

***Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts Bay
Transportation Authority***

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***AACT Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 26, 2012***

Notables

The AACT Executive Board meeting will meet from 10:00 AM to noon and the Membership meeting will meet from 1:00 PM to 3 PM on the fourth Wednesday of the month except when noted.

AACT has a page on the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's website at www.bostonmpo.org; click on AACT. Links can be found there for the following items: agendas, upcoming meetings, past meeting minutes, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the MBTA and AACT, and the AACT bylaws, the AACT brochure, and ADA regulations. There are also links to the MPO's newsletter, *TRANSREPORT*, the MBTA's Office for Transportation Access, and the AACT Coordinator.

Comments and questions concerning AACT should be directed to the Acting Interim Chairman James White by contacting the AACT Coordinator, Ms. Janie Guion, at 617-973-7507 (voice); 617-973-7089 (TTY); 617-973-8855 (fax); or at AACT@ctps.org (email).

The AACT meeting locations are accessible to people with disabilities and via public transportation. Assistive listening devices are 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 (ASL) upon advance request. Please contact the Central Transportation Planning Staff at 617.973.7507(voice), 617.973.7089 (TTY), 617.973.8855 (fax), or AACT@ctps.org.

The MPO fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. The MPO does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, English proficiency, income, religious creed, ancestry, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or military service. Any person who believes herself/himself or any specific class of persons has been subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI or related statutes or regulations may, herself/himself or via a representative, file a written complaint with the MPO. A complaint must be filed no later than 180 calendar days after the date on which 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.

Members needing service information or wanting to inquire about MBTA services should do so through the MBTA Marketing and Communications Department at 617-222-3200 or 800-392-6100, TTY 617-222-5146, Monday through Friday 6:30 AM to 8:00 PM and Sat/Sun from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM, or the MBTA website 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 is appreciated.

Attendance

AACT Members

Mary Dennesen, Ian Perrault, James White, Rick Morin, Marilyn MacNab, Angela Manerson, Beverly Ann Rock, Cheryl Ravalli, Mary Ann Murray, Nancy Miller, Viola Thacker, Richard Mahoney, Donald Summerfield, Thomas Gilbert, Kathryn Piccard, N. Murray, Jonathan Gale, Deanne Sisco, Nancy Martin, Reginald Clark, and Ellen Frith

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)/Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)

Daniel Amstutz and Pam Wolfe

MassDOT - MBTA Representatives

Frank Oglesby, Mike Hulak, Carol Joyce-Harrington, Tim Davis, A H Griffith, Nathan Lescouflaur, Mindy Simmon, Larry Haile, Paul Fitzgerald, Lisa Semper, Thomas Burgess, Melissa Dullea, and Alex Murkinson,

Vendor Representatives

Kevin McDonald - Veterans Transportation, LLC
Jackie Dunlop - Greater Lynn Senior Services
Claire DiPillo and Phil McGuire - The Joint Venture of Thompson Transit and YCN, LLC
Marilyn Cole and Phil Maguire - Innovative Paradigms

Other

Sharon Harrison-Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH)
Theadora Fisher-HST

Meeting

Acting Interim Chairman James White called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM

Members, friends, and guests introduced themselves and the agenda was read by the IC Chairman White.

AACT Meeting Minutes Approval

The August 22 minutes were presented and approved unanimously.

IC White moved his report to a later time in the meeting, giving representatives from Innovative Paradigms (IP) the floor so that the Membership would have sufficient time for members to ask questions.

Presentation

A brief introduction was given for the newly selected vendor for the MBTA's In-person Assessment Program for THE RIDE. Innovative Paradigms (IP) and its parent company Paratransit, Inc., come with thirty years of assessing client abilities and in determining client transportation needs. In addition to its extensive experience with eligibility, IP is an ADA operating agency and has direct interaction with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

IP has assigned Marilyn Cole and Phil McGuire to work with the MBTA.

Mr. McGuire is the Corporate Manager and Principal Advisor for THE RIDE project. He is also the CEO and has 35 plus years experience in transit and Paratransit management and has been with IP since 2006.

Ms. Cole has been assigned as Project Manager for the task for THE RIDE. She has been with the company since 2007 and involved with Paratransit and human services transport since 2005. She will be responsible for the establishment and refinement of this program's operations. She will remain on-site for the next year.

Both Mr. McGuire and Ms. Cole gave members a detailed presentation of what customers can expect from IP staff when an assessment is done.

They stated the following:

- IP staff follows the guidelines of both the ADA and the Easter Seals Project ACTION
- They are approved by the FTA
- No paper application is required for the eligibility assessment
- IP staff make no medical decision
- Eligibility will be based on the applicant's functional ability to use fixed route transit
- IP is well tested and approved by the FTA; their eligibility process is a model that the FTA uses in other areas

Advantages

- One-on-one in-person guidance through interviews
- Application process will result in a scheduled interview
- Applicants meet with a well-trained Mobility Coordinator who is trained in the area of ADA paratransit
- Determinations are made within two to three business days
- There is an immediate assessment service in the case of medical necessity
 - In the case of medical necessity by request of your doctor you can receive temporary eligibility
 - Unconditional eligibility will be in effect for 30 days
 - To continue after 30 days you must arrange for an in-person assessment
- Where there are multiple people who need THE RIDE, they can arrange for block booking and all can arrive and be interviewed individually.

The Process

- Applicant, family member or caregiver may phone in for an appointment
- The interview can take up to ninety minutes
- If you prefer an application be mailed to your doctor it can be arranged, but it's not necessary
- Complimentary transportation to your appointment can be arranged by IP staff or by you; also the facility will have free parking

- IP staff will review your profile to verify the information and ask you to sign a medical release form, if necessary
 - Applicant signs off that information is correctly reported helping to ensure an accurate determination
 - Your eligibility for THE RIDE will be determined after this process
- You may request a private interview with staff and your escort for the application process.
- The application is completed as part of the interview you will be asked to give information on your condition, ability and disability are addressed
- A transit skills assessment is not required of every applicant

Ms. Cole thanked the membership for the opportunity to speak with them. She also offered her office phone number for those who may have questions. It is 617-932-9242.

She then asked for questions.

D. Summerfield was concerned that their human service providers may not have the skills to do in-person assessment.

M. Cole stated that her staff is trained in how to do the needs and balance testing. She said that they use the guidelines of Easter Seals Project ACTION which states that a medical degree is not necessary to perform an assessment. These assessments are not medically related to transit ability.

J. Gale asked if the new application introduced for THE RIDE this year would still be in effect. Will they be using a “scale system” for the process and is that scale available for public review?

P. McGuire stated that the application form in circulation now can still be used by those who prefer one. He also mentioned that the applicant’s information from that form will be taken into consideration, but they will be relying on the questions that they have always used for the eligibility process (which are reviewed by the FTA). The scale system asked about is called a “decision tree.” It was stated that it can be made available for public reviewing.

K. Piccard asked how they would evaluate people who suffer from pain and fatigue. She also stated that oftentimes people have more than one destination in a day; a transfer to fixed route on several buses may be too much.

M. Cole stated that their questions are never “yes or no,” which never give sufficient information. Their Mobility Coordinators are well-trained to look at the bigger picture. The IP staff spends a lot of time talking about a variable condition, and what may affect a person’s eligibility. The IP staff will take the time to talk with the person and draw out information that will help with their decision on eligibility.

M. Martin asked where THE RIDE Eligibility center would be located.

P. McGuire the location is now in negotiation. He stated that he will keep everyone informed.

M. MacNab is concerned that the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPA) might be violated and identity theft might occur. How will they obtain information from the medical community?

M. Cole stated that IP is aware of the HIPA Act and is sensitive to people’s privacy. She assured the members that all records are safeguarded. She stated that she has no idea how long records will

be kept. The MBTA must inform them about this issue. She said that IP will be willing to work with the medical community on issues of obtaining information. She stated that she is looking forward to establishing a working relationship with the medical community since they will be working towards the same goal.

IC Chairman White thanked both Ms. Cole and Mr. McGuire for their in-depth presentation and looked forward to working with them in the future.

Chairman's Report

Interim Chairman (IC) White reported:

- He commented on the recent response letter received from Acting General Manager Jonathan Davis regarding the fare increase effects; due to the length of the letter it was not read, but is available
- AACT participated in the interviewing process of the candidates for the MBTA General Manager. IC White, while unable to attend, sent a letter and thanked Chairman Jenkins of the MBTA Board of Directors for asking the questions
- He thanked Rick Morin for his help with the letter
- A historic moment at the MBTA --the new General Manager, Ms. Beverly Scott, the first woman was selected to run the oldest system in the country
- Ian Perrault will now represent AACT on the Rider Oversight Committee
- He expressed thanks to Mike Lambert of the General Manager's office for including information regarding AACT in the Premium

- Service letter to all THE RIDE users; it's a great opportunity to introduce AACT in a mass mailing. This is greatly appreciated
- There have been no Passenger Assistance Training classes with any of the vendors

He then asked for questions. There were none.

Ms. Marie Trottier, Assistant General Manager for System-Wide Accessibility Department (SWA)

Larry Haile, SWA Coordinator, introduced Marie Trottier, who has been named the new Assistant General Manager for SWA.

Ms. Trottier thanked the AACT Membership for their letter of welcome and introduction.

She commented that she has been on the job for four weeks; she has been meeting people and setting up meetings. She told the members that she is willing to meet in person, by phone or by email. She wants to hear what the needs of the members are so she can help. She cautioned that she cannot help if she doesn't know what concerns need to be prioritized and what is important.

She is looking forward to working on projects and with other members of the MBTA staff to make transportation accessible at the MBTA.

She also stated that twenty-one years after the ADA was signed, progress is still lagging. She is looking forward to her new role at the MBTA.

IC Chairman White thanked Ms. Trottier for her brief introduction and stated that the AACT Board is looking forward to meeting with her soon. Due to a lack of time, questions were not allowed. Members were encouraged to send any questions to the AACT Coordinator to be forwarded to Ms. Trottier.

Larry Haile, Coordinator for the MBTA System-Wide Accessibility Department (SWA)/Fixed Route Services (see attached)

He announced that MBTA officials, members of the AACT Board, and representatives from the disability community are asked to participate in a full run-through of the MBTA's system orientation training in its entirety in early October.

The training is designed to familiarize seniors and customers with safety and accessibility features on buses and in rail stations. Participants and attendees will be asked to provide feedback on the training.

The system orientation training is tentatively scheduled to begin in fall 2012.

He then asked for questions.

A Consumer was concerned about handling her scooter upon entering a bus or Green Line car.

IC Chairman White suggested that she might need more control and that the wheels may be problematic and exceed the allowable limit.

M. MacNab suggested that the MBTA staff for bus procurement look into the Brockton Area Transit bus entrances. They are very wide and are nothing like the buses at the MBTA. The turning radiuses on the buses are ample. She asked that the MBTA staff please share this information with bus procurement.

L. Haile said he would forward the information.

A. Mannerson asked when the training would be.

L. Haile stated that it would be by the end of the year. There is a lot of work to be done.

IC Chairman White asked where the money comes from when the MBTA has to settle a lawsuit judgment.

L. Haile stated that he would need to do research.

T. Gilbert stated that he is having problems on the timing of stops on Route 89 when he rings the bell for a stop request. He stated that this is an ongoing issue for him. He has reported this incident to Customer Communications.

L. Haile stated that he would research the complaint.

The Office of Transportation Access (OTA)

Frank Oglesby, MBTA Deputy Director of Paratransit Operations - OTA, THE RIDE, distributed the August 2012 reports and stated the following:

- THE RIDE advisory regarding the five dollar premium fare to be effective October 1st has been distributed to all THE RIDE customers by the U.S. Postal Service
- The premium fare information can also be viewed at mbta.com
- There have also been software updates completed both with the MBTA and THE RIDE vendors

He then asked for questions.

J. Gale asked how the ridership numbers were since the fare increase went into effect.

F. Oglesby stated that the decrease in ridership is one-thousand to thirteen-hundred trips a day.

K. Piccard asked for the percentage.

K. MacDonald stated it was just under twelve percent.

J. Gale asked about the level of training the vendors' customer service staff received.

K. MacDonald answered that the user interface is pretty much exactly the same. No, additional training was really needed. The improvements to the program took place in the code and updates to the system hardware.

K. Piccard was concerned that she may have been over-charged for her trips on THE RIDE. She would like an explanation. She also wants to know who is responsible for adjusting her bill.

R. Morin stated it is twice the non-discounted cash fare; the lowest non-discounted cash fare on the bus is two dollars.

F. Oglesby stated that persons with questions regarding THE RIDE fare should contact Customer Communications.

M. Murray asked that flyers for the AACT meetings be placed in areas where they can be seen by passengers in buses and vans.

F. Oglesby answered that this is an issue to be worked out with the vendors.

IC White asked that drivers have extra flyers on hand for consumers.

MBTA Vendor Reports

Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)

Jackie Dunlop, Director of Transportation, distributed her report, included in the handout.

She then asked for questions. None were asked.

IC White thanked Ms. Dunlop for her report.

The Joint Venture of Thompson Transit and YCN Transportation (JV)

Victor Herrera, General Manager for the Joint Venture, distributed his report and reported the following:

- There will be a hiring freeze for the next thirty days due to the drop in ridership
- Former JV General Manager Albert Maldonado has passed away

He then asked for questions.

R. Clark asked if any of the twenty-seven drivers who were laid-off would be rehired when they are looking for drivers again.

V. Herrera stated that those drivers would be considered. None of the twenty-seven were union drivers.

D. Sisco asked if working overtime was mandatory for drivers.

V. Herrera answered yes; JV's pool of drivers is limited.

K. Piccard asked were drivers laid-off due to fewer trips caused by the fare increase.

V. Herrera said yes, this seems to be part of the cause.

IC White thanked Mr. Herrera for his report.

Veterans Transportation (VT)

Kevin MacDonald, Project Manager, distributed his report and announced that VT would be having recertification classes for Passenger Assistance Training every Tuesday in October from 9 AM to 3 PM; anyone attending must make prior arrangements.

R. Clark asked if the number of drivers remained the same.

K. MacDonald stated that they typically lose three drivers a month.

IC White thanked Mr. MacDonald for his report.

Open Discussion

D. Sisco asked why was her friend unable to add money to RIDE account at the new location.

IC White suggested that people use a credit card that has stored value and phone into the 800 line.

Announcements

IC White announced the MassDOT is having a statewide Transportation Conversation that is being held all over the state and encouraged everyone to attend.

P. Wolfe announced that flyers are available for the upcoming Transportation Conversation meetings.

IC White thanked Daniel Amstutz for assisting at the meeting today.

The meeting ended at 3:05 pm.