300 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

Accessibility Advisory Committee

MetroAccess Subcommittee Detailed Meeting Minutes
September 21, 2026 | Virtual Meeting | 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Attendees

AAC Members Present: Paul Semelfort (Chair), Hawaya Abby, Susan Bowmaster, Tino Calabia, Vanessa Coles, Rose Dallimore, Tajuan Farmer, Steve Kaffen, Swatha Nandukumar, Philippa Mezile, Sandy Neuzil, Noor Pervez, Sarah Radt, Patrick Sheehan, and additional AAC members.

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

Meeting Support: ASL interpreters and virtual meeting support personnel.

MEETING SUMMARY

The MetroAccess Subcommittee approved the agenda and amended July minutes. Staff reported public-comment resolutions, 394 July commendations, digital-assistant enhancements, Abilities Ride payment progress, a new wheelchair-accessible provider, targeted Lyft outreach, and customer-trip information options. Members focused on communication, choice of access channel, speech-disability accommodation, itemized EasyPay information, provider identification, and timely collection of Abilities Ride fees. Public comments addressed dispatching, fee deductions, digital-assistant usability, taxi reliability, inappropriate driver conduct, same-day trips, call-center tours, and accessible EasyPay features.

AGENDA ITEM 1: Call to Order, Agenda, Roll Call, and Prior Minutes

Detailed Discussion

Chair Paul Semelfort opened the meeting at 4:00 PM. Systemwide Accessibility provided participation instructions, reviewed the agenda, and conducted roll call.

The agenda was approved. July minutes were approved with a friendly amendment identifying Susan Bowmaster as Second Vice Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 2: Public-Comment Resolutions, Commendations, and Outreach

Detailed Discussion

Staff reported resolution of two prior public comments. HVAC systems are inspected before service, providers were reminded to monitor performance, and an online-reservation cancellation issue was traced to an internal technical problem. July

commendations totaled 394 across dedicated providers, the operations control center, and Abilities Ride.
No outreach activities occurred in August. Staff announced that the Michael Wilson Award and AAC Safety Award would be presented in October, with background on Michael Wilson provided for new members.

AGENDA ITEM 3: Digital Assistant Update
Detailed Discussion
Customers can now request that an existing Uber trip link be resent through the digital assistant by selecting option 2 and then option 2 again. The tool can resend links for assigned Uber trips without an agent and can look back up to four hours for a trip whose window has passed.
Members asked whether the feature applies to Lyft, whether customers can check if a trip is assigned to Uber, and how the system handles customers with speech disabilities. Staff stated that Lyft Concierge will initially receive more human-agent support and may later receive digital-assistant functionality. Staff also agreed that customer profiles should help route callers to an agent when a voice interface is not effective.
Members emphasized the need for broad messaging through updated guides, texts, social media, and other accessible channels. Staff reported that the customer guide had been updated and that a text message with the link was planned.

AGENDA ITEM 4: Abilities Ride Program and Payment Processing
Detailed Discussion
Staff reported collection of $809,346 in Abilities Ride fees and described the process as a work in progress. Accurate matching is complicated when third-party systems do not include a customer ID or booking ID, when a trip changes providers, or when a human agent books a trip outside the standard upload process.
Members described large batches of delayed $3 deductions that caused confusion and unexpected negative balances. Members requested an itemized, checkbook-style statement showing trip dates, booking IDs, charges, credits, and completed trips. Staff agreed that the long-term goal is faster collection and customer access to detailed trip information, potentially through My Transit Manager.
Staff also announced that Tower Transportation would join Abilities Ride as a wheelchair-accessible provider, primarily serving Washington, DC and Prince George's County. Targeted outreach will invite selected customers in southern Prince George's County to consider Lyft where driver availability may be stronger.

AGENDA ITEM 5: Customer Trip Information and Provider Identification

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Detailed Discussion
The committee discussed restoring provider information to the Instant Access IVR and adding comparable information to the digital assistant. The provider name had previously been removed to present MetroAccess as one unified service.
Members stated that knowing whether to expect a MetroAccess vehicle, taxi, Uber, or Lyft is important for locating the vehicle and preparing for pickup. Staff agreed to investigate the technical feasibility of restoring provider information in the IVR. The digital assistant already provides trip status and estimated arrival information, while My Transit Manager provides provider, tracking, cancellation, and booking functions.
Staff reported that My Transit Manager booking is now open to all registered users for trips previously taken. Members requested multiple access paths because customers differ in technology, communication, and support needs.

AGENDA ITEM 6: Public Comment
Detailed Discussion
Sam Dunston described a substantially late shared ride and asked whether a driver could change the drop-off order. Staff explained that drivers should not independently change trip order, but management can review circumstances and update Trapeze instructions when appropriate.
Denise described delayed batch deductions, confusing EasyPay entries, difficulty reaching an agent through the digital assistant, and taxi arrival information that did not match actual performance. Staff reiterated the goal of quicker, accurate deductions and noted that customers may request exclusion of a particular Abilities Ride provider.
Gerald Barnes requested voice entry and error recovery for the EasyPay telephone system. Staff agreed to ask the EasyPay vendor about IVR capabilities. He also reported improved Uber performance but recurring rear-entrance pickup issues and expressed interest in other providers.
Janice Samuel reported inappropriate comments by a rideshare driver, requested consideration of same-day trip requests, and asked about a call-center tour. Staff requested identifying information for investigation, confirmed the tour had not yet occurred, and noted that same-day service could be considered in the work plan.
Sarah Radt asked about the September 18 web-booking outage. Staff stated that the outage lasted most of the day, IVR notices were provided, phone and My Transit Manager booking remained available, and impacted customers were offered same-day booking the following day.
Tajuan Farmer requested confirmation that the recertification form is fillable and accessible, and recommended replacing abbreviations such as 'FE' with plain language

such as 'front entrance.' Noor Pervez asked that inappropriate driver conduct across rideshare and taxi providers be tracked and addressed.

AGENDA ITEM 7: Closing and Deferred Topics
Detailed Discussion
The planned Where's My Ride update was deferred because of time. Systemwide Accessibility provided closing contact information, and the committee adjourned following a motion and unanimous voice vote.

ACTION ITEMS
• Update July minutes to identify Susan Bowmaster as Second Vice Chair.
Responsible Party: Systemwide Accessibility
• Provide background on Michael Wilson during the October awards presentation.
Responsible Party: MetroAccess Operations
• Publicize the updated customer guide and digital-assistant enhancements through accessible channels.
Responsible Party: Access Services / Systemwide Accessibility
• Continue development of speech-disability-aware routing to human agents.
Responsible Party: Access Services / Digital Assistant Vendor
• Improve the timing, accuracy, and transparency of Abilities Ride fee deductions.
Responsible Party: Access Services
• Develop customer-facing itemized trip and fee information, potentially through My Transit Manager.
Responsible Party: Access Services / Technology Teams
• Conduct outreach regarding Tower Transportation and targeted Lyft participation.
Responsible Party: Access Services
• Investigate restoration of provider information in Instant Access IVR.
Responsible Party: Access Services / Technology Teams
• Follow up on canceled subscription trips that still generated Lyft links.
Responsible Party: Access Services
• Investigate reported inappropriate driver conduct and take appropriate action.
Responsible Party: Access Services / Third-Party Provider
• Consider same-day ride requests in the MetroAccess work plan.
Responsible Party: MetroAccess Subcommittee
• Schedule the previously discussed call-center tour.
Responsible Party: Access Services
• Ask the EasyPay vendor about voice entry and error recovery.
Responsible Party: Access Services / EasyPay Vendor

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• Confirm that the recertification form is fillable and accessible.
Responsible Party: MetroAccess Eligibility / Systemwide Accessibility
• Use plain-language pickup and drop-off notes where character limits permit.
Responsible Party: Access Services / Reservations Staff

ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Multiple communication channels for customers with different technology and communication needs.
    - Speech-disability accommodation in voice assistants.
    - Plain-language, itemized, accessible account information.
    - Accessible and fillable recertification documents.
    - Clear provider identification and real-time trip status.
    - Safe, respectful conduct by all dedicated and non-dedicated drivers.
    - Accessible IVR error recovery and voice entry.
    - Consistent use of plain-language pickup and drop-off notes.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned shortly after 6:00 PM following a motion and unanimous voice vote. The Where's My Ride update was deferred to a future meeting.