



Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-962-6060

BUS AND RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: May 14, 2012

In attendance: Susan Holland (Chair), Debbie Brown (Vice-Chair), Dr. Phil Posner, Marilyn Lutter, Patrick Sheehan, Georges Aguehoude, Darrell Drake, Doris Ray and Dr. William Staderman. Glenn Millis, Christopher Colbert, Sherry Collings, Terry Prevost, Nicole June, Antonia Evans and B. Moore Gwynn represented the Department of Access Services.

Call to Order

Chair Holland called the May 14, 2012 Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Public Comments

Persons attending the meeting did not offer public comments.

Review and Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The Subcommittee approved the May 14, 2012 agenda and the April 9, 2012 minutes with corrections.

Signage at Bus Bays in Metrorail Stations

Mr. Jim Hamre, Director of Bus Planning (BPLN) discussed accessible signage at bus bays. He indicated that there are approximately 12,000 bus stops in the Metro system and of that number, 1,100 stops have been improved. New bus stop signs will feature larger lettering for greater visibility; the customer information number and website; NextBus Identification numbers in Braille; and raised lettering that will be made of reflective material for better viewing. The Subcommittee expressed an interest in increasing the size of the tactile lettering for the Next Bus Identification signs. Mr. Hamre stated that signs are designed to align with the information box and fit directly above the box.

Metro is working with its partners in the region to design bus stops that are uniform. Mr. Hamre stated that the new bus stop signs are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and approved by Metro's Board. The Subcommittee expressed an interest in signage that includes the direction of buses serving a stop. Mr. Hamre reported that Metro is considering adding that type of information to bus stops and will provide feedback. Other features of the new bus stop will include a new information box with non-glare glass that will list the departure times of the bus, and a simplified map of the route.

Mr. Hamre also discussed stop signage for MetroAccess service. Where Metro shares bus stop signs with other transit properties, signage will be the same color as the transit property signs in that area. The Subcommittee expressed an interest in the placement of MetroAccess bus stops and how those stops will be distinguished at a location with multiple entrances. Mr. Hamre reported that the MetroAccess signage will identify pick-up and drop-off points.

In response to a comment made at the April 2012 meeting about locating bus bays at Metrorail Stations, Mr. Hamre reported that an LED display that includes an audio component will be used to announce real-time next bus information at Metrorail stations. This feature will announce the relocation of bus stops, detours, or any other services announcement. Additionally, bus stop information is constantly updated on-line, and current maps are being placed at the station affected. Also under consideration is the use of the Metrobus annunciator system to provide information on changes in Metrobus service. Mr. Hamre requested that the Subcommittee provide input on how best to relay information to customers when a stop has been changed at a station. The Subcommittee agreed to provide recommendations.

Emergency Preparedness in the Transit

Mr. Ron Bodmer, Operations Manager, MTPD Emergency Management, discussed Emergency Preparedness in the system. He indicated that on a

regular basis Metro conducts exercises on preparedness to improve response in emergency situations and pre-stage emergency equipment and supplies throughout Metrorail stations. Metro E-tech Carts, E-kits light sticks and battery operated carts, located on Metrorail platforms, are used for rescue by the local Fire and EMT departments.

The Subcommittee expressed an interest in enhancing emergency communication in the system and across jurisdictional lines. Mr. Bodmer reported that emergency information is immediately placed on the Passenger Information Display System (PIDS) and that Metro staff collaborates with the Council of Governments, Fire Chief Subcommittee and CERT Teams in the region on best practices for conducting rescue operations in the transit system. In many of the exercises, customers with disabilities are used in the simulation to offer a real-world experience of a rescue. Additionally, track walking exercises have been conducted with low-vision and blind customers at Metro's track simulator facility to demonstrate best practices in an emergency situation in the Metrorail system.

In response to a question about evacuating customers with disabilities in imminent danger, Mr. Bodmer reported that casualties are assessed and customers are evaluated according to severity of their injuries. Customers with disabilities who use mobility devices may be initially evacuated without the device and then later reunited with the device. The Subcommittee expressed an interest in the operation and testing of the Automated External Defibrillator device (AED). Mr. Bodmer stated that the AED is tested regularly by Metro staff.

Metrorail and Wheelchair Ergonomics

In response to a request from Metro's Board for feedback on the study, *Research in Motion: A Case Study Evaluating the Accessibility of Public Transit in our Nation's Capital*, the Subcommittee discussed the response. The Subcommittee unequivocally disagrees with the study's findings that Metrorail is unusable by people who use wheelchairs. Some of the issues

cited in the study were isolated incidents, and for each issue mentioned, staff demonstrated the improvements that have been made in the system. As an example, the study indicates that gaps between the train and the platform are an impediment to traveling in the system. Metrorail meets and in some areas exceeds the minimum requirements of the ADA, and the “gaps” were found to be within those standards.

The AAC agreed with the Subcommittee’s assessment of the study and noted that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has inspected the Metro system and found it to be compliant. Upon motion, the Subcommittee voted to approve Chair Holland’s letter of response to Metro’s Board.

Subcommittee Work Plan

The Subcommittee will begin the process of developing the FY2013 work plan, and Chair Holland requested work items from the BRS to add to the plan.

New Business

The Subcommittee furthered its discussion on access to fare gates at the mini-mezzanine level in the Metrorail. Dr. Posner reported that at some rail stations such as Rosslyn, fare gates on the mini-mezzanine level cannot be opened remotely. Upon motion, the Subcommittee recommended that Station Managers have the ability to remotely open fare gates at all Metrorail stations with mini-mezzanine.

Mr. Millis reported that approximately 60 applications were received for membership on the AAC and 39 persons were interviewed. Metro’s Board will make appointments to the AAC in June.

Adjournment

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

Attachment: Work Plan