

**Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts  
Bay Transportation Authority (AACT)**

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***Members Meeting Minutes***

***Wednesday, January 27th, 2016***

***Board of Directors:***

Chairman - James F. White

Vice Chairman - Rick E. Morin

**Executive Board**

Mary Ann Murray

Ian Perrault

Beverly Ann Rock

Lisa Weber

***Meeting opened at 1:02 PM.***

***Reading of the Agenda***

***Introductions***

*Attendees: James White, Ian Perrault, Mary Ann Murray, Lisa Weber, Beverly Ann Rock, Jim Tozza, Thomas Gilbert, Christine Daniels, Esther Minar, Richard Mahoney, Grace LaPointe, Angela Manerson, Remon Jourdan, Art Kovacs, Rev. Ellen Frith, Joe Quintanilla, Gina Russo, Jeff Magnet, William Corcoran, Reggie Clark and Rob Dias*

### ***MBTA Staff:***

Mike Hulak, Carol Joyce- Harrington, Rob Sampson, Jessica Podesva, and Dana Nye,

### ***Vendor Staff:***

Steve Epps, John Tuttle, Selena Walckner, and Kevin McDonald

### ***Other:***

Peter Rondean and Linda S. Salzer

## ***Chairman White's Report***

*He stated the following:*

- A letter was approved by the AACT Board to go before the Fiscal Management and Control Board (FMCB) to ask that a Task Force be formed related to the potential cuts to THE RIDE service because of a \$10 million shortfall. AACT, Boston Center for Independent Living, Massachusetts Senior Action Council, Disability Policy Consortium, and the Bay State Council for the Blind joined the Task Force and have met several times.
- The Centralized Control Call Center Selection Committee met a second time.
- The Taxi Subsidy Program has attended multiple meetings.

- Ad Hoc Vehicle Accessibility committee met to discuss the seating layout for the new buses that will be ordered in the future.
- He was contacted by William McGinnis of the Health and Human Service Compliance Officer who sent him information on compliance standards for HST MassHealth transportation providers.

**Vice Chairman Morin** explained that the Task Force will do everything possible to knock \$10 million out of the operating budget of the MBTA for THE RIDE Program.

He asked for questions. There were none.

### ***MassDOT Deputy Administrator-Transit***

***Michael Lambert*** spoke about THE RIDE Program initiatives and the Task Force on cost-saving measures. The meetings take place every other week, with conference calls intermittently in between when needed to make sure progress is made.

The first action *area* discussed was trip conversion; shifting trips from THE RIDE to optional transportation services, such as the Taxi Subsidy Program, ridesharing (Uber or Lyft), partnerships with Health and Human Service Transportation of MassHealth, or local municipalities' programs.

The second action plan discussed was fixed routes buses, trains, and trolley accessibility for customers who need THE RIDE only occasionally. They are looking into wider distribution of the discounted Tap Pass and using further reductions in fares to encourage buses and train usage. Travel Training helps accustom customers to fixed route services as well.

The third action *area* is reducing the scope of service through partnerships with various agencies, etc..

Finally, the fourth action area is to seek operational efficiencies, such as with updated global positioning systems, integrating vendors closer, creating the centralized call center, etc. After any presentation to MassDOT or the FMCB, he will come to the AACT meetings and be present the same information.

He then asked for comments or questions.

**E. Minor** asked about the RIDE CharlieCard and if the program was cancelled and the miscommunication about the program. *M. Lambert* responded by saying the program was a pilot program and had an expiration date with a decision not to expand it made by a previous administration. They also do not want to incentivize use of a fixed route service if that service is over capacity.

**J. Quintanilla** asked about an estimate for how much more expensive it would be for the average user once an agreement is made about

THE RIDE program cost increases and alternative providers. *M. Lambert* said the taxi fare would be \$2.

**G. Russo** commented that the MassHealth service is curb-to-curb rather than door-to-door, which creates some challenges for some users who are visually impaired, although some drivers do help you all the way. *Chairman White* said that there is a medical necessity component which can be altered based on individual need and that the task force can emphasize the point to help change the standards.

**L. Weber** asked if a user who is eligible for THE RIDE would be able to also get the Taxi Subsidy or be Tap Pass eligible at the same time based on logistics at the *M. Lambert* said yes, but only recently.

**G. LaPoint** asked about whether the Taxi Subsidy program was going to ever be made non-voluntary. *M. Lambert* said no. She also had a comment on the efficiency of THE RIDE routing with multiple passengers, and *M. Lambert* said that the Taxi Subsidy Program may shorten her ride in these cases and save her a \$1 per trip.

**B. Rock** asked if there were sufficient cabs to meet demand. *M. Lambert* said that the customer would call the cab company directly and the MBTA would not be managing the fleet. *R. Morin* this is not a shared ride service you are on your own to use the service of a cab.

**J. Quintanilla** asked how THE RIDE got its appropriated money from the government. *M. Lambert* said it was an operations budget item in

the T's budget, and the Taxi Subsidy Program is working off a federal grant currently, but that there is no annual federal appropriation to pay for the mandated service.

## *MBTA and Vendor Reports*

### *MBTA System-Wide Accessibility Department (SWA)/Fixed Route Services*

#### ***Rob Sampson, Manager for System-Wide Accessibility,***

reported and summarized that the North Station head house would be closed from two to three years for construction of an adjacent building. Alternative elevators to bring you down to the fare area will be at the corner of Causeway and Haverhill Streets and at Valenti Way. Additional signage was put in place to help find the alternative elevator and a temporary canopy outside was added. After the project is done, there will now be a corridor to connect the commuter rail and rapid transit platforms so that passengers would no longer have to go outside and walk along Legends Way. He mentioned that there would be Quincy there would be an informational meeting about the Wollaston MBTA station construction to make it accessible through the installation of three elevators.

He then asked for questions.

**A consumer** commented about how many times the bus stop was blocked by trucks, college shuttles, post office drivers, or deliveries.

*R .Sampson* said the MBTA Police is committed to increasing patrols around this building and has reached out to other municipalities to address the concerns.

**Chairman White** thanked R. Sampson for his report and acknowledged SWA for setting up the PATI meeting.

### ***MBTA Transit Police Department***

***Dana Nye, Community Outreach Coordinator,*** had no updates to report but did take questions.

**Chairman White** noted that there is a code for the bus driver to press every time there is a blocked bus stop and the AACT Board receives a report every month about where those locations are. Recertification classes will emphasize the need to activate that code every time a stop is blocked, because it reinforces the problem stops and is not an exercise in futility. D. Nye noted that the Chief does send out motorcycle officers to go to the stops with lots of complaints.

**T. Gilbert** inquired about the towns and cities serving as barriers to accessibility. D. Nye said she couldn't speak to that personally because it is not what her position works in, but Deputy Chief Horton and patrol operations are trying to strengthen relationships with other cities and towns.

**L. Weber** said that fare evasion at Downtown Crossing is widespread (according to a third party who couldn't make it to the meeting). D. Nye

said a plainclothes unit (“Crime Suppression Team”) works at the station in teams on weekdays and stand in certain areas where this is a problem and try to target this issue during rush hour. It is hard to get people to pay the \$100 fine for a first offence and it goes up to \$300 after that. Most of the people who wind up getting ticketed are homeless and very few will pay the fine and most often they forgive it. The ticket attaches to the driver’s license and you may not register a motor vehicle or renew a license if you have an unpaid ticket. Many people who take the MBTA do not have a car, so the legislation does not have as much teeth as one would hope.

**A consumer** noted that deadheading drivers will park in the bus stop and then leave to get a snack, read a book, etc. and block the stop. She suggests a penalty added to those who are blocking the bus stop. *Nye* said that there is a \$125 fine and it also is attached to your driver’s license.

***Chairman White*** thanked D. Nye for her report.

### ***Keolis Commuter Services, LLC***

***Selena Walckner, Title VI Manager***, mentioned that it is the public comment period for the proposed new commuter rail schedules. She then asked for questions.

**A consumer** asked about being overcharged going to Concord. He was going to charge tariffs, but it should have been half the fare with a

Senior or Access ID, according to the online note. S. *Walckner* said the individual issue should be getting a follow-up soon by the customer service department and that they are working on a new training program for conductors for ADA-related issues.

**Chairman White** thanked S. *Walckner* for her report. ***MBTA Office for Transportation Access (OTA) - THE RIDE Program***

**Frank Oglesby, Deputy Director**, submitted the OTA report and shared the following:

- The public meeting for the fare proposal will be at the beginning of the month check MBTA [fareproposal@mbta.com](mailto:fareproposal@mbta.com).

He then asked for questions. There were none.

**Chairman White** thanked F. *Oglesby* for his report.

***Veterans Transportation (VT)***

**Kevin MacDonald**, Project Manager distributed his report and noted that they would conduct PAT and sensitivity training in February.

He then asked for questions.

**G. Russo** asked about policy for THE RIDE and from Veterans because they are hearing about putting three people in the backseat and if that was allowed. *K. McDonald* said the Ford Focus is spec'd at a five-passenger car and they try to limit the scheduling component to three total passengers, so there would be only two in the back. This

happens because of an undocumented extra person. Usually the driver will report it.

**Chairman White** thanked K. McDonald for his report.

### ***National Express Transit (NEXT)***

**John Tuttle, Operations Manager**, announced upcoming passenger assistance training.

He then asked for questions.

**A consumer** asked a general question for all vendors about policy about how long to wait when being picked up from a transfer spot and the wait makes the first passenger late. *J. Tuttle* explained that there is no formal policy from the MBTA, but they work with the vendors and dispatch staff to try to avoid it. A decision is usually made in the moment. A customer waiting a half hour should definitely talk to the driver to call dispatch, because that is not fair. *K. MacDonald of VT* added that the process is to locate the other vehicle; the protocol is usually to take the first passenger to their endpoint, if you know a car is delayed in traffic and will be late and then double back.

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

## *Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)*

**Steve Epps, Director of Transportation**, distributed his report and said GLSS training are held at the Lynn office and that everyone is invited.

He then asked for questions. There was none.

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

## *Announcements*

**J. Magnet** reported on a couple of projects that he has been working with MassPort Authority at Logan Airport getting the convenience of outside seating to wait for THE RIDE vehicle and better entrance of high-top van at Terminal B

- Three benches are to be installed at Terminal A, B, and C to use while waiting for THE RIDE.
- A proposal was made for Terminal B to have high-top vans stop at the curb at the entrance and exit for arrivals, since they cannot stop in the center.

**Chairman White** commended Mr. Magnet on his dedication convenience. He wished him well with his further projects.

## ***Old Business***

None were presented.

## ***New Business***

None were presented.

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/](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](http://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](mailto: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.

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](http://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 Saturday and Sunday from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM, 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 is always appreciated.