



MEMORANDUM

TO: Access for All Advisory Committee
FROM: Laura Bachle, AICP
SUBJECT: Staff Recommendation for Refreshing the Access for All Advisory Committee
DATE: November 22, 2024

Involving perspectives of individuals who are traditionally underserved has been a part the Transportation Planning Board's (TPB) work for a long time. Since 2001, when the Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee was established, there have been a number of policy changes at the federal, state, and regional level that emphasize equity, including an Equity Resolution adopted by TPB in 2021. No formal recruitment or re-examination of the AFA Committee has taken place since 2016. Given that equity is a key principle of the TPB and an integral part of all its goals and strategies, the objectives of the committee have been re-examined to ascertain whether the committee as constructed still meets expectations.

TPB staff conducted a situation assessment from May - October, 2024. Forty individuals were interviewed including the AFA members (regular members representing organizations and ex-officio members who represent jurisdictions), state officials, and internal TPB and COG staff. Based on the assessment, alternatives for refreshing the committee were generated, peer-reviewed, and evaluated using objective criteria. This memo conveys the staff recommendation.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE ASSESSMENT

- AFA members and ex-officio representatives value the networking opportunities the AFA provides.
- The AFA has a role in fulfilling consultation requirements for certain TPB plans and programs.
- The committee is valuable to the TPB and AFA members.
- There is value in having representation from all five of the groups named in the AFA Committee (low income, people with disabilities, limited English proficiency (LEP), older adults, ethnic minorities).
- Transportation is an important sector that AFA members must address, recognizing that many AFA members have responsibilities in other sectors.
- The AFA committee helps TPB fulfill the Equity Resolution.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

In all, 10 alternatives were evaluated using these criteria:

- Meets the required consultation needed for TPB plans and programs.
- Is consistent with the TPB's mission and values.
- Enhances and supports the TPB Equity Resolution (R1-2021).

RECOMMENDATION

Keep the AFA Committee and seek to rebalance the membership. This recommendation would essentially not change the AFA but would seek to rebalance the membership with representatives from three populations currently underrepresented on the committee. Ideas for increasing representation include: dedicated membership slots, such as three members representing LEP groups or developing a work plan and meeting schedule to explicitly include planning processes and projects that benefit from their consultation, especially enhanced mobility and long-range planning. Steps to implement this recommendation might include the following;

- **Hold a recruitment opportunity.** If no recruitment is held, the membership may continue to skew towards representatives of people with disabilities. A possible way to address this would be to target recruitment to balance representation of all five groups and all jurisdictions. Since the AFA is representative of these groups, the criteria for selection needs to clearly state that candidates should be affiliated with an organization that serves the AFA population, represents their interests, (and does not represent themselves only), or functions as a liaison with another group, such as the WMATA Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- **Work on re-setting operations of the committee.** After recruitment and a rebalancing of committee membership, initiate a work plan and meeting schedule with the committee to modify the committee's operations. Topics to discuss further may include the following:
 - Committee size.
 - Clarification of roles for the AFA chair, members, ex-officio members, and information only participants.
 - Formulating a list of activities and planning out meeting agendas.
 - Formalizing a meeting schedule.
 - Completing implementation of changes to committee conduct (some changes have already been made).

NEXT STEPS

This recommendation will be discussed with the AFA Committee. Staff will invite feedback and formalize a recommendation to share with the TPB. After consideration, TPB can implement this recommendation during the 2025-2026 committee cycle.