



# Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

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**Wednesday, July 27, 2011**

## **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](mailto: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 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/](http://www.mbta.com/customer_support/feedback/)
- AACT has a page on the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's website at [www.bostonmpo.org](http://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.
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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 would be appreciated.

## ***ATTENDANCE***

### **Members**

Philip Beaulieu, Paul Barresi, Angela Manerson, Kathryn Piccard, Richard Mahoney, James White, Reggie Clark, MaryAnn Murray, Gail Weinstein, Marvin Weinstein, Beverly Ann Rock, Marilyn MacNab, Ellen Frith, Ian Perrault, Nancy Miller, Robert McGraw, Cheryl Ravalli, and John Cappuico

### **MassDOT - MBTA Representatives**

Frank Oglesby, Laura Brelsford, Mike Festa, Philip Balcom, Mike Hulak, Carol Joyce-Harrington, Robert Martin, Naod Getachew, Alessia Dempsey, Charlene Job, Michael M, Joseph Cecala, and Dorothy Winn

### **Vendor Representatives**

Kevin MacDonald and Jon Cristina – Veterans Transportation LLC  
Victor Herrera – Joint Venture of Thompson Transit Inc. and YCN  
Ray Croteau – Greater Lynn Senior Services

### **Other Representatives**

Sharon Harrison - Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
Kathy Devin- Massachusetts Commission on Disability

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

Walter Bennett, Mike Callahan, and Pam Wolfe

## ***MEETING***

### **Chairman Beaulieu called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM**

Members, friends and guests introduced themselves.

### ***Approval of the AACT Meeting Minutes***

The June 22 meeting minutes were approved with one abstention.

### ***Chairman Beaulieu's Report***

*He discussed the following:*

- He attended the training activities at the MBTA vendors
- He as a scheduled meeting on July 28 with the MBTA General Manager Davey
- The Executive Board members' assignments are:
  - Passenger Assistance Trainings (PAT) & Complaint Monitor  
Chairman Beaulieu and Jim White
  - MBTA Commuter Rail – Beverly Ann Rock
  - Rider Oversight Committee & Water Transportation  
Marilyn MacNab
  - Regional Transportation Advisory Council  
Mary Ann Murray

*He then asked for questions. There were none.*

A motion to accept the Chairman's report was approved with one abstention.

### ***The MBTA System-Wide Accessibility Department***

Ms. Brelsford, MBTA Deputy Director for System-Wide Accessibility, gave an overview of work the MBTA is doing to review and revise policies on emergency preparedness and issues related to persons with disabilities. The

2006 Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL) settlement requires that the MBTA develop a plan for emergencies throughout the MBTA system. An ad hoc committee of internal employees was formed in April 2011 to work on this. The group's initial plans are to discuss the current policies and procedures, adding and revising when necessary. The findings will be presented in early fall and members of the disability community will be invited to give input.

*She then asked for questions and comments.*

**B. Rock:** Do you have a plan in place should the lines of communication break down between dispatch and passengers?

**L. Brelsford:** During an emergency, first responders and MBTA personnel will be sent to assist immediately.

**G. Weinstein:** My husband has a history of asthma and I have a history of chemical sensitivity. We have been forced off THE RIDE due to the conditions. What is being done to increase awareness regarding the issue of chemical sensitivity on THE RIDE?

**L. Brelsford:** This project focuses on emergency preparedness on the fixed-route system. Perhaps someone here from THE RIDE can speak regarding chemical sensitivity. (see page eight)

**K. Piccard:** There may be a number of policies that should not be put on hold for a year to implement. I am also concerned with "single person train operation (SPTO)" should the operator of the train become incapacitated. How will passengers know that there is a problem? What should passengers do? Passengers in the last car may not be aware of the problem. This absolutely needs to be addressed.

**L. Brelsford:** I want to be really clear and assure you that the MBTA has very strong policies and procedures in place today. I don't want you to leave here thinking otherwise. The goal of this project is to take our current solid policies and make them even better. With respect to your question regarding a hypothetically incapacitated operator —The Operations Control Center would be aware that the motorperson was out of contact and dispatch assistance immediately.

**J. White:** Thank you for coming, Laura. When there is a transit emergency on the MBTA I'm concerned if the person will be moved along with their mobility device. How will people be reunited with their mobility device when they become separated?

**L. Brelsford:** A customer's wheeled mobility device will not be evacuated with the customer. The customer will be moved to safety, likely using a Stryker chair, and brought to a comfortable location. If possible, the first responders will take the customer's cushion (from their wheeled mobility device) along with them. Once the area has been secured, the wheeled mobility device will be removed from the scene. A member of the first responders will then be responsible for reuniting the customer with their wheeled mobility device.

**M. MacNab:** Last fall the University of MA Medical School made a presentation to the MassDOT Board of Directors to demonstrate how to transport people with very severe disabilities in an emergency/evacuation type situation. I would like for you to add this group to your stakeholders list when it is appropriate. I have submitted documentation regarding this issue to the MBTA Board of Directors, and the Transportation Secretary's office. People may be subject to the "fireman's carry," the art of carrying someone over the responders shoulder. For some people this can be very dangerous and in some cases deadly.

**L. Brelsford:** I agree. We will be sure to include this group as part of our stakeholders meetings later this year.

**K. Piccard:** I am very concerned for persons who may have their respirator in use. The person may not be able to speak. The scene may become very chaotic; some people can't cope with that kind of environment. I would hope no one detaches their respirator.

**L. Brelsford:** We will make sure that we put it on our list of topics to be addressed.

**K. Devins:** What plans do you have in place for a person's service animal?

**L. Brelsford:** The service animal's handler would have primary responsibility for controlling/leading their service animal during an emergency. However, our ad hoc committee will be working to educate everyone involved that service animals should be given priority (for safe evacuation) immediately, right behind human life.

**A. Manerson:** I am concerned regarding people with strollers getting caught as the doors close on the trains. Also why were the public pay phones removed from the first floor of this building?

**L. Brelsford:** I'm not sure about the payphones, but any instance of a vehicle door closing on anyone should be reported to Customer Communications.

**M. MacNab:** The cities and towns have emergency devices that they are not sharing with the public. I found out about the devices through the UMass Medical School. They are “flash drives.” Boston has a different style drive. Who should the device be given to? This needs to be addressed.

**L. Brelsford:** Our group can definitely reach out to UMASS for more information.

**R. Mahoney:** What is the maximum weight for the Stryker chair?

**L. Brelsford:** It is 500 pounds. The type of chair was chosen, in part, due to the weight capacity it could hold.

**R. Clark:** How will persons who are visually impaired be safely evacuated from the single person train operation?

**L. Brelsford:** You will be helped by a first responder, an employee of the MBTA, or another customer (if needed). Staff is trained to ask “What’s the best way for me to assist you?”

**J. White:** I would hope that someone from the AACT Executive Board will be part of the roundtable.

**L. Brelsford:** The initial work will be done by MBTA employees, but later this fall there will be a series of meetings for external stakeholders to share feedback.

**R. Martin:** Do you plan to have emergency procedures to evacuate persons who are hearing impaired or persons who do not communicate in any language?

**L. Brelsford:** We will make sure that we put it on our list of topics to be addressed.

**A. Mannerson:** Are you working on emergency/evacuation plans for fixed route and the commuter rail?

**L. Brelsford:** Yes, I travel the commuter rail myself. Our initial focus is on heavy rail –the Red, the Green, the Blue, and the Orange Lines as well as the fixed route bus system. Over time we will extend our focus to include commuter rail and ferries.

**L. Brelsford:** Thanked you, members and friends, and I’m looking forward to sharing the work that we’re doing on this project with you over the next two months.

***Kathy Cox, MBTA Manager for Fixed Route Services and System-Wide Accessibility Department (SWA) (report attached)***

Ms. Brelsford filled-in for the vacationing Kathy Cox and reported that there was no new information since the report was updated and submitted to members.

*She then asked for questions and comments.*

**R. Mahoney:** Where are the accessibility trainings held?

**L. Brelsford:** They are held at the Charlestown bus garage. Information is located on the fixed route report. You should contact Robin Howard if you are interested in attending. Her contact information is located on the fixed route report also.

**M. MacNab:** Would you send a list of the scheduled outreach Reduced Charlie Card locations to AACT Board? Can you clarify if the Back Bay office will be closed?

**L. Brelsford:** Outreach events can be found on-line at [www.mbta.com](http://www.mbta.com) and in your fixed-route reports. We are also working with local Senior Centers to encourage them to do outreach on their own with our support. With respect to the Back Bay office closing, there have been no final decisions made at this time. However, it is our goal to create an enlarged, more accessible office sometime next year.

**R. Clark:** I still have concerns that my cane will get caught in the train door on the single person train operation.

**L. Brelsford:** That is a very valid concern. Please make sure to contact Customer Communications anytime you experience an issue like that.

**Chairman Beaulieu:** Thank you, Ms. Brelsford, for your report.

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

Mr. Oglesby announced that the MBTA has a new Manager of Paratransit, Mark Hulak.

He then asked for questions.

**K. Piccard:** The wait time when calling a vendor is increasing. What is the average wait time? Is there a standard for wait times that should not be exceeded? Am I just calling at a time when the wait times are long? Is this happening with all the vendors?

**M. Hulak:** Vendors do have peak times. We know the times are getting longer, but it is possible that you could be calling at a busy time.

**K. Piccard:** Would you please report on this to us next month?

**M. Hulak:** Yes.

**G. Weinstein:** My husband has acute asthma and I have a multiple chemical sensitivity. Why is the no-fragrance rule not enforced?

**F. Oglesby:** We ask that people be mindful of others' sensitivities, but we can't enforce a mandate. You have a choice whether or not to take that ride.

**G. Weinstein:** Some of these chemicals are harmful and carcinogenic.

**K. Piccard:** There are other alternatives. People whose civil rights are inhibited have a right to complain.

**N. Miller:** I have to wear "Off" and other chemicals for my feet and hair and other things. Would you penalize me?

**F. Oglesby:** Ben Haynes and Peggy Griffin have discussed this and the conclusion is that one disability can't outweigh another. It is not possible to enforce a no fragrance rule. Vendors have adapted their training to include chemical sensitivity issues.

**M. Maple:** I have asthma and get migraines from odors. I have been told that you can request that you not be put on the same ride with someone who uses perfume and other chemicals.

**F. Oglesby:** I think that our vendors are willing to accommodate you if possible.

**J. White:** As a regular attendee of the vendor passenger assistance training I observe that the vendors make a great effort to teach the awareness of chemical sensitivity.

**M. Murray:** I suffer from asthma. I was told that I could request not to be placed on a vehicle with someone who I know makes me sick.

**F. Oglesby:** I think the vendors may be willing to work with you on this issue. There are no guarantees.

**Chairman Beaulieu:** Thank you, Mr. Olgesby for your report.



## ***Open Discussion***

**K. Piccard:** The information on page two of the agenda has not been voted on by the membership. I would like to see this section revised.

**Chairman Beaulieu:** I will take your comment into consideration. We will make some changes.

**J. White:** I had a return trip scheduled and was told that I would need to wait another 25 minutes for another passenger at the same location. Is that really how the program works?

**K. MacDonald:** The system tries to schedule trips together. In all of what we do, capacity is considered.

**K. Piccard:** How much advance notice is given when meetings are canceled?

**Chairman Beaulieu:** Most meetings that are canceled are in the winter months due to a snowstorm. During the summer, meetings are rarely canceled. It is a judgment call by the Chairman. Please listen to the local media for direction.

**J. White:** The Coordinator was called away on a family emergency. I want to thank Walter Bennett for stepping up so extraordinarily!

**Chairman Beaulieu:** Thanked everyone for a good meeting and for keeping it flowing without any incidents.

***Old/New Business:*** None was presented.

***Announcements:*** None was presented.

**Chairman Beaulieu adjourned the meeting at 3:00 P.M.**