Resolution 2016-03

Regarding Text-based Information for MTA BaltimoreLink

Sponsored by Cheryl Fogle-Hatch, Secretary, Greater Baltimore Chapter, Nicole Fincham-Shehan, Vice-President, TLC Chapter, and Ellen Ringlein, President, Greater Baltimore Chapter

WHEREAS, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is implementing the BaltimoreLink Network to improve service quality and reliability of MTA's bus routes; and

WHEREAS, the proposed BaltimoreLink Network consists of color-coded city link routes that connect to local routes designated by number in many neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, the proposed routes will differ from existing routes which will necessitate changing the locations of some bus stops; and

WHEREAS, MTA is accepting public feedback for at least three drafts of the BaltimoreLink plan before it is to be implemented in June of 2017; and

WHEREAS, in the first draft, the MTA website included text-based access to information about the proposed routes, mainly due to the efforts of a former employee of the Regional Transit Administration based in Howard County; and

WHEREAS, in the second draft, MTA staff did not provide text-based access to information but published in print and on its website only maps of planned route changes; and

WHEREAS, without text-based access to information, blind people could not independently review and comment on the second draft or provide input about these changes losing any ability to influence refinements to the new bus system; and

WHEREAS, the third draft is due in December of 2016: Now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland in Convention assembled this thirtieth day of October, 2016, in the city of Baltimore, Maryland, that this organization demand that the MTA provide text-based information on their website about all subsequent route changes as well as a list of proposed and current bus stops for BaltimoreLink in an accessible format online including stop numbers, and all route information that is printed on signs placed at each bus stop; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this organization urge that MTA invest in accessible talking signage with bus route information at all stops, particularly at transit facilities.