



Access Advisory Committee

to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150, Boston, MA 02116-3968 • (617) 973-7100
Fax: (617) 973-8855 • TDD: (617) 973-7089 • E-mail: AACT@ctps.org

AACT Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 26, 2009

NOTABLES

- Corrections to the July 22 minutes can be found on pages 9 and 10.
- The AACT has a page on the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organizations website at www.bostonmpo.org. Links can be found there for the following items: upcoming meetings, past meeting minutes, the Memorandum of Understanding between the MBTA and the AACT, and the AACT Bylaws, the AACT Brochure in accessible format, and ADA Regulations. There are also links to the MPO's newsletter, *TRANSREPORT*, the MBTA's Office for Transportation Access, and the AACT Coordinator
- Comments and questions concerning AACT should be directed to the Chairman
- Chairman Haynes recommends that AACT members needing information or wanting to inquire about MBTA services, do so through the Customer Support Service Center at 617-222-3200 or the MBTA website at 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 would be appreciated

ATTENDANCE

Ben Haynes, Lillian Haynes, John Kane, Philip Beaulieu, Linda Blair, Richard Nurt, Bill McCarthy, Thomas Gilbert, Jo Hart, Janet Aldrich, Tammy Perrault, Marilyn MacNab, Kathy Roach, Paul Barresi, Sears

Cummings, Ellen Frith, Sharon Harrison, Kathryn Piccard, John Cappuccio, Reggie Clark, and Denise Jackson

MBTA Representatives

Michael Hulak, C. Joyce-Harrington, Frank Oglesby, Kathy Cox, and Alex Murkinson

Vendor Representatives

Joint Venture of Thompson Transit Inc. and YCN – JoAnne Thompson and M. Claire Dipillo
Greater Lynn Senior Services, Inc. – Jackie Dunlop
Veterans Transportation LLC – Kevin MacDonald

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization

Walter Bennett and Janie Guion

Chairman Haynes called the meeting to order at 1:10 PM

- He extended a welcome to everyone
- Members, friends and guests introduced themselves
- The July 22 meeting minutes were approved with corrections and two abstentions were noted; please see text beginning on page 9 of these minutes for details

Chairman Haynes Update:

Mr. Haynes stated the following:

- On August 25, 2009, he, along with the Vice-Chair John Kane and the AACT Coordinator, attended a meeting with MBTA staff; Jim Folk, Director of Operations and Service Development, and the following Office of Transportation Access (OTA) staff: Frank Oglesby, Deputy Director of Paratransit Operations; Carol Joyce-Harrington, Asst. Manager-Administration; and Dottie Winn, Paratransit Coordinator/Eligibility.

- He is concerned that it appears that the MBTA is misinterpreting of the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Requested accessible format information should be available within ten days according to state law; even though. The federal law is 30-days, state law takes precedence.
- AACT is willing to work cooperatively with MBTA staff concerning issues of paratransit services
- AACT will continue to support the agreement in the Memorandum of Understanding and not deviate
- He is looking forward to working with the newly appointed deputy director for Paratransit Operations, Mr. Frank Oglesby

He then asked for questions and comments.

Chairman Haynes discussed MBTA Funding Sources

He said that efforts were made to secure a speaker for today's meeting but to no avail; but someone from the Senate side of the Transportation Committee will address AACT at the September 23 meeting. Questions or concerns should be shared with Chairman Haynes. He continued with the following:

- The Transportation Department is being streamlined under one line of authority
- There are major changes coming to the system
- News of the hearings and public meetings weren't received in time
- He encouraged members to be vigilant regarding announcements and the potential fare increase

He then asked for questions.

M. MacNab: I attended the hearing at the State House. The information was there in accessible format. I put a request in for accessible format and received it in a reasonable time. At the meeting all formats were made available. There were several foreign language brochures, Braille, PowerPoint, CD and large print. The special accommodation request was on all the media stations and in

newspapers. All one needed to do was to call the number that was given to request the information in advance. I suggest you read the MBTA yearly annual report. The law requires an annual report that is done by a certified public accountant.

C. Joyce-Harrington: I just want to echo one of the points that Marilyn made regarding the fare proposal meetings. At the last AACT meeting, I did bring the brochures and place them on the table. I also brought large print versions. I made the statement that Braille and any other form of accessible formats would be available at each meeting as well as foreign languages. I did attend the public hearing at the Gardner Auditorium I was in charge of passing out the information in accessible format for the hearings.

Chairman: Do you have an audio version?

C. Joyce-Harrington: That request should have gone through the MBTA Customer Service Department.

K. Roach: How can I get this information in accessible format?

C. Joyce-Harrington: Since the meetings have been canceled, all the information in the literature is now moot. After November 1, once the Governor and the Secretary make their decision, information will be made available as to whether there will be additional meetings. Your comments were received and submitted to Fare Proposal, forwarded to the Secretary and are on file as with other consumer comments.

K. Cox: I just want to add a comment regarding the earlier statements about a possible fare increase or service cuts. As you may know the public meetings scheduled on the topic of a possible fare increase and/or service cuts were cancelled by the Governor's office. At the same time it was announced by the Governor's office that an independent review of MBTA finances and management is ongoing, with the results due in on November 1st, the first day of the new Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). Sometime after that date an announcement will be made regarding the possibility of a fare hike and/or service cuts.

Chairman Haynes: I would like to clear up information concerning the public hearing at Gardner Auditorium. It was stated, "If anyone

from AACT had attended the meeting at Gardner Auditorium, information was there and easily accessible for anyone who wanted it. Attending a short meeting at Gardner Auditorium would have supplied them with what they needed.” Many may not have been able to get there or have the means at that time. Printed information is not useful to persons who are visually impaired. Through OTA we should not have to “mine” for information. The information should be readily available and in an accessible format when it is introduced. To review the introduction of existing information and then make the request when it is too late to participate or involve yourself in the process is of no value.

J. Aldrich: I am with the Catch of the Day New Service (CDNS). I have been videotaping public hearings and have over 400 in my archives. Anyone wishing to access the website for CDNS call Janet Aldrich at 978-388-2457.

J. Hart: I’d like to suggest the video of Secretary Aloisi at the Federal Stimulus Oversight Committee on Transportation meeting answering questions by the committee; it was a very interesting hearing.

M. MacNab: It should also be noted that there was additional advertising regarding this meeting. The meetings were well publicized on buses and with the local media. You didn’t need cable to hear about these hearings.

Kathy Cox, Manager for MBTA System-Wide Accessibility (SWA)

Ms. Cox distributed her report (attached) and announced that there were no last minute additions.

She then asked for questions.

Chairman Haynes: Have there been any cutbacks in services, routes, or the number of train operations?

K. Cox: Nothing has been brought to my attention. I will need to research.

Chairman Haynes: Do you have an update on the commuter rail access and services? I have heard of issues regarding the frequency

of trains that impact persons with disabilities and during certain travel times.

K. Cox: I have not heard of any specific issues.

K. Piccard: Can a town build mini-high platforms at their commuter rail station?

K. Cox: There are some issues regarding the building of mini-high platforms at commuter rail stations. The FTA has required full-high level platforms at stations being renovated. However, this issue is now being discussed. I will share any updates as they become available.

T. Gilbert: What is going to be done about the taxicabs that illegally block the bus stop at Back Bay Station on Dartmouth Street.

K. Cox: It has been an ongoing problem with many people needing to use the same space. We can't have police there all the time, but the Transit police can monitor the area.

Chairman Haynes: I would suggest that you have MBTA police patrol the area.

K. Cox: Yes.

E. Frith: There continues to be problems with the Somerville Police not enforcing the Bus Stop Law, and with the construction contractors moving bus stop signs.

M. MacNab: The new bus and train schedules will be available on the MBTA website for the fall. Anyone can compare the new schedule to the old schedule to see if any trips have been cancelled.

J. Aldrich: I ride the rails frequently. It is very confusing to find the car that stops at the ramp on the commuter rail.

K. Cox: All commuter rail trains are required to stop at all hours of service with the last two coaches at the country end of the train at the mini-high platform. Or you can call the Customer Support Services Center at 617-222-3200 with your concerns.

The report was accepted with one abstention.

**Frank Oglesby, Deputy Director of Paratransit Operations – OTA,
THE RIDE (reports attached)**

Mr. Oglesby reported the following:

- On August 15 a Veterans Transportation vehicle was rear-ended, caught fire and the occupants went to the hospital. There were no serious injuries and the consumers went on to their appointments
- All vendor staff levels are located in the monthly reports

He then asked for questions.

P. Barresi: I would like to urge all THE RIDE users, if possible, to attend vendor passenger assistance training.

K. Piccard: What are the air-conditioning requirements for THE RIDE vehicles?

F. Oglesby: If there were issues with any vehicles air-conditioning units it would be reported. When we do hear about problems we have the vehicles pulled off the road.

J. Dunlop: The vehicles have to be moving to keep the air-conditioning flowing.

Chairman Haynes: During driver training the drivers are instructed to turn-off the vehicle and take the key with them.

T. Gilbert: Is there a way to turn the key backwards and turn it again without having the engine on.

M. Hulak: This would only operate the radio.

M. MacNab: Would you research the law of “power down your engine” which only allows five minutes to idle an engine?

Chairman Haynes: Yes.

J. Hart: Engine idling is allowed for around three minutes.

K. Roach: How are drivers trained to work with service animals?

K. McDonald/VTLL: Drivers are instructed to assist in boarding the animal and then escort the consumer on the lift.

J. Dunlop/GLSS: Our drivers are instructed to not interfere with the service animal unless they are asked for assistance.

Chairman Haynes: Service animals and the consumer are not to be separated --it is a law.

P. Beaulieu: Vendors should have training schedules listed in vendor reports so that those interested in going to trainings can make arrangements to attend.

K. Piccard: Would you find out what air-conditioning temperature we are expected to have in hot weather?

F. Ogelsby: Yes.

The report was accepted with one abstention.

Open Discussion

K. Roach: What is the policy for being able to speak to the dispatcher?

Vendor's Response: You should be able to insist on speaking with the dispatcher or the night supervisor if you feel it is necessary.

T. Perrault: I asked to speak to the night supervisor and was told there was none on duty.

J. Thompson: We always have a supervisor on duty.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Corrections to the AACT meeting minutes of July 22, 2009

K. Piccard has asked for corrections to the July 22 minutes.

See page 9

K. Piccard noted that the following text in the minutes of July 22 was incorrect: "I have seen a pattern emerge when you call to book trips for a same-day request. Oftentimes the person will tell you they can't take your reservation. I have found that the staff at Veterans is happy to take your request. Staff at the other vendors pretend to take the information, and then when you call to confirm your same-day request you find there is no record. I would like the vendors to remind their evening staff about the policy of the same-day trip requests."

Staff has reviewed the meeting tape and prepared this transcript of her comments:

K. Piccard: "I have seen a pattern and I have also heard about this from other people. When they call and this is true with more than one vendor after reservation cut-off at 4 o'clock to make what they understand to be the term as a same-day request for THE RIDE for the next day. They know that the vendor is not obliged to give it to them, but they understand that the vendor is supposed to record the request. Some of the people in the dispatch office refuse to record the request. They say they can't take the request until it is the next day. I have found for myself that with some dispatch personnel at Veterans they are happy to take your request, and others I have to be highly insistent for them to record the request. Sometimes they will even say they have recorded it and they haven't. There is no record when I call the next day. I don't believe I have bothered about filing the complaint about the resistance. I would encourage the vendors to remind their evening dispatch employees what the policy is. They are supposed to record all so-called same-day requests that come in after reservations shuts-off".

- Page 10, July 22, 2009 meeting minutes. K. Piccard noted that the following text of the minutes of July 22 was incorrect. “Does your contract stipulate what percent of calls must be answered in a certain number of minutes?” Staff as reviewed the tape and are her words. *“What percentage of the times are your phones suppose to be answered by a person 2½ minutes or less? What percent? What is the contractual obligation? What percent of the time are you suppose to average is it, okay, you say you are supposed to average 2½ minutes or less from when the phone picks up when the message loop starts until the caller talks to a person?”*

Staff has reviewed the meeting tape and prepared this transcript of her comments:

K. Piccard: What is the percent of calls that must be answered contractually within 2.5 minutes from phone pick-up, through the loop until a person comes on the line?

K. MacDonald: The contract calls for a monthly average of 2.5 minutes from pick-up until a person comes to the line.