

**AAC**

Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

Meeting Minutes: April 7, 2014

ATTENDEES

Present: Patrick Sheehan (Chair), Phil Posner (Vice-Chair), Dr. Tapan Banerjee (2nd Vice-Chair), Elver Ariza-Silva, Carolyn Bellamy, Heidi Case, Chanelle Houston, Regina Lee, Dr. Brian Miller, Mary Jane Owen, Doris Ray, Denise Rush, Paul Semelfort, and Anthony Stephens.

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 agenda was approved as amended.

The March 10, 2014 meeting minutes were approved.

The Chairman's Report to the Metro Board, dated April 10, 2014, was approved as amended.

METRO FY15 BUDGET (APPROVAL)

Chair Sheehan thanked the AAC, members of the Fare Policy Work Group, and the disability community for all their hard work on fares. Through their participation at the public hearings, Board meetings and Committee's sessions a difference was made in the outcome of fares. Chair Sheehan also thanked Carol Dillon Kissal, DGMA/CFO, Christian Kent, AGM, Access Services (ACCS) and staff for their support of the AAC's efforts throughout the process. Mr. Kent thanked Chair Sheehan for his kind words.

As of July 1, 2014 MetroAccess customers will pay a lower maximum fare for paratransit service. Mr. Kent stated that in addition to the change for MetroAccess fares, Metro's FY15 Budget also includes a research study. The Study will explore two issues: 1) specialized transportation services throughout the region; and 2) investigate ways for people with disabilities to ride and become more comfortable with fixed route services. Collectively the region needs to study these issues to learn more about the types of services customers are using, current companies providing services and explore other way to meet the demand for paratransit service.

The AAC is poised for this type of research because it has in place a Bus/Rail Subcommittee (BRS) that have been studying these issues. Former BRS Chair Susan Holland spearhead similar issues a few years ago, and each jurisdiction made a presentation to the BRS on bus stop accessibility. In a recent meeting with Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC), Mr. Kent stated that it was suggested that the information on bus stop accessibility was outdated and more recent data was available. Mr. Kent suggested that the jurisdictions communicate their updates to the BRS. The

Board has requested that the AAC to develop an annual report for bus stop accessibility in the region. Staff will work with the AAC to develop this report.

The Study is also a great opportunity to highlight some of the challenges with providing transportation services on MetroAccess. It is also a chance to increase awareness of the accessible fixed route service in accommodating the demand. Mr. Kent stated that many people with disabilities have not tried the fixed route service or have had an unpleasant experience. Metro wants to change that experience, and the study is a good place to start. The discussion should include the AAC's area of interests, current efforts in making the fixed route system more reliable for customers with disabilities and next steps. It also should highlight how the AAC would like Metro to engage them on this topic.

Metro's Board has also taken an interest in bus stop accessibility. Mr. Kent stated that Metro's Maryland Board members primarily developed the language for the Study. The State of Maryland has the lion share of MetroAccess service and is interested in the sustainability for the future of the services for customers with disabilities. Mr. Kent stated that staff will have follow-up sessions with the Maryland Board members to ensure their needs are met. Additionally, in conjunction with COG, Metro will hold a regional discussion on this topic.

Dr. Posner stated that the BRS Bus Stop Accessibility Work Group is up to the challenge and has already taken the lead on some of the points mentioned; however, a work group is needed for rail. The AAC should move its recommendations through Metro's Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) process just as it did for lighting improvements. Mr. Kent indicated that the reason the lighting projects progressed so quickly was because many of the projects the AAC recommended were already part of other repair efforts underway in the system.

Mary Jane Owen expressed an interest in a mechanism for reporting vehicles that are park in bus zones. Those vehicles make it difficult for buses to pick-up wheelchair users at stop. Ms. Owen indicated that when she inquired about it, she was told that employees cannot make complaints. Mr. Kent stated that staff can bring matters to the attention of ACCS. Mr. Antonio Stephens is Metro ADA Ombudsman, and he is available to resolve these types of issues.

Chair Sheehan said this study is vital, because it gets to the root cause of the issue and gives the AAC a clean slate to develop a model. The model must be sustainable and a viable long-term solution for the MetroAccess service.

Carolyn Bellamy expressed an interest in MetroAccess "grandfather" policy. She indicated that Metro's new Silver Line will increase the fixed route service as well as MetroAccess service. Mr. Kent stated that the new Silver Line will increase the fixed route, yet MetroAccess will still serve the three quarters of a mile of a Metro bus stop or rail station. MetroAccess grandfather policy states that customers traveling outside the

corridor prior to the policy change are not limited to three quarters of a mile of the fixed route system. Metro already provides transit services to the first phase of the Silver Line. Ms. Bellamy stated that there are many customers in the service area who are unable to use MetroAccess because Metro has moved a bus stop or does not provide service on the weekends. Mr. Kent stated that Metro moved to the ADA definition because the growth of paratransit service was not sustainable.

QUARTERLY MEETING WITH BOARD EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

The AAC discussed the upcoming Quarterly Meeting with the Executive Leadership of Metro's Board of Directors, scheduled for April 24, 2014 immediately following Metro's Board meeting. In the past, the AAC leadership has presented a plan for *Safe, Accessible and Sustainable* (SAS) public transportation on Metrobus, Metrorail, and MetroAccess. Dr. Posner stated that the quarterly meetings are held in the meeting room and are open to the public.

In addition to the praise related to Metro's FY15 Budget, AAC members recommended the following topics for discussion with the Board: (1) Update on the recommendations from the initial meeting; (2) Elevator outages; (3) Real-time communication on all modes (MetroAccess Next Van Service); (4) Neutral Host Project (Cellular Service); and (5) Bus Stop Improvements.

Also, it was suggested that the AAC leadership discuss the possibility of having a customer service representative for BRS meetings. This person would function similar to the way the MetroAccess contractor does at the MetroAccess Subcommittee meeting. Chair Sheehan stated that it may not be appropriate to discuss with the Board that kind of request; however, the AAC leadership will discuss the issue further.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

BY-LAWS REVIEW

The AAC continued its discussion on updating its By-Laws. Upon motion, the AAC agreed to develop a work group, and Paul Semelfort, along with Tapan Banerjee, have agreed to serve as the Chair and Co-chair of the AAC By-law Work Group. In response to a question about Metro staff attending the work group meeting, Mr. Kent stated that staff will be in attendance. Once the document is complete, the protocol is that the new By-laws will be forwarded to the Board for approval. The By-law Work Group will hold its first meeting on April 21, 2014 immediately following the MetroAccess Subcommittee meeting.

MEETING MATERIALS – ACCESSIBLE FORMATS

The AAC also continued its discussion meeting on materials and accessible formats. Mr. Kent indicated that the By-laws state that materials will be provided a week in advance of the meeting. ACCS would like to propose that all meeting materials be distributed three business days prior to the full Committee meeting. Several members expressed an interest in disseminating meeting materials separately and not as a total package. Metro's Board and the Rider's Advisory Council (RAC) also adhere to a three-day

distribution of materials. Upon motion, the AAC agreed that all meeting materials will be distributed three business days prior to the full Committee meeting.

ADAP received a request to provide meeting materials in Braille. Mr. Kent stated that Metro provides meeting materials electronically, which is the most accessible format and in the past, that has met the need. However, when the most accessible format is provided and the need is not met, staff will follow-up for clarity and make the accommodation as necessary. It is not Metro's position to deny accommodations; however a better understanding of the need would be helpful.

Anthony Stephens indicated that he is a Braille user as well as a user of the technology and appreciates Metro going green with the reduction of paper; however, in terms of reasonable accommodations, everyone is unique and that should be taken into account when determining accommodation. In response to a question about whether Metro had the capability of producing any documents in Braille, Mr. Kent stated that Metro has not received a request for Braille in such a longtime that it no longer has the capability to produce documents in-house. However, Metro has partnered with Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind (CLB) to produce Braille documents when needed. Ms. Ray suggested that Metro should be able to provide the major alternative formats as an obligation under the ADA. Dr. Miller indicated that he agreed with all the previous members, the AAC should not step back from requesting this accommodation because Metro does not produce the documents in-house. He stated that he was uncomfortable with some of the language that was expressed. Dr. Miller stated that, for the record, Braille is an accommodation and a right.

BUS/RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The BRS discussed Metro's public service announcements (PSAs) on Metrobus. Metro uses PSAs on Metrobus to communicate short messages to customers on a variety of topics related to traveling in the system such as NextBus service, electronic devices, holiday schedules, and safety and security messages. The PSA system is connected to the annunciator system, which provides audio bus stop, route and destination announcements in accordance with the ADA on all Metrobuses. In an effort to provide better communication with customers, Metro will consolidate some announcements, eliminate others altogether, and keep all announcements to 15 seconds or less. The BRS commended Metro for its efforts to improve PSAs.

The BRS also received an overview of Metro's Elevator and Escalator service. Metro has 289 elevators and 586 escalators in the Metro system. Metro is committed to maintaining maximum reliability on its elevators and escalators. The reliability goal of 97.11% is set for elevators and 91% for escalators and is on target toward achieving this goal. Although Metro has set a reliability goal, the AAC learned that the percentage of elevator outages in the reports was intended to represent the percentage of elevators that were available for public for use and linked only to maintenance records. The AAC provided a number of examples where alerts and outages show the elevator in service when the elevator is actually out-of-service. Additionally, in each incident,

Metro provided shuttle service. It was determined that there was a disconnect between the alerts to communicate the elevator outage and the reports.

Metro is working to improve the notification process for elevator outages by implementing a remote access system (RAS). The remote monitor will be able to provide real-time information to staff on elevator outages thus providing better accuracy, reliability as well as allow shuttle service to be set-up in a more timely fashion. The AAC suggested that RAS will be tied to the alerts for elevators and escalators. Metro is reviewing the options of remote monitoring for elevators and escalators, including the possible option of manually creating such a system. The RAS is scheduled to be available in June 2014.

METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) continued its discussion of fare policy. Dr. Posner, Chair of the Fare Policy Work Group, provided an overview of Metro's Board Finance Committee meeting. He indicated that the Metro's Finance Committee presented a number of suggestions and requests regarding Metro's fare policy and it appeared from the letter that the AAC drafted, Metro understood the financial hardship of the disability community.

The MAS also discussed modifications to the MetroAccess Fare Calculator. The recommendation to modify the calculator was postponed until after the Board's decision on fares.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Barbara Milleville, President, National Capital Citizen for Low Vision (NCCLV), thanked Metro for lighting improvements in the rail system. She indicated that over the last couple of months, there has been a noticeable difference in the system. Ms. Milleville also expressed an interest when the next BRS Lighting Work Group will take place. She indicated that there have been several missed opportunities and a meeting would be needed to keep the Work Group's efforts on track. Ms. Ray indicated that she has a personal investment on this issue; however, it's been a challenge for her to set a date for the Work Group meeting. Mr. Stephens stated that he will be at the next Work Group meeting and has offered to serve as Co-Chair of the group. Mr. Blake stated that the next BRS Lighting Work Group will take place on May 12, 2014, immediately following the BRS meeting.

The next comment also reiterated Ms. Milleville's points about lighting and the BRS Lighting Work Group. Members of NCCLV attend most meetings and are committed to improving lighting throughout the system.

NEW BUSINESS

The AAC discussed Metro's Title VI Focus Group. The focus group centered on understanding how best to communicate with marginalized groups for events such as public hearings. Ms. Case stressed the importance of participating and encouraged other members of the AAC to participate.

Through Dr. Posner, Bill Staderman (*in absentia*) indicated that he wanted the AAC to approve his proposal to present a paper at the TASH Conference. Upon motion, the AAC voted to allow Dr. Staderman to submit a proposal to the conference and the proposal should be forwarded to the AAC prior to the conference. TASH's 2014 Annual Conference, "Be the Future," will be held December 3 through December 5, 2014 in Washington, D.C.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.



Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

STATUS OF FY 2014 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info – 13	Age-Friendly DC Task Force (Update)	11/4/13	AAC	Follow-up discussion after the event November 2013 event.	
Info – 22	Annual Report: Bus Stop Accessibility	TBD	AAC		
Info - 23	Accessible Bus Stops	9/2/14	AAC		

COMPLETED - FY 2014 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info – 01	Quarterly Meeting with Board Executive Leadership (7/25/13)	7/1/13	AAC	AAC members recommended topics for discussion	7/1/13
Info – 02	Metro’s Title VI Program	7/1/13	AAC	Completed Presenter: Deborah Coram	7/1/13
Info – 03	PIDS at Mini-Mezzanine	7/1/13	AAC	Completed Presenter: Chief Asante	7/1/13
Info – 04	MetroAccess Fare Calculator (History)	8/5/13	MAS	Presenter: Dan O’Reilly and Ryan Parr	8/5/13
Info – 05	Quarterly Meeting with Board Executive Leadership	7/1/13	AAC	Follow up discussion after the meeting on 7/25/13	8/5/13
Info – 06	Accessible Public Hearing Locations	9/3/13	AAC	Presenter: Loyda Sequeira	9/3/13

COMPLETED - FY 2014 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info – 07	Quarterly Meeting with Board Executive Leadership	10/7/13	AAC	AAC members recommend topics for discussion for the 10/24/13 meeting. (Includes time from the 7/25/13 meeting).	10/7/13
Info – 08	Metro’s Customer Pledge	10/7/13	AAC	Presenter: Lynn Bowersox	10/7/13
Info – 10	Accessibility Excellence Award	11/4/13	AAC	Reflection from Chair Sheehan	11/4/13
Info – 11	Quarterly Meeting with Board Executive Leadership	11/4/13	AAC	Follow up discussion after the meeting on 10/23/13 (MetroAccess Real Time App for Smartphones; Grandfather Policy)	11/4/13
Info – 14	Attracting Riders with Disabilities to Fixed Route Transit	12/2/13	AAC	Donna Smith, Director of Training, Easter Seals Project ACTION	12/2/13
Info – 12	Momentum and Long Range Plan (update)	12/2/13	AAC		12/2/13
Info – 09	Program Access	10/7/13	AAC	Deferred until January 6 th meeting. Doris Ray will provide the language	1/6/14

COMPLETED - FY 2014 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info – 15	Bus Stop Accessibility on the Trip Planner	1/6/14	AAC	Presenter: Ed Wells	1/6/14
Info – 16	Fare Policy	2/10/14	AAC	Feedback on Metro’s Public Hearings and Strategy for February 2014 Board Meeting	2/10/14
Info – 17	SmarTrip Conversion – Reduced Fare Card	2/10/14	AAC	Presenter: Christopher Colbert	2/10/14
Info – 19	Role of AAC and Subcommittees in material preparation	2/10/14	AAC	Deferred to March 3, 2013 meeting	3/10/14
Info – 20	Metro FY15 Budget (Fare Policy Change and Regional Study)	4/7/14	AAC	Presenter: Christian T. Kent, AGM	4/7/14
Info – 21	Quarterly Meeting with Board Executive Leadership	4/7/14	AAC	Completed	4/7/14
Info – 18	By-laws Review	3/10/14	AAC	AAC Developed a Work Group. Meeting immediately following MAS - April 21, 2014 meeting	4/7/14