



Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

Meeting Minutes: March 4, 2013

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

ATTENDEES

Present: Patrick Sheehan (Chair), Dr. Phil Posner (Vice-Chair), Dr. Tapan Banerjee (2nd Vice-Chair), Elver Ariza-Silva, Debbie Brown, Chanelle Houston, Regina Lee, Marilyn Lutter, Mary Jane Owen, Doris Ray, Denise Rush, Paul Semelfort, and Dr. William Staderman.

Not Present: Georges Aguehounde, Kristen Barry, Carolyn Bellamy, Robert Brown, Darrell Drake, Susan Holland, Brian Miller, and Jessica Hunt.

REVIEW OF AGENDA, AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The March 4, 2013 meeting agenda was approved.

The Chairman's Report to the Metro Board, dated March 4, 2013, was approved as amended.

The February 4, 2013 meeting minutes were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

A comment was made about access to committee materials prior to the meeting. Dr. Posner stated that beginning this month, AAC materials are now being posted for members to access via the website, and in the future the public may gain access to meeting materials prior to the meeting dates. Currently the documents are available to the public at the meetings, and once approved by the AAC they are made available on the web. Doris Ray stated that meeting materials should be available in alternative formats. Staff reported that, upon request, meeting materials are available in alternate formats.

In response to a Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) presentation on interior elevator directional signage, National Capital Citizens with Low Vision (NCCLV) expressed an interest the placement of symbols on pylons; maintenance of pylons with light fixtures; and an increase in the size of the letters on wall signage. NCCLV commended Metro for its efforts to improve signage on the platforms.

A comment was also made about the possibility of reduced funding for lighting projects in Metro's Capital Budget due to sequestration, and the importance of lighting to all customers, including those in the disability community. Chair Sheehan stated that the AAC, along with the Metro staff, have been diligently working on this issue.

TTY SERVICES (Update)

Al Pegram, Deputy Chief, Network Communication, provided an update on payphones and TTY equipment in the Metrorail system. He stated that with the increased use of cellular phone service, payphone usage has decreased dramatically in the system. Additionally, many payphones have been vandalized, rendering them inoperable and unsafe, and several have been removed from the system altogether. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued, yet no offer from payphone vendors to house a TTY system was received. Mr. Pegram stated that by September 2013, cellular service will be available throughout the Metro system, and therefore, Metro is intends to remove the remaining payphones in the system.

The AAC expressed an interest in use of payphones in emergencies, and by those in the deaf community, or for customers that do not own cellular phones. Mr. Pegram reported that Metrorail Station Managers are available to provide assistance for all customers, including during an emergency. The AAC expressed a concern about putting such additional duties on Station Managers. Christian Kent, AGM, Access Services, reported that, with the removal of payphones, the anticipated impact to customers will be minimal. Payphones represent old technology that has largely disappeared from the landscape. Mr. Kent expressed an interest in recommendations from AAC members on alternative forms of communication in the system. The AAC suggested that Metro post the information on its website as to which stations have operable payphones and their locations within the stations. Additionally the AAC suggested that the Metro work with jurisdictions to provide phones with direct lines to cab companies. Upon motion, the AAC recommended that Metro place an accessible sign in stations to alert customers that no payphone is available in the station and add such information to the website.

Although the Committee recommended that at least one phone be available in the station, Mr. Kent stated that it is important to note that Metro did not remove payphones from the system. Payphones were removed by the vendor, because they will no longer service that type of equipment. The AAC reiterated its concern for use of payphones for emergency, and for those in the deaf community and for customers that do not own cellular phones. A motion was made requiring Metro to have at least one payphone available in a station, throughout the system. A roll call vote was requested. The roll call vote was as follows:

- Dr. Tapan Banerjee – Yes
- Mr. Paul Semelfort – No
- Ms. Mary Jane Owens – Abstain
- Dr. William Staderman – No
- Ms. Chanelle Houston – No
- Ms. Regina Lee - No
- Ms. Debbie Brown – No
- Mr. Elver Ariza-Silva – Abstain
- Ms. Doris Ray – Yes
- Ms. Marilyn Lutter – No
- Ms. Denise Rush – Yes
- Dr. Phil Posner - No

Chair Sheehan stated that the final vote was seven to three with two abstentions, and the motion requiring Metro to have at least one payphones available in a station, throughout the system failed. Upon motion, the AAC recommended that the discussion be moved to the BRS for further discussion on communication alternatives in the system.

METROACCESS CONTRACTS AWARDS UPDATE

Mr. Kent provided an update on the new paratransit contract. He stated that many companies participated in the RFP process, and that the new contracts are five-year contracts with one renewal option at Metro's discretion for another five years. Metro awarded new paratransit service delivery contracts to Veolia Transportation, First Transit, and Diamond Transportation; a new quality assurance contract to MTM, Inc.; and a contract to manage the customer call center to MV Transportation.

Mr. Kent stated that the new model requires greater collaboration between reservationists, dispatchers, and service delivery. The standards include safety, on-time performance, customer service, and productivity. He added that there are incentive and disincentive elements associated with each performance standard. Superior service will be rewarded, while inferior service will be penalized, with penalties increasing if service is not improved in a timely manner. Safety and good customer service are measures that are paramount in the new paratransit contract. On-time performance, service delivery, communication, quality assurance, and complaints are also very important performance standards. Service delivery providers must communicate and operate as a cohesive team to deliver on Metro's standards of providing safe, reliable, and quality service.

The AAC expressed an interest in the challenges of splitting the call center and service delivery functions. Mr. Kent reported that the call center currently interacts with various providers, and that the current provider, MV Transportation, has experience in this area. In response to a question about next steps, Mr. Kent reported that the transfer of service to the new providers will happen gradually. Further discussions will continue at the next MetroAccess Subcommittee meeting.

AAC OFFICERS AND METRO BOARD LEADERSHIP

Chair Sheehan discussed the AAC's leadership first quarterly meeting with Metro's Board of Directors. He stated that the leadership presented a plan for *safe, accessible and sustainable* (SAS) transportation service on Metrobus, Metrorail, and MetroAccess. In response to questions about the Board's reaction, Dr. Banerjee reported that the Board was very receptive to the information and recommendations of the AAC. Upon motion, the AAC agreed to send Metro's Board of Directors a thank-you letter.

Dr. Posner discussed the AAC Travel Reimbursement Pilot Program. The pilot program, allowed members of the AAC who use MetroAccess to be reimbursed for up to three trips per month via MetroAccess to attend meetings of the AAC, its subcommittees, and work groups and task forces. He stated that the pilot program was discontinued last month and the AAC would like the Board to reconsider this decision and reinstate the program. In the leadership meeting, the Board reported that they would take the matter up for review. Upon motion, the AAC agreed to send Metro's Board of Directors a follow-up letter regarding the AAC Travel Reimbursement Pilot Program.

BUS/RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The BRS received an update on enhanced train operator announcements. Metro added "left side" auxiliary microphones to enhance train operators' ability to make announcements. This new feature is available on each rail car series and will be standard on the 7000 series railcars. The BRS expressed an interest in announcements on priority seating and upon motion recommended that the priority seating campaign re-established. Also upon motion, the BRS recommended that RTRA establish a policy that all announcements are made five seconds after a railcar comes into a station and prior to opening the doors. The noise level is different, and this will better alert customers of any changes.

The BRS also discussed the addition of new symbols to interior signs in the Metrorail system. Metro is adding the International Symbol of Accessibility (wheelchair), an elevator, and a directional arrow symbols to interior signs in the Metrorail system. Upon motion, the BRS recommended that directional symbols be included with the new symbol signage at transfer stations, and that Metro consider upgrading tactile signage where necessary.

The BRS also discussed MetroAccess bus stop signs in the Metrorail stations. MetroAccess bus stop signs will be located at bus bays nearest to station elevators. The BRS expressed an interest in the list of stations and bus bay locations for the MetroAccess bus stop signs. Christiaan Blake, Acting Director, ADA Policy and Planning, reported that staff will provide that information to the BRS at their March meeting. Upon motion, the BRS disapproved of the MetroAccess bus stop sign design because the signs lacked the accessibility features recommended by the BRS, and the BRS supported the placement of MetroAccess stop signs in bus bays at Metrorail stations.

METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) discussed the upcoming project to upgrade the elevators at the L'Enfant Plaza Metrorail station. All the elevators that will undergo modernization are located on the north side of the station, and it is expected that those elevators will be return to service in May 2013.

The MAS also discussed the findings of the MetroAccess Subcommittee Task Force. The Task Force has completed its recommendations on a document entitled "*Need to Know MetroAccess Policy*" Brochures. The Need to Know MetroAccess Policy brochure clarifies the current policy. Mr. Kent stated that the brochure should be used as part of the communication plan regarding the new paratransit contract. Upon motion, the AAC approved the Brochure.

New Business

The AAC discussed leadership on the BRS. It was recommended that Debbie Brown, BRS Vice-Chair, be appointed to the position of Chairman. Upon motion, the AAC appointed Debbie Brown to the position of BRS Chair. Mr. Kent applauded Ms. Brown's efforts to run the BRS in the absence of former Chair Susan Holland. He went on to say that Ms. Holland's contributions to the AAC should also be recognized and commended for her many years of service. Upon motion, the AAC recommended that Susan Holland be made an Emeritus member of the AAC and that she be recognized at the next Accessibility Excellence Awards

Dr. B. Moore Gwynn, AAC Coordinator, reported that the AAC recruitment of new members is underway. The AAC has a total of seven vacancies throughout the jurisdictions, and one At-large seat. Applications will be available at each meeting. The deadline to apply is 5 p.m. on March 24, 2013.

Meeting adjourned:

The meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.



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STATUS OF FY 2013 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info - 17	Wayfinding Mobility and Maps for All Program	4/1/13	AAC	Presentation by Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind	
Info - 18	Quarterly Meeting Recommendation Review Metrorail evacuation procedures to include the availability of informational literature that outlines the safety procedures	3/4/13	AAC		
Info - 19	Quarterly Meeting Recommendation Study universal securement policy for Metrobus	3/4/13	AAC		
Info - 20	Quarterly Meeting Recommendation Evaluate proposed lighting for the "station of the future"	3/4/13	AAC		
Info - 21	Quarterly Meeting Recommendation Develop a communication and messaging plan to the jurisdictions regarding funding for accessible bus stops,	3/4/13	AAC		
Info - 22	Quarterly Meeting Recommendation Priority seating campaign for Metrobus and Metrorail	3/4/13	AAC		

FY13 COMPLETED STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Action - 1	AAC Officer Elections	7/2/12	AAC	The election results are - Mr. Patrick Sheehan, Chair, Dr. Phil Posner, 1 st Vice-Chair, and Dr. Tapan Banerjee was voted as 2 nd Vice-Chair of the AAC	8/6/12
Info - 4	Community Partnerships (MV Transportation and Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind)	8/6/12	AAC	Presentation by Morgan Ortagus MV Transportation	8/6/12
Info - 2	AAC Administrative Process (Update)	7/2/12	AAC	Completed Follow up from 6/4/12 Meeting	7/2/12
Info - 3	Customer Surveys (Update) MetroAccess Customer Satisfaction and MetroAccess Knowledge and Usage Study	7/2/12	AAC	Completed Presentation by Alison Simon Follow up from 4/2/12 meeting	7/2/12
Info - 1	MetroAccess Fare Calculator (Update)	7/2/12	AAC	Presentation by Dan O'Reilly on 7/2/12 and 8/6/12. Referred back to MAS	9/4/12
Action - 2	AAC Appointment	8/6/12	AAC	MetroAccess Subcommittee Vice-Chair	9/4/12
Info - 5	Rail Service Criteria	9/4/12	AAC	A request for feedback by the October 2012 for the Metro's Board. Presentation by Andrea Burnside, Chief Performance Officer	9/4/12
Action - 3	BRS Subcommittee Work Plan	10/1/12	BRS	AAC Approved	10/1/12
Action - 4	MAS Subcommittee Work Plan	10/1/12	MACS	AAC Approved	10/1/12
Info - 6	AAC MetroAccess Travel Costs	8/6/12	AAC	Completed Committee supports survey of AAC members, to provide Metro staff with information need for recommendation.	11/5/12

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info - 7	Customer Guide to Metrobus and Metrorail	10/1/12	BRS	All AAC members will review draft, and provide feedback to ADAP by 11/5/12 and final document on December 2012. Item referred back to Subcommittee.	11/5/12
Info - 8	Strategic Plan	11/5/12	AAC	Completed Presentation by Andrea Burnside, Chief Performance Officer	11/5/12
Info - 9	APTA Innovation Award	11/5/12	AAC	Metro receives award for Travel Training Program	11/5/12
Info - 10	MetroAccess Performance Standards in New Contract	12/3/12	MAS	Presentation by Dan O'Reilly, MACS	12/3/12
Action - 5	BRS Station Lighting Work Group	12/12/11	BRS	Recommendations for approval to the Board	12/3/12
Info - 11	Metrorail Station Lighting	1/7/13	AAC	Completed Presentation by A. Robert Troup, AGM, TIES	1/7/13
Info - 12	Chairman's Address State of the Committee	1/7/13	AAC	Patrick Sheehan	1/7/13
Info - 13	AAC Recruitment 2013	2/4/13	AAC	Dr. B. Moore Gwynn	2/4/13
Info - 14	AAC Leadership Meeting Metro Board	2/4/13	AAC	Patrick Sheehan	2/4/13
Info - 15	MetroAccess New Contract	3/4/13	AAC	Completed	3/4/13
Action - 7	Subcommittee Chair Appointment	3/4/13	AAC	Completed	3/4/13
Action - 6	Customer Service Task Force	6/18/2012	MAS	Completed – MetroAccess Task Force The "Need to Know MetroAccess Policy Brochures	3/4/13