



# AAC

## Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

### **Meeting Minutes: June 4, 2012**

#### **Attendees, Review of Agenda, and Approval of Minutes**

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

Present: Chairman Sheehan, Dr. Phil Posner (Vice-Chair), Georges Aguehoude, Elver Ariza-Silva, Dr. Tapan Banerjee, Carolyn Bellamy, Debbie Brown, Darrell Drake, Regina Lee, Doris Ray, Paul Semelfort, and Dr. William Staderman.

Not present: Michelle Clark, Susan Holland, Jessica Hunt, Brian Hurley, Emily Singer Lucio, Marilyn Lutter, and David Winser.

The June 4, 2012 agenda was approved as amended. The May 7, 2012 minutes and the Chairman's report to the Metro Board dated June 4, 2012 was approved.

#### **Public Comment**

In response to a question about add-on trips or late pick-ups for MetroAccess services, Mr. Christian Kent, Assistant General Manager, Department of Access Services, reported that Metro has developed a customer service plan to address issues of service on Metrobus, Metrorail and MetroAccess, and requested that MV Transportation investigate and provide feedback on the issue. In response to a comment made about MetroAccess drivers who have difficulty finding certain buildings on college campuses, the contact information to George Mason Transportation service was provided. A comment was made about the proposed MetroAccess Fare Calculator. Staff reported that topic was added to the agenda for discussion.

#### **Fare Calculator Demonstration**

Mr. Kent provided an update on the MetroAccess Fare Calculator. He indicated that the calculator will be implemented in two phases. The first phase, demonstrated at the May 2012 AAC meeting, will allow customers using the internet to shop for the cheapest MetroAccess fare during a 30-minute window. Calculations are displayed in one-minute increments and demonstrate a wide array of fares before and after the requested time. The first phase of the MetroAccess Fare Calculator will be available on July 1, 2012.

The AAC expressed an interest in the access of information by customers with no computer access and the timeline for implementation of the first phase. The current system has limits and only allows customers to shop for two additional MetroAccess fares beyond the initial quoted fare. Mr. Kent stated that in the second phase

reservation agent will potentially have access to the same fare calculator software as customers who make reservations by the computer. The software will be customized to work with Trapeze, the scheduling software used in the MetroAccess call center. The AAC expressed an interest in delaying the implementation of the MetroAccess Fare Calculator until all the phases are completed and customers with or without computers can have the same immediate access to the tool. Upon motion, the AAC voted to suspend the application of the MetroAccess Fare Calculator until the AAC recommended features are implemented. This will give customers who make reservations by phone equal access as those who make reservations by the computer. Mr. Kent stated that the MetroAccess Fare Calculator will be compliant with Section 508 and provide all customers with the choice to choose the fare that is most suitable for them, which makes the process simple for all customers.

The AAC expressed an interest in the timetable for reservation agents to have access to the on-line tool. Mr. Kent stated that providing reservations agents access to the tool is a subsequent phase. This access has the potential to increase the amount of time customers are on the phone with agents and impact the call center's performance measures. Mr. Kent stated that an update on the fare calculator will be provided at the next MetroAccess Subcommittee meeting on June 18, 2012.

Upon motion, the AAC voted that Metro charge twice the bus fare until MetroAccess Fare Calculator meets the AAC recommendations and is implemented with full access for all customers. Mr. Kent reported that Metro's Board of Directors had passed the FY2013 budget inclusive of the MetroAccess Fare Policy. To this end, the increase was eliminated, and the maximum MetroAccess fare was capped at \$7. Further, the AAC expressed an interest in the base fare for MetroAccess. Mr. Dan O'Reilly, Director, MetroAccess reported that MetroAccess fares are linked to the fares on bus and rail, and any increase in those fares will alter the base fare for MetroAccess services. Customers will be notified of changes in the MetroAccess fares through the interactive voice response system (IVR) and seat-drops on vehicles.

The AAC expressed an interest in training and assistance for customers who speak different languages. With the current system customers with limited English proficiency (LEP) are placed on hold until a reservation agent with the particular language skill is available to take the reservation. At times, when there is no agent readily available, the time between when a call is made and a reservation is placed can be long. Mr. Kent reported that a separate link for languages will be considered, and requested that MV Transportation investigate the lapse in response for customers of different languages.

### **AAC Administrative Process**

Dr. B. Moore Gwynn, AAC Coordinator, reported that members are required to participate regularly in monthly meetings. The AAC By-laws indicate that membership can be concluded when a member has attended no regular meetings for three consecutive months. Members are encouraged to make notification of an absence and

to sign-in prior to each meeting. The AAC also discussed elections for officers to serve on the AAC. The AAC By-laws indicate that officers serve a term of two years and no more than three two-year terms. The AAC will hold elections during the August 6, 2012 meeting for new officers. The AAC recruitment process has been completed, and it is anticipated that in June, Metro's Board will appoint new members to the Committee. The AAC and its Subcommittees will begin the process of developing work plans for the FY2013.

### **Bus/Rail Subcommittee Report**

The Subcommittee received an update on bus stop improvements from Metro's Bus Planning. As to date signs at 1,100 bus stops have been improved. Some of the features include larger lettering for greater visibility, NextBus Identification numbers in Braille, and raised lettering that will be made of reflective material for better viewing. These improvements are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Additionally, there will be light-emitting diode (LED) display bus stops signs, each equipped with an audio component, that will provide real-time next bus information available at Metrorail stations. This feature will be able to announce the relocation of bus stops.

The Subcommittee discussed emergency preparedness with Metro's Office of Emergency Management. Metro pre-stages emergency equipment and supplies throughout the Metrorail stations, and conducts exercises to improve response in an emergency situation. In many of the exercises, customers with disabilities are used to simulate a real-world experience of a rescue. To ensure safety of all passengers Automated External Defibrillators are placed throughout the system and tested regularly.

The Subcommittee also discussed Chair Holland's report to the Metro's Board on the study that evaluated the accessibility of public transportation by wheelchair users. The Subcommittee agreed that a vast majority of seniors and older adults, including those using wheelchairs and other mobility devices, are able to successfully complete travel daily using the Metrorail system. The AAC agreed, and upon motion agreed to forward the Chair's report to the Board.

Dr. Posner reported that the Bus/Rail Fare Policy Work Group discussed the surcharge for customers who do not use SmartTrip cards. He indicated that in the March meeting, it was recommended that there should be no penalty for users of cash or paper farecards. This was also reiterated at the last Board meeting. Dr. Posner reported that the ability for customers to add fare to SmartTrip cards were not readily available in certain areas. This places an undue hardship on customers who use the system in those areas. Upon motion, the Committee recommended that Metro increase the number of places where SmartTrip cards can be loaded in underserved areas.

### **MetroAccess Subcommittee Report**

The Subcommittee discussed the role of the AAC members in the appeal process for MetroAccess eligibility. Mr. Millis reported that appeals are held for customers who are determined ineligible for MetroAccess services. Panels meet a minimum of twice a month, and all members are required to serve on appeal panels. Mandatory training on appeals for members will be held for members in September 2012. Mr. Millis encouraged more participation on MetroAccess appeal panels by members.

Mr. Kent provided an update on the Request For Proposal (RFP) for the new MetroAccess contract. He anticipates that Metro will release the RFP in June 2012 and host a pre-proposal conference in the same month. Metro anticipates awarding by the end of calendar year 2012. The MetroAccess Fare Calculator was also discussed, and a status update will be provided at the next Subcommittee meeting in June 2012.

### **New Business**

Carolyn Bellamy, Chair, MetroAccess Customer Service Task Force, reported that the Work Group's meeting will be rescheduled for June 18, 2012. The AAC agreed to develop a procedure for providing oral reports to Metro Board. Staff reported that reports to Metro Board of Directors main committee meeting should be limited to 5 minutes.

**Meeting adjourned:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Attachment: Status of Recommendations and Actions (completed items are reported once in the minutes and then tracked along with all pending recommendations and actions in the AAC Compiled Work Plan)



# Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

## STATUS OF FY 2013 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

| Info/Action Item Number | Description                          | Date Initiated | Originating Group | Status                             | Completion Date |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Info -1                 | MetroAccess Fare Calculator (Update) | 7/2/12         | AAC               |                                    |                 |
| Info -2                 | AAC Administrative Process (Update)  | 7/2/12         | AAC               | Follow up from the 6/4/12 meeting  |                 |
| Info -3                 | Customer Surveys (Update)            | 7/2/12         | AAC               | Follow up from the 4/2/12 meeting. |                 |