



Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

April 5, 2021

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 March 2021. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) Office of Inspector General Special Report - MetroAccess, 2) Metrobus Routes Changes, and 3) MetroAccess Ride Fare Calculation.

Issues of the Month

OIG Special Report - MetroAccess:

Christiaan Blake, Managing Director, Access Services, provided an overview of management's response to the Office of Inspector General's special report on MetroAccess. Mr. Blake stated the name of the on-time performance public facing metric is being changed to on-time pick-up performance, and that is already reflected in the reports that the AAC receives. A new performance metric will be created called onboard time compliance, which will compare a customer's time on board a MetroAccess vehicle during a trip and the onboard time of a comparable fixed route equivalent (FRE) trip.

Mr. Blake stated due to the existing global positioning system (GPS) malfunctions as a result of the vendor changing its mapping engine, MetroAccess had to stop using the real time traffic (RTT) services of the vendor. As a result, turn-by-turn directions have been in use while MetroAccess works on getting a new system. Mr. Blake stated the OIG has recommended MetroAccess come up with a real time traffic solution that works, and we agree with that.

Once a company is awarded the contract, MetroAccess will test the RTT service including some trips with some of the AAC members. If it seems to be working, then then MetroAccess will roll it out to the entire fleet of vehicles. If it seems not to be working, then we are going to continue to use turn by turn directions until a new RTT solution is found. This round of RTT review is expected to be completed by October 2021. Management will also continue its commitment to monitor MetroAccess trips for onboard time and continue our commitment to sharing updates with the AAC.

MetroBus Routes Changes:

Albert Himes, Planning Manager, and Jim Hamre, Director, Bus Service Planning and Scheduling, provided information about the upcoming Metrobus routes changes, effective March 14, 2021, through June 30th, 2021. Mr. Himes provided an overview of the approved upcoming bus routes changes and informed that there are several improvements in the service. For March, it was possible to make a number of improvements to the current service by adjusting the schedules that will also bring higher reliability to the service. He also stated there will be additional weekend service. The information was shared with the AAC prior to the meeting and is also posted on WMATA.com. The AAC appreciates the additional service, however some areas, such as

Fairfax County, may have reduction of service that was already considerably lower. A concern was raised that the reduction of bus service might drive an increased ridership on MetroAccess, causing higher costs for WMATA.

MetroAccess Ride Fare Calculation:

David Siedentopf, Head of Technology, MV Transit, stated the fixed route equivalent (FRE) service as it relates to MetroAccess ride-calculation, is evaluated utilizing Automatic Terminal Information Service (ATIS). The FRE information for travel time including any walk time, is provided by ATIS. For example, a trip which takes 35 minutes to travel on fixed route service should not take any longer on MetroAccess. Mr. Siedentopf stated if a MetroAccess trip is not within the current service zone, then it is still measured for onboard compliance based on the historical data. The fares are not increased for any trips not within the service areas, as the trip fare is calculated as per the historical data. In the recent past, when Metrobus service area reduced, the MetroAccess service has not changed. At the same time, however, if the fixed route services get extended, then the MetroAccess service will expand. Mr. Siedentopf stated ATIS checks for the fastest and least expensive route 15 minutes before and after the requested time and provides the fare.

The AAC appreciates that the MetroAccess service area was not affected when the bus routes were impacted. We also learned that the fare calculation data for route changes and rail changes is updated at 6 month intervals. Because of this lag, fare calculation may be inaccurate during times of frequent emergencies and maintenance work. Because of this the AAC hopes to have a flat fare policy established as it will eliminate confusion and questions about various fares. The current data on MAC fares infers that a flat fare between \$3.50 and \$5.00 should not have a negative impact on fare box recovery. It would also be positive for riders in financial planning, by knowing what the accurate fare for each trip would be. It should also have a positive impact on WMATA by reducing the cost for using the “fare calculator” and time spent by staff explaining and negotiating fares.

Sincerely,

Philip Posner
Chair