

Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities (ACPD)
March 12, 2024 – 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Microsoft Teams Remote Meeting

MINUTES

Welcome and Meeting Protocol

Committee Chair Earl Lee called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Gabe Christie, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA Manager), reminded the committee of the virtual meeting protocols.

Roll Call

In Attendance:

1. Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities:
Earl Lee, Greg Martinez Brenda Carney, Erick DuBray, Kristina Erikson, Nicole Campuzano, Atlantis (Ex Officio), CCB (Ex Officio), CCDC (Ex Officio)
2. Access-A-Ride Paratransit Advisory Committee:
3. RTD Staff:
Gabe Christie, Carl Green Jr., Tim Dean, Dave Jensen, Paul Hamilton, Gretchen Vidergar

Safety Moment

Gabe Christie, ADA Manager, reminded the attendees of the importance of winterizing one's house and ensuring proper precautions are taken during the volatile weather of spring.

Public Comment Period

No public comment.

Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities

1. Updates
 - a. 16th Street Mall Update
 - i. Gabe Christie, ADA Manager, provided an update on 16th Street Mall's renovation. The first three blocks of the mall will reopen on Labor Day weekend. Gabe intends to take committee members to this area when it reopens to assess its accessibility and give feedback to the City and County of Denver.

Earl Lee wants to visit this block and measure the distances around the bus stop to ensure it meets ADA accessibility standards. Earl stated that a tree or shrub seems to be at the spot where customers are supposed to board the bus, and another tree or



shrub is about 26 feet away, where the second set of bus doors would be. Additionally, a detectible warning track, with a color and texture that contrasts with the surrounding sidewalk, is supposed to be installed at each bus stop. Earl stated that this warning track should either be a 24-inch-wide textured surface, or a 12-inch-wide textured surface beside a similarly colored 12-wide untextured surface.

Earl Lee brought up potential concerns regarding the ramp angle to board the Free MallRide buses. Denver originally intended to install 3-inch curbs on the new sidewalks, which would have made the bus ramps too steep to board for wheelchair users. However, Denver is now installing 4-inch curbs. Earl believes people in wheelchairs will be able to use the ramps at this height and angle.

Earl Lee explained that when the 16th Street Mall's renovation is complete, the street will contain a bus lane moving in each direction with about four feet between them. On either side will be an amenity zone three to seven feet wide for vendors, activities and sitting areas. A 10-foot-wide walkway area will be on the far side of the amenity zones. This contrasts with the mall's prior configuration, where vendors resided in the area between the bus lanes.

2. Discussion

a. Possible L Line Suspension

Earl Lee gave an update on the L Line, stating that service on the line will be suspended March 18-22, 2024, to begin repairing and replacing tracks near downtown. Dave Jensen, Assistant General Manager of Rail Operations, clarified that during March 18-22, preliminary work and inspections will be done to prepare for the Near-term Downtown Reconstruction Project (Project) planned for summer 2024. This preliminary work is related to updating the electronics in the automobile traffic signs adjacent to the L Line corridor. Dave says the L Line may resume service earlier than Saturday, March 23, if the work is completed quickly.

Dave Jensen, Assistant General Manager of Rail Operations, summarized the Project. He stated that the L Line tracks are 30 years old and at the end of their functional lifespan. The Project will have multiple phases, and during the first every aspect of the track will get replaced at five intersections: 15th and Stout streets, 15th and California streets, 17th and Stout streets, 17th and California streets, and 19th and Welton streets. This Project will take place from Memorial Day weekend through September 2024, at which point the L Line should be able to resume normal operations. The L Line must be closed during the Project because, with the closure of these intersections, there would be no way to move the trains to and from the rail yard each day. The rest of the track in downtown and for the L Line, including along the Welton St. corridor, will be replaced in phases, but the schedule for those phases has not yet been determined.

To mitigate the disruption in service, the H and D lines will go to Denver Union Station instead of downtown. Customers who would normally take the L Line will be directed to use Route 43, but this may change. The Communications team is working on

outreach efforts to ensure customers know which route or routes they can use instead of the L Line. Dave Jensen, Assistant General Manager of Rail Operations, will connect the Communications team with Earl Lee to ensure the changes are communicated clearly to people with disabilities in the community.

b. Access-on-Demand Service

Paul Hamilton, Senior Manager, Paratransit Services, provided an update on the ongoing discussion about Access-on-Demand and invited the committee to provide input and feedback. Of the four Access-on-Demand service providers, only Uber offers multiple stops on trips. Additionally, Uber does not provide multiple stops on trips in wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV). Uber's WAVs are provided by RTD, because Uber does not have any of its own. RTD never designed nor approved Access-on-Demand to provide anything other than single-stop, one-way trips. Members of both ACPD and APAC want multiple-stop trips on Access-on-Demand, and RTD board members have received feedback from the public requesting the same.

Paul Hamilton, Senior Manager, Paratransit Services, informed the committee that Debra A. Johnson, General Manager and CEO, set up a American Public Transportation Association (APTA) peer review so that members of the transit community can closely review each aspect of the paratransit service. Alongside this, Debra set up a webpage where paratransit customers can provide feedback on their experience with Access-on-Demand. Currently about 3,500 customers have access to this page.

Carmine stated he has never been able to successfully request an Access-on-Demand trip due to his wheelchair. Paul Hamilton, Senior Manager, Paratransit Services, said he will get Larry Buter, Manager, Paratransit Services, or Gretchen Vidergar, Coordinator, Paratransit Eligibility, in contact with Carmine that day. Paul said WAV was set up through Uber to ensure wheelchair users had access to trips and 10% of all Access-on-Demand trips are provided to wheelchair users. Carmine stated that when he requests a trip, he is told that the dispatcher needs to find someone able and willing to drive the WAV, and then nobody follows up. Additionally, there have been instances where the dispatchers tell Carmine that WAVs are not offered after 3 p.m., despite the request occurring before that time. Paul stated that because Carmine has been having these issues, he will bring this issue up again at the next meeting so that Paul can ensure there will be follow up and feedback for Carmine's concerns.

Catrice Thomas, Atlantis (Ex Officio), commented that she hopes the multiple-stop Access-on-Demand service continues. Catrice said that occasionally a driver will drop her off at the wrong building. She stated that consumers at Atlantis can corroborate Carmine's experience of being unable to request a wheelchair accessible vehicle through Access-on-Demand. Paul Hamilton, Senior Manager, Paratransit Services, replied that Uber and Lyft as companies do not have any wheelchair accessible vehicles. Additionally, Paul noted that Metro Taxi has always struggled to provide enough wheelchair accessible vehicles for afternoon demand, and zTrip has only



recently updated their Denver fleet with several wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Catrice Thomas, Atlantis (Ex Officio), asked whether these companies are receiving incentives for participating in Access-on-Demand and whether they can be influenced into providing more wheelchair accessible vehicles for this service. Paul Hamilton, Senior Manager, Paratransit Services, responded that these vendors are subsidized, but not controlled, by RTD. Each company offers slightly different services, and WAV trips in Uber are provided by RTD vehicles. Due to this, Paul recommends customers sign up for service with every vendor, so that they can maximize their choices and options.

Cynde asked if RTD could provide a complaint form to customers to report problems with the Access-on-Demand vendors. As an example, Cynde stated customers are dropped off at the wrong building often enough that RTD should be aware of this issue. She believes people are not informing RTD of these issues after the fact because they are already spending so much time and energy addressing the issues in the moment. Paul Hamilton, Senior Manager, Paratransit Services, responded that each vendor has their own complaint intake process, and that any civil rights or ADA violations can and will be investigated by RTD. Gretchen Vidergar, Coordinator, Paratransit Eligibility, added that customers can submit complaints on the customer comment form at RTD's ADA Office webpage. Gretchen stated all complaints are tracked, her team follows up with the vendors about the complaints and the form can be filled out and submitted without speaking to someone about the issue. Cynde responded she did not know about the customer care form and will let others know it is available.

Julie stated that she had already taken a dozen WAV trips through Uber in March. She has been using the service since it was a pilot program and offered to help Carmine and others set up and learn about the Access-on-Demand service. Jessica, who uses a scooter, said the service has improved since it launched, and that she also uses several WAV trips per month, like Julie.

c. Future Agenda Items

Gabe Christie, ADA Manager, requested ACPD members share all agenda items they wish to discuss at the May meeting as soon as is feasible, because he will be on leave in April/May. Tim Dean, Civil Rights Administrator, will be the point of contact for the May meeting. Tim will ask for additional agenda items closer to the meeting date, as well as provide support and take minutes for that meeting.

Please send agenda items to Gabe.Christie@RTD-Denver.com and Tim.Dean@RTD-Denver.com.

3. Departures

a. Kirsten Erby

Gabe Christie, ADA Manager, informed the committee that Kirsten Erby stepped down

from her role due to personal matters. Gabe will share the link to the ACPD member application immediately after the meeting and within the meeting minutes. He requests the committee members recommend people to apply to the open positions. Gabe hopes to have new committee members by the next joint ACPD APAC meeting.

Adjourned at 11:54 a.m. – Gabe Christie, ADA Manager