

**AAC**

Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

Meeting Minutes: January 6, 2014

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

ATTENDEES

Present: Patrick Sheehan (Chair), Elver Ariza-Silva, Carolyn Bellamy, Heidi Case, Darrell Drake, Chanelle Houston, Regina Lee, Dr. Brian Miller, Doris Ray, Denise Rush, Paul Semelfort, Anthony Stephens, and Dr. William Staderman

REVIEW OF AGENDA, AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The January 6, 2014 meeting agenda was approved as amended.

The Chairman's Report to the Metro Board, dated January 6, 2014, was approved as amended.

The December 2, 2013 meeting minutes were approved as amended.

BUS STOP ACCESSIBILITY ON THE TRIP PLANNER

Ed Wells, GIS Manager, Department of Information Technology, discussed making bus stop accessibility information available on Metro's Trip Planner. He stated that the prototype would enable customers to obtain accessibility-related information about individual bus stops, such as the presence of a shelter, bench, bike rack, and other features; if the stop has a landing surface and if it is connected to the curb; if the stop is connected to a sidewalk, crosswalk or curb cut; and, if the stop has a streetlight nearby.

The AAC expressed an interest in whether the amenities listed included information about accessible pedestrian signals. Mr. Wells stated that pedestrian information is not currently part of the database and may be difficult to locate. Chair Sheehan stated that the Maryland State Highway Administration has the locations of all the accessible pedestrian signals on its website, and that the District of Columbia and Virginia may have the same information available on their respective websites. Several AAC members, as well as members of the public, agreed that pedestrian signal information would be an important addition to the bus stop accessibility data.

Mr. Wells stated that the prototype also includes maps with photos of the bus stops and the areas surrounding the stops. A comment from the public expressed an interest in having buildings near bus stops identified by name or address, as such information would assist the low-vision community in wayfinding. The AAC expressed an interest in whether the GIS data included all the jurisdictions. Mr. Wells stated that it does include all jurisdictions, but data from some jurisdictions are more up-to-date than from others. Bus stop data for Fairfax County, Virginia and Montgomery County, Maryland were updated in 2012, while the data for the other jurisdictions dates back from between 2005 and 2007.

Mr. Wells stated that the bus stop accessibility prototype will be accessed through Metro's website via the Trip Planner under Rider Tools, Bus or Accessibility tabs. After creating a route, customers can enter the bus stop's identification number and receive a list of amenities, photos, and other accessibility information about the stops along the selected route. A comment from the public stated that finding a bus stop's identification number is difficult because it is often too high on the pole or not on the pole at all. Doris Ray reiterated the importance of having alternate ways to locate the information if the bus stop number is unavailable. Mr. Wells agreed, and he asked customers to report problems, such as lack of a stop numbers, by selecting the "Report a Problem" link on Metro's website site. Members suggested that the accessibility prototype include the ability to look up information by street name. A member asked whether the link to report issues would be updated in real-time. Mr. Wells stated that all the information will be update as quickly as possible, but not necessarily in real-time.

The AAC asked if bus stop accessibility information would be available through a smartphone application. Mr. Wells stated that the information can be accessed through Metro's website on a smartphone or other mobile device, but currently there is not a separate mobile application. Dr. Miller expressed an interest in whether the bus stop accessibility information is compatible with the Click-and-Go system that is being developed for Metrorail stations. Mr. Wells stated that there has been no collaboration with Click-and-Go system. Chair Sheehan expressed an interest in whether the MetroAccess ridership map can be superimposed with bus stop accessibility prototype information to demonstrate where some of the improvements of bus stops should take place to make accessing the fixed route system more accessible for MetroAccess customers. He added that further discussion of this subject is a request by Metro's Board.

The bus stop accessibility prototype has been tested for Section 508 compliance and is compatible with screen reader technology. The prototype has a high-contrast color scheme. In response to question about whether the screeners will read the photos, Mr. Wells stated that all the photos would include a generic alternate text. Some AAC members consider the bus stop accessibility prototype to be a great idea because it will allow people with disabilities to travel to new places independently and on impulse. Heidi Case stated that knowing what to expect before you get to a destination is important and is another step towards maximizing the number of people who can use fixed route services. Mr. Wells stated that the bus stop accessibility prototype is scheduled to be available to the public in June 2014. Upon motion, the AAC moved that updates on the bus stop accessibility prototype be provided at future BRS meetings.

DISCUSSION ON THE NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

The AAC discussed Metro's upcoming public hearings on the proposed FY2015 Fare Adjustment and the proposed the FY2015 Capital Improvement Program and Federal FY2014 Grant Applications. Some members expressed objections to the Metro scheduling public hearing Number 591 the same day as the February AAC meeting. Some members stated that they want to attend all of the hearings, but abhor having to choose between attending a hearing or attending the AAC meeting. All the AAC members agreed that attendance at the public hearings is important to the disability community.

Upon motion, the AAC voted to postpone the February 3, 2014 AAC meeting and recommended to combine its full AAC meeting with the BRS meeting on February 10, 2014. Some members also expressed concerns in Metro's communication plan about the public hearings for MetroAccess customers. Omari June, Director, MetroAccess, stated that the public hearing information will be distributed through the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system and MetroAccess seat drops. Paul Semelfort suggested that Metro use the same methodology it used to communicate information about previous hearings; provide general information about the hearings and then directed customers to a number for more information. Upon motion, the AAC recommended that public hearing information be placed on the MetroAccess IVR system as soon as possible and distributed via email through the newsletter.

Some members expressed an interest in the availability of shuttle service for the February 3 hearing, which will be held at a location the AAC advised in September 2013 is very hilly and created a barrier for customers who use mobility devices. A comment from the public reiterated the need for shuttle service, adding that such a service would be helpful to people with visual disabilities as well as the riding public in general. Upon motion, the AAC recommended that Metro provide free shuttle services from the nearest Metrorail station to all the public hearing locations.

PROGRAM ACCESS

As a follow-up to an item from the November 2013 AAC meeting regarding adding language to the By-laws related to access to all AAC-related events and field trips, Dr. B. Moore Gwynn, AAC Coordinator, read aloud the proposed language provided by Ms. Ray. The language read as:

I move that the WMATA Accessibility Advisory Committee By-Laws be amended at Article VII, Section A: Add two sentences following the one on accessibility of meeting locations, which would read –

“All meetings shall be conducted in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II requirements and the U.S. Department of Justice Guidelines on Accessible Meeting Sites. When meetings, or portions thereof, are proposed to be held at pre-existing or historic stations or sites, program accessibility shall be provided, upon request, in compliance with the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, including moving the meeting to an accessible site and/or provision of other reasonable accommodation.”

Ms. Ray stated that the motion simply states that the AAC will abide by the ADA and this motion guards against any future occurrences. Christiaan Blake, Director, ADA Policy and Planning (ADAP), stated that Metro's Board of Directors must approve changes to the By-laws. He stated that Metro strictly adheres to the ADA. He added that staff has no objection to the proposed language, but cautioned members that amending the By-laws with the proposed language could result in limiting to the Committee's ability to advise Metro's Board on some matters. Upon motion, the AAC voted to proceed with amending the By-laws to include the proposed language on program access.

BUS/RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) discussed the new entrance modifications at the Rosslyn Metro Station. The entrance was designed to allow customers to move more freely in and out of the station. Although the BRS was pleased with the enhanced lighting and multiple high-speed elevators, some members were dissatisfied with the size and location of the elevator buttons; the lack of audible cues to indicate the arrival of an elevator; the absence of accessible signage for directions to the elevator; and the challenges of the emergency swing gate. To improve on future changes in Metrorail stations, ADAP is working with other departments to update the manual of Metro's standards. This manual will help staff, contractors, and anyone interested in joint development projects, to know Metro's standards for accessibility.

The BRS also reviewed its work plan, and upon motion added the following items to the plan: train to platform gap issues - solutions; shuttle services during elevator outages; review of Metrobus and Metrorail Sensitivity Awareness Training and ADAP's Computer Based Training on ADA sensitivity; and Metrorail and Metrobus announcements.

METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) discussed Metro's securement policy for MetroAccess service. Although the current policy is under review by Metro's General Counsel, the MAS clarified issues about the use of the Posey and shoulder belts, customer contact, manifest, and boarding.

The MAS also received a presentation on MV Transportation, the Call Center contractor, and the roles of the reservations, scheduling and dispatch departments. MV is implementing new processes to improve the scheduling of trips and a new method for dispatch supervisors to communicate issues on road conditions to the service providers. Additionally, an information technology team has been created to support the automated scheduling and reporting systems, as well as "push-to-talk" radios used by MetroAccess drivers and dispatchers.

The MAS also reviewed its work plan, and upon motion added the following items to the plan: bus shuttle service; accessible bus stops and MetroAccess service; and MetroAccess Fare Policy.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Regina Lee stated the discussion on public hearing was of critical importance. The AAC needed more time to discuss the upcoming hearing and would have had ample time if other presentations were rescheduled. Ms. Lee asked that in the future, staff reschedule other presentations when subjects of importance such as the public hearings require the attention of the Committee.

Denise Rush added comments about the public hearings and requested that any MetroAccess customer interested in attending the public hearings, but who has limited resources, to please contact her for payment of their MetroAccess trip(s) to and from any of the public hearings. Chair Sheehan stated that the disability community appreciates Ms. Rush's generosity greatly.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Blake provided a brief update on the upcoming planned elevator outages at the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport Metrorail station, and Metro's plan to provide a platform bridge to access the operating elevator and thus avoid the need for bus shuttle service.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.



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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 – 16 | Fare Policy | 2/10/14 | AAC | Feedback on Metro’s Public Hearings and Strategy for February 2014 Board Meeting | |
| Info – 17 | SmarTrip Conversion – Reduced Fare Card | 2/10/14 | AAC | Presenter: Frank Roth | |
| Info – 18 | By-laws Review | 3/3/14 | AAC | | |
| Info – 19 | Role of AAC and Subcommittees in material preparation | 3/3/14 | 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 |

COMPLETED - FY 2014 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

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| 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 |
| 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 |

COMPLETED - FY 2014 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

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| 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 |
| Info – 15 | Bus Stop Accessibility on the Trip Planner | 1/6/14 | AAC | Presenter: Ed Wells | AAC |