

**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES**

Date, Time & Place: August 13, 2014, 5:30-7:30 PM
Cambridge Citywide Senior Center

Attendance

Committee Members

George Metzger, Robert Fitzgerald, Saul Tannenbaum, Ritesh Warade, Eric Hoke, Katherine Rafferty, John Attanucci, Jim Gascoigne, Charles Fineman, Zachary Spitz

City of Cambridge

Adam Shulman (Traffic, Parking and Transportation); Jeff Rosenblum and Cleo Stoughton (Community Development Department)

6 members of the public were present.

Presentation: Central Square Bus Study

The City of Cambridge has engaged consultants CDM Smith and IBI Group to conduct a study of the current bus operations in Central Square and to propose short- and long-term improvements to how buses use Central Square and the location and design of the stops. This meeting of the Transit Advisory Committee will be an opportunity for the committee to provide valuable input to the study.

- Discussion of the scope for the Central Square Bus Study
- Seeking input from Advisory Committee on issues, ideas for Central Square bus operations
- What is experience with using buses in Central Square (bus stops, access, waiting conditions, bus stop locations, perceptions of service)?
- Bus circulation, routes.
- Discussion about what can be done – low hanging fruit vs. longer term improvements
- Discussion about cost of study (\$50K)
- List of all ideas and matrix/criteria to evaluate ideas

Workshop: Site walk of Central Square

The committee broke into 4 groups and explored Central Square, identifying problems and potential solutions.

Discussion: Problems identified and potential solutions

Participants reconvened back at the Citywide Senior Center and broke into 3 new groups to discuss findings from the site walk. Large maps of Central Square were available for marking up comments.

- Bus stops need better signage.
- Better signs to help people know where to go, similar to signs in Park Street subway Station that indicates berthing locations for B, C, D, and E lines.
- Sign on MBTA building on Magazine that says buy MBTA tickers at Star Variety is unclear – people may not know what or where Star Variety is. (it's the convenience store at the corner behind them).
- Bus schedules are at the MBTA building and not where it would be most accessible to people on Magazine sidewalk.
- MBTA bus route sign on Green Street at Magazine is facing drivers, but people who are around the corner from Magazine St can not see it. Should add another sign.
- Not enough space for waiting. CEMUSA station on Green Street should be eliminated with a larger sheltered area such as an awning from the building.
- Trash cans take up valuable space needed for bus riders waiting at Green St stop at Magazine St.
- Trash can locked to bus stop sign at Green St/Pearl Street is unpleasant

- Thumbs up for colored glass bus shelter on Mass. Avenue for being larger than CEMUSA and unique looking, but has not sides for weather protection and is still not large enough to accommodate number of people waiting at the stop. Why not extend shelter?
- Next Bus information would be great.
- Bus Stops signage should better indicate where the buses are going.
- Need a way to indicate to people where they need to go in the Square to board the various buses because they are spread out around the area.
- People should be allowed to board buses that are laying over during rain/snow.
- Use space on other side of Mass Avenue more (Harvard direction side).
- Add pedestrian signal to cross Pearl Street at Mass. Avenue so buses don't get hung up due to non-stop stream of pedestrians crossing.
- Move bus stops out of the most critical congested area on Mass. Avenue between Prospect Street and Pearl Street – have #1 stop at the sidewalk cut-ins west of Prospect Street.
- #1 bus stops should remain on Mass. Avenue near the MBTA elevators.
- There is a lot of trouble with delivery trucks and lots of congestion on Mass. Avenue.
- There should not be a layover stop on Magazine Street/Green—set layover back on Magazine south of Green Street.
- Buses circulations should use left off Mass. Ave onto Pleasant Street to Western/Green.
- Consider allowing left turn at Mass/River/Western for buses only.
- You should be able to use MBTA Charlie cards for the Harvard M2 Bus.
- A single central bus depot in Central Square was not recommended. Although the entire Central Square does operate as a bus depot itself.
- Difficult for buses to make turns from Green Street, right onto Magazine – they drive over islands. #83 bus has similar difficulty with turning around at end of its route at Alewife area.
- The 83 stop at Prospect/Bishop Allen toward Central Square should be moved to Prospect/Mass, closer to Red Line.
- Provide an underground bus terminal in Central Square similar to Harvard Sq.
- There is an imbalance of using the bus stops on Mass Avenue (both sides of Mass. Ave).
- Pearl Street/Mass Avenue congestion for buses.
- Need more space for bus stops.
- Bus /bike conflicts.
- Needs to be back door boarding of buses.
- Make Green Street bus only, or partially bus only.
- Outbound buses stopped at Inman St release exhaust in front of the outdoor seating at 1369
- The Green St at Magazine St stop is hard to find
- A car-free Central Square (or Mass Ave) would be nice
- Videos/screen for real-time information but also navigation/wayfinding
- Wayfinding signage could be artistic (public art)
- Could be better as a transportation center
- Pearl/Mass Ave. intersection very bad – no turns should be allowed
- Cars have option (to go around), buses have routes
- Allocation of space to user groups
- Restriction on flow of pedestrians (cars can't pass)
- No buses on Green St – relocate to Mass Ave
- MIT vs. Harvard Square sides of the intersection – imbalance (too much on MIT side)
- Essex/Mass Ave traffic light – a “killer”
- Allocate more space from parking to buses/bus stops
- Turn signal – Essex St – restudy
- Prospect/Mass Ave
- Buses blocking
- Speed up buses – simplify, deconcentrate
- Accessibility – elevators
- Very congested

- Poor signage/wayfinding – larger signage, lines on sidewalk with bus numbers
- Information kiosk
- Identifying stops (actual stop signage)
- Maps of stops on display
- Car-free Central Square/Mass Ave
- Alleviate boarding delays
- Public art (maybe light up) to make Green St. nicer
- Bus stop locations – minimize congestion, maximize connectivity
- Get rid of magazine @ green bus bays – make a nice pedestrian area
- The CEMUSA shelters block the sidewalk

Adjourned at 7:40pm
