

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

Date, Time & Place:  
MIT building E25, room 117  
December 6, 2017, 5:30-7:30

Attendance

*Committee Members*

John Attanucci, Chantal Eide, Charles Fineman, Jim Gascoigne, Mark Jensen, Katherine Rafferty, Neil Rodriguez, Daniel Schofield-Bodt, Arthur Strang, Saul Tannenbaum, Alexander Taylor, Miles Taylor, Melissa Zampitella

*City of Cambridge*

Tegin Teich and Greg Hanafin (Community Development), Adam Shulman (Traffic, Parking and Transportation)

*Presenters, official entities, and members of the public*

Phil Groth and Andy Smith (MBTA) were present, 1 member of the public was present

Committee Intros, administrative business, and updates

Committee members briefly introduced themselves.

Minutes for the November meeting were approved after a motion, a second, and affirmative voice vote by TAC members.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Fare Products and Policy

Brendan Fogarty from the MBTA presented on the future of fare products and policy at the organization. He said that his position is the first fare-centric position created for the T. The MBTA recently signed a \$725 million contract for a new fare system and plans to make payment easier and remove on-board cash payment from the system.

Brendan described that one of his major goals is to make T passes available to organizations that want to provide transit options to their workers and students. This includes refining a University Pass, which would appeal to students and get them to explore the Metro Boston area, and a Corporate Pass for companies to make available to employees. Some priorities that Brendan plans to look more closely at include:

- Time of day pricing
- Listening to what riders think is important
- Fare ratio
- Increasing ridership, including through increased use of the University Pass and Corporate Pass

Brendan acknowledged that capacity is a current constraint on the T and said he is thinking about methods for shifting the burden of payment to those who can afford it, such as peak time pricing.

Through the Corporate Pass, Brendan is hoping to get companies to spend more on transit for their employees. He says part of this is changing company norms around transit, and he is talking to Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) about this. Arthur Strang asked why companies would be motivated to spend more on transit, and whether there is information about what companies currently give transit benefits. John Attanucci added that there should be an ordinance that companies must give transit benefits. He said currently companies can choose to provide passes tax free to employees, but can also choose to subsidize passes. It was added that contractors are often excluded from transit benefits.

The current MBTA University Program includes a Semester Pass, which students make a one-time payment for and get 4-5 months of unlimited ridership. The pass ends up being an 11% discount over purchasing a pass every month. Brendan said there is currently not a lot of buy-in from students for the Semester Pass, in large part because of the big up-front cost for it. John recommended doing a pay-per-use card for students. Miles Taylor suggested something similar to the S-card that is available for high school students. It is a pay-per-use card but you can also elect to put a monthly pass on it.

#### Transit Signal Priority Update and Evaluation

Tegin described how Transit Signal Priority (TSP) works and presented on the TSP pilot ongoing at the Mass Ave at Brookline St traffic signal. She said additional pilots are in consideration that would use wifi to communicate between signals and systems at the City Hall Annex. She noted that there are certain intersections where TSP would not work as well, such as if a bus stop is right before the traffic signal. Some TSP facts:

- Even when TSP is in effect, it cannot shorten a red light more than the pedestrian clearing time for the intersection, which is 15 seconds for Mass Ave at Brookline Street.
- If TSP is requested for two consecutive cycles, it will not be granted for the second cycle.
- The cost is about \$15,000 per signal controller.
- The City is piloting wifi communications at 9-10 other intersections.
- TSP works most effectively when implemented at multiple intersections along a corridor.

#### Various Updates

Tegin announced that the City had been awarded two Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Grants from the Barr Foundation. The grants will be used on pilot BRT projects on Mt Auburn Street and north Mass Ave. The next step will be a public process. Implementation is planned for late Spring, June at the latest. Outreach will likely include flyers on buses. Mt Auburn Hospital and Athena Health shuttles will be able to use the bus-only lanes, as well as emergency service vehicles.

Tegin announced that the DCR will be holding a meeting on December 13 about short term solutions for the DCR owned intersections of Mt Auburn at Fresh Pond Parkway and Coolidge Ave.

She also announced that a winning bidder had been selected for the Green Line Extension Project, and the winning bid had come in around \$1 billion, including all 6 additive options. The project has an expected 2021 finish date. John said that the use of the Grand Junction corridor for transit needs to be pushed.

Phil Groth presented on MBTA service planning updates. Members of the Committee questioned how the MBTA determined its possible tiers for recommendations, and suggested that the current naming mechanism is not appropriate. Arthur Strang added that bus lanes on Route 2 near Alewife station should be included in the service planning. Phil talked about a feasibility study for piloting 40' battery electric buses on the trolley bus routes, which would be managed out of the North Cambridge garage.

#### Additional Updates and Final Public Comments

There were no additional updates or public comments.

Adjourned at 7:30