



Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

Meeting Minutes: April 1, 2013

Chairman Patrick Sheehan called the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

ATTENDEES

Present: Patrick Sheehan (Chair), Dr. Phil Posner (Vice-Chair), Dr. Tapan Banerjee (2nd Vice-Chair), Debbie Brown, Robert Brown, Chanelle Houston, Regina Lee, Marilyn Lutter, Brian Miller, Mary Jane Owen, Doris Ray, Denise Rush, Paul Semelfort, and Dr. William Staderman.

Not Present: Georges Aguehoude, Elver Ariza-Silva, Kristen Barry, Carolyn Bellamy, Darrell Drake, Susan Holland, and Jessica Hunt.

REVIEW OF AGENDA, AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The April 1, 2013 meeting agenda was approved.

The Chairman's Report to the Metro Board, dated April 1, 2013, was approved as amended.

The March 4, 2013 meeting minutes were approved as amended.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

In response to a question about the Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) Station Lighting Work Group being included in the tours on lighting, Christiaan Blake, Acting Director, ADA Policy and Planning, stated that Metro welcomes the continued input of the Work Group. He added that several of the Work Group's priorities and recommendations, as approved by the full AAC, have already been incorporated into the lighting improvement work that is being performed by Metro staff. Metro is addressing some of the recommendations from the tour, and the next step in the process will include a review of the upgrades to lighting at Judiciary Square and subsequently other Metrorail stations. Denise Rush asked if the Work Group reviewed lighting at Metrorail stations in Prince George's County. Marilyn Lutter, Chair, Work Group, stated that some Prince George's County stations, but not all, were surveyed during the initial phase. The Work Group plans to continue its review of stations. Dr. Posner stated that based on discussions at Metro's Capital Improvement Budget meetings, lighting improvements continue to be a priority despite sequestration. The AAC thanked Christian Kent, Assistant General Manager, Access Services, for facilitating the AAC's participation in the budgeting process for lighting.

In response to a question about Metro's New Silver Line, Dr. B. Moore Gwynn, AAC Coordinator, stated that presentation was rescheduled to accommodate another item

on the work plan. A Silver Line presentation will be scheduled as soon as those Departments are available.

In regards to Metro's installation of new Station Manager Kiosks in the system, a concern was expressed about the need to remove the old kiosks. Having two kiosks next to each other makes it difficult for mobility device users and visually impaired customers to navigate around the mezzanine area and locate a Station Manager. Mr. Blake reported that replacing older kiosks is part of the station rehabilitation projects, and that part of the rehabilitation plans is the removal of the older kiosks.

A comment was made about Train Operators announcements regarding elevator outages at Gallery Place and other Metrorail stations. Mr. Blake reported that Train Operators should make elevator outages announcements and encouraged everyone to report issues to Metro's Customer Service at 202-637-1328, and then contact the Office of ADA Policy and Planning to assist with follow-up. Dr. Posner reported that the BRS is working on this issue with Metro staff. He stated that information on out-of-service elevators is available through Metro's new mobile application for Smart phones.

WAYFINDING

Brandon Cox, Director of Rehabilitation Services, Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind (CLB), discussed accessible way-finding systems for customers who are blind, low-vision, or deaf-blind and use the Metrorail system. He stated that the idea of developing an audio map to increase independence and flexibility with traveling in the system for customers who blind, low-vision, or deaf-blind customers was the brainchild of Brigid Doherty, of the Department of Access Services. Ms. Doherty believed that if this population of customers were able to form a "mental picture" of a Metro station, they would be able to travel more safely and confidently on public transportation.

With funding from a New Freedom grant, CLB collaborated with Metro and Click-and-Go Wayfinding Maps to develop an accessible wayfinding system for the Metrorail. The new technology would seamlessly bridge indoor and outdoor environments by providing a voiced description of the physical features of a rail station to include the general layout, entrances, escalators, elevators, stairs, and station manager kiosks locations. The customized audio will include changes in slope and texture, acoustic cues, location of important landmarks, travel distances, and intersections. Information will be provided in three categories: walking directions; virtual tours; and points of interest. The audio information will be accompanied by text.

The AAC expressed an interest in how the system will lend itself to other customers. Mr. Cox stated that although the audio maps are specifically designed for customers who are blind, low-vision, or are deaf-blind, its application is applicable to anyone interested in planning a trip who may be unfamiliar with traveling within the Metro system. Because the audio maps will be available for Smart phones and other multi-media applications, it will be useful to a wide array of Metro customers. In response to a question about non-smart phone users, staff reported that Metrorail Station Managers

will still be available to provide assistance to all customers. The Audio Maps will offer customers who are blind, low-vision, or deaf-blind greater use of the Metrorail system because they will be able to research a station prior to travel in much the same way sighted individuals can.

In the first phase of the project, CLB will develop an accessible way-finding database for its model station, Gallery Place. Ten additional stations will be completed in Phase One as well. Focus groups will help select the additional ten stations. The criteria used in the selection process will include the complexity of the station; volume; transfer options; and usage of travelers who are visually impaired. The AAC expressed an interest in the make-up of the focus group. Mr. Cox stated that the focus groups would consist of individuals from various disability groups, local Orientation and Mobility specialists, local travel trainers, and other disability community stakeholders. This phase of the project will also include the development of a website. The second and third phases of the project look to include all Metrorail stations and all bus stops in the Metro region. Upon motion, the AAC applauded CLB and Metro for developing an accessible wayfinding system for the Metrorail system; adding that this project is another important step in making the transit system more accessible for people with disabilities. Also upon motion, the AAC forwarded the item to the BRS work plan and requested updates at the completion of each phase. Mr. Cox reported that CLB will provide feedback at the completion of each phase of the accessible wayfinding system.

AAC OFFICERS MEETING WITH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The AAC continued its discussion on the first quarterly meeting with Metro's Board Executive Committee. Mr. Kent indicated that the leadership had a robust discussion with the Board around the Committee's plan for *Safe, Accessible* and *Sustainable* (SAS) transportation service on Metrobus, Metrorail, and MetroAccess. He stated that minutes of the meeting will be distributed to the AAC prior the next meeting. Upon motion, the AAC accepted the following recommendations from Metro's Board:

1. Review Metrorail evacuation procedures to include the availability of informational literature that outlines the safety procedures;
2. Study universal securement policy for Metrobus and MetroAccess;
3. Evaluate proposed lighting for the "station of the future" and Metro's lighting standards;
4. Assist the Board in the development of a communication and messaging plan to the jurisdictions regarding funding for accessible bus stops; and
5. Re-institute the Priority Seating campaign for Metrobus and Metrorail

The Department of Access Services will coordinate with the appropriate staff to facilitate the review of these topics by the AAC. These items were deferred to the BRS work plan, and the AAC will provide feedback through its monthly Chairman's Report to the Board and other meeting materials.

BUS/RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The BRS discussed its field visit to the Judiciary Square station to review lighting improvements in the mezzanine area. The improvements directly tie to some of the priorities the AAC outlined in its Lighting report to Metro's Board of Directors. The BRS offered the following recommendations to enhance the improvements being made by Metro: spread the lighting evenly through the mezzanine to the platform; brighten the wall lighting; extend lighting from ceiling fixtures a little past the escalators; increase lighting in map cases; add lighting above pylons; add light to dark corners near trash cans; and reduce glare from fluorescent lights. Metro's goal is to have uniform lighting throughout the mezzanine and platform areas in Metrorail stations. Over the next 18 months, Metro plans to improve mezzanines at the following stations: Ballston, Clarendon, DuPont Circle, Farragut West, Gallery Place, L'Enfant Plaza, Metro Center, McPherson Square, Smithsonian, and Virginia Square. Upon motion, the BRS recommended that Metro move forward with lighting improvements, and that an AAC review of the completed project at Judiciary Square, as well as an accessible mezzanine, is scheduled as soon as possible.

The BRS also discussed exterior directional signage at Metrorail stations. The new exterior directional signage will identify Metro entrances with elevators and improve elevator head house signage. Metro will begin a pilot program with the proposed directional and elevator signage at the following rail stations: Bethesda, Crystal City, Gallery Place, King Street, L'Enfant Plaza, Metro Center, Prince George's Plaza, Silver Spring, Courthouse, Rosslyn and Takoma. Upon motion, the BRS recommended that Exterior Directional Signage Pilot Project move forward, and that Metro consider a review of the height of the signs for wheelchair users and adding light to the head houses.

Additionally, the BRS and the MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) discussed MetroAccess bus stop signs that will be installed in bus bays at Metrorail stations. MetroAccess bus stop signs will be placed at bus bays nearest to station elevators, or at the nearest bus bay when there are no bus bays directly adjacent to the elevator at a station. Upon motion, the BRS commended staff on the placement of MetroAccess Bus Stop signs. The BRS also received an update on accessible paths during construction at Metrorail stations.

METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The MAS continued its discussion on the transition to the new paratransit contracts. Mr. Kent introduced the Project Managers for each contractor:

- Leland Petersen – MV Transportation (Operations Control Center)
- Robert Werth – Diamond Transportation Services Inc. (Service Delivery)
- Michael Rademacher – First Transit (Service Delivery)
- Michael Staley – Veolia Transportation (Service Delivery)
- Scott Colburn – Medical Transportation Management-MTM (Quality Assurance)

The transition to the new contracts is occurring in phases, and during the transition period, the new contractors will receive training to familiarize them with MetroAccess policies and procedures.

The MAS also discussed improvements to the MetroAccess e-alert system, which provides customers with a single dashboard to manage alerts for Metrobus, Metrorail, and MetroAccess. It also provides flexibility to subscribe by text or email. The alerts will automatically post to the MetroAccess web page, and allow major alerts to be posted on WMATA's homepage "breaking news" banner. In response to a question about information being available through the Interactive Voice Response system (IVR) during periods when the e-alert system is inoperable, Omari June, Director, MetroAccess, confirmed that information will be available on the IVR. The MetroAccess MetroAlert system will be available in April 2013.

New Business

The AAC discussed the new process for disseminating the electronic monthly meeting materials to AAC members. Some members reported that the new electronic format makes it difficult to operate using a screen reader such as JAWS. Patrick Sheehan reported that his approach is to copy and paste the link into the browser to access the information. The AAC expressed concerns about the limited number of days that the documents are available on-line. Doris Ray stated that the former method to disseminate materials provided better access and allowed time for the review of materials. She recommended that the AAC return to the former method of distributing materials. Mr. Blake stated that if a member ever has any difficulty accessing the AAC meeting documents, they should contact Dr. Moore Gwynn for support. Dr. Moore Gwynn reported that Metro's IT Department provided the timeframe for the number of days a document can remain on-line. This limitation is an effort to manage server bandwidth. Dr. Posner reported that his approach is to download the documents and save in a folder, which he can access at his convenience.

The AAC discussed leadership on the BRS. Upon motion, the AAC appointed Brian Miller to the position of BRS Vice-Chair. Mr. Miller will serve in the position until 2013 AAC election is complete. Mr. Miller is replacing Debbie Brown who is now the Chair of the BRS.

Old Business

Dr. Posner requested an update on the MetroAccess Fare Calculator. Mr. Kent reported that development of the MetroAccess Fare Calculator is on schedule, and customer access to it will be available in May 2013. Dr. Posner also requested an update as to when the information on the new MetroAccess paratransit contracts will be available on Metro's website. Mr. Kent stated that confirmation process for the the contracts needs to be completed before information about the contracts is posted on Metro's website. Metro's website will have contract information posted under the tab, "About Metro - Public Records and Reports."

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m.



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STATUS OF FY 2013 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info - 23	Momentum – Metro’s Draft Strategic Plan	5/6/13	AAC		
Info - 24	MetroAccess Trip History	6/17/13	AAC		

FY13 COMPLETED STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Action - 1	AAC Officer Elections	7/2/12	AAC	The election results are - Mr. Patrick Sheehan, Chair, Dr. Phil Posner, 1 st Vice-Chair, and Dr. Tapan Banerjee was voted as 2 nd Vice-Chair of the AAC	8/6/12
Info - 4	Community Partnerships (MV Transportation and Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind)	8/6/12	AAC	Presentation by Morgan Ortagus MV Transportation	8/6/12
Info - 2	AAC Administrative Process (Update)	7/2/12	AAC	Completed Follow up from 6/4/12 Meeting	7/2/12
Info - 3	Customer Surveys (Update) MetroAccess Customer Satisfaction and MetroAccess Knowledge and Usage Study	7/2/12	AAC	Completed Presentation by Alison Simon Follow up from 4/2/12 meeting	7/2/12
Info - 1	MetroAccess Fare Calculator (Update)	7/2/12	AAC	Presentation by Dan O'Reilly on 7/2/12 and 8/6/12. Referred back to MAS	9/4/12
Action - 2	AAC Appointment	8/6/12	AAC	MetroAccess Subcommittee Vice-Chair	9/4/12
Info - 5	Rail Service Criteria	9/4/12	AAC	A request for feedback by the October 2012 for the Metro's Board. Presentation by Andrea Burnside, Chief Performance Officer	9/4/12
Action - 3	BRS Subcommittee Work Plan	10/1/12	BRS	AAC Approved	10/1/12
Action - 4	MAS Subcommittee Work Plan	10/1/12	MACS	AAC Approved	10/1/12
Info - 6	AAC MetroAccess Travel Costs	8/6/12	AAC	Completed Committee supports survey of AAC members, to provide Metro staff with information need for recommendation.	11/5/12

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info - 7	Customer Guide to Metrobus and Metrorail	10/1/12	BRS	All AAC members will review draft, and provide feedback to ADAP by 11/5/12 and final document on December 2012. Item referred back to Subcommittee.	11/5/12
Info - 8	Strategic Plan	11/5/12	AAC	Completed Presentation by Andrea Burnside, Chief Performance Officer	11/5/12
Info - 9	APTA Innovation Award	11/5/12	AAC	Metro receives award for Travel Training Program	11/5/12
Info - 10	MetroAccess Performance Standards in New Contract	12/3/12	MAS	Presentation by Dan O'Reilly, MACS	12/3/12
Action - 5	BRS Station Lighting Work Group	12/12/11	BRS	Recommendations for approval to the Board	12/3/12
Info - 11	Metrorail Station Lighting	1/7/13	AAC	Completed Presentation by A. Robert Troup, AGM, TIES	1/7/13
Info - 12	Chairman's Address State of the Committee	1/7/13	AAC	Patrick Sheehan	1/7/13
Info - 13	AAC Recruitment 2013	2/4/13	AAC	Dr. B. Moore Gwynn	2/4/13
Info - 14	AAC Leadership Meeting Metro Board	2/4/13	AAC	Patrick Sheehan	2/4/13
Info - 15	MetroAccess New Contract	3/4/13	AAC	Completed	3/4/13
Action - 7	Subcommittee Chair Appointment	3/4/13	AAC	Completed	3/4/13
Action - 6	Customer Service Task Force	6/18/2012	MAS	Completed – Task Force Chair, Regina Lee. The "Need to Know MetroAccess Policy Brochures	3/4/13

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info - 17	Wayfinding Mobility and Maps for All Program	4/1/13	AAC	Presentation by Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind	4/1/13
Info - 18	Quarterly Meeting Recommendation Review Metrorail evacuation Procedures to include the availability of informational literature that outlines the safety procedures	3/4/13	AAC	Completed - Moved to BRS	
Info - 19	Quarterly Meeting Recommendation Study universal securement policy for Metrobus	3/4/13	AAC	Completed - Moved to BRS	
Info - 20	Quarterly Meeting Recommendation Evaluate proposed lighting for the "station of the future"	3/4/13	AAC	Completed - Moved to BRS	
Info - 21	Quarterly Meeting Recommendation Assist the Board in the development of a communication and messaging plan to the jurisdictions regarding funding for accessible bus stops,	3/4/13	AAC	Completed - Moved to BRS:	
Info - 22	Quarterly Meeting Recommendation Priority seating campaign for Metrobus and Metrorail	3/4/13	AAC	Completed - Moved to BRS	