

**Clinton Bench:** Let me introduce myself. My name is Clinton Bench. I am Deputy Director of Planning for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. I am here representing Co-Chair of the Executive Order 530 Commission, Richard Davey. I will be facilitating the Executive 530 Listening Session. I am certainly delighted to see so many people here today. Having comprehensive, accessible, well-coordinated, and also efficient transportation systems is an incredibly important issue to both Secretary Davey and Co-Chair Secretary Bigby. Before the meeting gets started and we all extend our welcome to you and make some introductory remarks, I want to do a quick safety briefing for this room.

First off, there are two emergency exits in the room. Each member of the audience, as far as I can see, is generally facing forward, so there is an emergency exit in the back of the room. If you are facing forward, it is in the back and as you walk to the back of the room, it will be on your left. As soon as you go through the emergency exit, there will be a stairway down the hallway to your right. There is an emergency exit to the front of the room that is at the right front of the room and that will take you out to the commuter rail platform. On the commuter platform there is an accessible path of exit to the ground level. In the back of the room, also, the way in which you entered, is the elevator that can be used to go to the ground level. You have to go all the way down through the hallway as you are going through the emergency exit. And you will find it at the other end of the building. The restrooms are located in the back of the room – again through that same exit if you are heading to the back of the room. It's to your left – both men's and women's rooms. There is not a defibrillator in the building. There is a telephone located on the right side of the room, over by the windows in this corner on the right side of the room. Heather will dial 9-1-1 if necessary.

I want to let you know that we have CART translation available – you will see what you are saying on the screen, and it will be recorded as well. It will be available for future use by members of the Commission and will be retained as a public record. Assisted listening devices are also available should anyone wish to use one. Is there anybody who wishes to use an assisted listening device? If so, please raise your hand or announce at this time, and we will make sure that somebody brings one to you. Okay, I'm not seeing anybody requesting one, but if later you would like to have an assistive listening device, please just let us know.

We have an American Sign Language Interpreter available. I see her at the back of the room. If I can ask one of the two to please come to the front of the room and indicate that you are here and available to provide those services and see if anybody would like to indicate their desire for services. Thank you. No one has indicated a request for ASL interpretation.

The Commission has established a website for your use: [www.MBTA.com/execorder530](http://www.MBTA.com/execorder530). The Commission also has an e-mail address which you can use to make comments. That website gives you the ability to make comments as well. No matter how you make the comments – via website or via the telephone number I am about to give you – they will all count the same and all of them will be read to all the Commission members for their consideration. The e-mail address is [execorder@mbta.com](mailto:execorder@mbta.com). The telephone number is (617) 222-6260. Again, that line is for comments on the Commission's work only.

I would like to offer other members an opportunity to introduce themselves briefly. We will start at the right end of the table. I just want to clarify that we will be using a microphone for any comments that are made. I know some people may feel that they can be heard without a microphone, but let's just make sure that we are making the meeting as accessible to everyone as possible by waiting for the microphone to be brought to you. Thank you.

**Maria Gonzales:** Good afternoon. My name is Maria Gonzales. I am here representing Ron Marlowe from the Office for Access and Opportunity.

**Rebecca Deusser:** I am Rebecca Deusser. I am from the Executive Office of Administration and Finance.

**Judith O'Connor:** I am Judith O'Connor, Executive Director of the Millbury Council on Aging.

**Sandra Albright:** I am Sandra Albright Undersecretary of the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

**Francis Gay:** My name is Francis Gay. I am the Administrator of the Greater Attleboro-Taunton Regional Transit Authority.

**James Flanagan:** My name is Jim Flanagan. I am Executive Director of the Human Services Transportation Office, Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

**Catherine Mick:** My name is Catherine Mick. I am Chief Administrative Officer of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. I am here representing Co-Chair Secretary JudyAnn Bigby.

**Cheryl Lucier-Poppe:** I am Cheryl Lucier-Poppe, Deputy Secretary for Outreach for the Massachusetts Department of Veteran Services. I am here representing Secretary Coleman Nee.

**Michael Lambert:** I am Michael Lambert from the MBTA representing General Manager Jonathan Davis.

**Jini Fairley:** Hi. I am Jini Fairley. I work at the MetroWest Center for Independent Living, and I am one of the consumers who uses The RIDE and the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority ADA service.

**Thomas Cahir:** I am Tom Cahir, Administrator of the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority.

**Mohammed Khan:** I am Mohammed Khan, Administrator of the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority.

**Will Rodman:** I am Will Rodman, a volunteer on the Commission. I work for Nelson-Nygaard Associates.

**Denise Karuth:** My name is Denise Karuth. I am the other consumer member. I work with the Stavros Center for Independent Living. I use the MBTA RIDE, the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority ADA service, and intercity buses.

**Clinton Bench:** We do have a sign-in sheet in the back of the room. There is a place to check off if you would like to make a comment. Is there anybody who has not signed in or who needs the sign-in sheet brought to them. Raise your hand. Not hearing anybody or seeing anybody. . .

The ground rules for our meeting today – I would like to ask that only one person speak at a time. We also would like to give everybody a chance to speak at least once before speaking again. My sense is that we will have plenty of time for everybody to speak. Again, use the microphone. We will bring the microphone to you even if you think that your voice can carry over the crowd. I would like to ask that you limit your comments, at least your initial comments, to three minutes. We do have somebody who is going to be keeping time. You will hear an audible indication of when your time is coming up and then when it is up.

Please be respectful and polite as well as keep your comments focused on the overarching goals of the Commission. Finally, for those who may have speech disabilities, we will certainly allow you extra time for commentary and we will also have some staff available to repeat what you said if it is unclear or if you would like us to repeat it for you. Finally, I am going to ask, given the number of people here today, that the Commissioners hold questions – unless they need a quick point of clarification. We will have an opportunity to ask more questions at the end. So the questions, just to remind you why we are here today, the general question is: What can we do in order to use our resources more efficiently and effectively to meet our obligations to provide quality service to our customers? More specifically, what I would suggest maybe trying to keep your comments focused on are: Are there service improvements and modifications that can be made to maintain, continue, or enhance current service and delivery levels while achieving efficiencies and cost savings? If so, please describe them. Are there reforms that will enhance the quality of customer services? If so, please describe them. And finally, are there potential modifications to the eligibility processes used by The RIDE, transit authorities, or human service agencies? If so, please describe them.

Again, thank you everybody for coming. I'd like to start off by introducing Senator Harriet Chandler, who has joined us here today and ask if she would like an opportunity to address members of the audience as well. (While we are bringing the microphone back, if someone from CMRPC would like to make opening remarks as well after the Senator speaks, that would be great.)

**Senator Harriet Chandler:** I would like to welcome you to my district. I am delighted to see you here and that you have given us in Central Massachusetts an opportunity to comment on our needs. I also want to speak on behalf of the people I represent, 170,000 people of Central Massachusetts. We have serious transportation problems here. We have very little ability to get from one place to another unless you have a car. You are going to hear from a lot of people today. I know people who are students, people who work, who really can't afford to get a car. But, I want to speak first about a very specific group. I want to speak for the disabled today. For the last nine months, I have co-chaired a commission on brain injury. In fact, one of your Commission members sits on that commission and I think she can verify just about everything that I am saying.

One of the things I have learned in the nine months is that some of the problems that people with disabilities have, particularly the brain injured people who look just like everyone else and look like they could be able to drive a car, look like they could be able to do anything anybody else does, the problem is that they can't. The problem is that their ability to socialize, their ability to live independently, their ability to live with dignity, I think this applies to other people with disabilities as well, depends on their

ability to have transportation and quite frankly, they have no ability to have transportation – at least in Central Massachusetts. What I discovered as a result of the Commission is that that is true elsewhere. Our report will be coming out very shortly, a final report from the Commission.

Members of the Commission will be testifying in other cities where you are going to hold these meetings. And for each of us, the concern is very great. Because if we want people with disabilities, people with brain injuries to live as normal a life as possible, but if they can't get out, if they can't live – if they can't do the normal things that other human beings are able to do, that curtails their lives. That diminishes their lives and makes them less of a human being than they should be, could be, would be ordinarily. And so I would request that you look into the problems of the brain injured as well as other disabilities you will hear about today people who cannot live a normal life unless they have some form of transportation, some way of getting a medical appointment, some way of shopping --- doing their own grocery shopping, which they want to do – they want to be just like everyone else. They don't want to be dependent. We have looked into taxicabs. Sometimes it works and in some places it doesn't work. What we need to do is find some form of transportation that the State undertakes and can underwrite to a large degree, because for many of these people, they can't afford to do it otherwise.

I ask you to do this in the name of people who are already handicapped in one way or another. I ask you in the name of people who are coming back from willingly serving our country, coming back with a disability and not able to live a normal life otherwise. I ask you in the name of people who will be injured in the future and who will find the same problems. I don't want to speak over my three minutes. I thank you for giving me this opportunity and I hope that will give very serious consideration to the needs of the disabled. Thank you.

**Mary Ellen Blunt:** I would like to welcome you on behalf of Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission. Steve O'Neil could not be here today. I do want to note, as Senator Chandler has noted, that there is a need for transportation in this area. While we do have some fixed route service, it does not extend out much beyond the central core area. The WRTA does provide service to elders and people with disabilities in their communities, but it's limited in hours; it typically operates Monday through Friday and that is simply not enough to meet all the needs. It's certainly not enough to meet the work-related needs or any type of socialization-related needs. The transit authority is constrained by funding and they have been looking at many ways to expand services by reorganizing services, by trying to consolidate and to make the services more efficient, but certainly, as planners for the transit authority, we welcome the opportunity today to hear whatever ideas people have in this area that will make this area more efficient and hopefully the statewide services more efficient so that we can expand services.

**Clinton Bench:** Thank you very much Mary Ellen. Thank you to the Planning Commission for hosting us today. The first person who signed in who wish to make a comment is Sharon Strakowski.

**Sharon Strakowski:** Thank you. Good afternoon. I am representing the Bay State Council of the Blind, which is a member advocacy group of blind and sighted people and people with low vision.

First, I would like to say that while what we are doing here is very important, we need to recognize that many of the reasons that people don't use the fixed-route bus is because infrastructure and environmental barriers that make that very difficult, especially in a small community like ours. That being said, here are some of our comments. We are submitting a position paper and I am just summarizing briefly. We do believe that door-to-door service should be the norm across all RTAs throughout the State.

One of our main comments is that the eligibility assessments for blind and low-vision people must be done exclusively by certified mobility instructors who really know how blind people navigate in the street and on the bus, and can determine much better than anyone else, trip-by-trip eligibility or unconditional eligibility the best way for us to use.

We also believe that periodic recertification of someone permanently blind is unnecessary and inefficient because that is not going to change. With regard to revenues, we believe that the paratransit services should be charging the highest fares allowed by the regulations for people able to pay. Obviously, there are hardship cases, but it should never be less than fixed-route ride and the fare structure should be based on distance. As it is now, the \$2.00 fare, for instance, in the MBTA RIDE service area is totally inadequate for revenues.

One of the things that came to our attention is the fare structure for PCAs and companions. The companion should pay, but the PCA should not. It should be strictly enforced. We believe that no-shows on the part of riders should be dealt with, but equally should be the vendors who provide the rides. Finally, we would like to say that we understand that this is a shared ride system, and we are committed to helping our members to understand that that is the case and will be increasingly the case. Thank you.

**Clinton Bench:** Thank you. The next person on the list is Anna Cosizski.

**Anna Cosizski:** My name is Anna. I work for the Commission for the Blind. I cover the Central Massachusetts region. I work in WRTA and the MetroWest Regional Transportation Authority as well. What I want to point out in regards to fixed-bus route issues is that the flag down systems utilized by MART, MetroWest RTA, and some portions of WRTA make the service completely inaccessible to my clients. My clients can't see the buses approaching and they can't tell whether they are located in the appropriate location for the bus to pull over. Unless there are predetermined bus stops, my clients can't use the fixed route buses. In regard to predetermined bus stops, the stops aren't placed in locations for clients to access them. They are not sufficient in places like malls. A lot of malls are more spread out and having a bus stop in one area is not going to make the trip accessible to my clients, especially when they have to walk through a parking lot or across the street to get to the other parts of the mall.

Also, there is an issue with lack of auditory announcements on buses in all the three systems that I work with. Clients are encouraged to tell the bus driver where they need to be dropped off. However they need the auditory announcements in order to stay oriented to where they are. As of right now, there is no such system in any of the transit authorities that I work with. Once again, clients have a very difficult time using the systems because of that. Also, where the bus drivers do announce the stops, like in

Worcester, there is not a consistency of which stops get announced and some bus drivers announce a lot more stops while others don't. So there needs to be consistency – every bus trip, every stop being announced.

There is also a problem with accessibility of the website. There is a beautiful trip planner option that many clients can use and do use. The systems I work with have no such tool. I think it would be great if they did. Also, there are issues with people trying to use screen readers in order to get access to the bus schedule. There are issues with low vision individuals trying to access bus schedules because they are just not designed in a way that is easy for people to use. Also there is definitely a winter access issue where people are not shoveling their driveways. They are not shoveling the sidewalks. They are not shoveling the area around the buses. So my clients cannot get to bus stops.

There are differences in costs. There are huge gaps in service. One thing that I thought would be a good idea, is that a lot of the clients I do work with are younger people. They have smart phones. If you wanted to create applications for them to use, a lot of people would be willing to pay for those.

There is a lack of consistency in policies regarding whether service is curb-to-curb versus door-to-door. It needs to be one or the other. There is also a wide variety --- a lot of differences in how people apply for the services. There should be one application, one procedure across the board. The trip eligibility issue is going to be a huge problem.

**Clinton Bench:** Thank you. If other people have written testimony, we are happy to take a copy of the testimony as well. Kathy Kozinski.

**Kathy Kozinski:** Hi. I am Kathy Kozinski and I am the mother of a young man with an intellectual disability as well as the head of a grassroots organization known as The Individualized Project. The Project is made up of parents and their young adult children over the age of 22. The reason we started the program is because these families and young adults are looking for more options available to them.

As a State, we have a mandate to employ more individuals with intellectual disabilities. The fact of the matter is that you can have a job and can't get there. Back in February, I received a call from WRTA. The manager said that the WRTA has a ¾ of a mile rule. I never heard of the ¾ of a mile rule. Now I know it very well. He said, I have to tell you that we will carry your son until the end of the month, and after that we are dropping the trip. I asked why. He said that we lived 1/8 of a mile outside the ¾ of a mile limit. And apparently the Town of Auburn where we live – about a year prior to that we were getting wonderful rides from our Senior Center and right on target everything moving lovely – started sharing those rides.

So my son started taking the rides from taxi service and found inconsistencies all over the place. We've had taxi drivers smoking; taxi drivers picking up friends. The cars would be overloaded with people sometimes and that wasn't the major problem because a lot of times the taxi drivers were very nice. Part of the problem for my son was that he would get forgotten. He would be at work. He would be waiting for his ride. He would typically wait 45 minutes to an hour – but several times in the course of a year, he was totally forgotten. There were four occasions in the wintertime when it was frigid cold

weather when he waited for two hours. Because he has an intellectual disability, he knew to stand there and wait for his ride. If it weren't for the fact that family members checked in we wouldn't have found out he was still out there after two hours. I went back to WRTA and asked why I couldn't have the Auburn COA drive my son. They knew my son and knew where he was picked up. He was never forgotten. I enjoyed that kind of consistency.

The ¾ mile rule ended his life completely. He doesn't have a ride. He was paying \$5 a day – he earned \$28 a day. So he was paying \$5 out of that a day for his transportation. He works 4 hours. When I went to mycabfare.com or whatever it's called, the best price I could find was \$29.81 one-way -- \$60 a day for someone who earns \$28. He doesn't have recreation. He doesn't have a job now. We are working very hard to find him work within Auburn. Because of the new regionalization of services, I can't call the senior center and say, "Do you have an opening?" The Auburn COA asked why he wasn't placed with them because they have availability. There is a discrepancy in how the rides were planned. The most important part we have a system to educate students with disabilities and training for jobs, yet we have no means to get them to those jobs.

**Clinton Bench:** Thank you. The next person on the list is Jacqueline Morton.

**Jacqueline Morton:** I am here with Senator Chandler to not only state the issues for those with brain injuries, but those with all disabilities that are not visible, which we often refer to as invisible disabilities simply because they are not seen. We talk about people with MS, heart conditions, respiratory ailments, diabetes, those who need organ transplants and yet these people, because their disabilities are not visual like a blind person with a pair of sunglasses on them on a sunny day, they go unrecognized.

I, too, am epileptic. Recently the RTA asked me to restrict my seizure activity to days that were over 80 degrees and under 40 degrees. I serve on five city boards, including the Transition Committee, the Emergency Preparedness for the Disabled Commission, the City Manager's Neighborhood and Economic Development Board. And, once again, we find that people who are confined to the City because of disability or because of age, no matter what, have no way to get around the City. We have new businesses coming in – a new Wal-Mart. The RTA receives what is known as New Freedom funds for job access and reverse commute, yet anyone working second or third shift does not have a ride to or from work.

Working at a community center to give out emergency supplies, we found people – young, old, even a single mother who was 24 years old and totally disabled, hard to get accessibility because it was impossible to carry supplies. These are the types of mobility problems. Working with the Transition Commission to make the City more accessible. But accessible buildings are no good without a source of transportation to access them.

As far as disabilities, I also work with the veterans and like Senator Chandler said, many are returning with traumatic brain injuries. We are urging them to get out of the house. Go back to what they can of their lives. Often, a disabled Veteran will not be able to go back to the same job. There will be no way of getting around. One gentleman that I spoke to had taken a bullet in Iraq and was kind of

disappointed because it had missed his spinal cord and taken out a lung. He will never return as a fireman and gave up so much. And we ask if we are going to have the same services or the same rights as other people. Recently people wanted to attend a 9/1/01 memorial, but there was no transportation. I live in an area with two bus routes, but none on Sunday. My right to go to Church and participate in community programs is restricted. Even coming home, I will have a City Council meeting at 7:00 PM and will have to walk home at 11:00 PM. I question the best way to go, which street is safer to walk. Where is the better lighting? Where are the better sidewalks and God forbid a police officer stops me and asks for an ID and all because there is no transportation.

It shouldn't cost people \$50 or \$60 to serve the City. If we have to spend that money to go to the grocery store, there is no money to shop. I hope this would be looked into.

Last of all, I ask that buses offer the same security and safety devices that are available to those in wheelchairs. Frail elderly people, people who are epileptic and have other conditions, should at least have seatbelts. These are offered to those in mobility aids, but not to the general public which would be a big benefit to children, especially to have a young child on the bus without a seatbelt is very dangerous. I would hope that the Commission would look at this and give all people the same rights, not just the disabled, but for all individuals. These safety issues are very extreme. Thank you.

**Clinton Bench:** Thank you. Mark Bonnell?

**Mark Bonnell:** You announced a lot of things for people with disabilities, but you didn't mention if a person is vision impaired, a person like myself. Where is the reverse bill funding? So the RTA receives money before they spend it?

**Clinton Bench:** No bill to allow forward funding of the RTAs has been passed. We do want to try to keep this discussion focused on the work of this Commission because I am not sure we have time to answer a lot of questions that are off-topic. I will stay afterwards and answer questions about other issues if there are any.

**Mark Bonnell:** Will there be a train to go from South Station to North Station?

**Clinton Bench:** Go ahead and maybe you want to present your ideas as things you would like to see. Are there other things that you would like to see?

**Mark Bonnell:** Something that I would like to see is more service too. That's it.

**Clinton Bench:** Thank you. The next person on the list is Monique LePearl.

**Monique LePearl:** Hi. My name is Monique LePearl. I am a Worcester resident and work for the MDDC, Massachusetts Disability Development Council. I am here today – I wrote lots of notes and want to sum it up. Today I want to talk about transportation. I have used transportation when I was in college from 1992 to 2000. I understand where everybody is coming from. I was one that used WRTA. I was left for three or four hours at a time at the school. I never had staff, but I had staff at the school – like professors or secretaries – they had to call and ask where my ride was. WRTA would always say they

were on the way, or that they had been there and I had been a no-show. They would say that I wasn't where I was supposed to have been. They ended up being at the wrong building, the wrong part of the city. And we suffered for that. And once you get no-shows they suspend you. And they suspend you for stupid stuff. One, we are not children. Two, when we use the ride, we literally tell them where we want to go, when we want to be picked up, and it's not fair when they can have a half hour envelope and we only have five minutes to show up when they come. I was always on time. If I were five minutes late, something really crucial had happened. There were times when I cancelled. They still showed up and gave me a no-show.

As for medical, I have PT1 forms. I was left at my appointment for four hours after my appointment, and it was a will-call. Oh, ten minutes. Ten minutes. Ten minutes. Four hours later, that ten minutes finally showed up. And I have had professional people call. I had my physician call.

As for the work situation, right now, I am teaching a class. I am a facilitator for the youth advocacy leadership series. My office is in Quincy. I wanted to take the Red Line to Lesley College, and thank God somebody who actually was going there, that worked in my office, actually told me and my boss who has a disability, that there was no elevator. It was not working. It was not posted. I was not even notified, not even by e-mail.

I am having difficulty identifying accessible public transportation – including the MBTA and Peter Pan Bus Lines – to go on vacation. I am planning on getting married next year and we want to go on our honeymoon. We can't go far because I have a mentally challenged brother and he needs my help. We plan to go to Boston, so if there is an emergency we can come home. When I asked about the availability of buses, vans, trains, they told me that there are not enough disabled people who actually ride the buses so they don't send the buses for people who are disabled. There was also a time last summer when a friend of mine who uses a wheelchair because of MS wanted to go to Hampton Beach, and we couldn't do that either.

If we have to follow policies, so do the transportation providers, all transportation providers. I want to thank you for letting me testify today and hope I made a difference. Hopefully that will help people be more independent in communities and actually for the WRTA, I hope it goes out to different towns because I know a lot of people who have jobs and can't get jobs because transportation will not go out to the towns and back to Worcester. So I just want to thank you for the opportunity. Thank you.

**Clinton Bench:** Thank you. Sandy Houghton?

**Sandy Houghton:** Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you with various concerns with transportation and access for people with disabilities. My name is Sandy Houghton and I am a self advocacy leadership trainer for the Massachusetts Development Disability Council. We work to improve the system of supports for people with disabilities and their families by bringing together lawmakers and advocates to make sure people with developmental disabilities are included in decisions about public policy. The Council works with legislators and policymakers to serve as an impartial educational resource to inform public policy to meet the needs of individuals and people with developmental disabilities and their families. AS someone who uses transportation services, I learned quickly how the

ADA works. You have to call at least a day ahead of time. That is fine, but the problem is the timing of the services. I realize that everything is all about timing, in terms of getting people to their appointments. The problem is that when people use your services, they have a five minute window to get out to the van and either they are ready or else they are left behind. And, if they are in the bathroom, because of a last minute duty call, you just can't stop because you really don't know when the van is out there or not.

So, in order for the people to then make up their appointment, the van service has a 20 minute window. If they are late, they don't call you and tell you that they are running late. They can't find you. They don't know which building you are in or any of that stuff. They leave you for two hours to hang out after work because they can't find you because they don't know where your building is.

Another issue is how all this is scheduled, the timing of services. For instance, if you have a 9:00 AM doctor appointment, they can pick you up at 7:45 AM to 8:05 AM, which means you have to hang out outside of the house for your doctor appointment, so that gets you an hour's hangout time, especially if your doctor appointment is then at 10:00 AM and in order to get back home, they then schedule your return trip anywhere between a half hour to an hour which means if you are then inside waiting and then if you don't know that your van is there, they will leave without you, which again creates a whole other issue.

If someone has a job from 9 to 5, well like me, we have a satellite office. I live in the western part of the State and so I have to schedule for myself. I work in Quincy and I live in Hadley. I schedule for myself the van to get me there for 9:00. They get me there for 8:00. I asked to head home at 5:00. They cannot get me until 6:00, 6:30, 7:00. You are talking safety issues.

My basic, simple recommendation is to please schedule the timing of services a little bit more close so that people who do want to work do not have to hang out and wait or even leave their jobs in order to catch the van service because that will leave them hanging because it takes us a while to walk. It takes us a while to pack up. For me, because of my job, I travel around the State teaching the self advocacy leadership series. Depending on what part of the State I am in, determines how well the service runs. Quite often, the ADA van service works as a complement to the local bus service. That limits the disabled folks the ability to get out and do things and have a life. As the self advocacy leadership trainer, I teach advocates to ask for what they need, to be able to get around and do things as everyone else on this panel does.

Thank you for allowing me to address you regarding this important matter to all of us. Thank you.

**Clinton Bench:** Thank you.

**Monique LePearl:** May I make a comment to all of you guys up front. I don't want you to answer my question, but put it in your head. At MART, when we call for rides and everything else, you have to press 1, 2, 3, 4. Well, I have only one finger, and I don't go so fast. Second, when you check this out, please listen to the prompts very carefully. People have changed the name of DDS, Department of Developmental Services. The recording still says DMR. The "R" word has been taken out. It is very

discriminating when you hear that. So, it's very important to take that out and put in DDS. That's my comment. Thank you.

**Clinton Bench:** Thank you. Cathy Kuldsda?

**Cathy Kuldsda:** Hi. I am Cathy Kuldsda. I am from the Center for Living and Working. Even though we talk about how difficult it is to get around the City, if you live in one of the surrounding towns, it can be impossible. The CLW area extends not only to Worcester. In the smaller communities there are no buses, no cabs, no paratransit, nothing. It's almost impossible to get to work or school. Not everybody wants to move to the city.

People who have known me for years have heard me say this over and over again. I will keep saying it until things improve. And also, we have to discuss the impacts of the budget cuts. When I first moved to Worcester, you could take the paratransit van up until 11:00 PM. Now I think the last trip is around 9:00 or 9:30. If we want to go to work or take a night class, it is almost impossible. Please, at least encourage financing for the transit so there are no further cuts. And again, please think about people who live in non-urban areas. I have consumers who can't go places on the weekend because the van service doesn't run to their community. So they are pretty much stuck at home. I know that elder services tries to help people, but we need other options to transport people with disabilities. They need reliable service rather than having to wonder if elder services can pick them up on that day. That's all I have to say for right now.

**Clinton Bench:** Thank you. Paul Kiester?

**Paul Kiester:** Hi. My name is Paul Kiester. You can tell I am a DC native and moved recently to Worcester. I think I got that pronunciation right. I am learning. I have family that lives up in Fitchburg. I am legally blind and don't drive. There are no WRTA buses that go to Fitchburg that I am aware of. So if I were to go to Fitchburg to visit my relatives, I would have to take the commuter rail down to South Station, find the gate – when you can't see, finding the gate is a challenge – then take the Fitchburg route to arrive within a mile and a quarter of where my relatives live. There are no taxis, no buses, and I am not going to walk a mile and a half, so it never happens. We heard lots of people talking about availability of transportation in some of the outlying towns. That is an example of the lack of services that stops me from going to visit my relatives. So I have to wait for them to come visit me. Fitchburg is only 25 miles away. So something needs to be done there. But the bigger issue in that is, if I am going to get to Fitchburg on whatever public services are available, I have to take a bus over to Union Station, take the rail to South Station, and turn around and take the rail to Fitchburg. How do I do that?

What the WRTA doesn't have on their website is a trip planner to help with logistics. In the Washington, DC area they had an excellent trip planner on their WMATA website. You could key in your starting location and destination, the date you wanted to travel, how long you could walk and what time you would want to leave by or arrive by and if it can't find you a route, it will come back and say that the trip cannot be done within the two hour window. You can elongate the two-hour window if you want, but standing around for two hours isn't exactly fun. It would then list off itineraries sorted by any criteria you chose. When you finally found the one you wanted, you would key in your e-mail address and it

would e-mail you an itinerary of that trip which I could then either drop in my smart phone or print out and put in my pocket so I could see where I was going and how I was going to get there.

The key was that it would list the duration, the differences between the arrival time for the one transportation system and the departure time for the next. So it gives you three minutes, you say, no, not really. Sorry, you can't do anything in three minutes except fall down. So I have been working with Anna. She knows. So you would find the one you want, say print this out, you know, send it off to me, okay, and then allowed you to do the return trip with the same criteria. It knew where you were leaving from. It knew where you were going to. All you had to do is tell it when. So I would highly recommend WRTA taking a look at implementing something like that. Thank you very much for your time. Here comes the train. Right on time. Right on time.

**Clinton Bench:** Exactly three minutes. Thank you. I would also just point out, I don't want to put him on the spot, Mohammed Khan has been the Administrator of the Massachusetts Regional Transit Authority for a very long time. If after this meeting you want to grab him for a minute and see if there are any other options between Worcester and Fitchburg, he could at least give you some information. The next person is Bob Cusane.

**Bob Cusane:** Thank you. My name is Bob Cusane. I am a parent of a young woman with intellectual disabilities, who is striving for independence and has used paratransit services for about three years. She is not currently doing so.

I could reiterate a lot of the stories that you heard here today from the point of view of the anxious father who holds his breath from the time she gets in the cab until the time she returns and waits for the phone to ring or not and which, you know, a couple of hours the phone hasn't rung, you don't know what is going on. Most of the time it was fine, but what occurs to me and occurred to me a while ago is that I would like you to consider whether or not demand is there for an independent service to establish an independent transportation service that is geared toward providing services for people with disabilities. It seems that use of cab drivers has inherent problems. You have to work with their schedules, they are looking for the next fare, and we are really the second priority that they have.

A trained driver's mission is to get a person with a disability from Point A to Point B, without regard to the things that most cab drivers have to worry about. It would be much more effective and what I would ask you to consider is, that you may say the mandate isn't there to establish an independent service like this, and that may be true. If you look at the number of people that are utilizing services now, if you look at the number of people that would utilize them if they were more effective, I bet the number would triple or quadruple. There are a lot of people who would take advantage of a service if it were offered. It seems to me with the ability to communicate instantaneously, ability of software to establish routes for shared rides. I can't believe there isn't an effective way to provide, to design a service like this that can reach out to where the people are and where they need to get in a timely manner and safe manner. Thank you.

**Clinton Bench:** Thank you. The next person is John Winske.

**John Winske:** Hi, my name is John Winske. I am a member of the Arlington Disability Policy Consortium. I came out today on the MBTA, on the commuter rail and one of the things I feel fortunate about is living long enough to see some amazing changes. I mean where we are now and where we were 30 years ago – it's almost mind-numbing when it comes to some of the improvements that we have seen.

Despite what we are seeing today, we have so much further we can go. We will be presenting more detailed testimony, but I wanted to come here today to hear what people had to say here in Worcester. We really think that the Commission needs to look at less costly alternatives. Things such as accessible taxis – there is a lack of accessible taxis statewide. But even without accessible taxis, there are people in the community who are right now who are able to use a \$10 taxi ride which would be a less costly alternative than a paratransit service.

We need to look at innovative programs where maybe people who want discounts on their property taxes can volunteer to drive. We have to find alternatives for people living in the rural parts of the State. It is almost impossible to get around, so we need to find less costly alternatives and alternatives to use vehicles already on the road and put money into beefing up taxi services in order to have the RTAs simply authorize for more alternatives for someone like myself. If I can't get there using my main mode of transportation, give me an authorization code and give me permission to use a taxi for the trip. It would allow less planning and we think it would be less costly in these situations.

Lastly, I have to say that I attended the hearing yesterday in Boston that the MBTA had around in-person eligibility assessments. First of all, it's unfortunate that the T is going forward with this without waiting to see what this Commission has to say. And second of all, quite frankly, the hearing yesterday was a sham. It was not a hearing. It was the State telling people what is going to be done. It was not a process of getting our comments. They were telling you it was going to happen. We are afraid we will see the RTA move through and restrict services with a limit and dump people on less costly ways of delivering services. That would be a shame.

Thank you for your time and I would also add a quick question. You said that website was MBTA/executive order530?

**Clinton Bench:** Sorry. The website address is much like the e-mail address, so let me read that again. I had the wrong information on my piece of paper, but I will read it the correct way now. It's [www.mbta.com/execorder530](http://www.mbta.com/execorder530).

**John Cusane:** I would tell you that I went to that site for the purposes of research and basically, other than setting when the meetings are, there was no real detailed documents. Some of the documents we were looking for, for the purpose of developing effective testimony include things like the average length of trip, the miles per trip, cost per trip . . . real data so that people can offer you effective and intelligent testimony. Without access to that data, we are really hamstrung in our ability to offer detailed testimony. So I don't know if you can go about giving more detailed information on the site. It would be helpful.

**Clinton Bench:** The next person who marked themselves down wishing to speak is Jerri Roche.

**Jerri Roche:** Hi. I am Jerri Roche from the Worcester Public Schools. A big part of my job is supporting all the students with disabilities transitioning from the school to adult life. As indicated by Federal and State law, a big piece around transition is travel training. Many of the individuals that we support are not students and young adults that will be able to use a fixed route due to their disability, so paratransit is the only option for them.

One of our big challenges has been around eligibility. Oftentimes students are going to physicians who might see them once a year. I will give an example: A student on the autism spectrum may be going to college but is unable to cross the street safely. To the physician they look capable. They may not be able to cross the street. I have another student who might be non-verbal but quite capable, but the physician who sees them once a year sees Johnny sitting there not verbal and deems that, yes, he is appropriate for paratransit and may need to have a PCA with him. That is a challenge because our real goal is to support students to be as independent as possible.

When paratransit works, it works well. It helps support students, maintain jobs, life in the community and access to meet friends at the movies and things that any one of us may want to do. We also have the horror stories where students get dropped off at the wrong places. They are well-trained to inform the cab driver of where they are going, but the cab driver might be doubtful and argue over the destination. These situations are challenging. Oftentimes it can be successful. The eligibility piece – it would be very helpful if the physicians were to call on clinical professionals to provide educational assessments, psychological evaluations that really pinpoint what the student is all about, that might help to make a better determination.

Many of the students come from humble backgrounds and from families that have multiple struggles. Family supports can be challenging.

We work real hard at training students to be able to call in their own rides. That is tough when the student's speech is not very clear. Going through the whole system of press one and wait, press two and not only for individuals who are disabled – I have seen my poor mother trying to use that system. It's not going to happen for a lot of elderly people.

Many of my students can run circles around me when it comes to computers. It is important to note that there have been times when the case manager or operator at the RTA has not understood what a student or staff person wanted or vice versa so trips have been planned wrong. We are able to teach students how to sit at a computer and put in an order that would really help with independence. Sometimes when a student leaves us, they are not able to continue that system because they don't have any one at home that is able to make those calls. So I would like you to take a look at that also. Thank you.

**Clinton Bench:** The next person listed herself as unsure, but I will ask her now. Cynthia Willis?

**Cynthia Willis:** Hi. I am Cynthia Willis. I am here from the Shrewsbury Council on Aging. I am the Transportation Coordinator and I am glad I came to this meeting. I heard a lot of good things. We service the seniors, 60 years and older and disabled with transportation. I have a close working

relationship with the residents. They feel comfortable calling me, giving me their trips. They want to make sure I have their trips. Once I have their trips, they know that they don't have to worry anymore, their trips are all taken care of. But in Shrewsbury, we go the extra mile in working with our disabled riders and our ADA riders to make sure that we get them to where they need to be on time.

The paratransit service that we are running in Shrewsbury, I would like to think that it's a high level service, although somewhat cut back. For instance, the Town of Shrewsbury has one bus that goes through the town – the #15 bus. So the whole Town of Shrewsbury is not covered under ADA service.

In Shrewsbury they are building a lot of different communities where seniors and disabled people can live, but they are not able to come within the service area to use the services so they are at a disadvantage and we can only help people that are seniors and disabled. There are a lot more people in the community who can't even maneuver around, because again, a lot of people cannot afford cars, and work but can't work because the transportation system is not set up in a way that allows people to move around.

So, with the reform, I am hoping that there is so much more improvement that is going to come down the road to help the residents of Massachusetts as a whole get around. Thank you.

**Clinton Bench:** Thanks. Luz Montanez?

**Luz Montanez:** My comment was basically what everybody said over here. We have people that work and sometimes they cannot make it to work and sometimes they cannot because the transportation is unavailable to get back home. They can't make it to school. They have to stay home. They don't have a social life because they have to stay home. So I wanted to make a comment of that. I know a lot of people said that already. I just wanted to make that comment.

**Clinton Bench:** Thank you. Monica Polanco? If you don't want to speak, you don't have to.

**Monica Polanco:** I use paratransit. The issue that I have is that I work from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM. I know I am supposed to be ready 10 minutes prior to my pick-up time, but when you have a job, and you have to cover your shift, sometimes you run late. So there have been times that I have gone out late, and the driver has told me that I nearly missed my ride. I don't want to hear it. I am doing what I am supposed to do like everyone else who works. I am not a kid. Work on that. That's what I have to say. I am doing what I am supposed to do.

**Clinton Bench:** Thank you. Greg Gallant?

**Greg Gallant:** I am 21 years old. I don't drive. I need transportation to be more independent. I work 15 hours a week and take a college course, and I need public transportation. Usually it's not dependable for me. That's just me, but once I had to wait for my ride for two hours. I called every five seconds, or perhaps every five minutes to check on the arrival time. I really need transportation, dependable transportation, and it should be easier to figure out where you are going and who is taking you. I would like to know if it's going to be a yellow cab or the van service, because it's just going to be a lot easier.

**Clinton Bench:** Thank you. We have completed the list of people who have checked off that they wish to speak. As I said before, we will give folks one more opportunity. Is there anyone who has not spoken yet who would like to make a comment? Instead of reading through the names again, please indicate if you wish to make a comment. I see a couple of people who want to make an additional comment. We also may have some quick questions from the Commission members to clarify some of the things that have been said. So, I want to give them an opportunity to speak as well. But, for the two people up in the front who said they wanted to make just a quick additional comment, please do so; and I'll ask the Commission members if they have anything.

**Sharon Strakowsky:** I would like to echo what Greg said here about the cab service not really being the appropriate venue for paratransit delivery. I do believe that a dedicated vendor is the better source. There are, as many people have said, some really wonderful cab drivers, but it really isn't good. They are not getting a lot of money for paratransit trips; they have a lot on their minds. The cab drivers are a very fluid set of the population. We are getting more and more non-English speaking drivers which creates safety issues for blind people and others as well. So I don't think it's a good idea.

My second comment is that I don't really believe in trip-by-trip eligibility. I think it's craziness. I think the regional transit authority is going to live to regret it. Thank you.

**Clinton Bench:** Thank you.

**Anna Cosizski:** One thing that I wanted to add is that there is a lot of construction happening in this area. One thing that I noticed is that when new areas are being developed, they are not being developed with people with visual impairments in mind. The new Union Station is totally inaccessible. There are no auditory announcements letting my clients know which buses are coming and what buses are located at what stop. The big issue here is that we are not really pedestrian friendly. And also, when there is a lot of construction happening, there is not enough emphasis on how accessible things are designed for individuals with visual impairments.

**Clinton Bench:** Thank you.

**Paul Keister:** My name is Paul Keister. One of the problems that I have, and I have heard all sorts of horror stories today about paratransit services, is that I recently moved from the DC area and we had paratransit service there also called Metro Access. It runs exactly the same way, which is always late, dropping people off at the wrong place, and missing them, charging them for trips that they never took, charging them for vans that didn't show up even though the person was at the appointed place at the appointed time.

That's what stops me from using paratransit. I am a Type 1 diabetic. As such, if I don't get food on a regular basis, I fall down and the next thing I see is the inside of an ER somewhere. So it's medically dangerous for me to sit around for two, three, or four hours waiting for a ride. We are having our condo renovated and we are moving out to the Marriot Residence Inn on Plantation Street. It's a good hike up the hill to catch the 31 bus. On the way back from UMass, where I have to go, that means I have to cross Plantation Street without a light. Now, I can't see. Now, I can't see buses; I can't see cars. I don't

have to tell you how afraid I am of doing that, but I don't dare to take a chance on schedule a paratransit ride that may or may not show up.

Something needs to be done. In the county I moved from it was so bad that the county provided a service called Star Transportation, and they provided their own paratransit service that was completely separate from Metro Access, but you still had to have a Metro Access card to be eligible for it. The rates were approximately the same. It was unusual to wait for more than three minutes from the scheduled arrival time for a van or a taxi. The service was very, very good.

**Clinton Bench:** Thank you. I would now like to ask the Commission members if they have clarifying questions.

**Mohammed Khan:** I talked to you earlier, Paul. The trip to Fitchburg, we have the reverse situation. We are not part of the Worcester Regional Transit Authority. From Fitchburg, anybody can come over here and we have a van service and we are going to be changing that van service which is demand response into more or less a fixed route basis beginning October 17<sup>th</sup>. One thing that we will be doing is transporting anybody from Fitchburg to Worcester. This place is one of the stops, as well as Plantation Street, and UMass Medical Center. We can drop anyone coming from Fitchburg at any of those places. As a Worcester resident, you would need to speak to Steve O'Neil (Administrator of the Worcester Regional Transit Authority) to make arrangements to get back. I am going to leave my card with you so you can give me a call later.

**Paul Keister:** How would I find out that that service exists?

**Mohammed Khan:** We have a website. The service starts October 17<sup>th</sup>. We do have shuttle service right now. On the website it's characterized as demand-response service, but it is not for Worcester residents. It's meant for people in our part of the State. This is the type of coordination the Commission will be working on and some of this coordination may not require great expenditure. There are 16 regional transit authorities, including the MBTA, and we should be doing a better job working with each other.

**Paul Keister:** Let me clarify that. I can get to Fitchburg using the transportation systems that I said before – going into South Station and switching trains and head up to Fitchburg and coming back I would use your service.

**Mohammed Khan:** No. We will have a better service. We will have a better solution for you. We are bringing a van from Fitchburg to Worcester and that van will go back to Worcester, and that is the van that you can use to go back. You don't have to go to South Station and switch over the North Station and then go to Fitchburg. The van service will come three times a day and you will know exactly when that van is going to leave Union Station to go to Fitchburg. You are confined to one of these three times to go to Fitchburg.

**Clinton Bench:** Any other member questions? Jini?

**Denise Karuth:** I have a couple of questions. I haven't had a chance to get the answers to them, but one of the early speakers talked about people with brain injuries, they said there is no transportation for them. I have used the local paratransit services in the MBTA area, and believe me, I know the shortcomings of paratransit services. When you say there are no transportation services, are you saying that people with brain injuries are being denied the use of the paratransit services?

\_\_\_\_\_ : Yes. People with brain injuries and different neurological conditions are being denied or having to restrict their travel to certain conditions, such as weather, temperature, and so forth. They are almost impossible to comply with. It's an easy way to eliminate the people from the service.

**Clinton Bench:** There is a person in the back with their hand up. Did you want to answer the question about brain injury?

\_\_\_\_\_ : No. I wanted to say something else. May I?

**Clinton Bench:** Yes. Go ahead and say something else.

\_\_\_\_\_ : If you are working all day, and get sick and have to go home, paratransit is not able to pick you up in an emergency situation. For individuals who use other transportation options, this is not a problem. Maybe that's something we can think about.

**Clinton Bench:** Thank you. Monique had her hand up. Just see if Monique had something quick to say.

**Monique LePearl:** That young lady almost took the words out of my mouth. I had a situation where I had to see my physician, and she wanted to see me that day. I called up the WRTA and they said they could not schedule me without 24-48 hours notice. I called Hallmark, where I had had a surgery, and they told me to call an ambulance. I called the ambulance company, and they told me that it was not an emergency, and if they took me, they would have to bring me to an emergency room. All I wanted to do was go to my physician. I needed an antibiotic and I wanted to see my physician. She wanted to see me, and unfortunately, I had no transportation whatsoever. I called up and said, reiterated that this was an emergency situation. It was not like I wanted to go out shopping or to a movie. It was something medical and was a necessity. So when something like that happens, what can we do for that situation?

**Clinton Bench:** Quick time check. We have a lot of people who would like to discuss further. It's about 12 minutes until 5:00 PM and I want to be respectful of those who may have ordered a ride for a particular time. I want them to be able to hear the full discussion. So we will need to close here in about 12 minutes. I know a number of Members of the Commission are probably willing to stay around and speak to individuals and take any comments back as well. So I can offer that. I certainly will myself. Denise, did you have another quick question?

**Denise Karuth:** There was one person who – several people who said, for example, somebody said I am visually impaired and I don't hear people talking about that. I only hear about transportation for the disabled. For me, as a person on the Commission, I am sure for all of us, because I have gotten to know the rest of the Commission, when we are talking about people with disabilities, we are not talking about

people in wheelchairs alone. We are talking about people with visual disabilities, hearing disabilities, cognitive disabilities, sensory disabilities, brain injury, seizure disorders, anything you can name. So I want to assure you, we are trying our best to be very inclusive. I wanted to know from the person who said someone had testified that they were told that the buses didn't have lifts because no one ever used them – was this for regional transit authority service or was this for a company like Peter Pan?

**Clinton Bench:** I can clarify, she was speaking about Peter Pan intercity services. If that is not correct tell me, but I believe that's what it was.

**Monique LePearl:** What I know is that the WRTA buses, the regular buses have ramps, but no tie-downs. They just put you in. That is, if the bus driver sees you or doesn't drive by you, in which case they say that the ramp is not working, you'll have to wait for the next bus. The ones that I told you about do not have the ramps or the steps for the handicapped. It's the Peter Pan and the other ones that you want to travel on for vacations.

**Denise Karuth:** I wanted to say I have probably taken 150 trips on Peter Pan and sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. But, hold their feet to the fire. They do have the buses and they are supposed to use them. We are running out of time, but I did want to thank you all for being here and to let you know that you have been heard. Keep holding people's feet to the fire. We will do the best we can to make sure that we can get as much transportation for folks as we can possibly get.

**Cheryl Lucier-Poppe:** It's more of a comment than a question. An issue was raised regarding Veterans transportation. Every city and town in Massachusetts has a Veterans Service Officer who may be able to help you resolve a problem. Please let the VSO know that the problem(s) exist. We want to make sure that they are aware of those issues so they can make us aware as well. Thank you.

**Sharon Strakowski:** I picked up a lot today on punitive stuff, that people feel that they are second class citizens, and I just wanted to say that I think we have to remember that we are not victims in all of this, even though it feels like that sometimes when you have been waiting 45 minutes past your ride time. We as people with disabilities need to keep our dignity and make sure that other people do too. Thank you.

**Jacqueline Morton:** After listening to everyone here today, I would like to address some of the legal issues involved around this. As I mentioned, I work on a number of commissions as well as the Disability Commission, the Transportation Improvement Plan, I noticed that in nominating and appointing people to those commissions, people who are supposed to represent the best in the community, a couple of people were just assigned behind everyone's back. They are from CMRPC. One of those just happened to be the Chair of the Commission. No one was ever notified including organizations supporting the blind, of these hearings and things that are going on.

The other problem is, like you say, you have a civil right to paratransit. But a lot of these people have had their civil rights violated. People who are denied service can appeal. Yet, CMRPC representatives can appoint themselves to the appeals panel. I have questioned this at other meetings. I am no longer – I don't serve on those appeal hearings for just this reason. I believe people should have a right to an

impartial hearing. Fortunately, I give the blind credit that they do have representatives to assist with this. Yet, other disabilities have no representation at all and the city does have a city doctor who could provide some medical knowledge. The public are supposed to participate in the designing of the questionnaires that are handed to the doctors. People who are blind and epileptic asked if they could have PCAs and of course many who are familiar with the medical system would know that these people were not entitled to PCAs.

“Can you stand?” “Yes I can stand providing I don’t lose consciousness in between.” It’s all yes and no type thing. Some of the questions for different disabilities were crazy. And I would note that was because the ones that were chosen to represent the disabled community both got in their cars and drove away. They weren’t even people who utilized the system, so they have no idea of what is good and bad.

I am astonished to see so many people here today and I give them credit because many did not know of these meetings being held and we’d like to see the community better notified in regard to transportation improvement plans and such.

**Clinton Bench:** Were there any other Commission members who wanted to make one last comment or ask one last question?

**Jini Fairley:** I appreciate hearing some different things today than we had so far. This is our third listening session. I actually do use the paratransit services. I am legally blind and I use it every day to go to work. I use two different systems. I do two transfers every day. I have made a journal of my paratransit experiences and am sharing it with my fellow Commission members. You are being heard extremely well by all the members of the Commission. Please continue to inform us in writing, by e-mail, phone, or website of anything you wanted to say and didn’t have a chance to say. We are disseminating all comments among all Commission members and we are taking this process very seriously. Thank you so much.

**Clinton Bench:** The time is now 4:57, so I will take just a moment to first off thank everybody for spending two hours here with us this afternoon to discuss these important issues regarding access.

\_\_\_\_\_ : What will happen to all of this stuff?

**Clinton Bench:** I will try to answer that real quick. First off, I want to remind people of the next three meetings. There are three more meetings left. The next one will be held next week on October 12, from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM in Springfield at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission at 60 Congress Street. The one after that will be on October 27 at the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Intermodal Center in Pittsfield. The address is 1 Columbus Avenue, right downtown. The final listening session will be on November 7<sup>th</sup> at the State Transportation Building in Boston, 10 Park Plaza. After all of those listening sessions are complete, actually while the listening sessions are going on, the Commission already started to sit down as a working group to discuss what we are hearing thus far. Some of them have requested some additional details on costs of services and have a briefing book that all the Commission members use, a compendium of the demand-response service and fixed-route services and

laws and regulations. We will wait, of course, until after all the listening sessions are complete to then identify the framework for actually determining some of the issues that we want to cover in the report. But we are going to meet as a full group to discuss specific issues and make sure that a full written report for the Governor is available to him as soon as is practical. It may be around the beginning of next year because we do want to wait until all of these listening sessions are complete. We are a Commission set up specifically to advise the Governor himself so that is where the Commission report will go, but my expectation is that it will be fully public and we will have plenty of opportunity to discuss implementation strategies with some of the different concepts that are included therein.

Again, thank you very much to everyone for coming this evening. I know I will hang around here for a couple of minutes afterwards if people have some specific questions that I can answer. Other Commission members will be available for specific questions as well. Otherwise, thanks again. And if you would like to come to another listening session, please come. But, otherwise, just make sure you check that website I gave you and call that number and find out more about progress. Thank you.