

Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

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Members Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 22, 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 1:03 PM

Reading of the Agenda

Introductions

Attendees: James White, Mary A. Murray, Ian Perrault, Lisa Weber, Joyce Kilgore, Rick Morin, Debbie Weathers, Jon H. Byrne, Angela Manerson, Don Summerfield, Richard Mahoney, Jeffery Magnet, Steve Junknis, Dee Whittlesey, Nancy Miller, Reggie Clark, and Kim Platt

MBTA Staff:

Mike Hulak, Dana Nyle, Carol J. Harrington, and Rob Sampson,

Vendor Staff:

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 March 23rd and January 27th, 2016. The minutes were accepted unanimously with two abstentions.

Chairman's Report

Chairman White stated the following:

- On June 15th he attended a Community Forum on Disability Issues hosted by the City of Boston's Commission for Persons with Disabilities.
- On June 8th he attended the National Express passenger assistance training.

- On June 6th, he attended the Fiscal and Management Control Board (FMCB) meeting. On behalf of AACT, he recommended that Global Contact Services be awarded the contract for the Centralized Consolidated Call Center (CCCC), based on a rigorous scoring process before knowing the bid.

He commented that Michael Lambert, MassDOT, Deputy Administrator for Transit, made a presentation to the FMCB showing the likely benefits of the CCCC. He noted that with the new service, vendors will travel to all areas with no transfers. He noted that CCCC offices will be located in the town of Medford, MA. He noted that the MBTA ask that CCCC fast-track the process to be operational in six months.

- On May 26th he attended bus recertification training in Charlestown
- He explained that the MBTA and MassHealth Standard will be issuing a joint letter to a number of users of THE RIDE for medical trips. This letter will explain eligibility for free transportation by MassHealth for medical trips with a form to be completed by a medical provider.

He then asked for questions. There were none.

Luiza Aguiar, Director of Products at Perkins Solutions at the Perkins School for the Blind (PSB)

As Director of Products for Perkins Solutions at the PSB, she described a groundbreaking project that could change the way people who are blind or visually impaired access public transportation. The project is developing a new mobile-phone application which focuses on a micro-navigation tool to help the visually impaired precisely locate bus stops.

Boston is the first city in the testing phase of this new technology, which is funded by a grant from Google.org.

L. Aguiar was hired by the PSB from the high-tech industry. She detailed the story of how the idea of the app came to be after speaking with her colleagues and other people at the PSB. Most people said that they sometimes missed the bus because they were not perfectly positioned close to the bus stop sign or were too late after asking for help in knowing where to stand.

She noted that global positioning system (GPS) is accurate up to a 30-foot radius and that finding a bus stop sign can be a challenge for non-sighted or low-sighted riders even with the use of GPS navigation tools. The app users volunteer to help guide users to the bus stop sign. Raze Labs is the mobile app developer partner, and they have a lead iOS developer who is visually impaired and they also had a developer who worked for accessibility for Apple for a number of years.

PSB has a huge volunteer base that they hope to tap into for app development. Tufts Health Plan volunteers went out and entered guidance clues in 108 bus stops in just a few hours for the development of the app. In addition to new clues, PSB is also looking for testers' feedback indicating where the app could be improved.

Features include predictive arrival schedule, saved stops, and landmark clues to the bus stop sign –aligned with the direction of travel.

Anyone who would like to be a tester and give feedback or to stay updated should contact the PSB at www.perkins.org/bus/#notifyme.

She noted that testing will continue throughout the summer. The finished product is scheduled to be in the iTunes AppStore in September. It is the first mobile App at the PSB.

She then asked for questions.

A. Manerson asked about what happens when signs get moved, if the app incorporates basic mobility training, and if the app encourages the use of GPS at the same time. *L. Aguiar* said the app leverages existing GPS products, so the user can switch quickly between Apple Maps and Google Maps to get close to the stop and then use the app. The app lets the user know if the stop is near the curb so the user can “trail the curb.” The MBTA said 1% of all stops are in motion all the time. The app has a way for the user to say if the clue is wrong or not helpful. There is also a freeform field where the user can enter that the stop has moved. Other sensory clues (like scent) can be entered.

A consumer asked if this information would be made available to the android in the near future. *L. Aguiar* said that android’s accessibility capabilities are coming along, but first version will only be on iPhones using VoiceOver, which is more popular at this time.

J. Rowe asked if there were conversations with the MBTA about how to add signage to bus stops and how to locate them more accurately. *L. Aguiar* said that there were conversations. They know where the bus stops are +/- 1000 feet from the middle of the street. So PSB immediately realized they had to do a GPS reading at each bus stop. There will be an MBTA-sponsored survey out in the next 18 months to do this, but the app hopes to do some of the work sooner.

A consumer asked if there was a concern for people who do not have an iPhone. *L. Aguiar* said that iOS has a large share of the user base for VoiceOver so they started there.

Chairman White commented that he was impressed by the approach and wished her good luck. He thanked Ms. Aguiar for her presentation.

MBTA and Vendor Reports

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

Rob Sampson, Manager for System-Wide Accessibility, distributed his report and gave the following updates:

- On June 6th, System-wide Accessibility (SWA) published its semi-annual Plan for Accessible Transit Infrastructure (PATI) report on the 85 initiatives showing – both short and long term – to improve system access. SWA will update the initiatives every six months.
- MBTA has finalized the bus stop survey tool.

R. Clark asked about the lack of buses with cameras. *R. Sampson* said the latest order of buses is undergoing the piloting phase and they will enter revenue service in the next few months.

Chairman White asked about the new prototype of driver enclosure and if an oversize wheelchair would fit. *R. Sampson* said prototype has been tested for an oversized chair. The new circle check card has been approved but he is uncertain when the cards would be implemented.

R. Clark asked how many buses are involved in the latest procurement. He noted that service on the Route 66 is consistently inadequate. *R. Sampson* estimated that there are around 350 buses on order, including 40 articulated buses and noted his concerns about bus service on Route 66.

R. Clark asked for a better maintenance plan for the new buses. *R. Sampson* said that there are new guidelines for how long a bus is to remain in service after certain accessibility features are broken. He

commented that there is a rule stating that malfunctioning ramps should be removed from service as soon as possible.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Sampson for his report.

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

Mike Hulak, Manager of Paratransit Contract Operations, submitted the OTA report and shared the following:

- Effective immediately, same-day requests may still be requested. Anything after 5:00PM that is not considered a negotiation may still be requested but is not guaranteed. The same holds for same-day of service.
- Effective June 1st, the reservation window changed from 1-14 days to 1-7 days in advance to reduce the number of late cancellations. It also reduces the amount of available funds that a customer is required to have in their account.
- Effective July 1st, 1 way ADA fare will be \$3.15. One way non-ADA premium will be \$5.25. Wellesley and Dover will begin to be serviced by MWRTA. The transfer location will be Riverside and fare will be \$3.15.
- MBTA will not be providing July 4th shuttle service to and from Massachusetts Eye and Ear parking lot to the Esplanade.

He then asked for questions.

Chairman White asked if there were recommendations for people who want to go to the Esplanade. *M. Hulak* said there will be no service and that it is not an MBTA event.

Chairman White thanked M. Hulak for his report.

Keolis Commuter Services

Selena Walckner, Title VI Manager, was unable to attend the meeting.

MBTA Transit Police Department

Dana Nye, Communications Coordinator, gave no updates, but listened to comments from the audience.

- She was advised that private and commercial vehicles continue to block bus stops illegally.
- She was made aware of MBTA buses that speed.
- She was also made aware of MBTA buses with green lights flashing.

Officer Nye stated that customers should contact the MBTA at 617-222-1212 when they are aware of situations with buses or customers services at 617-222-3200.

Chairman White thanked Ms. Nye.

National Express Transit (NEXT)

Victor Herrera distributed his report and announced the next training passenger assistance class (PAT) for June 13th.

He then asked for questions.

D. Weathers noted that she fears retaliation if she makes a complaint against a driver. *V. Herrera* assured the customer that retaliation or intimidation to a customer for filing a complaint or concern is never tolerated.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Herrera for his report.

Veterans Transportation (VT)

Kevin MacDonald, Project Manager, distributed his report and announced the upcoming PAT classes for July 14th and 28th.

There were no questions.

Chairman White thanked Mr. MacDonald.

Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)

Steve Epps, Director of Transportation, distributed his report and announced PAT classes for July 1st from 8 AM to 4 PM.

He asked for questions.

J. Magnet was curious about the training. *S. Epps* stated that AACT members are always welcome to the trainings.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Epps for his report.

Old Business

None was presented.

New Business

None was presented.

Announcements:

- June 28th at 1-3 PM, Judge King will hold his semi-annual public meeting in the new Transportation Board Room, which is the former transportation library. The meeting will have the regular update and will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Boston Center for Independent Living settlement.

Meeting adjourned at 2:43 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.