



Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

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Wednesday, June 22, 2011

AACT Meeting Minutes

NOTABLES

- Former AACT Chairman Ben Haynes thanked everyone who supported him with their kind wishes and thoughts during the illness of his son. On behalf of his son he thanked everyone for their concern, and their prayers. His son is on the road to recovery from an infection developed in the hospital. He will be in rehabilitation for eight to ten weeks.
- After further research regarding the process when an applicant has been denied THE RIDE. Please see the attached as explained by the Office for Transportation Access.
- Comments and questions concerning AACT should be directed to Chairman Philip Beaulieu by contacting the AACT Coordinator, Ms. Janie Guion, at 617-973-7507 (voice), 617-973-7089 (TTY), 617-973-8855 (fax), or at AACT@ctps.org (e-mail).
- Chairman Beaulieu recommends that members needing service information or wanting to inquire about MBTA services, do so through the MBTA Customer Communications and Marketing Department at 617-222-3200 (voice), 800-392-6100 (voice, toll-free), 617-222-5146 (TTY), or the MBTA website at www.mbta.com/customer_support/feedback/
- AACT has a page on the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's website at 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.

- The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) 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 the MPO at (617) 973-7100 (voice), (617) 973-8855 (fax), (617) 973-7089 (TTY), or publicinformation@bostonmpo.org (e-mail).
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- 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

Members

Philip Beaulieu, Paul Barresi, Angela Manerson, Kathryn Piccard, Tammy Perrault, James White, Reggie Clark, Betty Soderholm, MaryAnn Murray, Georgia Feronberg, Beverly Ann Rock, Marilyn MacNab, Ellen Frith, Ian Perrault, Nancy Miller, Esther Minar, and Henrietta Maloney

MassDOT - MBTA Representatives

Darrin McAuliffe, Sundae Green, Bill McClellan, Scott Andrews, Sam Matthews, Mike Festa, Christine Bond, Philip Balcom, Toma`s Gonzales, Gregg Strangeways, Mike Hulak, Jay Mustapha, Carol Joyce-Harrington, Kathy Cox, and Elizabeth Ulba-Murray

Vendor Representatives

Kevin MacDonald and Jon Cristina – Veterans Transportation LLC
Victor Herrera – Joint Venture of Thompson Transit Inc. and YCN
John Soucy – Greater Lynn Senior Services

Other Representatives

*Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)/
Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)*

Walter Bennett and Janie Guion

MEETING

Chairman Beaulieu called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM

Members, friends and guests introduced themselves.

Approval of the AACT Meeting Minutes

The May 25 meeting minutes were approved with one abstention.

Chairman Beaulieu's Report

He discussed the following:

- His participation in the opening of the new accessible entrance to the Blue Line at State Street
- His request that AACT have safe and cohesive meetings for members and friends

He then asked for questions.

K. Piccard: Your last comment sounds like a threat. I hope that is not your intent.

Chairman Beaulieu: Not at all. I want consumers to feel they have a safe place to bring their concerns and to be heard in a safe environment. I do not want a repeat of what happened at last month's meeting.

K. Piccard: I hope you are not stating that consumers shouldn't use parliamentary procedures.

Chairman Beaulieu: I have no issue with parliamentary procedures. It was the manner in which it was brought to my attention. I would like to move on.

M. MacNab: What is the process when someone has been denied THE RIDE?

Please see page 1.

MBTA Red Line -Single Person Train Operation (SPTO)

Darrin McAuliffe, Director of Communications and Coordination for the MBTA recognized the newly elected AACT Chairman and Executive Board. He announced that Gary Talbot, Assistant General Manager for System-Wide Accessibility will be leaving the MBTA after four years of service to work with the national office of Amtrak in Philadelphia. He stated that Mr. Talbot has done a tremendous job and wished him well. Thank you, Gary!

Mr. McAuliffe then introduced the Red Line Operations staff: William McClellan, Chief; Sundae Green, Deputy Director of Safety; Scott Andrews, Superintendent of the Red Line; Gregg Strangeways, Manager, Service Planning; Elizabeth Murray, Assistant Director of Training; and Sam Matthew, Technical Advisor. He also thanked AACT for agreeing to the viewing of the PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. McClellan began by saying he has attended public meetings to get feedback from consumers so that the Single Person Train Operation (SPTO) is implemented properly. He explained SPTO and said that SPTO is tentatively slated to be implemented in early September. This program was recommended by the Federal Transit Administration to minimize operating costs. The MBTA plans to have more staff on platforms and that all areas will be watched on close-circuit monitors.

Members were also given an opportunity to view the educational “door safety” video on entering and exiting trains properly.

He then asked for questions.

K. Piccard: Responding to your point that people in wheeled mobility devices be directed to specific cars, every car has spaces for wheeled mobility devices. During rush hours the spaces on so-called designated cars may be occupied. Persons with wheeled mobility devices use all cars.

W. McClellan: Many of our visiting customers don't know where the spaces are located. The spaces are not clearly marked; we are working on that now so that our customers will know exactly where they are.

R. Clark: The visually impaired may be caught in the doors if the train is a SPTO. This has happened to me.

W. McClellan: This is our main concern. We are working with Kathy Cox on a warning message. Our customers will be given three oral warnings that the doors are closing.

M. MacNab: I have concerns regarding callboxes. The emergency callboxes at Fields Corner in the fare collection area are too high for persons using a mobility device. The boxes need to be lowered. I informed the people at the MBTA about this issue when they were put in. Also the emergency callbox on the trains is not easily accessible. I am really not sure where to locate one on the train. The callbox on the Red Line was not easy to trigger; I really had to pound it very hard.

E. Minar: I have traveled on lines with SPTO. There is never anyone available when I need assistance. I have used the callbox to alert the station personnel that I will be arriving at a particular station, especially on the Red Line. There is never anyone at Charles Street Station to assist me. My mobility device has been caught between the train and the platform in the "gap" which is very wide. SPTO becomes a real problem for both me and others when the operator has to get the "bridge plate" to assist me.

W. McClellan: We are working on solving the platform "gap" problem. There will be personnel working on the platform. That person will be able to assist you very quickly.

I. Perrault: I think that automatic announcements should be on all trains.

W. McClellan: The cost is astronomical to put automation in every train. There will be different situations when the motor person will

need to make manual announcements such as train arrivals, delay of service or that an elevator is out of service. We are moving forward on plans for the next generation of our subway fleet. The new trains will have automatic announcements.

M. Murray: Will this cause increases in travel times? How do you plan to make the trains run faster if one person is helping others board or exit the train?

W. McClellan: There will be some slight increases in times. During peak times there will be personnel on the platforms. There will be more trains operating during peak times.

K. Piccard: I have seen a train drag a person several car lengths by his ankles. The people who witnessed the man being dragged could not get to the emergency callbox and the people near the emergency box had no idea what was happening. I don't approve of the SPTO. The risk is huge. Maybe there needs to be more sensors in the doors.

W. McClellan: We are looking for feedback on the passenger emergency buttons. We have a major problem with people sticking their hands or bags in a closing door. We have an educational video on "door safety" put together by Elizabeth Murray and her group. We plan to have this video played in many places for passengers to view. We'd like for you to view it now.

B. Haynes: How do you plan to educate consumers about the safety devices on the train when consumers come in all various shapes, sizes, and disabilities? There are visitors who use mobility items who are not prepared to cope with them in an emergency situation. It seems to me that while you are doing something that may technically improve running of the train what you have said is not an adjunct to the safety of consumers. You should concentrate more on the training of your staff rather than concentrating so much on the consumer. If consumers are made to feel safe by the knowledge and operation of the equipment then you would have done the job.

W. McClellan: The MBTA employees are taught every aspect of equipment safety. The Red Line staff person in charge of training can best speak to this issue.

E. Murray: I have been with the MBTA for 21 years. I was part of the original Blue Line SPTO in 1996. I have worked with the staff of the System-Wide Accessibility Department for a very long time. I share your concerns regarding safety. When the SPTO began in 1996 we did not know what to expect. We were very concerned and anxious, but after that first week with no complaints we began to embrace the program.

Chairman Beaulieu: Mr. McAuliffe, I would like to thank you and all the others from Red Line Operations and other MBTA personnel for taking the time to bring this presentation to us.

Kathy Cox, MBTA Manager for Fixed Route Services and System-Wide Accessibility Department (SWA) (report attached)

Ms. Cox made the following announcements:

- The ribbon cutting of the new accessible entrance to State Street Station at 60 State/Congress Streets had federal, state, and city participants. I would like to thank the AACT Chair for his participation.
- Larry Haile, a part-time staff person at SWA, will be taking Laura Brelford's position as Coordinator on a full-time basis.

She then asked for questions.

E. Frith: Thank you very much for all the work that you do. Today when I arrived at the building there was an MBTA vehicle parked in the bus stop waiting for the General Manager. I have the license plate number.

K. Cox: Thank you. I will pass along your complaint.

J. White: I am a regular attendee at the “transit master” box training classes. I am concerned because of the small number of operators per class. I requested a memo be sent to all the garages regarding the code for the “transit master” box. Has this been done?

K. Cox: I will check.

K. Piccard: The use of the “transit master” box needs to be emphasized to the bus operators and why it is important that they press the button so that data can be collected on blocked bus stops.

K. Cox: I had a suggestion some time ago that the Operations Control Center announce to operators periodically during their shift regarding the need to take advantage of the “transit master” for reporting blocked bus stops. This would help them realize why it is so very important.

M. MacNab: I have witnessed bus operators driving past the bus stops. I am also hearing from my group monitors that buses are not kneeling on request or pulling over to the curb. When they are asked to do so they have attitude.

K. Cox: It is very important that violations be reported to the MBTA’s Customer Communications and Marketing Department (CCM) at 617-222-3200 so that they can be entered into the MBTA’s database to be tracked. I am appealing to you all to make a determination to make use of the CCM to file your complaints. Part of the mission of SWA is to assist with full integration here at the MBTA regarding programs and services for people with disabilities. The MBTA has a staff at CCM; it is their role to do complaint intake for everybody, including people with disabilities.

Chairman Beaulieu: Thank you Ms. Cox for your report.

**Frank Oglesby, MBTA Deputy Director of Paratransit Operations
– The Office of Transportation Access (OTA), THE RIDE (reports
attached)**

Due to a scheduling conflict Mike Hulak, Contract Administrator for OTA, presented on behalf of Mr. Oglesby

The following was reported:

- THE RIDE Independence Day shuttle service on the Esplanade will once again be coordinated by the staff of Veterans Transportations, LLC
- The MBTA has announced that it will no longer be honoring refund requests for any type of delayed service effective 7/1/2011. The guarantee will be honored on service delays through 6/30/2011

He then asked for questions.

E. Frith: There is a continuing problem with THE RIDE drivers parking in bus stops. Is there something you can do during training to remind them not to park in bus stops?

M. Hulak: Yes, this is already incorporated into our training. We can have dispatch remind drivers and also have a text message sent. Drivers are taught that parking in bus stops is prohibited. We can also send a daily memo to remind drivers not to park in bus stops.

B. Rock: Why was the reimbursement program for THE RIDE discontinued?

M. Hulak: This was a directive from MBTA General Manager Davey. This is a cost-saving measure that does not just affect THE RIDE but affect all modes of transportation.

M. Murray: Why are AACT meeting announcements not posted in buses or THE RIDE vans? Some people are unable to find out when meetings are held. Often vendor drivers post the flyer over the vehicle number.

M. Hulak: Flyers are posted. This is the responsibility of the vendor. In the matter of fixed route I don't think we have the means to post meeting announcements.

M. McNabb: My concern is that the AACT members need to hear from MBTA General Manager Davey about the reorganization of THE RIDE. We should also be able to give our suggestions on the reorganization. Would you please look into this matter?

M. Hulak: I will pass your concerns on.

Open Discussion

E. Minar: I am concerned about the lack of communication between the drivers and the dispatch operators. Why is it that dispatch operators do not respect consumers?

K. McDonald/VT: We are controlling a lot of trips with a limited staff; nine people are in dispatch at a time.

V. Herrera/JV: We are aware of the communication problem. We are working on this with text messaging between driver and dispatch operators.

B. Haynes: Ms. Minar, many of the people in dispatch are not qualified. Dispatchers need better map training in order to give better estimates of the time THE RIDE will arrive at your door.

B. Rock: My trip today was by way of Bromfield Street, Boston. Why would a trip to 10 Park Plaza, take more than an hour?

K. McDonald: The MBTA has stringent guidelines for travel. The window of adjustment by the MBTA is 30 minutes. It is up to each consumer to decide whether that standard of service is acceptable to them. The rules are that we adjust the trip by a maximum of 30 minutes to ensure ride sharing and sensible routing. You should always plan that a trip may be increased by 30 minutes.

K. Piccard: Sometimes the vendors may make an error whether they know it or not. You should try to negotiate your trip pickup and arrival times.

K. McDonald: When a trip is booked it may have several consumers paired together. Along the way trips may be canceled. We are not allowed to adjust your trip. This may get you to your destination earlier than expected.

Old Business

M. MacNab: The General Manager asked that the scheduling of THE RIDE be reviewed. I am suggesting that people send in their comments, suggestions, or problems. I would recommend you send this information to GM@MBTA.com.

E. Frith: I have been trying to post photos to the MBTA Customer Service system online.

Chairman Beaulieu: You should call Carla Howze, at 617-222-3200 for directions.

E. Minar: I have an Android phone system; I am unable to get www.MBTA.com.

K. Cox: I will need to do research.

Announcements:

M. MacNab: As you all know the General Manager is canceling the "Refund Program" this June 30, 2011. The funding is being directed to other projects such as commuter rail. I did not hear that any of the funds are being directed to THE RIDE or fixed route services. I am suggesting that we let the General Manager know that we would like to see funding directed to THE RIDE and fixed route. Please send your concerns to GM@MBTA.com.

K. Piccard: Good idea!

Chairman Beaulieu adjourned the meeting at 3:00 P.M.