



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

Meeting Minutes: December 1, 2014

ATTENDEES

Present: Patrick Sheehan (Chair), Dr. Phil Posner (Vice-Chair), Dr. Tapan Banerjee (2nd Vice-Chair), Elver Ariza-Silva, Carolyn Bellamy, Heidi Case, Charlie Crawford, Marisa Laios, Brian Miller, Edward McEntee, Mary Kay McMahon, Mary Jane Owen, Doris Ray, Denise Rush, Paul Semelfort, 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.

The November 3, 2014 meeting minutes were approved.

The Chair's Report to the Board, dated December 1, 2014, was approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

A comment was made about add-ons trips to existing MetroAccess service. The customer stated that she was less than two miles from her destination when MetroAccess dispatch added a trip. The MetroAccess driver changed direction to pick up the additional person prior to dropping the customer off. The customer stated that when situations like this occur trips become much longer for customers already on the vehicle. Allison Anderson, Operations Manager, MetroAccess Service, stated that she would follow-up with the customer to resolve the issue.

METRO'S DIVERSITY AND RECRUITMENT INITATIVES

Steven Boney, Talent Acquisition Manager, Department of Human Resources, discussed Metro's initiative to enhance the number of qualified individuals with disabilities in its workforce. He stated that Metro has placed great emphasis on diversifying its workforce. Metro now has a team focused on diversity recruitment that specializes in recruiting candidates from multiple cultures, veterans, and those with disabilities. Through the work of the diversity recruitment team Metro has increased the number of veterans in its workforce by 40 percent. Metro is known as a military-friendly organization, and is seeking to be similarly regarded by the disability community.

Metro has streamlined certain aspects of the hiring process to improve the candidate experience. Mr. Boney stated that the hiring process is available online and employment information can be accessed at any kiosk, such as the one in the lobby at Metro's Headquarters. Next year Metro will introduce an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Hotline phone number that will allow candidates to request reasonable accommodations via the telephone. Metro has also developed a metric to track the progress of the new initiative.

To provide a policy perspective of this effort, Mr. Boney introduced David Shaffer, Accessibility Policy Officer, Office of ADA Policy and Planning (ADAP). Mr. Shaffer stated that the initiative to increase the hiring of qualified individuals with disabilities is part of Metro's Affirmative Action Plan. The Department of Labor has new regulations that require all organizations receiving federal funds to increase the number of people with disabilities in their workforces. The guidelines require a representation of 7 percent across all job groups. Metro has implemented an employee self-identification program for veteran and disability status. The data will allow the organization to assess the areas in need of hiring in the targeted segments.

Ms. Case described the barriers to employment for people with disabilities. Many in the disability community are labeled as long-term unemployed. In the workforce, that is a huge problem because employers will often not conduct interviews or review resumes of candidates who fall into that category. Ms. Case expressed an interest in whether Metro was ready and able to address this type of issue. Mr. Boney stated that Metro is addressing the issue through targeted recruitment efforts that will create a level playing field for all applicants including those with disabilities as well as build partnerships with institutions of higher education, organizations and agencies that focus on diverse segments of the population.

Mr. Ariza-Silva described how the interview process could be intimidating for some people with disabilities. He suggested that Metro allow some applicants to customize the accommodation by allowing them to supply their own accommodation for interviews. Mr. Boney stated that he would take that suggestion under consideration.

Ms. Owen expressed an interest in accommodations during the hiring and employment phases; in particular, she expressed an interest in providing Braille as an accommodation for Blind candidates. Christiaan Blake, Director, ADAP, stated that Metro is committed to providing resources and support to make this initiative successful, and that reasonable accommodations are available upon request. Mr. Boney reiterated his comments about the ADA Hotline and stated that Metro is collaborating with organizations such as Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind to assist with various types of reasonable accommodation requests.

Ms. Rush expressed an interest in the availability of training, and asked if candidates with disabilities will need prior knowledge and skills for the jobs. Mr. Boney stated that Metro could provide training on a case-by-case basis. In response to a question about a list of all the jobs available, Mr. Boney stated that all job openings are listed in the Careers section on Metro's homepage.

Mr. Banerjee expressed an interest in the accessibility of Metro's facilities. Mr. Blake stated that ADAP is working to enhance accessibility at all Metro facilities. For example, at Metro's training facility in Landover, ADAP has led an initiative to increase the number of accessible parking spaces for current and future employees, and ADAP is working to improve restrooms at all Metro facilities.

Mr. Banerjee also expressed an interest in the language used for job announcements to ensure that they encourage people with disabilities to apply for jobs. Mr. Boney stated that Metro is reviewing these communications. Mr. Semelfort suggested language used by Prince George's County on all job applications: 'appropriate accommodations for individuals with disabilities are available for upon request.' Additionally, the County also uses the following language on its main webpage: 'accommodations for individuals with disabilities attending events, meetings or hearings are available upon request.' Mr. Semelfort added that County's website has an active International Symbol of Access link that allows customers to click on it and request accommodations.

Ms. Ray expressed an interest in whether Metro will use a special hiring authority similar to the federal government's program. Mr. Boney stated that Metro has a two-prong approach that includes a targeted focus on recruitment and a mass sourcing effort to gather as many qualified candidates for each position. Dr. Miller stated that the special hiring authority is a powerful tool for recruitment. Mr. Shaffer stated that Metro must recruit and hire competitively while working through its affirmative action concepts.

Dr. Posner expressed an interest in whether veterans or applicants with disabilities will receive additional points when competing against someone that does not have a disability. Mr. Boney stated that Metro's process is an equal playing field, and added that Metro's goal is to present more candidates who have disabilities for each opening to the respective hiring managers. In many job groups, Metro has openings where no applicants with disabilities apply. Mr. Boney stated that Metro is confident that our approach will increase our candidates and well as Metro's representation goal.

Mr. Boney stated that Metro is constantly searching for innovative ways to integrate its workforce. To meet these ambitious goals Metro needs everyone to participate in the recruitment efforts. He requested the AAC's assistance to spread the word about Metro's new hiring initiative. In response to a request to speak at various events in the disability community, Mr. Boney stated that he would be happy to speak about the new initiative.

Many members expressed their excitement about Metro's new hiring initiative and applauded Metro's for advancing the community of people with disabilities through employment.

AAC BY-LAW WORK GROUP (Update)

The AAC continued its discussion on the AAC By-Laws. Mr. Semelfort, Chair, By-Laws Work Group, stated that the AAC voted on each of the governance questions listed in the AAC November minutes. The next step in the process is to review the final draft document of the By-laws with recommendations. Dr. B. Moore Gwynn, AAC Coordinator, stated that the final draft document was not available for review at the meeting. Upon motion, the AAC agreed to table the discussion until the final draft document is available for review.

Dr. Moore Gwynn stated that the final draft document will be forwarded to members in Word and PDF formats, and added the review to the agenda for the January 2015 AAC meeting.

BUS/RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Bus/Rail Subcommittee (BRS) received an update on two projects: the Click-n-Go Wayfinding Project, the new bus stop accessibility tool added to the Trip Planner, and station lighting.

The BRS was pleased about the development and launch of the station wayfinding system. This tool enables customers who are blind or have low vision to navigate a Metro station by way of an audio map. The first station for which this tool is available is the Gallery Place/Chinatown.

The BRS was also excited about the bus stop accessibility tool for the Trip Planner, which allows customers to obtain accessibility-related information about individual bus stops that appear in a Trip Planner itinerary.

The BRS also received an update on station lighting upgrades completed and planned throughout the Metrorail system. The BRS applauded Metro for all of its efforts to enhance the customer experience.

METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) discussed less expensive public transit alternatives to MetroAccess Service. The discussion outlined the requirements of the various alternatives as well as highlighted the additional information listed in the Customer Guide to MetroAccess. Additionally, Ms. Anderson stated that the audio version of the guide is now complete, and a compact disc will be mailed to MetroAccess customers who have requested alternate format.

The MAS also discussed its FY2015 work plan and proposed adding the following items: 1) MetroAccess Grandfathering Policy (impact on new customers); 2) MetroAccess Door-to-Door Service and Taxi Providers (Training); 3) MetroAccess Bus Stops at non-Metro locations (Update); and 4) Bus Service changes and its impact on MetroAccess customers (Update).

NEW BUSINESS

The AAC discussed Metro's 2016 budget. Dr. Posner stated that Metro has a new Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and stressed the importance of the Committee building a relationship similar to the one with the previous CFO. Dr. Posner also encouraged members to attend the upcoming budget meeting on December 4, 2014, to learn about the capital and operating budgets, specifically how the budgets may affect AAC-focused projects like station lighting, and lighting and elevator maintenance. Upon motion, the AAC requested the CFO meet with the AAC to discuss the Metro's 2016 budget.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.



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STATUS OF FY 2015 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info - 21	AAC By-Laws Work Group	1/5/15	AAC	AAC Final Vote	
Info - 23	Open Discussion with CFO	1/5/15		Dennis Anosike, Chief Financial Officer	
*Info - 17	MetroAccess Long-term Sustainability Study	2/2/15	AAC		
Info - 18	Age-Friendly DC Task Force (Update)	3/2/15	AAC	Update (Follow-up discussion after event - November 2013).	
Info - 19	Momentum and Long Range Plan (update)	4/6/15	AAC		

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

COMPLETED - FY 2015 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info - 1	Silver Line Tour	7/7/14	AAC	Reflections	7/7/14
Info – 2	Silver Line Emergency Exercise	7/7/14	AAC	Reflections (request from EOM during the Metrorail evacuation procedures review)	7/7/14
Info – 3	Bus Stop Working Group (Update)	7/7/14	AAC	Presenter: Chris Blake	7/7/14
Info – 4	Quarterly Meeting with Board Executive Leadership	7/7/14	AAC		7/7/14
Info – 5	Metro's Signage Program	8/4/14	AAC	Update – from June 9 th BRS meeting	
Info – 6	Quarterly Meeting with Board Executive Leadership	8/4/14	AAC	Feedback from July 2014 meeting	

COMPLETED - FY 2015 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info – 7	AAC By-Law Work Group	8/4/14	AAC		8/4/14
Info - 8	Metrobus Voice Annunciator System	9/2/14	AAC	Phil Wallace, Bus Maintenance	9/2/14
Info – 9	AAC By-Law Work Group	9/2/14	AAC	Governance Questionnaire	9/2/14
Info – 10	AAC Administrative Items	9/2/14	AAC	AAC Subcommittee Work Plan (approvals) TASH Proposal	9/2/14
Info – 11	AAC By-Law Work Group	9/2/14	AAC		9/2/14
*Info – 12	Accessible Meeting Locations	9/2/14	AAC	Public Hearings (Bus Service)	9/2/14
*Info – 13	Annual Report: Bus Stop Accessibility	10/6/14	AAC	Moved to BRS – Discussion at October 2014 meeting	9/2/14

COMPLETED - FY 2015 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info – 14	AAC By-Law Work Group	10/6/14	AAC		10/6/14
Info – 15	Quarterly Meeting with Board Executive Leadership	10/6/14	AAC		10/6/14
Info – 16	Accessibility Excellence Awards	10/6/14	AAC	Vote – Richard W. Heddinger Accessible Transportation Awards	10/6/14
Info - 20	AAC By-Laws Work Group	11/3/14	AAC	Full Report and vote on governance questions.	11/3/14
Info - 21	AAC By-Laws Work Group	12/1/14	AAC	AAC Final Vote - Tabled until the Jan 2015	12/1/14
Info - 22	Metro's Diversity and Recruitment Initiatives	12/1/14	AAC	Steven Boney, Manager, Recruitment Operations & Diversity Recruitment, HR David Shaffer, Accessibility Policy Officer, ADAP	12/1/14

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