

Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
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AACT Membership Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 19, 2012

Notables

The AACT Executive Board meeting will take place from 10:00 AM to Noon and the Membership meeting will take place 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 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, 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 Acting Interim Chairman James White 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 (email).

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 Sat/Sun 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 appreciated.

Attendance

AACT Members

James White, Marilyn MacNab, Reggie Clark, Kathryn Piccard, Esther Minar, Richard Mahoney, Mary Densen, Nancy Miller, Cheryl Ravalli, Nancy Murray, Jeff Magnet, and Allen Karon,

MPO/Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)

Daniel Amstutz and Janie Guion

MassDOT - MBTA Representatives

Martha Glover, Jim Nilan, Larry Haile, Frank Oglesby, Mike Hulak, Carol Joyce-Harrington, Tangel Burgess and Tim Davis

Vendor Representatives

John Tuttle – Veterans Transportation, LLC

Jackie Dunlop and Randy Hendrickson – Greater Lynn Senior Services

Victor Herrera – The Joint Venture of Thompson Transit and YCN

Others

Kathy Devin – Massachusetts Office on Disability Meeting

Interim Chair James White called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM

Members, friends and guests introduced themselves

Chairman's Report

Interim Chairman (IC) White reported the following:

- He would like better communication with the public regarding the interruption of services on rail lines modes; a print and news media notification of the interruption in service should be done to reduce the impact on others
- He also commented consumers are who are still experiencing problems with being overcharged with the Premium Fare (PF) and getting double charged for trips that are not PF
 - A number of consumers' accounts have been depleted and they have been denied service due a software error
 - A consumer attended the AACT Executive Board meeting today with concerns that he is not only being overcharged but also double billed for service
 - A letter to OTA to address the issue is being prepared so that consumers are not denied access to service through no fault of their own be resolved quickly

He then asked for questions.

M Hulak stated that the problem with PF is isolated to Joint Venture. He stated that a staff member is the problem and that it is not a software issue. He has instructed Joint Venture to review all previous accounts and make adjustments.

IC White asked that OTA have accounts flagged so that consumers will not be denied service.

M Hulak stated that he would work with Joint Venture and not deny THE RIDE service.

Meeting Minutes Approval

No Meeting Minutes were presented for approval.

Presentation

Newly appointed Assistant General Manager, of the MBTA's System-Wide Accessibility Department, Marie Trottier addressed the AACT Membership with following highlights of her short time on the job. She was previously employed by Harvard University.

She gave the following highlights:

- She recently attended a complaint hearing at the Architectural Access Board
- She has been on site visits to commuter rail stations and observed the deplorable conditions of some curb cuts. Her reaction was the following:
 - A wheeled-mobility device could flip and dump the user
 - An ambulatory person could slip and fall
 - A person with low vision also could trip easily
- She recognizes that it is critical that SWA staff be involved in MBTA renovation projects, new construction, designs, real estate, drawings and in some cases, maintenance. She will be depending mainly on her Deputy Director, Laura Brelsford, and Mike Festa, Special Engineer, to assist her as they work closely with project managers. She also noted that there have clearly been elements missed due to lack of oversight.
- Oversight is also critical to stations and also for infrastructure like mini-highs, full-mini highs, and ramp accessible buses. Parking lots, curb cuts, and crosswalks also need attention.
- She also mentioned the on-going work of the Key Bus Route Improvement Project. She is reviewing this project to make sure that the elements will work for everyone who uses bus stops, whether they are aided by a mobility device, have other mobility disabilities, or chronic illness, or have vision impairments

- She also is working with Judge Patrick King on Way Finding. No decision has been made with the plaintiffs but she feels an agreement is near
- She attended a meeting on the Green Line Extension Project. She noted that designing accessibility for the project is a very long process, but crucial to the final plan
- She apologized for the last minute notice for the ceremony of the Redundant Elevator Project at Park Street Station

She stated that the more meetings she attends the more she can learn, see and discover. She wants to get the message out that SWA needs to be involved in every conversation; for example, finding tactile warning strips that will work in New England weather and will be safe and manageable. She emphasized her statement again that SWA needs to be part of the conversation and be at the table. She wants to be educated and informed as much as possible as quickly as possible to keep the system moving and getting greater accessibility for a greater population of individuals with disabilities.

She then asked for questions.

K Piccard is concerned that the MBTA Website schedules do not have information regarding whether a station she was going to travel to was wheelchair accessible without contacting the Customer Service Department. She would like information included on the website and the schedules.

M Trottier asked for more details.

R Mahoney said that he received a response to a complaint from Rob Sampson that indicated the operator that he filed his complaint against had been disciplined. He wants to know what actions were taken.

M Trottier said that she will do a follow-up with Rob.

M MacNab explained that a recent meeting she attended was not accessible to the public. This was a meeting attended by MBTA

officials to discuss Government Center Station (100 Cambridge Street). This is an on-going issue that she has brought up with the MBTA.

M Trottier said that she will follow-up.

M MacNab also commented that accessibility at the Fields Corner station with Way Finding and Elevator Signs should be reviewed.

M Trottier said that she will follow-up.

D Summerfield commented that the issues with Kenmore Station and Science Park still need to be addressed.

M Trottier said that she will follow-up.

IC White commented that more communication for impacts on service should be addressed. A station notification does not work if you are not a regular user of the system. He stated that in the past when service was interrupted public service announcements were made through the news media. He would like to see this issue addressed.

L Haile said that maybe this is only an isolated incident.

E Minar commented that there are no Customer Service Agents (CSA) at stations on the Orange and Red Lines. She commented that in a trip to Charles Street Station she encountered a gap and no CSA to assist. She stated that CSA's are arrogant and not willing to help. She said that stations need more staff and that there is no reason she should be looking for a CSA when traveling on the train.

K Devin commented that while taking a train at North Quincy Station there was a diversion in service and she was assisted by a customer locating a CSA. If customers are being encouraged to use fixed route, which it is not working.

D Summerfield commented that on the Red Line he witnessed a passenger's arm and bag caught in the train's door. The operator was

unaware. Other passengers helped by pulling the arm in but the bag was lost. He stated that he is afraid of what may happen to him.

IC White commented that conductors do assist passengers. During rush hour they sometimes don't want to help. If you have been disrespected, file your complaints to the MBTA Customer Service Department at 617-222-3200 and give the following information

- Operator Badge # if available
- Time/Train number
- Location/line/mode.

M MacNab commented on several issues: (1) MBTA Design and Construction is not spending money on appropriate accessibility projects; (2) the public is unaware of private hearings with the Architectural Access Board; (3) she is concerned that not enough is being done to ensure that there will be a raised platform at Government Center Station; (4) she is concerned that the language in the architects' contract is missing the word "accessibility;" and (5) stakeholders should be made aware of the features with the accessible public restrooms

M Trottier commented that she was hired on her ability to address the many issues that she has heard. She will not address issues that were prior to her arrival. She knows that she has the complete support of the former Acting General Manager, J. Davis, and feels that she will get the same support from the new General Manager, Dr. Beverly Scott.

R Clark stated that he continues to be abused by bus operators who pull their buses right in front of fire hydrants and mailboxes to let passengers exit the bus. He states that being visually impaired it is dangerous for him. He noted the last time he was very badly bruised and bleeding from bumping into the fire hydrant. He stated that he has always reported these incidents to the MBTA Customer Service Department.

IC White thanked Ms. Trottier for her presentation.

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

Larry Haile, SWA Coordinator, distributed his report (see attached).

He reported the following:

- The SWA Orientation Training is not a Travel Training Program; the two differ dramatically. The Orientation Training is more to familiarize the traveler with the accessible transit services offered and Travel Training is a more intense class on how to use the system.
 - The first SWA Orientation Training class will take place on January 3, 2013
 - A detailed flyer explaining how the program works is attached
- On Friday, December 21, the ribbon cutting for the Redundant Elevator Project at Park Street Station will be held

He then asked for questions.

E Minar asked if the Winter Street elevator at Park Street Station would be renovated.

L Haile stated that he will do research.

J Magnet asked if Mr. Haile would explain the responsibility of the SWA and if they are in charge of accessibility at Logan Airport.

L Haile stated that SWA handles issues related to the accessibility for the fixed route system. He stated more specifically that there is an internal monitoring program that uses testers with and without disabilities throughout the system for accessibility compliance. SWA reviews and signs off on new projects such as Way Finding and new infrastructure projects; they also work to implement policies that are designed to improve access. He noted that SWA deals only with

MBTA related issues. He stated that the MBTA is not responsible for issues at Logan. He also mentioned the new monthly SWA Orientation Training discussed earlier.

K Piccard asked if the public accessibility and employee job related accessibility issues were handled by the same departments. She also wanted to know if the OTA was part of SWA and whether MBTA employees with disability issues are handled by SWA.

L Haile stated that the Office for Transportation Access (OTA) handles THE RIDE and SWA handles fixed route issues. The MBTA Human Resources Department is responsible for all job related issues relating to reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities.

D Summerfield asked that Ms. Lebbossiere, Bus Operations instructor bus operators to make an effort to ask passengers to give their seat to a person with a disability.

L Haile stated that yes he would bring this to her attention.

IC White thanked Mr. Haile for his report.

L Haile wished everyone Happy Holidays!

The Office of Transportation Access (OTA)

Frank Oglesby, MBTA Deputy Director of Paratransit Operations – OTA, THE RIDE. He distributed the OTA reports from November 2012.

Mr. Oglesby noted that OTA is under the auspices of the Operations Directorate. He commented that Director Mellissa Dullea is the Director of Planning and Schedules; he serves as her Deputy Director. They both answer to Chief Operating Officer Sean McCarthy and they meet with him bi-weekly.

He reported the following about THE RIDE Eligibility Center:

- On December 10 the Center opened with thirty-two interviews completed on day one
- With support from the MBTA, all applicants are transported by pre-arranged transportation to the Eligibility Center from Greater Lynn Senior Services, Veterans Transportation, and Joint Venture
- He gave a special thank you to Joint Venture for having supervisors on-hand during that entire day to coordinate all THE RIDE drivers and who worked well with the Hood Business Park staff to ensure a smooth flow of traffic
- The Eligibility Center, in its first seven days of operation, scheduled over 532 total appointments and cancelled 96 appointments at the applicants' request. This is an 18 percent cancelation rate
- The Mobility Coordinators reported that a total of 154 interviews had been completed between December 10-18
- Applicants have been identified as conditional, unconditional, and temporarily unconditional.
- No not-eligible assessments have been made at this time
- There are 269 interviews scheduled for the period of December 19 through January 18

He then asked for questions.

R Morin asked about the number of conditional as opposed to the number of unconditional.

F Oglesby stated he did not know those numbers.

K Piccard asked if the reservationist can easily determine if the person's particular status (weather or medical) would be easy to determine for the person making the reservation.

M Hulak stated that OTA has that information--nothing has changed. They have occasionally utilized the information.

R Morin asked that OTA track the number of requests for conditional and unconditional trips.

M Hulak said he will look into the requests.

E Minar asked if there had been a drastic change in the number of people taking THE RIDE.

F Oglesby stated that there is a 15 percent decrease in ridership.

IC White stated that the Massachusetts Office on Disability and Executive Office of Elder Affairs was charged by the State Legislature to develop and analyze the MBTA Fare Increase Impact Study. The survey is now in circulation and AACT is looking forward to getting a report when it is complete.

J Magnet stated he was contacted about the survey.

IC White stated that it is very important that people take part in the survey.

M Hulak commented that the MBTA has recently changed its policy regarding confirmed pickup times. This change was done to be more in line with the ADA language which now allows a bit more flexibility to the consumer. Consumers can negotiate their pickup times in the event the scheduled pickup time is inconvenient.

R Morin asked if the policy on confirmed pick-up times be included in new guide for THE RIDE.

IC White thanked Mr. Oglesby for his report.

F Oglesby wished everyone a Merry Christmas!

Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)

Jackie Dunlop, MBTA Contract Relationship Administrator, distributed her report.

She then asked for questions.

M Miller asked when the #1400 van series would be retired from THE RIDE service; the vans are in terrible condition.

J Dunlop stated those vans are owned by the MBTA.

M Hulak said that they are working on getting new vehicles. The MBTA just received a shipment of Crown Victorias and they have been delivered to all the vendors. He was unable to give information on new van replacement.

J Dunlop wished everyone Holiday Greetings.

IC White thanked Ms. Dunlop for her report.

Veterans Transportation (VT)

John Tuttle, Operations Manager, distributed his report. He announced Season Greetings to everyone!

He then asked for questions.

J Magnet stated that the vendors cannot get his address correct for the McGrath and O'Brien Highways when he travels with JV. He also complimented all THE RIDE staff at Veterans Transportation as passionate and caring.

J Tuttle accepted the compliments of his staff but insisted that the staffs at both GLSS and JV are similarly motivated. Mr. Tuttle stated that he is going to speak with the JV staff regarding the correct address.

IC White thanked Mr. Tuttle for his report.

The Joint Venture of Thompson Transit and YCN Transportation (JV)

Victor Herrera, General Manager for the Joint Venture, distributed his report. He wished everyone Holiday Greetings! He also thanked Mr. Tuttle for the kind words about the JV staff.

He announced the following:

- On December 28 JV will be having a recertification of the Passenger Assistance Training (PAT) class
- JV will have a full PAT class in January 2013 for new driver hires

He then asked for questions.

K Piccard asked for more details on the training of Exposure Control.

V Herrera stated that in the context of the First Aid Course there is a section on “blood borne pathogens” which is a very sensitive part of the course. He stated the name is from the Occupational Safety Health Administration; it is called the exposure control plan. The training is critical; it is very important for the safety of the consumers as well as the drivers. He noted that drivers attend an hour long class and watch a film.

M MacNab asked if it is true that National Express is enforcing a five-minute idle time rule for their vehicles.

V Herrera stated that National Express, the new owner of the JV. Consumers should not be concerned because the five-minute rule does not apply here.

M Hulak stated that the idling time is a state law. Drivers are to exercise common sense depending on the temperature.

K Piccard stated that some consumers may have a medication requirement that needs extra sensitivity by the driver.

M Hulak asked that if a consumer has a medical issue they should report such conditions to OTA. This would insure that the driver is aware of that passenger’s medication. He stated that OTA is willing to accommodate everyone but OTA needs to hear from the consumer.

E Minar said she does not understand why the drivers are not aware that her profile states she should enter THE RIDE vehicle face forward. She said this is a continual problem with drivers not checking or saying it’s not listed in her profile.

M. Hulak stated that drivers are not following procedure; they are just scrolling through the screen.

V Herrera stated that drivers are very well trained. He is going to instruct drivers to carefully follow the profile of each consumer.

K Devin had a word of caution to vendors to instruct their reservation staff to pay close attention to the information listed in consumers' profiles. She said someone with an allergic reaction was assigned to a vehicle with an animal.

IC White thanked Mr. Herrera for her report.

Open Discussion

J Magnet asked where he could get a copy of his history with THE RIDE.

IC White suggested that he contact OTA Contract Administrators or the vendor.

J Magnet is concerned about seating in the shared ride section of Logan Airport. He stated that he has contacted the MassPort Authority to have benches installed in the shared ride area.

Announcements:

IC White stated the following:

- Ian Perrault is now the AACT representative to the Rider Oversight Committee
- Rick Morin has drafted a list of priority accessibility issues with THE RIDE and fixed route services. The list is being reviewed by the AACT Executive Board and will be shared with the AACT Membership for further discussion

F. Oglesby announced that a new THE RIDE Eligibility Information brochure will be going out to 1600 healthcare providers and others who help consumers with their application for THE RIDE.

L. Haile announced that the new MBTA System-Wide Accessibility Guide brochure is available for distribution.

IC White thanked Daniel Amstutz for assisting at the meeting.

The meeting ended at 3:05 PM.