



## Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW  
Washington, DC 20001

May 3, 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 April 2021. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) General Manager/CEO Visit, 2) 8000 Series Rail-Car, and 3) MetroAccess Sedans - Update.

### Issues of the Month

#### General Manager/CEO Visit:

Paul Wiedefeld, General Manager/Chief Executive Officer (GM/CEO) visited the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and shared an update about the 2022 fiscal year (FY-22) budget. Mr. Wiedefeld stated the Cares Act II is helpful for WMATA's FY-22. The rail ridership is down approximately 85%, and bus ridership is down about 60%. He informed that Metrorail system is operating at roughly 80% of pre-COVID service whereas, Metrobus is operating at 85% of pre-COVID service levels. This service level will continue for FY-22. Mr. Wiedefeld informed about several improvements that are being done on Metrobus service, such as monitoring usage, adding late-night service, preparing for potential school openings, etc. He also stated that as it was done in the past few months, WMATA will continue to remain flexible going forward. Mr. Wiedefeld informed that with the help of the Cares Act II, there will not be any lay-offs of employees. There will be no service-cuts and no stations will be closed. Mr. Wiedefeld stated although we are very positive for the future, we want to be very cautious as well.

Mr. Wiedefeld informed about the continued deep cleaning throughout the system on bus and rail. In case of a report of a COVID related issue, WMATA follows the deep cleaning procedure whether it is an office space or a public place. He also informed about the different testing of technology being done for cleaning and identifying areas that need to be cleaned. Taking advantage of the reduced ridership, capital program preventive maintenance has been advanced as much as possible, providing long-term benefits. Mr. Wiedefeld stated the goal is to stay ahead of any future demands. Recognizing that people need to feel safe in terms of social distancing and thorough cleaning, all of that is being done. He stated that WMATA has also reached out to the public to gauge their issues. With the vaccine, people's attitude is beginning to change. However, there is an added obstacle to be on rail and bus, in a closed environment with unknown people.

Mr. Wiedefeld stated MetroAccess and the disability community are always on his mind. The AAC has met WMATA leadership at a number of the Committee meetings, and they are very engaged and committed on doing the best they can. Mr. Wiedefeld stated he is very proud of what has been done, and of-course things could be even better. He stated Metro is a very good system. Mr. Wiedefeld stated WMATA looks to AAC for ideas to improve the service and we will work with the Committee members, as done in the past. Sometimes the outcomes may differ due to many reasons, however that does not mean

that we do not listen or do not care. The AAC is pleased to state that any problems we have had, those were dealt with as lessons learned, resulting in positive responses, improvements, and good relationships.

8000 Series Rail-Cars:

Nahom Debessaye, Project Manager, Vehicles, provided a thorough presentation which was also verbally described in detail. Mr. Debessaye provided background of the project. He shared fleet history of all the railcars Metro has had from 1000 series all the way to 7000 series. Under the project scope for 8000 series, he also provided the base order as well as the options. Mr. Debessaye provided information about the 15 milestones of this project, followed by the schedule delivery that is expected to begin in March 2024, and complete in August 2026. He shared the strategies of this project and the advancement technologies that are expected in the 8000 series. Giving an overview of what can be expected, Mr. Debessaye stated passenger wi-fi, robust cyber security, better/advanced passenger information systems, power outlets, repositioning of the grab handles, advanced and more security cameras are all part of the improved customer experience.

The Committee was pleased to receive the information and looks forward to having more opportunities to share constructive feedback on the 8000 series railcar design. The AAC applauds Mr. Debessaye for giving the best presentation the Committee has seen over the years.

MetroAccess Sedan - Update:

Christiaan Blake, Managing Director, Access Services, informed that 65 sedans have been added in the MetroAccess fleet, and approximately 5 sedans are being added per week. Mr. Blake stated that during a declared emergency, involving an airborne virus, there will be no customers placed in the front seat, and only customers traveling alone will be scheduled for sedan service.

Sincerely,

Philip Posner  
Chair