



Accessibility Advisory Committee

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February 4, 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 January 2019. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) WMATA Budget Public Hearings and 2) MetroAccess Service during Inclement Weather.

Issues of the Month

WMATA Budget: Public Hearings

The AAC discussed the two budgets: Capital and Operational. Under the Capital budget, items that will affect the disability community are the 8000-series cars, the MetroAccess vehicles, and lighting. Under the Operational budget, the disability community will be affected by the proposed flat weekend fare of \$2 on fixed routes, extended rush hour service and fares charged under the extended rush hours, a pass for MetroAccess customers, bicycle locations on 8 car trains, platform improvements to be made during the summer and what kind of shuttle service will be provided during the station shut downs.

WMATA's proposed changes for the upcoming budget:

- Expansion of peak service from 5am to 10am and 3pm to 8pm.
- Extend the Yellow line to Greenbelt.
- All 8-car trains during peak hours.
- Implement a flat weekend fare of \$2 for Bus and Rail.
- Reduced costs for several types of Bus and/or Rail passes.

The AAC supports and recommends the following:

- Fares staying at off-peak-hours during the extended rush hours service, since MetroAccess service will not be increased during these periods.
- 8-car trains are applauded, but please limit bicycles to the last two cars.
- MetroAccess should have a flat \$4 fare (without transfer) because of the flat weekend fare of \$2 on fixed routes. Having to reprogram the fare calculator will result in a confusing assortment of fares during this change in weekend Bus/Rail fares. The cost of not including transfers in the MetroAccess calculation will be minimum compared to the reprogramming of the fare calculator and confusion to customers. We believe that "Simpler is better" in this instance.
- Implement a pass for MetroAccess riders. This is done in other jurisdictions and is fair, considering all the other pass products offered to Bus/Rail riders and which will be reduced in cost in the proposed budget. If a pass exists for convention goers and students, why not one for people needing dialysis, medical appointments or subscription trips to work?
- Restore Metro bus lines eliminated, and service frequency cuts made to lines that provide feeder service to metro rail stations or offer an alternative route to origins and destinations that would otherwise require use of rail thereby augmenting use

of bus ridership as an incentive to drivers and patrons with disabilities who might otherwise use MetroAccess, and could result in both increased revenue and savings in MetroAccess expenditures. Recent surveys of seniors and persons with disabilities indicate that the biggest barrier to riding bus is lack of availability and frequency of service, especially in off-peak hours. In recent interviews the Mayor of the City of Alexandria recommended that Metro increase bus service on the Blue Line during forthcoming station shutdowns in the summer of 2019.

There was also a recommendation that WMATA explores the feasibility of developing variable height seating adjacent to the priority seats marked for people with disabilities and seniors (heights so that short passenger's feet can reach the floor and others high enough so that passengers with muscle weakness can get up).

Another recommendation that the AAC proposed for a feasibility study is that WMATA considers installing jumbotron-style Passenger Information Display System (PIDS) in new Metro rail stations and those stations undergoing renovations. An outdoor jumbotron now operates on 7th Street above the Gallery Place station showing arriving train times and other information.

MetroAccess Service during Inclement Weather

MetroAccess informs customers of service disruption by placing messages on the interactive voice response system as soon as possible and sending automated phone calls to customers with scheduled trips. The AAC recommended to place such messages on the website for customers to see it as they log in to their MetroAccess accounts. The AAC also recommended that MetroAccess be able to adjust customers' rides and accommodate specific needs by providing trips later than originally scheduled times; when various offices, schools, and other entities have delayed openings or early closures.

Sincerely,

Philip Posner
Chair