



Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

BUS AND RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: September 21, 2015

In attendance: William Staderman (Vice-Chair), Elver Ariza-Silva, Carolyn Bellamy, Brianne Burger, Darnise Bush, Charlie Crawford, Marisa Laios, Phillippa Mezile, Edward McEntee, Randall Pope, Phil Posner, Paul Semlfort, Denise Rush, and Roger Stanley.

Call to Order

Vice-Chair Staderman called the September 21, 2015 Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Review and Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The BRS approved the September 21, 2015 meeting agenda as amended. The BRS approved the July 13, 2015 meeting minutes.

Public Comment

A comment was made about the elevators at the new Paul S. Sarbanes Silver Spring Transit Center (SSTC). The customer stated that the distance between the some of the bus bays and elevators coupled by the multiple levels make it difficult for some customers to navigate the new facility. Phil Posner suggested that Metro add bus route announcements on the elevators. Christian Blake, Director, ADA Policy and Planning, stated that each level has multiple bus routes, therefore elevator announcements may not be feasible. However, Metro plans to offer an orientation session to assist customers with navigating the multiple levels of the SSTC.

Denise Rush stated that former BRS Chair Debbie Brown toured the SSTC and shared her comments regarding the challenges for customers with visual disabilities in an email with members of the National Federation of the Blind. She requested staff make the document available to any member interested in reading her comments. Mr. Blake stated that Metro will be updating the Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind Click-and-Go application with an audio map of the SSTC, and will follow up on Ms. Brown's other suggestions as well.

Brainne Burger made a comment about effective communication with the Deaf and hard of hearing community. Recently she received a request for assistance by the National Association for the Deaf (NAD) regarding the lack of accessible information about how to use the fixed route system during the papal visit. The video online was not captioned, nor was there a transcript of the audio. Mr. Blake stated that Metro had resolved the issue and thanked Ms. Burger for bring the issue to Metro's attention.

Ms. Rush made a comment about the lack of Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) participation in the public hearings and other activities. She expressed her disappointment in the lack of interest some members have in supporting activities. It is every member's duty to serve their respective constituency bases.

Ms. Rush stated that the power is in the collective voice, and rallying around fares is not where the AAC or the disability communities' responsibilities end. Attending public hearings on bus service and tariff changes, or participating in the emergency exercise, and even chairing a work group are all important. She stated that the AAC needs to do better by themselves, the people they serve, and Metro.

A comment was made about the accessibility of a bus stop on the C4 (Greenbelt to Twinbrook) Line. The customer stated that she uses the C4 and F4 (New Carrollton to Silver Spring) lines to travel daily for work. The bus stop that services the C4 line at Prince Georges Plaza is inaccessible and the Bus Operator has to let the customer off in the street. The customer stated that this is dangerous and a safety issue. The customer stated that she has contacted Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) several times requesting that the issue be corrected; however, the matter is still unresolved. The customer stated that she was requesting assistance from the AAC to resolve this issue. Mr. Blake stated that he will follow up with DPW&T as well. Dr. Posner recommended that the customer also contact the Prince George's Commission for Individuals with Disabilities for assistance.

A comment was made about two inaccessible bus stops in the District of Columbia. One stop in Chinatown, at the intersection of 7th & H Street NW, is obstructed by police equipment making it difficult for mobility device users to access at the location. Mr. Blake reminded members about reporting these issues to Metro's Customer Service. The customer stated that she has all the information and will follow up with Customer Service and the Ombudsman. The second stop is located at 7th & P Street NW. Mr. Blake stated that he would investigate the stop and what resources may be available to improve the stop.

Mr. Ariza-Silva made a comment about the cleanliness of elevators in the Metrorail system. He stated that since the last discussion in 2014, the cleanliness of the elevators has gotten worse. As a wheelchair user, he stated that the option to bypass or go around some of the waste and debris is limited. The BRS work plan has an update schedule for February 2016; however, people with disabilities who have no other option but to use the elevators when traveling in the system need immediate relief. Mr. Ariza-Silva recommended that the issue be moved up on the calendar and addressed immediately. Dr. Staderman agreed. Dr. Posner suggested that, in addition to someone from maintenance, a member of Metro's Transit Police should also present on the subject. Mr. Blake stated that the discussion will be scheduled as soon as a presenter is confirmed.

A comment was made about drop-off locations when using MetroAccess service. The customer stated that there has been some confusion with his drop-off location. Although he gives the address of the drop-off location when making a trip, MetroAccess drivers take him to locations he has not requested. The customer is interested in correcting the issue, but is unsure whom to contact. Allison Anderson, Operations Manager, MetroAccess, stated that when these types of issues arise, customers can contact MetroAccess Customer Service and request to speak to a supervisor who will provide assistance in resolving the issue.

Shuttle Bus Services and Planned Long-Term Elevator Outages

The BRS discussed shuttle bus service established when elevators go out of service, as well as Metro's preparation and scheduling of planned long-term elevator outages. Mr. Blake stated that Metro has worked hard to improve the process for customers to request shuttle bus service. Customers now have two distinct options: (1) request shuttle service from a Station Manager while at the station; and (2) prior to arriving at the station where there is an elevator outage, call Metro's Bus Operations Control Center (BOCC) at 202-962-1825 to arrange for a shuttle.

To ensure the quality of the service of both options, and the shuttle service itself, Metro initiated a mystery rider program. Mr. Blake stated that the initiative was instrumental in pinpointing some of the issues with Metro's process for requesting shuttle bus service. Mr. Blake stated that there are plans to administer the mystery rider program again. He requested that AAC members, along with the public, participate in the new round of service testing. Metro is interested in understanding whether customers are able to contact BOCC in advance; the type of service received from Station Managers; how long was the wait for shuttle service to arrive; and the overall quality of service.

In addition, Mr. Blake discussed Metro's interest in receiving feedback from the AAC with regard to Metro's scheduling of planned long-term elevator outages.

Ms. Burger expressed an interest in the elevators at the NoMa-Gallaudet University station. She stated that the elevators are extremely slow. Once a customer is on the elevator, there is an even longer wait time for the elevator doors to close and then move to the next level. A member of the public agreed, commenting that the elevators at the NoMa-Gallaudet University Station are extremely slow. The customer suggested that the timing of the elevators be programmed to a slightly higher acceleration. Mr. Blake stated that he would investigate and provide feedback.

Mr. Ariza-Silva stated that when considering the speed of the opening and closing of the elevator doors, it is important to keep in mind the types of customers using the

elevators. Some customers with disabilities do not move as fast and need a slightly slower speed of elevator doors to ensure they can enter and exit safely.

Dr. Posner stated that the U.S. Capitol has a central elevator command. When an elevator malfunctions, someone pushes a button and notification of the problem is sent to the central elevator command. In contrast, when using the rail system, sometimes the elevator malfunctions but Metro is unaware. Dr. Posner expressed an interest in whether Metro can move to a system similar to the process used for elevators at the U.S. Capitol. Mr. Blake stated that Metro is considering other options to keep elevator information available and current for customers.

New Business

Mr. Blake announced the winners of the election of AAC leadership positions of Chairman, 1st Vice-Chair and 2nd Vice-Chair. The winners are as follows: Patrick Sheehan, Chair; Denise Rush, 1st Vice-Chair; and Elver Ariza-Silva, 2nd Vice-Chair. The new leadership team will serve for a two-year term effective October 1, 2015. Many members welcomed the new leadership and thanked the former members for their service.

Old Business

Dr. B. Moore Gwynn, AAC Coordinator reminded members that nominations for the 2015 Richard W. Hedding Accessible Transportation Award will be taken until October 2, 2015. The Hedding Award honors the AAC's first chairperson, Richard W. Hedding, who led the cause of Metrorail accessibility. The award honoree will be recognized at Metro's Accessibility Excellence Awards on November 18, 2015.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Attachment: Work Plan