



## Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

### **Meeting Minutes: November 2, 2015**

#### **ATTENDEES**

Present: Patrick Sheehan (Chair), Denise Rush (1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair), Dr. Tapan Banerjee, Darnise Bush, Charlie Crawford, Steve Kaffen, Marisa Laios, Phillipa Mezile, Edward McEntee, Mary Kay McMahan, Randall Pope, Paul Semelfort, Dr. William Staderman, Anthony Stephens, and Roger Stanley

#### **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 September 14, 2015 meeting minutes were approved. The October 5, 2015 meeting minutes were approved. Mr. Kaffen asked about the process for follow-up items. Christiaan Blake, Director, ADA Policy and Planning (ADAP), stated that ADAP researches all items listed as follow-up and reports back to the committee at the earliest subsequent meeting once resolution has been obtained.

The Chair's Report to the Board was tabled to provide all members an opportunity to review the edits submitted by Phil Posner. Mr. Blake stated that he would email each member an accessible copy of Dr. Posner's proposed edits, and committee members will be required to respond via email with concurrence or disapproval no later than 11/5/15.

#### **AAC Subcommittees – Leadership Vacancies**

Each subcommittee has a chair and a vice-chair. The current chairs are Paul Semelfort, MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS), and Brian Miller, Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS), respectively. The current vice-chairs are Denise Rush, MAS, and Dr. William Staderman, BRS. Chair Sheehan open the floor for nominations for subcommittee leadership, but first stated that the real work of the AAC is performed at the subcommittee level, and that he has been very pleased with the leadership of the subcommittees. Mr. Crawford nominated the "current occupants" for MAS leadership. Dr. Banerjee seconded the nomination. The nominations period for MAS leadership was closed, and the AAC unanimously approved the reappointments of Mr. Semelfort and Ms. Rush.

Chair Sheehan opened the floor for nominations for BRS leadership. Mr. Stephens stated he feels that both Dr. Miller and Dr. Staderman have done excellent jobs in leading the BRS, and proceeded to nominate both to remain in their current positions. Dr. Banerjee seconded the nomination. Given that there was a second vice-chair for BRS, Mr. Crawford nominated Roger Stanley. The committee voted unanimously to in support of the nominated slate.

Due to other commitments, Dr. Posner will no longer be able to chair the Fare Policy Work Group. Dr. Sheehan asked for volunteers. Ms. Rush nominated Chair Sheehan to chair the work group. Mr. Kaffen was nominated to be the vice-chair of the work group. The AAC supported the slate as nominated with one abstention. Chair Sheehan asked members to show their interests in serving as members of the work group by a show of hands. Those indicating their interests were the following: Ms. Laios, Ms. Ray, Mr. Stanley, Ms. Mezile, Ms. Bush, and Mr. McEntee.

The Fare Policy Work Group will meet after the MAS meetings. Chair Sheehan stated that he will be meeting with the AAC 1st and 2nd vice-chairs after each BRS meeting, and he wants Station Lighting Work Group and Bus Stop Work Group meetings scheduled as well. Ms. Ray stated that Station Lighting Work Group meetings, which were originally planned to take place every other month, were impacted by staffing and building renovation issues. Ms. Ray is a co-chair of the Station Lighting Work Group, along with Dr. Staderman. Mr. Stephens is a co-chair of the Bus Stop Work Group, and Mr. Stanley was added as a co-chair.

### **Fare Policy Update**

Chair Sheehan stated that there does not seem to be any interest by Metro's Board in raising fares. He added that the AAC does not support fare increases for Metro's fiscal year 2017 budget. He also reported that the Riders Advisory Committee is looking at a zone-based fare, which the AAC researched a few years ago.

Chair Sheehan stated that in looking for fare simplification, one of the things the AAC is considering is a proposal to have MetroAccess fare be based on "bus only" fares as opposed to the fastest bus/rail combination fare. He added that the AAC should also look into whether the MetroAccess Fare Calculator is properly taking into account rail work slowdowns, which could result in the fastest route being bus/bus instead of bus/rail. Mr. Semelfort stated that the MAS has made a motion in this regard.

Ms. Ray stated that the AAC should also focus on possible increases in bus fares in addition to MetroAccess fares.

Fare Policy Public Comment: A member of the public reiterated the need to research the ability of the Fare Calculator to take into account rail work slowdowns. Adding to their comment, the customer pointed out that MetroAccess trips must be scheduled 24 hours in advance, and the Fare Calculator/staff does not know what the slowdown will be 24 hours later. Her conclusion is that the Fare Calculator is based on the fastest scheduled trip, not the fastest actual trip. The customer added that her advocacy of a bus/bus MetroAccess fare was also due in part to the fact that "many people with disabilities and seniors use bus only because it is their only affordable option."

Chair Sheehan added that the rail work slowdowns are scheduled in advance, so it is possible to calculate for them, but he is not sure that calculation is occurring. There are

also ad hoc rail slow downs. Chair Sheehan went further to ask/state even if MetroAccess fares take into account the slowdowns, wouldn't a bus/bus fare be simpler?

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

A comment was made about train number 2035 on the Green Line. The customer stated that the operator closed the door on her, and this has happened to her many times, as well as to other customers. The customer stated that operators are not looking down the platform. Mr. Blake stated that his office will follow-up with his Rail colleagues.

A comment was made about the perception that rail operators are more interested in getting down the track rather than ensuring all customers are safely aboard the train. It was suggested that Metro look at better training for operators; instituting new procedures; and introducing the installation of tools monitors in the head cars that will give operators a view of the entire platform. The customer also wants Metro to change the order of the automated announcements on rail cars.

Dr. Banerjee expressed concerns about the design of the Springfield Metro station on the Silver Line, specifically the lack of parking at the station; only drop off locations. Mr. Blake will look into the design history of the station.

A customer stated that not all station managers do not understand disability courtesy, particularly the practice of "not touching" customers. That is a training issue. Mr. Blake agreed, and reminded that committee of the computer-based training created by the Department of Access Services (ACCS) titled "Serving Our Customers with Disabilities" that was reviewed by the AAC. He stated that a major point of reference in that training was not to touch customers, their mobility device, baggage, or service animal without permission. Mr. Blake stated that ACCS will continue to emphasize this point.

On the news that Metro's choice for General Manager had withdrawn his name from consideration, Ms. Mezile suggested that the AAC send a letter or draft a resolution that states Metro's next General Manager (GM) should have some training or demonstrated history in sensitivity in serving customers with disabilities. Chair Sheehan stated that during the course of preparing for the new GM search, the AAC had been consulted as to what the agency the group would like to see in a new GM. He expects the new GM, whomever it is, to be well-versed in the needs and wants of the AAC on behalf of those we represent. Mr. Stanley supported the idea of Metro finding a GM who is customer oriented and understands the disability community.

Mr. Stephens questioned Metro's decision to have food sales in the stations. He suggested that the BRS look into this issue. Dr. Miller stated that the subcommittee will review this proposed policy.

Ms. Rush reported on a community town hall meeting in Prince George's County. During the meeting, she raised the issue of a lack of quality restaurants and shopping plazas, and the lack of bus service on weekends. She suggested that the County establish a cab service similar to what is happening in Washington, DC. Chair Sheehan stated that he supports efforts in the County to improve bus stops and the development of a taxi service.

Ms. Bush is concerned about the \$6.50 MetroAccess fare being charged to DC customers, particularly those in Wards 6, 7, and 8. She wants to know what the fares are being based on since many times these trips require bus to rail and back to bus. Allison Anderson, Service Manager, MetroAccess, stated that the fares are based on the fastest fixed route equivalent, but she would like to look into specific trips to which Ms. Bush is referring. One example is Fort Davis to George Washington Hospital.

Mr. Crawford stated that the bus/bus fare proposal is a good compromise to get to a fare structure that is reasonable. He said it is wrong to simply use the fastest route when there is information pointing out that the scheduled trips are not always available as the fastest trips.

Barbara Millville, National Capitol Citizens with Low Vision, offered to provide committee members, particularly the new members, a briefing of the Station Lighting Work Group, either during a BRS meeting or by meeting at a station. She also raised the issue of the Federal Transit Administration being more involved in Metro operations, and asked how that involvement may impact customers with disabilities.

Ms. Ray raised concern about the platform lights at some stations being turned off "during rest" up until a point when a train is approaching. She believes that this is a safety issue. She also raised the issue of the lack of lighting on the side of the Vienna station, now to the point that the crosswalk is hardly visible. She also supports improvements in bus and rail announcements. Chair Sheehan asked Ms. Millville to add the lighting concern to her group's work.

### **Quarterly Meeting with the Board's Executive Committee**

Chair Sheehan provide an update on the Quarterly meeting with the Board's Executive Committee. He stated it was a joint meeting with the Rider's Advisory Committee. Fare policy was a key topic of discussion as well as bus routes and priority seating. He also raised the topic of Corrective Action Plan, and stated that it will be an important aspect of addressing issues at Metro going forward. He also emphasized that documents placed on Metro's website need to be accessible. During the meeting, Ms. Rush asked the four Board members if any of them use MetroAccess. She is interested if there is any Board member who uses MetroAccess.

### **MetroAccess Subcommittee Report**

The MAS, and BRS, discussed the Free Ride program. The MAS voted in opposition to changes in the Free Ride Benefit. Committee members commented on National Disability Awareness month; ridership projections for MetroAccess (expected ridership growth, but also proactive steps to control the growth through alternatives); and members of the public commented on eligibility, grandfathering, and incidents on rail.

Following the MAS report, Dr. Miller made a motion to have the AAC vote to formally oppose any change in the Free Ride Benefit. The motion was seconded by Dr. Banerjee; and the motion passed. Ms. Ray abstained citing the need to obtain feedback from the Access for All Committee.

With regard to the conditional eligibility proposal in the MetroAccess sustainability study, Chair Sheehan, while pointing out that there is no proposal yet, made a motion that the committee would be opposed to a plan that changes conditional eligibility due to the possible risks associated with such a change. The motion was seconded and passed.

### **Bus and Rail Subcommittee Report**

The BRS discussed fare issues; announcements on rail cars and the need for operators to be reminded of their duty to make announcements; the lack of cleanliness of station elevators (the BRS passed a motion supporting full staffing of safety and maintenance positions.)

Following the report, Dr. Miller made a motion to have the full committee formally support the BRS motion. The motion was seconded and passed.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Ms. Ray announced the ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia's Reduced Fare Certification event. She also announced that there are forums on Virginia's 10-year transportation plans taking place.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.



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

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info - 04	AAC Quarterly Leadership Meeting	11/12/15	AAC	Feedback	
Info - 03	Momentum and Long Range Plan (update)	12/7/15	AAC	Presenter: Jennifer Weeks	
Info – 06	Age-Friendly DC Task Force (Update)	12/7/15	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**

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 - 01	25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ADA	7/6/15	AAC	Open Forum	7/6/15
Info - 02	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

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