



Accessibility Advisory Committee

300 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

BUS/RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES: September 8, 2025

In attendance: Tino Calabia (Chair), Sandra Neuzil (Second Vice-Chair), Susan Bowmaster, Vanessa Coles, Rico Dancy, Tajuan Farmer, Debby Fisher, Marcie Goldstein, Phillipa Mezile, Sarah Radt, and Patrick Sheehan.

Call to Order

Anu Sharma, AAC Coordinator, took roll call, read the Meeting Agenda, and provided helpful information, thereafter, Vice Chair Kaffen moved the meeting forward.

Review and Approval of BRS Agenda and Minutes:

The BRS approved the Meeting Agenda for September 8th, as presented.

The BRS Meeting Minutes from July 14th, 2025, were approved as written.

Prince George's County Bus Service Update:

Efon Epanty, Prince George's County, stated the Transit Vision Plan (TVP) has been completed, finalized and adopted by the County Council. That is county's official roadmap for transit development for the next five years. The focus is on implementing year one action plan (short-term fixes), i.e. bus stops and other facilities related improvements. The priority is to better serve residents and visitors and connect people across the county and into the Metro system. We have been moving forward with our fleet improvement plan, thus embarked on buying new buses for the system. Mr. Epanty stated we are in the process of acquiring more vehicles for our paratransit system as well. The plan continues to implement Micro-Transit to improve accessibility and mobility for residents throughout the county. The Better Bus Network (BBN) was implemented and weekday ridership has increased. Mr. Epanty stated data/information is still being collected to review and understand the needs and expectations of riders.

Chair Calabia stated that Denise Rush, AAC Vice-Chair, had discussed bus deserts in Prince George's County. He asked about the Micro-Transit and regular bus services. Mr. Epanty stated we have taken multi-phase approach as part of our strategy to improve services in the county. That includes expanding Micro-Transit from currently in Oxon Hill, to five different zones in the county. In southern county, the plan is to split the existing Micro-Transit zone into two: Oxon Hill and Clinton. We plan to introduce three new zones: Bowie, Laurel, and West-Hyattsville, and implement Micro-Transit over the next two years. Chair Calabia asked about funding/budget limitations or shortfalls, impacting the plans or if that is included in the TVP. Mr. Epanty stated our leadership has not reduced the budget; thus, we are moving forward to implement service as planned.

Second Vice Chair Neuzil asked if the county is implementing bus stop improvements or if that is in the planning phase. Mr. Epanty stated the plan includes installation of

additional shelters in high ridership bus stops. We are also working on a comprehensive bus stop improvement plan with design work for bus stops by corridors, to be followed up with implementation. The timeline for that project is committed to doing it this year.

Chair Calabria asked if there will be new bus stops where there had not been any service before. Mr. Epanty stated this year, we collaborated with WMATA and other partners about bus stops as part of BBN implementation. Some of the stops are temporary and we are going to make improvements to those, as needed and as feasible. For instance, in some areas, the county does not own the right-of-way on many roads. Hence, we must coordinate with State Highway Administration (SHA) to get the permits and approvals before making bus stop improvements.

Mr. Sheehan asked if installing sidewalks along some of the routes and lighting will be part of bus stop improvements. Mr. Epanty stated the design work may require installation of connecting sidewalks, crosswalks, safety improvements, and lighting at bus stops. Mr. Sheehan asked about the length and width of the sidewalks, bus stop designs and amenities at the bus stops. Mr. Epanty stated we are going to do design-work-research for the designs of the bus stops. The TVP considers a good bus stop that follows the Universal Design Principles ensuring accessibility. We want to prioritize safety at the bus stops and that they are connected to sidewalks. Mr. Epanty stated we are not considering floating bus stop, remote stops or bus islands. Mr. Sheehan offered to assist anyway the Committee can, by bringing any issues back to WMATA Board. Mr. Sheehan stated through DMV moves, we are looking at Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Bus Prioritization. Chair Calabria asked Mr. Epanty to share pictures of bus stops being considered for future. Mr. Epanty stated we will share pictures with the committee when available.

Mr. Sheehan asked about the hours of operation of the five proposed Micro-Transit services. Mr. Epanty stated we use a context-specific approach; therefore, we do not have a universal start or end time. Mr. Sheehan asked since The Bus is extended to areas within Bowie, therefore, is paratransit now also providing service there? Mr. Epanty stated as part of the compact, MetroAccess goes within the $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile where The Bus goes. Mr. Epanty stated we also have Call-A-Bus, which is our supplemental paratransit system. The Call-A-Bus and the Micro-Transit routes do not support paratransit.

Mr. Farmer asked Mr. Epanty to explain the Micro-Transit service. Mr. Epanty stated Micro-Transit is a demand and response service based on real time. It does not require advanced booking and trips can be booked through the app or a phone call. The rides should be within 15 minutes thus a person should be available to be picked up from their

location and get dropped off. Mr. Farmer asked about the limitation of range for an individual. Mr. Epanty stated Micro-Transit service is zone-specific, for instance, a person can travel within the Bowie zone only. Mr. Farmer asked if existing bus stops and any new stops that get improved, will be in Metro-Pulse app? He asked about marketing efforts to ensure persons with disabilities and older adults have access to information about their bus-stops. Mr. Epanty stated it is something for us to consider.

Ms. Coles asked how the concept of Micro-Transit came about, if it serves National Harbor currently, and how residents can know about this service. Mr. Epanty stated the county started Micro-Transit service during the COVID-19 epidemic. We have operated this system in just one zone, Oxon Hill and Clinton area. It does not serve the National Harbor currently. The primary reason we created the Micro-Transit zone was to connect people with shopping and healthcare needs. We realized there were some areas in the county where we do not have fixed-route service and people needed to make short essential trips to the pharmacy or to Walmart or a grocery store. Ms. Coles asked if Micro-Transit accommodates people with accessible needs. Mr. Epanty confirmed and stated we utilize wheelchair accessible vehicles and provide the best service as possible.

Chair Calabria thanked Mr. Epanty for coming and sharing the information. He invited Mr. Epanty back to discuss any updated, when available.

Navy Yard ELES Capital Project:

Cedric Watson, Senior Capital Program Manager, Elevator and Escalator Department, stated we are in the process of replacing all the escalators at the Navy Yard station. We are currently working on the east entrance (New Jersey Avenue side). The plan is to complete the replacement of all the escalators on the mezzanine and then the entrance by the end of the month. Following that, escalators at the Navy Yard High Street entrance will be replaced where the entrance will be closed to the public. However, the New Jersey Avenue entrance will remain open with all elevators available to the public. All three escalators located in the west entrance, along with two escalators on the platform will be replaced simultaneously. This project's scheduled duration is about 25 weeks, starting on September 29th, 2025, with an estimated return to service on March 25th, 2026. During that period, we will work to expedite the replacement of all five escalators located on the west entrance, not to extend work impacting our customers.

SVC Neuzil confirmed that at any given moment, there will be escalators operating at one or the other end of the station. SVC Neuzil also confirmed that there will always be an elevator option for people who use wheelchairs or need elevators. Mr. Watson confirmed

and stated the east entrance on New Jersey Avenue, will be accessible to the public. Both elevators travel from platform to mezzanine, and mezzanine to street. Those escalators and elevators will remain open for the duration of the project.

Mr. Farmer commended on the timing for this work as the Nationals games will end soon, thus not impacting the larger crowds of people traveling to and from this station.

Next Big Transportation Bill:

Chair Calabria discussed dedicated funding for WMATA to avoid another fiscal cliff as experienced because of the pandemic. Mr. Sheehan stated there is a DMV Moves meeting in September. In fall, they expect to release some of their findings. Summary of what he said at the last week's meeting: In 2018, WMATA was given a rainy-day fund in the amount of \$500 million. That was not indexed to inflation and when COVID hit, the money was spent much quicker than expected. That is partly the reason why we ran into the fiscal cliff a couple years ago. In FY28, WMATA's borrowing power ends. The jurisdictions have talked about putting in \$500 to \$600 million collectively from Maryland, D.C, and Virginia. Those funds will be indexed against inflation. To gather the funds, adding a sales tax was discussed however that idea was not liked by many. The region knows there is an urgency as we are in FY26 and by FY27 they must have a plan coming forward.

Chair Calabria stated the Department of Transportation (DOT) order 2100.7 says that preferences will be given to communities with marriage and birth rates higher than the national average. It also will prohibit recipients of DOT support or assistance from imposing vaccine and mask mandates. He wondered what will happen when states do that. The funding will be based upon whether the states or localities require local compliance or cooperation with federal immigration enforcement and with other goals. The objectives specified by the President of the United States and the DOT order 2100.7, signed by the DOT Secretary. At worst or at best for us, maybe it is not in effect. We never had those priorities on states and localities. Since we are not in a region of higher marriage or birth rates, that could be another flaw in our vision for future funding.

Ms. Fisher stated with cutbacks/changes in federal employees/departments, we may see reduction in ridership, eventually adversely impacting fare collection. She hopes that any solutions DMV Moves creates, will be long-term dedicated funding to avoid another fiscal cliff. Chair Calabria stated hopefully the Micro-Transit service builds in flexibility and transportation for residents and is considered in DMV Moves as it will affect MetroAccess. Mr. Sheehan stated they are looking at increasing the efficiencies within the system. With automatic train operation (ATO) savings, all that money is being pushed back into the

system. MetroAccess can save money due to Abilities-Ride and that money is being reallocated in the system. The Better Bus Network (BBN) is helping and as a result, bus prioritization and other projects are being considered. Due to efficiencies, WMATA will not need to borrow funds from Capital for Operations to run the system. Chair Calabia stated hopefully federal government's decisions will not adversely impact WMATA.

Public Comments

The first member of the public was interested in the process of Request for Proposals (RFP) for the new fare vending machines. He was advised to contact the office for further information that could be provided via Procurement, and/or available on wmata.com

The second member of the public commented that because of problems with the new bus system, if people are having trouble, are they going to be allowed to apply for MetroAccess.

SVC Neuzil shared a MetroAccess concern where an Uber driver did not arrive at the correct location of a building. The specific location is on Old Dominion Drive, apparently multiple buildings have that address including the one on Kirby Road. Chair Calabia asked if SVC Neuzil tried calling the place to get a better address to provide it to the Uber driver. SVC Neuzil stated she has asked another person in that complex for their address, and she might try that address the next time she goes there. SVC Neuzil asked how to change the location of Uber Pin, so that the driver can arrive at the correct location. Christiaan Blake, Vice President, Access Services, stated he hears this concern a lot and that Uber is a convenient promotion. We are always willing to help and share issues with Uber or any company. We have brought on other Uber-like companies that are door-to-door service and will provide a lot more support than Uber is designed to do. He recommended for customers to use MetroAccess for any place when traveling there for the first time.

Ms. Mezile stated when she calls Uber drivers, they do not respond and cancel after going to a wrong location. One driver answered the phone, he was familiar with the building and confirmed that GPS sends him to the alley. She stated Lyft is better with directions. Mr. Blake stated a lot of people tell me they do not like Uber's navigation and that Lyft is better with directions. Mr. Blake stated we are trying to get Lyft on board as a provider. Sharing an experience with Reservations, Ms. Mezile was asked if she would like Uber or a cab. She inquired about the cab offer. Mr. Blake stated there is no difference. We have not changed the computer system yet and to be compliant, we are practicing offering other providers. There are about 17 different options under Abilities Ride. We are trying

to determine the best way to list providers per customers' ride, as applicable per the area and available providers.

The second shared concerns about contacting WMR and the long wait time for a supervisor. She does not use cabs as their call centers are overseas and that staff does not know this area. She referenced an issue of getting eligibility process complete when traveling to a different state. Mr. Blake stated paratransit service is not intended for customers to book a few trips a day in advance and then call to make constant changes on the day of the trip. If customers continue to make changes on the day of the trip, due to higher call volume, waiting for a supervisor may take place. Mr. Blake clarified that MetroAccess does not process visitor status for another paratransit service. We will provide them with customer's eligibility information when they contact us. We process visitor status for people traveling to the DC Metropolitan area.

Mr. Dancy repeated a concern about not reaching his place of work by 6:00am on a Saturday. Mr. Blake reiterated that MetroAccess is a fixed route equivalent, shared-ride paratransit service. Usually, MetroAccess has been able to get Mr. Dancy to his place of employment by his desired times. Traveling from his home to Dulles Airport is a very long trip. Usually, Mr. Dancy's trips are picked for Uber through the lottery, somehow his trip was not picked in the lottery that day. Mr. Blake again explained that MetroAccess wants to get him to his job by the desired time however, as a shared ride public transit service, the service we provide to one customer, must be available for all. Mr. Dancy asked about resetting the password for the app. Mr. Blake offered to provide Mr. Dancy assistance in getting the password issue resolved.

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

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:01 p.m.