

ACCESS FOR ALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

February 17, 2021

Canek Aguirre, Chair

The Access for All Advisory Committee (AFA) met virtually on February 12 and the highlights from the meeting are provided below. A list of participants is on the last page. The AFA advises the TPB on transportation issues and services important to low-income communities, underrepresented communities, people with limited English proficiency, people with disabilities, and older adults.

This is the first meeting with our new Chair, Canek Aguirre, who introduced himself and provided information on his background and interest in the committee's focus areas.

VISUALIZE 2045 BRIEFING

Ms. Armendariz briefed the committee on initial results from TPB's region-wide public opinion survey and focus groups in preparation for the 2022 update of Visualize 2045.

In the survey, participants were asked about:

Travel during the COVID-19 pandemic

- general travel
- job related travel
- deliveries

Our transportation future (thinking 1 year after end of pandemic)

- transportation system improvement
- development and congestion
- ways to increase use of alternative travel modes

Future & External factors

- climate change
- equity
- autonomous vehicles

The focus groups, guided by the themes of equity, climate change, and safety will be used to supplement the data from the public opinion survey. A joint focus group with AFA and the TPB's Community Advisory Committee will be held on February 25.

The discussion following the presentation included questions about involvement of individuals with disabilities, speakers of languages other than Spanish, and people with disabilities who consistently use public transit and whether they are sufficiently represented. Staff explained how the focus groups are being used to fill gaps identified in the survey and the upcoming focus group with AFA was scheduled to ensure inclusion. Suggested considerations will be taken to ensure equitable opportunity for all groups in the region to participate.

PRESENTATIONS ON THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON DIRECT TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS SERVING OLDER ADULTS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Winchell-Mendy provided an overview of activities TPB/COG has taken and will continue to take

in response to COVID impacts on Enhanced Mobility and other programs in the region serving older adults and people with disabilities:

- Get the word out
 - AFA meetings
 - Presentation at TPB's Technical Committee
 - February 11 Memo to TPB about the these impacts
- Collect information and data from subrecipients on the impacts
- Work with subrecipients to ensure full use of award dollars – budget adjustments, no-cost extensions, delays in start of continuing projects under new awards
- Manage Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 (CRRSAA) funding for the DC-MD-VA urbanized area

Enhanced Mobility grantees Mr. Werth from Diamond/National Express and Ms. Smith from The Arc of Prince William/INSIGHT, Inc., presented on the significant impacts of COVID-19 on their programming and transportation services for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities in Virginia and the region:

- Drops in revenue due to shut down and slow return of adult day and vocational programs, which require transportation for participants
- Furlough of drivers and other staff
- Costs of PPE and COVID cleaning/sanitation required to keep vehicles, riders, staff, and the workplace safe
- The need to alleviate anxiety around safety for riders and operators, especially with COVID vaccination rollout delays and tier protocol
- Retention of experienced operators and staff
- Covering fixed operating expenses
 - Facility rent and utilities
 - Staff salaries
 - Vehicle insurance even when idle
 - Health insurance of furloughed workers

For Diamond/National Express, the need to cover costs of transportation for some participants while no fare is coming in from others means programs like Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDDs) transportation and RouteSource, which provides transportation to work for individuals with intellectual disabilities, cannot be sustained.

The Arc of Prince William is experiencing a \$100,000 deficit in their transportation program.

Committee discussion centered on concerns about why such programs were not included when CARES Act funding was received in the region and how the AFA could bring awareness to the issue. Also discussed were the status of driver vaccinations and how CARES Act funds for the region went to WMATA and jurisdictions could apply for funds and offset their regular contributions for Metro operations.

OTHER BUSINESS

AFA member Deborah Fisher, with expertise in intellectual and developmental disabilities, was selected by WMATA's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) to be the second AFA liaison.

WMATA's 2020 Hedding Award, which honors a person or organization whose efforts have resulted in significant improvements to accessible public transportation services for people with disabilities in the National Capital Region, was given to the late Charlie Crawford.

Long-time AFA member Gloria Swiergina was appointed to the Maryland Commission on People with Disabilities.

Staff advised that the region will receive \$591,353 in CRRSAA funding at 100% Federal, and a proposal for eligibility and selection criteria that will be presented to the TPB this month.

Staff announced a webinar series on autonomous vehicles and people with disabilities offered by the U.S. Access Board.

2021 MEETING DATES

- Friday, April 9th, 12-2
- Friday, June 11th, 12-2 Tentative (may occur in July if needed)
- Friday, September 10th, 12-2
- Friday, November 12th, 12-2

MEETING ATTENDANCE

District of Columbia	Virginia	TPB Staff
Cesar Baretto, DDOT	Andrew Wexler, Arlington County	Abigail Zenner
Heather Foote, Age Friendly DC Transportation Committee	Clemmon Hammie, VDOT	Kanti Srikanth
Karen Randolph, DDOT	Karen Smith, Arc of Prince William/INSIGHT, Inc.	Karen Armendariz
Nechama Maslianksy, S.O.M.E.	Lorena Rios, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Northern Virginia	Lyn Erikson
Wendy Klancher, DFHV	Phil Thomson, National Express	Lynn Winchell-Mendy
	Rikki Epstein, Arc of Northern Virginia	Nicholas Ramfos
Maryland	Robbie Werth, Diamond Transportation	Lynn Winchell-Mendy
Bill Orleans, resident	Roger Hoskin, representing older adults	Nicholas Ramfos
Deborah Fisher, representing people with developmental disabilities	Stephanie Maher, National Express	
Gloria Swieringa, Prince George's Commission for Individuals with Disabilities	Tom Furlong, Diamond Transportation	Chair
Janet Cornick, Maryland Department of Transportation		Canek Aguirre, City of Alexandria Councilmember
Rob Malone, Arc of Prince William County	Regional	
Sara Fought, JCA Connect-A-Ride	Angela White, National MS Society of Greater DC	Unknown
Yolanda Hipski, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland	Brenda Richardson, Women Like Us	Allilsa Fernandez
	Cecelia Castillo-Ayometzi, WMATA	Caller #2
	Glenn Millis, WMATA	Caller #7
	Janine Ashe, FHWA	myu000