

**ADA Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 8, 2013**

Members Present

Chairperson:	VACANT
Committee Members:	Mr. Maurice Fantus Mr. Garland Armstrong Mr. Jim Watkins Ms. Laura Miller Ms. Rhychell Barnes Mr. Yochai Eisenberg Ms. Doreen Bogus Mr. Steve Hastalis Ms. Mary Anne Capelleri
Absent:	Ms. Rachel Siler – Excused Absence
Vacancies	Two
Facilitator:	Amy Serpe

Roll Call

Members of the Committee introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes

- There was one amendment to the minutes. Jim Watkins did have an excused absence as he had called in prior to the January 14, 2013 meeting. Mr. Armstrong moved to accept the January 14, 2013 meeting minutes and Ms. Cappelleri seconded the motion. Ms. Serpe asked for a vote to approve the minutes as amended. A majority of members approved the minutes of the Committee's January 14, 2013 meeting.

Customer Service Report

- (Customer Service Reports are sent to Committee members prior to meetings). Ms. Yvette Paetsch, Manager, Customer Feedback Programs stated that although there was an increase in all customer complaints during the first quarter of 2013 versus 2012, ADA related complaints decreased by 2%, from 143 in 2012 to 113 in 2013. However, the sub-group of complaints regarding service animals did increase during the 2013 first quarter as there were 3 complaints about service animals versus the same number of complaints for the entire year of 2012.

- Committee members also had some discussion about “pass-ups” regarding whether Bus Operators deliberately didn’t want people with disabilities to board or whether the bus was legitimately crowded and unable to accommodate more passengers.

Rail Facilities Maintenance and Power & Way Including Elevator/Escalator Report

- Mr. Frank Dixon, Manager, Escalator/Elevator Maintenance explained the elevator report stating that the 2013 numbers are different from 2011 and 2012 numbers due to elevator difficulties in the frigid weather where hydraulic elevators created leaks that resulted in units being out of service.
- Mr. Steve Hastalis questioned whether there are heating elements, or insulation, or something to mitigate the cold weather problems on the elevator hydraulics. Mr. Dixon responded, “No”, there are not any such mechanisms in the hoist ways.
- Mr. Dixon confirmed to Mr. Watkins and Ms. Miller that during cold weather the elevators are being operated remotely every 30 minutes to help off-set difficulties that may occur if elevators are not being used.
- Ms. Miller questioned if there are extended elevator repair hours to which Mr. Dixon responded that every effort is made to accommodate passengers but could not confirm extended hours at this time.
- Mr. Dixon also explained the escalator report stating that the 2013 numbers are different from 2011 and 2012 numbers due to the fact that several units are being reconditioned, (parts being replaced, etc.).
- Mr. Dixon stated that the Rosemont project is projected to be complete around April 22, 2013 and the Loyola station should be finished around April 30, 2013.
- Mr. Hastalis questioned whether stations with escalators out of service had working elevators. Mr. Dixon responded yes.

Red Line Renewal Project Update

- Mr. Robert Wittmann, General Manager of Capital Construction and Ms. Elsa Gutierrez, General Manager of Service Planning & Traffic Engineering updated the committee on the Red Line project.
- Stations will be closed beginning May 19, 2013.
- There are 2 different contractors: Kewitt Construction for track, new rail and ties and F. H. Passion for station contracts – primarily for the new elevators at the Garfield, 63rd and 87th rail stations.
- Rail Alignment: All Red Line stations will be closed from Chinatown/Cermak to 95th.

- The Red Line will operate from Howard, stop at Roosevelt and then make all stops on the Green Line. The Green Line service will operate from Lake & Harlem.
- Express service will be offered from 95th, 87th and 79th to the Garfield Station. The hours of the express station will be from approximately, "...4:00 in the morning to 1:00 in the morning".
- Local Service will be offered from 95th to 63rd and will stop at all the Red Line stations that are currently closed. That service will also be available from 4:00 in the morning to 1:00 in the morning.
- During the owl period no express service will be available but the local service will go from 95th to the Garfield elevated station making all the stops where the Red Line stations have been closed.
- CTA will add extra service on the 3 King Drive, 4 Cottage Grove, 8 and 8a Halsted, J14, 29, 44 and 48 bus routes.
- All vehicles including shuttles will be accessible for individuals with mobility devices.
- Rail operators as well as signage will be available to notify passengers.
- An Entire outreach effort is being headed by the Communications Department including an electronic trip planner that will be specific to the Red Line project.
- Although entry at the Garfield Station will be free, the turnstiles will remain in order to track ridership numbers.
- Mr. Watkins raised issues related to turn-around areas for people who use wheelchairs and other mobility devices. He made reference to the fact that this is often an issue at various bus turn-around areas. He stated that there is about a 3 foot drop at the Redline Cermak/Chinatown stop. Mr. Dixon agreed to look into the issue as well as whether the payphones in the station are working which was another issue Mr. Watkins had raised.

Bus Rapid Transit/ "Jeffery Jump" Project Update

- Robert Vance, Manager of Traffic Planning updated the Committee on concerns raised at the last meeting as to the amount of time in real seconds people would have to safely cross at intersections. The formula is based on the width of the street and a standard time crossing speed which is 3.5 feet per second.
- The Committee's concern is that the Transit Signal Priority on the Jeffrey Jump will not provide enough time for individuals with disabilities (especially visual disabilities) to cross the street.
- Mr. Vance explained the three phases to crossing the street. First, there is a white solid walk sign, the second is a flashing don't walk and the third is a solid don't walk. Time is never taken away from the flashing red signal which provides

the allotted time needed to cross a street. (CTA does not set these standards. They are set by CDOT).

- Mr. Hastalis questioned the amount of time a person has to cross Jeffery at an early green light. He reminded Mr. Vance that this is about people with disabilities and we don't want them to get hit trying to cross the street.
- Mr. Vance responded that crossing time is a total of 30 seconds and switching to an early green would subtract 9 seconds leaving a total of 21 seconds and it takes the average person only 14 seconds to cross.
- Early green at 75th street is in place from noon to midnight, 7 days a week.
- Ms. Bogus first thought that people could plan on how to cross based on time of day but when Mr. Vance told her signals are also influenced and automated by traffic flow, she surmised that people would be unable to plan.

Ventra Open Fare Standards System Update

- Eric Reese, Director of Revenue and Rick Simons, Manager of Revenue Technology, Bus updated the Committee on Ventra; a new joint CTA/PACE Contactless Fare System.
- Prior to the meeting, the Committee was able to view the Ventra machine at the Clinton & Lake Train Station. (This was not a demonstration as the software is not yet installed and machines are therefore not active). The purpose was to allow Committee members to at least see the equipment, check out the Braille and other markings/buttons on the equipment, etc.
- Concerns were raised about the need to use earphones in order to hear directions/information from the speakers.
- Ms. Bogus reiterated what was discussed at the demonstration to consider alternatives regarding the need for earphones. She thought perhaps earphones could be made available at the station Kiosks and that disposable covers could also be provided for earphones. Another suggestion was to have a handheld device with a cord similar to a phone attached to or nearby each machine.
- Ms. Bogus asked if the machines are in compliance with the specifications outlined in the Illinois Accessibility Code and the Americans with Disabilities Act as far as accessibility.
- Mr. Reese confirmed that the Ventra machines are in compliance with ADA and state regulations.

Bus Shelter Button Continuous Beeper

- Due to technical difficulties, this sound will be demonstrated at the next ADA Advisory Committee meeting. Although a microphone was used to amplify the sound it was not loud enough for people to hear and could not be amplified at a greater level at this time.

- As a reminder, Ms. Serpe explained to the Committee that there will be a continuous “beeping” sound added to the audio bus information buttons currently at several bus shelters to assist individuals who are blind and visually impaired in locating the physical button. Pressing the button located on the left front pole of a bus shelter activates the audio component thereby providing verbal information regarding bus arrival route numbers and times.
- Mr. Hastalis asked if the circuit has some way to automatically regulate its volume based on the surrounding ambient sound.
- Mr. Reese responded not at this time but volume can be turned up and down if needed. The function is just not automatic as it has to be generated by a human through a computer program.
- Mr. Fantus asked if there is a way to tell if the button is out order other than someone having to call in and report it.
- The answer is that as of this time, it has to be reported in order for CTA to know it isn’t working. It can generally be fixed through a computer.

Update Re: Chimes/ Beeps and Audio Announcements within Rail Cars Bombardier 5000 series Rail Car updates

- Robert Kielba, Chief Rail Equipment Engineer presented information regarding adding additional beeps so that people who are blind or visually impaired can differentiate when the rail car doors open and when they close.
- CTA has 232 cars delivered and we receive more every day.
- CTA will be adding more sounds on various rail lines. He is hopeful to be able to bring a sample of the sound to the next ADA meeting.

Rail and Bus Fleet Maintenance Project

Tom Dietrich who is the General Manager, Rail Car Heavy Maintenance reported on his three projects.

- First project is the 2600 overhaul program. CTA currently has 596 (2600) rail cars. Between 2009 and 2012 CTA has overhauled at least half of the rail cars.
- In March 2013, the CTA Board approved the purchase of overhaul materials for an additional 100 rail cars. The current goal is to overhaul eight (8) cars per month. This project should conclude in 2015.
- The second project is the 3200 overhaul program. CTA currently has 256 (3200) rail cars. Some improvements include the addition of LED lighting and colored LED destination signs. The current goal is to overhaul eight (8) cars per month. Program expected to begin in spring 2015 and conclude in 2017.
- The third project is the installation of cameras in the 2600 and 3200 rail cars. The project scope is 852 cars. At this time 13% percent of this project is completed.

About 112 rail cars are now equipped with video cameras. The current goal is 30 cars per week. This project should conclude prior to end of 2013.

Audio Announcements at Rail Stations and on Rail Platforms

- Thomas Reilly, General Manager Rail Operations reported on audio announcements.
- Mr. Reilly stated that he is aware that operators are sometimes not in compliance with protocols related to train announcements. He understands that announcements are sometimes made before the train is actually at the station with the doors open as it should be.
- Mr. Reilly said that there are a couple of spot check mechanisms in place. The CTA safety department does spot checks on this as well. And public response is another way to ensure compliance. He explained that if the operator is not following the rules we have to take corrective action to get them into compliance
- Committee members agreed that there is a training issue at hand.
- Mr. Reilly stated that the actual station announcements are a little different. Station announcements will come from the control center or sometimes the supervisor.
- Mr. Armstrong asked about glitches in the system.
- Mr. Reilly replied that a lot of it is infrastructure.

Rail and Bus Fleet Maintenance Project

- John Ward, General Manager, Bus Maintenance Facilities & Fleet Improvement, reported on the rail and bus fleet.
- CTA received 1,000 forty- foot New Flyer buses that are reaching mid-life of their 12 year span as they were purchased in 2006. It is time for them to have their mid-life rehab.
- Currently, the vendors are using four (4) buses to use as prototype pilots to set up their schedules.
- This project will go live on June 1, 2013 and there should be six (6) new buses per week.
- The New Flyer 60- foot bus order is almost finished. 83 busses are in service now. The other 18 are being inspected. These will be utilized during the Red Line project.
- The next new order is 200 forty foot Nova buses. The prototype should arrive in November 2013. Full production should begin in February with about 3 buses a week.

Stroller Information

- Rovaughn Graham, Acting Vice President, Bus Operations and Adrian Lewis, General Manager at the 74th Street Bus Garage reported on stroller procedures.
- The *Be Stroller Savvy* information card was read to the group.
- The basic concept of the policy is that the Bus Operator needs to request that anyone using a stroller should fold it up and relinquish the Priority Seating Area to any customer with a disability. Also, if the bus is initially crowded, the Operator should request the stroller to be folded prior to boarding.
- Committee members were concerned with the procedures being communicated to the riders.
- Ms. Serpe explained that she specifically defines the Stroller Policy during all of her ADA/Disability Awareness Training sessions with new bus operators, CSA's and other rail and management personnel.
- Mr. Graham also stated that he will do another rollout of the policy and push to get the message to the operators to make sure they are aware of appropriate procedures related to customers who board with strollers.

CTA Facilitator's Report

- Ms. Serpe provided updates on the following projects/programs:
- ADA/Disability Awareness Trainings: Generally between 25 and 50 CSA's are trained every Tuesday and about 30 - 40 new Bus Operators receive training on Fridays. Other personnel that have also been trained include Rail Flagman CSA Managers with other staff to follow as needed/requested.
- Rail car evacuation/safety training for people who are blind or visually impaired will hopefully be able to be scheduled during this summer
- Ms. Serpe will be working on the New Freedom Grant project to develop visual and audio rail station guides with Greg Polman at the Chicago Lighthouse which is the project contractor.
- Ms. Serpe reported on the ADA Advisory Committee membership terms. She stated that there are four members whose first term expires as of the end of July 2013. These members are Rhychell Barnes, Laura Miller, Rachel Siler and Jim Watkins. Additionally, the current 2 member vacancies (which are for Amy Serpe and Greg Polman) also expire at the end of July 2013. She explained that anyone not wishing to remain on the Committee and serve another 2 year term needs to let her know of their intent as the process of soliciting new members to fill vacancies is getting underway.
- APTA did a bus safety check audit and report and acknowledged the ADA Committee in the report.

Public Comments

- A member of the public commented that Rail Operators should not specify the details regarding any type of medical emergency. He explained that he was on a Red Line train and the Operator announced that someone had committed suicide. The Rail Operator also said that it happens almost every two weeks. The customer was very concerned about this fact and at the Operator's lack of discretion. He also commented that Rail Personnel should be trained to treat people who are homeless with respect as he has witnessed people being kicked or spoken to inappropriately.
- This same individual went on to comment that the meetings are great but feels the topics can be more condensed. He ended by saying that people with disabilities have concerns around the new cars.
- A representative of the National Federation of the Blind of Illinois wanted to second the opinion of Mr. Hastalis regarding the need for different sounds on trains to signify that the doors are opening. He echoed the opinions of other Committee members regarding the fact that the Ventra Fare machines will not have audible speakers and therefore, information can only be heard by using earphones which is a problem if you don't have them with you. He does, however, really appreciate that currency bills can be inserted into the Ventra Fare machines in any direction.
- A member of the Illinois Council for the Blind and the PACE Suburban ADA Advisory Committee also wants options for hearing the Ventra machine speakers in addition to just using earphones. He also feels that the continuous "beeping" sounds at bus shelters to identify where the audio information button is, is not necessary. This customer wishes that CTA could follow Washington Metro's initiative in announcing both the opening and closing of train doors (currently, there is only a voice with chimes for closing) but if this is not possible, he definitely agreed that there should be two distinctively different sounds for the opening and closing of the doors.
- In response to this customer, Mr. Hastalis commented that he was happy that CTA solved the concern of the four-way bill acceptor for the blind community. He also touched on the audio jack issue around earphones etc. He wondered could the system have an internal speaker or some external audio device for those that don't have headphones.
- Mr. Reese stated that since we are concerned about privacy issues because we are accepting debit and credit cards we would probably want to keep away from announcing people's information out loud.
- Another customer with a disability thanked the committee for their honesty. He also said he has been riding the Green line for a long time and has seen many improvements. He did state that he thinks there should be more sensitivity training for Rail and Bus Operators. He commented that there is an emergency

ball/lever above doors that can release the doors in an emergency situation but people with various types of disabilities, including himself, cannot reach the lever.

- An audience member who had heard about the pre-meeting look at the Ventra machine for members of the Committee questioned why the Suburban PACE ADA Committee was not invited to see the machine.
- Ms. Serpe explained that the pre-meeting view was for CTA ADA Advisory Committee members only but additional viewings can be arranged for other groups as the system becomes implemented. She explained that this was not a full demonstration as the software is not yet on the machines.
- This same customer also said that the Jeffrey signal jump was going to be a real problem and that people should be allowed to test it. And things are still not resolved. She ended her comments by stating that strollers, luggage and other items often block doors on the trains which makes boarding and leaving trains next to impossible for people who are blind or visually impaired.
- Another audience member asked to be put on any mailing list regarding CTA's programs/projects for people with disabilities. She was reminded of the Accessibility component feature found on CTA's established website.
- Another customer with a disability stated that she has a problem regarding strollers and crowding on the bus.
- Ms. Serpe agreed that the policy needs to be reiterated and implemented.

New Business

- Members were reminded that the next ADA Advisory Committee will be held on Monday, July 8, 2013 with Public Comment Sign-Up from 1:00 – 1:30 p.m., followed by the meeting from 1:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Adjournment

- Facilitator Serpe asked to move to adjournment. Mr. Armstrong moved to adjournment and Mr. Hastalis seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 4:06 p.m. with an apology for going slightly over the established meeting time due to an abundance of public comment.

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