300 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) – MetroAccess Sub Committee (virtual)
Detailed Meeting Minutes: July 20, 2026

MetroAccess Subcommittee Members Present: Paul Semelfort, MetroAccess Subcommittee Chair; Tajuan Farmer, First Vice Chair; Susan Bowmaster, Second Vice Chair; Patrick Sheehan; Sarah Radt; Steve Kaffen; Sandy Neuzil; and Rico Dancy.

WMATA Staff Present: Dr. Maggie K. Butler, Vice President, Systemwide Accessibility; Christian Blake, Vice President, Access Services; Allison Anderson, Operations Manager; Terrian Williams-Hall, Director, MetroAccess; and Eligibility and Access Services staff.

Presenters and Guests: Wanda Muhammad, Administrative Operations Manager, MTM; Kenya Chalmers, Project Manager, Transdev OCC; and Gina Fletcher, Challenger Transportation.

Members of the Public: Janice Samuel, RoseAnn Ashby

Approval of Agenda and Previous Minutes
The, July 20th, 2026, meeting agenda approved as presented.
The previous Meeting Minutes were approved as written.

MEETING SUMMARY
The MetroAccess Subcommittee reviewed and approved the meeting agenda and discussed concerns regarding the length and format of committee meeting minutes. Members debated the balance between detailed public records and concise meeting summaries. WMATA staff committed to providing both a detailed transcript-style record and a shorter summary version in the future.
The committee received customer service and outreach reports, including resolutions to previously raised public comments and commendation statistics for MetroAccess contractors. Staff also recognized employees receiving customer service and safety awards.
A substantial portion of the meeting focused on development of the MetroAccess Subcommittee work plan. Members proposed recurring agenda topics including customer satisfaction reporting, complaint tracking, MyTransit updates, MetroAccess eligibility operations, vehicle procurements, communications improvements, driver training, and accessibility-related outreach.
Committee members extensively discussed MetroAccess Eligibility Office operations, including communication delays, email responsiveness, application processing, ID card issuance, recertification procedures, and opportunities for modernization and automation. WMATA staff acknowledged the need for continued evaluation of workflows while emphasizing the importance of protecting customer medical and eligibility information.
The committee also reviewed implementation of the new Abilities Ride administrative fee, discussed customer account transactions, and addressed concerns regarding financial transparency and ease of understanding for riders.

Finally, MetroAccess leadership provided an update on Digital Assistant initiatives, including customer service automation, chatbot deployment, agent support tools, and future procurement efforts aimed at improving customer experiences and operational efficiency. Public commenters raised questions regarding same-day service, online booking reliability, and fare processing practices.

AGENDA ITEM 1: Review and Approval of Agenda and Previous Minutes
Detailed Discussion
Chair Paul Semelfort opened discussion on approval of the July agenda. Following motions from AAC members, the agenda was approved without modification.
Discussion then shifted to approval of June meeting minutes. Sandy Neuzil expressed concern regarding the increasing length of meeting minutes, noting that recent records had grown to approximately 13 pages and contained significant amounts of procedural and boilerplate information. She recommended reducing future meeting minutes to approximately five or six pages to improve readability and utility.
Several AAC members supported the recommendation, including Sarah Rodt and Rico Dancy. Committee members emphasized that meeting minutes should focus on action items, major discussions, decisions, and recommendations rather than resembling full transcripts.
Christian Blake provided historical context for the current format. He explained that previous AAC members had criticized WMATA for producing meeting records that lacked sufficient detail. In response, meeting notes evolved into highly detailed records resembling court-transcript style documentation. He acknowledged the current concern and agreed that a more concise summary format could be appropriate while maintaining transparency.
Tajuan Farmer suggested a dual-document approach. He proposed maintaining a detailed record for public transparency and archival purposes while also generating an AI-assisted summary version for committee review and easier consumption by AAC members.
Chair Semelfort supported the compromise approach and emphasized the committee's commitment to transparency, particularly because MetroAccess discussions frequently involve important customer concerns.
Commitment
Dr. Maggie Butler confirmed that Systemwide Accessibility staff will provide both a shortened summary and a detailed version of meeting records moving forward.

AGENDA ITEM 2: Customer Service Accommodations, Public Comment Resolution Report, and Outreach
Detailed Discussion
Public Comment Resolution Report
Wanda Muhammad presented follow-up actions associated with prior public comments. She reported that a customer who experienced a missed MetroAccess trip had their concern investigated. Staff determined the trip had been assigned through the Abilities Ride program. A MetroAccess agent successfully arranged transportation through Uber to resolve the matter.
She also reviewed a previous complaint from an AAC member involving trip scheduling challenges. Investigation found that the reservation had ultimately been booked

successfully after staff reviewed trip scheduling windows and applicable fixed-route equivalency requirements.
A third outstanding issue involved discrepancies between information displayed in the MyTransit app and vehicle-location information provided by the MetroAccess Operations Control Center (OCC). Staff forwarded the complaint to contractor IT personnel, and the investigation remained active.

Commendations

Ms. Muhammad reported 409 commendations received during June 2026:

- Transdev OCC: 177
- Challenger Gaithersburg: 96
- Beaver Road: 72
- Central Avenue: 41
- Abilities Ride: 19
- Hubbard Road: 2
- MTM: 0

Outreach Activities

Christian Blake reported participation in a meeting hosted by the American Council of the Blind of Virginia following travel scheduling conflicts. Sarah Rodt clarified that the organization was ACB rather than the National Federation of the Blind, and Mr. Blake thanked her for the correction.

AGENDA ITEM 3: Employee Recognition Awards

Michael Wilson Recognition Award

Kenya Chalmers recognized Sean Bailey, Dispatch Supervisor Assistant at the OCC.
Ms. Chalmers highlighted Mr. Bailey's customer service excellence, strong performance metrics, customer commendations, support for onboarding new employees, and mentoring of WMATA summer interns.
Chair Semelfort thanked Mr. Bailey for contributing to positive customer experiences and serving as an example of excellence within MetroAccess operations.

Safety Award Recognition

Gina Fletcher recognized Marcia Glenn of Challenger Transportation's Gaithersburg location.
Ms. Glenn was recognized for 12.5 years of service, exceptional customer service, excellent safety performance, and consistent professionalism.

AGENDA ITEM 4: MetroAccess Subcommittee Work Plan Development

Detailed Discussion

Chair Semelfort led discussion regarding future MetroAccess Subcommittee priorities.
He proposed recurring reports on:

- MetroAccess Customer Satisfaction Survey results
- MyTransit application enhancements
- Eligibility Office updates
- New vehicle procurements
- Customer Guide updates
- Digital Assistant implementation

- Where's My Ride enhancements

AAC Recommendations
Susan Bowmaster
Requested quarterly reporting on complaint management processes, including:
- Resolution timelines
- Customer satisfaction
- Operational effectiveness
- WMATA staff perspectives

Sarah Rodt
Recommended:
- Additional member feedback opportunities before finalizing the work plan.
- Presentations regarding driver training programs.
- Site visits for AAC members.
- Updates on major technology and service contracts.
- Engagement with WMATA Communications teams to improve outreach to riders with disabilities.

She emphasized that many customers receive information differently than the general public and may benefit from more proactive communications methods.
Follow-Up Request
Chair Semelfort stated that proposed topics would be circulated and AAC members would be invited to provide ideas throughout the summer before finalization of the work plan.

AGENDA ITEM 5: Eligibility, Communication, and Customer Service Update
Detailed Discussion
This agenda item generated substantial discussion regarding MetroAccess eligibility operations.
Communication Delays and Customer Experience
Chair Semelfort described an instance in which an emailed request regarding visitor eligibility remained unanswered for several weeks. He also reported waiting approximately 90 minutes on hold when attempting to contact the Eligibility Office.
Mr. Blake acknowledged that while most communications are handled promptly, email requests can occasionally be missed. He emphasized that the office receives large volumes of correspondence and reiterated that customers should follow up if no response is received.
Modernization Discussion
Sarah Rodt described several recent interactions involving:
- New applications
- Replacement ID cards
- Lost attachments
- Delayed processing
- Inconsistent acknowledgments

She argued that eligibility processes continue to rely heavily on manual workflows and would benefit from modernization tools such as document portals, tracking systems, and automated status updates.
Mr. Blake agreed that modernization opportunities should be explored but emphasized the need to carefully protect medical and eligibility information. He stated that WMATA is examining future automation opportunities.

Reciprocal Eligibility

Ms. Rodt raised concerns regarding language on WMATA's website related to temporary reciprocal eligibility for out-of-region paratransit riders. She stated that current descriptions may not align with federal requirements and requested review.
Mr. Blake committed to reviewing the published information.

Reduced Fare and MetroAccess ID Cards

Rico Dancy raised concerns about customers who are approved for recertification but experience delays receiving new identification cards after previous cards expire.
Mr. Blake explained:

- MetroAccess IDs are produced onsite.
- Mailing delays may occur after cards are transferred to postal services.
- Customers should recertify as early as possible.
- Emergency alternatives, including expedited delivery options, are available when necessary.

Certification Period Clarification

Mr. Dancy inquired why customers must recertify regularly despite permanent disabilities.
Chair Semelfort clarified that WMATA recently standardized certification periods at five years for eligible customers.

AGENDA ITEM 6: Abilities Ride Administrative Fee Rollout

Detailed Discussion

The committee reviewed implementation of the recently introduced Abilities Ride administrative fee.
Chair Semelfort requested clarification regarding:

- EasyPay deductions
- Refund timelines
- Administrative fee transactions
- Customer account visibility

Mr. Blake explained that:

1. Customers initially pay the MetroAccess fare when booking.
2. If a trip is assigned through Abilities Ride, the MetroAccess fare is refunded.
3. A separate $3 administrative fee is charged only for completed Abilities Ride trips.
4. Refunds and fee deductions are processed as separate transactions to improve transparency and auditing.

Accessibility and Customer Transparency Discussion

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Patrick Sheehan expressed concern regarding the large volume of account transactions generated by the process and questioned how customers would monitor and reconcile account activity.
Mr. Blake stated that separate transactions improve accountability, traceability, and customer dispute resolution.

AGENDA ITEM 7: Digital Assistant Update
Detailed Discussion
Terrian Williams-Hall provided a status update regarding MetroAccess artificial intelligence and Digital Assistant initiatives.
Current Initiatives
The Digital Assistant ecosystem currently includes:

- Reservations Digital Voice Assistant
- Where's My Ride Digital Voice Assistant
- Agent-facing chatbots
- Reservations chatbot pilot deployment

Customer Benefits
Ms. Williams-Hall explained that AI tools now:

- Accelerate Uber-related support requests.
- Provide more accurate vehicle arrival information.
- Use real-time traffic data.
- Reduce training burdens for new customer service agents.
- Create more consistent customer interactions.

Procurement Update
Ms. Williams-Hall reported that:

- A formal solicitation package has been submitted to procurement.
- Contract award is anticipated by the end of 2026.
- Full implementation is targeted by March 2027.
- AAC feedback has been incorporated into procurement requirements.

Accessibility Discussion
First Vice Chair Tajuan Farmer raised questions regarding whether chatbot technology could improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities by simplifying the complexity of Trapeze software workflows.
Both Ms. Williams-Hall and Mr. Blake agreed that the technology could improve workplace accessibility and expand employment opportunities.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD
Janice Samuel
Comment
Asked whether chatbot implementation could support future same-day trip booking services.
Response

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Mr. Blake explained that same-day service is technically feasible today but would require balancing operational resources, customer demand, civil rights obligations, and program sustainability. He noted that Abilities Ride expansion was prioritized as a more immediate customer benefit.

RoseAnn Ashby
Comment 1
Reported occasional online reservations receiving confirmation numbers but subsequently disappearing from the system before the day of travel.
Response
Mr. Blake acknowledged an active Trapeze-related technical issue and confirmed that MetroAccess, Transdev, and Trapeze teams are working jointly toward resolution. He encouraged customers to verify trips through the MyTransit application.
Comment 2
Questioned why fare processing could not be simplified to charge either the MetroAccess fare or the Abilities Ride fee rather than processing multiple debits and credits.
Response
Mr. Blake explained operational and accounting reasons for maintaining the current separate transaction model.

Commitments, Responsible Parties, and Timelines
- Provide both detailed and summary meeting records
  - Responsible Party: Dr. Maggie Butler and Systemwide Accessibility
  - Timeline: Future meetings
- Circulate MetroAccess work plan ideas and gather additional member feedback
  - Responsible Party: AAC Chair and WMATA Staff
  - Timeline: Summer/Fall 2026
- Review reciprocal eligibility information published online
  - Responsible Party: Christian Blake
  - Timeline: Future follow-up
- Continue evaluating eligibility process modernization opportunities
  - Responsible Party: Access Services
  - Timeline: Ongoing
- Continue investigation of MyTransit/OCC location discrepancies
  - Responsible Party: OCC Contractor IT Team
  - Timeline: Ongoing
- Resolve Trapeze-related online booking issue
  - Responsible Party: MetroAccess, Transdev, and Trapeze Teams
  - Timeline: Ongoing
- Advance Digital Assistant procurement and implementation process
  - Responsible Party: MetroAccess Leadership
  - Timeline: Contract award targeted by the end of 2026; implementation targeted by March 2027.

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ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Need for more accessible and efficient eligibility communications.
- Interest in digital modernization while protecting sensitive disability-related information.
- Concerns regarding processing of MetroAccess ID cards and recertification workflow.
- Requests for more proactive customer communications.
- Interest in improving accessibility of employment opportunities through AI-supported agent tools.
- Need for ongoing review of app reliability and customer information accuracy.
- Importance of maintaining options for rapid connection to human agents when urgent transportation issues occur.
- Continued attention to independent access through SmarTrip-enabled fixed-route travel.

OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS / FOLLOW-UP REQUESTS

- Review reciprocal eligibility webpage language.
- Continue exploring automation opportunities in Eligibility Office operations.
- Provide future updates regarding complaint resolution performance metrics.
- Consider presentations on driver training and employee onboarding.
- Examine communications methods for reaching riders with disabilities.
- Continue updates regarding Digital Assistant procurement and implementation.
- Monitor customer impacts of the Abilities Ride administrative fee rollout.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The motion passed without objection. Members were reminded that no August MetroAccess Subcommittee meeting would be held and that the next meeting would occur in September 2026. The meeting adjourned shortly before 6:00 PM.

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