



Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
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February 5, 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 January 2018. The primary issue we reviewed was the new MetroAccess Vehicle.

Issue of the Month

New MetroAccess Vehicle

The AAC received an update on modifications to the new MetroAccess vehicles, and the AAC was provided an opportunity to receive a first-hand in-person observation of the improvements to the vehicle design. The AAC is very impressed with the newly modified vehicle, and equally impressed with the responsiveness of Metro staff to the concerns and recommendations of the AAC and other disability stakeholders.

Modifications to the vehicle included but not limited to the following:

1. To address concerns about the height of the rear seat, two single seats have been added to replace the extended seat;
2. The right-side seat knee room space has been increased with the installation of a fold up seat;
3. Overhead grip straps were added to the front and rear of the van to assist customers with steadiness while being transported, along with entry and exit from the vehicle;
4. The assist handles' vertical stanchion has been repositioned to provide better customer assistance while boarding and disembarking the vehicle;
5. The extended metal step on the exterior of the van has been redesigned;
6. A slip resistant coating has been added to the vehicle floors;
7. The edge of the step has been modified to better assist blind/low vision customers with boarding; and
8. Signage and padding have been added inside the passenger door, advising customers to watch their head when boarding.
9. Modifying placement of the gps device to improve driver visibility while driving.

These changes have greatly improved the new MetroAccess vehicle design. The AAC extends a warm thanks and commendations to Metro staff and Metro leadership for facilitating these outstanding improvements. We look forward to having all of the existing new vehicles modified to include these improvements.

Budget Hearings

Because of the timing of the Budget Hearing, the AAC did not submit their input to the Board. We have attached our input which was approved at the February 5 AAC meeting to this letter.

MetroAccess Rides

The MetroAccess ridership and rides numbers show a positive effect of the ADAP partnerships with STAR, DC Cab and Abilities Ride. While MAC registration was up for 2017, the number of rides taken was reduced by close to 2%. We encourage the efforts to continue developing alternative options for paratransit. There is also a point to be made about future planning by WMATA. While projections are useful in planning, actual data should be included in the process to update and certify projection methods.

White Boards

The AAC has been following the distribution and utilization of white boards as a communication aid for station managers. We encourage full implementation of the distribution of white boards and continued training of station personnel as to their location and use.

Sincerely,

Philip Posner
Chair

AAC Comments on 2018 Budget

Thank you for not raising fares or reducing service this year. We believe that there should have been more hearings for in person input in the 3 jurisdictions, not just one hearing which greatly limits access from the senior and disability community. We also hope that the AAC will be involved in early planning for new projects such as lighting and new rail car design, so that accessibility can be included in the plan, rather than having to develop a fix after the fact.

Capital Budget items to be supported:

- 1) Lighting program: Support to funding of lighting improvements in all areas of the system from track lighting to parking lots.**
- 2) Improved signage (type and location). Improved signage should include it's accessibility to persons with significant vision impairments. Tactile signs on pylons are non-existent and moving the larger print list of stations ahead from pylons to wall signs makes the signage utterly inaccessible. Restore signage, including tactile signage to pylons at accessible heights.**

- 3) Gap reduction (platform repair), continue ongoing platform repairs and modifications affecting gaps, lighting and slippage.**
- 4) Improve slippage safety and visibility (granite stairs, mezzanines, platforms and trains).**
- 5) Elevator/escalator maintenance and upgrades should continue.**
- 6) Bus stop accessibility should be maintained and expanded.**
- 7) Bus accessibility (mobility device turn around to exit bus should be addressed by seating modifications)**
- 8) Funds to complete detectable warnings on platform edge in 100% of stations, as planned and promised.**
- 9) Real time information for MetroAccess vehicles**

Operating Budget:

- 1) Include sufficient funding to maintain current lighting systems, as well as enhancements once installed, at a maximum illumination because this is a critical issue and accounts for a lot of the problems in assessing needed enhancements. Currently, there is no adequate baseline regarding the true status of the station lighting environment.**

- 2) Develop a MetroAccess Pass equivalent to the current bus and rail pass**
- 3) Based upon the actual decrease in number of rides on MAC for 2017 and the increase in revenues from MAC, modify the fare formula, either multiplier or maximum fare.**
- 4) IVR enhancements should be supported, but problems with the current IVR for fixed route travel (schedules and trip planning) has to come first because that information is not otherwise accessible, except to those with computers and/or Smart Phones.**
- 5) Increase the number and frequency of bus routes around the region, especially in areas lacking evening and weekend service**
- 6) When Bus route adjustments are made, MetroAccess riders should be protected**
- 7) Enhance utilization of white boards as a communication aid for customers with hearing challenges (fully distribute to all stations and train station managers in their use).**
- 8) Develop more signage and on train videos highlighting courtesy and priority seating.**