

Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts Bay
Transportation Authority
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Executive Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 23, 2013

Notables

The AACT Executive Board meeting will meet from 10 AM to Noon and the Membership meeting will meet from 1:00 PM to 3 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 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, 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 Acting Interim 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 Sat/Sun 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 appreciated.

The meeting opened at 10:10 A.M.

Reading of the Agenda

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Introductions

Attendees:

Acting-Interim Chairman Jim White, Ian Perrault, Mary Ann Murray, and Beverly Ann Rock

MBTA Staff:

Melissa Dullea, Carol Joyce-Harrington, Mike Hulak, Frank Oglesby

MPO Staff/Coordinator:

Janie Guion

Approval AACT Executive Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

The December 19, 2012, Executive Board Meeting Minutes were accepted and approved.

Chairman's Report

IC White commented on the following:

- On December 21 he attended a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Vertical Transportation Improvement Project at Park Street Station
- He participated in the December 31 System-Wide Accessibility Customer Orientation class which acquaints consumers with riding the MBTA safely and other accessibility features, by hands-on and classroom training
- He read two letters addressed from the AACT Executive Board to Dr. Beverly Scott, the new MBTA General Manager: a welcome message and a request

to meet and greet with the AACT Executive Board of Directors. He also read an acknowledgement of thanks from Dr. Scott to IC White for his impromptu comments on behalf of the AACT membership at the Park Street Station ribbon-cutting ceremony

- He attended trainings with THE RIDE contractors and a recertification training class at the MBTA Charlestown garage where he discovered operators were using an out-of-date circle-check card from 2007 which identified the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) equipment that must be verified before buses leave the garage. He has contacted Judge Patrick King and Kevin Voltour about the problem. He is waiting to hear an explanation from System-Wide Accessibility. He is very concerned that vehicles are leaving the garage without the proper checks
- He made a request to the MBTA Transit Police Deputy Chief Lewis Best to send a representative to regularly attend the AACT Membership meetings
- He attended a Transportation Workshop hosted by Lisa Weber of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, assigned by the State Legislatures to do a transportation study outside of the Boston area which came out of the Executive Order 530 Commission
- He supports Governor Patrick's proposal to seek a new transportation financing plan

Office of Transportation Access Proposals

Ms. Melissa Dullea of the MBTA Planning and Scheduling Department, which also oversees the Office for Transportation Access (OTA) -Paratransit Operations, along with her staff

presented and discussed a number of preliminary transportation issues involving THE RIDE.

She stated that the MBTA is looking to restructure a number of THE RIDE policies. She stated that this is only an informational presentation and that there are no written proposals of the following topics to be discussed. They are only looking for feedback on these ideas from the AACT Board of Directors.

She discussed the following three items:

1. New Appeals Process for In-Person Assessment (IPA)

Ms. Dullea stated that in the past when applicants were denied THE RIDE they were addressed by a panel of three judges: the MBTA Legal Department, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and a member of the AACT Board. She stated that in previous years denials were never a problem. The staff from OTA never participated on the panel since it would have been a conflict of interest. THE RIDE staff may have been at the hearing but only to provide information. She stated that in the past scheduling such hearings would take a week or two due to the participants' schedules.

This new IPA process would have a single appeals officer recommended. She stated that OTA is now eligible to address appeals since they no longer handle applications for THE RIDE. OTA would assemble a pool of six or seven ADA-knowledgeable staff to train, and would possibly enlist staff from the System-Wide Accessibility Department since they are also familiar with the ADA requirements and would make excellent officers.

Ms. Dullea said they have developed a plan for a new IPA Appeals Officer and she will present it to the full membership at a future meeting.

AACT Executive Board of Directors had the following comments:

IC White stated that the Memorandum of Understanding between the MBTA and AACT suggests that someone from AACT should participate on the IPA appeals. An AACT representative would make sure the proceedings operate in a fair manner.

M Hulak informed him that he may be confusing this with THE RIDE Appeals Suspension Board.

IC White stated that this is an issue for the full membership.

M Hulak said that this will not affect THE RIDE Appeals Suspension.

MA Murray suggested that someone from the AACT Executive Board of Directors be trained to participate on the IPA Appeals Board.

IC White stated that he wants the disability community to know that AACT is looking out for their best interests.

M Dullea asked what sort of role AACT would like to have in the process.

IC White stated that AACT should monitor the IPA proceedings simply to observe for fairness and not to make any impact on the decision making. He commented that the process should be fair and equitable.

2. A new No-Show and Late Cancellation Policy

Ms. Dullea advised the Board that the MBTA is considering a no-show and late cancellation policies. She said the proposal is meant to help change the behavior of consumers who schedule multiple trips and then fail to cancel a trip when they know that they no longer want or need that trip. ADA states that a consumer

must show a pattern of no-shows and that they should not be penalized for issues that might be beyond their control. She went on to say that there are a variety of reasons why consumers may fail to cancel and be labeled a no-show. She also noted that a consumer must show a true pattern or practice of persistent no-shows which is usually five or more no-shows.

OTA has consulted with other transit agencies around the country. They are looking into what will work best for THE RIDE Program.

Currently, no-shows impact THE RIDE in many ways: greater drive time, impacts on other consumers, and increased fuel costs, for example. OTA would rather implement penalties in the form of suspension from the program. However, other transit agencies such as New York, invoke financial penalties.

She noted that the MBTA will follow the ADA guidelines on no-shows.

AACT Executive Board of Directors had the following comments:

IC White indicated that he and the late Chairman Phil Beaulieu had been in discussion with former MBTA General Manager Davey and Special Assistant Mike Lambert regarding a proposed “no-show” policy. He suggested that Ms. Dullea speak with Mr. Lambert for a copy of the summary that was developed from their suggestions.

He wanted her to know that he is in agreement that there is a need for some type of surcharge to consumers who frequently cancel trips at the last minute.

I Perrault asked what would be considered as a late cancelation penalty.

M Dullea stated that it all depends. It could be possibly one, two or a three hour notice.

IC White stated that he is hoping that there could be voluntary compliance and that consumers would cancel trips the night before.

CJ Harrington said that most consumers do cancel in advance; it's only a few who will call minutes before THE RIDE arrives.

BA Rock commented that she is not in favor of a surcharge. She said that issues her Massachusetts should not be compared to other states based on the need and demographics. She believes that the current data for no-shows is not very high. She noted that the wait is long and difficult to get through to the vendor. She does not want consumers to be penalized for being at special events. She does not want the consumers to think that the MBTA has found other ways to get more revenue.

IC White asked to see the impacts on the cost of gas and on-time performance summarized. He believes that if consumers would see how their actions impact the service, they may consider trying harder to cancel trips in advance.

MA Murray asked how the no-show policy would affect persons who are unable to cancel in a reasonable time due to medical or business issues.

M Dullea stated that implementing a new "no-show" policy would be complicated at best.

3. Shortening of the reservation window from fourteen days to five

The MBTA is considering a shortening of the reservation window from fourteen days to five. Ms. Dullea noted that a new structure for this would encourage consumers not to lock in funds and would eliminate some financial burden. She commented that it's

mostly subscription users that use the fourteen day window. She noted that with the five day window would help reduce subscription users from locking in funds for long periods of time. This would also help consumers who forget they have locked in reservations and who may forget to cancel their service.

AACT Executive Board of Directors had the following comments:

IC White believes that shortening the window to reserve trips would jam the telephone lines at the vendors. He would like to have supporting data on what percentage of consumers currently reserve trips 14 days in advance from the three vendors.

M Dullea stated that she believes this will not alter the call volume since oftentimes consumers' schedules change.

M Hulak stated that he would look into the supporting data.

BA Rock asked that consumers be made aware that when booking trips that their money is held in reserve.

M Dullea stated that reducing the number from fourteen to five days for reservations would help eliminate no-shows. Consumers often forget they have canceled an appointment or find other transportation and forget to cancel service.

She concluded by restating that this was only a preliminary discussion and that the entire membership would be presented with more information when OTA develops a written proposal.

Open Discussion

IC White addressed the issue of the vendor drivers arriving at a consumers' home excessively early to accommodate other consumers to their destination.

M Hulak stated that he has spoken to Joint Venture and Veterans on that issue.

BA Rock inquired about the no-show and cancelation policy meetings with former General Manager Davey and his Special Assistant Mike Lambert.

IC White said that the there was a discussion over a year ago and was immediately taken off the table.

BA Rock commented that the interior of Veterans vehicles are not very well maintained and that their vehicle cleaning crew was terminated.

MA Murray would like for the MBTA to consider compensation for AACT Board members for trips other than the business with THE RIDE, SWA or MBTA related matters.

IC White stated that he will make a case citing the Memorandum of Understanding with the new MBTA General Manager to consider compensation for THE RIDE to AACT meetings.

BA Rock suggested that maybe a certain number of trips could be compensated per month.

IC White suggested that the AACT Board review the current contract of THE RIDE so that they can prepare for the next round of negotiations.

He also hopes that the AACT Executive Board members will agree to have a greater role in the next round of public hearings for a possible fare increase.

BA Rock stated that she believes waiting on the telephone line for a reservation for five to seven minutes is excessive.

IC White addressed the issue of vendors picking up consumers early to accommodate someone else's travel needs.

M Hulak stated that the management of Joint Venture and Veterans were warned.

IC White asked that Mr. Hulak reiterates THE RIDE negotiation policy at the Membership meeting.

MA Murray stated that reservationists are still not advising you of what is in your account when you reserve a trip.

M Hulak stated that balances should be given at end of your transaction.

BA Rock asked if the vendor staff are aware of how many people are on hold just before telephone lines close for reservations.

M Hulak stated yes, they are aware; he cautioned that consumers should not wait till the last minute to reserve trips.

I Perrault asked about the status of the Manage My Trips Module on the MBTA website.

M Hulak stated that there is a software problem and that OTA has been aware of the situation for a while. He has contacted the software vendor and will speak with him today.

Meeting adjourned at 12:05 PM