

**ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
(AACT)**

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December 20, 2006

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 PM.

NOTABLES

- Please sign in at all meetings
- All meetings are equipped with assistive-listening devices
- AACT elections details to be discussed
- As a courtesy to the hosting vendor, training sessions are to be attended for the full day; members, please plan your day accordingly
- Keep your attendance current to ensure your right to vote or hold office
- Handouts should be distributed at least fifteen minutes before the meetings

ATTENDANCE

Marilyn MacNab, Philip Beaulieu, Frank Taverna, Paul Barresi, Jeff Grant, Kathy Roach, Phil P. Semans, Betty J. King, Reggie Clark, Richard Chapman, Kathryn Piccard, Marilyn Goulston, Don Summerfield, John Marshall, John D. Kane, Sharon Harrison, Jim Durant, Pauline Lincoln, Thomas Gilbert, Cheryl Ravalli, and Jim Oliver

MBTA Representatives:

Robert Rizzo, Carol Joyce-Harrington, and Kathy Cox

Vendor Representatives:

Joint Venture – Carlton Jones
GLSS – Jacquelyn Dunlop
Kiessling Transit, Inc. – Claire DiPillo
Veteran Transportation Services – John Tuttle

Central Transportation Planning Staff:

Pam Wolfe and Walter Bennett

AGENDA

- Self-introduction of the audience
- Reading of the Agenda
- November 15 minutes were presented and approved

MBTA/OTA Fixed-Route Services Report

Kathy Cox, Manager of Fixed-Route Services for Access (buses, trains, subway, commuter rail, bus rapid transit, and commuter rail and commuter boat) for the MBTA Office for Transportation Access (OTA), presented the following information (reports attached). She thanked Chairman Beaulieu for accommodating her schedule, and recognizing her to speak early.

Highlights:

- The MBTA draft Capital Investment Program (CIP) for fiscal years 2008-2013 is a yearly document and process that gives consumers a voice on how the MBTA funds are spent. The CIP will focus on projects that are accessibility, reliability, and safety.
- On December 7 General Manager Grabauskas announced bus service improvements to the busiest routes with increased oversight by supervisors in an effort to increase on-time performance and reduce overcrowding
- The new and improved MBTA is online. AACT members are asked to log on, view the site, and give feedback.
- The Fairmont Commuter Rail Line improvements are due to be completed by 2011 and will include stops at Geneva Ave, South Bay Center, and Blue Hill Ave.
- On December 4 at 5:30 AM the General Manager Grabauskas began the mass distribution of the Charlie Card in Roxbury at Dudley Station. MBTA staff will continue distribution at various locations for several more weeks
- Persons who have received a new Senior or Transportation Access Pass (TAP) within the last 18 months now have the current Charlie Card (assuming it has not expired).
- The new vehicle purchase continues with the arrival of the following: Green Line low-floor cars, the New Flyer of America buses, and the new Blue Line cars.

- Other items discussed were: on-site visits to areas to take photos for senior ID's, the activation of the automatic fare equipment, the reduced fare ID replacement effort in local communities, the stop announcement monitoring (compliance with ADA requirement), the class action lawsuit on access compliance monitoring.

She then asked for questions and comments.

D. Summerfield: There is a problem with the handrails at Boylston Station. The newly installed handrails don't go above the top of the stairs. Please bring to the attention of Mr. Festa.

K. Cox: I will.

K. Roach: The audio system on the Red Line platform at Park Street is too low. The announcements can't be heard.

K. Cox: I will pass this information on.

Consumer: I am concerned about the timing of the Charlie Card information. There is a communications breakdown. The weight of the transition is fully on customer service at the control gates and we ought to compliment them on the excellent job they are doing. But the public has not seen this information yet. The new language needs to be defined and a need for more training. The customer service people should be thanked. Can this feedback be addressed in a timely manner? Even the customer service staff people aren't being informed

K. Cox: It is a challenge for everyone. MBTA staff is out in stations passing out flyers with the information concerning the change. I have also been passing out information on the new Charlie Card. Lots of information has been issued. Training for customer service agents started last May; in some instances training was given on-site.

J. Oliver: Who is training the access monitors to handle issues on accessibility? Are they certified trainers?

K. Cox: They will only be observing. They are trained on how the wheelchair is secured. The monitors are undercover. Trained staff will train them.

Other Comments:

Consumer: I was asked to report to you that the elevator in this building is not working properly.

The report was accepted.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Beaulieu made the following remarks:

- Every member is asked to keep perfumes, colognes, and deodorants to a minimum when taking THE RIDE due to those who maybe sensitive.
- He thanked the Vice-Chair and the AACT Board for managing the work of AACT during his absence.
- Members were told to get updated calendars
- Members were informed why he always checking his watch. He's the time keeper of the meeting

He then asked for questions. The report was accepted.

Public Comment:

Consumer: The meeting attendees should be notified that the meeting is being recorded?

M. MacNab: AACT meetings are public that do not require a notice.

New Business

Kathryn Piccard made the following four motions. They were seconded and passed.

Motion #1

Move that AACT ask OTA to give postal notification of the fare increase (in writing or the alternative mode designated by the recipient) to every RIDE user who has used the RIDE in 2006, or who has money in their account, or who has been newly approved this year.

Motion passed.

R. Rizzo: This will be part of my report. My office did arrange for a massive mailing. This had been done in consultation with your Chair.

Motion #2

K. Piccard: Move that AACT ask OTA to require RIDE vendors to immediately notify each passenger of their account balance whenever passengers phone to make reservations for trips on or after January 1, 2007; whenever their account balance is at or below twelve dollars, which will amount to six trips; before or after they make their reservations.

Motion passed.

Motion #3

K. Piccard: Move that AACT ask OTA to require RIDE vendors to notify each subscription passenger immediately of the fare increase taking effect January 1, 2007, and if two weeks notice of the fare increase has not been given before January 1 to any particular rider to allow that rider a one-time leeway in making the extra payment without disrupting their service.

Motion passed.

Motion #4

K. Piccard: Move that AACT ask OTA to make the minimum amount needed to open an account, for people coming into the area from outside the MBTA service area the price of one trip, just as is the case with Charlie Cards, so that out-of-town visitors will not have to invest money they do not have an easy way to reclaim.

Amendment by J. Grant: We restrict reducing the minimum amount that for a card for one trip only for people coming into the area as, opposed to changing across the board.

By show of hands to the original motion 8 to 4.

AACT members voted to amend the motion. Members then passed the amended motion.

AACT Fixed Route Coordinator Report

Frank Taverna has returned after a long absence. No report was presented.

MBTA/OTA Paratransit Contract Operations Report

Bob Rizzo, Manager of Paratransit and Contract Operations for the MBTA, gave a summary of the following activities carried out by his staff, vendor representatives, and other participants (September and October reports attached). Mr. Rizzo asked that a copy of the motions be sent to his office for review and he will inform AACT on his actions

Highlights:

- OTA staff met with TranSystems, Inc, on the recommendations of the access study
- Staff met with Kiessling Transit, Inc. to resolve transfer concerns
- THE RIDE Safety Committee met on the concerns of chemical sensitivity awareness
- OTA and Bus Operations accepted delivery of new vehicles for THE RIDE
- There is a commitment by the MBTA to work with AACT and THE RIDE contractors to involve committee in the review of future vehicle needs and procurement; this will consist of evaluation of the existing fleet and performance in early 2007
- The Joint Venture of Thompson YCN hosted a training session for all THE RIDE contractor maintenance personnel to become familiar with the new vehicles, how they work, and the warranty provisions, representatives from the manufacturer were on hand to administer the training
- A demonstration of THE RIDE computer system was given to the Greater Hartford Transit District
- TranSystems will meeting with the oversight group next month regarding the modeling system
- On November 9 the MBTA Board of Directors passed the system-wide fare increase for implementation January 1
- THE RIDE will extend service for First Night until 2:30 AM

Service Updates overview:

- Ridership increased 8.8 percent for the month of November compared to November 2005 Year-to-date (YTD) ridership is up 9.3 percent, while the “not available” (NA) rate is at zero
- YTD on-time performance (within 30 minutes of scheduled pick-up time) 98.7 percent and 92 percent (within 15 minutes of scheduled pick-up time) YTD
- Complaints have decreased for December marginally and are just under one percent
- Complaints have decreased for the fiscal year and are just under 7 percent for the month of December
- Vehicular accidents have increased one percent.
- THE RIDE Safety meeting will not meet this month, but will return on January 25 at OTA offices

He then asked for questions.

D. Summerfield: What is a subscription rider?

R. Rizzo: This is for consumers (such as a person going to work, school or a regularly scheduled appointment) who have trips more than three or more times a week at the same time. The customer should schedule these trips every two weeks. The commitment cannot be made to every customer.

J. Grant: Are you talking with the contractors to make sure the subscription customers know about their balances before they get too low?

R. Rizzo: I would like for THE RIDE representatives to inform about the subscription service during his or her report.

M. MacNab: I am late because the driver started out for my trip in the wrong city. The last three times they have been late. When a driver is trained, what are the standards to be met and who is observing the checking to make sure the wheelchairs are not moving?

R. Rizzo: I will follow-up on the complaint. All drivers are given professional training. I have also observed the training, which is appropriate and sound. If you observe anything please let us know.

P. Semans: If you make a transfer would THE RIDE be \$2 or \$4?

R. Rizzo: The fare is \$2 from point to point. There is no additional charge for a transfer point.

K. Piccard: Is North Quincy to Watertown \$2?

R. Rizzo: That is correct.

J. Oliver: I read in the minutes that Greater Lynn Senior Services is negotiating with the North Shore transit agency to work out transfers. To the South, the Greater Attleboro Transportation Authority (GATRA) is picking up some towns that pay subsidies into the MBTA and don't get service. Will this happen with GATRA?

R. Rizzo: We are open to another regional transit authority. We are following up on a request from a town on the north shore.

The report was accepted.

MBTA Director of Planning Joseph Cosgrove presented the Lechmere/North Point Update/Science Park Status with the following comments:

Highlights:

- The MBTA is coordinating with the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority
- The MBTA is working on a design for a pedestrian overpass
- Partnership with Gilford Transportation
- Lechmere Station will be relocated to the east side of the highway
- The NorthPoint Project is scheduled to be approved by the MBTA Board of Directors in a few months
- The new Lechmere Station will be completed by 2010
- There is a plan for expansion to the Green Line to Somerville Union Square
- The expansion of Green Line will extend into Medford in the vicinity of Tufts University

He then asked for questions.

K. Piccard: The last drawings of the plans for the station showed lots of arched glass and asphalt and it looked like it would be too hot and a problem to keep air circulating.

J. Cosgrove: No final decisions have been made for the design. Richard Ryan is the project manager for the new North Point/Lechmere project. He gave a presentation of the current design to members on how the new station would be ventilated.

J. Grant: I want you to look into the following two points: (1) the elevators – look closely at the light patterns inside the elevator at night, and (2) traffic lights – make

sure they have audible walk signals

R. Ryan: Yes, I will take that into consideration.

M. MacNab: Paratransit riders want to transfer to transit and the tendency is to locate us at the curb in the kiss-and-ride area. But the paratransit vehicles should have a designated spot close to the door and there should be a place to sit, a pay phone, lighting and security; also, if there is an escalator and a stairway, please locate the stairway between the up and down escalator.

R. Ryan: Yes, I will take that into consideration.

K. Piccard: We would also appreciate at least having a taxi stand located close to the station.

THE RIDE Coordinator Report

Paul Barresi THE RIDE Coordinator commented on the following items

- He thanked GLSS staff for inviting him to a passenger assistance training
- He is continuing to process complaints
- He reminded vendors and OTA staff to be careful not to send complaints to AACT if the customer has indicated they should not be sent

He then asked for questions. None were presented. The report was accepted.

Vendors' Reports

Kiessling Transit, Inc (KTI)

M. Claire DiPillo, General Manager, read from her report for the month of November (report attached). In addition she responded to the question raised earlier about reminding customers when their balance is getting low.

She then asked for questions.

J. Oliver: How often do you retrain your dispatchers on re-scheduling trips with a change of address, a location of pickup or a drop-off?

C. DiPillo: That is automatic for the customer for change.

P. Lincoln: I am not told about my balance.

C. DiPillo: We always inform the customers.

The report was accepted.

Greater Lynn Senior Services, Inc. (GLSS)

Jackie Dunlop, Director of Transportation, read from her report for the month of November (report attached). In addition she responded to an earlier asked question; a monthly report is produced to give all GLSS subscription users notice at least two weeks in advance that their account is getting low.

She then asked for questions.

Consumer: How do you inform other users that their balance is low?

J. Dunlop: We don't. The majority of the consumers' balances are low. Your balance will show on the screen when you call. We inform them during their call.

Consumer: Is there some way to recognize the truly good drivers?

J. Dunlop: If a compliment is received from a customer it will go in the drivers' file. In the past we had a program "Driver of the Month," but it was cancelled due to problems. We do continue to let drivers know that they are doing a good job individually.

J. Oliver: How often do you retrain your dispatchers on re-scheduling trips with a change of address, a location of pickup or a drop-off?

J. Dunlop: This type of scheduling is done on a day-to-day basis. If someone calls to cancel a trip it is rebooked.

The report was accepted.

Joint Venture of TTI /YCN, Inc.

Carlton Jones, Safety Manager, read from his report for the month of November (report attached).

He then asked for questions.

J. Oliver: How often do you retrain your dispatchers on re-scheduling trips with a change of address, a location of pickup or a drop-off?

C. Jones: Dispatchers are instructed on how to change pick-up locations. If you are having a problem with your reservation call the Assistant Operations Manager, Mike Hunter, he is there in the morning. In our dispatch area in the afternoon you may call Robert Morris.

P. Semans: My daughter is living in Sharon and most of the time there is very good service; but the last two times the driver didn't come and I couldn't get to my destination. We have had problems.

C. Jones: We have had problems. We now have additional staff.

The report was accepted.

Veterans Transportation Services, Inc. (VTS)

John Tuttle, Operations Manager, read from his report for the month of November (report attached).

He then asked for questions.

J. Oliver: How often do you retrain your dispatchers on re-scheduling trips or changing the address or location of pickup or drop-off?

J. Tuttle: All staff is trained to rebook trips.

R. Chapman: Consumers have informed me that complaint cards are not in the vehicle.

J. Tuttle: They are there. This is part of our circle check. We put them in the glove compartment. We place them in the pouch with the AACT notices. I will take this under advisement.

R. Rizzo: Would you comment on the safeguards for subscription users concerning their account balance?

J. Tuttle: We have numerous safeguards in place for subscription and non-subscription users. When the screen comes up the dispatcher is alerted that the funds are low and informs the consumer. The vendors are authorized to give a limited number of trips until the account is settled. He warned that consumers should be aware that there are no free rides.

Consumer: I have a similar problem, as do other people with scheduling a trip where you want to stay no longer than an hour. Is there anything that can be done about this practical term?

J. Tuttle: We do require you to wait an hour between pickups. The problem with this

is a time constraint. The problem is your arrival time. You or others should make the reservationist aware of this.

Consumer: Is there a way to have the pickup an hour after the drop-off time?

J. Tuttle: I will look more into a solution.

Members' Comments:

M. McNab: Mr. Rizzo and all the vendors; thank you for the large print reports. I greatly appreciate that. I thank all of you.

D. Summerfield: Why was the schedule changed from the third Wednesday to the fourth Wednesday?

Chairman Beaulieu: Our Coordinator produces the schedule months in advance with building management.

Consumer: I was unable locate this meeting even though she spoke with security guards.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 PM.