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December 9, 2011

Mr. Patrick Wojahn, Chairman
Access for All Committee
Transportation Planning Board
777 N. Capitol Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Re: AFA Recommendations for MetroAccess Cost Containment

Dear Chairman Wojahn:

In April 2010, the Access for All Committee (AFA) transmitted a letter to the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) offering recommendations on how to reduce the cost of our MetroAccess paratransit service. Metro Board Chair Catherine Hudgins has asked the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) to respond. The recommendations were sent as alternatives to potential service reductions or fare increases that were being evaluated as part of our annual budget process, during which a budget gap of nearly \$200 million was being addressed. While all of the recommendations were reviewed, a formal response to AFA was not provided. The AAC recently reviewed these recommendations in the context of the current year's budget discussion, and the disposition of each is as follows:

1. **Increase taxi usage by 10 to 20 percent.** Projected savings was based on pricing that is no longer valid. Taxi rates are now mileage based (and charged by the meter) and are comparable to the cost of service performed by Metro's dedicated service providers. Also, taxi is best leveraged for spontaneous response, and with only two taxi companies in the program capable of meeting our service requirements (and with limited coverage across the service area), there is a significant limitation on our ability to use taxi service at the recommended volume.
2. **Self-insure the MetroAccess fleet.** Pursuit of this option was approved by Metro's Board in November 2011.
3. **Improve the capacity of the MetroAccess eligibility certification process to reduce the number of people being given presumptive eligibility, and after public vetting, introduce conditional eligibility.** Completed. Additionally, our eligibility certification office is offering reduced (half) fare on fixed-route services for

nearly all applicants who are not eligible for MetroAccess, and our travel training function has been integrated into that office to enable customers to explore that option while they are on site.

4. **Increase the flat fare and premium fare for out-of-corridor service at a lower rate of increase than that proposed.** Fare increase was implemented in March 2011, indexing the paratransit fare to twice the equivalent fixed-route fare. Simpler fare structure alternatives are currently being reviewed, and the AAC is preparing its own recommendations for Board consideration.
5. **Restructure MetroAccess contract to lessen the concentration or responsibilities in a single company.** Currently being considered as business model being constructed with significant vetting with the AAC and the public. The next contract is scheduled to begin on July 1, 2013, and the procurement process will be conducted in 2012.
6. **Carefully review proposed Metrobus changes to ensure that low-income bus riders are the least affected by potential service reductions and/or fare increases.** A complete Title VI analysis was performed prior to the consideration of any service changes, and the analysis confirmed that there would be no inordinate impact on disadvantaged populations. Metro will continue to use that approach for any future changes that may be considered.

Now that AFA holds two seats on the AAC, it is our expectation that any further detail on these or other recommendations from AFA will be brought forward for review at our future meetings. Additionally, we welcome the participation of all members of the AFA at all AAC activities.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Patrick Sheehan
Chairman

cc: Catherine Hudgins, Chair, Board of Directors
Richard R. Sarles, General Manager and Chief Executive Officer
Christian T. Kent, Assistant General Manager, Access Services