

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

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AACT Membership Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 25, 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 10:00 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.

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 Saturday/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.

Meeting opened at 1:05 PM

Reading of the Agenda

Introductions

Attendees: Valerie Hall, Audrey Armand, Jeff Magnet, Theresa Casey, Tyler Terrasi, Robert Diaz, David Hogan, Esther Minor, Deanne Sisco, Nancy Miller, Cheryl Ravalli, Richard Mahoney, Mary Ann Murray, Ian Perrault, Also Lisa Weber, James White, Rick Morin, Beverly Ann Rock, Thomas Gilbert, and Reggie Clark

MBTA Staff:

Christine Bond, Benjamin Brooks, Larry Haile, Kenneth Green, Carol Joyce-Harrington

Vendor Staff:

B.J. Finnell, Ronan Coatanea, Steven Epps, Kevin MacDonald, Claire DiPillo, Jacquelyn Reynolds, and Arthur Kovacs

MPO Staff:

Janie Guion and Matt Archer

Approval of Minutes

Chairman White requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes for May 28. A motion was made and carried.

Chairman's Report

The Chair stated the following:

- He and his Vice Chair Morin attended an Emergency Evacuation Training Program. There was an ADA module, in the morning and the afternoon session that focused on evacuation protocols. He thanked Laura Brelsford from the office of System-Wide Accessibility for inviting AACT.
- He attended a meeting with Thomas Mulligan, General Manager of Keolis Commuter Services.
- Keolis has agreed to have a representative attend all AACT meetings. Chairman White provided Keolis representative with MBTA ADA training materials, and they discussed conducting a survey about accessibility on the commuter rail.
- Per the MOU between AACT and the MBTA, he is serving as a selection committee member for the MBTA's RFI 99-14: Taxi Subsidy Program. Vice Chairman Morin will serve as an associate member.

He then asked for questions.

T. Gilbert stated that some cities and towns have placed benches, bike racks, and other objects on the edge of the curb at bus stops. He requested that a letter be drafted to municipalities stating that persons with visual impairments need to board buses safely and that there should be no obstructions at the bus stops. Chairman White suggested having a person

take photographs of these bus stops and forward them to either the AACT Coordinator or the Office of System-Wide Accessibility.

Sean Pfalzer, Manager, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Michelle Scott, Manager, Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Mr. Pfalzer stated the following:

- The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is one of three certifications documents that the Boston Region MPO develops. The TIP updated annually, and the draft federal fiscal year (FFY) 2015-2018 is currently in the process of public review.
- The TIP is a four-year capital plan which lists all transportation infrastructure projects in the region that will be funded with federal funds during that four-year period. The MPO has released a draft of the FFY 2015-2018 TIP for public review; comments will be accepted until early July, and a vote to approve will occur on July 10.
- The TIP programs a total of approximately \$2 billion; approximately \$670 million is for the highway program, and \$1.3 billion for the transit program. The majority of these investments will go toward maintaining and modernizing the existing transportation system.

He then asked for questions.

Chairman White asked if issues with the federal Highway Trust Fund will affect the TIP. *S. Pfalzer* stated that they have the potential to impact the

TIP. He noted that there have been similar situations in the past, where there have been continuing resolutions to extend the current transportation bill. He said that he hopes a solution is identified without having to eliminate projects.

R. Clark asked if information is available in audio format. *S. Pfalzer* stated that he would forward the information in an accessible format.

Ms. Scott stated the following:

- The UPWP is an annually produced document describing the types of transportation planning activities that the MPO staff will be working on over the coming federal fiscal year.
- The UPWP documents planning studies that set the concepts for projects that may become projects in the TIP. The UPWP programs approximately \$6.7 million, most of which comes from the federal government. The UPWP includes four major types of activities: studies to improve specific transportation services or infrastructure; data collection and analysis activities used to support transit planning; research projects on “big picture” transportation issues; and funding and resources to support the MPO’s operations, decision making, and public outreach.
- The UPWP includes funding that supports the meetings and operations of AACT and the Regional Transportation Advisory Council, of which

AACT is a member. It also supports the public outreach conducted by the MPO to collect feedback/comments from individuals throughout the region that informs the transportation planning process. It also includes the MPO's technical assistance programs that support transit services.

- More information is available at the MPO's website at www.bostonmpo.org where public comments may be submitted.

She then asked for questions.

T. Gilbert asked about the Urban Ring project and if there will be an opportunity for the public to comment on the Silver Line extension to Chelsea. *S. Pfalzer* stated that the Urban Ring project has been discussed in the development of the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan, though it has not been included in that plan at least in the last eight years. One constraint has been the question of whether the MPO has the available resources to fund a project as large as the Urban Ring. *Ms. Scott* stated that the Silver Line extension is a MassDOT- managed project; the comments sent to the MPO are forwarded to MassDOT staff.

Chairman White thanked Ms. Scott and Mr. Pfalzer.

Deputy Chief Kenneth Green, Night Commander, MBTA Transit Police

Deputy Chief Green stated the following:

- The MBTA's "See Say" smartphone app allows users to anonymously report suspicious activities to the MBTA Transit Police. "See Say" is monitored 24/7 by a lieutenant commander and two dispatchers.
- He discussed issuing tickets at MBTA bus stops. From January 2013 through June 2013, Transit Police issued 482 tickets at bus stops; from January 2014 through June 2014, they have issued 844 tickets. The motorcycle unit's main duty is to patrol problem areas and issue tickets. The Transit Police provides lieutenant commanders with a list of all problem bus stop areas. Transit Police Chief Paul MacMillan has spoken to police chiefs in surrounding cities and towns about issuing tickets at bus stops.
- Dave Carney, Director of Bus Operations, informed Deputy Chief Green that new signs warning of a \$100 fine for parking in bus stops have been installed at 90% of top problem areas.
- When the Transit Police is notified of an incident on THE RIDE, they will investigate it to determine if a criminal incident took place. If it is not a criminal incident, THE RIDE deals with it as an administrative action.

He then asked for questions.

Chairman White stated that vehicles parked on Charles Street at 10 Park Plaza have prevented RIDE vehicles from dropping off their passengers. *E. Minor* added that this is also a problem for individuals taking the 43 bus.

Deputy Chief Green stated that he will speak to the lieutenant commander in charge of the area, who can have crews patrol the area periodically.

A member expressed concerns about parking near Quincy Center Station, and asked about the towing of vehicles parked in bus stops. *Deputy Chief Green* stated that the Transit Police contracts their towing to local towing companies. He added that he will talk to the lieutenant commander of the Quincy Center area about parking.

Chairman White thanked Deputy Chief Green.

MBTA Reports

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

Larry Haile, SWA Coordinator, distributed his report.

Mr. Haile stated the following:

In response to questions regarding ramps in disrepair at JFK/UMass Station and objects such as benches in front of bus stops, *Mr. Haile* stated that the MBTA is working on a plan for accessible transit infrastructure. The MBTA will look at the MBTA's entire infrastructure and form a plan to alleviate areas so individuals can have free access to public transportation. It is important for individuals to report accessibility issues to customer service because this will give the MBTA documented proof of these issues.

He also addressed the issue of advertisements above the “priority seating” on buses and subways. The calling cards are unreachable or impossible to see by those in mobility devices or of a small stature. He commented that he would address the issue with his superiors at SWA. He also encouraged the membership to contact customer service with that kind of issue.

He then asked for questions.

E. Minor asked about the accessibility at Science Park Station. *L. Haile* commented that it has been accessible for the last three years.

V. Hall raised concerns about a lack of seating at bus stops near housing for elderly and disabled individuals. Mr. Haile suggested that she report this issue, along with the location of the housing, to either System-Wide Accessibility or customer service.

T. Gilbert suggested that stop announcements on MBTA buses include the name of housing complexes for elderly and disabled individuals. Mr. Haile stated that the MBTA needs to be cautious about announcing stops in this manner from an advertising standpoint.

A member asked if benches are installed at bus stops on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Haile stated that he is unsure, though ridership may be a factor.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Haile for his report.

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

Carol Joyce-Harrington, Assistant Manager, submitted the OTA report and stated the following:

- THE RIDE new contracts begin, on July 1 and the core RIDE area, which was Boston, is now expanded to include Brookline, Cambridge, and Somerville. Customers residing in these communities may now call any of the three RIDE contractors for trips for trips within the Core area.
- Chelsea and Burlington will now be served directly by both Veterans Transportation and Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS). There will be no transfer if you travel within either of these areas. Wilmington will be shifted from the Veterans Transportation's area to GLSS.
- A RIDE Advisory notice was being US mailed to all active RIDE customers informing them of the changes. A new RIDE Guide is also available on the T's website www.mbta.com/theride which has also been updated to reflect the new changes. RIDE Guides can also be made available upon request by calling OTA at 617-222-5123 or emailing theride@mbta.com.

- All RIDE contractors will also conduct a seat drop with the RIDE Advisory notice beginning the last week of June and running through July 2nd.
- THE RIDE will provide an accessible shuttle during the Fourth of July concert on the Esplanade from MGH's Mass Eye and Ear Parking lot to the Hatch Shell and all transportation on all modes of transportation, including THE RIDE, after 9 P.M. will be waived.

She then asked for questions. There were none.

Chairman White thanked Ms. Harrington for her report.

Thomas Mulligan, General Manager, Keolis Commuter Services

introduced several members from his executive staff: Gerald Francis, Deputy General Manager; Ronan Coatanea, Director of Customer Service; and Rita Hardiman, Director of Diversity and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO).

Mr. Mulligan stated the following:

- Effective July 1, Keolis Commuter Services will begin operating the MBTA commuter rail system.
- He thanked Chairman White for addressing the Keolis staff.

- He commented that he and his staff are looking to meet the needs and expectations of individuals with disabilities.
- They are committed to providing training to any and all of their employees who interact with customers, particularly regarding improving interactions with persons with disabilities.
- They are reviewing the training of their current employees and, if necessary, will improve the training process.
- He is looking forward to working with Chairman White and the AACT community.

Mr. Mulligan invited Rita Hardiman, Director of Diversity and EEO at Keolis Commuter Services, to address the membership. *Ms. Hardiman* explained that she is working closely with Ronan Coatanea, Director of Customer Service for Keolis, on ADA compliance and improving services for their clients. She noted that her office is responsible for handling complaints, including reviewing and investigating complaints relating to accessibility or inappropriate customer service. Her office will take a special look at complaints filed by persons with disabilities.

He then asked for questions.

Chairman White expressed his gratitude for Keolis' outreach to AACT.

A. Manerson asked about the CapeFlyer service. *B.J. Finnel* stated that the CapeFlyer is not operated by Keolis.

E. Minor stated that her mobility device will not fit through the doors of some cars on the commuter rail; she like would future designs to include wider doors and stronger bridgeplates. *Mr. Mulligan* stated that the current fleet features both older and newer cars; the newer cars are more ADA compliant, and the MBTA is going through the process of replacing the equipment.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Mulligan for his comments.

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

Claire DiPillo distributed her report and asked for questions:

E. Minor asked if consumers will still need to transfer in the Framingham/Natick area. *Ms. DiPillo* stated that they will since that is a separate paratransit vendor Metro West.

Chairman White thanked Ms. DiPillo for her report.

Veterans Transportation (VT)

Kevin MacDonald, Project Manager, distributed his report and announced passenger assistance trainings.

He then asked for questions.

A consumer commented that THE RIDE drivers often confuse One Bowdoin Square with One Bowdoin Street.

E. Minor asked why pick-up times are changed. *Mr. MacDonald* stated that logistics are used to maximize the use of vehicles. He noted that most requested drop-off times are for the top of the hour, and if times were not shifted, there would be overbookings at the head of the hour and slack times at the three-quarter hour on every hour. He added that shifting times allows groupings of customers to make sense logistically.

Chairman White thanked Mr. MacDonald 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 commented that drivers are being very sensitive to the needs of the passengers and reminding others that they are parked in a handicap zone.

Chairman White thanked Ms. Reynolds for her report.

Announcements

Vice Chair Morin announced a gubernatorial candidate forum at the Perkins School for the Blind on June 26th.

Chairman White announced that the MBTA fare increase will begin July 1.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM.