ACCESS FOR ALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

The Access for All Advisory Committee (AFA) met virtually on Monday, November 2, 2026. The committee received a report from the WMATA Access Advisory Committee liaison, an update on re-tooling of the Reach-A-Ride program, a presentation on the status of the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan, and a presentation on the Washington Area Bicyclists Association.

REPORT FROM THE WMATA ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AAC) LIAISON

Deborah Fisher gave an update on the committee. Ms. Fisher shared a few items the committee is working on, including recommendations from the wayfinding signage workgroup, updates on the bus stop and shelters improvement program, and the latest information on digital assistance. Ms. Fisher urged AFA members to attend the AAC meetings. She also stressed that WMATA is open to feedback and encouraged members to reach out with any concerns.

Questions and comments included the following:

Does WMATA collect profiles of riders?

No. They do collect information on how you are using digital assistance services, or who might be using Metro Access so that person can choose to set up services if they have, for example, communication challenges. It enables the rider and trip provider to be more efficient.

Are there problems with how WMATA shares information? Oftentimes there are complaints from riders about buses passing them by or arriving very late.

Glenn Millis addressed this question directly. He said to let WMATA know right away about any concerns, and he provided his phone number. It's important to remember that the buses and MetroAccess are affected by the same traffic patterns and delays as other vehicles. Some of these are unavoidable, but there are other ways to ensure you can get to where you need to go. Abilities-Ride is another service that provides door-to-door assistance.

Other members shared their experiences with service, including waiting over an hour for a pick-up or being on the vehicle for a very long time. They said there are a lot of issues. A suggestion was that WMATA should let a user know if there is going to be an excessive delay so a rider can make a different choice. Members discussed the different services WMATA provides and how they operate, whether at the curb, door-to-door, and other aspects of the services. Other providers, such as Uber-WAV, are also available, but they can be inconsistent in the type of services they can offer, such as wheelchair- accessible vehicles. WMATA representatives encouraged members to reach out directly to let them know about their experiences. They are committed to improving service but need to hear from their clients.

REACH-A-RIDE PROGRAM UPDATE

Dan Sheehan, Transportation Operations Program Director, gave an update on the status of the project. He reminded members that COG was awarded $100,000 to coordinate an upgrade to the Reach a Ride platform, originally envisioned as a one-call, one-click Information and Referral/Assistance tool for transportation options. The original program fell into disuse, so COG conducted extensive stakeholder engagement. Stakeholders unanimously identified the greatest need as a "Help the Helper" resource, including a comprehensive, regionally maintained directory of transportation services, supported by a dedicated mobility manager, that equips local mobility

managers with the information they need to serve clients whose needs fall outside their own program's eligibility boundaries or service area.

FTA approved the re-scope, so recently COG finalized the implementation strategy and secured contracted support for the program. The consultant team is busy building the new site, including consolidating information from the legacy site, looking over all the data fields and getting ready for Beta-testing the site. January is targeted for launching the new site so that there can be six months of operation. During that time, data will be collected to test the value of the service to provide FTA with a data-informed recommendation of the program's future.

Mr. Sheehan posed two questions to the AFA for feedback:

- Do you have particular data fields you'd like to include?
- Would anyone be willing to sign on in December to beta-test the site?

Suggestions included a field for service and coverage area. There is also a concern over nomenclature for service areas, for example, assuring we have an understanding of service for Fairfax County, for example, that may not include Alexandria City. Discussion also included misleading street addresses. There are postal codes that indicate the address is in Falls Church, for example, when it is actually in Fairfax County. That can create confusion. A mobility manager might search for Alexandria providers, not realizing that the provider doesn't serve southern Fairfax County. It's especially concerning with Virginia geography.

The following members asked to be included in the Beta-testing phase: Bong DelRosario, Cynthia Alarico, and Era Pandya. The Beta-test will likely be held in mid-December.

Questions and comments included the following:

If hours of operation for a service are from 9-4, who picks up from 4 to midnight? How does someone get that information?
Hours of operation is a good data field to ensure is covered. We also hope to refresh the provider information routinely so we can get better at identifying services. There likely won't be a lot of turnover during the six-month pilot, but the information will be updated regularly in any case.

Will you include surveys as part of the pilot?
Yes, we plan on doing an end-of-project survey, so we will do a wrap-up report to identify our lessons learned and what next steps we might take if we decide to launch a full-scale program after the pilot.

COORDINATED HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE
Sergio Ritacco, TPB Senior Planner, summarized the nature of this plan, which is to plan for the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities. The plan is an FTA requirement which needs to be completed before the next Section 5310 program solicitation. He reminded the members that the plan has four main sections, including taking stock of all the providers, addressing how these services are meeting the needs of older adults and people with disabilities, what gaps may exist, and then applying those strategies to advise awards through the Section 5310 program. Mr. Ritacco introduced Eva Hsu and Alexander McRoberts from ICF to go over the findings to date, indicating they are about to launch an open survey to the public for people who identify as older adults or people with disabilities.

Ms. Hsu and Mr. McRoberts went over the timeline for the plan development, which has a deadline of May, 2027. They are going to build off the previous plan completed in 2023, beginning with the inventory of existing services. They shared information they have gathered so far which includes list

of over 170 providers. Providers were interviewed to ascertain their top accessibility improvements they would find most useful, what types of coordination might improve outcomes, and what long-term outcomes should guide 5310 funding decisions. They are also surveying riders using the services, which will run from mid-November to mid-January. These efforts will identify those gaps in coverage. They plan on returning to the AFA with their findings in February.

Questions and comments included the following:

In addition to the surveys, look at the 5310 grant history, because to some extent, they represent what the community and COG believes is important. For example, at one point human services agencies didn't receive vehicle grants. That changed when some of those organizations voiced their concerns and now they do get these grants. It was identified as a priority through the grants process. A similar example is travel training. There wasn't any, but it was identified as a need and is now routinely funded.

A grants review was conducted by staff, so that information is captured, but grant history is very important. This is an iteration of previous plans so nothing successful will be lost.

How will people know the survey is not a scam?

The survey will come from COG with a TPB logo. We have assured all the correct accounts are linked. Hopefully people will understand this is authentic.

Is the Coordinated Human Services Transportation plan being coordinated with the Reach-A-Ride reboot?

Yes, the coordinated plan is moving at a faster pace, so the data we gather will be available to Reach-A-Ride as they get up to speed.

What long-term outcomes should guide the 5310 funding going forward?

Vehicles that have a low floor with ramps or lifts has been a successful modification. Also, we have the advent of very intelligent transportation, some very automated, which includes scheduling and dispatch. That's out of the range of many NGOs now, but they are coming down in price.

AFA FORUM

Committee members received a presentation from Kevin O'Brien with the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA). Mr. O'Brien shared an overview of the type of work WABA is doing, which includes advocacy, education, a new Trail Rangers program, and the Gearing Up community bike shop. WABA also sponsors community rides and just started a program through Capital Bikeshare to offer cargo bikes through a cargo bike library. Members discussed safety education in schools and how people outside schools are being trained, the challenges of conflicts between wheelchair users and the design of some bike facilities, and safety education aimed at e-bikes and scooters. Mr. O'Brien said one of the reasons he joined AFA was to have an open dialogue with people with disabilities in order to understand how to make communities easier to navigate for everyone.

Member Attendees

Era Pandya, MCPS, Co-Chair
Elena Alergant, NV Rides
Deborah Fisher, WMATA Access Advisory Committee Liaison
Solomon Haile, COMTO
Terri Lamb, DATA
Ray Billings, DATA
Shannon Minnick, Independence Now

Kevin O'Brien, WABA
Keziah Wohlers, ARC of NoVA
Gail Sullivan, CAC Liaison

Ex-Officio Attendees
Leo Pineda, VDOT, Co-Chair
Bong Delrosario, Maryland Department of Disabilities
Yaris Ng Pang, DDOT
Christopher Grayton, Yellow Cab
Glenn Millis, WMATA
Denise Isreal, Montgomery County DOT
Cynthia Alarico, Fairfax County
Jessica Richards, Tri-County Council

TPB Staff
Laura Bachle
Rachel Beyerle
Marc Moser
Dan Sheehan
Sergio Ritacco
Lyn Erickson
Cristina Finch
Cherice Porter
Eva Hsu, ICF- Consultant
Alexander McRoberts, ICF-Consultant