



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

Meeting Minutes: October 6, 2014

ATTENDEES

Present: Patrick Sheehan (Chair), Dr. Phil Posner (Vice-Chair), Tapan Banerjee (2nd Vice-Chair), Elver Ariza-Silva, Carolyn Bellamy, Marc Brenman, Heidi Case, Marisa Laios, Phillippa Mezile, Brian Miller, Edward McEntee, Mary Kay McMahon, Mary Jane Owen, Doris Ray, Denise Rush, Paul Semelfort, and Anthony Stephens.

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 September 2, 2014 meeting minutes were approved as amended.

The Chairman's Report to the Metro Board, dated October 6, 2014, was approved as amended.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

A comment was made about the MetroAccess No Show/Late Cancellation suspension policy. The customer stated that there are times when their MetroAccess drop-off is so late that they are already within the Late Cancellation window for their return pick-up trip. When the customer attempts to cancel the return trip, they are issued a No Show/Late Cancellation penalty. This is an issue because too many late cancellations or no shows can result in a suspension from the service. Ms. Case stated that she had a similar experience with the service and was able to cancel before a penalty was imposed. She suggested that MetroAccess dispatchers contact customers and ask whether they want the returned trip time adjusted. Omari June, Director, MetroAccess Services, stated that a member of his staff will follow-up with the customer at the end of the meeting.

A comment was made about the removal of bus stops and its impact on MetroAccess users. The customer stated that frequently she would travel to a location in Glenarden, MD using MetroAccess service. Over a year ago, the stop was removed and MetroAccess no longer offers service to that location. Ms. Bellamy stated that this is a recurring issue for many MetroAccess customers especially those who reside in the suburbs. In an effort to bring a resolution to the affected customers, she encouraged the AAC to revisit this issue again. Mr. June stated that a member of his staff will follow-up with the customer at the end of the meeting.

QUARTERLY MEETING WITH BOARD EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

The AAC discussed the upcoming Quarterly Meeting with the Executive Leadership of Metro's Board of Directors, scheduled for October 23, 2014 immediately following Metro's Board meeting. The discussion centered on the best approach for discussing with the Board the impact of bus stop elimination and consolidation on the MetroAccess service and customers. Many members agreed that comments from the public were occurring too frequently and that the issue needs to be reviewed. Ms. Rush stressed the importance of the disability community's presence at the public hearings related to bus service changes, adding that today, Southern Prince George's County will probably lose service, but tomorrow it could be Montgomery County or Fairfax.

A comment from the public stated that bus stop elimination is a real concern for many MetroAccess customers; adding that a change in bus stop location could mean the elimination of service for customers not grandfathered into MetroAccess, and agreed the discussion should be broadened to include the MetroAccess Grandfathering policy.

Ms. Owen suggested that the discussion be broadened to include the MetroAccess grandfathering policy. Dr. Posner stated that the MetroAccess system bloomed faster than expected, and that capacity and affordability became key concerns. Metro then aligned the service with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to make the service more manageable. To ensure the policy did not have a negative impact on existing customers, certain MetroAccess customers were allowed to continue to travel without the new service area restrictions (grandfathered).

Christian Kent, Assistant General Manager, Department of Access Services, stated that this policy (grandfathering) is a tough issue and Metro understands the challenges faced by customers. At that time, the service was becoming unsustainable, and to solve the issue many wanted to cut expenses. Mr. Kent, however, sought a balanced approach that would reduce overall cost while continuing to deliver the improved service customers had come to expect. The Board then aligned the service area to the definition in the ADA, and allowed grandfathered MetroAccess customers to continue to travel under the previous policy. Mr. Kent recommended that the AAC discuss the issue with the Board, along with the need for specialized transportation throughout the region, and be prepared for a discussion on the cost of service.

Dr. Posner stated that the AAC Executive Leadership meeting with the Board would be a good time to talk about how the local region can assist in this issue. He suggested that current MetroAccess customers placed outside of the service area due to bus route changes be automatically grandfathered, and not switched over to another service. Mr. Kent stated that another approach would be to develop a process on how to avoid bus service changes before they negatively affect MetroAccess service. This would mitigate the need to amend grandfathering.

Chair Sheehan stated that from the discussion of the Committee, it is apparent that the AAC should discuss this issue further. Ms. Owen suggested that the AAC use census data to paint the picture and advocate for expansion of MetroAccess services. Upon motion, the AAC moved the MetroAccess grandfather policy discussion to MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) for further study, with a deliverable in February 2015.

The AAC also discussed bus stop accessibility. Mr. Kent stated that that the Board sees bus stop accessibility as an important issue and staff will be providing an update at the October 9, 2014 Customer Service and Operations Committee meeting. He stated that the initial discussion with the Board proposed a new Metro standard for an accessible bus stop, which added an accessible path to the stop, which the Board adopted. Mr. Stephens suggested that the upcoming presentation highlight universal design in the paths to bus stops. The accessible path will make it safer for all customers using the bus stop, not just customers with disabilities. Many members agreed. Mr. Kent stated that all AAC members are welcome to attend the Board's subcommittee meeting.

The AAC recommended the following topics for discussion with the Board: 1) impact of bus stop elimination on MetroAccess service; 2) MetroAccess Grandfathering policy; 3) Neutral Host Project (cellular service); and 4) regional bus stop improvements. Dr. Posner stated that the quarterly meetings are held in the Jackson Graham Building (JGB) Lobby-level meeting room, and are open to the public.

AAC BY-LAW WORK GROUP (Update)

The AAC continued its discussion on the AAC By-Laws. Mr. Semelfort, Chair, AAC By-Laws Work Group, stated that eleven members had completed the AAC governance questionnaire. As requested, staff compiled the responses and highlighted the majority opinions. The AAC By-Laws Work Group will review the information for consideration into the final document. Mr. Semelfort stated that the Work Group would meet on October 20th, immediately following the MAS meeting, and added that all AAC members are invited to participate.

AAC ADMINISTRATIVE DISCUSSION

Frank Roth, Director, Office of Eligibility Certification and Outreach, stated that Metro would hold its Third Annual Accessibility Excellence Awards on Wednesday, November 19, 2014, at the JGB Lobby-level meeting room from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The awards are in recognition of outstanding contributions to the region's disability community and the accessibility of Metro.

The Accessibility Excellence Awards event is also the occasion where the Richard W. Hedding Award and the Dr. Rosalyn Simon Award are presented to deserving individuals. The Hedding award is in honor of the AAC's first Chairman who led the cause of accessibility on Metrorail. The Rosalyn Simon Award is in honor of Dr. Rosalyn Simon, a renowned expert on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and champion of accessibility, and will be presented to an industry professional serving the disability community.

The AAC discussed nominations for the 2014 Richard W. Hedding Accessible Transportation Award. Nominations were submitted for one AAC members and one organization. After much debate, the AAC recommended that members should have the opportunity to vote via ballot during the AAC meeting. Metro will notify the honoree immediately, and the public announcement of the honoree will be forthcoming.

BUS/RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The BRS had an open discussion of mandatory securement for the fixed route system. The topic was an action item from the AAC's first quarterly meeting with Metro's Executive Board. The Committee had a vigorous discussion with many expressing strong opposition to a mandatory securement policy for fixed route service. Currently, Metro does not have a mandatory securement policy for the fixed route system and the majority of members agreed that Metro should continue to give customers "choice."

The BRS also discussed lighting maintenance for bus shelters at Metrorail stations and thanked staff for its efforts to maintain adequate lighting inside and outside the rail system.

METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The MAS discussed MetroAccess Customer satisfaction through the lens of peer transportation agencies. The research was conducted by the New York Metropolitan Transit Authority, included eleven transportation agencies for the 2011 calendar year and FY10/11. Metro ranks seventh among our peer agencies. MAS members were pleased that Metro was included in the study. The MAS also continued its discussion on the impact of bus stop consolidation on MetroAccess service.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.



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STATUS OF FY 2015 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info - 20	AAC By-Laws Work Group	11/3/14	AAC	Full Report and vote on governance questions.	
*Info - 17	MetroAccess Long-term Sustainability Study	12/1/14	AAC		
Info - 18	Age-Friendly DC Task Force (Update)	1/5/15	AAC	Update (Follow-up discussion after event - November 2013).	
Info - 19	Momentum and Long Range Plan (update)	2/2/15	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

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