

**AAC**

Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

Meeting Minutes: August 1, 2011

Attendees, Review of Agenda and Approval of Minutes

Chairman Sheehan called the August 1, 2011 Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Present: Patrick Sheehan (Chairman), Phil Posner (Vice-Chair), Darrell Drake, Carolyn Bellamy, Susan Holland, Tapan Banerjee, Paul Semelfort, Marilyn Lutter, Emily Lucio, Debbie Brown, Michelle Clark, David Winsler, Regina Lee, Brian Hurley, Doris Ray and Elver Ariza-Silva. The July 11, 2011 minutes and the Chairman's report to the Metro Board dated August 1, 2011 were approved with corrections.

Public Comments

Several comments were offered about MetroAccess including air conditioning, wheelchair securement, and better assistance provided by drivers for customers using mobility devices. Mr. Kent stated that all MetroAccess vehicles are required to have operable air conditioning systems and that Metro's securement policy is to secure mobility devices by the frame of the chair. Staff responded that MetroAccess operators are to assist customers to and from the exterior doors of the location where there are accessible pathways. The Committee recommended that a wheelchair securement reminder be sent to all MetroAccess drivers. A comment was made in regards to the National Capital Region Transportation Board letter date April 7, 2010 concerning the MetroAccess Fare Policy. The Committee requested that the document be attached to the minutes of the meeting. Other comments were made about the need for train announcements, adding truncated domes to all stations in the Metrorail system. Mr. Millis reported that truncated domes are being added during station rehabilitation. Debbie Brown reported a malfunctioning escalator at the Georgia Avenue Petworth Metrorail station. Mr. Kent advised that the escalator malfunction will be investigated.

Status of Action Items from Previous Meetings

For the benefit of new members, Mr. Sheehan provided a discussion on how the Committee operates. The discussion and research on issues are performed at the Subcommittee level and recommendations are then brought to the AAC for a vote. Mr. Sheehan reported that on July 21, 2011, when Metro's Board was having a discussion on a matter of interest to the AAC, the AAC Chairman gave a report to the Board. The July 21, 2011 report to Metro's Board addressed the MetroAccess fare policy, a pending town hall meeting on the new MetroAccess contract, the 7000 Series rail car design and appreciation for the appointment of new members. Kathryn Porter, Metro's Board member from Maryland, requested that the Board be notified of the town hall meetings concerning the new MetroAccess contract.

The AAC agreed to form a Fare Policy Working Group to discuss the impact of the current fare policy on MetroAccess riders and provide recommendations. Mr. Kent stated that through the Fare Policy Working Group, the AAC will be able to provide Metro's Board with alternatives and recommendations on fare policy prior to the establishment of the FY13 budget.

Mr. Kent reported that August marks the first month of the new meeting schedule for both the Committee and Subcommittee. Mr. Kent stated that as requested at a previous meeting, comment cards are available to persons attending AAC meetings to submit questions to the Chair during proceedings outside the public comment period. Mr. Kent stated that this method of engaging the public was successfully used at the MetroAccess Subcommittee meeting and assistance will be provided to the public in completing the comment cards.

Bus Rail Subcommittee Report

Ms. Holland provided a short summary of the Subcommittee's history, an overview of the FY2012 work plan and an outline of the agenda for the next meeting. Ms. Holland reported presentations on the 7000 series railcar and Union Station Rehabilitation Project are scheduled for the August 8, 2011 meeting. Ms. Holland explained that Subcommittee recommendations have enhanced the accessibility of the 7000 rail car enabling greater use by people with disabilities. Other items on the Subcommittee's agenda include: a review of the Metro customer complaint process, lighting and signage in the rail system, priority seating campaign, platform information display system and the Accessible Bus Stop Project (ABSP). Ms. Holland announced that the BRS will participate in the half-day Regional Travel Training Forum in October, hosted by Metro in collaboration with Easter Seals Project Action. Ms. Holland explained that the forum is designed to develop strategies to promote and coordinate travel training in the region and to develop a database of travel training providers.

Metro Access Subcommittee Report

Mr. Semelfort stated the Subcommittee has voted to have a December meeting to complete its discussion on the new MetroAccess contract. Mr. Semelfort provided a brief overview of the Subcommittee's FY12 work plan, MetroAccess performance reports and outreach initiatives, noting that the MetroAccess performance report statistics can also be found on Metro's website. Other items on the Subcommittee's upcoming agenda include an evaluation of the Fixed Route Trip Length Comparability study and the Taxi Use Comparison study. Mr. Semelfort reported that the newly established Fare Policy Work group will address the ability of customers to search different departure times on the Ride Guide to find the lowest MetroAccess fare.

Mr. Kent reported that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Office of Civil Rights has closed the most recent audit of MetroAccess. The FTA agreed that MetroAccess

has fully responded to all of the concerns raised by the ADA compliance review. The full report will be made public upon its completion.

New Business

Ms. Alison Simon, Office of Research presented on how Metro conducts customer satisfaction surveys. Ms. Simon shared that Metrobus surveys will be conducted twice a year focusing on key areas: knowledge of MetroAccess service and characteristics, the customer's knowledge of alternative transportation modes and communication preferences. The usage survey will also determine what customers believe is most important to them while using MetroAccess service. Mr. Kent stated that the surveys will also allow the riding public to have input on the new MetroAccess contracts. Ms. Simon reported that a consultant will be developing the survey questions and conducting the survey. The Committee requested that the Committee be able to review questions prior to the consultant conducting the survey and Ms. Simon agreed.

Mr. Nat Bottigheimer, AGM, Planning and Joint Development discussed the scope and progress of a project to fully review Metro's fixed-route policy. This is in preparation for the Metro's Board discussion on the FY2013 budget in September 2011. Mr. Bottigheimer reported that the focus of the consultant's work is to evaluate the existing fare structure implications on revenue, ridership, and ease of use for customer and operational simplicity. The evaluation will also take into account the equity for the difference in ridership throughout the region. Mr. Bottigheimer reported that the surveys will be used as a tool to garner information to determine the model for the pricing structure for fixed-route fares. The AAC requested that results of the survey upon completion.

Mr. Kent provided an update on the new MetroAccess contract. Mr. Kent reported input from stakeholders is the next step in the process for the new MetroAccess contract. Surveys in multiple formats and focus groups along with a town hall meeting will be used to gain input from stakeholders on issues such as safety and customer service. The AAC recommended that the Centers for Independent Living Centers (CILs) in each jurisdiction be used to distribute surveys to the disability community. Mr. Kent stated that a presentation will be made to the Metro Board Finance and Administration Committee in December 2011. Upon approval of the Board, the next step would be to develop a Request for Proposal for Metro Board review, approval and contract award(s) by the end of CY2012. This will allow ample time for paratransit service contractor(s) to prepare to provide new service beginning on or before July 1, 2012.

Meeting adjourned: Meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Attachment: Status of Recommendations and Actions (completed items are reported once in minutes and then tracked along with all pending recommendations and actions in the AAC Compiled Work Plan.)



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STATUS OF FY 2012 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Info/Action Item Number	Description	Date Initiated	Originating Group	Status	Completion Date
Info -07	Review MetroAccess Fare Policy	5/2/2011	MACS	Fare Policy Work Group will discuss the impact of the current fare policy on MetroAccess riders; gather additional customer testimony. Final recommendations to the AAC are expected by 10/17/2011.	
Action – 3	7000 Series	7/11/11	BRS	BRS recommendations for the 7000 Series Railcar Design	
Action – 4	Town Hall Meetings	8/1/11	AAC	AAC will discuss and approve Town Hall Meetings for the new MetroAccess Contract	
Action – 5	Focus Groups	8/1/11	AAC	AAC will discuss and approve Focus Groups for the new MetroAccess Contract	