



Accessibility Advisory Committee

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December 2, 2019

Dear Chair Smedberg and Members of the Board,

It is my pleasure to present you with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) report for the month of November 2019. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) Proposed WMATA Budget, 2) Open Stroller Policy, and 3) Abilities-Ride Providers.

The AAC is saddened by the passing of Carolyn Bellamy, Emeritus Member, AAC. She had been a valued member of the AAC for many years and will be missed.

Issues of the Month

Proposed WMATA Budget:

Yetunde Olumide, Vice President, Office of Management and Budget Services, shared an overview of the fiscal year 2021 budget as it was proposed to the Board. The Committee appreciated Ms. Olumide taking the time and coming to the meeting to share and receive feedback from members. The Committee is interested in knowing about WMATA's plans to finance the service to prevent bus service cuts. The flat rate of \$2 paid in cash with a surcharge of 25 cents is foreseen as a strain on a group of people who already lack the benefit of free transfers and may end up paying more in fares than the SmarTrip users. Please consider the programs in NYC and Seattle discussed by the Bus Transformation Project of free bus or free Smartrip card for free bus for low economic groups (elderly, persons with disability, and poor).

In addition, the Committee is disappointed that proposals of a MetroAccess flat fare for weekends and a MetroAccess pass do not seem to be part of FY21 budget. These programs would increase WMATA operational efficiency and thus reduce road hours and operational cost. Passes should improve on time performance by improving scheduling from subscription trips. Please review the attached motions from July addressing flat fares and MAC passes. The Committee hopes these two items will be added to the FY21 budget and get an approval by the Board.

Open Stroller Policy:

Jordan Holt, Director, provided an update about the open stroller policy being adopted as a pilot. Ms. Holt stated the policy adopted is of the DC Circulator, which has been in effect for about eight years. Beginning next year, WMATA would pilot the policy for a year to test the policy and gather data to determine its impact. The impact will be monitored for the following: adaptation by the customers, the level of convenience experienced by customers with strollers, and impact on the disability community, particularly persons using wheelchairs and other mobility devices as well as persons who are blind and vision impaired. The open-stroller policy may also positively impact the Metrobus ridership.

There are three categories of priority groups for the accessible seating area:

- First priority: People using wheelchairs and motorized mobility aids.
- Second Priority: Persons with disabilities, seniors and people with walkers.
- Third priority: Children in strollers – up to two at a time on each bus.

Stroller-size limitations:

- The maximum size for a stroller (allowed under this policy) is 48” long by 24” wide.

The AAC appreciates WMATA considering the open stroller policy and soon moving forward with the pilot. The AAC looks forward to receiving the data from this pilot for further feedback.

Abilities-Ride Providers:

The Abilities-Ride program provides not only an alternate but also same day service to MetroAccess customers. The Abilities-Ride service providers are Silver Cab operating out of Prince George’s County; Regency and Action Taxi operating out of Montgomery County; Old Dominion Taxi operating out of Virginia; and Yellow Cab, District Cab, and Curb operating out of the District of Columbia. In addition, Falcon Transport and BBC Express are van providers that are specifically providing service to individuals traveling to and from a human services agency in Prince George’s County under the Abilities-Ride program. Additional companies are expected to be finalized by the Procurement Office with one such company being Via Transportation. In past, the DC Council had an issue with Via as they serviced only in the northwest part of the city. Under the Abilities-Ride program, the AAC hopes Via will service the entire District of Columbia. The AAC looks forward to increase in the number of providers in the Prince George’s County.

Sincerely,

Philip Posner
Chair