

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

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

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**Committee Members**

Present: Randa Ghattas, Charles Fineman, Jim Gascoigne, Joseph Beggan, George Metzger, Miriam Cooper, Eric Hoke, Zachary Spitz, Katherine Rafferty, Jeffrey Lockwood, John Attanucci, Ritesh Warade, Brian Dacey, Kelley Brown, Terrence Smith

Absent: Simon Shapiro, Susan Pacheco, Jackie Douglas, Robert Fitzgerald, John DiGiovanni, Doug Manz, Saul Tannenbaum, Rev. Leslie K. Sterling

City of Cambridge

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

*One member of the public was present.*

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**Welcome** by Jeff Rosenblum

**Review of notes from last committee meeting**

*Handout: Notes from the June 5 committee meeting.*

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

- The legislature did not approve enough money to complete all necessary upgrades to transportation infrastructure in Mass.— What does this mean for the T? How will funding actually be distributed between necessary annual capital improvements and additional system upgrades? What is funded and what isn't? Are details available about improvements to transit in Boston and the inner suburbs vs. commuter rail and other services in more distant suburbs?
- Traffic from the Longfellow Bridge reconstruction is causing major disruptions in East Cambridge. Not only is this a nuisance to drivers, it is causing major problems with buses as well. A comprehensive solution is needed for mitigating the Longfellow reconstruction, rather than small solutions for individual problems. The D branch of the Green Line should be extended to Lechmere and bus frequency from there should be increased.
- Do we know exactly what the funding from the Green Line delay mitigation is going to?

(Jeff) We will work on providing information and having discussion of these issues at future meetings.

**Presentation: Preparing for Climate Change in Cambridge: What does global warming mean to us?**

*Jennifer Lawrence, Sustainability Planner for the City of Cambridge*

The City of Cambridge is facing the challenges of climate change. For over a decade, the City has been developing strategies and policies to reduce Cambridge's contribution of greenhouse gases that cause climate change. As climate change science continues to reveal multiple lines of evidence that the global and US climate is indeed changing and we see more extreme weather events across the country, the City of Cambridge is conducting a project to prepare for climate change in our community. This project has two phases, first a risk and vulnerability assessment phase in 2012-2013, then an adaptation planning and preparedness phase in 2014-2015.

*Handouts:*

- *"Preparing for Climate Change in Cambridge" – City of Cambridge*
- *"Cambridge Climate Change Study" – City of Cambridge*

*The Survey is also available online at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/climateprep>  
- "FTA works toward climate change resilience" – Federal Transit Administration*

Comments from and responses to committee members: Cambridge works closely with Boston to develop transportation infrastructure across borders. The City values intermodality, making sure all systems (transit, bike, pedestrian, car-sharing, etc.) are integrated. Within the City, departments talk with one another, and all transportation employees work on projects concerning all modes of transportation. Cambridge is working with taxi companies to increase the efficiency of vehicles. The City must be sure to coordinate policies around climate change and evaluate existing policies of Cambridge and other cities in the region. Cambridge is making progress on its flood assessment.

#### **Workshop: Transit Demographics and Ridership Data**

Based on feedback from the last committee meeting, we have assembled some preliminary demographics and ridership data graphics. We will break up into four groups, each assigned to a data set. Each group will spend 20 minutes reviewing the graphics and compiling observations, and then a representative of each group will report back to the whole group.

*Comments and questions from each group are attached.*

#### **Public comments**

- MASCO buses are 1) often noisy and 2) could be made available to the public.
- Alewife station is messy. (Jeff: A study is underway to determine how to make it more efficient.)
- Buses (e.g. bus #83) wait for the last train to come, sometimes waiting for up to 30 minutes.

**Adjourned at 7:40pm**

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## **Workshop: Transit Demographics and Ridership Data**

City of Cambridge Transit Advisory Committee | August 7, 2013

Based on feedback from the last committee meeting, we have assembled some preliminary demographics and ridership data graphics. We will break up into four groups, each assigned to a data set. Each group will spend 20 minutes reviewing the graphics and compiling observations, and then a representative of each group will report back to the whole group.

### **GROUP A: ORIGIN/DESTINATION COMMUTE MAPS (how people commute to Cambridge and Kendall Sq. by car and by transit)**

Comments on presentation of data:

- It would be interesting to see SOV numbers from each town, rather than from just TAZ's. This might take the form of just a ranking of towns by driving or a map similar to the current ones with different geographical groupings.
- Scale on transit/SOV maps should be the same. It also might be collapsed so that the visual presentation better represents the data.
- Better explanation of data would be helpful – how many people per TAZ, for example.
- It might also be useful to have ridership represented proportionally in addition or in place of absolute numbers. It is hard to know what any given number of drivers or passengers from a TAZ means without putting the data in perspective.
- How do you count people that drive to a station and then take a train? For now, trips involving transit are considered transit trips.

Comments on data:

- Facility enhancements should be emphasized as a way to increase ridership. For example, the Alewife station is hard to access, which might be hindering more people from using transit.
- Connectivity between stations and walkability near stations should be considered as ways of increasing ridership.
- If the central hub of the system is improved, it might encourage more people to ride (but should this be the emphasis of near-term plans?).
- The Urban Ring project is important for underserved communities.

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### **GROUP B: DEMOGRAPHICS MAPS (population density, commuters who drive and take transit, household income, elderly & healthcare facilities)**

- West Cambridge and Cambridgeport have fewer options than other areas of the city in terms of transit. This can be seen reflected in transit ridership in these areas. It is important to note that people might self-select in these areas. That is to say, people that plan on driving anyway might choose not to live near transit nodes.
  - Dedicated bus lanes would go a long way to making transit more efficient, especially in areas not served by the Red or Green Lines.
  - In areas underserved by transit, it is especially hard to get to hospitals in Boston.
  - The Jefferson Park Clinic has been closed for some time.
  - Stops like Alewife are difficult to access. Walkways to transit should feel safe, be well-lit, and have little car traffic.
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### **GROUP C: RED LINE (line ridership data, and red-line loading data)**

- Does the red line have an off peak? Ridership is high, even on the weekend. This shows that it is not only a commuter line.
  - Should we consider trying to mitigate the peak period by asking employers to stagger office hours? This might be an effective strategy for some people, but those that rely on peak period schedules for busses and commuter rail would likely not be willing to significantly change their schedules.
  - The graphs can be used to infer where people are going to and coming from at different times of day.
  - Some of the graphs might be used to plan construction, as they show when each line is least active.
  - Steadily increasing ridership over time shows our increasing dependency on the T.
  - Trains are crowded from Harvard to Charles/MGH—efficient management or not enough trains?
  - Data assume no delays. Delays, when they do occur, result in overcrowded trains.
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### **GROUP D: BUS BOARDING MAPS**

- A map or routes with boarding totals don't necessarily tell the whole story for every bus line. A more in depth analysis is needed to determine exactly what is going on.
- It is hard to infer why people are boarding at certain places on certain routes (not 77).
- Knowing the number of people boarding at each stop is useful and consistent with what one would expect. It would be helpful to know the number of buses serving each route to get an idea of how full buses are. Additional context would be useful: are there major businesses, connections to other bus or train lines, shopping malls, hospitals, or residential areas along the route? This context dictates boarding patterns.
- Some stops along routes 1, 66 and 77 will be modified or removed in the near future under the MBTA's Key Bus Route Improvement Program. Target dates are on MBTA website.
- Boarding data for route 70 should include data from route 70A, if it doesn't already.