



# AAC

## Accessibility Advisory Committee

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

January 3, 2012

Chair Hudgins and Members of the Board,

It is my pleasure to present you with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) report for the month of December 2011.

### **Bus/Rail Subcommittee Report, December 12, 2011**

The Bus/Rail Subcommittee (BRS) discussed accessible signage on Metrobus. Phil Wallace, Director of Bus Maintenance, provided a demonstration of an accessible bus number sign (tactile numbers and Braille) to be placed on bus fare boxes. The accessible signage will provide customers with visual disabilities with bus number information. The Subcommittee voted to recommend approval of the accessible bus number signage and agreed to present its recommendations to the AAC for approval at the January 3, 2012 meeting. Mr. Wallace stated that if approved, installation of signs could be completed in the first quarter of FY2012.

Mr. Brett Tyler, Director of Customer Service provided an update on the customer complaint and feedback process to the BRS. He indicated that the on-line comment form had been modified to accommodate reader software used by some blind and low-vision customers. Patrick Sheehan, AAC Chair reported that the new form meets all the technical requirements and standards of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act 1973.

The Subcommittee was also updated on the auto-dispatch system in Metrorail elevators. Auto-dispatch, in elevators that serve two landings, automatically go up or down to the next floor after a customer has entered the elevator. This greatly assists individuals unable to push buttons inside an elevator. Mr. Millis, Director of ADA Programs, stated that Metro's office of Elevators and Escalators (ELES) has reported that auto-dispatch is available in 133 two landing elevators in the system but that 28 elevators are not equipped. These 28 elevators have controller circuitry that is incompatible with the auto-dispatch system. The Subcommittee requested additional information on the requirements and cost to add auto-dispatch to the remaining elevators, and requested a list of elevators equipped with the auto-dispatch system.

The BRS also discussed station lighting in the Metrorail system and agreed to develop a Station Lighting Work Group and will partner with NCCLV, and disability advocacy organizations to identify Metrorail locations where lighting can be improved. A draft of the Customer Guide for Metrobus and Metrorail was also discussed. The BRS recommended that the Customer Guide include a list of unattended mini-mezzanines, contact information for transit police, other commuter transportation services and a web link with a map of elevator locations at each station.

### **MetroAccess Subcommittee Report, December 19, 2011**

The MetroAccess Subcommittee (MACS) discussed customer feedback from the Town Hall meetings. Mr. Pate, CEO of MV Transportation outlined a process to improve services and indicated that accountability, training, and hiring practices are priorities for service improvements. He indicated that training, re-training, and employee shadowing will continue in an effort to ensure proper and courteous customer service.

The Subcommittee also discussed MetroAccess fare media exchange. Staff reported that old token and fare cards no longer have value and therefore, cannot be exchanged. The notification and exchange period spanned over six months. Mr. Kent explained that when a policy to phase out fare media is implemented, there is a limited amount of time to exchange the fare media for value. The Subcommittee requested additional information on the exchanges of MetroAccess fare media in bulk.

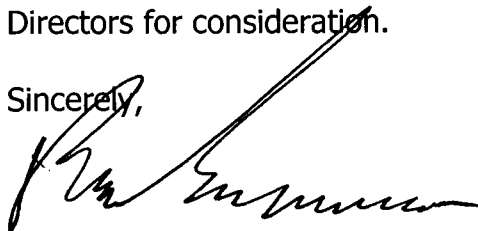
Dr. Posner, Fare Policy Work Group Chair, reported that the Work Group will provide its recommendations to the full AAC for approval at the January 3, 2012 meeting. Ms. Alison Simon, Director, Office of Customer Research, provided an update on MetroAccess Focus Groups. She indicated that Focus Groups were completed in November, and participants represented a diverse group in gender, age, ethnic background, and disability type from Northern Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Maryland.

MACS also discussed ways to increase distribution of customer information materials and agreed to add this discussion to the work plan. The Subcommittee also added meeting technology and a Town Hall Policy Work Group to the work plan. The meeting technology will allow members to conference into groups and meetings from an offsite location. The Town Hall Policy Work Group will use information from the focus groups, and Town Hall meetings to measure and evaluate improvements with the current paratransit contractor.

### **Fare Policy Recommendation-Approved, January 3, 2012**

The AAC recommends the attached MetroAccess Fare Policy to Metro's Board of Directors for consideration.

Sincerely,



Patrick Sheehan  
Chairman  
Attachment- Fare Policy Recommendation



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### AAC Fare Policy Recommendations, January 2012

Based upon the AAC recommended fare policy and input from staff on possibilities that would be consistent with ADA, FTA, and Title VI, and the Board's desire to simplify fares for the customer (there are currently more than 200,000 possible fares for the same trip over a 30 minute time period using the current "fastest trip" calculation for MetroAccess), we propose the following fare structure for MetroAccess:

A base boarding fare of \$2 or less based upon the ADA requirement that it not exceed twice the fare charged on "The Bus" in Prince George's County.

We further recommend that a zone system be created to set additional distance charges. This is based upon the fact that at this time, WMATA staff is recommending a zone system for paper fare cards within the "tourist zone". We propose that WMATA staff set up a system of concentric zones for the WMATA, MetroAccess service area and that a base fare less than \$2.01 be charged to board the vehicle and that travel within the boarding zone be that amount. However, a charge may be added when travel crosses a zone border. The distance between borders and the charge to cross zones would be calculated by WMATA staff based on the need for revenue generation and the financial impact on the riders.

For the current year, the average fare per trip has been \$4.85 and the maximum fare was capped at \$7. Because of the adverse economic impact of the \$7 cap on the low income customers of MetroAccess, we request that a lower cap be considered for MetroAccess rides in 2012.

These recommendations will meet the principles set out in our previous recommendation and are in line with those set by the Board, ADA, FTA and Title VI.

## AAC RECOMMENDED FARE POLICY PRINCIPLES

The AAC wants to continue to work with WMATA staff to develop a MetroAccess fare policy parallel to that being developed for bus and rail. This is critical, since compliance with the ADA requires that these fares be linked to each other. The AAC recommendations for the coming budget year's MetroAccess fares will be based upon compliance with the following three cornerstones: WMATA Fare Policy Principles, ADA requirements, and compliance with Title VI.

The WMATA Principles that should be applied are:

1. Ensure and enhance customer satisfaction
2. Establish a mechanism to allow customers to determine their fares easily
3. Establish equitable fares and ensure compliance with federal regulations
4. Generate adequate revenue while maximizing ridership

The ADA language that should be adhered to:

§ 37.131 Service criteria for complementary paratransit.

(c) Fares. The fare for a trip charged to an ADA paratransit eligible user of the complementary paratransit service shall not exceed twice the fare that would be charged to an individual paying full fare (i.e., without regard to discounts) for a trip of similar length, at a similar time of day, on the entity's fixed route system.

Metro's Title VI Policy Statement that should be followed:

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (Metro) is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation or denied the benefits of its services on the basis of race, color or national origin, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

The AAC recommends that impacts on persons with disabilities be considered by Metro during reviews required by changes to fare policy and service.

The AAC recommends that the impacts on low-income MetroAccess riders also be considered by Metro when there are changes to fare policy and service.