



## Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

### **Meeting Minutes: May 2, 2016**

#### **ATTENDEES**

Present: Patrick Sheehan (Chair), Denise Rush (1st Vice-Chair), Elver Ariza-Silva (2nd Vice-Chair), Dr. Tapan Banerjee, Carolyn Bellamy, Brianne Burger, Darnise Bush, Charlie Crawford, Steven Kaffen; Marisa Laios, Phillippa Mezile, Edward McEntee, Mary Kay McMahan, Randall Pope, Paul Semelfort, Anthony Stephens, Dr. William Staderman, and Roger Stanley.

#### **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 April 4, 2016 meeting minutes were approved.

The Chair's Report to the Board, dated May 2, 2016, was approved.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Christopher Barnes, Riders Advisory Council, made a comment about the accessibility of the fixed route system. Metro should focus on reducing demand for MetroAccess by improving the existing fixed route services. He gave the following examples where correcting issues would improve accessibility of the system: 1) reduce platform-to-train gaps to ensure load leveling on railcars; 2) improve announcements on the 7000 series railcars; 3) enhance station lighting; and 3) eliminate the numerous occasions where Metro fails to announce elevator outages. All of these issues make it difficult for all customers, but especially those with disabilities, to use fixed route services. Improving these areas would also help reduce demand for MetroAccess. A comment from the public echoed Mr. Barnes' comments about support for Metro's infrastructure. There are so many things that Metro can improve to increase safety and make the system more usable for all customers including those with disabilities.

A comment was made about a report from McKinsey & Company. The report includes numerous recommendations about MetroAccess and alternatives to MetroAccess, such as TransportDC. The customer expressed an interest whether the AAC will discuss the report. Christian Kent, Assistant General Manager, Department of Access Services, stated that the McKinsey report has been published on Metro's website. The AAC has been made aware of the need for dedicated funding and Metro's effort to fiscally sustain the system. The report does include a discussion about MetroAccess. It summarized ways to make the service more efficient and was to be used for discussion

purposes only. Metro General Manager Paul Wiedefeld has come before the AAC twice in an effort to gather direct feedback and share Metro's objective and course of action.

In a follow-up on the McKinsey report, Dr. Ponser stated that the AAC should focus on the Abilities-Ride Request for Proposal (RFP).

Another comment was made about the Abilities-Ride proposal. The customer stated that the minimum requirement of 50 wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV) is too low when considering the size of the service area. The customer added that the AAC did not raise the subject of Abilities-Ride and its impact during Mr. Wiedefeld's most recent visit. The customer went on to say that the disability community expects the AAC to hold Metro staff and other members accountable on this issue. The customer stated that the AAC should make their expectations for the Abilities-Ride RFP known in writing to the Board before the RFP is made public. Mr. Crawford suggested that the AAC issue recommendations that Metro can actually implement. A comment from the public stated that the RFI and draft RFP should be provided to the AAC for comment before any of the documents are made public.

The AAC concurred with the comments received, and upon motion agreed to send a list of recommendations to Metro's Board, General Manager, and staff outlining the minimum standard of service acceptable for the Abilities-Ride proposal. Paul Semelfort, MetroAccess Subcommittee Chair, Denise Rush, Doris Ray, Carolyn Bellamy, and Dr. Banerjee will produce the document for presentation to the AAC via email by May 16, 2016.

A representative from the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) made a comment about transit organizations partnering with Transit Network Companies (TNC) like Uber and Lyft. Metro is seeking to partner with a TNC to manage cost, but with little regard to the concerns of the disability community or workers. The ATU discourages this practice and has several recommendations that could improve existing paratransit services and working conditions. The recommendations are outlined in the document, *Abandoning Paratransit Service to Save It? How Partnering with Lyft and Uber Undermines the Mission of Transit Agencies*.

### **PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT**

Ron Pavlik, Chief, Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD), discussed crime and safety on the fixed route system. Chief Pavlik was accompanied by other MTPD officers including: Kevin Gaddis, Deputy Chief, Patrol Operations; Warren Donald, Deputy Chief, Administrative Bureau; and Peter Sepulveda, Deputy Chief, Homeland Security Bureau. MTPD was established in 1976 and its mission is to provide protection for Metro customers, personnel, transit facilities, and revenue. MTPD has 474 sworn officers who provide a variety of law enforcement and public safety services on the fixed route system. MTPD has jurisdiction and arrest powers throughout the Transit Zone, which includes Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, for crimes that occur in or

against Metro's facilities. It is the only tri-jurisdictional police agency in the country and serves a population of 3.2 million.

MTPD has a new command center that allows officers to monitor the system via closed-circuit television (CCTV). Chief Pavlik stated that crime on the fixed route system is considerably lower when compared to crime in the Metropolitan area (e.g. the Metrorail crime incident rate is 6% per million riders; the Metrobus rate is 1% per million riders; and the crime incident rate for the region is 22% per 1,000 people). In the system there are two types of crimes: (1) crimes against persons and (2) crimes against property. Crimes against persons include minor assaults and robberies. The most common crimes in this category are cell phone robberies. Crimes against property generally occur at the parking garages, with thefts from automobiles or vandalism to vehicles. Chief Pavlik stated that crimes at parking garages are at a 10-year low. In response to a question about Metrorail stations with the highest crime, Chief Pavlik stated that transfer stations like Gallery Place are higher crime stations. At certain stations, such as Minnesota Avenue and Deanwood, MTPD maintains a presence around the clock because crime is more prevalent.

Dr. Banerjee expressed an interest in MTPD quarterly statistics reports. He stated that information should be available to the AAC on a regular basis. Chief Pavlik stated that MTPD reports crime on Metro's blotter every day and to Metro's Board of Directors on a quarterly basis.

Dr. Posner expressed an interest in cameras on the platform. Other transit properties, such as the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), use cameras to send platform-long images to train operators. This allows train operators to gauge whether the doors need to remain open longer as a safety issue to allow all customers, including those with disabilities, to enter or alight the train. Very often people with disabilities get caught in a train door because it is difficult for train operators to see the length of the platform. Chief Pavlik stated that, on a regular basis, Metro uses the cameras on the platform to monitor the system for safety and crowd control. Additionally, Metro shares information from the camera system with the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center, which makes it available to the region allowing officers and first responders the ability to respond to situations in an efficient and effective manner. Chief Pavlik stated that he would follow up on MBTA system.

Dr. Posner also made a comment about Metro's Fare Evasion Initiative. The program allowed Metro to lock the equipment gates throughout the rail system. Although the equipment gate has a magnetic feature that will unlock the gate in the case of an emergency or a power outage, there are some emergencies that do not involve power outages. Chief Pavlik stated that the initiative is to deter fraud in the system. MTPD is collaborating with the Department of Access Services and the Chief Financial Officer on an amenable solution.

A comment from the public expressed an interest in the protocol for when a random bag may be left on the platform or train. Metro is in the nation's capital and threats or a terrorist attack can occur anywhere in the system. Chief Pavlik stated that Metro follows up on all abandoned and suspicious packages in the system. Metro has a bomb squad with over 20 trained explosive dogs. Additionally, MTPD partners with the Joint Terrorism Task Force, which is a partnership between various law enforcement agencies and charged with taking action against terrorism.

Ms. Rush expressed an interest in crime throughout the system. She stated that the customers with disabilities are the most vulnerable customers in the system. As a person who is blind, she would be afraid to ride the fixed route system because of the crime. Chief Pavlik stated that MTPD takes crime very seriously. Recently there were two fatal incidents on the Orange line, which may have given some customers the impression that Metro is unsafe. However, the crime statistics do not support that perception. He added that MTPD investigated and closed the two fatal incidents within 24 hours with arrests. Metro uses a layered approach to fighting crime in the system. In response to a question about the deployment of officers, Chief Pavlik stated that the process of deploying officers is fluid. Metro follows trends and patterns in the system; relies on a number of approaches to deter crime; and apprehends those committing crime in the system.

Some members expressed interest in whether youth were committing a large number of the crimes in the system. Chief Pavlik stated that the youth can be challenging, however, it is a misconception that youth are responsible for all or most of the crime in the system. There are some problematic youth using the system, but it is a small number. To combat this, MTPD saturates the system during peak hours with uniform and plain-clothes officers and monitors the system via CCTV. To ensure the public is aware of officers in the system, Metro has changed the color of uniforms to make sure help is more visible.

Mr. Ariza-Silva expressed an interest in training. Metro's customer base is diverse, and specialized training that includes working with all customers including those with disabilities is important. Chief Pavlik stated that officers receive cultural diversity in law enforcement training; this training is mandatory and given every other year.

Mr. Stephens expressed an interest in the best ways to alert the police when a situation is occurring in the system. Chief Pavlik encouraged the AAC and the public to report crime via the Text Tip program. The program was designed to provide two-way communication for emergency and non-emergency situations in the fixed route system. Customers can text information to 696873 or use the letters MYMTPD. Customers can also contact MTPD directly by dialing (202) 962-2121, 911, or using the emergency intercom system on the railcars.

With a round of applause, the AAC thanked Chief Pavlik and his team for keeping safety on the fixed route system in the forefront and for protecting all customers including those with disabilities.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

The AAC discussed its upcoming field trip. Dr. B. Moore Gwynn, AAC Coordinator, stated that the AAC will tour the MetroAccess Operations Control Center in Hyattsville, MD. The guided tour is scheduled for May 16, 2016, and will replace the regularly scheduled MetroAccess Subcommittee meeting. The location is accessible by taking the Green Line to the Prince George's Plaza Metrorail station. Shuttle service will be provided from the south side of the station to and from the tour. Staff will be available at the Prince George's Plaza Metrorail station to assist members with the shuttle service. Any members requiring reasonable accommodations must make the request by Friday, May 6, at noon. In response to a question about whether members of the public can participate in the tour, Dr. Moore-Gwynn stated that this tour is reserved for AAC members only.

The AAC also discussed its monthly meeting schedule. Dr. Moore-Gwynn announced that all AAC and subcommittee meetings (to include work groups) will not be held during the month of August 2016. This change in the schedule is permanent and will align the AAC's schedules to that of Metro's Board of Directors. Many members welcomed the break, while others expressed a desire to maintain the traditional AAC meeting schedule. The AAC and its subcommittees will resume their regular meeting schedule in September with the following meetings: AAC - September 6, 2016; Bus/Rail Subcommittee (BRS) - September 12, 2016; and MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) - September 19, 2016. All meetings will take place at Metro Headquarters in the Lobby Level Meeting Room unless otherwise noted.

The AAC briefly discussed the recruitment for new members. Dr. B. Moore-Gwynn stated that the 2016 AAC recruitment period ended on April 15, 2016 and vacancies will be filled from the pool of qualified applicants from the current recruitment as well as previous applications on file.

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

The BRS received two informative presentations: 1) low-cost innovate solutions to reduce crowding and congestion at certain areas on station platforms; and 2) Metro's Lost and Found Program.

The Department of Rail Transportation discussed a new pilot program aimed at reducing crowding and congestion near and around the Passenger Information Display Systems (PIDS), steps, and escalators. Metro, in partnership with the District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT), developed two low-cost solutions to reduce crowding and congestion at certain areas on a station's platform: (1) making certain information on the PIDS more prominent and (2) placing floor signage to help customers know where to stand on the platform.

The PIDS pilot proposes making a small color change to display the number of cars in red when an eight-car train is inbound to a station. This would make the information more easily recognizable and inform customers that they can spread out along the entire length of the platform. Another pilot solution is the placement of accessible floor signs that indicate the exact spot of the last car of a six or eight-car train. This provides customers with information on where to wait for the shorter trains.

The BRS believes that that floor signs and color change on the PIDS will make a difference inside of the stations. The AAC commends Metro and DDOT on these innovative solutions, and look forward to helping develop more.

The BRS also discussed Metro's Lost and Found program. There are two program categories in the Lost and Found program: (1) the fixed-route system and (2) MetroAccess. When a customer loses an item in the fixed-route system, the item is secured, logged into the Customer Relationship Management system (CRM), and then matched with a customer report on lost items. Metro contacts customers by phone, email, and customers contact cards. Metro's main office for the Lost and Found program is in Hyattsville, MD, and is accessible by the Prince George's Plaza Metrorail station.

When an item is lost on MetroAccess, the vendor operating the trip will retain the item. Customers can contact Metro's Lost and Found Office, which will follow up with the MetroAccess Customer Assurance team, which will confirm that the item has been found. The MetroAccess Customer Assurance team then contacts the customer and provides information on where to claim the item.

### **METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**

The MAS discussed the MetroAccess Securement policy. For the safety of customers, as well as fellow passengers, Metro requires that all passengers wear both a lap belt and shoulder harness at all times while riding MetroAccess. Given that some members of the disability community cannot wear a lap belt and/or shoulder harness for medical reasons, the MAS respects a person's right to submit a waiver allowing them to opt out of some securement. However, the Committee is concerned that too many members of the disability community are ignoring the risks associated with riding MetroAccess while not fully secured.

The AAC received a presentation on the statistics of injuries and fatalities when people ride motor vehicles unsecured, and staff presented a series of crash test videos, which demonstrated a range of outcomes from using no securement and improper securement, to proper securement including the lap belt and shoulder harness. Members of the AAC agreed that seatbelts save lives. The MAS suggests that Metro do more to make other safety options available, such as seatbelt extenders, which can make wearing the shoulder harness more comfortable.

The AAC will continue to discuss this issue, and use research to inform the community for the purposes of safety and saving lives.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.



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

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info – 13	SafeTrack Plan	6/6/16	AAC	Letter to GM Presenters: James Hughes and Jim Hamre	
Info - 14	AAC Quarterly Meeting with Board Executive Committee	6/6/16	AAC		
Info – 06	Age-Friendly DC Task Force (Update)	12/5/16	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**

<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.