



Accessibility Advisory Committee

300 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

January 5, 2026

Dear Chair Santos, and Members of the Board,

It is my pleasure to present you with the AAC report for the month of December 2025. The primary issues we reviewed were: (1) Richard W. Hedding Award - 2025, (2) Better Bus Update, and (3) MetroAccess Eligibility Recertification Process Advocacy.

Issues of the Month

Richard W. Hedding Award - 2025:

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) nominated David Shaffer, posthumously, a former WMATA employee, for the Richard W. Hedding Award - 2025. Some of the AAC members remembered the contributions of Mr. Shaffer, in enhancing accessibility, and helping the disability community while employed with WMATA and beyond, along with his outstanding background involving education, work experience, and the law cases that he won. Despite his disabilities, Mr. Shaffer continued to work as an advocate for the disability community. He was instrumental in getting changed the default location of street elevators from mezzanine to street level, and direction of the platform escalators changed making it convenient for customers from mezzanine getting to the platform level. He worked on MetroAccess to ensure grandfathering of the system. He was in front of the Supreme Court a couple of times and won some high-profile cases.

Despite him being legally blind, Mr. Shaffer could get around independently, ride Metro, do his legal work, and do his Ombudsman work. He was a gentle person and always responded to whatever was brought to his table.

Better Bus Update:

Charlie Dingboom, Planning Manager, Operations Manager, discussed bus service changes that will be effective December 14th, 2025. This will be the first opportunity to address issues that were noticed which arose with the inception of the Better Bus Network in June. Many of these changes are to address deficiencies in the network or areas that were over-served in the network redesign and trying to right-size service with a few a bit larger element. Mr. Dingboom stated a new route A29, is being established in December, which is being funded through the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission's (NVTC's) I-395-95 Commuter Choice Grant Program. Mr. Dingboom shared information about the significant changes on bus routes in the District of Columbia. He also provided information about the several smaller changes on bus routes in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia.

The AAC looks forward to the changes to be implements later in December, and beyond.

MetroAccess Eligibility Recertification Process Advocacy:

Sarah Radt, Second Vice Chair, AAC, discussed background of the AAC Streamlined Recertification Proposal and the key objectives. Ms. Radt provided current challenges, discussed legal basis and national trends from leading paratransit systems with

streamlined recertification include New York MTA, Chicago RTA, Santa Rosa, Nashville, and others. The streamlining proposal applies to riders with medically verified permanent or non-improving disabilities. The key changes will be recertification every 5 years instead of 3, and no new medical forms required unless a person's condition changes. Customer will still be required to verify personal information, update mobility and assistive device needs, and report functional changes. The original eligibility certification process and requirements will not change. There is no potential of increased fraud due to misuse of ID as a result of this proposal.

The AAC recommends WMATA to adopt a streamlined five-year recertification process for riders with permanent or non-improving disabilities. This proposal will reduce barriers and unnecessary burdens on riders, will improve administrative efficiency for WMATA staff, will ensure robust eligibility standards and safeguards, and aligns with ADA and FTA guidance and national best practices.

Sincerely,

Patrick Sheehan
Chair