



Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
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BUS AND RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: December 12, 2016

In attendance: Brian Miller (Chair), Brianne Burger (Vice-Chair), Edward McEntee (2nd Vice-Chair), Charlie Crawford, Larry Haile, Suzanne Kamel, Mary Kay McMahon, and Randy Pope.

Call to Order

Chair Miller called the December 12, 2016 Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Review and Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The BRS approved the December 12, 2016 meeting agenda as amended.

The BRS approved the November 14, 2016 meeting minutes.

Ombudsman's Report

Christiaan Blake, Director, ADA Policy and Planning (ADAP), provided an update on items from the November 2016 BRS meeting:

- He stated that the project to improve complaint data to better identify ADA-specific items remains underway.
- He stated that David Shaffer, ADA Ombudsman, is working with Rail Transportation (RTRA) on the possibility of 7000-series train operators announcing elevator outages. Previously, the BRS recommended that elevator outages be announced at least two stations prior to the affected station, and that announcements be made while a train is at a station platform and in the tunnels. Larry Haile expressed an interest in whether train operators can make announcements in addition to the automated announcements. He stated that the manual announcements should be provided when a train is leaving a station; that way, the announcements can be made without the operator talking over the automated announcements. Mr. Blake stated that ADAP is working with RTRA on the issue, and the Ombudsman will keep the committee abreast of any developments.

Metrorail Station Signage Program

Thomas Proctor, Office of Infrastructure Services, discussed Metro's Signage Program. He stated that signage in the Metrorail system has one function--to connect people to places. There are a number of elements that contribute to a good wayfinding sign. Consistency, simplicity, continuity, and familiarization are all factors used in Metro's Signage Program to ensure all customers, including people with disabilities, are able to navigate the system. Metro also provides related information through websites and printed media to give customers multiple ways of accessing travel information.

Some things limit the effectiveness of signs. Mr. Proctor stated that text size, location, and sight lines are key to determining where to locate a sign so all customers can view it. The Metro system is rich in architectural design, and although the architecture is taken into consideration, Metro makes every effort to ensure it does not limit the effectiveness of its signage. Other elements that affect signage effectiveness are contrast, understandability, flow of information, and contradictory or confusing information. Mr. Proctor stated that Metro strives to ensure that the messaging is universal throughout the system.

To ensure all system signage meet the needs of customers, Metro conducts outreach with stakeholders, reviews pedestrian traffic flow, and obtains mapping of the area. Mr. Proctor also works closely with the Department of Access Services on regulations that relate to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). He added that much of his work is guided by Metro's Rail System Signage Design Manual, and before any design is placed into the system, a scaled elevation and layout is completed for each sign. Metro has a strict signage review process and every proposed sign goes through a rigorous assessment before being placed in the system.

Mr. Haile stated that he has some experience with developing signs. He stressed the importance of viewing signage from a "going to" (the platform or bus bay at a station) and "coming from" (a platform to exit out the rail system) perspective. He added that from a visual signage perspective, Metro does a good job. However, Metro can do more with tactile signage to get customers to their destinations in the system and out of the system as well. Mr. Proctor stated that signage studies have been conducted at all 91 stations, and the consensus is that tactile signage and symbols were lacking throughout the system. Metro is preparing to upgrade such signage. Additionally, Metro will be moving to digital signage in addition to the current static signs in the system.

Brianne Burger expressed an interest in enhancing directional signage for the elevators. She stated that she has a new baby and travels in the system along the Orange and Blue lines with a baby stroller. Being able to locate the elevator without always walking in the wrong direction because there is no signage or the signage is pointing in the wrong direction is important. Mr. Proctor stated that in reviewing all the stations there were some deficiencies identified which are being addressed. For example, all of the International Symbol of Access markers on the lower level of the Gallery Place Metrorail station have been replaced to better assist customers in locating the elevators more easily.

Charlie Crawford expressed an interest in signage for Metrobus stops. He stated that for some Blind customers, locating a bus stop can be difficult, especially when there is no one else around. He stated that science and technology have improved and there are tactile ways to locate a stop. For example, placing patterns in the sidewalk that are not tripping hazards that can alert a person that they are near a bus stop. Mr. Proctor stated that his office primarily handles signage in the Metrorail system, however he will share the suggestion with Metro's Office of Bus Planning (BPLN), which manages all of Metro's bus stops and from time to time works with the local jurisdictions on their bus stops.

Mr. Haile expressed an interest in whether Metro had the ability to add signage on bus shelters. Mr. Proctor stated that adding signage to a shelter would have to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. BPLN manages all of Metro's bus stops, and he collaborates with them on any signage modification to a Metro bus stop at a rail station.

Mr. Haile also stated that he liked Mr. Crawford's idea of developing alternative ways of helping people who are Blind find bus stops. He stated that the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority has placed square placards on bus poles that identify the routes at the stop. TriMet in Portland, Oregon uses a quick response code (QR) that allows customers to get real-time arrival information using a smartphone. Although this information may not be tactile, customers who are Blind can be oriented through travel training to using the QR code for information. Mr. Haile stated that would enhance the customer experience. Mr. Proctor stated that there have been discussions about using social media and smartphone technology to enhance the customer experience while using the Metrobus and Metrorail system.

Suzanne Kamel expressed an interest in Metro adding the same information found on the wall signs onto platform signs. As a low-vision customer, wall signage can be difficult to view. For example, at Gallery Place the font may be large, but the wording pointing customers in the direction of Chinatown or the Verizon Center is barely visible. She stated having information located where customers can view it from a close distance is important. Mr. Proctor stated that in addition to the wall signs, Metro uses secondary and complementary signage on the pylons throughout the system to ensure customers are able to access the information.

Barbara Milleville, President of the National Capital Citizens for Low-Vision (NCCLV), stated that for several years she has been working with the Committee and Metro to improve lighting in the rail stations. NCCLV reviewed stations and provided a list of areas where lighting was inadequate. System signage was one of the areas where

lighting could be improved. For example, the light that shines on signs above and below escalators at some stations does not exactly work for customers with low-vision. Ms. Milleville invited Mr. Proctor to shadow her in the system to enhance his understanding of the experience of low-vision customers navigating through the system. Mr. Proctor stated that he appreciated the invitation and will discuss it further with Ms. Milleville.

Ms. Milleville added that NCCLV has been encouraging Metro to change the color of signs from tan to dark brown. She stated that this change would provide more contrast. She also stated that the neon signs in the system really stand out and suggested that Metro add them system-wide. Mr. Proctor stated that Metro has listened to the customers and is moving to the dark brown colored background on all signs in the system. In response to a question on when all of the signs will be changed to the new color, Mr. Proctor stated that Metro would complete the signage upgrade at all 91 stations by the year 2020.

A member of the public commented that the elevator symbol used to be found on the station name signs on the platform level in several places. When Metro added the Silver Line, the symbols were removed at all Orange and Blue lines stations and never replaced. Mr. Proctor stated that the symbols will be replaced in conjunction with upgrades of the signage.

Many members expressed an interest in being included in the process for the placement and development of signs, in particular the tactile signs in the system. Mr. Proctor stated that he welcomes the disability community's input on all signage including tactile signs in the system.

The BRS thanked Mr. Proctor for an informative presentation and added the update to the work plan.

ADA Quality Assurance Program

Marque Dixon, ADA Quality Assurance Specialist, ADAP, discussed Metro's Quality Assurance program. He stated that his role is to ensure that the accessible features are maintained in all Metro stations, facilities, and equipment. When an accessibility issue occurs in the system, he investigates the matter, notifies the appropriate office for repair, and monitors the progress of the repair until the issue is resolved.

In addition to scheduled inspections, he randomly checks inter-car barriers, fare-machines, gates, and the load-leveling of cars for compliance and safety. The emergency buttons on the platforms, aspects of the parking garages, elevators, and

bus bay areas at the rail stations are also tested for compliance. Over the years, Mr. Dixon built relationships with various offices such as the Office of Elevator and Escalator, Department of Safety and Environmental Management, Office of Plant Maintenance, Office of System Maintenance, and the Operation Central Control Center. These relationships play a vital role in addressing issues of compliance in the Metrobus and Metrorail systems.

Mr. Dixon encouraged customers to report issues of compliance to Metro's Customer Service at (202) 962-1328 and ADAP at (202) 962-1100. He will be informed of the complaint and will investigate the issue. In response to a question about emailing compliance issues, Mr. Blake stated that customers could email those issues to access@wmata.com.

Ms. Milleville expressed an interest in whether lighting outages were being captured and reported. Mr. Dixon stated that lighting including overhead, track bed, and platform lights are reviewed on a regular basis. The outages are reported and monitored until repaired.

The BRS thanked Mr. Dixon for the important work he does to maintain access throughout the system.

Public Comment

A comment was made about the new MetroAccess ID cards for conditionally eligible customers. Cheryl O'Konek, Operations Manager, Office of Eligibility Certification and Outreach, stated that the new MetroAccess ID card allows a conditionally eligible customer and their personal care attendant (PCA) to use the Free Ride Benefit (FRB) independently, thereby relieving station managers and bus operators from administering use of the FRB. The card can be used throughout the system and on buses operated by one of Metro's jurisdictional partners. For services at reduced rates or full fare, customers can add value to the new ID cards to pay for such services. Ms. O'Konek stated that the corresponding PCA card will allow whoever is traveling with the eligible customer to access the system for the same fare as the ID card holder so long as certain conditions are met. When traveling with the card holder, the PCA card must be tapped on the same target as the ID card holder within 90 seconds. If the PCA card is used more than 90 seconds later or is tapped at a different fare gate, the PCA card will function as a full fare SmarTrip card. The cards do not come with pre-loaded value.

In response to a question about replacing the PCA card, Ms. O'Konek stated that any balance remaining on the old card will be transferred upon replacement, and Metro will charge \$2 to replace the accompanying PCA card.

Mr. Haile expressed an interest in whether the PCA had to go through the same fare gate as the card holder. Ms. O'Konek stated that the PCA must travel through the same fare gate within 90 seconds of the card holder to receive the benefit. If a PCA card is used after the 90 seconds or taps a target at a different fare gate, the PCA card will function as a full fare card.

A customer stated that she recently participated in a travel training class where the new MetroAccess ID card was demonstrated. During the training class, some customers using mobility devices had difficulty tapping the fare machine target on the Metrobus vehicle because of the angle and height of the machine. Mr. Blake thanked the customer for raising the issue and stated that his office will follow up.

A comment was made about a MetroAccess letter. The customer stated that the letter is several pages long and very confusing. Mr. Blake stated that Metro sent a letter to all MetroAccess eligible customers about the privacy policy. The policy allows Metro to share a limited amount of data related to the customers' paratransit eligibility with local jurisdictions and government agencies. For an example, a MetroAccess customer that resides in the District of Columbia (DC) is eligible to use TransportDC service. Information about DC MetroAccess customers may be shared with DC officials to allow information to be sent to MetroAccess customers about TransportDC and other transportation options.

A customer expressed an interest in whether Medicaid information was part of the data being collected and shared. Mr. Blake stated that Metro does not collect data related to a customer's Medicaid eligibility. The data allowed to be shared is limited to demographic information (name, address, email, and phone number) and eligibility type.

A comment was made about TransportDC. The customer stated the automated prompt at the beginning of the call reminds customers to sign up for MetroAccess before January 15, 2017. Customers that do not have a MetroAccess service card by that time will be denied TransportDC service. The customer asked for clarity on this issue. Mr. Blake stated that Metro contacted the D.C. Department of For Hire Vehicles (DFHV) and have advised them of the erroneous information and requested that it be removed. DFHV has agreed to remove the information.

A comment was also made about the recent ruling from the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA). The FTA weighed in shared mobility and the ADA. The FTA stated that shared mobility is required to be ADA accessible even when there are no federal dollars used. The customer stated that this is in direct contrast to Metro's position with Abilities-Ride. Mr. Blake stated that Metro is aware of the FTA advisory related to shared mobility. Mr. Blake stated that, in his opinion, the advisory simply reaffirms Metro's commitment to making Abilities-Ride an accessible alternative as outlined in the original scope of work shared with the public last January.

Old Business

Ms. Burger expressed an interest in when the next update on white boards will occur. Dr. B. Moore Gwynn, AAC Coordinator, stated that an update is scheduled for the January 9, 2016 BRS meeting.

New Business

Dr. Miller expressed an interest in whether there were any motions made during the prior meeting. Mr. Blake stated that the last motion he recalled is the request to have Metro's General Council discuss waivers for the planned emergency exercise. Staff suggests that the AAC write a letter to the GM on this subject. Dr. Moore Gwynn stated that the AAC Chair will most likely discuss the suggested letter during the next AAC meeting.

Mr. Haile stated that there was a discussion on how to enhance training for first responders. Dr. Moore Gwynn stated that the Committee requested a follow-up from the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). OEM has been scheduled for the February 2017 subcommittee meeting.

The BRS added bus stop signage to the work plan.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.