

Access For All (AFA) Advisory Committee
Subcommittee on Transit Information for Limited
English Speakers

**Review of Previous AFA
Recommendations for Improving
Transit Information for Limited
English Speakers**

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Background on the TPB and AFA

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What is the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB)?

- *Federally Mandated Role:* As a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the TPB is responsible for coordinating planning and funding for the region's transportation system.
- *Members:* Include representatives of local governments; state transportation agencies; state and District of Columbia legislatures; and WMATA.



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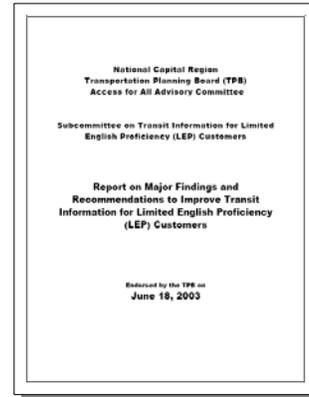
What is the Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee?

- Created in 2001
- Advises the TPB on transportation issues and services of concern to traditionally disadvantaged groups
- Comprised of community leaders from low-income populations, minority groups and people with disabilities
- Chaired by a TPB member, Cathy Hudgins from Fairfax County

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Previous Efforts to Improve Language Access

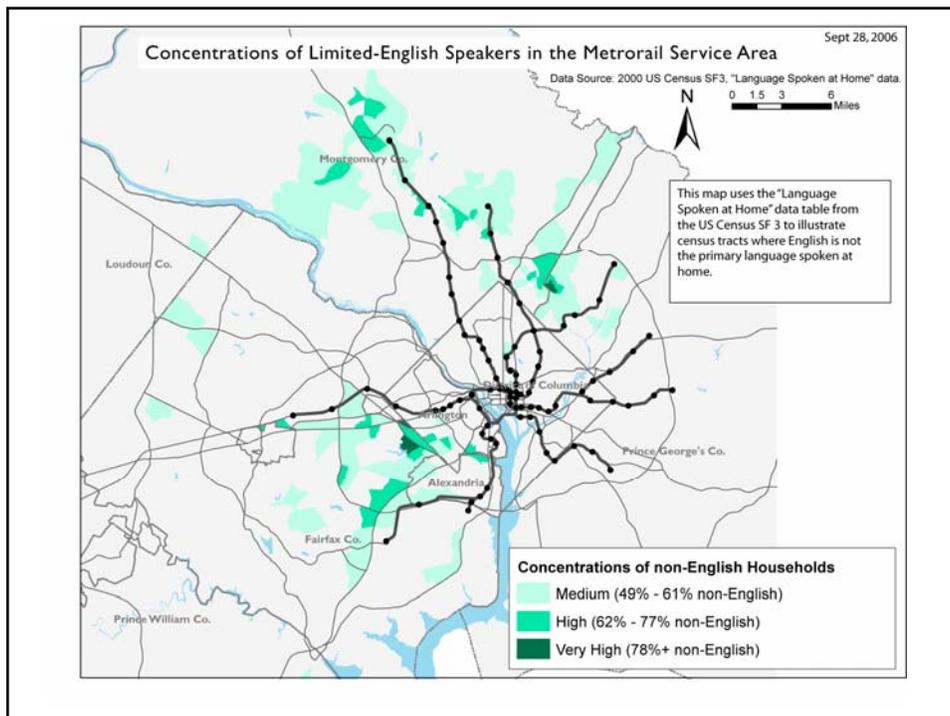
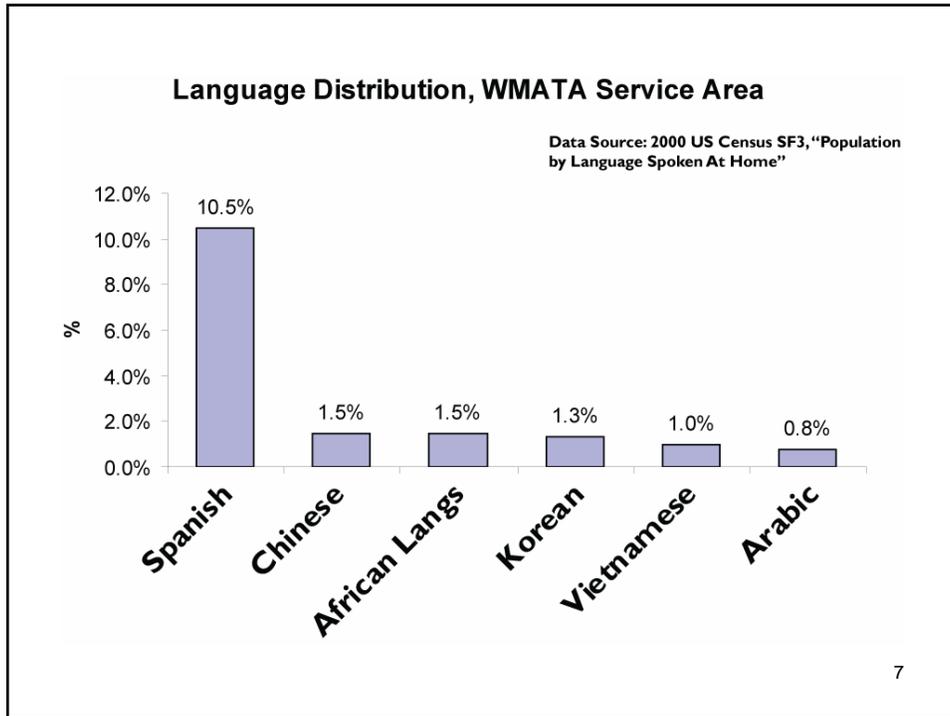
- AFA Subcommittee created in 2002
- Focus Group held in January 2003
- Recommendations were endorsed by the TPB and transmitted to transit agencies in June 2003
- Worked with Metro to:
 - add a Spanish greeting
 - advertise the translation service
 - produce a video in five languages on how to use Metro

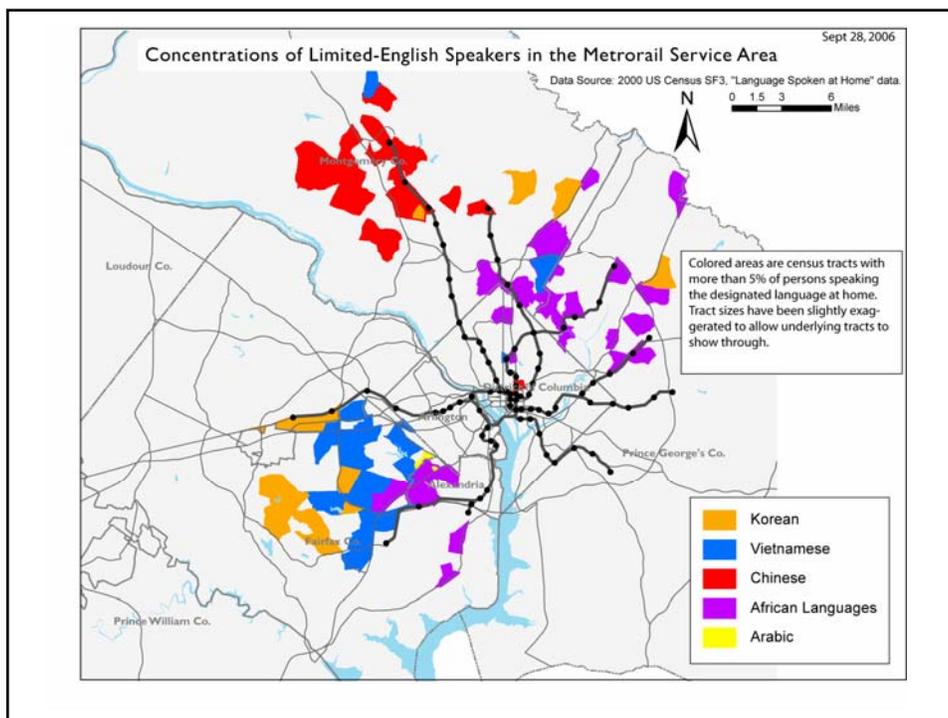
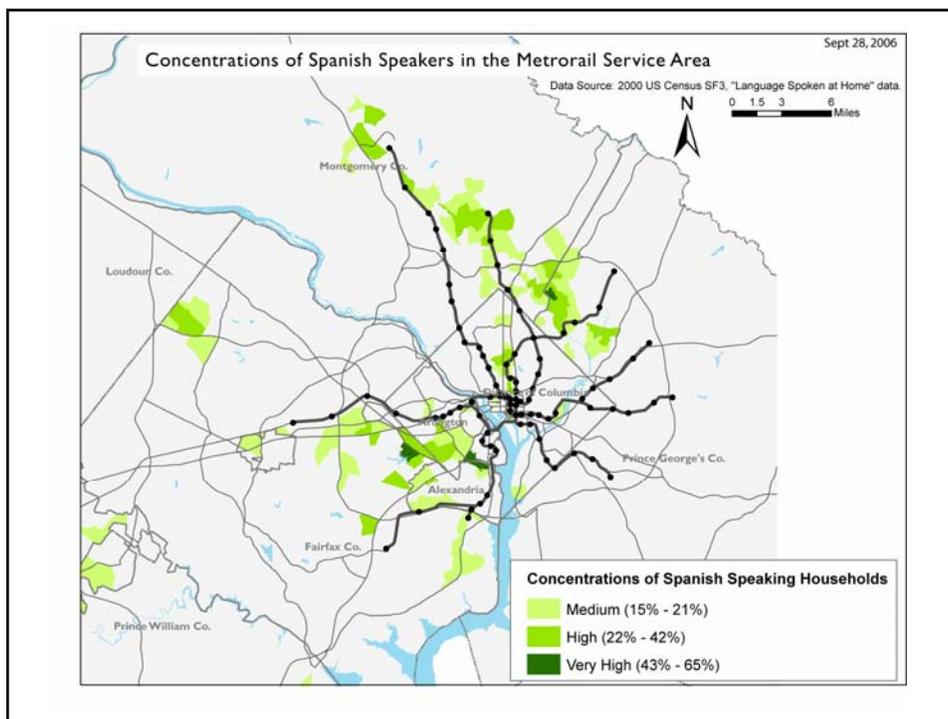


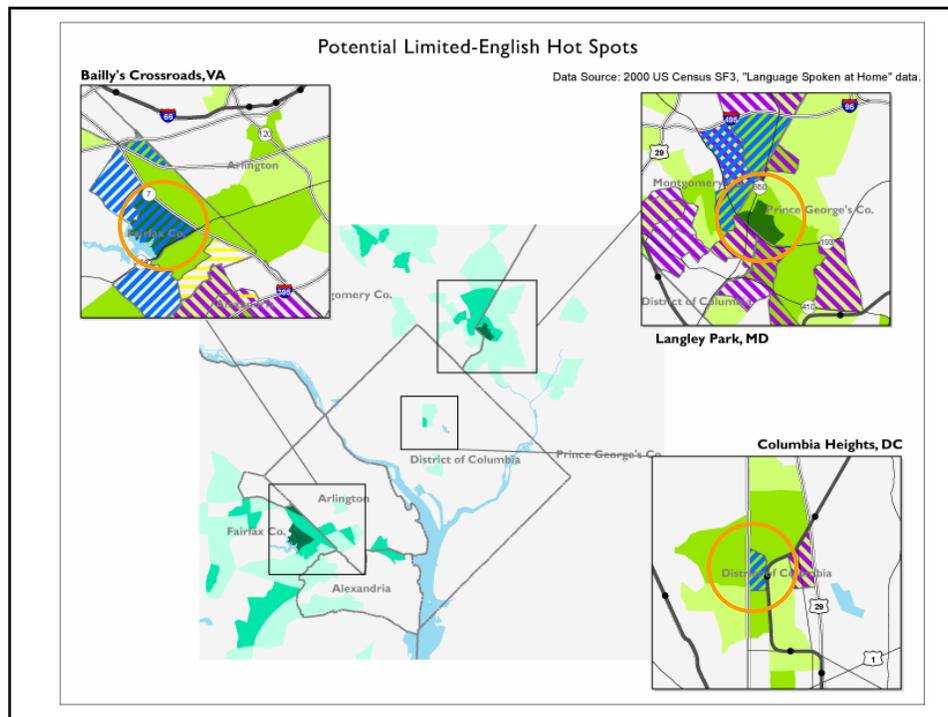
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Languages Spoken in the D.C. Region

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Types of Recommendations from the 2003 AFA Report

- *Promote and Improve Existing Language Assistance Services*
- *Provide Additional Language Assistance Services and Materials*
- *Long-Range Recommendations for Expanding Language Assistance Services*

Promote and Improve Existing Language Assistance Services

- WMATA should add **multilingual (beyond English and Spanish) greetings and options** on their general information line.
- All transit providers should improve existing transit information provided in English by using **clear, concise language with pictures, graphics and symbols.**
- WMATA and transit providers should provide written translated materials in Metro stations and bus stops in **heavily LEP-populated transit areas.**
- All transit providers should **establish community or citizen advisory groups** to help transit agencies reach language access goals.



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Provide Additional Language Assistance Services and Materials

- WMATA should **provide education, training, and tools** for social service providers, churches and other organizations that work with LEP and English as Second Language (ESL) communities.
- Transit agencies should use a **survey of riders to determine which language translations need to be provided**, and the Census data should be used until surveys can be completed.
- Transit agencies should rely more on **universal symbols and pictures**, rather than words, in printed information and signage



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*Long-Range Recommendations for
Expanding Language Assistance Services*

- Recruit **bilingual transit agency employees** for positions with frequent customer contact with the public. Ensure that they are compensated fairly for their skills and job responsibilities.
- Provide **cultural sensitivity training** for bus drivers, transit police and other transit agency employees who have customer contact.

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Roundtable Discussion: Continuing
Problems ‘On the Ground’



- **What are the continuing barriers limited-English speakers face in using the bus and Metrorail system?**



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Suggested Priorities

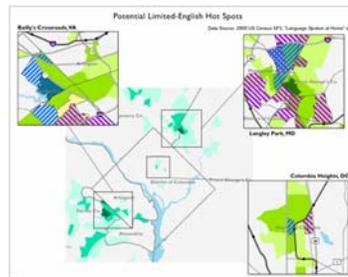
- WMATA should post instructional videos online
- WMATA should provide the trip planner in languages other than English
- WMATA should ensure that MetroAccess users who don't speak English can get information about the service, apply, and speak with reservationists
- WMATA should establish a **Hot Spots** program, targeting LEP services at three specific locations:
 - Columbia Heights in the District of Columbia
 - Langley Park in Maryland
 - Bailey's Crossroads in Virginia
- WMATA should incorporate successful strategies from **Hot Spots** program system-wide
- WMATA should provide a draft of the **language access plan** to the AFA for review by May 2007.

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Small Group Discussions on Proposed “Hot Spot” Program



- Pick your group:
 - Columbia Heights in D.C.
 - Langley Park in MD
 - Bailey's Crossroads in VA



- **What would the ideal comprehensive language access program look like?**
 - **Consider the necessary transit information, amenities, and basic facilities**

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