



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

300 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

May 14, 2026

Dear Chair Santos,

It is my pleasure to present the Accessibility Advisory Committee's report for May 2026, reflecting discussions from the AAC full committee meeting and its standing subcommittees, including Bus & Rail and MetroAccess. Throughout the month, the Committee engaged actively with WMATA staff on emergency preparedness, wayfinding and passenger information, fleet modernization, digital accessibility, and MetroAccess service delivery. The Committee appreciates WMATA's continued engagement and collaboration and recognizes ongoing efforts to advance accessibility while supporting safe, reliable service for all riders.

Issues of the Month

Emergency Preparedness and Accessible Communication

The Committee received a comprehensive briefing on WMATA's emergency preparedness training and facilities, including simulations, evacuation procedures, and responder training. Members expressed appreciation for the depth of training underway and emphasized the importance of clear, calm, and accessible communication during emergencies. Discussion highlighted the need for responders to allow sufficient time for individuals with communication, cognitive, sensory, or speech disabilities to respond, particularly in high stress situations. The Committee welcomed WMATA's commitment to updating training materials and videos and looks forward to continued collaboration to ensure emergency messaging and procedures support the diverse needs of riders.

Wayfinding and Passenger Information

The Bus & Rail Subcommittee continued in depth discussion on wayfinding and signage, including updates on the L'Enfant Plaza signage project. Members welcomed the focus on reducing cognitive load, the use of virtual testing, and the phased, data driven approach to implementation. The Committee discussed readability, lighting, placement, and long term maintenance considerations, as well as opportunities to incorporate tactile features in future projects. The AAC appreciates WMATA's engagement on these complex design issues and the opportunity to provide feedback before broader rollout.

Rail Fleet Modernization

Members received updates on accessibility related features of the 8000 series railcar program, including wheelchair spaces, handholds, and digital display capabilities. Discussion emphasized the importance of balancing audibility with sensory considerations and ensuring that audible information is paired with clear visual communication. The Committee welcomed continued attention to accessibility during vehicle design and testing phases.

Bus Stop Accessibility and Operations

The Bus & Rail Subcommittee reviewed recommendations to improve bus stop accessibility, including enhanced stop identification and boarding areas. Members expressed support for

piloted, data driven approaches to improve safety and usability for riders with mobility and vision disabilities while recognizing the need to coordinate across jurisdictions.

Systemwide Accessibility and Digital Engagement:

The Committee received updates on systemwide accessibility initiatives, including the upcoming accessible redesign of WMATA.com, planned usability testing, and future wayfinding and Metrobus engagement activities. Members welcomed opportunities to participate in testing and expressed appreciation for WMATA's focus on improving digital access, clarity, and consistency for riders using assistive technologies.

MetroAccess Service Delivery and Innovation

The MetroAccess Subcommittee focused on customer experience, digital tools, and service innovations. Members reviewed updates on customer service commendations, outreach activities, and technology enhancements, including digital assistants and MyTransit Manager. Discussion centered on ensuring tools remain usable, transparent, and well supported by human assistance when needed. Updates on AbilitiesRide and service provider coordination were also discussed, with members offering constructive feedback to support continued refinement.

Cross-Cutting Accessibility Priorities

Across all discussions, the Committee emphasized the importance of predictability, consistency, and proactive communication as foundational accessibility principles. Members highlighted the value of early and ongoing accessibility engagement to support successful implementation and minimize unintended barriers for riders.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee appreciates WMATA leadership and staff for their continued collaboration, responsiveness, and openness to dialogue. The Committee looks forward to ongoing engagement as initiatives advance and remains committed to supporting accessible, equitable transit for the region.

Respectfully submitted,
Patrick Sheehan
Chair, Accessibility Advisory Committee