

ACCESS FOR ALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

June 26, 2023

Christina Henderson, Chair

The Access for All Advisory Committee (AFA) met in a hybrid format on Monday, June 26. The committee discussed the District of Columbia's funding and project prioritization process, OmniRide's microtransit program (OmniRide Connect), the 2023 Enhanced Mobility solicitation, and the implementation of recommendations from the 2022 Participation Plan Evaluation. The AFA advises the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) on transportation issues and services important to low-income communities, underrepresented communities, people with limited English proficiency, people with disabilities, and older adults.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FUNDING AND PROJECT PRIORITIZATION PROCESS

Samuel Brooks of the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) presented on the District of Columbia's funding and project prioritization process. He provided an overview of the federal requirements of regional and statewide planning, DDOT's project selection process, and DDOT's approach for Visualize 2050. Comments and questions from the committee included:

- **Discussion about DDOT's Equity Assessment Tool (EAT)'s methodology to incorporate the needs of people with disabilities and coordination with the Office of Racial Equity.** Several members of the committee asked about DDOT's Equity Assessment Tool (EAT) and how it is used in project selection. One member asked if the Mayor's Office of Racial Equity is involved in this process. Another member asked how the needs of people with disabilities are accounted for in the EAT. Several members asked about how data and project prioritization process is used to assess gaps in accessible right-of-way (ROW) and funding needs. A committee member referred DDOT staff to the AFA's scooter concern list as a resource. DDOT staff noted that their Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Division coordinates with the Mayor's Office of Racial Equity and could provide detailed information about the EAT.
- **Questions about the role of public input in project selection and opportunities to engage.** Committee members asked about how public input shapes project development and selection. Another member asked where public input could shape wayfinding and signage for bicycle projects. DDOT staff said that projects include a community input process and community feedback (ex. 311 submissions, ANC meetings and reports, requests and resolutions, other DDOT studies) is used to shape project scopes.

OMNIRIDE CONNECT OVERVIEW

Perrin Palistrant of OmniRide provided an update of OmniRide's microtransit operations. He covered the background of the program, recent service expansion in Prince William County, and future plans. Comments and questions from the committee included:

- **Microtransit services should consult with organizations representing people with disabilities.** A member asked if OmniRide Connect had wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV) and connected with groups representing people with disabilities. OmniRide staff stated that the OmniRide fleet consisted of WAV and were working with the Center for the Blind and Prince William County social services for travel training. The committee member suggested the Center for Independent Living considering their work with people with different disabilities.
- **Clarification about OmniRide's paratransit v. microtransit services.** One member asked about the differences between microtransit and paratransit. OmniRide staff responded that paratransit has a larger service area. He added that the microtransit service was open to all,

including registered paratransit users. He stated that microtransit does not replace paratransit but is another option for riders.

- **Questions and concerns about taxi reliability.** OmniRide staff noted that Yellow Cab was a partner in providing their microtransit service. A committee member asked if OmniRide faced issues with taxi reliability and wait times like issues experienced in Fairfax County. OmniRide staff said that their operations have not been impacted, but they continue to monitor wait time data. The member asked if the fleet included wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV). OmniRide staff stated that their fleet includes all WAV, and the Yellow Cab taxi fleet includes about 5 WAV.
- **Question about fare structure.** One member asked about the fare structure and payment system. OmniRide staff stated that their system is currently zero-fare, but should they charge a fare in the future, riders could pay via the app. If fares are reinstated, they would also include an option for riders who do not have a smartphone to purchase rides.

2023 ENHANCED MOBILITY SOLICITATION

Mohammad Khan, TPB Enhanced Mobility Program Manager, presented an overview of the upcoming Enhanced Mobility grant solicitation to prepare interested applicants in applying. Comments and questions from the committee included:

- **Questions about the pre-application conference requirement and schedule.** The AFA chair sought to clarify whether the pre-application conferences were mandatory for potential applicants. TPB staff confirmed that agencies must attend the pre-application conference to be eligible to apply. She also asked about TPB's motivation to move from seven online events to three events (one hybrid, two in-person). TPB staff stated that they are providing in-person options to foster better relationship building.
- **Seeking insight on best practices from successful applications.** One member asked TPB staff about best practices from past applicants for a successful application. TPB staff said that the past Enhanced Mobility Program Manager noted that applicants have capacity to handle the financial obligations of the grant and meet insurance requirements.

2022 PARTICIPATION PLAN EVALUATION IMPLEMENTATION

Marcela Moreno, TPB Transportation Planner, presented an overview of the upcoming Enhanced Mobility grant solicitation to prepare potential applicants. Comments and questions from the committee included:

- **Feedback on assessing internal language capacity and ensuring accurate translation.** A committee member noted the importance of proof reading translated materials to ensure the website and other translated materials are conveying the right message whether they are professional translated or using an online tool like Google Translate. They added that it is important to understand the organization's internal language capacity for proofreading.
- **Recommended resources for staff to consider while implementing recommendations.** Several members suggested staff review several examples from across the region to support implementation of evaluation recommendations. These resources included the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's Regional Fair Housing plan outreach, the DC Department of Aging's Future of Aging survey incentives, and federal plain language guidelines. Another committee member suggested that Gallaudet University could be a resource to ensure that written and oral communication is accessible to native American Sign Language users.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Chair Christina Henderson announced that the next AFA meeting would be held on Monday, September 18th in a hybrid format with an in-person option at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and virtual option on WebEx.

District of Columbia

Rosa Carrillo
Heather Edelman
Heather Foote
Nechama Masliansky
Bill Orleans
Brenda Richardson

Maryland

Doreen Brown
William Clements
Deborah Fisher
Peter Flandrau
Sara Fought
Robert Malone
Sherri Mohebbi

Virginia

Cynthia Alarico
Clemon Hammie
Roger Hoskin
Valesca Maldonado

Regional

Janine Ashe
Glenn Millis

TPB Staff

Rachel Beyerle
Cristina Finch
Pierre Gaunard
Mohammad Khan
Marcela Moreno
Sergio Ritacco
Kanti Srikanth
Justine Velez

Guests

Samuel Brooks, DDOT
Perrin Palistrant, OmniRide

Chair

Christina Henderson, Council of the District of
Columbia