

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

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Membership Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Board of Directors:

Chairman – James F. White

Vice Chairman – Lisa Weber

Executive Board

Nadine Jones

Mary Ann Murray

Beverly Ann Rock

James Tozza

Call to Order at 1:20 PM

Vice Chair Lisa Weber apologized for the delay and explained that the Chair on advice of his doctor would not be here. She noted that she will be presiding over today's meeting and wished the Chair good health and a speedy recovery.

Reading of the Agenda

Introductions

Attendees: Lisa Weber, Sylvia Mekler, Steve Justice, Christine Daniels, Jennifer Workman, Nancy Miller, David Vieira, Eric Lane, Kevin Wilson, Thomas Gilbert, Debbie Weathers, Ella Williams, Angela Manerson, Mary Davis, Nadine Jones

MBTA: Mike Hulak, Rob Sampson

Other: Kristen McCosh, Patricia Mendez, Winston Pierre, Ray Croteau, Victor Herrera, Jessica Podesva, Steve Epps, Kevin MacDonald

Vice Chairman Weber stated the following:

- Community Engagement group is in charge of the merger between the plaintiffs group and AACT. She explained that the role is to have one entity that will deal with disability access issues at the MBTA whether it is fixed route services or paratransit issues. She commented that the two groups are stronger together.
- Paratransit Task Force continues to meet monthly. She noted that anyone with questions should feel free to chat with her.
- Taxi Pilot Programs (Uber and Lyft) are now active to those who are paratransit eligible.

She then asked for questions.

M. Davis asked why was there no represented from Keolis attending today's meeting. *Chair Weber* stated that AACT was informed of a scheduling conflict.

Approval of Minutes

August 23 meeting minutes were accepted unanimously.

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) Taxi Cabs Kristin McCosh, Commissioner, Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Began by sending well wishes to Chairman White. She introduced her staff who accompanied her to the meeting Winston Pierre, Patricia Mendez, Architectural Access Specialist for the City of Boston.

She stated the following:

- Accessible taxi cabs in Boston are called Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs). 100 WAVs are part of the regular taxi fleet, and operate like standard cabs. Customers can hail them on the street or can be requested over the phone. All WAV's may not be ADA compliant. There are no applications or assessments needed to use these vehicles. *(See the attached)*
- Full specifications of the vehicles can be located at boston.gov/disability/wav.
- The Taxi pilot program for non-paratransit trips with the MBTA will allow RIDE customers to use taxis instead of RIDE vans.

- There will be future meetings between the MBTA and the Boston Police Department that will focus on increasing the number of accessible vehicles and service improvement.

She then asked for questions.

J. Smith-Workman asked if the WAVs will have jurisdictions. She also asked who will pay for the taxi subsidy pilot. *Commissioner McCosh* stated that because WAVs operate as standard taxis, they can pick up anywhere in Boston; though they cannot make pick-ups outside of Boston, they can make drop-offs. Regarding the taxi pilot, she is unsure of the pay structure, but she speculated that the MBTA will pay for some of it.

A. Manerson asked what color the WAVs are. *Commissioner McCosh* stated all cabs in Boston are white. WAVs are identifiable by the wheelchair icon.

N. Miller asked if WAVs are intended for same-day trips. *Commissioner McCosh* stated that WAVs are intended for same-day trips, though customers could schedule a regular trip. She noted that WAV drivers are trained to work with persons with disabilities.

Ms. Weber thanked the Commissioner for her update.

MBTA Department of System-Wide Accessibility (SWA)

Rob Sampson, Manager for SWA, stated the following:

- MBTA welcomes a new General Manager Luis Ramirez.

- Elevator Replacement Project – All Tufts Medical Center station elevators will be out of service from October 16, 2017 thru to May 2018.
 - MBTA will provide shuttle bus service from Back Bay Station to Tufts Medical Center for the duration that elevators are taken out of service.
 - To request shuttle service contact the station official or utilize the station call box or the Silver Lines 4 or 5 to Downtown Crossing.

He then asked for questions.

T. Gilbert commented that he has noticed that the LED aboard speaker on a couple of the new buses were in shambles and not very clear. *R. Sampson* stated that to his knowledge the operators cannot trigger the stop announcements. He will contact Bus Operations

D. Vieira noted that he encountered a customer ambassador who was unfamiliar with the entire layout of Government Center station.

R. Sampson stated that the agent's job is to be familiar with the station. He noted that he will do research.

P. Mendez stated that there is a problem at Shawmut station on the Red Line that needs attention. She would like to help. *R. Sampson* accepted her offer.

T. Gilbert commented that operator training should include more LED messages such as passengers: do not block the front entrance, move to the rear, and do not take up seating with bags.

J. Workman commented that Route 23 ridership has increased now that school has started. She noted that the Route 28 buses are very

accommodating. The Route 23 is inaccessible for mobility devices and person with disabilities. She asked what can be done to increase the bus size. *R. Sampson* suggested that she file a complaint with the customer service. He also commented that the MBTA Service Planning Department holds public meetings to get customer input.

Ms. Weber thanked the Mr. Sampson for his update.

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

Mike Hulak, Manager of Paratransit Contract Operations, noted that he had submitted his report and added the following:

- He commented that the MBTA has launched its new accessible website.
 - Both THE RIDE and the Department of System-Wide Accessibility have new looks.
 - Members and friends are encouraged to view the new site at www.mbta.com/theride.
- He reminded members that the MBTA has a new financial partner to process THE RIDE deposits. (Please see the attached) This was not a decision made by OTA, but by the MBTA financial management in order to create efficiency.
 - He explained that the MBTA will no longer accept deposits at 10 Park Plaza.

He then asked for questions.

A consumer wants to know the name of the financial partner the MBTA has processing THE RIDE deposits. The information was not

available. *Vice Chairman Weber* recommended that she share her concern at the MBTA Customer Service Department 617-222-3200.

E. Williams noted that she has a standing pick up with THE RIDE weekly but she continues to be taken south instead of north. She noted that drivers show up 45 minutes to two hours late. *M. Hulak* apologized and noted that OTA is working with TRAC management to ensure that all customers get sufficient service.

K. Wilson commented that he had a late pickup at Fenway. He explained that the driver held him captive for over an hour while waiting for someone to leave at their place of employment in Brighton. He stated that it was after midnight when he arrived home.

J. Workman asked when will the new vans arrive that were on display. *M. Hulak* explained that *the* MBTA has purchased new vehicles that are similar, but not from New England Wheels. He noted the AACT Chair arranged for the viewing.

Ms. Weber thanked the Mr. Hulak for his update.

National Express Transit (NEXT)

Victor Herrera, General Manager, announced that passenger assistance training (PAT) will be on October 11th from 8:00a - 4:00p.

He then asked for questions.

J. Workman asked that drivers be advised to show courtesy and ask a passenger if he or she needs assistance to the vehicle. *V. Herrera* stated that drivers are instructed to ask if assistance is needed to or from the vehicle in the passenger assistance training class.

Ms. Weber thanked the Mr. Herrera for his update.

Veterans Transportation

Kevin MacDonald, General Manager, announced a PAT class on October 10th, 2017 from 9:00a – 3:00p.

He then asked for questions.

J. Workman enquired about a rumor that Veterans would not transition to Global until a later date. *K. MacDonald* stated transition will be November 1st instead of the original date to ensure for a better quality of service.

K. Wilson concerned that calls to book THE RIDE are usually disconnected. *K. MacDonald* asked that he share the dates and times.

E. Lane noted THE RIDE continually arrives late. *K. MacDonald* noted that historically, September is a very busy month for traffic, more people taking THE RIDE, more cars, and more school vehicles. Congestion will last until about the second week in December. He apologized for the inconvenience and advised him to contact dispatch.

Ms. Weber thanked the Mr. MacDonald for his update.

Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)

Steven Epps, Director of Transportation, announced PAT class will be on Friday, October 6th.

He then asked for questions.

J. Workman noted that she does not feel safe when THE RIDE driver(s) have been drinking liquids. *S. Epps* noted that he will need to do research.

Ms. Weber thanked the Mr. Epps for his update.

Global Contact Services (GCS)

Ray Croteau, Acting General Manager submitted THE RIDE Access Center (TRAC) report and announced his permanent status as the new General Manager for GCS as of last week.

TRAC is the command access center for THE RIDE where all scheduling, reservations, dispatching and archiving of all your trips are being performed.

He explained that under his leadership things are getting better especially the dispatch side. Customer services are also getting better. He noted that his staff now has a better understanding of their jobs and what is expected of them.

He also received a rash of complaints from members who were very upset with the treatment by his staff. He heard complaints concerning rudeness from dispatchers, lack of vehicles, vehicle mix up, no return calls, and late pickups. *Mr. Croteau* explained that he is willing to meet with each person individually who could provide information to help as he researches into their concerns.

Ms. Weber thanked the Mr. Croteau for his update.

Announcements

- White Cane Day will be celebrated on October 23 at the State House.

- J. Podesva announced that there is a delay in the merger between the plaintiffs group and AACT due to challenges at the Department of System-Wide Development. She is hopeful that things will settle down and that the group can continue its work.

Open Discussion

The following concerns were shared:

- Commuter rail, Green, and Red Line trains public address system are programmed incorrectly with the wrong stops. This becomes problematic for those who may be visually impaired, tourist, and others.
- A few communities do not (Somerville, Arlington, and Watertown) consider ADA compliance rules when adding bike paths.
- A bike path has been placed near a bus stop near the Perkins School for the Blind.
- More should be done to have dialogue between the MBTA with +the cities and towns to address how Plan for Accessible Transit Infrastructure can work in their plans.

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 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 MBTA Customer Call Center is *NO* longer located at 10 Park Plaza to receive walk in customer comments, concerns and inquiries. Please visit the MBTA website at www.mbta.com to submit your comments, concerns and inquiries. ***You may also call to speak with a Customer Service Representative.***

6:30 a.m. – 8 p.m. Monday – Friday

8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Saturday/Sunday

(617) 222 – 3200

(800) 392 – 6100

TTY (617) 222 – 5146

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.