



## Accessibility Advisory Committee

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May 4, 2020

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 April 2020. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) Safety Concerns: COVID-19, 2) Blue/Orange/Silver Lines Capacity and Reliability Study, and 3) MetroAccess Vans: Next Generation.

### Issues of the Month

#### Safety Concerns: COVID-19:

The AAC had a discussion about the safety of the bus operators and other front-line employees. A safety concern was raised for the bus operators being in close proximity of passengers. The AAC was also concerned whether the bus operators and other front-line employees are permitted to wear masks. At the same time, continuous wearing of the mask can be problematic for the wearer. The AAC supports providing the N-95 masks for the safety of the bus operators and other front-line employees. The AAC also appreciated all that is being done by WMATA and the Board to ensure that safety is the first priority for employees and passengers. With scaled back service and closures of many stations, this may be an opportunity for WMATA to do the work that has been scheduled on Orange and Silver line stations this summer. The recommendation stands only if it is safe for employees to perform their duties needed for this project. The AAC applauds WMATA Staff for all that has been done in this difficult time. (We are aware of the decision to go forward with an advanced time table) for the work. We will receive a presentation of the strategy at our May meeting).

#### Blue/Orange/Silver Lines Capacity and Reliability Study:

Mark Phillips, Senior Transportation Economist, Strategy Planning and Program Management, presented the Blue/Orange/Silver Lines Capacity and Reliability Study. He shared the options under consideration:

1. Optional Train Turn-Backs.
2. NOVA Circulator.
3. New Blue Line Regional Connections.
4. New Core Loop
5. New Silver Line Connections, North of I-66.

The AAC was pleased to learn that the alternatives that move forward will serve Prince George's County in some way. As the AAC was informed, one of the goals is to expand access to economic opportunity and there is not a much bigger need in the region for access to economic opportunity than Eastern DC and Prince George's County. As Mr.

Phillips said, he did not think WMATA could claim to have met that goal if we do not serve that area better.

MetroAccess Vans: Next Generation:

Glenn Millis, Senior Policy and Planning Officer, provided an update about MetroAccess Vans, Next Generation. Mr. Millis had received recommendations from the AAC and we were pleased to learn about all the features that could be adopted:

- Low floor ramp paratransit suitable vehicles available.
- Step in entrance for ambulatory customers available.
- Kneeling features may be available.
- Increased open space for two wheelchairs available.
- Increased aisle space/seating space available.
- Legroom - open space under seat ahead available.
- Arm rests, hand holds, foot rest in seat ahead—possible depending upon seat type.
- High back seats with seats at 17” to 19” which meet requirements for people of different heights.
- Seat belts – adjustable height at shoulder could be available.
- Integrated longer belts available.
- USB charger port available.
- Larger windows available. Tint available for protection against sunlight.
- LED lighting available at entry way and interior.

WMATA has been awarded a grant for this project. The AAC appreciates the work by Access Services that is underway to enhance the grant. The AAC recommends the specifications be forwarded to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) to make it a role model vehicle for paratransit nationwide.

Our wishes for everyone’s good health and safety!

Sincerely,

Philip Posner  
Chair