouts for customers. Mr. Kent stated that the GM has authorized the use of white boards for two-way communication in the system. Mr. Sheehan stated that he wanted to make clear that the AAC recommendation for the use of white boards is to ensure that two-way communication is occurring with all customers. In this critical time, where information is knowledge, no customer should be left wondering or without assistance in the system.

Anthony Stephens expressed an interest in Metrobus routes G12 and 14 (Greenbelt and New Carrollton). He stated that the lines are operating on the weekends and expressed an interest whether the change was due to SafeTrack. Mr. Hamre stated that the changes in the routes were not related to SafeTrack. The changes to those routes were done during Metrobus State of Good Investments last fall.

Mr. Stephens also stated that he plans to use commuter bus service to Union Station in November 2016 when SafeTrack is scheduled for the Green and Yellow lines from College Park-University of Maryland to Greenbelt lines. He expressed an interest in whether Metro will operate more eight-car trains through the system to ease the crowding. Mr. Hughes stated that Metro is committed to operating eight-car trains to control some of the crowding.

A comment from the public stated that customers need to plan and add approximately 40 minutes to their travel times. The customer stated that crowding will occur at the end-of-the line stations because customers will drive to those lines trying to avoid the area where the maintenance is occurring. This will mean trains will be more crowded as they arrive into certain stations. Additionally, the customer requested that Metro add shuttle service at the Dunn Loring and Vienna stations.

Elver Ariza-Silva expressed an interest in the recommendation in the AAC SafeTrack letter related to MetroAccess fare policy. Mr. Kent stated that the Metro's Board has not authorized any changes to the fare policy on any of the three modes of service. In a question about the MetroAccess Fare Calculator, Mr. Kent stated that Metro has updated the Trip Planner and those changes will be reflected in the Fare Calculator

results for MetroAccess trips. Mr. Hughes stated that the Trip Planner has been updated to account for each SafeTrack maintenance cycle. As the maintenance work is completed and a new maintenance cycle begins, the information will be updated in the system.

Mr. Kent addressed another recommendation in the AAC letter regarding the use of MetroAccess vehicles or the Circulator to accommodate additional mobility devices. He stated that, in reference to the Circulator, Metro forwarded the information to District of Columbia, since the Circulator is a District service. Mr. Kent also stated that MetroAccess is at peak ridership, and therefore, it is unlikely that any MetroAccess vehicles will be available for customers not under Metro's Free Ride Program. Mr. Hamre stated that all Metrobuses serving stations during SafeTrack are of the low-floor variety that can accommodate two mobility devices. Mr. Hamre reiterated that Metro added 40 additional buses and more operators in order to meet the demands in an efficient manner. In response to a question about how the hours of operation will impact MetroAccess service, Mr. Kent stated that as long there is bus service in the area where the customer is traveling, MetroAccess will continue to operate.

Carolyn Bellamy expressed an interest in the impact of elevator outages during SafeTrack. She stated that the elevators at Judiciary Square and Gallery Place stations were out of service, which delayed her trip to the meeting. She added that staff working in the system appeared to be unfamiliar with everything going on, and then placed her on a train going further away from her destination. For customers with disabilities this could be challenging, and information should be available in a timely manner. Mr. Blake stated that the elevator outages at both Judiciary Square and Gallery Place are not planned outages. He stated that the outages are listed on Metro's website.

Darnise Bush expressed an interest whether personnel in the system have been trained to provide assistance to all customers including those with disabilities. Mr. Hughes stated that everyone working in the system during these maintenance cycles has been trained on the information as well as interacting with customers.

The AAC thanked the presenters and requested regular updates throughout the year-long cycle. Mr. Hamre stated that in between the updates customers can share their experience about SafeTrack by doing the following: talking with a Station Manager or staff in the system; contacting Metro's Customer Service at (202)637-7000; or via email at [metrobusplanning@wmata.com](mailto:metrobusplanning@wmata.com).

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Questions were raised about the Abilities-Ride request for information (RFI), timing of the request for proposals (RFP), and when the AAC would be able to review the RFP. The customer stated that staff previously stated that the AAC would be allowed to

review RFI responses as well as the RFP before it is issued publicly. The customer expressed an interest when will this issue will be on the agenda for review. Christian Kent, AGM, Access Services, stated that the process is taking a little longer, and not all decisions have been made. The topic will on the agenda when Metro is ready to discuss the next steps in the process. In regards to the contract, Anthony Stephens stated that at a minimum, the AAC should be notified about any ADA or Section 504 issues or red flags that arise during the procurement process.

Denise Rush stated that the Federation of the Blind recently won its lawsuit against a transportation network company for the improper treatment of the disability community. She urged Metro to rethink its business relationship with companies that do not abide by the principles or regulations of the ADA.

A comment was made about early pick-ups and late arrivals on MetroAccess. The customer stated that he was picked up early for a trip, but because the driver was unfamiliar with the route and poor directions provided by the Ranger, he arrived at this appointment late. The customer stated that this has happened on more than one occasion and suggested better training for MetroAccess drivers.

The customer also commented that he has had trouble with MetroAccess arrival calls. On many occasions the arrival call has either not occurred or was wrong. The customer requested that his trip history be reviewed in an effort to resolve these issues with the service. Allison Anderson, Operations Manager, Office of MetroAccess Service, stated that staff will investigate both issues and provide feedback.

#### **QUARTERLY MEETING WITH METRO'S EXECUTIVE BOARD**

The AAC discussed the upcoming Quarterly Meeting with the Executive Leadership of Metro's Board of Directors, scheduled for June 9, 2016. The quarterly meetings are held in the Jackson Graham Building (JGB) Lobby-level meeting room, and are open to the public. The AAC recommended the following topics for discussion with the Board: 1) lighting; 2) Abilites-Ride program; 3) Customer Safety on Metrobus, Metrorail and MetroAccess); 4) Select Pass Program; 5) Emergency Exercise Waivers; and 6) Fare Policy.

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

The BRS received a presentation on Metro's Select Pass, a new pilot program aimed at giving customers more choice among transportation options and payment. The pilot program offers passes at two price points: \$80 (one-way fare \$2.25) and \$135 (one-way fare \$3.75), and all trips at the value set or less are included. For customer convenience, the Select Pass is only available online and has an unlimited Metrobus option for an additional \$45 per month.

The main advantage to the customer is the unlimited travel on the fixed route system for one set low price. This means customers can make a stop without incurring any additional charges. The program is billed on a monthly basis, which allows customers to budget their travel expenses. The disability community likes this idea and recommended that the next iteration of the Pass include an option for customers with disabilities using reduced fare. A reduced fare Select Pass would allow customers with disabilities to budget their travel as well.

### **METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**

The MetroAccess Subcommittee toured the MetroAccess Operations Control Center (OCC) in Prince George's Plaza. The OCC has a 24/7 dispatch operation, employing 60 dispatchers and 30 supervisors, who handle approximately 8,300 to 8,800 trips per day. The Reservations Department consists of 55 to 60 reservationists on duty who handle approximately 2,300 to 3,000 reservation calls per day. Mr. Gray discussed the role of the Scheduling Department, advising that the department utilizes Trapeze routing software to coordinate schedules for the following day. Once the preliminary schedules are set, the team conducts a final review and sends the manifests to each MetroAccess service delivery provider. Many members commended Metro for the improvements in the MetroAccess system and the OCC staff for a very informative tour, stating that having seen the operation first hand provides clarity to the complexity of the service.

The Subcommittee also discussed the MetroAccess Interactive Voice Response System. Staff stated that a software issue has been identified and a solution is in development with "fail-safe" redundancy that would provide increased connectivity to correct the intermittent IVR system failures.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Sheehan stated this is the last full committee meeting for Mr. Stephens and Dr. Staderman. He stated that he has personally enjoyed working with each one of them and wish them all best in their future endeavors. The AAC applauded all the members and several members provided comments of appreciation.

Mr. Sheehan also requested that Board Chair Jack Evans be invited to the AAC September meeting. It would be important for the AAC to hear from the Board Chair.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.



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Page 8 of 10

### STATUS OF FY 2016 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info – 13	AAC Quarterly Meeting with Board Executive Committee	7/5/16	AAC	Feedback	
Info – 14	Lighting Work Group (Update)	7/5/16	BRS	Feedback on NCCLV Meeting with GM	
Info – 15	AAC Administrative Process Discussion	7/5/16	AAC		
Info – 16	A discussion with Metro's GM	9/6/16	AAC	TBD	
Info – 06	Age-Friendly DC Task Force (Update)	12/5/16	AAC	Update (Follow-up discussion after event - November 2013).	



**STATUS OF FY 2016 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS**

Info – 17	A discussion with Metro’s GM	1/3/17	AAC	TBD	
Info – 18	A discussion with Metro’s GM	5/1/17	AAC	TBD	

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

**COMPLETED - FY 2016 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS**

<b>Info/Action Item Number</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date Initiated</b>	<b>Originating Group</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
Info - 01	Proposed 2016 Bus Route Changes	7/6/15	AAC	Presenter: Julie Hershorn	7/6/15
Info – 02	25 <sup>th</sup> 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 - FY 2016 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

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

Attachments: 1. Bus and Rail Subcommittee Work Plan  
2. MetroAccess Subcommittee Work Plan