

ACCESS FOR ALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT
July 8, 2024

James Walkinshaw, Chair

The Access for All Advisory Committee (AFA) met virtually on Monday, July 8, 2024. The committee received staff updates on the DMVMoves initiative and the AFA member assessment. They also received a presentation from the ARC of Northern Virginia on their ARC2Independence wayfinding application. The committee also held time open for a member forum.

Staff Updates

Laura Bachle, Transportation Planner, briefed members on the COG-WMATA Regional Transit Initiative (DMVMoves), which kicked off formally on May 1. DMVMoves is an initiative of the Council of Governments and WMATA to achieve a unified vision for transit in the DMV. The initiative kicked off May 1, with a Regional Task Force made up of 20 leaders formally convening on June 10. The initiative will set the vision, plan, funding model, and action steps necessary to transform the region's transit network into a world-class system capable of meeting the region's needs and goals.

Ms. Bachle described the four phases of the workplan to be accomplished between now and June of 2025 and the two advisory groups supporting the task force. The AFA Committee's interests are represented on the Community Partners Advisory Group, which met on June 21. These were initial discussions to be fleshed out in the coming months. The July Advisory Group meeting will be on Tuesday, July 16. There is currently a survey underway. A link to the survey can be found on the DMVMoves website. Members were encouraged to share the link among their networks.

Ms. Bachle also gave an update on the AFA member assessment. She has spoken with the membership and introduced new ground rules and agenda changes based on the feedback she received. She also noted that there will be a membership drive in the fall. She encouraged members to continue reaching out to her with suggestions.

Members did not have any questions or comments.

.ARC-2-INDEPENDENCE WAYFINDING APPLICATION

Dianne Monnig and Ashley Schalick from the ARC of Northern Virginia (ARC NoVA) gave a presentation on their wayfinding app for people with disabilities. The Arc of Northern Virginia is a local chapter of a national organization that promotes the independence of people with disabilities. They have a program called ARC2Independence, which helps individuals with disabilities live fully inclusive lives in the community. They have an app that offers customizable wayfinding and lessons. There are currently 241 active users. ARC NoVA is partnering with many organizations to provide the app, including tailored training and even devices for those that need them.

Member questions and comments included the following:

What is the geographical coverage for the services ARC of NoVA is offering? The presenters shared a map of their coverage, which basically covers the near counties and cities of the DMV.

How scalable is the resource? How many users do you have now and what's the capacity given the challenge of customizing it for each individual?

There are 241 users currently. There's a lot of customization that ARC NoVA can do, but they train

their partners, like Fairfax County Public Schools, to be able to customize the app directly. That leverages resources quite a lot. They are capable of partnering with more organizations. They are particularly interested in applications with groups in DC.

Have you considered incorporating any kind of social element in the app? In other words, could a user chat about their experience with other users?

Yes. They have talked a lot about this topic and have been doing some research on what the best platform would be. They hold a Zoom meeting with users once a month open to everyone to talk about the app.

Do you have data on how many people use the app per day? Do you know what your most popular app is?

They can look at who has been active and what percentage of their lesson they have completed. They also have data compiled weekly. "Let's Take Metro" is likely the most popular. It goes through the entire trip: what to take with you, safety, and every step along the way. It's customizable for every user.

Could this app be a resource for people with cognitive decline or dementia?

Yes, it's possible that the general lessons could be used by many people, and it's easy to take one lesson and adapt it to another user.

AFA FORUM

As a regular part of every agenda, members are invited to share information about their programs, current initiatives and any questions or concerns they may have. This was the first time the committee held an open forum. Attendance was light, so there were few commenters. Members did stress that changes in WMATA service directly affect the services they provide. For example, a change of a bus route, elimination of a stop, etc. changes the MetroAccess availability as well. It's important to keep the membership informed of any such changes and include the committee in those discussions.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting is September 9. TPB staff will poll the membership to determine if it will be virtual or hybrid.

Attendees

District of Columbia
Heather Foote
Angela Miller
Brenda Richardson
Cassandra McFerson
Rosa Carillo

Maryland
Sara Fought
Robert Malone

Virginia
Cynthia Alarico
John Nemeth
Elena Algergant
Regional
Angela White

Glenn Millis
Cecilia Castillo-Ayometzi

TPB Staff
Rachel Beyerle
Kanti Srikanth
Leo Pineda
Laura Bachle

Chair
James Walkinshaw, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors