



Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
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BUS AND RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES: OCTOBER 11, 2011

In attendance: Susan Holland (Chair), Debbie Brown (Vice-Chair), Marilyn Lutter, Phil Posner, and Darrell Drake. Christian Kent, Glenn Millis, and B. Moore Gwynn represented the Department of Access Services.

Call to Order

Chairman Holland called the October 11, 2011 Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Public Comments

A comment was made related to signage on the railcars and the Passenger Information Display Systems (PIDS) during weekend track maintenance in the Metrorail system. The railcar display was labeled as 'special' and the PIDS system displayed dashes in place of words. Mr. Kent suggested that the line color be displayed to indicate the train color. Mr. Bumbry, Superintendent of Metrorail Station Operations reported that the display system malfunction will be investigated. A commendation was made concerning announcements on the orange line train in the Metrorail system. The Train Operator operating railcar 2008 provided exceptional announcements that included information on the elevator outage and shuttle bus service at the upcoming station.

Review of Agenda, Minutes

The Subcommittee approved the October 11, 2011 agenda and the September 12, 2011 minutes.

Status of Action Items from October 11, 2011 Meeting

The Subcommittee continued its discussion on Metro's customer complaint and feedback process. The discussion focused on the customer

perception that there is a gap between customer expectations and what Metro provides as it relates to filing a complaint and receiving a response.

The Subcommittee expressed an interest in the type of information required to file a complaint. Mr. Castillo, Manager of Customer Relations, reported that vehicle information, date, time of travel, and other detailed information are important to facilitate a full investigation of customer concerns in the system. Ms. Ann Carey, Metrobus Director, District II, stated that detailed information such as the bus number is necessary to identify Metrobus operators and validate the complaint. The Subcommittee recommended that the bus number be added to the sequence of announcements on the annunciator system to assist customers with information needed to file a complaint on Metrobus. Ms. Carey indicated that she will follow-up on the recommendations and will provide feedback to the Subcommittee.

The Subcommittee also expressed an interest in the format of the online comment form. The current design of the form does not translate information properly to reader software used by individuals with certain disabilities. Mr. Castillo stated that there are seven fields designated with an asterisk, which are required to complete the on-line customer comment form. Mr. Jones discussed Metrobus commitment to a quality response and resolution to customer complaints. He stressed the importance of specific information to validate complaints and the implementation of preventive and corrective action protocols. The Subcommittee recommended that an accessible version of the on-line Customer Comment Form be developed and offered as a mobile app for Smartphone and other mobile device users.

The Subcommittee also discussed follow-up procedures when complaints are filed by telephone and the time it takes to respond. Mr. Castillo reported that all complaints are processed and filed in the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database system. He indicated that certain complaints warrant a full investigation, while other information in response to a complaint is more readily available and provided in real-time. Mr. Bumbry stated that the response time is two business days for complaints filed electronically on Metrorail. The Subcommittee

recommended that at the end of each telephone call, staff should ask and confirm the customer's preference of response for responding to their complaint. Whether the complaint is oral or in writing, the response should be specific to the issue.

Mr. Millis invited the Committee and Subcommittees to participate in the Research Regional Travel Training Project (RTTP) meeting on the travel training grant obtain through the New Freedom grant awarded to Metro. The meeting will be held on October 19, 2011, Jackson Graham Building and will address key issues on traveling training, lessons learned, and best practices in training customers with disabilities to use fixed route service.

There will also be a Regional Travel Training Forum on October 25, 2011, at the Jackson Graham Building hosted by Metro and Easter Seals Project Action. The forum will provide information on methods and strategies to promote travel training in the region and develop a database of travel training providers. To improve the customer experience, Mr. Kent reported traveling training will be integrated into Metro's Transit Accessibility Center process for determination of reduced fare or paratransit services.

Mr. Kent thanked Ms. Rikki Epstein for her exemplary service to Metro and shared that Ms. Epstein has a new employment opportunity that will allow her to continue to work with Metro on initiatives that benefit the disability community.

The Subcommittee discussed the Customer Guide for Metrobus and Metrorail. Mr. Millis reported that the guide will provide information on best practices in the use of fixed routes. Additionally, this information will be available electronically or by U.S. Mail. The Subcommittee also recommended that the Customer Guide include information regarding Metro's customer feedback and complaint process. The guide will also promote filing complaints electronically for an enhanced response protocol. *Mr. Kent reported that the customer guide will also be available in Braille.

Mr. Kent indicated that Metro has a company-wide customer service initiative with the goal of improving the customer experience. The

Subcommittee requested a written response on the following concerns related to customer complaints on Metrobus and Metrorail:

- Confirm follow-up preference at the end of each customer service call
- Accessible version on the electronic complaint form and develop for a mobile app
- Add a customer complaint and feedback section to the Customer Guide for Bus and Rail
- Add the bus number to the series of announcement on the Annunciator
- What get fixed via complaints and the normal procedures
- Follow-up on a change in bus stop location (Wisconsin avenue)
- Contrast colors on PIDS (black background with amber lettering)

Subcommittee Work Plan

The Subcommittee reviewed its work plan priorities and agreed to add a presentation from the National Capital Citizens with Low Vision to the November 14, 2011 meeting agenda. Also added to the BRS work plan was Fare Policy, Emergency Preparedness procedures, and the ADA Sensitivity training curriculum on Metrobus and Metrorail. The BRS received written monthly reports on Travel Training and Ridership, Elevator Status and the Accessible Bus Summary.

New Business

Mr. Millis reported that Metrobus and Metrorail are revising the training programs related to ADA sensitivity. A request was made for participants with disabilities to take part in training provided to front-line staff on Metrobus and Metrorail to offer first-hand perspectives on the challenges and best practices with traveling on fixed route.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Correction: Customer guide is available in audio.

Attachment: Work Plan