

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

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Executive Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 28, 2017

Board of Directors:

Chairman – James F. White

Vice Chairman – Lisa Weber

Executive Board

Nadine Jones

Mary Ann Murray

Beverly Ann Rock

James Tozza

Meeting opened at 10:05 AM.

Reading of the Agenda

Introductions

Attendees: Jaunita Bradshaw, Beverly A. Rock, Mary A. Murray, James White, Lisa Weber, Jim Tozza, John O'Grady, Cora Jones, Pat O'Grady

Other: Jessica Podesva, Ben Schutzman, Mike Hulak, Jorge Ladesmon, Carol J. Harrington

Approval of Minutes

Chairman White requested a motion to approve the minutes of March 22 and April 26. The motion was made carried unanimously.

Chairman White's Report

He stated the following:

- He attended a PAT class on June 7 and a bus recertification training program on June 22.

AACT Summit Report

Vice Chair Weber stated the following:

- She explained the Summit to those who did not attend, noting that Secretary Pollack gave opening remarks.
- She received much positive feedback from attendees.

Chairman White thanked the AACT Coordinator for distributing letters to those who helped facilitate the Summit.

THE RIDE Access Center (TRAC) Update

Ben Schutzman, Director, Office of Transportation Access (OTA), stated the following:

- OTA continues to focus on customer's concerns.
- He discussed the long-term benefits of The RIDE Access Center (TRAC), including the ease of having one phone number for customers to call.
- The transition of Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS) to TRAC saw more challenges than expected. He acknowledged an increase in late and missed trips and longer hold times. They want to ensure that GLSS is fully transitioned and improvements at TRAC are realized before the third and final transition.
- Driver availability has been a major reason for the increase in late and missed trips. Trips are being shifted onto GLSS's non-profit service. OTA has advanced the taxi pilot negotiations, and the Uber/Lyft program has been encouraging. They are seeking a Lyft concierge who could offer trips when regular RIDE service is delayed.
- About half of the office staff at TRAC is very experienced, and about half are either new to their role or new to the MBTA. OTA is working with Global Contact Services to ensure that the staff is fully trained. After the transition of GLSS to TRAC, there were not enough staff members available to handle calls in a timely manner. OTA has advised GCS that new staff should be hired in advance of the final transition.
- He discussed scheduling software and its benefits. He stated that as more staff begins using the software, the customer experience

will improve. The software provider has offered training to the staff; training sessions have seen heavy attendance.

- OTA is diligently tracking complaints. Missed pick-ups are currently the top concern.
- On-time performance is generally in the high 80% to low 90% range. Prior to the GLSS transition, on-time performance was in this range. Performance dropped to 85%-86% after the second transition, though it returned to 89% during the week of June 19.
- Call times rose to 3-5 minutes after the second transition, but has been steadily dropping to under 90 seconds.
- Before transitioning to TRAC, NEXT and GLSS were able to pick up approximately 1.4 to 1.7 passengers per hour. This has increased slightly since their transitions, but improvements will continue to be made.
- The goal number of customer issues is 2 per 1,000 trips. Prior to the second transition, this increased to 4 per 1,000 trips, largely due to how services are being handled. This number increase to 12 per 1,000 trips after the second transition; this number has been trending downwards.
- He noted that GCS is held accountable for problems.

He then asked for questions.

Chairman White stated that a balance should be given at the end of scheduling; this had happened previously. He noted that not giving the balance has led to problems for consumers who do not realize they have no funds available. He added that a customer was treated rudely when they tried to schedule a trip to the AACT meeting. *B. Schutzman* stated these issues are related to training. He apologized for the unpleasant phone call.

Chairman White stated that by February 28, GCS was supposed to have each department staffed to 50%, which they did not achieve. This issue should have been addressed sooner.

Vice Chair Weber asked for clarification about the Lyft concierge. *B. Schutzman* stated the goal is that GCS can use this when they realize a trip will be delayed; GCS will reach out directly to customers to offer this service. This will be fully integrated into TRAC.

J. Tozza stated he spoke with a rude TRAC staff member who insisted a vehicle had arrived when it had not. *J. O'Grady* stated he experienced a similar issue. *B. Schutzman* stated that this is a training issue, and customers should file complaints with GCS. *M. Hulak* stated that the standard operating procedure is for dispatch to confirm the location of vehicles with GPS when drivers report no-shows.

Chairman White stated that drivers and dispatchers are having extended negative conversations in front of RIDE customers over the radio. *MA Murray* added that this can be upsetting to customers. *M. Hulak* stated they want drivers to utilize their mobile computer for communications of this nature.

M.A. Murray raised the issue of driver hours. *M. Hulak* acknowledged the issue and noted that the two hour mandatory overtime is in the drivers' bargaining agreement.

M.A. Murray asked why GCS was fined. *M. Hulak* stated that GCS was fined for several reasons, including late trips, missed trips, and telephone issues.

A customer described difficulties she had getting to an appointment. She also described an occasion in which multiple RIDE vehicles arrived to pick up several passengers, when one would have been sufficient. *M. Hulak* apologized for the issues getting to the appointment, adding he would speak to her after the meeting.

Regarding multiple vehicles, he stated that the scheduling software tries to make the most efficient use of available resources. There will be times when situations with multiple vehicles will occur; at other times only one vehicle will arrive.

M.A. Murray stated she has repeatedly been picked up excessively early for medical appointments, which often leads to her appointment concluding long before her scheduled return trip. She stated this issue should be looked into. *M. Hulak* stated the scheduling software should not schedule a person to arrive two hours early to an appointment. He stated that due to cancellations the day prior to a trip, people may be picked up earlier due to gaps in the schedule. The scheduling software has parameters for how long trips take; this information cannot be changed on a day-to-day or hourly basis. He added that RIDE trip travel times should be comparable to fixed-route travel times.

M.A. Murray stated she has witnessed drivers parked and resting. *M. Hulak* stated that in between trips, drivers should not circle an area. OTA prefers the vehicles to be parked in order to not waste fuel.

J. O'Grady stated that he was given a 5:00 pick-up time, despite informing the scheduler he would be available at 1:30. A TRAC staff member changed it to 2:30. When a vehicle did not arrive at 2:30, dispatch informed him that his pick-up time was 5:00. *B. Schutzman* stated it is important to file formal complaints when these situations occur. *M. Hulak* stated he would investigate the issue. *C.J. Harrington* noted that the complaint process has not changed, and provided contact information.

MBTA Bus Operator Safety-Bike Incident

Vice Chair Weber stated that multiple members of the cyclist community have complained about safe driving by MBTA buses. These people have filed formal complaints with the MBTA. She would like to

have a conversation about general safety, and proposed having a guest speaker present on this topic.

A customer stated that many cyclists do not allow passengers to safely exit buses, as they frequently run through red lights by riding alongside the bus. She added that cyclists used to ride against the flow of traffic, allowing drivers to see them ahead of time. *Chairman White* noted drivers should be pulling to the curb, which would prevent cyclists from riding alongside them. He added that the law prohibits riding against traffic due to head-on collisions.

M.A. Murray stated that AACT should advocate education for cyclists. This could include television spots and in-class education. She noted that certain aspects of bicycle travel are unknown to some drivers and cyclists. *Chairman White* stated that AACT is concerned with the disability community. *MA Murray* noted that AACT needed to sign off on allowing bicycles on the front of buses.

J. Podesva stated she has performed outreach during the creation of the new community engagement group, including members of the cyclist community. She stated that a conversation could certainly happen between these communities, but it may be some time before it occurs. She would like the new community engagement group to initially focus on other issues; however, addressing the cyclist community will eventually need to occur.

Chairman White noted several advocacy groups that work with cyclists. He added that the City of Boston had an initiative where City Council members cycled to work. The City of Boston should be the forerunners of educational initiatives. However, he questioned how AACT would fit into this situation.

Vice Chair Weber noted that an increasing number of people are using bicycles as mobility devices; this should fall under AACT's reach.

She would like AACT to get in touch with whoever runs the initial MBTA driver training and have them as a guest speaker. She noted that driver safety affects both the disability community and cyclist community. *J. Podesva* stated they should get in touch with Laura Brelsford of System-Wide Accessibility.

M.A. Murray made a motion for Vice Chair Weber to head a committee on this the issue of cyclists and vehicle safety. The motion was not seconded.

Chairman White stated he asked Bill Cameron of MBTA Bus Operations to give a presentation to AACT on how bus drivers are trained. He noted that the cycling issues can be raised during this presentation.

B.A. Rock stated that AACT should not undertake cycling issues, as AACT already addresses many issues.

Open Discussion

J. Podesva stated she will have her intern create a 3x5 complaint card containing all necessary information to file a complaint. The card would have AACT's logo. *Chairman White* suggested distributing them on RIDE vehicles.

Old and New Business

J. Podesva stated that the new community engagement group will likely not begin during the summer; a tentative launch date is October. Reasons for the delay include financial issues and internal issues; the Ad Hoc Committee will also need to meet with Secretary Pollack. She will continue to be involved in its implementation.

Meeting adjourned at 11:43 AM.

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.

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.