



Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

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Wednesday, August 25, 2010

AACT Meeting Minutes

NOTABLES

- AACT has a page on the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's website at www.bostonmpo.org. Links can be found there for the following items: agendas, upcoming meetings, past meeting minutes, the memorandum of understanding 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.
- Comments and questions concerning AACT should be directed to Chairman Haynes 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 (e-mail)
- Chairman Haynes recommends that members needing service information or wanting to inquire about MBTA services, do so through the MBTA Customer Support Services Center 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/
- 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

Ben Haynes, Lillian Haynes, Paul Barresi, Angela Manerson, Kathryn Piccard, Stanley Wotring, Helen Mayo, Linda Leperz, William McCarthy, Cheryl Ravalli, James White, Reggie Clark, Marilyn MacNab, Sears Cummings, Thomas Gilbert, John Cappucio, John Kane, Philip Beaulieu, Brian Coppola, and Don Summerfield

MassDOT /MBTA Representatives

Frank Oglesby, Carol Joyce-Harrington, Kathy Cox, ,

Vendor Representatives

Greater Lynn Senior Services, Inc –Jackie Dunlop
Veterans Transportation LLC–Kevin MacDonald
Joint Venture of Thompson Transit Inc. and YCN–Victor Herrera

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

Walter Bennett and Janie Guion

MEETING

Chairman Haynes called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM

- Members, friends and guests introduced themselves.

Approval of the AACT Meeting Minutes

- The AACT minutes from the July 28 meeting were approved as written, with one abstention.

Chairman's Report (No written report was submitted)

The Chairman Haynes reported the following:

- Concerned about the lack of communication between the MBTA, MassDOT and AACT regarding transportation activities
- A need for better understanding of the Americans with Disabilities Act
- A reminder that the AACT meetings are not the place to file complaints
- A reminder that AACT the Board reviews complaints and will intervene if your response is not to your satisfaction
- Acknowledgement that the MBTA General Manager Richard Davey has a dedicated spirit to getting the job done.

He then asked for questions. None were presented.

Carla Howze, Director of Customer Support Service Center (CSSC)

Ms. Howze gave an operational overview of her department and staff functions.

She then asked for questions.

M. MacNab: I contacted MassDOT for information on Regional Transit Authorities (RTA) throughout the state. The staff had no RTA information and suggested that I do my own research. The agency staff should be more knowledgeable and have any of the other RTA's information available.

C. Howze: Thanks for bringing this to my attention.

D. Summerfield: I have filed many complaints with CSSC and never received a callback. The complaints that I have filed have been in violation of my civil rights. I don't feel the system is working. Why can't I get a callback regarding my complaint?

C. Howze: If it is identified as a civil rights complaint it is forwarded, to the Office of Civil Rights, this may take a little longer. I will do research.

J. White: I have filed numerous complaints to CSSC regarding blocked bus stops in my neighborhood. That it is an increasing problem. Bus operators should be reminded to use the “transit master box” (TMB) when the bus stops cannot be accessed.

C. Howze: I will report this to Chief MacMillan.

J. Kane: What is the training level of your staff?

C. Howze: There is extensive training for the department. Chairman Haynes has a copy of the manual on how we handle complaints. Training of the CSSC staff is done on four to five different systems.

P. Barresi: Is there a schedule for training the CSSC staff?

C. Howze: Since the inception of the department, we have not hired any additional staff. We do have re-training when the MBTA has a new product or change in the system.

R. Clark: Bus operators see that the bus stop is blocked but do not text the message to Operations Control. Do all operators know how to operate the TMB?

C. Howze: Yes, there is a way to notify the Operations that there is a vehicle parked in the bus stop. I have heard that they are in the process of re-instructing drivers on the TMB.

K. Piccard: What is the percentage of complaints that you are able to close? Do you spot-check complaints?

C. Howze: The response is about 80 percent. We are looking for 100 percent and, yes, we do spot-check.

H. Mayo: Consumers are very inconsiderate by not canceling THE RIDE service. Consumers who fail to cancel service should be charged. The taxpayers are paying for those who are no-shows.

T. Gilbert: I'd like to suggest that transportation reminders be referenced on the CSSC phone system while the caller waits.

C. Howze: I will do research.

Chairman Haynes: Thank you, Ms. Howze; we appreciate your taking the time to address our concerns. I'd like to suggest that your office schedule re-training for staff members to refresh them regarding their duties and responsibilities. This would help improve the communication between your office and the consumers.

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

She reported the following:

- Due to a number of elevator maintenance projects going on over the coming months the MBTA will be operating shuttle buses between stations from time to time. Details will be available at www.mbtacom and through stations/vehicle announcements and signage.

D. Summerfield: When I boarded the bus recently, I informed the driver that I had a disability and ask that he let me get seated before he took off. He didn't listen and I was falling. This needs to be addressed.

K. Cox: Bus operators are instructed to wait for the customer to be seated. Please call the MBTA Customer Support Services Center at 617-222-3200 with the details so that Bus Operations can investigate and take appropriate action.

B. Coppola: Do you have any information about whether Massachusetts Bay Commuter Rail will be adding the light-emitting diode (LED) captioning?

K. Cox: I do not know. The last time I checked there were no immediate plans. I recommend that you suggest to the AACT Board

that they invite someone from Commuter Rail to a future AACT meeting.

J. White: Are you aware of any rule that says passengers are not to assist the drivers with tie-down of their mobility device?

K. Cox: MBTA operators are responsible for securing mobility devices.

T. Gilbert: Can you confirm where exactly drivers are to stop the bus at stops?

K. Cox: I believe that it is near the front sign, but I will check with Bus Operations.

K. Piccard: At a previous meeting last year Bus Operations brought in yellow stickers that could be attached to mobility devices that read, "Secure Here," I find them to be incredibly helpful. Would you bring more stickers to the next meeting?

K. Cox: I will ask Bus Operations if they have the stickers and will bring some.

D. Summerfield: I find that, if a train is to be expressed and bypass some stations, the train's visual announcement is shown very late. If you are hearing impaired, you have no time to react to the change.

K. Cox: Unfortunately all of our trains do not have dual-mode announcements (audio and visual). All new trains will have dual mode announcements to address this problem.

T. Gilbert: I have heard that the straps used to secure the mobility devices are very soiled. Can you make sure that someone is cleaning the straps?

K. Cox: I will forward that information to Bus Operations.

Chairman Haynes, thank you Ms. Cox.

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

He reported that there is no new information since the report was updated.

He then asked for questions.

H. Mayo: I am not pleased with the staff that is in charge of OTA. Why not hire persons with disabilities?

F. Oglesby: I am willing to speak with you.

K. Piccard: What can you share with us about the recent accident between a pedestrian and one of THE RIDE vehicles? Were any consumers on board?

F. Oglesby: The accident is still under investigation; there were no passengers on board.

S. Cummings: I arrive in Boston via the commuter rail at North Station. I become very anxious that I have missed THE RIDE when I arrive and there is no RIDE vehicle. To help ease my anxiety it would be appropriate for THE RIDE to arrive before I do.

F. Oglesby: I can speak with your vendor. I will contact you regarding this issue.

J. White: THE RIDE drivers are concerned with their Global Positioning System (GPS) units, which only give verbal directions on where to turn and not a map location. Have you heard how this system is working?

K. MacDonald/VT: This was a feature that was not requested and VTS has asked that it be turned off. The result is that drivers will be able to see the progress of the trip on the GPS screen, as they did before. The GPS tool upgrade has been received and rolled out. I do not yet know how much improvement we will see.

J. Kane: The ranger units are not accurate because it sends drivers on a more scenic route rather than a more direct route. Why do some vendors use different GPS units? Are certain GPS units they banned by the MBTA?

K. MacDonald/VT: The issue that prompted VTS to ban the use of alternative GPS units arose when a driver was reported to be using a cell phone. When we brought the driver in he said he was using the GPS function on his cell phone. VTS made the choice to disallow all devices other than those mounted on the vehicle (Mentor Rangers) in order to remove the problem of misperception. The MBTA would have to say whether or not this is also their requirement.

D. Summerfield: While I have had some complaints in the past with THE RIDE, I would like to say that I have had wonderful service from the Greater Lynn Senior Services and Veterans Transportation. The staffs have been very respectful.

F. Oglesby: Thank you.

H. Mayo: Why are consumers allowed to have only two bags when they grocery shop?

V. Herrera: Drivers sometime give the wrong information regarding bags. When you are shopping for groceries you are allowed more bags. It is the trip to the airport with too many pieces of luggage that is the issue.

A. Manerson: What time is the last pickup for THE RIDE service?

F. Oglesby: It is 1:00 a. m.

P. Barresi: Is your voice heard on fixed route buses?

F. Oglesby: Everywhere, yes, on all modes.

J. Kane: What is the MBTA's position on the GPS unit?

F. Oglesby: The GPS can be used at the discretion of the individual driver.

T. Gilbert: Can the rule for “no eating or drinking” in vehicles be applied to fixed route as it is for THE RIDE?

F. Oglesby: I will do research.

No Transit Police Report was given.

Open Discussion

Chairman Haynes: We are taking suggestions for future presentations. Please identify what your issue is or whom it may concern and we will make every effort to have it included on the agenda.

Some suggestions are:

- An MBTA Bus Operations discussion of safety and accessibility features
- A Massachusetts Bay Commuter Rail discussion of light-emitting diode captioning
- A Training Department presentation on an overview of MBTA staff training
- A Customer Support Service Center or MassDOT presentation on the process of accessible services from other RTA's
- A State Transportation Building security update.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.

