

**AAC**

Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

Meeting Minutes: March 10, 2014

ATTENDEES

Present: Patrick Sheehan (Chair), Dr. Tapan Banerjee (2nd Vice-Chair), Heidi Case, Darrell Drake, Regina Lee, Dr. Brian Miller, Mary Jane Owen, Doris Ray, Denise Rush, Paul Semelfort, and Dr. William Staderman

Call to Order

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA, BOARD REPORT, AND PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

The agenda was approved as amended.

The February 10, 2014 meeting minutes were approved.

The Chairman's Report to the Metro Board, dated March 10, 2014, was approved as amended.

BUS STOP ACCESSIBILITY PRESENTATION

Christiaan Blake, Director, ADA Policy and Planning (ADAP) provided an update on bus stop accessibility. He stated that the Department of Access Services (ACCS) would make a presentation to Metro's Board on bus stop accessibility in the region. Metro maintains a bus stop inventory of stops served by Metrobus. The inventory has 11,320 stops, and 5,356 are listed as inaccessible. Of the inaccessible stops, ACCS has identified 57 as priority for improvement by the jurisdictions. Mr. Blake stated that an update would be provided at the next Bus Stop Accessibility Work Group meeting on April 21, 2014 immediately following the MetroAccess Subcommittee meeting.

Ms. Ray expressed an interest in how Metro determined which stops to improve. In Virginia, the City or County maintains some bus stops while others are managed by the State. Mr. Blake stated that Metro's strategic goal is to coordinate with the jurisdictions on all 19,000 bus stops in the region. The 57 priority stops were identified by looking at stops in which their inaccessibility was a part of the consideration of a customer being granted eligibility for MetroAccess service. A comment from the public stated that Metro must consider the needs of the low vision community for sidewalk improvements. With the snowy winter, there is even a greater need to keep sidewalks accessible by clearing the snow. It was added that Metro has done a great job with maintaining its sidewalks.

Chair Sheehan stated that in a brief conversation with Tom Downs, Chair, Metro Board of Directors, Mr. Downs stated that his number one priority was bus stop accessibility. Last year approximately 350 of the regions 19,000 bus stops were improved.

Chair Sheehan stated that the Board recognizes the work of the AAC, and is looking forward to the AAC's continued recommendations on issues affecting people with disabilities traveling on all three modes of Metro service.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

ROLE OF THE AAC AND SUBCOMMITTEE IN MATERIAL PREPARATION

As a follow-up to a discussion at the Bus/Rail Subcommittee meeting (BRS), the AAC discussed the role of staff in preparing AAC materials. The issue was raised because some members thought that information and materials being produced were too corporate and gave the appearance that Metro staff is dictating how and what the AAC is communicating to the Board. Mr. Blake stated that ADAP serves as staff support for the AAC and subcommittees, and produces all the materials for the meetings. At each meeting, the AAC has an opportunity to make changes to the documents if members feel such are warranted. Additionally, ADAP will review the materials more closely to ensure all the AAC and its subcommittees comments and suggestions are included. In conclusion, ADAP will continue to produce the materials.

BY-LAWS REVIEW

The AAC discussed updating the AAC By-laws. Chair Sheehan provided the historical context for the project stating that a thorough review will take several meetings. Additionally, a work group should be tasked with the review and to provide recommendations to the full committee. Ms. Case expressed the importance of understanding the language in the by-laws before the development of a group. Christian Kent, Assistant General Manager, Access Services, stated that the AAC By-laws were patterned after the Riders Advisory Council (RAC) By-laws. He echoed the Ms. Case's comments about members needing to understand the By-laws, especially with new members about to come on board, and he added that from time to time, Metro's Board and the RAC have updated their By-laws.

Dr. Miller suggested that the AAC review a few articles of the By-laws each meeting to ensure all members understand the information in the By-laws. Ms. Ray agreed with Dr. Miller adding that the approved language on program access be added to the document. Chair Sheehan expressed an interest in expanding the expertise of AAC work groups through the addition of non-AAC members and further exploring the language on program access. Dr. Miller stated that listening remotely should have a role in the attendance policy and the AAC should discuss meeting times.

The AAC expressed an interest in the number of members required for a quorum and whether vacancies are included in that number. Not having a quorum has prevented at least one of the subcommittees from approving documents and moving recommendations to the full committee. Mr. Kent stated that a large number of vacancies can prevent the AAC from doing its work. To prevent this, Mr. Kent suggested that the AAC consider adding alternate members. Alternate members may also be used to immediately fill a vacancy. Mr. Kent stated that this process is used by Metro's Board.

The AAC also expressed an interest in material dissemination. Subcommittee materials are always provided in advance, however AAC materials are provided just before the meeting, which does not give some members a lot of time to review. Mr. Blake stated that the goal is to provide materials further in advance; however, when there are not five weeks in a month, there is not the additional time to forward a complete packet to the AAC. Ms. Case suggested that the materials be disseminated separately and not as a total package. Ms. Ray suggested that the timeframe for the dissemination of materials should be documented in business days. Mr. Blake stated that staff is open to ideas on how to better provide the monthly materials to the AAC. In response to a question about when the By-laws were updated, Mr. Kent stated that the By-laws were approved in 2011.

Ms. Rush emphasized the importance of member participation at all meetings. Mr. Kent reiterated the importance of attendance and suggested that the AAC consider enforcing the attendance policy. Staff recognizes this is a sensitive issue and is open to suggestions on how to manage the attendance policy. Ms. Ray suggested that the attendance policy include excused and unexcused absences and apply only to the AAC meeting, not subcommittee meetings.

As a reminder, Mr. Kent stated that in order for the By-laws to be final they must be ratified through the Board. Upon motion, the AAC voted to develop a work group tasked with the function of updating the AAC Bylaws.

Ms. Rush also expressed an interest in the protocol for speaking to others outside of the AAC. Chair Sheehan or his designee is the voice of the AAC. Ms. Rush stated that the AAC's strength is in being a united group speaking with one voice. Mr. Kent commended Ms. Rush for the recent article in a local newspaper noting that she provided a very accurate picture of MetroAccess customers and the importance of the service to the media.

Mr. Kent discussed ways possible AAC conversations with Metro Board members or other staff could occur outside of coordination with ACCS. (1) a Board member reaches out to the various members to get their thoughts on a topic because they recognizes the disability community interests in that area; (2) a Board member reaches out to members of their jurisdiction for feedback on certain to subjects; or (3) informal conversations at Board meetings. At those times, Mr. Kent stated that the AAC member is acting as an individual and not an AAC member. Ms. Case stated that her understanding of the protocol was that members could seek information from staff to better understand the content being evaluated. Ms. Case added that she sought staff input to help determine what should be included in the AAC fare policy letter to the Board. She added that Mr. Kent was included on the telephone call.

Chair Sheehan also applauded Ms. Rush for the article in the local newspaper. He stated that the AAC has shown good judgment with speaking to the media and others outside of ACCS. Dr. Miller stated that the By-laws advise on speaking to the media but offer

little guidance on members representing themselves with Metro's Board or other staff. This may be something to include in the By-laws. Dr. Banerjee suggested that members interested in having a dialogue with staff contact the Chair or Vice-chair first. Chair Sheehan stated that ACCS provides unconditional support to the AAC. The Committee should continue to build on this relationship by including them in any outside conversations with staff or the media.

AAC RECRUITMENT

Dr. B. Moore Gwynn, AAC Coordinator, provided an update on the AAC recruitment. She stated that the recruitment period will end on Sunday, March 14, 2014, and that the AAC has seven vacancies. The openings will be filled from the pool of qualified applicants from the current recruitment as well as previous applications on file. In response to a question about advising candidates about the commitment of membership, Dr. Moore Gwynn stated that all applicants are informed of the AAC expectation for attendance and meeting participation. This point is stressed a few times during each interview. Dr. Moore Gwynn stated that members could contact her directly for any information regarding specifics of their terms. In response to a question about returning members, Dr. Moore Gwynn stated that everyone must interview, including returning members.

Dr. Miller expressed an interest in whether meeting times were a challenge for candidates in the interview process. Dr. Moore Gwynn stated that none of the candidates interviewed expressed concern about the meeting times. Mr. Kent stated that the reasons given by some members whom are no longer able to continue to serve has not been because of meeting times. Chair Sheehan stated that former AAC member Kevin Hanretta was appointed to Deputy Assistant Secretary, Department of Veteran Affairs by President Obama, therefore he could not continue his service to the AAC. Ms. Owen suggested that the AAC have a member representing the homeless population. Chair Sheehan stated that the AAC membership is open to any senior or person with a disability.

BUS/RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The BRS discussed Metro's joint development program. All Metro joint development projects begin and end with transit access. The first project was an office building located above the Farragut North station. It demonstrates the type of access that customers are familiar with today. This access fosters new communities around rail stations because the transit-oriented joint developments are no less than a half a mile in proximity from a rail station. This closeness generally spurs synergy that will enhance ridership and private development.

ACCS is an integral component of the process and works collaboratively on all of Metro's joint development projects. The goal is to ensure that all customers can access the station by all modes of transportation. The BRS thanked Metro for its foresight on disability issues related to joint development and Mr. Wall for an informative presentation.

METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) discussed the features of the Ranger and the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) on MetroAccess vehicles. The Ranger provides vehicle operators point-to-point navigation information to drop off and pick up locations. The system is also utilized by dispatchers to manage operations. Metro is considering other types of software for integration with the Ranger for real-time location reporting. The changes will allow MetroAccess to provide real time location information via smart phone to customers in the future.

The MAS also drafted a letter to Metro's Board regarding Metro fare policy that included the AAC's opposition to fare increases. Additionally, the MAS discussed MetroAccess Bus Stops in high-density areas and the topic has been added to the Bus Stop Accessibility Work Group's work plan.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

A comment was made about a MetroAccess customer's destination that was incorrectly documented for pick-up and return. The customer managed to correct the issue for pick-up, but was unable to do the same on the return trip. Ms. Case expressed an interest in the reason the information was not updated on both trips. Mr. June stated that return trips are not automatically changed because some customer change their location, get to another location, and then use MetroAccess. He added that the MetroAccess Customer Service Representative followed the proper protocol.

Ms. Case expressed an interest in better communication of the securement policy on MetroAccess. She stated that some drivers are securing while others are not. Mr. June stated that the policy is being enforced, and additional information will be included in the MetroAccess Customer Guide. In a response to a question about whether the shoulder belt is mandatory on MetroAccess vehicles, Mr. June stated that it is Metro's policy to use the seat and shoulder belt; however, customers can apply for a waiver.

Ms. Lee expressed an interest in the on-time performance policy for MetroAccess vehicles. She stated that the dispatcher information regarding the vehicle location is not always accurate. Mr. June stated Metro is exploring upgrading the Ranger system on MetroAccess vehicles with software from Google or Tom-Tom. After the upgrade, the information provided to customers regarding the vehicle location would be definitive.

OLD BUSINESS

Chair Sheehan expressed an interest in an implementation schedule for the lighting in the rail stations and bus stop improvements. He stated that he would like to update the progress to the Board. Additionally, Chair Sheehan expressed an interest in the implementation in MetroAccess real-time information. The technology is available and used in several markets. Mr. Kent stated that real-time information for MetroAccess Service is on ACCS work plan. Mr. Semelfort stated that New York City has a system that provides real-time information for paratransit service. Ms. Rush stated that there is

a cost associated with everything, and before such an improvement is implemented understanding the cost is important.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.



Accessibility Advisory Committee

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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 – 18	By-laws Review	3/10/14	AAC	Deferred to April 7, 2014 meeting	
Info – 20	Metro FY15 Budget (Fare Policy Change and Regional Study)	4/7/14	AAC		
Info – 21	Quarterly Meeting with Board Executive Leadership	4/7/14	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
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

COMPLETED - FY 2014 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

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
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

COMPLETED - FY 2014 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info – 15	Bus Stop Accessibility on the Trip Planner	1/6/14	AAC	Presenter: Ed Wells	1/6/14
Info – 16	Fare Policy	2/10/14	AAC	Feedback on Metro’s Public Hearings and Strategy for February 2014 Board Meeting	2/10/14
Info – 17	SmarTrip Conversion – Reduced Fare Card	2/10/14	AAC	Presenter: Christopher Colbert	2/10/14
Info – 19	Role of AAC and Subcommittees in material preparation	2/10/14	AAC	Deferred to March 3, 2013 meeting	3/10/14