



Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
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BUS AND RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: March 12, 2012

In attendance: Debbie Brown (Vice-Chair), Regina Lee, Phil Posner, Marilyn Lutter, Patrick Sheehan, Georges Aguehoude, Doris Ray and William Staderman. Christian Kent, Glenn Millis, Christopher Colbert, Nicole June and B. Moore Gwynn represented the Department of Access Services.

Call to Order

Vice-Chair Brown called the March 12, 2012 Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Public Comments

A comment was made about an alleged instruction MetroAccess drivers received related to the proposed fare increases on MetroAccess. Staff reported that they would investigate the situation and provide feedback. A request was made about the status of MetroAccess bus stop signage. The BRS recommended that both issues be forward to MetroAccess Subcommittee.

Review and Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The Subcommittee approved the March 12, 2012 agenda and the February 13, 2012 minutes.

Status of Action Items from the March 12, 2012 Meeting

At the December 2011 meeting, the BRS requested an update on auto-dispatched elevators in the Metrorail system. In response, Mr. Rodrigo Bitar, General Superintendent, TIES/ELES reported that there are 239 elevators in the Metrorail system. The Auto-dispatch system, which is only available on some elevators that serve just two landings, where the

destination is obvious, was developed to aid customers who use mobility devices and have trouble maneuvering to reach the elevator buttons. The auto-dispatch system will automatically sense when a person has entered the elevator and will move up or down to the next floor.

Mr. Bitar reported that there are 36 elevators scheduled for rehabilitation. Of that number, 11 elevators will have the auto-dispatch system. The elevators affected are those at Pentagon, Metro Center, Mt. Vernon, Congress Heights, Capitol South, Eastern Market, Courthouse, Federal Center, Cleveland Park and Bethesda. A number of the elevators have controller circuitry that is incompatible with the auto-dispatch system.

The BRS expressed an interest in the prioritization of repairs for elevators. Mr. Bitar reported that elevator repairs are prioritized based on high density areas, regularly scheduled maintenance and the length of time an elevator has been out-of-service. For elevator systems that require additional work to repair, shuttle service is provided and coordinated through the Department of Bus Transportation. The BRS recommended that Ballston Station be considered for the auto-dispatch system. This would assist with the flow of pedestrian traffic at the station and expedite travel in the Metrorail system. Mr. Bitar indicated that he would follow-up and provide feedback.

The BRS also expressed an interest in the elevator display panels in the Metrorail system. The display panels vary from station to station. Elevator display panels height is standard but the location of buttons on the panel varies by manufacturer. The BRS recommended a standard configuration of buttons on elevator control panels and accessible signage indentifying the elevator as street, platform or mezzanine be added throughout the system. ELES is working to reduce the variation in display panels in the Metrorail system. Mr. Bitar indicated that he would follow-up and provide feedback on signage.

The BRS furthered its discussion on train announcements in the Metrorail system. Mr. Paul Bumbry, Superintendent, Metrorail Station Operations

reported that microphones are being installed on the “left side” of the train operator’s cabin to facilitate announcements. The installation will first take place on the 2000 and 3000 series with other series to follow. The 6000 series railcars already have this capability. The 7000 series railcars will have automated announcements.

In the February meeting, the BRS recommended that train announcements related to the Blue/Yellow Rush Plus be made at the platform, in the tunnel and at least two stations prior to the branch point of the line, and staff at the branch points assist riders with changes in the service. Mr. Bumbry reported that, in addition to signage, staff in the stations will provide destination information sheets on the new service to customers. A train operator will also provide announcements related to the Blue/Yellow Rush Plus service. The Office of Rail Transportation along with the Office of ADA Policy and Planning will develop an ADA training video.

The BRS expressed an interest in surveying customers one month after implementation of the Blue/Yellow Rush Plus service. The Subcommittee recommended that the AAC review survey and focus group questions prior to being released to the public. Staff reported that they would follow-up on the possibility of conducting surveys for the Blue/Yellow Rush Plus service.

The BRS discussed the use of TTY’s in the Metrorail system. Mr. Al Pegram, Deputy Chief, Network Communication reported that pay phones that would house the TTY system have declined in use. A Request For Proposals (RFP) for TTY services was issued and there were no bids. A second RFP has been issued.

The BRS expressed an interest in the use of pay phones for emergency services. Mr. Pegram reported that with the increase of cellular phone service, pay phone usage has decreased dramatically. In emergencies, Metrorail Station Managers are available to provide assistance. Darrell Drake reported that indeed, the Deaf community mostly communicates by cell phone or video phone.

Marilyn Lutter, Chair, BRS Station Lighting Work Group reported that the Work Group held its first meeting on February 13, 2012. The meeting was attended by Barbara Milleville, President, National Capital Citizens with Low Vision (NCCLV), Jocelyn Hunter, Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind, Jim Vale, Vietnam Veterans of America Inc., and Metro staff. Metro staff provided an overview of the lighting situation and responded to NCCLV recommendations for improved lighting in the Metrorail system. The Work Group was delighted to learn that lighting issues cited for some stations had already been addressed. The advocacy groups agreed to further identify stations for lighting improvements and provide an updated list at the next meeting.

New Business

Dr. Phil Posner reported that the Bus/Rail Fare Policy Work Group met on February 13, 2012 and discussed the fares associated with the use of cash or paper farecards in the Metrorail system. The Work Group recommended that there be no penalty for users of cash or paper farecards in the system. Upon motion, this information was reported to the full Committee.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Attachment: Work Plan