



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
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BUS AND RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES: December 12, 2011

In attendance: Susan Holland (Chair), Debbie Brown (Vice-Chair), Damian Gregory, Regina Lee, Phil Posner, Marilyn Lutter, Patrick Sheehan, Georges Aguehoude, William Staderman and Darrell Drake. Christian Kent, Glenn Millis, Christopher Colbert, Antonia Evans, Javon Smith and B. Moore Gwynn represented the Department of Access Services.

Call to Order

Chairman Holland called the November 14, 2011 Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Public Comments

A comment was made about the load leveling system on railcars. The West Hyattsville station was identified as an example where the difference in the platform and railcar makes it difficult for customer using mobility devices to alight the train. Staff reported that the load leveling system is fleet-wide and frequently checked and adjusted for irregularities. The railcars also have gap reducers which reduce the gap between the train and the platform. These features make the system accessible for customers with disabilities.

Review of Agenda, Minutes

The Subcommittee approved the December 12, 2011 agenda and the November 14, 2011 minutes.

Status of Action Items from November 14, 2011 Meeting

The Subcommittee discussed accessible signage on Metrobus. At the October 2011 meeting, the BRS recommended that the bus number be added to the system to assist customers with information needed to file a complaint on Metrobus. Mr. Phil Wallace, Bus Maintenance Division provided a demonstration of an accessible bus number sign. The

accessible sign will be a combination of Braille and raised letters and installed on the front of the fare boxes to allow customer with low vision or blind to identify the bus number. Mr. Wallace reported that a fleet-wide installation of signs could be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2012. The Subcommittee voted to accept the accessible signage on the fare box machines and agreed to present its recommendation to the AAC for approval at the January 3, 2012 meeting.

The Subcommittee discussed the station lighting in the Metrorail system. At the November 2011 meeting, the BRS requested that the National Capital Citizens with Low Vision provide additional information on stations where lighting is inadequate and offer specific recommendations for improvement. The BRS recommended that a work group be developed to address the issues and will partner with NCCLV, disability advocacy organizations and staff. Mr. Kent agreed to facilitate this effort.

Mr. Brett Tyler, Director of Customer Service, provided an update on the customer complaint and feedback process. Mr. Tyler provided background on the complaint process and indicated that complaints, commendations, questions, or suggestions can be filed electronically by telephone and by mail. Mr. Tyler reported that most complaints are received electronically and customers are provided a response in the same manner.

The BRS indicated that at the end of each telephone call, staff should ask and confirm the customer's preference of the type of response to their complaint. Whether the complaint is oral or in writing, the response should be specific to the issue. The Subcommittee also recommended that responses should always be given to customers when complaints show a pattern of violations or is safety related. Mr. Tyler indicated that he will follow up on the recommendations and will provide feedback to the Subcommittee.

Mr. Tyler also provided an update on the on-line comment form. The BRS indicated that the current design of the on-line comment form does not translate information properly to reader software used by individuals with

certain disabilities. Mr. Tyler indicated that the on-line comment form had been modified to accommodate reader software. Additionally, some of the fields have been moved to make the form more user friendly. Mr. Sheehan reported that the new form meets all the technical requirements and standards of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act 1973.

Mr. Tyler reported that the Office of Customer Service was evaluating how it can improve customer service and will be surveying customers as part of that effort. Information from the evaluation and the survey will be used to improve services to customers.

Staff provided an update on the auto-dispatch elevators in the Metrorail system. The auto-dispatch system aids customers who use mobility devices and have trouble maneuvering to reach the elevator buttons. Mr. Millis reported that auto-dispatch was available in 133 elevators in the system. Elevators that serve two landings will automatically move up or down to the next floor after the door opens. There are 28 elevators without auto-dispatch. Metro's Office of Elevators and Escalators (ELES) has reported these elevators have controller circuitry incompatible with the auto-dispatch system. The Subcommittee requested additional information on the requirements and cost to add auto-dispatch to the remaining elevators and requested a list of elevators equipped with the auto-dispatch system.

Staff also provided an update on the draft Customer Guide for Metrobus and Metrorail. The Guide is designed to assist riders with the use of fixed route public transportation. Staff reported that information on elevator locations and helpful telephone numbers were added to the document. The Subcommittee suggested that information on unattended mini-mezzanines, contact information for transit police, other commuter transportation services and a web link with a map of elevator locations at each station be added to the document. Staff will follow up on the recommendations and will provide feedback to the Subcommittee.

The BRS discussed training with internal front-line staff for Metrobus and Metrorail. The concept of a pool of volunteer speakers with disabilities can offer a first-hand perspective on traveling on fixed route, purposely making the point that accessible transportation is essential to independence in the community. Two members tentatively volunteered for the training program.

Subcommittee Work Plan

The Subcommittee reviewed its work plan priorities and agreed to add the bus number fare box signage to the work plan and voted to forward this work item to the main Committee for approval. BRS will also add to its work plan an update on the 7000 series. The Subcommittee expressed an interest in an update on the travel training program and the status of the travel training grant at the January 9, 2012 meeting.

New Business

No new business was introduced.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Attachment: Work Plan