



February 9, 2018

Dr. Phil Posner, Chair
Accessibility Advisory Committee
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Dear Chair Posner:

This letter is in response to the Accessibility Advisory Committee's (AAC) request that the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) consider installation and use of an accordion-style between-car barrier, as used on some trains in the New York City Transit (NYCT) system and perhaps in other transit systems as well, on the 8000-series rail cars.

WMATA's 8000-series project team has reviewed the concern brought forward by the AAC regarding the gap between the end car barriers on the existing 7000-series fleet, and the committee's recommendation to use accordion-styled between-car barriers similar to the ones utilized on some of the New York (Long Island Railroad) or NYCT fleet.

Between-car barriers are necessary to meet the requirements of Title II of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) implementing regulations, 49 CFR Parts 27, 27, 38, and 39. DOT's ADA regulation, 49 CFR Part 38.63, pertains to between-car barriers and states that "Suitable devices or systems shall be provided to prevent, deter or warn individuals from inadvertently stepping off the platform between cars. Acceptable solutions include, but are not limited to, pantograph gates, chains, motion detectors or similar devices. The 8000-series specification requires that both ends of each railcar be equipped with an ADA compliant between-car barrier to deter passengers from inadvertently walking off station platforms and falling between cars.

WMATA is not able to commit to a new style of barrier type or design at this stage of the program. As it pertains, specifically, to the suggested accordion-style between-car barrier system, such a change would require study time to ascertain its viability for Metro operation since they have not been used in WMATA's system before. In addition, WMATA is concerned with the use of any hard fixture between-car barriers due to system constraints caused by tight curves, crossovers, and switches that need to be negotiated throughout Metro's rail right-of-way.

**Washington
Metropolitan Area
Transit Authority**

It is WMATA's understanding that most major transit systems do not use accordion-style between-car barriers, and that NYCT is moving away from using this type of barrier design as well.

WMATA will continue to engage stakeholders throughout the design process and provide a Final Design Review with a demonstration test of the proposed barrier system using WMATA furnished railcars or a mockup of the new railcars. In addition, the 8000-series program will incorporate lessons learned from the 7000-series railcars relating to the current barrier system's safety and design improvements.

Currently, the 7000-series program is incorporating a major modification to the between car barrier at the cab end of the cars to address the concerns previously noted by the AAC, and the request to add chain style barriers between all cars instead of rubber barriers.

WMATA is committed to improving its current barrier systems and will continue to coordinate with internal and external stakeholders to address any issue and/or concerns for the 8000-series railcars. If you have any further questions or comments, do not hesitate to contact me at 301-955-5358 or ndeessay@wmata.com.

Sincerely,



Nahom DeBessay
Program Manager, 8000 Series Railcar Program

cc: Patrick J. Lavin, Chief Safety Officer
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