



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

Meeting Minutes: March 2, 2015

ATTENDEES

Present: Patrick Sheehan, Dr. Phil Posner (Vice-Chair), Brianne Burger, Heidi Case, Charlie Crawford, Marisa Laios, Phillippa Mezile, Mary Kay McMahon, Doris Ray, Denise Rush, Paul Semelfort, Anthony Stephens, 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 meeting agenda was approved as amended.

The February 2, 2015 meeting minutes were approved.

The Chair's Report to the Board, dated March 2, 2015, was approved as amended.

New Business

Dr. Posner made a motion to nominate Carolyn Bellamy as an Emeritus member of the AAC. The motion was approved by the AAC, and the nomination will be moved to Metro's Board Secretary for approval.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

A comment was made about ADA regulations regarding the use of the expanding barricade safety system that Metro uses to identify a work zone when escalators are out-of-service. At rail stations across the system, blind and low-vision customers are having difficulty navigating the platform during construction because they cannot detect the gate. Christiaan Blake, Director, Office of ADA Policy and Planning (ADAP), stated that his office had been actively involved in designing construction barriers for the rail system that would extend from waist-level to the floor, thereby giving safe passage for all customers including those that use white canes. He stated that ADAP will continue to work on this issue.

A customer expressed an interest in participating in the upcoming emergency training on Metrorail. Ms. Case clarified that the emergency exercise is to train first responders, not the general public, on the evacuation of all customers including those with disabilities. She added that members of the AAC are volunteering to help, but will not be receiving any training.

In response to a question about the Metro computer based training on serving customers with disabilities, Mr. Blake stated that the discussion on that topic has been rescheduled to the March Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meeting.

Ms. Case made a comment about snow and ice removal at bus stops. She stated that several bus stops along her route were covered with snow and ice, which in some cases make it impossible for customers using mobility devices to access them or difficult for a Bus Operator to deploy the lift or ramp. Ms. Bellamy stated that on the Georgia Avenue – Maryland, along lines Y2, Y7, and Y8 many of the bus stops are not clear of snow.

Mr. Blake stated that there are approximately 19,000 bus stops in the region. The overwhelming majority of bus stops are not located on Metro property. Metro is responsible for the stops that are located on Metro property, primarily at rail stations. In cases where snow is a barrier at these locations, Mr. Blake stated that customers can call ADAP at 202-962-1100 with information about the location, and his office will contact the appropriate personnel. He added that all other bus stops in the region are the responsibility of the respective property owners, be it private or government. Most jurisdictions require clearing sidewalks within 24 to 48 hours after a major weather incident. Mr. Blake encourages customers to contact local departments of public works or local elected officials with regard to delayed snow removal from bus stops and sidewalks.

A comment from the public stated that the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), Office of Accessible Services, identified each bus stop and the jurisdiction responsible for the stop and posted the information on its website. This resource worked really well at MBTA because the information was empowering for all customers including those in the disability community.

Dr. Posner added that the snow should also be removed from curb cuts. If a Bus Operator is able to alight customers at a stop, the customer using the mobility device may not be able to get to their destination because the curb cut was not clear. He stated that in his Arlington community, neighbors join together to clear the sidewalks and curb cuts. To cut through some of the red tape, Dr. Posner suggested enlisting the help of community groups to clear the sidewalks, paths and curb cuts in the snow. Ms. Mezile agreed with Dr. Posner stating that business owners and community volunteers often clear an accessible path in and around these areas.

METRO'S EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN

Ron Bodmer, Director, MTPD Emergency Management, discussed emergency evacuation in the Metrorail system. He stated that OEM serves as the liaison between Metro and local jurisdictional first responders and coordinates these efforts through one central command post to provide order in a potential crisis. This unified approach for response and recovery during an emergency reflects the national standard, and ensures clear expectations, responsibilities, and a chain of command; all of which result in organized and efficient handling of incident responses. Mr. Bodmer introduced Denton Rourke, Manager, Emergency Operations, and Captain Robert Konczal, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department.

OEM provides evacuation support for a variety of events in the Metrorail system, such as train door malfunctions; loss of power on the tracks; collisions, and incidents such as the L'Enfant Plaza. During an emergency Metro's first priority is to evacuate customers to the platform or other area of safety. Mr. Bodmer stated that there are challenges to providing evacuation support in an emergency that occurs between stations. He stated that power to the third rail is critical because it determines whether the affected train can be returned to the platform or a recovery train can be mobilized to off-load customers to safety. Evacuation to the tracks is always the last resort. Metro does not encourage self-evacuation due to the numerous hazards present outside the rail car.

In June 2009, during the rush hour, Metro added OEM personnel to the Bus Operations Control Center and Rail Operations Control Center. This ensures immediate notification to first responders and the quick deployment of resources to resolve the situation in the system. In a response to a question about special events, Mr. Bodmer stated that OEM personnel are staffed for each event.

Mr. Rourke stated that Metro pre-stages emergency equipment and supplies strategically throughout Metrorail stations. Metro Emergency Tunnel Evacuation Carts (ETECs), E-kit light sticks, Motorized Emergency Recon Vehicle (MERVs), and fire maps are all located on Metrorail platforms and inside of Station Manager kiosks. Each station has a minimum of two ETECs and the equipment is available for rescue efforts by the local fire and EMT departments, as well as Metro staff. Local fire and EMT personnel also use stair chairs and glow sticks to evacuate customers from the system. In response to a question about the number of stair chairs in the system, Mr. Rourke stated that there is one stair chair per EMT unit, and generally a large number of EMT units assist in each incident. The stair chair is placed on the ETEC and move to the platform.

Captain Konczal stated that emergency exercises are the most effective way to train first responders and other emergency personnel on the system. All of the local fire and EMT departments in the region where Metrorail operates are staffed with personnel around-the-clock. This ensures that when an incident occurs there is no delay in responses. In response to a question about evacuating customers with disabilities in imminent danger, Captain Konczal reported that all customers are evacuated according to the severity of their injuries. Customers should communicate all issues in the triage assessment including hidden disabilities. He added that customers who use mobility devices maybe initially evacuated without the device, but are later reunited with it. When this occurs, the device and customer are tagged with a bar code that allows the customer to be matched with mobility device.

Ms. Burger expressed an interest in enhancing communication with customers who are deaf or hard of hearing during emergencies. Generally, emergency responders (including police officers) shine a blinding light in the customer's eyes. She also stated that in the recent issue at the L'Enfant Plaza station directions were given orally. She stated that as a deaf person she would not have heard the directions. Captain Konczal

stated that this is a challenge for some first responders. The jurisdictions provide limited training in this area and more attention needs to be placed on this issue.

Ms. Ray thanked the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department for their hard work in rescuing the citizens of Northern Virginia. She expressed an interest in the protocol for entering a train during an incident. Captain Konczal stated that fire and EMT personnel conduct reconnaissance in a group to obtain as much information as possible before other responders are deployed. Additionally, Ms. Ray expressed an interest in the protocol for evacuating ambulatory disabled customers. She stated that during the Silver Line exercise, a member of the AAC who uses a white cane expressed an interest in walking back to the platform. Ms. Ray stated that the AAC member was not allowed to walk to the platform, but instead was forced to the cart. Captain Konczal stated that getting customer to safety is our goal. The safety walk area in the tunnel is 22 inches and includes numerous protruding objects, therefore customers with visual disabilities are compelled to use the ETEC.

Mr. Crawford expressed an interest in how the jurisdictions prevent responder fatigue. Captain Konczal stated that most first responders are driven by the desire to help others in the most challenging and difficult situations. To prevent exhaustion, fire and EMT personnel are monitored and rotated out if this becomes an issue.

Mr. Stephens also expressed his gratitude, calling fire and rescue personnel heroes. With an increase in the number of people using service animals, Mr. Stephens expressed an interest in the protocol for rescuing the animals and as well as the customers who rely on the animals' assistance. Captain Konczal stated that with this type of situation, personnel will most likely work with the Humane Society and use the same tagging system, so the animal and customer can be reunited later. In a follow up, Chairman Sheehan commented that it is important to keep in mind that sometimes the dogs cannot tell the difference between an exercise drill and a real incident. Captain Konczal stated that he will keep that in mind and share with his team.

Ms. Case expressed an interest in the protocol for incidents that happen on the platform or mezzanine levels. In particular she asked about sheltering in place and whether the elevators worked during an emergency such as a fire in the system. Mr. Bodmer stated that fire and EMT personnel will evacuate the system via elevator or escalator to the surface. However, if that entranceway is compromised, Metro will use a train to evacuate customers. Metro also have other spaces that customers can shelter in place until the fire and rescue department arrives. Captain Konczal stated that responses are incident-specific and Metro's new rail line has a station location for customers to shelter in place.

Dr. Posner stated that on the 7000 Series rail cars the evacuation area is located at the center doors, which is also the same place as the mobility device parking area. He stated that this is a problem because customers will probably climb over the person in the mobility device in an effort to evacuate the train. Dr. Posner stated that the AAC

has worked feverishly to change this, but to no avail. Captain Konczal stated that Metro has not had many incidents where evacuating from the center doors was an issue. Fire and EMT personnel tend to use the end doors in evacuation. Mr. Bodmer stated that Metro uses the center doors for evacuations because it is away from the third rail.

In referring to the comments on communication, Dr. Posner expressed an interest in whether there was a single communication line where all the fire and EMT personnel from each jurisdiction can communicate. Mr. Bodmer stated the L'Enfant Plaza incident exposed some weakness in the system that the jurisdictions are committed to correcting. Captain Konczal stated each jurisdiction communicates on a particular channel through the various work groups and points of contact.

Ms. Laios stated that there are things that her body cannot physically do without her mobility device and express an interest in how first responders handle those type of situations in an emergency. Captain Konczal stated that the first responders are highly trained. Local fire and EMT departments in the region treat people with similar issues and situations every day.

OEM invited the AAC to participate in the upcoming drills and emergency preparedness exercises in April 2015 at the Greenbelt Station. These drills are opportunities for Metro staff to collaborate with the Fire Chiefs Subcommittee, Community Emergency Response CERT Teams, and others in the region on best practices for conducting rescue operations in the transit system. Mr. Sheehan stated that during public comment there was a request to participate in the drills. Mr. Bodmer stated that Metro will be conducting quarterly drills for the next three years and appreciate all volunteers. The AAC views safety as a critical issue for all customers including those with disabilities in traveling in the system. Both Mr. Bodmer and Mr. Rourke stated that they would be available after the presentation to demonstrate the emergency equipment and answer any additional questions. The AAC thanked the panel for the presentation.

METROACCESS LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY STUDY

The AAC discussed the MetroAccess Long-term Sustainability Study. The study will examine the needs of specialized services in the region and provide recommendations. In particular, the Board is interested in understanding how can Metro sustain its paratransit service, MetroAccess, into the future.

MetroAccess is expected to grow exponentially in the coming years. Currently the service transports 2.2 million customers a year, but as people live longer and are diagnosed with disabilities, it is expected that MetroAccess will add more than a million additional customers.

To minimize such ridership growth Christian Kent, Assistant General Manager, Department of Access Services (ACCS), stated that Metro can take some or all of the

following steps: 1) Increase travel training; 2) Add more alternative services, such as CAPS-DC, which provides taxicab service to certain medical facilities and human services transportation such as the pilot with Community Support Services in Montgomery County, MD. Mr. Kent stated that all these models have shown great promise and has freed capacity on the paratransit system. Ms. Case commented that Metro can do more to move customers from paratransit to fixed route service. Ms. Ray emphasize that it is important remind Metro's Board that paratransit services is not limited by trip purpose or organization affiliations. Customers should have the option of participating in the pilot programs and have the full understanding that participation does not block them from using MetroAccess.

ACCS has collaborated with George Mason Center for Regional Analysis to conduct the study. The preliminary conclusions indicate that all of the aforementioned models need implementation on a regional scale. The study also praised Metro for using conditional eligibility. Metro is using trip-by-trip eligibility, but not enforcing the standard. Mr. Kent stated that he will brief Metro's Board on the study at the March 12, 2015 Customer Service and Operation Committee meeting.

Mr. Semelfort expressed an interest in extending the pilot program to Prince George's County. He stated that the County has a paratransit service, but it is very limited. Mr. Kent stated that State of Maryland is considering expanding the specialized transportation program into Prince George's County because the pilot demonstrated that it worked.

Mr. Crawford stated that customers using the pilot programs are excited and he expressed in how Metro can continue that enthusiasm with customers. Mr. Kent stated that one of the keys is listening to the customer and understanding the need. It is important to engage each county in Maryland to understand the needs of customers at the local level. In response to a question about the expansion of the CAPS-DC, Mr. Kent stated that the District of Columbia is offering the program to customers with other types of medical needs beyond dialysis.

Ms. Rush expressed an interest in customer participating in CAPS-DC and using EZ-Pay accounts. Mr. Kent stated that when reservations are made through the MetroAccess Call Center, Metro charges the jurisdiction the fee for the service and the EZ-Pay is available. However, customers using the pilot do not use the MetroAccess Call Center to make their reservations, so EZ-Pay is not an option. After learning of this new information, Ms. Case stated that the CAPS-DC pilot should also be extended to Seabury Connector. Mr. Kent stated that Metro has met with Seabury.

A comment from the public expressed an interest in whether the institution of higher learning authored the report and whether the report was complete. Mr. Kent stated that the report was authored by George Mason University staff, and it is not yet complete. In response to a question about the JCC, Mr. Kent stated that the report had not yet been presented to the organization.

ACCESSIBLE MEETING LOCATIONS (UPDATE)

The AAC received an update on accessible meeting locations. Mr. Blake stated that his office collaborated with the Office of the Board Secretary to review a number of locations to ensure they meet accessibility standards.

FARE POLICY – STRATEGY MEETING

The AAC briefly discussed fare policy. Dr. Posner stated that the Board had a robust discussion on Capital Improvement Projects, such as lighting, which is fully funded in the FY2016 budget. Metro plans to complete its work on lighting in station mezzanines in 2016. However, the timeframe for additional track bed lighting has been extended to for completion in FY2018.

There was also a discussion on the eliminated of bus routes and the impact on MetroAccess customers. Dr. Posner stated that list of affected routes are redundant and will not affect MetroAccess. Metro has a process in place to analyze routes against MetroAccess ridership before proposing for elimination. He stated that Metro has been no proposal for an increase in fares for MetroAccess at this time.

BUS/RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The BRS had a robust discussion on sensitivity awareness training with the Office of Bus Transportation and the Office of Rail Transportation. Both areas provide instruction in one or more of the following areas related to the Americans with Disabilities Act: service animals; lowering the bus for customers to alight; priority seating announcements; hands-on instruction with wheelchair securement; and safety. The customer service training is administered to all employees at every level and coaching classes are conducted for supervisors.

The AAC thanked the Office of Bus Transportation and the Office of Rail Transportation for their commitment to improve the traveling experience of customers with disabilities using the fixed route system.

METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Due to the inclement weather, the February 2015 MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) was canceled. However, during the January 2015 meeting, MAS received an update on DC Taxi Project for Dialysis Customers. The project allows customers to take a taxi round trip to dialysis center. MetroAccess customers residing in the District of Columbia who are traveling to/from a dialysis facility or another medical facility that provides dialysis services are eligible to use in the DC Taxi services as an alternative to MetroAccess.

The MAS also discussed its work plan and added the following items: 1) interfacing with hospitals and other medical facility administrators about their practices for MetroAccess

vehicles parking or drop-off and pick-up locations for customers; and 2) evacuation training during emergencies in the rail system.

Recruitment

The AAC briefly discussed the recruitment for new members. Dr. B. Moore Gwynn, AAC Coordinator, stated that the 2015 AAC recruitment period open on March 1, 2015 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. 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.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.



Accessibility Advisory Committee

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 Washington, DC 20001
 202-962-6060

STATUS OF FY 2015 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info – 26	Marketing (Update)	4/6/15	AAC	Emergency Evacuation signage; Priority Seating campaign signs; and advertising campaigns that include people with disabilities	
Info – 18	Age-Friendly DC Task Force (Update)	5/4/15	AAC	Update (Follow-up discussion after event - November 2013).	
Info - 19	Momentum and Long Range Plan (update)	6/1/15	AAC		

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

COMPLETED - FY 2015 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

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

COMPLETED - FY 2015 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

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
Info - 21	AAC By-Laws Work Group	1/5/15	AAC	AAC Final Vote	1/5/15

COMPLETED - FY 2015 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

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

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