

*Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts
Bay Transportation Authority*

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Members Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 24, 2016

Board of Directors:

Chairman - James F. White

Vice Chairman - Rick E. Morin

Executive Board

Mary Ann Murray

Ian Perrault

Beverly Ann Rock

Lisa Weber

Meeting opened at 1:05 PM

Reading of the Agenda

Introductions

Attendees: James White, Art Kovacs, Ian Perrault, Lisa Weber, Rick Morin, Debbie Weathers, Jim Tozza, Rev. Ellen Frith, Angela Manerson, Rob Dias, Shaquella Butler, Jeffery Magnet, David Ryles, Dee Whittlesey, Veronica Surrell, Nancy Miller, and Lynn Surrell

MBTA Staff:

Mike Hulak, Carol J. Harrington, Rob Sampson, Jessica Podesva, Ithai Larsen, and Frank Oglesby

Vendor Staff:

Selena Walckner, Jim Costello, Steve Epps, Victor Herrera, and Kevin MacDonald

Other:

David Chia and Linda S. Salzer

MPO Staff:

Matt Archer and Jennifer Rowe

Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes of December 18, 2015. The minutes were accepted unanimously.

Chairman White's Report

He stated the following:

- On January 28th he attended bus recertification training.
- On February 2nd, 9th, 16th, and 23rd he attended meetings of the Centralized Call and Control Center (CCCC).
- On February 3rd he attended a passenger assistance training class.
- On February 17th he attended the System-Wide Accessibility meeting of the Plan for Accessible Transportation Infrastructure.
- On February 18th he attended the Means Testing pilot meeting.
- He congratulated all three RIDE vendors for their total average of 95% on-time passenger performance rating.

He asked for questions. There were none.

MBTA and Vendor Reports

Keolis Commuter Services

Selena Walckner, Title VI Manager, commented that she did not have any updates to share but was available to take questions and comments.

A. Manerson asked that Keolis staff be reminded to identify themselves when offering assistance to the visually impaired. **S. Walckner** noted that she would share this information with the customer service staff and transportation managers.

Chairman White commented that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has released a notice nationwide regarding the issue of railroad

crossing gates that are malfunctioning. He asked if Keolis had been contacted regarding this notice. *S. Walckner* stated that she would research the matter.

Chairman White thanked *S. Walckner*.

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

Mike Hulak, Manager Paratransit Operations, sitting in for Frank Oglesby, Deputy Director, submitted the OTA report and shared the following:

- MBTA General Manager Frank DePaola and Chief Administrator Brian Shortsleeve wrote a joint letter of thanks to vendors, operators, and drivers for safely delivering all passengers in the recent bad weather conditions.

He then asked for questions.

L. Weber commented that THE RIDE drivers face lots of traffic delays that slow the system down and cost money. She asked why drivers are not equipped with hand-held devices that would help navigate around bottleneck areas. *K. MacDonald* noted that this would not work given that drivers have no real-time mapping. He noted that there are many factors influencing traffic patterns. He also explained that driver contracts prohibit any type of device that may be distracting.

Chairman White asked if MassDOT contacts OTA in the event of a major catastrophe that will impact traffic patterns on streets and highways. *K. McDonald and M. Hulak* noted that they are aware of situations that may alter traffic patterns. *M. Hulak* noted that he is in contact with MassDOT Operations Center that alerts OTA immediately when situations arise.

Chairman White thanked F. Oglesby for his report.

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

Rob Sampson, Manager for System-Wide Accessibility, distributed his report and gave a brief summary of the Plan for Accessible Transit Infrastructure (PATI). He reported that the External Engagement Committee kick-off meeting was held on February 17th and attended by Secretary of Transportation Stephanie Pollack, MBTA General Manager Frank DePaola, and Chief Administrator Brian Shortsleeve, along with many other stakeholders. R. Sampson gave an overview of capital funding limitations, prioritization criteria, and supporting analysis that will inform the near and long-term plans for accessibility spending. He noted that the MBTA will be holding quarterly meetings with stakeholders to get their input on how the MBTA should prioritize projects.

He then asked for questions.

Chairman White was pleased to see that R. Sampson had added the categorizing of fixed-route complaints to today's report. This would document when a train malfunctions and indicate if anyone on the train was someone with a disability and if there were problems evacuating passengers in a timely manner. R. Sampson noted unless a passenger self identifies as having a disability we would not be aware and also indicated that there is an after action report that would be much more detailed citing injuries, etc. He also stated that MBTA employees and some maintenance personnel are trained in emergency preparedness and evacuations to assist persons with disabilities.

Chairman White asked if a video is available that would help AACT members relieve their fears of emergence situations. *R. Sampson* noted that there is a sample demonstration video.

L. Salzer noted that there is an emergency box on the Orange and Blue lines at each end of the train for emergencies calls only. She was concerned that some passengers may not have been aware of the emergency button.

D. Weathers noted that passengers' biggest complaint about last week's incident was the lack of communication and personnel to assist. *R. Sampson* noted that the train personnel's first obligation is to communicate with dispatch and advise them of the situation.

Chairman White asked how doors on the train would open in the event of an emergency. *R. Sampson* noted that there is a release switch in each vehicle.

Chairman White thanked *R. Sampson* for his report.

Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)

Steve Epps, Director of Transportation, distributed his report and announced that GLSS is hiring drivers. He also announced that a passenger assistance training class will be held at the Lynn headquarters. He noted that all AACT members are invited to attend the training classes.

He then asked for questions.

E. Frith commented that RIDE drivers are notorious for blocking curb cuts. *S. Epps* noted that his company does not condone that type of behavior by drivers. He noted that drivers are given instructions and told not to block accessible areas.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Epps for his report.

Veterans Transportation (VT)

Kevin MacDonald, Project Manager, distributed his report and announced a passenger assistant training class in March.

He then asked for questions. There were no questions.

Chairman White thanked *K. MacDonald* for his report.

National Express Transit (NEXT)

Victor Herrera, General Manager, distributed his report and had no further updates.

He then asked for questions. There was none.

J. Costello, a RIDE customer and dispatcher for NEXT, commented that often new customers do not receive a guide after going through the in-person assessment. He noted that the guide is not user-friendly for persons who have cognitive issues or other challenges. He noted that users may feel that the manual is too large and intimidating. He asked if there was a way to make the guide friendlier, perhaps by including a “quick-sheet” with pictures or a video describing customers’ responsibilities; both options would reduce the amount of reading required. *Chairman White* stated that he is aware that many of the new clients to THE RIDE do not read the guide. *M. Hulak* noted that the guide has been downsized to be less intimidating and upon notification of a person’s eligibility from TREC (new applicants or recertifying) a quick one pager, listing key topics, is included in their RIDE acceptance package.

MBTA Update on Current Accessibility Initiatives

Laura Brelsford, Assistant General Manager, System-Wide Accessibility Department (SWA) gave an update on the current

accessibility initiatives for the Plan for Accessible Transportation Infrastructure (PATI) in a PowerPoint presentation. She noted that the next update will be in May 2016. (See the attached for complete update).

She noted many things to look forward to and highlighted a few:

- Development of a universal training guide that can be used by employees of all modes
- Development of one easy to read universal priority seating decal system-wide
- Updating of recertification for all customer service agents and bus operators
- Purchasing of additional Stryker chairs for all train sets to have at least one chair
- Consulting with a contractor to develop a universal guide for all architects, designers, engineers
- Development of training manual to work with Transit Police
- Development studies for the remaining inaccessible stations and new elevator design
- Securing money for station designs: Symphony, Natick, Franklin, and Downtown Crossing
- She noted that Secretary Pollack, General Manager DePaola, and Chief Administrator Shortsleeve are well aware of the lack of funding for future projects. She noted, however, that accessibility is a priority.

She then asked for questions.

R. Morin acknowledged L. Brelsford for the great work on her presentation. *L. Brelsford* thanked him for his comments and observations.

A consumer asked how the second tap card target on the fare box was made possible. *L. Brelsford* noted that the MBTA and the vendor made the wiring and sensor modifications were made to all fare boxes. She noted that all new fare boxes will be equipped with these modifications. She stated that this work took place at night over a year.

Chairman White asked what steps are taken after any incident like the one reported last week. *L. Brelsford* noted that when such incidents happen, she contacts the Transit Police and the Safety teams to find out if anyone required additional assistance, how they were assisted, and whether the MBTA's evacuation plan worked.

E. Frith commented that station elevators lack ventilation. She asked if there is documentation on elevator repairs that can be viewed on-line. *L. Brelsford* stated that the information had been temporarily removed from the website. She did note that the information was being revised and that it would be back on-line shortly.

Chairman White thanked *L. Brelsford* for her presentation.

Old Business

None was presented.

New Business

None were presented.

Open Discussion

Chairman White also wanted to know if there was a way for someone in a mobility device to release the doors manually with a lever or button. *L. Brelsford* stated that the buttons are not designed for passengers to operate and that only the emergency brake is available.

E. Frith stated that she has been around AACT for some time and is pleased to see the work that is being accomplished. *L. Brelsford* thanked her and stated that she is proud of her top notch staff and that she has the support of executive management, and the community.

Announcements

L. Brelsford announced that Government Center Station will re-open on March 21st beginning at 11:45 A.M. everyone is welcome to attend.

J. Magnet has worked tirelessly with the folks at MassPort for a dedicated pickup area for THE RIDE at Logan Airport. He announced that all his hard work has been rewarded. He stated that MassPort has added signs for THE RIDE at Terminal B at a passenger pickup area. He noted that the State Police are aware and that vehicles should be safe from towing.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM.

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.

Notices of AACT meetings are posted on the website of the MBTA at http://www.mbta.com/about_the_mbta/public_meetings/. Visit the MPO's calendar page at <http://www.bostonmpo.org/calendar/month> to find AACT agendas, meeting minutes, and past meeting minutes. For more on AACT, see the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the

MBTA and AACT, the AACT Bylaws, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations at <http://www.mbta.com/aact> .

Also, find articles about topics discussed at AACT meetings in the MPO's newsletter, *TRANSREPORT*, at <http://www.bostonmpo.org/transreport>. For more information on accessibility at the MBTA, please visit www.mbta.com/accessibility.

Comments and questions concerning AACT should be directed to Chairman James White by contacting the AACT Coordinator, Ms. Janie Guion, at 857.702.3658 (voice/relay), 617.570.9193 (TTY), AACT@ctps.org (email), or c/o CTPS, 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150, Boston, MA 02116 (US 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; 617.570.9192; (TTY) 617.570.9193 (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 her or himself or any specific class of persons has been subjected to discrimination

prohibited by Title VI, ADA, or other non-discrimination statute or regulations may, her or 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 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.