

**ADA Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 13, 2015**

Members Present

Chairperson: Steve Hastalis (Final Meeting)

Committee Members: Pierre Bance (Arrived Late)

Angela Davis

Carol Gomez

Grace Kaminkowitz

Christina Mullins

Aziza Nassar

Dorrell Perry

Suzen Riley (Arrived late)

Bryen Yunashko

Donna Shaw

Excused Absence: Allen West

Facilitator: Amy Serpe, Manager, ADA Compliance Programs

Steve Hastalis, Committee Chairman called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Note

Due to staff availability, the order of topics presented deviated from the order listed on the Agenda. All topics were presented.

Roll Call

- Committee members introduced themselves and both new and returning members provided a bit of background information about themselves.

Announcements

- Ms. Serpe announced that this is the last meeting for Steve Hastalis as he has completed his service terms. The CTA greatly appreciates his contributions and thanks him for his service and interest in accessible transportation.
- Ms. Serpe announced that Karen Tamley, Commissioner of the Chicago Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) was recently appointed to the National Access Board by President Obama.
- Allen West has an excused absence.

Approval of Minutes from July 13, 2015 Meeting

- After all members had arrived, Mr. Hastalis asked for a motion to vote to approve the minutes from the July 13, 2015 meeting. Ms. Mullins moved and Ms. Perry seconded the motion. The Committee voted to approve the minutes as written. The 4 new members did abstain from the vote.

Elevator/Escalator Report

- Jim Kissane, Director Facilities Maintenance reported on the status of elevators and escalators.

- Committee members received advance copies of the Elevator/Escalator Efficiency reports prior to the meeting.
- For the 3rd quarter of 2015 – July, August and September – elevator efficiencies are up for all 3 months in comparison to the same period during 2014: July (1.00% at 99%), August (0.80% at 99.2% and September 1.20% at 98.8%). *“We also have two elevators that are open now at the Clark and Division station. In the future, they are scheduled to start at the Quincy station. Two elevators will be installed there.”*
- Escalator efficiencies in the 3rd quarter of 2015 are also up for all months compared to the same time period in 2014: July (4.4% at 95.6%), August (2.4% at 97.6% and September 4.0% at 96.0%). *“Year-to-date we have reconditioned seven escalators. We are currently in the process of doing LaSalle and Congress on the Blue Line and 63rd on the Red Line. The Blue Line LaSalle and Congress, ...that started October 1st and if everything goes smooth it is usually six to eight weeks that it will be down for step and chain replacement. So you'd be looking about mid November for that to be back up and operational. 63rd and the Red Line was roughly a couple of days before that,... that project was started on September 29th and it's a step and chain replacement anywhere between six to eight weeks for completion and you'll be looking also somewhere around the same time of about mid November (for completion).”*
- Chairman Hastalis asked for clarification re: the new entrance at the Clark and Division Station. It was reiterated that there is elevator access at LaSalle and Division but not at any of the Clark and Division entrances.

Customer Service Report

- Kate Kennelly, Manager Customer Feedback Programs provided the Customer Service update report.
- Committee members were sent the Customer Service reports for review in advance of the meeting.
- Ms. Kennelly went over the graphs and highlights for the Customer Service reports for the third quarter of 2015.
- *“Overall complaints decreased a little bit. They're down two percent from the second quarter and more on par with the volume we received last year during the same period. We received 243 complaints total the previous quarter and using historical data as an indicator we do expect these complaints to trend down again over the next two quarters.”*
- *ADA complaints accounted for 5% of all complaints trending down from quarter two. We had 4,574 total complaints and 243 were ADA-related. Overall, complaints trended up 6% while ADA complaints trended down slightly.*
- *Some significant categories: Rude behavior totaled 63 complaints, which is up from last quarter. Primarily, these were regarding bus operations, but there were some regarding rail operations as well. Complaints peaked in July and have been improving ever since. Pass-up complaints totaled 40 which is up 21 percent from the previous quarter. Overall, pass-up complaints are following a similar trend and complaints are spread throughout the system. Complaints regarding elevators and escalators are trending up in quarter 3. We had 4 escalator and 10 elevator malfunctions reported to us. Complaints occur primarily on the Red and Blue Lines. Some improvements I see in the complaint volume issues with ramps on buses totaled 16, which is down 27% from the previous quarter. We also had 0 complaints reported about inoperable AVAS and 0 complaints regarding gap fillers”.*
- Ms. Shaw raised the issue that she has gotten on a particular bus and the bus ended up not going to the regular end of the route stop but she didn't know what was happening because

she cannot hear. She stated that this is an issue for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing when any type of additional manual announcement is made.

- Ms. Robinson from Bus Operations who was in the audience, as well as Ms. Serpe explained that in circumstances when you need to be sure a bus is going to the destination you want, it is sometimes necessary to check with the Operator when you are boarding (this may include writing a note if oral communication is difficult). Also if in transit and there is a change, you would need to approach the Operator and get clarification. Those types of “emergency” manual announcements that come up while in transit are not part of the visual AVAS announcements and cannot be planned.
- Ms. Nassar raised the issue that there isn’t always a Customer Service Assistant or Representative (CSA/CSR) at the Chicago/Franklin “L” Station. She asked if the State budget problems are related to someone not being there.
- Ms. Serpe explained that no, the budget has nothing to do with this issue. All rail stations have at least one CSA or CSR to assist customers. If someone is not immediately present, they may be assisting another customer. However, incidents where someone needs help and there is no CSA/CSR available (after a reasonable amount of waiting time) need to be reported to Customer Service. All such complaints are investigated.
- Mr. Bance raised the issue that sometimes there is more than one bus at a stop and the second bus does not always pull up and stop at the front position allowing someone who is blind or visually impaired to board that bus.
- Both Ms. Serpe and Mr. Fuentes from Bus Operations who was in the audience explained that buses are to make sure that anyone who wants to board is able to do so, especially if they notice a person who has a disability, especially a visual disability. These types of issues need to be reported to Customer Service for follow-up and discipline as warranted.

Ventra Program Update

- Mike Gwinn, Director of Revenue and Fare Systems provided an update related to the Ventra Fare System Mobile App that is being developed.
- He stated that, *“We continue to make good progress on the app and are on target for a Fall release to the public. We are comfortable with the basic function of the app, the Ventra account management, the Metra mobile ticket purchase and use process and the real-time bus and train tracker engine.”*
- Mr. Gwinn explained that work is also being done to ensure that it is accessible for people with disabilities. Over 700 people have been testing the app and feedback has been positive. *“Coming up, we’re going to start planning phase two of the app before too long, which is the integrated door-to-door trip planning across all three service boards, which will be another fantastic tool for everybody in their pocket.”*
- Mr. Yunashko asked about accessibility features such as for someone who uses a Braille reader on their smartphone. Mr. Gwinn explained that now that the basics are complete he and his team will work on perfecting the accessibility issues including interface with Braille. Ms. Serpe will provide contacts to Mr. Gwinn for more direct feedback and follow-up. Having an app that is accessible to individuals with various disabilities has always been part of the overall goal of the Ventra Mobile App.
- While the app is a great tool, Ms. Serpe explained that there may be issues for some people due to the kind of phone and service that they are using.
- Mr. Gwinn also explained that the plastic Ventra cards that can be uploaded with money at rail stations or other places are not going away. The Ventra Mobile App is for people that want to use it. No one has to use it and it may not work for everyone due to personal devices, etc.

Safety Updates

- Ms. Serpe explained that the CTA has a current campaign through the Safety and Communication Departments. The focus and message to customers is, *"It's not OK. If it's unwanted, it's harassment."*
- Chairman Hastalis asked at what point do you report something to Customer Service versus calling 911? Ms. Serpe explained that if an individual feels threatened or in danger, they need to do whatever is necessary in that situation up to and including calling 911 and the police. She also explained that each rail car has Emergency Call Buttons that should be used as needed. The buttons are tactile and the train car number which is tactile and Braille is located near the button.
- Ms. Davis asked where exactly the call buttons were located. Ms. Serpe stated that in every car, there are ceiling lights which are white. However, there is one part in every car where the lights are blue and/or blue/purple. Below those lights is where the Emergency Call Button is to alert the Rail Operator that there is a problem. If you cannot see the lights or colors, another way to find the button is that it is located next to the wheelchair securement area by the seats that flip. If a person cannot physically reach the button, then they should yell or get people's attention if there is a problem. The reality is that people need to do what they need to do to feel safe.
- Also keep in mind that all rail cars, rail stations, and buses have cameras which have helped to curb problems.
- Another suggestion was that people might prefer riding in the first car where the Rail Conductor is. (Keep in mind that any customer may ride in any car they choose).
- Ms. Serpe also announced that the blue truncated dome or tactile edging will be added to both platforms at the State and Lake Station. This will assist all customers, especially those who are blind or visually impaired. Work is expected to happen in early November and should only take a few days to complete. Work will happen while the station remains fully open and active.
- Chairman Hastalis pointed out that the CTA should consider adding a cane rail for detection by anyone who is blind or visually impaired near the stairs by the Adams & Wabash Station. He stated that if you are blind or visually impaired you can run into the underside of the stairway and hit your head.
- There was additional discussion re: the Emergency Call buttons on "L" cars. Mr. Rovaughn Graham, General Manager, Transit System Safety (Bus) and Kenny Elam, General Manager Safety Management Systems (Rail) were in the audience and came forward to assist in answering Committee member questions.
- Ms. Nassar was concerned that the Emergency Call buttons are at the proper height in rail cars. Mr. Elam said he will have the height checked but believed that the buttons are compliant with accessibility regulations.
- Ms. Shaw's concern was related to when on the "L" or bus and she pushes either the Emergency Button on a train or the stop request call cord/button on a bus, she can't hear if it makes a sound.
- Mr. Elam explained that the Emergency Call Buttons on trains also light up. And Mr. Graham explained that the sound after someone pulls the stop cord on a bus only happens on the first pull. So if others pull the cord it doesn't sound.
- Ms. Riley pointed out that on a bus it can be difficult to talk to the Operator as they now have a plastic partition screen around them. It was explained that this is needed for safety purposes for CTA Bus Operators and any customer may ask the Operator to repeat information as needed.

Facilitator's Report

- Amy Serpe, Manager, ADA Compliance Programs and ADA Advisory Committee Facilitator, presented the Facilitator's Report.
- Ms. Serpe announced that 11 individuals had applied for membership on the Committee, replacing those individuals whose terms have expired. Four individuals were brought on for this meeting and one more will be selected in January, when Steve Hastalis leaves. She explained that the CTA Transit Board assists with member selection and Chairman Terry Peterson issues letters to selected members.
- A new Chairman for the Committee will be selected from current members. That individual will begin in this capacity as of the January 2016 meeting.
- Ms. Serpe pointed out that a current members' list is included in the member packets complete with contact information and term expirations.
- Ms. Serpe stated that the ADA 25 Chicago initiative has ongoing events and information through the end of the year. Interested individuals should check out that Website.
- Ms. Serpe announced that CTA's annual Budget hearing open to the public is scheduled for November 16, 2015. Additional budget information can be found online and at libraries throughout the city. There are also large print copies of the budget available and if anyone needs further assistance in accessing the information, she should be contacted. She also stated that general sign language interpreters will be at the budget hearing. If other accommodations are needed, she should be contacted as soon as possible.
- Dates for the 2016 ADA Advisory Committee meetings were announced: Monday, January 11, Monday, April 11, Monday, July 11 and Tuesday, October 11, 2016.
- There is a correction on this meeting's Agenda. The next meeting is on Monday, January 11, 2016. (The year is incorrect – 2015 – on the distributed Agenda).
- Ms. Shaw asked how people who are deaf can get information regarding various events and meetings. Ms. Serpe informed her that all information is posted on the CTA Website. Also, she sends out various announcements and press releases to a variety of organizations. Anyone or any organization can request to be added to the list. It is also anticipated that Committee members will help spread the word about events and activities within their communities.

Construction Projects Update

- Robert Wittmann, Vice President Capital Construction, gave an update on the CTA's current construction projects.
- Mr. Wittmann informed the Committee that the KIPS power substation project at Kimball, Princeton and State has been going on most of the year. This is a rehabilitation of our existing substations that are in service.
- Facility work at Kimball and Princeton is basically complete. There is final installation and testing of electrical equipment.
- At State Street, which is a bit larger, there is interior facility work and new electrical equipment install happening.
- At the 95th Station, work continues on foundation work on the South Terminal. Some utility work and foundation walls are completed but there is still work to do. Regarding the main station contract, the design build procurement process continues and should be wrapped up shortly.
- The Wilson station work is going well with about 99% completion of the stage one deep foundation work. Once the deep foundation is done, new track can be installed. Foundation work has also started for the new Station houses.

- All major track work on the Ravenswood Loop Connector Track Project is complete. There are still a few punch-list items on the system between Armitage and the Mart.
- Another track project which began in August 2015 is the Purple Line Express Project. This is replacing ties on tracks one and four between Lawrence and Jarvis. This project should wrap up by the end of this year.
- The five-station design on the Your New Blue Project – Irving Park, Montrose, Addison, Cumberland and Harlem – is approaching 100% completion. As has been noted before, an elevator will be installed at Addison.
- The Quincy and Illinois Medical District Stations are also both in the design phase, with construction starting in 2016. Both are getting elevators installed.
- Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) projects include completion of the Clark/Division station where work was completed on the Clark side as of September 29th. Foundation work at Washington and Wabash, which is a brand new station is continuing.
- The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is installing an elevator at the Peoria entrance of the UIC Halsted Station. Work should be done by the end of 2015.
- Mr. Wittmann had provided a document entitled, *CTA/CDOT/IDOT Station Projects, Summary of Station Access* for Committee members included in the meeting packets.
- Mr. Hastalis asked where the primary elements of the new Wilson Station going to be? Mr. Wittmann explained that, *“...the new main station house at Wilson will be on the southside of Wilson just west of the intersection of Wilson and Broadway. So that's the new main entrance that will have the elevators in it. There is ... another entrance, accessible entrance at Sunnyside, which is about a block further south of Wilson. So that's going to be accessible via ramps as well as a stairway. ... finally there is a third auxiliary entrance/exit on the north side of Wilson for people that want to stay on that side of Wilson when they exit the platform.”*

Planning Update

- Carole Morey, CTA's Chief Planning Officer provided information regarding upcoming projects.
- *“So first I want to emphasize that obviously throughout our construction program, but also in planning we're committed to increasing the accessibility of our rail stations. That is a very important part of our planning process.”*
- Ms. Morey reminded members that from 2010 to 2012, in conjunction with the 20th anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the CTA convened the Infrastructure Accessibility Task Force. *“...this group evaluated feasible concepts for improving accessibility and also a way to prioritize stations within the CTA rail station and they issued a final report in 2012. It's available on our website.”*
- *“So the percentage of accessible CTA rail stations has grown from 66 percent in 2010 to a projected 72 percent when the projects Bob Wittmann just identified are all completed. So this percentage includes Addison, Wilson, Quincy and Washington/Wabash and those are all projects which are fully funded and in design or under construction and I wanted to add that the concepts developed in the Infrastructure Accessibility Task Force really laid the groundwork for what we're doing at Addison and Quincy. So really good and useful work.”*
- Additionally, the CTA also constructed 3 new stations: Oakton, Morgan and Cermak Green.
- Ms. Morey went on to explain that, *“...one of the big planning projects that we're currently working on is called the Red Purple Modernization Project and we started planning that because the north Red and Purple Lines contain one of the largest concentration of non-accessible stations in the CTA system. ... Wilson is underway and phase one of Red Purple Modernization, (RPM) which is in planning, will reconstruct Lawrence, Argyle, Berwyn and Bryn Mawr as fully accessible stations. So we'll be adding 4 new fully accessible stations*

through this project. ...(During) future phases of this project we'll reconstruct all of the remaining non-accessible stations between Sheridan and Linden."

- The CTA is accumulating funding for phase-one of the RPM project and will continue funding efforts for all other phases.
- There is a core capacity program which is a federal program that will fund up to 50% of eligible projects.
- *"So the other big project in planning that I would characterize as an accessibility project is the planning we're doing for the reconstruction of the Forest Park Blue Line. We're doing this in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Transportation which is working on a planning project for the reconstruction of the Eisenhower Expressway. So the idea behind this study is we're doing a condition assessment, we're doing market research and public engagement really to kind of grow support, but also get feedback from the community on the reconstruction of the branch. ...following completion of the full Red Purple Modernization Project and the reconstruction of the Forest Park Blue Line, 88 percent of CTA's rail stations will be accessible."*
- Ms. Davis asked if the RPM project was on target in terms of a time line as she heard that when the project is underway stations that she uses may be closed for an extended period of time. Ms. Morey explained that pre-construction may begin in 2017 but construction won't happen until 2018.
- Ms. Riley asked a general question that if stations for any project were closed for an extended period of time would shuttle service be provided. Ms. Morey explained that the CTA would provide shuttle service as warranted during construction phases of projects.

Old Business

- Ms. Serpe addressed the bus pull-cord stop request issue raised in previous meetings. The issue relates to the fact that there are people who cannot reach the pull-cord without standing and standing isn't also a safe maneuver. Ms. Serpe reported that work is underway to find a solution to this issue and will report back at the next meeting regarding what can be done, especially on newer buses to be ordered.
- Mr. Hastalis also asked about the progress of the new Loop Link Bus Station Project. Ms. Serpe stated that it is still under construction and in January will provide appropriate updates for this project.

New Business

- Mr. Yunashko asked about the feasibility of having a audio loop listening device system on buses that connects with people's hearing aids, allowing them to better hear both audio and manual announcements. Ms. Serpe was not aware of the technology and will check with CTA staff regarding this type of equipment.

Public Comment

- Mr. Garland Armstrong stated that it was important for people to attend the CTA Budget Public Hearing on November 16, 2015. He also again stated that sometimes strollers block the aisles or take up the priority seating/wheelchair securement areas on buses. Ms. Serpe reminded the group of CTA's Stroller Policy and went on to explain that Bus Operators can request someone to move but cannot make them move,. The public is the public and some individuals may not comply with the request.
- Ms. Heather Armstrong asked when the Yellow Line (formerly called the Skokie Swift train) would again be operational. Ms. Serpe stated that as publicized, a late October re-opening of

the Line is expected. She went on to state that shuttle service will continue until the station is fully operational.

- Mr. Jamal Powell discussed that it is difficult to know when a bus has moved a stop from one side of the street to another as he cannot see any posted signs. He also commented that when he has reported poor behavior on the part of a Bus Operator, he has found the CTA responsive to his call. The last couple of times he has called in a complaint, he stated he received a call back from the CTA within a couple of hours.
- Ms. Riley added a comment that she had recently called ahead regarding a particular bus stop that had a lot of construction in the area and when she was at the stop, a CTA Supervisor was there to assist her and make sure she could access the bus. She is appreciative of that effort.

Adjournment

- The next ADA Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Monday, January 11, 2016.
- Chairman Hastalis asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Davis moved and Ms. Riley seconded to adjourn the meeting. All voted, "Aye," and Chairman Hastalis did so at 3:54 p.m.

#