

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

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AACT Membership Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 22, 2013

Notables

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

AACT has a page on the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) website at www.bostonmpo.org; click on "Get Involved" then scroll down to "Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA." 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, and ADA regulations. There are also links to the MPO's newsletter, *TRANSREPORT*, and information on accessibility at the MBTA. This page includes the contact information for the AACT Coordinator.

Comments and questions concerning AACT should be directed to the 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); AACT@ctps.org (email); or at c/o CTPS, 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150, Boston, MA 02116 (mail).

The AACT meeting location is accessible to people with disabilities and is near public transportation. Upon request (preferably two weeks in advance of the meeting), every effort will be made to provide accommodations such as assistive listening devices, materials in accessible formats and in languages other than English, and interpreters in American Sign Language and other languages. Please contact the MPO staff at 617.973.7100 (voice), 617.973.7089 (TTY), 617.973.8855 (fax), or publicinformation@ctps.org.

The MPO complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other federal and state non-discrimination 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, ADA, or other non-discrimination statute or regulation 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 always appreciated.

The meeting opened at 1:03 P.M.

IC White opened the meeting by asking everyone to join in a moment of silence in memory of those who lost their lives and the many who were injured in the tornado in Moore, OK.

Reading of the Agenda

Introductions

Attendees:

Interim Chairman Jim White, Allen M. Karon, Penny Shaw, Beverly Ann Rock, Margaret Crowdis, Betty J. King, Ian Perrault, Mary Ann

Murray, Tyler Terrasi, Dari Harding, Viola A. Thacker, Penny Shaw, Kathryn Piccard, and Reggie Clark,

Agencies: Theadora Fisher, Executive Office of Health and Human Services Office; Lisa Weber and Theresa Casey, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

MBTA Staff: Carol Joyce-Harrington, Alex Murkinson, Jim Nilan, Laura Bresford, Mike Hulak, Frank Oglesby, Kelli Ahola, and Philip Balcom

Vendor Staff: Victor Herrera and Norman Simand, Joint Venture of Thompson Transit; Randy Hendrickson and Lori Gonzales, Greater Lynn Senior Services; Kevin MacDonald, Veterans Transportation

MPO Staff/Coordinator: Matt Archer and Janie Guion

Approval Membership Meeting Minutes for April 24, 2013

The meeting minutes were approved with one abstention.

Chairman's Report

IC White reported the following:

- The MBTA bus operator certification training will be postponed to June.
- He will be attending the Joint Venture passenger assistance training on Thursday, May 30th.

- He attended the Community Forum on Disability Issues at Boston City Hall on May 21st which was run jointly by the City of Boston and the Boston Center for Independent Living
- He expressed an interest in AACT organizing a roundtable with the different disability groups and organizations to highlight issues that affect the disability community
- He is planning to meet with MBTA General Manager Beverly Scott on Tuesday, June 5, to discuss several topics
- He stated that Mike Lambert, MassDOT Deputy Administrator of Transit and Rail, and Special Assistant to MBTA Manager Dr. Scott, attended the AACT Executive Board meeting earlier today and stated that he has named Aniko Lasko as the State-Wide Mobility Coordinator for the 530 Commission

He asked for questions. There were no questions.

Boston Metropolitan Organization Staff

Pam Wolfe, Manager for the Certification Activities gave an overview on the upcoming presentations from the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The Boston MPO's purpose is to decide how to spend federal transportation funds that come into the region for construction of transportation projects. She explained how the MPO decides how to spend the federal money

that comes into the region for transportation planning studies and then makes decisions concerning which projects should be built. She also explained the MPO's three important documents: (1) the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), a vision document that looks ahead twenty-five years, (2) the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is, the short range implementation document for the LRTP; and which looks ahead four years and identifies all construction projects using federal funding in the next four years and (3) is the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), identifies all planning programs and studies that will receive federal funding over the next year, working within a one year scope.

Ms. Wolfe invited the Membership to be part of the process by attending MPO meetings, supporting the Board members who are members of the Regional Transportation Advisory Council and giving accessibility information to the MPO.

Michelle Scott, Manager for the UPWP, gave an overview of the UPWP process. She stated that the UPWP lists the transportation studies and planning activities that will happen in the Boston Region for the upcoming year. The UPWP follows a federal fiscal year timeline from October 2013 to September 2014. She explained that the UPWP supports the MPO planning, helps the MPO make decisions about planning and programming, and involves

transportation stakeholders throughout the region. The UPWP includes support for AACT and many other activities. Ms. Scott described how planning activities come from a variety of sources: some are to meet federal planning requirements in the development of the LRTP, UPWP and TIP; some are ideas from the general public; and some come from transportation agencies like the MBTA and MassDOT.

Ms. Scott stated that the Draft UPWP has been released for public review. She stated that she would like to get comments and feedback on the document and those consumers may suggest whatever they think is important to include in the document for funding. She offered copies of the document and said that it was also available for review at the Boston MPO website. She suggested that those needing special formats see the AACT Coordinator or they may download at link www.bostonmpo.org.

She then asked for questions.

K. Piccard commented that there are towns with commuter rail service but sometimes there is no accessible entrance. Is there a way for those towns can sign up for funding to get accessible mini-high platforms? What if the town takes on the financial responsibility?

Could the Plan include the funding for the town to build mini-high platform?

M. Scott stated that a number of Boston MPO staff work directly with the MBTA including on their Program for Mass Transit and that she would forward her concerns to the MBTA.

A. Karon stated that he is a resident of Canton who is concerned that the Sharon station is inaccessible; he would like to see construction start on the mini-high platforms now rather than later. He is fearful that a sudden drastic action will be taken to close down the station.

M. Scott stated that she would inform the Boston MPO staff to relay his concerns to the MBTA.

R. Clark asked about accessibility plans for the New Balance station.

P. Wolfe replied that this type project prepares design plans that would not be included in the UPWP. The next speaker Sean Pfalzer may have information regarding this type of project.

R. Morin asked if the MPO is involved in the studies of what to do with South Station.

M. Scott explained that the MPO is supporting some of the efforts that MassDOT is planning concerning the expansion of South Station. She

said that it is documented in the UPWP, which decides on the funding in a range of different studies in which MPO staff may be participating.

Consumer stated that in her experience the commuter rail communication is lacking for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing. If you are deaf and hard of hearing you have no way of knowing what stop you are approaching and no way to know if you are getting off at the correct stop. There have been improvements on fixed route and heavy rail where there is visual signage, but commuter rail is lacking in accessibility to the deaf community.

M. Scott stated that she is not aware of what efforts are being made in that area. She will do research in that area.

P. Wolfe explained that those types of programs are part of the MBTA's on-going improvement program and will be presented by the next speaker.

Sean Pfalzer, Manager for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), gave highlights of the TIP program. He began by saying that many of the questions asked earlier are tailored more to the TIP rather than the UPWP which includes the capital investments being planned throughout the transit regions and highway systems. He added to the earlier discussion regarding station accessibility for the commuter rail and other transit facilities for the MBTA. He noted

that he will discuss the MBTA's Capital Investment Program (CIP) for the next four years and that many of the programs within those investments will address the concerns expressed earlier such as making commuter rail stations accessible. He stated that although he did not have many details he believes that the Way Finding Program will address signage issues and visual aids at commuter rail stations.

The investments in the region's transportation system are guided by the MPO's vision and policies which prioritize investments that preserve the current transportation system in the state of good repair; that to provide safe access for all transportation modes; that enhance livability, improve mobility for all users throughout the region.

He then asked for questions.

R, Clark asked that he be provided with more information on the TIP.

IC White thanked Ms. Wolfe, Ms. Scott and Mr. Pfalzer for their presentations.

Election of AACT Officers for Terms 2013-2015

The AACT election was held with assistance of the MPO staff. The following officers were elected and announced to the membership:

Elected Board Members:

Chairman James F. White

Vice-Chairman Rick Morin

Board of Directors:

Mary Ann Murray

Ian Perrault

Beverly Ann Rock

Tyler Terrasi (*withdrew due to other commitments*)

MBTA System-Wide Accessibility (SWA)

Laura Brelsford filled in for Larry Haile who was away on vacation.

She congratulated the newly elected Board. She distributed her report and stated the following (see attached):

- She announced that Judge Patrick King, court-appointed overseer of the settlement between the MBTA and Boston Center for Independent Living, would be holding his semi-

annual public meeting on Friday, June 14 here at 10 Park Plaza

- She addressed the New Balance station inquiry and talked about the accessibility features
- She also commented on the inquiry about visual aids on commuter rail trains and that new trains will be in operation soon with stop announcements made audibly and displaced visibly
- She stated that SWA is very involved in the details of accessibility for the temporary closing of the Government Center. She also stated that no public announcement about the closing has been made and that it may come in late June or early July nearing the closing.

She suggested that the Government Center Team be invited to an AACT meeting to discuss the future of the station.

She then took questions.

IC White noted that he would like for the AACT Board to be briefed on details of the Government Center station and that he would like for this to be an item at the fall summit.

BA Rock asked when AACT would be given a presentation on the New Balance Station.

L. Brelsford stated the designs are ready for a presentation but she will keep AACT informed of the details.

IC White asked about the glass architectural concept released about six months ago.

A. Karon stated that he found an error on page four of the SWA report in the year-to-date concerning the Transportation Access Pass and Senior Pass. He also commented on the MBTA private bus service Route # 716 from Mattapan into Canton saying that he fears Canton becoming a town only served by commuter rail.

L. Brelsford stated that she would make a correction and redistribute the report.

R. Morin asked when Judge Patrick King's oversight of the settlement between the MBTA and the Boston Center for Independent Living would come to an end.

L. Brelsford stated that there is no hard end date. She indicated that the settlement states the following conditions: (1) after four consecutive positive reporting periods; (2) if both the plaintiff and the

MBTA agree that they have met their obligation, and as long as the plaintiff agrees.

IC White thanked Ms. Brelsford for filling for Mr. Haile and said she did a great job!

OTA Office for Transportation Access (OTA) -THE RIDE Program and THE RIDE Eligibility Center (TREC)

Frank Oglesby, Deputy Director, presented his report (see attached). He congratulated the newly elected Board and stated that he was looking forward to their continued working relationship.

He then asked for questions.

R. Morin asked for more details on other determinations on the TREC report.

F. Oglesby said that it encompasses any type determination such as walk-ins and the medical necessity.

IC White asked if the ridership figures were accurate for March with a decrease of 29 percent; he asked if this was in comparison to last year's data.

F. Oglesby replied yes, ridership is way down.

M. Hulak stated that ridership is down due to possible weather conditions compared to last year's.

MA Murray asked if they have a way of knowing what really caused the low ridership.

F. Oglesby replied that the low ridership may be due to in-person assessment and that some people have opted out of going to in-person assessment.

M. Hulak commented that it is very difficult to predict ridership because of snowstorms and their related service shut downs, early dismissals, cancelations, and buildings closing early. He noted that this varies from storm to storm.

R. Morin commented on the release of the survey done by Myra Berloff and Ann Hartstein. The study is to address the recent fare increase and the low ridership that resulted. He stated that in conversation with Ms. Berloff she told him that the recommendations can be done without added cost. He made an appeal to MBTA representatives to contact those who may be in charge to release the report.

A Consumer asked about what the MBTA is doing to improve the system for persons who cannot communicate with THE RIDE driver especially people who are deaf, blind and hard of hearing (DBHH). Many have been dropped off at incorrect locations. She stated that there should be some way for the driver to communicate.

M. Hulak stated that there is no specific tracking of individuals with disabilities. He noted that mistakes do happen in transporting the

wrong consumer and that it is most unfortunate. The driver is investigated and then disciplined for the infraction.

IC White asked if the driver is aware by looking at the computer console; there is a special code for a person's impairment.

K. MacDonald explained that there is a code to identify the consumer.

IC White stated that consumers should add their cellular phone number to their OTA profile in case there is a problem.

Consumer stated that there are consumers that are deaf, blind, and hearing impaired with no easy way of communicating with the driver. Some drivers do not write English very well.

IC White stated that a consumer can mark their ID number in the palm of their hand for easy ID to communicate with a driver.

Consumer stated yes they are aware of that option, but it is more about the driver's willingness to communicate.

R. Morin commented that the MBTA should explore the idea of a three-person committee to work on issues of the visually and hearing impaired.

M. Hulak stated he is more than willing.

IC Whited thanked Mr. Oglesby and Mr. Hulak for their participation.

Vendor Reports

Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)

Randy Hendrickson, Manager, distributed his report and announced that the next passenger assistance training would be Friday, June 7.

He then asked for questions.

MA Murray commented that the GLSS vehicle she was in today had a meeting announcement for the April 24 meeting.

IC White thanked Mr. Hendrickson for his report.

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

Victor Herrera, General Manager, distributed his report and congratulated the new Board on their election and stated that he is looking forward to working with them over the next two years.

He stated the following:

There will be passenger assistance training on June 30th for newly hired drivers.

He introduced the new human resource manager, Norman Simand.

He then asked for questions.

A. Karon asked for details for attending a passenger assistance training class.

V. Herrera stated that participants should give one-day notice beforehand due to limited space. There will be no charge for the trip to the vendor at 617-979-6702.

IC White thanked Mr. Herrera for his report.

Veterans Transportation (VT)

Kevin MacDonald, Project Manager, distributed his report and added that passenger assistance training will be held every Tuesday, in June beginning at 9 AM; in addition there will be a CPR training class. He also took time to congratulate the newly elected Board members.

He then took questions.

IC White asked for the specific dates for the June passenger assistance training classes.

K. MacDonald stated that they are Tuesdays June 4th, 11th, 18th, and 25th. He suggested that the members schedule their trip at 877-765-7433.

IC White asked if there was an increase in ridership.

K. MacDonald stated that the ridership is less than expected but it is moving up.

IC White thanked Mr. MacDonald for his report.

Open Discussion

B. King stated that she has seen some discrepancies in her THE RIDE account. She asked if she could get a copy of her account monthly.

M. Hulak indicated that she would need to contact OTA for information and they would send it by postal service or email.

R. Morin stated that she could review the information on-line.

M. Hulak stated that she could only view the trip history not her balance. He indicated he is working on an on-line balance sheet.

Announcements

R. Clark spoke about the brochure “Our Stories: Celebrating Four Decades of Living in the Community”, which features people who move from public institutions to community access. For copies of the brochure contact Barbara Stallsberry at the Massachusetts Association for the Blind at www.mabcommunity.org

IC White thanked everyone for participating in the meeting and he thanked all those who voted in the election.

Meeting adjourned at 3:05 PM.