



Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
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BUS AND RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: November 13, 2012

In attendance: Debbie Brown (Vice-Chair), Chanelle Houston, Marilyn Lutter, Brian Miller, Mary Jane Owen, Dr. Phil Posner, Doris Ray, Denise Rush, Patrick Sheehan, and Dr. William Staderman

Representing the Department of Access Services: Christian Kent, Christopher Colbert, Carol Lopez, Glenn Millis, Dr. B. Moore Gwynn, Terry Prevost, and Corinna Sigsbury

Call to Order

Vice-Chair Brown called the November 13, 2012 Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Public Comment

A comment was made about the accessible path in the construction zone at the Vienna Metrorail station. The frequent changes in the pathway make it difficult for customers with visual impairments to safely navigate the terrain from the bus bays to the rail station. Andrew Suggs, Transportation Planner, Fairfax County Department of Transportation, responded that to ensure on-time performance standards were maintained during the construction period, it was determined that the Fairfax Connector bus service will continue to alight on the Q side at the Vienna station. The construction is scheduled to be completed in the next 45 days.

Review and Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The BRS approved the November 13, 2012 meeting agenda as amended, and approved the October 9, 2012 minutes.

Bus Stop Accessibility

The BRS continued its discussion on bus stop accessibility with transportation departments from the City of Alexandria, Fairfax County, and the District of Columbia.

Pierre Holloman, Transit Planner, City of Alexandria, provided an overview of bus stops in Alexandria. He stated that there are 832 bus stops in the city. Of that number, 573 are accessible. 182 of the 832 stops are Metro only stops, while 361 are shared bus stops. Mr. Holloman stated that many of Alexandria's stops are located on public right-of-way and private property.

Mr. Holloman reported that bus stops in the central business district are in most need of improvement because they lack sidewalks, passenger loading pads, and other basic amenities such as benches and ramps. Other challenges that hamper accessibility at bus stops are parking, lack of pedestrian signals, and maintenance funding. The BRS expressed an interest in funding and recommended that the city implement an adopt-a-stop program to ease some of the financial challenges. Mr. Holloman stated that the city once had an adopt-a-stop program, but it was discontinued due to lack of interest by the public and business community.

Mr. Holloman stated that since 2008 the city has improved 244 bus stops. Improvements included shelters, canopies, benches, passenger loading pads, and solar powered lighting. Additionally, the city has been successful with removing parking near bus stop areas as well. Through federal grants and other local funding sources, the city is planning to install 10 bus stop benches, approximately 20 accessible pads, and replace approximately 15 bus shelters. Alexandria is also working with Metro on a new Freedom grant for other bus stop improvements.

Andrew Suggs, Transportation Planner III, Fairfax County Department of Transportation, discussed bus stops in Fairfax. Mr. Suggs stated that the county has approximately 4,300 bus stops. Of that number, 2,500 are Fairfax Connector only stops and the remainder are Metro only stops. Mr. Suggs referenced a 2004 study which indicated that over 900 of the county's bus stops were in need of improvement, with many of those stops located in older Fairfax communities. 150 of the stops identified in the study have since been improved with pads, ramps, curb-cuts, sidewalks, benches, shelters and lighting. Improvements to the reminding bus stops have been delayed due to funding. The BRS expressed an interest in the development of the criteria for the 900 bus stops identified as needing improvements. Mr. Suggs stated that study relied on several local disability advisory groups, federal guidelines, and best practices to develop the assessment criteria for bus stops.

Mr. Suggs said that the State of Virginia provides financial support for bus stop improvements in the county, and added that the county does not receive any federal funding for bus stop improvements. With jurisdictional budgets stretched everywhere the BRS questioned why Fairfax doesn't receive any federal funding to help improve bus stops. Mr. Suggs stated that it has been Fairfax County's Department of Transportation general practice not to receive federal funds because of the restrictions that come with such funding. The county, however, has received federal funds for bus stop projects along the Richmond Highway corridor.

Though funding for bus stop improvements remains a challenge, Mr. Suggs stated that the county continues to work with existing funding sources to improve bus stop accessibility. In collaboration with internal partners and a contractor, the county has recently completed the infrastructure on several bus stops. The contractor provided approximately 85 shelters and 15 canopies for these stops, and will perform all maintenance and repairs at these stops. All other improvements at these stops were funded by the county. The county is also developing a four year transportation plan that includes the identification of 200 bus stops in need of improvements. The cost of the improvements is approximately \$4 million.

Brett Rouillier, ADA Coordinator, District Department of Transportation (DDOT), provided an overview of bus stops in the District of Columbia (DC). He indicated that DC has very little capacity to improve accessibility at the bus stops. The DDOT handles all the permits, which include installing or replacing shelters, curb-cuts, ramps, and landing pads. However, a lack of coordination with other internal offices has slowed the development of accessibility at many of DC's bus stops. Mr. Rouillier stated the DDOT is working to improve its internal and external partnerships.

Mr. Rouillier stated that Metro conducted a study of all bus stops in D.C. The study identified 3,488 bus stops in DC with over half of them marked as inaccessible. Mr. Rouillier stated that DC uses Metro's design standards when improving bus stops. Although adhering to the standards is challenging in high demand and well dense areas, such as the downtown business district, DC always meets the federal compliance for bus stops. In the recent time period, DC has installed nearly 700 brand new bus stop shelters.

Mr. Rouillier reported that the DDOT will perform significant work on the K Street corridor beginning in the spring of 2013. The improvements will include curb-cuts, ramps, landing pads, and accessible pedestrian signals at all the bus stops on the medium along the K Street business district; from 12th Street, N.W. to 21st Street, N.W. The BRS expressed an interest in Circulator buses sharing the same stops with Metrobus. In the last few years most of the stops around the D.C., such as Independence Avenue near the Library of Congress and in Georgetown near Wisconsin Avenue and M Street, have been separated. Mr. Rouillier reported that Circulator bus stops have been adjusted, and that he will follow-up to provide feedback. The BRS believes that if the two systems began to share stops DC would have fewer stops to improve, maintain or repair.

Station Lighting Work Group

Marilyn Lutter, Chair, BRS Station Lighting Work Group, provided an update. She stated that the cost estimate provided by Metro staff for the first round of lighting improvements totaled more \$24 million. The estimate was developed from the priorities of the Work Group and matched-up with the results of the Work Group's observations of 40 Metrorail stations. Chair Lutter reminded members that improving lighting in the Metro system will be a long-term initiative. The Work Group and its advocacy partners will continue to review lighting in Metrorail stations.

Christian Kent, AGM, Access Services, asked whether maintenance items were included in the Work Group's priorities. Chair Lutter stated that some priorities are maintenance related. She added that the Work Group has been working with Metro staff to resolve maintenance issues, though some maintenance issues remain outstanding. Mr. Kent requested that the Work Group separate the maintenance issues from the capital improvements, and prioritize the list. The Work Group stated that they would perform the analysis and provide a separate list prior to the December AAC meeting.

New Business

Dr. Posner reported that at previous AAC and MetroAccess Subcommittee meetings there have been discussions about the changes in Metrobus routes and schedules, and the impact of those changes on the denial of MetroAccess service for some customers. This has happened to members who have been using the service for many years. Dr. Posner recommended that changes in bus service be analyzed for their impact on MetroAccess eligibility and ridership, and added that changes in Metrobus routes should not impact customers' ability to travel. Ms. Ray asked whether the Board-approved change in the MetroAccess service area of July 2010 placed any limitations on the days and hours of service that trips can be booked to a given location. Mr. Kent reported that MetroAccess riders who have been grandfathered have no restrictions on days, time, or places where they can use the service within the Compact jurisdictions, but that all other customers can only book trips to locations that are served by fixed-route transit at corresponding days and times.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Attachment: Work Plan