



Accessibility Advisory Committee

300 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

May 1, 2023

Dear Chair Smedberg, and Members of the Board,

It is my pleasure to present you with the AAC report for the month of April 2023. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) 8K Rail Car Series, Open Gangway Design – Update, 2) Better Bus Network Redesign Public Engagement, and 3) MetroAccess Fare Cap \$4.

Issues of the Month

8K Renderings:

Lynn Bowersox, Senior Vice-President (SVP), Rail Transformation; Sushil Ramnaress, Vice-President and Chief Mechanical Officer; David Sauter, Senior Program Manager, Rail CENV Railcar Programs, and Nahom Debessay, Project Manager Vehicles, provided an update about the 8K Rail car series, open gangway design. Ms. Bowersox shared background from 2020 and stated now, we are still working on that design, and are considering the open gangway rail car design. Ms. Bowersox informed that she has been intercepting with customers to seek feedback about the open gangway design. She has received similar concerns and comments as she did from the AAC. Customers like the notion of open gangway to traverse between rail cars easily, the increased capacity, and the ease of entering/exiting the rail car. Ms. Bowersox shared and discussed the structural information at this time since there is time to discuss rest of the details. Ms. Bowersox and the team informed of the seating configuration being different from the 7K.

Ms. Bowersox stated a lot of feedback has been received from customers at various stations, from the AAC, and the bicyclist association. The next step is to take a survey of Metro riders. She shared renderings and updates on the feedback received. Ms. Bowersox stated that as per the feedback received, the seating configuration has been modified and about 1/3 is for side seating whereas 2/3 is for back-to-back seating. Ms. Bowersox stated much more significant aisle space will be available with the proposed seating configuration. She shared the open gangway design with more openness of railcars, along with side seating as well as back-to-back seating, place for bicycles along with the side bench style seating, space for wheelchair along with a back-to-back seating style. Discussing the informational screens, Ms. Bowersox shared information about the digital station ahead signs close to the doors, all along the rail car length. Ms. Bowersox also informed that the trains would have heated floors, a great feature for colder season.

The AAC appreciates an opportunity to visit the New York's Coney Island railyard to view the open gangway design. That was a great opportunity for the participating members to experience and share their constructive feedback. Overall, the experience was positive, and the proposed seating configuration provides added spaces for overall ridership although some of the seats would be reduced per car. The AAC thanks Ms. Bowersox and everyone involved in arranging the trip, presenting to the AAC on several occasions and efforts of taking feedback from the disability community, as much as possible.

Better Bus Network Redesign Public Engagement:

Melissa Kim, Deputy Project Manager, and Finn Vigeland, both from the Office of Planning, Bus Network Redesign Project; provided project update including Phase Two Engagement Plan and information about the next steps. Ms. Kim provided the Better Bus Network Redesign Roadmap and stated the Visionary Network will deliver regional connectivity, quality customer and operator experience, and equity.

Mr. Vigeland shared engagement goals in phase two. To engage with public, they will host 50 events in 50 days to celebrate 50 years of Metrobus including community workshops, roadshow pop-ups, bus ride-along, webinars, and social media. Mr. Vigeland provided information where the events will be held. He provided workshop schedule and locations: Arlington Central Library (VA), Creative Suitland Arts Center (MD), THEARC (DC), Turkey Thicket Rec Center (DC), and the West Hyattsville Library (MD). Mr. Vigeland stated visionary network could be experienced from the Better Bus virtual lab. He shared examples and accessibility aspects of static network map, route profile, interactive maps, trip planning tool, website, and route profiles. Mr. Vigeland shared details about efforts of receiving information from as many people as possible, following the ADA and Title VI. The information will be disseminated in accessible formats in print as well as digitally. Mr. Vigeland stated the wide range of audiences includes internal and external stakeholders.

The Committee looks forward to the team's updates on the latest Visionary Network, the technical process used to develop it, and participate in various events.

MetroAccess Fare Cap \$4:

Christiaan Blake, Managing Director, Access Services, shared information about the approved change to the MetroAccess Maximum Fare from \$6.50 to \$4 by the WMATA Board. Mr. Blake stated that the change will take place for trips beginning on Sunday, June 25th. Mr. Blake stated customers will be informed of this change through the OCC, IVR, Customer Guide, and the Website. If a customer has a subscription trip, they do not need to do anything, their fare will automatically reflect the new fare.

The AAC appreciates all the efforts being put forth to assist MetroAccess customers. The Committee would like to thank the Board Members, therefore, has extended the invitation to the Board Members. We look forward to having the Board Members at its May meeting.

Sincerely,

Patrick Sheehan
Chair