

# **Draft Memorandum for the Record Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (AACT) Membership Minutes**

## **Wednesday, May 23, 2018, Meeting**

1:00 PM–3:00 PM, State Transportation Building, Suite 2150  
10 Park Plaza, Boston

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## **Board of Directors**

Chair—James F. White  
Vice Chair—Lisa Weber

## **Executive Board**

James Tozza  
Nadine Jones  
Mary Ann Murray  
Beverly Ann Rock

## **Reading of the Agenda**

## **Welcome and Introductions**

## **Attendees**

Lisa Weber  
Debbie Weathers

Jim White  
Gail Weinstein  
Mel Weinstein  
Ellen Frith  
Nadine Jones  
Joyce Kilgore  
Jim Tozza  
Thomas Gilbert  
Christine Daniels  
Sharon Harrison  
Ronda Tepfer  
Reggie Clark  
Carol Joyce-Harrington  
Mike Hulak  
Rob Sampson  
Sgt. Benjamin Carrasco  
Lisa Darlington  
Victor Herrera  
Kevin MacDonald  
Elizabeth Hickey  
Ray Croteau  
Julia Wallerice

## Chair's Report

**James White**, Chair, reported on the following items.

- *Chair White* apologized for his absence in April.

- He recently attended a Paratransit Task Force meeting.
- He announced that the MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board has awarded The RIDE Access Center contract to Transdev/IntelliRide with service to begin as of June 1, 2018.

## **Meeting Minutes**

- A motion to approve the AACT meeting minutes of April 25, 2018, was rejected by Carol Joyce-Harrington, Office for Transportation Access, who noted that on page four lines 16 through 25 are being opposed. Corrective action will be taken.
- A motion to approve the AACT meeting minutes of March 28, 2018, was approved unanimously.

## **Making Buses Better and More Accessible in Everett**

**Julia Wallerce, Boston Program Manager for the Institute for Transportation & Development Policy (ITDP)**, shared the following information.

- BostonBRT is an initiative comprised of academics, elected officials, advocates, residents, and transit agencies. Its mission is educating and informing people about bus rapid transit.

- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is an emerging mode of mass transit in the United States. Cities including Hartford, Albuquerque, and Los Angeles have BRT systems.
- BRT is a customer-oriented, highly efficient method of mass transit. Its defining feature is dedicated lanes; buses do not mix with traffic and generally operate in the middle of the roadway. Buses have intersection priority and transit signal priority, for example, a signal may remain green if a bus is approaching. BRT also features off-board fare collection, enclosed stations, and platform level boarding.
- BostonBRT advocates BRT as a method to address congestion, reliability, and access in the Boston region. Buses currently carry more than 450,000 people per day in the region, but suffer from extreme delays and access problems.
- In 2017, BostonBRT released an RFP for cities to test elements of BRT to show the impact on travel time, speed, accessibility, and overall satisfaction. Four communities were selected to receive grants toward this end: Arlington, Everett, and Cambridge and Watertown together. ITDP has coordinated these projects.
- Everett has five bus lines running along Broadway, connecting multiple communities and carrying 7,500 people per day. In 2017, Everett piloted a dedicated bus lane in the mornings; due to the success of the pilot, this has become

permanent. Between 4:00 AM and 9:00 AM, buses on Broadway operate in the parking lane and do not mix with traffic.

- In a step toward BRT, Everett is using its grant to introduce level boarding platforms. Stepping onto the bus is a barrier toward bus travel; the step is high, and kneeling buses (buses which lower to allow easier access) are time consuming. By providing a level platform, people in mobility devices or those with mobility barriers can easily access buses. Everett will be the first city in the United States to pilot this type of platform. The platform was custom designed and will be installed in June 2018. Two bus stops will have level boarding platforms. ITDP will evaluate the impact of the platforms both quantitatively and qualitatively.
- She encouraged AACT members to engage with BostonBRT, including participation in “before and after” videos about the pilot.

**Jay Monty, Transportation Planner for the City of Everett,** provided further details about the Everett pilot program.

- The City of Everett has worked on improving bus service over the past year. The primary reasons for the improvements are economic development and accessibility. Everett does not have rail service; as such, bus is an important amenity to improve and grow the community.

- People with or without mobility issues frequently struggle to enter buses. In addition to personal impacts, this also results in loss of efficiency. One of the key features that make the Red Line and Orange Line efficient is level boarding, allowing easier access for persons in mobility devices; buses in the United States do not currently have this advantage.
- Representatives from Everett spoke with several vendors who specialize in bus bulb-outs, which are sidewalk extensions that allow for greater visibility for pedestrians. The height of a bus is roughly the height of two sidewalks; as such, the level boarding platforms will be installed on top of the current sidewalks to match the height of buses. This will allow for all-door boarding, which the current kneeling buses prevent.
- One challenge is that raising the sidewalks will affect adjacent businesses, namely doorway access. For this pilot, Everett has selected locations that will not affect business and are two of the busiest stops.
- While the level boarding platforms will initially be run as a pilot, they will stay in place if the pilot is successful.

**Andrew McFarland, Community Engagement Manager for LiveableStreets Alliance**, shared the following information.

- At the 2017 AACT-MBTA Summit, several attendees commented on accessibility issues at bus stops. This project will help address these issues. He encouraged riders to provide feedback on the pilot; community feedback will make it easier to propose similar projects in other communities.

They then opened the floor for questions and discussion.

**T. Gilbert** raised concerns about the platforms, noting that different bus models have different heights. *R. Clark* expressed similar concerns. *J. Monty* stated that they worked with the MBTA on the issue. Sidewalks also vary in height; kneeling buses cannot fully reach lower sidewalks. Noting that most buses have some ability to kneel, if a bus has a 14-inch height and the platform is 12 inches, buses can kneel to match that height. He added that while these platforms will not completely address this issue, it will still be a vast improvement. *J. Wallerce* added that this will better allow BostonBRT to “tell the story” of the situation following the pilot and highlight potential improvements in future pilots.

**G. Weinstein** asked if the vehicles will be driverless and asked about the potential implications of driverless vehicles, including what would happen in the event of mechanical malfunction. *J. Wallerce* stated the vehicles will not be driverless. Buses and current infrastructure will not be modified, apart from the installation of the platforms; service will be unchanged. She

added that mechanical malfunction on buses will be addressed in the same manner of current bus operations. *J. Monty* noted that the chance for mechanical malfunction will likely decrease, as buses will not need to raise and lower.

**G. Weinstein** asked if any drivers will lose their jobs. *J. Wallerce* stated they will not, adding that drivers on the affected routes will receive additional training. Drivers are a valuable resource for feedback on the pilot, as they directly engage with passengers.

**Chair White** asked about the design of the platform with regard to persons with visual impairments. *J. Monty* stated the platform will have tactile warning strips around the edges.

**R. Tepfer** asked where the platforms will be located. *J. Monty* stated they will be located at the Broadway and Everett Square stops; one will be located in front of the Rite-Aid (northbound), the other will be located across the street (southbound).

**Vice Chair Weber** requested that BostonBRT continue to seek feedback from stakeholders, including residents, businesses, drivers, and advocates. She added that each community is different, and encouraged BostonBRT to approach BRT differently depending on the challenges posed by each community.

**T. Gilbert** stated that in areas where dedicated lanes are not feasible, bus stops with correct lengths could improve bus boarding. *J. Wallerce* stated that the MBTA Better Bus Project is



an opportunity to provide this type feedback, though this is not what BostonBRT is addressing.

**L. Weber** expressed concern that “efficiency” can result in overcrowded buses. *J. Wallerce* stated that the customer experience is a central driving force behind BRT; it is not about loading more passengers onto buses, but rather improving access and providing more efficient bus travel.

**Chair White** stated having a cash option for fare payment causes delays. Moving to a cashless system will improve efficiency. *J. Wallerce* stated that Automated Fare Collection 2.0 will allow for further steps toward BRT in various corridors around Boston.

## **Ad Hoc/Community Engagement Committee Update**

**Jessica Podesva** and **Vice Chair Lisa Weber** provided an update on the Accessible Transportation Committee (ATC).

- AACT will host the last meeting on June 27, 2018.
- The new ATC will launch in July 2018.
- AACT will merge with the new ATC, making for a bigger and better group.
- The makeup of the new committee will consist of general membership with an executive board but will function differently than the AACT.

- Executive Board will consist of six individuals and five organizations.
- Each organization will select one representative to serve on the Board.
- First meeting will include only the five organizations.

*J. Podesva* explained that for the prior 10 years, two groups have been unofficially working together for persons with disabilities to advise the MBTA on accessibility issues. *L. Weber* noted that both groups have done a good job but that the two groups will serve together more strongly as one to carry on the next phase of the settlement.

*J. Podesva* opened the floor to questions and discussion.

**J. Tozza** noted his interest in serving on the new ATC Board. *J. Podesva* noted that the group will hire a coordinator and that there is no process in place at this time. She also mentioned that the new ATC administrator will be in charge of those applications for the Board.

*Vice Chair Weber* shared the following information regarding AACT and its transition into ATC.

- AACT received a letter from Luis Ramirez, MBTA General Manager and CEO, about the merger of the two groups. (Please see the attached letter.)

- Members in attendance are encouraged to continue on and become members of the new ATC.
- The group is working on logistics and meeting times. Members are encouraged to share their ideas about locations noting that meetings will continue at 10 Park Plaza.
- The documents for the Memorandum of Understanding and bylaws are still being reviewed.
- The key message is that nothing is being lost, but gaining a lot with more opportunities to share in the topics that you want to hear.
- There have been many changes since the formation of AACT such as the Boston Center for Independent Living Settlement, the Paratransit Task Force and most notably the Fiscal and Management Control Board.
- The two groups combined helps to improve communication between the stakeholders and the MBTA.
- The June 2018 meeting will include an acknowledgement of AACT and recognition of the group for its hard work and many accomplishments.
- Members are encouraged to bring any pictures that may highlight AACT over the years.

## MBTA and Vendor Reports

### 1. Office for Transportation Access (OTA)—THE RIDE Program

**Mike Hulak, Manager of Paratransit Contract Operations,** submitted the OTA report and provided the following updates.

- He announced that the MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board has awarded The RIDE Access Center contract to Transdev/IntelliRide with service to begin as of June 1, 2018.
- Customers interested in the UBER/LYFT pilot should visit [www.mbta.com/accessibility/the-ride/on-demand-pilot](http://www.mbta.com/accessibility/the-ride/on-demand-pilot).
- He congratulated Lisa Darlington, former Acting Director of Transportation, who has been named Director of Transportation. He applauded her for doing double duty since the retirement of Steve Epps.

*M. Hulak* opened the floor to questions.

**R. Tepfer** asked if the UBER/LYFT pilot would extend beyond July 1, 2018. *M. Hulak* explained that no extension of the pilot has been announced.

**D. Weathers** asked whether or not the same dispatchers and other staff were going to remain with Transdev/IntelliRide. *M. Hulak* explained that some staffers will be remaining with additional training.

**J. Kilgore** asked if THE RIDE allows return trip modification. *M. Hulak* explained that dispatch has to be contacted for changes. It may or may not be possible.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Hulak for his report.

## 2. Transit Police Department

**Sgt. Benjamin Carrasco, Community Outreach**, reported on the following information.

- *Sgt. Carrasco* was informed by the Superintendent for Bus Operations that action would be taken about a bus problem reported last month at a Harvard Square bus stop.

*Sgt. Carrasco* then opened the floor to questions.

**T. Gilbert** commented that persons who knowingly illegally park at bus stops make it hazardous, dangerous, and prevent safe access. He suggested that members contact their state politicians and local municipalities to do more at the State level to enforce the 2010 Bus Stop Access Law.

**D. Weathers** stated that she is concerned when there is no station ambassador on duty [at a train station] as she had experienced a card malfunction. She fears being arrested for not swiping her card. *Sgt. Carrasco* explained that someone who had an outstanding warrant on file may be arrested. He suggested that the callbox in stations be used to report concerns to customer service. He noted that many of the stops are not staffed with ambassadors because of budget

constraints and that some smaller stations do not have the same passenger volume as larger stations.

**T. Gilbert** expressed his thanks to the sergeant for more patrols at South Station. *Sgt. Carrasco* noted that they have assigned five officers to the station during the peak hours.

Chairman White thanked *Sgt. Carrasco* for his update and sent greetings to Chief Green.

### **3. Department System-wide Accessibility (SWA) Fixed Route Services**

**Rob Sampson, Manager for SWA**, shared updates on the following items.

- The MBTA has approved funding for the new priority seating signs.
- Installation of the signs will begin September 2018 and continue into January 2019. (Please see attached.)
- The MBTA buses currently have automated messages that announce priority-seating information. He added that bus drivers are required to ask patrons to relocate if someone needs priority seating; a move is voluntary.
- *R. Sampson* announced that Judge King will be hosting the semi-annual meeting on Wednesday, June 13, 2018.

He then opened the floor to questions and discussion.

**R. Clark** noted that there will still be problems exiting the bus because passengers refuse to move to the rear of the bus. *R. Sampson* noted that he is aware of the problem and that operators should request that passengers move to the rear of the bus.

**J. Tozza** asked about getting new buses for the North Shore in Lynn. *R. Sampson* noted that the compressed natural gas (CNG) buses need to be near the fueling pumps here at the Cabot garage.

**T. Gilbert** explained that while at Park Street Station, the countdown board eastbound was not working properly. *R. Sampson* noted that he will report the malfunction.

Chairman White thanked Rob Sampson for his update.

#### **4. Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)**

**Lisa Darlington, Director of Transportation**, distributed her report and announced that a new-hire class will be held on Tuesday, May 29, 2018. She also noted that the next Passenger Assistance Training (PAT) class is scheduled for Monday, June 4, 2018.

She opened the floor for questions. There were none.

## 5. The RIDE Access Center (TRAC)

**Ray Croteau, General Manager, Global Contact Services,** submitted his report and asked for questions. There were none.

## 6. National Express Transit (NEXT)

**Victor Herrera, General Manager,** submitted his report and announced a PAT class on Wednesday, June 6, 2018.

He then asked for questions. There were none.

## 7. Veterans Transportation (VT)

**Kevin MacDonald, Project Manager,** submitted his report and announced a PAT class on Wednesday, June 6, 2018.

He then asked for questions. There were none.

## 8. Keolis Commuter Services (KCS)

**Elizabeth Hickey, Manager, Diversity, Inclusion, and Title VI,** shared the following information and answered questions.

- On May 26, 2018, the commuter rail spring/summer schedule will be released with few changes. Hard copies are available at South and North stations and online from the MBTA Keolis app.
- Track diversions.
  - Busing continues during midday on the Canton-Stoughton Line on Monday, Tuesday, and



Wednesday (no impact on rush hour); the project completion is scheduled for July 2018.

- Accessible shuttle bus services during weekends for Morton and Readville stations; off and on during the weekend depending on the bridge construction.
- All shuttle buses are accessible.
- *E. Hickey* expressed gratitude to Debbie Weathers, AACT member, for bringing to the attention of KCS Customer Service Department a dangerous issue at the Talbot Avenue station stop. She noted that corrective action was taken with additional signage posted on platforms for warnings and a request was submitted for additional MBTA Transit police patrols during rush hour.

**A consumer** asked for an explanation of the KCS weekend reduced fare. *E. Hickey* explained that she is not very familiar with that project, which is being handled by the KCS Marketing Department.

**R. Clark** asked for an update on the Franklin shuttle. *E. Hickey* explained that service will not begin before July and that she will make an announcement at the next meeting.

**C. Daniels** stated that at the April meeting there was no notice about a Lowell shuttle. *E. Hickey* explained that notices may come out after she has attended a meeting. She expressed her apologies for the inconvenience.

## **Announcements**

### **Judge Patrick King Semi-Annual Public Hearing**

Date: Wednesday, June 13, 2018

Time: 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Location: Transportation Board Room 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Address: The State Transportation Building

10 Park Plaza

Boston, MA, 02116

## **Old Business**

None was presented.

## **New Business**

None was presented.

**Meeting adjourned at 2:40 PM.**

## **Notables**

Future meeting locations/dates and times for the newly formed community engagement group will be announced via email distribution, using the former AACT distribution list, and on the T website. The meetings will be accessible to people with disabilities and via public transportation. Assistive listening devices will be available at the meeting site. Every effort will be

made to provide other accommodations, such as materials in accessible formats or languages, or interpreters in American Sign Language upon advance request of 15 days of the scheduled meetings. In the interim, please contact MBTA's System-wide Accessibility office at 617-222-5237 or email [swa@mbta.com](mailto:swa@mbta.com) with any additional questions or concerns.

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*526, section 4 (based on race, color, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, disability, veteran's status [including Vietnam-era veterans], or background) must be filed no later than 300 calendar days after the date the person believes the discrimination occurred. A complaint form and additional information can be obtained by contacting the MPO (see above) or at [www.bostonmpo.org](http://www.bostonmpo.org).*