

Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts

Bay Transportation Authority (AACT)

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Membership Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 23, 2017

Board of Directors:

Chairman – James F. White

Vice Chairman – Lisa Weber

Executive Board

Nadine Jones

Mary Ann Murray

Beverly Ann Rock

James Tozza

Meeting opened at 1:00 PM.

Reading of the Agenda

Introductions

Attendees: J. White, L. Weber, M. Murray, A. Manerson, B. Rock,

M. Segelman, S. Theberger, J. Smith, S. Mekler, K. Cambell,

B. Crocker, R. Gibson, R. Clark, D. Weathers, N. Jones, J. Tozza,

O. Richards, R. McCulley, C. Daniels, D. Summerfield, D. Vieira

Other: T. Gilbert, B. Russell, M. Killoran, L. Dantas, K. Morrissey

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the following meetings were presented:

May 24, 2017

June 28, 2017

July 26, 2017

The minutes were approved with one abstention.

Steve Poftak, MBTA Interim General Manager

He stated the following:

- He explained that for the past two years, he has been a member of the Fiscal and Management Control Board (FMCB). He noted that input from the community has been valuable to the FMCB; it is important for the Board to know the impact of their decisions. He commented that his time as Interim General Manager will end on September 11, at which point he will return to the FMCB.
- He announced that the Luis Ramirez, will begin his term as the new General Manager on September 12. The MBTA feels Mr. Ramirez will provide steady and stable leadership, a component of which will be a commitment to accessibility.
- He commented on the success of the Uber/Lyft pilot program. The program has reached over 35,000 trips with 1,200 participants. He acknowledged that the program is not a full substitution for THE RIDE, but it is a valuable service for certain customers.
- He stated that many RIDE vehicles will be replaced with 100 newer vehicles at the end of 2017.
- He noted that as part of the Plan for Accessible Transit Infrastructure all 7,685 MBTA bus stops have been assessed. He expressed the importance of safe, accessible bus stops. And noted that critical safety issues have been identified at 272 bus stops; these are on the docket to be fixed, moved, or replaced during the 2018 construction season. This information will also be used to inform the MBTA's planning and construction decisions.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Poftak for his remarks.

Department of System-Wide Accessibility (SWA)

Aniko Laszlo, Director of Coordinated Mobility in for Rob Sampson, Manager, SWA

She stated the following:

- The Green Line currently has 26 surface stations that are not accessible. The MBTA is reviewing a draft conceptual design report for the remaining stations. The MBTA will be collaborating with Mass Highway and the City of Boston.

- The Chinatown station elevator was out of service for a number of weeks. The elevator is back in service. An elevator at Park Street is currently being overhauled; completion is scheduled for January 2018. In the rest of the system for the past month, elevator up time has been 99.5%.
- The new ramps and temporary mini-high platforms are currently under construction at Mansfield Commuter Rail Station. The mini-highs are expected to be operational by early December.
- The month of July 2017 SWA received 103 accessibility complaints. Half of these were about buses; most regarded failure to board or buses that fail to stop.
- The MBTA is providing system orientation training, both in groups and one-on-one. Beginning in September, trainings will occur every second and third Thursday of the month; there will be morning and evening trainings.

She then asked for questions.

O. Richard noted an incident between a blind MBTA customer and two MBTA Ambassadors which received media coverage. She asked how Ambassador training has been adjusted due to the incident. K. Quigley stated that SWA worked closely with developing the training for the Ambassador program. Since the incident, those ambassadors have been removed. The vendor provided a refresher training, as well as training on de-escalation.

D. Summerfield commented that there are no announcements about bus diversions prior to boarding buses.

T. Gilbert recommends that an audit of the hybrid buses (1400 series), noting failing LED displays on those models. A. Laszlo stated she would give this information to the appropriate department.

R. McCulley asked for the number of complaints about lack of announcement on the subway system. A. Laszlo stated there were three.

K. Wilson stated that the Route 55 bus does not go through the Fenway Park area during Red Sox games, and is instead diverted. He noted there was no indication there would be a diversion.

Chairman White thanked Ms. Laszlo for her report.

MBTA Office for Transportation Access

(OTA) –THE RIDE Program

Mike Hulak, Manager of Paratransit Contract Operations

Mr. Hulak distributes his report and added an additional commented that OTA has met with the future General Manager of the MBTA

Mr. Luis Ramirez, and looks forward to working with him.

He then asked for questions.

M. Davis asked if the new general manager will oversee THE RIDE.

M. Hulak stated he will.

D. Summerfield stated that he was part of the taxi pilot program, but was on the waiting list for the Uber/Lyft pilot program when the taxi pilot ended. He asked why he was not automatically put on the Uber/Lyft pilot. *M. Hulak* stated the two pilot programs are separate, and the newer taxi pilot has not yet started. Customers can email ridepilots@mbta.com to add their name to the list for the new taxi pilot. OTA Staff stated there is no longer a waiting list for the Uber/Lyft pilot; anyone who signs up can participate.

B. Corcoran asked for clarification about which phone number he should use for complaints and compliments. *M. Hulak* stated that 617-222-3200 for regular customer service, or customers can use 617-222-5123 to go directly to the RIDE department.

A consumer stated that TRAC informed her that she could not use 1295 Boylston Street as a pickup location for Fenway Park, stating that it is not a landmark. She stated she had previously been able to use this location, and asked why this is the case. *M. Hulak* stated that if 1295 Boylston Street is open to vehicle traffic, there should not be an issue.

J. Smith asked if NEXT still provide standby service. *M. Hulak* stated that GCS is currently focused on all trips that were requested the day prior; there is currently no standby.

Chairman White thanked *Mr. Hulak* for his report.

Kenneth Green, Chief of Police, MBTA Transit Police Department

Chief Green explained that he has been in training at the Federal Bureau of Investigations, National Academy from April to June.

He then asked for questions.

R. Gibson complimented the Transit Police for assistance with a drug user in an elevator at Chinatown Station. *Chief Green* stated that he will ensure that his officers consistently check the elevators at Chinatown and State Street.

O. Richard asked if Transit Police will scale up their visibility as students return to school. *Chief Green* stated they will hire extra officers to bolster security during morning and afternoon school breaks. They will also continue their STOPWATCH program, in which officers and concerned adults monitor troubled stops.

R. Clark requested that Transit Police ensure the safety of bus drivers. *Chief Green* stated the safety of MBTA employees and passengers is paramount. Transit Police checks the busses, and they rely on bus drivers to report to them if they feel threatened. Transit Police has made numerous arrests related to buses. He noted that buses are equipped with security cameras and alarms.

K. Wilson stated that many people frequently park at the Prudential stop, resulting in passengers needing to board in the street. He added this often happens during Red Sox games. *Chief Green* stated he will instruct the motorcycle officers to patrol this location for several days.

Chairman White thanked Chief Green for his *Hulak* for his comments.

Rita Hardiman, Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer in for Elizabeth Hickey - Keolis Commuter Services (KCS) announced the following:

- On August 22 and September 29, there will be busing between Gloucester and Rockport on four midday trains. This will allow for installation of Positive Train Control. Work on the Beverly drawbridge has been completed. Alerts will be pushed as text to cell phones, and information is available on the MBTA website.
- On August 27 weekend busing on the Newburyport/Rockport line will conclude.
- West Natick mini-high replacement project is progressing. There are temporary lifts in place until work is completed.
- Canton Junction construction has concluded, and all platforms are open and accessible.

She then asked for questions and comments.

Chairman White thanked Ms. Hardiman for her report.

Ms. Hardiman then discussed a potential new program for Keolis in the Boston area regarding priority seating and received input:

- The proposed program would have customers receive a priority seating card along with their TAP card; this would essentially be an ID card. This card is used in a number of systems in England, and has been primarily used by individuals with hidden disabilities. This option was started in response to the many complaints concerning customers who were not disabled taking up the priority seating.
- The card requests that a person give up their priority seat, and notes that the card holder has a disability that may not be apparent. It does not require the person to give up their seat, but does alert them to a person's disability. Alternately, it can be shown to other passengers who request the card holder give up their priority seat. It can also be shown to conductors, who can then ask a passenger to move from priority seating; she noted that conductors cannot force passengers to move.
 - Conductor intervention
 - Loss of individual identity as disabled.
 - Loss of Inclusion and Desegregation.
 - A customer backlash.
 - Discourage hogging seats.
 - Legal Implications.
 - Educate General Public: Notices and Signage.

She thanked everyone for their input, adding that although the system works in England, it may not work in Boston. She noted that Keolis will conduct surveys regarding this proposal.

Veterans Transportation

Jon Christina, Operations Manager, announced passenger assistance training (PAT) class will be on September 13th.

He then asked for questions.

Consumer stated she is a Veterans customer, but does not currently live in the service area. She asked if she is still eligible for RIDE pilot programs. *M. Hulak* stated that active RIDE customers are eligible to participate in pilot programs, even if they live outside of the service area.

S. Theberge asked if Veterans will transition to TRAC. *J. Christina* stated they are currently working with Global Contact Services (GCS) and OTA to transition their call center.

M. Segelman stated that she requested a pick-up, and was later told she had not; following this, she received a phone call informing her that a RIDE vehicle was waiting for her. *J. Christina* stated he can investigate the incident.

O. Richard noted numerous complaints about dispatch in the GCS report. She asked if Veterans has received a similar volume of complaints, and if they have had issues interfacing with TRAC.

J. Christina stated there have been some issues to work out, but they are working with GCS to transition.

J. Smith asked if Veterans has stopped offering stand-by service.

J. Christina stated that Veterans currently accepts stand-by requests. *M. Hulak* noted that Veterans supplements their RIDE service with their taxi service, allowing them more flexibility to provide additional service.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Christina for his report.

Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)

Steven Epps, Director of Transportation, announced PAT classes will be held on August 25th and September 11th.

He then asked for questions.

R. Gibson complimented a supervisor and a driver for assisting her into her house after her mobility device failed. *M. Hulak* stated that supervisors and drivers are not supposed to do this; emergency services should have been involved. He stated this policy is due to the risk of injury to the employees.

B. Corcoran asked if there will be a policy change in which three people are scheduled to sit in the back seat of the fleet's Crown Victoria. *M. Hulak* stated that the Crown Victoria is designed to have three customers in the back and one customer in the front. At some point, it was limited to two customers in the back seat; this has been changed to what it was supposed to be. However, if a person is large in size, they can phone ahead and they will be given extra space.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Epps for his report.

National Express Transit (NEXT)

Kevin Morrissey, Assistant General Manager

He stated that eight new drivers are currently in training.

He then asked for questions.

J. Smith requested that NEXT remind their drivers to limit their use of fragrances. *K. Morrissey* suggested that she should file a complaint.

M. Hulak stated that when drivers are given their keys, vendors ensure they are not using an excessive amount of fragrances.

S. Theberge asked if drivers are allowed to leave their vehicle if customers are boarded. *K. Morrissey* stated that drivers are instructed to stay within sight of the vehicle. If drivers need to lose their line of sight, they are instructed to call dispatch.

M. Segelman asked if drivers need to take their keys when they leave the vehicle. *K. Morrissey* stated they are instructed to always take the keys, and customers should file a complaint if they do not. *M. Hulak* added that it is Massachusetts state law to not leave the vehicle idling.

M. Segelman asked about drivers playing the radio during trips.

M. Hulak stated passengers can ask drivers to change radio stations.

K. Wilson stated that a driver's GPS was not functioning and asked to borrow my *K. Morrissey* stated the driver should report the issue to dispatch, who would send another driver. *M. Hulak* noted the GPS assists the driver, but does not replace their map book.

A. Manerson noted that some of the questions raised by AACT members are addressed in PAT classes.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Morrissey for his report.

Global Contact Services (GCS) Ray Croteau, Acting Interim General Manager

Stated the following:

- GCS continues to improve service, though they are not satisfied with its current state. GCS is working to correct issues that arose during the vendor transitions to The Ride Access Center (TRAC), and is in frequent communication with NEXT and GLSS.
- He noted that there were over 100,000 trips completed in July, and TRAC received 120,000 calls.

He then asked for questions.

D. Vieira stated that a reservationist asked him to provide the address for Back Bay station. He stated that he was not given the pickup location on the Clarendon Street. He asked why the reservationists are not aware of this pickup location. *R. Croteau* stated that new agents were unfamiliar with using this table. GCS is having “mini-meetings” with every agent to ensure their familiarity with the software; customer feedback is used to guide discussions.

J. Smith asked if GCS could provide updated guidelines for RIDE customers, as it seems that they are implementing rule changes.

M. Hulak stated that any changes in policy would be made by the MBTA. MBTA provides this information when there are substantial changes to the guidelines, and the updated guide is available on the MBTA website at www.mbta.com.

S. Theberge stated that RIDE drivers should have phones for contacting customers; the need for driver and customer to speak through dispatch makes locating drivers difficult. *R. Croteau* stated that the no phone policy is in place as a safety measure. *M. Hulak* stated this policy came into effect for all MBTA drivers and operators following a Green Line accident.

D. Summerfield asked if GCS also handles calls to the MBTA customer service phone line. *R. Croteau* stated GCS has the contract to assist in most calls to the customer service line, adding that it is a department separate from TRAC.

M. Davis stated on several occasions drivers are intentional reporting her as a no-show. *R. Croteau* stated he has not heard of drivers doing this intentionally, adding that GCS monitors the no-show process; dispatchers are supposed to ensure that the driver is in the correct location. *M. Hulak* noted that no drivers have been held accountable for excessive no-shows.

Chairman White thanked *Mr. Croteau* for his report.

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) 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.

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