



Access Advisory Committee

to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

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AACT Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, March 26, 2008

NOTABLES

- The disruption of the meeting did not reflect the reason why the meeting was dismissed at 2:30 PM. J. Marshall was very disrupted asking multiple questions of the presenter. The Chief Transportation Officer was the MBTA was asked, "What was the timeline on getting the Chelsea Commuter Rail station ADA compliant. The officer had said earlier the stop was just a pilot program and the station was not part of the "key station" plan
- Comments and questions concerning AACT should be directed to the Chairman.
- Members are reminded that when a complaint is filed only the information concerning the complaint is shared with AACT. There is no personal information shared, only the details of the complaint.
- Chairman Haynes recommends that AACT members needing information, or inquiring about MBTA services do so through the new Customer Support Service Center at 617 – 222-3200 or log on to their Web Site at www.mbta.com/customer_support/feedback/
- Judge Patrick King, the court-appointed independent monitor for the MBTA and Boston Center for Independent Living settlement agreement, asked that he be contacted with members' thoughts, comments, and questions. He can be reached by phone at 617 – 228 – 9125 or by e-mail at MBTAMonitor@gmail.com. He promises to answer as quickly as possible.
- 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 would be appreciated.

ATTENDANCE:

Philip Beaulieu, Marion Vieira, Bryan Riley, Esther Minor, Don Summerfield, Thomas Gilbert, Elizabeth Salazar, Ben Haynes, Pauline Lincoln, Jim White, Kathryn Piccard, Lillian Haynes, Deanne Sisco, Marilyn MacNab, Angela Mannerson, Linda Blair, Cheryl Ravalli, Tammy Perrault, James Oliver, Reggie Clark, Frank Taverna, April Maselli, John Kane, Thomas Gilbert, and Marion Lent

MBTA Representatives:

Mike Festa, Alex Murkinson, Dottie Winn, Annette Griffith, Robert Rizzo, Kathy Cox, and Mike Hulak

Vendor Representatives:

Joint Venture of Thompson Transit and YCN – Jo-Anne Thompson, Carlton Jones, and Loretta Jenkins Thompson
Greater Lynn Senior Services, Inc. – John Soucy, Cathy Darby, Maria Colameta, and Ron Airey
Kiessling Transit, Inc. – Claire DiPillo, Paula Kiessling and Carl Kiessling
Veteran Transportation Services – John Tuttle, Bob Kelly, and Derek Marcon

Agency Representatives

Richard Chapman – Massachusetts Commission for the Blind
Katy Roach – Massachusetts Office on Disability
Walter Bennett and Janie Guion – Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization staff

The AACT Chairman opened the meeting at 1:00 PM with a welcome to everyone.

Agenda

Members, friends and guests introduced themselves.

Vice-Chair P. Beaulieu read the agenda.

January 29 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Chairman Haynes requested the February 26 minutes be presented at the April 23 meeting due to a reporting error.

Chairman' s Update

The Chairman noted the following (see the attached):

- His concerns that consumers are still having difficulty with trip scheduling, complaints and trip requests.
- The zone to zone and one zone trips scheduling is insufficient
- Members were also reminded that THE RIDE is door-to-door shared service, not a taxi, private car, or limousine service; consumers should be prepared to leave their home when the driver rings the doorbell. This will help expedite the service to the next customer.

He asked for questions.

K. Piccard: Oftentimes circumstances when you request a zone-to-zone trip THE RIDE cannot accommodate your requested pickup time.

Chairman Haynes: This information was covered in the report.

M. MacNab: On my short trip in the same zone the vendor still cannot get me to my destination at my requested time.

Chairman Haynes: Where it takes more than the 30 minutes by the most direct route the vendor can take twice that amount of time for your trip.

E. Miner: Trips that I request for a specific time for THE RIDE are not on time as requested. Can you offer a solution?

Chairman Haynes: The best solution is to take down your travel times when scheduling THE RIDE. Call the vendor fifteen minutes after the pickup time and ask why you are not being picked up on time.

The report was accepted.

Overview of the Vendor Reservation and Same-day trip Request

The Greater Lynn Senior Service - Maria Colameta, Customer Service Manager, reported the details of their company handle reservations and same-day trip requests and then answered questions.

M. MacNab: Complimented GLSS on making their identification number on vehicles visually easy to read.

C. Colameta: Thank you.

M. Vieira: The reservation staff has a lack of personality when communicating with the consumer. The staff should be spoken to.

L. Jenkins: Thank you.

Chairman Haynes: Is it a policy that your company doesn't take same-day trip requests between 6 and 8 on the day of the trip on the dispatch level?

L. Jenkins: Yes we do. Everyone is capable of taking a trip request.

P. Barresi: If I called JV tomorrow morning between 6 and 8 will the dispatcher at least try to book my trip?

L. Jenkins: Yes. The dispatcher will take your request.

Chairman Haynes: I have tape-recorded proof that the dispatch staff is not willing to help when someone calls for same-day trip request.

L. Jenkins: Everyone in that department is capable of booking a trip.

Chairman Haynes: Thank you. I hope that JV will review the process with its employees and make sure that it is consistent with other vendors.

K. Piccard: Is your dispatch and reservation staff has the same experience when making trips?

C. DiPillo: Yes.

P. Lincoln: I would like to compliment Claire and the Kiessling staff for excellent service.

C. DiPillo: Thank you.

K. Roach: During your report you didn't mention if the person was asked if a service animal would accompany them. Also you didn't mention if the driver is made aware he or she should come into the building lobby.

C. DiPillo: The reservation shows that the driver should enter the main entrance of the lobby and call out the person's name.

E. Miner: I have found reservation staff on the 4 PM shift to be very rude and on occasion will hang up on the caller.

C. DiPillo: I would like to speak with you at the break.

K. Piccard: When there is a backup of calls at 4 PM are lines opened until all calls are serviced?

C. DiPillo: Yes.

Chairman Haynes: Drivers are required to find the passenger; THE RIDE is a door-to-door service. Drivers are to ring the bell of a residence and go into to the lobby of public buildings and announce your name.

Chairman: Are your dispatchers aware that they are to call the passengers back whether or not they are able to book a trip for the caller? I want you to be aware that your dispatchers do not adhere to the company policy. The consumers have been told to callback the next day to check.

C. DiPillo: Yes. Sometimes we suggest that they check back the next morning.

P. Barresi: Do you double check to make sure that all the scheduled times are correct for a transfer?

J. Tuttle: Yes, we do verify with the vendor who is part of the transfer.

D. Summerfield: What is the indicator that lets you know your balance is low in a THE RIDE account?

J. Tuttle: There are two types: a balance before the trip and actual amount that's stored value for trip.

T. Gilbert: What instructions are THE RIDE drivers given to avoid illegally parking at bus stops? There is a definite problem at Davis Square.

J. Tuttle: We do instruct our drivers not to park illegally. Oftentimes it is done as a means of safety.

J. White: THE RIDE arrived at my complex to get passengers and the driver found that there was more than one wheelchair passenger in the group and his van had mechanical problem with a seat.

J. Tuttle: Before drivers leave garage they are to check vehicle with the circle check method. If the driver had followed this procedure this problem would have revealed the vehicle should have not been in service.

T. Gilbert: Is it possible that in the future drivers could be given alternative parking areas for Davis Sq?

J. Tuttle: We could request that a designated area be found by OTA.

P. Barresi: Are passengers entitled to same-day trip request at anytime? Or can the dispatcher just tell us at that time there is nothing available.

R. Rizzo: You may request a trip at anytime under the ADA and the MBTA operating rule. It is not a guaranteed trip.

K. Roach: Where is THE RIDE's official drop-off point for North Station?

J. Tuttle: The official drop-off is the west entrance.

E. Miner: Why are drivers so dependent on the GPS? They refuse help and the driver will arrive late for my appointment. I know the directions to my destination.

J. Tuttle: We do teach mapping skills. Drivers are instructed to listen to the passengers as well as looking at the map.

P. Beaulieu: I have tried on several occasions to book multiple trips after regular hours and was encouraged to just book one trip and was told to callback during regular hours. Is that your company policy?

J. Tuttle: There should have been some common courtesy by the person. What you should have been asked is whether or not someone could get back you or would it be possible for you to call back the next day at your convenience?

T. Gilbert: Should a trip to Newton and Peabody take five hours for travel time?

J. Tuttle: Perhaps four and half-hours at the max. You need to factor in the time of day you are traveling.

B. Haynes: What is your company's policy when a passenger's trip has been booked improperly?

J. Tuttle: Our policy is to reschedule the trip for as soon as possible.

- **E. Miner:** I have booked multiple reservations with VTS to attend a meeting in Roxbury. The information was given that there would be PCA's traveling with several passengers. THE RIDE will arrive with not enough room for passenger and their PCA.

J. Tuttle: Passengers and their PCA's should not be separated. Please verify your information when you are booking your trip. Always read the information back for verification.

D. Summerfield: On several occasions the person would not review my trip with me.

J. Tuttle: I will speak with the staff and the customer service manager.

Chairman Haynes: As part of the passenger assistance training (PAT) that all vendors receive, they are made aware to never separate the passenger and the personal care attendant (PCA) when transporting. The passenger may have failed to inform the

reservation taker that a PCA would be traveling also. Should this become a problem the driver should call dispatch and arrange for both to be transported together.

Chairman Haynes: Thanked all the vendor representatives for making their presentations.

The reports were accepted with one abstention.

MBTA Office for System-Wide Accessibility Department (SWA)

Kathy Cox, manager for Fixed Route services and SWA stated that due to a personnel change in the Commuter Rail Operations a number of concerns raised at the last meeting are still under investigation. She hopes to have answers at the April 23 meeting.

She asked for questions.

T. Gilbert: Can you confirm that R. Stoelz is no longer with the MBTA?

K. Cox: You are correct; he is no longer with the MBTA.

D. Summerfield: Why is the new low floor vehicle (Green Line) in the rear of the train. That is disconcerting to me since I like the low-floor vehicles.

K. Cox: I will need to investigate.

K. Piccard: Can you give us an update on the continuance of THE RIDE Charlie Card Initiative Program?

K. Cox: There is no end date. It is a minimum of a year for the program.

T. Gilbert: Can you give me an update on the New Flyer of America buses? When they will be arriving and what garages will get them?

K. Cox: The buses from 1984 will be replaced. Perhaps the Quincy garage. I will need to do research.

R. Clark: I was recently on a bus route #151 that had mechanical problems with the brakes. Would you check on the status of this bus?

K. Cox: Yes.

J. Oliver: Are bus schedules updated on the MBTA web site?

K. Cox: I will investigate.

K. Roach: The speakers on the Wollaston Station platform were broken.

K. Cox: Please report all complaints to the MBTA Customer Service Center at 617-222-3200 at the time of the complaint. I will file this complaint on your behalf.

T. Gilbert: When will the Davis Square station get the new public address system?

K. Cox: I will need to investigate.

Mannerson: Is the Customer Support Service Center run by automation or live intake takers?

K. Cox: There are 30 staff members to answer calls.

R. Clark: Concerned about a bus route.

K. Cox: I will need to do research.

T. Gilbert: I really appreciated hearing the public address system remind people to remove their belongs and paper upon leaving the bus.

K. Cox: I will pass it on your comments.

Chairman Haynes: What is the process for obtaining the complaints and responses filed by persons with disabilities and the accessibilities on fixed route?

K. Cox: Sharing that information is now in discussion with the MBTA Legal Department.

M. Viera: Can you have drivers announce to people to not block the entrance to the bus and move to the rear?

K. Cox: Yes. I will share this information with the operator training school.

R. Chapman: What is the status on the trains that were being tested at Wellington Square last year?

K. Cox: Those trains are for the Blue Line. They will be going into service after testing and passing inspection.

T. Gilbert: What is being done to make sure operators (Red Line) are consistent at are announcing the location of elevators and directions for exiting the train properly?

K. Cox: In the response to complaints that are filed the area supervisors are notified. All operators are provided a brand new script to read from. So there is no excuse for operators.

E. Miner: I have had problems with drivers on the route # 43 and the Silver Line downtown not having properly working ramps on buses.

K. Cox: There is no excuse. The operator can operate ramps on the new buses manually.

MBTA Office for Transportation Access (OTA) Paratransit (THE RIDE) Contract Operations Update

Bob Rizzo, Manager of Paratransit and Contract Operations for the MBTA, gave an update. (reports attached)

- Members were given the opportunity to fill out an application for THE RIDE Charlie Card Program
- The MBTA has replenished THE RIDE (after popular demand) “yellow hand-signs”
- Veterans Transportation Services (VTS) working with the MBTA Legal Department to ensure a smooth sale with the new owner of VTS has now been renamed Veterans Transportation, LLC after
- THE RIDE once again shattered last years’ record for the most number of passenger ever issued
- Reported that GLSS dedicated a building to the late Vince Lequie
- Commended AACT and other groups for working on the MBTA Access Study Report

- He then asked for questions.

M. Lent: Can you tell us the reason for the complaint and have they been addressed?

R. Rizzo: All vendor reports give a breakdown of all the specifics and responses of complaints.

D. Summerfield: There is a bus stop on Summer Street on the eastbound side that says "THE RIDE pickup area".

Rizzo: Yes, I am familiar with that stop it was place just before the official bus way. It was placed there at the request of a consumer about two years ago.

K. Piccard: Since you are ordering 42 new RIDE vehicles I am concerned that if the vans consumers use are still under warranty and if that using them has led to changes in transportation so that you could have ordered sedans.

Rizzo: We don't have plans to have ordered any sedan at the present. We looked at the needs of each vendor recently and determined that due to the demographics we should remain with vans for now.

Old Business:

Chairman Haynes: The AACT Anniversary Committee is still working on a location for the celebration. We are looking to keep the cost down and to make sure it is accessible by location and transportation to all. It is our hope that by having sponsorships the cost can be kept reasonable.

R. Clark: What will be the cost?

Chairman: We are striving to keep the cost below \$30.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:30PM.