



Accessibility Advisory Committee

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October 7, 2019

Dear Chair Smedberg and Members of the Board,

It is my pleasure to present you with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) report for the month of September 2019. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) Metrorail Faregates, 2) Dock-Less Scooters/Disability Safety, 3) Next Generation Paratransit Vehicle, 4) MetroAccess On-Time Performance, and 5) Effect of bus route and schedule changes on MetroAccess and proposed “grandfathering”.

Issues of the Month

Metrorail Faregates:

The AAC was informed about the contractor being chosen based on specific criteria, including having the best possible gates for the WMATA environment. The program has certain objectives including modern faregates, improve customer experience and operations interfaces, increase reliability, reduce opportunities for fare evasion and power consumption, provide a pleasing design that is complimentary to WMATA’s historic design aesthetics, a seamless customer transition, and ADA compliance. The opportunity for new messaging on the light displays will be helpful. The Committee was pleased to learn that their recommendations for multiple payment targets on the ADA accessible faregates will be adopted. The Committee also recommended for the displays to be at an angle for ease of visibility. The AAC looks forward to the new and improved faregates. We hope the staff will be able to resolve the issue of a failed accessible gate at an entrance that is not served by a human employee, such as that at Gallery Place, one of several such locations. If the accessible gate fails to open, wheelchair customers or those with strollers would be denied entrance or exit.

Dock-Less Scooters/Disability Safety

The dock-less scooters have been problematic on or around the Metrorail stations. The AAC was advised WMATA interprets its existing bike policy is applicable to the scooters. The Committee understands that the policy enforcement would be required and that WMATA has a non-conventional mobility device policy. The scooters for disabilities could fall under that policy, and the AAC advocates to expand the prohibition beyond accessibility due to the scooters being more problematic than they are worth in the Metro system. The scooters are unregulated motor vehicles that can go 30 miles per hour. Therefore, the AAC recommends the banning of rental shared mobility devices on Metro property unless they are certified mobility devices, using WMATA standards, to be established by their Safety Office/Police Department, similar to those used for Segways. The reason is that there is no rationale for the use of a dock-less scooter to get from one location to another using Metrorail or Metrobus because these vehicles can be left at the entrance of the Metrorail station or Metrobus stop and a new device can be procured when they exit the system. If they were to be permitted on MetroBus, they could present

a detriment to access and egress and occupy space needed for wheelchairs and other disability mobility devices.

Next Generation Paratransit Vehicle:

The AAC has discussed the possibility of WMATA developing a national standard model for paratransit vehicle and for WMATA to take the lead and be the pioneer of introducing such a vehicle. The Committee was informed that some grants are being explored as designing and the entire process is a major effort. The Next Generation Paratransit Vehicle is under consideration and several aspects are being reviewed. At this time, it is a process of communication about a vehicle that is going to be built in the future. The design considerations are impressive as customers have been the focal point. The vehicle needs to be safe, accessible, comfortable, efficient, environmentally friendly, and ADA compliant. The AAC appreciates any future opportunities to receive information and provide recommendations for the state of the art paratransit vehicle as it will be a major milestone and accomplishment for the AAC and WMATA. The AAC commends WMATA for such an effort. This design might be implemented as a shared order with peer agencies and thus produce some cost efficiency in ordering and manufacture.

MetroAccess On-Time Performance

MetroAccess management is working diligently to transform MetroAccess into an all shared-ride service. However, during this transition the AAC has noticed that the MetroAccess on-time performance (OTP) has declined below 90%. The AAC recognizes that MetroAccess is a public transportation and that shared-rides are an aspect of the service, however we are requesting management look first to maintaining OTP above 92%, and secondly aim at pooling trips and other efficiency measures. We request the development of “real time” data available to the customer similar to that used by ride hailing companies like Uber and Lyft. We further request that on-time performance measures include total time on the vehicle and total stops for pick up and drop off.

Bus Routes and MetroAccess

Bus Route adjustments and schedules have reduced service throughout the region over the past years. Based upon customer reports to the AAC, this has resulted in MetroAccess customers losing service they once had on weekends and outside peak hours. The AAC recommends instituting a grandfathering process that would permit residents to keep their MAC service if they had it before the route change and schedules were changed. Based upon the title VI analysis required before these changes were made the small number of MAC customers to be grandfathered should not have a significant negative financial impact on WMATA. Based upon this information the AAC recommends that a policy be implemented that would grandfather residents with MetroAccess availability at the time of a bus route modification be grandfathered in the system for that location and retain their original access.

It was also brought to the attention of the AAC, that many MAC customers residing in rehabilitation facilities or nursing homes are being relocated by social service organizations to locales with no MAC service. It is requested that a fiscal analysis be

carried out to determine the cost and legal implications of granting MAC service to this group of individuals.

Sincerely,

Philip Posner
Chair