



Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

BUS AND RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: March 12, 2018

In attendance: Edward McEntee (Chair) Tino Calabia (1st Vice-Chair), Elver Ariza-Silva, Carolyn Bellamy, Hazell Brooks, Charlie Crawford, Steve Kaffen, Mary Kay McMahon, Phillippa Mezile, Anthony Oberg, Randall Pope, Denise Rush, and Paul Semelfort.

By Remote: Phil Posner (AAC Chair)

Call to Order

Chair McEntee called the March 12, 2018, Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Review and Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The BRS approved an amended March 12, 2018 meeting agenda removing the Elevator Design and Cameras presentation and adding the Eligibility Certification Outreach discussion on the Reduced Fare program by Christopher Colbert, Acting Director.

The BRS approved the February 12, 2018 meeting minutes as written.

The Ombudsman Report

David Shaffer, Ombudsman, ADAP stated he received an update to an issue committee member Steve Kaffen reported about the N bus line AVL and Real Time trip planning. Mr. Shaffer stated Bus Planning described that this issue occurs when there is equipment failure or Operator error. Mr. Shaffer, also stated the day in question was investigated and it was determined that the cause of the issue was due to equipment failure. Mr. Kaffen, thanked Mr. Shaffer and stated that the issue has not happened since he reported the information to ADAP.

Mr. Shaffer reported there was another incident where a Metrobus Operator refused to lower the lift because the operator assumed the customer did not require a lift. Mr. Shaffer also reported a Metrobus operator refused access to a customer who had a Pitbull as a Service Animal. In both cases the Operators were disciplined for their actions.

Mr. Shaffer stated he received many of complaints about announcements on the 7000 railcar series. He stated while riding in the system it appears that some operators are cutting the announcements off when they open the door, and some operators are cutting the announcements off when they depart from the station. Mr. Shaffer stated this issue appears to occur during non-rush hour. During peak hours there are enough customers boarding on and off the trains, which allows the Operators to play the announcements in full. Mr. Shaffer stated he would like the committee to provide feedback over the next few months on announcements they hear while traveling. Mr.

Shaffer stated he will present the findings to Donald Goings, RISS for corrective action. Mr. Shaffer stated on the non 7000 series rail cars customers are stating announcements aren't clear. He stated that on the much older railcars the speaker systems aren't compatible and sometimes he finds himself counting rail stops before exiting. Mr. Crawford asked what the announcement protocol is for Train Operators. Mr. Shaffer stated the operators are supposed to announce doors opening, move to the center of the car, train line then which side to exit. Mr. Kaffen stated during off peak periods he noticed operators also cut off the next station stop. Mr. Kaffen stated he recommends as a rider, to give the operator the right to cut off announcements during off peak time, however, only announce the next station.

Ms. McMahon stated that announcements by operators are being drowned out by station announcements. An example of this is when a train pulls into Gallery Place. Mr. Calabria asked if Metro can audit operators on their ability to use the train equipment when it comes to announcements. Mr. Shaffer stated that Mr. Blake and he are looking to launch a mystery rider program that will help identify issues with announcements. Mr. Shaffer stated in the meantime the AAC needs to notify him date, time, railcar and train line when the issues happen. Mr. Kaffen stated the next station announcement is a problem for all train series. He added that on the 7000 series an announcement is not made when you are arriving at a station. Mr. Shaffer stated the announcement is made 1 minute before arriving to the station. Mr. Kaffen stated Metro should look into how Paris makes their train announcements. Mr. Kaffen stated the AAC should implement Paris announcement recommendations for the 8000 railcar series.

Mr. Kaffen made a motion that the committee look into how Paris, France makes their announcements. Mr. Kaffen made a motion that the committee, when riding Metrobus and Metrorail, report any announcement issues to ADAP using phone or email.

Mr. Shaffer asked the committee if there were any other issues they would like him to investigate. Mr. Kaffen stated there are private buses that are blocking right lane access to DuPont Circle Station, while they are picking up passengers. Mr. Kaffen stated this blocks the N2 access to the station as well as the 42 bus line. He asked that ADAP look into this issue. He suggested that Metro works with the city to move the private buses to another street near DuPont Circle. Mr. Shaffer asked if the private buses have a stop at the station designated for their usage. Mr. Kaffen stated yes, the bus companies are called Washington Deluxe and Best Bus, and they are transporting people to New York City. Mr. Kaffen stated the private bus service is causing traffic issues all day. Mr. Shaffer stated he will follow up with Bus Planning. Ms. Bush stated that the committee should, as the announcement on Metro bus to the previous motion made by Mr. Kaffen.

Ms. Ray asked if members should only call Mr. Shaffer. She also added if members are allowed to report issues 24 hours a day. Mr. Blake stated this is a formal step that ADAP is asking the committee to take when traveling on the system. Yes, please file your complaint with customer service, however, do reach out to ADAP for follow-up. Ms. Ray stated she would like to know the method members should use when making a complaint about issues in the system, if she's not near the computer. Ms. Ray stated she would rather report it right then and there. Mr. Blake stated that when you are out on the system, and you will like to file a complaint, call the office of ADA Policy & Planning at 202-962-1100 then report it to customer service when you have time.

Ms. Bush asked if there is any other communication such as text or email that members and customers could use to report an issue. Mr. Blake stated please email access@wmata.com

Reduced Fare Program

Mr. Colbert provided the committee with a brief overview of the Reduced Fare program (RFP). Mr. Colbert stated the Reduced Fare program is managed by Metro's office of Eligibility Certification Outreach, the RFP card provides customers with disabilities a discounted fare for bus and rail.

Mr. Colbert stated customers who qualify for RFP, must have a qualifying disability with an application completed by a medical professional, if under age 65 and receive Medicare (not Medicaid), Veterans with disabilities who have been granted a 60% or greater disability rating by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and Applicants who are deaf or hard of hearing with a pure tone average of 70dB or greater in both ears regardless of hearing aids. Mr. Colbert stated however, the audiogram can be no more than five years old. Mr. Colbert stated if you are a visitor from outside of the Washington DC area and have Reduced Fare in the city you reside in you are eligible to receive a 60 day courtesy card. He also added if you need more than 30 days you can apply for the program with a completed application.

Mr. Colbert stated that in addition to the Reduced Fare program for people with a disabilities, Metro also offers the Senior SmarTrip card. The senior card is for customers who are age 65 years and older whether or not they have a disability. Senior citizens can purchase a Senior SmarTrip card by showing a valid photo ID with proof of age at the Metro sales office, commuter store, or other selected retail outlets. Mr. Colbert stated due to the closing of the sales location at Jackson Graham, seniors are now able to purchase Senior SmarTrip from the Transit Accessibility Center.

Mr. Colbert stated qualifying Reduced Fare customers are rendered their card the same day the application is processed. Mr. Colbert added customers can be determined eligible for 30 days, 1 year, or 5 years. He stated that customers also might be eligible to have an attendant travel with them (if an attendant is needed, the healthcare professional completing the application must indicate so). Ms. Bush asked if the 1 year of Eligibility is temporary. Mr. Colbert stated correct. Mr. Ariza-Silva asked if the Senior SmarTrip card has the same equivalent pricing as the Reduced Fare program. Mr. Ariza-Silva asked if the doctor must state the customer needs an attendant and if they receive a different card from the customer. Mr. Colbert stated the senior card and reduced fare has the same benefits. Mr. Colbert also stated yes, once the doctor indicates the customer needs a PCA, they provide the customer with a separate card for the PCA.

Mr. Ariza-Silva asked if a customer is found fully eligible for MetroAccess, do they get a reduced fare card. Mr. Blake stated if a customer is found fully eligible, and the customer states they can use fixed route with an attendant, at the customer's request they will be given access to conditional eligibility card. Mr. Colbert stated customers with fully eligible MetroAccess under old guidelines were able to get a reduced fare card. He also added if there are customers who have the fully eligible MetroAccess card and they can use Metrobus and Metrorail with an attendant please contact the Eligibility Office for reclassification. Mr. Alver asked if customers has a reduced fare program card already and later requires a PCA, do they have to submit a new application stating they now require a PCA. Mr. Colbert stated it's required that a medical professional must indicate whether the customer need a PCA. Ms. Ray asked if you are a conditional MetroAccess customer you ride free and the attendant rides free, is this also the same for fully eligible customers. Mr. Colbert stated that conditionally approved MetroAccess customers along with their attendant can ride fixed route for free. However, customers who are found fully eligible must pay unless they get reclassified.

Ms. Ray asked what is Metro's definition of a PCA. She also, added if a senior needed a PCA to travel with them, then how they can get the reduced rate. Mr. Colbert stated a PCA is anyone who is traveling with a customer. Mr. Colbert will check the tariff to see if a Senior SmarTrip card is attendant eligible. Mr. Colbert added normally if a senior requires an attendant, they are recommended for MetroAccess. Mr. Blake stated there is no PCA card for the Senior SmarTrip, however, Mr. Colbert will check into the tariff. Ms. Ray asked how will Metro classify the hearing impairment requirement of having 70Db as having a disability. She added there are many customers that are 50% dB instead of 70db and are still is considered disabled. Mr. Colbert stated his office is

simply checking to see if the customer has an audiogram, if the customer has one, they will process the RFP application.

Ms. Bush asked why the RFP card is five years and MetroAccess is 3 years. Mr. Colbert stated MetroAccess also have a 5 year card. Ms. Bush asked why are customers with a permanent disabilities granted a 3 year MetroAccess card instead of a 5 year card. Mr. Colbert stated the 3 year MetroAccess card is for customers who are able to use fixed route as well as MetroAccess and the 5 year card is for customers who are only able to use MetroAccess due to their disability. Mr. Blake stated at the next MetroAccess meeting Mr. Colbert will go into details about the MetroAccess eligibility process. Mr. Blake also stated for that Metro's goal is to make more investments and more advancements to the transit system, when there is time for a customer to recertify for MetroAccess they may no longer need Paratransit because they can use fixed route on some or maybe all their trips.

Mr. Ariza-Silva asked when he rides Metrobus if he is required to tap his MetroAccess SmarTrip card or just show his ID card. Mr. Colbert stated you must tap on Metrobus and Metrorail. Mr. Ariza-Silva stated Metro Station managers are telling MetroAccess customers not to tap the MetroAccess card when boarding the bus, because their card will be blocked. Mr. Colbert stated that some counties do allow you to use MetroAccess cards when riding on their bus for free. He stated he believes this can be the issue that's causing the blocked card. Mr. Colbert will follow up with SmarTrip on the matter.

Chair McEntee asked if there is an indefinite Eligibility length for customers who have a permanent disabilities that won't improve. Mr. Blake stated there is an administrative eligibility process for customers who's disability won't change. Mr. Blake stated the goal is that Metro will make changes that will allow customers to use fixed route service.

Mr. Crawford asked that Mr. Colbert clarify whether MetroAccess customers pay for using the service. Mr. Colbert stated MetroAccess customers do not pay for Metrobus and Rail, but they do pay for using MetroAccess van service. Ms. Bush asked if seniors and reduced fare have a separate application. Mr. Colbert stated yes, they have a different application process. Ms. Bush added if Metro would consider combining the reduced fare process and the senior process. Mr. Colbert stated due to the eligibility requirement of both programs they cannot be combined. However, they do have the same benefits.

Ms. Ray asked how is the Reduced Fare Program funded. Mr. Blake stated that the program is not funded by the federal government. However, every trip that's taken on

Metro is funded by the local jurisdictions. He added, just like MetroAccess the reduced fare is getting half fare instead of full fare. Ms. Ray asked what is the per customer subsidy on Metrobus & Metrorail for reduced fare. Mr. Blake stated he will research the cost and provided it to the committee.

Public Comment

Doris Ray stated as a member of the riding public there is a big problem with the schedule information you receive over the computer IVR. She would like ADAP staff to investigate the issue. She stated when she calls the IVR line the computer does not respond to your voice. Mr. Blake stated that Mr. Shaffer will look into and report back to the committee next month.

Mr. Ariza-Silva stated that at DuPont Circle Metro on Wednesday, a 7000 was going towards Glenmont, had kids on board that were able to retrieve fire extinguisher and use it on the railcar. Mr. Ariza-Silva stated he would like to know where the fire extinguishers are located and how are they secured. Mr. Blake stated he will look into the issue.

Ms. Bellamy asked for an update on Georgian Woods Place stop. Mr. Blake stated Bus Planning stated that it should be completed in two weeks. Ms. Bellamy stated that the stop that was moved from Georgian Woods Place and it is not accessible. Mr. Blake will follow up with Jim Hamre and report back to the committee.

Chair McEntee asked Mr. Blake what are the details on the Rush Hour Promise. Mr. Blake stated the Rush Hour Promise is when Metro will provide credits to customers who experience a delay of 15 minutes or more during rush hour service. Rush hour is defined as: Monday through Friday, from 5 a.m. until 9:30 a.m. and from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Eligibility is based on the time a customer enters the Metrorail system or boards a Metrobus. Mr. Blake also added each customer must use a registered SmarTrip card.

Ms. Ray stated that Barbara Millville appreciates the work the AAC is doing and would like to continue to advocate with the AAC for the vision impaired community.

Mr. Crawford asked about the lighting issue at Gallery Place and L'Enfant Plaza. David Shaffer stated that he is still looking into that complaint and he will have the answer next month.

Paul will not attend next month's AAC meeting. Ms. Rush will provide the report.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:43 p.m.