



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

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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 December 2013. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) an update on Momentum; 2) attracting riders with disabilities to bus and rail services; 3) an overview of the MetroAccess Call Center contractor's process; and 4) review of 2013 AAC highlights and accomplishments.

Issues of the Month

Momentum

The AAC received an update on the accessibility aspects of Metro's strategic plan. It is estimated that by the year 2040, the Washington Metropolitan region will see dramatic growth in the number of senior citizens and people with disabilities. Metro is collaborating with its regional partners to ensure various aspects of Momentum are designed to meet the needs of all customers including seniors and those with disabilities. The AAC views Momentum as an inclusive plan that can be used as a guidepost for preparing the region for the increase of transportation services for customers with disability. Metro is also developing a Regional Paratransit Plan (RPP) that aims to improve overall coordination of specialized transportation services.

The AAC applauds Metro for including accessibility in its long-term planning; laying the foundation for Momentum its FY2015 budget; and for broaching the conversation of accessibility with the jurisdictions.

Attracting Riders with Disabilities to Bus and Rail Services

The AAC received a presentation from Donna Smith, Director of Training, Easter Seals Project ACTION (ESPA), on attracting riders with disabilities to bus and rail (fixed route) services. Because of the rapid increases in paratransit demand and cost, transit agencies are developing new approaches to make fixed-route services more accommodating and appealing to paratransit customers who have at least the occasional ability to use fixed-route transit. AAC members discussed some of the barriers to full accessibility like vertical gaps between platform height and trains, unplanned elevator outages and shuttle services that are often not timely. Members commented that work to resolve these issues would be a further step to respond to Metro's strategic plan and Momentum campaign to meet the predicted dramatic growth in the number of senior citizens and people with disabilities. Metro has already implemented a number of the best practices that Ms. Smith highlighted, and ESPA will be partnering with Metro on some new approaches working in conjunction with Access Services Staff and the AAC.

MV Transportation (MetroAccess Operations Call Center Contractor) – Process Overview

The MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) was provided an overview of the Call Center process by the contractor, MV Transportation. In the new MetroAccess business model, the Call Center is separate from the service operations component. MV is implementing new processes to improve the scheduling of trips and a new method for dispatch supervisors to communicate issues on road conditions to the service providers. Additionally, an information technology team has been created to support the automated scheduling and reporting systems, as well as “push-to-talk” radios used by MetroAccess drivers and dispatchers. The new business model has also established a separate contract for quality assurance that will include monitoring of the performance of the Call Center. The quality assurance contractor, MTM, will present periodically information of this kind to the AAC in coordination with the Access Services management team.

AAC 2013 Highlights and Accomplishments

The primary role of the AAC and its subcommittees is to advise Metro on issues that impact the disability community. In 2013, the AAC and its subcommittees provided input on some important issues, and the list below highlights a few of our successes:

- Advised on lighting in the Metrorail stations
- Provided input on interior and exterior elevator directional signage
- Provided recommendations on literature of evacuation procedures
- Provided input on MetroAccess Bus Stop Signs
- Provided recommendations on the Essential MetroAccess Policies

The AAC looks forward to another successful year in making Metro more accessible to its many customers with disabilities.

Sincerely,



Patrick Sheehan
Chairman