

Catherine Mick: Good afternoon. Thank you all for coming today. Before we start the meeting, we just wanted to lay out a little bit of introductory material. I'm Catherine Mick and I'm the Chief Administrative Officer for the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. I am here today representing Secretary JudyAnn Bigby, who is co-chairing this Committee with Secretary Richard Davey.

We are so pleased to see so many people who have taken the time out of your busy day and schedules to come today. I think it is because we all recognize how important these issues are to everyone. Certainly they are important to everyone's everyday lives. Before the meeting gets started, we would like to extend some opening remarks. I wanted to point out safety information that is specific to the space that we are in today.

Both of the exits in the back of the room lead to emergency exits that are about 30' along the respective sides of the building. Heather Hume has a mobile telephone and will call 911 in case of an emergency, and, if someone does have an emergency or is need of assistance at any time during this meeting, please raise your hand and someone will assist you. Restrooms are also located at the left of the rear door. There's a key pad that is much like a telephone key pad. The code to use is 16045. Someone at the sign-in desk will assist you if you need help with the keypad.

We wanted to let you know that we have CART services here today. Assistive listening devices are available should somebody wish to use one. Please raise your hand and one of our staff can assist you if you are in need of an assistive listening device. Also, should you require a Spanish language interpreter, we have somebody here today. Can you identify yourself?

Iris: Hello. I'm Iris. (Repeated in Spanish. Asked if anyone need Spanish language interpretation.)

Catherine Mick: Thank you so much. We also just wanted to point out a few housekeeping items. The Commission has established a website at www.mbta.com/execorder530. That address is located on the fliers at the sign-in desk. The reason we wanted to introduce the CART file for this meeting is that all of the CART materials, as well as other materials related to this Commission, will be posted on that website. We also have ASL interpreter services here today, if someone should desire or need them. Secondly, the Commission has an e-mail address to which you can send any additional comments or feedback. We understand that as time goes on you may have additional thoughts to offer or responses or reflections upon what you hear here today, so please feel free to send those via e-mail at execorder530@mbta.com. There's a phone also for comments only. That telephone number is (617) 222-6260. All of the information that I just recited to you is available on the fliers located at the sign-in desk.

Before we introduce the Commission members here today, I wanted to provide a brief introduction as to what the Commission's charge is. One of the reasons why we are asking for all of you to be here today and participate in this with us is that the Commission for the Reform of Community, Social Service and Paratransit Transportation was created by Governor Patrick through Executive Order 530. The purpose of the Commission is to conduct a comprehensive review of all paratransit and community transportation services in the Commonwealth; to gather the public's critical input regarding those services; and for us to provide detailed actionable recommendations to the Governor.

You, as stakeholders, are critical to this process. We've held four sessions already and we have two sessions that will follow – one in Pittsfield, as well as one in Boston. All of what you are saying here is being recorded and provided to Commission members for further reflection and dialogue. After we have completed these public sessions, we are meeting together as a Commission to talk about what we have heard; what the issues are; and to talk about what we might do in these very difficult times to try to address these problems in a sustainable manner.

I'm going to ask each of the Commission members to identify themselves and introduce themselves as well as describe what role they are serving on the Commission. Let's start on this end.

Clinton Bench: Good afternoon. My name is Clinton Bench. I'm the Deputy Director of Planning for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. I'm here to represent Secretary Richard Davey. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation is a multimode agency of transportation covering aeronautics, highway, transit and also the Registry of Motor Vehicles – and within the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, the regional transit authorities also provide local transit services in 15 different regions across the State.

Michael Lambert: My name is Michael Lambert. I am representing Jonathan Davis, the General Manager of the MBTA.

Mohammed Khan: My name is Mohammed Khan. I am the Administrator of the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority located in Fitchburg.

Denise Karuth: Hello. My name is Denise Karuth. I am one of the two consumer members of the Commission. I work as a consultant with the Stavros Center for Independent Living. In the 1980s I chaired a Governor's Commission on Transportation for both fixed route and paratransit, under Governor Michael Dukakis.

James Flanagan: Hi. I'm Jim Flanagan, Director of the Human Services Transportation Office. We manage a brokerage for human service agencies across the Commonwealth.

Thomas Cahir: My name is Tom Cahir. I'm the Administrator of the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority and previously worked at the Executive Office of Transportation (MassDOT) and was involved with transit and other transportation matters. Prior to that, I was a member of the State Legislature and Committee on Transportation for fourteen years. This has been an issue of interest to me throughout my career. In traveling around the state, this being the fourth of six listening sessions, we've received a lot of valuable input, and it will be helpful in making our recommendations. I want to ensure you that people who depend on these services will not be displaced, but rather that we will look at ways to create efficiencies. It is easy to say that, but there are always opportunities to create efficiencies without impacting services in a negative way. My colleagues up here are knowledgeable, and I look forward to your testimony today.

Will Rodman: Hi. I'm Will Rodman. I'm a principal of the Boston office of Nelson-Nygaard. I've been helping transit agencies and human service agencies here in the Commonwealth and across the country

with paratransit and human services transportation for 33 years. Thanks for coming today. We look forward to listening to your ideas in an effort to help shape our recommendations.

Jini Fairley: My name is Jini Fairley. I work at the MetroWest Center for Independent Living. I'm the other consumer on the Commission. I use the MBTA complementary paratransit (The RIDE) and the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority ADA service every day to get to and from my job. I'm looking forward to hearing from all of you.

Cheryl Lucier-Poppe: I'm Cheryl Poppe with the Massachusetts Department of Veterans Services. I'm here representing Secretary Coleman Nee, particularly as it relates to issues with regards to Veterans' transportation.

Judith O'Connor: Hi. I'm Judith O'Connor and I'm Executive Director of the Millbury Council on Aging. I run a paratransit and elderly service around the Worcester area. I'm very dedicated to adding more service. As all of you know, there is just not enough.

Catherine Mick: Thank you. I'd like to provide a little bit of an overview around how we are going to be structuring today's meeting. In order for everyone who wishes to speak to be able to do so, so that the session runs smoothly, I'm going to run through how we are structuring the meeting and the ground rules to proceed. There is a sign-in sheet located at the front of the room. We would ask that anyone wishing to speak please indicate so on the sign-in sheet. If anyone needs assistance, or has not yet signed in but would like to do so now, we would ask you to raise your hand and someone will help get the sign-in sheet to you.

The other thing is that we ask that only one person speaks at a time, and people wait to use the microphone, as we want to make sure that everyone in the room can hear one another and we certainly want to make sure that we have the capacity to capture what you saying – again, the information that is provided here today – your thoughts, your input and reflections will be used and reflected upon further by the Commission members going forward. It is very important for us to make sure not only that everyone has an opportunity to hear what everyone else is saying, but that we are able to record it in an accurate manner. We would ask that you identify yourself in advance of speaking so we can have that information for the CART file.

We ask that you limit your comments to a maximum of three minutes per comment. Commission staff will indicate when that time is up and will also sound a one-minute warning signal. We are really doing this in order to give everyone in the room an opportunity to speak. This session is scheduled until 5:00 PM. We can reopen the conversation once everyone has had a chance to speak. We want to make sure that everyone is given the opportunity to do so. We would also ask that folks try to keep their comments focused on the overarching goals of this Commission. Several of the other Commissioners are here today. We are looking at what we can do to use our resources more efficiently and effectively to meet our obligation and desire to provide quality services to all consumers of these transportation services.

We have framed this within three questions that you've seen on the invitation that was provided to all of you here today. We ask if you have any ideas regarding service improvements, please indicate what they might be. If you have any ideas regarding modification that could be made to maintain or enhance service delivery, please share those with us. We would ask that if you have particular ideas or suggestions for reforms or initiatives for improvement to paratransit services that will also enhance quality and customer service, that you describe those to us as you envision them. Finally, we would ask if there are any potential modifications to the eligibility processes and requirements that are utilized by The RIDE, regional transit authorities, or human service agencies, please describe those to us. They will be helpful to us with our intent and goal to present actionable recommendations to the Governor.

I will open the meeting by introducing our host and saying thank you very much for hosting us here today. It is greatly appreciated. Mary MacInnes . . .

Mary MacInnes: Thank you very much. I want to thank the Governor for forming this Commission. It is very much needed. I also want to welcome all of the members of the Commission to the Pioneer Valley. I've provided some background information for you. My original intent of doing that was in the interest of time – because I did not want to get the hook from Heather.

My perspective on the issues that we are discussing today might be somewhat different than what you may have heard from other Administrators in the past. The reason for that difference largely has to do with the amount of fixed-route service that PVTA provides, which is mentioned on the front part of the sheet you received. Also on the front of the sheet you will see demographic information for PVTA, while budgetary information is on the back of the sheet. All of these factors combined require me to tell the Commission, that simply put: Our existing service, starting next year, is unsustainable.

That is the case even though in '02 and '03, PVTA cut 21 percent of its service. Also in '07, I eliminated a similar percentage of administrative staff. Then, lastly, in '08, we increased fares and the staff is currently studying ways to raise fares again in '12. Even with all of those variables, we are still in a very difficult funding situation.

PVTA represents one third of all the RTA ridership combined. We believe that the Commission should focus primarily on its mission to determine how paratransit services can be provided more efficiently so that the service can be sustained. Some of the stops that PVTA has taken along the way: We are currently piloting an in-person application process. We also purchased four Transit Connect vehicles that are much less expensive and will also provide more fuel efficiency than a traditional van. The difference is that they are not handicapped accessible. But many of our riders are able to use a vehicle like this. That is resulting in a cost savings for us. We are currently embarking on a travel training program using New Freedom Program funds. We've scheduled trips for paratransit similar to fixed-route so we can get the largest number of riders going to the same destination on the same vehicle. It works in areas of high density populations. We offer this service at a reduced fare. It increases our rides per trip. As I said, the passengers can avail themselves of this at a reduced fare.

Future conversations for PVTA include reducing the 14-day advance reservation method in order to reduce the number of no-shows and cancellations; complying with the ¼ of a mile corridor, currently it

goes beyond ¾ of a mile; establishing flex-routes in our outlying areas; developing a mobility management program; investigating the possibility of reduced or no fare for fixed-route service for people who would normally be eligible for paratransit services. We are hoping to have a recommendation for the Commission to investigate the use of PVTA bus passes for HST customers for which we have one very good example of that currently in the Mass. Access to Recovery Program. Already, although that program is fairly new, we've provided 1,700 passes for customers. This is exactly the type of thing that we would hope to be able to expand upon. Also, we hope that the distance traveled for HST customers could be reduced. Therefore, a fixed-route opportunity in each of the regions would be possible rather than having a trip from Springfield to Boston, which is virtually impossible on public transportation. Lastly, the possibility of subsidizing taxis or providing accessible vehicles to taxi companies would be a recommendation given that PVTA has a good system of fixed routes. PVTA has 44 routes and the service area is very well covered by the 44 routes. The problem in terms of attracting seniors or people with disabilities to use the system is the frequency of service. Unlike the MBTA, we don't have 10- 15-minute frequencies. Ours can be anywhere from 30 minutes to 40 or 45 minutes. Any kind of assistance or help that could be provide for us to improve our fixed-route frequencies so they could be more easily accessible to paratransit riders would be greatly appreciated.

That about wraps up the comments I have. I tried to stay within the time limit.

Catherine Mick: Thank you so much. Thanks again for having us here today. So the first person who has signed-in and has requested to make a comment today is Martina Robinson.

Martina Robinson: I take the bus (paratransit) every day. I'm a freelance writer, and I have to get to where my assignment is. I don't have an office that I go to. Last year I spent \$2,000 on paratransit services alone. That's a great deal of my income. I don't think it is appropriate to ask anyone who relies on paratransit services to pay that much of their income. I'm hoping that the Commission will look into how to provide passes or more bus service so I can take it and not spend all of my money or give all of my money to PVTA.

It would be nice to come to Springfield on Sunday. I live in Belchertown. The train station is right over there. I can't get from there to my house on Sundays at all. It is not possible. That's an inconvenience for me, because if I have a conference or something that ends on Sunday afternoon, I cannot go home until Monday. I'm spending extra money on a hotel. That again is a problem.

I really like Mary's idea of having accessible taxis. I could sometimes pay for a taxi; that's possible. Because the bus from where I'm from ends at 10:00 PM, I am sometimes unable to go out on Saturday nights. I don't think people realize that we can only go out until 10:00 PM. That is something to consider. Thank you very much.

Catherine Mick: Thank you. Thanks for expressing those concerns. Denise Morin?

Denise Morin: Hi. I'm visually impaired and there's no way I could take a fixed-route bus. There are barriers to my doing so – one of them being that I can't cross a main street or traffic lights that don't have any way of letting me know that it is okay to cross. I've almost been hit by a car three times. So,

the paratransit is the only way I have to get around. If I didn't have it, I wouldn't be independent. I would have to rely on somebody. I just don't have that kind of help in my life. That's it.

Catherine Mick: Thank you. Ernest Morin?

Ernest Morin: Thank you. I was declared legally blind back in 1973, long before the advent of paratransit services. I found myself forced to use public transportation. When it came time to get a bus home, I had to make sure that I was at a bus stop where there were other people so that I could ask someone to please point out a bus to me so that I would be sure to get on the right bus. With the advent of paratransit service, my independence has increased immeasurably. I live alone, and I am able to go the Veterans Hospital where I get service on a regular basis. It is just really a godsend and I would hate to see any changes made.

The only thing that I would ask is that the curb-to-curb service be changed to portal-to-portal. Often when you get off the paratransit there are curbs, there are stairs, there are barriers in your way that can require extra service, so I would urge the Commission to go from curb-to-curb service to portal-to-portal.

Again, I avail myself of Veterans' services and they have an outpatient clinic there, but not all services are available there. So I have to travel to Leeds for activities like the Blinded Veterans Support Group. We are deeply concerned about the paratransit system. Thank you.

Catherine Mick: Thank you. Richard Amuseau?

Richard Amuseau: I'm a consumer who has used paratransit for many years. I have seen companies come and go. One of the things that I think might help the situation would be to provide training for people who then might be able to take the regular fixed-route bus because I think the more people that are able to ride the fixed-route bus might make a difference in terms of scheduling or increasing the frequency of the buses running. I have a hard time thinking of having the service for free because we are paying money now to get the paratransit service, so that one might be useful for the fixed-route bus and help. I know that in the Northampton area buses are being equipped with internal voices that tell people what the next stop is and the people boarding the bus would be aware of what the bus number is, so they can get the right bus. I think also that the shared-ride program should be expanded. I know it is getting better, but it has a long way to go. I think also that training for people who ride the paratransit service might be productive in terms of taking away the scariness of riding the fixed-route bus with the new buses that have been purchased and are a whole lot easier to get on. One of the reasons people don't use it is that it might be scary for them to make that transition. When I was working, one of the things that I did was I tried to train clients on how to use the regular buses and pretty much every time I did that, people were pretty successful.

Catherine Mick: Thank you very much. I noticed that a few people have come into the room since we started. I wanted to let the folks know if you have not signed in yet would like to speak here today, please do so or raise your hand and somebody can come by and bring you a sign-in sheet to make sure

that we are tracking all comments. If you need assistive listening devices or if you need to sign-in, you can do so at the front desk. Thank you. Sal Picard?

Sal Picard: Hello. My name is Sal Picard. I think he pretty much said it all. There's only one other thing that I would like to add. We live in the Blue Bird Estates in East Longmeadow. It is independent living. A lot of buses come there to pick people up. Most pick up a single rider. They have a beautiful bus with one person on it and then another bus will come along and pick up another single rider. Why can't you incorporate some of these rides and have several people on one bus? I think it would save gas and save people a lot of time. Thank you.

Catherine Mick: Carol Wilson?

Carol Wilson: I'm from the Commission for the Blind. I work with client on training them how get around independently with their canes and guide dogs. Unfortunately, there's only one person covering all of Western Massachusetts. So we are not available for training, and having more frequency in some of our areas especially out in the more rural areas of western Massachusetts would be beneficial. Having the drivers announce the stops and major transfer points would be invaluable to my clients. As far as the paratransit, there's a whole laundry list, but the priority is one of eligibility. Vision cannot be the only disability. I think that there needs to be an understanding of how different peoples' visual impairments are affected by lighting or glare; how a person can function fairly well during the day but at night has no vision at all. Looking at eligibility, you have to understand specifics.

I also heard somebody talking about starting the travel training program. I just wanted to really express my concern that travel training is not orientation mobility. That's a specialized training for the blind and visually-impaired. I think it would be very important for you to work with a Certified Mobility Orientation Specialist.

I think that a lot of my clients would love to stop using paratransit. They want the independence and freedom. Some clients out in South Hadley have access to a bus line four times a day. They may get to a destination, but cannot coordinate the trip to get back home. Having frequency on those regular fixed routes could really help.

Catherine Mick: Thank you. Sandra Burgess?

Sandra Burgess: First I want to say, although it needs improvement, I'm grateful for the service we have through PVTA. I'm a blind person. Now that I'm growing older, I guess I have become disabled in other ways. I have poor balance. I now walk with a dog on one side and a support cane in the other hand. I have a hearing loss, which has been progressively getting worse since I have been in my 30s. Mostly with the hearing loss and mobility impairment, it makes it hard to do all of the traveling I used to do on a city fixed-route bus. I may be able to get off a bus on State Street, but I do not have the facility to easily and safely figure out what the traffic is doing. I cannot tell where sound is coming from. I mostly hear out of one ear. I'm grateful for the service. I do not want to use up all of my time on that.

Getting on to something else, there is a problem, especially of late, with the blindness community that's occurred with myself and other people not being aware whether or not paratransit has arrived. Sometimes they take off and I, myself, have called and said "Where is my ride?" and they say "Oh, they were there; they waited ten minutes for you and left." And I don't know that. I'm not able to see when a bus comes up. I don't hear well enough either. Sometimes I might hear a beep, beep, beep which could be my van backing up, a delivery truck, or whatever. For that fact, I think that if the rules are supposed to be door-to-door, somebody ought to come close to the door and have the courtesy and time to do that and say "Look I'm here from PVRTA, etc."

The only other thing I would like, and I don't know how we would do it, because we always have funding problems . . . I live in Springfield and live close to a very nice route that has 20 minute frequency. The service does not extend until the evening. It is hard to go out anywhere in the evening to go to a concert or something and have the ability to get home. You can get there, but you cannot get home if you don't want to spend \$20 or \$30 for a cab fare. The whole thing is a pain in the neck, and you cannot get out unless you are blessed to have sighted people who want to go where you want to go and want to drive a distance. That's all I have to add to this. Thank you so much.

Catherine Mick: Thank you. We continue to hear those challenges from many people around the hours of operation and the limitation that poses. It is certainly something that folks are interested in looking into further and pursuing through this Commission. Thank you for those insights. Debbie LaRoche?

Debbie LaRoche: I'm Debbie LaRoche. I want you to know that a lot of times when the van comes, the driver does not ring the doorbell, so I don't really know when it is there. The windows are so tiny you can't really see. So, I would like every driver to ring my doorbell, if that's okay with you. I don't mean just some drivers. I mean every driver. I want people to understand the importance of what I am telling you. Do not suspend me for 30 days because you have no reason to. Thank you very much.

Catherine Mick: Thank you. Charles Sterns?

Charles Sterns: My name is Chuck Sterns. I also live in Blue Bird Estates. I have noticed that there are never more than four people in any paratransit van that I am on. Typically there are only one or two people on board. Sometimes when I leave my house in the morning I see a van pull up and approach that van. The driver tells me that he is not there for me, and then a second van pulls up. There seems to be a lack of efficiency in having two vans pick up one person each. Thank you. I will send further comments by e-mail.

Catherine Mick: Thank you. Janice Frost?

Janice Frost: I'm Janice Frost and I live at Georgetown. I formerly lived in Enfield, Connecticut for 43 years. They had very little transportation. My husband is older than I am, so I always knew that the likelihood of my having to take care of myself was pretty high. This summer that happened. We had moved to Georgetown and I knew that there would be a day when I would have to do all of my own stuff by myself. That has been what paratransit has helped me do this year.

Sandy (Burgess) and I went shopping yesterday at Wal-Mart. We went in two separate vans. That was not necessary. It could be much, much more efficient if two of us went on the same van. We came home on the same van coincidentally. We had to nearly pass her house to get to my house, so that made sense to take her. I think it would be good to have smaller units, not the big long vans. I think that would probably be much more efficient. I think the service is wonderful, I do appreciate it.

I did move to Springfield to have the privilege of being able to use PVTA and/or the paratransit. I use them for daily living. I have to go buy groceries and Sandy does that as well. We have been picked up or trying to be picked up by a driver who will not get off the van to let us know that the van is there. Somehow they need to be taught that if you are blind, you cannot look out the window and see where they are. If it gets cold, we can't just go out there and sit; we are getting old. I'm 75 and I do mind the cold or the heat much, much more. I appreciate the service. I would like to see it be more efficient and I would like to have PVTA let us know when these kinds of meetings are being held. Sandy got the information through an e-mail from Boston. We got nothing from PVTA to tell us that this was going to happen here today. I don't know how everybody else heard about it, but there's been a law in place since 1973 that says that we should be able to have information given to us in an accessible format. Thank you very much.

Catherine Mick: Thank you. Donna Lieber?

Donna Lieber: I'm here from the Franklin County Home Care Corporation Area Agency on Aging. We serve the most rural area in the county. Many of our towns have maybe one run a day – or none at all. That's an issue. But, I've been working with the Transportation Advisory Committee for FRTA, our transit authority. Since they only go curb-to-curb, we have a number of clients through the area who are not able to get to the curb and therefore cannot use the service.

FRTA says that they cannot have the bus driver leave the bus to go and assist the client. What we would really like to have is a volunteer or a group of volunteers who would be willing to ride the buses to assist passengers who are unable to get from their homes to the curb or from the curb to their homes. That would help people access the system who are currently unable to do so. Thank you.

Catherine Mick: Thank you. Bill Korzenowski?

Bill Korzenowski: Hi. I'm Bill. I'm the Director of Belchertown Council on Aging. I used to be on the Shelburne Council on Aging. During that time, many frustrations came up with the transportation offered by the Franklin Regional Transit Authority. We had vans that provided local transportation. Occasionally we would transport people to the Greenfield medical center. Occasionally, we would bring a patient to dialysis, when they were done, I would be back in Shelburne and I would not be able to bring that person back. Maybe the initials have changed, but it would be like a DMR van would be coming up from Greenfield with one person on that van. My frustration was that that vehicle was unable to transport my customer. When I asked why, I was told that there was no way to bill the trip. I was told that a Commission like yourselves was going to straighten out all of those pieces. They need to be straightened out because there's a lot of transportation available and it needs to be coordinated.

The Belchertown Council on Aging provides transportation. We have a van through MassDOT's Mobility Assistance Program. I want to thank you for that. It is a great program. We are able to use our van and drivers to provide the door-to-door service that seniors need. Unfortunately we do not provide services for those under 60. Our mandate is 60 and over. That 60 and above service, they really do need door-to-door type service. We are lucky enough that we are able to provide the operating costs for the driver and maintenance. There are a lot of towns that would like to be able to access a van and they don't have funding. It would be great if the Mobility Assistance Program could fund some of the operating costs.

We also found that many of our seniors were not going to the doctor. We are in a very rural area. They could go to a local doctor or be referred out to a medical facility in Northampton or Bay State in Springfield. The PVTA does an excellent job, but if you have an appointment and the doctor is running behind, it can be complicated to meet the schedule. People were not using the program. We started a program with retirees. We provided an hourly wage and mileage reimbursement. It is partially funded through a grant. We would like to identify other grant money to expand the program to include individuals with disabilities.

Again, thank you for your efforts. There are a lot of people out there waiting to see what comes of this. We hope that soon there's a better coordinated system. Thank you.

Catherine Mick: Thank you. Frank Sciple?

Frank Sciple: I'm on the Disability Commission in Chicopee. Unfortunately, one of my clients was supposed to be here and did not make it. He uses the fixed route buses. We have approached him regarding joining the Disability Commission. Unfortunately, our meetings normally end after the final bus. To get from where we hold our meeting, in the public library, to his home in Willimantic requires two transfers. Even if we extended the hours, I don't think a standard full bus would be required. One of the small buses possibly could be running that route. With a survey, we might determine that a bus is not needed every day of the week.

The problem in some cases, and in particular in his case, is that he's not eligible for paratransit. He uses the fixed-route system. I've seen him just about plow the road with his electric chair to get to the fixed-route bus stop. His doctor did not want to forward information of a personal nature to enable him to become eligible for paratransit. The doctor's reasons for not doing so included confidentiality of patient information. Hopefully, having face-to-face interviews for paratransit will help as long as additional information that extends into his medical privacy is not taken into account.

So just extending the hours, making shorter runs with smaller buses would be greatly appreciated for the situation that I described.

Catherine Mick: Thank you. Carolyn Brennan?

Carolyn Brennan: Thank you. Actually everything I wanted to say has been said. I'm from East Longmeadow and I'm from the Council on Aging. Bill (Korzenowski) echoed everything I would have said, including not just supporting the purchase of the van, but providing operating costs as well.

The involvement of the Council on Aging in the delivery of services ensures that the local participation is considered.

Catherine Mick: Thank you. Susan Mackalin?

Susan Mackalin: Hi. How are you? I just wanted to bring up that when I get off the bus, I have to wait a long time for the cars to stop. I was just wondering if you could put a stop crosswalk on Main Street so I don't have to wait so long for the cars to stop. When the cars stop, I still look before I walk.

Attendee: What town is that?

Susan Mackalin: West Springfield on Main Street.

Clinton Bench: I would also like to ask, so we can keep it for the record, where on Main Street in West Springfield?

Susan Mackalin: The apartments are across the street from the Police Station. I was wondering if there were a crosswalk with a pedestrian light if I could cross more easily.

Clinton Bench: We'll make sure that we check into that for you. Thanks.

Catherine Mick: Carol Miszaskic?

Carol Miszaskic: I work for New England Business Associates. We work with individuals who are able to work. We help them get jobs. One of the obstacles that we face is the availability of transportation in certain towns such as Hampden and Southwick. We have a gentleman who has graduated from school. He has not been out of Hampden or out of his house. He has no way of getting to a doctor because he uses an electric wheelchair. The other issue is that some of our folks have to call in their schedules every week. They are going to the same place every time of the week, but they cannot get a standing order. The response that I received was that they should be treated like everyone else and that people have transportation available to them on schedules. That's true, however, the PVRTA does not operate at 7:30 in the morning in our area. A lot of people have to be to work by 8:00 AM. We have people getting to work late, and in some cases it has cost them their jobs. I guess I just want to say that I don't understand why we can have subscription service for those people going to work. Why should they have to call in every week and set up a schedule and then be placed on standby and not even know if they are really going to have transportation? Thank you very much.

Catherine Mick. Thank you. The woman down here in pink. I don't have your name on the sign-in sheet. If you could just identify yourself . . .

Ramona Wilson: I am Ramona Wilson. I take paratransit. Sometimes they come early for me. Sometimes I see them in front of my house. Sometimes I rush downstairs to get on the van. And one

time, the van waited for five minutes and left without me. I had to call them back to come and pick me up. That was not right. That's not fair. So I had to call them on my phone and tell them to come back and pick me up. So the driver waited five minutes and took off. When I came down the stairs, he left. That's not right. They are supposed to wait for me to come out the door because I live on the third floor, the same apartment where she lives. That's not fair. So that's all I have to say.

Catherine Mick: Sorry that you had difficulty with that.

Ramona Wilson: Yeah, not too good.

Catherine Mick: Well, I just wanted to say that there are many more people, who when they signed in indicated that they did not want to speak. However, I've run the list here for those who indicated they wanted to speak. First of all I wanted to open the floor for Commission members who have additional follow-up questions or need clarifications to the comments that have been made. Also, I'd like to open the floor for those who have not presented and would like to say something here today.

Bob Cooper: My name is Bob Cooper. I'm from the Committee on Disabilities here in the City of Springfield. I have a couple of quick comments. There was a lady down the end, I can see her from where I'm sitting here, who made a comment earlier. The State of Massachusetts, and every other State in the United States has what is called a White Cane Law. When you stand on a curb and you have a white cane or a dog in a harness, that's an instant crosswalk and all cars in both directions are supposed to stop. Last year we did a TV spot about this issue with Channel 40. Do you know how many people don't know the law exists? That's a problem. I think there's something that could be done.

My wife is also blind and travels with a dog. She uses the PVTA van and fixed-route bus service often. She has encountered the same problem with a van parked outside and she not being able to see it. On more than one occasion, she was actually left standing outside on her cellphone and called PVTA and wanted to know where her van was. PVTA contacted the van driver and the van driver called back and said "I'm waiting, but I see a lady outside waiting with a dog." I would think that maybe an exception can be made for the blind and a phone call could be made to signal that the Paratransit vehicle is there or will be there within five minutes.

As far as street lights, crosswalks, etc. we are trying to get all of the crosswalks equipped with buzzers, but it costs money. That's what we always run up against – the money part of it. My wife is almost as old as I am . . . I won't say anything more. She's been blind since birth. She gets on a bus and asks the bus driver where he's going. He will tell her. When she gets on the bus she says, "Can you tell me when we get to _____?" They always have.

It may be just a simple matter of opening one's mouth a little more. Some people just have a need to know where they are at any given time. My wife has had reasonably good service with PVTA. It is also getting used to the system and you must know how the system works. For the people from Blue Bird Acres, if you are seeing multiple vans arrive to take individuals to various locations perhaps the residents

could get together and call the RTA to suggest better grouping of trips for more cost effective shared rides. That's it.

Catherine Mick: Thanks so much .The gentleman in the brown shirt.

Paul Nandole: My name is Paul Nandole. I work for the vocational agency that helps adults with disabilities find work. I think the comments that were made a little bit earlier about hours of availability are pretty critical when you are talking about jobs for people, especially in rural areas where service is limited at best. Oftentimes they don't even have weekend availability and for people who already have less consideration for job opportunities, it is a detriment that they are not at all available on weekends and early mornings. I realize it is always a question of costs versus needs, but if people can't access jobs when the employers want them to be there, they are not going to be considered. It is already a struggle to get them to be considered in the first place. I really think that that needs to be addressed, especially in the more rural areas where fixed route service, which is how a complementary paratransit service will be available, is so limited to begin with. It does not really exist for them when they need it. Thank you.

Catherine Mick: Thank you.

Attendee: Excuse me. I just want to know if this meeting was advertised in the local press or on television. I heard about it from my son who lives in the Boston area.

Catherine Mick: No. It was not advertised on the local television. It was distributed through many different mechanisms, one through the PVTA vehicles as well as through other agencies.

Attendee: I just want to say also overall that the PVTA service has been a godsend, for that I'm very happy and thankful.

I have a question. PVTA just sent a whole lot of money on new vans. If they are having such a problem, how can they put all of this money into the buses and not for the consumer to make sure that the consumers have their rides.

Clinton Bench: I can try and answer in general. Administrator MacInnes is here as well and she may have something more to add. Fortunately or unfortunately transportation funds our often broken out into capital funds and then operating funds. The Federal Transit Administration as well as our state government provides a certain formula allotment for replacement vehicles Those monies in general can only be used on capital purchases. So, in some cases, the money that is available through the certain pot of money, if you will, can be used to purchase a new van or bus, but it is not necessarily available to be used for operations, so that's part of the challenge that we often have with all of our Regional Transit Authorities. I suspect that is part of the reason here as well. Administrator, do you have anything else to add?

Mary MacInnes: I just wanted to add one thing – the vehicles the lady is referring to happen to be MAP vehicles provided to us by the State at no cost for which we are very appreciative. We received 20 vans from the State. Obviously you need to have vans in a state of good repair in order to operate on a reliable basis. So we appreciate the vans.

Rick Morin: This is Rick Morin. I happen to be the son of the gentleman who talked about people from Boston. First off, I would like to comment that I think this is a great meeting. I think that the comments have been spectacular and I thank people for that. There's been great input. Secondly, just a couple of things that strike me in terms of what I keep hearing over and over. In terms of paratransit, if I understand the laws correctly, the accessibility function requires a clear path of travel – the entire path of travel from the time the person leaves the residence until the time that they arrive at their final destination. By definition, that is not curb-to-curb. There are many, many people who have difficulty getting from their door to the curb and that would be considered a barrier.

There are three very straightforward concepts in terms of determining paratransit eligibility. That simply is: People are eligible to use paratransit if there are barriers that prevent someone from riding the fixed route system independently. I heard the gentleman who talked about his wife riding the fixed route very successfully. I totally concur, but there's also a danger in painting with a broad brush. We have to be careful. Everybody's situation is different. Regarding people with visual impairments, the people who are most able to determine their mobility are certified mobility trainers. I highly advise the Commission to make sure that you don't lose focus of that fact. Again, the meeting has been very, very good. I appreciate it. I'm happy to be here and thank you very much.

Catherine Mick: Thank you.

Ramona Wilson: I was going to ask one of you guys, what can I do about that problem? If they keep waiting for five minutes then take off, what should I do about that problem?

PVTA: What you need to do is contact PVTA directly. We have an automatic complaint database and it will be resolved.

Ramona Wilson: I take the paratransit van, not the big bus.

PVTA: It is still called PVTA. Maybe I can talk to you afterwards.

Ramona Wilson: Yes, because I live way up on the third floor and I have to come all the way down. When I come down they take off. That's not good. I hate it.

PVTA: I'll give you the number.

Catherine Mick: The two of you can connect. Okay, over to the back row.

Attendee: I want to say something and that is we are paying too much for the van. We should be having it for free because we are disabled, and I think that has a lot to do with it.

Attendee: You can't run the vans on no money.

Catherine Mick: I wanted to just open up a moment to the Commission members here to ask if folks – I see a couple of hands up for clarifying comments and questions. Just identify yourselves.

Thomas Cahir: I'm Tom Cahir the Administrator of the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority. As Katie indicated at the outset, our charge is to make recommendations. I have attended several of these meetings and have heard a recurring theme from folks like Sal and the gentleman from Belchertown. Two people on a van going at the same time. I don't think the answer that Bill gave, they don't know who to bill, is adequate. They need to look at all of the transportation services available, and now with the new software that is available we are doing that on the Cape, we are creating efficiencies so we can get more people on vans and share rides. It is something that my colleague, Mo Khan, has talked about for a long time. It is to build in cost savings and be able to spend money on other things. It is an issue that is important to me and I want to thank all of you for providing information.

Will Rodman: I have questions for Carolyn, Richard, and some for Mary as well. Carolyn Brennan, just a clarifying question. Were you advocating for smaller buses in terms of it being a more affordable operating cost? Is that what you were saying? Did I get that wrong?

Carolyn Brennan: Actually, I meant that they were more efficient. As far as Councils on Aging – if you went back to 89 and 90, when I worked in a small community in Hampden County, we had our own vans and we received a subsidy from PVRTA. We typically had one or two people on a van going through East Longmeadow, meanwhile denying ADA paratransit trips because of a lack of capacity.

As a result of this inconsistency in service, there was a small regionalization that occurred just within the Councils on Aging. We could share four vans so that we would not have one person on a van. This was before we had scheduling software.

My concern with technology is that technology is not as smart as the human brain. Technology cannot tell you how long it takes to put a wheelchair onto a van going up a driveway in a rural community. We were able to schedule all trips through a single dispatcher. You simply called the dispatcher who would schedule your trip on the spot. We cannot do it without RTAs or the paratransit system. I think it is a very good, but at the local level, a community like Ludlow that has an additional van that they run themselves which can do some of the smaller pick-ups around town really cuts out the need for much more expensive service.

Will Rodman: Thanks. Okay, Richard – one of your comments was that you would like to see paratransit service expanded. Did you mean into new areas or new times and days or both?

Attendee: Probably both.

Will Rodman: What is the greater area of need?

Attendee: The vans being able to reach more people. Just a quick example – years ago there used to be a fixed route service that went through Southwick. It was approximately two buses a day. As more and more people were driving their own cars everywhere, the need for the fixed route diminished. Once that happened, the fixed route was stopped and the paratransit, which was just a complement to it, ended as well.

There was a program that was established to transport individuals transitioning from public assistance to employment or employment-related activities. Many of the transit authorities expanded fixed-route services to meet the demand. Some used a flexible fixed-route system which could deviate to nearby locations on request. Once it was determined that the ridership on the fixed-route system could not support its operation, the routes were dropped. That's the thing. I want to say if you are putting people to work, you are also generating more dollars in taxes which hopefully partly could go towards continual improvement of the overall transit service.

Will Rodman: Thank you very much. My last question is for Mary MacInnes. These are the three things you said which I have questions about: the first was your mobility management program. It means a lot of different things to different people. Could you give some details about that. The second is that the bus route that you implemented that I think you said was based on the concentration of paratransit users; and third you mentioned a need to reduce distance traveled by HST clients. Could you elaborate on those three things.

Mary MacInnes: Sure. On your first question, when I mentioned a mobility management program, that was something for the future. So we have not started on that yet. Basically, the way that would work is that we would have the ability to be aware of all of the different kinds of transportation services that are available in the region and try to maybe merge the resources to more effectively provide the service. That's something that we hope to start work on next year.

In regards to your next question on the paratransit service, the way that works is that it is not a fixed route but rather an additional paratransit vehicle. It would depart at a particular time on a schedule like a fixed route going to a particular destination, not anywhere at all – like a medical trip for example – from somewhere in Springfield to the hospital. Paratransit riders would use that service. It operates like a fixed route, but with a paratransit accessible vehicle and at a reduced fare. It acts like a combo.

In regards to your last question regarding reduced distance traveled by HST clients, it is my understanding that there are trips that HST might book that are very, very long distance. For example, this is just hypothetical, there might be a trip from Springfield to Boston. There's no way that a regional transit authority could satisfy that trip. The customer would have to take the bus from Springfield to a bordering community with the WRTA service (with at least two non-member towns between) and then use the WRTA to the next border, etc. If they can make shorter trips for the same type of trip purpose, then the individual Rats could satisfy that need on fixed route service.

Will Rodman: Excellent.

Cheryl Poppe: Thank you for your service to our country. I extend that out to every Veteran in the room. I'm pleased to know that PVTA is providing transportation to Leeds. I'm glad to know that. I wanted to take an opportunity to remind everyone that in your cities and towns everyone has a Veterans Officer who can try to assist you with any Veteran's needs that you have. In terms of transportation, if you can just let your Veterans Services Officer know, they can try to work with this issue. Since there are so many here who represent employment agencies and those helping people to find employment, please be aware that there's a Job Creation Commission hearing that's going to take

place tomorrow at the Holyoke Transportation Center at 11:00 AM. The address is 206 Maple Street in Holyoke. I will bring along your concerns about the transportation issues discussed today to that Commission as well.

Judith O'Connor: I'm very happy that you all came. I have found these forums extremely eye-opening because I'm from a little town, but I do an awful lot. I'm proud of Councils on Aging. We are truly the best buy in town. We utilize a lot of volunteers. I have a question to the gentleman who said that you only provide rides to individuals who are 60 and older because that's mandated. I provide rides to anybody who wants a ride. I don't care how old they are as long as they are traveling during the times that I do service. I do this so that I don't have one or two people on that van. I'll have five or six people.

At our last session, the parents of a young man came to discuss their son's issue with transportation. He lived in an area that was 1/8th of a mile from the 3/4 mile corridor served by an ADA service. He could not get a ride to work. He was two houses over from the border of my town. Two houses! I said that I could transport him. The mother was astonished. I said that I had no problem going into Auburn to pick him up. I'm no hero, I'm just putting one more person on my bus and that's what makes my service cost effective. If more Councils on Aging would do that, It would make us all more cost effective.

If someone is 58 and has a broken leg and needs a ride, I just think that more people on the van will help all of us. I'm all for more money. If we are not going to get any more operations funding, let's just stuff as many people as we can onto our vehicles.

Bill Korzenowski: I'm Bill from the Belchertown Council on Aging. My van is always full. Most of my service is in town. For my out-of-town service, part of the funding is from the Older Americans Act, which says that it is for individuals 60 and above. I cannot use those funds without violating the regulations.

Will Rodman: Yes you can. This is what the Federal folks are telling us. Here is what they are saying. AS long as you meet the needs of the principal constituents, in your case the seniors, if you have extra space, you can use it for other folks. That's what they said. So there's a huge misconception that you have to use a van you get with Older Americans funds just for senior citizens. It is not true.

Denise Karuth: Thanks. Thank you all. I really appreciate your comments. You've said a lot today. You've given us a lot to work with. I appreciate that very much. I have a few comments partially as someone who lives in the area and uses PVRTA services and also some questions to follow up on things that you've said. In terms of scheduling, I recently wanted to go to a funeral that was in the Town of Southampton. I live in Northampton. This is one of the curiosities about this service. I could have gotten a ride to Westfield, which would have to go through Southampton, right by the church where the funeral was being held. But because Southampton does not have services, I could not be dropped off or picked up at the church. It is one of the peculiarities of this area. Even though the van was going back and forth through the community, the van could not stop there.

I did not hear anyone talk today about computer scheduling issues. I was wondering if folks have run into them. I suspect you have. I know that I could often drive my wheelchair at 6 miles per hour to

downtown Northampton, from my home four miles away, faster than the van can usually take me because it seems like that is the way the computer system works. If you ask for a ride, it has been getting better over time, you tell that service that you need to be some place at 4:00 PM. The van will not pick you up later than 3:00 PM, even if it is just a short ride. We are not talking about going through congested streets like Downtown Boston where a four-mile drive takes a long time. There's a lot of places they might want to stop along the way in a four-mile stretch of Boston. For a long time, if I asked for a ride to Springfield from my home, it was not unusual for me to get a pick up time of at least two hours prior to my requested arrival time. The only way to get around that scheduling glitch was to negotiate the pick up time with the scheduler. I'd call and say that I wanted a 3:15 PM pick-up. I would be told that there was nothing available until 4:30 PM. I'd then ask for a 3:00 PM pick-up. Again, I'd be offered 4:30 PM. I'd ask for a 2:45 pick-up and be told that the pick-up time would be 3:15 PM, the exact time I wanted. That happened more often than it should have. I don't think it's Pita's fault. I think that the computerized schedule systems that are in place could stand some improvement. Again, they implemented the system a couple of years ago and it is a little bit better than it was. Maybe it is getting better over time.

I would love to hear what people have to say, because it has been tried out here, about in-person eligibility assessments. Before I open the floor in general to that, I would love to know, for anybody who could answer how the eligibility determinations are made for three groups of people: people with epilepsy whose seizures are not controlled by medications; persons with mental health disabilities; and people who are blind or vision impaired. The first two are because I've known of people in the PVTA area with uncontrolled epilepsy who have been denied in the past before in-person eligibility came into being and the second is because we've heard people at other places we've stopped express serious concerns about in-person eligibility and persons with mental health disabilities. The third is so many people here today have made comments about people who are blind or visually impaired. I could not tell if it was blind and visually impaired or just visually impaired being denied service.

Iris (PVTA): Thank you. When an application comes in, it is basically processed on functional assessment. Everything in the application is taken into account, whether it is epilepsy or a visual impairment. Whatever the application is, it is never denied on the disability, if it is denied at all.

Denise Karuth: The problem is that I know people with epilepsy. They are asked questions like: "Can you hear sounds? Can you climb stairs? Can you navigate a bus route?" All of those questions, physically they are able to do those things, except they have seizures. I know one person who has had two grand mal seizures on buses and has been denied ADA eligibility. That's the concern. In an application that is based on the physical ability to do things, see and hear and walk, the needs of a person with seizure disorder or a mental health disability might not be recognized. That's one concern. I'm glad the discussion happened about senior vans for people with disabilities. I'm pleased that that can be done, even with that particular program. I know that it is being done in other places. I'm glad folks here can begin to consider it.

How is in-person eligibility going for people here? Has anyone had experience with the in-person eligibility assessment? Any of the folks that use the ADA service? No hands?

Iris (PVTA): I just wanted to say that we have an appeals process. Anybody denied service is offered an opportunity to appeal the decision. We have four members on our Appeals Board. They do not work for PVTA, but they are very knowledgeable in their jobs and also about the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Denise Karuth: My friend was denied service through an appeals process. It is an issue that not only the PVTA but at other transit authorities throughout the state. I want to respond to comments, particularly to people who are blind about not knowing when the vehicle comes. I think the service is supposed to somehow let you know they are there – by coming to the door or looking for you. So that should be happening. It is not something that you should have to ask for. It should be happening already. Hopefully we can make sure it happens more consistently. I thought the idea of living in a particular place and pooling on your own, if you could say let's go to the store on the same day or same time or to a particular place, perhaps that would make it easier for the transit authority to schedule you jointly. That would be good. I know it does not always happen because I've seen that in the Boston area where it does not always work. It could not hurt.

I have a question for the Commission in general, the question about making traffic signals accessible to people with visual impairments so there's an auditory component. I'm wondering if you know if signals can be retrofit. If there's anybody who can make an existing signal work.

Catherine Mick: That's something we can bring up at our working session next week.

Denise Karuth: There's a vehicle out there called the MV-1. For people's reference, it is a purpose-built vehicle that uses universal design. That vehicle might be useful for taxi services or other kinds of services. It might be something that the transit authorities could even use to replace some of their larger vans so I know that like PVTA said you just want inaccessible vans to be used by ambulatory folks. Maybe that vehicle could be one that could be considered in that kind of an application as well. You could have the flexibility of taking somebody in a wheelchair without using a huge van.

Catherine Mick: I know that some folks are leaving. I want to acknowledge that. I think there are still some comments from the audience members here that we want to make sure that we capture as well as Jini had a comment to clarify an issue. Then we can resume. Jini?

Jini Fairley: I guess there were three concerns that jumped out at me. They were connected to Carol from MTB, the MOB specialist. What RTA were you referring to Carol?

Carol Miszaskic: I work with two – Pioneer Valley and Berkshire Regional.

Jini Fairley: We have a few people from Franklin RTA as well. I'm very disturbed. We'll look into this -- people with legal blindness needing another disability to be eligible for the ADA service. The main barrier for people who are legally blind is signage, reading signs and reading information. For instance, I don't know what got handed out today. I could not read it. There has to be some awareness throughout the RTAs – all 16 of them – that's the main barrier for someone who is legally blind and cannot usually use the fixed route system, maybe one that they've memorized, but they can't generally

use the fixed route. Paratransit eligibility is not even conditional. It is usually unconditional not trip by trip. The second one was subscription service. Someone said that there is someone here representing vocational services for people with disabilities. I will definitely look into this. I don't remember the gentleman who talked about it, but being on a will-call when you have to get to a job – that's just the scariest thing in the world.

Carol Miszaskic: That was me, Carol from New England Business.

Jini Fairley: Okay. I occasionally have to change my paratransit trip and they will say okay will you be a will-call. And I think, "I'll never get to work today." I know that scary feeling. I will look into this. I do believe it can be available to people who take the same trip, the same time at least three times a week. Maybe that can be looked at throughout all of the RTAs. The third thing was the person not being able to get downstairs fast enough for the five minute window that we all have to get to paratransit services. I can barely make out a RIDE vehicle in front of my house. I go usually by either they rang the doorbell or I know it is my time and I go out. If they are not there, I'm not standing out there in the cold. I hear you, I live this every single day and we'll look into these three issues that you spoke to me about today.

Catherine Mick: Thank you Jini.

Frank Sciple: I know someone mentioned about being notified about this meeting. I believe Mary said notices were on the buses. Of course that was also one of the problems – it was printed. We have multiple regiments of either Braille or large type. The other was the notification.

I received this through the group I belong to which is the Disability Accessibility Network. It was sent to me from someone that had received it. It was Friday that I found about this meeting. Now, the Massachusetts Office on Disability does have a list of all of the Commissions on file. They have e-mail addresses. This may be another venue of notification that the state could use to notify these people. I mean I could send at least six other people this information if it were given to me early enough. Just that early notification type of method would be greatly appreciated.

Catherine Mick: Absolutely. It is surprising to hear that actually because we had been putting this out there via multiple channels over a month at this point. That's really disappointing and surprising to hear. Thank you for bringing it to my attention. I'm not sure what happened.

Mary MacInnes: I want to mention that Frank, you are being modest, because he is also the Disability Representative on the PVTA Advisory Board. We recently held the annual meeting of the Disability Advisory Board. Frank I did mention this just to let you know that we did notify you of the meeting. I just wanted to go on record since he is on the Advisory Board.

Attendee: I've noticed in traveling with the new vans that there's been a gradual change over from microphones that the drivers used to call radio dispatch to a system where they have to push a button to alert the dispatcher that there's something that they need to talk to the dispatcher about. With the microphone it was much easier to get to the dispatcher. If the driver was at the stop and didn't see the person coming out, they would call the dispatcher and the dispatcher would try to reach the person by

phone. There needs to be a dialogue here where the dispatcher would say, "I'll give this person a couple more minutes because they have difficulty coming downstairs." I have a feeling that the drivers have a more closed system on the van and are not calling as much to get the dispatcher because sometimes it does take a while. And, if you are calling to try to find out where the client is, you probably are going to wait there more than five minutes that they typically wait for the client to show up. I don't know if that new system is good or bad yet.

Catherine Mick: Thank you.

Attendee (PVTA): The gentleman is referring to our new vocal data terminals that we have. I am not aware of any difficulty in communications from the drivers to dispatch. I'm not familiar with the particular issue.

Catherine Mick: Thank you. I just wanted to acknowledge the time here. It is about five minutes of five. Many of you will be meeting up with your rides. I wanted to just take a couple of moments to thank you all for coming out here today. Your input and feedback and your experiences are truly valued and definitely have been heard by the people sitting here today and will be brought back for further discussion and broader discussion. I wanted to say thank you today to the PVPC Executive Director, Mr. Brennan, for providing the room and thank you to his staff for setting up this great space and audio system. We greatly appreciate it. I know that people do need to leave. Folks here, I think, would be willing and able to stay a few minutes extra for additional comments and concerns. There's one hand that is raised here. We certainly have time for one final comment.

Attendee: I would like to get a hand-out of the information.

Catherine Mick: Sure. We can get those as you exit the room. We can give you the flier. We have it available in a couple of different formats.

Attendee: I do have one concern with the new system, GPS, or whatever PVTA uses. The GPS always drops me by the bar. I don't live there. That's a problem. You have been telling me you are going to fix that for a year.

Attendee (PVTA): It is fixed.

Attendee: No it is not.

Catherine Mick: Maybe folks can connect on that in a moment. We wanted to thank you again and also to announce that our next public comment and dialogue session will be held on October 27th at the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority, 1 Columbus Avenue in Pittsfield. Another session will be held in Boston on November 7th from 3:00 PM- 5:00 PM at the Transportation Building. Thank you again for coming today. We look forward to hearing your continued input through the e-mail and phone.