



# AAC

## Accessibility Advisory Committee

### Meeting (Hybrid) Minutes: December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025

#### Attendees

Present: Patrick Sheehan (Chair), Denise Rush (Vice Chair), Sarah Radt (Second Vice Chair), Susan Bowmaster, Tino Calabia, Vanessa Coles, Rico Dancy, Tajuan Farmer, Marcie Goldstein, Steve Kaffen, **Phillippa Mezile**, Sandy Neuzil, Paul Semelfort, and Philip Weintraub.

#### Call to Order

Anupama Sharma, AAC Coordinator, took the roll call, afterwards, Chair Sheehan moved the meeting forward.

#### Approval of Agenda, Board Report, and Prior Meeting Minutes

The, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, meeting agenda approved as presented.

The November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, Meeting Minutes were approved as written.

The Board Report was approved as written.

#### Richard W. Hedding Award 2025, Award Ceremony:

The Richard W. Hedding Award 2025 was posthumously rewarded to David Shaffer, former WMATA employee, for enhancing accessibility within Metro. Chair Sheehan stated despite his disabilities; Mr. Shaffer worked tremendously all his life to enhance accessibility in and outside Metro. Vice Chair Rush stated she knew about some of Mr. Shaffer's outstanding works, and he was there for the AAC. Mr. Calabia stated he has gotten to learn a lot about the great work and incredible achievements of Mr. Shaffer. Ms. Neuzil stated she met Mr. Shaffer when on a panel, he explained various transportation options for people with disabilities. Mr. Semelfort stated Mr. Shaffer - champion of fairness, exemplified commitment, integrity, and exceptional service to our community and transit system. Mr. Kaffen stated Mr. Shaffer was an extraordinary person; his sensitivity, compassion, and ability to help a customer, were impressive. On behalf of Dr. Posner, Chair Sheehan stated Mr. Shaffer educated the AAC and explained how/why decisions were made. Robbie Werth, MetroAccess, stated he considered Mr. Shaffer a professional who provided helpful feedback to help improve the MetroAccess service.

The nomination highlighted Mr. Shaffer's distinguished career to advancing equity, accessibility, and justice for people with disabilities, women, and minorities. Mr. Shaffer's adult children: Jed Shaffer (son), Brynn Shaffer (daughter), and Joyce Winston (partner), were present to receive the award. Chair Sheehan presented the Richard W. Hedding Award 2025, to Mr. and Miss Shaffer, honoring David Shaffer's tremendous lifelong achievements. Jed Shaffer thanked the AAC for honoring his father as he believed in making the World a more accessible place. His father was a humble person, did not like to talk about his accolades, and this award means a great deal. Ms. Shaffer thanked the AAC for speaking about her father in such a high regard for his valuable work. He

transformed his disability into a superpower and made impactful changes by transforming public transportation and empowering people with disabilities. Ms. Winston stated David's loss of vision may have been the best thing to the disability community and this country.

**System-Wide Accessibility (SWACC) Update:**

Maggie Butler, Vice President, System-Wide Accessibility, provided an update on WMATA's bathroom accessibility assessment. We have completed the full assessment across all stations, and teams across Metro are reviewing and analyzing the results. We will have a comprehensive update for you in January. The second update is about our engagement approach moving forward, so beginning in March, we will transition to the quarterly hybrid meetings for the AAC. These will be structured as in-person meetings with a virtual option to ensure accessibility and broad participation. We will be sharing media logistics, dates, accessibility features, and opportunities to submit public comments and questions. Our goal is to establish a predictable hybrid rhythm that promotes transparency, collaboration, and continuous improvement. The final update is regarding the AAC vacancies for Virginia and D.C. We have applications submitted for both seats and we are preparing to begin a structured review process with anticipation of selecting the new members by January 2026.

Mr. Farmer asked if AAC vacancies will have panel interview with AAC or internally only. Dr. Butler stated we will follow the traditional process for the selection that does incorporate the AAC's review of the materials and the individual's selected.

Ms. Neuzil asked about the format of the accessible bathrooms, if that will be in a list form as well as perhaps a map form, so that it would be easy to figure out which stations have accessible restrooms. Dr. Butler stated yes, we are looking at both options to make sure that we have the list for those who may not be able to navigate the map.

Ms. Coles asked if there was a time to submit applications by the candidates for the vacancies. Dr. Butler stated yes, that was November 28. So, they can definitely submit, if we need to reopen the application process, we can, but we encourage individuals to submit. They can submit after the deadline.

Mr. Weintraub asked about the bathrooms at the Metro Rail Stations, will those be done to be made accessible? Dr. Butler stated we are looking at the reports now to identify what work needs to be done, so we'll be able to have a complete report of what's accessible, what might need some additional remediation.

**DMV Moves Update:**

Chair Sheehan provided the final update on DMV Moves. On November 17<sup>th</sup>, the COG Board and the WMATA Board passed the resolutions that were presented in October. The recommendations for DMV groups include \$460 million per year, by the three jurisdictions. The priorities of bus prioritization - signaling and ensuring the financial cliff in FY28, all are being addressed. Chair Sheehan stated information from that meeting is

available on the DMVMove.org website. Chair Sheehan further stated that they are looking at implementing a strategic planning of our meetings on a quarterly basis. Chair Sheehan recommended on inviting the experts to the AAC meetings to provide briefings, locally, regionally, or enterprise level. The presentations could be to explain the complexities of the financial systems, the signal systems, the bus prioritization systems. Chair Sheehan stated it is not specifically accessibility, however, it is the larger component of what we will learn over the next several years.

Vice Chair Rush asked how we are going to tell people with disabilities, about the restrooms, concerning the different genders. She stated customers got to be prepared, they need to know what restrooms are available, the attendant needs to help. She stated you got to tell them the facts, including that there may be nobody to help, they have to be prepared for each situation. Dr. Butler stated we are going to have a communications plan that alerts the public of what is available, what role we play, what role they may have to play as it pertains to planning to utilize the accessible restrooms across the stations. That will be a part of that update.

#### **Subcommittee Elections:**

Chair Sheehan stated according to the bylaws, the AAC will vote on nominations for the MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) and the Bus Rail Subcommittee (BRS). The members submitted nominations as follows: Mr. Calabia self-nominated for BRS Chair, and Mr. Semelfort self-nominated for MAS. Chair Sheehan conducted the election and stated we have two positions and two nominees, one for each position. He asked the slate be accepted by acclamation: Mr. Calabia for BRS, and Mr. Semelfort for MAS. Chair Sheehan asked for the nomination to be closed, and that they be voted in by affirmation. Chair Sheehan stated Mr. Calabia and Mr. Semelfort have done an excellent job on important topics with both the subcommittees. He thanked both the subcommittees for the work done, making the AAC a successful committee, and good work going forward. Mr. Semelfort stated it is a pleasure to represent the committee and appreciated Ms. Rush for being his greatest mentor. Mr. Calabia stated he is happy to serve with two vice chairs.

#### **Public Comments:**

The first member of the public stated that it is confusing for rideshare drivers to determine drop-off/pick-up location at New Carrollton Station. Christiaan Blake, Vice President, Access Services, stated there is a construction project at New Carrollton. For MetroAccess customers, there is the kiss and ride on garage's lower level. There is also a MetroAccess stop at the bus bays. Depending on where a customer asks the operator to stop, it may end up in traffic back-up. We have Falcon company, providing shuttle service between lower and upper levels for customers who need the service. They are going to work with System-Wide Accessibility to get a spot in the bus loop. Falcon vehicles have a small Metro flag. Uber and taxis can go into the kiss and ride lot if a customer is going to use Metro Station. If the person is going to Metro Building, there is a side curb, where you can be picked up or dropped off. We encourage customers to use that location as well. Chair Sheehan stated a reservationist can help customers by finding about their locations.

The second member of the public is developing 150 units of attainable housing across the street from New Carrollton Station. He would like an opportunity to discuss mobility-bus pick-up on the development site, how to collaborate with WMATA on the development project. He was provided with an email address for further correspondence.

Public Comments can be received via phone at 202-962-1100, or via email at [MetroAACChair@wmata.com](mailto:MetroAACChair@wmata.com)

**Bus and Rail Subcommittee Report:**

Mr. Calabria stated you've all received a draft of the subcommunity report. Please review it, and we have to decide on adopting it at the next meeting. That is the Bus and Rail Subcommittee meeting.

The following topics were discussed at last month's BRS meeting:

- Bus Flag Designs
- Committee Questions / Committee Comments for DC DOT
- Members Comments and Discussions
  - Inconsistent signs guiding to elevators and escalators at Metro Stations
  - Order of Metro Rail Lines
  - Signage for Restrooms at Metro Stations

**MetroAccess Subcommittee Report:**

Mr. Semelfort stated the following topics were discussed at last month's MAS meeting:

- MetroAccess Strategy Study Update (Washington Suburban Transit Commission)
- MetroAccess Eligibility Recertification Process Policy
- MetroAccess Eligibility Recertification Process Advocacy

**The meeting was adjourned at 7:05p.m.**