

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

Date, Time & Place: September 11, 2013, 5:30-7:30 PM
Cambridge Citywide Senior Center

Committee Members

Present: Randa Ghattas, Charles Fineman, Jim Gascoigne, Miriam Cooper, Zachary Spitz, Katherine Rafferty, Eric Hoke, Ritesh Warade, Doug Manz, Saul Tannenbaum, John Attanucci, Susan Pacheco, Kelley Brown, Terrence Smith

Absent: Simon Shapiro, Jackie Douglas, Robert Fitzgerald, John DiGiovanni, Rev. Leslie K. Sterling, Joseph Beggan, George Metzger, Jeffrey Lockwood, Brian Dacey

City of Cambridge

Adam Shulman (Traffic, Parking and Transportation); Susanne Rasmussen, Jeff Rosenblum (Community Development Department)

Three members of the public were present.

Welcome by Jeff Rosenblum

Review of notes from last committee meeting

Handout: Notes from the August 7, 2013 committee meeting.

- [Jeff] Announcement: The October meeting has been cancelled, the next meeting is the November 6 meeting. Note that the location of the November meeting is yet to be determined.

Comments on notes from last meeting and general comments and questions:

- Concerns about the #77 bus stop consolidation implementation as part of the Key Bus Routes Initiative, stops have been eliminated but the signage still exists, the stop announcements do not coincide with the actual stops that the bus is making, and is overall very confusing especially for those with sight mobility issues.
- The Red Line outage the other day during happened at a particularly inopportune time (college move in day).
- Wants additional clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the committee. [Jeff] Indicated that at the November meeting, staff will be bringing a draft framework for a workplan for the committee for the next 9 months.

Presentation: Implication of MetroFuture's 30-year regional smart growth plan on public transportation

Amy Cotter, Regional Plan Implementation Director, Metropolitan Area Planning Council.

The MetroFuture plan supports a vision of smart growth and regional collaboration through the promotion of: efficient transportation systems, conservation of land and natural resources, improvement of the health and education of residents, and an increase in equitable economic development opportunities for prosperity. Our speaker will summarize key assumptions that went into the plan, and the resulting implications for public transportation.

Handouts:

[- Copy of the presentation \(PDF\)](#)

[- "MetroFuture: Making a Greater Boston Region," MAPC, May 2008.](#)

Comments and discussion by the committee:

- What if you focus instead of putting housing near transit, put the jobs near transit, wouldn't the housing market follow suit? [Amy] One of the problems is that we undervalue small business development, this is an opportunity for local government to change zoning.
- Great presentation on regional trends, would like more information about Cambridge trends.

- Using BioGen as an example, the workers are younger, sometimes move to the Boston area without a job, want to live in an urban environment, and want jobs close to home so they can bicycle and take transit, employers are responding to this demand to be able to attract the best talent. Talent will go to where there are many employment opportunities possible without having to move apartments to get a new job. But the financial services sector, on the other hand, is taking advantage of cheaper land outside of the city.
- Central Square committee agrees that we want Cambridge to follow a “smart growth model,” the biggest struggle is with housing affordability, especially middle-income housing.
- If a bus goes down a street, it should be zoned for business.

Presentation: Inside the Black Box – Transportation Implications of Smart Growth in Cambridge

Susanne Rasmussen, Director, Environmental & Transportation Planning

The presentation daylights the methodology used to estimate additional transportation demand as a result of proposed build-out in Kendall Square / Central Square area.

Handouts:

[- Copy of the presentation \(PDF\)](#)

[- “Car-free commuting push pays off in Kendall Square.” Boston Globe, July 25, 2012.](#)

Comments and discussion by the committee:

- What about data (employment / sf) for “old” building currently occupied, any data for that? [Susanne] This is very challenging data to obtain, there is no regulatory way to get this information.
- We only have data from “new” development? [Susanne] Yes, but keep in mind that “new” is starting in 1998 with the implementation of the PTDM ordinance, so that captures a significant amount of new development in Cambridge.
- The density of workers per square foot is going up in the Boston area, driven by tenants wanting to improve efficiency, some conversions have seen a 25% increase in worker density, but have not seen more driving (often constrained by parking supply), meaning that these employees are travelling by means other than car. I don’t see much telecommuting where people stay home just one day a week, usually they do it full time.

Open discussion

- Moving the #1 bus stop at Harvard Square back is frustrating, appears to have been to accommodate the tour buses and accommodate metered parking spaces. [Jeff] We will look into that.
- Concerned that Cambridge doesn’t appear to focus enough on transit, recognize that the MBTA agency is out of the hands of Cambridge, but it appears that the city puts bikes before transit. [Jeff] The city is committed to transit at the highest level, as exhibited by the formation of this advisory committee, and the work that has been happening. Some of this will become more clear as the committee gets more into strategic planning in November.
- Even though Cambridge doesn’t control the MBTA, still has control of intersections and streets, so can contribute to bus movement improvements.
- It is a challenge, but we need to see how we can create bus priority lanes, is it even feasible to have them? Yes, it will sometimes involve the removal of some parking and maybe some vehicle capacity, but this is really important.
- Getting key bus routes through major streets as fast as possible is important. Let’s get buses moving.
- Yes, the red line is the life line of Cambridge, but it is fixed. Bus movement is important to focus on because those routes can allow for more flexibility.
- Feel strongly that bus only lanes are important. But cannot forget bicycles, this is critical. We need to think about networks, both for buses and bikes, and those may be prioritized on separate streets. Take Mass Ave, that needs to be good for all users, but maybe a side street network like Green/Franklin could be made really friendly for bicyclists. Windsor is another example of a great access street for bicyclists. Maybe Harvard St. too.
- Need to keep in mind bicycle/ pedestrian interactions, especially bicycle facilities that are on the inside of bus stops.
- Need to take into consideration resupply pattern of trucks to small businesses, and how that impacts transit operations, 69 bus comes to mind. Some cities restrict deliveries to certain hours?
- Discussion about bicyclists behavior. Want to better integrate elderly concerns with bicyclists.

Public comment period:

- Comment about the need to have housing close to businesses.
- Reiterated concerns about relocated #1 bus stop at Harvard Square. Is there a way to correct this decision?
- A question about how citizens are consulted regarding public transportation changes, and especially how to consult with those the regularly use transit, it's a challenge but we need to do better.
- Understands the utility of Hubway bike share, but as a public service, would like to see subsidized memberships for low income users.

Adjourned at 7:30pm
