



Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., *Governor*
Michael S. Steele, *Lt. Governor*

Robert L. Flanagan, *Secretary*
Neil J. Pedersen, *Administrator*

Maryland Department of Transportation

Minutes of Meeting

Date: November 28, 2007

Meeting Date: October 24, 2007

Subject: ADA Advisory Committee Meeting #4

Location: Hearing and Speech Agency (HASA), Auditorium

Recorder: Joe Crider

Members in Attendance:

Doug Simmons	SHA Deputy Administrator
Linda Singer	SHA Office of Policy and Research
Norie Calvert	SHA Office of Highway Development
John Gaver	Maryland Department of Transportation
Richard Woo	SHA Policy & Research
Scot Morrell	SHA Office of Counsel
Pat Sheehan	American Council for the Blind (ACB) (via teleconference)
Lisa Choplin	SHA Office of Highway Development
Sylvester (Sly) Bieler	ARC of Baltimore
Harriet Levine	Jacobs
Ben Dubin	Alliance of Disability Commissions
Cari Watrous	Maryland Department of Disabilities
Denise Perdue	Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH)
Ginger Palmer	Anne Arundel County Commission on Disabilities

Observers:	John Gover	SHA Office of Highway Development
	Paris Lee	SHA Office of Equal Opportunity OEO

Members Unable To Attend:

Rosemarie Morales	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Duane Geruschat	Maryland School for the Blind
Sharon Maneki	National Federation of the Blind (NFB)
Yvonne Dunkle	Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH)
Andrea Buonincontro	Making Choices for Independent Living
Troy Parham	SHA OEO
Marian Vessels	TransCen
Craig Borne	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)



Introductions

Linda Singer opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and advising of where the restrooms and emergency exits were located.

Doug Simmons expressed his gratitude to the committee members for attending and asked for input regarding what is and is not working well.

Linda reported that January's meeting minutes were approved by the committee. She also advised that the reason for the long timeframe between this meeting and the last was to allow for SHA to obtain input from the public meetings. The input would allow SHA to have significant data to share with the committee.

Public Meetings

Linda reported that the public meetings have been a positive experience. She also reported that due to poor attendance at the Baltimore County public meeting, the strategy for the meetings was revised. SHA is joining existing scheduled County Commission on Disability meetings. This strategy ensures that at a minimum, commission members and the people who normally attend these meetings will be aware of SHA's ADA initiatives.

Richard Woo asked Ginger Palmer, who attended the Anne Arundel County public meeting, about her impression of the meeting and improvements needed, if any. Ginger stated that the presentation was good. She really liked the set up of the computers and how they had the ability to focus on specific areas. She was also happy to discover that several issues of concern were already in SHA's database.

Ben Dubin commented that the input from the public meetings is looking at the question, "Did SHA miss anything?" In his opinion, this information is not as valuable as it would have been had the public meetings occurred prior to the inventory.

Cari Watrous responded that the public meetings provide help with prioritizing places where there are problems.

Norie Calvert discussed the comprehensiveness of the checklist from the 2002 ADAAG. She explained that the survey is ongoing and shows detailed and specific information. There is data for locations where there are problems but these locations need to be reviewed in depth to determine how to correct any deficiencies and the best way to make the area compliant. Norie noted that for these reasons, public input is very important. She further explained that if there were locations that citizens mentioned, which were not identified by the Self Evaluation, the meetings give the public the opportunity to have these areas added to SHA's list. She also added that one of the main purposes of the public meetings is to use public input to determine how to prioritize the data collected. These meetings were designed to start a dialog about the Self Evaluation and it is important to continue conducting them and collecting public input.

Linda added that the Advisory Committee was asked if they would like to go out and experience what SHA was surveying and make recommendations. A couple members went out with a field team on a survey and their comments were incorporated into the checklist development.

Harriet Levine explained that the scheduling of the public meetings was deliberate. These meetings served as a means of informing the SHA representatives who receive comments and giving them more public insight into problem areas. It also gives them the opportunity to address these issues and do more than make a notation and say "We'll look into that." It is SHA's objective to begin prioritizing the projects and locations for improvements. In addition, Harriet explained SHA's approach to go beyond the law and provide full accessibility to everyone. An example of the types of comments that have been received at the public meetings which the survey may have missed was an APS in the median of Georgia Avenue. In this specific location, people using wheelchairs had trouble reaching the push button due to the offset

from the curb and it button itself was difficult to push.. These types of comments are very important to us, but would not be captured were it not for the public meetings.

Doug stated that the Self Evaluation allowed SHA to look at their system and identify where there are problems and determine how much funding will be needed for improvements. He also said that the Self Evaluation served as a starting point for a conversation with the public.

Linda also reported that Maryland's program for ADA improvements is being used as an example for other states. She has received emails and calls from New Mexico and Pennsylvania regarding how SHA is conducting their improvements.

Self Evaluation

Harriet Levine provided a brief overview and update of the Self Evaluation:

- The self evaluation field work was completed in December 2006 and the results were discussed at the last Advisory Committee meeting.
- The Self Evaluation found that 51% of sidewalks are compliant and 0.05% of ramps were compliant. The primary problem with the ramps is no detectable warning surface and the lack of level landings at the top of the ramps.

Harriet also gave a brief list of the features that were surveyed during the self evaluation including sidewalks, ramps, driveway crossings, median crossing, access to transit stops, and APS. The information collected was entered into GIS, making it easy to zoom into specific areas and see what areas are compliant or non compliant. Additionally by using GIS it easier to use information about other various features such as transit stations, hospitals, office parks, etc. by adding different overlays to the existing mapping. This can be used as an additional tool in the prioritization of projects.

Harriet continued to explain that the last step in the self evaluation is communicating with the public. The first meeting was in Baltimore County where only 1 person attended. Due to the low attendance, SHA adjusted the approach to the public meetings. As a result, meetings are being held in conjunction with the local County Commissions on Disabilities. This approach was very successful in Montgomery County, which had 50 people in attendance. The Howard county meeting was attended by the commissioners and 8 citizens who examined the displays and communicated with the SHA personnel. Anne Arundel County was also well attended with approximately 20 people.

Several comments have been received from the public meetings and participants have been encouraged to contact SHA for future comments. Some of the most common comments have been the lack of ramps or curb cuts; locations where wheelchair users have to use the streets because there are no curb cuts; places that need sidewalks, and various comments about city and county roads. The comments about sidewalk needs and problems with city and county roads are passed on to the respective agency or department for consideration.

Pat Sheehan asked whether SHA was coordinating with the Safe Routes to School organization. Lisa Choplin stated that SHA is coordinating, but they must submit plans to SHA so that SHA is aware of these locations.

Ben asked if the Safe Routes to School are on local roads. Doug stated that most are on local roads however, SHA is managing the program.

Harriet continued discussing the details of comments from public meetings. Besides comments on specific sidewalk locations, she mentioned other types of comments such as a comment made requesting a review of speed humps on the roads where there is no sidewalk for ADA compliance (Anne Arundel County meeting) and a comment regarding the hybrid car issue.

Harriet reported that recently four public meetings were held within the past two weeks. She explained that currently there is an effort being made to summarize the comments and upon completion, the summary

will be distributed to the Committee and proper contacts within SHA or the local agency responsible. The comments will help SHA to prioritize improvements. Additionally, SHA is committed to working with any group to get additional input.

Linda added that SHA hopes that the public meetings will create a continuous dialog between the public and SHA and as opposed to being a, "one shot deal". She restated the willingness of SHA to go to any venue to hold a meeting to receive additional public input. Linda also mentioned that several counties have asked to attend the technical training offered to SHA employees.

Linda discussed how the transition plan will be used to prioritize ADA improvements. Federal regulations mention several locations as priorities which include hospitals and transportation centers. The committee also assisted through the brainstorming session held at the first meeting. She also mentioned that there have been some improvements already completed because there was money that needed to be spent in the fiscal year.

Lisa Choplin explained the funding received by SHA. SHA received money in 2005 which was spent on the self evaluation. In 2006, SHA received approximately \$1.7M, half of which was spent on improvement projects. These projects were selected based on places where improvements could be completed quickly. The current focus is to complete projects based on priority. In 2007 SHA received \$4M, however programmed projects exceeded the budget and SHA is trying to delay some of them until 2008. Currently all the projects are done under area wide contracts based on different districts.

Lisa explained there are 4 different districts that have area wide projects. Currently the list of projects completed include one in Montgomery County, one in Prince George's County, 5 in Baltimore County, 1 ongoing project in Anne Arundel County, 3 in Howard County, and 1 ongoing project in Frederick County. The total amount of sidewalk improvements completed is 4.5 miles. Additionally, the scope of other existing projects will include the next logical intersection for improvements to prevent projects from drawing the boundary to just before the intersection so they do not have to do ADA improvements at the intersection.

Ben asked if the sidewalk mentioned earlier was just correcting deficiencies or whether it was new sidewalk.

Lisa stated that all the projects were to correct deficiencies. A field check was conducted to ensure that the improvements were correct however, there were some locations where a small section, 120' or so, of new sidewalk was put in to make it a complete system after looking at the area of the projects.

Doug mentioned that there is a separate program to add sidewalks in areas and that this is not the intention of this particular program.

Sly wanted to know if all the corrections were based on the inventory, to which Linda replied yes. Sly asked how citizens submitted comments.

Linda explained the options SHA has set in place which include: an internet site, TTY, a phone line, email and in person by filling out a comment sheet. Linda also mentioned that she has been handing out cards and working with people in the county to forward comments to SHA. She also added that at public meetings, comment cards (including in Braille), were available and staff also wrote down notes during conversations and a court reporter was also on-hand to take comments or questions upon request. SHA is diligent in its efforts to ensure that information gets out to the public.

Sly asked if these options were working. Linda responded that it seems to be working, and SHA is getting calls from counties to set up meetings.

Harriet said that the ADA team is currently assessing the meetings to determine what can be done better. She asked Committee members what they thought about a 1 page flyer that can be handed out and that

members of the committee could send out to their constituent groups. The flyer would have information on the self evaluation and all of the contact information for the program.

Sly commented that the flyer is a good idea.

John Gaver mentioned that if people don't know the exact person to contact they can contact the Secretary of Transportation for additional information. Any request relating to ADA issues will be forwarded to the Title II Coordinator.

John Gaver also mentioned that the MDOT home page has an icon that allows people to fill out comments. Linda provided the website for ADA compliance at SHA.

Ben asked if SHA had gone out to non profit groups. Linda said yes and mention that John Gover, Norie and Lisa are going to VA for an ACB conference in the upcoming weeks. Pat advised that there should be 150 or so people at the meeting in VA.

Norie advised that there is also a meeting with the District of Columbia to give an overview of the entire self evaluation process. SHA has met with WMATA's regional transit group (originally called the Bus Stop Group) and provided training to Prince George's County and WMATA.

Pat asked if WMATA is aware of SHA's approach toward improvements. Norie explained that SHA is providing more detailed training and working to share data between the agencies. Harriet added that WMATA understands the difference in the scope of the SHA inventory and their inventory. SHA only looked at bus stops where there was already existing SHA sidewalk next to the WMATA bus stop.

Pat stated if access and sidewalks are improved it would save about \$37 per trip for paratransit as paratransit riders often use the service because they can not access existing bus stops. Pat suggested that the people coordinating the paratransit services could provide insight into the areas that are getting the most requests due to lack of accessibility of the existing bus stops. Pat provided the names and contact information for the people to contact within WMATA.

Harriet discussed that there are locations where there could be a higher priority but the project is taking longer because of outside complications. Current projects were picked where improvements could be done quickly, with little complications and less lead time. Now we are looking at projects that will have more lead time and require more coordination with outside entities. Examples include areas that require utility relocations, areas where state roads are along private property, and where residents do not want to provide easements.

Norie added there is a specific example where a church does not want to grant an easement for a sidewalk because they do not want to accept the liability relating to the sidewalk in the future.

Linda advised that the APS retrofitting have identified 1250 sites that will be converted to APS, 209 of these are installed or are being installed. SHA's plan is to have all of these installations completed by 2016. Additionally all new pedestrian-activated signals will be APS.

Norie reported that in January SHA was creating a specification, or spec, regarding accessibility during construction. A draft spec was created and presented to the group for comments and then the spec was presented at MDQI, Maryland's Quality Initiative conference. Currently SHA is working to address the comments. The Spec was tested in the area wide contracts which provided some good information that is being incorporated into the final specification. For example the specification is not very specific or

informative so it is determined that we need to provide a pedestrian maintenance of traffic plan to go with it. The Access Board is very happy with the spec and provided minor comments. SHA is awaiting FHWA review and approval of the spec so it can be implemented on federally funded contracts.

Cari asked how the spec related to the Show and Tell done by SHA. Norie explained that the Show and Tell highlighted several of the products that could be used to meet the spec. Additionally, there are a couple of products that SHA wants to look at in more detail.

Linda reported that the Secretaries 3rd annual conference on Accessible Transportation was very well attended. Additional comments were collected at the meeting. She also mentioned exploring the idea of a peer exchange with other states in the mid-Atlantic region to discuss what each state is doing and share best practices.

Linda advised that the county has the same obligations as the State. The State has oversight, and is going to work to educate the counties and offer the same training to the counties to hopefully provide a consistent and seamless network.

Linda is looking at communications based on Section 508 and welcomed any input. SHA has guidelines on website content and was told that some of them were problematic and have been working with the Access Board to resolve these. Pat Sheehan offered to help as that is his area of expertise.

Linda asked if there are any issues or open discussion items.

Pat wanted to know if the APS that were installed were at 209 intersections or 209 signals. John Gover said that they were signals not intersections because there can be more than one signal at an intersection. Harriet also added that there are over 400 additional signals currently in design.

Ben questioned a comment about exceeding the standards and wanted to know exactly how SHA was exceeding the standards. Lisa explained to Ben that the most noticeable difference is that all SHA sidewalks are minimum 5' in width and anything less than 5' needs to go through the design waiver process versus the 4' required by ADAAG. Norie added that ADAAG requires that you only redo areas where the project is actually in contact, so this could mean redoing the ADA ramps in only one quadrant of an intersection, but SHA's scoping process requires that the entire intersection be redone to be compliant.

Sly mentioned that in some Far East cities there are the truncated domes as well as noticeable ridges in the pavement that serve as guideways and asked the group if these are a good option and if anyone had seen these? Doug responded that SHA would look into it. Nobody else had seen anything like this. Harriet offered to contact Jacobs overseas offices for more information. Pat was aware of something similar to what Sly described at shows but was unaware of any location where it was actually used in public right of way and that they were not really recognized in the US.

Linda mentioned that there was a phone call asking if colorblind people qualified as part of the group. Most agreed that this was not really an issue as the lights are sequenced a certain way. Sly added that in Canada green, yellow and red are sometimes represented by different shape lights.

John Gaver complimented SHA for looking at their procedures and policies and for updating them to ensure ADA compliance.

Pat thanked the group for the opportunity to call in and noted that it worked well for him.

Ben suggested that SHA be proactive and go out and contact groups and not wait for them to contact the state. Doug responded that SHA will continue the outreach effort. Cari mentioned that she has a huge email list and will ask about subsets of the list.

Ben wanted to know if we are at a point to move forward with priorities. Lisa stated that SHA has addressed the initial projects and is getting into more time consuming projects that need to be prioritized. SHA advised that they could start to prioritize one county as a sample. Lisa stated that Baltimore County had most of its initial projects completed and would be a good candidate for further prioritization. Norie added that GIS allows us to query various layers to help set priorities. Lisa also stated that SHA is looking

at locations where there are a large number of pedestrian accidents. Ben asked if there are any demographics for the locations about those who need access. It was mentioned that this is not really allowed. Cari said that it could be possible to check the mobility maps for people who require paratransit, and also checking with Human Resources for people collecting disability.

Ginger asked if there were any other county meetings and wished to be informed of future meetings. Linda mentioned there were no scheduled meetings as of now but the group would be informed as soon as they are scheduled.

Next Meeting:

The group discussed another meeting in late January. The MdQI conference is the 30th and 31st. A tentative date will be established and sent out to the group. Also, due to the time of year, a tentative "snow date" will also be established.