

**accessDC**

**“Open-Mic” Style Listening  
Session #2**

**Summary**

March 2017

## Introduction

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) held their second “Open Mic” -style listening session for the accessDC - Inclusive Coordinated Transportation Planning Study. The purpose of the study is to identify gaps in the current transportation network serving older adults and persons with disabilities and develop recommendations to enhance access to transportation services.

Members of the public that were unable to attend the meeting are invited to submit comments through email or over the phone with DDOT personnel.

## Meeting Overview

Location: Old Council Chambers –441 4th St NW, Washington, DC 20001

Date: Saturday, March 11, 2017

Time: 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

## Meeting Organization

This was a two-hour meeting, including a presentation followed by an “Open-Mic” session. The meeting was structured as follows:

1. **Sign In:** Time for people to sign in and pick up meeting materials.
2. **Study Presentation:** Introduce study goals, provide schedule updates
  - a. **Existing Conditions Overview:** The study team provided an overview of the current transportation services, programs, and linkages available in the District and discussed the findings of the customer survey.
  - b. **Draft Strategies:** The study team detailed potential enhancements to transportation services and linkages that are currently under review. The potential strategies include small tweaks to existing services, implementing a “No Wrong Door Approach”, or developing accessible trip planning or trip booking platforms.
3. **Open Mic Session and Q&A:** During the Open Mic time attendees that wanted to speak had up to three minutes to talk about their concerns, questions and suggestions for improving the recommendations. Afterwards, the study team took questions and answers from the audience.
4. **Meeting Closure:** Summary of main points that emerged from the open mic session, next steps in the study, as well as information for the public to stay informed about the project updates (contact information, website link, e-blast subscriptions, etc.)
5. **Discussion with Group of Attendees:** Some attendees that arrived late were able to look over the presentation handouts, get a brief overview of strategies, and provide their feedback.

## Attendance

1. 22 people attended the meeting, including three Project Advisory Committee (PAC) members, Joyce Forrest, Janet Parker, and Sandra Fault, representing the community.
2. A number of ANC commissioners were also present.
3. 9 attendees completed DDOT's Title VI form.
4. 8 attendees spoke for up to three minutes during the open mic session and 4 other attendees spoke after the meeting during the discussion time

## Speakers at the Open Mic:

Comments from speakers at the Open Mic are summarized below:

### 1. Clarence "Buddy" Moore, Ward 1 Commissioner on the Commission on Aging

Seabury Connector Card program has a low participation rate. Mr. Moore stated the process is too complicated before and after receiving the card. The process as described by Mr. Moore is below:

- Senior applicant completes the application and the application is sent to Seabury.
- Seabury sends the applicant a postcard with a number to call.
- Depending on income, the applicant gets a subsidy of 35 to 80% and Seabury informs the applicant of their portion on the call.
- The applicant must send a money order or check with their portion after which Seabury sends a Visa card with money on it to them.
- The applicant must then go to CVS to transfer money to their [flash card] WMATA Smartrip card.
- Additional money is added only when the applicant/Connector card holder sends another check or money order again to Seabury.

Mr. Moore also noted that Seabury does not provide a timely service (e.g. 2- to 3-hours delays).

### 2. Phil Maggio, American Council for the Blind

Mr. Maggio stated that he uses MetroAccess and TransportDC and the time of day and time of month affects what service is available. MetroAccess is a challenge to use during the evening rush hour and inclement weather. He also mentioned that he uses Uber.

### 3. Kirsten Oldenburg, Commissioner ANC 6B

Ms. Oldenburg stated that she was there to advocate for sidewalks and making sure that they are accessible. She also mentioned that DC has very few benches for older adults who are pedestrians to sit and rest.

### 4. Justin Lini, Commissioner ANC 7D

Mr. Lini stated that the team should consider using cell phone texting as a strategy to reach a broader population. He suggested explore additional options for seniors to book trips, such as installing a kiosk in public places where there has high population of seniors. He also reminded everyone to be looking at options that work for residents in Wards 5, 7 and 8 who may not be as technologically savvy.

#### **5. Janet Parker, Project Advisory Committee - accessDC Study**

Ms. Parker stated that strategies with cell phone use should definitely be looking into text messaging options especially to accommodate those who are deaf. She said that resides in public housing in Ward 3 and a number of her neighbors do not have cellphones with video display. She urged the group to explore baseline options and strategies that would work for low-income users.

As an informational item, she shared with the room that AARP memberships allow access to Logisticare that provide 24 rides per year to pharmacy and doctor appointments.

#### **6. Urbane Bass, III - Model Cities Wellness Center**

Mr. Bass from the Model Cities Wellness Center spoke about transportation for recreational uses in addition to medical needs. He is with a group called Seniors Speaking Up and Out and spoke about a bus that used to be available to the wellness center but had been discontinued by DCOA. Seniors would use the bus to travel to bowling leagues, Senior Steppers, Senior Hooters, and Senior choirs to perform around the city.

#### **7. Ms. Alayna Waldrum, Coordinator - Senior Advisory Coalition**

Ms. Waldrum stated that strategies that required using a cell phone could become an issue for seniors, because some of them struggle to operate their phones and often rely on caregivers to arrange their rides. She also emphasized the need to get information about transportation options out through outreach, education, and one-on-one sessions.

#### **8. Sherice Muhammad, Commissioner ANC 7D**

Ms. Muhammad said she was representing Ward 7D including the community around Deanwood which has a high population of seniors. They have used the NextDoor App successfully in the community to bridge the gap between young people and older residents. She suggested having print copies also with step-by-step instructions similar to the images in the Open Mic presentation to help make seniors more comfortable with technology. She also suggested more options for active seniors such as Uber.

#### **9. Arsenetta Hawthorne, Ward 7 resident**

Ms. Hawthorne stated that she's a new resident of the District from California and felt like transportation was very expensive and confusing. DDOT and other agencies should provide an easier way for people to understand the transportation system and options available such as good maps. She also said that a lot of people where she lives rely on families' support for transportation assistance.

Ms. Hawthorne also mentioned that she was a statistician and believed that the graphs showing preferences of the respondents needed to include the number of respondents in each category. (DDOT staff said that the slide would be updated to include the information.)

A few additional speakers joined the meeting after it had ended but the team shared the presentation informally with them and noted their comments:

#### **10. Alma Daly, Ward 5 Resident**

Ms. Daly stated that she is concerned about how Seabury operates. She said they do not provide transportation to senior and wellness centers. In addition, she stated the service is not affordable,

timely, and it doesn't show up sometimes. She also wanted to bring attention to a bus that used to be available for the Model Cities Wellness Center that had been taken away.

#### **11. Mabel Hart, Ward 5 Resident**

Ms. Hart stated that MetroAccess was inconvenient because of the advance 24-hour booking requirement and the \$7 cost per day was too much for a senior to pay. She also said WMATA drivers were often not considerate about senior users and needed additional training. When she tries to take the bus and the senior or disabled seats are occupied, the driver does not say anything. She said there should be training for bus drivers to remind people to move for seniors and those with disabilities. Metrobus drivers sometimes ignore people waiting at the bus stop. Ms. Hart recommended that Metrorail make changes to be more sensitive to seniors needs and accessibility (e.g. elevators, stairs, and fast-paced crowds). Special attention was also needed for people with intellectual disabilities.

#### **12. Leroy Cammell, Ward 5 Resident**

Mr. Cammell said that he rides MetroAccess but it's too expensive and always late. It's hard for seniors on a small, fixed income to afford transportation.

#### **13. Kathleen Brisbane, Model Cities Wellness Center**

Ms. Brisbane stated that it is important to note and clarify that Wellness and Senior Centers do not serve a primarily recreational purpose for many seniors in the District, and that these residents need transportation to get to these centers and get their meals.

## **Other Comments**

A few other comments were received and discussed during the presentation and these are summarized below:

- Attendees mentioned that some taxi companies do not accept the Connector Card.
- One of the attendees commended DDOT on the RideDC App and suggested that it be modified to show multiple bus lines, allowing people to better use the app when making transfers. For example, if a person takes the X9 and needs to transfer to the D6, they would be able to track both buses to understand the best place to make a connection.
- There was some concern about Seabury's accommodations when customers need to go to doctor's appointment or receive medical treatment.
- Is there any capacity within ServeDC to do a Bus Buddy program?
- Ms. Joyce A. Forrest recommended that the study team contact the television news station WUSA9 Andrea McCarren for information they collect about people calling in about sidewalks in Maryland, DC, and Virginia. She provided contact information for her: Andrea McCarren, [amccarren@wusa9.com](mailto:amccarren@wusa9.com) #NoBarrier 202-895-5552 or 202-246-2264.
- Ms. Janet Parker stated that DDOT should create safe path for people in wheelchairs, such as fixing loose bricks in sidewalks and adding curb cuts.
- In response to a question about which cities are currently using advanced trip booking, and what's the feedback from users, the study team stated there are examples in Jacksonville,

FL and Salt Lake City, UT. In Jacksonville, it gives people more information about their options, but that in some cities the roll out is slow.

- Is advanced trip booking a concept or really happening in some cities? The study team stated that some cities have it, but different developers are customizing the system.

## **Next Steps**

1. The meeting presentation and summary will be uploaded on website
2. Study team will develop recommendations according to the feedback
3. Study team will present draft recommendations at the next PAC meeting