Call to Order:
Chairman Chris Prentice, Access Advisory Committee

Chairman Prentice called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Introductions:

Committee members present were Chairman Prentice, Vice Chairman Paul Hunt, Molly Birrell, Estrella Barrera, Tom Turner, and John McNabb.

Capital Metro staff members present were Sam Sargent, Martin Kareithi, Chad Ballentine, Roberto Gonzalez, and Jeff Denning.

Brenda Fernandez was present representing MV.

Citizens present were Ms. Katheryn Rutledge, Ms. Cheryl Hunt, Ms. Rosemary Goltz, Ms. Kathryn Davis.

Citizen Communication:

Ms. Katheryn Rutledge, MetroAccess Client

Ms. Rutledge stated that the Upper East Side Flex service did not go into Mueller and she and other customers believed it would do so. She also stated that the GPS on MetroAccess vehicles continued to take her to different locations than she requested, such as specific bank locations. Mr. Ballentine stated that he would look into both issues and that staff had done so in September.

Ms. Cheryl Hunt, MetroAccess Client

Ms. Hunt stated that she was still having issues with MetroAccess operators not following directions on the manifest for trips to her church. She also asked if negotiated times still gave a client three different appointment time options. Mr. Ballentine stated that clients can negotiate either the pickup or the drop off.

Chairman Chris Prentice, Access Advisory Committee

Chairman Prentice stated that he’s noticed a strange anomaly with stop announcements on fixed route services. For example, when Route 20 crosses over the river into Downtown, an announcement is made for the stop at Riverside and Barton Springs Road, but when the river is
crossed the stop at 4th and Lavaca is not made. The announcements begin at 8th Street. Mr. Kareithi stated that he would look into this issue.

Ms. Glenda Born, Access Advisory Committee

Ms. Born asked that supervisors and staff remind operators to give a safety warning when buses unload on particularly bus streets. She also commended a MetroAccess call taker for getting her a ride home after an error cancelled her trip. Ms. Born appreciated the efforts made by the call center to assist her during this emergency.

Ms. Rosemary Goltz, Route 333 Customer

Ms. Gold stated that she lives along Route 333 and doesn’t drive. She is concerned by the Connections 2025 recommendations for her portion of the route and wanted updates on when the next Board of Directors work session would be. Mr. Sargent gave Ms. Gold the time and place of the work session and January board meeting, with an update that the board plans to vote on the plan at their February 27th meeting.

Ms. Kathryn Davis, Four Points Resident

Ms. Davis stated that she lives in the 620 and 2222 (Four Points) area and there’s a “transit black hole” with a need for service. Her husband works at the Home Depot in the area and travels by bike, which can be very dangerous in the area. Mr. Gonzalez and Mr. Sargent spoke with her and informed her that the area is under consideration for service and a possible park and ride as part of the Connections 2025 plan and long range capital projects plan.

MetroAccess Statistics & Tech Update:
Mr. Chad Ballentine, Director of Paratransit, Capital Metro

Mr. Ballentine provided the monthly update on MetroAccess statistics, including on-time performance and Upper East Side Flex ridership. He also discussed the rollout of the new Capital Metro website and mobile app.

Ms. Born asked what the rationale was behind not having a link to MetroAccess on the home page of the new website. Chairman Prentice also expressed concern that the new website may be cleaner but it’s difficult for people with accessibility issues to find the MetroAccess site. He stated that it was “inexcusable for this to not be on the home page.”

Mr. Sargent explained the structure of the website, that MetroAccess has a link under “Rider’s Guide” that is more prominent than any fixed route or rail service. He acknowledged that it is not on the homepage, however, and customers with accessibility issues could have difficulty locating the page. Mr. Sargent will follow up with the webmaster and creative team to discuss.
Committee Action Update:
Mr. Sam Sargent, Community Involvement Coordinator, Capital Metro

Mr. Sargent reminded the committee that Ms. Barrera had been reappointed to her position on the Access Advisory Committee at the November Board of Directors meeting by Board Member Delia Garza. Ms. Rebecca Allbritton was appointed by Board Member Ann Kitchen to a vacancy on the committee.

Mr. Sargent also asked about the final language for the Access Advisory Committee resolution on the draft Connections 2025 plan and whether or not a representative from the committee would present the resolution at the January or February Board of Directors meeting.

Vice Chairman Hunt stated that the final resolution should include a statement that the ADA service area should be frozen at the existing boundaries so that no MetroAccess client is negatively impacted. Chairman Prentice echoed these sentiments that the loss of one client was one too many.

Access Committee Resolution for the Board of Directors

Whereas most people responded that more frequent service is preferable to more coverage; and

Whereas people who already have bus service always want more service; and

Whereas people who live in the service area but do not have bus service in their area are unfairly taxed without transportation options; and

Whereas a lack of transportation options anywhere in the service causes hardships to impacted people in general; and

Whereas people with disabilities generally have fewer transportation options and are more severely impacted; and

Be it further resolved that the Board reject the Connections 2025 plan; and

Be it further resolved that the Board instruct the consultants to develop a plan that provides full coverage of the service area; and

Be it further resolved that full coverage means that no one located in the service area will be located more than one mile from a Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority bus stop; and

Be it further resolved that the Board instruct the staff to increase the metro Access corridor to one mile; and

Finally, be it resolved that the Board and staff proactively raise the funds to support full coverage of the service area.
New Business

**Project Connect Rollout:**
*Mr. Sam Sargent, Community Involvement Coordinator, Capital Metro*

Mr. Sargent provided an update on the public rollout of Project Connect (2.0) as the committee will receive regular updates in the coming year. He explained that Project Connect is Central Texas’ regionally adopted high capacity transit plan. The current work is to refine the plan by selecting new transit solutions for access into, out of, and within Central Austin.

The study area is the five county MSA, including Travis, Williamson, Hays, Bastrop, and Caldwell counties. Representatives from each of these areas are providing input on the plan and public meetings are being scheduled throughout the study area.

Mr. Sargent, continued, explaining that Project Connect will be developed in three phases:

- **Big Ideas, Bold Starts:** a feasibility analysis that identifies where enhancements and new services are needed most and which projects are most critical. This will take 6 to 9 months.
- **Real Solutions for Real Problems:** an alternatives analysis that identifies the best system of solutions and the most effective strategy for rapid implementation. This will take 14 to 18 months, making use of phase 1 input and the expertise of Capital Metro and city staff, as well as the AECOM consultant team.
- **Path to Implementation:** adoption of Locally Preferred Alternatives (LPAs) that advance preliminary engineering and environmental designs, along with the submission of a federal application for project development. This phase will last 4 to 6 months.

A critical part of Project Connect is coordination with all regional transportation and planning entities, including TxDOT, City of Austin, CTRMA, and CAMPO. Capital Metro will also partner with municipalities, community stakeholders, transit users, employers, the FTA, developers, education leaders, and health and human services agencies. The City of Austin’s Strategic Mobility Plan will be integrated into the final Project Connect plan.

Three types of corridors will be identified throughout the process, falling into the categories of Commuter Corridors, Connector Corridors, and city center Circulator Corridors.

Chairman Prentice stated that he is on the Multimodal Community Advisory Committee (MCAC) and it is his belief that the Project Connect name is still associated with the failed 2014 urban rail election. In his opinion, this will make it difficult to pass any bond if the old name is still attached to the project. The committee expressed their general agreement with this statement.

Javier Arguello, project manager for Capital Metro, and other members of the project team will provide more in-depth updates in the coming months.
Action Items

Approval of November 30th Meeting Minutes

The previous month’s minutes were approved unanimously on a motion from Ms. Birrell, seconded by Vice Chairman Hunt. Mr. McNabb abstained, as he was not present for the November 30th meeting.

Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 6:30 p.m.