



Accessibility Advisory Committee

300 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

April 3, 2023

Dear Chair Smedberg, and Members of the Board,

It is my pleasure to present you with the AAC report for the month of March 2023. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) 8K Renderings, 2) Elevators within Metrorail System, and 3) MetroAccess Pick-up Window Change Update.

Issues of the Month

8K Renderings:

Lynn Bowersox, Senior Vice President (SVP), Rail Transformation; Brian Dwyer, Chief Operating Officer (COO), and Sushil Ramnaress, Vice President and Chief Mechanical Officer, Rail Maintenance, provided information about the 8K Renderings.

Ms. Bowersox was provided with the AAC Handbook on Rail Car Design that was created in 2019 and recommended that the WMATA Board and the General Manager consider adopting open gangway car design for the 8000 series or at-least a pilot of such trains. Ms. Bowersox was pleased to say that our General Manager has advised the Board that we are exploring the open gangway design for the 8000 series. Ms. Bowersox shared the two slides that showed the concept of what an open gangway design would look like on an 8K from the interior as well as the exterior of the rail car. Ms. Bowersox asked the Committee a few questions and provided responses to the questions of the members. She also informed that she would return to the AAC to provide additional information and receive feedback.

Mr. Dwyer stated we have a new Chief Mechanical Officer (CMO) in Rail Maintenance. The CMO's team has been to New York and Atlanta, and will be visiting Toronto, to explore the open gangway design concepts as well as other issues including expanding camera capabilities with 6Ks and 7Ks. From his own experience as a consultant at APTA as a Safety and Security Reviewer, Mr. Dwyer stated we will undertake a thorough safety and security certification and threat and vulnerability analysis when any design we consider for future. Mr. Dwyer stated we are using an industry leader to help us on the design of this vehicle, and they have assisted WMATA successfully, in the past as well.

Mr. Ramnaress informed that the accordion style would be safe for riders as the pinched points both with baffles and plates that cover the open gangway, are still being considered and will be detailed in the design phase of the car. He stated there are several versions of these available and we will be working with the 8K car builder and supplier to evaluate any concerns as we design the baffles or the plates for the Metro 8K car.

The AAC shared some safety concerns, particularly in case of emergencies, i.e. a shooter on train, fire and/or smoke, etc. The team was responsive and assured the AAC that the safety aspects are and will be reviewed carefully. The AAC provided feedback on hold bars and seating configuration. The AAC was pleased to see the willingness of the team.

Elevators within Metro Rail System:

Seth Garland, Director, Station Planning, Office of Planning, stated his group has purview over looking at existing and the new stations in their early planning conceptual design phase. The team often reviews issues such as access, capacity, and circulation at the stations. He explained that the team also reviews opportunities to add additional elevators into those stations when reviewing as part of larger projects. More recently they have started to look specifically at opportunities to add additional elevators at existing stations.

Mr. Garland stated the ADA requires a single elevator to go between the levels of stations. Hence, the older stations have one elevator between changes in elevation. Around 2016, Metro changed its internal design standards to add requirement of guaranteed access, i.e. two elevators at every location where there is a change in elevation. The new stations such as the Silver Line, were built after the new implementation of new standard, thus have two elevators that go between each elevation change.

Mr. Garland stated as we apply that standard to existing stations, such as downtown Metro Stations (Metro Center or Gallery Place) with large crowding, we have looked at other opportunities to make the stations more efficient and to address other issues regarding crowding and capacity of those stations. He informed that if there is an opportunity to add an elevator that will improve the overall circulation within the station, that gets taken into consideration. Mr. Garland stated stations with center platform seem to be a little easier to add elevator versus the stations with side platforms, especially the underground stations.

The AAC was pleased to learn the reasonings behind one elevator in a station versus additional units. We appreciated the explanation and detailed information by Mr. Garland.

MetroAccess Pick-Up Window Change Update:

Christiaan Blake, Managing Director, Access Services, stated MetroAccess currently has a 30-minutes pick up window that starts 15 minutes before and ends 15 minutes after the pick-up time. To make it easier for MetroAccess customers, the goal is to start the pick-up window at the pick-up time. Mr. Blake stated many other paratransit agencies are already practicing this and if the change gets approved it will be effective July 1st, 2023. A robust messaging campaign will be used to inform MetroAccess customers of this change. Mr. Blake also informed that there would be a change in the Reservations scripts and modifications to Customer Guide, and the Abilities-Ride providers would also be advised.

The AAC appreciates all the efforts being put forth to assist MetroAccess customers.

Sincerely,

Patrick Sheehan

Chair