



Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

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Wednesday, November 17, 2010

AACT Meeting Minutes

NOTABLES

- AACT will open the nomination process for the new Board at the January 26 meeting. Nominations will end on April 27
- Comments and questions concerning AACT should be directed to Chairman Haynes by contacting the AACT Coordinator, Ms. Janie Guion, at 617-973-7507 (voice), 617-973-7089 (TTY), 617-973-8855 (fax), or at AACT@ctps.org (e-mail)
- Chairman Haynes recommends that members needing service information or wanting to inquire about MBTA services, do so through the MBTA Customer Communications and Marketing Department at 617-222-3200 (voice), 800-392-6100 (voice, toll-free), 617-222-5146 (TTY), or the MBTA website at www.mbta.com/customer_support/feedback/
- AACT has a page on the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's website at www.bostonmpo.org. Links can be found there for the following items: agendas, upcoming meetings, past meeting minutes, the memorandum of understanding between the MBTA and AACT, and the AACT bylaws, the AACT brochure, and ADA regulations. There are also links to the MPO's newsletter, *TRANSREPORT*, the MBTA's Office for Transportation Access, and the AACT Coordinator
- The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meetings are conducted in accessible locations, and materials can be provided in accessible formats and in

languages other than English. If you would like accessibility or language accommodation, please contact the MPO at (617) 973-7100 (voice), (617) 973-8855 (fax), (617) 973-7089 (TTY), or publicinformation@bostonmpo.org (e-mail)

- The MPO fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related 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, or military service. Any person who believes herself/himself or any specific class of persons has been subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI or related statutes or regulations may herself/himself, or via a representative, file a written complaint with the MPO. A complaint must be filed no later than 30 calendar days after the date on which the person believes the discrimination occurred
- Please sign in at all meetings
- Announcements are always welcome

ATTENDANCE

Members

Ben Haynes, Lillian Haynes, Paul Barresi, Angela Manerson, Kathryn Piccard, James White, Reggie Clark, Marilyn MacNab, Thomas Gilbert, MaryAnn Murray, Emma Sheilds, Phil Beaulieu, Brian Quinn, John Kane, Henrietta Maloney, Georgia Feronberg, Darally Danaren, Beverly Rock, and Steven Roberts

MassDOT - MBTA Representatives

Mike Hulak, Frank Oglesby, Carol Joyce-Harrington, Kathy Cox, Mike Festa, Paul Strobis, Marla Hoffman, Alex Murkinson, Charles Murphy, Todd Johnson, and Ted Timmons

Vendor Representatives

Kevin MacDonald and Jon Cristina – Veterans Transportation LLC
Victor Herrera – Joint Venture of Thompson Transit Inc. and YCN

Other Representatives

Kathy Devin–Massachusetts Office on Disability

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)/ Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)

Walter Bennett and Janie Guion

MEETING

Chairman Haynes called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM

- Members, friends and guests introduced themselves.

Approval of the AACT Meeting Minutes

- The AACT minutes from the October 27 meeting were approved as written, with two abstentions.

Chairman's Report (No written report was submitted)

Chairman Haynes reported briefly on the following:

- He has noticed that there are problems with THE RIDE that need to be addressed. Hopes that they will be.
- A meeting is planned with General Manager Richard Davey on the issue of THE RIDE.

- He asked that members and friends be more caring of others.
- He wished everyone a Happy and Safe Holiday Season.

The Chairman's update was accepted as presented.

Myra Berloff, Director of the Massachusetts Commission on Disability (MOD)

Ms. Berloff shared with the group the most recent and upcoming Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) decisions by the federal and state governments.

- An MOD pamphlet with tips for interacting with people with disabilities is available
- All security staff in state buildings are trained to treat all persons with dignity and respect
- She emphasized that you should neither react too hastily nor feel threatened by security. Security checkpoints are for your safety and something we all must go through
- If you feel you have been insulted please contact MOD
- Remember that issuing the MOD yellow parking warning ticket should be done without confrontation. Be polite and be safe.
- As of September 15 the Department of Justice (DOJ) reauthorized the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) with some changes:

For definitions:

- "Service animal"; as of March 15, 2011 snakes will no longer be considered service animals in public accommodations and transportation. The change will not affect housing accommodations

- A new definition of a mobility device; “other wheel mobility devices”
- Other:
 - On public transportation the DOJ says that service animals will be limited to domestic dogs and miniature horses
 - The Segway cannot be taken into grocery stores because they run on fossil fuel
 - The new “video relay service” is the latest technology that can be used to support communication for people who are hearing impaired
 - Theaters will now have a wheelchair ticketing policy that will allow you to purchase three seats together whenever available
 - March 15, 2012 a new reservation policy for accessible room accommodation goes into effect
 - The organization “Helping Hands” which train monkeys for persons who are quadriplegics agrees that their trained monkeys are for in-house purposes only since monkeys carry diseases that can be transmitted to humans.

She then asked for questions.

K. Piccard: What is being done so that Segway’s can travel safely on paratransit vehicles?

K. Cox: The System-Wide Accessibility Department contacted Washington, DC concerning Segway’s being used as mobility aids onboard the commuter rail. We were told they’re okay, as are bikes when being used as a mobility aid. However, customers cannot ride either a Segway or a bike being used as a mobility aid on the platform or onboard the vehicle.

M. MacNab: The inventor of the Segway has died. Is the Segway still being manufactured?

M. Berloff: The Segway Company was sold.

K. Piccard: Has there been a change in the width or length of the common wheelchair since the new definition of the “wheel mobility device.”

M. Berloff: Unfortunately there isn't a change in that yet. There is a study that is on-going; I don't know where they are in the study. When the regulations were originally written they were based on manual wheelchairs that were being used by the study group to determine regulations with young men who had been injured. The study looked at men who were paraplegics and when you think about the ergonomics of a young man they are taller and have longer arms. One of the big changes in the new ADA standards is that the reach range has been lowered. The range was maximum 54 inches and now it is 48 inches. There are changes that are incorporated into the standards to address that.

K. Piccard: I own a non-standard wheelchair. The old definition talked about three inches above the floor; my leg supports are far more than that so they don't count. My leg supports are much more than three inches higher. Will this be relevant to specifications of THE RIDE vehicles? Will I need different specifications or measurements?

M. Berloff: I have not heard of any changes even being proposed. There are changes but I am not sure if they will affect your chair in the reclining position. There are changes from the state Architectural Board. We are now requiring a larger lift platform. The manufactures will have a six month window before implementation.

Kathy Cox, MBTA Manager for Fixed Route Services and System-Wide Accessibility

Ms. Cox reported that since submitting her written report there was no additional news:

She then asked for questions.

S. Roberts: Would you tell us about the renovations being planned for South Station?

K. Cox: There will be additional tracks for more Amtrak trains. This information can also be found in last month's October report.

R. Clarke: I have heard through the media that there will be an additional seven tracks.

K. Cox: Thank you.

A. Manerson: When will the Yawkey Way Station be completed?

M. Festa: If I am correct it will be around 2014. I will do research.

P. Barresi: Is there a new training program called "Americans with Disabilities Act Blitz"? I recently was told about this at the last operator recertification training class. This would be an accelerated training program to keep operators updated.

K. Cox: Yes, there are a couple of ideas in the works. One is called the "American with Disabilities Act Blitz." A small group of MBTA trainers and System-Wide Accessibility staff would visit bus garages to speak with operators for around thirty minutes. The session would include a refresher on wheelchair securement, stop announcements and pre-boarding. This would be a new way to get the word out while operators are coming in for their breaks and shifts. This is still under discussion and has not been implemented at this time.

T. Gilbert: Is there any movement to make the bus stops more accessible or to get accessible parking spaces for THE RIDE?

K. Cox: It would be nice to re-visit this issue with the new Boston Commissioner for Disabilities. We have worked with the AACT Chair, 10 Park Plaza building management, and the former City of Boston Commissioner for Disabilities.

B. Rock: Are you the person to speak to about the metal benches at the bus stops?

M. Festa/K. Cox: Both the MBTA and the City of Boston have benches around the city. Perhaps you can give us some locations for our research.

K. Piccard: I was unable to view the new commuter railcar that was on display at North Station. Can you tell me if wheelchairs will fit properly?

K. Cox/M Festa: There is room enough for two wheelchairs.

J. White: At the bus stop located at 1344 Hyde Park Avenue --the enclosure on the side of the shelter is broken. Why does there seem to be a priority to pick-up school students first rather than the elderly who might have a problem waiting?

K. Cox: Shelters in need of repair can be phoned into the MBTA Customer Communications & Marketing Department. They have the list of who owns which shelter and who is responsible for clearing snow at which bus stop. During the hours that students are going to or from school we have extra buses on the school routes. Anyone is welcome to board the bus, although the majority of customers are students.

Chairman Haynes: Thank you Ms. Cox, for your report.

Frank Oglesby, MBTA Deputy Director of Paratransit Operations – The Office of Transportation Access (OTA), THE RIDE

On December 2, 2010 the late Robert “Bob” Rizzo, manager of the MBTA THE RIDE Program will be posthumous inducted into the Northeast Passenger Transportation Association.

He then asked for questions.

K. Devin: I have been approached with concerns that the phone system is difficult when booking THE RIDE. Are there any plans to update the phone system for booking THE RIDE?

F. Oglesby: There currently are no plans for change. We listen to your complaints, your suggestions, and any feedback regarding the system. We will make changes to the degree that we are able to do so.

H. Maloney: The automated system is flawed when you check-in on your pick-up. You can only get your information through the operator.

F. Oglesby: We will do research.

K. Piccard: Do you have an update on the investigation where a pedestrian was killed in Norwood by a THE RIDE driver? Is he still an employee?

F. Oglesby: The Norwood Police Department found the driver was not at fault and all criminal charges have been dropped. Yes, he is still an employee.

Chairman Haynes: The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that AACT has with the MBTA states that the MBTA discuss and receive input from AACT and members regarding any changes in the language and the contractual services and the changes to the types of services in the MOU. I have been told that the MBTA is issuing passes to THE RIDE users concerning how and when they can use fixed route year long passes. I'm concerned that AACT was never contacted regarding this issue.

CJ Harrington: We still have THE RIDE Charlie Card Program in place; it is an on-going pilot program. It has been in existence for two-years; there was a huge roll-out with many advocacy groups and state agencies on hand for the debut. You must be eligible for THE RIDE for at least one year.

Chairman Haynes: I am aware of the pilot program, the program was to last for one year. Now I hear that some people are getting a three to five year pass.

F. Oglesby: Sir, that is not happening.

Chairman Haynes: I will be speaking with the General Manager about my concerns.

Consumer: When the pilot program expires can you renew for the Charlie Card Program?

CJ Harrington: The pilot program has no one-year limitation or termination. It is open-ended. When you recertify with THE RIDE Program you continue as a pilot member.

MA Murray: How is the information disseminated to users of THE RIDE?

CJ Harrington: It is a pilot program and not a full-fledged marketed program. When the program was initiated applications were sent to 4,000 users. At present the program is by word of mouth. It may be advertised sometime in the future. Applications are available today.

B. Rock: In a previous meeting AACT was told that marketing this free pass program would be done with senior groups.

K. Cox: We go to senior groups twice a month to take photos for the Senior, Transportation Access/Transportation Access Pass or Blind Access CharlieCard programs. We are not promoting the pilot program at these events; however, any customer who has been approved for the program can have their photo take for their card at an outreach event.

Open Discussion

Todd Johnson, Deputy Director of MBTA Operations Controls Center and Training (OCC) who was accompanied by his staff gave an overview of the transition from booth collectors to Customer Service Agents. They get a five-day training program to learn the skills required for the new automated fare collection.

He then asked for questions.

T. Gilbert: Is the CSA responsible for reporting stations that have faulty public address systems, LED screens or burned out lights?

T. Johnson: Yes, every employee of the MBTA is responsible for reporting anything that is out of service or not working. CSA's are trained to report any number of problems they may encounter throughout the system including LED's, elevators, escalators, burned out lights or other problems.

R. Clark: Who is responsible for keeping the path-of-travel safe at stations?

T. Johnson: CSA's are to make sure the elevators and escalators, are working properly and that people are not congregating on the stairs. These are the types of safety and security problems the CSA's are to report to the OCC.

B. Rock: Where does the responsibility lie for the cleaning of dirty elevators? Who is responsible for telling teenagers that putting their feet on the benches makes it impossible for customers to sit?

T. Johnson: CSA's are to report to the OCC when dirty elevators and escalators are discovered. Both are checked hourly. Problems are reported to OCC and assigned a work order number. With regards to the elevators, the cleaning contractor is notified and a porter is sent to clean the elevator.

J. White: Where do you conduct the recertification training and are AACT members allowed to attend?

T. Johnson: Absolutely. CAS recertification is conducted at the Cabot Training Facility in South Boston. There is no set schedule. Training is as needed. We can set-up a more concrete schedule with dates and you are most certainly welcome.

T. Gilbert: Could the CSA's have a campaign that would remind passengers not to litter in the stations?

T. Johnson: There is a new campaign scheduled to be introduced in a two-week eight-hour course (How can I help you today?) to

increase customer service with all frontline MassDOT employees. Training will include the following departments: the Registry of Motor Vehicles, the MBTA, and the MassDOT staff.

B. Haynes: Who trains the CSA workers? Are they trained to assist consumers especially persons with disabilities?

T. Johnson: Yes. The CSA's are given a five day training course. More than 50% of the class is training to assist persons with disabilities. We have worked closely with the System-Wide Accessibility Department and we have produced a film, a written test, and a customer service consultant was hired to help us develop the program.

K. Cox: Most of the training materials included in the CSA classes, and all other accessibility-related classes, are based on a training document that was submitted to the MBTA a number of years ago by B. Haynes Consultants.

J. White: When traveling to Forest Hills Station I have had to wait for someone with a key to the bridge plate before I could board the train. Are there changes being made so that when I arrive unannounced I can board the train without any problems?

T. Johnson: We are working very hard to make sure that when you arrive at the station your trip is not delayed. We will also contact the CSA at the station where you are getting off to ensure a smooth path-of travel.

Chairman Haynes: I would like to get your schedule in advance of your training so that AACT members may observe and participate.

Announcements:

There were none.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.