



## Accessibility Advisory Committee

300 7<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20024

December 2, 2024

Dear Chair Santos, and Members of the Board,

It is my pleasure to present you with the AAC report for the month of November 2024. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) Paul Smedberg - DMV Moves, 2) Don Drummer - Prince George's County Bus Desert, 3) Sign Shop Machines, and 4) MetroAccess Service.

### Issues of the Month

#### DMV Moves:

Paul Smedberg, Task Force Co-Chair, WMATA Board Vice Chair, Principal Director – VA, stated we had a challenging budget season last time. It highlighted the financial model is not sustainable. The General Manager; himself; Clark Mercer, new Executive Director, Council of Governments (COG); and Charles Allen, DC Council Member; decided to do a joint project to begin a discussion on how to have dedicated funding. In addition to Operations, we also have Capital challenges coming up. Mr. Smedberg stated our partners: Maryland, District of Columbia, and Virginia, have different political landscapes. Metro Board and COG Board agreed to put this together. We have the Chief Administrative Officers along with important and influential legislatures on state and jurisdictional levels. There are two working groups: the Business and Community Group, and Administrative Group; tasked with various issues and questions to address, with a goal to ideally have a regional solution.

The AAC was impressed by hearing Mr. Smedberg's overview, the number of people involved to create a financial solution for WMATA's funding challenges. The AAC hopes the outcome will be what is intended or close to it and appreciates everyone's efforts.

#### Prince George's County Bus Desert:

Don Drummer, Board Member, attended the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and its Bus and Rail Subcommittee (BRS) meetings in the month of November. Mr. Drummer stated the goal is to clarify a concern of the committee and close the gap of community with the Prince George's County (PGC) officials. Mr. Drummer introduced Jonathan Rogers, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT); and Victor Weisberg, PGC, and laid the foundation for future. Mr. Rogers thanked the Committee for the opportunity to introduce himself and stated he is the Washington Area Transit Director, and he appreciated the Committee's comments. Mr. Weisberg stated we want to set the foundation, have a dialogue and a mechanism of communication with the Committee. There has been a lot going on with the Transportation, PGC worked closely with Better Bus Network Redesign (BBNR) and continues to work closely to see how different systems can work synergistically.

The AAC appreciates Mr. Drummer's attention to the bus desert in PGC. The AAC looks forward to having a plan that spells out what can be handled through BBNR and DMV Moves. The AAC was reassured by the comments of Mr. Weisberg that he is working with WMATA and DMV Moves towards resolving bus desert issues in PGC.

Braille Machine Review:

Sarah Meyer, Executive Vice President, and Chief Customer Experience/Engagement Officer was glad that AAC members joined today to see the new braille machine. Ms. Meyer stated the new machine helps us to catch up with the backlog on signs. We have had some terminal changes and will have some more changes. This machine will help Metro in getting caught up with the number of signs and create new signs timely, to help people navigate through the system.

The AAC had a good tour about how the old machines work. Making braille signage is very labor intensive one sign at a time, made in three to four steps. The new sign making machine for raised lettering and braille, uses a different technique, it is a faster process and less expensive. It was good for the AAC to see the machines; the staff was very helpful and responsive to their questions. The members had a great experience and learned a lot about the signs.

MetroAccess Service:

Christiaan Blake, Vice President, Access Services, stated the MetroAccess service area is enormous, and the ridership is growing. Prior to July, there were three vendors in five locations. Currently we have one vendor with three locations. Towards the beginning of December, another contractor would be added to operate out of Montgomery County. We are working diligently to open a fifth base in or close to the Washington DC line along the beltway. The effort is that the base within counties/areas, can focus on that specific jurisdiction. Mr. Blake stated these efforts would improve the service and customer experience. The last time the contracts were changed was in July 2019 and the service level was below 90% until October. The AAC was informed of the plan to improve service. Afterwards, there was not a single month that had below 90% service level. He had not anticipated to have a repeat of service level below 90% after five years, however, the work is being done for service improvement and customer experience with late pickups.

The AAC appreciates Mr. Blake for being straight forward, open, and transparent about the street service and call center, with the Committee and his tremendous efforts for improvements.

Sincerely,

Patrick Sheehan  
Chair