

**AAC****Accessibility Advisory Committee**

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

Meeting Minutes: March 5, 2012**Attendees, Review of Agenda, and Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Patrick Sheehan called the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Present: Patrick Sheehan (Chairman), Susan Holland, Paul Semelfort, Regina Lee, Debbie Brown, William Staderman, Doris Ray, Marilyn Lutter, Emily Singer Lucio, Darrell Drake, Jessica Hunt, and Carolyn Bellamy. Not present: Dr. Phil Posner (Vice-Chair), Georges Aguehoude, Tapan Banerjee, Elver Ariza-Silva, Michelle Clark, David Winser, and Brian Hurley. The March 5, 2012 agenda and February 6, 2012 minutes were approved. The Chairman's report to the Metro Board dated March 5, 2012 was approved with corrections.

Public Comments

A question was made about how to locate items lost in the system. Staff reported that Metro's Lost and Found is located in Hyattsville, MD. Inquiries about lost items can be made in person Tuesday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. or on-line anytime. A request was also made about the dates for the MetroAccess Fare Media Exchange. Staff reported that MetroAccess fare media exchange was held on February 23 and 24, 2012. Another fare media exchange will be held on March 15 and 16, 2012 at the Pentagon and Metro Center Sales Offices.

Metro Board of Directors Strategic Planning Message

Mr. Sheehan welcomed Catherine Hudgins, Chair, Metro Board of Directors, and Mr. Patrick Wojahn, Chairman, Access For All Committee (AFA), Transportation Planning Board. Mr. Sheehan thanked Chair Hudgins for her support of the AAC and commended Ms. Carol Dillon Kissal, Deputy General Manager/Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Christian Kent, Assistant General Manager of Access Services, and staff for their efforts on the MetroAccess fare policy and paratransit contract.

Chair Hudgins discussed the Metro Board of Directors Strategic Plan. Its strategic goals are to improve mobility in the region, to support the development of complete communities, and to ensure financial sustainability. Additionally, the Board will focus on policy, accountability and transparency in the delivery of safe, reliable, and cost effective transportation services.

The main focus of the Board, the General Manager and every employee at Metro has been and continues to be safety. Metro works with our external stakeholders at the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), Tri-State Oversight Committee (TOC) and the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) to achieve our safety objectives.

There have been many safety improvements to the fixed route and paratransit system that have led to a safer environment for Metro customers. Chair Hudgins reported that Metro invested one billion dollars in the replacement of 1000 series railcars, track circuits and power cables, and is looking for continued support from funding partners in the region to sustain this initiative. Metro has also enhanced the safety and service delivery on MetroAccess and is working on the development of a new paratransit contract.

Chair Hudgins indicated that the Board reviews transportation matters holistically and considers complete communities as a critical element in the evaluation of transportation services. The assessment of complete communities is inclusive of how communities are built, where jobs will exist, how people will gain access to transit services, and the role Metro will play in the region. Metro's Board is interested in hearing from the AAC on areas where the disability community is impacted.

Mr. Sheehan thanked Chair Hudgins for her commitment to the AAC and for her service in improving public transportation for all riders including people with disabilities.

Status of Action Items from Previous Meetings

Mr. Sheehan reported that the accessibility issues with the Metro Budget Survey have been resolved, and the survey is open until March 21, 2012. Staff is also available at the hearings to assist customers in completing the survey. Mr. Kent reported that the telephone option related to the Town Hall Meetings is available to all customers of the system. MetroAccess riders were encouraged to leave their MetroAccess ID numbers for follow-up purposes only.

Open Discussion with Access For All Committee

The joint meeting of the AAC and the AFA began with a discussion on the MetroAccess contract and fare policy. Mr. Kent reported that the Request For Proposal (RFP) for the new MetroAccess contract will be ready in June 2012. Metro has incorporated ample time in the preparation of a new contract to increase community input. The selection of new contractor(s) will occur by end of the 2012 calendar year. This will allow more than sufficient time for the new contractor(s) to begin service in July 2013.

Mr. Kent also reported that the Vendor Conference, MetroAccess Town Hall Meetings and Focus Groups related to the new paratransit contract have been completed. The MetroAccess Business Model related to quality assurance, operation of the call center and service delivery was presented to the Metro Board of Directors.

As part of the process, Mr. Kent reported that benchmarking of other transit providers was performed. Some of the paratransit models under review were Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), King County Metro Transit, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) and Maryland Transit Administration (MTA). Metro is interested in

working with accessible transportation providers including taxi services, that can meet the needs of the customers and maintain Metro's standards.

There was discussion of the possibility of assigning contracts to multiple providers. Mr. Kent reported that having multiple providers creates an additional opportunity for accountability. He added that separating the functions provides greater transparency to Metro and the customers who use the service. Metro's goal is to attract companies that have the capability to address issues and adjust their operations to deal with those issues.

The AAC and the AFA also discussed MetroAccess Fare Policy. The AFA expressed a concern on the difficulty in determining the cost of a trip on MetroAccess. The MetroAccess Fare Policy Work Group is working on this issue and has developed a proposal that would cut fares or charge a flat fee. Mr. Sheehan reiterated the importance of completing the Metro's survey and attending the Public Hearings on the proposed FY13 Budget. Chair Hudgins stated that the Board's consideration of the cost of paratransit services is assessed along with its obligation to the operational needs and deficits in the budget and that Metro's Board has taken a keen interest in the impact of the proposed fare increases on MetroAccess customers. The Committees discussed the proposed fees for the use of paper farecards and cash in the fixed route system. Upon motion, the AAC recommended that there should be no penalty for users of cash or paper farecards. The AFA agreed and also recommended that the needs of older adults be thoroughly considered along with addressing fares for customers with disabilities.

AAC members praised Metro for adding Braille signage to the fareboxes on all Metrobuses. As of March 2012, the entire fleet has been completely equipped with accessible signage that would allow visually impaired customers to identify the bus numbers on Metrobus. The AAC also commended MetroAccess Safety Committee for their efforts in making the service safer for customers. Metro Transit Police Department was also recognized for their quick response to an incident at the West Hyattsville Metro Station in February 2012.

Bus/Rail Subcommittee Report

Ms. Holland reported that the Bus/Rail Subcommittee (BRS) discussed accessible bus stops with Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation. There are approximately 4,000 stops in the County and some bus stops are in need of accessibility improvements. The BRS will draft a letter to the Maryland State Highway Administration about more needed improvements to bus stops and shelters in Prince George's County.

The BRS was provided an update on the on ELIG's Travel Training Program. The new Travel Training contracts, awarded to Medical Transport Management, District of Columbia; Independence Now, Maryland; and ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia, Virginia, will employ a total of six travel trainers. Each site will function as a

satellite office of the Transit Accessibility Center to issue Reduced Fare Disability ID cards.

The Subcommittee discussed the Blue/Yellow Rush Plus service in the Metrorail System. All system maps and signage in the Metrorail system will change to reflect the new service pattern. The BRS recommended that the circle representing the line should have a greater contrast to distinguish the rush hour only disk from a regular line disk, and that train announcements of the line shift should be made on the platform, in the tunnel and a least two stations prior to the branch point of the line.

MetroAccess Subcommittee Report

Mr. Semelfort reported that the MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) discussed MetroAccess fare media exchange. Customers took advantage of the first MetroAccess fare media exchange dates. Mr. Semelfort again emphasized that a second fare media exchange is scheduled for March 15 and 16, 2012 at the Pentagon and Metro Center Sales Offices. All exchanges of fare media will be credited to MetroAccess EZ-pay accounts.

The MAS commended improvements made to MetroAccess service based on customer feedback from the MetroAccess Town Hall Meetings, and on the comprehensive review of hiring and training practices that was completed in 2011. Those improvements include enhanced background and reference checks, driver and dispatcher training, and scheduling efficiency. The AAC requested these actions be noted into to the Chairman's report to the Board. Representatives from MV Transportation recognized a MetroAccess operator from Challenger Transportation, Gaithersburg, MD for his professionalism, and excellent safety and service record.

Adjournment

Mr. Sheehan adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Attachment: Status of Committee Recommendations and Actions (completed items are reported once in the minutes and then tracked along with all pending recommendations and actions in the AAC Compiled Work Plan)



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STATUS OF FY 2012 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info -07	Review MetroAccess Fare Policy	5/2/2011	MACS	In light of the impact of the proposed fare adjustments on the fixed route, the Fare Policy Group will continue its discussion, add Bus/Rail fare policy to its topics and provide its recommendations to the Board report. Completed discussion of Bus/Rail and MetroAccess Fare Policy and presented to the Board.	3/12/12
Info -16	Complete Streets and Complete Communities	3/5/2012	AAC	Scheduled for May 7, 2012	