



Accessibility Advisory Committee

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March 2, 2020

Dear Chair Smedberg and Members of the Board,

It is my pleasure to present you with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) report for the month of February 2020. The primary issue we reviewed was the WMATA Proposed 2021 Budget: (a) Public Hearings, (b) Bus Service, and (c) MetroAccess Service.

Issues of the Month

WMATA Budget - Public Hearings:

The AAC discussed the public hearings at length. The Committee was concerned about the process of distributing information about the budget hearings. One of the concerns we had was about the hours of the hearings. As representatives of the disability community and the senior community, it is our responsibility to ensure that the information is easily available to all, and the information is accessible. For this, the Committee made several recommendations: start and end time should also be published for the public hearings. People should know the kinds of accommodations may be provided, how to request those accommodations, and the time-frame in which the requests can be made. Although this was not provided for this public hearing, the AAC recommends two public hearing locations for Northern Virginia: one in Arlington County, and one in Fairfax County. In the event there could be only one hearing in Northern Virginia, then to schedule it closer to Fairfax County to accommodate those residents as well.

For people with low vision or who are blind, it is important to have accessible documents. This year, the budget document was not accessible. The brochure was made accessible, however, the proposed budget in its entirety was not accessible. This should be a lesson learned for future and any time a document is created, the AAC recommends for it to be in accessible format as well.

WMATA Budget - Bus Service:

The AAC appreciates the proposal of lowering the price of the 7-Day Regional Bus Pass, increasing the transfer discount between Metrorail and Metrobus, and adding a new short-trip and a weekend pass. The weekend service on high-ridership routes may improve, as may the MetroExtra service. The AAC has a concern of bus service on some of the routes being restructured and even eliminated if Metrorail late night hours extend. About 25 of the 159 bus lines are proposed to be discontinued and another 80 that would have some change in the current service. The number of bus stops may change from 10,000 to 9,600, whereas about 400 bus stops serve more than one bus line.

The B30 route is proposed to be discontinued however the alternative MARC trains have accessibility issues. MetroAccess fares will be adversely affected if Metrobus and Metrorail fares increase as proposed. Another concern is for the Z line. When Montgomery County takes over the service, it will only provide service during the peak

hours. The 5A bus route will be eliminated when the Silver Line Phase 2 opens, limiting service to after 5:00 a.m. There are many other routes being impacted in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. The AAC is concerned about bus service cuts despite the fact of increasing population in this region.

WMATA Budget – MetroAccess Service:

The budget is for a full fiscal year. However, in case of bus service cuts, the proposal of retaining the current MetroAccess service is only for half of the fiscal year. The AAC understands and appreciates this positive proposal. The number of people who are seniors and/or have disabilities and use the bus service, is rather large. If bus service is cut, bus riders and MetroAccess customers, both would be impacted adversely. The AAC hopes that the bus service cuts would not go in effect as all riders including seniors and persons with disabilities would be impacted in more ways than one: those who use fixed route as well as MetroAccess service.

Sincerely,

Philip Posner
Chair