

# Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

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## *AACT Membership Meeting Minutes*

*Wednesday, December 18, 2013*

### **Notables**

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

AACT has a page on the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) website at [www.bostonmpo.org](http://www.bostonmpo.org); click on "Get Involved" then scroll down to "Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA." 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, and ADA regulations. There are also links to the MPO's newsletter, TRANSREPORT, and information on accessibility at the MBTA. This page includes the contact information for the AACT Coordinator.

Comments and questions concerning AACT should be directed to the Chairman James White by contacting the AACT Coordinator, Ms. Janie Guion, at 617-973-7507 (voice); 617-973-7089 (TTY); 617-973-8855 (fax); [AACT@ctps.org](mailto:AACT@ctps.org) (email); or at c/o CTPS, 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150, Boston, MA 02116 (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. Please contact the MPO staff at 617.973.7100 (voice), 617.973.7089 (TTY), 617.973.8855 (fax), or [publicinformation@ctps.org](mailto:publicinformation@ctps.org).

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 herself/himself or any specific class of persons has been subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI, ADA, or other non-discrimination statute or regulation may, herself/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 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/](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.

Meeting opened at 1:01 PM

## Reading of the Agenda, James White, Chairman

### Introductions

#### *Member Attendees:*

James White, Ian Perrault, Rick Morin, Lisa Weber, Allen M. Karon, Richard Mahoney, Kathryn Piccard, Nancy J. Miller, Tyler Terassi, Don Jansiewicz, Penny Shaw, Linda Shepard Salzer, Ways2Go Travel Trainer

*MBTA Staff:*

Larry Haile, Carol Joyce-Harrington, Mike Hulak, Rashad Lyn

*Vendor Staff:*

Victor Herrera, National Express-Joint Venture of Thompson Transit;  
Jacqualyn J. Reynolds, Greater Lynn Senior Services; Kevin  
MacDonald, Veterans Transportation

*MPO Staff:*

Janie Guion and Matt Archer

## Chairman's Report

*The Chair stated the following:*

The AACT Forum was a tremendous success. He thanked those who attended the Forum Committee, the MBTA, and CTPS. AACT hopes that this will become an annual event. He noted that there is an audio recording available on the Boston Region MPO website at [www.bostonmpo.org](http://www.bostonmpo.org)

The MassDOT Board of Directors voted to reduce the cost of THE RIDE program from \$4 to \$3 (see attached). He praised the cooperative efforts of the Boston Center for Independent Living, the Massachusetts Senior Action Council, the Bay State Council of the

Blind, the Massachusetts Office on Disability and AACT. General Manager Scott is reviewing the possibility of a tiered fare program for THE RIDE.

The Selection Committee for THE RIDE contract is in the final stages.

## ***Guest Presentation***

### **Dr. Beverly Scott, General Manager of the MBTA**

The General Manager expressed her desire to hear from the AACT membership instead of making a prepared speech.

**Chairman White** stated THE RIDE fare reduction could not have happened without General Manager Scott.

**General Manager Scott** stated there is still work to be done. She stated that they are discussing a program for free MBTA fixed-route services for the 15 percent of THE RIDE customers who have conditional eligibility.

**K. Piccard** asked if those without conditional eligibility would also be included.

**General Manager Scott** stated they would not. She stated that for those with unconditional eligibility, In-Person Assessment has

determined that the person cannot use the fixed-route system; contrarily, In-Person Assessment has determined that those with conditional eligibility can, under certain circumstances, use the fixed-route system.

**R. Morin** noted that if you are listed as unconditional but ride the T from time to time, you should be listed as conditional.

**Chairman White** stated that an observation by MBTA Board of Directors Chairman John Jenkins was that \$40 is saved every time a person who exclusively uses THE RIDE uses the fixed-route system.

**L. Weber** noted that monthly passes for the express buses cannot be purchased online and asked if there were plans to change that.

**General Manager Scott** stated that there were currently no plans to change it, but encouraged Ms. Weber to send her concerns in writing. She noted that the MBTA needs to figure out a way to eliminate as much cash as possible on the fixed-route system and eliminate cash transactions on the buses, which impacts service.

**R. Morin** thanked Dr. Scott for keeping means-testing on the table for additional consideration.

**Chairman White** stated that individuals from the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) are assisting with means-testing.

**General Manager Scott** stated the MBTA has asked the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to offer an advisory position. FTA has stated there is nothing in the federal transit guidelines that preclude means-testing.

**K. Piccard** stated that other systems use something similar to means- testing, some of which involves billing other agencies in addition to looking at individuals' incomes. She asked if that could be considered.

**General Manager Scott** stated that this shows the value of AACT, because its members can raise a level of complexity on many issues, which ties into Executive Order 530 (EO 530). She commented that the MBTA needs a group of knowledgeable consumer advocates to participate and provide input.

**Chairman White** stated that one of the key people involved in coordinating the EO 530 requirements will be Aniko Laszlo, and he will be in touch with her regarding AACT's recommendations. On the subject of safety, he stated that he believes that investing in cameras

to prevent accidents is misguided and asked if money would be better spent on automatic switches.

**General Manager Scott** stated there is a federal mandate that all passenger railroads need to implement positive train control, which features an automatic stop feature; she noted it is very expensive, and all passenger railroads will need this by 2015, though it may be pushed to 2020. She stated the MBTA is in the process of implementing full safety oversight programs under the regulation of the Department of Public Utilities.

**K. Piccard** suggested that freight trains be included in safety plans.

**P. Shaw** noted she had previously raised concerns regarding In-Person Assessment asking questions about medication and asked if progress had been made addressing them.

**General Manager Scott** stated that at this time it is legal, but we want to avoid doing anything unfair. She asked that concerns raised in AACT regarding In-Person Assessment be sent to her so they can be addressed. She added that she has heard that this issue has been raised before, that the MBTA is not doing anything illegal or inappropriate, and that it should stand; however, she will address concerns.



**Chairman White** noted that the AACT Board of Directors had taken a vote to have a conversation with Michael Lambert about having an open house at THE RIDE Eligibility Center (TREC) to address any and all concerns.

**P. Shaw** expressed concern that it would be difficult for some individuals to get to TREC.

**R. Morin** stated that Bay State Council of the Blind has submitted a recommendation to OTA about rewriting their In-Person Eligibility brochure; he added that he feels the brochure does not reflect what really happens.

**P. Shaw** stated that there are many issues aside from that, including difficulty and psychological trauma in getting to TREC.

**Chairman White** stated these concerns could be addressed during an open house.

**P. Shaw** asked if the open house could be held at a more accessible location. She asked if it could be held at the State Transportation Building.

**Chairman White** stated that could be a possibility. He noted that no issue would be off the table.

**Chairman White** thanked the General Manager.

## Approval of Minutes for November 2013

**Chairman White** asked for a motion to accept the minutes for the meeting of November 20, 2013. Mr. Karon made the motion. The motion was seconded and carried, with one abstention.

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

**Larry Haile, SWA Coordinator**, distributed his report and had no further updates.

He then asked for questions.

**Chairman White** asked what the timeframe would be between the bidding process and first prototypes of the new Orange and Red Line cars.

**L. Haile** stated he is unsure what the timeframe would be. He noted that there had been discussion about reconvening the ad hoc committee that looked at specs for the new cars; he stated he is sure this would happen before the prototypes are released.

**I. Perrault** asked if the MBTA's Emergency Training Center at Broadway station had opened.

**L. Haile** stated the Emergency Training Center began operations in the fourth quarter of 2013.

**A. Karon** noted that the Customer Assistance Areas are frequently not staffed at Back Bay station and asked if individuals should use the call box.

**L. Haile** stated that the call boxes are intended for times when a Customer Assistance Area is not staffed.

**Chairman White** asked when the Night Owl service would start.

**L. Haile** stated that it would start in spring 2014.

**Chairman White** stated that on January 23, there will be a bus recertification program in Charlestown. He thanked Mr. Haile for his report.

## **MBTA Office for Transportation Access -THE RIDE Program**

**Mike Hulak, Manager of Paratransit Contract Operations,** submitted the OTA report. He stated that due to the snowstorm advisory on December 17, the MBTA meeting for public comment on the draft Late/No-Show Policy was cancelled; the meeting will be rescheduled and customers will be notified. Comments will still be

accepted via US Mail (MBTA – The Ride, 10 Park Plaza Rm. 5750, Boston, MA 02116) or email (theride@mbta.com). He noted THE RIDE fare reduction would come into effect on January 6, 2014. He added that THE RIDE contractors will be operating on a holiday schedule on Christmas day.

He then asked for questions.

**K. Piccard** asked if a fare increase would occur when changing an ADA trip by more than half an hour after the 5 PM cutoff on the prior day.

**M. Hulak** stated that it would be considered a same day request, which is not considered an ADA trip.

**K. Piccard** asked if fare policy could be clarified on the website.

**M. Hulak** stated OTA would look at the language of the policy.

**Chairman White** asked for information about the Shepard Brothers prototype vehicle.

**M. Hulak** stated they are essentially the same as the current vehicles. The new vehicle has a Ford E-350 chassis and is scheduled to be in production. He stated there will be 216 new vehicles.

**K. Piccard** stated that the grooves in the rubberized flooring go from front-to-back, which makes it easy for people to slip when it's wet.

**M. Hulak** stated having the grooves run left-to-right could cause water to get caught in the body channel.

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

## **Vendor Reports**

### **National Express and the Joint Venture of Thompson Transit and YCN Transportation (JV)**

**Victor Herrera, General Manager**, distributed his report and announced Passenger Assistance Trainings (PAT) on January 8 & 9. He congratulated the membership on THE RIDE fare reduction.

**Chairman White** stated that he hopes there will be proper staffing for a potential increase in ridership.

Mr. Herrera then asked for questions.

**K. Piccard** noted there had been slight increase in incidents, and asked if they had been similar incidents.

**V. Herrera** stated there had been increased activity, and when there is inclement weather there are generally more incidents.

**M. Hulak** stated that every type of incident is reported, including problems with headlight bulbs, windshield wipers, and flat tires. He commented that he had noticed an increased number of flat tires in recent weeks. He stated that the cold weather takes a toll on the

vehicles, but the vendors are handling the situation to the best of their ability.

**Chairman White** asked why there had been a spike in pickups that were 30 minutes late.

**V. Herrera** stated that it had to do with inclement weather.

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

## **Veterans Transportation (VT)**

**Kevin MacDonald, Project Manager**, distributed his report and announced trainings for the month of January.

He then asked for questions.

**Chairman White** asked if Mr. MacDonald expected an increase in ridership following THE RIDE fare decrease.

**K. MacDonald** stated he did not expect an immediate increase, but does expect an increase over time.

**A. Karon** asked why there had been 781 missed trips in November.

**K. MacDonald** stated that it was due to a system failure on

November 20; VT lost service around 8 AM, and it was not restored

until 1PM. He explained that VT facilities are connected through the Internet; an attempt to route the facility in Everett to the main office building caused an inability for any user to connect to any system; removing the route restored the system.

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

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

**Jacquelyn Reynolds, MBTA Contract Relationship Manager,** distributed her report and had no further updates.

She then asked for questions.

**Chairman White** thanked Ms. Reynolds for a proposed AACT meeting calendar for the entire year.

**E. Frith** stated that a number of THE RIDE customers going to Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital in Charlestown have been taken Mass General Hospital, and vice versa.

**M. Hulak** suggested that individuals who have been taken to the incorrect destination contact OTA.

**Chairman White** thanked Ms. Reynolds for her report.

## **Open Discussion & Announcements**

**Chairman White** announced a Human Services and Equity in Transportation Forum on January 14, with a snow date of January 28, in conference rooms 2 & 3 of 10 Park Plaza from 9AM to noon. It will be sponsored by the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Executive Office of Health and Human Services Transportation Office, and MassDOT Statewide Mobility Manager. He also announced the MPO public meetings on January 7, detailing information about the Transportation Improvement Program and the Unified Planning Work Program, in Suite 2150 of 10 Park Plaza from 12:30-2:00 PM and 5:30-7:00 PM.

**K. Piccard** asked if registration was required to attend the Human Services and Equity in Transportation Forum.



**Chairman White** stated that participants should RVSP by January 6 by emailing [publicinformation@ctps.org](mailto:publicinformation@ctps.org).

**E. Frith** stated that bus stops have not been cleared of snow in Somerville and Boston. She asked what the protocol is for clearing bus stops; she added she has had difficulty getting an answer from the MBTA and the City of Somerville.

**Chairman White** stated that in Boston, any enclosure with advertisements is supposed to be cleared at the expense of the advertiser; other bus stops need to be handled individually by filing a complaint with the MBTA. He added that in Boston, it is the responsibility of homeowners to clear snow from the sidewalks in front of their homes.

**K. Piccard** stated that she believes that the MBTA did an extensive study within the last five years that is posted on the MBTA website. She noted that snow clearance of bus stops falls into a number of categories, and the MBTA is required to clear some (but not all) of them.

**Chairman White** stated he would discuss this issue with Michael Lambert and request the formal written protocol. He added that he has raised this issue with John Lozada and General Manager Scott.

**CJ Harrington** suggested raising this snow removal issue not with Mike Lambert but with Marie Trottier, AGM-SWA and the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance, who manage property of many state buildings including the State Transportation building.

Meeting adjourned at 2:50.