



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-962-6060

Meeting Minutes: February 2, 2015

ATTENDEES

Present: Dr. Phil Posner (Vice-Chair), Elver Ariza-Silva, Tapan Banerjee, Brianne Burger, Heidi Case, Charlie Crawford, Marisa Laios, Phillippa Mezile, Edward McEntee, Mary Kay McMahon, Mary Jane Owen, Denise Rush, Paul Semelfort, Anthony Stephens, Dr. William Staderman and Roger Stanley.

Call to Order

Vice-Chairman called the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA, BOARD REPORT, AND PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

The meeting agenda was approved as amended.

The January 5, 2015 meeting minutes were approved as amended.

The Chair's Report to the Board, dated February 2, 2015, was approved as amended.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

In a follow up to a discussion during the December 2014 Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meeting on marketing fixed route services to people with disabilities, a customer commented that the experience of using the fixed route system by customers eligible to for MetroAccess service has to be viewed more as rewarding experience rather than a punishing one.

A comment was made about the use of MetroAccess cards on the fixed route system. The customer stated that on two separate occasions she was denied access to the fixed route system because she did not have the right MetroAccess card. The customer added that according to the MetroAccess Customer Guide, MetroAccess customers along with one companion can ride Metro's fixed route services for free. Dr. Posner stated that Allison Anderson, Operations Manager, MetroAccess, would follow up with the customer to resolve the issue. Christiaan Blake, Director, ADA Policy and Planning (ADAP), stated that customers should report these types of issue to Metro's Customer Service at 202-637-7000 and to ADAP at 202-962-1100 for additional follow-up.

Ms. Owen made a comment about directional signage in the Metrorail system. She stated that the Union Station Metrorail station lacks sufficient directional signage to direct customers to the elevators. Dr. Posner stated that the issue of adequate station directional signage is a work in progress, one on which the AAC has received several presentations.

Ms. Owen suggested that the AAC take the issue up again because the lack of signage affects all customers, not just customers with disabilities. The topic was referred to the BRS work plan.

METRO'S CUSTOMER CARE INITIATIVE

Barbara Moulton, Director, Office of Customer Care, Department of Customer Service, Communication and Marketing, discussed Metro's new Customer Care Initiative (CCI). She stated that CCI's initial focus will be on improving the internal cultural of the organization, and added that when employees feel valued by an organization they will provide external customers with better service likely resulting in better travel experiences by customers.

With CCI Metro is taking a holistic approach to addressing the needs of its internal customers, Metro employees. Ms. Moulton stated that the following CCI committees were developed to address various areas of focus: 1) Training and Development; 2) Business Intelligence Tools (Technology); 3) Performance Metrics; 4) Internal Improvement (reviews policy); and 5) Employee Engagement (internal communication). Each committee consists of about 15 employees from across all job groups and levels including station managers, bus operators, and mechanics. In the end, Metro will have one integrated training program, procedure, and evaluation tool for employees to assist customers.

Metro is also benchmarking other organizations to identify additional best practices. Metro will adopt and implement those practices where appropriate. Ms. Moulton stated that the combination of information from various sources provides CCI with greater awareness. In response to a question about Metro staffing levels, Ms. Moulton stated that the vision is to grow the staff over time, but it is important for Metro to first understand the needs of its current employees.

CCI is working with each department to address the issues that are identified. Ms. Moulton stated that the process to improve the culture includes a job description review and organizational-wide survey. The positions that directly interface with customers will have job descriptions updated to include a mandatory customer care component. In addition, customer care will be added to Metro's New Employee Orientation, which is a requirement for every new and promoted employee at Metro. Ms. Moulton stated that the results of the survey will be available in late Spring 2015.

Ms. Moulton stated that Metro also conducted employee focus groups to understand the barriers to providing superior customer service throughout the Metro system. A recurring theme of employees in the rail system was the inability of employees to have adequate responses for customers when there is equipment failure. To address this issue the Business Intelligence Tool committee is developing a mechanism to provide Station Managers and others workers in the rail system updated status when equipment is inoperable.

This feature will reduce employee frustration while providing them with a resource to inform customers of the status of equipment and possibly direct them to other services. Another issue for employees in the rail system is the inability to refund fares when the vending machines are inoperable. Ms. Moulton stated that when the fare vending machines are not working properly customers lose their money and look to Station Managers for a refund. The Business Intelligence Tool Committee is also working to correct this issue.

Mr. Ariza-Silva expressed an interest in whether the customer care training would include Metro Transit Police. He stated that many of the Transit Officers in the rail system appear unapproachable, and when a Station Manager is unavailable, customers look to Transit Officers for assistance. Ms. Moulton stated that CCI is working with all Metro departments.

In the discussion with a focus group of Metrobus employees, Ms. Moulton stated that the issue of discipline was raised. Currently Bus Operators are given discipline at the beginning of their shift. The procedure can cause some Bus Operators not to perform their best when dealing with the public. Ms. Moulton stated that to correct this issue Bus Operators will be provided commendations at the beginning of their shifts and discipline at the end of their shifts. This is a more positive way for employees to begin a shift or day.

The issue of engagement will address Metro's internal communication. Ms. Mouton stated that through the research, we have learned that many Metro employees do not have access to emails. The idea is to improve internal communication so that all employees are receiving the same messages in the same manner.

The AAC expressed an interest in whether MetroAccess employees were included in this initiative. MetroAccess drivers, dispatchers, and monitors interface with customers and should be included in the initiative. Ms. Moulton reiterated that she is working with all departments.

Ms. Case stated that as Metro markets its fixed route services, Metro should keep in mind that personnel will be the key to making the difference in whether MetroAccess customers feel comfortable using the fixed route system. All customers, including those with disabilities, want to know that help is available when a problem arises. Ms. Case stated that, currently, her confidence level in receiving assistance when a problem arises in the system is low. It is key that personnel understand their role in providing superior customer service. Ms. Case recommended that Metro develop a mystery rider program that focuses on the disability community.

Ms. Laios suggested that Metro review her research on communicating with people with disabilities. She stated that the information offers several different methods of communicating with various types of disabilities. Ms. Laios stated that the information

has been tested and may be a useful tool in addressing some of the issues in working with the disability community.

The AAC thanked Ms. Moulton for her informative presentation to improve the customer experience by valuing its employees. The AAC commends Metro for recognizing this area of inefficiency and being committed to address it. Ms. Moulton stated that she took extensive notes, and that she will discuss the AAC's recommendations with each of the Customer Care Committees.

AAC LEADERSHIP QUARTERLY MEETING WITH METRO'S EXECUTIVE BOARD

The AAC discussed the upcoming quarterly meeting with the Board. Dr. Posner stated that due to the hectic Board schedule, the January Quarterly meeting with the Board Executive Leadership was rescheduled. The new date for the meeting is February 26, 2015 immediately following Metro's Board meeting.

The AAC recommended the following topics for discussion with the Board: 1) Budget (impact of bus and rail fares on MetroAccess); 2) the impact of Bus stop elimination on MetroAccess service; 3) safety (communication during emergencies); 4) priority seating (wheelchair seating location as they impact manual door opening and evacuation); 5) extended hours and track work; and 6) rail headways.

Ms. Rush stressed the importance of the disability community's presence at all public hearings and meetings related to Metro's budget. She stated that the disability community must make its presence known so that the Board will take the issue that impact the disability community seriously. Fares are a topic that can affect all customers, not just those in the disability community.

BUS/RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The BRS received progress reports on the installation of detectable warning signals (bumpy domes), station lighting, and shuttle bus service. Metro has installed detectable warning signals at 84 stations, and is expected to complete installations in the remaining seven stations by June 30, 2015. Metro has also made significant progress with lighting in the Metrorail system. To date, improvements have been made in mezzanine lighting at 35 stations, with 13 more stations slated for improvements in 2015. Additionally, Metro has plans to enhance the lighting on the track beds, passageways, and near elevators and escalators throughout the system. Finally, the BRS was updated on the performance of Metro's shuttle bus service that is provided during elevator outages in the Metrorail system. Many members agreed that the service has been greatly improved over the past year and that the option to call ahead for a shuttle is a great benefit to the customer.

METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) received an update on DC Taxi Project for Dialysis Customers. The project allows customers to take a taxi round trip to dialysis center. MetroAccess customers residing in the District of Columbia who are traveling

to/from a dialysis facility or another medical facility that provides dialysis services are eligible to use in the DC Taxi services as an alternative to MetroAccess.

One challenge the service is facing is the perception of the cost. The service has a flat \$5 fare for customers. The MAS recommended the following ways to market and expand the DC Taxi Project: 1) offering dialysis trips as subscription trips since they are regularly scheduled trips; 2) advertising at dialysis centers; and 3) leaflet drops and IVR messages.

The MAS also discussed its work plan and added the following items: 1) interfacing with hospitals and other medical facility administrators about their practices for MetroAccess vehicles parking or drop-off and pick-up locations for customers; and 2) evacuation training during emergencies in the rail system.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.



Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
 Washington, DC 20001
 202-962-6060

STATUS OF FY 2015 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info – 25	Emergency Evacuation Plan	3/2/15	AAC	Presenter: Ron Bodmer	
Info – 26	Fare Policy	3/2/15	MAS	Strategy Meeting	
*Info – 17	MetroAccess Long-term Sustainability Study	3/2/15	AAC	Presenter: Christian T. Kent	
Info – 18	Age-Friendly DC Task Force (Update)	4/6/15	AAC	Update (Follow-up discussion after event - November 2013).	
Info - 19	Momentum and Long Range Plan (update)	5/4/15	AAC		

Note: Quarterly Meeting Recommendations are marked with an asterisk symbol.

COMPLETED - FY 2015 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info - 1	Silver Line Tour	7/7/14	AAC	Reflections	7/7/14
Info - 2	Silver Line Emergency Exercise	7/7/14	AAC	Reflections (request from EOM during the Metrorail evacuation procedures review)	7/7/14
Info - 3	Bus Stop Working Group (Update)	7/7/14	AAC	Presenter: Chris Blake	7/7/14
Info - 4	Quarterly Meeting with Board Executive Leadership	7/7/14	AAC		7/7/14
Info - 5	Metro's Signage Program	8/4/14	AAC	Update - from June 9 th BRS meeting	

COMPLETED - FY 2015 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info – 6	Quarterly Meeting with Board Executive Leadership	8/4/14	AAC	Feedback from July 2014 meeting	
Info – 7	AAC By-Law Work Group	8/4/14	AAC		8/4/14
Info - 8	Metrobus Voice Annunciator System	9/2/14	AAC	Phil Wallace, Bus Maintenance	9/2/14
Info – 9	AAC By-Law Work Group	9/2/14	AAC	Governance Questionnaire	9/2/14
Info – 10	AAC Administrative Items	9/2/14	AAC	AAC Subcommittee Work Plan (approvals) TASH Proposal	9/2/14
Info – 11	AAC By-Law Work Group	9/2/14	AAC		9/2/14
*Info – 12	Accessible Meeting Locations	9/2/14	AAC	Public Hearings (Bus Service)	9/2/14

COMPLETED - FY 2015 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

*Info – 13	Annual Report: Bus Stop Accessibility	10/6/14	AAC	Moved to BRS – Discussion at October 2014 meeting	9/2/14
Info – 14	AAC By-Law Work Group	10/6/14	AAC		10/6/14
Info – 15	Quarterly Meeting with Board Executive Leadership	10/6/14	AAC		10/6/14
Info – 16	Accessibility Excellence Awards	10/6/14	AAC	Vote – Richard W. Hedding Accessible Transportation Awards	10/6/14
Info - 20	AAC By-Laws Work Group	11/3/14	AAC	Full Report and vote on governance questions.	11/3/14
Info - 21	AAC By-Laws Work Group	12/1/14	AAC	AAC Final Vote - Tabled until the Jan 2015	12/1/14
Info - 22	Metro’s Diversity and Recruitment Initiatives	12/1/14	AAC	Steven Boney, Manager, Recruitment Operations & Diversity Recruitment, HR David Shaffer, Accessibility Policy Officer, ADAP	12/1/14

COMPLETED - FY 2015 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info - 21	AAC By-Laws Work Group	1/5/15	AAC	AAC Final Vote	1/5/15
Info - 23	Open Discussion with CFO	1/5/15		Dennis Anosike, Chief Financial Officer	1/5/15
Info – 24	Customer Care Initiative	2/2/15	AAC	Barbara Moulton, Office of Customer Care	2/2/15

Note: Quarterly Meeting Recommendations are marked with an asterisk symbol.