



# AAC

## Accessibility Advisory Committee

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December 3, 2018

Dear Chair Evans and Members of the Board,

It is my pleasure to present you with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) report for the month of November 2018. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) Accessible Faregates, 2) MetroAccess Emergency Policy for drivers, and 3) Rail Announcements.

### **Issues of the Month**

#### Accessible Faregates:

The committee members discussed an issue of accessible faregates. The committee had a motion that whenever the accessible faregates malfunction in the closed position, by default, they should stay in the open position. Since the emergency gates at Metrorail stations are locked and not accessible, it is a concern of the committee members that in case of the accessible faregates malfunction, persons with a disability have difficulty getting through (entering or exiting the station). To prevent any delays for customers, and to provide ease of using the public transportation, a solution was offered by the committee that the accessible faregates remain open, when they malfunction, until the issue is resolved. There was also a request made that a system to notify the station manager of the failure be implemented so that an immediate action can be taken. The responsible department is doing analysis and reviewing the data along with conclusive reports, to see if the statistics match the concerns of the committee members and to see what is being done to improve the service on the accessible fare gates. The AAC expects to be updated as progress is made.

#### MetroAccess Emergency Policy for Drivers:

As brought forth to the Board in the November meeting, currently, in case of an emergency, Metro Access drivers are required to first contact the Operating Central Control (OCC). After getting instructions from the OCC, drivers may be able to take further actions, including the ability to call 911. During the Metro Access Subcommittee meeting, this issue was discussed with the appropriate WMATA/Metro Access staff, and a solution was reached that during an emergency, if drivers and/or customers are in imminent danger, and if there is a need to call 911, drivers may make the decision to call 911 first, and then call the OCC. The OCC will aid as needed and contact the emergency contact person of the client (involved). Further, WMATA is studying the possibility of having some medical supplies available on the vehicles (band aids, bandages) that could be offered to injured passengers for their use.

#### Rail Announcements:

In November, we learned that the train operators were no longer routinely announcing elevator outages two stations before arriving at the affected stop. The incident that alerted the AAC of this practice, occurred when a Vienna bound train off-loaded unknowing passengers at the Virginia Square Station, that did not have an in-service platform-to-mezzanine elevator, nor did that station have an in-service ascending escalator. It was a track-work weekend and the next train was heading towards Ballston,

scheduled in another 24 minutes. At that time, limited options were available for customers: request a shuttle or try the elevator at the New Carrollton side of the Virginia Square Station by going back, after waiting another 24 minutes for the next train. The station manager at Virginia Square had reported the outages, but the warning announcements were not made. The AAC requests that elevator outages be announced by train operators, at least two stations before arriving at the station with the outage so that customers can act appropriately. The Bus/Rail Subcommittee also suggests that the ascending escalator be in service when only one escalator is functioning at a location. Further, it is suggested that the Passenger Information Display (PID) Train Information on the platform be coordinated with train arrivals, particularly at transfer platforms that have multi-line, multi-destination service. When the platform lights flash, the PID should show the arriving train information.

The Bus/Rail Subcommittee is currently analyzing the train announcements made during the 18 second duration in the station and is developing suggestions to improve effectiveness by arranging content and sequence. The current announcement at each station comprises six messages over an 18-second period and begins after a 5 second moment of silence and the doors opening (note: the first 3 announcements currently occur when they are no longer relevant):

- This is a 7000-series car;
  - Doors opening;
  - Step back to allow customers to enter;
  - When boarding, please move to the center of the car;
  - This is a XX line train to (last stop);
  - The next stop is (next station).
- Chimes
    - Doors closing

Best Wishes for a Safe and Happy Holiday Season and New Year!!!!

Sincerely,

Philip Posner  
Chair