

ACCESS FOR ALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

The Access for All Advisory Committee (AFA) met virtually on Monday, June 23, 2025. This was the first meeting of the new cohort. They received an update from the WMATA Access Advisory Committee, shared introductions, received a briefing on the Enhanced Mobility Solicitation, and discussed upcoming topics and further work on organizing the committee.

REPORT FROM THE WMATA ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AAC) LIAISON

Amanda Lau, TPB staff, provided the update for Deborah Fisher who had a scheduling conflict. The AAC is an advisory committee that reports to WMATA's Board of Directors to represent the needs of people with disabilities and older adults riding Metro. The report touched on several recent activities. The AAC has discussed accessibility (or lack thereof) in Prince George's County. Since the ADA determination for paratransit relies on the location of fixed routes, the lack of services in the county is challenging, Prince George's County transportation officials have assured the AAC that they are working to address the issue. Another topic is accessibility features such as wayfinding tools. AAC members have been reviewing these to ensure they are user friendly. Reliability of MetroAccess is another topic frequently discussed. These are systemic as well as individual problems that arise daily. Performance indicators such as elevator and escalator reliability and crime are reviewed. Crime has gone down, and riders are generally feeling safer. The budget, the new Better Bus network, and safety are other topics the AAC has been active in lately.

There were no questions or comments.

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. Since this was the first meeting of the new cohort, members introduced themselves and talked briefly about their programs. There are both new and returning members, some programs are just getting started and some have been in operation for a very long time.

There are organizations coordinating volunteer drivers for older adults, providing employment access for people with disabilities, providing transportation services directly through Enhanced Mobility grants, working in transportation equity programs, providing travel training, independent living assistance, expanding active transportation accessibility for underrepresented communities, providing services for underprivileged children, and developing wayfinding applications for older adults, people with disabilities, and those with limited English proficiency. All provide advice to elected and appointed officials. Members appreciate having an opportunity to share their work and get a regional perspective on transportation. Ex-officio members introduced themselves. They shared the broad scope of their programs and expressed appreciation for the work the members are doing.

2025 ENHANCED MOBILITY SOLICITATION

Cherice Sansbury, TPB staff, gave a presentation on the Enhanced Mobility program and the grant opportunity now underway. She said over \$64 million has been awarded to various projects since 2007. The projects focus on mobility improvements to enhance services for older adults and people with disabilities. She discussed the grant opportunity using some examples of recent grantee work, including the eligibility criteria, the selection process, and the schedule. Pre-application conferences will begin in July.

Questions and comments included the following:

How is the geography that depicts the eligible areas derived?

They are the urbanized areas as defined by the U.S. Census. FTA uses this geography to define where these funds will be spent.

Can you provide more details about the pre-application conferences?

The pre-application opportunities are posted on the website (mwcog.org). There will be two in-person conferences, and one will be hybrid.

WORK PLANNING SESSION

Amanda Lau, TPB staff, reviewed the preliminary results of a survey sent to all members. Questions include what the most pressing concerns are for organization, topics for future AFA meetings, most urgent needs, and what expectations members have for their participation in the AFA. The survey will be held open until July 16. Topics to be addressed in future meetings were also discussed, including Visualize 2050, safety planning, and bicycle and pedestrian planning. The next AFA meeting, scheduled for October 2025, will be about Visualize 2050. There will be an orientation session held on the Transportation Planning Board and long-range transportation planning for any members who have an interest prior to the next meeting to bring everyone up to speed. Laura Bachle also solicited interest in working on the organization and structure of the renewed AFA committee.

Questions and comments included the following:

Transportation within the metro area for people without cars is okay, but often people need to get to important appointments in areas without good access, like to court-appointed special advocates, so expanding opportunities for people who don't drive is key.

One topic for a future meeting could be best practices for involving people who have over-lapping disparities, such as older adults with limited English proficiency, and ways to reach out to those communities.

Regarding the structure and organization of the AFA committee, a suggestion was made to provide a description of what the opportunity might entail in terms of time, etc. and provide that to everyone for their consideration. Laura Bachle agreed to do that.

Member Attendees

Elena Alergant, NV Rides
Brandon Cassady, VA Workforce and Training Initiative
Julio Claros, Leisure World
William Clements, Gaithersburg HELP
Solomon Haile, COMTO, DC Chapter
Roger Hoskin, Fairfax County Transportation Advisory Commission
Terri Lamb, DATA
Kayla Sutton (for Roberta McEachern), Centers for Independent Living
Cassandra McFerson, Capitol Hill Village
Shannon Minnick, Independence Now
Kevin O'Brien, WABA
Era Pandya, MCPS
Karen Smith, The ARC of Greater Prince William/INSIGHT, Inc.
Zitao Weng, Korean Community Service Center of Great Washington
Keziah Wohlers, The ARC of Northern Virginia

Ex-Officio Attendees

Kenny Boddy, Prince William Board of County Supervisors
Bong Delrosario, MD Department of Disabilities
Janine Ashe, FHWA-DC
Denise Isreal, Montgomery County DOT
Jenene Lee, CAC Liaison
Glenn Millis, WMATA
John Nemeth, VDOT
Yaris Ng Pang, DC DOT
Jessica Richards, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland

TPB Staff

Laura Bachle
Rachel Beyerle
Amanda Lau
Cherice Sansbury
Kanti Srikanth