
THE ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA MEETING MINUTES

February 22, 2006

NOTABLES

- Letters of interest for the open seat on the Executive Board are being accepted until March 31, 2006
- 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
- Distribution of handouts should be at least fifteen minutes before the meetings
- AACT will be celebrating our 30-year anniversary celebration in 2007. We are looking for members for the committee

Access
Advisory
Committee to the
 Massachusetts
Bay
Transportation
Authority

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ATTENDANCE

Marilyn MacNab, Jim Oliver, Paul Barresi, Kathryn Piccard, Michael Smith, Reggie Clark, Frank Taverna, Phil Semans, Lillian Haynes, Richard Nurt, Anne-Marie Leonard, Jeff Grant, Cheryl Ravalli, Richard Mahoney, Roberta Loguidice, Frank Parizi, Catherine Johnson, Dorothy Maben, Lynda Hoffman, Pat Lydon, Gloria Mastro, and Robert L. Kintz

Agency Representatives:

Jeff Grant – Milton Commission on Disability

Joseph Loguidice – Malden Commission on Disability

Kathy Roach – Massachusetts Office on Disability

Richard Chapman – Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Sharon Harrison – Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Ben Haynes – B. Haynes Consultant Services

MBTA Representatives:

Carol Joyce-Harrington, Robert Rizzo, Michael Festa, Michael Hulak, Kathy Cox, and Ron Mariani, Barbara Boylan,

Vendor Representatives:

Joint Venture – Carlton Jones and Victor Herrera

GLSS – Jacquelyn Dunlop and Dennis B

Kiessling Transit, Inc. – M. Claire DiPillo

Veteran Transportation Services – John Tuttle

The Vice-Chair Marilyn MacNab called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM:

- Welcome from Acting-Chair who conducted meeting in the absence of Chairman Beaulieu
- Self-Introduction of the participants
- Welcome from Acting-Chair Marilyn MacNab
- Reading of the agenda
- January 18 minutes offered for approval and unanimously approved

MBTA/OTA Fixed-Route Services Report:

Kathy Cox, Manager of Fixed-Route Services for the MBTA/OTA (Office for Transportation Access), summarized the activities of February and March by announcing the following information (report attached). Ms. Cox also responded to questions that were asked at the January 18 meeting. How are new buses tested prior to going into revenue service? What type of plan will be negotiated with the Neoplan bus company since the company is going out of business? Please find attached a detailed response of each question.

Highlights:

- The Ruggles Station bus way is now open to traffic after an extensive rehabilitation project.
- A proposed new ramp at Harvard Station underground inspected by a member of AACT.
- The Automatic Fare Collection Equipment has been installed on both the Red and Silver Line.
- Construction at Ashmont Station begins as a part of the four-station Red Line modernization project.
- Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) and staff from the MBTA's Automatic Fare Collection Project reviewed and provided input on the functionality of the audio and Braille features of the new equipment.

She then asked for questions.

J. Grant: On different occasions on the B-Line I observed two different low-floor cars in service during rush hour. What happened to the one-car per train rule?

K. Cox: Once we have the full contingency of low-floor vehicles in service we will be able to operate the low-floor cars as intended; that is one-low floor car with one of the older Kinki cars.

R. Chapman: How will the Charlie Card work for people with a short return trip at the turnstiles?

K. Cox: We are trying to prevent fraud; that is a passenger passing their card back to the person behind them. The rule is a 15-minute wait.

B. Haynes: During the 80' s the MBTA ordered 99 new low-floor cars for the Green Line. Why is the order now at 85 cars?

K. Cox: This was a negotiated arrangement between the MBTA and Breda Corporation. The number dropped due to the extensive modifications.

L. Hoffman: How many of the low-floor cars have been retrofitted?

K. Cox: There are 47 available for revenue service on the Green Line and some will be added to the C - Line.

K. Piccard: Are all complaints for fixed route forwarded to the Office for Transportation Access (OTA)?

K. Cox: Complaints on accessibility are sent to OTA from the MBTA's Central Customer Service Center.

J. Oliver: You have monitored 114 bus trips; of that, 85% of stops were announced. How many stops are required in those 114 trips?

K. Cox: I don't have those statistics with me; however, assuming that 7 or 8 stops are required on each route, multiply that number by 114. We did 85% of the total.

M. MacNab: Is there any fanfare at the opening of the new Automatic Fare Collection machines at the stations.

K. Cox: No. We are opening so many stations that we do not have ceremonies. We do have many employees available, however, to assist passengers.

The report was accepted.

AACT Fixed Route Coordinator Report

Frank Taverna began his report with the following comments:

- He continues to monitor the MBTA Web site and the elevator and escalator update line.
- On the Red Line, the North Atlantic Avenue elevator at South Station is out of service until further notice.
- The lift at Harvard Station is out of service. There are plans for extensive maintenance of the lift.

He then asked for questions.

A. Leonard: Is there a way that the numbers in the elevators leading to this floor can be in Braille?

F. Taverna: This building is owned by the state. I will pass your concerns to Building Management.

B. Haynes: Can you tell us where you get your information for your report?

F. Taverna: Some are complaints received from Fixed Route OTA; I have also done on-site

monitoring and my own research.

K. Piccard: Have you found that your information on the Web Site and your personal observations coincide?

F. Taverna: Yes.

The report was accepted.

MBTA/OTA Paratransit Contract Operations Report

Bob Rizzo, Manager of Paratransit and Contract Operations for the MBTA, distributed the attached January and February report.

Highlights:

- The offices of OTA will be moving to the fifth floor. More detailed information is forthcoming
- OTA hosted THE RIDE Safety Committee Meeting, with representatives from each contractor and the AACT Chairman.
- The Access Study consultant met with OTA staff.
- A meeting with Bus Operations and Materials to finalize specifications for THE RIDE Sedan Procurement was held
- THE RIDE administrators met with Kiessling Transit, Inc. on operational issues and held a second meeting for contract issues
- MBTA Appeal Hearings were held with MBTA legal staff, OTA, representatives from the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and AACT
- Staff participated in meetings with the Executive Office of Elder Affairs on transportation issues
- Joint Venture and OTA staff attended a community meeting at the Norfolk Adult Day Care
- Bids for THE RIDE Sedan are now under review
- A site visit was made to the UMASS-Boston campus to relocate THE RIDE drop-off and pickup area during construction

Service Updates:

Good News

- Ridership increased 25.13 percent for the month, compared to January 2005 (from 95,840 to 119,922)
- Fiscal year (FY) 2006 ridership year-to-date (YTD) -ridership trend continues with trips up 10.1 percent (from 762,844 to 839,907) over FY 2005, while maintaining a zero "Not Available" (NA)
- The on-time performance (within 30 minutes of scheduled pickup time) was at 98.1 percent; YTD 91.5 percent (within 15 minutes of scheduled pick-up time)
- YTD complaints have decreased by 30 percent from January 2005 (from 223 to 157)
- January complaints level was below 200 for the ninth straight month. YTD average is 10.3 complaints per 10,000 trips requested, or 1.38 complaints per

thousand trips delivered

- YTD vehicular accidents are even with (both at 346), while vehicle accidents for the month were down 30% compared to last January (from 67 to 47)
- OTA and THE RIDE contractors have re-instituted the monthly Safety Committee meeting
- Mr. Rizzo thanked the members of the Committee for their efforts for improvement and safety of THE RIDE.

Bad News

- YTD complaints increased by .7% (from 1,108 to 1,114)

He then asked for questions.

M. MacNab: Who serves on THE RIDE Appeals Board?

R. Rizzo: The committee includes an attorney appointed by the MBTA General Counsel, the AACT Chair or his designee, and a standing representative who is Bob Donahue from the MRC.

L. Hoffman: Is it true that a consumer should wait two hours between trips?

R. Rizzo: Our long-standing policy is one hour.

B. Haynes: Some vendors have identified the travel time between their service area and Boston as two zones. Is this correct?

R. Rizzo: No. That is erroneous. Boston is part of all four-vendor territories as of 1999. Someone coming from Peabody to Boston should be limited to 60-minutes per zone depending on the time of day.

R. Loguidice: I am somewhat new to THE RIDE. I have been really frightened by a driver. Is there anything that can be done about the drivers who speed and who are rude and unprofessional?

R. Rizzo: Someone from GLSS will speak with you. You can always call THE RIDE office anytime with your concerns.

Consumer: Is the appeal for THE RIDE up to the passenger or OTA?

R. Rizzo: We make the attempt to inform them verbally the day of the decision. A letter is sent by certified mail notifying the consumer that he or she has 60 days to inform us of an appeal.

The report was accepted.

MBTA Design and Construction

Barbara Boylan, Director of Design and Construction, gave an update on MBTA key stations.

Highlights:

Red Line Stations:

- Fields Corner and Shawmut are still under construction; Savin Hill still has some construction underway but is accessible by two elevators
- Mattapan High Speed Line (MHSL) is in the final stretch of design and will go out to bid in two weeks

- The Ashmont Station construction and MHSL Line are linked. Once the loop at Ashmont is reconstructed the MHSL will be shutdown to commuters as of June 24, 2006. Shuttle buses will transport riders.
- Charles/MGH is still under construction completion is slated for 2006

Blue Line Station:

- State Street is still under construction of the extension for six car trains
- There will be new elevators at 60 State Street and 53 State Street for easy and direct access

Green Line Stations:

- Construction at Copley and Arlington are now under construction; Kenmore was started in 2005
- Government Center is now out to bids
- Construction of Brookline Village and Boston College will be later this summer (2006)
- New Lechmere project designs are being developed
- Mini-highs will be returning; and will be replaced with newer mini-highs for fifteen stations
- Uphams Corner and Morton Street are now under construction

Other:

- A new MBTA project is in the works "Light Rail Accessibility" only for stations on the Green Line.
- The MBTA booklet "The Riders Guide for Getting Around Boston by Transit", will be back in circulation in a few weeks

She then asked for questions.

Consumer: Would you speak on the spider maps?

B. Boylan: Most all the MBTA spider maps have been completed except the Silver Line. The maps are now done on vinyl, a bit costly but they will last forever.

K. Piccard: What is being done about more frequent removal of snow from MBTA property? Snow removal needs to be more frequent.

B. Boylan: You are certainly correct the snow removal from stations should be done on a timely basis. You have that right.

J. Loguidice: Is there any move to make the Chelsea commuter rail station accessible?

B. Boylan: Chelsea commuter rail station is not a key station in the plan at this time.

M. Smith: Many of the spider maps are very out of date. Is there a move to replace them?

B. Boylan: The commuter rail lines are being updated. The plan is to put them in the major stations like North and South Station. Massachusetts Bay Commuter Rail will do the map replacement.

J. Loguidice: Is there anything consumers can do to get the Chelsea Station accessible?

B. Boylan: The MBTA has a Mass Transit Program. It is a 25-year plan for the MBTA. I will get you a copy.

The report was accepted.

Vendors' Reports

Kiessling Transit, Inc.

M. Claire DiPillo, General Manager, read from her report for the month of January (report attached).

She then asked for questions.

K. Roach: Would you explain your job description policy on drivers?

M. C. DiPillo: We have drivers with previous experience; we check drivers' records, map-reading skills, and they must pass an English-speaking test.

P. Barresi: Are employees suspended from work when a complaint is filed?

M. C. DiPillo: The person will continue to work. They will need to attend the next available training.

B. Haynes: Under "Scope of Service" in THE RIDE manual on page 18, it says that the vendor will call the consumer to inform the consumer of same-day trip request.

M. C. DiPillo: I believe we do. I will need to check.

The report was accepted.

Greater Lynn Senior Services, Inc. (GLSS)

Jacquelyn Dunlop, Director of Transportation, read from her report for the month of January (report attached).

She then asked for questions.

K. Roach: Would you explain your job description policy on drivers?

J. Dunlop: We do a records check, we observe their reaction during training.

B. Haynes: Would you give an overview of the passenger assistance and sensitivity training of drivers?

D. Boucher: We train the staff on how to deal with persons with disabilities. The human resources department gives a quick assessment of each driver and makes recommendation. The most important training is the passenger assistance; it gives me a sense of who each driver is.

A. Leonard: Is there anything being done about the many "no-shows"?

R. Rizzo: The MBTA has a policy of not penalizing people for "no-shows". We are looking at the possibility, but we are a long ways from resolving that issue.

The report was accepted.

Veterans Transportation Services, Inc. (VTS)

John Tuttle, Operations Manager, read from his report for the month of January (report attached).

He then asked for questions.

B. Haynes: Do you re-train drivers with issues of sensitivity or passenger assistance immediately or do you wait for the next available class?

J. Tuttle: We train immediately. We will have an intensive one-on-one training with the driver. We will then monitor their behavior. We also have a follow-up with the consumer who is riding with him.

The report was accepted.

Joint Venture of TTI /YCN, Inc.

Carlton Jones, Safety Manager, read from his report for the month of January (report attached).

He then asked for questions.

P. Barresi: What do you do with a driver who is scheduled for passenger assistance or sensitivity if there is no class until the following week?

C. Jones: It depends on the severity of the incident. All driver incidents are investigated by the Joint Venture Safety Department.

The report was accepted.

MBTA Police Report: None was presented.

Announcements: AACT Spring Party will take place on April 26, 2006 (please see the attached information).

Old Business: AACT Board has an open seat (please see the attached information)

New Business: None was presented.

The meeting was adjourned at 3: 25 PM.