

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

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## ***AACT Membership Meeting Minutes***

***Wednesday, December 17, 2014***

### ***Board of Directors:***

Chairman - James F. White

Vice Chairman - Rick E. Morin

### **Executive Board**

Mary Ann Murray

Ian Perrault

Beverly Ann Rock

Lisa Weber

### ***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](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 857.702.3658(voice); 617.570.9193 (TTY); 617.570.9192(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 857.702.3700(voice), 617.570.9193 (TTY), 617.570.9192 (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 Saturday/Sunday 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 1:06 PM***

***Reading of the Agenda***

***Introductions***

***Attendees:***

Lisa Weber, James White, Rick Morin, Mary Ann Murray, Ian Perrault, Diaz, Rob, Reggie Clark, Yasi Abdol, Linda Shepard Salzer, Gina Laurent, Marilyn MacNab, Debbie Weathers, Kim Blout, Nancy Miller, Sharon Harrison, Kathryn Piccard, and Angela Manerson

### ***MBTA Staff:***

Mike Hulak, Frank Oglesby, Larry Haile, Ken Green, Rashad Lyn, Rob Sampson, Mike Lambert, C.J. Harrington, and Brian Francis

### ***Vendor Staff:***

Selena Walckner, Jacquelyn Reynolds, John Tuttle, Victor Herrera, Mike Rushin

### ***MPO Staff:***

Matt Archer, Janie Guion, David Fargen, Natalie Raffol

### ***Approval of Minutes***

Chairman White requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes for September 24, 2014. A motion was made and carried with one abstention.

### **Chairman's and Treasury Report**

*The Chair stated the following:*

- He thanked Dr. Scott and Michael Lambert for inviting AACT to serve on the Means Testing Committee. He thanked Vice Chairman Morin for his work on the committee.
- He also stated that he is in the process of setting up a bank account for the AACT general funds.

## *Paratransit Means Testing Program*

*Michael Lambert, Deputy Administrator & Assistant to the General Manager, MBTA & MassDOT*, stated the following:

- The MBTA will be piloting a program that allows for lower fares for low-income customers, who have income within 100 percent to 300 percent of the poverty line. ADA and premium trips will be reduced by \$1.00. The discount will be on a reimbursement basis; the MBTA will periodically look at the number of trips and put funds back into the customer's account according to their travel activity. The pilot program will run for six months, and will most likely begin in July 2015. The MBTA will examine the feasibility and effectiveness of a full rollout based on the experience in the pilot program.
- The pilot group will consist of 600 randomly chose individuals who participate in any of 18 state-based ADA benefit programs. Participants can apply in two steps. First, they mail in the form that will be supplied to selected participants. From that pool of applicants, a certain number will be selected and asked to provide additional income verification, such as a copy of an ID card or a letter indicating participation in a state-based ADA participant benefit program. The selection process will be anonymous; the MBTA will not know the applicants' names or disability. While random, the selection process will ensure geographic distribution, distribution of ADA and premium

trips, and distribution of income levels. This distribution will allow the MBTA to see which groups benefit the most from the fare reduction.

- No other large scale transit organization has a program like this. The MBTA worked closely with many groups to ensure equity and ease of implementation, including AACT, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority, UMass Boston Collins Center, Boston Center for Independent Living, Disability Policy Consortium, Massachusetts Senior Action Council, and Executive Office of Elder Affairs. The MBTA will need the help of its partners if it chooses to advance this program to the Massachusetts legislature for full implementation.

He then asked for questions.

**K. Piccard** asked about the means testing program's relation to MassHealth's PT-1 medical transportation. *Mr. Lambert* stated any THE RIDE customers who are part of MassHealth will be eligible for means testing; they can opt to use either PT-1 or THE RIDE. Prior to the fare increase on THE RIDE, many customers chose THE RIDE over PT-1; after the fare increase, customers began to use PT-1. He stated that the means testing program may motivate individuals to use THE RIDE, and he encouraged THE RIDE users to use the service that is best for them.

**R. Dias** asked if there is a minimum amount of trips a customer needs to take in order to be eligible. *Mr. Lambert* stated that number of trips will be used as a benchmark, but not as selection criteria.

**M. MacNab** asked about the timeline of the project and the possibility of a fare reduction for all THE RIDE customers. *Mr. Lambert* stated that the program will be rolled out as soon as possible, yet they expect to implement it in July. He stated that the pilot program will determine whether the MBTA should roll back the fare to \$2.00 for all customers; at the moment, there is not enough information to determine the effect of reducing the fare for all customers. He stated that it may make sense to roll back the ADA fare but still means test for the premium fare, which is not constrained at twice the fixed-route cost.

**Chairman White** asked if fuel savings could be used to subsidize the program. *Mr. Lambert* stated that THE RIDE budget is part of the MBTA budget, and that those savings go to the MBTA; he noted that fuel savings pay for the means testing program, so that outside money is not required. He noted that THE RIDE updates its GPS and scheduling software in order to optimize routes; all three vendors should be updated by the end January. The hybrid vehicles have increased their fuel efficiency.

**Chairman White** thanked Mr. Lambert for his presentation.

## MBTA Reports

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

*Rob Sampson* distributed his report and stated the following:

- The new Salem Intermodal Station is now open.
- Weekend service will be returning to the Fitchburg/South Acton commuter rail lines. South Acton Station will be fully accessible, as will Littleton Station.
- The MBTA's Internal Access Monitoring Program has switched from a paper-based format to a tablet-based format. It is currently being tested. This will allow for real-time data sharing. Reports will be generated using the tablet-based format in the first quarter of 2015.
- The Operations Control Center, which controls the MBTA Twitter page, has implemented a “#taccess” hashtag, allowing individuals to find accessibility-related news.
- Judge King presented his annual Boston Center for Independent Living Settlement Report.

He then asked for questions. There were none.

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



## ***Keolis Commuter Services (KCS)***

***Selena Walckner, EEO/Title VI Manager, KCS*** stated the following:

- Keolis is moving forward with ADA training.
- They have continued their partnership with SWA and are looking for future opportunities to increase information sharing.

She then asked for questions. There were none.

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

## ***MBTA Transit Police Department***

***Chief Kenneth Green*** stated the following:

- The motorcycle units of the Transit Police have been issuing tickets to bus stop parking violators. They have given out 117 tickets in the past three weeks.

He then asked for questions.

**Chairman White** asked if Chief Green would extend an invitation to the new permanent Chief to speak at an AACT meeting; *Chief Green* stated that he would.

**Chairman White** thanked Chief Green for his update.

## *MBTA Office for Transportation Access (OTA) -THE RIDE Program*

**Frank Oglesby, Deputy Director**, submitted the OTA report and had no further updates.

He then asked for questions. There were none.

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

## *National Express (NEXT)*

**Victor Herrera, General Manager**, distributed his report and announced passenger assistance training classes.

He stated the following:

- NEXT is continuing to make improvements to its service. There were 833 late trips in October, and 767 in November; there were 190 complaints in October, and 142 in November. NEXT is seeking to improve customer service.

He then asked for questions. There were none.

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

## *Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)*

**Jacquelyn Reynolds**, MBTA Contract Relationship Manager, distributed her report and had no further updates.

She asked for questions. There were none.

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

**John Tuttle** distributed his report and had no further updates.

He then asked for questions. There were none.

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

### ***Open Discussion and Announcements***

**D. Weathers** stated that single seats in the new THE RIDE vans are uncomfortable for persons with back issues. *Mr. Hulak* stated his office will check for possible adjustments. He suggested sitting in the bench seating. *Ms. Piccard* suggested using a portable, foldable seat cushion.

**M.A. Murray** stated that individuals have found it difficult to place their walkers in THE RIDE hybrid cars. *Mr. Hulak* stated that foldable walkers fit in the trunk, while larger walkers are difficult to fit. He noted that the scheduling software does not differentiate between walker types; they are currently working with the software company to classify them as different walker types. He stated that customers with larger walkers can call to inform the vendor, at which point the customers will be classified as van-only; *and* that the trunks in the hybrid cars can accommodate both a folding walker and reasonable amount of packages. She also noted that dispatchers continue to provide inaccurate information regarding pickups; and that customers are be given more courtesy. He agreed that customers should be

given honest estimates. *Ms. Reynolds* noted that a weather or traffic pattern may further delay the driver after information is provided.

**A. Manerson** stated that people have been classified as no-shows before their five minute grace period had expired. *Mr. Hulak* stated that if a THE RIDE customer witnesses this happening, they should inform OTA.

**Chairman White** read a letter from AACT to John Jenkins, Chairman, MassDOT Board of Directors, supporting the pilot program (see attached).

**Meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM.**