



March 10, 2014

Chuck Bean, Executive Director  
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments  
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Bean:

On February 27, 2014, Metro's Board of Directors discussed the need for regional collaboration for much-needed improvements in the coordination of specialized transportation services. I am writing on behalf of the Metro Board to request that the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOCG) facilitate that collaboration, in partnership with Metro, with the goal of providing service to the greatest number of customers through the most effective use of available resources.

As you know, accessible transportation is key to the quality of life of people with disabilities. Social service transportation, MetroAccess and Medicaid paratransit provide rides for people with disabilities unable to use the region's accessible fixed-route services. However, MetroAccess, which provided two million trips last year, is the most expensive option and is becoming unsustainable as we anticipate the future growth of customers.

Over the last 20 years, Metro has funded the many improvements to make Metrobus and Metrorail fully accessible to people with disabilities. Last year, over 16 million rides were taken by seniors and people with disabilities on Metro's accessible fixed-route services, many of whom were travel trained by Metro staff. Also, over one million rides were taken on fixed-route by conditionally eligible MetroAccess customers.

Despite Metro's successful efforts in accommodating the ever-increasing demand for service by our customers with disabilities, this year alone, the demand for MetroAccess has increased by seven percent. Growth at this rate is unsustainable and costly, and it draws upon financial resources that are greatly needed for safety and system improvements.

The region, working together, could address this important issue in a number of ways. One immediate action would be to focus on improving 10,000 of the region's 19,000 bus stops that today are inaccessible. Metro is working with local jurisdictions to prioritize accessibility improvements for bus stops. While it is not practical to repair all 10,000 stops in the short term, it is practical to direct resources to a prioritized subset. This can be accomplished through

**Washington  
Metropolitan Area  
Transit Authority**

600 Fifth Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
202/962-1234

By Metrorail:  
Judiciary Square—Red Line  
Gallery Place-Chinatown—  
Red, Green and  
Yellow Lines  
By Metrobus:  
Routes D1, D3, D6, P6,  
70, 71, 80, X2

Mr. Chuck Bean  
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local, state, and federal funds, and it is our understanding that bus stop improvements are among the priorities for this year's selection of projects for all grants administered by MWCOG.

Another is to work together to identify the most cost effective way to provide this much needed service. Metro is moving ahead with two such pilot projects. Maryland's Department of Transportation and Metro have implemented a pilot that funds social service agency paratransit trips previously operated by MetroAccess. The District of Columbia and Metro are developing a taxi service for residents traveling to and from dialysis centers in lieu of MetroAccess. The Maryland pilot has already produced favorable results, but more is needed throughout the region.

Therefore, we are asking that MWCOG facilitate a discussion of these important issues. Metro staff is capable and available to co-lead this effort with MWCOG, and the Metro Board believes that this type of proven partnership can lead to more effective specialized transportation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Downs". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "T" and "D".

Tom Downs  
Chairman

C: Metro Board of Directors  
Richard Sarles, General Manager and Chief Executive Officer



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION  

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TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Transportation Planning Board

**FROM:** Tim Lovain, TPB Second Vice Chair  
Chair, Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force

**SUBJECT:** WMATA Board Request for COG/TPB to Facilitate Regional Collaboration with WMATA on Specialized Transportation Services

**DATE:** March 19, 2014

COG's Executive Director received a letter from the Chair of the WMATA Board, Tom Downs, regarding regional coordination of accessible transportation on March 10 and asked TPB staff to work with me to provide this memorandum for your background. The attached letter from Chairman Downs requested that COG/TPB facilitate regional coordination with WMATA given concerns about the growth and cost of MetroAccess service, the need for bus stop improvements and alternatives to MetroAccess.

The TPB has been actively engaged with WMATA in regional coordination of these issues since 2007 and looks forward to continuing to partner with WMATA, State and local governments, and non-profit agencies to address the mobility needs of people with disabilities in cost-effective ways. The TPB's Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force, which I currently chair, has been discussing and recommending approaches to expand access to the fixed route system and provide alternatives to MetroAccess. This has resulted in the TPB funding a number of successful Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Freedom and Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) projects: the Reach-a-Ride specialized transportation information website for consumers, travel training, bus stop improvements, pilot programs for wheelchair accessible taxis and other alternatives to MetroAccess. WMATA's involvement has been a key to the success of several of these grants: WMATA provides the match funding for the Reach-a-Ride website, and is the recipient of a bus stop improvement grant. Continued collaboration with WMATA on these critical issues is welcomed and the WMATA staff participation at the Task Force meetings is appreciated.

The March 10 letter from the WMATA Board will be discussed at the next Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force meeting on March 27. After that discussion, staff will prepare a response to Chairman Down's letter to be sent from TPB Chair Patrick Wojahn and distributed to the TPB at its April meeting.

The concerns raised in the letter from the WMATA Board are shared across the region, and will be central themes as the Task Force oversees the update to the Federally-required Coordinated Human Service Transportation. The Coordinated Plan will guide funding decisions for FTA's new Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility program which provides approximately \$2.8 million per year in grants for specialized transportation services. The Enhanced Mobility program is an opportunity to build upon the success of

the TPB's JARC and New Freedom projects and support the region's mutual goals of providing people with disabilities quality transportation in cost-efficient ways. These federal funds require matching funds of either 50 percent or 20 percent which has been challenging for local governments and non-profit agencies to identify.

The Task Force will also explore the possibility of a TPB-hosted regional forum on specialized transportation, in collaboration with WMATA, for senior agency staff at the local and State levels to share innovative practices and approaches for addressing mobility challenges for persons with disabilities.