



# AAC

## Accessibility Advisory Committee

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October 3, 2011

Chair Hudgins and Members of the Board,

It is my pleasure to present you with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) report for the month of September 2011.

**Bus/Rail Subcommittee Report.** The Bus/Rail Subcommittee (BRS) discussed train operator announcements; information displayed on the Passenger Information Display System (PIDS); and skipped stations in the Metrorail system. Mr. Paul Bumbry, Superintendent of Metrorail Station Operations, presented the process for displaying information on the PIDS. He indicated that service disruptions are displayed in three-minute intervals until the incident is resolved. Service disruptions can override next train arrival or elevator outage information and are displayed by the color of the line affected, reason for the delay, and location in the Metrorail system.

Mr. Bumbry also reported that, to ensure trains maintain the schedule, they will occasionally pass stations. This practice of skipping stations is not done at transfer or core stations and not late at night. The BRS recommended that elevator outage information on PIDS should identify whether it is the platform or street level elevators. They also recommended greater contrast to display PIDS information and suggested that a black background with amber lettering be used. Announcements of skipped stations should be performed at least two stations prior to the affected station, and the train operator should make the announcements at the platform and in the tunnels. The Rail department agreed to follow up and report on work performed to address the AAC comments. The BRS will report its findings to the AAC.

Mr. Lendy Castillo, Manager of Customer Relations, discussed the Metro customer complaints and feedback process. The BRS expressed an interest in the type of information required to file a complaint on-line and indicated that the online comment form system was too cumbersome for people with certain disabilities. Mr. Castillo reported that complaints are given a case number in the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and that the customer service staff partners with other departments to bring the complaint to a resolution. The BRS agreed to further this discussion at the October 11, 2011 meeting with representatives from Metrorail and Customer Relations and asked that a Department of Bus Transportation representative be invited to the meeting.

**MetroAccess Subcommittee Report.** The MetroAccess Subcommittee discussed an informal study conducted by staff on the use of taxis to provide paratransit services. The study compared Metro's paratransit service and New York City Transit's paratransit service in four categories: fare structure; payment options; external service providers;

and customer usage of taxis. It was noted that the percentage of MetroAccess trips provided by taxis was much higher in the past.

The Subcommittee also discussed an April 2010 letter from the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board Access for All (AFA) Committee that was brought forward by a member of the public. The letter provided recommendations to reduce the FY2011 MetroAccess budget while avoiding service changes or substantial fare increases. Staff reported that Metro considered a number of cost cutting measures before finalizing that budget, and the recommendations in the letter were reviewed at the time. Several of the recommendations have since been implemented, and some are currently being implemented. Since similar questions are likely to emerge in this year's budget process, the Subcommittee agreed to review and respond to the letter via the AFA representatives now serving on the AAC.

The Subcommittee recognized Ms. Claudia Andrade and Mr. Charles Mullen, two MetroAccess drivers, for their excellent service and commitment to safety.

**AAC Committee Actions.** To obtain public input on the business model for the upcoming paratransit contract, the AAC has approved a schedule for a series of focus groups and town hall meetings. The focus groups, which will be administered through a combination of facilitated group meetings and in-depth interviews, will allow randomly selected customers, various advocacy organizations, and peer transit agencies to provide input on safety, reliability, and customer service. The town hall meetings will supplement the focus groups, providing the opportunity for all members of the public to be heard. All Board members would be most welcome to attend any of these meetings.

The town hall meetings will start with an Open House at 6pm and run from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on the following days and locations: Monday, October 24, 2011 at the Jackson Graham Building, District of Columbia; Tuesday, October 25, 2011 at the Arlington Library, Arlington, VA; and Wednesday, October 26, 2011 at the First United Methodist Church Hyattsville, MD. For those who are unable to attend the meetings, Metro will take comments by phone mail, e-mail, or U.S. mail. We believe that this combination of input mechanisms from the public will enable Metro to make the most informed decisions in establishing the next paratransit contract.

Sincerely,

Patrick Sheehan  
Chairman