300 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

Accessibility Advisory Committee

October 22, 2026

Dear Chair McAndrews,

During July 2026, the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and its Bus & Rail and MetroAccess Subcommittees continued to provide strategic input on accessibility initiatives across WMATA services. Discussions focused on improving the customer experience, safety, communications, and accessibility for riders with disabilities. Key topics included digital accessibility enhancements for WMATA.com and MetroPulse, emergency preparedness planning, station restroom accessibility, wayfinding improvements, platform door planning, MetroAccess modernization efforts, and customer communication practices. Committee members emphasized the importance of incorporating accessibility early in project planning and design, maintaining transparent and timely customer communications, and continuing meaningful engagement with people with disabilities to help shape WMATA's programs, services, and capital initiatives.

Digital Accessibility and Customer Information

The AAC received an update on the May 2026 launch of WMATA.com and MetroPulse 2.0. WMATA reported continued progress in improving digital accessibility, including enhanced keyboard navigation, screen reader compatibility, improvements to AAC webpages, efforts to reduce dependence on PDF documents, and continued conformance with WCAG 2.2 AA standards. Future enhancements include expanded elevator and escalator outage information, improved trip-planning tools, and conversion of PDF-based forms into accessible online forms.

Members encouraged continued testing with people with disabilities, particularly users with low vision, and emphasized the importance of accurate real-time service information, accessible customer communications, and visibility of critical trip-planning features.

Emergency Preparedness and Accessibility

AAC members discussed a recent Emergency Preparedness site visit and provided recommendations to strengthen accessibility during emergency operations. Feedback focused on expanding participation by individuals with a range of disabilities, including wheelchair users, deaf and deaf-blind individuals, people with service animals, and autistic riders. Members also recommended simplifying emergency instructions and signage through plain language, symbols, and pictorial communication where appropriate.

The Committee expressed appreciation for WMATA's collaborative approach and encouraged continued engagement between Emergency Preparedness staff and disability stakeholders.

Bus and Rail Accessibility Initiatives

Station Restroom Accessibility

The Bus and Rail Subcommittee reviewed WMATA's customer restroom accessibility initiative, which will provide accessible customer restroom facilities at 36 Metrorail stations. The program includes upgrades to existing facilities and renovations where necessary. Members strongly supported the initiative and emphasized the importance of accessible restroom access for rider independence and dignity. Topics discussed included family restroom accommodations, wayfinding, customer communications, and safety considerations related to restroom locations.

Wayfinding and Station Ahead Maps

The Subcommittee received updates regarding Station Ahead Maps and wayfinding improvements. AAC members participating in field testing provided feedback on map readability, orientation, contrast, color differentiation, accessibility for color-blind customers, and station map placement. WMATA reported that several improvements had already been incorporated based on AAC feedback and committed to continued engagement as the program advances.

Rail Modernization and Platform Doors

WMATA presented plans for platform door installation as part of the Rail Modernization Program. Members discussed opportunities to improve safety while enhancing accessibility through platform gap mitigation, predictable boarding locations, improved wayfinding, emergency access considerations, and enhanced audible and visual information systems. WMATA committed to ongoing AAC involvement as project planning continues.

MetroAccess Operations and Service Modernization

Customer Service and Program Performance

The MetroAccess Subcommittee reviewed customer-service performance, outreach activities, and operational updates. Staff reported strong customer recognition results and provided updates regarding the resolution of several customer concerns. Members discussed customer satisfaction, complaint tracking, communications, and service reliability as ongoing priorities for future work planning.

Eligibility and Customer Communications

Members discussed opportunities to modernize MetroAccess eligibility and customer-service processes, including electronic document submission, online status tracking, automated notifications, and improved communication practices. Discussion also addressed recertification processes, identification card issuance, reciprocal eligibility information, and customer wait times. Members emphasized the importance of maintaining privacy protections while improving transparency and responsiveness.

Digital Assistant and Technology Improvements

MetroAccess staff provided updates on Digital Assistant and artificial intelligence initiatives designed to improve reservations, trip information, customer support, and operational efficiency. Planned enhancements are expected to improve response times, provide more accurate vehicle information, and support customer-service staff. Members also discussed

the potential of accessible technology to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Abilities Ride Program
The Subcommittee reviewed implementation of the Abilities Ride administrative fee and associated account management processes. Members emphasized the importance of clear customer information regarding charges, refunds, account activity, and transaction transparency. Staff indicated that current procedures support auditing, dispute resolution, and accountability.

Respectfully submitted,
Patrick Sheehan
Chair, Accessibility Advisory Committee