



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

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April 1, 2019

Dear Chair Evans and Members of the Board,

It is my pleasure to present you with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) report for the month of March 2019. The primary issues we reviewed were: 1) WMATA Budget, 2) Metrorail Announcements, 3) Elevator Call Buttons, and 4) MetroAccess Sedans.

Issues of the Month

WMATA Budget:

Paul Wiedefeld, General Manager/Chief Executive Officer (GM/CEO), shared information with the AAC members during the full committee meeting and answered several questions posed by the members. The AAC appreciates Mr. Wiedefeld's time and information that he shared. As part of the budget, the current Metrorail service hours will remain in effect for another year. We also know that many late-night employees will be adversely affected by this decision. The AAC appreciates WMATA's effort of subsidizing trips on taxi and ride-hailing services. However, the amount set does not seem to be sufficient. The \$3 subsidy seems inadequate for late-night employees. The AAC understands the budget constraints that WMATA may be experiencing and hopes that there can be an increase of bus service in the affected areas, and that may be a better option for the late-night employees.

After attending the Finance Committee meeting and seeing the final budget to be approved by the Board, we compliment you on a balanced and sustainable budget product. We are disappointed that MetroAccess customers were left out of access to a pass product. We believe that one similar to the "MetroSelect" pass would be fair and sustainable. We would also consider a MetroAccess "Arrival Promise", similar to the rush-hour-promise. This would guarantee that no one would have to ride longer than 2 hours to their destination, once they boarded the vehicle.

Metrorail Announcements:

The AAC has had several discussions about the Metrorail announcements in the past few months. The AAC has also had a couple of guest speakers who have provided and received information. In the last Bus/Rail Subcommittee meeting, the AAC received some constructive updates from Donald Goings Superintendent, Rail Infrastructure and Support Services. Mr. Goings received the recommendations and grouped them in four segments:

- Clarify sequencing and length of the announcements.
- The unutilized 5 seconds of dwell time.
- Visual displays for information purposes.

- The elevator outage announcements not being made by train operators.

Mr. Goings stated there is an overlap of auto manual door operation forthcoming. The changes will be made all at one time. One of the clarity issues that came up was “lexit” being announced instead of “exit.” About the announcements during rush-hours versus non-rush-hours, all announcements are standard and universal for all times of service. The proposed shortening and the sequencing of the announcements will be adopted. The committee’s recommendation was to mention the transfers first, and to announce, “careful of the gap between the cars on 7000-series.” The unutilized 5 seconds of dwell time may get resolved with the coming automatic operations. Concerning the train and station displays, the train displays can be manipulated to display certain messages. At the same time, messages informing customers to vacate priority seating, may not be enforced but only suggested as all passengers are paying customers. He also informed as to why the displays at the bottom of the escalators and in front of the elevators may not be helpful, they are safety issues. Displays at the bottom of the escalators may cause back-ups. An appropriate location for such display signs is being reviewed. With time, the AAC looks forward to having improvements in the Metrorail announcements.

Elevator Call Buttons

The AAC discussed the need for standardization of elevator call buttons in the rail. Suggestions for location, color, size and labels (text, Braille and elevated text) are being developed. It was also noted that the default position for mezzanine to street elevators has not been changed to street yet. Even though the AAC was told that this would help prevent water intrusion.

MetroAccess Sedans:

WMATA is considering the addition of sedans to the MetroAccess fleet. The criteria for selecting a make and model included the vehicle had to be available on a state or a local government contract; have a minimum rear legroom of 36 inches; and have a government rating of 40 miles per gallon in city driving. Based on the set criteria, three vehicles are being considered: 2019 Chevy Malibu hybrid, 2019 Ford Fusion hybrid, and 2019 Honda Insight hybrid. The AAC had a chance to view all the three sedans, test them, and provide feedback. The AAC appreciates the opportunity to be able to advise WMATA with detailed feedback. The recommended choice of the majority of AAC members was the Chevy Malibu for various reasons including comfort, leg room, wide-opening passenger doors. The AAC suggested the possibility of removing the front passenger seat to create more room for service animals, long legs and mobility devices. It was also suggested that the exterior of the vehicles might be a location for advertising.

Sincerely,

Philip Posner

Chair