

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
(AACT)**

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AACT Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, October 24, 2007

NOTABLES

- The next AACT meeting will be on Wednesday, November 28, 2007
- Chairman Haynes commented that questions concerning AACT should be directed to the Chairman.
- THE RIDE users are asked to file complaints at the Office for Transportation Access 617- 222-5123
- *Chairman Haynes recommends that AACT members obtain information, or inquire about MBTA services through the new Customer Support Services at 617 – 222-3200 or log on to their Web Site at www.mbta.com/customer_support/feedback/*
- A new policy for taking photos on MBTA property is in effect. Persons taking photos on any MBTA property will be required to show photo identification.
- Judge Patrick King, the court-appointed independent monitor for the MBTA and Boston Center for Independent Living settlement agreement, asked that he be contacted with members' thoughts, comments, and questions. He can be reached by phone at 617-228-9125 or by e-mail at MBTAMonitor@gmail.com. He promises to answer as quickly as possible.
- Please sign in at all meetings.
- Keep your attendance current to ensure your right to vote or hold office.
- Announcements are always welcome. Please be prepared to give as many details as possible; date, time, location, contact person, and phone number. A flyer would be appreciated.

ATTENDANCE:

Kathryn Piccard, Paul Barresi Ben Haynes, Lillian Haynes, Marilyn MacNab, John Marshall, James Oliver, Frank Taverna, Reggie Clark, April Maselli, Tammy Perrault, Don Summerfield, Marion Viera, Catherine Joyce, David Mortimer, John Kane, Angela Mannerson, Philip Beaulieu, Richard Nurt, Divinha Payne and Thomas Gilbert

MBTA Representatives:

Shenandoah Titus, Michael Festa, Michael Hulak, Paul Fitzgerald, Barbara MacKenzie, Carol Joyce-Harrington, Ron Mariani, Annette Griffin, Philip Balcom, Robert Rizzo, Carl Merrick, Lisa Semper, and Kathy Cox

Vendor Representatives:

Joint Venture of Thompson Transit and YCN – Carlton Jones, Greater Lynn Senior Services, Inc.– Jackie Dunlop, Kiessling Transit, Inc. – Claire DiPillo, and Veteran Transportation Services – John Tuttle

Agency Representatives

Richard Chapman – Massachusetts Commission for Blind
Janie Guion and Walter Bennett – Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization staff

The AACT Chairman opened the meeting at 1:05 PM with a welcome to everyone

Agenda

Self-introduction of the members, friends and guests
Agenda read by the Vice-Chairman

The Chairman’s report included the following items:

- The AACT Board is requesting of MBTA management the training materials that are used in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Section 37.173 to train its personnel; he commented that the ADA gives the transportation entity the right to develop its own training program with respect to all employees including managers, office staff, operators, and others; No one is exempted; noted that training standards for MBTA personnel should be more unified.
- The Chairman is also looking into the MBTA complaint process for investigations and responses

He then asked for questions.

K. Piccard: Did you announce at the last meeting that John Kane was appointed to the AACT Executive Board?

Chairman Haynes: He was asked if he was interested in serving on the Board. I will inform everyone concerning new board members.

The report was accepted with one abstention.

Shenandoah Titus, MBTA Transit Police, Deputy Director of Community Relations

Deputy Titus began by commenting that he would like to have the audience ask questions instead of making a long speech. He stated his philosophy, background and many credentials, which include:

- Member of the MBTA Transit Police Command Staff
- Lawyer
- Visiting faculty for the U.S. Office of Personnel Management
- Federal Government, U. S. Department of Homeland Security Instructor
- Over 100 other certifications and titles
- Certified fraud examiner

He then asked for questions.

M. MacNab: Can you tell me what are the responsibilities of the MBTA (bicycle mounted) Transit Police unit? How many are there?

S. Titus: We are partnering with the Boston Police Department during special events (Boston Red Sox) since it affects the MBTA.

T. Gilbert: Have there been any consultations with Toronto, Canada Transit concerning their designated waiting areas for public safety?

S. Titus: We do partner and exchange ideas with agencies across the country and the world. I will do research with MBTA Operations in terms of enhancing the lighting and possibly creating waiting areas.

J. Marshall: October 30 at Boston City Hall a public hearing will be held on increasing the fees for vehicles that block bus stops. Will the MBTA Transit Police be responding to calls by operators for vehicle towing?

S. Titus: Yes.

R. Clark: Will the MBTA get a Transit Court like New York City?

S. Titus: We will need to do a needs and feasibility study.

D. Summerfield: Will the MBTA be removing the public telephones from the train stations?

M. Festa: Verizon presently holds the contract for the public telephones. I will need to do research and report back.

A. Mannerson: I would like to see the public telephones remain.

D. Summerfield: The exit sign for elevator #904 at Haymarket Station is located in an odd place. There is also no Braille or raised lettering for those who are visually impaired and who are most likely to frequent the elevator.

T. Gilbert: Can you tell us about the MBTA Transit Police agreement between cities and towns concerning the writing of parking fines for persons parking in bus stops?

S. Titus: The MBTA Transit Police is doing what we can to partner with local police and municipalities to work on this issue.

M. MacNab: What is the working relationship between the MBTA and Homeland Security (HS)? I recently observed their presence on the Red Line.

S. Titus: We do have a relationship with various departments of HS. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has a vested interest in working with state and local

transportation entities. The MBTA needs federal funds to run the system. That is part of the relationship. It would be difficult to address what you observed.

J. Marshall: More should be done for the cities and towns to encourage them to deal with the issue of parking at bus stops. In Boston the responsibility for the enforcement of parking violations belongs to the MBTA Police Department, Boston Transit Police and the Boston Traffic Department. Councilman Felix Arroyro recommends that all three groups work together and have a monthly meeting to work on this issue.

M. Vieira: Commented that if you want to make changes so that operators' pickup passengers more safely, the police should be included, and all this should be done in the training school. The young people in the training schools are the ones who need this information.

S. Titus: Your observation is correct.

Chairman Haynes: Do you have some helpful travel tips for the holiday traveling on the MBTA?

Deputy Titus: Everyone should be aware of fraud when shopping on the Internet do not give out personal information. When traveling on the MBTA you should be aware of your surrounding's; for example, passengers making loud noises, which may be a way of distracting you. If at all possible do not travel on trains that are over-crowded. Don't be a hero and do not challenge anyone who shows you a weapon.

Deputy Titus can be contacted at the MBTA Transit Police office at 617-222-1005 or Stitus@mbta.com.

Chairman Haynes thanked Deputy Titus for his words of wisdom and said he would like to have him return to address updates on some issues that were raised earlier.

Manager of the Office for Transportation Access (OTA) for Fixed-Route Services

Kathy Cox, Manager of Fixed-Route Services (buses, trains, subway, bus rapid transit, commuter rail and boat) from the MBTA OTA, distributed her report and stated that there were no new updates since the report was produced.

She shared the following update from the September 24 meeting:

- Someone asked whether security cameras monitored MBTA parking lots. There are no security cameras in MBTA parking lots.
- Someone wanted to know why operators don't flip seats down when the wheelchair is no longer on the bus? This makes it impossible for consumers to be seated. According to MBTA Bus Operations, inspectors will monitor flip-up seating on buses.

She also shared that the MBTA has a new pilot Radio program that can be heard at North, South and Airport Stations. The radio station will carry celebrity, sport, comedy and news

messages. The MBTA would like your feedback on the concept at customer service on the program. **NOTE: THE RADIO PROGRAM HAS SINCE BEEN CANCELED**

P. Barresi: Are there any arrangements to provide people who are not declared legally blind by the Commission for the Blind (CB) who use the fixed route via THE RIDE to be able to have training to be better able to use the Fixed Route System? For those who are not aware the CB has its own travel-training program.

K. Cox: The MBTA will not develop another travel-training program.

R. Mahoney: Are there any penalties for bus operators who use their cell phones while operating the bus?

K. Cox: Please call this information into Customer Support Service 617-222-3200.

J. Oliver: Have you had a chance to inspect the new accessible bathrooms on the new commuter trains? Did you inspect the changes that AACT made for the emergency call button?

K. Cox: Yes, the emergency call button can be reached conveniently wherever you may be in the restroom.

D. Summerfield: Are you aware that there are no accessible parking spaces in Waltham (Central Square Station) on the commuter rail line.

K. Cox: Thank you.

K. Piccard: The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission clients can ask for travel training on their own.

T. Gilbert: Oftentimes train operators do not make announcements (elevator location, train door exit, or bus locations) when the train arrives at the station.

K. Cox: The entire workforce will be trained. Bus operators will be trained first then the train operators will be next.

R. Mahoney: Is the information in the document by TranSystems, Inc. to be forwarded to the MBTA?

K. Cox: We will be addressing the document later today.

The presentation was accepted with one abstention.

MBTA Office for Transportation Access (OTA) Paratransit (THE RIDE) Contract Operations Update

Bob Rizzo, Manager of Paratransit and Contract Operations for the MBTA, gave a brief update (September reports attached).

He shared the following items:

- There should be a correction to THE RIDE Activity report concerning the October 22 meeting with the MBTA Budget Committee on Paratransit Capital Investment; the meeting was postponed until October 29
- THE RIDE's new and improved hand-held sign was passed around for AACT members' viewing, evaluation, and comments
- A suggestion from an AACT member a few years ago caused the MBTA to produce a hand-held sign for THE RIDE as a way of locating consumers in a crowded or large venue.

He then asked for questions.

K. Piccard: Does the hand sign have the reflective feature added?

R. Rizzo: Yes.

D. Summerfield: There is a problem with drivers using cell phones while transporting consumers.

R. Rizzo: Should you encounter problems, please contact my office.

The report was accepted with one abstention.

Brief Overview of the Evaluation of the MBTA Paratransit and Accessible Fixed Route Transit Services

Kathy Cox and Bob Rizzo gave a brief overview of the evaluation of the MBTA Paratransit and Accessible Fixed Route Transit Services study. The MBTA Board of Directors contracted the evaluation. TranSystems Corp and Planners Collaborative conducted the study on accessible services throughout the MBTA, excluding only Commuter Rail Operations. On October 30 a comprehensive review will take place with the contractors for the study and MBTA staff. During that meeting questions will be entertained. (No questions were taken during this briefing.) The members, friends and guests were invited to review the 200-page document at the MBTA website www.mbta.com. Anyone who needs it in accessible format can so request at 617 222-5184.

Open Discussion:

Chairman Haynes informed the members that this portion of the meeting is an open dialogue where members and attendees may ask questions of the MBTA representatives for fixed route services, paratransit, Kiessling Transit, Inc. (KTI), Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS), The Joint Venture of Thompson Transit and YCN Transportation (JV) and Veterans Transportation Services (VTS) and members of the AACT Executive Board.

C. Joyce: THE RIDE studies should include opinions from users who have been with THE RIDE for some time as well as those who are new to THE RIDE in order to get a broad range of opinions.

A. Mannerson: Would you give more details about the subway radio?

K. Cox: It is a radio program at South, North, and Airport Station. The station will be ongoing with sports figures, comedy, news and information for people on the go. **NOTE: THE RADIO PROGRAM HAS SINCE BEEN CANCELED**

D. Summerfield: What have you heard about the negotiations with Anna Barry concerning proper stop announcements on the Green Line. I was told it is due to start on November 11, 2007.

K. Cox: There was an effort to get this on-line some six weeks to two-months ago. The effort is on-going. This is close to reality.

T. Gilbert: Is there any marketing campaign that will educate passengers concerning safety issues when traveling on MBTA buses?

K. Cox: I will do research.

K. Piccard: Is it possible for someone who lives in Stoughton to take Dial-Brockton-Avon-Taunton (BAT) and transfer to THE RIDE territory then transfer to Merrimack Valley territory, Lowell paratransit services, since the ADA requires that any paratransit service accept a persons' status for 21-days out of a year before requiring that persons to be certified? This information should be included in THE RIDE Manual. This is not in the manual.

R. Rizzo: I am in agreement that a customer has a right for access within the U. S. once a person is approved for ADA paratransit. There are concerns with this type of service delivery. I welcome the opportunity to work with AACT to update publications and THE RIDE guide that would be helpful. One of the reasons that OTA had not previously published information on this type of service is that it is not within MBTA control. I am not is not comfortable publishing information on services that may or may not be available on a consumer's arrival at his or her destination. The information shall be kept general. Consumers should contact OTA for more information for travel outside THE RIDE service area. The MBTA does not make a guarantee for services provided outside the MBTA service area.

Motioned by K. Piccard: I move that we ask the Office of Transportation Access (OTA) to have a brief clear statement in the on-line ride guide and subsequent paper publications for consumers to have information in all formats to explain paratransit reciprocity and its availability for use in contiguous Regional Transit Authorities (RTA).

Motion Discussion:

J. Oliver: There are far too many RTA's with different times for service availability. This is a very complicated issue and a study should be done.

K. Piccard: I agree with Mr. Rizzo that the MBTA cannot provide the information of other RTA's paratransit systems. It would be simple to add other RTA's website and phone numbers

to the guide. The RTA could provide their updated information. This is new information to many people.

The motion passed with one member-voting no.

Chairman Haynes: AACT will entertain working with OTA to draft language for a brief explanation to go into THE RIDE Manual explaining the process of how, or who to contact at OTA or other paratransit services regarding facilitating transfers. Another requirement of the ADA is that there be a visitors' process that is offered by the MBTA to someone from outside their service area. Visitors coming into the MBTA service area can use the MBTA service as long as they are certified in their own service area.

Old Business:

J. Marshall: The hearing on raising the parking violation fee for illegally parking in bus stops was rescheduled for Tuesday, October 30 at 10:30 AM at Boston City Hall.

K. Piccard: I believe that the meeting for the Systemwide accessibility study is not a discussion of the study but rather a discussion of a different document; the items the MBTA is implementing. This document has not yet been released.

R. Rizzo: The Authority has been working for some time on action items that are as of yet incomplete. I will look into having more details at the next meeting.

D. Payne: Cars continue to park in bus stops making it impossible for buses to pickup consumers safely.

K. Cox: I will pass on this information.

Announcements:

On Thursday, November 8 a third viewing of the new Blue Line cars will take place at Wellington Station on the Orange Line test tracks.

Chairman Haynes: I am seeking people to volunteer to be on AACT's 30th anniversary committee. A chairman will be selected from the volunteers.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:22 PM.

Correction to the September 24 minutes by R. Rizzo page 5, lines 5 and 7 should have read:

K. Piccard: What is the maximum number of wheelchairs in a new style van for emergency evacuation?

R. Rizzo: The maximum number is three in the new style vans.

