

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

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**AACT Membership Meeting Minutes**

*Wednesday, July 24, 2013*

**Notables**

The AACT Executive Board will meet from 10 AM to noon and the Membership meeting will be conducted 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 (MPO) website at [www.bostonmpo.org](http://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 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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/](http://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.

Meeting opened at 1:03 PM

Reading of the Agenda

Introductions

*Attendees:*

James White, Ian Perrault, Cheryl Ravalli, Rick Morin, Allen M. Karon, Ian Perrault, Beverly Ann Rock, Mary Ann Murray, Richard Mahoney, Kathryn Piccard, Reggie Clark, Nancy J. Miller, Angela Manerson, Kathy Burns, Robert Dias, Massachusetts Office on Disability,

Theresa Casey, Theadora Fisher, Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

Also Lisa Weber, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Penny Shaw, Disability Consortium; Dennis D. Pinder, Four Corners; and Linda S. Salzer, Ways2Go Travel Trainer

**MBTA Staff:**

Larry Haile, Carol Joyce-Harrington, Marie Trottier, Robert Stradaull, Mike Hulak, Frank Oglesby, and Tim Davis

**Vendor Staff:**

Victor Herrera and Mike Rushin, National Express-Joint Venture of Thompson Transit; Jacquelyn J. Reynolds and Nick Gevannaris, Greater Lynn Senior Services; Kevin MacDonald, Veterans Transportation

**MPO Staff:**

Janie Guion and Matt Archer

**Chairman's Report**

*The Chair stated the following:*

- He introduced himself as the newly elected Chairman for AACT and introduced the new Executive Board of Directors for 2013-

2015: Rick Morin, Vice Chairman, Mary Ann Murray, Ian Perrault, and Beverly Ann Rock.

- He noted that Tyler Terrasi had resigned from the Board due to other commitments and that Chairman White has appointed Lisa Weber of the Massachusetts Committee on Disabilities, to replace him, in accordance with the AACT Bylaws.
- He attended three In-Person Assessment Appeals (hearings for people who have been denied eligibility) for THE RIDE.
- He also attended THE RIDE's Pre-Bid Conference meeting, concerning the request for proposals.
- THE RIDE core area will be changing to allow all vendors to service the Brookline, Cambridge and Somerville core areas.
- A Summit for November 20 is being planned by Board members Rick Morin, Beverly Ann Rock, and Lisa Weber. The summit will take place during the November AACT Executive Board meeting time frame; members will be informed as the committee progresses.

He then asked for questions.

**MA Murray** asked for a clarification on the Lahey Clinic transfer for the North Shore.

**M. Hulak** stated that this transfer will take place with the new contract next year.

***Recommendations from Governor's Executive Order 530  
Commission (EO 530)***

Michael Lambert wears two hats, one for MassDOT Rail and Transit Division and one for the MBTA on transit programs in general which encompasses mobility management and an increasing role with THE RIDE. He was a key representative to the Executive Board 530 Commission last year which was formed by the governor to take a statewide look at community transportation as a whole including transportation that is provided by local governments, councils on aging, Veterans' departments, regional transportation authorities (RTA's), the MBTA, ADA paratransit, other types of paratransit, and non-profit agencies.

*He stated the following:*

- The commission met for nine months in locations all over the state and presented a final report to the governor which he accepted and made final. He noted that the main recommendation coming from the commission's report is to establish a statewide coordinating council in community transportation. This is a model that has been adopted formally by fourteen states.

- The role of the council is to advise and inform the Secretaries of Health and Human Services and Transportation in a joint effort to improve the network of transportation across the state. The coordinating committee has been established and will meet with the Secretaries this September; a statewide website will be launched in a week.
- The second key recommendation is to hire a statewide mobility manager, Aniko Laszlo, who has excellent experience in this area.
- A third is to establish regional coordinating committee to work in concert with the Statewide Coordinating Committee.
- He noted that the commission issued sixty very specific recommendations which were organized into three key themes: (1) transportation availability, access, and service quality; (2) customer eligibility, application and screening; and (3) efficiencies, cost containment and maximizing revenue.

He then gave an overview of the Commission's goals: (1) improve transportation options by identifying gaps in service and addressing them; (2) address physical barriers --clearing snow from key bus routes and making ADA --eligibility consistent across the state; (3) to create efficiency in revenue --to co-mingle as many trips as possible, and change the application process for organizations seeking vans;

for example the MBTA's accessible taxi pilot program will start soon to provide rides more cheaply than the current cost of THE RIDE.

He concluded by saying that the statewide coordinating committee looks a lot like the EO 530 Commission which is made up of a consumer of THE RIDE, local government agencies, and an RTA consumer.

Finally, Mr. Lambert stated that in the short term they will continue to progress in terms of recommendations from the commission; but on a larger scale they will be working with the coordinating committee to prioritize the sixty recommendations to see which gives better spending power. The committee will do everything to make sure their work is transparent, meets goals, and is responsive to the public.

He then asked for questions.

**K. Piccard** commented that there are many people who are eligible for Medicaid transit. She noted that she has received many complaints that vendors do not comply with their contracts, and consumers feel that if they complain, they may be retaliated against. She asked how the commission will ensure that contractors will comply.

**M. Lambert** stated that all transportation networks can be improved across the board. He has noticed that since the commission was formed there has been a better working relationship and information is shared among the agencies.

**R. Morin** asked who oversees the work of the committee.

**M. Lambert** stated that the committee reports to the Secretaries of Transportation and Health and Human Services.

**Chairman White** stated that he spoke with the then General Manager Davis and Secretary Davey regarding AACT's concern for consumer safety--taxi drivers should be trained to the standards of THE RIDE drivers and undergo criminal background checks. He asked that vehicles have more than a minimum amount of insurance for consumer safety.

**M. Lambert** stated that he will need to do research.

**K. Burns** asked the cost of a taxi ride.

**M. Lambert** stated that the goal is to have the cost lower than THE RIDE.

**Chairman White** asked if THE RIDE ID account numbers will be used for taxi service.

**M. Lambert** said no, not initially.

**MA Murray** asked if the inexpensive cost will also apply to vans.

**M. Lambert** stated that this will depend on the taxi company and the number of fully accessible vehicles available.

**Chairman White** asked that he make a requirement that all vehicles be accessible.

**M. Lambert** stated that all vehicles would be accessible.

**K. Piccard** asked that, as a specification on the new vehicles, the door hinges be wider for the convenience of those who are using a mobility device.

**M. Lambert** stated that Mike Hulak is part of the development team and hears your concerns.

**A. Karon** asked about the relationship between THE RIDE and other RTA paratransit systems, specifically the Brockton-Avon-Taunton line. He asked how the service could be improved upon.

**M. Lambert** stated that THE RIDE has seven boarding RTA's where some transfers work well and at other times do not. He noted that this is a very complex issue and not a simple task. He noted that one of

the many tasks of the commission is to take all the transfers across the Commonwealth into consideration.

**K. Burns** asked how soon the taxi service would begin.

**M. Lambert** stated that he would be working with AACT to finalize a proposal and he looks forward to the service beginning soon; but it must be safe and the program must be workable.

**R. Morin** commented that since the Governor had problems getting his transportation bill passed by the Legislature this year, were there any programs in jeopardy?

**M. Lambert** noted that Sunday service is directly tied to the funding and that there was some support for the bill but not at the level the governor would have liked. He stated that both Secretaries are really committed to providing whatever resources they need to advance the recommendations of the commission, especially the ones that don't require a significant amount of service.

**Chairman White** thanked Mr. Lambert for his report on the Final Report of the Executive Order 530.

## ***MBTA System-Wide Accessibility Department (SWA)/Fixed Route Services***

**Larry Haile, SWA Coordinator**, stated that he had presented his report and that the Google App would be completed sometime in 2014.

He then took questions.

**K. Piccard** asked if he knew about the training of the emergency callbox personnel who answer calls on MBTA platforms. She noted that she was told that someone in a mobility device spoke with a customer service agent who stated that there was no emergency.

**L. Haile** stated that callboxes have two buttons, especially the newer versions on the platforms, -one marked, “Info” and the other “Emergency” or “Help.” He stated the personnel are trained to assist, and if there is no response from the person, that someone will go to the area to locate and assist the person.

**Chairman White** asked that when consumers run into problems that they please contact the Customer Service line.

**R. Diaz** asked if information received by callboxes is recorded.

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

**A. Manerson** asked about the emergency training facility.

**L. Haile** stated the training will begin in the next few months and will be located in an updated facility.

**MA Murray** asked whether there had been any training in Lynn.

**L. Haile** stated that he would find out.

**A. Karon** asked for an update on the many accidents on the E-Line.

**L. Haile** stated that he was not aware of accidents on that line. He also recommended that consumers take the bus Route 39 which runs parallel to that line.

**Chairman White** asked if the AACT Board could be provided with a list of text messages about non-working elevators and escalators.

**L. Haile** said that he would need to do research.

**K. Piccard** asked if, when consumers are alerted that elevators or escalators are out of service, they are informed of others that are nearby that are in use.

**L. Haile** stated that consumers are given alternatives.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Haile for his report.

### ***MBTA Office for Transportation Access -THE RIDE Program***

**Frank Oglesby, Deputy Director**, submitted THE RIDE report and stated the following.

- Phil Balcom was acknowledged for supervising the MBTA Shuttle service for July 4<sup>th</sup> Esplanade concert

He then took questions.

**A. Manerson** asked why was there a delay in getting shuttle service for the annual Fourth of July concert on the Esplanade.

**F. Oglesby** stated that the MBTA was advised due to safety concerns.

**Chairman White** stated he worked hard to advocate that service not be canceled for those who had no other way of getting to the concert.

**K. Piccard** stated that she was on a vehicle that was not cool enough for a very hot day. She asked for an explanation of the policy.

**M. Hulak** commented that each driver is required to perform a circle check on the vehicle before leaving the garage. He also stated that in the last few weeks the temperature was extremely hot and that they had received many complaints. He noted that in extreme heat, air-conditioners have a hard time keeping the passengers comfortable. He noted that after an investigation, if the vendor is found liable, there will be fifty dollar fine.

**BA Rock** asked for information on the radio policy.

**M Hulak** stated that if a driver has the volume very loud you may request that sound be lowered or ask for the radio to be turned off. If you feel your request was not complied to contact OTA to investigate further.

**Chairman White** thanked Mr. Oglesby for his report.

### ***Veterans Transportation (VT)***

**Kevin MacDonald, Project Manager**, distributed his report and announced the dates of Passenger Assistance Training (PAT) and CPR classes for the next month; see the full listing in the submitted report.

He then took questions.

**Chairman White** asked for the percentage in decreased trips in comparison to 2012 figures.

**K. MacDonald** stated that in comparison to last year the percentage is down significantly and that it is the worst since he had begun working at Veterans. It is less than the contracts estimated. He stated that it was weather-related.

**Chairman White** thanked Mr. MacDonald for his report.

### ***National Express and the Joint Venture of Thompson Transit and YCN Transportation (JV)***

**Victor Herrera, General Manager**, distributed his report and announced the dates of upcoming Passenger Assistance Trainings (PAT's); see the full listing in the submitted report.

He also stated that when vehicles have faulty air-conditioning units they are removed from service immediately. The driver has the option to complete the trip but it's not in the best interest of the company to

keep that vehicle on the road. He stated that drivers do a thorough job of checking vehicles before they leave the garage. This is a critical part of the job and that any discrepancy should be reported immediately to the pull-out supervisor; there is a mechanic on duty beginning at 5 AM daily.

He then asked for questions.

**K. Burns** commented that a driver informed her that his vehicle did not have any windshield wiper fluid.

**V. Herrera** stated that that can't be true as drivers are instructed to do a thorough check of their vehicle before they leave the garage.

**Chairman White** introduced Mike Rushin, Chief Operating Officer for National Express from Chicago office to the Membership.

**Chairman White** thanked Mr. Herrera for his report.

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

**Jacquelyn Reynolds, MBTA Contract Relationship Manager,** distributed her report and announced that the PAT classes for August are listed on her report.

She then asked for questions.

**MA Murray** asked about what she sees as a possible error in the report for pickups greater than thirty minutes and trips sixty minutes per zone.

**J. Reynolds** stated that there is no error.

**K. Piccard** asked about transfers with other vendors or RTA's.

**J. Reynolds** stated that there are transfers with other vendors.

**Chairman White** thanked Ms. Reynolds for her report.

### ***Open Discussion***

**P. Shaw** has concerns that the in-person eligibility assessment staff asked questions that are very intrusive and are not transportation related. She is concerned that no one is addressing the issue. She stated that she has filed complaints and has been in touch with the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) and the Executive Office of Elderly Affairs.

**Chairman White** stated that he had addressed the General Manager about in-person assessment concerns.

**K. Piccard** expressed concern that Ms. Shaw's issue with in-person assessment staff asking questions that clearly were not transportation related is a real concern. She asked who administers the contract; and who is responsible for negotiating for in-person assessment to deal with this issue.

**CJ Harrington** stated that OTA has been in contact with MOD, the Disability Law Center, and the Boston Center for Independent Living and Project Easter Seals ACTION (PESA). She also stated that they have made all types of reasonable accommodations. She noted that they have processed some 8,000 people since December. She is confident in the process and that they have been utilizing best practices that they have received from across the country, the Federal Transit Administration and PESA. She stated that OTA has guidelines that they are following.

**R. Morin** discussed reasonable accommodations are taken on a case-by-case basis. He noted that this is a dispute that Ms. Shaw has taken to MOD to mediate and many of the questions being asked are in the PESA. He noted that once agencies such as MOD rule, the ruling is final.

**K. Piccard** asked what the OTA website says about this issue.

**P. Shaw** stated that the website indicated that you must bring documentation. She noted that she wanted people to be aware of the process.

### **Announcements**

**Chairman White** announced the Americas with Disability Celebration on Wednesday, July 25, at Boston City Hall, at which time he encouraged everyone to attend.

**A. Manerson** announced a film series that is being presented by the Cambridge Commission on Disability.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:00 P.M.**