



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Meeting (Virtual) Minutes: July 7, 2025

Attendees

Present: Paul Semelfort (Acting Chair), Susan Bowmaster, Tino Calabia, Rico Dancy, Marcie Goldstein, Steve Kaffen, Phillippa Mezile, Swatha Nandhakumar, Sandra Neuzil, Sarah Radt, and Philip Weintraub.

Call to Order

Anupama Sharma, AAC Coordinator, welcomed everyone, shared helpful tips, read the agenda, thereafter, Chair (Acting) Semelfort moved the meeting forward.

Approval of Agenda, Board Report, and Prior Meeting Minutes

The July 7, 2025, meeting agenda approved as presented.

The June 2, 2025, Meeting Minutes were approved with a minor amendment.

The Board Report was approved as written.

Motions Made, Motions Passed:

the AAC request the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority to consider allowing individuals who are permanently disabled, not be required to go through the recertification process every three years. The motion was passed.

Systemwide Accessibility (SWACC) Oversight Report:

Kevin Louers, Access Review Manager, SWACC, shared the report on behalf of the Vice President of System-Wide Accessibility. Mr. Louers stated each month, the SWACC team will provide an overview of our work across the system.

The first update is in response to the most recent feedback regarding the restrooms. SWACC is working closely with Infrastructure to inventory all restrooms and conduct a comprehensive analysis to determine which facilities are currently accessible, which require remediation, and which require a designed solution or must remain offline due to structural infeasibility. While we know that all restrooms have accessible features, we are prioritizing evaluation of features that may require more complex engineered solutions to fully address. Specifically, these focus areas include accessible routes leading to the restrooms, and door pressure required to open restroom doors. This effort is in direct response to the requests and feedback from the Committee, members of the public, and past Board Member Drummer. Using the most current data, we have completed approximately 30% of the re-evaluation of restrooms across the Authority and that information is being analyzed. We remain on schedule to complete the restroom reviews by December 2025. As each review is finalized, we share the information with Infrastructure to support a detailed analysis and guide next steps for remediation and improvements.

Mr. Louers shared another update that System-Wide Accessibility, in partnership with Infrastructure, is hosting a U.S. Access Board training for internal stakeholders. This will be a two-day offering held in October 2025. The first session will include a refresher course covering the ADA, DOT standards, and the ABA. The second session will focus on more technical interpretations of design requirements to support consistent and informed decision-making across projects. Mr. Louers stated SWACC appreciates AAC's continued engagement and partnership and invited any questions about this work.

Mr. Calabria thanked and complimented for the provision of the timelines for carrying out this project. Chair Semelfort asked frequency of the report and Mr. Louers stated it will be a monthly readout for updates. Mr. Weintraub asked about the mode of the report. Mr. Louers clarified the update will be through the meeting. Ms. Radt asked if the AAC members would be invited to attend the training. Mr. Louers stated we will follow up to more detailed information on how many people and the extent of who will be able to attend that meeting.

Metro Performance:

Jordan Holt, Senior Director, Performance and Global Benchmarking, provided Service Excellence report from July 1st, 2024, through March 31st, 2025. Aligned with WMATA's service excellence goal, this report is bus, rail and MetroAccess. While ridership continuously grew across all modes at about 8%, Metro staff kept a focus on maintaining a safe system. Serious crime across bus and rail system reduced about 40% and customer perception of safety also improved. WMATA did not meet targets for on-time-performance (OTP) in any mode, therefore service reliability is an area of focus.

The key performance indicators (KPIs) are safety and security, reliability, and convenience. Customer injury rate was 28.4 per 10 million vehicle revenue miles, not meeting our target. WMATA met its target on customer satisfaction for all three modes. Metrorail exceeded the target of 85% customer satisfaction with reliability, shorter waits, and faster travel being the top three drivers. Customers who ride on frequent bus service network (at least 20 minutes), 82% are satisfied compared to 74% of customers who ride on less frequent service. MetroAccess met target due to on-time-performance (OTP) and service reliability. The crime decreased due to many factors: special police officers in Metro system, quick response to tips and leveraging cameras, and retrofitting of the faregates addressing fare evasion since almost everyone who committed a crime - fare evaded in the rail system. The Part 1 crime decreased in the system and WMATA met target for both bus and rail.

Ms. Holt stated MetroAccess service reliability was 88%, missing the target of 92% trips (excluding Abilities Ride) picked up on time. There was improvement from Q2 due to MetroAccess team's work with contractors and adding a new service provider in January. Staff continues to leverage Abilities-Ride to ensure MetroAccess customers are picked up on time. In March, due to regional employees returning to the office, traffic congestion worsened, and this impact was seen on MetroAccess and Metrobus. Bus OTP struggled

to meet its target. Staff has been focused to ensure on-time terminal departures. Along with traffic congestion, travel times is one of the key reasons of late trips. Hence, WMATA has been focusing for the jurisdictional partners to add bus priority lanes. For the FY25, the amount of bus priority lane miles doubled compared to last year.

Rail OTP did not meet target although there was an improvement in Q3 due to the automatic train operation (ATO) on Red Line. The ATO on Red Line was launched in mid-December. The first schedule adjustment was made in late January, followed by the second schedule adjustment in late June. The ATO was launched on Green and Yellow Lines in May. The first schedule adjustment occurred in June, and the second schedule adjustment will be in December. Similarly, the ATO was launched on Blue, Orange, and Silver Lines. In late June, combined schedule adjustments were made. Another combined schedule adjustment is due in December. Data and experience on Red Line's ATO inform that customer trips are faster, on average by 100 seconds. End-to-end trips are eight minutes faster. Due to ATO on Red Line, there has been a 3% improvement in train reliability and the OTP. On the Green and Yellow Lines, about 60% trips are faster on average between 35 and 70 seconds. With data in the next few months, WMATA will assess the results of ATO on other lines as well.

Mr. Weintraub asked if Metrorail schedule adjustments will continue with time or for a limited duration. Ms. Holt stated typically schedules are adjusted twice a year, in June and December. They will continue comprehensive adjustments through next June. Thereafter, much smaller adjustments may take place probably for 12 months.

Ms. Nandhakumar asked if Metrobus data includes scheduled buses that do not run. Ms. Holt stated the OTP only includes the service that we run. Between July 1st and March 31st, we delivered about 97.8% of all the scheduled service, missing about 2% of service. We schedule 11,990 trips every day, and 276 of those are missed. In February and May, it was related to an increase shortage of operators. All operators, including the ones on the Extra Board, were getting trained for the new bus network.

Mr. Calabria asked about train surfing and suicides, as it relates to crime in Metro system. Ms. Holt stated train surfing is not considered a Part 1 crime, and shared information about various efforts to bring awareness about the dangerous levels of such incidents. Concerning suicides, those do not get counted as crime, but potentially customer injury and/or fatality.

Chair (Acting) Semelfort thanked Ms. Holt and re-invited her to September MAS meeting.

Jurisdictional Eligibility Bill:

Chair Semelfort recapped that during the last MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) meeting, a bill was discussed that was passed in Maryland, related to people with permanent disabilities, why they must reapply for the reduced fare program. MetroAccess customers advocate that bill for MetroAccess Eligibility process. A motion was made at MAS to bring

this up to the AAC, about our position on this and to include it in the Board Report. Ms. Radt stated it would save time and effort for MetroAccess riders and WMATA staff. Technology may improve and people with disabilities who currently feel they must use MetroAccess, could possibly use bus and rail more if there were different navigation or technology solutions that would work for them. Chair Semelfort explained that eligibility process for paratransit is different than the process of Reduced Fare Program and the ADA requires that there is a process for determining eligibility in terms of functional eligibility, or to use bus and rail, and a part of that process is medical documentation.

Christian Blake, Vice President, Access Services, countered by stating the philosophical placing a permanent label on a person related to their ability to use fixed-route service conflicts with the goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and WMATA, which has led the nation in accessible fixed route services. Although a person's disability may be permanent, the inability to use the fixed-route services may not be permanent. Mr. Blake provided examples how MetroAccess does not truly practice conditional eligibility, whereas it is enforced in other parts of the country. If enforced, many customers may not be able to use MetroAccess for all their trips, as currently done. Mr. Blake stated we are looking at other ways to mainstream customers with disabilities into generally publicly available transportation services, i.e. taxis, Ubers, and other services. When customers are permanently eligible for reduced fare - to use public transportation, Mr. Blake is supportive of that. He encouraged the committee to advocate based on their beliefs.

A member of the public advocated for the bill to eliminate recertification process for people with permanent disabilities as it relates to MetroAccess Eligibility. If advancements occur on fixed route, then customers could be grandfathered for the eligibility process, as currently done for the service area. The eligibility initial process will still include doctor's attestation that the person's disability is permanent. Mr. Blake clarified that Eligibility Office reviews the application to determine if a person's disability prevents them from using bus or rail or at least some of the trips, not whether the disability is temporary or permanent. He added that tremendous investments are being made on the fixed route service allowing every person regardless of their disability, the capability to use the nation's finest and most accessible public transit system. Ms. Radt concurred in support of the proposed bill and recommended to bring it to the attention of WMATA Board. The AAC made and passed a motion in support of bringing it to WMATA Board.

Public Comments:

Mr. Calabria stated July is Disability Pride month and advocated WMATA to accommodate people with disabilities. He also shared that on June 30th, the PG County Executive stated The Bus, PG County bus service, will begin serving Bowie, Adelphi, Fort Washington and two other areas. The Bus is free of charge to customers, however, that could not be confirmed. Ms. Nandhakumar and a member of the public confirmed that The Bus is free of charge to customers since 2023. The member of the public asked the impact of The Bus fare and service on MetroAccess and how to find The Bus service routes/area. Mr. Blake stated MetroAccess provides service within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of fixed route service and

the fare is twice the fastest fixed-run equivalent for it, including the jurisdictional bus service. He recommended to use WMATA's Trip Planner for bus route information.

The second member of the public stated her concern about bus announcements while servicing bus stops.

Ms. Radt stated the new Metro-Pulse app is not working with inverted text, some of the smart dynamic text applications on an iPhone.

Mr. Weintraub asked about crowd control for large events like July 4th fireworks. Ms. Sharma informed that there is extra personnel at stations, particularly in the core stations where we expect larger than usual ridership to maintain and assist customers. Metro Police along with additional Metro staff are also available to assist customers.

Ms. Mezile asked about Uber as it relates to dropping off at wrong locations. Mr. Blake informed that information was provided to Uber and it will be followed up at the MAS meeting in two weeks. Chair (Acting) Semelfort stated the pin could be moved for better service and he receives ride information on his Uber app. Mr. Blake stated the issue needs to be corrected by Uber for all customers and locations and not everybody has a personal Uber app. The first member of the public stated her experience about the same issue with Uber where drivers getting to the vicinity, not to the specified location. Mr. Weintraub shared the same experience on his personal Uber account. Ms. Radt stated this is a universal problem even when she uses her private Uber app.

Public Comments can be received via phone at 202-962-1100, or via email at MetroAACChair@wmata.com

Bus and Rail Subcommittee Report:

Mr. Calabria stated the following topics were discussed at last month's BRS meeting:

- Way Finding Signage Review - L'Enfant Plaza Station, Metro Center Station, Rosslyn Station, Gallery Place-Chinatown Station
- Restrooms Availability in Metrorail Stations
- Summer 2025 Shutdown – Phase I
- Customer Service Inquiry
- Wayfinding Signage Review

MetroAccess Subcommittee Report:

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

- MetroAccess Service Updates
- KTS Transportation
- MetroAccess Abilities – Ride Update
- MetroAccess Eligibility Process

The meeting was adjourned at 7:19p.m.