



Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

June 7, 2021

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 May 2021. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) Metrobus Routes Changes, 2) Station Signage and Information – Update, and 3) MetroAccess Flat Fare versus Fare Calculator.

Issues of the Month

Metrobus Routes Changes:

Jim Hamre, Director, Office of Bus Planning, provided information about the upcoming bus routes changes, effective June 6th, 2021. Mr. Hamre stated WMATA is at the first step of recovery. Last year Metro laid out four phases of COVID: crisis response, stabilizing the service, recovery (current), and then post-COVID-era (hopefully within a year). With this schedule, we are trying to enhance the span of service to expand the coverage of service and increase the capacity so that we are able to serve the riders who are willing to take public transit now and over the course of the summer. For now, we are trying to get appropriate service coverage for the summer. Our ridership on Metrobus has increased almost 50% since January 3, when we restored fare-collection and use of front door board and alighting of our buses. Mr. Hamre stated we are brushing on 200,000 riders a day on weekdays, and he expects by the end of summer, it will probably be around 300,000. This schedule is built to be able to serve that range of activity. Mr. Hamre informed the AAC of all the options, with expanded late-night service, additional routes restored and improved service on selected routes throughout DC, Maryland and Virginia. The AAC is pleased to know there has been an increase in ridership, and of WMATA's efforts to accommodate the customers.

Station Signage and Information – Update:

Tom Proctor, Environmental Graphics Design Specialist, stated we are looking at issues that are out of compliance with today's standards. Mr. Proctor has been working very closely with the Office of ADA Policy and Planning and their Quality Assurance report. The report is created by taking physical surveys throughout the system and finding any type of deficiency from an accessibility standpoint, including signage. We will systematically make the proper adjustments to ensure ADA compliance with the signage. Mr. Proctor stated the digital displays were discussed during his last visit to the AAC, the process is quite involved. The digital displays will ensure that even when we go through many fluctuations, challenges, and rescheduling, we will be able to put out our messaging in a compliant manner which is easy for all riders not just the disabled community. We have been surveying across the country to see what other systems are doing and how we can integrate the best option into our system of data management system. The AAC wants to inform the Board that the attention to details and all the work being done, is much appreciated by the customers with disabilities and their advocates, such as the AAC.

MetroAccess Flat Fare versus Fare Calculator:

Christiaan Blake, Managing Director, Access Services, stated the MetroAccess fare policy is in strict alignment with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), that fare is calculated as twice the fastest fixed route fare. Mr. Blake further explained that if the fastest fixed route equivalent (FRE) trip is bus only, the MetroAccess fare will be \$4. If the fastest FRE trip has a Metrorail component, the MetroAccess fare for that trip will be between \$4 and \$6.50. Mr. Blake stated a while ago, the AAC and the Leadership of the Department of Access Services, in response to concerns about ever increasing MetroAccess fares worked on a solution, the MetroAccess Fare Calculator. It is programmed to look across a window of 30 minutes to find the lowest available fare and has generally been a successful addition, but it is not a guarantee of a discounted fare. .

The AAC is strongly in favor of moving MetroAccess fares away from the federally allowed twice the fastest fixed route fare to a flat fare.

Sincerely,

Philip Posner
Chair