

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

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AACT Membership Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 26, 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 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; 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 (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 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 always appreciated.

Meeting opened at 1:03 PM

Reading of the Agenda

Introductions

Attendees:

James White, Rick Morin, Ian Perrault, Lisa Weber, Mary Ann Murray, Beverly Ann Rock, Allen M. Karon, Richard Mahoney, Kathryn Piccard, Nancy Miller, Angela Manerson, Deanne Sisco, Reggie Clark

Also Audrey Armand, Gregory Harnett, Josh Martin, Liam Flanagan, Shawn Mahady; Linda Shepard Salzer, Ways2Go Travel Trainer; Theadora Fisher, Human Services Transportation; Theresa Casey, Mass. Rehabilitation Commission; Sharon Harrison, Mass. Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

MBTA Staff:

Frank Oglesby, Larry Haile, Carol Joyce-Harrington, Mike Hulak, Kevin Vautour, Charles Murphy, Susan Lebbossiere, Heather Hume

Vendor Staff:

Victor Herrera, National Express-Joint Venture of Thompson Transit; Jacquelyn J. Reynolds, Greater Lynn Senior Services; John Tuttle, Veterans Transportation; B.J. Finnell, Keolis Commuter Services

MPO Staff:

Janie Guion and Matt Archer

Approval of Minutes

No minutes were presented.

Chairman's Report

The Chair stated the following:

- He attended a PAT class at Joint Venture. He and Mr. Perrault attended recertification training in Charlestown, which trained 35 new bus drivers.
- He attended a meeting at Boston Center for Independent Living regarding the new MBTA spider map. He stated that when the final version is available, he will distribute it to the AACT membership.
- He reminded users of the importance of updating their profiles with the Office for Transportation Access when there is an address

change, phone number change, change in mobility device, or an important detail in their life.

- A new AACT Forum Committee has been formed. The chair will be Mr. Morin, and he will be joined by Ms. Weber and Ms. Rock; if AACT general members would like to participate, they should contact the AACT Coordinator or Mr. Morin. The AACT Board would like the Forum to be an annual event.

Kevin Vautour, MBTA Bus Operations, Senior Training Instructor

Mr. Vautour discussed the training of bus operators. He stated the following:

- Since 2007, the MBTA in conjunction with System-wide Accessibility has devoted many hours to training bus operators.
- The current training is called Phase 1. During Phase 1, every new operator is required to train on all aspects of ADA. Approximately four hours are spent in a classroom setting; this time is spent reviewing special orders that are necessary for drivers to perform their duties in a safe and effective way. They are also taught customer service skills and sensitivity skills. New drivers train on all the current fleet.

- One aspect covered in Phase 1 is pre-trip inspection, which helps the drivers identify problems they may have with the bus. Busses that are not compliant are not put on the road.
- Phase 2 came into effect at the end of 2007 in conjunction with the delivery of a bus simulator system to Charlestown. During Phase 2, the morning is spent in the simulator, where drivers learn defensive driving techniques; the afternoon is spent with busses, learning boarding and alighting procedures and securing passengers. Over 1,300 drivers have been trained in Phase 2. These trainings are held every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in Charlestown.
- Training classes are open sessions with the next class Tuesday, April 22.

He then asked for questions.

Chairman White stated that anyone who wishes to attend a training class should contact the Larry Haile at System-Wide Accessibility at 617-222-4258 voice; 617-222-5045 TTY; lhaile@mbta.com.

R. Clark and **Mr. Flanagan** raised concerns regarding bus drivers stopping too far away from sight-impaired individuals. *Mr. Vautour* stated there are situations where it is safer to stop further away, but

in those situations the driver is supposed to exit the bus and assist the individual. He added that it is unacceptable for drivers to pull away before an individual can reach the doors; these drivers should be retrained.

R. Mahoney stated that he has observed several busses on the same route idling in groups near Mission Park. *Mr. Vautour* stated that this should not happen. He noted that when the first bus pulls into the station, they are required to go up to the berth and let the passengers board the bus. He suggested talking to an MBTA inspector or notifying the customer service department.

L. Flanagan noted that some bus drivers begin driving before sight-impaired individuals can find a seat. *Mr. Vautour* stated that drivers are trained to not begin driving until passengers are seated or holding an extension or grab bar. If a situation like this occurs, individuals should contact customer service.

T. Casey asked if bus drivers can let individuals exit busses between bus stops if a passenger is having an issue. *Mr. Vautour* stated that drivers have the discretion to stop at areas other than bus stops providing it is safe to do so.

K. Piccard suggested encouraging drivers to not make comments about individuals' mobility devices. *Mr. Vautour* stated that drivers should not make comments like this.

In response to questions regarding video on the busses, *Mr. Vautour* stated that all busses are equipped with video cameras. The cameras capture everything within the bus except the actual driver's seat. The cameras do not record audio.

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

Larry Haile, SWA Coordinator, distributed his report.

In response to questions regarding wayfinding, Mr. Haile stated the following:

- The MBTA is considering using Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags at decision-making areas (such as intersections) within stations; when someone taps their phone by an RFID tag, it will give wayfinding information. A pilot program being planned, currently work is only being done in English. There has also been discussion about possibly using iBeacon technology, which is used to alert people about sales about certain stores as they pass them; this could be used for indoor navigation in stations.

- Presently, no other transit agency in the U.S. is using RFID technology to provide wayfinding directions in the transit environment. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority will be rolling out a program in which customers with visual impairments will receive detailed text and audio directions on how to navigate through subway stations in DC. In other parts of the world, Austria is doing something similar to what the T is planning to do.

He then asked for questions.

L. Shepard Salzer noted that Mr. Haile's description of wayfinding for South Station that is available on the Ways2Go Mobility Management Facebook page.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Haile for his report.

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

Frank Oglesby, Deputy Director, submitted the OTA report and stated the following:

- Late night service will operate from 1 AM to 3:00 AM on Friday and Saturday evenings. THE RIDE will only operate from a point of origin or destination that is within 3/4 miles of the key bus

routes and rapid transit stations. Requests made for outside of the 3/4 mile radius will not be accommodated.

M. Hulak stated that trips on Friday evening (Saturday morning) need to be booked on Thursday. He noted that the MBTA has changed their body belt policy. The use of a “body belt” during transport in wheelchairs or scooters is no longer mandated. Customers now have the option when one is offered by a driver to use it or not.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Oglesby 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.

N. Miller stated that some individuals have difficulty in vehicles without armrests. *Mr. Hulak* noted that while all MBTA vehicles have armrests, armrests are not required in THE RIDE vehicles.

Chairman White thanked Ms. Reynolds for her report.

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

Victor Herrera, General Manager, distributed his report and informed members that they had lost two of their drivers in a matter of days and noted that they would be sorely missed.

He then asked for questions.

K. Piccard asked about the increased amount of missed trips in February. *Mr. Herrera* stated that the missed trips were snow-related.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Herrera for his report.

Veterans Transportation (VT)

John Tuttle, Operations Manager, distributed his report and had no further updates.

He then asked for questions.

R. Morin asked about the volume of complaints regarding pickup and delivery for the month of February. Mr. Tuttle stated that February was difficult due to snow.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Tuttle for his report.

MassDOT Statewide Mobility Manager of the Commonwealth

Aniko Laszlo, discussed Executive Order 530 (EO 530) progress made on implementing the recommendations of the Commission for the Reform of Community, Social Service, and Paratransit Transportation Services in the Commonwealth and the Statewide Coordinating Council on Community Transportation (SCCCT), including the following:

- The EO530 report has several overarching policy recommendations and sixty specific recommendations; the sixty recommendations will result in specific projects.
- The Statewide Coordinating Council on Community Transportation (SCCCT) established in September of 2013 and will meet quarterly. The first quarterly meeting was held in January of 2014; the next meeting will be on May 9, 2014 at 10 AM to 11:30 AM, in the State Transportation Building Conference Rooms 5 & 6, and is open to the public.
- The SCCCT serves as a voluntary advisory body to the Secretary of Transportation, the General Manager of the MBTA, and the Secretary of Health and Human Services. The Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) mirror the make-up of stakeholders at the state level and serve to give guidance on a regional level.

- Currently, four regions have established RCCs: the Berkshires, Cape Cod and Islands, Worcester Region, and the North Shore. Planning meetings to form new RCCs have been proceeding; meetings were recently held in Pioneer Valley and in Haverhill (covering Merrimack Valley); upcoming meetings will take place in the Greater Attleboro-Taunton area, the Brockton area, and Metro Northwest.
- Negotiations regarding the formation of the Boston area RCC will begin the week ending April 4, 2014; due to the region's size, there may be more than one RCC. There will be opportunities for members of the public to be involved when these RCCs are developing.
- RCCs are required to conduct a comprehensive service assessment. This includes looking at fixed route service and paratransit service; MassDOT will provide funds for paratransit service assessment across the state.
- The EO 530 report discusses what needs to be fixed regarding paratransit eligibility and transfer issues. Starting in April, the SCCCT will work with UMass Boston to research this issue before formulating a common denominator for cross-system eligibility and developing a formal transfer policy.

- The Human Services Transportation Office has started to form a travel training network. Based on information provided by travel trainers, MassDOT is funding statewide travel training. A national company will come to Massachusetts to train travel trainers; hopefully there will be two of these trainings in 2014.
- The MBTA's Office for Transportation Access (OTA) is developing an accessible taxi program. Jim Nihan of OTA is the project manager. The accessible program will offer a 24-hour non-ADA service. The fare will be either metered or a flat \$15; the state subsidizes the fare by \$13, though additional costs will be the responsibility of the passenger. Payment for service will be by debit card.
- The program will start out as a pilot and will consist of 250 THE RIDE eligible individuals that will be picked by a lottery or on a "first come" basis.
- The MBTA will identify which taxis companies are best qualified and meet several key MBTA qualification criteria.

She then took questions.

K. Piccard stated that there are three types of paratransit users and wondered whether or not the system would unify all three. *A. Laszlo*

stated that a small group of consumers will address this issue and stated that members of the community are welcome to join the conversation.

Announcements:

None were made.

Meeting adjourned at 3:02 PM.