



Access Advisory Committee

to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

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AACT Meeting Minutes for Wednesday,

October 22, 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

Ben Haynes, Lillian Haynes, Tammy Perrault, Cheryl Ravalli, John Kane, Tom Gilbert, Philip Beaulieu, Raheemah Abdullah, Reggie Clark, Marilyn MacNab, April Maselli, Denise Jackson, and James Oliver

MBTA Representatives

Paul Strobis, Philip Balcom, Michael Hulak, Kathy Cox, and Paul Fitzgerald, Carroll Joyce Harrington, Annette Holder Griffith, and Michael Festa

Vendor Representatives

Joint Venture of Thompson Transit Inc and YCN – JoAnne Thompson and Carlton Jones

Greater Lynn Senior Services, Inc. – Ron Airey

Kiessling Transit, Inc. – Roger Kiessling and M. Claire DiPillo

Veteran Transportation LLC – John Tuttle and Derek Maroon

Massachusetts Bay Commuter Railroad Representatives

Gillian Wood, Nadia Vagas, Steve Jones, and Paul Carroll

Agency Representatives

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization

Walter Bennett and Janie Guion

Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Sharon Harrison

Chairman Haynes opened the meeting at 1:00 PM

- AACT members past, present and guests were extended a hearty welcome
- Members, friends and guests introduced themselves
- Vice-Chair Phil Beaulieu read the agenda

Chairman's Update

He stated the following:

- He continues with his work on the MBTA THE RIDE Selection Committee.
- He would like to have a better relationship between AACT and the MBTA Design and Construction Department.
- He would like the MBTA to adhere to the language of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between AACT and the MBTA.

- The MOU has specific language that states AACT should be involved in changes that impact the disability community.

No questions were asked.

K. Cox: The Science Park Station is only at 60% design. This not complete; I apologize for not speaking with you directly; the information you received was given to you incorrectly. I am looking forward to AACT reviewing the Science Park Station designs.

Chairman: Thank you for your clarification.

Massachusetts Bay Commuter Railroad Company (MBCR)

Gillian Wood, Chief of Customer Service, gave an overview concerning how complaints are handled, including the process and where to file them. She did acknowledge that they do not get many complaints from persons with disabilities.

She then asked for questions.

R. Clark: The restrooms continue to be unsanitary on commuter trains. Why was there so much emphasis placed on clean restrooms when MBCR took over?

G. Wood: They are cleaned as often as can be. It may be the time of day. Many are very old. I will take back your concerns to the Maintenance Department.

T. Gilbert: Why are the train public address (PA) systems not working properly?

G. Wood: The PA systems are tested daily before the trains leave the yard.

M. McNabb: I need to use a special car to exit for the mini-high platforms. My fear is that no one will know I am in that area of the train.

S. Jones: It is a requirement that conductors walk through trains to make sure that everyone has exited the train.

T. Gilbert: I still observe that sometimes doors are not closed on the trackside of the train. This is a real concern on the south side.

G. Wood: We address this issue daily.

M. McNabb: When I board a commuter rail train how do I know where to exit for the mini-high platforms? Is there a list that says where the mini-high platforms are located at the station?

S. Jones: I will need to do research. This information can be put on the train schedules.

G. Wood: The new schedules are now printed.

S. Jones: We can also by place the information on posters at stations.

R. Clark: Where do you see expansion on the commuter rail?

G. Wood: The Fall River expansion is due to happen in a few years.

T. Gilbert: The audio is not very clear.

G. Wood: It is the acoustics at North Station. The ceilings are so high it makes announcements inaudible. We are aware of the issue.

Chairman Haynes: Are complaints filed at MBCR investigated by trained staff? What is the material? Would you make a copy of the material available to AACT?

G. Wood: There is no special training material. No professional training is done. Training is done at in-house.

T. Gilbert: Is it a rumor that in the next two years the commuter trains will have automated announcements and LED signs?

G. Wood: The MBTA will upgrade there systems; an RFP is being advertised for the automated announcements on trains. It will be about two years before you notice any change.

Chairman Haynes: According to the ADA Section 37.173 all transportation providers and transportation entities, in-house as well as operators, are required to be trained to proficiency by an established certified training program or one of your own. I would like such as; work being done in cooperation with the various advocacy groups to produce a training program or adopt one. The MBTA

requires all of its contractors and operators to work with the University of Wisconsin with respect to the Passenger Assistant Training Program. A section in the ADA requires that complaints be held for one year and a summary of complaints held for five years. Do you have this system in place?

G. Wood: We do maintain records indefinitely.

K. Cox: Lynda Dillon has an eight-hour class that I have observed. She has developed an extensive training class. Crew members or anyone dealing with complaints regarding accessibility are required to take this class. I'm not sure if it is routinely held.

G. Wood: We get very few ADA complaints; many are not filed.

Chairman Haynes: I would like a schedule of all trainings pertaining to passenger assistance and accessibility.

G. Wood: Yes.

J. Oliver: A few years ago the training done at a location on Albany Street was inaccessible. The hands-on training was done at South Station. The training classes all of sudden ended. I tried very hard to find out why and got nowhere.

G. Wood: We no longer train at Albany Street. Trainings are now done at Cobble Hill.

Chairman Haynes: Ms. Wood thank you for your time and effort. Please leave your contact information so that I may follow-up.

G. Wood: Yes, thank you.

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

Kathy Cox, Manager for Fixed Route Services and SWA, apologized for late distribution of her written report. (Report attached)

Ms. Cox stated the following:

- The MBTA has launched a "customer courtesy campaign"
- Posters for the campaign have been placed on 400 buses and 600 subway cars
- The posters will highlight cell phone use, seats, blocking exits, and trash
- Training of Bus Operations personnel will be completed by the end of November.
- Recertification of subway customer service agents will began soon. AACT and other stakeholder will be asked to participate.

She then asked for questions.

There were none.

The Fixed Route update was accepted.

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

Mr. Rizzo commended AACT on their 30th Anniversary. He acknowledged AACT for the successful partnership with the MBTA and their critical role in helping advance accessibility system-wide.

He also read highlights from his OTA paratransit activity report. (Reports attached)

He reported on the following:

- Road observation safety checks were done throughout THE RIDE service area.
- THE RIDE Selection Committee met several times. The process is ongoing.
- OTA staff accompanied Operations' Senior Managers to review access options for North Station and the TD BankNorth Garden.
- He apologized to consumers who may have experienced technical difficulties for persons adding money to their accounts through the MBTA website. The problem was due to an update by the external vendor who maintains the site. If you experience any difficulties please contact his office.

He then asked for questions.

J. Oliver: When will the new vehicles arrive?

R. Rizzo: All 42 arrived in late August and through the third week of September. They are all in service.

THE RIDE update was accepted.

Open Discussion

Chairman Haynes: To the vendors, AACT would like to extend "thank you" for wonderful "direct service" of THE RIDE on Wednesday, October 16 for the AACT 30th Anniversary Celebration. Your drivers performed admirably and without a hitch. Thanks again for all that you do.

D. Jackson: What training is given to bus operators dealing with people with baby carriages and the public blocking the aisles?

K. Cox: We have no solution at this time. We are aware of the problem. The new acquisition of buses was ordered to have more space in the middle for strollers.

Chairman Haynes: I suggest that System-Wide Accessibility, or whomever is responsible for training regarding passengers boarding and exiting the bus, instruct operators to insist that passengers not block the aisles. There is no law such as Massachusetts General Law(s) or ADA that allows a public transportation vehicle to have any obstructed path-of- travel as a result of objects in the aisle. This could become a serious problem if there was an accident; passengers could possibly be trapped.

J. Kane: There is a leak from the top of (THE RIDE) vehicle(s) #1700 and #1800. Is there anything being done?

C. Dipillo: There was a problem at one time.

Chairman Haynes: I have been informed that passengers are experiencing unusual scheduled pickup times. Some drivers are arriving for consumers as early as 2-21/2 hours earlier than their appointment! Consumers cannot be picked up more than one hour before their appointment unless they are traveling to a different zone. I would like for you to look into this matter correct the problems and retrain staff where necessary.

30TH Anniversary Celebration Update

Chairman Haynes: I want to thank everyone who participated on the Anniversary Committee; Ms. April Maselli, the unsung heroes and "she-roes" from the Central Transportation Planning Staff. All were punctual and worked proficiently. I want to thank all those who gave of their time and money.

Special thanks to Mr. Rizzo for his speech on the origin and continued existence of AACT with the MBTA as a partner to bring accessible transportation to the Boston region.

Thank you to the MBTA staff, vendors and others who gave of their time and money.

Announcements:

A. Maselli: Announced the Green Line Extension meeting for November 12, 2008. A flyer concerning this meeting was sent in the October 2008 mailing.

C. J. Harrington: Announced the upcoming Disability Awareness Month Program here at 10 Park Plaza.

Old and New Business: None was presented.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:45 PM.