

# **Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (AACT)**

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## **Members Meeting Minutes**

*Wednesday, January 25, 2017*

### **Board of Directors:**

Chairman – James F. White

Vice Chairman – Lisa Weber

### **Executive Board**

Nadine Jones

Mary Ann Murray

Beverly Ann Rock

Tom Tozza

Lisa Weber

***Meeting opened at 1:03 PM.***

## **Reading of the Agenda**

### ***Introductions***

#### **Attendees:**

James White, Lisa Weber, Jim Tozza, David Vieira, Thomas Gilbert, Richard Mahoney, Bill Corcoran, Nadine Jones, Kevin Wilson, Christine Daniels, Reggie Clark, Dee Whittlesy, Angela Manerson, Elizabeth Cracker, and Thomas Gilbert

#### **MBTA Staff:**

Mike Hulak, Carol Joyce-Harrington, Rob Sampson, and Kelli Ahola

#### **Vendor Staff:**

Gerald Francis, David Scorey, Steve Epps, Joe Baker, Victor Herrera, Mike Rushin, Greg Alcorn, Kevin McDonald, Bryan Overcash, Rita Hardiman, Liz Hickey, David Pearson, Linda Shepard Salzer, and Sean Powers

#### **Other:**

Patricia Mendez and Judge Patrick King

### ***Meeting Minutes Approval***

All minutes were passed unanimously.

- September 28, 2016
- October 26, 2016
- December 21, 2016
- July 27, 2016

# Chairman White's Report

He stated the following:

- He attended the Ad Hoc Committee kick-off meeting which addressed the Community Engagement and a Paratransit Task Force meeting on January 17. The group covered basic aspects of the committee.
- He attended The RIDE Task Force meeting. The group discussed subsidy programs; the taxi subsidy should begin soon. The group also discussed new means testing.
- Chairman White, Vice Chair Weber, and the AACT coordinator attended Hynes Convention Center to view different fare collecting machines from four vendors. SWA has asked for AACT's input. He discussed a fare collection scanner which would work on the back doors of busses and trolleys.
- He discussed a Lower Mystic meeting. MassDOT is performing a traffic analysis in Everett, Revere, and Boston regarding the impact of casinos. There are concerns about the impact on Charlestown, and there are discussions of a new road to mitigate traffic. He will present more information to AACT when it is available.
- He discussed the new MBTA bus design. He noted the seats behind the driver fold up individually, rather than a bench seat. The busses are also wider than the current design. Additionally, the security cameras can be streamed to an external location, rather than only be held for three days; this will allow for complaints to be investigated at later dates.
- He will attend a Question and Answer session with Governor Baker and Mayor Walsh.
- He appointed two new Board members Jim Tozza and Nadine Jones.

There were no questions asked.

# **Keolis Commuter Services, LLC – North America Leadership**

## ***President Gerald Francis***

**Mr. Francis** thanked the AACT membership for their support. He expressed gratitude toward Chairman White for his support for both Keolis and himself, particularly when he became the General Manager.

In July of 2016, Keolis moved their North American corporate office to Boston, allowing the organization to better commit to the area. He stated that now as the current president, he has the opportunity to work on local operations but also look at things from a national perspective, allowing him to talk to other transportation agencies in the United States.

He introduced **David Scorey**, the current General Manager of Keolis Commuter Services who has approximately thirty years of experience in the rail business, noting particular experiences with mechanics, operations, and strategic planning.

## ***General Manager David Scorey***

**Mr. Scorey** described his work in the UK rail industry. He discussed his prior experience with transit accessibility, noting his previous employer won awards for station improvements and “priority seating cards,” which recognize hidden disabilities.

He noted that in the UK that there is equivalent legislation described as the Equality Act 2010 which states that people with transport should be accessible to everyone effectively.

He explained that the UK has a subsidy legislation call the persons with reduced mobility technical standard that applies to rolling stock--design, signage, accessibility, and information systems.

He noted that both the UK and the United States are actually the same in supporting accessibility to the network making transport available to everyone.

Since Keolis began their contract with the MBTA, Keolis has focused on passenger information and communication – including providing accessible information and in multiple languages – and employee training. Keolis ensures that every new employee is aware of how they can assist passengers. The company plans to strengthen their conductor training program, ensuring they provide the best level service. Their Customer Service, Safety, and Diversity teams are working on a study regarding bridge plate improvements.

He stated that improving accessibility is continuous, and Keolis will strive for ever-higher standards.

**Chairman White** commended Mr. Scorey on the level of service during heavy ridership on January 21.

## **MBTA System-Wide Accessibility Department (SWA)/Fixed Route Services**

**Rob Sampson, Manager for System-Wide Accessibility**, reported the following:

He then asked for questions.

- SWA is undergoing a selection process to hire a consultant that will be responsible for updating the MBTA Guide to Access. The Guide to Access is a set of guidelines a, compilation of state and federal accessibility requirements. The guide is intended for contractors, but can also be used during maintenance operations. The update is a requirement of the Boston Center for Independent Living settlement agreement.

He then asked for questions.

**D. Veria** commented that a CA was not able to give him a schedule or time of the next commuter rail train coming through at Forest Hills. He suggested that all stations that have commuter rail service should have schedules. *R. Sampson* noted that he would do research.

**K. Wilson** asked about elevator access at Hynes Station. *R. Sampson* commented that there are some on-going negotiations with the developer for that station and that there is no timeline for a decision.

**T. Gilbert** has a concern with the Rt. 71 bus. Before it goes in the tunnel buses are using that particular bus stop as a layover. *R. Sampson* noted that he has heard about this issue. He noted he would report this to the bus superintendent for that route.

**R. Clark** stated that he called Customer Service after he was unable to board several busses, and the Customer Service agent was rude. *R. Sampson* stated he would look into the issue personally, and would speak with Mr. Clark during the break.

**Chairman White** suggested having dedicated locations for persons who need assistance at bus stops, allowing drivers to identify persons who need help. *R. Sampson* noted this is likely not possible, though it may be possible at stations. He stated that bus drivers are advised to ensure that whoever is at the stop is aware that a bus has arrived. If they see someone with an apparent disability, they should speak with them.

**T. Gilbert** asked if there are plans to include a countdown clock for buses at Davis Square. *R. Sampson* commented that he would share his suggestion, adding that if more customers provide this type of feedback it would be helpful.

**Chairman White** thanked Mr. Sampson for his report.

# MBTA Office for Transportation Access (OTA) -THE RIDE Program

**Mike Hulak, Manager of Paratransit Contract Operations**, submitted the OTA report and shared the following:

- The Means Testing results are being presented to the Fiscal Management Control Board (FMCB) on February 6. This report is available at [www.mbta.com/theride](http://www.mbta.com/theride).
- THE RIDE Access Center (TRAC) will be phased into implementation shortly. He thanked the RIDE contractors and Global Contract Services for their efforts. The timing of the implementation will be based on service area. If you currently call National Express for trips in the South core areas, you will speak with a TRAC agent beginning at the end of January or early February. When this date is finalized, the date will be put on the NEXT telephone system, and there will be a seat drop. If you currently call GLSS, you will speak with TRAC in April; Veterans callers will speak with TRAC in late June.
- Information on the Uber/Lyft Pilot Program is available at [www.mbta.com/paratransitpilot](http://www.mbta.com/paratransitpilot). If you are a participant and have questions, you must contact Uber or Lyft directly. For questions about eligibility, or if you have not received a response from Uber or Lyft in 72 hours, please email [ridepilot@mbta.com](mailto:ridepilot@mbta.com).
- He expressed appreciation to the RIDE contractors for their work during the recent snowstorm, noting no accidents and generally timely service.

He then asked for questions.

**P. Mendez** asked if there is a phone number for the Uber/Lyft pilot. *M. Hulak* stated there is not.

**A. Manerson** asked about which vendors to contact when traveling from the North Shore to the South Shore. *M. Hulak* stated that through April, users will need to contact GLSS. When all vendors have transitioned to TRAC, there will be one number to call, and TRAC will provide the connections. He added that the current intention is to provide one trip without a transfer.

**L. Weber** asked if RIDE drivers have had difficulty finding areas to pull to the curb, leading them to double park or park illegally. *M. Hulak* acknowledged that this is a long-standing issue. Many meter officers turn a blind eye to RIDE drivers, though drivers are flagged and ticketed regularly. He stated there cannot be dedicated pick-up/drop-off spots at every location. North Station, South Station, Back Bay, and Ruggles have these areas.

**E. Cracker** stated that when she contacts THE RIDE vendor while speaking through a sign-language interpreter it can be difficult. She asked that the operators and interpreters work better together. *Mr. Hulak* stated he would speak with Ms. Cracker during the break.

**A. Manerson** asked why OTA lacks information about the Uber/Lyft pilot program. *M. Hulak* noted that OTA is not overseeing the pilot program. He added that OTA would not have access to users Uber/Lyft ride information.

**Chairman White** thanked Mr. Hulak for his report.

He then asked for questions.

## **Judge Patrick King Update (See attached transcript)**

### **MBTA and Vendor Reports**

#### ***Keolis Commuter Services (KCS), LLC***

**Elizabeth Hickey, Title VI Manager/ADA Enforcer**, stated the following:

- The Fiscal Management Control Board approved the Blue Hill Avenue Commuter Rail station, which will be between Blue Hill Avenue and Cummings Highway on the Fairmount Line. Construction is expected to be complete in 2019.
- The construction of the Boston Landing station has impacted performance on the Worcester Line. The most recent estimate for completion of the construction is April.

She then asked for questions. There were none.

**Chairman White** thanked Ms. Hickey for her update.

### ***Global Contact Services (GCS), LLC***

***Bryan Overcash, Chief Operating Officer*** in for Chris Woznac, general manager, who was unable to attend but sends her regards.

Reported the following:

- Ms. Woznac is at THE RIDE Access Center (TRAC) office with 40 staff members who are in various stages of training.
- GCS wants to provide the very best customer service.
- He is excited about the progress and feels that over the next several weeks GCS will be taking calls from the south region.
- They are very excited and looking forward to serving.

He then asked for questions.

**Chairman White** stated that GSC has invited the AACT Executive Board to visit the TRAC facility. He stated he would discuss his visit with the general membership after his tour.

**Chairman White** thanked Mr. Overcash for his update.

## ***Veterans Transportation (VT)***

**Kevin MacDonald, Project Manager** distributed his report and announced Passenger Sensitivity Training on February 7.

He then asked for questions. There were none.

**Chairman White** thanked Mr. McDonald.

## ***Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)***

**Steve Epps, Director of Transportation**, distributed his report and announced PAT training on February 17 from 8:00am to 4:30pm. Those interested in attending should contact the AACT coordinator.

He then asked for questions.

**B. Corcoran** asked if the phone calls RIDE users receive before their pick-up changes their pick-up time. *S. Epps* stated that they do not; *M. Hulak* stated the calls inform RIDE users when the RIDE vehicle is either one mile or fifteen minutes away.

**Chairman White** thanked Mr. Epps for his report.

## ***National Express Transit (NEXT)***

**Victor Herrera, Operations Manager**, stated the following:

- NEXT will be the first vendor to transition to TRAC. NEXT has worked hard with GSC to ensure its functionality.
- PAT class will take place on February 1, and Wheelchair Securement class will be on February 8.

He then introduced Mike Rushin, Chief Operating Officer of NEXT, who will be leaving the organization and Joseph Baker, who will be his replacement in the Northeast Area.

**Mr. Rushin** acknowledged the work of AACT and stated he will miss working with the group.

**Mr. Baker** stated he is very familiar with Boston, noting his uncle uses THE RIDE. He expressed his passion to improve service.

**Chairman White** expressed his appreciation for Mr. Rushin's openness and commitment to the disability community.

**Mike Hulak** noted that he echo's the same sentiments of Mr. Herrera and went on to say the MBTA thanks you too.

Mr. Herrera then asked for questions.

**R. Clark** stated he is frequently on hold for excessive periods when calling NEXT. *V. Herrera* stated their intention is to handle calls immediately. He noted that some staff have left or moved to TRAC, adding NEXT has had to deal with absenteeism. He acknowledged this has been somewhat difficult. He noted that NEXT is committed to meeting the standards of the contract.

**Chairman White** thanked Mr. Herrera for his report.

## **Open Discussion**

**B. Corcoran** said that he is kind of floored by this whole thing with Judge King. He asked Chairman White to re-verify what our role as AACT is.

Chairman *White* explained that "our goal with AACT, and everything that our mission statement and bylaws are staying exactly the same. All they're doing now is forming a new committee that's representative of all the disability community and agencies that affect persons with disabilities. It's almost like, there's a Board of Directors for the MBTA, and underneath that they have a Fiscal Management Control Board (FMCB). They make the decisions, vote on stuff, and pass it on to the main advisory committee. It's kind of like the same thing. AACT is going to be operating just like we always did. We're going to be

going to trainings, work with the MBTA, and have public meetings to tell everybody what new things are happening with new rules and new regulations. That aspect is not changing. What's changing is that we're forming a new committee that's more representative of all the agencies as well. See, AACT and its bylaws are individuals, not associations. So the Ad Hoc Committee is going to represent almost all the agencies that somehow inter-work with the disability community Boston Center for the Independent Living, MA Senior Action Council, and Disability Law Center actually helps create laws at the State House. We're going to be creating a work group that has a lot more influence and ability to reach a larger segment of people to get stuff done.

**B. Corcoran:** But that group will be...a smaller group but it will be more effective? *Chairman White* [It's] a separate group. We haven't worked everything out yet, such as whether [the Ad Hoc committee] will have public meetings. We're starting, we haven't done anything and each month I'll be reporting our progress and exactly what's happening. We haven't even set up any kind of ground rules yet, so I can't report anything because we haven't done anything yet.

**Chairman White** described the interior of the new bus design. The seats behind the driver now fold up individually. On the opposite side, there are two mobility securement areas. He noted this will address accommodating both mobility devices and baby carriages. He acknowledged the leadership of SWA who took the recommendations of the committee.

**D. Vieira** expressed appreciation for the number of stop buttons on the new busses. He noted that if a person is sitting in a particular seat, a row of LED lights which illuminate the path shine into a person's face. He suggested designing a shade that would keep the lights on the path without shining

outward. *Chairman White* stated he would look into the issues, and suggested a tinted shield may work.

**T. Gilbert:** With AACT changing and integrating more agencies to be involved that oversee MBTA issues, do you think this would also give us the opportunity to hold the [regional transit authorities] accountable in the state as well? In particular, Lowell and Attleboro are really behind in ADA.

*Chairman White:* Under our present guidelines, our mission statement, we recommend policy and policy decisions, so if there's an issue any place in the state that the MBTA serves, [it's their duty]. I'm not sure what it is, but right now we don't have enough time to go over it. But put it in writing for me. **T. Gilbert** explained that RTA's for 20 years did not pull to the curb, any stop announcements, and rudeness of drivers. *Chairman White:* I'm sorry, I didn't hear you. They're not part of the MBTA. The Task Force, or the new Ad Hoc Committee, can make some recommendations to the Fiscal Management Control Board. *M. Hulak:* stated that RTAs have their own committees similar to AACT that you can get involved with. *Chairman White* noted that area is not local.

**K. Wilson** stated that fare gates do not always accept his TAP card, despite being loaded. Additionally, the fare machines sometimes do not return is money. *R. Sampson* stated he would speak with him after the meeting.

**A. Manerson** asked that someone explain how a sensor works. *M. Hulak* clarified that a sensor is triggered from motion/movement.

## **Announcements**

None were presented.

## Old Business/New Business

None were presented.

## Meeting adjourned at 3:00 P.M.

## Notables

The AACT Executive Board will meet from 10:00 AM to noon and the Membership meeting will be conducted from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM on the fourth Wednesday of the month, except when noted.

Notices of AACT meetings are posted on the website of the MBTA at [http://www.mbta.com/about\\_the\\_mbta/public\\_meetings/](http://www.mbta.com/about_the_mbta/public_meetings/). Visit the MPO's calendar page at <http://www.bostonmpo.org/calendar/month> to find AACT agendas, meeting minutes, and past meeting minutes. For more on AACT, see the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the MBTA and AACT, the AACT Bylaws, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations at <http://www.mbta.com/aact> .

Also, find articles about topics discussed at AACT meetings in the MPO's newsletter, *TRANSREPORT*, at <http://www.bostonmpo.org/transreport>. For more information on accessibility at the MBTA, please visit [www.mbta.com/accessibility](http://www.mbta.com/accessibility).

Comments and questions concerning AACT should be directed to Chairman James White by contacting the AACT Coordinator, Ms. Janie Guion, at 857.702.3658 (voice) 617.570.9193 (TTY), [AACT@ctps.org](mailto:AACT@ctps.org) (email), or c/o CTPS, 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150, Boston, MA 02116 (US mail).

The AACT meeting location is accessible to people with disabilities and is near public transportation. Upon request (preferably two weeks in advance of the meeting), every effort will be made to provide accommodations such as assistive listening devices, materials in accessible formats and in languages

other than English, and interpreters in American Sign Language and other languages.

The MPO complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other federal and state non-discrimination statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. The MPO does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, English proficiency, income, religious creed, ancestry, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or military service. Any person who believes her or himself or any specific class of persons has been subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI, ADA, or other non-discrimination statute or regulations may, her or himself or via a representative, file a written complaint with the MPO. A complaint must be filed no later than 180 calendar days after the date on which the person believes the discrimination occurred. A complaint form and additional information can be obtained by contacting the MPO (see above) or at [www.bostonmpo.org](http://www.bostonmpo.org).

Members needing service information or wanting to inquire about MBTA services should do so through the MBTA Marketing and Communications Department at 617.222.3200 or 800.392.6100, TTY 617.222.5146, Monday through Friday 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM. There are no weekend or evening hours. You can log on to the MBTA website at [www.mbta.com/customer\\_support/feedback/](http://www.mbta.com/customer_support/feedback/).

**Please sign in at all meetings.**

Announcements are always welcome. Please be prepared to give as many details as possible: date, time, location, contact person, and phone number. A written notice is always appreciated.