



## Accessibility Advisory Committee

300 7<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington DC 20024

# MetroAccess Subcommittee Virtual Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2026

Time: Approximately 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM Eastern Time

## Attendance

The MetroAccess Subcommittee of the Accessibility Advisory Committee met virtually on January 20, 2026. Members present included Darnise Bush; Rico Dancy; Tajuan Farmer, who facilitated the meeting; Steve Kaffin; Phillippa Mezile; Patrick Sheehan, Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee; Tino Calabia; Philip Weintraub; Paul Semelfort; Vanessa Coles; Swatha Nandhakumar; Sarah Radt; Sandra Neuzil; Marcie Goldstein; and Susan Bowmaster. Deborah M. Fisher and Doris Ray participated as at-large members, and Phil Posner participated as an Emeritus Member.

WMATA staff present included Dr. Maggie K. Butler, Vice President of System-Wide Accessibility; Christiaan Blake, Vice President of Access Services; Allison Anderson, Customer Service and Outreach; Dolan Chittams, Public Comment and Commendations; Adam Lasky, OCC Dispatch Manager; Stacey Jackson, WeDriveU; and Terriane Williams-Hall, Director of MetroAccess.

## Opening Remarks and Call to Order

The meeting was facilitated by First Vice Chair Tajuan Farmer. Dr. Maggie K. Butler, Vice President of System-Wide Accessibility, opened the meeting by welcoming committee members, WMATA staff, and members of the public. Dr. Butler confirmed that the meeting was being recorded, reviewed meeting logistics and participation guidance, read the meeting agenda, and conducted roll call. A quorum was confirmed based on members present. Upon completion of the agenda review, logistics, and roll call, facilitation of the meeting transitioned to First Vice Chair Tajuan Farmer.

## Approval of Agenda and Prior Minutes

The agenda for the meeting was approved without objection. The December 2025 MetroAccess Subcommittee minutes were not available at the time of the meeting and were tabled. Staff indicated that draft minutes would be circulated in advance of the next meeting for committee review and approval.

## Reports and Commendations

Allison Anderson introduced Dolan Chittams to provide updates related to public comments and commendations. Mr. Chittams reported that there were no outstanding public comments from the December 1, 2025 Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting. He summarized a December 15, 2025 MetroAccess Subcommittee public comment regarding an AbilitiesRide trip scheduled through Uber in which the pickup location did not align with the MetroAccess reservation. The issue was attributed to a missed response to a customer text message. The OCC contractor was reminded of the requirement for timely and consistent responses to inbound customer text communications.

Mr. Chittams also summarized December 2025 commutation statistics, including overall volumes and distribution across providers and service locations. No personally identifiable information was discussed.

During committee discussion, Paul Semelfort emphasized that text-message responsiveness remains inconsistent, particularly for customers who rely on text as their primary method of communication. Staff acknowledged the concern and confirmed that monitoring and reinforcement with OCC staff and contractors is ongoing.

## Reports and Awards

Adam Lasky presented the Michael Wilson Award to Sherita Queen in recognition of her professionalism, dependability, and dedication in her role as an OCC dispatcher. Ms. Queen expressed appreciation for the recognition and shared her pride in supporting customer safety. Stacey Jackson presented the MetroAccess Safety Award to Solana Simmons in recognition of her exceptional safety record and commitment to customer care.

## MetroAccess Fleet Discussion

Christiaan Blake, Vice President of Access Services, provided an overview of the MetroAccess fleet, with a focus on the transition to low-floor, ramp-equipped minivans. He explained that ramps are generally more reliable and safer than mechanical lifts and are consistent with industry standards and Metrobus operating practices.

During discussion, Paul Semelfort raised concerns regarding the ability of larger mobility devices to fit safely within minivans and how those devices are secured. Mr. Blake explained that extensive testing has been conducted with a wide range of mobility devices and that riders who cannot be safely accommodated in minivans are identified in the system for assignment to next-generation vehicles. He clarified that minivans can accommodate up to two ambulatory riders or one ambulatory rider and one wheelchair user, while next-generation vehicles can accommodate up to two wheelchair users and

three ambulatory riders. Personal care attendants are counted as passengers for capacity and safety purposes.

Tino Calabria shared examples from peer transit systems and offered to provide photographs of higher-capacity vehicles serving multiple wheelchair users. Mr. Blake acknowledged the discussion and noted that MetroAccess must balance vehicle capacity, shared-ride efficiency, and operational realities.

### AbilitiesRide Providers Update

Mr. Blake announced that VIA will rejoin the AbilitiesRide program in February 2026 and that Tower Transportation will join the program in March 2026. Both providers will offer wheelchair-accessible service.

### Uber Pickup and Mapping Issues

Mr. Blake discussed persistent challenges related to pickup and drop-off accuracy, particularly instances in which GPS navigation directs drivers to alleys or inaccessible locations. Committee members, including Sandra Neuzil, Patrick Sheehan, and Janice Samuels, shared experiences involving difficulty moving pickup pins, differences between Uber and Lyft performance, and accessibility barriers for blind and low-vision riders who cannot rely on visual maps. Sarah Radt made comments referencing Abilities Ride providers in the booking tool/app. Currently, customers are advised informally to write “Uber requested” on their request form, but there are no official instructions to that effect.

Mr. Blake explained that trips are initially booked as MetroAccess trips and later assigned to providers through a lottery process. He emphasized that riders should not assume Uber service until a provider link is received and encouraged riders to use the MyTransit app to confirm provider assignment. Staff reported that testing of improved geocoding and coordination with Uber is ongoing.

### Digital Assistant and MyTransit App

Terriane Williams-Hall provided an update on the digital assistant and the MyTransit app, which support trip booking, “Where’s My Ride” inquiries, and more consistent Uber bookings through agent tools. Mr. Blake emphasized that Uber operates as a rules-based promotional service, is not appropriate for urgent or emergency trips, and does not replace MetroAccess as a shared-ride public transit service.

Paul Semelfort inquired about future features such as trip cancellation and direct booking through the MyTransit app. Staff indicated that these features are under review and dependent on vendor development and testing. No implementation timelines were provided.

Sarah Radt Abilities Ride providers in the booking tool/app. Currently, customers are advised informally to write “Uber requested” on their request form, but there are no official instructions to that effect.

## Public Comment

During public comment, Timothy Jones suggested allowing provider preferences within rider profiles, adding audible alerts in the MyTransit app, and reviewing minivan seating configurations for riders and personal care attendants. Staff indicated that feasibility would be assessed within existing program rules and future planning efforts. Janice Samuel described confusion caused by automated confirmation calls that do not clearly state whether a trip will be served by MetroAccess or Uber. Staff responded that call script language would be reviewed to clarify that automated calls confirm reservations rather than provider assignment. Joseph Phillips expressed continued concern regarding Uber mapping inaccuracies and urged stronger coordination with the provider. Staff responded that geocoding improvements are being tested and engagement with Uber is ongoing. Public comments are summarized to reflect participant input and do not constitute findings or determinations by the Subcommittee.

## Additional Business

No additional business requiring formal action or vote was brought before the Subcommittee. Topics discussed during the meeting that will continue to be monitored include OCC text-message responsiveness, clarity of automated confirmation communications, Uber pickup and mapping accuracy, and future enhancements to the MyTransit app and seating configurations. These matters were discussed for informational and planning purposes and did not constitute formal actions of the Subcommittee.

## Adjournment

There being no further business, First Vice Chair Tajuan Farmer adjourned the MetroAccess Subcommittee meeting at approximately 6:00 PM Eastern Time. Appreciation was expressed to committee members, WMATA staff, interpreters, and members of the public for their participation. The next MetroAccess Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for February 17, 2026.