



# NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

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## TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

### **Memorandum**

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Tim Lovain  
Chair, TPB Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee  
TPB 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair  
Alexandria City Council Member

SUBJECT: AFA Comments on the Draft 2014 Financially-Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan

DATE: September 17, 2014

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At the July 24 Access for All Advisory (AFA) Committee meeting, the committee discussed significant changes to the Draft 2014 Financially Constrained Long Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) and also provided feedback on how they think region is progressing toward implementation of the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan during a structured listening session facilitated by TPB staff. These discussions resulted in the following comments on the Draft 2014 CLRP, and general transportation concerns for people with disabilities, those with limited incomes and minority communities.

### **Comments on New Projects and Significant Changes in the CLRP**

**The AFA expressed concern on the impact of shifting High-Occupancy Vehicle lanes to High-Occupancy Toll lanes could have on low-income residents.**

- The 2014 CLRP contain a number High-Occupancy Toll lane projects that would require users to pay fees for use of the facilities. The committee raised concerns about how low-income individuals could be impacted if the region moves towards more tolled facilities.

**The AFA would like to see more community-based, affordable public transportation.**

- Many of the population groups the AFA represents depend on public transportation on a daily basis. The number of new road and road widening projects has the committee concerned that not enough attention is being made to future public transportation needs.

- The AFA raised concerns that in areas further out from the core, bus service is limited to peak hours or not available at all.
- The AFA expressed concerns about affordability of public transit and the negative impact on the quality of living and health of traditionally-disadvantaged population groups if fares continue to rise.
- The AFA supports incentives for people with limited incomes so that they can chose their preferred mode of travel; incentives could include user-side subsidies or reduced fare programs.

**The AFA stressed the importance of implementing agencies considering accessibility throughout the planning, design and build stages.**

- Accessibility for everyone is improved when agencies consider the needs of people with disabilities early on in the planning stages of a project.
- Sidewalks, curb cuts and detectable warning systems at intersections and bus stop help all pedestrians.
- The AFA raised concerns that the streetcar projects in D.C. and Arlington may not have fully considered how people with visual disabilities and those using mobility devices will safely cross the street given limited visibility, streetcar tracks in the roadway, and passengers boarding and embarking from the vehicle.
- The AFA raised concerns about shifting towards online and app-based transportation information which many times are not accessible to those with visual and hearing impairments.

**General Comments on Transportation-Related Concerns**

**The AFA supports more options for bicyclists, but pedestrian infrastructure and disability awareness should be a priority.**

- The AFA supports increasing and maintaining bicycle paths.
- Bicyclists should be made aware and more considerate of pedestrians with disabilities who have visual, hearing and mobility impairments.
- Existing regulations needs to be enforced and more regulations regarding the shared use of pedestrian and roadway infrastructure is needed.
- In D.C., sometimes people using mobility devices use bike lanes when sidewalks are impassable, especially when construction projects are being done.

- Given the need for accessible pedestrian infrastructure, how are implementing agencies balancing the priority for accessible pedestrian infrastructure and the desire to build more bike lanes or facilities?

### **The AFA stressed the importance of improving and maintaining bus stops and pedestrian infrastructure.**

- Many of the population groups represented on the AFA depend on public transportation to meet their daily mobility needs. The committee expressed its support for current efforts by WMATA and local jurisdictions to improve access to bus stops for people with disabilities.
- The committee asked how the local jurisdictions and WMATA are prioritizing and coordinating on bus stops improvements, particularly on the 157 stops that WMATA has prioritized.
- The committee raised the need for maintenance of bus stops and sidewalks after improvements have been made.
- Lighting at bus stops is an important accessibility and safety feature, in addition to curb cuts, accessible bus shelters, connecting sidewalks, and concrete landing pads.
- The AFA advocated for fast-tracking problem areas, improving inter-jurisdictional cooperation, setting a timeframe for improvements, and more funding for more improvements throughout the region.

### **The AFA expressed concerns about MetroAccess service, eligibility, and fares.**

- AFA members noted that they have seen improvements in MetroAccess but still report having difficulty with 1) Scheduling a trip within the requested pick up and drop off times and 2) inconsistent levels of driver professionalism and courtesy.
- The AFA raised concerns about how higher MetroAccess fares and stricter eligibility requirements are impacting those that are dependent on paratransit, and recommends that WMATA implement a simpler fare structure.