



## NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

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## TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

### Memorandum

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Tim Lovain  
Chair, TPB Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee  
TPB Second Vice Chair

SUBJECT: AFA Comments on the major projects submitted for the 2015 Financially-Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan

DATE: February 17, 2015

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At the January 29, 2015 Access for All Advisory (AFA) Committee meeting, the committee discussed the proposed changes for the 2015 Financially Constrained Long Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) and also provided general feedback on transportation-related concerns during a structured listening session facilitated by TPB staff. These discussions resulted in the following comments on the 2015 CLRP, and general transportation concerns for people with disabilities, those with limited incomes, and minority communities.

#### Comments on the proposed changes for the 2015 CLRP

The AFA expressed concern that shifting High-Occupancy Vehicle lanes to High-Occupancy Toll lanes along I-66 in VA could have a negative impact on transportation disadvantaged groups.

- The 2015 CLRP includes two new High-Occupancy Toll lanes projects on I-66 in Virginia which would require users to pay fees for use of the facilities. The AFA reaffirms the concern that people with disabilities and low-income individuals may be excluded from the benefits of these projects.
- If these toll projects and others like them are to be built in the future, it is essential to provide high capacity transit options along these new facilities in order to ensure that the projects benefit these transportation disadvantaged groups.

The AFA is concerned that reducing vehicle lanes to build bicycle lanes in the District of Columbia will have a negative impact on bus riders.

- The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has proposed reducing the number of lanes along a many roadways in DC in order to create new bicycle lanes. The AFA is concerned that reducing the lanes available for vehicle traffic will increase congestion and travel time along these corridors, and have a negative impact on individuals that rely on the bus to meet their mobility needs.
- This may create even more barriers to mobility for individuals with disabilities, low incomes, and those who have limited English ability who may currently be burdened by overcrowding and limited frequencies during peak periods.

### General Comments on Transportation-Related Concerns

The AFA stressed that accessibility should be considered throughout the planning, design, and construction stages of all transportation projects.

- When agencies consider the needs of people with disabilities early on in the planning stages of a project, efforts to ensure accessibility to those with disabilities is greatly improved.
- Sidewalks, curb cuts, clearly delineated pedestrian crossings, and detectable warning systems at intersections and bus stop help all pedestrians.

The AFA would like to see more affordable public transportation options throughout all parts of the region.

- The AFA supports making all public transportation options affordable to the population groups who rely on them. In the face of rising transit fares, the committee supports incentives for people with limited incomes so that they can chose their preferred mode of travel; incentives could include user-side subsidies or reduced fare programs.
- The AFA also notes that in outer suburban areas bus service is limited to peak hours or not available at all, and that lack of service limits the mobility of transit-dependent population groups.

The AFA stressed the importance of improving and maintaining bus stops and pedestrian infrastructure.

- The AFA expressed the need to continue to improve the accessibility of bus stops throughout the region. Many bus stops are not currently accessible to people with disabilities. Many of these individuals are dependent on public transportation to meet their daily mobility needs, but can simply not access the stops safely.

- Some features that can be included in increase safety and accessibility include: improved lighting, construction of curb cuts, connecting sidewalks, and installing concrete landing pads.
- The AFA advocates for fast-tracking problem areas, improving inter-jurisdictional cooperation, setting a timeframe for improvements, and more funding for more improvements throughout the region.

The AFA stresses the importance of cultural diversity and language training for bus and MetroAccess drivers throughout the region.

- Our region is home to residents from many different cultural backgrounds and ethnic groups and the AFA believes that transit service providers should be sensitive to the needs and customs of transit users.
- This could include providing cultural diversity training, language training, and bilingual drivers where necessary.

The AFA reaffirmed concerns about MetroAccess service, eligibility, and fares.

- AFA members noted that they have seen improvements in MetroAccess but still report having difficulty with 1) scheduling a trip within the requested pick up and drop off times and 2) inconsistent levels of driver professionalism and courtesy.