



Accessibility Advisory Committee

300 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

July 1, 2024

Dear Chair Santos, and Members of the Board,

It is my pleasure to present you with the AAC report for the month of June 2024. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) Acting Vice President of Systemwide Accessibility's Visit, 2) Better Bus Network Redesign – Year One Network, 3) Way Finding Signage Review – Post Site Visit (L'Enfant Plaza), 4) ASL Interpreters for Board Meetings, and 5) MetroAccess Service Delivery.

Issues of the Month

Meet and Greet Acting VP Systemwide Accessibility:

Jason Snyder, Acting Vice President, Systemwide Accessibility, shared his background and stated this time around he has been with WMATA since October 2023. The AAC was impressed to know that prior to that Mr. Snyder was the Deputy Director of City of Seattle and that has a PhD in International Law with a focus on Human Rights and accessibility is a personal and professional passion for him. The Committee was delighted to learn that Mr. Snyder is committed to be an advocate both internally and externally of the organization. His vast experience of 15 years in the policy development and strategic stake holder engagement areas, 10 years within the context of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations and compliance, internationally through the State Department as well as internally, speaks volumes. Not only that but Mr. Snyder has six years of experience with Amtrak and WMATA in a prior role in the Department of Labor Relations. The AAC appreciates Mr. Snyder's advocacy for awareness.

Better Bus Network Redesign – Year One Network:

Al Himes, Director, Bus Planning Service, provided an update about the Better Bus Network Redesign – Year One Network. Mr. Himes shared information about the work done thus far along with outreach in Spring 2024, that helped reach the proposed 2025 Better Bus Network, which will be followed by the final 2025 Better Bus Network which is expected to be adopted in Fall 2024 and implementation is expected in Summer 2025 within existing resources. Mr. Himes clarified how the proposed 2025 Better Bus Network attracts more customers using the same level of resources: more intuitive and easier to understand by renaming bus routes to make a more consistent and legible system; creates faster and more reliable travel time by eliminating some bus stops that are too close together; works within current funding and staffing resources and creates a more efficient system, carrying more customers with the same resources. Mr. Himes encouraged riders to avail the opportunity and provide feedback.

Way Finding Signage Review – Post Site Visit (L'Enfant Plaza):

The AAC members participated in the site visit to review the way finding signage review at the L'Enfant Plaza Station on June 10th, 2024. Sarah Meyer, Executive Vice President and Chief Customer Experience and Engagement Officer with her team, explained the many signs throughout the station, to the AAC members. A detailed report from the AAC was drafted about the site visit including recommendations, acknowledging the updated

implementations, and additional comments to be considered for future enhancements. Ms. Meyer asked specific questions about the updated signage to receive feedback whether the signage is appropriate, does it provide clear information, etc. She shared feedback that was received through surveys. Ms. Meyer also discussed the concept of platform numbers, which is successfully used internationally. The AAC appreciated the invitation and the participation of Ms. Meyer with her team, to review the signage, and the Committee looks forward to reviewing the next station, Rosslyn, with updated signage.

ASL Interpreters for Board Meetings:

The AAC raised a concern and asked if the American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter service can be added for all of the Board of Directors meetings. The meetings are open to the public and if a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, attends these meetings, s/he will not have equal opportunity to participate in the meetings. That is a Civil Rights violation, a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), that protect people with disabilities from discrimination. The ADA requires effective communication. People who have vision, hearing, or speech disabilities (communication disabilities) use different ways to communicate. The ADA requires that title II entities (State and local governments) and title III entities (businesses and nonprofit organizations that serve the public) communicate effectively with people who have communication disabilities. The goal is to ensure that communication with people with these disabilities is equally effective as communication with people without disabilities.

Digital Assistant – WMR Capabilities:

Terrian Williams-Hall, Director, MetroAccess, stated like MetroAccess reservations line, we hope to offer similar support for Where is My Ride (WMR) later this summer. The plan is to offer ride status calls where customers can call in and ask the thinking machine for their ride status. Our digital assistant will confirm pick up times and provide estimated times of arrival. The service will also offer cancelation option. The callers can provide the trip information and the thinking machine can quickly cancel the trip. If the caller wants to add a trip, soon the thinking machine will be able to add it in the same call. We also plan to offer text message option, where the thinking machine will respond to your text for these options. The AAC looks forward to the Digital Assistant – WMR capabilities later this summer and appreciate all the efforts put forth by the Access Services and MetroAccess Office.

Sincerely,

Patrick Sheehan
Chair