



Accessibility Advisory Committee

300 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

April 1, 2024

Dear Chair Smedberg, and Members of the Board,

It is my pleasure to present you with the AAC report for the month of March 2024. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) WMATA Budget Hearings, 2) 8K Rail Car Soft Mockup, and 3) Abilities-Ride Provider Solicitation.

Issues of the Month

WMATA Budget Hearings:

Madam Chair Rush thanked everyone who came to the budget hearings and testified, wrote letters, and completed the surveys. She attended the first two budget hearings along with other AAC members, whereas Paul Semelfort, MAS Chair, attended all three budget hearings. Madam Chair Rush stated everyone those who participated, made an impact. Phil Posner, Member Emeritus, stated he watched all the hearings online and everyone did a wonderful job. Many persons with disabilities participated and did a great job in conveying the message. He further added that it was good to see this year different Board Members participated at each hearing. Dr. Posner stated the service-changes will not take place till July 1st, and there may be changes made until then. Mr. Semelfort stated there were a lot of members who rode MetroAccess and many of the disability community came and spoke at all three hearings. The message conveyed was about keeping the current MetroAccess service area and hours. People shared their personal stories and the Board Members listened to them attentively.

8K Rail Car – Soft Mockup:

Lynn Bowersox, Senior Vice President, Rail Transformation, and Stanley Tsoi, Deputy Chief Mechanical Officer, presented the 8K Rail Car Soft Mockup. Ms. Bowersox stated there will be an Expo of Metro's fleet of the future, on the National Mall, from March 20th through April 3rd, from 9:00am to 5:00pm. The Committee has provided a lot of input into the 8K, and the historic soft mockup during the Cherry Blossom week will be in a very public display right outside of Smithsonian Station. Ms. Bowersox provided specifics of the soft mockup that is fully accessible. She stated there is a ramp that is being constructed to allow people who need assistance with walkers and wheelchairs, or who use other devices to access the soft mockup. Ms. Bowersox further stated the soft mockup will provide placement of things, sense of the space, and how things are laid out. There is an opportunity for the final design for a couple of small tweaks but nothing big, no big changes at this point.

Abilities-Ride Provider Solicitation:

Christiaan Blake, Vice President, Access Services, informed about the solicitation for the Abilities Ride program has completed and the existing six companies will remain in the program. The companies are as follows: Yellow Cab (PG County), Regency Taxi and Action Taxi (Montgomery County), Old Dominion (Northern VA), Curb and Yellow Cab (Washington DC), and Silver Cab working as VIP will be eligible for some trips in DC. Mr. Blake stated Lyft has been accepted but they have not signed the contract yet. Uber is

also a part of the program. Another a new provider, Uzurz, is being added. These are private vehicles as Uber, and Uzurz would provide door-to-door service, unlike other providers that provide curb-to-curb service. Currently, Uzurz is also providing non-paratransit service in Alexandria, however, with MetroAccess, they may be anywhere in the region depending upon their recruitment of drivers. Mr. Blake stated that Uzurz also provides paratransit service in the Baltimore area. Mr. Blake further stated that the providers will be available to the AAC later for the Committee to correspond.

Sincerely,

Patrick Sheehan
Chair