300 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) Detailed Meeting Minutes (Virtual): July 6th, 2026

Attendees

AAC Members Present: Patrick Sheehan (Chair), Tino Calabia, Rico Dancy, Tajuan Farmer, Debbie Fisher, Marcie Goldstein, Steve Kaffen, Philippa Mezile, Sandy Neuzil, Sarah Radt, Paul Semelfort, Phil Weinthrop, Susan Bowmaster. Additional AAC members and participants joined throughout the meeting.

WMATA Staff Present: Dr. Maggie K. Butler, Vice President, System-Wide Accessibility, Anthony Thomas, Director of Customer Experience Programs, Additional WMATA staff and support personnel

Meeting Support: ASL Interpreters

Approval of Agenda and Prior Meeting Minutes

- The July 6th, 2026 AAC agenda was approved without objection following a motion by Paul Semelfort and a second by Rico Dancy.
- The committee reviewed and approved the prior meeting minutes. Paul Semelfort moved approval, Rico Dancy seconded, and no revisions were proposed.
- The Board Report was approved with the proposed amendment.

MEETING SUMMARY:

The Accessibility Advisory Committee approved the meeting agenda, prior meeting minutes, and Board Report. During Board Report discussion, members raised questions regarding accommodations for deaf-blind participants and the use of Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDIs).

The committee received a post-launch update on WMATA.com and MetroPulse 2.0, focusing on website accessibility improvements, elevator and escalator information, accessibility testing, and future enhancements. Members provided feedback on trip planning, dark mode functionality, bus stop information, and involvement of users with disabilities in accessibility testing.

The committee also discussed lessons learned from a recent Emergency Preparedness site visit and provided recommendations regarding wheelchair accessibility, emergency communications, disability representation in exercises, and public emergency information.

Dr. Maggie Butler provided updates on AAC membership recruitment, future accessibility initiatives, engagement with WMATA leadership, staff hiring, and upcoming committee activities.

Public comments included concerns regarding Red Line shuttle operations and AAC member participation. Subcommittee reports from the Bus and Rail and MetroAccess Subcommittees were presented, highlighting ongoing accessibility initiatives, customer concerns, modernization efforts, and future planning activities.

AGENDA ITEM 1: Call to Order, Accessibility Instructions, and Roll Call

Detailed Discussion

Dr. Maggie Butler opened the meeting by providing accessibility instructions intended to support equitable participation by all attendees. Participants were reminded to state their names and provide brief visual descriptions when speaking for the first time to support individuals using interpreters, joining by telephone, or reviewing meeting recordings. Instructions were provided regarding muting, unmuting, and raising hands through both Zoom and telephone participation methods.
Dr. Butler reviewed the meeting agenda, which included approval of the agenda, minutes, and Board Report; a WMATA.com and MetroPulse 2.0 update; discussion of the Emergency Preparedness site visit; a System-Wide Accessibility update; public comment; and subcommittee reports.
Roll call was conducted and a quorum was established. Following roll call, Chair Patrick Sheehan assumed leadership of the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 2: Approval of Agenda, Prior Meeting Minutes, and Board Report
Detailed Discussion
Chair Sheehan requested approval of the meeting agenda. Paul Semelfort moved approval of the agenda, and Rico Dancy seconded the motion. The agenda was approved without objection.
The committee then reviewed and approved the prior meeting minutes. Paul Semelfort moved approval, Rico Dancy seconded, and no corrections were offered.
During review of the Board Report, Paul Semelfort proposed a friendly amendment allowing additional information from the evening's discussions to be incorporated prior to submission to the WMATA Board.
Rico Dancy raised a question regarding accommodations available to deaf-blind participants and specifically asked about procedures for obtaining Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) services when needed.
Chair Sheehan acknowledged the importance of the issue and stated that he and Dr. Butler would research current requirements and procedures. Rico Dancy offered to assist based on his experience and familiarity with deaf-blind accommodations.
Following discussion, the Board Report was approved with the proposed amendment.
Follow-Up Request
- Research procedures and requirements for requesting Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDIs) to support deaf-blind participants.

AGENDA ITEM 3: WMATA.com and MetroPulse 2.0 Post-Launch Update
Presenter
Anthony Thomas, Director of Customer Experience Programs
Detailed Discussion
Anthony Thomas presented a comprehensive update regarding the launch and performance of WMATA.com and MetroPulse 2.0.
He reported that WMATA.com launched on May 17 and MetroPulse 2.0 launched at the end of May. Since launch, WMATA has collected substantial user feedback and begun implementing improvements.
Mr. Thomas reported that WMATA.com had generated more than 3.4 million user sessions and approximately 15 million page views. The most frequently visited areas of the site

include the homepage, trip planner, nearby service features, route information, and Rider Tools.
During discussion, Tino Calabia requested clarification regarding website session metrics. Mr. Thomas explained that a session represents a visitor's interaction with the website regardless of the number of pages viewed during that visit.

Accessibility Improvements

Mr. Thomas reviewed several accessibility improvements made since launch.
Following customer feedback, WMATA created a centralized elevator and escalator information page to eliminate the need for customers to search station-by-station when planning accessible trips. He reported that future enhancements will incorporate planned elevator outage information to improve trip planning for riders who depend on elevator access.
Mr. Thomas also highlighted improvements to AAC meeting information pages. Working in partnership with System-Wide Accessibility staff, WMATA redesigned meeting pages to make schedules and materials easier to access while reducing reliance on PDF documents.
He stated that WMATA continues to maintain compliance with WCAG 2.2 Level AA standards and has implemented multiple accessibility improvements, including:

- Enhanced skip-link functionality.
- Improved keyboard focus management.
- Improved accessibility of station pages and modal windows.
- Resolution of more than twenty-five accessibility issues identified through automated testing.

Future Enhancements

Mr. Thomas reviewed several roadmap initiatives, including:

- An "All" filter option for bus and rail searches.
- Conversion of PDF forms into accessible online forms.
- Expanded elevator and escalator information.
- Improved navigation controls.
- Enhanced favorites management.
- Improved trip planning workflows.
- Accessibility improvements within MetroPulse 2.0.
- Parking and shuttle information improvements.
- Customer feedback and lost-and-found forms.

AAC Member Discussion

Sarah Radt thanked WMATA staff for addressing elevator information concerns previously raised by AAC members. She emphasized the importance of reliable and centralized outage information for customers with mobility disabilities.

Sarah also requested information regarding planned dark mode functionality and encouraged testing with individuals representing a variety of low-vision needs and preferences.
Paul Semelfort praised improvements that make MetroAccess resources easier to locate, noting that eligibility information, web booking functions, and commonly used resources now require fewer steps to access.
Steve Kappen raised concerns regarding the Trip Planner. He stated that walking time information is less visible than in previous versions and should be restored because many riders use walking distance and travel time to compare route options.
Steve also requested restoration of print-friendly trip planning features and raised concerns about inaccurate Next Bus information during detours and temporary stop relocations.
Chair Sheehan asked about accessibility testing methodology. Staff described the use of Siteimprove, NVDA, JAWS, WebAIM tools, and additional testing methods.
Dr. Butler reported that System-Wide Accessibility plans to add staff resources to support accessibility testing, content review, and accessibility education throughout the organization.
Committee members repeatedly emphasized the value of involving people with disabilities in usability and accessibility testing. Mr. Thomas welcomed continued collaboration with AAC members.

ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Committee members emphasized the importance of:

- Providing consolidated elevator and escalator outage information.
- Testing dark mode functionality with users representing a range of low-vision experiences.
- Restoring walking time visibility within Trip Planner results.
- Improving Next Bus accuracy during temporary stop relocations and detours.
- Continuing conversion of PDF forms into accessible online experiences.
- Expanding opportunities for AAC participation in user testing.

WMATA Staff Commitments
Anthony Thomas and Customer Experience staff committed to:

- Expanding elevator and escalator information within MetroPulse.
- Continuing implementation of planned accessibility improvements.
- Evaluating Trip Planner and Next Bus concerns.
- Partnering with System-Wide Accessibility on future testing efforts.
- Considering AAC participation in usability and accessibility testing activities.

AGENDA ITEM 4: Emergency Preparedness Site Visit Discussion
Detailed Discussion

Chair Sheehan facilitated discussion regarding the recent Emergency Preparedness site visit and demonstration.
He described the event as a valuable opportunity that allowed AAC members to directly observe equipment, evacuation procedures, and emergency response activities.
Tino Calabia stated that the event provided significant insight into WMATA's emergency preparedness efforts. He encouraged future demonstrations to include active participation by wheelchair users so evacuation procedures involving mobility device users can be evaluated more effectively.
Sandy Neuzil discussed the value of learning about evacuation carts, track-level evacuation procedures, lighting systems, and emergency response practices. She appreciated the opportunity to better understand WMATA's planning for a range of emergency scenarios.
Sarah Radt praised the event and raised questions regarding accessibility of emergency controls and communications equipment for wheelchair users. She also suggested reviewing emergency signage and instructions to ensure information is concise, easily understood, and supported by recognizable symbols and graphics.
Committee members recommended greater representation in future exercises from:

- Wheelchair users
- Service animal users
- People who are deaf or hard of hearing
- People who are deaf-blind
- Individuals with autism and developmental disabilities

Phil Weinthrop recommended offering future demonstrations at a variety of times and days to increase participation and accessibility.
Chair Sheehan suggested bringing Emergency Preparedness staff back for a future discussion focused on questions and recommendations generated during the site visit.

AGENDA ITEM 5: System-Wide Accessibility Update
Presenter
Dr. Maggie Butler
Detailed Discussion
Dr. Butler provided updates regarding AAC membership, staffing, upcoming projects, and organizational accessibility initiatives.
AAC Membership Recruitment
Dr. Butler reported that WMATA received eleven new applications and three reapplications during the current recruitment cycle.
Available positions include:

- Two District of Columbia seats
- Two Virginia seats
- One Maryland seat

She reported that applicant interviews had already begun and that recommendations would be forwarded to the Board.

New members are expected to begin service in September following onboarding activities planned for late August.
Tino Calabia asked whether outreach efforts successfully reached members of the Latino disability community. Dr. Butler confirmed that outreach occurred and applications were received from members of that community.

Attendance Expectations

Chair Sheehan emphasized the importance of attendance and participation. He stated that AAC leadership intends to more closely monitor attendance requirements established in committee bylaws and stressed that active participation is essential to committee effectiveness.

Early AAC Engagement

Dr. Butler reported that WMATA leadership and the General Manager have expressed interest in involving AAC earlier in strategic initiatives and major modernization efforts to ensure accessibility feedback is incorporated early in project development.
She announced that Rail Modernization staff will provide a future presentation regarding platform screen doors.
Tino Calabia requested that previously developed platform-edge design materials be shared with project staff before that presentation. Dr. Butler agreed to facilitate that request.

General Manager Engagement

Dr. Butler reported that the General Manager has been invited to attend a future AAC meeting during September or October. The goal is to provide AAC members with an opportunity to discuss accessibility priorities directly with agency leadership.

Staffing and Upcoming Activities

Dr. Butler reviewed plans for:

- An accessibility-focused 8000-Series railcar tour.
- Additional Station Ahead Maps engagement activities.
- Expanded AAC support functions.
- Future accessibility staffing growth.

She noted that hiring activities are temporarily paused because of organizational system upgrades but are expected to resume.
The expanded AAC support role will include tracking AAC recommendations, participating in relevant internal task forces, and helping ensure accessibility recommendations receive formal consideration.

Commitments

- Share platform screen door reference materials with Rail Modernization staff.
- Continue AAC recruitment and onboarding activities.
- Resume accessibility staffing efforts when organizational systems permit.
- Expand support for AAC recommendation tracking and implementation monitoring.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Phil Weinthrop

Phil Weinthrop raised concerns regarding unauthorized vehicles entering bus-only lanes used by Red Line shuttle operations during rail shutdown activities.
He stated that private vehicle use of these lanes can delay shuttle operations and requested stronger enforcement measures.

WMATA Response
Dr. Butler committed to raising the concern with appropriate operations staff for review and follow-up.

Marcie Goldstein
Marcie Goldstein asked whether anyone had recently been in contact with Doris Ray and expressed concern regarding representation and participation given her absence from recent AAC meetings.

WMATA Response
Dr. Butler stated that she and Chair Sheehan had already discussed attendance-related matters and that WMATA intends to follow up with the organization represented by Doris Ray to better understand the situation and determine whether alternative representation may be necessary.

AGENDA ITEM 6: Bus and Rail Subcommittee Report
Presenter
Tino Calabia
Detailed Discussion
Tino Calabia summarized key discussions from the June Bus and Rail Subcommittee meeting.
Topics included:

- Wayfinding signage testing.
- Station restroom accessibility initiatives.
- Customer service concerns.
- Summer construction activities.
- Rail shutdown accessibility impacts.
- Station accessibility improvements.

Sandy Neuzil added information regarding Prince George's County's Transit Vision Plan presentation, highlighting discussions regarding local bus service improvements, accessibility enhancements, microtransit initiatives, and broader mobility planning efforts.

AGENDA ITEM 7: MetroAccess Subcommittee Report
Presenter
Paul Semelfort
Detailed Discussion
Paul Semelfort reported on MetroAccess ridership growth and continued expansion of Abilities Ride participation.

He noted that customer satisfaction remains generally positive while acknowledging that members continue monitoring service reliability and communication concerns related to provider transitions.
Paul also discussed:

- The concept of a future digital MetroAccess card.
- Vendor transition activities.
- Delay notifications and customer communications.
- TIM (My Transit Manager).
- Abilities Ride administrative fees.
- Eligibility communications.
- Development of a formal MetroAccess Subcommittee work plan.

ACTION ITEMS

- **Research procedures for securing Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) services for deaf-blind participants**
    - Responsible Party: AAC Leadership / System-Wide Accessibility
- **Review Trip Planner concerns regarding walking-time visibility and printing functionality**
    - Responsible Party: Customer Experience
- **Investigate Next Bus accuracy during detours and temporary stop relocations**
    - Responsible Party: Customer Experience
- **Continue development and testing of dark mode functionality**
    - Responsible Party: Customer Experience
- **Expand elevator outage information within MetroPulse**
    - Responsible Party: Customer Experience
- **Explore AAC participation in accessibility and usability testing**
    - Responsible Party: Customer Experience / System-Wide Accessibility
- **Obtain responses to Emergency Preparedness questions regarding accessibility and emergency communications**
    - Responsible Party: Emergency Preparedness Staff
- **Explore broader disability representation during emergency exercises**
    - Responsible Party: Emergency Preparedness Staff

- **Review concerns regarding unauthorized vehicle use of shuttle lanes**
    - Responsible Party: Operations Staff
- **Share platform screen door reference materials with Rail Modernization staff**
    - Responsible Party: System-Wide Accessibility
- **Continue AAC recruitment and onboarding activities**
    - Responsible Party: System-Wide Accessibility
- **Resume accessibility-related hiring initiatives**
    - Responsible Party: System-Wide Accessibility

This list format is significantly more accessible for screen reader users than a table because each action item is announced sequentially with its associated responsible party, eliminating the need to navigate table rows and columns.

ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Deaf-blind accommodation procedures and CDI availability.
- Accessible elevator and escalator information.
- Low-vision accessibility and dark mode design.
- Visibility of walking times within Trip Planner.
- Accessibility of emergency communications and signage.
- Wheelchair accessibility during emergencies.
- Inclusion of diverse disability groups during preparedness exercises.
- User involvement in accessibility testing.
- Early accessibility engagement in major WMATA initiatives.
- MetroAccess communication and service reliability.

OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS AND FOLLOW-UP REQUESTS

- Clarify CDI procedures for AAC meetings and other events.
- Evaluate Trip Planner usability concerns.
- Improve Next Bus information during detours.
- Continue user testing of MetroPulse accessibility features.
- Obtain answers to Emergency Preparedness accessibility questions.
- Expand disability participation in emergency exercises.

- Review shuttle-lane enforcement concerns.
- Continue platform screen door accessibility discussions.
- Complete onboarding of newly selected AAC members.
- Resume staffing initiatives supporting accessibility programs.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Following committee reports and final discussion, Chair Sheehan thanked AAC members, WMATA staff, interpreters, presenters, and members of the public for their participation. Members were reminded that no AAC meeting would be held during August and that the next full AAC meeting is scheduled for September 2026.
The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30 PM.