



An Interview with MILES TAYLOR



BY: HELINA MEKONNEN AND FATIMA AKTER, CRLS STUDENTS AND PEDESTRIAN COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Why are you so interested in transit?

I've found that I really like the way [transit] networks interact with each other. The most interesting part for me is the collection of routes and schedules and how it all works together. I try to find any sorts of errors in these systems, [and try] to make everything as efficient as possible, which is what I do on my blog. When I was around 4, my dad and I set a goal for ourselves to ride the whole subway system. It took a while to do, but that whole experience of going out to the ends of the lines and seeing what was out there made me love riding the trains.

What made you decide to start a blog about the MBTA?

When I was 11, I started to collect bus schedules, and once I got my hands on a full system map, I wanted to memorize the whole thing. I remember pouring over it for hours on end trying to figure out where each route goes! As for the blog, there was an existing blog called (T)he Adventure that was doing something similar.

From the moment I discovered it, I remember just reading through all his posts over and over and thinking that I wanted to do the same thing. Once I turned 13, my parents let me get an email address, so I could actually start a blog. I never thought it would get as big as it did or that I would actually finish the whole MBTA, but it's been a fantastic experience!

You competed in the 2018 Glocal Challenge, which challenges CRLS students to solve a local problem with global implications. This year's focus was improving sustainable transportation in Cambridge by 2020. What was your project about?

We were originally going for an idea involving schedule improvements and reconfiguring of bus routes to improve the #1 bus. But we thought about it and it wasn't politically feasible and it wasn't a

very creative idea. It wasn't a very "Glocal" idea. We thought about it, and we settled upon the idea of putting used iPads in the windows of small businesses that show bus arrival times to passersby on the street. This is helpful in multiple ways. It reduces the high cost of putting a bus tracker outside. It benefits transit users for a low cost. It will hopefully get some people to start riding the bus (to know that it exists). And it will benefit small businesses. We hope that it will reinforce that idea that transit is a big driver towards small businesses. It is an idea that is beneficial to more kinds of people.

How do you get to school?

I take the 83 bus to the Red Line, usually. If I'm feeling adventurous, I'll brave the 77.

Is there any advice you have for Cambridge residents about public transit?

People complain about the T a lot, I don't exclude myself from that, but it's important to appreciate what we have. Cambridge and the surrounding area is blessed with a generally fast and frequent subway system, a huge comprehensive network of bus routes that feed into it, and a commuter rail system that has decent off-peak and weekend service, even though it's designed for rush hour travel.

So many cities around the country have developed around the car, making transit far more difficult to implement. But here in Massachusetts, we grew up before the car and it shows in our transit network. Sure, the Red Line seems to experience delays every single day and the bus system can be really unreliable sometimes, but be thankful that it's all there. We could have it a heck of a lot worse.

Follow Miles at milesonthembta.blogspot.com

Miles Taylor is a member of one the 2018 Glocal Challenge's winning teams! Follow his progress at cambridgema.gov/glocal



DID YOU KNOW?

There are committees, made up of residents, community members, and City staff, devoted to enhancing sustainable transportation in Cambridge, including:



THE BICYCLE COMMITTEE

works to improve conditions for bicyclists and promotes bicycling as a means of transportation through organizing public events, reviewing plans for road construction and proposed development projects, working bicycle network planning, and more.



THE PEDESTRIAN COMMITTEE

works to promote walking and to help create a more comfortable, safe, and pleasant environment for walking in Cambridge. It advises on the design of roadway projects and policies related to traffic calming, traffic signals, and sidewalk design.



THE TRANSIT COMMITTEE

guides City positions and policies regarding long term sustainable funding for transit, transit expansion, service planning for modification or expansion of bus routes, and service reliability and improvements including ways to better design our street network to prioritize bus transit.