



Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

September 7, 2021

Dear Chair Smedberg, and Members of the Board,

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) hopes the Members of the Board had a happy and safe summer break. The AAC welcomes the Members of the Board back and extends invitations to the AAC Meetings (virtual).

It is my pleasure to present you with the AAC report for the month of July 2021. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) Equity/Fares and Service during Recovery and “Back to Normal”, 2) Bus Validator Device Location, and 3) MetroAccess Audio Recording Discussion.

Issues of the Month

Equity/Fares and Service during Recovery and “Back to Normal”:

Peter Cafiero, Managing Director, Intermodal Planning, and Mark E. Irvine, Manager, Systems and Capital Planning, summarized Board-approved service improvements and fare changes. The service improvements and fare changes support pandemic recovery in the region, to be implemented in fall 2021. The combination of service and fare changes was recommended for Metro's pandemic recovery phase to support the region, encourage ridership and trip making, promote system connectivity, assist low-income riders, and induce non-work travel on the system. Mr. Cafiero stated all-day Metrorail and Metrobus services will be provided with consistent high frequency rides, seven days a week. Metrobus and Metrorail services will improve for existing and new riders.

The AAC was pleased to receive the detailed presentation and hopes some level of the Bus Transformation Project (BTP) is adopted for this program. The partnership between WMATA and Amazon on building affordable housing close to bus stops and Metrorail stations has been in the news. In regard to the reliability, in past, the service hours were reduced for maintenance work that was needed and performed on tracks. At this time, the AAC is interested as to how track work would be impacted with the proposed extended hours. The shorter work week is being discussed by various organizations. The AAC always emphasizes on the service, accessibility, and sustainability. The AAC hopes and wishes WMATA the best in its continuous efforts of returning to “Back to Normal”.

Bus Validator Device Location:

Samuel L. Scheib, Project Manager, Capital Funding, and Gregory Garback, Director, Fare Revenue Systems and Modern, provided information about the next generation farebox. Mr. Scheib stated the system-wide replacement would help eliminate the legacy system failures. Sixteen-hundred and sixty-six (1666) fareboxes will be upgraded with externally mounted validators, along with a touchscreen used by the bus operators. All of the garage equipment consisting of vaults, probes, safes, and computers would be replaced. Additionally, 50 validator devices will be purchased for a pilot of rear boarding

to test the feasibility. Afterwards, WMATA would determine if rear-boarding needs to be extended to other buses as well. The new fareboxes provide the ADA accessibility with larger colored customer screen display. The validator is mounted under the handrail, it accepts SmarTrip and mobile wallets (iPhone and Android), as well as maintains cash fare payment and the capability of adding value.

The other ADA considerations were that the device cannot obstruct pathways nor can it obstruct the operation of the ramp. The view of the operator could not be obstructed. The device is hard wired and for the add-value feature, the validator has to be close to the farebox and the bus operator. The hanging mount seems to be the ideal location and received consensus from the AAC Members who participated in the device-location test. The AAC appreciates the opportunity extended to test the location. Carol Peredo Lopez, Director, ADAP went through steps to ensure, the device location is at the most optimal location for persons with various disabilities and is ADA compliant. The AAC appreciates all the time and efforts that Ms. Peredo Lopez invested in this project. At this time, the AAC looks forward to completion of the project projected around 2023 as it allows rear door boarding. The AAC also looks forward to feedback received, and any educational/informational materials that get developed for customers' experience.

MetroAccess Audio Recording Discussion:

Paul Semelfort, AAC Member, had an opportunity to listen to the vehicle-recorded-audio from two of his previous trips. One trip was on a sedan and the other was on a van. This process was tested in May, however it was not very successful at that time as the audio volume was not very clear. This time, an application (app) was used to amplify the volume of the recording which resulted in clearly audible audio. Mr. Semelfort was able to hear the recorded audio much more clearly. There was some background noise, however Mr. Semelfort was able to hear the conversation between himself and the driver. Mr. Semelfort stated MetroAccess management could use the recorded audio for safety considerations, as intended.

Sincerely,

Philip Posner
Chair