



Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
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BUS AND RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: June 12, 2017

In attendance: Edward McEntee (2nd Vice-Chair), Charlie Crawford, Randall Pope, Phil Posner, Denise Rush.

Call to Order

Chair McEntee called the June 12, 2017 Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Review and Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The BRS approved the June 12, 2017 meeting agenda.

The BRS approved the May 8, 2017 meeting minutes as written.

Public Comment

No one from the public requested to speak.

Ombudsman's Report

Christiaan Blake, Director, ADA Policy and Planning (ADAP), provided an update on a comment made during the May BRS meeting related to the unevenness of the platform to the train at the Rhode Island Avenue Metrorail station. He stated that this also is an issue at the Braddock Road station. The Committee received an update on Metro's short-term and long-term solutions to the issue. ADAP followed up on Doris Ray's comment regarding color contrast. Mr. Blake stated that Metro investigated other options, such as custom tile; however, Metro will first use a slip-resistant yellow paint for the short-term solution, before changing to a bright green custom tile. Mr. McEntee expressed an interest in whether the BRS will be able to view the project once completed. Mr. Blake stated that the BRS will be kept abreast of the progress of each rail station, and photos will be provided.

Mr. Blake announced that Metro will have a demonstration of the 7000-series railcars between-car barriers on June 14th. Although the new inter-car barrier design on the 7000-series railcars was compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Metro will no longer use the clamshell-style barriers. Currently, the traditional chain barriers and clamshell-style barriers alternate between every other car; but moving forward, the traditional chain-link barriers will be installed in between every car. All existing 7000-series railcars will be retrofitted with the chain-link barrier design, and all new 7000-series railcars will be manufactured with the chain-link barrier design.

B. Moore Gwynn, AAC Coordinator, invited members to participate in the upcoming emergency exercise. The exercise will take place on June 25, 2017, at the Pentagon station. This is a high-security exercise, therefore only Metro employees and AAC members are allowed to participate in this event. All participants are required to sign a waiver. Any member interested in attending should contact ADAP by June 19, 2017, at noon.

Dr. Moore Gwynn also provided an update on a comment made during the May BRS meeting regarding travel training services to Baltimore via the Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) train. The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) contracts travel training services to the Center for Mobility Equity. MTA also has a small number of staff members who also provide travel training on all modes, including MARC.

Members were reminded of the new service changes on Metrobus and Metrorail. The service changes will begin on June 25, 2017. Metro has outlined the changes in a brochure that is available in English and Spanish.

Bus Stops – Prince George’s County

Jim Hamre, Director, Bus Planning (BPLN), discussed bus stops in Prince George’s County. He stated that there are approximately 10,800 Metro bus stops around the region. The vast majority of the bus stops do not belong to Metro. They are the property of the local jurisdictions. Generally, the only bus stops owned and managed by Metro are those located at the rail stations.

Mr. Hamre stated that Metro received a New Freedom grant for bus stop improvements. Metro collaborated with the disability community to develop criteria to identify inaccessible bus stops. It is estimated that 40% of the bus stops around the region are inaccessible to mobility device users and others with limited mobility. In 2014, Metro expanded its standard for bus stops to a stop with a 5-by-8-foot paved surface that connects to the curb and an accessible path to the nearest intersection.

Metro has a regional goal of having 100 bus stops improved per year. Mr. Hamre stated that in partnership with the local jurisdictions, over 200 bus stops have been improved this year. Many of these improvements were funded by the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC)/New Freedom and the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants. Mr. Hamre introduced Aaron Overman, Senior Planner for Bus Facilities projects. Mr. Overman stated that in his role, he has worked extensively with Prince George’s County and the District of Columbia (D.C.) on improving accessibility at bus stops.

Mr. Overman stated that Metro has been working on design schematics and permits from the various jurisdictions that control the right-of-way area to implement the standard for bus stops. He travels to each proposed location to view the bus stops and

the work to be performed. With the assistance of the Department of Access Services, Metro improved 10 bus stops in Prince George's County last year. Currently, Metro has plans to improve 51 bus stops in Prince George's County and 11 bus stops in D.C. Mr. Overman stated that one of the challenges to improving bus stops in D.C. is obtaining an up to date list of bus stops needing improvements because the list is always changing. Many of the projects are small but go a long way in making the system accessible. He stated that for next year, Metro has identified 140 more stops for improvements.

Dr. Posner expressed an interest in whether Metro plans to implement a tool used by Arlington County to tell customers where the bus is along the route. The system operates on a global positioning system and does not require a customer to be computer savvy or require a smartphone. Mr. Hamre stated that he was familiar with the system used in Arlington County. The system is different from Metro's NextBus system, as it does not have a website or a smartphone application. He stated that Metro has not considered using the system. The NextBus display units at bus stops allows Metro to provide information to customers in addition to bus stop information. Metro's NextBus system can all be accessed using mobile technology.

A comment from the public expressed an interest in whether Metro collects information about inaccessible bus stops and how a customer can report an inaccessible bus stop. Mr. Hamre stated that Metro collects information on all bus stops around the region. Customers can report inaccessible bus stops to Metro's Customer Service at (202) 637-1328 or complete a form online.

A comment from the public expressed an interest in how Metro coordinates with the jurisdictions to improve bus stops. Mr. Hamre stated that Metro worked with other jurisdictions through its Regional Bus Stop Task Force. The group is comprised of bus stop coordinators from around the region. Metro is specifically working with Prince George's County because the County had several shovel-ready projects.

Mr. Crawford expressed an interest how Metro determines whether the work being performed on a bus stop is stellar. Mr. Hamre stated that Metro does not have a formal structure for feedback on bus stops. However, customers can comment on bus stops during any of Metro's public meetings or through Metro's Amplify program.

A comment from the public expressed an interest in the service changes on the W13, W14 - Bock Road and the P17, P18, P19 - Oxon Hill/Fort Washington bus lines. Mr. Hamre stated that during the FY2018 budget hearings, a proposal was presented to eliminate the P17, P19, and W19 - Indian Head Express bus lines. At the public hearings, Metro received many comments related to the importance of bus services

from Prince George's County residents. Instead of eliminating the routes, Metro will operate an all-day two-way service on the Bock Road and Oxon Hill Fort Washington lines to the Southern Avenue Metrorail station.

In a follow-up, the customer stated that, as a visually impaired customer, she was concerned with her safety at some of the rail stations. Mr. Hamre stated that Metro Transit Police monitors the safety data from all stations and when there is a rise in crime at any of the stations, MTPD mobilizes personnel to that station. Metro has assigned a bus supervisor at the Southern Avenue station to assist customers with their travel needs.

A comment from the public expressed an interest in the weekend service on the Bock Road and Oxon Hill Fort Washington lines. Mr. Hamre stated that the budget did not include weekend service.

Mr. Hamre reminded members that the service changes begin on Sunday, June 25, 2017. He stated that there are changes in every jurisdiction. With a round of applause, the BRS thanked Mr. Hamre and Mr. Overman for the overview on bus stops in Prince George's County.

Work Plan

The BRS discussed its upcoming work plan for FY2018. Dr. Posner suggested that the BRS receive an update on all the regional bus service. He stated that across the jurisdictions, there have been many changes to bus service.

Charlie Crawford stated that in Montgomery County the fares have been changed to make them consistent with the upcoming changes in Metro's new fare policy.

In follow-up, Dr. Posner stated that Montgomery County Ride-On does not accept Metro fare media for the Free Ride Program. Mr. Crawford stated that last week he forwarded members an email from the Montgomery County Council, which indicated that MetroAccess customers who are conditionally-eligible and their personal care attendant or companion can travel on Ride-On for free.

Mr. McEntee expressed an interest in receiving a presentation on the service hours. Many members were opposed with the changes because of the impact on customers. An update in FY18 would determine whether Metro should continue with the same service hours or consider returning the hours to the period before SafeTrack.

Mr. Crawford expressed an interest in an update on lighting. In follow-up, Dr. Posner stated that an update on the maintenance of lighting is also important. Mr. Blake stated

that maintenance for lighting in Metro's FY18 budget was not reduced. On the capital improvement side, the lighting projects are long-term. The Bethesda and Judiciary Square Metrorail stations are receiving improvements that will be duplicated across the system. He stated that no final date has been set as to when the work will be completed.

Dr. Posner suggested an update on the white boards.

Dr. Posner stated that Metro should consider placing the 10 most common questions and answers, such as "where's the restroom" or "where's the elevator" on cards in Braille and raised letters. He stated that he has used a similar method of communication when traveling abroad. This tool, along with the white boards, will aid all customers including those in the deaf and deaf-blind community. Upon motion, the BRS agreed to investigate the development of the top 10 questions and answers in Braille and raised lettering.

Old Business

Mr. Crawford requested a follow-up on the AAC recruitment. Dr. Moore Gwynn stated that the 2017 AAC recruitment period was open from April 3 through April 30, 2017. There were 10 openings which have been filled. All of the interviews are completed, and the information has been moved forward to the Metro's Board for approval. It is anticipated that new members will be approved at the Board meeting on June 25, 2017.

New Business

Dr. Moore Gwynn shared that Patrick Sheehan fell and broke his wrist in four places today. He indicated that he was on medication, and his physician has given him instruction to rest. Members interested in sending well wishes to the AAC Chair can do so via email.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:07 p.m.