



## Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

### Meeting Minutes: June 1, 2015

#### ATTENDEES

Present: Dr. Tappan Banerjee (2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair); Elver Ariza-Silva; Carolyn Bellamy; Brianne Burger, Heidi Case, Charlie Crawford, Marisa Laios, Phillippa Mezile, Dr. Brian Miller; Edward McEntee; Mary Kay McMahon, Doris Ray, Denise Rush, Paul Semelfort, Anthony Stephens, Dr. William Staderman and Roger Stanley.

#### Call to Order

Second Vice-Chairman Banerjee 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 May 4, 2015 meeting minutes were approved as amended.

The Chair's Report to the Board, dated June 1, 2015, was approved.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

A comment was made about MetroAccess fares. The customer stated that he recently used MetroAccess to attend an event at his church located in another building on the church grounds. The customer stated that he frequents this location often, but has been charged different fares for each trip. The customer requested a review of his trips. Christiaan Blake, Director, ADA Policy and Planning (ADAP), stated that a representative from MetroAccess would address the issue directly with the customer.

Heidi Case made a comment about Metro's new telephone survey on fares. She stated that the questions were unclear, and added that there was a language barrier with the representative. Ms. Case stated that in her opinion the telephone survey was poorly conducted and a waste of her time. Christian Kent, AGM, Department of Access Services (ACCS), expressed an interest in whether the overall objective of the survey was clear from the phone call. Ms. Case stated that her understanding of the survey was very limited. Mr. Kent stated that Metro understands the importance of accessibility in conducting surveys. He requested that in the future members try to obtain as much information about the call such as the telephone number or company name. This will allow ACCS to investigate the issue and provide feedback.

#### METRO'S FARE MEDIA – ELIMINATION OF PAPER FARECARDS

Jim Bongiorno, Manager, Treasury, discussed Metro's initiative to eliminate paper farecards. The goal of the project is to eliminate the use of paper farecards in Metrorail by July 1, 2016. Metro will be removing the mechanism in the blue machines to make way for the SmarTrip device. For each new SmarTrip card dispensed, the charge will be

\$2. Mr. Bongiorno stated that customers would see immediate savings in the cost of the card after their first round trip on the system because they will not be paying the \$1 surcharge. In response to a question about using the blue vending machines to exchange paper farecards, Mr. Bongiorno stated that the option would be available on the brown vending machines. Customers will be able to use the brown machines for cash transactions or to trade in paper farecards. Eliminating paper farecards is one of the goals of Metro's New Electronic Payment Program.

Mr. Bongiorno stated that Metro will conduct a pilot project to eliminate fare cards in two phases. The first phase will involve internal testing of the machinery. The second phase will be a live test of the vending machines at the King Street, Union Station and Ronald Reagan National Airport Metrorail stations. These stations were selected because of the historically high use of paper farecards at these locations. In a response to a question about which station has the highest number of paper farecard sales, Mr. Bongiorno said Union Station has the highest number in the system.

Mr. Bongiorno stated that Metro will begin retrofitting all the blue vending machines in the system in October 2015. This process is expected to take 4 months, and be completed by January 2016. When retrofitting is completed, Metro will discontinue accepting paper farecards at the fare gates. The devices that accept paper farecards at the faregates will be plugged. Metro will then stop accepting paper farecards for trade-in to add value to SmarTrip cards as of June 30, 2016. Additionally, Metro will also eliminate the paper Transit Link cards. The Transit Link card will be replaced with a SmarTrip card that includes a MARC, VRE or MTA commuter bus sticker. Mr. Bongiorno stated that any customer holding a paper farecard on July 1, 2016, would have a Metro souvenir.

To ensure the public is aware of this initiative, Metro is conducting extensive outreach. Mr. Bongiorno is working with Metro's Department of Customer Service, Communication, and Marketing (CSCM) and the Office of External Relations on messaging for public outreach.

Phillippa Mezile expressed an interest in the reason for discontinuing paper farecards. Mr. Bongiorno stated that cost of producing paper cards is one of the factors; however, the mechanical devices that process the paper farecards are aging and it is getting more difficult to obtain parts to repair the machines. In response to a question about the savings, Mr. Bongiorno stated that Metro would save a significant amount of money by eliminating paper farecards.

Brian Miller expressed an interest in how Metro will advertise and communicate the program to the disability community. Mr. Bongiorno stated that CSCM would collaborate with ACCS to ensure the message to customers is consistent and accessible.

Elver Ariza-Silva expressed an interested whether the SmarTrip card will change and will customers have to purchase a new card. Mr. Bongiorno stated that the SmarTrip

card would remain the same. Currently, SmarTrip cards cost \$10. After the elimination of the paper farecards, the price of the SmarTrip cards will be \$2 and have \$8 of stored value. SmarTrip cards will also give customers the option to add Metro's passes such as the 7-day pass or the short-trip pass.

Mr. Ariza-Silva also expressed an interest in whether customers will have the option to add fare to the SmarTrip cards on Metrobus. Mr. Bongiorno stated that customers will still be able to add fare on Metrobus and at retailers such as CVS and Giant Food Store.

Dr. Banerjee thanked Mr. Bongiorno for the presentation. He stated that new system has to potential to make the Metrorail system more efficient. The AAC recommended that Metro make a strong and timely effort about the elimination of farecards in its outreach to the disability community.

#### **ACC QUARTERLY MEETING WITH BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (UPDATE)**

The AAC discussed its quarterly meeting with the Board's Executive Committee. The AAC leadership focused its comments on the "safety" portion of the Safe, Accessible and Sustainable (SAS) plan; the concept of alternatives to paratransit service; and the appointment of new members. Dr. Banerjee stated the Board requested ACCS work with the Department of Safety and Environmental Management and the Office of Rail Transportation to determine the feasibility and cost of adding armrests to the first forward facing seats on the 7000-series rail cars. The Board also agreed that better instructions would make the intercom easier to use and requested follow up.

The Board stated that they were interested in the AAC being more innovative in its work. Mort Downey, Board Chair, stated that transportation needs innovation to continue on a path of sustainability.

#### **BUS/RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**

The Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) discussed the next generation of Metro's fare collection equipment project. The new system will allow more fare media loading options including the use of credit and debit cards, smartphones, personal bank accounts, cash, and retail outlets. Through NEPP, Metro is testing the core capability of the equipment to ensure the system is capable of running a high volume of transactions and can handle high-speed processing of information. The next phase will test the full functionality including the user interface.

The BRS views this as the most critical phase in the pilot because it relates to all of the customers applications. The AAC recommends a thorough review of guidelines for accessibility as it relates to "time-out" options for data entry. Some programs do not allow customer enough time to enter information to complete a transaction or process, thus making the process of entering information very frustrating for some customers with disabilities. The AAC also recommends that members be kept up to date on the testing for mobile applications to ensure accessibility and the discussions on technology as it applies to MetroAccess service. Finally, the AAC welcomes any opportunity to test

the functionality of the new fare equipment for accessibility prior to full operation in the system and to provide feedback on the user experience.

The BRS also discussed its work plan for FY2016 and added the following items: remote fare gate access at all stations; emergency exercises (lessons learned); station manager kiosk access; cell phone access in the rail system; Silver Line Phase II; Metro's "Station of the Future"; and Metro's Lost and Found program. The BRS requested updates on the following topics: CFO financial update; platform and directional signage; Click-And-Go; elevator cleanliness and maintenance schedules; lighting; and bus stop improvements. The BRS also expressed an interest in informational sessions on the following topics: accessibility features training for mobile applications and i-Beacon technology.

### **METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**

The MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) received an update on Metro's Travel Training Program. The Travel Training program is designed to assist individuals with disabilities and seniors with utilizing public transportation independently. The program provides customers with the tools to plan trips, utilize accessibility features on Metrobus and Metrorail, and travel safely within the transit system. Metro advertises the program to customers through the Transit Accessibility Center; signage on Metrobus, Metrorail and MetroAccess vehicles; newspaper ads; customer outreach; and workshops. To further promote the travel training programs, Metro plans to use Facebook and Twitter for travel training promotions once a quarter. On a twice-yearly basis, Metro holds a Train-the-Trainer Workshops to teach organizations' staff members how to travel train their clients who are interested in traveling on fixed route. In fiscal year 2015, more 1,600 individuals have been travel trained.

The MAS conducted a thorough work plan review. The following items were added to the work plan: MetroAccess service area (policy and times of service); grandfathering policy; new MetroAccess vehicles and accessibility features; vendors providing MetroAccess taxi services; budget and fare policy for MetroAccess (fare strategy); payment plan for MetroAccess (Smart Trip); MetroAccess driver sensitivity training; and fixed route and comparable paratransit travel times from one destination to another. The MAS also expressed an interest in informational sessions on the following topics: seatbelt waiver - current statistics since the policy went into effect.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

The AAC discussed recognizing former members of the committee. Several members commented that many of the former members were tireless advocates that has served for a number of years on the AAC without recognition. Upon motion, the AAC voted to annually recognize former members for their service. Mr. Kent stated that staff will begin locating members to recognize them at the Accessibility Excellence Awards in November.

Dr. B. Moore Gwynn announced that due to the renovations in the JGB Board and meeting rooms, all AAC and its subcommittee meetings to include work groups will be canceled for the month of August 2015. Many member welcomed the break while other expressed an interest in continuing the work. The next meeting of the AAC will be on September 8, 2015 in the JGB, Lobby Level Training Room. Doris Ray stated that the assistive listening device does not work in the Training Room and requested a change in location. Dr. Moore Gwynn stated that ADAP is testing the audiovisual equipment for use in that space and will follow up with the AAC on adjustments.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.



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**STATUS OF FY 2016 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS**

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info – 01	25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ADA	7/6/15	AAC	Open Forum	
Info - 02	Proposed 2016 Bus Route Changes	7/6/15	AAC	Presenter: Julie Hershorn	
Info - 03	Momentum and Long Range Plan (update)	9/8/15	AAC	Presenter: Jennifer Weeks	
Info – 04	Age-Friendly DC Task Force (Update)	10/5/15	AAC	Update (Follow-up discussion after event - November 2013).	

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 <sup>th</sup> BRS meeting	

**COMPLETED - FY 2015 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS**

Info – 6	Quarterly Meeting with Board Executive Leadership	8/4/14	AAC	Feedback from July 2014 meeting	
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

**COMPLETED - FY 2015 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS**

*Info – 13	Annual Report: Bus Stop Accessibility	10/6/14	AAC	Moved to BRS – Discussion at October 2014 meeting	9/2/14
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. Hedding 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

**COMPLETED - FY 2015 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS**

Info - 21	AAC By-Laws Work Group	1/5/15	AAC	AAC Final Vote	1/5/15
Info - 23	Open Discussion with CFO	1/5/15		Dennis Anosike, Chief Financial Officer	1/5/15
Info – 24	Customer Care Initiative	2/2/15	AAC	Barbara Moulton, Office of Customer Care	2/2/15
Info – 25	Emergency Evacuation Plan	3/2/15	AAC	Presenter: Ron Bodmer	3/2/15
Info – 26	Fare Policy	3/2/15	MAS	Strategy Meeting	3/2/15
*Info – 17	MetroAccess Long-term Sustainability Study	3/2/15	AAC	Presenter: Christian T. Kent	3/2/15
Info – 27	Marketing (Update)	4/6/15	AAC	Emergency Evacuation signage; Priority Seating campaign signs; and advertising campaigns that include people with disabilities	4/6/15

**COMPLETED - FY 2015 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS**

Info – 28	By-laws	5/4/15	AAC	Board Approved: April 23, 2015	5/4/15
Info – 29	Elimination of Paper Farecards	6/1/15	AAC	Presenter: James Bongiorno	6/1/15
Info – 30	Quarterly Meeting with Board Executive Leadership	6/1/15	AAC	Update	6/1/15

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