

Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities (ACPD)
September 6, 2023 – 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm
Microsoft Teams Remote Meeting

MINUTES

Welcome and Opening Comments

Committee Chair Earl Lee called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.

Virtual Protocol/Roll Call

Gabe Christie, RTD's ADA Manager, reminded the committee of the virtual meeting protocols.

In Attendance:

1. Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities General Members:
Aaron Pasterz, Earl Lee, Brenda Carney, Aly DeWillis-Marcano, Doug Wooley, Ericka DuBray, Kristina Ericson, Betty Elias, Nicole Campusano
2. Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities Ex-Officio Members:
Joe Beaver – Colorado Cross Disability Coalition, Catrice Thomas – Atlantis Community Inc, Dishon Spears – Colorado Center for the Blind
3. RTD Staff:
Gabe Christie; Carl Green, Dave Jensen; Paul Hamilton, Michelle Murz-Hutchinson, Marta Sipeki, Dave Houston, Nicholas Rorres, Andrea Sucherman, Attilio Framarini, Charlie Chavez
4. RTD Board Members
Kate Williams

Safety Moment

Gabe Christie reminded the attendees of the importance of weather safety and ensuring proper precautions are taken during the volatile weather of the spring.

Public Comment Period

No public comment.

Updates for ACPD Committee:

- **Welcome to our New Members**

- a. Gabe Christie, ADA Manager, Civil Rights Division, asked the newest members of the ACPD to introduce themselves by giving their names. The new members of the ACPD are Ericka DuBray, Kristina Ericson, Betty Elias and Nicole Campusano. The new members expressed their passion for the work of the committee and their excitement to have an impact on the community and transportation in the RTD service area.

- **Elevators Outage Customer Support**

- a. Gabe Christie, ADA Manager, Civil Rights Division provided information regarding elevator outage customer support. Gabe stated that the RTD staff member who oversees elevator outage support was unable to attend the meeting. He opened the floor and asked that ACPD members provide their feedback and recommendations regarding the provision of support for customers.

Earl Lee, Chair, ACPD stated that he has lost all faith in the ability to keep the elevators operational. Earl stated that there is very little communication regarding outages of elevators despite the numerous times RTD staff has stated that they are monitored by video and therefore alerted when they are down. He also stated that he does not believe that cleaning crews are reaching the elevators three times a day as many of the elevators he encounters are filthy and are clearly being used as places of refuge and drug use. Earl stated that because of the outages of elevators and the infrequency of cleaning he often has to choose an alternative route to travel. Earl stated that while this feedback may feel harsh it is honest and important to have that honest feedback. Gabe Christie thanked him for his feedback.

Doug Wooley added that we have repeatedly spoken about elevators, and it does not seem that there is being any progress being made the ability to notify customers of elevator outages. He also stated that he has concerns about facilities that have ramps such as the one at Englewood station. Doug stated that while there is a ramp at Englewood station it is very long it would be very difficult for someone not using a power trail to get up. Additionally, if the elevator were to go out and Englewood station, the Englewood Civic Center be closed, and the ramp icy and slick- there is no way for a customer to get down from the platform.

Greg Martinez stated that it is important to gather information about outages and the effect it has on customers either through an app or through customer feedback that can then be reported back to headquarters. Greg stated this data can then be used to inform prioritization of elevators for repair and further focus outreach on customers.

Betty Elias stated that she wanted to echo some of the sentiments shared by early including the feeling that the cleanliness of elevators is not being accurately reported. Betty stated that with the sounds the elevators make, constant breakdowns, an unclean environment that there's genuine concern that the environment is not safe for use. She echoed the sentiment that the small pool of maintenance available through the elevator contractors is a great hindrance on the efforts of RTD.

Greg Martinez stated that adding a QR code could be helpful for customers. Attilio Framarini, Manager of SCADA System and Communications stated that there are phone numbers and URLs to contact RTD staff in the event of an outage. The problem with QR codes being that they would need to be immutable and immune to vandalism- which many materials on RT premises experience.

Gabe Christie stated that he appreciated the feedback all of it honest and valuable, he would deliver it to the RTD employee who was unable to come to the meeting and period he stated his hope was that this person would be able to attend the November meeting and speak in more detail to the concerns raised in today's meeting.

- **Audio Messages for Customers**

- a. Attilio Framarini, Manager of SCADA System and Communications was introduced to provide some clarification on the current audio messaging and science systems present at RTD light rail stations. Attilio stated that the PA systems were replaced approximately 18 to 12 months ago throughout many areas of the service area. He stated that the audio amplifiers take ambient noise feedback and funnel it back to the audio amplifier system to control the loudness of the messaging. This means that audio announcements at stations that are extremely loud, like those adjacent to highways or arterial roads may sound louder once traffic has abated.

Attilio Also ask them when customers encounter stops announcement systems or signage that are inaccurate or produce garbled messaging to please provide feedback to customer care period this feedback will allow RTD to identify and repair announcement systems that do not provide adequate announcements. Attilio Also added that because the announcements are synthesized, they may often have pronunciation issues which can and often are replicated on fixed route buses. Earl Lee ask is the system a digital system or an analog system. Just in stone stated that it is an analog system.

Earl Lee stated that he had received reports from members of the blind community can be very difficult for them to hear and have expressed interest in improving the quality of the audio announcements. Earl asked what is being done through the implementation of newer technology or other efforts to improve the quality of voice announcements. Attilio stated that it would require additional filtering technology to filter out background noise mirroring the noise cancellation provided by current headphones. Until you also stated that current iPhones and other current generation smartphones have, they feature in which they can use their interdependent headphones to amplify audio announcements and provide audio announcements based on location. This is something that his team is looking into.

Dave Jensen, assistant general manager rail operations, stated that he greatly appreciated the feedback as he had not previously been familiar with the concern. Dave stated that the technology that's currently in place was designed in the late 90s expecting that technology to improve would be akin to expecting an older smartphone

to behave as a newer model. Dave did state though that the reporting of shortfalls is essential to helping RTD understand how to better configure and improve its service and improve the experience of customers overall while riding the service.

To Sean Spears, ex officio member of the Colorado coalition for the blind stated that he had reports from blind students who ride the route 66 that the audio announcements are insufficient. Deshaun asked if there was a way to ensure that audio announcements work on buses before the bus leaves the garage. Attilio stated he also knows that if the body announcement system is malfunctioning, bus operators are able to use the PA system to make announcements and stop announcements.

- **Ramps on the Free Mallride**

- a. Earl Lee stated that he was taking them all ride shuttle and watched a gentleman get on and off the floor three mile ride shuttle. His wheelchair was scraping the ramp edges, which the man reported is not an uncommon occurrence. Earl asked if we could if the committee would be willing to discuss the future accessibility of mall ride shuttle ramps.

Nick Rorris, equipment engineer, bus maintenance stated that the mall ride shuttle is 30 1/2 inches wide which is 1/2 inch wider than the minimum required and quarter inch wider than the standard transit buses which are just over 30 inches. He stated that retrofit would be very difficult in this situation not only because the ramp would need to be replaced but because the ramp is built into the frame of the doorway meaning that the doorway of the bus would have to be expanded and highly labor intensive. A new ramp would have to be designed from scratch and installed. Nick asked if earl had seen this issue or experienced this issue on fixed route transit buses. Earl stated that he had not seen it and then he also would not realize that they were slightly narrower than the mall ride buses. Nicholas stated that he had not heard of any customer complaints regarding the width of the ramps, which Gabe Christie confirmed he had not seen any customer feedback regarding that issue either.

Nick Rorris stated that he would investigate what a retrofit would look like, but that the limitations maybe too large to overcome. Nick did state that when the time comes to purchase new buses this could be a factor that is included. Early stated that while he doesn't believe the retrofit would be the option, he does believe that the mall ride shuttles will need eventually to be replaced to be more accessible.

Doug Woolley stated that he understands that the effort to produce wider ramps isn't likely to happen in the near future, but he is holding out hope for the future. He did emphasize the impact of the potential of damaging a wheelchair when attempting to traverse a narrow ramp. Doug stated that a wheelchair like his could take up to 8 months to repair if damaged and then it would be very impactful if that potential for damage could be mitigated through wider ramps and kneeling the buses.

Nick Rorris stated that it is helpful for operators to kneel the bus during transit- the mall ride shuttles are not meant to kneel when they drop the ramp as the mall ride shuttles have been articulated for the height of the mall sidewalk. Stated that he was on the impression there were three levels to which the bus could be knelt to which Nick Rorris agreed.

Nick Rorris The bus does have design flaws because it was intended to operate solely on the mall and is currently operating outside of its area. Nick stated that the bus does meet ADA requirements. Earl reiterated to Nick that although the bus does meet ADA requirements it is not accessible for all customers. Earl stated that he hopes that there will be efforts to ensure the accessibility of the free mall ride shuttle moving forward.

Other Matters

- **RTD Website Update**

Andrea Sucherman, manager, Digital Communications brought forth a survey to the ACP. Andrea stated that the digital communications team is looking for feedback regarding the ease of navigation, accessibility, and ease of location of information regarding the RTD website. Andrea stated that RTD is about to undergo efforts to improve the website and the feedback provided through the survey will help improve the website in a way that most benefits customers. Doug Wooley asked if the survey was focused primarily around accessibility- which Andrea stated it was not solely accessibility and had general questions as well as accessibility focused questions. Doug asked if the committee could be shared with other members of the public to which Andrea stated it could and to feel free to share the survey.

- **ACPD Membership Recruitment Update**

- a. Gabe Christie, ADA Manager, Civil Rights, provided an update about the recruitment of new members to the ACPD. Gabe stated that of the of the potential and alternate members four members were selected and appointed to the ACPD. This leaves three spots to be filled. Additionally, Timothy DaGiau has resigned from the committee to take a position in Durango Colorado, leaving an open membership slot. Gabe bring reviewing applications along with members of the steering committee to select more members from the application pool and efforts to fill the roster. Gabe asked that ACPD members share the application with their communities and encourage more people to apply to be on the ACPD.

Closing Comments

- Earl Lee encouraged the committee members to bring forth any idea they have or things they would like to discuss. He reminded the committee that they add value to RTD by sharing things that could be improved or discomfort they experience as it helps RTD improve the service.

Adjourned at 3:26 pm – Earl Lee