



## Accessibility Advisory Committee

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### **BUS AND RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: June 10, 2013**

In attendance: Debbie Brown (Chair), Regina Lee, Marilyn Lutter, Mary Jane Owen, Dr. Phil Posner, Denise Rush, and Dr. William Staderman.

#### **Call to Order**

Chair Brown called the May 13, 2013 Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

#### **Public Comment**

A question was asked about evacuation procedures on Metrobus and assistance for customers with disabilities. When an incident occurs and the bus is evacuated, is there a procedure for assisting for customers with disabilities to safety. Chair Brown stated that on a rare occasion when her bus was evacuated, the bus operator provided her assistance with getting off the bus.

As a follow up to a question made during the May 2013 BRS meeting regarding which rail stations in Maryland, particularly Prince George's County, had not yet been evaluated for lighting issues by the BRS Station Lighting Work Group, Barbara Millville, President, National Capital Citizens with Low Vision (NCCLV), reported that the following Maryland stations were not evaluated by the Work Group: Branch Avenue, Cheverly, College Park, Grosvenor-Strathmore, Landover, Naylor Road, New Carrollton, Prince George's Plaza, Rockville, Shady Grove, Southern Avenue, Suitland, Twinbrook and West Hyattsville. Ms. Millville stated that the initial focus of the Work Group volunteers were Metro's core stations and those with high ridership. Chair Brown suggested that the Work Group review some of the outdoor stations listed to demonstrate the differences in lighting, because in certain conditions, those stations may have just as many lighting issues as indoor stations.

A comment was also made about the MetroAccess eligibility process and the differences between the types of MetroAccess ID cards. Christopher Colbert, Operations Manager, Office of Eligibility Certification, stated that he would discuss the issues of eligibility and MetroAccess ID cards with the customer directly after the meeting.

#### **Review and Approval of Agenda and Minutes**

The BRS approved the June 10, 2013 meeting agenda, and approved the May 13, 2013 meeting minutes.

#### **New Metrorail Map**

Jennifer Green, Director, Strategic Communications, discussed the newly re-designed Metrorail map. She stated that Metro is updating the rail map to accommodate the new Silver Line rail stations. The new map will include five new stations, connecting East Falls Church on the Orange Line to Wiehle Avenue–Reston on the new Silver Line.

She added that the new rail line will operate between Wiehle Avenue-Reston and Largo Town Center and will eliminate Orange Line Rush+ service. Based on extensive customer feedback, Metro will be adding the following features to the Metrorail map:

- Map rail lines that are 24% thinner to accommodate the new rail line;
- A darkened Silver Line between the Blue and Orange lines;
- New icon pictured as a station dot with white extenders for stations that are serviced by three rail lines;
- A more prominent Metro Transit Police phone number;
- Anacostia National Park; and
- Lighter borders for the Beltway and jurisdictional boundaries.

Ms. Green stated that many of these enhancements will improve the geographic accuracy of the stations and street abbreviations where possible. She stated that cross streets will remain available on the large version of the maps located in rail stations and on trains. However, to ensure smaller versions of the map are readable, Metro will eliminate cross streets on the smaller versions of the map. In response to a question about Braille and strip station maps, Ms. Green stated that after the new map is finalized in Summer 2013 she will work with Access Services to produce accessible versions of the map. Upon motion, the AAC recommended that Metro add information about stations that have center platforms; bring greater contrast to the green space on the maps; make an audio version of the map; and install versions of the large map on all the rail cars. Adding the information about the center platform stations will assist customers needing to transfer to the next station, or to take a different elevator to continue their trip during an elevator outage. Dr. Posner expressed an interest in marketing the new map on T-shirts. Ms. Green reported that Metro plans to market the map in a variety of formats to the widest audience possible.

### **Brochure on Metrorail Evacuation Procedures for Customers with Disabilities**

Christiaan Blake, Acting Director, Office of ADA Policy and Planning, discussed Metro's brochures for safety procedures on Metrorail. He stated that this review of informational literature that outlines the safety procedures for the Metrorail system was one of the quarterly meeting action items from the AAC Leadership meeting with Metro's Executive Board. The review of materials also includes a review of the brochure for safety procedures on Metrobus.

The BRS expressed an interest in adding information on the Metrobus brochure that describes how customers are evacuated. On the rail, the evacuation announcements indicate that customers who use mobility devices should remain in place until staff can evacuate them. This type of announcement is not done on the bus. Dr. Posner

expressed an interest in the instruction on evacuating off the bus through the escape hatch. He stated that the instructions are not clear, particularly if the hatch is blocked. Ms. Lee suggested adding the information on bumpy tiles to the Metrorail safety brochure. Mr. Blake reported that in addition to the BRS recommendations, ADAP will also update the pictures in the brochures. Dr. Staderman suggested that Metro also add pictures of the Emergency Tunnel Evacuation Cart (ETEC) to the brochure.

Ms. Owen expressed an interest in having fewer words and more pictures in the safety brochures. She stated that for customers with intellectual disabilities and some seniors, pictures may express the intent better than words. There may need to be some words, but not as many words as is included in the current brochure. Dr. Posner stated that Metro has lots of international travelers and any new brochure should include international symbols. In response to a question about large print and contrast of information to pictures, Mr. Blake reported that any new brochure will be accessible and available in various formats. Based on feedback from the BRS, staff will begin to update the brochure and provide feedback to the BRS throughout the process. Upon motion, the BRS recommended that the Chairman's Report to Metro's Board point out the BRS recommendation to develop new safety brochures for Metrobus and Metrorail.

### **Customer Service Process for Staff Recognition (Update)**

As a follow-up to recommendations made at the January and February 2013 BRS meetings, Dr. B. Moore Gwynn, Accessibility Advisory Committee Coordinator, provided an update on the process to acknowledge Metro staff for providing outstanding service to senior citizens and people with disabilities. She stated that ADAP met with the Department of Customer Service, Communications and Marketing (CSCM), to develop a staff recognition program, and it was determined that the BRS needs to develop criteria for the award. The criteria should include:

- Name of Award;
- Through which mechanism will the staff person be recognized;
- What will the honoree receive; and
- How often to award?

Dr. Posner suggested that the BRS use information on front line staff, such as Metrobus Operators or Metrorail Train Operators, who have consistently demonstrated themselves to be courteous and helpful to seniors and people with disabilities. During the public comment section at BRS meeting, front line staff is often commended for their efforts. Additionally, some customers send their comments in writing about the extraordinary experience with Metro personnel. The BRS expressed an interest in how much data is available to recognize staff each month, and if information on an

employee who receive the top commendation can be shared. Dr. Moore Gwynn stated that she would follow up with CSCM and provide feedback.

Ms. Rush expressed an interest in how MetroAccess will continue to recognize employees given the multiple contractors. She stated that it is important to recognize all phases of Metro's transportation service for providing outstanding service to senior citizens and people with disabilities. Some members suggested that Metro revise its comment form to make it less cumbersome to recognize excellent service. Upon motion, the BRS recommended that on a quarterly basis Metro provide information on employees who received top commendation at Metro. This will help the BRS formulate criteria for an award.

### **Work Plan**

The BRS identified the following accomplishments of their FY2013 work plan: review of the 7000 series railcars; station lighting enhancements; bus stop improvements; accessibility of the SmarTrip machines and other locations for loading fare cards; accessible signage on Metrobus; and new interior and exterior signage in the rail system. Additionally, the BRS added station and elevator maintenance to its 2014 work plan.

### **New Business**

Christian Kent, AGM, Access Services, briefly discussed leadership on the BRS. He stated that June will be the last BRS meeting Debbie Brown will chair, and added that her contributions to the AAC should also be recognized. Upon motion, the BRS recommended that Debbie Brown be recognized at the next Accessibility Excellence Awards. The BRS also recommend that any discussion about the selection of a new Chair should be done at the next BRS meeting. This will give an opportunity of new members to participate.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

Attachment: Work Plan