



## Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

Meeting Minutes: May 7, 2012

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

Vice-Chairman Dr. Phil Posner called the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Present: Dr. Phil Posner (Vice-Chair), Susan Holland, Paul Semelfort, Regina Lee, Dr. Tapan Banerjee, Debbie Brown, Doris Ray, Marilyn Lutter, Dr. William Staderman, Elver Ariza-Silva, Darrell Drake, Michelle Clark, and Carolyn Bellamy. Not present: Patrick Sheehan (Chairman), Georges Aguehoude, David Winser, Emily Singer Lucio, and Brian Hurley. The May 7, 2012 agenda and April 2, 2012 minutes was approved. The Chairman's report to the Metro Board dated May 7, 2012 was approved with corrections.

### **Public Comments**

In response to a question about MetroAccess ridership that was initially made at the April 2012 Metro Board meeting, Mr. Kent reported that the MetroAccess Subcommittee provides information on ridership each month, and the data indicates a downward shift in MetroAccess ridership. A comment was made about a missed trip of three MetroAccess customers. Staff reported that they will investigate and will provide feedback. A comment was also made about the alleged inaccessible format of the 2012 Metrorail Passenger survey and the ability of survey takers to providing assistance to customers with visual disabilities to complete the survey. The Metrorail Passenger Survey was designed to meet accessibility standards for the widest possible customer base. Ms. Carol Dillon Kissal, Deputy General Manager/Chief Financial Officer, reported that Metro will improve the in-station survey process and provide feedback to the Committee. Completed surveys can be mailed, returned at the collection boxes near station manager's kiosks, or completed online using the information provided on the survey form. Members of the audience commended the AAC and the disability community for its strong presence at the Metro's Board meeting on April 26, 2012.

### **Fare Calculator Demonstration**

Eleanor Evans, Senior Web Program Manager, IT provided a demonstration on the proposed MetroAccess Fare Calculator. The MetroAccess Fare Calculator is a web-based tool designed to assist customers with calculating the fare for a trip. She indicated that there are four fields with drop-down menus that denote the date of travel, departure times, pick-up address and drop-off point. The proposed design also allows the option to select a pick-up landmark instead of a pick-up address.

Ms. Evans indicated that with the proposed MetroAccess Fare Calculator, all fares are associated with the customer's requested time and date of travel. Available times are

displayed in one-minute increments, fifteen minutes before and after the requested departure time, and the fare calculator displays the array of corresponding fares. The AAC expressed an interest in the proposed MetroAccess Fare Calculator's accessibility to screen reader software used by individuals with vision impairments and its use by customers with cognitive disabilities or with no computer access. Ms. Evans indicated that all links in the fare calculator are tagged to recognize reader software, and the fare calculator is being tested to meet web accessibility standards (Section 508). The AAC also expressed an interest in the proposed MetroAccess Fare Calculator being available in multiple languages. Mr. Kent reported that there are many options for enhancements and that a separate link for languages will be considered.

Mr. Kent indicated that proposed MetroAccess Fare Calculator provides customers with the ability to choose the fare that is most suitable for them. He reported that customers will be able to select the lowest possible fare even if the actual scheduled time within a 30-minute window eventually reserved was different. This includes both reservations made on the trip-booking module or through a MetroAccess reservationist.

The AAC reiterated its remarks that the MetroAccess fare structure should be simplified. Mr. Kent stated that the proposed MetroAccess Fare Calculator is a first step toward simplifying a complex fare structure for customers by enabling them to quickly and easily select the lowest fare possible within a 30-minute window, regardless of the actual time scheduled within that window. The AAC expressed an interest in the capacity of MetroAccess service to provide customers with the identical fares and in the same 30-minute window pick-up. Mr. Kent reported that the current structure supports trip negotiation that allows trips requested distributed over a period to accommodate all trips during the peak period, and the fares will be associated with the pick-up time requested. Ms. Kissal requested that the AAC combine all the requirements related to the proposed fare calculator so that they can be addressed. Upon motion, the Committee voted to develop a list for recommended features for the proposed MetroAccess Fare Calculator and forward those recommendations to Metro staff.

### **Metrorail and Wheelchair Ergonomics Study**

In response to a request from Metro's Board for feedback, the Committee discussed a research study that evaluated the accessibility of public transportation by wheelchair users. The research, *A Case Study Evaluating the Accessibility of Public Transit in our Nation's Capital*, was an out-of-date study that described one trip of a non-wheelchair user with unfamiliarity with traveling in the Metrorail system.

Chair Holland indicated that the BRS disagrees with the study and stated that the research took a narrow view of the system when it cited the farecard machines, the gaps between the train and the platform, station lighting, signage, non-working elevators, the closing of railcar doors, and employee behavior as barriers to traveling in the Metrorail system. For each area mentioned, staff demonstrated the improvements

that meet or exceed compliance under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As an example, the research indicated that fare tickets would fall out of the machine, onto the floor, and someone with a disability would not be able to pick them up. Each station in the system has at least two accessible farecard machines that are designed to assist a customer from beginning to end on how to purchase a farecard. A random assessment of farecard machines in the system revealed that the machines were operating properly and holding farecards.

AAC Vice-Chair, Dr. Posner, and MetroAccess Subcommittee Vice-Chair, Dr. Banerjee, both disagreed with the contention that Metrorail is not ADA compliant. Dr. Banerjee stated that the gap reducers have improved his use of Metrorail. The AAC acknowledged that there are many things that can be done to improve accessibility in the system and agrees with the BRS's assessment. The vast majority of seniors and older adults, including those using wheelchairs and other mobility devices are able to successfully complete travel on a daily basis using the Metrorail system. Overall, the Committee reported being highly confident in the accessibility of the system. Chair Holland reported that she asserted her disagreement of the study in a letter to Metro's Board.

Other comments expressed were about the non-standard tactile signage in Metrorail elevators. Staff reported that the elevators meet ADA standards but are not uniform throughout the system as each manufacturer has different panels and that this can cause confusion for some individuals with disabilities. Staff reported that Metro will work with the AAC on this issue. In a response to a question about the closing of the railcar doors, staff reported that the railcar doors are not like elevator doors that will re-open automatically. Metro's railcars are designed to close, and automated announcement indicates that the door is closing.

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

Mr. Joseph Reynolds, Chief Engineer for Railcars provided an update on Metro's 7000 series railcars. Features include larger seats, more handrails, automated stop announcements, an emergency call button near the priority seating area and new display signs that will describe the train's location. Mr. Reynolds stated that all eighteen recommendations by the AAC were accepted. A prototype of the 7000 series railcars will be available for the AAC inspection on arrival.

Ms Rita Davis, Director, Rail Training and Instruction, and Mrs. Ruth Solomon, Curriculum Development Specialist, Metrobus Training, discussed ADA training for Metro personnel in bus and rail. The training department reported improvement in training materials, and that they are working with staff to develop and ADA training video that will include customers with disabilities providing training.

Mr. Millis, Director, ADA Policy and Planning, provided an update on the Customer Guide for Metrobus and Metrorail. Mr. Millis stated that all recommendations by the

AAC were accepted, and the guide will be available in accessible formats. Communications will provide feedback after the RFP has closed. The guide will be available for distribution in July 2012.

### **MetroAccess Subcommittee Report**

Chair, Paul Semelfort reported that the Subcommittee had an extensive discussion on the propose increase of the MetroAccess fare. He indicated that the several recommendations to simplify and make fares more equitable have been submitted to the Board. Additionally, comments made by the disability community helped to convince Metro's Board to further review the issue on MetroAccess fares. Mr. Kent explained the history of MetroAccess Fare Policy and the anticipated impact on customers should the proposed budget be approved. He indicated that Metro's Board will have a final vote on fare policy at the April 26, 2012 meeting. Upon motion, the Subcommittee recommended that Metro's Board to adjust the MetroAccess Fare Policy to comply with the Metro's Fare Policy Principles.

The Subcommittee also discussed the MetroAccess Fare Calculator. The calculator is designed to allow customers to select a trip and fare that is suitable to them. Mr. Kent stated that a demonstration of the MetroAccess Fare Calculator will be held at the May 10, 2012 meeting. Mr. Kent reported progress on the Request For Proposal (RFP) for the new MetroAccess contract. Recommendations from the AAC, MetroAccess Town Hall Meetings, Focus Groups, vendor's meeting, and data from benchmarking other transit properties have been incorporated into the proposal. Mr. Kent will provide an update at the May 21, 2012 meeting.

### **New Business**

No new business was discussed.

**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 2012 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info -18	AAC Administrative Process	6/4/12	AAC		
Info -16	Metrorail and Wheelchair Ergonomics Study	4/9/12	BRS	Scheduled for May 7, 2012	5/7/12
Info -17	MetroAccess Fare Calculator Demonstration	4/16/12	MACS	Demonstration	5/7/12