

TPB Access for All Advisory Committee

Progress Made Towards Accessible Transportation Since Disability Awareness Day



OCTOBER 19, 2005

TPB DISABILITY AWARENESS DAY

Congress designated each October as

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

to increase the public's awareness of the skills of workers with disabilities and to highlight employment barriers.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO:

- Be unemployed;
- Live in poverty; and
- Have inadequate transportation.



On October 20, 2004, the TPB and its Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee sponsored the successful **"Disability Awareness Day."** Eleven TPB members traveled to a press conference with a volunteer with a disability and member of the media via bus, rail and paratransit. The event highlighted transportation challenges and more importantly, **raised awareness and affected attitudes about people with disabilities.**

The event highlighted that:

- Not all of the region's buses are wheelchair accessible;
- Bumpy strips warning rail passengers that the edge of the platform is near are present in only 54 of 83 Metrorail stations;
- Elevator outages at Metrorail stations seriously impede travel for people who are unable to use stairs or escalators; and
- Inefficient operation of paratransit services results in confusion and delays.

AWARENESS IS THE KEY . . .

It's not just what you do, but how you think.

"I have come to believe that the primary obstacle faced by people with disabilities is other people's attitudes. Whether accurate or not, feelings about people with disabilities influence important judgments and decisions."

-John Hudson, AFA Member

PROGRESS MADE...



BUS

- D.C. Circulator – Low-floor buses
- By January 2006, Metro buses will be 100% lift-equipped
- 450 new Metro buses will be low-floor

RAIL

- Elevator redundancy in two new stations
- New public announcement system planned for 39 Metrorail stations

PARATRANSIT

- Demand Responsive Study is underway
- New MetroAccess director and new contract in January

SIDEWALKS

- Regional bus stop inventory is underway

...REMAINING CHALLENGES

INVOLVE PEOPLE WITH A RANGE OF DISABILITIES IN TESTING BIG PURCHASES OR CHANGES, such as elevator button design (for visually impaired), public announcement systems, and new buses

WHEELCHAIR LIFTS ON BUSES

- Use low-floor buses in urban areas with curbs
- Provide hands-on training on how to secure wheelchairs on buses given the wide variety of mobility devices

RAIL STATIONS

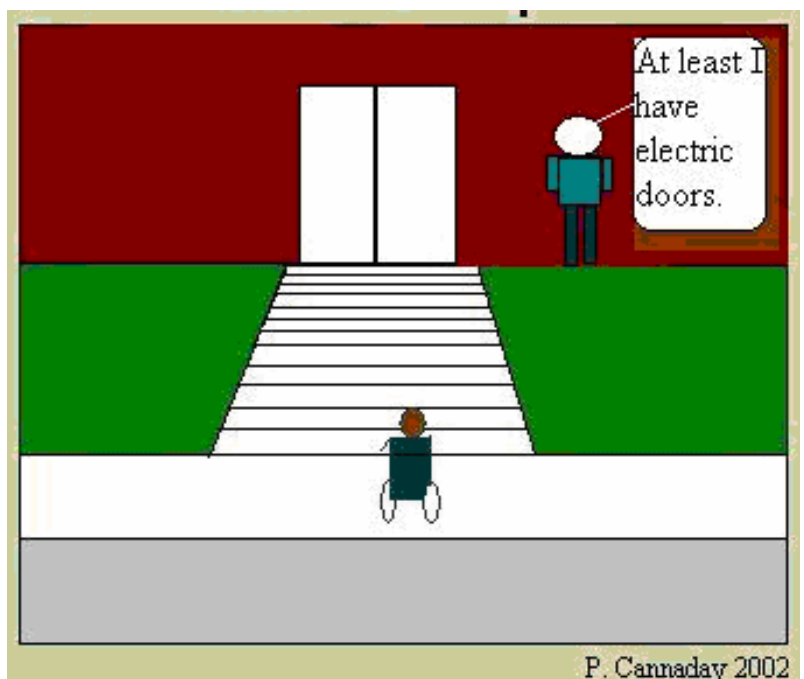
- Improve lighting and elevator reliability

ACCESS TO BUS STOPS AND METRO STATIONS

- Complete the regional bus stop inventory
- Improve bus stops
- Improve sidewalks and crossings (add more Audible Pedestrian Signals)

CONTINUED METROACCESS DELAYS

LACK OF ACCESSIBLE CABS, especially in D.C.



BENEFITS FOR ALL

“We are not doing this for us, but for you. As you age, you might need a wheelchair. Your vision could get worse.”

-Dr. Raymond “Bud” Keith, AFA Member

Accessibility features benefit everyone, today and in the future. As the baby boomers age, accessibility features will be even more critical.

Think of how accessibility features, such as curb ramps, help people pushing strollers, people with rolling luggage, and bicyclists.



PEDESTRIAN ACCESS FOR ALL



Safe and accessible pedestrian access to transit stations is key for everyone, but especially people with disabilities. One missing curb cut can make the whole public transit system inaccessible to someone in a wheelchair. The AFA committee urges that local jurisdictions and transit agencies work together for improved pedestrian access.

“The region needs to work together to create a transit and pedestrian system that provides access for all.”

-Kathy Porter, TPB Member and AFA Chair

TPB RESOLUTION ADOPTED OCTOBER 20, 2004

The TPB:

- Recognizes the importance of accessible and dependable transit service, sidewalks, and safe pedestrian crossings for people with disabilities; and
- Encourages TPB member agencies and jurisdictions to implement the AFA recommendations to improve transit services for people with disabilities.



Washington Post Quote of the Day—October 20, 2004

“You can talk to people until you’re blue in the face about what you can do for people with disabilities . . . But until you’re in a chair, you can’t understand.”

-Michael LeJuene, TPB Citizens Advisory Committee

WHAT COMES NEXT?

The AFA hopes to do a disability awareness event every three years, and do smaller awareness activities in-between.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Check the AFA Committee Website at

www.mwcog.org/transportation

