



**AAC**

## Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

### **Meeting Minutes: May 5, 2014**

#### **ATTENDEES**

Present: Patrick Sheehan (Chair), Phil Posner (Vice-Chair), Dr. Tapan Banerjee (2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair), Elver Ariza-Silva, Carolyn Bellamy, Heidi Case, Darrell Drake, Chanelle Houston, Regina Lee, Dr. Brian Miller, Mary Jane Owen, Doris Ray, Denise Rush, and Paul Semelfort.

#### **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 April 10, 2014 meeting minutes were approved.

The Chairman's Report to the Metro Board, dated May 5, 2014, was approved as amended.

#### **QUARTERLY MEETING WITH BOARD EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIPS**

The AAC discussed its Quarterly Meeting with Metro's Executive Board. The AAC leadership focused its comments on the "sustainability" portion of the SAS (Safe, Accessible and Sustainable) plan. Chair Sheehan shared his reflections of the meeting, stating that the Board was open and receptive to the needs of seniors and people with disabilities. The Board's comments focused on quality of life issues; sustaining MetroAccess service; and opening such discussions to larger audiences.

Christian Kent, Assistant General Manager, Access Services, reported that the Board members were pleased with the meeting and they acknowledged the impact fares have on customers and their quality of life. He added that in a resolution the Board has requested that the issue of MetroAccess sustainability be studied further with feedback requested by June 2015. The Study will focus on the delivery of paratransit services, demographics, nature of disabilities and age, accessibility of fixed route services, and will benchmark other specialized transportation services. The Board has also corresponded with the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) on the issue of MetroAccess sustainability. TPB and the Council of Governments (COG) will support these efforts with a forum for stakeholders. The forum is expected to take place in late summer or early fall of this year. Additionally, COG will host a bus stop workshop. Members of the AAC Bus Stop Accessibility Work Group should consider participating and the AAC Access for All members (AFA) can provide updates.

Mr. Kent commented that quality of life issues are not just a regional issue, but a concern for all transportation organizations. A number of federal agencies, "think tank" organizations, and institutions of higher learning are being encouraged to involve themselves in efforts to address the matter. Upon motion, the AAC voted to have the overview of the study presented to the full committee, and updates reported to the respective subcommittee.

Chair Sheehan stated that the Board requested the AAC assistance in locating accessible locations for Metro hearings, meetings, and other public activities. Loyda Sequeira, Board Secretary, stated that her office is coordinating with the Office of ADA Policy and Planning (ADAP) to identify accessible locations in each jurisdiction. Ms. Sequeira stated that the goal is to develop a list of several locations that Metro can use to host meetings. In response to a question about the checklist for accessible meeting space, Carol Lopez, Accessibility Design Review Manager, stated that the list provided by the AAC is comprehensive and will be used to grade locations. In response to a question about demonstrating progress on this issue with the Board, Ms. Lopez stated that ADAP will provide feedback at the next AAC meeting. The AAC re-iterated its interest in prior notification of Metro public hearings and meetings. Ms. Sequeira stated that Metrorail generally holds public hearings in the spring and Metrobus generally holds hearings in the fall. She stated that Takoma Park hearings will be held during the week of June 16, 2014 and staff will provide the AAC with information on the site selection process prior to the hearing.

The AAC expressed an interest in transportation to/from public hearing locations. Ms. Rush stated that each member represents an area with transportation services. The public needs to be informed about the local service and how the service may have an impact. The DC Circulator recently held a meeting on fares and the jurisdictional fares are taken into consideration when Metro is considering raising its fares. Ms. Case stated that local jurisdictions should be following the law and using same formula as Metro, which is two times the bus fare. Ms. Bellamy stated that she agrees with Ms. Rush and that the AAC should be notified about public meetings in the surrounding jurisdictions because of the potential impacts. Mr. Kent stated that jurisdictional fares are tied to the MetroAccess Fare Policy and hence the AAC should contact each jurisdiction and request notification of their public transportation meetings and events. Dr. Posner stated that the DC Circulator's parent company also has a contract with Metro and suggested that ACCS make the initial contact. Mr. Kent stated that the AAC is interested in more than just a simple notification of hearings, and contacting the contractors would be moving away from the issue. The AAC should communicate its position related to fare policy to the jurisdictions. Additionally, Metro's Board has members from each jurisdiction and they will be copied on that type of communication.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

The AAC discussed the recruitment for new members. Mr. Kent stated that the Board is set to appoint nine new members to the AAC. He added that having the ear of the Board is very important and members should not take the responsibility lightly. As established committee members it is important that you set a good example that models openness, passion, and respect for all opinions. Members must be mindful that there is a larger audience listening, and all differences must remain professional. Staff is at every meeting and available to assist any member.

A few years ago, the AAC reported to the General Manager. Chair Sheehan stated that the AAC reporting relationship to the Board is a recent occurrence. This new reporting status speaks volumes as to how Metro views and interacts with the disability community. Chair Sheehan stated that the AAC has a stellar reputation, its counsel is respected, and hard work recognized. As the AAC celebrates its "win" on fares for the disability community, it should also look ahead towards the next fiscal year and the work ahead.

Ms. Owen expressed an interest in member bios and a list of staff. Ms. Lee expressed an interest in whether any of the new members attended AAC meetings prior to being appointed. She stated the importance of having the right temperament to serve. Ms. Bellamy suggested a mentor program or buddy system to help new members acclimate to the work of the AAC. Dr. Banerjee expressed an interest in a welcome packet for new members. Mr. Kent stated that every new member receives a packet that includes member bios, and they attend an orientation session. Staff will forward the current bio list to all members.

The AAC was also provided an update on Metro's Silver Line victim's exercise. A new date has been set for Sunday, June 22, 2014. In response to questions about the location, time, and availability of transportation, Dr. B. Moore Gwynn, AAC Coordinator, stated that the location will be the Spring Hill Station; the time has not been determined; and ADAP will coordinate the transportation.

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

The Bus/Rail Subcommittee (BRS) discussed Metro's texting program for non-emergency situations occurring in the fixed route system. Customers can text non-emergency information to 696873 or use the letters MYMTPD. They should provide the following information in their initial text: 1) description of a person or problem; 2) where the incident is occurred; 3) train or bus number including direction of the route; and 4) the time of the incident. Metro provides an automatic response to all texts and all the information is confidential.

The BRS also discussed the custodial and grounds service in the Metrorail system. The discussion focused on individuals who make use of Metro's elevators as restrooms. Although Metro has installed cameras to deter this type of activity, Metro has seen a rise in incidents on elevators outside of the normal business hours at the Takoma,

Shady Grove, Gallery Place, DuPont Circle, and Bethesda stations. Despite PLNT's efforts and often immediate responses to incidents, many members agreed that PLNT's custodial and maintenance schedules pose challenges to addressing elevator cleanliness issues. The BRS thanked PLNT for working to keep Metrorail stations and grounds clean, but recommends that the overall approach to elevator cleanliness be reviewed.

### **METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**

The MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) reviewed the development of a real-time communication system for MetroAccess service. The real-time communication system will be phased-in after Metro updates the maps and GPS technology on MetroAccess vehicles. Currently Trapeze is working to develop short messaging service (SMS), text, and email messaging for smart phone communication related to confirmation of reservations, trip reminders, vehicle arrival times, and sending mass communication of service issues with MetroAccess. To ensure all customers have access to these benefits Metro is investigating other options for customers who do not have access to smart phones.

In a review of the MAS agenda, Chair Semelfort requested a change for the May 19, 2014 MAS meeting. The MetroAccess seatbelt policy will replace the on-time contractor performance report. Mr. Ariza-Silva expressed an interest in a presentation on visitor's status for MetroAccess riders. Frank Roth, Director, Eligibility Certification and Outreach, stated that the policy is standard, and he can provide a full presentation at an upcoming meeting. The presentation on MetroAccess Visitor status was added to the MAS work plan.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Barbara Millville, President, National Capital Citizen for Low Vision (NCCLV), made a comment about meeting materials in accessible formats. She stated that as a low-vision person it is difficult to view the materials in their current format, even with a magnifier. Large print or having the materials in advance will assist all members of the public. Mr. Kent stated that Metro provides reasonable accommodations upon request.

Ms. Millville also requested a follow-up on the issue of appointing a Chairperson for the BRS Station Lighting Work Group. Dr. Miller, Chair, BRS, stated that Anthony Stephens has agreed to serve as a Co-Chair of the Work Group along with Doris Ray. Dr. Moore Gwynn stated that the next BRS Station Lighting Work Group meeting will be held on May 12<sup>th</sup> immediately following the BRS meeting.

Chair Sheehan stated that as the AAC reviews its By-laws, member should consider allowing members of affinity groups to lead or co-lead work groups. Mr. Kent stated that the current By-laws allow that type of participation.

Carol Carter Walker, Chair, Metro's Riders Advisory Council (RAC), congratulated the AAC on its winning strategy, which had a significant impact on the MetroAccess fares. She stated that she attended most of the public hearing and commended AAC members

for their attendance. Ms. Carter Walker stated that the RAC also has a quarterly meeting with Metro's Executive Board. The Board has suggested that the RAC use the AAC's Station Lighting Study as a model for the RAC. Ms. Carter Walker expressed an interest in collaborating with the AAC on bus stop accessibility because improving accessibility helps everyone.

Chair Sheehan, thanked Ms. Carter Walker for her kind words about the AAC, and added that the AAC is interested in collaborating with the RAC on many issues. Together there is a lot of ground to cover to improve services for all riders. Chair Sheehan stated that he appreciates Ms. Carter Walker leadership on the RAC.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Dr. Posner reminded members to provide input on William Staderman's request for approval of an abstract for the TASH Conference. TASH's 2014 Annual Conference with a theme of "Be the Future" will be held December 3 through December 5, 2014 in Washington, D.C.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

The AAC discussed MetroAccess policy on seatbelts. Ms. Lee expressed an interest whether the seatbelt policy has changed and changes communicated to customers. Mr. Kent stated that there was no change in the policy. The new process brings Metro in compliance with its safety policy and the law. The four point tie-down is not optional; however, the shoulder seatbelt can be waived under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) unless the transit agency has a policy requiring all customers to wear them. According to the state law in Maryland and Virginia, Metro is required to maintain records on customers who are exempt from the policy under the ADA, in addition to the law requiring that each exemption be recommended by a physician. Mr. Kent stated that information about the seatbelt policy will be included in the new MetroAccess Customer Guide. Enforcing the seatbelt policy sends the message to customers that MetroAccess service is a safe and efficient form of transportation. Mr. Roth added that the laws of Maryland and Virginia are clear; they specifically state that a seatbelt waiver can be granted if there is a medical reason. The form has a letter of instruction for the doctor.

Ms. Rush stressed the need for consistency in communicating the seatbelt policy. She reported that on a regular basis, she uses MetroAccess service with a seatbelt around her waist only. Only recently has a driver insisted that she wear the seatbelt around the shoulder. Ms. Rush stated that she told the driver that she could not wear the seatbelt around her right shoulder. The driver escalated the issue to a road supervisor and eventually to Allison Anderson. Ms. Rush stated that she was told to comply with the policy or she could not be transported and that Metro's Transit Police would be called to remove her from the vehicle if necessary. Ms. Rush stated that Metro is her family car and she would have no way home. She reluctantly got out of the vehicle to prevent any further embarrassment from this situation. Ms. Rush also stated that she requested the seatbelt waiver at the March 10, 2014 AAC meeting and just received the form prior

to today's meeting. Mr. Kent apologized for the inconsistent messages about safety, and for how the situation escalated. Mr. Kent stated that Metro does not use its transit police to resolve customer service issues that a driver or supervisor could handle.

Mr. Ariza-Silva stated that he encountered a similar situation related to the seatbelt policy. He stated that the driver told him that he must comply with the policy or produce a medical form. Unaware of the changes in the policy, Mr. Ariza-Silva stated he complied, however it was a painful ride. Ms. Bellamy expressed an interest in the impact of the seatbelt policy on service and safety. She stated that everyone is aware how seatbelts can save lives, and it would be misguided to allow customers not to wear seatbelts. Ms. Bellamy commented that the shoulder seatbelt saved her life in an accident on MetroAccess. It's important not to take this issue lightly. Upon motion, the AAC voted that the information about the shoulder seatbelt policy be added to the MetroAccess IVR and that drivers have additional waivers in multiple languages with them on the van to provide to customers upon request.

Mr. Kent discussed Metro's Contractor Badge Policy. Metro's security policy requires that all visitors have an escort while in the building. Therefore, AAC member contractor badges will not have access to the interior of the building. In response to a question about exceptions, Mr. Kent stated that there were no exceptions to the policy and members should return badges to Dr. Moore Gwynn upon expiration.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.



**Accessibility Advisory Committee**

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 Washington, DC 20001  
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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 - 24	Accessible Meeting Locations	6/2/14			
Info - 25	Work Plan Accomplishments	6/2/14		Round up of yearly accomplishments (all committees)	
Info - 26	Joint Meeting with RAC	6/2/14		Meeting scheduled for June 9 <sup>th</sup> BRS meeting	

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

**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 <sup>th</sup> 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
Info – 20	Metro FY15 Budget (Fare Policy Change and Regional Study)	4/7/14	AAC	Presenter: Christian T. Kent, AGM	4/7/14
Info – 21	Quarterly Meeting with Board Executive Leadership	4/7/14	AAC	Completed	4/7/14
Info – 18	By-laws Review	3/10/14	AAC	AAC Developed a Work Group. Meeting immediately following MAS - April 21, 2014 meeting	4/7/14

**COMPLETED - FY 2014 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS**

Info – 13	Age-Friendly DC Task Force (Update)	11/4/13	AAC	Follow-up discussion after the event November 2013 event. Move to 2015 Work Plan.	5/5/14
*Info – 22	Annual Report: Bus Stop Accessibility	TBD	AAC	Move to 2015 Work Plan	5/5/14
Info - 23	Accessible Bus Stops	9/2/14	AAC	Report by the Work Group. Move to 2015 Work Plan.	5/5/14
*Info - 27	The Study	5/5/14	AAC	Move to 2015 Work Plan. Feedback due to Board by June 2015	5/5/14

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