



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Bus and Rail Subcommittee Meeting Minutes: November 12, 2019

Attendees

Present: Tino Calabia (Chair), Anthony Oberg (Vice-Chair), Elver Ariza-Silva, Darnise Bush, Charlie Crawford, Rico Dancy, Melanie Jackson, Steven Kaffen, Denise Rush, Patrick Sheehan, and Phil Posner (Remote Participation).

Call to Order

Chair Calabia called the Bus Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Approval of Agenda:

The Agenda was approved as amended: the topic of Open Stroller Policy Update was moved before the Committee introductions and Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes.

Open Stroller Policy Update:

Jordan Holt, Director, Office of Performance, provided an update about the Open Stroller policy. There will be a one-year pilot period for allowing open strollers on Metro buses. Ms. Holt thanked the Committee for pointing them to the DC Circulator's policy and engaging with her office on this topic. The purpose of the pilot is to determine if space is available in the priority seating areas, and no one is using those seats, using a wheelchair or a mobility device, then can parents or caregivers traveling with a stroller will be able to utilize those seats and space. The Office of Performance is in the process of establishing clear guidelines for the bus operators and the customers. This would be a year-long pilot beginning on January 1st, 2020. It has not been shared with the general public yet however; Ms. Holt attended the BRS meeting to share the information with the Committee and inform them of the intention of the pilot. At this time, Ms. Holt invited any questions from the Committee.

Mr. Kaffen asked whether the strollers would require the ramp to board the buses. Ms. Holt stated that would be implemented upon request and the policy can be modified if needed.

Mr. Dancy asked about closed captioning on the trains. Carol Peredo Lopez, Director, the Office of ADA Policy and Planning (ADAP), stated at this point there is no information about closed captioning.

Ms. Jackson inquired about various sizes of the strollers. Ms. Holt stated the DC Circulator's policy with size limitations will be adopted for Metro's pilot and be used to educate customers; pictures of the acceptable strollers may be included in the marketing materials. Chair Calabia recommended having flyers like the ones for bicycles with sizes specified on it. Ms. Bush asked about marketing efforts to inform customers. Ms. Holt stated they are working with Marketing, Media Relations, DC Public Schools, neighborhood list serves, amongst other sources.

Ms. Bush recommended contacting the Access Board to get the requirements. Ms. Holt thanked Ms. Bush for the recommendation and stated it is very important for customers to follow the policy for it to be a success. Ms. Peredo Lopez clarified that the Access Board allows 30 inches by 48 inches foot print for a wheelchair space. Chair Calabia inquired whether Ms. Holt has communicated with the DC Circulator about their open stroller policy. He recommended that operators have the policy available on buses in case there is a need to reference it for customers violating the policy. Ms. Holt introduced her colleague Tranell Griffin, Office of Performance, as she has been in communication with the DC Circulator, as well as Montgomery County transit agency's Ride-On buses. Ms. Peredo Lopez recommended that Metro follows the originally recommended stroller size of 24 inches by 48 inches. Ms. Holt agreed.

Ms. Holt stated they are also looking for pre-programmed announcements for customers boarding with strollers. Ms. Peredo Lopez suggested that the pre-programmed announcements also be displayed on the Metro bus scroll screens. Mr. Ariza-Silva asked about people with grocery carts boarding Metro buses. Ms. Holt stated currently we do not have a policy related to carts or luggage. The staff is observing a sample of bus routes to determine frequency of carts used on buses and possible responses for operators. We are also testing to see how the policy may work, however we are going to review and create appropriate answers for the bus operators. Chair Calabia recommended that the information flyers with stroller size specifications be added to the new mothers' basket that they receive upon discharge from the hospitals. Ms. Holt thanked him for the recommendation and offered to include pictures of different strollers that meet the requirement.

Ms. Bush asked who is responsible for securing the strollers aboard Metro buses? Ms. Holt stated the customer is responsible for locking the brakes on the stroller. Chair Calabia thanked Ms. Holt for coming and sharing the information. Ms. Holt thanked the Committee for all the recommendations on this matter.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:

Chair Calabia continued the meeting with the introductions of the Committee members.

The October 15th Meeting Minutes were approved as written.

Ombudsman Report:

David Shaffer, Ombudsman, Office of the Americans with Disabilities Act Policy and Planning (ADAP) provided his report. Regarding the automatic door opening, currently, there is no time-frame for it returning anytime soon. The accuracy of elevator escalator outage notifications is being monitored to determine the source of inaccurate information, followed by correction. The elevator button being blocked at the Federal Triangle station, was inspected, and the issue was resolved. Concerning the stroller, another focus will be on the pediatric wheelchairs that look like strollers and have attachments for securement. The operators are going to be informed about the difference between a stroller and a pediatric wheelchair. Chair Calabia asked if there has been some resistance to the idea.

Mr. Shaffer stated the bus operators have legitimate concerns, as they face the customers every day who do not comply with rules.

Mr. Shaffer provided information about the e-scooter policy. There are several WMATA departments involved and we are taking a lead to draft a policy. The comments have been submitted to the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) about their regulations regarding e-scooter policies. Chair Calabria asked about the language from the DDOT. Mr. Shaffer stated the District of Columbia has primary jurisdiction and we do not have the authority to make changes. WMATA has requested parity with the DDOT. We would like geofencing 25 feet around Metro property, the technology used is accurate with GPS, which is 60 feet, and the upcoming Beacons technology can also be used. WMATA has also requested prohibition on parking; customers cannot park within 10 feet of elevator entrance, escalator entrance, or bus stop, whereas the station entrance restriction is 25 feet. Customers are currently prohibited from riding e-scooters in the station per WMATA's policy. Mr. Shaffer further stated that we are working on designated parking. There is a need for clarification on jurisdictional concerns, i.e. property owner where the customer education signs can be placed as some stations may be on federal property, or private property, or WMATA property. To identify the e-scooter parking locations, the stations' property identification will be done in conjunction with the Office of Planning. For semi-temporary locations, a pilot may be performed at a few stations. Based on the pilot results, it may take several months for tangible results (signs posted). In the interim, Mr. Shaffer is working on overall draft on the policy followed by implementation.

Chair Calabria asked about e-scooters in regard to buses. Mr. Shaffer stated it works similarly for the transfer stations. For buses, we can have prohibition on parking and need to have the right to remove the e-scooters quickly. The best approach is to have signage as there are 11000 bus stops. Mr. Ariza-Silva shared his experience with 2 e-scooters that hindered his entrance to a bus stop. As a result, he had to move further out to get back to the stop. He recommended for signs with text and pictures until we have established the policy.

There was a brief discussion about the floating bus stops. Mr. Crawford mentioned three or four floating bus stops in the Montgomery County, his communication (documents) with the county officials, and the hinderance from his view point. Ms. Peredo Lopez stated we have been looking at the District of Columbia to see what they are doing about the floating bus stops and she provided a description of these stops. Chair Calabria stated he would visit the floating bus stops. Ms. Peredo Lopez asked if Mr. Crawford had any discussion with the county about stop signs for cyclists. Mr. Crawford stated he has had a continuing discussion with the Department of Planning, and the county has agreed to install stops for pedestrians, cyclists, and for vehicles. The law is the same for all. Responding to the question by Ms. Peredo Lopez, Mr. Crawford stated the handrails were part the discussions he had with Montgomery county officials.

Chair Calabria brought up a new concern of a lamp malfunction at the Friendship Heights station. Mr. Shaffer will review it further.

"Handbook" for Rail Car Design

The Committee discussed the "Handbook" for rail-car design for further actions. The topics that were discussed and need to be re-written for clarity are as follows.

The discussion started with the topic of *Communications*. Chair Calabia asked for clarification as to what does *Communications* mean. Dr. Posner clarified the internet connection drops between stations, and it needs to improve. For example, some personal vehicles have built-in internet connection. Mr. Oberg stated it needs to be reviewed whether it is a possibility or not. As a Committee we just need to specify the recommendation. Dr. Posner stated people with disabilities using cell phones could get better information directly from wmata.com. Dr. Posner would rewrite this section.

Chair Calabia stated Dr. Posner clarified the *poles and Hand-poles* situation in railcars. Dr. Posner stated Mr. Ariza-Silva had mentioned about a center pole/grab-bar with hanging extensions from center doors going to the front and the rear in rail cars, prior to the 7000 series. Ms. Peredo Lopez recommended to refer it as a horizontal grab bar or hand rail.

Between Car Security Barriers: Mr. Oberg stated it needs to be clarified "longer towards the ground". Using correct words will convey the message as intended.

Wheelchair Spaces: Mr. Kaffen asked whether the recommendation is to have four or two wheelchair spaces in each rail car. A discussion took place on this topic with a recommendation to have two wheelchairs in the center of the rail-cars, as in the 7000-series-railcars. This would provide uniformity and space needed for customers.

Armrests: The recommendation is to have flip-up armrests (like airlines seats) on the first row of front forward facing seats located by the priority seats.

Floor Marking: Ms. Peredo Lopez had concerns about the yellow color in the pictures since WMATA uses yellow color for marking elevator and escalator outage, etc. to warn people it is a dangerous area. Chair Calabia stated the color is for illustration purposes only.

Priority Seating Signage: The picture in the draft handbook shows seats with signs, making it more noticeable. The recommendation was to keep the signs on the seats.

Accessibility Symbol: The recommendation is WMATA adopts a new Accessibility symbol.

Emergency Instructions: There was a discussion about the emergency signs. Mr. Kaffen stated the size of the two emergency posters by the center doors is already very large. He recalled the Committee had talked about the font size to be increased for improved readability. A system map may be more helpful rather than two emergency posters at the same location. Dr. Posner shared that in the emergency poster, there is no mention of leaving wheelchairs behind amongst other bulky items for people to leave behind, and

that needs to be added. Mr. Oberg recommended to have clarity of the language on instructions to use the emergency call button device to avoid confusion for customers.

Rail Operator Visibility: The Committee is not sure if this recommendation is possible.

New/Old Business and Work Plan Updates. Public Comment:

The “Handbook” was discussed during the work plan. There were no public comments.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00pm.