



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

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January 7, 2013

Dear Chair Hudgins and Members of the Board,

It is my pleasure to present you with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) report for the month of December 2012. The primary issues reviewed by the AAC, its subcommittees, and workgroups during the month were Planning for the Transition to the new MetroAccess Contract, Next Steps in the improvement of Bus Stop Accessibility, and Planning for the Roll-out of the new "*Customer Guide to Metrobus and Metrorail for People with Disabilities and Senior Citizens.*" Included in this report is also a listing of the AAC's 2012 accomplishments.

Issues of the Month

Transition to the new MetroAccess Contract

The AAC and its MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) have begun preliminary work with Metro staff to ensure that MetroAccess customers have a seamless transition in service to the new contracts. The AAC received a briefing on the performance standards that will be required. These standards include safety, on-time performance, customer service, and productivity. The new contract includes incentive and disincentive elements associated with each performance standard. Superior service will be rewarded and poor performance will be penalized.

The MAS will dedicate its next four meetings to the development and implementation of a communications plan that will educate MetroAccess customers on all the important aspects of the transition.

Next Steps in the improvement of Bus Stop Accessibility

Following the conclusion of presentations from Metro's jurisdictional partners on their efforts regarding bus stops and bus stop accessibility, the Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) received an overview from Metro staff on the next steps toward implementing improvements. It was pointed out that there are four critical components to improving bus stops: staff, knowledge, time, and capital. Throughout the region, there has been an increase in bus planning personnel, including at Metro.

Having knowledge of each jurisdiction's process and requirements is essential as well. In some locations multiple agencies have approval authority for permits, which, if unknown, will add complexity of the process of improving bus stops in those areas.

Time and funding are the final components. Much of the work is planned for spring time, which is generally the start of construction season, and slows down greatly during the winter. Funding is essential to improving bus stops in the region, and through various grants, Metro is working with the jurisdictions to improve bus stops, in addition to the dedicated funding of some jurisdictions. In the spring 2013, Metro will begin to install NextBus Information digital display signs, with audio, at bus shelters around the region.

The AAC and Metro staff will jointly report a projected timeline for a series of bus stop accessibility improvements to the Board.

"Customer Guide to Metrobus and Metrorail for People with Disabilities and Senior Citizens"

The AAC partnered with Metro staff in the development of a new edition of the **"Customer Guide to Metrobus and Metrorail for People with Disabilities and Senior Citizens."** The Guide is designed to improve the travel experience of customers with disabilities by helping familiarize them with the accessible features of the Metro system and help MetroAccess customers transition to fixed route services for some of their trips. The document is now complete, and planning for its roll-out is underway.

In addition to normal formats, (e.g. regular print, large print, bi-lingual, and audio) the AAC has requested that Metro assess the feasibility of Braille and a video edition with sign language translation. The Guide will be distributed in various locations, including libraries, hospitals, independent living centers, public schools systems, university disability offices, MetroAccess seat drops, and at businesses such as Roberts Home Medical, Washington Ear, NewsLine, and state rehabilitation agencies. Production and distribution is expected to get underway this month.

AAC's 2012 Accomplishments

The AAC and its subcommittees played an instrumental role in advising Metro on a number of issues during 2012. Some of our noted successes are listed as follows:

- Input on design of Metro 7000-Series Railcars
- Development of Metro's Customer Guide to Metrobus and Metrorail for People with Disabilities and Senior Citizens
- Recommended the installation of accessible signage on Metrobus fareboxes
- MetroAccess Fare Policy Review
- Input on Eligibility's Authorization To Help Me Apply of MetroAccess Services form
- Input on accessibility features of the SmarTrip Card Dispensers
- Initiated the development of the MetroAccess Fare Media Exchange Initiative

- Provided Input on New Paratransit Contract
 - Town Hall Meetings
 - Focus Groups

Finally, the AAC would like to thank Catherine Hudgins, Chair, Metro's Board of Directors for all her direction and support of the Committee and we look forward to having a similar relationship with the incoming leadership on Metro's Board.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Sheehan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "S".

Patrick Sheehan, Chairman