

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

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AACT Membership Meeting Minutes

(Revised copy, see page 14, J. Ferris comment)

Wednesday, November 19, 2014

Board of Directors:

Chairman - James F. White
Vice Chairman - Rick E. Morin

Executive Board

Mary Ann Murray
Ian Perrault
Beverly Ann Rock
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 the Chairman James White by contacting the AACT Coordinator, Ms. Janie Guion, at 857.702.3658 (voice); 617.570.9193 (TTY); 617.570.9192 (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 857.702.3700 (voice), 617.570.9193 (TTY), 617.570.9192 (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, TTY 617.222.5146, Monday through Friday 6:30 AM to 8:00 PM and Saturday and 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:

Lisa Weber, James White, Rick Morin, Mary Ann Murray, Ian Perrault, Richard Mahoney, Pauline Downey, Kathryn Piccard, Betty.J. King, Reggie Clark, Angela Manerson, L. Walker, Dianne Sisco, Nancy Miller, Theresa Fisher, Ester Minar, Gina Russo, Bob Cochran, Bob Hachey, and Linda Shepard-Salzer

MBTA Staff:

Mike Hulak, Carol Joyce-Harrington Frank Oglesby, Rob Sampson, and Rashad Lyn

Vendor Staff:

Selena Walckner, Jacquelyn Reynolds, K. MacDonald, Mike Rushin, Victor Herrera, Mike Epps, Ronan Coatanea, Randy Hendrickson

MPO Staff:

Matt Archer, David Fargen, Janie Guion, and Pam Wolfe

Approval of Minutes

None were presented.

Chairman's Report

The Chair stated the following:

- He thanked the presenters and attendees of the AACT-MBTA Summit
- He expressed his gratitude to Mr. Thomas Mulligan, General Manager and Keolis Commuter Services for providing the refreshments.

MBTA and Vendor Reports

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

Rob Sampson distributed his report and stated the following:

- SWA has established a new format for their AACT reports. The reports will have more up-to-date and new information for the community. He stated that SWA is open to suggestions on further improving the reports.

B. Hachey stated that automated stop announcements on the Red Line are inconsistent and often difficult to hear. *Mr. Sampson* asked that individuals report instances where stop announcements are not being made.

R. Clark asked about the implementation of the new low floor MBTA busses. *Mr. Sampson* stated that the priority is to replace the older, high floor busses. He noted there will be a fleet of primarily low floor busses; high floor busses will be kept for emergency purposes.

E. Minar stated that the gap between Red Line cars and the platform at Charles/MGH Station is a hazard to individuals with mobility devices. She asked if the new MBTA busses can accommodate double wide wheelchairs. *Mr. Sampson* acknowledged that the gap at Charles/MGH is a long-standing issue. Regarding the new busses, he stated that SWA is always concerned with accommodating individuals with mobility devices, individuals with strollers, and other riders. He noted that the new busses have two areas that are designated for strollers.

K. Piccard asked about bridge plates at Charles/MGH Station. *Mr. Sampson* stated there are two bridge plates, located at the ends of the platform. He noted that individuals could contact CSA or use the call box on the train to request assistance. *Chairman White* stated that he has never had an issue requesting a bridge plate.

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.

G. Russo stated that she has had difficulty filing complaints and she frequently has not received a response. She asked for a description of the complaint process. *Mr. Oglesby* explained that vendors are expected to investigate and respond to complaints within 10 days. All complaints received by OTA are logged into the system and are tracked for responses, and reviewed for accuracy.

B Hachey asked if there is a policy regarding how early THE RIDE driver may ring a customer's doorbell. *Mr. Oglesby* stated drivers should not ring a customer's doorbell before the pickup time.

B. Corcoran stated that he has been dropped off at his destination over an hour in advance of his scheduled drop-off. He added that he has also had difficulty filing complaints. *Chairman White* advised him to ask OTA to run his trip history for a review. *Ms. Harrington* stated that THE RIDE customers can contact OTA by: email at theride@mbta.com with their complaints, questions or concerns; or call MBTA customer service at 617.222.3200.

A consumer stated that he has repeatedly had to wait over an hour for a pick-up despite being told that a driver would arrive shortly. *Ms. Russo*

asked that pick-up estimates be more honest. *Mr. Oglesby* stated that it may be better to give an approximate distance rather than time. *Mr. Hulak* noted that it is difficult to estimate how long it will take to travel a certain distance.

G. Russo asked if there is a policy regarding how early THE RIDE can drop off passengers. *Mr. Hulak* explained that OTA's goal is for drop-offs to be no more than 30 minutes early; he noted that the scheduling software should not schedule earlier than that. He acknowledged that with cancellations and no-shows, there are times when customers may be dropped off more than 30 minutes early. He also stated that if consumers are dropped off too early, they should seek safe shelter.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Oglesby for his report.

Keolis Commuter Services (KCS)

Selena Walckner, EEO/Title VI Manager, KCS, stated the following:

- Her primary responsibility is investigating consumer complaints about equal access, which includes ADA issues. She works closely with the Customer Service department.
- Keolis will implement additional training for both their customer service and transportation departments at the beginning of 2015. This will increase awareness and communication. They are also developing

training initiatives specifically for safety issues, including effective communication during emergency situations and safe evacuation procedures.

- Keolis is looking into increasing access to information in accessible formats.
- Keolis is working to improve on-time performance. She noted that a number of commuter rail lines are meeting their performance goals.

Chairman White thanked Ms. Walckner for her report.

National Express (NEXT)

Victor Herrera, General Manager, distributed his report and announced passenger assistance training classes.

He stated the following:

- At the previous AACT meeting, he had addressed service issues in September: over 1,235 late trips; in October, 833; a reduction of 33%, while completing 4,000 more trips than in September.
- NEXT will continue to focus on improving service.
- NEXT has hired a new customer service manager.

He then asked for questions.

Vice Chairman Morin asked what actions have been taken to improve problems with drivers. *Mr. Herrera* stated that NEXT hired a new safety manager, Mark Logan, who is revising the safety program; this primarily deals with training, but also deals with enforcement of the rules. He explained that problems with drivers should be handled immediately and then they should be examined to determine if there is a systemic problem.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Herrera for his report.

Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)

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

She asked for questions.

G. Russo commented that her grocery cart cannot fit into the new hybrid cars. On previous trips she has notified dispatch that she will be bringing a cart; hybrids are still sent to pick her up; during one trip, her cart was damaged. *M Hulak* noted that consumers update their profile with the information that they are traveling with a cart. This information will be placed in the customers profile and only vans will be sent.

Chairman White thanked Ms. Reynolds for her report.

Veterans Transportation (VT)

Kevin MacDonald distributed his report and had announced upcoming trainings.

He then asked for questions.

B. King asked about customer trips that have been scheduled and are now dropped. *Mr. MacDonald* stated the policy is to correct the mistake, research, identify the problem, and handle the trip as a same day request.

Chairman White thanked Mr. MacDonald for his report.

Casey Arborway Project - Steve McLaughlin, MassDOT Project Manager; Jonathan Kapust, Lead Designer, HNTB; Louis Free, Lead Architect, URS

Mr. McLaughlin, Mr. Kapust, and Mr. Free stated the following:

- The Casey Arborway Project consists of the removal of the current Casey Overpass in Jamaica Plain and replacing it with an at-grade, reconstructed roadway network.
- The project will connect the Emerald Necklace from Franklin Park to the Arnold Arboretum. Shea Circle, in front of Franklin Park, will be replaced with a more pedestrian-safe intersection. Additional, crosswalks will be constructed at the Arboretum where none currently

exist. Every crossing of the Arborway will have a refuge area to accommodate individuals who move at a slower pace, ranging from 10 to 24 feet wide. The signals will be fully accessible; each light will have “lead pedestrian intervals,” where the pedestrian is given a head start to cross before the traffic is allowed to go.

- The project will add approximately three miles of new bike path on either side of the Arborway. The bike path will be 12 feet wide. There will also be a separate, eight feet wide pedestrian walkway on both sides of the roadway. Sidewalks will be repaired and widened throughout the area. On the north side of the Arborway, a new plaza and Orange Line headhouse will be constructed. At the plaza, there will be mixing zones for bicycles and pedestrians, and a bicycle roundabout which will separate them from pedestrians.
- The MBTA currently has infrastructure located underneath Casey Overpass, including the bus Route 39 busway and an egress-only Orange Line headhouse. A new, accessible headhouse will be constructed for both Orange Line access and egress. The headhouse will have four fare-collection locations that will allow access to the north end Orange Line platform without needing to cross the Arborway. An elevator will provide direct access from the headhouse to the platform. The Route 39 busway will be relocated south, to Washington Street.
- Information on the project can be found on the MassDOT website.

They asked for questions.

MA Murray commented about access for individuals with mobility devices. *Mr. Kapust* stated that ramps are eight feet wide, as wide as the crosswalk, allowing two individuals to cross at the same time. He noted that bicycles have a separate ramp from pedestrians.

A consumer asked about what will be done with rail tracks in the area. *Mr. Kapust* stated that the contractor is required to remove the rails when they are not buried a certain depth; the rails will be salvaged back to the MBTA.

R. Clark asked how individuals will access the commuter rail. *Mr. Kapust* stated this project will not upgrade the commuter rail platform.

A consumer noted that the current elevator to the Orange Line platform will provide access during construction.

J. Ferris expressed concerns about the project. He stated that the wide intersections will be difficult for people to cross. He stated that access for transit and paratransit vehicles will be slowed, as will traffic. He added that bringing the Forest Hills station to accessibility compliance will cost an additional \$10 million, and asked why the Forest Hills improvements and cost had not been presented to AACT. *Chairman White* stated that he and Vice Chairman Morin had been given a presentation on this project, which they will discuss in an upcoming meeting, adding that AACT has been fully informed about Forest Hills station.

Chairman White thanked Mr. McLaughlin, Mr. Kapust, and Mr. Free.

Meeting adjourned at 2:58 PM.