

***Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts Bay
Transportation Authority***

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AACT Membership Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 22, 2014

Board of Directors:

Chairman - James F. White

Vice Chairman - Rick E. Morin

Executive Board

Mary Ann Murray

Ian Perrault

Lisa Weber

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.

AACT has a page on the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) website at 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 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 (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.

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.

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 Saturday/Sunday from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM, 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 is always appreciated.

Meeting opened at 1:06 PM

Reading of the Agenda

Introductions

Attendees: Nancy Miller, Pauline Downey, Robert Diaz, Reggie Clark, Cheryl Ravalli, Richard Mahoney, Elaine Hamilton, Rhoda Gibson, Allegra Stout, Linda Shepard Salzer, Barbara Garlington, Yasi Abdolmohammadi, Angela Manerson, Theresa Casey, David Brewington, Allen Karon, Lisa Weber, James White, Rick Morin, Mary Ann Murray, Ian Perrault, Kathryn Piccard, Deanne Sisco

MBTA Staff:

Mike Hulak, Frank Oglesby, Kenneth Green, Paul MacMillan, Rashad Lyn

Vendor Staff:

Thomas Mulligan, Jacquelyn Reynolds, John Tuttle, Claire DiPillo

MPO Staff:

Janie Guion and Matthew Archer

Approval of Minutes

Chairman White requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes for August 27. A motion was made and carried with two abstentions.

Chairman's Report

The Chair stated the following:

- MBTA General Manager Scott invited him to offer input on new car purchases.
- Laura Brelsford, Assistant General Manager, Department of System-Wide Accessibility(SWA) asked that AACT be more involved in assisting with projects, with committees, and with trainings.
- He was invited to inspect a new bus that is being purchased. He inspected the bus and consulted with the engineers about his findings.
- He attended passenger assistance training and attended a bus recertification class at the Charlestown garage.

Summit Committee Report

Rick Morin, AACT Vice Chairman and Summit Chairman stated the following:

- November 19, AACT will host its second annual summit. The summit will begin at 9:00AM; registration will begin at 8:30AM.
- The Summit Committee is finalizing the speakers; there will be representatives from the City of Boston, MassDOT and the MBTA.

- The theme will be “The Power of Advocacy.” The Summit Committee is asking the speakers to discuss initiatives and projects that could be advanced by advocates.

He then asked for questions. There were no questions.

Lisa Weber, AACT Board Member, representative to the MBTA Rider Oversight Committee stated the following.

- A presentation was given on the Late Night MBTA Service; although still in its pilot stage, it was noted that a general consensus would like to see the service be continued.
- MBTA is considering ways to connect its commuters with the Boston Hubway system at some stations.

Chairman White introduced Chief MacMillan and expressed his appreciation to the Chief for his loyal support over the years to AACT. He noted that among Chief MacMillan’s many actions were to reinstate the attendance of a Transit Police representative at AACT meetings. He also noted that the Chief worked alongside Mike Hulak of the Office for Transportation Access in discussions with the Boston Police to allow THE RIDE to travel through Downtown Crossing. He instituted the blocked bus stop report which has made a tremendous difference in bus access.

Chief MacMillan noted that the Transit Police worked on changing the legislation to allow them to write citations at bus stops. The MBTA sends the Transit Police a report on blocked bus stops every month, which helps them target problem areas.

Chief Paul MacMillan, MBTA Transit Police Department

Chief MacMillan stated the following:

- Deputy Chief Kenneth Green will be Acting Chief after *Chief MacMillan's* retirement. The Transit Police representation at AACT meetings will continue.
- The Transit Police will continue to work closely with AACT. Chief MacMillan thanked AACT for its commitment and stated he knows there is still work to be done.
- He stated that working with AACT has been a very rewarding experience, and that the Transit Police appreciates AACT's input.

He then asked for questions.

K. Piccard expressed concern about the blocked bus stop report; she noted that the frequency of service on some bus lines is higher than others, which may skew the data. *Chief MacMillan* stated that the Transit Police could possibly work with Bus Operations on this issue, perhaps by

including a percentage in addition to a gross number in the report. He added that MBTA riders should report blocked bus stops when they see them.

P. Downey and *Mr. Clark* asked about bus stops blocked by snow. *Chief MacMillan* stated that this issue is handled by Bus Operations, which sends out crews to shovel out bus stops; he acknowledged that they cannot clear every stop. Individuals should contact their local communities as well. *Vice Chairman Morin* stated that this issue will be discussed at the AACT Summit.

MBTA Reports

Chairman White announced that Larry Haile has left his position at the Department of System-wide Accessibility. Rob Sampson will be the new SWA liaison to AACT.

Rob Sampson, MBTA Department System-Wide Accessibility (SWA)/Fixed Route Services said the following:

His responsibility at SWA is to track and report on complaints. Additionally, he assists on the development of employee training, policies, and procedures. He noted that Mr. Haile prepared the SWA report, which he distributed.

He stated the following:

- On October 23, State Senator Brownsberger will co-host a meeting to present a proposed project that would consolidate four inaccessible Green Line stops along the B Branch and result in two accessible stations. The stops are BU West, St. Paul Street, Pleasant Street, and Babcock Street. SWA is very excited to continue moving to a 100 percent accessible fixed-route system; he noted that only 40 percent of Green Line stops are currently accessible.
- The majority of accessibility work at the Sharon Commuter Rail station has been completed. The project created accessible paths of travel and access to the restrooms and coffee shop.
- The work at Salem Station and garage is nearing completion; the full-high platform will be open within approximately two weeks.
- The MBTA is purchasing 60 new buses; all will be in service by the end of 2014. The MBTA is adjusting the design for these buses to meet their requirements. He noted that the slope on the ramp of these buses will be decreased, and there will be a section behind each securement area specifically for strollers.

He then asked for questions.

Chairman White stated the new buses have a wider aisle at the entrance, aiding those in mobility devices.

K. Piccard asked how many wheelchair users can ride the new buses at a time. *Mr. Sampson* stated there are two securement areas. *Chairman White* noted that one of the securement areas is large enough to accommodate oversized wheelchairs.

L. Shepard Salzer asked if the high-floor buses will be phased out. *Mr. Sampson* stated they will be kept for emergency purposes.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Sampson for his report.

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

Frank Oglesby, Deputy Director, submitted the OTA report and had no further updates.

He then asked for questions.

K. Piccard asked about OTA's involvement in means testing. *Mr. Oglesby* stated that the MBTA is in the process of developing a pilot for a tiered fare program for THE RIDE. The pilot program will last six months. He noted the program is still in development.

A. Karon asked for clarification about OTA's involvement in a Transportation Access Pass (TAP) meeting. *Ms. Harrington* stated there is internal discussion regarding the TAP pass and the suspended RIDE CharlieCard pilot from several years ago.

Vice Chairman Morin asked for data on trip violations; he noted that on-time performance has declined over the past year, and asked the vendors to speak about this issue. He expressed concerns that THE RIDE drivers have asked passengers to call dispatch during trips. He added that he has heard several reports of dispatch taking long periods of time respond to no-show messages.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Oglesby for his report.

Keolis Commuter Services (KCS)

Ronan Coatanea, Director of Customer Service, KCS stated the following:

- While the Natick station is not accessible, it has been classified as accessible on some documentation. This will be amended as soon as the documents can be printed.
- The elevators at Route 128 station, listed as accessible, were not operational on one day. This was a temporary problem related to an automatic security check operation.
- There has been difficulty with the automated public address system on the new commuter rail cars.

- Keolis is accelerating the deployment of the new double-decker Rotem commuter cars, especially on the north side of the system.
- On October 10, Keolis released a new version of an app on iOS iPhone and Android platforms.
- Keolis is working with the Carrol Center for the Blind, which has submitted a request for several access improvements.

He then asked for questions.

K. Piccard suggested that Keolis update the online commuter rail schedules to reflect the accessibility of Natick station; she noted that this can be done without waiting for the printed schedules to be produced. *Mr. Coatanea* thanked Ms. Piccard for the suggestion.

R. Clark stated that the elevator at the Framingham station is not functional. He raised the concern that individuals in mobility devices may not be able to access the train. *Chairman White* noted that commuter rail conductors ask passengers in mobility devices what their destination is; if the station is inaccessible, the conductor would inform them.

L. Weber asked for information about upcoming track work. *Mr. Coatanea* stated that the tracks need to be destressed; currently, the tracks expand in hot weather, and in colder weather they will not reform to their initial shape. Destressing involves cutting small portions of the rail. The destressing operation took place during the summer and will continue in the spring and

summer of 2015. Currently, teams are high-pressure washing the tracks and deploying a gel that will improve adherence of the wheels.

T. Fisher stated that purchasing commuter rail tickets from a machine requires the purchaser to know which zone they are travelling to; there is no list of stops for reference. She suggested making a list available or providing a way to look up which zone a stop is in. *Mr. Coatanea* stated that zone information is available on the schedules on the MBTA website, as well as on the mobile app. Keolis is currently working with the MBTA on a passenger information plan; one suggestion has been to include the zone number on the station name signage at commuter rail stations.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Coatanea for his report.

National Express Transit (NEXT)

Victor Herrera, General Manager, distributed his report and announced PAT classes. He stated the following regarding Mr. Morin's earlier points:

- Drivers should never ask a passenger to call dispatch; drivers should contact the dispatchers directly. He asked THE RIDE customers to report drivers who do this.
- Dispatch should not take ten to fifteen minutes to respond to drivers reporting a no-show. He stated that it is not acceptable for a driver to receive no response from radio dispatch, and that this problem needs

to be corrected. He noted that customers should bring this to his attention.

- NEXT is aware that on-time performance had decreased, and they are correcting these issues. He committed to better on-time performance, noting that on-time performance returned to normal during October. *M. Hulak* stated that the MBTA takes on-time performance seriously. OTA met with Mike Rushin, CEO of NEXT, who assured them that service would improve.

He then asked for questions.

R. Clark raised an issue concerning the importance of on-time performance for customers travelling to a medical appointment. Mr. Herrera stated that this is a matter of procedure; if a person is scheduled to be dropped off at a certain time, they should be dropped off then. He suggested that THE RIDE customers schedule their drop-offs to be fifteen minutes before their appointment. Mr. Hulak noted that under the ADA guidelines, they cannot give priority to anyone, including those travelling to medical appointments. Chairman White thanked Mr. Herrera for his report.

Veterans Transportation (VT)

Kevin MacDonald distributed his report and announced upcoming trainings.

He stated the following regarding Mr. Morin's earlier points:

- Regarding on-time performance, he noted that the vendors are beginning a new contract period, during which they are tasked to deliver work at a higher productivity rate, meaning they deliver more work in fewer hours. In order to facilitate this, ridesharing needs to increase, this includes additional stops and additional dwell time.
- Currently, the vendors can only compare THE RIDE trip times and fixed-route trip times manually and individually by trip; there is no project underway to make these numbers more readily available. He stated there has been discussion with OTA about defining a standard.
- VT is attempting to match the speed of travelling in their computer system to the speed of travelling on the street. In September, as trips began to require an additional 15 percent to 20 percent more time per mile, the computer system responsible for scheduling began to be thrown off. He stressed that fixing this problem is integral to fixing a host of other problems. He noted that this is why dispatchers may take long periods of time to respond to no-show messages.

Chairman White thanked Mr. MacDonald for his report.

Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)

Jacquelyn Reynolds, MBTA Contract Relationship Manager, distributed her report.

She stated the following:

- The addition of Somerville, Cambridge, and Brookline to the GLSS service area has added to their constraints.
- She stated that she is unsure if dispatch monitors the response time on no-show messages and is not familiar with problems in response time. She added that she will look into this matter.

She then asked for questions.

M. Hulak asked Vice Chairman Morin to give an overview of VT based on his recent visit.

Vice Chairman Morin stated that he was impressed with the operation, adding that he visited during a calm period. He was impressed with the distribution of work and the tools they utilize, found it to be very professional, and had positive interactions with two dispatchers. He stated he understands how there can be a “domino effect” when glitches occur, and asked how the distribution of work is handled in these situations.

K. MacDonald stated that VT is attempting to perform notice of arrival calls; when a driver is within a short distance of the pickup location, a phone call will be placed to the customer alerting them that the driver is about to arrive. He has spoken to organizations that do notice of arrival calls, and was told that this reduces no-shows and reduced calls to dispatch inquiring about driver arrival time. *M. Hulak* stated that OTA will approach AACT regarding this subject as they proceed.

P. Downing asked about the package policy on THE RIDE vans. *Ms. Reynolds* stated that there must be a manageable amount of packages, so that the driver can both assist the passenger and carry the packages.

Chairman White thanked Ms. Reynolds for her report.

Open Discussion and Announcements

Chairman White stated that a former deceased member left instructions to donate \$1,280.00 to AACT's general fund. He expressed his gratitude for the donation. He added that other individuals are free to donate money to AACT.

K. Piccard made a motion that AACT members receive a report of these donations each month. The motion was seconded and carried with one abstention.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM.