



Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
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BUS AND RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: August 12, 2013

In attendance: Dr. Brian Miller (Chair), Dr. William Staderman (Vice-Chair), Heidi Case (2nd Vice-Chair), Georges Aguehoude, Elver Ariza-Silva, Robert Brown, Kevin Hanretta, Chanelle Houston, Regina Lee, Dr. Phil Posner, Doris Ray, Denise Rush, Patrick Sheehan, and Anthony Stephens.

Call to Order

Chair Dr. Miller called the August 12, 2013 Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Review and Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The BRS approved the amended August 12, 2013 meeting agenda, and approved the July 8, 2013 meeting minutes as amended.

SmarTrip Offboard Recharging Stations

Jim Bongiorno, Treasury, discussed the design and purpose of Metro's new SmarTrip Offboard Recharging Stations. He stated that 1 in every 14 customers add value to their SmarTrip card onboard a Metrobus. These transactions can take anywhere from 5 to 30 seconds, and they are factors in reducing Metrobus on-time performance. To reduce the number of these transactions and improve Metrobus performance, Metro is going to deploy solar-powered offboard SmarTrip Recharging Stations at various bus stops across the jurisdictions. The District of Columbia is projected to receive 47, Maryland – 26, and Virginia – 26. Mr. Bongiorno stated the stations will be available in late 2014 depending on funding and jurisdictional cooperation.

Mr. Stephens expressed an interest in the locations of recharging stations in Maryland and Virginia. Mr. Bongiorno stated that recharging stations will be in locations where high numbers of onboard add-value transactions occur. At Metrorail stations in Maryland, for example, the devices will be placed at bus bays at Addison Road, New Carrollton, Silver Spring, and Suitland. In Virginia, loading stations will be placed at the Pentagon, Ballston, and Rosslyn Metrorail stations. Ms. Ray stated that the recharging stations at rail stations were not necessary because customers have an opportunity to add fare at the rail stations. Mr. Bongiorno stated that the data indicate there are a high number of onboard add-value transactions at Metrorail stations despite access to SmarTrip vending machines in the stations.

The recharging stations will also be placed at various bus stop locations in Maryland and Virginia, such as Campus Drive and Mulberry Lane; East West Highway and Harkins Road; New Hampshire Avenue; University Boulevard; Verse Mill Road; Columbia Pike; Leesburg Pike; Patrick Henry Drive and Brook Drive; Arlington Towers; Shirlington Transit Center; and Seven Corners Transit Station, just to name a few. In response to a question about the devices being at bus stops with shelters, Mr. Bongiorno stated the devices will be placed at bus stops with and without shelters.

Metro is considering two vendors: Parkeon and Cale, for the recharging stations, and require each to propose developing a machine that meets the following criteria: be used to solely add fare; be compatible with Metro's Nextfare System; and will be durable and work under all weather conditions. The BRS expressed an interest in safety and stated that this topic also was of interest to Metro's Rider's Advisory Council (RAC) because many of the proposed areas where the recharging stations will be located are not considered to be safe. Mr. Bongiorno stated that the proposed machines are tamper resistant and will be constructed from stainless steel. Customers will still have the option of onboard recharging and other options, when safe usage of the recharging stations comes into question. Metro does not advocate the any customer places themselves in harm's way. Dr. Posner suggested that for safety, Metro can place the devices in businesses. Mr. Bongiorno stated that some of the locations are near establishments where Metro offers a similar service, yet there are still a high number of onboard add-value transactions.

The recharging stations will have an audio feature, and the exterior covers of the machines will be graffiti proof. The BRS suggested that Metro consider the noise level in the placement of the devices. Recharging stations that are too close to street will have their sounds drowned out and make the device useless for customers that need the audio. In response to a question about language and interactive capabilities of the audio, Mr. Bongiorno stated that the audio will be available in Spanish and customers will be able to interact with audio. The BRS expressed an interest whether the proposed recharging stations will have a touch screen or button display. Mr. Bongiorno stated the machines will have button display with an LED panel.

The BRS expressed an interest in accessibility features of the proposed SmarTrip Recharging Stations. Mr. Bongiorno stated that he has worked closely with Metro's Office of ADA Policy and Planning (ADAP) in each phase of development. The machines will take paper currency, coin, debit, and credit cards. In response to a question about the direction of bills, Mr. Bongiorno stated that the machines will take bills in any direction. The machine will operate in the same manner as the farebox on Metrobuses and not give change. Ms. Houston expressed an interest in the height of the device. Mr. Bongiorno reiterated his collaboration with ADAP and stated that height of the recharging stations will be very similar to the height of the parking pay stations.

The BRS also expressed an interest in where the devices will be placed at the bus stops and the direction of the front of the machines. Dr. Staderman stated that the construction of some vending type machines make it difficult for customers who use mobility devices to get close enough to use the vending machines. Mr. Bongiorno stated that recharge stations will be placed opposite of the advertisement panel in bus shelters

and the frontal direction will depend on the space available around the bus stop. Dr. Staderman stated that customers who use mobility devices also use the opposite end to enter into the shelters and therefore it is equally important to keep that area open. Mr. Bongiorno stated that each bus stop is different some have obstacles near the shelters such as trash cans and tree box, but Metro will make every effort to ensure access to the bus stop, shelter, and devices are not restricted. Dr. Miller stated that some comments from the public were that the machines should be placed in consistent locations; the screen and text should have a good contrast; the machines should be test marketed with members of the disability community; and Metro should add the locations of the recharging stations on its website. Dr. Posner suggested that Metro advertise the machines using the announcement system on the Metrobus.

Metrorail Emergency Evacuation Poster

The BRS discussed the Metrorail Emergency Evacuation poster as part of the discussion on safety. Christiaan Blake, Director, ADAP, stated that an updating of this poster was spurred by an action item from the AAC's Leadership meeting with the Executive Committee of Metro's Board of Directors. He stated that Metro's Department of Communication and Marketing has the lead in the development of the Emergency Evacuation poster.

Located at the center doors of every train car, the posters provide customers with tips on how to evacuate a railcar safely. Dr. Posner reiterated one of the AAC's recommendations for the design of 7000 series railcar that was not incorporated, and stated that the poster should not be placed in the same area as the parking area for customers who use mobility devices. In the older series railcars, the parking areas for customers who use mobility devices were at the ends of the car. In 7000 series railcars the parking area is near the center doors. A reading the poster's language could lead some customers to believe that they should leave strollers, bicycles, and mobility devices at the center railcar doors before evacuating, thereby creating obstacles for people trying to evacuate. This is a safety issue for all customers especially those that use mobility devices.

Mr. Blake stated that ADAP has made the following recommendations for the poster:

- Remove the system map
- Enlarge the lettering and other messages on safety
- rearrange the placement of some language

Dr. Miller stated that the comments from the public echoed the recommendations from ADAP. Ms. Ray stated that the lettering should have good contrast with the background and red letters should not be used because it makes it difficult for customers with visual

disabilities to see them. Dr. Posner suggested that Metro use the ceiling of the rail cars to display the system map. Mr. Stephens expressed an interest in the location of the third rail. Staff stated that the third rail is further from the platform and is always covered. Mr. Blake stated the BRS can provide additional suggestions or comments on the evacuation poster by email until August 16, 2013.

Metrorail Safety and Evacuation Brochure

The BRS continued its discussion on the Metrorail Safety and Evacuation Brochure. Mr. Blake stated that the in the updated version this brochure, for the first time, includes information related specifically to customers with disabilities.

The BRS expressed an interest in alternative formats of the brochure. Mr. Blake stated that the new brochure will be accessible and available in various formats. Ms. Lee recommended that the first letter of each word in the heading should be capitalized. This would make the heading stand out. Mr. Blake stated that he will review ways to incorporate the recommendations into the brochure. Ms. Houston expressed an interest in the printing and dissemination of the brochure. Mr. Blake stated that the brochure will be available by the end of this calendar year. The BRS applauded Metro for its efforts on the new brochure.

Public Comment

A comment was made about the meeting times of the AAC subcommittees. The early meeting time makes it difficult for many members of the disability community to participate. Dr. Miller stated that a later meeting time would assist him for he takes personal leave from work to attend meetings. Ms. Ray stated that Metro is missing the opportunity for participation by the public, and that most civic boards generally meet at the 7:00 p.m. hour. Ms. Rush stated that a change in the meeting time would mean that she would not be able to participate in any meetings. She stated that her days begin at 4:30 a.m., which makes attending a later meeting a very long day. Dr. Posner agreed, stating that a change in time would mean he would have to re-think his commitment to serve.

Ms. Lee stated that the AAC has already discussed this issue and it was determined that the meeting time should remain. Mr. Blake stated that the meeting of the full committee is held at a later time and meals are provided because Metro recognizes that the time is during the dinner hour. Additionally, there is the labor cost, the coordination of staff, and the location of space.

The meetings are available via Spreaker for everyone. Ms. Ray stated that the RAC is meeting later so the public can participate. Mr. Sheehan stated that with the current meeting schedule, the AAC is receiving good participation and a change in meeting time may also have negative affect on participation.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:22 p.m.

Attachment: Work Plan