



Accessibility Advisory Committee

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BUS AND RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: March 11, 2013

In attendance: Debbie Brown (Chair), Darrell Drake, Marilyn Lutter, Mary Jane Owen, Dr. Phil Posner, Doris Ray, and Patrick Sheehan.

Call to Order

Chair Brown called the March 11, 2013 Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meeting to order at 5:00 pm. The meeting was postponed one hour to allow for a field visit at the Judiciary Square Metrorail station so that Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) members could review the mezzanine lighting at the station.

Public Comment

A comment was made about the color of the new MetroAccess bus stop sign and ability of customers with low vision to properly see the signs. Barbara Millville, President, National Capital Citizens for Low Vision (NCCLV), suggested that Metro use a color scheme with the highest contrast possible, such as a white background with black lettering. Staff reported that they would relay this suggestion to the Department of Transit Infrastructure and Engineering Services (TIES).

A comment was made about the Interior Signage presentation that took place during the February 2013 BRS meeting. The comment was in regards to the font of the wall signage in Metrorail stations. The font size should be in larger in print, Arial in style, and bold in color. Metro should consider using reflective paint or ink that will provide contrast for customers with low vision. Staff reported that they would also relay this information to the TIES.

A comment was made about the need for better communication from Metro when bus routes change. The changing of routes without proper notice creates hardships for customers, especially those with mobility disabilities. On bus routes with infrequent service, a change in the schedule could mean that wait times become much longer. Staff reported that they would relay this concern to the Office of Bus Planning.

Review and Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The BRS approved the March 11, 2012 agenda, and approved the February 11, 2013 meeting minutes.

Field Visit – Mezzanine Lighting Review

As part of the continuing efforts of Metro and the BRS Station Lighting Work Group, the AAC was invited on a field visit with Metro staff to review mezzanine lighting at the Judiciary Square Metrorail station. Ivailo Karadimov, Manager of Architecture, TIES, stated that the lighting improvements being displayed tie directly to some of the priorities the AAC outlined in its report to Metro's Board of Directors.

Based on the feedback of the AAC, Metro is establishing a standard of lighting that will be applied in the course of lighting improvements at other mezzanine locations throughout the system. Mr. Karadimov stated that on the F Street side of the Judiciary Square Metrorail station, the mezzanine lighting was installed four years ago with energy efficient blubs. In response to a question about the replacement of bulbs and fixtures, Mr. Karadimov stated that inspections and preventive maintenance of lighting is conducted on a routine basis, and that issues of safety in lighting are the first priority for repairs.

The BRS expressed an interest in the color of lighting on the opposite side of the station. Mr. Karadimov stated that lighting on the 4th Street side of the station was recently completed with lighting in the color of warm white, which has more yellow tones than blue. Metro's goal is to have uniform lighting throughout the mezzanine and platform in Metrorail stations. Mr. Karadimov stated that mezzanine and track bed lighting will be the same. The BRS expressed an interest in why mezzanine lighting appeared dim in the direction of the outside escalators. Mr. Karadimov stated that soft lighting is used in the transition to outside.

For optimal results lighting should be spread evenly through the mezzanine to the platform. Members of NCCLV and the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) made the following suggestions, wall lighting should be brighter; lighting from ceiling fixtures should extend a little past the escalators; enhance lighting in map cases; add lighting above pylons; add light to dark corners near trash cans; and glare from florescent light should be reduced. Christiaan Blake, Acting Director, ADA Policy and Planning, thanked the BRS for these suggestions and stated that his office will follow-up with staff in regards to them. Doris Ray reported that it was important to have the maximum contrast in the lighting environment. The BRS expressed an interest in whether the signal light on the platform that flash when a train is arriving will change. Mr. Karadimov stated that there are no current plans to change the color of the signal lights on station platforms. In response to a question of whether the tube lights flicker when it is time to be replaced, Mr. Karadimov stated that the lights are more advanced, so they will not drop or flicker.

Metro plans to improve 17 mezzanines at ten stations over the next 18 months. Those stations are the following: Ballston, Clarendon, DuPont Circle, Farragut West, Gallery Place, L'Enfant Plaza, Metro Center, McPherson Square, Smithsonian, and Virginia Square. The BRS, NCCLV and VVA all reported a major difference in the new lighting. Marilyn Lutter, Chair, BRS Station Lighting Work Group, recognized the NCCLV, VVA, and Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind for working the Group to raise awareness. Mr. Karadimov invited the BRS to return for a follow-up on the completed upgrades to lighting in the Metrorail station.

Upon motion, the BRS recommended that Metro move forward with lighting improvements and that an AAC review of the completed project is scheduled as soon as it is available.

Exterior Elevator Directional Signage

Carol Lopez, Accessibility Design Review Manager, Office of ADA Policy and Planning, discussed exterior directional signage at Metrorail stations. She stated that there is a variety of directional and elevator signage throughout the Metrorail system, and the varying styles could create confusion for customers. To address this matter Metro has created an informative signage system designed to enhance existing signage, directing customers to accessible Metro entrances and elevators. The new exterior directional signage will identify Metro entrances with elevators and improve elevator head house signage.

In response to a question about the compliance of the new directional and elevator signage, Ms. Lopez stated that the proposed new signage for elevators will be 18 inches to 22 inches high with a font size of 2 inches. Elevator signage head houses will display the entire name of the station, direction, and include symbols on all sides. At station entrances the signage will be larger to describe the entryway. NCCLV suggested that lighting should be added to the elevator signage head houses; lighting would make elevators more visible, especially for customers not familiar with the Metrorail elevators, such as tourist and other visitors.

Metro will begin a pilot program with the proposed directional and elevator signage. The proposed signage will be displayed at the following Metrorail stations: Bethesda, Crystal City, Gallery Place, King Street, L'Enfant Plaza, Metro Center, Prince George's Plaza, Silver Spring, and Takoma. Dr. Phil Posner and Ms. Ray both suggested that the Courthouse and Rosslyn stations be added to the pilot program because of their many entrances and unusual configurations. Mary Jane Owens reported that pilot program should consider the placement of signs at the level of wheelchair users. Upon motion, the BRS recommended that Exterior Directional Signage Pilot Project move forward and that Metro consider a review of the height of the signs for wheelchair users; adding light to the head houses; and incorporate the Courthouse and Rosslyn stations in the pilot.

Construction Signage and Fences (Update)

In response to a comment made at the April 2012 meeting about fences and accessible paths during construction at Metrorail stations, Ms. Lopez reported that only one bus bay is under construction at the Vienna Metrorail Station, and that all Fairfax Connector bus service has return to their previous locations. The Washington Blvd bus routes (2B

and 2G) have been moved to bus bay N. In response to a question about the rebuilding the bus bay area at the Vienna and the Dunn Loring Metrorail stations, Ms. Lopez stated that the garage is being built in two phases; the first phase will have connection to the station from the garage and is scheduled to be completed in June 2013; and the second phase will include the new a bus loop, a Kiss & Ride, some retail buildings, and two apartment buildings. One building will be completed in summer 2013 and the other, along with the retail space, will be completed in late 2014. The entire second phase is scheduled to be completed in summer 2014. Ms. Ray stated that the crosswalk on the Q bus side of the station, that leads to the taxi stand, needs to be repainted. Ms. Lopez stated that she will follow-up.

MetroAccess Bus Stop Sign

Corinna Sigsbury, Accessibility Planning Review Manager, Office of ADA Policy and Planning, discussed MetroAccess bus stop signs that will be installed in bus bays at Metrorail stations. She stated that in most cases the signs will be placed at bus bays nearest to station elevators. However, in some cases the stop signs will be placed at other locations, for example at the Ballston Metrorail station the MetroAccess bus stop sign will be located at bus bay E, which is located directly across the street from the elevator. The reason for this is because there are no bus bays directly adjacent to the elevator at this station. The BRS expressed an interest in the list of stations and bus bay locations for the MetroAccess bus stop signs. Ms. Sigsbury reported that 44 Metrorail stations will have the MetroAccess bus stop signs installed, and a list was provided by staff.

In response to a question about MetroAccess bus stop signs in other locations, Ms. Sigsbury reported that staff will be working with a special committee of the MAS on that phase of this project. Upon motion, the BRS commended staff on the placement of MetroAccess Bus Stop signs.

New Business

Dr. B. Moore Gwynn, AAC Coordinator, reported that the AAC recruitment of new members is underway. The AAC has a total of seven vacancies throughout the jurisdictions, and one At-large seat. Applications will be available at each meeting. The deadline to apply is 5 p.m. on March 24, 2013. Members received Metro's new safety calendar.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.
Attachment: Work Plan