

Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities (ACPD)
May 14, 2024 – 2:00-3:30 p.m.
Microsoft Teams Remote Meeting

MINUTES

Welcome and Opening Comments

Committee Chair Earl Lee called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

Virtual Protocol/Roll Call

Gabe Christie, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Manager, reminded the committee of the virtual meeting protocols.

In Attendance:

1. Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities – General Members:
Earl Lee, Greg Martinez, Brenda Carney, Aly DeWillis-Marcano, Erick DuBray, Kristina Ericson, Nicole Campuzano, Kirsten Erby
2. Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities – Ex Officio Members:
Catrice Thomas – Atlantis, DeShawn Spears – Colorado Center for the Blind, Joe Beaver – Colorado Cross Disability Coalition
3. RTD Staff:
Gabe Christie, Carl Green, William 'Bill' Sirois, Erin Vallejos, Paul Hamilton, Michelle Merz-Hutchinson, Steve Smith, Jack Kroll Matthew Alonzo
4. RTD Board Members:
Jamie Lewis, District A

Safety Moment

Gabe Christie iterated the importance of practicing heat safety in the Spring and Summer months.

Public Comment Period

No public comment.

Updates for ACPD Committee:

1. Board reporting methods
 - a. Jack Kroll, Executive Manager, Board Office, stated the Board wishes to have a formalized, written way for external entities, including ACPD, to provide input to the Board on a regular basis. These written reports would be verbally summarized during Board meetings, and the



reports would be included in the transcript of the meeting in which they were summarized. Jack requested the ACPD members to consider how they would like to provide these updates to the board.

2. Civic Center Station renaming

- a. Jack Kroll, Executive Manager, Board Office, reported that renaming RTD stations was a discussion item at the April Board meeting, and he expects it to be an action item at the June meeting. Once the Board approves the policy to rename RTD property and stations, Jack expects to create a system for the Board office to receive renaming proposals. At this point, if or when someone proposes to rename Civic Center Station, the policy and system will be in place to enact this change.

3. Gang of 19 monument

- a. Joe Beaver, CCDC, summarized how Rev. Wade Blank and the Gang of 19 protested for accessible public transit. Joe stated that the city of Denver is enthusiastic about installing a sculpture as a monument to the Gang of 19, and he encouraged RTD to participate in creating and installing this monument. Director Jaime Lewis stated that he has encouraged the city's officials to make this monument the centerpiece of Civic Center Park. The city wanted to put the monument in one of the wings of the park, but a decision has not been finalized. Director Lewis encouraged ACPD to write a letter of endorsement of the monument and its placement in the center of the park.

Jack Kroll, Executive Manager, Board Office, asked about the city's timeline for working on the monument. Joe Beaver responded that there is no official timeline yet, but that he would expect about two years. Director Lewis stated that he expects at least one year to be spent in concept and development, and probably another year for the artist to create the sculpture. He added that money has already been set aside for this monument and will not be taken away.

Earl Lee, Chair, stated he believes this monument is a worthwhile endeavor and would like to endorse it. He encouraged the committee to send a letter to the board in support of this project. Catrice Thomas, Atlantis asked for more details about the monument's design and placement. Director Lewis stated that the monument will reflect many disabilities and will represent the disability rights movement and community, rather than Rev. Wade Blank or any other specific individual. The monument's design has not yet been finalized.

Aly DeWillis-Marcano asked about the process for the committee to endorse or support a project like this. Gabe Christie, ADA Manager, stated that Earl Lee would draft a statement with Gabe's assistance, which would then be sent to the members for feedback. Following members' approval, Earl and Gabe would forward the letter to the board, and possibly to the city as well. Director Lewis and Jack Kroll, Executive Manager, Board Office, clarified that because this is the city's project, the letter should be primarily directed to the city, with the RTD Board of Directors CC'ed.

Aly DeWillis-Marcano asked if the decision makers were the Denver City Council or the



Denver city administration. Director Lewis stated the administration should be the decision makers. Kristina Erikson clarified that the Denver Arts & Venues agency will make the decisions regarding the monument.

Other Matters

1. Bus operators alighting wheelchair users
 - a. Earl Lee, Chair, described a pattern of incidents where bus operators stop in places that force wheelchair users to alight into the grass or mud rather than onto the concrete pad or sidewalk. Earl asked the members to share their experiences of operators not providing adequate space to alight onto the sidewalk. Joe Beaver, CCDC, stated he had had the same experience. Earl described one occurrence where the operator pulled up and away from the sidewalk so that the ramp could be used as a bridge, leaving most of the sidewalk free for alighting. This contrasted with at least two other incidents where operators did not attempt to adjust the bus's placement for alighting.

Earl Lee asked if there were any protocol or procedures for kneeling or lowering the bus. He described an incident where an elderly customer struggled to step up onto the bus from street level, where the bus operator did not attempt to lower the bus or ask the customer if she needed assistance. He asked if RTD has policies regarding situations like this and if operators are trained how to assist customers with disabilities or those who seem to be struggling. Erin Vallejos, Senior Manager, Contracted Services, responded that, according to the Trailblazer, operators are supposed to stop three feet before the flag stick to allow for proper deployment of the ramp or lift, or three feet past the flag stick if there are obstructions. Erin stated that operators use their discretion on a case-by-case basis, and pulling away from the sidewalk to use the ramp as a bridge can be viable depending on the specific street and level of traffic. She also said that operators receive extensive instruction on this during their job training, as well as periodic refresher training and bulletins which act as policy and procedure reminders. Erin wants to discuss this issue with Chris Deines, General Superintendent, Transportation, before following up with the committee with potential solutions. Regarding lowering the bus, Erin wants to find the specific language in the Trailblazer before speaking further on the issue. However, she said operators should always lower the bus for a customer who asks for that assistance. She then encouraged the committee members to send similar incidents and other complaints to Customer Care, especially if they can identify the operator who was violating policy. Director Lewis, RTD Board Director, agreed with Erin that the bulletins are helpful for reminding operators of correct procedures. He stated many bus stops in the district do not have concrete pads, which makes safe alighting difficult. Operators have discretion to not alight customers in areas the operators deem unsafe, so customers should communicate with the operators to find an appropriate place to alight.

Earl Lee brought up RTD's policy of allowing 60 days for investigation and resolution of complaints. He believed this timeline was unacceptably long. Erin Vallejos, Senior Manager, Contracted Services, stated that in her office Title VI and ADA complaints must be investigated and addressed within six days and other complaints must be addressed within 10 days. Gabe Christie, ADA Manager, explained that while Division management tries to

resolve cases within six days, the 60-day window is available when cases have extenuating circumstances. Gabe will contact Chris Deines, General Superintendent, Transportation, to determine why Earl's initial complaint was not resolved in six days. Additionally, Gabe will ensure that Earl's concerns regarding alighting will be discussed in an FAQ document to be distributed to operators at ADA Open House events later this year.

2. ACPD membership recruitment update

- a. Gabe Christie, ADA Manager, stated that only three people have applied to be a member of the committee since the last round of applications in 2023. He requested the members to disseminate the application link and encourage community members to apply to the committee. Four members' terms will end this year, and there are two vacancies, so Gabe wants to bring in six to seven new members to bring the committee up to its 13-member maximum. Gabe will send the application link to the members along with the meeting minutes.

3. 16th Street Mall update

- a. Gabe Christie, ADA Manager, stated that when construction on the #2 block is complete, the committee will visit and evaluate the space for its accessibility features. He wants to ensure the committee can provide timely feedback about the reconstruction to the city of Denver and the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure. Gabe visited the #1 block on Monday, May 13, 2024, and has concerns about the stone delineation between the pedestrian and transit routes. He will send an email to the committee members to decide dates to visit the completed blocks and provide feedback.

Earl Lee, Chair, asked if he would be able to access a measured drawing of a Free MallRide bus. Gabe Christie, ADA Manager, stated he would contact Tim Lucero, General Superintendent, Street Operations, regarding this request. Greg Martinez sent Earl and Gabe a copy of the design guidelines, which included the bus dimensions.

Closing Comments

Earl Lee adjourned the meeting at 2:55 p.m.