



Accessibility Advisory Committee

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July 2, 2018

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 June 2018. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) Metrorail Incident and Status of Barrier Retrofit, and 2) New Board Member Guidelines.

Issues of the Month

Metrorail Incident and Status of the 7000-Series Barrier Retrofit

The AAC received an update on the May 25th incident in which a blind customer fell off of the platform at the Van Ness station after mistaking the space between the rubber between-car-barriers (BCB) for a door opening. This is now the third incident of a person falling off of a station platform while trying to board a 7000-series train. The AAC has continued to express concerns about the rubber BCBs found on the 7000-series railcars, and would like Metro to consider alternative BCBs, namely accordion-style, found in other transit systems.

The AAC also received an updated on the status of the 7000-series BCB retrofit project. The existing rubber BCBs are scheduled to be replaced with the chain-styled BCB that is attached to every other railcar on 7000-series trains. In September 2016 Metro announced that, based on customer feedback, all 7000-series trains would be retrofitted to have chain barriers between all cars on the trains. Per Metro's announced timeline, the retrofitting was scheduled to be completed by April 2018. To date, not only is the project not complete, but it does not appear to have started.

The AAC was informed that the vehicle manufacturer was notified about the decision to retrofit the BCBs in late 2016, and in April 2017 Metro conducted the first testing of the new retrofit design. The testing resulted in the need to make some design adjustments, which included making the design practical for connecting the barriers while in the rail yard. In October 2017 Metro received the mockup designs from the manufacturer and then requested a commercial proposal for the change to the railcars. In January 2018 manufacturer submitted their proposal, and Metro is expecting materials to be delivered by August 2018. Metro is expected to receive 50 cars per month of materials, and the entire retrofit is expected to be completed by November 2019.

The AAC recommends that WMATA uses the 7000 Series recorded message system to announce: "This is 7000 Series Train" as it arrives in the station. The "Tap the floor to find the door" message currently used at select stations should be played between stations on the 7000 cars to reinforce the safety message.

New Board Member Guidelines

The Board has developed new guidelines which result in a decreased role for its alternate members, including its only female members. This appears to have been a result of the new capital funding arrangement with Virginia. Until this decision, the alternate Board members played a significant and positive role in the effective operation of WMATA. All of the alternate members have demonstrated knowledge and skills that add to the effectiveness of the Board.

The AAC believes that this reduction in the alternates' ability to participate in Board meetings and executive sessions will greatly diminish the Board's effectiveness. The AAC requests the role of the alternates with the Board be restored. If it is not possible to fully restore these functions, we suggest an advisory role with access to all information available to voting members and the ability to comment at all Board and committee meetings.

Sincerely,

Philip Posner
Chair