



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

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Washington, DC 20001
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May 4, 2015

Dear Chair Downey and Members of the Board,

It is my pleasure to present you with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) report for the month of April 2015. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) Metro's Current Marketing Campaigns; 2) Metrorail Gaps; 3) the new 7000 Series Railcars; and the FY2016 budget.

Issues of the Month

Metro's Courtesy Campaign

The Department of Customer Communication and Marketing provided the committee with a presentation on Metro's current marketing campaigns including a courtesy campaign regarding priority seating, updates to emergency messaging, and information regarding other marketing efforts.

Metro's priority seating courtesy campaign is focused on rider etiquette and civility related to obvious, hidden, and temporary disabilities. The campaign includes advertising via print media (posters in the rail system); social media; and press releases. Metro has received positive media coverage related to its priority seating ads, and requests from a neighboring transit property to use the advertisement in their system.

Metro has launched a new emergency evacuation video. The video is designed to provide rail customers with information on what to do during an emergency. The video is available in multiple languages and will run regularly on local television stations and on Metro's website. Metro is also in the process of upgrading emergency evacuation signage throughout the system. Additional safety efforts include Metro "safety alerts", which are hand-held signs that remind customer's pay attention to their behaviors while in the system, and continuation of the Transit Security Administration's "See Something Say Something" campaign.

Metro's other marketing efforts include: Earth Day; Silver Line Grand Opening; 7000 Series Debut; Passport DC Metro that focuses on the international community; Touch-A-Truck; and movie night. Many AAC members liked the idea of a movie night because it brings the community together, educates everyone, and is financially accessible to everyone because it would be free.

Recognizing that common courtesy and safety on public transportation is an issue that transportation properties across the country are facing, the AAC commends Metro for

its inclusive approach to these issues. To enhance awareness, the AAC recommends that Metro use the "safety alerts" in the pay area and at the top of the escalators as way to connect the message with more customers.

Platform to Railcar Gaps – Issues and Solutions

In light of the AAC discussion on sustainability, the Bus and Rail Subcommittee discussed solutions to the challenge of accessing a railcar when there is a gap between the train and the platform. At times, overcoming the gaps can be difficult for some wheelchair users, blind customers with service animals, and others who use mobility aids such as walkers or crutches.

To alleviate this issue, Metro is applying standards to minimize the horizontal and vertical gaps. These standards will be used on all new stations. The AAC has offered some preliminary suggestions including the use of ramps; researching best practices from other transit properties; and developing a list of locations where this issue is most pervasive on Metro's website, and we will continue to work with staff as they develop solutions.

Reflections – 7000 Series Railcars

With excitement and elation, several members of the AAC witnessed the unveiling of Metro's newest railcar, the 7000 Series. These new railcars offer all the latest in design and accessibility features such as audible signage that will enable customers who are blind or have low vision to know where they are along their route; a wider aisle so that mobility device users can move more freely throughout the train; more handrails and bars for holding; and slip resistant floors for greater traction for all customers using the railcars.

Although the new railcars offer more safety and accessibility features than any previous railcar series, the AAC recommends that Metro install arm rests on the first forward facing seats (near the priority seating) to allow customers with limited capacity something to hold onto or push upon when rising from the seat.

FY 2016 Budget

The Accessibility Advisory Committee applauds the Board for sustaining funding in its FY 2016 budget for lighting improvements throughout the Metro system. This is a valuable investment in Metro's capital infrastructure, which benefits not only those with varying visual disabilities, but all customers who will gain increased safety through more efficient and better lighting.

At every opportunity, the AAC advocates for sustainable public transportation around the region. The AAC wholeheartedly supports Metro's position to include public transportation at the MGM National Harbor and other developments around the region. The AAC views this as the solution that will enhance the quality of life of all customers including those with disabilities.

Finally, the AAC recognizes the importance of safety and security of the Metro system and looks forward to participating in future first responder training exercises.

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