

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

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Members Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 21, 2016

Board of Directors:

Chairman – James F. White

Vice Chairman – Lisa Weber

Executive Board

Mary Ann Murray

Beverly Ann Rock

Lisa Weber

Meeting opened at 1:10 PM.

Reading of the Agenda

Introductions

Attendees: James White, Lisa Weber, Jim Tozza, Thomas Gilbert, David Veria, Reggie Clark, Kevin Wilson, Bill Cochran, Rosa Brooks, Richard Mahoney, Brenda Elliot, Nadine Jones, Angela Manerson, Christine Daniels, Reggie Clark, Debbie Weathers, Dee Whittlesy, Kevin Wilson

MBTA Staff:

Mike Hulak, Carol Joyce-Harrington, and Rob Sampson, Kelli Ahola

Vendor Staff:

Steve Epps, Kevin McDonald, Victor Herrera, Joy Harper, Rita Hardiman, and Christine Woznac

Other:

Patricia Mendez, and Jessica Podesva

Meeting Minutes Approval

Chairman White's Report

He stated the following:

- He attended the Paratransit Task Force meeting earlier in the December.
- He was unable to attend the December Fiscal Management and Control Board (FMCB) meeting to testify at in support the Office Transportation Access initiatives about THE RIDE Program. His letter was read by his assistance.
- He noted that 64 new buses are in service and he is sure that everyone will be pleased with the layout.
- He met on December 16 with Judge Patrick King, Jessica Podesva, and Laura Brelsford to discuss the future of AACT.

There were no questions asked.

MBTA Acting General Manager and Chief Administrator

Brian Shortsleeve began by thanking Chairman White and members of the Executive Board for their leadership. He stated he and Jeff Gonneville, the Chief Operating Officer know that above all the safety of all passengers is their top priority. He noted that for many people accessibility and safety is synonymous.

He explained that accessibility is a part of everything that the MBTA does in design, construction, wayfinding, and policies and procedures. He commented that the MBTA has great advances in accessibility over the past few years and with the March 2016 opening of Government Center. And now the transitioning into longer projects with the remaining stations and the rest of the assets while making more train options available to the customers.

Update on System-Wide Accessibility (SWA):

- He stated that \$150 million was earmarked in the last Capital Improvement Plan for accessibility projects.
- He stated that Wollaston is the last inaccessible station to be upgraded this spring without disruptions.
- He stated that designers have been tasked to pull together conceptual designs for the remaining inaccessible Green Line and commuter rail stops.
- He stated that over 7600 bus stops that have been surveyed for accessibility deficiencies. He acknowledged Laura Brelsford, Assistant General Manager for SWA for her leadership of the bus stop initiative.
- He stated that the Plan for Accessible Transportation Infrastructure remains an MBTA top priority.

He addressed the issue of privatization and was pleased to announce that after six months of negotiating with the MBTA and the Carmen's

Union Local 589 had come to a deal. The agreement would ensure that the Carmen's Union drivers over the next four and half years will continue to delivery most of the core service and the four Boston rail systems.

Paratransit Program Update:

He was pleased to announce the consolidation of three current RIDE call centers which remains on schedule with opening later in January. He acknowledged Mike Lambert, Deputy Administrator, MassDOT Rail & Transit for the leadership with the consolidation efforts. He explained that this change will bring increased choices in services to customers and provide long term sustainability to the ADA program.

He noted that with this change the MBTA will continue to deliver the same level of safe services that everyone has come to know and expect. Customers will call the new RIDE Access Center (TRAC). He noted that all the old telephone numbers will continue to work at the new dispatch operation. National Express Transit, Greater Lynn Senior Services, and Veterans Transportation will all continue to provide ADA paratransit services without any changes. He commented that once TRAC is fully implemented and is functional later this summer all transfers will be eliminated.

He explained that the MBTA will continue to explore expandable mobility options for RIDE customers with programs such as the Taxi pilot program. He explained that the MBTA will continue to experiment, innovate, and find ideas with a goal of delivering the best service in the most exemplary way that can be done.

The goal of Uber and Lyft is to create a complimentary program; to create an improved customer and increase their experience. He then asked for comments or questions.

A consumer asked about the city of Boston cabs participating in the program. *B. Shortsleeve* noted the city cabs did not have the level of insurance that the MBTA required

D. Vieira noted that in your speech safety is a top priority for the MBTA. He has reported problems about loose rails in elevators. He asked who was in charge of reporting safety hazards. *R. Sampson* said that the station officials are to inspect elevators three times a day. He noted that he would do research.

L. Weber complimented the establishment of TRAC and addressed a personal complaint about THE RIDE. The question was related to the MBTA/Uber partnership. She noted that currently, Uber does surge pricing which means the same trip costs different amounts depending on the time of day. She wondered if this could be addressed by the Task Force or elsewhere. *An MBTA staff member* stated that he knows that in both apps that you should be able to get a fare estimate before you take the trip. So that is clear before you proceed. He noted that he would do research for a flat rate.

Chairman White thanked the *B. Shortsleeve* for the work with the Carmen's Union on privatization. *B. Shortsleeve* noted that they are really excited about the outcome.

T. Gilbert asked about returning Customer Service hours on Saturday and Sunday. *B. Shortsleeve* noted that the volume was very low during that time. He understands that there could be other options to consider. He noted that he would give it some thought.

R. Clark asked if the new buses had protection screens. He is concerned about drivers being assaulted on the job. *B. Shortsleeve* noted that there are 350 new buses coming in that have driver protection screen.

Chairman White thanked the Acting General Manager and Chief Administrator for his presentation. *B. Shortsleeve* then thanked the Chair for his leadership. Both men exchanged holiday pleasantries.

MBTA and Vendor Reports

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

Rob Sampson, Manager for SWA, reported the following:

- He attended Judge King's semi-annual meeting where SWA share updates on accessibility initiatives and in addition to a progress of commitments on the initiatives.
- He noted that there are 325 new buses scheduled for deployment at a rate of ten buses per week from now through July or August.
- He also announced that in January a markup of the new Orange and Red Line trains stored at the Wellington garage will be on display. He commented that AACT and others in the disability community will inspect both and share feedback.
- He noted that the Elevator Replacement Project will began this spring at the following stations: Park Street, Central Square, and Tufts Medical Center
- He also announced that on the Green Line coming this spring the consolidation of four inaccessible stations
- He stated that the Plan for Accessible Transportation Infrastructure initiatives will be posted to the MBTA website at www.mbta.com

He then asked for questions.

R. Mahoney commented that bus operators are allowing too many carts and baby carriages on the bus at the same time. He noted that it is difficult to find a seat if you are a persons with a disability. *R.*

Sampson said that his office gets that comment often. He noted that the new buses are much spacious and that he will be pleased.

A. Manerson commented that the signs in stations are not large enough to read.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Sampson for his report.

MBTA Office for Transportation Access (OTA) -THE RIDE Program

Mike Hulak, Manager, submitted the OTA report and announced the following:

- That all customers will now be allowed to use “online booking” if they have been approved with conditions. Currently, only unconditional customer can use that feature. This will commence in February.
- That the automatic call feature is now working. He asked that customers contact OTA and leave a cellphone number to be on this call list.
- That the Taxi subsidy program has ended and they are now reviewing the data. The Means Testing data has just been released and can be found on the MBTA website at www.mbta.com/theride

He then asked for questions.

B. Cochran stated when he attempts to book same-day service the representative will not book the trip. *M Hulak* noted that the information should be taken and they should do the best to accommodate you. He said that same day request are not ADA trips. These tips are difficult to obtain and are not guaranteed.

K. Wilson stated that his RIDE service is always late or never shows. He usually has to call someone to pick him up at work. *M Hulak* he would need to do research on the November 2 date.

L. Weber asked is there same-day trip request more difficult than others to accommodate. *M Hulak* each same-day request is difficult to accommodate. He noted that Veterans as little more flexibility with their taxi service which is a benefit to them. We don't leave anyone stranded. It is more difficult to get same-day service from home.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Hulak for his report.

MBTA Transit Police Department

Dana Nye, Community Outreach Coordinator, commented that she has the November Bus Stop Blocked report and that the major areas of violations were in the cities of Cambridge, Chelsea, and Quincy. She noted that the Lieutenants in charge of these areas have been contacted to address the problems.

She then asked for questions.

T. Gilbert stated that a sign for the bus stop moved with any warning or direction. *R. Sampson* noted that there should be signage that directs you at the old site and the temporary location and you can find also find information at the MBTA website at www.mbta.com or contact customer service for information at 617-222-3200.

R. Clark commented that bus stops are illegally blocked by trucks in Brookline on Harvard Street. *D. Nye* noted that she will send someone to monitor the area.

Chairman White thanked Ms. Nye for her report.

Global Contact Services, LLC

Chris Woznac, General Manager announced:

- That GCS office is now completed with furniture, telephones, electronics, and that staff hiring is nearly complete.
- That a two-way radio contact was recently established with Veteran Transportation drivers.
- That training for staff begins early in January.
- That passengers phoning into TRAC will hear familiar voices from vendors as well as new people.

She then asked for questions.

B. Cochran asked about the number of staff that will complete her staff. **C. Woznac** stated that once the transition is completed there will be approximately 140 to 145 on staff in dispatch and scheduling.

Chairman White thanked Ms. Woznac for her update.

National Express Transit (NEXT)

Victor Herrera, Operations Manager, stated the following:

- That on January 4 NEXT will have passenger assistance training.
- That Mike Rushin is moving on and will be replaced by Joe Baker. He will attend the January AACT meeting to say good bye.

He then asked for questions.

D. Vieira commented that the automatic telephone system at NEXT is still programmed with the name Joint Venture.

A consumer noted that her driver did not have the proper tie-down. **V. Herrera** commented that he would take a look at her chair.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Herrera for his report.

Veterans Transportation (VT)

Kevin MacDonald, Project Manager distributed his report and noted that PAT and sensitivity training will be on January 26.

He then asked for questions. No questions were asked.

Chairman White thanked Mr. McDonald for his report.

Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)

Steve Epps, Director of Transportation, distributed his report and he noted that GLSS is always looking for new drivers.

A consumer reported that a THE RIDE driver showed up to her home and showed no courtesy. He did not ring her doorbell or did nor did he give her door-to-door service. She asked if those services were no longer given. *Mr. Epps* said that THE RIDE is still a door-to-door service. He noted that he will look into this situation.

He then asked for questions.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Epps for his report.

Keolis Commuter Services (KCS), LLC

Rita Hardiman, EEO Director and Diversity, in for Liz Hickey who is ill. She noted that Keolis as its winter plan is in full affect. She noted the both Keolis and the MBTA learned so many lessons from that horrible winter of 2014. Winter plans are coordinated in the heat of July. She noted that information can be found on the Keolis website at www.keolis.com as well the MBTA website at www.mbta.com.

She stated that Keolis is making special efforts to pretreat surfaces for ice removal and slippery conditions on all platforms, and parking lots where people are getting access to the rail. She noted that the areas are pretreated the night before if they are aware of a temperature drop.

She noted that at 3:00 a.m. Keolis staff will begin checking areas to check out the impact.

Keolis recently published and distributed to all customer service employees and transportation staff an updated guide on ADA requirements related to commuter rail systems. These requirements are different from AMTRAK which does long distance service and there are different requirements for bus, subway, and light rail.

She then asked for questions.

D. V. commented that Keolis had cancelled a train on the Readville line without any notice. He also noted that the LED board is inoperable and has been out for some time.

T. Gilbert asked that more information be given on stop announcements. *R. Hartiman* state that she liked the idea and would pass the suggestion on.

Chairman White asked about the early morning service on the Fairmont Line when cancelations were a problem. *R. Hartiman* state that they are doing find. She noted that there is a new policy in place and that cancelations are way down.

Chairman White thanked Ms. Hartiman for her update.

Open Discussion

J. Podesva state that the MBTA has sent out a letter about customer engagement and the future of AACT to everyone. She stated that letter has been distributed today. If anyone as questions that they can contact her for further information.

A. Manerson asked for more information about the future of AACT. *J. Podesva* stated the change would not affect the group it would still be independent. She stated that there will be a new set of rules and

bylaws. She is not sure if there will be a name change.

Announcements

Chairman White announced at the January meeting, David Scorey, General Manager, Keolis Commuter Service will be introduced to the membership meeting.

M. Hulak announced that on December 31st the MBTA will be extending operations until 2 a.m. and THE RIDE will follow suit. He noted that fares will be waved on all modes after 8 p.m.

L. Weber announced the new Wheelchair Lemon Law.

Old Business/ 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/. 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.

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 (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.

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 6:00 PM. There are no weekend or evening hours. You can log on to 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 always appreciated.