



# Access Advisory Committee

to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150, Boston, MA 02116-3968 • (617) 973-7100  
Fax: (617) 973-8855 • TDD: (617) 973-7089 • E-mail: [AACT@ctps.org](mailto:AACT@ctps.org)

## ***AACT Meeting Minutes***

***Wednesday, October 28, 2009***

### **NOTABLES**

- Vice-Chair John Kane chaired the October meeting in the absence of Chairman Haynes
- The AACT has a page on the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organizations' website at [www.bostonmpo.org](http://www.bostonmpo.org). Links can be found there for the following items: upcoming meetings, past meeting minutes, the Memorandum of Understanding between the MBTA and the AACT, and the AACT Bylaws, the AACT Brochure in accessible format, 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 Chairman
- Chairman Haynes recommends that AACT members needing information or wanting to inquire about MBTA services, do so through the Customer Support Service Center at 617-222-3200 or the MBTA website at [www.mbta.com/customer\\_support/feedback/](http://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***

John Kane, Philip Beaulieu, Linda Blair, Bill McCarthy, Thomas Gilbert, Marilyn MacNab, Sears Cummings, Rob Sampson, Linda Blair, John Marshall, Carol Savory, Don Summerfield, Rev. Ellen Frith, Kathryn Piccard, Madelyn Pulisciano, and Reggie Clark

### ***MBTA Representatives***

Carla Howze, Frank Oglesby, Tangela Burgess, Philip Balcom, Paul Strobis, Michael Hulak, Carol Joyce-Harrington, Dorothy Winn, Kathy Cox, and Michael Festa

### ***Vendor Representatives***

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

### ***Massachusetts Office on Disability***

Kathy Roach-Devin

### ***Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization***

Walter Bennett and Janie Guion

### ***Vice-Chairman Kane called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM***

- Members, friends and guests introduced themselves
- Mr. Kane read the agenda and his report (see attached) and asked for questions

**M. MacNab:** Congressman Capuano did not attend the RTAC meeting as stated in your report. Please make the necessary corrections.

**K. Piccard:** At the September 22 meeting we were promised the Chairman's report. Is it available?

**V. Chairman Kane:** The Chairman did not make one available.

***Member Hot Issues Session***

**K. Piccard:** THE RIDE contract is now two months into operation. Would you explain the increased missed trips up by 1/3 and the incidents by 150 percent?

**K. MacDonald/VTS:** There are many possible reasons but probably it is the return of fall traffic, school buses and the like.

**M. MacNab:** I'm concerned that not enough effort is being made to get scheduled projects to AACT in a reasonable time so that we can give suggestions for changes on accessibility. In the past, projects have come to us early enough so that we can make time for suggestions. This would give us the opportunity to review and respond at a later date. Now projects have come to us at 100 percent or very close which does not allow enough time for suggestions. I feel that the MBTA uses this as an excuse. When AACT brings up concerns the MBTA will say, "AACT has agreed".

Early dismissal at AACT meetings should be communicated or coordinated better between vendors and consumers. I would like for the AACT members to be made aware that vendors will be calling THE RIDE for an early pick-up. It would be helpful to inform consumers before leaving that the vehicles would be arriving at the building at a specific time. Our last meeting ended early and there was some confusion with people not knowing that the vehicles were called in for an earlier pickup.

**M. MacNab:** Are the new system "spider" maps completed? At what percent is the Fairmont Project to completion?

**K. Cox:** No, the maps are here for your review. They have also been on display at other locations. The two stations presented last month are at 60 % completion.

## ***MBTA Customer Support Services Center (CSSC)***

Ms. Carla Howze, director of the CSSC discussed the support role of the CSSC. Daily there is an intake of 2,200 inquires that come in by phone, e –mail and walk-ins. Each month the office averages over 50,000 calls. Representatives handle the following: complaints intake, trip and planning itineraries, fare information, and schedules. More than 90 percent of calls are for trip planning services and less than 10 percent are for customer complaints.

She then answered questions.

**K. Piccard:** How many languages do you provide?

**C. Howze:** Through our main phone system we provide English and Spanish. There are also representatives who speak Haitian Creole French Creole and Cape Verdian, Cantonese, Italian and Mandarin.

**D. Summerfield:** In the past year I have filed at least three to five alleged class one violations; four out of the five didn't go anywhere. It takes beyond the 30-days to get an answer. What can you do to expedite complaints going to the Office of Diversity and Civil Rights (ODCR) more promptly?

**C. Howze:** The complaints are sent to the various departments the same day they are reported electronically. The investigation may take more than one or two days to complete.

**D. Summerfield:** My last two complaints filed in September with June C. of ODCR had no information to process my complaint. No tape or name of the driver was in the complaint, and the 30 days are nearly over. I still have not heard from her.

**C. Howze:** We send the complaints to ODCR and wait for the response.

**K. Cox:** We are in contact with department heads to let them know that complaints are not being addressed in a timely fashion.

**C. Howze:** We will also be compiling a report that will show outstanding cases. This report will go above the superintendents and the line chiefs to get the complaints resolved quickly.

**M. MacNab:** I have been informed by letter that I should voice my complaint to your CSS phone lines. This is a lot of data for your staff to handle. When is it appropriate for him to tell us to put this in a complaint? A complaint may be very involved.

**C. Howze:** Our representatives have been on the phones in excess of two to three hours taking a complaint. It is our role to take the complaints, no matter the length of information. Representatives have been on the phone upwards of three hours.

**K. Cox:** We do have a number of comments, complaints and suggestions that come through our office. We ask that they call the CSS so that all calls are centralized. This will help to analyze how many times a call comes into CSS on the same issue.

**D. Summerfield:** What happens to a complaint that comes in after 6:00PM on Friday evening or on a long weekend? I am concerned that the information may be erased in 72 hours. I feel your staff should be trained to view the tape and analyze if it is a class one violation.

**C. Howze:** ODCR has trained my staff on what to look for when taking complaints. Weekend complaints are waiting on the desk of the investigator when he/she arrives on Monday morning. We keep all recordings for about one month.

**M. MacNab/ K. Piccard:** What is your e –mail address?

**C. Howze:** The e –mail address is the MBTA at website [www.mbta.com](http://www.mbta.com) (Select Customer Support) we will get the information electronically.

**M. MacNab:** The MBTA web page is not compatible to my computer. Is there an e-mail address I can have instead?

**C. Howze:** We don't have an address for complaints. When you file by the web form it automatically feeds into the tracking system so we don't have to re-enter the information. It will then automatically pop-up and be assigned to an agent. We do not have an address where you can send your complaint to us.

**K. Cox:** I will ask our staff person to work with the IT Department to produce that form. The system should be accessible to everyone.

**K. Roach:** How are complaints handled from THE RIDE consumer at CSS?

**C. Howze:** All complaints concerning THE RIDE are sent to Office for Transportation Access for their respond. THE RIDE will respond and then notify us that the customer complaint is completed.

***Michael Festa, Senior Accessibility Specialist and Project Manager of System-Wide Accessibility (see attached handouts).***

Mr. Festa presented to the members and friends the Science Park station drawings and gave a detailed review of the stations' amenities.

He then asked for questions.

**D. Summerfield:** I have taken measurements of the Kenmore station elevator and found it to be undersized.

**M. Festa:** I will need to do research and get back to you.

**M. MacNab:** How do I get from Nashua Street to exit the north pier without being run down by traffic? I don't see that the state laid out a safe passage for foot travel.

**M. Festa:** I am not familiar with this street. I must apologize. I will get back to you.

**E. Frith:** Will the area have all the curb cuts so that travel will be accessible?

**M. Festa:** The Division of Conservation and Recreation will be doing the work to make the area accessible. Also, there will be traffic lights to coordinate the system.

**D. Summerfield:** Will the funding be coming from Mass Highway?

**M. Festa:** Not that I am aware.

**Kathy Cox, Manager for MBTA System-Wide Accessibility (SWA)  
(report attached)**

She announced the following item:

- Over the coming months the MBTA will be replacing all the bus stop signs. This will be a long-term, on-going project. There are 18,000 signs to be replaced. This will also give the opportunity to add the new \$100.00 fine parking violation notice.

She then asked for questions.

**K. Piccard:** It would be helpful to have a strip of paint to mark the limit of the bus stops that would say, "Bus Stop End."

**K. Cox:** We have been doing research on this issue. It begins with key routes. It is done in a number of other cities.

**T. Gilbert:** With the new reform of the MBTA, will the "Black T" symbol be a thing of the past?

**K. Cox:** I have heard nothing about the "T" symbol disappearing.

**Consumer:** Why along Blue Hill Avenue are the bus stops moved every two to three years? People are not getting any younger and you have to walk farther away for bus stops.

**K. Cox:** Long-range plans are for the new Route 28X bus route to have fewer stops, but the regular routes along Blue Hill Avenue will continue to have their regular stops.

**D. Summerfield:** Problems occur exiting the outbound Route #73 trolley bus in Belmont at School Street --I have to exit this bus in the street. I have found that the bus sign is faded and should be replaced. Boarding the Green Line low-floor cars is impossible. You have said that getting the attention of the driver would work. This is almost impossible.

**K. Cox:** I attended a meeting with the chief of the Green Line where I presented this concern. I will do a follow-up with Brian Dwyer.

**R. Clarke:** If you need the MBTA inspector to assist you it should not be a problem. It's their job to monitor the station.

**K. Cox:** You should try to approach the inspector to let him know you need assistance for the low-floor car. Many of the Green Line stations do not have inspectors.

**E. Frith:** When the new signs are posted will there be a beginning and ending of the stop? In many areas there is only one sign. It is very hard to know where the stop ends. It is very difficult to get operators to document parking violators. Many of the streets in Somerville don't have bus stops posted.

**K. Cox:** I will do research and report back.

**T. Gilbert:** What steps do I take to relocate several bus stops in Somerville? They are stops at Central, Walnut, School and Highland Avenue on the inbound that need to be better placed for safer and easier exiting from the bus.

**K. Cox:** Contact MBTA Customer Service to document your concern. It then goes to the Bus Operations bus stop coordinator, and SWA will get a copy.

**D. Summerfield:** There needs to be more monitoring of the Park Street station platform by the inspectors. At 4:30 PM a woman needed assistance for a bridge plate; the inspector could not be located.

**K. Cox:** I would like further details.

***Frank Oglesby, Deputy Director of Paratransit Operations – OTA, THE RIDE (report attached)***

Mr. Oglesby reported the following:

- October is Disability Awareness Month and the program was hosted by Gary Talbot last Wednesday.

He then asked for questions.

**E. Frith:** There are still severe issues with THE RIDE vehicles blocking bus stops. This happens frequently after the AACT monthly meetings; I would appreciate it if the bus stops would remain completely clear of vehicles.



**F. Oglesby:** I do understand it is a really tough situation with cars parked in the area. Oftentimes, it is the only area that the consumer can board safely.

**T. Gilbert:** Maybe there is a way to load safely just before or after the bus stop.

**F. Oglesby:** It sounds like a good idea to work on with the City of Boston.

**D. Summerfield:** I'm a member of the Cambridge Disability Commission in Cambridge; every year we host an event for Disability Awareness.

### **Announcements**

**R. Clark:** The new Silver Line 4 service that operates from Dudley to South Station has started.

**T. Gilbert:** President Obama signed today the so-called "hate crime" bill-adding people with disabilities to the class of people protected by the 1969 law.

**E. Frith:** I attended the Disability Awareness Program here last month and really enjoyed it. The program was very inspiring. I was in awe of the photos of persons who have disabilities and their accomplishments. They were displayed so beautifully.

**R. Clarke:** Due to the state's income shortfalls please keep aware of the Governors' budget cuts.

**T. Gilbert:** There is a new elevator at the Kenmore Square Station that has surveillance cameras.

***Meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.***

