
THE ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA MEETING MINUTES

July 26, 2006

NOTABLES

- Would you like to have the AACT minutes by e-mail? Please reply at AACT@CTPS.org
- Jim Oliver reported that former AACT Vice-Chair Kathy Mooney is recuperating from an accident that resulted in a broken knee
- Chairman Beaulieu and Richard Chapman thanked Thomas Gilbert who helps with the microphone duties
- Please sign in at all meetings
- 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
- Keep your attendance current to ensure your right to vote or hold office
- Handouts should be distributed at least fifteen minutes before the meetings

Access
Advisory
Committee to the
Massachusetts
Bay
Transportation
Authority



10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116-3968
(617) 973-7100
Fax: (617) 973-8855
TDD: (617) 973-7089
E-mail: AACT@ctps.org

ATTENDANCE

Ben Haynes, Lillian Haynes, Phil Beaulieu, Kathryn Piccard, Jim Oliver, Thomas Gilbert, Frank Taverna, Richard Nurt, Jeff Grant, Karen Nurt, Cheri Lieberman, Cheryl Ravalli, Chickie Abdallah and Paul Barresi

Agency Representatives:

Richard Chapman – Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

MBTA Representatives:

Michael Festa, Robert Rizzo, Michael Hulak, Kathy Cox, Ron Mariani, Carl Merrick,

Vendor Representatives:

Joint Venture – Carlton Jones

GLSS – Jacquelyn Dunlop and John Sousa

Kiessling Transit, Inc. – Lisa Stevens and Bob Tobin

Veteran Transportation Services – Carol Frazier and John Tuttle

Central Transportation Planning Staff:

Jared Fijalkowski, Janie Guion, and William Moore

AGENDA

- Self-introduction of the audience
- Reading of the Agenda
- June minutes were not presented since all members had not received the July mailing

Chairman's Report

- Chairman Beaulieu informed the members that he has not been very well and therefore was not prepared to give a report

MBTA/OTA Paratransit Contract Operations Report

Bob Rizzo, Manager of Paratransit and Contract Operations for the MBTA, gave a summary of the following activities carried out by his staff, vendor representative's and other participants (June and July reports attached).

Highlights:

- OTA and others participated in a product demonstration of a securement for wheelchairs which was approved and will be in service of the next vehicle procurement
- VTS personnel coordinated shuttle service at a designated parking lot for the annual Boston 4th of July concert
- There was a site visit conducted by contract administrators to Kiessling Transit, Inc. to discuss contractual issues
- The Access Study group met with TranSystems, Inc., in preparation of the service monitoring phase of THE RIDE
- Representatives of OTA attended the Mattapan neighborhood health fair sponsored by the City of Boston
- OTA staff, THE RIDE vendor representatives and the AACT Chairman will attend a two-day Highway Watch Training (HWT). The training focuses on

protection of the nation's transportation infrastructure security. The MBTA General Manager Daniel Grabauskas is committed to enhancing the safety of the consumers.

- Paratransit staff has assisted in preparing a proposal for the purchase of 49 wheelchair lift-equipped vehicles for consideration and to be presented at the next MBTA Board of Directors meeting on August 10

Service Updates:

- Ridership increased 7.3 percent for the month compared to June 2005 (from 120,328 to 129,143)
- Fiscal year (FY) 2006 ridership year-to-date (YTD) increased by 9.2 percent (from 1,335,692 to 1,458,824) over FY 05, while maintaining a zero "Not Available" (NA) rate
- The on-time performance (within 30 minutes of scheduled pickup time) is at 98.8 percent, YTD pickups are at 92 percent within 15 minutes of scheduled pick-up time
- Complaints have increased by 15.8 percent from June 2005 (from 158 to 183)
- March complaints levels are below 200 for the 15th straight month
- YTD complaints decreased by 13.9 percent (from 2,120 to 1,825)
- YTD average is 9.37 per 10,000 trips requested, or 1.25 complaints per thousand trips delivered
- YTD vehicular accidents have decreased 3.3 percent (from 627 to 606), while vehicle accidents for the month increased to 81.3 percent compared to last June (from 32 to 58)
- OTA and THE RIDE contractors' monthly Safety Committee will be hosted by OTA on August 31 at OTA.

He then asked for questions.

R. Chapman: Have there been any changes in THE RIDE service since July 1, 2006?

R. Rizzo: We have made no systemic changes in the way the program is managed. If you can get me further details or please have the consumer call my office. We are glad to look into any concerns.

P. Barresi: What is it that VTS does on the day of 4th of July concert that is so unique?

R. Rizzo: VTS works behind the scene. Vendors are instructed to take the consumers' requests. The consumer is then dropped off at a designated area

parking lot for a shuttle ride to the concert and is return after the concert to the same area.

B. Haynes: I have been made aware that some passengers like to board THE RIDE vans facing inward. It is my understanding from the University of Wisconsin that all wheelchairs are to be boarded facing outward and with deployment facing outward. Has the policy for boarding THE RIDE changed? I would like a copy of that policy.

R. Rizzo: Our policy remains the same. I am aware of one such case. We have made some reasonable accommodations after consultation with the trainer Dr. Bob Schmidt at the University of Wisconsin after visitation to the home of the consumer.

Other:

Mr. Rizzo informed the group that he and Kathy Cox, Manager of Fixed Routes Services, will be traveling to Washington, DC to represent the MBTA as guests to the celebratory session sponsored by Federal Transportation Administration and Easter Seals Project in recognition of the 16th anniversary of the Americans with Disability Act. He is looking forward to sharing information from the experience.

The report was accepted.

THE RIDE Coordinator Report

Paul Barresi commented on the following:

- His attendance at a passenger assistance training
- Complaints in scheduling, pickup and drop-off, and driver attitude

He then asked for questions and comments

Mr. Rizzo invited the AACT Board to the OTA offices to observe their reporting software for the complaint process.

The report was accepted.

Vendors' Reports

Joint Venture of TTI /YCN, Inc.

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

He then asked for questions.

J. Oliver: What is your explanation of the word “resolved” in your responses?

C. Jones: It was probably resolved with disciplinary actions.

J. Oliver: Did any of these resolved complaints result in retraining of the driver, the dispatcher, the reservationist, or disciplinary actions?

C. Jones: Yes.

P. Barresi: While reviewing complaints over the month one response indicated severe actions would be taken. What were the severe disciplinary actions taken?

C. Jones: Management fired three dispatchers for not adhering to company policy.

The report was accepted.

Veterans Transportation Services, Inc. (VTS)

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

He then asked for questions.

J. Grant: What is the difference between a verbal and a written warning?

J. Tuttle: A verbal warning is a disciplinary track. A written warning is a second notice that goes into the driver’s file.

C. Lieberman: I attended your July 15 passenger assistance training class, which was superbly done. It was done very professionally.

J. Tuttle: Thank you.

Chairman Beaulieu: Why are there so many missed trips?

J. Tuttle: I blame the rain; many times the passenger has found another way home.

Chairman Beaulieu: I am still waiting, since the last meeting for a complete list of scheduled trainings.

J. Tuttle: There is no list. All drivers have been trained. We are current.

The report was accepted.

Greater Lynn Senior Services, Inc. (GLSS)

John Sousa Director of Transportation, read from his report for the month of June (report attached).

He then asked for questions.

J. Oliver: Were any of the 13 incidents you noted driver related?

J. Sousa: Incidents are issues with the passengers and accidents are issues with the drivers.

Consumer: When a folded seat falls on a passenger is that an accident or incident?

J. Sousa: This would be categorized as an incident.

The report was accepted.

Kiessling Transit, Inc (KTI)

Bob Tobin, Safety Manager, read from her report for the month of June (report attached).

He then asked for questions.

J. Grant: Why do you think you have the least amount of same day requests granted?

B. Tobin: I will do some research.

R. Nurt: Would you explain more about the passenger assistance and sensitivity training class?

B. Tobin: Safety is number one. Being respectful of the passenger's rights.

K. Piccard: Are drivers aware that many users have conditions that change day-to-day or hour-to-hour? Some days when I'm on THE RIDE the radio is fine. The next day I may request that the radio be turned off. The driver will then challenge me. Drivers do not seem to be very sensitive to the needs or requests of the consumer.

B. Tobin: Your rights should be respected.

J. Sousa: Drivers are told during training that the AM-FM radio is for the convenience of the passengers.

B. Tobin: You would need to file a complaint.

B. Haynes: I have found that drivers from all vendors do not react to the four-step process when picking up passengers. They do not identify themselves, identify the passenger, and offer assistance and know how to escort the passenger.

B. Tobin: Drivers have been written-up for not following the policy. Perhaps we need to energize the program.

C. Abdallah: Would you please have drivers identify themselves a second time when the vehicle is in motion?

B. Tobin: That could be added to our training.

M. Smith: How are drivers disciplined after a vehicle accident?

B. Tobin: We have a point system. The driver will lose his next pay raise. The driver may attend driver class. It depends on the severity of the accident; they may be dismissed.

P. Barresi: Perhaps re-certification of drivers should be done every year.

B. Tobin: We would need to increase the hours. We have road supervisors who observe drivers. We just don't have the manpower.

R. Rizzo: That issue comes up when the MBTA is redesigning service specifications. We did consider increasing the frequency of re-certification; we differed on the matter of increasing from every two years to every year as a matter of balancing the existing budgetary resources against what we anticipated to be the need in services. We want to meet the needs of service in terms of volume. We have greatly increased focus on penalties in contracts. The MBTA has increased the penalty of the contractor for per at-fault accidents from \$100.00 to \$250.00.

C. Fraizer: During the course of the year we have road observation by a supervisor. If we see something wrong we will bring in the driver whether it is one of our own or not. The driver will have some time taken off the road for an infraction. It is an on-going process.

K. Piccard: Has the safety committee addressed the issue of bad drivers, those who fabricate the truth, vendors who may have monetary incentive to perhaps go along with that?

R. Rizzo: OTA reviews accident reports very closely. It is in the best interest of the vendors, consumers, and the Authority that we review all reports. All vendors are required to purchase a commercial insurance policy. From years of experience I can assure you that insurance companies do not allow fabrication when it comes to assigning blame. They are extremely thorough. OTA makes a judgment when vendors turn in their invoices and statistical reports at the end each month. We review and make a determination separate and apart from the vendor in terms of who is at-fault or not. We don't frequently disagree but we do on occasion. The only time we would over turn our rule is if the company has written documentation from

the insurance company that the other party was at fault. Otherwise we won't reverse our decision. Vendors do not take their driver reports without a cautious eye for truthfulness.

B. Haynes: I can attest that each vendor here has gone through investigative training. Chairman Beaulieu, others and I have conducted the training. The vendors should be able to trust the word of the driver, just like the word of passenger. While passengers expect the vendor to hear what we say and take it as truthful, we expect no less with a driver. If the investigation proves to be different or changes are warranted then they do that also.

The report was accepted.

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 June and July by announcing the following information (report attached).

Highlights:

- Acknowledged the 16th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Government Center (Blue and Green Line) Station, a major accessibility project, was on June 30
- Massachusetts Bay Commuter Rail (MBCR) crew constructed an accessible mini-high platform at Rockport Station, making it accessible
- Construction is underway at Maverick Station (Blue Line) making it a multi-modal; new elevators and escalators will be in service with completion in 2008
- The class action lawsuit goes into effect on July 31
- Mini-high level platforms installed on the Green Line are now complete
- The MBTA has launched the overhaul of 162 commuter rail coaches
- Automated fare equipment installment continues
- Reduced fare ID replacement continues in the 77 communities
- Expansion of the Stop Announcements Monitoring Program will include: pulling over to the curb, wheelchair securement, use of ramps and lifts and operator courtesy
- Service on the Attleboro/Stoughton Line has been expanded on the weekend; the line will be renamed Providence-Stoughton Line

She then asked for questions and comments.

M. Smith: Are MBTA employees required to have any form of medical training?

K. Cox: I will do some research.

M. Festa: I have a correction to your report. At this time only the Fenway Green Line eastbound has the mini-high platforms.

C. Abdallah: At the New England Medical Center operators have a very difficult time bringing the bus into the curb. The curb may need to be painted.

K. Cox: We will look into this. It would be at the discretion of the cities and towns to paint the curb.

J. Oliver: Will the monitors be trained on wheelchair securement? Will AACT members be able to inspect the changes in the new Blue Line cars before they go into service?

K. Cox: Yes, there will be training. Yes, they will be in next year and AACT will be asked to inspect the pilot cars.

B. Haynes: I recently reviewed a complaint where the operator refused to open the door for a person on crutches.

R. Mariani: There were a couple of operators that fit that description on that route. We were unable to identify the correct person without the bus number. We re-trained the person who closely resembled the person we thought it could be. We would have liked to give have given a more severe penalty but we were unable to know if we had identified the correct operator.

B. Haynes: If you don't know who the operator is, you accomplish nothing with the re-training. Why not retrain all three drivers?

R. Mariani: We just can't do that. So the person who was thought to be the operator at fault was re-trained.

T. Gilbert: Will the new fare box collection equipment be accessible for persons with disabilities? Is it a funnel style?

K. Cox: No, the farebox is not a funnel style. The operator will assist if the person is unable to put the money in the box.

J. Grant: Information concerning the shuttle service on the Ashmont Station is very inaccurate. Commuters have been given the wrong information on where to pickup shuttle service. There is also a lack of accessible path-of-travel at the Ashmont Station. Have you received many complaints?

K. Cox: I apologize on behalf of the MBTA. We may need to travel to the station to address that issue.

Consumer: Operator personnel on the Red Line do not call out the exits for left or right, or locations of elevators and escalators when trains pull into stations. What is the progress on the public announcement (PA) system 1800 on the Red Line cars?

K. Cox: Please turn in complaints when you observe these problems. The PA information is turned in and they are due to be repaired.

R. Mariani: The Orange Line Superintendent informed me that he is going to give the operator personnel a reminder. I will give a call to the Red Line Superintendent.

J. Grant: Will you be doing the ADA monitoring on the heavy rail?

K. Cox: Yes, and Green Line.

R. Chapman: Do you have any information about the service animal being attacked by the MBTA Transit Police dog?

K. Cox: I know about the incident. The customer and the police officer had varying versions of the event. I was in touch with the customer and the police department sent an e-mail to the person who submitted the complaint on behalf of the customer.

The report was accepted.

The Fixed Route Services Coordinator Report

Frank Taverna provided the following comments:

- From July 4 to present, all elevators have been running smoothly
- He made a recent trip to Broadway Station where he used his access pass on the automated fare equipment and was quiet impressed
- He and Ron Mariani of OTA will be going to Science Park to review the layout

He then asked for questions or comments:

C. Abdallah: At the Quincy Center Station parking lot more needs to be done to make access easier for the person in charge of accessing the button for the elevator for persons with disabilities.

Chairman Beaulieu: Ms. Cox is taking notes.

J. Oliver: In the future reports please include the data on the Silver Line, Water Transportation and trackless trolleys.

P. Barresi: Would you inform us when you have training of bus operators?

F. Taverna: I will need to do some research.

K. Cox: The MBTA's entire workforce will be trained. We are counting on many people in this room to help. There will be plenty of trainings in the future and everyone can get involved.

T. Gilbert: Have you noticed a problem with the elevators not properly marked out-of-service by MBTA personnel? It often happens at Davis Square?

F. Taverna: I have had some problems at Broadway Station.

B. Haynes: I would like to get a copy of the training material for training fixed route operators in PAT and sensitivity and a list of the trainers and information on whether or not they are certified. Who certified the trainers?

F. Taverna: I will need do some research.

The report was accepted.

MBTA Transit Police Report:

None was presented.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Public Involvement Activities open house:

Jared Fijalkowski, from the Central Transportation Planning Staff, announced the MPO public involvement open house (see attached flyer).

- On July 17 the MPO released two draft documents, draft FY2007 the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the draft FY 2007-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- The UPWP lists the planning studies and activities that MPO will undertake over the next fiscal year
- The TIP lists transportation projects in the region to be funded over the next four years
- The MPO is seeking comments on the documents
- Open house and workshops will be held in several areas where members of the public can come by and learn about the documents and ask questions

J. Grant: Why are you only providing access for (hearing impaired) at one meeting?

J. Fijalkowski: We would provide them at any meeting people request. We will have the C-Print captionist whether or not it is requested.

B. Haynes: Will there be accessible formats at the meetings?

J. Fijalkowski: Yes.

J. Oliver: I received a flyer with other meetings listed?

J. Fijalkowski: This flyer was developed especially for this meeting today. If anyone would like more information on those I would be happy to share it with you.

C. Abdallah: I'd like to get a copy of the documents.

J. Fijalkowski: Yes.

B. Haynes: Was the public given proper notice of these meetings?

J. Fijalkowski: Yes, we sent the notice out two weeks in advance.

J. Grant: Was this information sent to the voice media?

J. Fijalkowski: We have a list called MPO media. We send out a text copy to all newspapers in the region, and the list may include radio and television. The information is available on-line and it goes out by e-mail.

Announcements:

The address for:

Kathy Mooney
Shaunessey Kaplan Hospital Rm # 312A
1 Dove Avenue
Salem, MA 01970

Other:

J. Oliver: Why did the AACT Board not mention the 16th anniversary of the ADA? Nothing was sent in the mailing reminding us of the ADA anniversary.

Chairman Beaulieu: Sorry, I let it get by.

J. Oliver: Can someone tell the membership what recommendations the board has made to the MBTA on accessibility of buses, vans, subways etc? Have you notified the membership of these recommendations?

K. Piccard: It is customary that we work through channels, which we will continue to do. The project access group has been working with TranSystems. Mr. Rizzo, can you tell us if the 18-month contract has been extended.

R. Rizzo: Negotiations are now ongoing for the extension.

Old Business: None was presented.

New Business: None was presented.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 PM.