



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

Meeting Minutes: May 1, 2017

ATTENDEES

Present: Patrick Sheehan (Chair), Denise Rush (1st Vice Chair), Elver Ariza-Silva (2nd Vice Chair), Carolyn Bellamy, Charlie Crawford, Phillippa Mezile, Edward McEntee, Mary Kay McMahon, Randall Pope, Phil Posner, Doris Ray 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 as amended.

The April 3, 2017 meeting minutes were approved as amended.

The Chair's Report to the Board, dated May 1, 2017, was approved as amended.

A DISCUSSION WITH A BOARD MEMBER

Metro Board members Malcolm Augustine, Maryland, and Robert Lauby, Federal Government, greeted members of the AAC and the public. Mr. Sheehan stated that Metro's General Manager and Chief Executive Officer (GM/CEO) had a last-minute change in schedule and was unable to attend tonight's meeting.

Mr. Lauby stated that he is the Chief Safety Officer for the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). At FRA, he facilitates the safety and accessibility reviews for commuter rail systems across the country. All newly-designed equipment, restrooms, and even food service carts fall within his purview and must be fully accessible. FRA achieves this through innovative designs.

Mr. Lauby thanked the AAC for their support of the different initiatives to improve safety throughout the system. He acknowledged that the disability community depends on public transportation, and for many it is their only option. Although Metro's safety initiatives have been an inconvenience to customers, these actions are important because safety, service, and reliability are all closely related. Therefore, it is critical that Metro gets support to complete the work necessary to have a reliable and safe system, so that it is there for all when needed.

Mr. Augustine stated that he has served on Metro's Board since July 2015 as an alternate member representing the Maryland - Prince George's County. He stated that

he, too, is appreciative of the AAC's support and perspective on issues such as MetroAccess Service.

Mr. Augustine stated that his professional background is in the field of marketing analytics. This kind of information is data driven, but when reviewing data, he always remains mindful of the customer. Prince George's County is heavily dependent on MetroAccess service, having the largest group of customers using the system. AAC members' real and positive feedback has helped the Board implement changes to improve the service.

Mr. Augustine stated that his goal in attending tonight's meeting was to listen and have an open dialogue with the disability community.

Mr. Sheehan opened the floor for questions from Committee members.

Paul Semelfort expressed an interest in more transportation options for Prince George's County residents. Prince George's County accounts for 40% of the ridership on MetroAccess. Two of the reasons are because many of the bus stops in the County are inaccessible and bus service is limited in its operation in the County. Mr. Augustine stated that he is a strong supporter of public transportation. Maryland, through Prince George's County, commits \$500 million a year to support Metro. He stated that every ride on the system is subsidized, and there are no rides that pay for themselves. As a Board, it is important to ensure that the funds are spent efficiently. To do this, Metro's Board meticulously reviews the service and its subsidy on all three modes of service. Mr. Augustine stated that with limited resources, often times tough decisions have to be made.

Mr. Augustine stated that after the District of Columbia (DC), Prince George's County utilizes Metro more than any other neighboring jurisdiction. The Prince George's County bus system, "The Bus," is a small service with limited resources. Therefore, residents depend on Metro for most or all of their transportation needs. The other neighboring jurisdictions have larger transportation budgets and can fill in the service gaps.

Mr. Augustine stated that he is keenly aware of the limitations of the County's system and its impact on MetroAccess service. For example, a bus line that connected Bowie to the New Carrollton station was being considered for removal. Although the line was not highly utilized, cutting the line would have impacted a number of MetroAccess customers. Mr. Augustine stated that he always advocates for maintaining as much service as possible when a line is being reduced because of the impact of customers.

Mr. Semelfort stated that Prince George's County has a paratransit service, however the service area and hours are limited. He suggested that the Prince George's County

Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) advertise or expand hours in early mornings and late evenings on the weekdays. This would allow the disability community who live in Prince George's County to use the system for intra-county trips. Mr. Augustine stated that this is a resource issue and he does not foresee a significant growth in the service. Nevertheless, Metro's Department of Access Services (ACCS) has been working on innovative ways to bridge the gap in transportation in Maryland.

Mr. Semelfort also expressed an interest in the impact of the SafeTrack surge in Prince George's County on customers, and whether the County had any plans to ease customer frustration during this period. Customers who depend on the system needed more notice to prepare for this major shutdown of the system. Mr. Augustine stated that Metro and DPW&T could have done a better job with communicating alternatives to all customers. The decision to shut down the stations completely as opposed to single tracking is to allow more work to be done. Metro, DPW&T, and the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) are working together to mitigate the inconvenience of this surge. Metro's Office of Bus Transportation will shuttle customers to the closest station on the Blue or Orange lines. The shuttle ride is only 15 minutes. Metro and DPW&T are also encouraging customers to use the local bus lines for travel. Lastly, MDOT has agreed to monitor passenger volume levels and add additional MARC trains as needed.

Mr. Lauby stated that SafeTrack has been a learning curve for Metro. The system is different in each area, which means the response must be different. The decision on how best to approach a project depends on the level of maintenance. The decision to shut down the stations was made to accomplish the project in a quicker fashion compared to a long, drawn-out process of single tracking.

In a follow-up on resources, Mr. Semelfort stressed the need for improvements at bus stops throughout the County. Accessible bus stops that include the path of travel could lower the County's dependence on MetroAccess. Mr. Augustine stated that there is room for improvement in that area and an inventory of bus stops would be helpful in determining next steps.

Mr. Sheehan stated that the AAC will add bus stop accessibility in Prince George's County to the Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) work plan. He stated that the discussion should include the appropriate office/department in the County to advocate for improvements.

Charlie Crawford expressed an interest in whether funding resources can be expanded over multiple projects, thus providing savings that can be used for other projects such as bus stops. For example, funding from Transportation Planning Board and the Federal government may have the flexibility to use for other projects. Christiaan Blake, Director,

ADA Policy and Planning (ADAP), stated that the vast majority of bus stops in Prince George's County and throughout the region are not owned by Metro. Metro bus stops are primarily located at Metrorail stations. Prince George's County has separate funds from Metro to improve bus stops. Metro works with DPW&T on bus stop improvements, including the identification of stops located where there is demand for MetroAccess service.

In a follow-up on accessible bus stops, Carolyn Bellamy stated that bus stop accessibility is an issue in Montgomery County, too. She expressed an interest in whether the State, jurisdiction, or Metro performed quality control on improvements made at bus stops by contractors. Several bus stops near the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Randolph Road are inaccessible, and have been that way for several months. Mr. Christian Kent, AGM, ACCS, stated that Metro updated its definition of an accessible bus stop, and campaigned regionally for jurisdictions to adopt the definition and use it when improving bus stops. Often times, a bus stop is enhanced when the surrounding area around the stop is improved. Ms. Bellamy reiterated Mr. Semelfort's point stating that accessible bus stops could lower Maryland's dependence on MetroAccess. Mr. Blake stated that he reviewed the condition of the bus stop at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Randolph Road, and it appears that the area may not be completed. ADAP will follow and provide feedback. Mr. Augustine stated that he would also share the issue with his colleagues in Montgomery County.

Mr. Kent stated that not all the jurisdictions survey bus stops at the same time. Therefore, some of Metro's data on bus stops may be dated. Additionally, he stated that the definition of an accessible bus stop is interpreted differently in each jurisdiction. In many jurisdictions, the priority is to ensure the bus stop is physically accessible. Therefore, amenities, such as audible signals for a bus stop, depend on the funding for the stop. That said, Mr. Kent stated that once an alteration is made, the bus stop must be brought up to code and made current with accessibility standards.

Denise Rush stated that her biggest concern is with customers who use MetroAccess and the Metrobus. She stated that, little by little, public transportation in Prince George's County is disappearing. For example, for the last couple of years the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) has held meetings at National Harbor. With the reduction to no weekend service, NFB had to move their meetings because of a lack of transportation. That same reduction in fixed-route service is preventing customers who use MetroAccess from traveling to church or to local retail stores like Walmart. Ms. Rush stated that the lack of transportation options is painful for all customers in the County.

Mr. Augustine stated that Metro had a \$290 million budget deficit. One of the ways to close the funding gap was a reduction in service. He acknowledged that the southern part of Prince George's County does not have Metrorail access in the same manner as

other areas; however, too many residents still rely on their personal vehicles. Mr. Augustine stated that he did not agree with all the reductions and cuts in service; however, they were a lot less than what was initially projected.

Doris Ray stated that she agreed with Ms. Rush and Ms. Bellamy on points regarding bus stop accessibility. MetroAccess was formed as a regional ADA paratransit service eliminating the need for each jurisdiction to have its own paratransit service. She stated that the Board and the jurisdictions should take this into consideration when deciding to fund or cut accessible bus stops.

Additionally, bus stops in Fairfax County area are mainly on the side of the road. Ms. Ray stated that the bus stop near her home received some enhancements, but there was no improvement made to the path of travel. This makes the bus stop inaccessible if a customer cannot get to the stop, which includes a newly built walkway with no curb ramp.

Ms. Rush stated that if Prince George's County residents are using the system the most, that means the funds are being paid into the system. Yet, it seems that residents are receiving less public transportation service. Mr. Augustine agreed that there has been a reduction of service over the years in the County. Metro collaborates or operates a few different systems in one service area. For example, in a densely populated area, such as DC, there is lots of access to the rail and bus system, and the routes are shorter, which costs less to operate. Customers in DC are still paying the same fare. Additionally, he stated that the amount of revenue recovered on Metrorail in DC is much more significant than the revenue recovered in Prince George's County.

Ms. Rush expressed an interest in whether contributing more money to the system would make a difference in service. She recommended that state and county leaders tax the local businesses that benefit from having Metro at or near their location. The residents in Prince George's County cannot continue to be disregarded when it comes to adequate public transportation.

Mr. Augustine stated that the GM/CEO has a plan for dedicated funding for the system. The plan requires some adjustments on the operations side of the budget to maintain Metro's current financial and business practices. The plan requests an additional \$500 million annually from the region for the capital side of the budget.

Ms. Ray stated that she agrees with the plan for a sales tax to fund the system. Everyone should pay into the system. Metro has too many people traveling on the system from other jurisdictions who do not pay into the Compact. For years, Loudoun and Prince William County residents have used the system without the County paying its fair share into the Metro system.

Phil Posner stated that many people with disabilities use the public transit system for attending medical appointments outside of the local area, like in Baltimore. Metro is limited in the amount of travel training it can perform outside of the service area. He suggests that Metro partner regionally to allow travel trainers in other regions to travel train customers and vice-versa. This would be of tremendous assistance to customers and savings to the jurisdictions because the customer would travel using fixed-route service instead of the paratransit service.

Mr. Sheehan stated that Metro's travel training program is an outstanding service. Making bus stops accessible, coupled with travel training, will give customers with disabilities options, thus allowing MetroAccess to be the safety net for those who are unable to use fixed-route service.

Dr. Posner stated that Metro should consider offering MetroAccess customers a frequent riders' travel pass. This pass would give customers who use MetroAccess regularly a discount on travel after so many trips, comparable to the passes offered on fixed-route.

Dr. Posner also stated that Metro's default position for elevators is usually the street level. With the newly renovated elevators at the Virginia Square-George Mason University station, the default position is the mezzanine. He stated that during inclement weather all customers, including those with disabilities, would appreciate an elevator at street level to remove them from the elements.

In a follow-up, Mr. Lauby asked whether members are aware of elevator outages in advance of traveling in the system. Dr. Posner stated that planned outages are well advertised on Metro's website and via eAlerts, but emergency elevator outages are not.

Mary Kay McMahon stated that she was impacted by the service disruption on the Red Line. She expressed an interest in feedback and other alternatives during these types of disruptions in the system.

Mr. Lauby stated that Metro's Board received a briefing on the Red Line incident. A piece of equipment was faulty causing smoke in the tunnel. This section of the rail system was scheduled for rehabilitation and Metro has moved up the repairs to address this issue. Metro's position is that safety has to trump service, so the work on the Red Line will start immediately.

Mr. Sheehan stated that he participated in the emergency exercise at the Navy Yard Metrorail station. During the exercise, a member of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) led a discussion on the evacuation process. He stated that the

discussion provided him a different perspective of the evacuation process. The tutorial on the exercise was one of the reasons the event went so well. Mr. Sheehan gave kudos to Bob Hester and the staff at OEM.

Mr. Sheehan also stated that the AAC is on record for not participating in emergency exercises as long as Metro requires a waiver for participation. The AAC recommends that Metro reconsider its position and provide limited liability protection to customers who participate in the exercises. This protection will allow for the repair or replacement of equipment that may be damaged during the exercise.

Ms. Bellamy stated that she disagrees with Metro's approach of evacuating people with disabilities in an emergency. She suggested that Metro should evacuate the most vulnerable, such as people with disabilities and children, first before others customers.

Mr. Kent stated that he will relay the compliments to Bob Hester and all the OEM staff.

Ms. McMahon stated that during the week of April 17th, for three days in the evenings, there was no access into the Navy Yard Metrorail station from the DOT side. The elevator was undergoing planned maintenance and the escalators were all directed in the up position. Mr. Lauby stated that he uses the Navy Yard station quite frequently also, and will look into the issue and provide feedback.

Phillippa Mezile stated that Metro moved the list of stations on the pylons at the platform level. The list of stations is now located on the walls. For customers with low vision traveling in the system the signage on the walls is difficult to view. She suggested that Metro return the list back to the pylons on the platform. Mr. Blake stated that on center platform stations, the station ahead list signs were on the pylons. Because the information on the pylons is static information, Metro is adding new signage to add more flexibility of information to customers. For example, when there is an issue in the system, there is no additional information to that can be added to the signage on the pylons. With the new signage, information can be displayed on issues occurring in the system along with general information about next station. Staff will invite the Metro's signage team to a future meeting.

Ms. Mezile stated that having the signage on the walls only makes the information inaccessible. She suggested that Metro use a layered approach, which includes signage on the pylons, walls, and the electronic signage.

Dr. Posner stated that signage in the system is difficult to view even for customers with perfect vision because of the dust and dirt in the station.

With a round of applause, the AAC thanked Mr. Augustine and Mr. Lauby for a transparent discussion on funding, elevator outages, and bus stop accessibility. Mr. Sheehan stated that the AAC appreciates the partnership and support from the Board of Directors, ACCS, and ADAP.

PUBLIC COMMENT

A comment was made about late pick-ups on MetroAccess. The customer stated that his return trip from dialysis is consistently late causing further issues with his health. The customer stated that he contacted MetroAccess, but is often passed from representative to representative without any resolution.

In follow-up, the customer stated that he is also having issues his EZ-Pay account. The customer stated that his insurance company adds funds to the account; however, there has been a delay in posting the funds. The insurance company confirms the transfer of funds to the account, yet MetroAccess has no record. This issue has been going on for over three months. The customer requested assistance in resolving these issues. Mr. Blake stated that a member of the MetroAccess team will address the issues before the end of the meeting.

Barbara Milleville, President, National Capital Citizens with Low Vision (NCCLV), stated that the low vision community is excited that Metro will continue to fund lighting projects in the system. The use of LED light bulbs will save the system money over time because the energy costs are lower to operate.

Ms. Milleville also made a comment about painting at Union Station. NCCLV's position is that Metro should table the painting of station walls until LED bulbs can be installed and reviewed by the low-vision community. An overly bright environment will make it difficult for customers with low vision to safely navigate the system. Mr. Blake stated that, at this time, Metro does not intend to paint the walls of other stations in the system.

Another comment was made about poor service on MetroAccess. The customer stated that on April 25th, MetroAccess arrived two hours after the pick-up window. The trip also included a trip with a customer whose destination was in the opposite direction. The combination of the late pick-up and the trip in the opposite direction made the trip much longer than normal. The customer stated that she continuously reports these issues to Metro's Customer Service team and at meetings, yet they continue to happen. Staff stated that a member of the MetroAccess team will address the issues before the end of the meeting.

Dr. B. Moore Gwynn, AAC Coordinator, read a comment from a customer who left before the end of the meeting. The customer stated that she is a person with a mobility

device who travels on fixed-route system. The customer stated that bus operators are no longer making ambulatory customers move from the wheelchair securement area on the bus. This issue means that customers who use wheelchairs must wait at the bus stop for an extended amount of time even when the buses are not full. She requested that the AAC look into this issue.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Rush stated that at the last MetroAccess meeting, the attendance was extremely low. A presentation on Passenger Assistance was given, which would have been beneficial for all members. She stated that the AAC needs to improve its attendance at all meetings and strengthen its attendance policy.

Mr. Sheehan stated that the subcommittee level is where the work of the AAC is done. He stressed the importance of attending meetings.

Ms. Bellamy expressed an interest in elections for the AAC and subcommittees. Dr. Moore-Gwynn stated that elections for the AAC leadership are scheduled for the fall. The subcommittees' leaders are appointed and with the current openings, the AAC is scheduled to address the issue after the AAC elections. The AAC is in the recruitment phase and currently interviewing potential new members.

Ms. Bellamy asked whether the topic of attendance and the role of membership are raised during the interviews. Dr. Moore-Gwynn stated that in the interview process, the schedule of meetings and the commitment required to be an active member are discussed. Each candidate is asked whether they can attend the meetings at their specific times and on which subcommittee they are interested in serving.

Ms. Bellamy stressed that the AAC and disability communities need advocates to serve on the committee.

Mr. Kent stated that there is a process to add new members to the AAC. Candidates complete an application and provide a biography demonstrating their background and expertise related to disability and transportation. He stated that the best way for new members to be acclimated to the process is to help develop the work plan. This may help members to be more active during the meetings because the committee will be discussing something relevant and interesting to them.

Mr. Kent also stated that Metro's Board views the AAC as a valuable voice in the community. The materials provided to the Board have relevant information and compliment the work of the AAC. He suggested that the way to continue to stay relevant is to make sure the work plan has substantive issues. Mr. Sheehan stated that the Board is interested in deliverables that show the value of the AAC.

Ms. Rush requested that the presentation on the Passenger Assistance study be added to the MetroAccess work plan.

Mr. Sheehan requested an update on Abilities-Ride. Mr. Blake stated that the program is still in the procurement process. The Abilities-Ride proposal is a large undertaking for Metro. The program has the potential to move a greater number of customers with disabilities similar to the TransportDC program, which does over 100,000 trips per year. Mr. Blake stated that the goal is to start the program by July 1, 2017.

Ms. Bellamy stressed the need for a call center and background checks for drivers in the proposal. She stated that MetroAccess transports some of the most vulnerable customers in the system and regular background checks should be done to ensure all customers who use the system are protected. The lack of background check may result in hurting a customer and Metro's reputation should an incident occur while traveling on a vehicle. Mr. Blake stated that a call center was not required in the solicitation, and that the manner of background checks required in the solicitation conformed with Maryland state law.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 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 – 20	A discussion with Metro’s GM/CEO	6/5/17	AAC	Presenter: Paul J. Wiedefeld	
Info – 24	Platform Initiatives Braddock Road & Rhode Island Avenue	6/5/17	AAC	Presenter: Chris Blake	
Info – 25	AAC & Board Ride-Along Initiative	6/5/17	AAC	discussion	
Info – 26	Title VI presentation	7/3/17	AAC	Presenter: Sharlene D. Reed Office of Equal Employment Opportunity	
Info – 06	Age-Friendly DC Task Force (Update)	7/3/17	AAC	Update (Follow-up discussion after event - November 2013).	

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

COMPLETED - COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info – 08	Momentum and Long Range Plan (update)	12/7/15	AAC	Presenter: Jennifer Weeks	12/7/15
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/CEO	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

COMPLETED - COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info – 16	A discussion with Metro’s GM/CEO	9/6/16	AAC	Presenter: Paul J. Wiedefeld	9/6/16
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/CEO	1/3/17	AAC	Presenter: Paul J. Wiedefeld	1/3/17
Info – 22	Wayfinding (Demonstration and Tour)	3/6/17	BRS	Presenter: Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind and ClickAndGo	3/6/17
Info – 23	Dulles Phase II	4/3/17	AAC	Presenter: James Van Zee Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority	4/3/17

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