



## Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
202-962-6060

### **BUS AND RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: January 9, 2017**

In attendance: Brianne Burger (Vice-Chair), Charlie Crawford, Larry Haile, Steven Kaffen, Mary Kay McMahon, Randall Pope, Denise Rush, and Patrick Sheehan.

#### **Call to Order**

Vice-Chair Burger called the January 9, 2017 Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

#### **Review and Approval of Agenda and Minutes**

The BRS approved the January 9, 2017 meeting agenda as amended.

The BRS approved the December 12, 2016 meeting minutes as written.

#### **Ombudsman's Report**

David Shaffer, ADA Ombudsman, provided feedback on a comment made about announcements on the 7000-series railcars. The customer stated that, on a regular basis, the train doors close prior to the completion of the announcements. Mr. Shaffer stated that he investigated the issue with Metro's Office of Rail Transportation (RTRA), which reported that the timing of the doors on the 7000-series railcars are not automatic, and can be controlled by train operators. To address the issue, RTRA has instructed staff to monitor announcements and correct issues as they arise.

In a follow-up on announcements, the Ombudsman also provided feedback on a comment made about elevator outages. Mr. Shaffer stated that train operators are required to make announcements about elevator outages on all railcars, regardless of series. RTRA will monitor and correct any issues as they arise.

Charlie Crawford expressed an interest in whether Metro takes disciplinary action on employees who violate the policy. Mr. Shaffer stated that Metro has a progressive disciplinary policy. He reminded members and the public to report deficiencies in the system to Metro's Customer service at (202) 637-1328 and to Metro's Office of ADA Policy and Planning at (202) 962-1100 for follow up. Customers should include as much information as possible to assist Metro in tracking the reported issues.

The Ombudsman also provided feedback on a complaint about out-of-service trains from a deaf customer. RTRA reported that train operators are required to make announcements when a train is taken out-of-service. Train operators must walk through the entire train and flash the lights to alert all customers that the train is out-of-service. This procedure is to ensure there are no customers left on a train before the train is moved to the next location or rail yard.

Ms. Burger stated that as a deaf customer who has used the system for over 13 years, she has never experienced a train operator flash the lights or walk through the train to

let customers know that the train is out-of-service. Christiaan Blake, Director, ADAP, stated that train operators are following the procedure; however, it may be inconsistent across the system. ADAP is working with RTRA to formalize the policy to ensure that the procedure is adhered to consistently across the system.

Donald Goings, Superintendent, Station Operations/Service Delivery, RTRA, stated that the procedure for when a train is at the end of a line or placed out-of-service, is that the train operator makes the announcement, must flash the lights, and walk through the train. RTRA supervisors are responsible for ensuring that train operators follow the procedure. When a train is placed out-of-service in an area other than the end of a line, another member of RTRA staff will have that responsibility.

Larry Haile expressed an interest in whether Metro plans to use an outside source to monitor train announcements. Mr. Blake stated that Metro has a Mystery Rider Program. The program is designed to address shuttle service for elevator outages, an area where Metro has made great progress. Mr. Blake stated that he would investigate whether the current program could be expanded to monitor train announcements as well, and he will provide feedback to the Committee.

Mr. Haile also stated that train operators are not performing the door opening announcements on the 7000 series railcars. The lack of audio announcements places customers who are Blind or have low vision traveling on 7000-series trains at a disadvantage. Mr. Shaffer stated that he would investigate and provide feedback.

Steve Kaffen stated that the announcement reminding customers to move to the center of the railcars has outlived its purpose because customers are conditioned to move quickly into the railcars. Mr. Kaffen suggested that Metro consider removing the announcement or give the train operator the flexibility to use the announcement when necessary, such as during high tourist season.

Mr. Haile agreed with Mr. Kaffen's points about announcements. He stated that announcements in the system occur so frequently that they become white noise, and some customers do not pay attention to them.

Mr. Blake stated that automated announcements on the 7000-series railcars are comprehensive to insure the needs of all customers are met.

Mr. Crawford stressed the need for, and value of, consistent, predictable and repetitive announcements. Metro has a responsibility to serve everyone, not just customers who may be familiar with the system. Mr. Blake stated that there are no plans to change the

announcements; however, he would forward the comment to the appropriate office for consideration.

**Communication with Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing Customers (Update)**

Mr. Goings provided an update on communication with Deaf and Hard-of-hearing customers traveling in the system. He stated that to facilitate communication via white boards, Metro will have pre-printed alert messages that station managers can post during an emergency in the system to communicate with customers. These pre-printed signs will ensure that the information is consistent and readable by all customers. It is anticipated that the communication tool will be available use by the upcoming Inauguration.

Another tool Metro will use to improve communication is the "Get Around Town" tear-off. Mr. Goings stated that the tear-off will include symbols, short messages, and a system map. The form is a tear-off sheet so customers can take the form with them and refer back to the directions, if needed. In response to a question about a review, Mr. Goings stated that there will be an opportunity for another review before implementation.

Ms. Burger expressed an interest in whether the white boards will be used on rail and bus. Mr. Goings stated that the tool will be used in the stations. Station managers will have a white board at every mezzanine, and when incidents occur in the system, station managers will use the pre-printed magnetic signs to place a message on the white board. RTRA is collaborating with the Department of Bus Transportation on this issue.

In a follow-up, Ms. Burger stated that when an incident occurs in the system it is at the platform level, where most customers including those who are Deaf or Hard-of-hearing need information. She expressed an interest in whether station managers will be instructed to use the tool on the platform. Mr. Goings stated that the goal is to communicate with customers with a consistent message. RTRA is developing the process. He reminded members and the public that Metro shares information via eAlerts, the Passenger Information Display System, and the Kiosk Information Display System. In response to a question about training, Mr. Goings stated that all station supervisors will be briefed, and the procedures will be disseminated to all station managers.

Barbara Milleville, President, National Capital Citizens with Low Vision, expressed an interest in whether the "Get Around Town" tear-off would be available in large print. Mr. Goings stated that RTRA will make the information available in an accessible format.

Mr. Crawford complimented RTRA on its efforts to ensure communication is extending to all customers using the system.

Ms. Burger stated that training is key to ensure staff understands the necessity of the communication tool. Mr. Goings reiterated his statement about RTRA developing the process.

Ms. Milleville stated that customers who are Deaf or Hard-of-hearing may also have low vision. She suggested that Metro use markers with a brush tip. Brush tip markers are wider, making information more visible for customers with low vision. Mr. Goings stated that the pre-printed magnetic signs will be used on the white boards.

Mr. Kaffen made a comment about lighting at the Judiciary Square station. He expressed an interest in whether Metro could apply that type of lighting to other stations. Jim Hughes, Managing Director, RTRA, stated that Metro has a plan to improve lighting throughout the rail system.

In a follow-up on lighting, Patrick Sheehan expressed an interest in a list of stations with lighting improvements, and a list of stations that will be completed in fiscal year 2018. Mr. Blake stated that staff will invite Metro's lighting group to a future meeting.

Ms. Burger thanked RTRA for the update. She stated that members and the public look forward to the implementation of this new communication tool in the rail system and on Metrobus.

### **Metrorail Station Signage Program (Update)**

Thomas Proctor, Office of Infrastructure Services, provided an update on signage in the Metrorail system. At the last meeting, members expressed an interest in the replacement of elevator symbols and increasing the number of tactile signage throughout the system.

Mr. Proctor stated that Metro is embracing a new standard that will address accessibility symbols, as well as larger and consistent fonts throughout the system. He stated that the new signage program is designed to make information consistent across the system.

In the new signage program the "station name" signs will be 18' x 144", with a font size of 6 inches, and include accessibility symbols for elevators, escalators, and directional arrows. The background of the signage will be dark brown in color with white lettering making information more visible. Metro has improved wayfinding in the following stations: Gallery Place, Ronald Reagan-Washington National Airport, McPherson Square and Smithsonian.

Metro is also enhancing the "station ahead list" (SAL) signs. The font size on the SALs has been increased to 5/8 of an inch to allow customers to view information at a distance. The signage layout has also been uncluttered, making information orderly and easier to view. On center platforms, where the SAL are vertical, Mr. Proctor stated that those signs will be replaced with digital signage. The digital SAL list will be located on the pylons, and include touch and audio features. In response to a question about exit wayfinding information, Mr. Proctor stated that the new signage program will increase exit wayfinding information. Mr. Proctor stated that Metro will complete signage upgrades at all 91 stations by the year 2020.

In a follow-up on exit information, Mr. Haile stated that wayfinding information at the platform level on the Blue, Orange, and Silver lines is lacking. Mr. Proctor stated that he will review the signage in those areas. Additionally, Mr. Haile encouraged Metro to use Blind members of the AAC in the development and testing of tactile signage.

Phillippa Mezile stated that at the Foggy Bottom and Eastern Market stations the SAL are no longer on the pillars. The information is above a stationery advertisement box. For customers with low vision, the height makes the information harder to view. Mr. Proctor stated the new signage program will address elevation views to ensure customers can view the information at eye level.

Ms. Mezile also expressed an interest in whether the tactile signage will be available in raised lettering. Mr. Proctors stated that the information will be available in an accessible format.

Mr. Crawford expressed an interest in accessing wayfinding information in the system via a smart phone. He stated that most smart phones have wayfinding applications, however without the cellular access in the rail system the applications are useless. Mr. Proctor stated that Metro has an initiative to add Wi-Fi in the stations. There are also discussions to add stationery kiosks linked to customers' cell phones, that will provide information about traveling in the system.

Mr. Sheehan stated that a few months ago the Committee received a presentation on Wi-Fi and smart phone applications in the Metrorail system. He stated that any smart phone application must meet the 508 technical requirements. He reiterated Mr. Haile's point about using the AAC in the development and test phases of any smart phone application.

Mr. Kaffen stated that the electronic signage at bus shelters operates too slowly. He encouraged Metro to increase the timing of the information. Mr. Proctor stated that he would forward the comment to Metro's Office of Bus Planning.

### **Public Comment**

Mr. Kaffen made a comment about an incident on Metrobus. He stated that on January 5, 2017 he was waiting for the 42 bus. When the bus arrived it stopped a half-a-block away from the bus stop, and was partially in the street. Mr. Kaffen stated that he walked toward the bus, and as he boarded the operator scolded him for not walking faster. Flustered by the treatment, he stated that he dropped his fare card. The bus operator motioned him to the front to get the card, and as he proceeded to the front, the bus stopped short causing him to fall forward. A request was made for assistance from the Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD). Mr. Kaffen stated that after an inordinate amount of time, he followed up with MTPD again using the number from the automated announcement that was relayed in Spanish. MTPD arrived and offered medical assistance, but Mr. Kaffen stated that he declined. Shortly after, a Metrobus supervisor arrived and addressed the issue. Mr. Kaffen stated that he believed this incident was not handled properly, and that neither procedures nor training were followed. Additionally he stated that the announcement for MTPD should change. Mr. Blake stated that the Ombudsman will follow up.

Denise Rush encouraged members to contact Metro's complaint line immediately when an incident happens in the system.

Mr. Blake reminded members to report issues to Metro's Customer Service at (202) 962-1328 and ADAP at (202) 962-1100 for follow up. Customers can also email compliance issues to [access@wmata.com](mailto:access@wmata.com).

### **New Business**

Ms. Rush expressed an interest in public hearings. B. Moore Gwynn, AAC Coordinator, stated that Metro's public hearing is scheduled for Monday, January 30, 2017. As soon as the information is available, it will be forwarded to the Committee.

**Old Business**

Mr. Haile reiterated his comments about stop announcements on Metrorail and Metrobus; review of standards. Dr. Moore-Gwynn stated that the item has been added to the work plan.

**Adjournment**

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