



Accessibility Advisory Committee

300 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

January 3, 2022

Dear Chair Smedberg, and Members of the Board,

It is my pleasure to present you with the AAC report for the month of December 2022. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) Strategic Planning, 2) 8000 Rail Car Series, and 3) Inclement Weather and MetroAccess Service.

Issues of the Month

Strategic Planning:

Kimberly Feldbauer, Strategic Transformation Project Manager, stated this is an enterprise wide Strategic Plan. Every three and a half years, WMATA is required to update its Strategic Plan. Ms. Feldbauer provided an overview about the Strategic Transformation Plan development, highlighted emerging plan goals and objectives, and outlined next steps to finalize and adopt the plan. Ms. Feldbauer stated staff and community input are shaping a robust, customer-centric Strategic Transformation Plan, and it would be adopted in winter 2023. She shared the mission, vision, and goals of the Strategic Transformation Plans. Ms. Feldbauer stated community and stakeholder engagement extends across four phases, but starts and ends with listening to customers, community, and Metro staff. Data and stakeholder input led to four goals and supporting objectives to achieve Metro's vision. Each emerging goal is supported by objectives. Ms. Feldbauer provided an overview of the goal and objective metrics, as well as an overview of the preliminary initiatives.

Ms. Feldbauer also shared the questions that were considered for discussion as well as the next steps over the next few months. Ms. Feldbauer stated she would be happy to return to the AAC with updates as available. The Committee thanked Ms. Feldbauer for the detailed presentation and looks forward to receiving updates in the future.

8000 Rail Car Series:

Nahom Debessay, Project Manager, Vehicles, provided a project update about the 8000 series passenger railcars, simulator, related supplies and services. Mr. Debessay provided project background and stated it consists of the design, manufacture and delivery of railcars that will meet the demands and match the infrastructure of WMATA. The 8000 series railcars will replace all 358 remaining 2000 and 3000 series railcars. The 2000 and 3000 series were purchased between 1983 and 1988. Mr. Debessay provided detailed Metro Rail Car fleet history from 1000 series all the way up-to the upcoming 8000 series. Mr. Debessay provided the current project scope along with base orders and options as well as project milestones. Mr. Debessay also shared the project schedule with changes due to the impact of COVID-19 and the global market. Mr. Debessay provided the delivery schedule that is expected to begin in November 2024 and completed by March 2027.

Mr. Debessay shared project strategies that included WMATA overall mission including program focus and customer amenities. He also discussed the introduction of new energy saving functionality and technology. The AAC looks forward to receiving an update with additional available information, in Spring 2023.

Inclement Weather and MetroAccess Service:

Allison Anderson, Operations Manager, MetroAccess, provided a brief overview of the process as it related to inclement weather. MetroAccess may make service modifications during severe weather, or hazardous situations, or other emergencies situations. Example of severe weather condition may include icy roads, snow accumulations, high winds, or tornadoes, to name a few. During such conditions, the door-to-door service may revert to curb-to-curb service if we cannot safely render door-to-door service. Ms. Anderson stated we ask customers during these times to ensure clear path from their exterior door to their pickup location is clear and safe for our drivers to perform door-to-door service as applicable. It is important to note that MetroAccess primarily services the neighborhood and secondary streets, unlike Metrobus, that primarily operates on main roads. Thus, during the severe weather, neighborhood and secondary streets are not always the priority to get cleared to maintain the safe miles in the local jurisdictions. If warranted, service may be curtailed to return trips only or suspended altogether. MetroAccess does not take curtailing service lightly, and will look to keep service going, unless by doing so it jeopardizes the well-being of our customers, while using the public transportation, or of our vehicle operators in executing the service needs. MetroAccess service changes will be announced via a variety of communication medium such as Metro alert messages, local radio and television, the MetroAccess phone system, the Metro website, and the robo calls. Ms. Anderson further stated the objective is to accommodate as many customer requests as possible. MetroAccess communicates with customers via phone calls, thus it is important customers maintain their profile via the Eligibility Office.

The AAC and the disability community appreciate all the efforts put forth by MetroAccess Management, Staff, and Operators, in providing the service to customer during the inclement weather.

Sincerely,

Patrick Sheehan
Chair