

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
(AACT)**

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Meeting Minutes for June 27, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 PM.

NOTABLES

- The next AACT meeting will be on Wednesday afternoon, July 25, from 1:00 to 3:30 PM in Conference Room 2
- Chairman Beaulieu asked that everyone join him in a moment of silence in memory of Jeff Grant, long-time AACT member and advocate for the disability community
- Judge Patrick King, the court-appointed independent monitor for the settlement agreement asked that he be contacted with members' thoughts, comments, and questions; he can be reached by phone at 617-228-9125 or e –mail MBTAMonitor@gmail.com. He promises to answer as quickly as possible
- Madam Vice-Chair MacNab thanked the AACT members for their support during her tenure as Vice- Chair. She commented that she was very honored to have served
- James (Jim) Oliver, thanked outgoing Chairman Beaulieu for stepping in after his resignation due to his unexpected illness.
- Please sign in at all meetings
- Keep your attendance current to ensure your right to vote or hold office
- All meetings are equipped with assistive-listening devices
- As a courtesy to the hosting vendor, training sessions are to be attended for the full day; members, please plan your day accordingly
- Handouts should be distributed at least fifteen minutes before the meetings
- THE RIDE does not honor subscription service on major holidays. All trips must be requested for that holiday service
- Announcements are always welcome. Please be prepared to give as many details as possible: date, time, location, contact person, phone number or flyer would be appreciated

ATTENDANCE

James Oliver, Philip Beaulieu, Frank Taverna, Marilyn MacNab, Paul Barresi, Kathryn Piccard, Don Summerfield, Richard Nurt, Ben Haynes, Richard Mahoney, John Marshall, Mark Kalashian, Cheryl Ravalli, John Kane, Divinah Payne, Chris Hart, Carmen Curry, Gloria Mastro, and Lillian Haynes

MBTA Representatives:

Carla Howze, Gary Talbot, Carl Merrick, D. O'Connor, Michael Festa, Michael Hulak, Paul Fitzgerald, Carol Joyce-Harrington, Alex Murkinson, Kathy Cox, Robert Rizzo, and Dorothy Winn

Vendor Representatives:

Joint Venture of Thompson Transit and YCN – Carlton Jones, Greater Lynn Senior Services, Inc.– Jackie Dunlop, Kiessling Transit, Inc. – Claire DiPillo, and Veteran Transportation Services – John Tuttle

Central Transportation Planning /MPO Staff:

Janie Guion and Walter Bennett

Agenda

- Self-introduction of the members, friends and guests
- Reading of the Agenda

Members were given an explanation of the reason the meetings are taped.

Chairman Beaulieu's Report

He discussed his activities for the months of May and June, which included the following:

- A meeting for the Program for Mass Transportation
- Services for the late Jeff Grant, long-time AACT member
- Participation in the three-day re-certification training for Train-the-Trainer at Veterans Transportation
- Continued contact through out the month with various officials at the MBTA
- A visit to the Office for Transportation Access-Fixed Route at Back Bay Station

He thanked the AACT members for all their support and said that he is looking forward to his continued work on accessibility issues with the incoming Chairman.

He then asked for questions. There were none. The report was accepted.

The April 25 and May 23 minutes were approved.

MBTA Director of Customer Support Center

Carla Howze, Director for the newly established MBTA Customer Support Center (CSC) spoke briefly about the new center and answered questions from the audience. The CSC office came on-line in February of 2007 and 90 percent of the staff is new to the MBTA. The CSC is the central intake location for all complaints. A staff of 24 representatives is capable of taking complaints in seven languages and has a language vendor on call. This office does not investigate or research

complaints. The complaints are routed to the various departments by way of software called HEAT. Although this is the central location to call for any and all type of complaints the Office for Transportation Access will continue to accept complaints for THE RIDE. A new function for the CSC is to help passengers' in emergency situations. The office is located in the State Transportation Building on the 5th floor and can be reached by calling the MBTA's main phone number at 617-222-3200.

Questions were then asked.

B. Haynes: In the past, complaints have taken 10 days for a response. How quickly will your office respond?

C. Howze: The new technology sends the information electronically. Complaints depend on research and investigation, in which my office is not involved. Answers may perhaps be quicker than 10 days.

M. MacNab: Will your office now handle making special accessible accommodations?

C. Howze: This is now under review by the General Manager's office.

J. Oliver: Will you be assigning complaints by number?

C. Howze: We do have a numbering system.

M. Kalashian: Will your office give on-the-spot emergency assistance if needed?

C. Howze: Yes.

K. Piccard: How will complaints for THE RIDE be handled?

C. Howze: Complaints for THE RIDE will be forwarded to the Office for Transportation Access.

D. Payne: When did the emergency services start?

C. Howze: This service started in March.

Old Business:

M. Kalashian commented that Ron Mariani is not helping resolve his long overdue commuter rail issues.

New Business: None was presented.

Announcements: None were presented.

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)

She reported on the following:

- There is a new accessible elevator at Shawmut Station
- The Fields Corner Station will be on-line in two weeks
- Riverside track replacement continues on the Green Line
- Staff participated in the Elder Expo at the Reggie Lewis Center
- The MBTA is investing more money for service upgrades
- New Blue Line trains are arriving

She then asked for questions.

M. Kalashian: Why is the commuter rail system not a part of the lawsuit settlement?

K. Cox: The plaintiffs did not have commuter rail as an issue.

D. Payne: Are you aware of the issue with the bus stop on Harrison Ave?

K. Cox: Your complaint was passed on. I will now take your complaint to another level.

P. Barresi: What can you tell us about the incident on the Red Line?

R. Rizzo: It was stated that a passenger made a comment that he had bomb.

D. Summerfield: Why are the trains stopping beyond the detectable warning strips at Lechmere Station?

K. Cox: I will revisit this issue with Green Line Operations.

M. Kalashian: Who should people with disabilities call with complaints?

K. Cox: The goal is to have all complaints go through the new Customer Support Center for better tracking.

M. MacNab: I have been monitoring the new automatic fare equipment and I've found that it is very inaccurate. There needs to be clearer information on the machines for the consumer.

K. Cox: I will pass your concerns on to the Automated Fare Collection Department.

B. Haynes: Will your office still handle complaints on accessibility?

K. Cox: We are pleased to accept phone calls.

M. Festa shared information on the locations of the Green Line's new accessible mini-highs:

- Boston University (BU) Central
- Newton Station
- Brookline Station
- Washington Street Station
- Cleveland Circle Station
- Museum of Fine Arts Station

The report was accepted.

Fixed Route Coordinator Report

Frank Taverna reported that he and Ron Mariani had been on several site visits to view the accessibility of the MBTA stations.

He then asked for questions. The report was accepted.

M. Kalashian: Will the Customer Support Center give complaints in accessible formats?

F. Taverna: I am not sure.

B. Haynes: Have you been receiving the Fixed Route Stop Announcement data?

F. Taverna: I haven't seen any lately. I will take action on the matter.

The report was accepted.

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 reports.

Highlights:

- MBTA and the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority have entered into a two-year contract for paratransit services
- There was a briefing with the new Assistant General Manager for Systemwide Accessibility on the background and activities of both THE RIDE and Fixed Route Services
- The staff attended a meeting with personnel from the Massachusetts General Hospital on upcoming construction impact for THE RIDE customers
- There was a meeting with the Rider Oversight Committee Finance Sub-Committee to answer questions concerning THE RIDE
- The annual Independence Day shuttle service to the Hatch Shell on the Esplanade was a success.
- He attended the closing session of the "Train the Trainers" a three day Certification Program at Veterans Transportation Services

Report on OTA staff activities:

- Bus Operations personnel conducted tests on THE RIDE's new vans
- There was a site visit at North Station to determine location of the new drop-off and pickup to be added
- There was an eligibility presentation on THE RIDE to the Council on Aging in Danvers
- A manufacturer's representative accommodated a customer at home to investigate securement equipment and techniques
- Staff participated in an on-going Project Action Paratransit Study
- Staff met with transit police staff dealing with THE RIDE

Service Updates

- Ridership increased 9.7% for the month of May compared to May 2006, and year-to-date (YTD) ridership is up 8.7%, while still maintaining a zero NA rate
- YTD on-time performance (within 30 minutes of scheduled pick-up time) was at 98.7% /92.2% (within 15 minutes of scheduled pick-up time)
- YTD complaints have decreased by 10%. May complaints levels were below 200 for the 26th straight month
- YTD vehicular accidents are level with FY06, which has shown a major achievement in increased ridership
- Complaints increased by 19.3 percent from May 2006

He then asked for questions.

K. Piccard: What is the policy for data that is not accident related?

B. Rizzo: There are no images of customers. The system is not abused. Recordings are saved only if there is an accident.

P. Brassei: How does your office monitor THE RIDE?

B. Rizzo: There are two members from my staff appointed to observe THE RIDE.

B. Haynes: Are all MBTA personnel trained to proficiency?

B. Rizzo: I am unable to give you an answer.

The report was accepted.

Paratransit (THE RIDE) Coordinator Report

Paul Barresi gave a brief statement concerning his tenure on the AACT Board and thanked everyone for their support. He wished the new Board success.

He then asked for questions.

M. Kalashian: What steps should I take for next THE RIDE contract document to include in the language that “two people who require the front seat of the vehicle not be scheduled for THE RIDE at the same times?”

P. Barresi: I am not able to answer that.

M. MacNab: Members who usually take THE RIDE should consider fixed route whenever. This would help with funding for the MBTA.

The report was accepted.

Vendors' Reports

The following vendor representatives gave statistical reports for May and questions were taken from AACT members.

M. MacNab asked all four vendors if THE RIDE cam data is viewed in privacy? All four stated that

the information recorded by the cam is only view by management staff in a secure area.

B. Rizzo commented that not all vehicles are equipped with the drive cam. The new order of vehicles will be equipped.

Veterans Transportation Services, Inc. (VTS)

John Tuttle, Operations Manager, read from his report for the month of June.

He then asked for questions.

M. Kalashian: How is the data from THE RIDE cam used? Can we request the driver hit the cam button?

J. Tuttle: We use this information for improvement of driver behavior. The cam is there for passenger safety. No one should be requesting the panic button. The cam is triggered by a sudden event.

The report was accepted.

Kiessling Transit, Inc (KTI)

M. Claire DiPillo, General Manager, read from her report for the month of June.

She then asked for questions.

B. Haynes: Did any of THE RIDE accidents impact the safety of the consumer?

C. DiPillo: Nothing was serious.

The report was accepted.

Greater Lynn Senior Services, Inc. (GLSS)

Jackie Dunlop, Director of Transportation, read from her report for the month of June.

She then asked for questions.

M. Kalashian: Did drive cam help with any of the accident investigations.

C. DiPillo: Yes, a driver was dismissed.

The report was accepted.

Joint Venture of Thompson Transit and YCN (JV)

Carlton Jones, Safety Manager, read from his report for the month of June.

He then asked for questions.

M. Kalashian: Are you using the drive cam to settle customer complaints?

C. Jones: Yes.

J. Oliver: A recent trip in THE RIDE vehicle a driver had two red lights come on.

C. Jones: The technicians will need to look at this vehicle.

The report was accepted.

MBTA Transit Officer Report by Lt. Commander Donald O'Connor DOConnor@mbta.com

Lt. O'Connor began with a brief report on the total number of parking tickets written by transit officers that was 89 with 61 issued for vehicles parked illegally at bus stops.

He then asked for questions.

M. Kalashian: Were you able to follow-up on my request from the last meeting?

LT. O'Connor: Yes, Lt. Ventrerlli will be speaking with staff and supervisors.

D. Payne: Thank you for your help concerning illegally parked vehicles at bus stops. The bus stops are being monitored.

M. MacNab: Why are there no officers in the food court at South Station?

LT. O'Connor: I was not aware of the lack of security.

K. Piccard: Is there more that you can tell us about the emotionally disturbed person who stated he had a bomb?

LT. O'Connor: He was distraught about the MBTA lack of service.

D. Summerfield: How is ticketing done in other towns?

LT. O'Connor: Boston and the MBTA have a Memorandum of Understanding and we are issued ticket books. We don't have a problem with most towns. They are sharing in the revenue.

D. Summerfield: Do you know what is happening with a Bill at the State House concerning illegally parked cars at bus stops would be unify provisions all over the region?

LT. O'Connor: I know that a move is on to increase the fines.

The report was accepted.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.

