



MEMORANDUM

TO: TPB Technical Committee
FROM: Wendy Klancher, TPB Principal Transportation Planner
Bryan Hayes, TPB Transportation Planner
SUBJECT: Proposal for an enhanced Access for All Advisory Committee
DATE: February 26, 2015

In support of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board's (TPB's) long-standing commitment to involve traditionally underserved population groups in the transportation planning process, TPB staff proposes to combine the Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force (Task Force) and the Access for All Advisory Committee (AFA) into a single committee under the Access for All committee name. The proposal to combine the Task Force and AFA originally came from members of these committees.

TPB staff anticipates that the board will be asked to approve this proposal in April. TPB members would also be asked to suggest additional community leaders for the AFA Committee to refresh the membership of the committee and enhance the feedback the TPB receives from traditionally underserved communities.

BACKGROUND

The AFA was established in 2001 with a focus on bringing transportation concerns from low-income populations, minority populations, and persons with disabilities into the regional transportation planning process.

The AFA is a critical component of the TPB's approach to equity and environmental justice. While the TPB has been analyzing its Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) for disproportionate and adverse impacts on traditionally-underserved populations since 2001, the AFA committee has brought short-term critical concerns about transportation issues to the attention of the TPB, and very often that feedback has led to real change that has improved services, including MetroAccess, more information in different languages, bus stop improvements, and more attention to the needs of people with disabilities when planning new transportation projects.

In 2006, the TPB created the Task Force to oversee the development of the Federally-required Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan after COG/TPB became the designated recipient for the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom programs. This group included many of the same members as the AFA committee. As the Task Force became engaged in developing the Coordinated Plan and priority projects for JARC and New Freedom, staff noticed a decline in attendance at AFA meetings.

WHY COMBINE THE AFA AND HSTC TASK FORCE

The work of the Task Force is largely done after the development of the Update to the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan in 2014 for implementation of the Enhanced Mobility Program. In addition, the membership of the AFA and the HSTC Task Force is largely overlapping. For these reasons, staff recommends that the two committees be combined under the name the Access for All Advisory Committee.

A joint conference call between the AFA and HSTC Task Force was held in October 2015 and there was wide support for the proposal to combine the two committees. The suggestion to some members of the existing groups have already expressed support for this change.

WHAT WOULD BE THE NEW AFA MISSION?

The AFA mission, articulated below, will remain essentially the same:

The Access for All Advisory Committee (AFA) advises the TPB on transportation issues, programs, policies, and services important to traditionally underserved communities, including low-income communities, minority communities, people with limited English proficiency, people with disabilities, and older adults. The committee identifies issues of concern to traditionally underserved populations in order to determine whether and how these issues might be addressed within the TPB process.

This mission is consistent with the mission statement included in the 2014 Update to the TPB's Participation Plan, although the definition of "traditionally underserved communities" has been expanded to more explicitly include people with limited English proficiency and older adults.

WHAT WOULD BE THE COMMITTEE'S OBJECTIVES?

The objectives and activities of committee will include the following:

- Facilitate regional discussion about issues important to traditionally underserved communities, such as public transit, affordability, connecting people to jobs, and improving service delivery
- Provide feedback to the TPB on the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP), other long-range planning efforts, studies, and transportation issues in general
- Provide guidance on updates to the Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan which must be revised every 4 years
- Provide input on the priorities for the TPB's solicitation for Enhanced Mobility grant applications
- Serve as a forum for coordination among community groups and/or human service agencies at the regional level

HOW WOULD THE COMMITTEE'S CHAIR BE SELECTED?

For the proposed new AFA, the committee would continue to be chaired by a TPB member. The AFA chair would be selected by the TPB chair in consultation with the TPB officers. The chair will be asked

to serve a two-year term. The chair will have the option to name a vice-chair, who may or may not be a TPB member, to assist with the committee.

HOW WOULD THE MEMBERSHIP BE STRUCTURED?

As in the past, the AFA membership will be comprised of leaders representing traditionally underserved communities, including non-profits organizations, social services agencies, members of relevant advisory bodies in the region, as well as individuals who are otherwise recognized as “community leaders.” As in the past, the AFA members should serve as “community connectors”; members not only provide essential input on transportation concerns to the TPB planning process, but also bring back information about transportation issues to the communities that they represent or work with. On an ex-officio basis, the committee will continue to include representatives of public and private transportation providers, as well as representatives from social service agencies within TPB member jurisdictions.

AFA membership is currently planned to include a maximum of 50 individuals representing community organizations or non-profits, not including ex-officio members. The focus of the membership is on the organizations, rather than solely on the individual. Every two years, at the same time that a new AFA chair is selected, staff will undertake a comprehensive effort to refresh the committee membership.

The committee will continue to include ex-officio representation transportation agencies active in the TPB process: the District Department of Transportation, the Maryland Department of Transportation, the Virginia Department of Transportation, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration.

HOW WILL MEMBERS BE SOLICITED?

This spring, TPB staff will issue a call for applications for AFA membership. All current AFA and Task Force members will be invited to apply. In addition, TPB members will have an opportunity to suggest members who represent the communities or interests listed below. All members will be required to submit a brief application in which they will explain their interest in serving on the committee.

TPB staff will work to ensure the committee includes a broad mix of representation from around the region and from each of the groups listed below. Staff will conduct research on potential organizations to be invited to apply and will reach out to past members for suggestions and reach out to potential new members. The AFA members will represent organizations working with one or more of the following communities:

- Low-income communities
- Minority communities
- People with Limited English Proficiency
- Persons with Disabilities
- Older Adults

WHAT IS THE MEETING SCHEDULE?

The committee will generally meet on a bi-monthly basis, with five regular meetings per year in February, April, June, September and November. Special meetings or subcommittee meetings may be scheduled as needed.

The first meeting of the enhanced committee is tentatively scheduled for June 23, 2016 at 12 noon, dependent upon the availability of the Chair.

WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC ACTIONS AND TIMELINE TO ENHANCE THE AFA COMMITTEE?

After the Technical committee is briefed on the proposal to combine the AFA and the Task Force, the Steering Committee will be briefed and asked to concur at its March 4 meeting. In March, TPB staff will begin the research and recruitment for AFA members and issue a call for applications with a deadline in late April. TPB staff will work with the TPB Officers to identify a Chair. In April, the TPB would be briefed on the enhanced AFA committee and nominate the Chair. TPB staff would finalize the membership in May and hold the first meeting in June.

TIMELINE AND STEPS TO CREATE THE ENHANCED AFA COMMITTEE

March 4: Brief the Technical and Steering Committee

March to April: TPB staff will identify and reach out to possible applicants and ask TPB members for suggestions

March 18 to April 29 : Call for applications

April 20: Brief the TPB on the Enhanced AFA Committee and TPB nominates a Chair

May: Membership finalized and members notified of first meeting

June 23: First meeting of the Enhanced AFA Committee