

ACCESS FOR ALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

September 9, 2024

James Walkinshaw, Chair

The Access for All Advisory Committee (AFA) met virtually on Monday, September 9, 2024. The committee received staff updates on the DMVMoves initiative, a preview of the fall TPB agenda, and the AFA member assessment. They also received a presentation on transportation access and better health outcomes. The committee also held time open for a member forum.

STAFF UPDATES

Laura Bachle, Transportation Planner, previewed the TPB's fall agenda, including upcoming items in September on the Regional Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Implementation (REVII), an Equity Deep-dive, and a safety event currently scheduled for October 31. Lyn Erickson, Plan Development and Coordination Program Director, also mentioned the new COG/TPB Transportation Resources and Applications Page (TRAP).

Laura Bachle and Kanti Srikanth, Deputy Executive Director Metropolitan Planning, briefed members on the COG-WMATA Regional Transit Initiative (DMVMoves), DMVMoves is an initiative of the Council of Governments and WMATA to achieve a unified vision for transit in the DMV. 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. Meeting are set this month for the Community Partners Advisory Committee to provide input to the task force on recommending a vision for world class transit, and home in on preliminary ideas for funding. The AFA Committee's interests are represented on the Community Partners Advisory Group, which is scheduled to meet September 13.

Ms. Bachle also gave an update on the AFA member assessment, recapping the history of the committee, the membership, the work plan presently, and explaining why the TPB staff are looking into refreshing the committee. The TPB staff hope to have a recommendation to share with the committee later this fall.

Members did not have any questions or comments.

REPORT FROM THE WMATA ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE LIAISONS

Deborah Fisher provided a report on the current activities of the committee. The highlights this year included work on fees, accessibility features, safety, and budget. Current initiatives include DMVMoves, and the Metro Better Bus Network. The full written report will be provided to AFA members.

Member questions and comments included the following:

Regarding Better Bus and the potential impact on MetroAccess, Chair Walkinshaw shared information on a discussion he had in a meeting with WMATA in which he raised the concern about some routes being eliminated which would affect the service radius prescribed by the ADA. He was reassured that there would be no reduction in MetroAccess service as a result of the changes. He advised everyone to continue to be vigilant about the matter and keep abreast of the initiative as it moves forward. Deborah Fisher added that there are more people moving into areas that have fewer transit options, which directly affects the people with disabilities and older adults and their caregivers.

Has the situation with DC residents no longer being able to obtain senior SmartTrip cards using a photo ID inside Metro stations been discussed?

No, this situation has not been raised. Glenn Millis (WMATA) will look into the matter and have an answer for the next WMATA Access Advisory Committee meeting.

Other members also confirmed the difficulty in securing a card once you are in the Metro system and the challenges of getting to and from parts of the region on metro buses during non-rush hours.

TRANSPORTATION ACCESS AND BETTER HEALTH OUTCOMES

Jessica Richards, from the Tri-County Council of Southern MD, and Jeb Corey from IT Curves Transit Group, presented their programs, which provide access to medical care. These programs are leading to better health outcomes. Transportation barriers, such as lack of a vehicle, distance, and high costs, hinder access to healthcare. Approximately 3.6 million Americans miss medical care due to transportation barriers. Programs like Rides to Health, and Wheels to Wellness provide a means of overcoming these barriers. Providing these services doesn't come without challenges, including finding permanent funding, but these programs have shown significant cost savings from a reduction in ambulance and emergency care needs.

Members had a number of questions and comments on the presentations.

How is it that other localities can cover more of the cost that we can here in Washington, DC?

There are lots of variables that go into the cost of transportation. The COG region is one of the more expensive places. One thing operators are doing is better coordination. If you can get more than one person on a trip or coordinate other trips that need to be done in the area after a drop-off that lowers costs. Coordinating different funding sources also helps, but it does take a lot of resources to do that.

How do we incentivize more transportation providers?

Incentivizing more transportation providers is more market-driven. If there's a need for the services at a critical volume, then there will be providers, but establishing a service has many hurdles to overcome; one in particular is insurance and liability. There can also be a shortage of qualified private providers.

Members appreciated hearing about these programs, especially serving Southern Maryland with transportation access where there is so little support presently.

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.

Fairfax County shared some updates involving their Enhanced Mobility grant. Next month, they will be launching their transportation outreach sessions at senior centers to increase awareness of transportation options and resources. They are also increasing awareness of travel training and are in the process of launching a taxi pilot program. Through the county and community partners, the program will provide non-emergency medical transportation to older adults and those with disabilities.

TPB staff gave a short overview of the TPB Regional Curbside Management Forum held August 2. A literature review and summary of the forum is expected soon and will be shared with members.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting is November 4. This will be a placeholder until another meeting date can be secured later in November or early December. TPB staff will poll the membership to determine possible dates.

ATTENDEES**District of Columbia**

Heather Foote

Brenda Richardson

Maryland

Sara Fought

Robert Malone

William Clements

Deborah Fisher

Jessica Richards (guest)

Virginia

Cynthia Alarico

Roger Hoskin

Karen Smith

Lorena Rios

Regional

Angela White

Glenn Millis

Cecilia Castillo-Ayometzi

Jeb Corey (guest)

TPB Staff

Lyn Erickson

Cristina Finch

Rachel Beyerle

Kanti Srikanth

Leo Pineda

Laura Bachle

Chair

James Walkinshaw, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors