



## Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

### **Meeting Minutes: May 4, 2015**

#### **ATTENDEES**

Present: Patrick Sheehan, Dr. Phil Posner (Vice-Chair), Dr. Tappan Banerjee (2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair); Elver Ariza-Silva; Carolyn Bellamy; Brianne Burger, Heidi Case, Charlie Crawford, Marisa Laios, Dr. Brian Miller; Edward McEntee; Doris Ray, Denise Rush, Paul Semelfort, Anthony Stephens, Dr. William Staderman and Roger Stanley.

#### **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.

The April 6, 2015 meeting minutes were approved.

The Chair's Report to the Board, dated May 4, 2015, was approved as amended.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

A comment was made about the manner in which MetroAccess dispatchers schedule trips. The excessive time spent on vehicles can have a physically negative impact on a person's body. The customer stated that he recognizes that the paratransit service is shared ride; however, requested that more attention be given to scheduling of trips. Paul Semelfort, Chair, MetroAccess Subcommittee, stated that a member of MetroAccess staff would follow up before the conclusion of the meeting.

Phil Posner stated that replacement and new MetroAccess vehicles are included in Metro's FY15 Capital Budget. Dr. Posner suggested that the AAC view and comment on the new MetroAccess vehicles. Mr. Sheehan agreed and forwarded the issue to MetroAccess work plan.

A second comment was made about the length of time customers spend on a MetroAccess vehicle. The customer stated that on Wednesday, April 29, 2015, the return trip on MetroAccess was four hours long. The customer encourages Metro to review the process of scheduling and offer training to dispatchers that include ways to reassign and track vehicles lessening lengthy trips on MetroAccess. Mr. Semelfort stated that the member of MetroAccess staff would follow up before the end of the meeting.

Heidi Case made a comment about the momentum that can result when a Metrobus vehicle accelerates. Some Bus Operators accelerate to a high speed only to quickly decelerate at the next stop. The gravity force of these actions pulls customers forward than jerks them back. When this occurs, it makes it difficult for customers standing or in

the wheelchair securement area to hold and maintain balance. Ms. Case stated that was not a safe operation of the vehicle. Christiaan Blake, Director, ADA Policy and Planning stated that he would forward her comments to the appropriate office.

Additionally, Ms. Case stated that some Bus Operators do not pay enough attention to customers who verbally requests stops. She noted that she generally makes a request at least one stop ahead of the requested stop; however, on several occasions, the Bus Operator passes the stop. When the bus arrives at the next bus stop, she is unable to alight the bus because the stop is inaccessible. The bus traveled another full block before she was able to alight. Mr. Blake suggested that the issue be forward to Metro's Customer Relations at (202) 637-1328 as well as provide him the information for follow up.

### **AAC BY-LAWS - APPROVED**

The AAC discussed the approved By-laws. At their April 2015 meeting Metro's Board ratified the AAC By-laws. With a round of applause, the AAC thanked Mr. Semelfort, Chair, AAC Work Group, and Tappan Banerjee for all their leadership and direction on this project. Mr. Semelfort stated it was an AAC team effort. All the meetings, long discussions over the internet and during the meeting produced a solid document.

The list of major changes in the new document are as follows:

- Changing the AAC members' terms from a maximum of four (4) three year terms to three (3) four-year terms
- Establishing an attendance policy for the AAC and both subcommittees
- Changing the officer selection process to elevate the Vice-chair of the AAC or of a subcommittee to the Chair position until an election can be held
- Adding the quarterly meetings between the AAC Leadership and the Board Executive Committee to the AAC's responsibilities
- Requiring meeting materials in accessible format upon request and that the location for meetings be accessible
- In the "Quorum" section, the change is to clarify that a quorum is not required to conduct subcommittee business, as subcommittee business is forwarded to the AAC for vote, and the AAC requires a quorum. This provision is to ensure subcommittees can be productive when attendance is an issue.

Dr. Posner expressed an interest as to when the new terms begin for members. B. Moore Gwynn, AAC Coordinator stated that the change in terms, only impact new or reappointed members, with terms begin in July 2015. In response to a question about partial terms, Dr. Moore Gwynn stated that the new appointee would fill the position to complete the remainder of the incomplete term.

Ms. Case expressed an interest in the elevation process for officers. Dr. Moore Gwynn stated that when a Chair steps down mid-term for any reason, the Vice-chair is automatically elevated to the next level until an election can be held. Elections are usually held at the next AAC meeting or next available date.

Charlie Crawford expressed an interest in why the terms of officers were not changed to reflect the same changes as member terms. Dr. Banerjee stated that the terms of officers was not an area that the work group nor the AAC sought to change.

In response to a question about materials dissemination, Dr. Moore Gwynn stated although the document does not specifically state business days, it is implied and materials would be distributed three days prior to the meeting.

On the issue of attendance, many members expressed an interest in the number of absences required before membership is placed under review. Dr. Banerjee stated that issues of illness generally are not counted as an absence. Brian Miller commented that the approved By-laws also require members to be present for two-thirds of the meeting. Dr. Moore Gwynn stated that Metro's Board expects members to be fully engaged and that means attending meetings. It is important for members to understand that the lack of attendance is not an automatic termination from the committee. Metro's legal team added a due process clause similar to the one in Rider's Advisory Council (RAC) By-laws related to attendance.

Mr. Sheehan stated that in all his years serving, there has never been an issue. AAC members are dedicated. In response to a question about whether work groups were included in the attendance policy, Mr. Sheehan stated that attendance to those meetings are not part of the equation.

### **ACC QUARTERLY MEETING WITH BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The AAC discussed the upcoming Quarterly Leadership Meeting. The meeting has been rescheduled to May 28, 2015 immediately following Metro's Board meeting. In addition to comments made at the April 2015 BRS meeting, the AAC added the following points to the agenda: the education and training of first responders to work with the disability community; enhancing instructions for intercom users on the rail; and the need for the arm rest on the first forward facing seats near priority seating on the rail. The agenda will also include updates on the joint Priority Seating Work Group with member of the RAC; Silver Line; lighting; and bus stop projects.

Dr. Posner reminded members that Metro's Board has new members. This will mean that the AAC will have to reintroduce itself and its agenda for "Safe, Accessible and Sustainable" public transportation.

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

The Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) discussed the unveiling of Metro's new 7000 series railcar. All of the AAC recommendations for accessibility were met except two: (1) the placement of the wheelchair parking spaces; and (2) the inclusion of arm rests on the first forward facing seat near priority seating. Although the new cars feature more handrails and bars for holding, those safety features are missing in the first forward-facing seating, leaving customers with limited capacity nothing to hold onto or push upon to rise from their seats. The BRS recommends that the armrests be returned to the first forward facing seats near priority seating on the 7000 series railcars.

The BRS discussed solutions to the challenge of accessing a railcar when there is a gap between the train and the platform. At times, overcoming the gaps can be difficult for some members of the disability community. To alleviate this issue, Metro is applying standards to minimize the horizontal and vertical gaps. These standards will be applied to all new stations. The AAC has offered some preliminary suggestions including the use of ramps; researching best practices from other transit properties; and developing a list of locations where this issue is most pervasive on Metro's website. We will continue to work with staff as they develop solutions.

The BRS also discussed the need for fixed route service at a new development in Prince George's County. The current plans do not include a bus stop at the MGM National Harbor. The BRS believes that a stop would serve the community by providing public transit options to employees and customers of the casino. The BRS will continue to keep abreast of this issue and other developments around the region where access to public transportation is an issue. Additionally, the BRS discussed the impact of discontinued buses on the disability community and received updates from the Station Lighting and Priority Seating Work Groups.

Dr. Posner noted that in the Board's Subcommittee on Customer Service, the issue of lighting was discussed. He stated that Metro's first priority is to repair tunnel lighting in the rail stations. In response to a question about track lighting, Dr. Posner stated that it is still a priority.

### **METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**

The MAS received an update on the MetroAccess Long-Term Sustainability Study. The Study's forecast for the service note that because people are living longer, it is possible to see an increase in ridership from 2 million MetroAccess customers to 3.1 million MetroAccess customers, just between the years 2015-2025.

The Department of Access Services is evaluating a number of alternatives to MetroAccess, to include pilot programs such as the DC TransportDC service and the Maryland human services transportation alternative, CAPS. Some social service agencies have hired other companies to serve their customers who use MetroAccess. With these projects, the jurisdictions are able to serve more people and save money. The jurisdictional contribution in some areas is less because they manage their own

paratransit system such as the as Specialized Transit for Arlington Residents (STAR) service in Arlington County, Virginia.

The Board recognizes that MetroAccess is a vital service and is considering all options in ensuring that the service is provided in the most efficient and cost effective manner. The Board will receive its final report and recommendations in June 2015.

The MAS also discussed the MetroAccess Knowledge and Usage Survey. The survey focused on the overall satisfaction to MetroAccess Service. The discussion focused on route efficiency, and language access.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

The AAC briefly discussed other paratransit options. Metro has a pilot program with taxis known as DC Transport. Ms. Case expressed an interest in Metro creating another pilot with Seabury Connector. She stated the transportation service is for seniors who reside in DC. Mr. Blake stated that the DC Transport pilot program has been a huge success and Metro has engaged Seabury Connector. Seabury is funded by the DC Office of Aging, while the DC Transport Pilot program is funded by DC Department of Transportation and the DC Taxi Cab Commission. Through the pilot program, Metro has demonstrated that alternative transportation programs work because the customers are enjoying better service while the jurisdiction pays less than it would have for a comparable MetroAccess trip.

Members were reminded that the BRS Station Lighting Work Group will hold its next meeting on May 11, 2015 immediately following the BRS meeting. The AAC Priority Seating Work Group will also hold a meeting. This meeting is scheduled for May 18, 2015 immediately following the MAS meeting. This Work Group is a joint effort with the RAC. All members are welcome to attend the meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.



**Accessibility Advisory Committee**

600 Fifth Street NW  
 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 – 29	Elimination of Paper Farecards	6/1/15	AAC	Presenter: James Bongiorno	
Info – 30	Quarterly Meeting with Board Executive Leadership	6/1/15	AAC	Update	
Info – 18	Age-Friendly DC Task Force (Update)	6/1/15	AAC	Update (Follow-up discussion after event - November 2013).	
Info - 19	Momentum and Long Range Plan (update)	7/6/15	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 <sup>th</sup> 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
Info – 27	Marketing (Update)	4/6/15	AAC	Emergency Evacuation signage; Priority Seating campaign signs; and advertising campaigns that include people with disabilities	4/6/15
Info – 28	By-laws	5/4/15	AAC	Board Approved: April 23, 2015	5/4/15

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