



## Accessibility Advisory Committee

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January 7, 2019

Dear Chair Evans and Members of the Board,

It is my pleasure to present you with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) report for the month of December 2018. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) WMATA Budget, 2) Announcements (Bus and Rail), 3) Mobility Device Safety, and 4) New WMATA Bicycle Policy.

### Issues of the Month

#### WMATA Budget

The AAC discussed the WMATA budget as presented by General Manager/Chief Executive Officer Paul Wiedefeld, to the Board. The AAC is preparing for the budget hearings to be held in January and February. The AAC will prepare bullet points, send requests to the Board, and share feedback as required. The AAC also discussed the proposed Metro flat weekend fare of \$2 for bus and rail trips that would result in flat weekend MetroAccess fares of \$4 for many trips. We were happy to learn from the RAC that 3 public hearings are planned (MD, DC, VA) in accessible locations. We look forward to the final docket for discussion.

#### Announcements

The AAC discussed various audio and visual announcements, and the specific announcement delivery locations, e.g. platforms, trains, and buses.

The AAC recognizes that the initial five (5) seconds of time are often not being used when a train arrives at a platform. The AAC believes that during this time, important information can begin to be shared, including type of train, destination, and train line. This could be followed by a message, such as *"please move away from the door so people can exit and enter the trains."* This message would be heard by passengers in the train and those on the platform through the 7000 external speakers.

Recently, the announcements on the 7000-series experienced by committee members have been shortened to: "This is a 7000-series car" as the doors open; "This is a --- Line Train to ---"; "Next stop is ---". This appears to be a step in the right direction, but the first 5 seconds of stoppage is still silent. Unfortunately, this sequence of announcements has been used randomly throughout the 7000 fleet. AAC experience has varied from no 5 second pause followed by this is a 7000-series train/Doors opening; followed by doors closing, to the full set of announcements. We believe that it is possible for announcements to be both efficient and useful to passengers if provided in a consistent manner. Announcements could be broken down to two segments: rush-hours and non-rush-hours and at transfer stations vs non-transfer stations. For rush-hours and at all

transfer stations, the AAC offers the following as a more pertinent message to all Metrorail riders during such time:

- Careful of the gap between cars on this 7000-Series train;  
This is: [NAME of the station];
- This is a \_\_ line train goes to [last stop's name];
- Next stop [NAME of next stop];  
Chimes  
Doors closing.

The AAC also recommends that information of an arriving train should be displayed on the Passenger Information Display System (PIDS), as well as on monitors at the foot of escalators and elevators as trains approach the station (coordinate the PIDS with the flashing platform lights), so people coming off of an escalator and out of an elevator have the information in front of them.

The AAC recommends the following for Metrobus announcements: add destinations, announce the stop being serviced, next stop to be served, bus fare, and a message about usage of priority seating. For cashless bus routes, the AAC recommends an announcement that states: “*this is a cashless bus.*” The method of the information delivery might include: driver announcements; automated announcements and/or enhanced screens as used in other cities like Philadelphia.

#### Mobility Device Safety

Due to the recent wheelchair incidents, motorized mobility device safety and optimal boarding for customers with wheel chairs were discussed. It was researched to see whether there may have been any effects of the bumpy tiles, and the conclusion is that the wheel chairs were not affected by the bumpy tiles.

An announcement instructing the public to give the right of way for wheelchairs where it might be hazardous for wheelchairs to pass is recommended by the AAC. The AAC recommends that travel training be available for all Metro customers with disabilities. This training would include videos and handouts to be developed by WMATA with the help of the AAC.

#### New WMATA Bicycle Policy

The recently announced policy permitting bicycles on rail during rush hour will certainly have an impact on people using mobility devices during this period. The policy will be discussed at the January AAC and Bus/Rail meetings. The following is some information about how a similar policy is being implemented in NYC, Atlanta and San Francisco: The New York subway and the San Francisco and Atlanta transit systems

allowing bicycles at all times, provided cyclists use common sense in choosing not to cram their bikes onto crowded trains. The **New York and Atlanta systems urge bike-toting cyclists to avoid boarding full rail cars, while the Bay Area Rapid Transit system in the San Francisco area goes further, specifying:**

***Bikes are never allowed on crowded cars (there must be enough room to comfortably accommodate you and your bicycle)***

***Bikes are never allowed on the first car of any train***

***Bikes are not allowed in the first three cars during commute hours (7:00 to 9:00 AM and 4:30 to 6:30 PM)***

Finally, it is unfortunate that input was not sought prior to implementation of the new bicycle policy. Any policies employed by WMATA would be stronger, more effective and fairer if they were developed with the input of those affected passengers. To quote an often-used comment from the disability community: "Nothing about us, without us."

Sincerely,

Philip Posner  
Chair

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/transportation/2019/01/02/metro-lifts-ban-against-bikes-trains-during-rush-hour/?utm\\_term=.7fe20b1d2a32](https://www.washingtonpost.com/transportation/2019/01/02/metro-lifts-ban-against-bikes-trains-during-rush-hour/?utm_term=.7fe20b1d2a32)

. . . Metro planners cited policies on the New York subway and the San Francisco and Atlanta transit systems allowing bicycles at all times, provided cyclists use common sense in choosing not to cram their bikes onto crowded trains. The **New York and Atlanta systems urge bike-toting cyclists to avoid boarding full rail cars, while the Bay Area Rapid Transit system in the San Francisco area goes further, specifying:**

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**BART**