

ACCESS FOR ALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

The Access for All Advisory Committee (AFA) met virtually on Monday, August 3, 2026. The committee received a report from the WMATA Access Advisory Committee liaison, an update on the bicycle and pedestrian plan, and a presentation on University Legal Services. Additionally, the committee held a discussion on the re-tooling of the Reach-A-Ride program.

REPORT FROM THE WMATA ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AAC) LIAISON

Deborah Fisher gave an update on the committee. Ms. Fisher shared the focus areas the committee has been addressing, including the Red Line closures, concerns about wayfinding signage for low-vision patrons, results of a survey on restrooms and accessibility, and work on emergency preparedness for trains.

Questions and comments included the following:

Some commuters with disabilities on Metrorail have problems with finding a seat before the train starts. Sometimes the lurch of the train results in a person falling. Is WMATA aware of this problem?

There are designated seats and there is supposed to be enough time for people to seat themselves, but this is the kind of issue that would benefit from people attending the AAC meetings and bringing the topic up directly. This actually might improve as Metro moves to automation, but it's important to provide input to Metro on these concerns.

Regarding MetroAccess providing Uber and Lyft as part of their services through Abilities-Ride, the way it's supposed to work is that you sign up and indicate you need a wheelchair-accessible ride. Currently wheelchair users have been encountering problems getting those services.

Christiaan Blake is the director of Access Services for WMATA. He encourages people to reach out to him directly. This is the kind of issue that needs to be brought to WMATA's attention.

Could you provide more information on the emergency preparedness work WMATA is engaged in doing? Specifically, are people with intellectual and developmental disabilities being considered?

The work is ongoing both internally and externally. This group in particular is very important, because of the challenges they face of being confused and overwhelmed despite travel training and other supports. Keeping this population in mind as we do this work benefits everyone. We make sure we reach out to public. Anyone is welcome to contact us.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN UPDATE

Michael Farrell, TPB staff, updated the committee on the status of the plan, which is updated every four years. A particular focus of the plan this time is on facilities that function for all ages and all abilities via a low-stress network. Micro-mobility also continues to be a growing theme in the plan. The plan will be accessed on an interactive dashboard with many features to aid the public. Mr. Farrell recapped a workshop that was held that included accessibility considerations for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. There was great interest among the attendees in furthering the discussion on public right-of-way accessibility guidelines (PROWAG) so another workshop is being scheduled exclusively on this topic on August 24.

Questions and comments included the following:

The number of scooters and electric bicycles has increased. They ride on sidewalks and pose a hazard. What more can you share about this issue?

This is something everyone is aware of, especially e-motos, or electronic motorcycles. These can be characterized as over-powered e-bikes that can go faster than other electric-assisted types. They are typically being sold online so it is tough to regulate them. It's an issue for everyone. Regarding enforcement overall, jurisdictions vary but most encourage people not to ride on the sidewalks and wear a helmet. Bicyclists can be ticketed the same as a driver. Bicyclists are supposed to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk, and when they are using the street, they are expected to follow the rules of the road the same as a car. However, it is harder to ticket a bicyclist.

In general, people with disabilities are concerned about bike lanes. Blind pedestrians and people who use mobility devices are fearful of using public transportation because they often need to navigate that space on their own. Has there been any consideration of creating spaces that help with making the transit from bus to sidewalk safer?

Yes, there are some considerations. This is a good topic to address at the upcoming workshop on PROWAG.

AFA FORUM

Committee members received a presentation from Jane Brown from University Legal Services (ULS). ULS has been providing services to support under-represented individuals in the District since 1967. ULS provides housing counseling, legal services including tenants' rights and homeownership, workshops on housing options and financial literacy, and work through Tenant Opportunity Purchase Act (TOPA). They advocate for people with disabilities and serve as the District of Columbia's Protection and Advocacy agency, known as Disability Rights DC. Their work also includes the Help America Vote Act services, ensuring DC residents have accessible places to vote, a prison advocacy program, and access for Washingtonians with disabilities to assistive technology.

REACH-A-RIDE PROGRAM UPDATE

Dan Sheehan, Transportation Operations Program Director, recapped the history of COG's Reach-A-Ride platform, originally envisioned as a one-call, one-click Information and Referral/Assistance tool for transportation options across the National Capital Region. The original program fell into disuse, so over the last several months, COG has been engaged in discussions with stakeholders, including individual interviews with eleven stakeholders representing mobility management programs, transit agencies, and human service organizations across the region. The intent of these engagement sessions was to determine the most effective and sustainable direction for the program.

These discussions resulted in a recommendation to re-tool the program into 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. This recommendation has been forwarded to the FTA for permission to re-scope the program. If approved, it will be important that mobility managers and service providers help in refining and tailoring this approach so it is maximally useful.

Laura Bachle went over the proposed timeline and added some more details about what was heard during the interviews, which included the preferred format of the platform, challenges and issues mobility managers face, roles for TPB, and possible uses outside of mobility managers. Staff will keep the AFA informed on progress and invited members to reach out if they have interest in helping tailor the program.

Member Attendees

Elena Alergant, NV Rides

Jane Brown, ULS

Brandon Cassady, VA Workforce and Training Initiative

William Clements, Gaithersburg HELP

Deborah Fisher, WMATA Access Advisory Committee Liaison

Terri Lamb, DATA

Roger Hoskin, Fairfax County Transportation Advisory Commission

Shannon Minnick, Independence Now

Zitao Weng, Korean Community Service Center of Great Washington

Keziah Wohlers, The ARC of Northern Virginia

Ex-Officio Attendees

Leo Pineda, VDOT, Co-Chair

Bong Delrosario, Maryland Department of Disabilities

Glenn Millis, WMATA

Christopher Grayton, Yellow Cab

Glenn Millis, WMATA

TPB Staff

Laura Bachle

Rachel Beyerle

Amanda Lau

Kanti Srikanth

Mike Farrell

Dan Sheehan

Janie Nham

Kanti Srikanth

Lyn Erickson

Taylor Robey

Tom Harrington

Cristina Finch