



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Charles Allen, Chair, Access for All Advisory Committee
TPB Second Vice Chair

SUBJECT: AFA Comments on the Draft 2016 Financially Constrained Long-Range
Transportation Plan (CLRP) Amendment

DATE: November 16, 2016

At the October 27, 2016 Access for All Advisory (AFA) Committee meeting, the committee discussed the proposed changes for the 2016 Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) amendment and provided general feedback on transportation-related concerns. These discussions resulted in comments in two categories: comments specific to the draft 2016 CLRP amendment and other general transportation concerns.

Overall, the AFA stressed the importance of affordable, reliable and accessible rail, bus and paratransit for people with disabilities, those with limited incomes, minority communities, people with limited English skills, and older adults. The AFA had eight summary comments, listed below, with additional detail under each comment provided in the following pages.

- The AFA expressed concern about the additional burdens that high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes may place on low-income populations.
- The AFA recommends that the CLRP include full funding for Metro's core capacity needs including 8-car trains and supports a sustainable funding source for Metro.
- The AFA expressed concern that the "Access to Jobs" measure shows an East-West divide, and that the region is not only divided by race and income, but also by access to jobs.
- The AFA recommends prioritizing transportation funding for pedestrian infrastructure in the CLRP which is critical for people with disabilities' and older adults' safety, access and mobility. The AFA also noted that people with disabilities have safety concerns when using crosswalks near the DC Dedicated Bicycle Lane Network.
- The AFA emphasized that accessibility for people with disabilities should be considered throughout the planning, design, construction and implementation stages of transportation projects or services.

- The AFA would like to see additional and more affordable public transportation options throughout all parts of the region
- The AFA stresses the importance of diversity and sensitivity training for front-line transit employees and transportation network company drivers, such as Uber and Lyft drivers.
- The region should support increasing resources for MetroAccess to serve additional demand and maintain service quality, and facilitate the provision of alternative options.

COMMENTS SPECIFIC TO THE DRAFT 2016 CLRP AMENDMENT

The AFA expressed concern about the additional burdens that high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes may place on low-income populations.

- The draft 2016 CLRP amendment includes high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes on I-395 and I-66 in Virginia which would require users to pay fees for use of the facilities when driving alone. The AFA commented that tolled facilities tend to place additional burdens on low income workers, people with disabilities and those with limited English skills, and asked if the project would have affordability and accessibility provisions.
- The AFA committee questioned if low-income populations can fully participate in the benefits of these new facilities and from the benefits of purchasing a transponder as well as pre-paying tolls with a credit card.
- The AFA applauds the plans to include significant additional bus service in these corridors, but recommends that the transit service be fully implemented and improved as necessary.

The AFA recommends that the CLRP include full funding for Metro's core capacity needs including 8-car trains and supports a sustainable funding source for Metro.

- The committee noted that full funding for Metro 2025 projects, capital initiatives to expand the core and system capacity, is not included in the draft 2016 CLRP, especially 8-car trains during rush hour.
- The AFA is concerned about Metrorail remaining both affordable and available to residents and low-income workers, and specifically expressed concerns about

proposals for reducing late-night Metrorail service hours, station closures and eliminating bus service and the impact on those who are transit-dependent.

- The AFA also recognizes Metro’s current maintenance and revenue challenges and expressed strong support for Metro’s efforts to improve safety, maintenance and service quality, and expressed support for the development of a multi-state agreement for a stable source of funding for Metrorail, Metrobus and MetroAccess.

The AFA expressed concern that the “Access to Jobs” measure shows an East-West divide, and that the region is not only divided by race and income, but also by access to jobs.

- The AFA received a presentation on the performance analysis of the draft 2016 CLRP amendment, including Figure 1 showing changes in access to jobs by auto with the greatest losses on the eastern side of the region and that the greatest gains are on the western side of the region.
- The AFA supports actions to address the East-West divide, such as an increase in all modes of transportation to connect the Eastern part of the region to the job-rich Western portion.

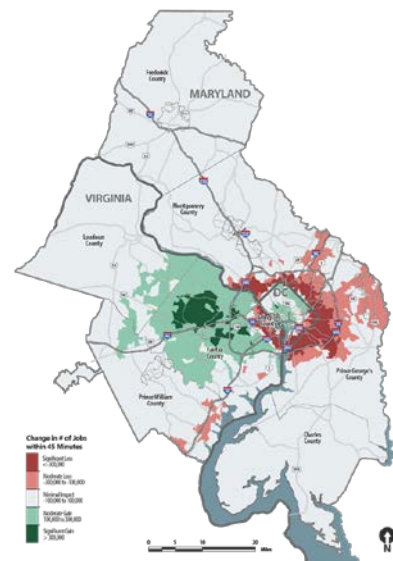


Figure 1: Changes to Access to Jobs by Auto in 45 Minutes, 2016 to 2040

The AFA recommends prioritizing transportation funding for pedestrian infrastructure in the CLRP which is critical for people with disabilities’ and older adults’ safety, access and mobility. The AFA also noted that people with disabilities have safety concerns when using crosswalks near bike lanes.

- The AFA commented on the Crystal City Transitway project and was concerned that funding for BRT is being prioritized over pedestrian infrastructure investments in an area already well-served by transit.
- All pedestrians must be cognizant of bicycles in the bike lanes that are part of the DC Dedicated Bicycle Lane Network, but people who have hearing, visual and mobility limitations are especially concerned about their safety. People with sensory

or physical impairments may not be able to see or hear the bikes, or move quickly enough to get out of the way of a bicyclist when crossing a street with a bike lane, or when exiting a vehicle that is parked near a bike lane.

- The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and other implementation agencies should consider the safety concerns of people with disabilities and the need for education and awareness of pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers as these agencies maintain, build and propose bike lanes.

COMMENTS ON OTHER TRANSPORTATION CONCERNS

The AFA emphasized that accessibility should be considered throughout the planning, design, construction and implementation stages of all transportation projects or services.

- When implementing agencies consider the needs of people with disabilities early on, as well as throughout the planning stages of a project, the accessibility and usability of the transportation improvement can be greatly improved for everyone.
- The AFA noted that people using mobility devices have difficulty in finding accessible parking options in D.C. as well as the need for more accessible transportation options in general.
- The AFA recommended that WMATA expedite efforts to close the gap between the new rail cars and the station platforms on Metrorail because of the number of people using mobility devices being caught in the gap, either causing injuries to the riders or damages to the mobility devices.
- With regards to language access, the AFA recommends that WMATA as well as the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) provide greater language access to limited English speakers to ensure that they can comment on proposed service changes and/or transportation projects. WMATA's efforts to build partnerships with language access advocacy organizations should continue; there was a concern that this effort has not been sustained.

The AFA would like to see additional and more affordable public transportation options throughout all parts of the region.

- The AFA commented that there is a need for more public transit in the region, and while the CLRP includes \$145 billion for transit and \$99 billion for highways, the committee is concerned that this funding level is not adequate to support increased service connecting jurisdictions in MD, VA and DC and the outer suburban areas.
- The AFA supports making all public transportation options affordable to population groups with limited incomes who rely on them. In the face of rising transit fares, the committee supports incentives for people with limited incomes; incentives could include user-side subsidies or reduced fare programs.
- While the committee commended the region's commitment to investing in transit in the CLRP, the AFA is concerned about transit-dependent populations being priced out of high-density areas, such as activity centers and near Metrorail stations. Some people are unable to live in these areas well served by transit and other public services because the housing costs are out of reach, so they are forced to find housing that is farther away from these critical services.

The AFA stresses the importance of diversity and sensitivity training for front-line transit employees and ride-sharing company drivers.

- The committee recommends that transportation providers augment sensitivity training of front-line employees and transportation network company drivers so that they know how to appropriately communicate and assist all customers; such training should include awareness of and sensitivity to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) community, different types of disabilities, and different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

The region should support increasing resources for MetroAccess to serve additional demand and maintain service quality, and facilitate the provision of alternative options.

- Demand for ADA paratransit will increase due to requirements to transition people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to community-based independent living and the aging population. AFA members expressed concerns that MetroAccess may not have the resources to serve this additional demand and maintain service quality at the same time; not all human service agencies can afford to provide the transportation themselves, as they have done in the past.

- The AFA noted that some people with severe disabilities need a greater level of service than what ADA paratransit can provide; but pilot programs that directly fund human service agencies to provide transportation to their clients rather than using MetroAccess have shown good results and resulted in savings for jurisdictions. The region must look at a variety of options, including Medicaid transportation and enhanced mobility grant funding, to ensure the ongoing availability of specialized transportation services needed by customers with intellectual disabilities.
- The AFA recommends that the region continue to support alternatives to MetroAccess, such as taxi pilots, and the use of transportation network companies or other providers in the Abilities-Ride proposal, to the extent that these options can provide fully accessible service for people with a wide range of disabilities and are less expensive to the jurisdictions than MetroAccess.