



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Bus and Rail Subcommittee Meeting Minutes: October 9, 2018

Attendees

Present: Tino Calabia (Chair), Elvir Ariza-Silva, Deborah Cotter, Charlie Crawford, Melony Jackson, Steve Kaffen, Mary Kay MacMahon, Phillipa Mezile, Denise Rush, Phil Posner, and Patrick Sheehan.

Call to Order

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

Chair Calabia started off the introductions of the Committee members, and the guest speaker.

Approval of Agenda and Prior Meeting Minutes:

The modified meeting agenda was approved.

The September 10, 2018, Meeting Minutes were approved.

8000 Series RFP Discussion:

Jun Deng, Assistant Project Manager, 8000-series Railcar, stated that the 8000 series Request for Proposal (RFP) was released on September 4, 2018. The pre-proposal conference was on October 9, 2018. The submittal of questions from the vendors is scheduled for November 15, 2018. The proposal submittal due date is January 31, 2019, and the estimated contract award and notice to proceed is December 31, 2019.

Dr. Posner stated that the rail car flooring in the 8000 series should meet certain requirements. Customer in wheelchairs don't use the priority seats as they stay in their wheelchairs. Some people who use the priority seats, have difficulty sitting down and/or getting up from those seats. Having arm-rests will be helpful for people with disabilities to get support while sitting and/or getting up from the seats. The aluminum bar can be used as an arm-rest. Screen-rest could be shorter so that the arm-rest could be placed for people who need it.

Chair Calabia asked if vendors will be informed of the design now or would it be submitted later? Ms. Deng stated it will be submitted later.

Mr. Crawford asked are you (Ms. Deng) aware of anything that needs to be improved. Ms. Deng stated there is a difference from the 7000-series process. We do not have technical proposals and will work with Christiaan Blake on the design of rail cars.

Mr. Kaffen asked about the capability for customers to hold-on to either something from the ceiling or a pole. Ms. Deng stated we are looking into it.

Ms. McMahon stated there is a section of population with shorter height. Therefore, there should be a mix of seat heights. Mr. Ariza-Silva stated there are different areas in the same car where different seat heights could be placed, and asked how could you accommodate different seat heights? Dr. Posner stated the lateral seats should have priority seating. If we put priority seats on regular height in the center, and priority seats at the end of car with different heights, that may be a solution. Mr. Crawford suggested to have adjustable seats for different heights. Dr. Posner suggested to have the flip seats that could be adjustable. Ms. Deng stated these suggestions are available for our design.

Mr. Kaffen asked is the announcement technology built-in for the manufacturer? Ms. Deng stated we are taking lessons from the 7000-series process, and that it is part of the proposal.

Dr. Posner asked if aluminum could be an option for the hand-rails. Ms. Deng stated weight reduction is a high priority and customer service is also important. We will balance them out.

Ms. Mezile asked is any design concept available? Ms. Deng stated we are in the preliminary phase. Chair Calabria stated I have seen poles in rail cars that split in three, which enable for three people to hold-on.

Cashless Bus Pilot and Expansion Update:

Ms. Mezile asked what is a cashless bus system? Do you only use SmarTrip cards? What about people who can't afford to get a card? Chair Calabria stated cash (transactions) slows down the bus. Ms. Mezile stated everybody has to go to the Metro stations to load even if that is not convenient for them. Chair Calabria stated that is one of the problems and things that our AAC Chair, Posner mentioned.

Dr. Posner stated they have no goals other than speeding the process of loading and unloading the bus and shorten the dwell time at stops. There is no data to show that cash transactions or loading of cards are slowing down the buses.

Ms. Rush stated there are a lot of people who don't know anything about buying a card.

Mr. Sheehan stated you have to have consideration for tourists. Differently from past November, now they have pitched (the pilot) on six or seven other lines. First it was just going to be from June through December. Now they want to expand the pilot.

Mr. Crawford stated benefit versus cost analysis seems to be lacking in the presented proposal. It will cost several hundreds of thousands of dollars to reconfigure the announcement system in buses. It would be nice to see the cost analysis.

Ms. Mezile asked where are these proposals coming from, WMATA or the Board? Dr. Posner stated they are coming from WMATA staff. There is a real cash crunch and they are trying to find ways to save money without thinking about it. As per two financial

officers, the reason they are pushing this is because it costs them 10% to process buses with cash. Dr. Posner pointed out to them there is no free transfer with cash.

Ms. Mezile stated the open baby stroller policy along with this cashless program has started to sound very racially insensitive to me. Most of the mothers who travel with baby buggies are black and brown. Most of the people that will be cut out because of this cashless system, are people who may not have money to go and get a card. They may not have loads of money to put on Metro card at one time, may be they are going day-by-day. Dr. Posner stated they are required to do a Title VI analysis. They can do the pilot for a year before Title VI comes out.

Chair Calabria stated another perspective is to boost bus ridership. Quicker buses allow people to get to their destinations without delays that happen now. There are other ways to quicken the bus ride. One way is to have signal priority for buses that enables for green lights to stay on for longer duration when a bus approaches the traffic light. The other way is to have designated bus lanes. The overall goals are speeding up the buses, and not having delays by cash or coin exchanges. Speeding buses could attract more ridership.

Mr. Kaffen stated there are various reasons for bus delays. One reason is that customers have to wait for people to exit before they can even queue up to board. People have never been coached to use the rear doors. Second thing is we have the narrowest cash machines to accept the bills, it takes 5 seconds to get the bill in and it is time consuming. The third thing is we are going to see more and more people without loaded metro cards, for several reasons. Customers will go in the bus, driver will either have to let them on for free or ask them to get off and that takes 10 seconds to let people off the bus.

Mr. Ariza-Silva stated many people use the front door because the ramp goes down at the front but not at the back door.

Mr. Crawford stated it is public transportation. Cashless program separates people from the transportation and that might create some problem.

Ms. McMahan stated another reason for people to use the front doors is that the priority seats are in the front of the bus and it will take more time for people to exit from the back door.

New/Old Business and Work Plan Updates:

Chair Calabria along with the Subcommittee members decided to postpone discussion on the topic of unfolded baby strollers to the next month's meeting in November.

Ombudsman Report:

Chair Calabria stated David Shaffer, ADAP, was going to provide an update on the lighting issues. Mr. Shaffer provided information on how Kelvins and Lumens are measured. Chair Calabria asked if the committee members could receive the kits to measure light at stations as asked before. Mr. Blake stated that Metro has not purchased equipment for AAC volunteer members. Doing so would raise liability issues. Dr. Posner suggested for

Committee members to ride with lighting staff members and provide their feedback on the issues discussed about lighting at stations. It is not just Kelvins and Lumens, it is also location of the lighting. Mr. Blake stated perhaps ADAP could facilitate some time for AAC members to spend with the members of the lighting staff. Barbara Milleville, National Capital Citizens with Low Vision, stated it is a work in progress and she sees ongoing improvements.

Chair Calabria asked Mr. Shaffer about an update on the re-lamping in 25 stations. Mr. Shaffer stated he will find out. Chair Calabria asked status about the LED down light fixtures, that it was scheduled to commence in August 2018, to be completed by October 2019. This is October, has it begun? Mr. Shaffer will follow up.

Mr. Sheehan asked for the status of the 7000-series the between-car barrier retrofit, which is supposed to be completed by May 2019. Mr. Blake stated that so far, 20 (10 car-sets) of the 7000-series cars have been accepted, that means they have come from the manufacturer with the retrofitted between-car barriers, and we have 64 car-sets (2 cars per set = 128 cars) that have been delivered to be retrofitted. This means that the 148 (128+20) cars will be ready real soon. Dr. Posner asked when you talk about car sets, one car will have bumper and the other will have the chains? Mr. Blake clarified it is 2 cars.

Chair Calabria stated he found out from a Kawasaki representative at the 8000-series pre-proposal conference that they are also producing cars for New York system. That will involve 10 trains with open gangways. He asked about the cost of the pilot train. Mr. Blake stated the cost is less likely an issue, and that feasibility of those types of cars in this particular system is the challenge. Chair Calabria stated he did not ask Kawasaki about the feasibility issue. He is asking how open gangway cars could be manufactured for married pairs and for Quadra-pairs.

Work plan updates:

Chair Calabria asked Mr. Blake about the Work Plan Updates. Mr. Blake stated the Work Plan is list of items that have been discussed and that are of interest for future discussions. The committee members can provide their comments about topics for upcoming meetings, including your advice to the Board.

Mr. Ariza-Silva asked for an update or explanation on performance of the accessible faregates. Mr. Blake stated that will be on the list for next month, and it will be on the Work Plan Update list. We will bring a staff member to get update.

Mr. Kaffen stated a discussion is needed on rail announcements.

Mr. Crawford stated a Smart Phone application for all services is needed. Dr. Posner recommended everyone to review the Easterseals project. Ms. Mezile commented about an application (app) that provides update on the next bus. Dr. Posner stated that could be the DC Rider app. Chair Calabria asked is there a way for public to have access to these apps? Dr. Posner stated these apps are available to anyone who has a smart

phone. Mr. Kaffen stated that in November, there will be meetings for various groups on this specific projects, updates should be shared with the committee. Dr. Posner recommended that we can invite the (Easterseals) director.

Ms. Rush stated she would like to get an update on accessibility for bus stops. Mr. Sheehan asked about the Geographic Information System (GIS) project update. Mr. Blake stated the project still requires some support.

If you use the Trip Planner, you click on the bus stop location, and you could see what the stop looks like. For that we rely on photographs from Google, but some of the photos may not have updated in years. We are trying to see if pictures can be updated by Metro or customers, so that the project isn't totally dependent on Google. Not all of the 11,000 stops in region are accessible, and we will add this topic to the Work Plan.

Dr. Posner stated the Board is going to have its first budget meeting this Thursday. If anyone wants to think about serving on the fare policy group, this would be a good time.

Dr. Posner stated any service changes on bus or rail have impact on MetroAccess rides. Chair Calabia asked if there is a report that is issued. Dr. Posner stated there is a report and the Board receives it. Part of the process is a public hearing on proposed changes. The board then either approves or disapproves. The report shows results of surveys and even impacts on MetroAccess ridership. Chair Calabia asked if that report is available for the public. Dr. Posner stated yes it is, and the next one is in November. Mr. Blake stated I don't think there are any plans for MetroAccess fare increases. Mr. Alvir-Silva stated for clarification for the work plan, we need the budget process updates and State of Good Operations report. Ms. Rush stated if there is a 10 cents increase on bus (or rail) fare that means double that amount for MetroAccess riders. MetroAccess clients whose fare is below \$6.50, will be affected.

Chair Calabia stated he does not know which members are supposed to be present for the BRS. Mr. Blake stated all the AAC members have the right to come and participate in both or either of the subcommittees, but all have to attend the AAC meeting.

Dr. Posner stated we need better signage. Size of signs and the space available is always an issue. We have a story in the Washington Post about Bus Routes, how route numbers are created. If you are not on that route, route numbers are meaningless to you. The electronic signage we have at the stations, the Passenger Information Display Systems (PIDS) shows where the trains are going. We need signs to show where the elevators are located, where the elevators will let you off as far as where you are going. Some of the disaster trains stations are Friendship Heights and L'Enfant Plaza. The L'Enfant Plaza is the worst in the system for signage. The VRE plus every single line (except Red) in the system, service that station.

Ms. Milleville commented with the current situation of the Riders Advisory Committee (RAC), it is important for the AAC to stay on track as far as its work plan is concerned.

Dr. Posner stated that the AAC supports the RAC and we will present it to the Board in next month's meeting.

Chair Calabria urged all the members to voice their concerns via media or some other mode. Dr. Posner reminded all members that when you speak to the media, you speak as yourself not as a member of WMATA or the AAC. He was identified in his title, he was not identified as a member of the AAC or a member of WMATA. Mr. Sheehan stated it is also important that when Phil speaks with the media, he speaks on the motions that we have passed as a whole in the AAC meeting. Dr. Posner stated the media will ask if it is his personal opinion and he would tell them that is the motion that was passed in the AAC.

Mr. Kaffen commented about the pro-activeness of Washington Post's reporter who attended the Cashless Bus hearing. He was there for the entire presentation. At the end of the presentation he talked with many of the presenters and passed out his card. It was unfortunate that we haven't seen any report from the WAMU, that position has been in transition and they have a new person, and we hope that person will get involved just like the person involved from the Washington Post. Dr. Posner stated some of them show up for all of the hearings. Some reporters may show up for a few of the subcommittee meetings. A lot of them listen in, they don't have to be physically present. Meetings are online, agendas are online, power points are online, and everything is broadcasted. They will listen in so they are paying attention to what is going on. Mr. Kaffen asked if the Work Plan is available to them. Dr. Posner stated it is available. They like us, we are organized, and we have a plan. Ms. Rush stated they are watching us when you don't even know they are watching us and they are listening. Mr. Alvir-Silva stated we present the needs and solutions.

Public Comment:

There were none.

Mr. Blake stated this is the Disability Employment Awareness month. We have the Accessibility Excellence Award ceremony, and the highlight of the event will be the presentation of the Richard Hedding Award presented to a person of the community for their work and volunteer efforts and other sacrifices to make public transportation available for all. There was a discussion on two very fine nominations. One was for Wendy Klancher within the context of her work. The other nomination and the winner of this year's award is for Denise Rush.

Meeting adjourned at 5:55pm.