

## ACCESS FOR ALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

July 7, 2020

*Kacy Kostiuik, Chair*

The Access for All Advisory Committee (AFA) met virtually on July 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, minority communities, people with limited English proficiency, people with disabilities, and older adults.

### **COG's ACTIVITIES TO ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY**

Ms. Jennifer Schitter, Principal Health Planner (COG), defined the COG and its connection to TPB and how equity, a priority for the COG Board, is woven into COG's Region Forward Initiative. She then discussed COG's partnership with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) to advance equity at the regional level. The inaugural GARE cohort, representing 11 jurisdictions and over 100 government staff, launched in September of 2019. During the year, the cohorts developed racial equity action plans to help normalize conversations about race and implement new policies and practices to advance racial equity in their jurisdictions. Next steps include graduation of the first cohort and opportunity for participants to move into a second-year implementation phase. The second cohort, open to all 24 jurisdictions COG represents, will launch in early 2021.

In addition, Ms. Schitter shared that COG's Health Officials Committee partnered with the Virginia Commonwealth University's Center on Society and Health to issue the brief "Health Equity: How Opportunities for Health are Shaped by Race and Ethnicity." As context, the study the brief is based on was on the agenda at a prior AFA meeting.

GARE participant Mr. John Filer, Chief of Emergency Medical Services, Charles County Maryland shared information on his cohort's project to improve the County's public transportation system, VanGo, to better support the needs of people of color. He explained VanGo's service area being a food desert, how the project helped identify the true needs of ridership (services on Sunday rather than extended evening hours during the week) and the current inability to meet demand due to COVID-19 restrictions for buses to operate at 50% capacity.

In the discussion that followed, AFA members expressed concerns related to the East-West divide when it comes to transportation, the digital gap, and the need for new outreach methods to connect with traditionally underserved communities during COVID-19. The Racial Equity Tool and related resources mentioned in the discussion will be shared with the committee via email.

### **SAFETY**

Mr. Jon Schermann briefed the committee on the findings of the Regional Roadway Safety Study, with a focus on pedestrians. He explained that when the numbers were gathered for the federally required state highway safety targets, the Board didn't like the high crash numbers so wanted to develop actions on safety. After an overview of the crash data, Mr. Schermann shared the draft recommendations for reducing fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways that were presented to the TPB in June.

AFA members were interested in data on distracted pedestrians, whether there was a race/ethnicity breakdown of the data and pointed out that the data showed most crashes were older adults age 85+ but older drivers were defined in the document as 65+. There was interest in the final report and plans for dissemination, and staff ensured it would be shared with the AFA when released.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Chair Kostiuk shared details of her participation in TPB's Curbside Management Forum on June 22, where she spoke on curbside accessibility with Cesar Baretto, the ADA Coordinator for DDOT. In her presentation, Chair Kostiuk advised forum participants of the following concerns expressed by AFA members:

- industry-specific terminology that may limit participation by people who are truly impacted by decisions related to curbside management, and resulting need for plain language in outreach efforts
- the digital divide
- poor sidewalk infrastructure
- inaccessible curbsides
- areas where public transportation users have to cross bike lanes to access floating bus stops
- micromobility devices being left in pathways.

During the discussion, members shared additional concerns, including how restaurant outdoor seating decreases public space even further and impacts people using mobility devices, and the need for more drop off zones near Metro stations in urbanized areas. In conclusion, TPB staff confirmed there will be additional curbside management forums and welcomed Chair Kostiuk's suggestion that a future forum focus on curbside accessibility and include a panel of AFA members who are directly impacted by the issues.

Virginia Tech PhD student Ms. Mahtot Gebresselassie discussed her research project focusing on accessibility of ride-hailing companies (Uber/Lyft) in Washington, DC. Her work will look at the issue from the perspective of wheelchair users, drivers, and the companies themselves to determine a holistic understanding of the core issues. She will also explore the government side to determine regulations that will help meet the accessibility challenge. Ms. Gebresselassie also requested assistance in locating wheelchair users in DC to participate in her survey. Chair Kostiuk invited her back to a future AFA meeting to share her findings.

## **2020 MEETING DATES**

- October 6
- Nov 10 - tentative

## MEETING ATTENDANCE

<b>District of Columbia</b>	<b>Virginia</b>	<b>TPB Staff</b>
Heather Foote, Age Friendly DC Transportation Committee	Andrew Wexler, Arlington County	Abigail Zenner
Vivian Guerra, DDOT	Brittany Voll, DRPT	Bryan Hayes
<b>Maryland</b>	Clemmon Hammie, VDOT	Jennifer Schitter
Bill Orleans, resident	Cynthia Alarico, Fairfax County Neighborhood & Community Services	Jon Schermann
Debbie Fisher, representing people with developmental disabilities	Karen Smith, Arc of Prince William/INSIGHT, Inc.	Kanti Srikanth
Gloria Swieringa, Prince George's County Commission for Individuals with Disabilities	Lorena Rios, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Northern Virginia	Karen Armendariz
John Filer, Charles County	Mahtot Gebresselassie, Virginia Tech PhD student	Lyn Erikson
Janet Cornick, Maryland Department of Transportation	MaryJo Hensler, Fairfax County Neighborhood & Community Services	Lynn Winchell-Mendy
Kari Snyder, Maryland Department of Transportation	Tom Furlong, Diamond Transportation	Sergio Ritacco
Sara Fought, JCA Connect-A-Ride	<b>Regional</b>	<b>Chair</b>
Shawn Brennan, Montgomery County DHHS	Angela White, National MS Society of Greater DC	Kacy Kostiuik, City of Takoma Park – Ward 3 Councilmember
Yolanda Hipski, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland	Brenda Richardson, Women Like Us	
	Cecelia Castillo-Ayometzi, WMATA	
	Glenn Millis, WMATA	
	Janine Ashe, FHWA	
	Maital Kaminer, S.O.M.E.	
	Richard Ezike, The Urban Institute	