



Access Advisory Committee

to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

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AACT Meeting Minutes for Wednesday,

September 24, 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 the MBTA 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

Richard Mahoney, Martin Shopris, Pauline Lincoln, John Cappuccio, Marilyn Seaur, Elise Marcil, Thom Gilbert, Philip Beaulieu, Bill McCarthy, Richard Mahoney, Bob Carr, Paul Barresi, John Marshall, Kathryn Piccard, John kneeland, Marilyn MacNab, April Maselli, and James Oliver.

MBTA Representatives

Matt Whalen, Philip Balcom, Dorothy Winn, Kathy Cox, and Paul Fitzgerald.

Vendor Representatives

Joint Venture of Thompson Transit Inc and YCN – JoAnne Thompson
Richard Armour, Carlton Jones, and Na'im Sidig
Greater Lynn Senior Services, Inc. – Jacquelyn Dunlop
Kiessling Transit, Inc. – Paula Kiessling, Carl Kiessling, M. Claire
DiPillo, and Chris McMahon
Veteran Transportation LLC – Dan McInnis and John Tuttle

Agency Representatives

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

Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hearing –
Sharon Harrison

Philip Beaulieu opened the meeting at 1:05PM

Vice-Chairman Phil Beaulieu filling in for Chairman Haynes who was serving on THE RIDE Selection Committee opened the meeting.

Members, friends and guests introduced themselves.

Vice-Chair Phil Beaulieu read the agenda

August 27 Meeting Minutes were approved with one abstention

The transportation update by the Vice-Chairman indicated that due to work constraints he has been attending passenger assistance training at THE RIDE vendors' offices whenever possible.

No questions were asked.

Jim Oliver, AACT member, with the approval of the Executive Board, presented an award to Joint Venture driver Mr. Na'im Sidig, for his honesty, professionalism, and integrity for returning personal property of Mr. Oliver and other consumers.

Update on THE RIDE CharlieCard Program

Kathy Cox, Manager for Fixed Route Service, explained that she would be standing in for the Assistant General Manager for System-Wide Accessibility, Gary Talbot, to give an update on THE RIDE CharlieCard Pilot program, due to Mr. Talbot's other commitments.

Matt Whalen, supervisor of the Reduced Fare CharlieCard Program at Back Bay was introduced. The scheduled PowerPoint presentation on THE RIDE CharlieCard Pilot Program was postponed due to technical difficulties. However, an oral presentation was made.

In January 2008, General Manager Grabauskas launched THE RIDE CharlieCard initiative. It was developed as an incentive to give registered users of THE RIDE who want to increase their bus, train, and commuter rail travel an opportunity to try fixed-route service. THE RIDE CharlieCard does not affect a customer's service with THE RIDE; eligibility for THE RIDE service is maintained. The benefits are that no reservations are required, travel plans can be flexible, and customers have increased access to all MBTA services.

The MBTA fixed-route system is much more accessible now with:

- The first low-floor trackless vehicles in the nation
- 95 low-floor Green Line cars currently in service
- Accessible water transit
- A fully accessible bus- rapid transit system—known as the Silver Line
- Audio-visual on-board and in-station public address system (the system is being upgraded and clarity of announcements will be improved)

The MBTA now offers much more in accessible stations now with:

- 68 % of subway stations now offer elevators or ramps
- Bridge plates are now offered at accessible stations
- 63% of commuter rail stations (zones 1-5) are accessible

- 100% of the bus fleet is accessible with ramps and or lifts
- Elevators and escalators are now much improved and are operating at 98% to 99% reliability on both.

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization has been awarded the contract to conduct a survey of THE RIDE CharlieCard Pilot Program users. The results will be compiled and forwarded to General Manager Grabauskas. The results will be analyzed and a decision made on the continuation of the program

She then asked for questions.

K. Piccard: I am concerned that the correct format be given to persons participating.

K. Cox: I'll pass on your concerns.

J. Oliver: Can THE RIDE CharlieCard be used on the commuter rail to a Patriot's game?

K. Cox: No, only zones 1 – 5.

M. MacNab: Can I get a copy of your PowerPoint presentation?

K. Cox: It will be in the AACT mailing.

B. Carr: I had a problem with operator aboard the commuter rail train who was not aware of THE RIDE CharlieCard Program.

K. Cox: All employees should be aware of this information. I will do some research.

Kathy Cox, MBTA System-Wide Accessibility Fixed Route Service Update

Ms. Cox stated the following:

- Blue Line cars are now running six car trains—the challenge had been was the platform length.

- The new Blue Line six car trains are operated by a single operator
- The vehicle specification process is getting underway for new Orange and Red Line cars; an AACT representative will be part of the formal group, which meets on specifications.
- As part of the vehicle specification process the MBTA is working to find a solution to the gap between the platform and the train; Vehicle Engineering has hired a consultant to seek solutions nationally and internationally

She then asked for questions.

K. Piccard: Will the number of Blue Line six car trains be reduced late at night when the number of passengers decline?

K. Cox: The number of cars in trains on all lines declines during off-peak hours and on weekends.

T. Gilbert: Will the rail cars have hand microphones for employees to make announcements through the public address system?

K. Cox: In the next vehicle procurement, AACT will be involved in the design.

M. McNabb: When you publicize your senior outreach at various locations on your website it is not clear that Transportation Access Pass card customers can get their cards in addition to seniors getting theirs.

M. Whalen: All outreach meetings are available to everyone. The dates and locations are listed on the MBTA website. I'll check the language and make sure that this is clear.

***Bob Rizzo, MBTA Office for Transportation Access (OTA)
Paratransit Contract Operations***

Dottie Winn, Coordinator for THE RIDE Paratransit Eligibility Program represented Bob Rizzo, who as the Chair of THE RIDE Selection

Committee was attending that meeting and therefore could not be with us this afternoon.

Ms. Winn stated the following:

- Staff performed road observation and safety checks throughout THE RIDE service area.
- THE RIDE continues to break records for trips given in a day
- August 2008 was another high month for passengers serviced on THE RIDE

She then asked for questions.

K. Piccard: Can a consumer file more than one complaint per vendor?

D. Winn: Yes, a customer can file complaints separately.

K. Piccard: Does anyone have the right to consolidate those complaints?

D. Winn: No, it is computerized once it is entered in the database. No one can make any changes.

P. Barresi: How do you determine this? I had to file a complaint with two companies. I was unable to get through to the companies to cancel.

D. Winn: The complaints are logged in separately, one for each company.

R. Cark: Two people who work with me had a complaint against THE RIDE. They arrived late for work.

D. Winn: I would encourage you to call and file complaints. There is no retribution. The MBTA pays very good money for this service; the contactor would also like to know what the issues are.

M. McNabb: Are van drivers supposed to tie down wheelchairs or scooters, or to put the brakes on?

D. Winn: If you witness any safety issues you should call and file the complaint. Your safety is at risk.

Consumer: Who reviews the individual complaints against THE RIDE drivers?

D. Winn: Whether the complaint is called into the Office for Transportation Access (OTA) or the vendor, all calls are routed back to OTA and logged into the OTA system. The paratransit administrator or contract manager receives the complaints and reviews them on daily basis. A separate staff person is assigned to each vendor. A review of the response is completed with recommendations and needed actions are taken.

M. McNabb: What is the proper tie-down of a mobility device?

Vendor Rep: It should be tied down at five points.

P. Barresi: Would you make sure that all service changes in the new contract are given to users as soon as possible?

D. Winn: Yes, it is our intent to give as much notice as possible. We look forward to doing this at the beginning of the year.

P. Lincoln: What can be done with drivers who speak Spanish on cell phones and become rude?

D. Winn: Language on all vehicles should be in English. You can report any concerns about your ride. Talking on a cell phone on The RIDE is not allowed—file a complaint. If the music is not to your taste tell the driver to turn off the radio. This is your ride, you need to feel comfortable. Please file a complaint.

J. Thompson: When a complaint is received concerning misconduct, a copy of the investigation goes into the driver's personnel file. Please report these experiences. I am concerned that the driver was belligerent or sassy to you. I don't like that.

P. Barresi: Remember passengers should be polite to drivers also. Drivers may be rude if you are rude. A little courtesy from the passenger could only help.

Report was accepted.

Open Discussion

E. Firth: There are still vehicles that are parking in bus stops in Cambridge and Somerville. In Medford, the bus stop at Winthrop and Boston Avenue needs a sign. I would like some direction as to where I can go for help.

T. Gilbert: Have you spoken to S. Feaster?

E. Firth: Yes, I have left several detailed messages, but have gotten no reply.

J. Marshall: You can start at your local town or city hall. A number of AACT members testified concerning vehicles blocking bus stops before the Boston City Council. This was in an effort to help pass a bill that would increase parking fines to \$125.00 for offenders. A statewide initiative for a bill to support the increased fines statewide once again failed. The bill has been stranded in the Government Operations Committee since August 2007. AACT has not taken a strong enough action to push the MBTA to lobby heavily for the passage of the bill.

E. Firth: The Somerville Aldermen are not interested. The police chief stated that he would not enforce ticketing and towing of vehicles parked in bus stops.

J. Marshall: I would like to make a motion that AACT take an official vote to support the bill.

Vice-Chair Beaulieu: I will present this at the next Executive Board meeting and bring you an answer at the next meeting.

30TH Anniversary Update

April Maselli gave a brief update on the AACT 30th Anniversary Celebration to be held at the Holiday Inn, Brookline, MA, on October 16. Members were encouraged to purchase tickets soon. Persons with special meal request due to allergies were asked to contact the AACT Coordinator at 617-973-7507.

Announcements:

J. Oliver: MetroWest Regional Transit Authority's next meeting is on Oct. 27, 2008 starting at 4 pm, at 160 Waverly Street, in Framingham, MA.

K. Piccard: At the next meeting I plan to challenge the meeting instruction that appears on the second page of the agenda, "one question at a time." I would like this statement modified. Often questions are misinterpreted, misunderstood or not fully answered. I will speak to this at the next meeting.

Old and New Business: None was presented.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:50 PM.