



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

Wednesday, February 22, 2012

AACT Meeting Minutes

NOTABLES

- Comments and questions concerning AACT should be directed to Chairman Philip Beaulieu 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 Beaulieu recommends that members needing service information or wanting to inquire about MBTA services 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 8:00 PM and Sat/Sun from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM, 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, click on AACT. Links can be found there for the following items: agendas, upcoming meetings, past meeting minutes, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) 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

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- 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 appreciated.

ATTENDANCE

Betty King, Nancy Miller, Beverly Rock, Georgia Feronberg, John Cappuccio, Don Summerfield, Philip Beaulieu, James White, Mary Ann Murray, Kathryn Piccard, Richard Mahoney, Ian Perrault, Mary Dennesen, Barbara Garlington, Esther Minar, and Ellen Frith

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

Janie Guion and Pam Wolfe

MassDOT - MBTA Representatives

Tarnya Stewart, Frank Oglesby, Mike Hulak, Carol Joyce-Harrington, Kathy Cox, Larry Haile, Phil Balcom, and Tangela Burgess,

Vendor Representatives

Kevin MacDonald – Veterans Transportation, LLC

John Soucy – Greater Lynn Senior Services

Claire Dipillo – The Joint Venture of Thompson Transit and YCN Transportation, LLC

Other Representatives

John Cappuccio – T- Riders Union

Jonathan Gale – Disability Law Center

Rick Morin – Bay State Council for the Blind

MEETING

Chairman Beaulieu called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm

Members, friends and guests introduced themselves

Approval of the AACT Meeting Minutes

- No meeting minutes were presented

Chairman's Report

He reported the following:

- He reported that there have been a number of articles in the media and print making suggestions to the MBTA and asking that they consider other options than the ones that they are proposing.

- He recognized two new members of the AACT Executive Board members, Ian Perrault and Rick Morin.
 - both were unanimously approved by the Executive Board members

He then asked for questions.

None was presented.

New MBTA Charlie Card Store (CCS)

Laurel Brelsford, MBTA Deputy Director of System-Wide Accessibility, spoke briefly and introduced the new Operations Manager, Tarnya Stewart.

Laurel Brelsford said that the vision for the store is that of former MBTA General Manager Richard Davey. The location will be at Downtown Crossing in the Chauncy Street concourse between the Red and Orange lines. This store will be designed to serve all customers and be one hundred percent accessible.

Ms. Stewart, Operations Manager, said that she brings her expertise as a former staff member of the Registry of Motor Vehicles. She will be reviewing and updating the policy and procedures. She gave an overview of the store's design and informed the group that the store will not carry MBTA souvenirs at this time. The store hours will be 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and will be opening June.

She then answered questions.

N. Miller asked if THE RIDE's on-line telephone deposit hours would remain the same.

L. Brelsford assured everyone that deposit procedures by telephone or on-line will remain the same. The new downtown location is also a walk-in location for deposits.

K. Piccard suggested consumers be given advance notice of six weeks of office closings on the MBTA website and directions to the new location and other details. She also suggested that the office be open at least one evening to accommodate those who cannot get to the store during normal business hours.

J. Gayle did not think the new Charlie Card Store location at Downtown Crossing is as accessible as the other locations.

L. Brelsford acknowledged that careful consideration went into the decision to locate the new store at Downtown Crossing and that it is accessible. She is very pleased with the decision to locate there.

J. White commented on the theft of Charlie Cards last year and wanted to know what procedures would be put in place to avoid this happening again.

L. Brelsford replied that the theft was related to an outside vendor.

T. Stewart stressed that with her expertise from the Registry of Motor Vehicles she is putting in place procedures to make sure that no employee is committing fraud.

K. Piccard suggested that photographs be placed on-line to give a better sense of direction.

L. Brelsford stated that there have been discussions for a possible website for the new Charlie Card store. She thanked her and said photographs are a great idea.

N. Miller asked what kind of ADA signage will be used.

L. Brelsford commented that there will be temporary signage. We will need to make sure we have all applications in Braille and large print. The new location is very large and visible; it will be encased in glass with large lettering on the windows.

Chairman Beaulieu thanked Ms. Stewart for her presentation.

Larry Haile, Coordinator for the MBTA System-Wide Accessibility Department (SWA) (see attached)

Mr. Haile reminded everyone that if they experience problems with timing of stop announcements for trains, fixed route or other complaints they should contact the Marketing and Communications Department at 617-222-3200 or 617-222-1546 (TTY)

He reported the following:

- The Operations Department has conducted audits on stop announcement timing issues. The issues have been fixed, complaints have declined; audits are no longer being done.
- There will be a temporary closing of the Downtown Crossing CharlieCard office
- Audits on the Green Line trains found problems with the internal speakers; the audit is continuing
- An audio version of the fixed route report is now offered upon request

He then asked for questions.

D. Summerfield did not agree that fixed route audits be eliminated since it is an on-going problem. He also is concerned about Blue Line stop announcement timing; they have been off for years; the problem is on-going.

L. Haile encouraged everyone to file complaints so they can be documented and sent to the appropriate department and be tracked.

J. White asked if the Charlie Card Store information could be incorporated into the new accessibility guide.

L. Haile stated that the request would be taken into consideration with assistance from Charlie Card staff.

E. Minar stated that as a wheelchair user she entered the Route #70 bus from the rear and her chair was not secured. She would like buses to have an accessible front entrance similar to the Silver Line or the Route #39 buses.

L. Haile stated that this is an issue for Bus Operations. He did say that operators are trained to secure wheeled mobility devices on all buses. This information should always be forwarded to the Communications and Marketing Department at 617-222-3200. This is a serious offense and a safety concern.

D. Summerfield asked for an update on the forward facing priority seating project. He noted that it is a federal law.

L. Haile acknowledged that no new information regarding the priority seating project was available. He will keep everyone informed when he has more details.

Chairman Beaulieu thanked Mr. Haile for his report.

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

Mr. Oglesby distributed the January/February 2012 reports for THE RIDE and shared the following.

- The upcoming additional public hearings will be posted in all THE RIDE vehicles with more details

He then asked for questions.

J. White asked if the draft of the new applications for THE RIDE eligibility was finalized.

F. Oglesby stated that the new application was now in use.

N. Miller asked if someone was now approved for THE RIDE, whether they would be expected to reapply now with the new application policy.

F. Oglesby stated that his plan is to have everyone recertified in the next three years.

K. Piccard stated that after reviewing the draft application she submitted a number of suggestions. She asked whether or not they had been reviewed before making the application available to the public.

F. Oglesby stated he would check.

J. Gayle inquired about how qualified the OTA staff is to review the applications if the RFP is still out for bid.

F. Oglesby asserted that the staff doing this work is more than qualified.

D. Summerfield asked if the criteria had changed for those who take both fixed route and paratransit.

F. Oglesby stated that you may be given a conditional (able to take fixed route or paratransit when you are up to it) eligibility status. This will allow for you to take fixed route at certain times when you so desire.

R. Morin identified unconditional eligibility as a barrier that prevents a person from using fixed route transit. This would make them eligible for paratransit services only.

E. Minar admitted that she is skeptical of people who are not professionally qualified saying who can take paratransit. She asked if there are people at OTA with medical degrees. She stated that her condition is very unpredictable.

F. Oglesby stated that for conditions that are unpredictable, these persons are given the status of unconditional eligibility. He also mentioned that there are people in the program with such conditions and they have been approved unconditionally.

C.J. Harrington stated that OTA is looking for a doctor or professional health provider get information on the consumers' conditions. She said they look at functional assessment, looking at customers from a transportation prospective; not a medical one. They look at the ability to get on and off a fixed route. They are not performing diagnosis but just want to know what the consumer is capable of doing.

K. Piccard suggested that people with unpredictable pain or other type of medical conditions are at greater risk for injury and should be in a controlled environment.

R. Morin encouraged everyone to log on to www.projectaction.org to review the ADA Paratransit Eligibility document to come to their own conclusion. He said that this document has really helped him and that it would be worth other's time to review.

J. Gayle asked how this data would be tabulated. There is a growing concern that the information will be shared with Mass Health or Medicare.

F. Oglesby stated that his staff is being pre-judged unfairly on their educational knowledge and qualifications. He said that a five-year member of the OTA staff is a qualified level three social worker with the organization. He said the MBTA Law Department is reviewing the HIPAA Rule, and regarding Mass Health or Medicare, that it will be a

while before any information is shared. Consumers will be given the option from OTA regarding sharing their information.

Chairman Beaulieu thanked Mr. Oglesby for his report.

Vendor Reports:

John Soucy, Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS), Operations Manager shared the following:

- The GLSS March Passenger Assistance Training schedule
- A respond to the concerns of consumers who have extremely long telephone waits for service at night
 - There is a possible need for more staff
 - Equipment failure is ruled out
 - Management will determine a resolution

He then answered questions.

B. King inquired about same-day trip requests.

J. Soucy stated that same-day trip requests were at sixty percent. He also said that same-day trip requests are much more difficult to accommodate. He suggested that if requests are made two days in advance you are guaranteed to get your trip request.

M. Hulak stated that the ADA does not require same-day service be provided; that is why it is not counted as a not-available trip.

K. Piccard asked why there are no road supervisors.

J. Soucy stated that the operation supervisors are the road supervisors. A site supervisor is whoever minds the shop after the senior managers leave for the day.

M. Murray asked that the PACE vehicles be distinguished from THE RIDE vehicles.

J. Soucy stated that he will look into the matter.

N. Miller asked if there is any possibility the MBTA would consider advertisements on THE RIDE vehicles to help out with revenue.

J. Soucy stated that would need to be approved by the GLSS Board of Directors.

M. Hulak stated that advertisements on THE RIDE vehicles as a source of revenue was not being considered. The vans need to continue with the color coding so that customers can recognize them. Perhaps this may change in the future.

R. Mahoney asked for details about the difference between incidents and accidents.

J. Soucy stated that incidents involved people and accidents are vehicle-related.

M. Hulak added that incidents could also be broken side mirrors, flat tires, and not just customer-related.

***Chairman Beaulieu** thanked Mr. Soucy for his report.*

Veterans Transportation, LLC (VT)

Kevin MacDonald, Senior Project Manager shared the following:

- The VT March Passenger Assistance Training schedule
- A first in VTLLC history--Due to the great weather they were able to deliver more than 72,000 trips

J. Gayle asked why taxi cab drivers were not getting an equal share of money for THE RIDE trips.

K. MacDonald stated that this was an internal issue between Veterans Taxi and Veterans Transportation.

E. Minar stated that the customer service was not forthcoming when she inquired about a delayed pickup

K. MacDonald stated that the calculation is based on distance of the vehicle from pickup at that time.

B. King is concerned that when she is picked up late for her trip that the dispatcher or driver will not adjust her return trip home.

K. MacDonald stated that only the customer is allowed to make trip adjustments. He suggested that the passenger communicate to dispatch, possible by cellular phone.

E. Minar stated that in her profile with THE RIDE she is allowed to go on the vehicle face forward. The drivers are telling her the information is not listed on her profile.

K. MacDonald stated that he would research this.

Chairman Beaulieu thanked Mr. MacDonald for his report.

The Joint Venture of Thompson Transit and YCN, LLC (JV)

Claire Dipillo, Manager announced the following:

- The JV March 7th Passenger Assistance Training

No questions were asked.

Chairman Beaulieu thanked Ms. DiPillo for her report.

Open Discussion

E. Frith suggested a letter be written by the MBTA to cities and towns regarding drivers of delivery vehicles that continue to illegally park in bus stops. She stated that the U.S. Postal Service vehicles also believe they can park anywhere. She is very concerned about illegal parking in Cambridge. She wants to know what can be done to let these agencies know the law. She stated that bus stop signs are not meeting regulations; some are too tall, too short or outdated. She is looking to make this a safer community. She would like a letter sent to all municipalities and companies that violate the civil rights of persons with disabilities.

D. Summerfield recommended she contact Ms. Kathy Ladden, Superintendent of all Cambridge post offices who can make sure no Cambridge mail trucks violate any laws.

J. Gale asked the Chair what is AACT's position on the Governor's 530 Executive Order and the MBTA Proposed Fare Increase statement to the MBTA.

Chairman Beaulieu stated that he is working on the statement. It will be on the www.Bostonmpo.org website.

K. Piccard asked Chairman Beaulieu if he would be speaking on behalf of the whole membership.

Chairman Beaulieu stated that he would.

E. Frith asked if the group (AACT) would consider writing a letter to the violators from the many companies whose vehicles are parking in bus stops.

K. Piccard stated that AACT is an advisory board to the MBTA. AACT would ask the MBTA to write the letter, and AACT would offer suggestions and send a list with addresses of organizations that violate the bus stop law.

Chairman Beaulieu agreed it is a good plan.

Motion

K. Piccard made a motion that AACT write a letter to the MBTA asking for their assistance enforcing the no parking in bus stops by writing to entities observed in violation.

E. Frith seconded the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved by members.

Announcements:

D. Summerfield announced that today at 5:30 PM the Cambridge City Council would be discussing the MBTA's plan for the proposed fare increase and taking public comments.

Chairman Beaulieu announced that Cheryl Ravalli, AACT member, had an accident in January with a car while on her scooter. She is now home and doing well.

Old Business: None was presented.

New Business: None was presented.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 P.M.