



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
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BUS AND RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: February 10, 2014

In attendance: Dr. Brian Miller (Chair), Dr. William Staderman (Vice-Chair), Heidi Case (2nd Vice-Chair), Elver Ariza-Silva, Dr. Tapan Banerjee, G. Robert Brown, Darrell Drake, Chanelle Houston, Regina Lee, Dr. Phil Posner, Denise Rush, and Anthony Stephens.

Call to Order

Chair Miller called the February 10, 2014 Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Review and Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The BRS approved the February 10, 2014 meeting agenda, and approved the January 13, 2014 meeting minutes.

Metro Joint Development Projects

As a result of community concerns presented to the BRS during its November 2013 about the transit-oriented development at the Takoma Park station, the Committee requested a presentation regarding joint development projects. Stan Wall, Director, Real Estate and Station Planning, provided an overview of Metro's joint development programs. Metro defines joint development as a creative program through which property interests owned and/or controlled by Metro are marketed to office, retail (commercial), recreational (entertainment), and residential developers with the objective of developing transit-oriented projects.

Ms. Case stated that she personally followed-up on the concerns raised about the Takoma Park station and determined that there were no access issues. She stated that the concerns expressed by the community members were not accessibility issues. Mr. Wall stated that the Office of Real Estate and Station Planning manages all of Metro's joint development projects and worked closely with all the stakeholders on that project to ensure access to the station not only remained, but was also enhanced.

Joint development projects at Metro date back to the inception of the rail system. The first joint development project was an office building located above the Farragut North station. Other projects near Metrorail stations include the Bethesda Metro Center Office Hotel and Plaza (1981); Ballston Condo, Hotel and Office Project (1986), and the Rhode Island Avenue Retail and Apartment complex (2012). Mr. Wall stated that all joint development should be transit-oriented development; however, not all transit-oriented developments are joint developments. Metro makes every effort to avoid the latter types of projects because they lack proper station planning and such developments often fall short in connecting to a rail station.

To foster new communities around rail stations, Metro prefers to engage in joint development projects that collaboratively integrate with other parts of the community. Mr. Wall stated that Metro's transit-oriented joint developments are no less than a half a mile in proximity from a rail station. This closeness spurs synergy that will enhance ridership and private development. Metro uses the following criteria to evaluate all of its joint development proposals:

- Integrate with WMATA's transit facilities
- Reduce automobile dependency
- Increase pedestrian/bicycle originated transit trips
- Foster safe station areas
- Enhance surrounding area connections to transit stations
- Provide mixed-use development including housing, and the opportunity to obtain goods and services near transit stations
- Offer active public space
- Promote and enhance ridership
- Generate long-term revenues for WMATA
- Encourage revitalization and sound growth in the communities that WMATA serves

All Metro joint development projects begin and end with transit access. The Office of Real Estate and Station Planning works collaboratively with the Department of Access Services (ACCS) to identify and address issues of access during the station planning process; in the review and evaluation of proposals; and in the review of construction documents for proposed accessibility enhancements. ACCS also participates in the Real Estate Coordination Team meetings. Mr. Wall stated that the entire process is inclusive and involves all stakeholders. The goal is to ensure that all customers can access the station by all modes of transportation. The BRS expressed an interest in the enforcement of accessibility standards on joint development projects. Mr. Wall stated that Metro has full authority to enforce all accessibility standards as it relates to serving Metro customers and often exceed the Federal standard for accessibility. He stated that when conflicts arise with a development project, customer safety and access are always the highest priorities that must be addressed first.

At the beginning of 2014, Metro's Board approved joint development projects at the following rail stations: Branch Avenue; Capitol Heights; College Park-University of Maryland; and Huntington. Mr. Wall stated that this was in addition to the projects approved in November 2013 at Grosvenor-Strathmore; Morgan Boulevard; Brookland-CUA; Fort Totten; and Navy Yard-Ballpark rail stations. Additionally, in the future, Metro plans to develop projects at the East Fall Church station. The BRS would like to learn

more about the projects at the Fort Totten and Prince George's Plaza stations. Mr. Wall stated that the development on the eastside of the Fort Totten station has been completed, and there are some discussions regarding joint development projects on the westside of the station near the commuter parking area. At the Prince George's Plaza station, a joint development project consisting of a retail complex directly above the station is underway. The proposed apartment complex at the Prince George's Plaza site is a private development.

In response to a question about additional business revenue gained by being near the rail stations, Mr. Wall stated that Metro views the proposed gains as capital that is applied toward infrastructure costs as opposed to using the funds to off-set operating expenses. Businesses pay a special tax to support the construction. The NoMa-Gallaudet and the new Silver Line stations are examples of these types of projects. Mr. Wall stated that Metro reinvests all its proceeds from joint development projects into other projects that improve access to stations such as sidewalks; pathways; bike racks; and additional parking.

Ms. Houston expressed an interest in a development at Brookland-CUA station. She stated that from the building elevators, it is difficult to determine how to access the station. That project is a private development; however, Metro can review access to the station as part of its Station Improvement Plans. The BRS also expressed an interest in when the Silver Spring Transit Center will open. Mr. Wall stated that additional work on the Transit Center will occur in the summer 2014, and the project will be reassessed for opening at that time. In response to a question about participating in the early stages of the process, Mr. Wall stated that Metro collaborates with the jurisdiction to conduct public forums to engage the community on each proposal.

The BRS thanked Metro for its foresight on disability issues related to joint development and Mr. Wall for an informative presentation.

Old Business

Regina Lee expressed an interest in whether the AAC Bus Stop Accessibility letter was forwarded to the Council of Governments/Transportation Planning Board. She indicated that at the last meeting of the Access for All Committee, there was no discussion of the letter. Christiaan Blake, Director, ADA Policy and Planning (ADAP), stated that the letter was sent via U.S. mail to Patrick Wojahn, Chair, COG-TPB Human Services Task Force, as well emailed to the Chair, Tim Lovain and Wendy Klancher. The BRS suggested that in the future, Metro should send all letters certified mail and by email. The next Bus Stop Accessibility Task Force will be held on March 10, 2014, immediately following the BRS meeting.

New Business

Ms. Case requested clarification of some of the statistical data on the elevator and escalator performance reports. She indicated that Metro appears to be under-reporting elevator outages in the system. Elver Ariza-Silva stressed the importance of accurately reporting outages on all systems, including the monitors in the station and the data provided to the BRS. Darrell Drake stated that sports events can impact customers with disabilities' ability to freely use elevators. When platforms are crowded, non-disabled customers use the elevators more frequently. Mr. Blake stated that ADAP's primary focus has been the announcement of planned elevator outages in the system. He stated that ADAP will work to include better announcements of unplanned outages. Mr. Blake indicated that Metro's Office of Elevator and Escalator will be invited to the March BRS meeting.

Public Comment

A comment was made about single tracking on the Red Line. This information did not appear on the website, the Public Information Display System (PIDS) or the news. This information should be distributed to the public so they can be aware of how to plan. Dr. Posner stated that he receives track work announcements including single tracking by email. Upon motion, the BRS recommended that Metro better inform customers about track maintenance issues on the website. Staff stated that they would follow up and provide feedback.

A comment was also made about the varying styles of elevator "call" buttons. The different styles make it difficult for customers to find the appropriate button to push, and the buttons in new elevators are hard to push. Mr. Blake stated that ADAP is working the AAC to make buttons in elevator more uniform for customers. The focus is on elevators at the Rosslyn and Regan National Airport Station. Staff will continue to work on this issue and provide feedback.

A comment was also made about the security gate on some Metro buses. Some drivers use a bungee cord to hold the security gate, and this limits the access for customers who use mobility devices. Mr. Blake stated that customers should report this issue to Metro's Customer service and ADAP for further follow-up.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Attachment: Work Plan