



Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
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BUS AND RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: November 12, 2013

In attendance: Dr. Brian Miller (Chair), Dr. William Staderman (Vice-Chair), Heidi Case (2nd Vice-Chair), Georges Aguehoude, Dr. Tapan Banerjee, Darrell Drake, Kevin Hanretta, Chanelle Houston, Regina Lee, Mary Jane Owen, Dr. Phil Posner, Denise Rush, and Patrick Sheehan.

Call to Order

Chair Miller called the November 12, 2013 Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Review and Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The BRS approved the November 12, 2013 meeting agenda, and the October 15, 2013 meeting minutes.

FY2014 Metrobus Service Changes (Update)

Jim Hamre, Director, Bus Planning, (BPLN), provided an update on Metro's FY2014 Metrobus service changes. He stated that the changes are designed to ensure Metro remains in a "State of Good Operations". The changes will affect bus service on forty-nine different routes across the jurisdiction, expand bus service on six high volume corridors, improve reliability, travel time, and reduce crowding for approximately one in six Metrobus customers. All the FY2014 Metrobus service changes were made with current budgeted resources.

To garner the public's opinion on the propose Metrobus service changes, Metro conducted six public hearings, nine "pop-up" outreaches, attended seven local community meetings, conducted an on-line survey with 2,258 responses and collected over 1,500 pieces of written testimony. Mr. Hamre indicated that certain routes such as the National Harbor (NH1) and D.C. Dulles (5A) lines received significant customer input. Metro listened and those routes will not change, but will receive enhanced services. In addition to the changes in bus service, Metro will also make changes to the Tariff that will prohibit smoking at all Metro bus bays and bus stops and cover off-board fare collection. In response to a question about enforcement of the no smoking policy, Mr. Hamre stated that the policy is already a local ordinance that can be enforced by Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD) as well as the local police departments. The AAC expressed an interest in how customers would purchase the tickets for the off-board fare collection. Mr. Hamre stated that Metro has a pilot program for a re-charge stations that will allow customers to purchase tickets or add fare to SmarTrip cards. This pilot program is still in the beginning stages. Mr. Hamre stated that the next step is for Metro's Board to approve the FY2014 Metrobus service changes and the amendments to the Tariff.

Dr. Posner expressed an interest in better coordination with the track work with events around the city. He indicated that Metro was performing track work on the Orange Line

and fans from the football game had to shuttle to another station after the game. There were many angry customers. Mr. Hamre stated that he will keep this in mind.

Accessible Bus Stops – Scorecard

Christiaan Blake, Director, ADA Policy and Planning, stated that at the AAC's last quarterly meeting with Metro's Executive Board, funding for bus stop accessibility in the various jurisdictions was discussed. He indicated that Metro's Executive Board recommended that the AAC develop a scorecard demonstrating the progress of each jurisdiction. Based on the presentation from each of the jurisdictions, a table was developed that outlined the total number of bus stops in each area, the number of accessible bus stop and the percentage of bus stops that need improvements. Tracking this information and comparing it to the cost to paratransit service, would demonstrate to the jurisdictions potential savings they would realize if they improved local bus stops.

The AAC expressed an interest in how Metro was identifying accessible bus stops. Mr. Blake indicated that Metro's standards for bus stops include: flat firm surface, 5 x 8 landing pad; connection to a matching curb. A comment from the public expressed an interest in if the standard included benches. Mr. Hamre stated that benches are included in the standard for all Metro owned bus stops; however, in the jurisdictions, benches may not be included in bus stop standards. Mr. Blake indicated that a future goal is to have other jurisdictions adopt Metro's standards for bus stops. Another comment from the public indicated that accessible bus stops should also include lighting, accessible signage, bus schedules and a Metro map.

Mr. Blake indicated that some of the work of identifying inaccessible bus stops had taken place through the work performed on the New Freedom Grant. In response to a question about the number of stops that were improved through the grant, Mr. Blake indicated that as to date, no stops have been improved through the grant. Although no stops have been improved, Metro will perform all the work to improve the bus stops in the grant.

Mr. Blake suggested that the AAC Chair encourage the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) to include accessible bus stops in the next round of funding for transportation projects. Many members agreed that working closely with the other disability partners in the jurisdiction and locating additional funding would be helpful in moving this process forward. Upon motion, the BRS recommended that AAC Chair forward a letter to TPB requesting that they adopt Metro's definition of accessible bus stops, add the topic to their agenda, and fund bus stop improvement projects. Upon motion, the BRS also recommended developing a work group to address the issues. The Accessible Bus

Stop Work Group will hold its first meeting immediately following the MetroAccess meeting, and Regina Lee will serve as the Chair.

Public Comment

Barbara Millville, President, National Capital Citizen with Low Vision, thanked the BRS for all its efforts on lighting. She applauded Metro for making the commitment to improving lighting at all its underground stations. Metro's underground stations will receive enhanced lighting similar to the lighting improvements at Judiciary Square Metrorail stations.

Heidi Case expressed an interest in the BRS moving their focus toward issues that directly impact the riding public. She cited a number of recent issues on the fixed route system and indicated that the BRS should be working toward enhancing the system. Metro needs to place more emphasis on sensitivity awareness training, and reduce chronic barriers that make riding the fixed route system inaccessible or difficult for customers with disabilities. Mr. Blake encouraged members to report incidents, complaints and commendations in the system to Customer Service and to ADAP for additional follow-up.

New Business

Mr. Blake stated that at Metro's October 24, 2013 Board meeting, comments were made about the inaccessibility of a transit-oriented development project near the Takoma Metro Station. The statement indicated that the proposed design has the accessible drop-off area as being approximately three times further away than its current location creating access issues for people with disabilities.

Mr. Blake stated that the Office of ADA Policy and Planning (ADAP), has thoroughly reviewed this project, and the comments made at the Board meeting related to accessibility at the Takoma Metro Station were not accurate. He indicated that the current drop-off area is approximately 75 feet away from the elevator entrance to the Takoma station. Under the proposed plan, the elevator entrance will be a full 10 feet closer than the current drop-off area. Additionally, there are six accessible parking spaces with the closest space being approximately 150 feet away from the elevator entrance to the Takoma station. In the new plan, the accessible parking spaces will be 30 feet closer to the elevator entrance of the station. Mr. Blake stated that the new proposal enhances accessibility and does not diminish access for customers.

Jim DiLuigi, Architect and volunteer advisor for the Takoma Park community on the transit-oriented development project near the rail station, indicated that the proposed

plans do not provide safe access for customers to get to and from the accessible parking area at the rail station. The adjacent building has only one elevator from the front entrance which is also a service elevator. A rear elevator in the building is near the accessible parking area but its access is unsafe for the customers. Mr. DiLuigi stated that these issues need to be addressed through a redesign of the building plans. The BRS expressed an interest in whether the proposed design has customers exiting into a drive lane. Mr. Blake stated that ADAP's response was related to the points raised at the Board meeting.

The BRS also expressed an interest in the number of elevators that is proposed for this site. Mr. DiLuigi stated that there are three elevators proposed and they are not centrally located for access to the system. The building is separated by the parking area, and therefore, if the front elevator is not available, a customer could not access another elevator from inside the building. Customers would be required to travel through the parking area to the back of the building to access the elevator. Mr. DiLuigi indicated that this building design makes it difficult for people with disabilities to have access. Mr. Blake stated that the elevators that Mr. DiLuigi is referencing are not the transit access elevators. The elevators that he is speaking of are in the proposed building that will be adjacent to Metro's property. Dr. Posner stated that there was a similar circumstance with a developer at the Rosslyn Metro Station. The developer promised building elevators that would lead directly into the station but later found the elevators to be too costly; therefore, they were not put in the building.

Dr. Posner stated that the Subcommittee's role is to advise Metro on accessibility issues in the system, and there are no issues with access at the Takoma Metrorail Station. Mr. DiLuigi stated that Metro has a choice to build something everyone can access and suggested that the design plans go back to the drawing board. The AAC expressed an interest in the timeline for renovations for the project at Takoma station. Mr. Blake stated that this issue was presented to the Board at the last meeting, and the project is being handled by another department at Metro. ADAP's role is to enhance accessibility on this project. The AAC expressed an interest in a greater understanding of Metro's Real Estate and other transit-oriented development practices. Dr. Posner stated that for greater knowledge, members can attend Metro's Board Development Subcommittee.

Jacqueline Davison, President, Victory Towers Residence Association, expressed an interest in better access for seniors and customers with disabilities in the Takoma Park area. She indicated that many of the residents have disabilities and rely heavily on public transportation. The proposed transit-oriented development project near the Takoma Metro Station will severely limit the access to residents.

Sara Green thanked the BRS for the time spent and the opportunity to speak on the Takoma station issue. She indicated that Metro's Board had adopted many elements of this proposed plan even with the problems in the design of the public parking area that connects to the Takoma station. Customers will be forced to use heavy traffic lanes when attempting to access the building elevators or the platform in the Metrorail station. Ms. Green stated that this is a design flaw that will be difficult to change once the work is completed.

Faith Wheeler, Member, Takoma DC and Maryland Neighborhood Group, stated that she had been working on this issue of transit-oriented development project in the Takoma area since 2008. She indicated that many of the residents in her area are also individuals with disabilities and want the path to the Metro entrance to be fully accessible.

Chair Miller thanked the community group from Takoma for presenting this information to the committee.

Adjournment

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

Attachment: Work Plan