



Access Advisory Committee

to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

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AACT Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, June 25, 2008

NOTABLES

- Comments and questions concerning AACT should be directed to the Chairman.
- Chairman Haynes recommends that AACT members needing information, or wanting to inquire about MBTA services, do so through the Customer Support Service Center at 617 – 222-3200 or their Web Site at www.mbta.com/customer_support/feedback/
- 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, Esther Minor, Thomas Gilbert, Kathryn Piccard, Marilyn MacNab, Linda Blair, Cheryl Ravalli, Tammy Perrault, James Oliver, Reggie Clark, April Maselli, John Kane, Thomas Gilbert, R. Abdullah, Dorothy Carter, Paul Barresi, Neil Lipson, and Richard Mahoney.

MBTA Representatives:

Sgt. John Cantella, Mike Festa, Alex Murkinson, Dottie Winn, Annette Holder-Griffith, Carol Joyce-Harrington, Robert Rizzo, Kathy Cox, Mike Hulak, Carl Merrick and Paul Fitzgerald.

Vendor Representatives:

Joint Venture of Thompson Transit and YCN – Jo-Anne Thompson and Gustavo Vasquez

Greater Lynn Senior Services, Inc. – John Soucy

Kiessling Transit, Inc. – Claire DiPillo and Roger Kiessling

Veteran Transportation Services – John Tuttle, Derek Marcon

Agency Representatives

Katy Roach – Massachusetts Office on Disability

Walter Bennett and Janie Guion – Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization staff

Vice-Chair Philip Beaulieu opened the meeting at 1:05 PM in absence of Chair Haynes

Members, friends and guests introduced themselves.

Mr. Beaulieu read the agenda.

May 28 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

MBTA Office for Transit Police Officer

The MBTA's Transit Officer Lt. John Cantella, gave a brief overview of his responsibilities to commuters. They respond to emergency calls, patrol for illegally parked cars, give elevator assistance, and assist persons with disabilities and a number of other concerns.

P. Barresi: On two late night occasions recently I was in touch with your office; I needed assistance to contact "THE RIDE" contractor. Your staff was not prepared to help me concerning THE RIDE.

J. Cantella: There are times when there is no one we can talk with after a certain hour.

T. Perrault: My concern is that the curb cuts are often littered with debris.

J. Cantella: That would be an issue for your local city or town. The number for the City of Boston is 617-635-4500. The MBTA is only responsible for curb cuts on MBTA property.

B. Rizzo: Here is a copy of telephone numbers (home, office and cell) for all MBTA OTA staff and contractors. This list should help you assist the customers.

J. Cantella: I will pass this information on to the dispatchers.

L. Blair: The path-of-travel at the Forest Hill station that leads to bus Route #39 is blocked by patrol cars. If I travel in another direction I will pass over the drain system. I have made a complaint about this before; patrol officers continue to park in that location.

J. Cantella: I will pass this information on.

M. MacNab: I just want to make sure that people know they are to call their own town or city hall. When you file a complaint with the MBTA you should telephone 617-222-3200 and you will be given a tracking number.

J. Cantella: If you have a problem remembering the main complaint number, call 617-222-1212, and we will transfer the call.

T. Gilbert: In Somerville at Trull Lane and Highland Avenue on Sunday's between 11 to 2, there are at least four illegally parked vehicles there. Would you have someone patrol that area?

J. Cantella: Yes.

The report was accepted.

MBTA Office for System-Wide Accessibility Department (SWA)

Kathy Cox, Manager for Fixed Route Services and SWA gave a copy of her report to everyone and an update from the May 28 meeting (report attached.)

She stated the following:

- She was asked that all buses were equipped with external speakers and she found that they are.
- An update of the MBTA Customer Support Service Center (CSSC) contact information and hours of operation. Telephone numbers for placing a complaint with CSSC are 617-222-3200 (voice), 1-800-392-6100 (voice, toll-free), and 617-222-5146 (TTY). She stated that there are 30 staff members to take calls from Monday to Friday 6:30 A.M. to 8 P.M. and Saturday and Sunday 7:30 A.M. to 6 P.M.

She then asked for questions.

J. Oliver: Today in my local newspaper there was information about Rhode Island building several commuter rail stations to be serviced by the MBTA. Will AACT be involved in the design of the stations for accessibility? Will the MBTA and Massachusetts Bay Commuter Rail have the capacity to handle another 2,000 to 3,000 passengers per day?

K. Cox: The state of Rhode Island has purchased a number of double-decker coaches for the expansion. The purpose of the expansion is to connect to Green Airport. There has been a lot of controversy surrounding the project and lots of work by the Rhode Island Disability Commission and other interested parties. They have been going back and forth with the federal government to ensure the stations are accessible. These stations do not belong to the MBTA. I am not sure what role the MBTA construction department has in the development, or what role AACT will have with this project. I can say that the MBTA would not be operating service there unless Rhode Island met all the federal and state access codes. MBTA staff is attending all public hearings.

M. Festa: You are correct. We do not own the property. The work will be done by outside contractors. I will do research on the project.

T. Gilbert: Why are there no tactile warning strips at the Providence commuter rail station?

K. Cox: I will do research.

E. Minar: When will the MBTA Science Park station become accessible?

K. Cox: This station was not part of the initial "Key Station Plan". Funding has now been made available for the Science Park station. AACT will be contacted to review the project at 60% design. I will inform the Chair when the designs are ready for review.

M. Festa: The design is now at 30% design.

M. MacNab: This week is Water Transportation Week. Would you comment on the accessibility of the boats so we may try them?

K. Cox: The MBTA operates a number of ferry routes that are accessible.

M. Festa: We have two types of accessible ways to enter the ferry system. We have a ramp system and a mechanical system (the "marina radar"), which gets you up and over and onto the dock. There are two ramp systems available for high and low tides. The old system the "ramp rider" is currently being replaced throughout the system.

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. He discussed the following (reports attached):

- There is a joint collaboration with contractors on road observation of drivers
- RFP proposals for THE RIDE vendor contracts will be reviewed in early September with recommendations to follow later this fall

- New vehicles for THE RIDE will be in service by the end of the summer
- Staff attended a VTS customer mediation
- The MBTA will offer shuttle service to the annual 4th of July concert on the Esplanade. The MBTA will offer free return trips home after the event

He then asked for questions.

P. Barresi: What is being done to make sure that the Transit Police have the proper training to assist persons with disabilities? They will need to know the correct telephone numbers and the right questions to ask in order to be most helpful.

R. Rizzo: The MBTA Transit Police have coordinated training with both AACT and my office in prior years. Detectives have given a presentation to THE RIDE contractors and the AACT Chair. A detective unit held a two-hour group meeting with my staff to explain what they do to offer avenues of assistance. This is sort of a two-way street. Oftentimes the transit police need assistance from us; whether they are helping you or are responding to some other public safety concern. THE RIDE contractors have to reach out and help transit officers to make sure the lines of communication are effective in both directions. This year there have been a significant number of vehicle accidents reported. May 2008 vehicle accidents showed an increase of 22%, up from last year's 669 vehicle accidents. The vast majority are not serious. There are a number of hit and run incidents where another party strikes THE RIDE vehicle and leaves the scene. It is well known that there are a number of individuals who drive on the roads of the Commonwealth uninsured and without properly registered vehicles. We all suffer from that at some point and THE RIDE is no exception. In many instances the transit police have been helpful to the local police departments. In the suburbs the local police often can get to the accident scene before the transit police; and they are often helpful to the transit police. We can all get better if we work together.

M. MacNab: I would like to suggest that during a flood emergency evacuation THE RIDE vehicles be replaced with the amphibious vehicles.

R. Rizzo: Your comment is correct; there have been problems on the North Shore with evacuating persons. In the past we have worked with the National Guard and the local safety officials to transport people.

T. Gilbert: Is there any way to have a coordinated effort between the cities and towns to have designated "THE RIDE" pickup signs so vehicles won't park in MBTA bus stops?

R. Rizzo: We have discussed the idea. We do have signs in a few places. My reluctance to broaden this too much is the following: All transit systems must offer paratransit services. The majority of the paratransit services across the country are not door-to-door service like the MBTA but curb-to-curb. The curb-to-curb service depends on designated stand areas for pickups because they don't go door-to-door. We are analyzing the situation and taking advice from groups in terms of where those isolated places where signs should be. This suggestion should really be thought about carefully.

The update was accepted.

30th Anniversary Update

April Maselli gave an update on the plans for AACT's 30th Celebration. The contract for the celebration was signed for October 16 at the Brookline Holiday Inn at 1200 Beacon Street. The theme will be "Accessibility Throughout the MBTA Transit Systems Beyond and It Works". The confirmed speakers are Ms. Wheelchair America 2008; former OTA Manager, Joe Curtain; former MBTA General Manager, Mike Mulhern; and MBTA General Manager, Daniel Grabauskas. We will also be acknowledging the late Jeff Grant for his work with AACT.

She then asked for questions.

K. Piccard: I have not received any information on the event.

J. Guion: It was an oversight. You will receive your information electronically.

A. Maselli: The cards we sent out are just to get an idea of who may attend. That's not the formal invitation.

P. Barresi: Will this information be advertised on WBZ radio with Jordan Rich?

A. Maselli: It will be discussed.

R. Clark: You should also contact WBZ's Lovelle Dyette.

A. Maselli: It will be discussed.

T. Gilbert: Will you be notifying the Talking Information network? The information will be broadcasted to persons with disabilities.

A. Maselli: It will be discussed.

P. Barresi: The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind runs that network.

The report was accepted.

Additional Transportation Issues:

E. Minor: The driver who recently came to pick me up from my church was very rude. This has happened before.

P. Beaulieu: Please speak with the Veterans representative.

Old and New Business: None was presented.

Announcements: None was presented.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:30PM.