



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

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BUS AND RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: October 15, 2013

In attendance: Dr. Brian Miller (Chair), Dr. William Staderman (Vice-Chair), Elver Ariza-Silva, Dr. Tapan Banerjee, Darrell Drake, Kevin Hanretta, Chanelle Houston, Mary Jane Owen, Dr. Phil Posner, Patrick Sheehan, and Anthony Stephens.

Call to Order

Chair Miller called the October 15, 2013 Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Review and Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The BRS approved the October 15, 2013 meeting agenda, and the September 9, 2013 meeting minutes.

Priority Seating

Jawauna Greene, Director, Marketing, provided an update on Metro's Priority Seating Campaign. To develop the design concepts Metro benchmarked other transit agencies; used input from the AAC; and conducted observations of the priority seating areas on Metrobus and Metrorail. Ms. Green stated that the proposed themes for the priority seating design include *Courtesy Works*, *Stand Up and Rise to the Occasion*, and *Show You Care*. All of the themes are designed to promote compassion and courtesy by customers using public transportation services. The BRS favored the *Stand Up and Rise to the Occasion* theme stating that the color contrast and large lettering will allow customers with low-vision to read the signs. The BRS was split on whether to keep or remove the upward pointing arrows in the design. Some thought the arrows reinforced the message while others believed the arrows created visual "crowding" in the design.

In addition to advertising through brochures, enhanced announcements on buses, frequent reminders on the Passengers Information Display Systems (PIDS), and the General Manager's column in the local newspaper, Ms. Green stated that Metro will use a variety of pictures in place of words to demonstrate the priority seating area. On Metrobus and Metrorail, some decals will be placed on windows above the priority seating areas, while others will be placed on the floor directly in front of the priority seats. In response to a question about slippery surfaces, Ms. Green stated that the floor decal will be made of a non-slip surface. Dr. Phil Posner suggested that Metro forgo using the icon with a child sitting on its parents lap. He stated that too often strollers are parked in front of one priority seat making the other priority seat unavailable. Metro will also add reminders about priority seating to its customer service hold message and through social media outlets. Anthony Stephens express an interest in promoting the priority seating campaign on Metro's new mobile website for smart phones. Ms. Green stated that Metro plans to advertise on its mobile site as well as on internet radio sites like Pandora, Spotify, and Live 365.

The review of the Priority Seating Campaign for Metrobus and Metrorail was one of the action items from the AAC Leadership Quarterly meeting with the Executive Committee of Metro's Board. Ms. Green stated that Metro has committed approximately \$100,000 to promoting priority seating awareness. These funds will be used to survey the campaign's performance; update materials; and purchase radio advertisement. Elver Ariza-Silva expressed an interest in advertising the parking spaces for mobility devices on the outside of the trains. He stated that during peak hours trains are so crowded that the some customers do not acknowledge him or the space designed for mobility devices. Advertising parking spaces on the outside of the trains for mobility devices may help change that perception. The BRS applauded Ms. Green and the Marketing Office for its progressive design concepts and various approaches to creating a culture of courtesy at Metro.

Bethesda – "Metro's Station of the Future"

Ivailo Karadimov, Manager of Architecture, Engineering, discussed the concept for the new Bethesda Metrorail station. He stated that Bethesda was selected as Metro's "Station of the Future" because of its correlation to the future Purple Line station; its upcoming replacement of elevators in the Spring 2014; and its overall condition and need for major repairs.

Mr. Karadimov stated that Harry Weese was the original architect for Metro's underground stations. He stated that Mr. Weese used certain principles in designing Metro's underground stations and that those principles are being used to design Metro's station of the future. The design principles are as follows: (1) Parts that can be designed in multiple ways across the system; (2) design spaces need to be easily seen; (3) natural pathways that are readily visible; and (4) design space to keep away from walls.

Metro's underground stations are considered to be a historic landmarks, and Weese's work is viewed as distinctive and iconic. As such, any major changes to the Bethesda station or to the system as a whole must obtain permission from the U.S. Commission on Fine Arts. In response to a question about other transit agencies obtaining approval from the U.S. Commission on Fine Arts, Mr. Karadimov stated that some customers appreciate the historic look and feel of the Metrorail stations and think that any changes would deviate from original design.

The design elements in Metro's station of the future will include information walls that will incorporate new fare machines; interactive maps with information about restaurants and other points of interest near the rail station; more visual displays dedicated to

customer information; an increase in the number of Public Information Display Systems (PIDS) on the platforms; the replacement of track level lighting; and improved lighting throughout the station.

The BRS expressed an interest in the height of the visual display systems dedicated to customer information. Visual display systems that are too high make it difficult for customers who use mobility devices to access. The BRS also expressed an interest in the compliance of the interactive maps. Mr. Karadimov stated that he working closely with the Office of ADA Policy and Planning (ADAP) to ensure all the features at the station are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Chanelle Houston expressed an interest in the height of the new station manager kiosk. As stated with the comments on the visual display systems, if the new Station Manager's kiosk remains at its current level, it will still be too high for customer with mobility device to access. Mr. Karadimov stated the kiosk will be lowered approximately 7 inches, and the Station Manager's ledge will be at an accessible height. Chair Miller expressed an interest in how the improvements at the Bethesda station will be different from the new Silver Line stations. Mr. Karadimov stated that the Silver Line Stations are all above ground, and that there are significant differences in designing above ground stations versus underground stations.

The proposed design of the Bethesda station will be modern, moving away from the Metro brown color to something lighter, possibly stainless steel. The BRS favored the idea of using lighter colors adding that the Metro brown color is difficult to see with the dim lighting in the stations. The BRS expressed an interest in frequent updates as the review of lighting for the proposed station of the future was one of the action items from the AAC Leadership Quarterly meeting with the Executive Committee of Metro's Board. Mr. Karadimov stated that he would be happy to provide the BRS with updates. Construction of the Bethesda station will commence in 2015.

Public Comment

A comment was made about the availability of cameras in the elevators at Metrorail stations. At the Bethesda station, some customers are using the elevators for illicit acts. This type of behavior is a safety issue and impacts the access for customers who use mobility devices. Christiaan Blake, Director, ADAP, stated that all Metro elevators have cameras.

A comment was also made about lighting standards in the Metrorail station. Barbara Millville, President, National Capital Citizen with Low Vision, noted that her organization has been helping Metro evaluate lighting throughout its system. Mr. Karadimov stated

that Metro has lighting standards. Ms. Millville stated that the BRS has a Work Group that specifically focuses on lighting in the rail system, and she expressed an interest in the standards being a topic of discussion. Mr. Blake stated the topic can be added to the agenda of for the BRS Station Lighting Work Group.

New Business

Mr. Blake stated that the University of the District of Columbia Van Ness Metrorail station will soon undergo significant escalator repairs. He stated that the total shutdown of this east side entrance will allow repair work to be significantly reduced from 30 weeks to approximately 19 weeks. In the event there is an elevator outage at the station, Metro will have engineers available for quick repairs. In response to a question about the impact of the entrance closure on bus service Mr. Blake stated that the closure of the east side entrance of the station for the repair will not impact Metrobus or Metrorail service.

Mr. Blake discussed the BRS Station Lighting Work Group. He stated that the Work Group will need a Chair and this position is available to any AAC member. At the last BRS meeting Doris Ray stated that she would assist until a Chair can be selected. Upon motion, the BRS recommended that Doris Ray serve as Chair of the BRS Station Lighting Work Group.

As a follow-up to comments made at the September 9, 2013 meeting regarding Metro's bathroom policy in the rail stations, Dr. B. Moore Gwynn, AAC Coordinator, stated that most Metrorail stations have at least one restroom available for limited use by the customers. The customer restroom is available for emergency, small children, senior citizens, and customers with disabilities. Station Managers can refuse a customer from using the restroom for any of the following reasons:

- Employee's personal safety;
- Station or train emergency;
- Sick customer in the station;
- Severe overcrowding at station; fare equipment malfunction which requires the Station Manager to assist customers
- Another transit provider disruption (Amtrak, MARC, VRE) which require the Station Manger to direct customers to locations
- Any track wayside incident
- A police situation

Corinna Sigsbury, Accessibility Planning Manager, also provided an update on comments made at the September 9, 2013 meeting regarding Metro's use of the expanding barricade safety system to identify work zone when escalators are out-of-

service. Ms. Sigsbury stated that she researched the temporary gates used by Metro and found that the design is in compliance with the ADA requirements.

Dr. Posner provided an update to the BRS on the Fare Policy Work Group. He stated that since last fare increase, the Work Group has worked diligently to eliminate the twenty-cent charge for paper fare cards and to increase the number of places where SmarTrip cards can be purchased and reloaded. Dr. Posner stated that he was delighted to announce that the Work Group's efforts, through the AAC have paid off on both efforts. Metro has increased the number of places where customer can purchase and reload fare cards, and Metro staff will recommend that the Board eliminate the twenty-cent charge for paper fare cards. The BRS commended Dr. Posner for his leadership as Chair of the Work Group and for the accomplishments of the group.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:46 p.m.

Attachment: Work Plan