



Accessibility Advisory Committee

300 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

September 5, 2023

Dear Chair Smedberg, and Members of the Board,

It is my pleasure to present you with the AAC report for the month of July 2023. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) Metro Performance Report, 2) Fare Vending Machines, and 3) MetroAccess Reservations by Phone.

Issues of the Month

Metro Performance Report:

Jordan Holt, Director, Performance, provided the FY23 Q3 Metro Performance Report. Ms. Holt stated customer satisfaction sustained large improvements over the past 12 months, reflecting actions taken to improve service delivery. System-wide ridership is increasing, with customers responding to added frequency. Ms. Holt stated that WMATA is focusing on addressing customer and employee safety through cops, cameras, and compassion. Ms. Holt provided information about Metro Performance Results for quarter one through three of fiscal year 23 (FY23). Ms. Holt further provided information about the additional measures that were met for FY23 or are trending in the right direction. Ms. Holt shared information about customer satisfaction on Metro services. Rail and bus customer satisfaction sustained large increases since FY22 Q3, reflecting shorter wait times and better reliability. MetroAccess customer satisfaction has returned to pre-pandemic averages (~73%) and remains on-par with Bus and Rail.

The AAC appreciates all the efforts made by WMATA to ensure customer satisfaction, and thanks Ms. Holt for providing details to the AAC in a relevant manner.

Fare Vending Machines:

Kathryn Hermann, Manager Strategic Initiatives, Planning and Sustainability provided information about the next generation of Fare Vending machines. Provided background and objectives, Ms. Hermann stated our current Fare Vending Machines (FVMs) are at end of life as these were designed in the 1980s and have several issues: large footprint, non-touch display with limited functionality, do not accept EMV chip or contactless payments, consume a lot of power, difficult to move, customers complaint, difficult to reprogram, inflexible for new products, difficult to get parts to maintain state of good repair, and not compatible with new back office. Ms. Hermann stated procuring and deploying our next generation of FVMs will address state of good repair and modernization needs for existing fare vending machines in rail stations. She stated the goal is to improve customer service, reduce operating costs, and modern design aesthetic. The objective is to 'right-size' the fleet, align to NextGen Back Office schedule, and be innovative.

The AAC appreciates Ms. Hermann for taking the Committee's recommendations that could be reviewed further for consideration. The AAC looks forward to providing any additional feedback for the FVMs.

MetroAccess Reservations by Phone:

Terrian Williams-Hall, Director, MetroAccess, stated we are in the process of implementing the artificial intelligence tool that is going to provide easy to use, natural language access to booking trips. Customers can call-in and there will be recognition of phone numbers if called from a phone number that is regularly used. The authentication will be simplified. The anticipation is that these phone calls will take 50% less time than the current time. MetroAccess will first partner with the Subcommittee to test it and give feedback before going live. The aim is to do that in about a month to a month-and-a-half. Then MetroAccess will incorporate AAC's feedback into the final product, and it is anticipated to be implemented in September. Ms. Williams-Hall stated it is a thinking machine thus will get smarter over time with use. It will speak 32 different languages including Spanish, and it also picks up on dialects and accents. If it does not get it the first time, it will adapt by customers' second or third call and everyone will be able to use it. If it does not recognize the words, it will direct the customer to the agent.

The AAC looks forward to using the tool as it is expected to improve customer experience.

Sincerely,

Patrick Sheehan
Chair