



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-962-6060

September 6, 2016

Dear Chair Evans and Members of the Board,

It is my pleasure to present you with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) report for the months of July and August 2016. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) the Abilities-Ride proposal; 2) Metrobus announcements; and 3) the Metrorail emergency exercise.

Issues of the Month

Abilities-Ride

The AAC continued its discussion on Metro's proposal to partner with transportation network companies (TNC) to offer an alternative to MetroAccess service in Maryland. The AAC also discussed its letter to the Metro Board outlining recommendations with regard to the Abilities-Ride proposal. The letter outlined recommendations aimed at safeguarding public transportation by ensuring that access and accessibility are not compromised for any customer, including those needing wheelchair accessible vehicles.

The AAC acknowledges that unconstrained growth in demand for MetroAccess is unsustainable and that more must be done to meet the increasing need for specialized transportation. The AAC is fully committed to helping Metro develop ways to provide reliable and sustainable public transportation services. The AAC encourages customers with disabilities to use Metrobus and Metrorail when appropriate as a way to curb the rising cost of MetroAccess service.

Metrobus External Announcements

The AAC discussed the volume level of external stop announcements with Metro's Office of Bus Maintenance (BMNT). Metro currently has 1,583 buses in its fleet. On certain Metrobus lines, the volume level of the external stop announcements mostly related to base fare has increased, causing discomfort for some residents near bus stops. This announcement occurs each time the front door of a bus vehicle opens, whether or not a passenger is boarding the bus. To mitigate the problem, Metro reviewed all the buses in the fleet, and after an upgrade in technology, determined that the Annunciator systems were averaging a volume range significantly higher than Metro's normal average level. The system was reprogrammed, so as each bus is placed into service, the annunciator system automatically calibrates to the appropriate level for the environment. All Metrobuses have an ambient sensor that will allow the volume to go higher or lower depending on the surrounding environment. For additional review, BMNT offered to provide a demonstration of the Annunciator equipment on Metrobus.

The AAC thanked BMNT for a thorough discussion on the external announcements. The AAC stated that they look forward to a demonstration of the Annunciator system.

Metrorail Emergency Exercise

In August 2016, several AAC members participated in Metro's emergency exercise on the Yellow Line Bridge. The AAC views safety as a critical issue for all customers, especially those with disabilities. The AAC reiterated its recommendation that future first responder training includes working with customers who are deaf or hard of hearing and customers who use service animals. The AAC also recommends that Metro works with disability coordinators at the local level in each jurisdiction to standardize training for first responders. The AAC commends Metro for the ongoing number of planned emergency training exercises for first responders around the region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Sheehan', written in a cursive style.

Patrick Sheehan
Chair