



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-962-6060

January 5, 2015

Dear Chair Downs and Members of the Board,

It is my pleasure to present you with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) report for the month of November 2014. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) Metro's Diversity and Recruitment Initiative, and 2) Accessible Fixed Route Services – User Challenges & Growth Opportunities.

Issues of the Month

Metro's Diversity and Recruitment Initiative

Staff from the Department of Human Resources discussed Metro's initiative to increase the number of qualified individuals with disabilities in its workforce. The initiative is part of Metro's Affirmative Action Plan, and it is part of a requirement of all organizations receiving federal funds to increase the number of people with disabilities in their respective workforces. The guidelines require a representation of 7 percent of people with disabilities across all job groups.

Metro has a team that is focused on diversity as well as the recruitment of candidates from various cultures, those who are veterans, and those with disabilities. Through the work of the diversity recruitment team, Metro has increased the number of veterans in its workforce by 40 percent. Metro is known as a military-friendly organization, and is seeking to be similarly regarded by the disability community. To meet this goal Metro has streamlined certain aspects of the hiring process, and next year Metro will introduce an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) hotline phone number that will allow candidates to request reasonable accommodations via the telephone.

Many members expressed their excitement about Metro's new hiring initiative, and applauded Metro's for advancing the community of people with disabilities through employment.

Accessible Fixed Route Services – User Challenges & Growth Opportunities

Metro is widely considered to be one of, if not, the most accessible public transit systems in the nation. Despite the well-deserved praise, customers with disabilities can still face challenges using the bus and rail systems. As Metro continues its efforts to ensure the sustainability of the MetroAccess service, accessible bus and rail services will continue to be the most convenient and cost-effective alternative to MetroAccess.

To that extent, AAC members participated in a discussion about their personal experiences on bus and rail, and cited the following as some barriers to using these services: 1) overcrowding on platforms in the rail system; 2) priority seating challenges on bus and rail; 3) issues of cleanliness on elevators and platforms; 4) inadequate lighting; 5) elevator outages; 6) inconsistent customer service in the rail system; and 7) confusing signage on rail platforms that make it difficult to navigate the system.

The AAC made the following recommendations for improving Metro's existing programs and service: 1) market travel training programs to hospitals, Independent Living Centers and on MetroAccess vehicles; 2) improve customer information and communication during disruptions in the system; 3) gather information from travel trainers regarding issues that cause individuals not to complete the training; 4) make eight car trains the standard for rail service; and 5) increase the number of people with disabilities in front line positions.

Staff will use the recommendations as baselines to ensure that certain barriers that exist today in public transportation for people with disabilities are not carried into the future. The AAC is confident that this forward thinking approach will yield ideas and policies that improve public transportation for all Metro customers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Sheehan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "S".

Patrick Sheehan
Chairman