

## Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

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### AACT Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 14, 2012

### Notables

*On December 19 the AACT Executive Board will meet from 10:00 AM to noon in the Transportation Library, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, State Transportation Building and the full Membership will meet from 1:00 PM to 3 PM in Conference Rooms 2 and 3 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, State Transportation Building*

AACT has a page on the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) website at [www.bostonmpo.org](http://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*, the MBTA's Office for Transportation Access, and the AACT Coordinator.

Comments and questions concerning AACT should be directed to the Acting Interim Chairman James White by contacting AACT Coordinator, Ms. Janie Guion, at 617-973-7507 (voice); 617-973-7089 (TDD); 617-973-8855 (fax); or at [AACT@ctps.org](mailto:AACT@ctps.org) (email).

The AACT meetings are conducted in accessible locations, and materials can be provided in accessible formats and in languages

other than English. If you would like accessibility or language accommodation, please contact Ms. Guion at the information above.

The MPO fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related 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 or related statutes or regulations 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.

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/](http://www.mbta.com/customer_support/feedback/).

You may contact THE RIDE at the Office for Transportation Access, Monday-Friday, 8:30 AM to 5 PM, to ask for a trip/fare history of trips you have taken. You may also file a complaint here if you feel you have been overcharged. Please telephone 617-222-5123 (Voice), 617-222-6119 (fax) or 1-800-533-6282 (voice, toll-free), 617-222-5415 (TTY) or email [theride@mbta.com](mailto:theride@mbta.com)

Your checks for MBTA THE RIDE travel should include your account ID number and should be addressed to:

**MBTA**  
**Office for Transportation Access**  
**10 Park Plaza**

***Suite 5000***

***Boston, MA 02116***

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**

Ian Perrault, Kathryn Piccard, James White, Richard Mahoney, Marilyn MacNab, John Capuccio, Mary Dennesen, Mary Ann Murray, Reginald Clark, and Rev. Ellen Frith

#### **MPO/Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)**

Daniel Amstutz, David Fargen, and Janie Guion

#### **MassDOT - MBTA Representatives**

Frank Oglesby, Kathleen Balerna, Paul Fitzgerald, Larry Haile, Mike Hulak, Carol Joyce-Harrington, and Tim Davis

#### **Vendor Representatives**

Kevin MacDonald - Veterans Transportation, LLC

Ray Croteau and Randy Hendrickson - Greater Lynn Senior Services

Claire DiPillo - The Joint Venture of Thompson Transit and YCN, LLC

## Other

Theadora Fisher-Health and Human Services

## Meeting

Interim Chairman James White (IC White) called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM

Members, friends and guests introduced themselves

## Corrections to the September Meeting Minutes

At the request of Innovative Paradigms, the September 26 meeting minutes have been revised for clarity.

The revised September 26 minutes were presented and seconded by the membership. Copies of the revised version are available. The minutes were accepted and approved as changed.

**M. MacNab** expressed her concern as to how to identify the changes. **AACT Coordinator** noted that the changes to text are in italics; the old text is crossed out but still identifiable and that revised copies will go to everyone.

## Chairman's Report

IC White reported on a variety of items. Here are a few highlights with the report attached:

- He was unable to attend a Recertification Training at the Charlestown Garage due to the October storm
- The opening of the In-Person Assessment (IPA) facility will possibly be in late. He speculated it would be late

November or early December, though the actual date is not confirmed

- AACT Board is waiting to have a tour of the IPA facility in Charlestown and observe the mock demonstration

He then asked for questions. None were asked.

### **Meeting Minutes Approval**

- None were presented.

### **Presentation**

Kathleen Balerna, Deputy Director of Bus Operations, began her career with the MBTA twenty years ago as a bus operator and has worked her way up through the ranks to her current position.

She stated that she can view both sides of her job since she began as a bus operator.

Ms. Balerna began by addressing a variety of concerns.

The main items discussed were:

- MassDOT officials have been notified through MBTA Special Order not to block bus stops with either company or personal vehicles. They will be access the \$100 find and reprimanded.
- Monitoring continues: an additional bus sign added with a \$100 fine has been posted

- Still no progress on removal of city-owned items; work is ongoing with the City of Boston
- Removal of a U.S. Postal Box and other boxes: newspaper boxes have been relocated; contact for postal box removal unsuccessful; Ms. Balerna will continue work on the issue
- The test program to block out certain bus stops with paint and pavement marking (identify as a no parking zone) is on hold due to budget constraints. Ms. Berlerna stated that they are looking at this as a pilot program. If successful they will continue the program
- Ms. Balerna addressed issues of: sensitivity, safety, monitoring bus operator and complaints about bus operator. She also addressed comments from members on issues of pulling into the curb and kneeling the bus, courtesy before moving bus, and making sure that seats are lowered, especially to help the visually impaired
- ADA announcements to extend courtesy to seniors and persons with disabilities are on buses and trains

She then took questions.

**M. MacNab** asked for the number of the bus stop at Charles Street West. She also suggested that Ms. Balerna contact Ms. K. McKosh who is Boston's Commissioner on Disability. The Commissioner may be able to provide contacts for resolving these issues. She suggested that Ms. Berlerna speak to Dave Carney.

**K. Berlerna** thanked her for the information.

**R. Mahoney** commented on the MBTA Bus Improvement Plan and felt it was not going to work with the Bus Route 66.

**K. Berlerna** stated that both Bus Routes 66 and 57 are being reviewed.

**R. Clark** commented that buses travel in packs. He said that when they all arrive at the same time some will continue on and you miss the bus you were waiting for.

**K. Berlerna** said that Bus Route 66 is heavily monitored by Bus Operations and operators are given the okay to drive by a stop when there are several stacked together.

**R. Clark** suggested that bus operators should be reminded to tell passengers not to seat little kids on the black equipment on the left box as you enter the bus.

**K. Berlerna** thanked him for the comment.

**IC White** stated that while at Forest Hills he was waiting to board and the Inspector and the bus operator did not enforce the pre-boarding rule for allowing persons in wheeled-mobility devices to board first.

**K. Berlerna** stated that she will research the problem.

**R. Clark** stated that he is visually impaired and he travels alone. He said that when exits the bus he has found that the bus operator has stopped the bus fifteen feet behind or ahead of the stop, or at a mailbox, or a fire hydrant.

**K. Berlerna** asked for the location.

**R. Clark** said the area is in Brookline.

**IC White** asked if she had any information on the Bus Stop Improvement Plan implementation.

**K. Berlerna** said that would be the Service Planning Department. She would contact Erik Scheier in that department.

**IC White** thanked Ms. Berlerna for her presentation.

**K. Berlerna** thanked the AACT Membership for the invitation to speak.

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

Larry Haile, SWA Coordinator, distributed his report and reported that there was no additional information since the report was completed.

He emphasized information given during Ms. Balerna presentation regarding ADA priority seating and automated announcements for fixed route vehicles.

He then asked for questions.

**R. Clark** asked for his thoughts on the ADA priority seating announcements.

**L. Haile** stated he would like to have announcements at every station as in the Washington, D.C. train system that inform passengers of the train arrival times every two minutes.

**IC White** asked Mr. Haile to give an elevator update on recent outages and the ongoing elevator project.

**L Haile** said that anyone can call the Elevator Update line at 1-800-392-6100 or 1-617-222-2828 to get information.

**I. Perrault** asked for an update of the automated phone system for MBTA scheduling.

**L. Haile** stated that the system is in the planning stages; he noted that as more information is developed he will keep AACT informed.



**I C White** asked that Mike Festa be aware that the Membership would like an update on the Government Center Project (GCP). He is interested in the timeframe of work to be done on GCP.

**L. Haile** stated he would inform Mr. Festa.

## **The Office of Transportation Access (OTA)**

Frank Oglesby, MBTA Deputy Director of Paratransit Operations -  
OTA, THE RIDE

Mr. Oglesby distributed the October 2012 reports for THE RIDE and had no further updates.

- Mr. Oglesby expressed his gratitude to the contractors from Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS), the Joint Venture of Thompson Transit and YCN (JV), and Veterans Transportation (VT) who worked tirelessly on Monday, October 29 during Hurricane Sandy making sure all THE RIDE passengers were returned home safely.
- He also expressed appreciation to his OTA staff for reporting to work also during the storm.
- He announced that GLSS has named a new Director of Transportation, Mr. Randy Hendrickson.

He then asked for questions.

**I C White** questioned whether a fifteen percent decrease in ridership was correct.

**M. Hulak** indicated the data would need to be verified.

**IC White** thanked Mr. Oglesby for his comments. He also appreciated everyone's hard work.

## **Veterans Transportation (VT)**

Kevin MacDonald, Project Manager, distributed his report and stated the following information.

- The storm caused downed telephone lines and a loss of electrical power. All problems have since been corrected
- VT is in negotiation with StratGen for new software development
- Passenger Assistance Training will be the first three Tuesdays in December. There will no training Christmas Eve.

He was available for questions.

**R. Morin** asked about the new software and whether VT is seeing increased efficiency in scheduling.

**K. MacDonald** responded no, but he expects to. He stated that the map data is slightly different. The maps have not been made public.

**R. Morin** asked what problems VT was having with the premium service area.

**K. MacDonald** stated that VT has had less recompiling of the schedule due to the time changes. He stated that fewer customers asking for changes has had a positive effect.

**IC White** asked about the one major benefit from moving from the old software to the new software. He also wanted to know about on-time performances.

**K. MacDonald** stated that the system runs faster. He explained that on-time performance is at 99 percent.

## **Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)**

The New Director of Transportation, Randy Hendrickson, distributed his report.

On his first day in his new position he encountered many problems: a power outage that interrupted computers due to a storm; the 800 telephone lines were interrupted also due to the storm; and the electrical circuits were accidentally flipped off by the janitorial service.

His staff scheduled all trips for THE RIDE manually, the old way with pen to paper.

He asked for questions. There were none.

**IC White** thanked Mr. Hendrickson for his comments and welcomed him to his new position.

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

Claire DiPillo, Manager for the Joint Venture, submitted her report and had no further updates.

She was available for questions.

**IC White** asked if ridership for JV was back to normal since the fare increase.

**C. DiPillo** stated that the ridership is increasing. She stated that as of today the number is 2000 trips.

**M. Hulak** interjected that as of today, trips for THE RIDE are at their highest.

**IC White** asked if **JV** had rehired any drivers since the layoff.

**C. DiPillo** responded that new drivers would begin the Monday after Thanksgiving.

**IC White** thanked **Ms. Dipillo** for the information.

**C. DiPillo** responded with a thank you and wished everyone Happy Holidays.

## **Announcements**

**R. Clark** announced new train service from Boston to Brunswick and Portland, Maine. For complete details contact Amtrak.

**M. Hulak** announced that the MBTA will be purchasing 104 Crown Victorias for THE RIDE Program. He stated that sedans are not being eliminated from THE RIDE.

## **Open Discussion**

**IC White** asked if someone with a neck injury could request a sedan since vans have no headrest. He asked if this would influence how a trip is booked. He asked if this type of circumstance would make an allowance for a sedan.

**M. Hulak** answered that it would not and that the ADA requires only that the MBTA make accessible transportation available.

**Rev. Frith** stated that she continues to see vehicles blocking the bus stop at 10 Park Plaza-Charles Street entrance. She was unable to access the bus stop due to an unmarked cruiser blocking the stop. She called for police to ticket the vehicle. She feels not enough is

being done to address the issue. She wants a special meeting to talk about the issues of concern to the membership.

**IC White** stated that the Deputy Director of Bus Operations made a presentation speaking on the issue of blocked bus stops. He told her she missed a lot of details presented by Ms. Balerna regarding blocked bus stop issues.

**Rev. Frith** went on to say that reporting complaints to Customer Communication at the 222-3200 number is not working. She stated that she reports elevator lights being out and bus stop signs being removed. She noted that buses don't stop where there is no sign. She would like there to be a point person who would make sure that complaints are being responded to and the work is completed. She also stated that she has spoken with the Director of System-Wide Accessibility regarding this issue. She is furious that she has to wait four months for repairs and still no repairs have been completed. She stated that follow-up calls are received four months later. She would like to have a special meeting to find out how AACT can be more effective. She would like to have the Secretary of Transportation come to address her issues.

**IC White** stated that he has filed a complaint to the MBTA regarding the 10 Park Plaza, Charles Street stop being blocked is not always reported by bus operators as a blocked bus stop. He stated that his complaint was responded to and the Bus Operations Deputy Director is here with us today. He feels that there are people who are taking initiative and people are showing up to address the issues.

**Rev. Frith** stated that she was just told by a bus operator and a transit officer that they have had no ADA or sensitivity training for persons with disabilities except for the visually impaired. She would like for the AACT Board to know this information.

**IC White** stated that all MBTA personnel have been trained in ADA or the sensitivity training. He stated that the training is an eight hour course and that he was part of its development with Judge Patrick King. He stated that all MBTA personnel were trained.

**IC White** informed K. Piccard that her motion to have more information added to THE RIDE report has been responded to.

**M. Hulak** stated that a motion presented by K. Piccard for more information to be added to THE RIDE report has been added to the OTA Activity Report.

**K. Piccard** said that the concerns raised by Ellen Frith are legitimate about the number of times the bus stop and other issues are addressed. She went on to say that there are some complaints that are responded to and some items that are not always responded to in a timely manner. She went on to mention that IC White stated how he reports problems and they are responded to in a timely manner. She remarked that her stated complaints are not always addressed in a timely manner. She said when there is a broken light for instance, it is important for people with low vision or unsteady footing to have that lighting replaced. She stated that waiting four months to get lights replaced is unacceptable and these issues need to be addressed sooner. These concerns are absolutely legitimate. She suggested that it would be useful for AACT to have a special meeting for people to express new ideas. She believes that if the appropriate people were listening perhaps the concerns could be better addressed although she was quick to say that she understands that some issues may not be doable. She also noted that if the appropriate people are not there to listen then the concerns should be addressed to the appropriate MBTA personnel in writing.

**IC White** stated that during the AACT Board meeting a number of issues were discussed. He stated that they are in the process of sending out letters to set up meetings with the new MBTA General Manager. He stated that Michael Lambert will be coordinating a meeting with new MBTA General Manager and the outgoing Acting General Manager. He also stated that Rick Morin, Board Member, will be developing a list of concerns to be addressed that have been raised by the membership over the entire year. He also said that he addresses all concerns from the meetings when he has the opportunity to meet with the General Manager.

**R. Morin** stated that he is in the process of creating a priority list so that the AACT Board can be held accountable. He stated the Board plans to have regularly scheduled meetings with MBTA management to address the issues. He plans to revise the list as they go forward. He stated the input heard today is well taken.

**IC White** stated that the next AACT meeting, which is not normally scheduled for December, will be held on Wednesday, December 19<sup>th</sup> due to the many pressing issues on the table.

The meeting ended at 3:05 pm.