

Memorandum for the Record Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (AACT) Membership Minutes

Wednesday, January 24, 2018, Meeting

1:00 PM–3:00 PM (called to order at 1:05 PM), State

Transportation Building, Suite 2150, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

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Board of Directors

Chair—James F. White

Vice Chair—Lisa Weber

Executive Board

James Tozza

Nadine Jones

Mary Ann Murray

Beverly Ann Rock

Reading of the Agenda

Welcome and Introductions

Attendees

James F. White

Lisa Weber

James Tozza

Nadine Jones

Angela Manerson

Jennifer S. Workman
Lynn Hutchings
David J. Vieira
Byron Nash
Mary Dennesen
Rosa Tepper
Sylvia Mekler
Tom Gilbert
John Robinson
Christen Daniels
Beverly A. Rock
Debbie Weathers
Reggie Clark

MBTA Staff

Carol Joyce-Harrington
Mike Hulak
Rob Sampson
Ben Schutzman

Vendor Staff

Ray Croteau
Steve Epps
Victor Herrera
Kevin MacDonald
Elizabeth Hickey

Other

Eugenia Soules
Winston Pierre
Patricia Mendez

Approval Meeting Minutes

None were presented.

Chair Report

James White, Chair, addressed his absence from previous meetings and expressed his appreciation to Vice Chair Lisa Weber for her support during his absence and for the wonderful job as noted to him by others. Chair White then updated the committee on the following points.

- The MBTA will sever all ties with Global Contact Services (GCS) by the end of June 2018 to be replaced with a new vendor to assume responsibility for the centralized call and control center for THE RIDE, the MBTA's paratransit program.
- The Chair expressed gratitude to the Office for Transportation Management (OTA) for the recommendation to the General Manager for his appointment to the Selection Committee to represent AACT's membership during the

evaluation period to replace GCS for the new call center vendor

- The Chair noted that GCS will remain in place for a period for a smooth transition once the new vendor/contractor is selected.
- The Chair thanked Matt Archer, Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) support staff, for his assistance during the absence of the AACT's Coordinator.

The Chair opened the floor to questions. None were asked.

MBTA Update on the new Request for Response for THE RIDE Access Center

Ben Schutzman, Director of Transportation Innovation, OTA, provided the following updates.

- The MBTA is seeking a new vendor for THE RIDE Access Center (TRAC). Many stakeholders worked with OTA to ensure that the information and lessons learned since TRAC's opening will be used in the process.
- A Request for Response (RFR) was sent on January 19, 2018. Bids are expected at the end of February 2018; the

MBTA will perform due diligence, evaluation, and selection from late February 2018 to the beginning of May 2018. The transition from GCS to the new vendor will be finalized on June 1, 2018.

- The RIDE Eligibility Center will also have a new contract. The MBTA will begin the selection process in the coming weeks, and the new vendor will begin work on July 1, 2018.

B. Schutzman opened the floor to questions and discussion.

D. Vieira asked if current TRAC employees, working for GCS, will remain at TRAC following the transition. B. Schutzman stated that all existing employees will be offered a position with the new vendor. He noted that the new vendor will make improvements and enhancements to staff over time.

T. Gilbert asked if GCS will continue to operate the MBTA call center. B. Schutzman stated that GCS will transition out of that capacity on June 1, 2018.

Vice Chair Weber complimented the MBTA for its use of community feedback in the RFR.

B.A. Rock asked if the phone system will allow THE RIDE customers to call dispatch directly. B. Schutzman stated that the phone system can be improved, but it will be at the discretion of the new vendor. He added that the current system allows customers to directly reach dispatch.

J.S. Workman asked if due diligence will ensure that the new vendor has not been terminated from previous jobs. B. Schutzman stated that vendors are required to have prior experience in the field, adding that the MBTA will investigate its previous contracts.

N. Houghton asked if the policy of checking references began after hiring GCS. B. Schutzman stated this has always been MBTA policy, but noted that the minimum requirements now include experience in reservation, scheduling, and dispatch.

MBTA Reports

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

Rob Sampson, Manager for SWA, shared the following points.

- The Blind Ways application created by the Perkins School for the Blind helps low-vision customers locate bus stops.
- MBTA is responsible for all snow removal at bus stops. Report these areas to MBTA Customer Service at 617.222.3200.

R. Sampson opened the floor to questions and discussion.

D. Vieira noted that the route 32 bus on which he was a passenger had no audio. R. Sampson noted that he is aware of the situation. He was also curious about the warranty for the new buses.

Chairman White noted that passengers that experience problems with buses' audio should contact MBTA Customer Service. Callers need to provide a bus number, time, and location where boarded.

L. Weber commented that there was a power failure while traveling on the Green Line. M. Hulak explained that he is not a true technician but shared that a circuit breaker problem delayed the train that caused the headway to be adjusted. L. Weber noted for the record that MBTA management should

ensure that the new Green Line trains are double-checked for compatibility to the old tracks.

T. Gilbert asked about more training and recertification for train and trolley operators. R. Sampson noted that there are no plans at this time for further trainings.

P. Mendez noted that snow on MBTA property made it unsafe to walk. R. Sampson commented that, based on the property line, the property may not have been owned by the MBTA.

L. Weber asked how bus shelters are cleared of snow. R. Sampson explained that there are crews of people, bobcats, and snow blowers.

C. Daniels explained that on December 16, 2017, on Western Avenue in Somerville, she checked her app, which indicated she had five minutes to be at her bus stop. She was surprised to see a road race. She said there was no bus diversion notice. R. Sampson stated the T is in charge of making sure signs are posted when there are bus diversions.

J.S. Workman asked who is in charge of clearing the crosswalks of snow to get to a bus stop. Chairman White suggested that she contact the City of Boston at 311.

2. MBTA Office for Transportation Access—THE RIDE Program

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

- He is pleased that the MBTA has put 100 new RIDE vans into service across the three providers. He noted that getting the vans ready for the road was a major service production and that many of the old vans will be retired.
- He thanked THE RIDE providers for their service during the blizzard and the days of frigid weather, especially for the drivers.
- He explained that there has been a delay in complaint responses from GCS. Noting that it is not the fault of GCS. He stated that OTA has been busy, especially working on the new van project. He apologized for the delay.

M. Hulak opened the floor to questions and discussion.

D. Vieira explained that he was disconnected from reservations at Veterans and TRAC. K. McDonald addressed

the issue at Veterans. He noted that they have been experiencing problems periodically with the system. He explained that his call may have come through while the system was rebooting and that there are ongoing problems with this service provider.

N. Houghton noticed that some of the vans have tracks that extend to the drivers' seat and in other vans, the track stops midway. She noted that only one mobility device (MD) can be in the van at a time. M. Hulak explained that some of the older model vans were designed for three MDs while the newer vans are designed for two. He noted some customer's MD may have increased in size and other extenuating circumstances.

Vendor Reports

1. Veterans Transportation

Kevin MacDonald, Project Manager, distributed his report and announced a Passenger Assistant Training (PAT) class on Wednesday, February 7, 2018, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

K. MacDonald opened the floor to questions and discussion.

A consumer asked who attends PAT class. K. McDonald answered that classes are opened to all RIDE users. He noted that the training is geared to ensure that drivers understand enough about different disabilities that they may interact with directly. He noted that any customer is welcome to participate.

2. National Express Transit (NEXT)

Victor Herrera, Operations Manager, distributed his report and announced PAT class on Wednesday, February 7, 2018, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

He also explained the importance of being extra careful when exiting your home in extreme weather conditions. He noted that he had been hospitalized for slipping and falling at his home.

V. Herrera opened the floor to questions and discussion.

Chair White emphasized to members that THE RIDE is a door-to-door service. He stressed that when taking the service, the driver is there for your safety and to help prevent you from slipping and falling.

J.S. Workman asked whether or not the driver can refuse your trips due to icy conditions without contacting dispatch. V.

Herrera noted that a driver can refuse to walk on an inch of ice on your steps; but the driver must report icy conditions to dispatch. Chair White encouraged her to report incidents like this one to customer service.

J. Robinson noted that he worked on the railroad until he retired as a cleaner. He shared that their safety rule was, “If you can’t make it safe, don’t do it.”

3. Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)

Steve Epps, Director of Transportation, distributed his report and announced PAT classes on January 26, 2018, and February 9, 2018.

S. Epps opened the floor to questions and discussion.

A consumer asked about GLSS’s PAT training. S. Epps replied that she would be welcome to attend.

4. Keolis Commuter Services, LLC

Elizabeth Hickey, Manager, Diversity, Inclusion and Title VI, provided the following information on issues on the commuter rail that may affect accessibility.

- Customers should contact Keolis customer service for any problems with snow and ice removal.
- There is currently construction on the Mansfield mini-high platforms on the Providence Line. The platforms remain accessible on both inbound and outbound sides. There are temporary mini-highs in place.
- During the closure of Wollaston Station for a two-year period for renovation, people who travel from Quincy Center to South Station may use their Zone 1A or Subway passes.
- There will be no busing on the Haverhill Line.

E. Hickey opened the floor to questions and discussion.

D. Vieira reported to Keolis that snow needed to be removed from ramp/stairs at Fairmount. He was informed that the jurisdiction belonged to Amtrak. He explained that Amtrak neither stops at the station nor collects money from the parking lot. E. Hickey noted that she will contact that department in charge.

A consumer noted that she is pleased that Keolis customer service goes above and beyond since the takeover from the

previous contractor. E. Hickey thanked her for the positive feedback.

D. Weathers experienced a problem exiting the Talbot Avenue commuter rail station where only one side of the station had snow removal. E. Hickey noted that she will look into the problem.

5. Global Contact Services

Ray Croteau, General Manager, distributed his report and opened the floor to questions.

A consumer complimented THE RIDE Access Center (TRAC) for its service. R. Croteau thanked her for the positive feedback. She also asked whether or not there was a way to get an estimated time of arrival from dispatch. She noted that she is only given her scheduled pickup time. R. Croteau explained that it is estimated from the time a driver drops off his previous passenger, which is approximately 10 minutes.

J.S. Workman asked about the future of the staff at GCS once the new contractor takes over. She was concerned whether or not they would have training. R. Croteau stated that everyone

will need to reapply. He stated that there is a two-month grace period according to the RFP. He noted that training is ongoing.

Open Discussion

A. Manerson noted that MBTA Route 87 Somerville does not run after 7:00 PM. R. Sampson stated that there is no demand after that hour.

R. Clark would like to have someone from Amtrak attend AACT's meeting. Chairman White noted that he would look into his suggestion.

T. Gilbert would like Transit Police to attend the February 28, 2018 meeting. Chairman White noted that he would contact Chief Green.

T. Gilbert asked about using today's technology to forward pictures of vehicle license plates that illegally block bus stops. He would like to forward photos of violators who illegally park at bus stops. Chairman White advised that Gilbert contact his legislators because there is a pending bill on Beacon Hill to address this issue.

P. Mendez commented that she interacts with people from many municipalities, cities, and towns. She noted that she would like to invite others to attend AACT meetings.

Announcements

- 2018 Summit Planning Committee will meet at the State Transportation Building, Suite 2150, directly following the AACT Executive Board Member Meeting on Wednesday, February 28, from 12:00 PM to 12:45 PM. Members are welcome to participate in the planning.

Old Business/New Business

None were presented.

Notables

The AACT meeting location is accessible to people with disabilities and is near public transportation. The AACT Executive Board meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month, except when noted, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM (noon). The Membership meeting follows immediately from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM.

Notices of AACT meetings are posted on the MBTA website at www.mbta.com/about_the_mbta/public_meetings/. Visit the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) calendar page at 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 ADA regulations at www.mbta.com/aact.

Also, find articles about topics discussed at AACT meetings in the MPO's newsletter, *TRANSREPORT*, at 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 Chair 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 MBTA has advised AACT that **Interpreter Services** will be canceled the Friday before each Wednesday monthly meeting unless otherwise notified. To ensure interpreter services are

scheduled, please contact **the AACT Coordinator, Janie Guion**, by close of business on the Friday prior to the Wednesday meeting at AACT@ctps.org or leave a voice message at 857.702.3658.

Upon request 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.

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.