

**ADA Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 12, 2015**

Members Present

Chairperson: Steve Hastalis
Committee Members: Rhychell Barnes
Dorrell Perry
Pierre Bance (Late arrival)
Christina Mullins
Grace Kaminkowitz
Laura Miller
Suzen Riley
Allen West
Bryen Yunashko
On Phone: Tim Fischer
Unexcused Absence: Angela Reneau

Facilitator: Amy Serpe, Manager, ADA Compliance Programs

Steve Hastalis, Committee Chairman called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

Announcements

- Ms. Serpe announced that the public portion of the meeting will end at about 3:00 p.m. as the Committee will go into an Executive Session in order to go through CTA's required Ethics Training.

Roll Call

- Committee members introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes from October 14, 2014 Meeting

- Mr. Hastalis asked for a motion to vote to approve the minutes from the October 14, 2014 meeting. Ms. Kaminkowitz moved and Mr. West seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously voted to approve the minutes as written.

Elevator/Escalator Report

- Committee members were sent the Escalator and Elevator reports for review in advance of the meeting.
- Byron McMiller, Elevator/Escalator Department Inspector, reported on the status of elevators and escalators.
- Elevator Efficiency – Comparisons for last quarter in 2013 versus 2014. All months saw an increase:
 - October 2013 = 98.47% and in 2014, 99.57%
 - November 2013 = 98.21% and in 2014, 99.04%
 - December 2013 = 98.46 and in 2014, 99.52%
- There are two elevator installation projects currently in progress. One at Cermak on the Green Line and the other at Congress UIC on the Blue Line.

- Escalator Efficiency – Comparisons for last quarter in 2013 versus 2014. All months saw a decrease due to continued maintenance and reconditioning of some units which takes them out of service for a time:
 - October 2013 = 96.58% and in 2014, 93.88%
 - November 2013 = 95.03% and in 2014, 93.09%
 - December 2013 = 96.69% and in 2014, 95.43%
- Two reconditioning projects were completed:
 - Blue Line, Irving Park on 12-12-2014
 - Blue Line, Washington/Madison on 12-12-2014
- Three reconditioning projects starting or to be completed in January 2015:
 - Orange Line, Roosevelt starting on 1-12-2015
 - Red Line, Howard started on 1-7-201
 - Blue Line, Monroe/Adams which is in progress and should be completed by the end of January 2015.
- As of September 27, 2014, there is 24 hour coverage for elevator maintenance.
- A second shift has been added for the escalator maintenance, as well as a second shift for elevator and escalator inspections.
- Ms. Riley questioned why, when any type of renovation is done at a station, elevators are not automatically installed.
- Ms. Serpe and Mr. Hastalis both explained that the installation of an elevator deals with many factors and, due to the age and position of some of our current stations, it is not always technically feasible to install an elevator.
- Ms. Serpe reiterated that the CTA is in compliance with ADA and other accessibility regulations and standards and is working towards 100% accessibility for all of its rail stations. Over 68% of CTA's rail stations are accessible having 99 out of 145 stations which contain elevators and other accessibility features.

Customer Service Report

- Committee members were sent the Customer Service reports for review in advance of the meeting.
- Yvette Paetsch, Manager Customer Service and Customer Feedback Programs, went over the graphs and highlights for the customer service reports for quarter four of 2014.
- Total CTA complaints (including ADA and all other types of complaints) for the fourth quarter (October, November and December) of 2014 increased by 629, from 3,727 in the fourth quarter of 2013 to 4,356 in 2014.
- ADA complaints when comparing fourth quarter (October, November and December) of 2013 to the fourth quarter of 2014 increased by 26, from 127 in 2013 to 153 in 2014, representing a 1% increase.
- Highest complaint categories include rude operators with a total of 131; bus 99, rail 26 and rail Customer Service 6.
- As of July 2014, the Customer Services Department also tracks both Priority Seating and stroller related complaints.
- A comparison of quarters three (July 2014) and quarter four (October 2014) showed a decrease in relation to complains related to Priority Seating from 14 to 4. Similarly, stroller complaints also decreased from 4 in July 2014 to 1 in October 2014.
- Complaints that increased from the fourth quarter (October, November and December) of 2013 to the fourth quarter of 2014:
 - Pass ups: 2013 = 20 vs. 2014 = 24
 - Lift and ramps: 2013 = 14 vs. 2014 = 16

- Failure to kneel the bus: 2013 = 6 vs. 2014 = 8
- Escalator malfunction: 2013 = 0 vs. 2014 = 1
- Refusal to allow service animals on board remained the same: 2013 = 1 and 2014 = 1
- Elevator malfunction remained the same: 2013 = 0 and 2014 = 0
- No external audible announcement remained the same: 2013 = 0 and 2014 = 0
- Complaints that decreased from the fourth quarter (October, November and December) of 2013 to the fourth quarter of 2014:
 - Malfunctioning/inoperable AVAS 2013 = 13 vs. 2014 = 1
 - Failure/refusal to deploy the gap filler: 2013 = 6 vs. 2014 = 4
 - Failure to announce stops: 2013 = 6 vs. 2014 = 0
 - Touching passengers/equipment or service animals: 2013 = 1 vs. 2014 = 0
- There were no questions following Ms. Paetsch's presentation.

Construction Projects Update

- Robert Wittmann, Vice President Capital Construction, gave an update on the CTA's current construction projects.
- Mr. Wittmann discussed the power substation project at Farwell, Armitage, and Hill. The Hill and Farwell substations are complete, energized and providing power to the system.
- The Armitage substation should be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2015.
- Another substation project that is happening is called the KPS project, and is happening at Kimball, Princeton, and State. It is anticipated that work on these three systems will be completed by the end of 2015.
- Mr. Wittmann then talked about the O'Hare Blue Line Station Project. He stated that needed repairs at the California station were completed in October 2014 and then just recently work at the Damen station was also completed with that station reopening on December 22nd right before the holidays. So those two stations, along with some minor work at the Western station completes a three station contract.
- The 95th Terminal Improvement project has started, as well as some work associated with the Wilson Station renovation. These are both multi-year projects which will be going on for some time. Upon completion, both stations will be fully accessible including elevator access.
- Mr. Wittmann explained that the Ravenswood Loop Connector Track project, which will be ongoing throughout 2015, will include track repairs on the Brown Line between Armitage and the Merchandise Mart.
- There was also a five-station project on the Blue Line which just went out for bid. This project does include installation of an elevator at the Addison Station, as well as other accessibility features at the stations.
- Additional upcoming projects that will also include the installation of elevators are at the Illinois Medical District and Quincy Stations.
- Mr. Wittmann talked about projects managed by the Chicago Department of Transportation, (CDOT). While this work happens at CTA stations, it is done through CDOT. Projects include:
 - The new Cermak Green Line Station with an anticipated opening date by the end of the first quarter in 2015
 - Completion of work on the Clark side of the Clark and Division Street Station scheduled to be ongoing until June of 2015.
 - CDOT awarded a contract for the new Washington/Wabash Loop Station so work will begin soon. This is also a multi-year project which ultimately includes elimination of the Madison/Wabash and Randolph/Wabash Stations. The new Washington/Wabash station will include elevators, escalators and other accessible features.

- Mr. Hastalis asked for clarification if the Quincy Station construction project was a CTA or CDOT project. Mr. Wittmann explained that it is a CTA project meaning that the CTA will be managing both the design, as well as the construction for that station which will include installation of an elevator.
- Mr. Hastalis asked where the elevator would be installed at the Illinois Medical District Station and Mr. Wittmann replied that it will be located at the Ogden entrance. Also all station entrances will be made accessible.
- Ms. Riley asked if the Austin Station in Oak Park was going to be made accessible via an elevator any time soon. Mr. Wittmann responded that there is an ongoing Vision Study in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) as they look at the improvements to both the Eisenhower Expressway and CTA's Blue Line system. As it is a Vision Study, it is very early in the process, therefore a specific time-line is not available..
- Ms. Miller asked where is the best place for the public to learn about all upcoming CTA construction projects. Mr. Wittmann stated that information is located on CTA's transitchicago.com Website. He also explained that some time-lines for future anticipated projects are difficult to project for a variety of reasons.
- Ms. Miller and Ms. Kaminkowitz asked for more information related to the CDOT BRT Loop project.
- Chairman Hastalis stated that he has been at some meetings with CDOT planners and other community organizations and learned that this is primarily an east/west bus operation that will connect the rail stations west of the Chicago River with the heart of the central business district to speed up bus operations.
- Ms. Kaminkowitz questioned if there would be dedicated bus only lanes and Mr. Wittmann said that yes, the project is a true Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project meaning dedicated lanes, specific boarding locations, etc., located on west-bound Madison Street and east-bound Washington Street.
- Mr. Yunashko inquired as to how the CTA determines the accessibility of a construction project. It was explained by both Mr. Wittmann and Ms. Serpe that the CTA uses a variety of methods, documents and personnel to ensure compliance with FTA and local accessibility standards, laws and regulations. The Facilitator's position of Manager of ADA Compliance is dedicated to looking at issues related to accessibility and disability. Also, the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) reviews project designs in conjunction with the City's Building Department to ensure compliance not only with accessibility laws, but also with other regulations. There are many elements that are reviewed beginning with design and working through completion of any of the construction projects. The City does not issue a building permit if plans are not up to the standards.
- Mr. Yunashko stated that he feels there needs to be more tactile access at rail stations for people who are blind, and especially for those individuals who are deaf and blind. He feels this is an underserved population. Ms. Serpe and Chairman Hastalis explained that "ADAAG" regulations (Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines) are federal regulations that the US Access Board has put out defining very specifically what needs to be done in order to be in compliance with accessibility laws. The reality is that not all rules facilitate the needs of all users at all times. Ms. Serpe suggested that perhaps there can be some discussion involving various individuals and groups such as the MOPD to look at such issues. Also the Descriptive Rail Guides being developed in conjunction with the Chicago Lighthouse for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired may offer some assistance as this tool can be previewed prior to going to a station.

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 and, when complete, *“... the Ventra mobile app will be a great benefit for customers of the CTA, Metra and Pace that will put -- essentially put a Ventra vending machine in the pocket of everyone with a smart phone, provide real-time information about Ventra accounts and transit agency service and give the region a universal fare payment system that a customer can use to pay to travel on CTA, Pace and Metra.”*
- Mr. Gwinn further explained that the app will be launched in four stages with the public launch of the app in May of 2015. The free app will be initially available for Apple and Android phone users.
- Mr. Gwinn then defined each of the four Ventra Mobile App Phases:
 - Phase one of the app will feature account management tools, active push notifications for your Ventra account and Metra mobile ticketing integration, meaning customers can use their Ventra account to pay for Metra fares, again, for the first time.
 - Phase two will feature trip tools which are scheduled based travel information for all three service boards (CTA, Pace and Metra).
 - Phase three will debut an integrated trip planner, a regional trip planner, which will provide door-to-door travel options across all three service boards. This trip planner will include whether or not a given station is ADA accessible in order to provide people with disabilities the most information in choosing their route.
 - Phase four will offer virtual Ventra cards. It's the option to turn your phone into a Ventra card. In order to use this option, however, a customer would need a Near Field Communications enabled phone. So you'll just tap your phone on a reader to pay a fare.
- Mr. Gwinn continued his explanation citing that future phases will include the ability to publish promotional content, fully integrate with the RTA's fare program and integrate with social media as well as any other advances made possible by new features in mobile device software. All three service boards are committed to ensuring that the mobile app is accessible and usable by the disability community. The app is being designed following accessibility, best practices and standards and will utilize the federal section of 508 and Illinois Information Technology Accessibility Act guidelines to the greatest extent possible where applicable and practical and CTA will include representatives of the disability community in its testing process early on to make sure that it is being designed properly and functions properly.
- Mr. West asked about Beta testing and he and Ms. Riley asked to be involved in the testing if possible. Mr. Gwinn responded that the CTA will be making an announcement regarding the process for the public's involvement in the testing.
- Ms. Kaminkowitz and Mr. Fischer were both interested in finding out how the mobile app will work with a Paratransit Reduced Fare Card. Mr. Gwinn replied that Pace is working on issues related to Paratransit Fare Cards.
- Mr. Yunashko asked about the apps usage for individuals who have low vision or use Braille. Mr. Gwinn stated that the development team is following the federal guidelines and the State Information Technology Accessibility Act guidelines to ensure that concerns of individuals who are blind or visually impaired are met. Mr. Yunashko stated he has encountered instances where guidelines for an application may have been followed but the end product result was still not usable for individuals who read Braille. He and others would like to be involved in the testing process for the Ventra Mobile App.

Facilitator's Report

- Amy Serpe, Manager of ADA Compliance Programs updated the Committee on CTA ADA-related projects.
- Ms. Serpe read aloud the Descriptive Rail Guides Project template that was previously distributed to Committee members, along with a sample guide for the Clinton Rail Station. The on-site reading was done to provide access to the information for Committee members who have visual impairments, as well as any audience members who were blind or visually impaired.
- The Descriptive Rail Guides Project is funded through a New Freedom Grant and utilizes the contractual services of The Chicago Lighthouse for People Who Are Blind Or Visually Impaired in their development. The guides provide descriptions of all of CTA's rail stations and when complete, will be posted online enabling individuals to read through a station description prior to visiting that station.
- The intent of this reading was to generate feedback from the Committee in so far as if people thought an element of significance was being omitted within the guide.
- Ms. Kamankowitz suggested that adding a bit more information related to where an elevator goes, (i.e., all the way to the platform or must a customer use 2 different elevators or even an elevator and then a ramp, such as at the Clinton Station, to get to the platform and boarding area). Her additional point is that some individuals cannot use a ramp so, even though the station is accessible to someone in a mobility device, it might not work for some people who are only able to use an elevator.
- Mr. Hastalis would like to see more information regarding specific connections from each station such as what is the relationship between the station and the bus terminal, surrounding streets, neighborhood, etc. He also thought all inclines should be listed as ramps.
- Ms. Serpe stated that while these comments will be taken into consideration, it is most likely not possible to include everything that is around a particular station. Where do you stop providing information? This will have to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Safety concerns will also be addressed in so far as if one is exiting a train that is at street level, etc.
- Mr. West and then Ms. Riley commented that they have been able to get assistance from the CSAs and other staff at the Jefferson Park Station as needed to access their bus. This was again a reminder to the Committee that not everyone wants or needs the same type of information or assistance and that CTA personnel are trained to assist customers, especially those who have disabilities in a "safe travel" experience.
- Ms. Riley suggested adding pictures to the guides. Ms. Serpe responded that it is understood that people learn in different ways, (i.e., visually, audibly, kinesthetically, etc., and supplementing the guides with pictures is being considered).

Old Business

- No old business was discussed.

New Business

- No new business was discussed.

Public Comment

- Mr. Ray Campbell who is the Chairman of the Pace/Paratransit ADA Advisory Committee, stated he was glad that the Descriptive Rail Guides Project is continuing to move forward. He also commented that he supports the idea of individuals who are blind or visually impaired in pre-testing the Ventra Mobile App to ensure usability by people who read Braille.

- Mr. Garland Armstrong commented that the bus terminal islands at Cumberland and Jefferson Park are not accessible to people who use mobility devices.
- Mr. Jamal Powell commented that he appreciates the detail included in the Rail Guides descriptions. He also commented that he has had both positive and negative experiences when dealing with the CSAs at rail stations. Sometimes they provide excellent support and sometimes they can't answer his question and make no effort to find out the answer.

Adjournment

- The next ADA Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Monday, April 13, 2015.
- Mr. West moved and Ms. Miller seconded to adjourn the meeting. Chairman Hastalis did so at 3:00 pm. (The early adjournment was to allow all Committee members to go into an Executive Session for required *CTA Code of Ethics Training*. Mr. Stephen Wood, Deputy General Counsel, Compliance, Policy and Appeals conducted the training from 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.).

###