



Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

January 4, 2021

Dear Chair Smedberg, and Members of the Board,

On behalf of the AAC, we wish you, the WMATA Board, General Manager, and the WMATA family a very happy New Year of 2021, as well as the best of health to all, and that the Cares Act II goes into effect soon with all the needed funds that are needed to save jobs and maintain service.

It is my pleasure to present you with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) report for the month of December 2020. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) Visit from General Manager/CEO Paul Wiedefeld, 2) New Faregates Alternate Sounds, and 3) MetroAccess Communication to Customers - Outages/Inclement Weather.

Issues of the Month

General Manager / CEO Paul Wiedefeld:

Paul Wiedefeld, General Manager/CEO, provided an update regarding the fiscal years (FY) 2021 and 2022 budgets. Mr. Wiedefeld informed the committee about the time frame that will be covered by the Cares Act and the deficit for the remainder of FY21. Balancing the budget with a deficit of \$176 million is a difficult task and the General Manager discussed the proposal that has been approved by the Board. The AAC shares Mr. Wiedefeld's concerns for employees losing jobs and customers losing service. At the same time, the AAC appreciates different ways that WMATA is trying to provide service to those who may need it the most. With that being said, we recommend the 43 route be reviewed, as many seniors use this bus service in the Dupont Circle area and are having to wait for long periods of time for bus service. We also suggested looking at micro bus pilots in Montgomery County and DC's pilot ride to rail to supplement potential WMATA service cuts. We also suggested developing shuttle support with private and federal entities for their essential workers.

Regarding the FY22 budget, Mr. Wiedefeld explained that the projected deficit is \$500 million. The General Manager also stated that it is important to begin the process for the FY22-budget now and be able to modify the service with the help of farebox collections and the availability of Cares Act II funds. We know that is possible, as it was done for the remainder of the FY21 budget process. The public hearings for the FY22 budget are about to begin and the AAC looks forward to participating in those, remaining positive for the outcome. We were happy to hear that there is no plan to reduce the MetroAccess service area or service times included in the 2021 and 2022 budgets.

New Faregates Alternate Sounds:

Terri Anomnachi, Project Manager, Capital Funding, provided an update about the new faregates along with alternate sounds. Ms. Anomnachi has visited the AAC and the BRS a few times. Each time, she received feedback and returned with an update. During this meeting, Ms. Anomnachi played various tones for the new fare-gates and showed us the

visual indicators for the specific tones. She shared four tones, out of which two were for positive results reflecting visually, as well. The other two were for negative results, where either the customer needed to add funds or see a station manager for not entering and/or exiting properly. Ms. Anomnachi also recapped the various sensors which prevent doors from closing on customers. We thank Ms. Anomnachi for all she has done in collaborating with and responding to the AAC.

MetroAccess Communication to Customers - Outages/Inclement Weather:

Recently, the MetroAccess Call Center has experienced some technical difficulties. Terrian Williams-Hall, Director, MetroAccess, informed the AAC that although we have built-in redundancy, there were a few instances recently the Call Center experienced difficulties. Ms. Williams-Hall provided information about the three recent instances and the remedies, such as (a) transporting agents to a backup location, (b) having the IVR alert customers of technical difficulties, and (c) having Call Center agents take calls from home.

The AAC is glad to hear all the efforts being taken to improve customer experience and service, and will continue to monitor improved communications during such outages.

Sincerely,

Philip Posner
Chair