CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES

Date, Time & Place:  June 5, 2013, 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM
Cambridge Citywide Senior Center

Committee Members
Present: Jeffrey Lockwood, Joseph Beggan, Kelley Brown, Brian Dacey, John DiGiovanni,
Randa Ghattas, Jim Gascoigne, Doug Manz, George Metzger, Susan Pacheco, Katherine
Rafferty, Zachary Spitz, Simon Shapiro, Terrence Smith, Rev. Leslie K. Sterling, Charles
Fineman, Robert Fitzgerald, Eric Hoke, Ritesh Warade
Absent: John Attanucci, Jackie Douglas, Miriam Cooper, Saul Tannenbaum

City of Cambridge
Susanne Rasmussen, Jeff Rosenblum, Chaoqun "Charlie" Guo (Community Development
Department)

About 5 members of the public were present.

Welcome by Jeff Rosenblum

Review of notes from last committee meeting
Handout: Notes from the May 8 committee meeting.

Some comments from committee members: Under “strengths,” the second to last item referred
to comparing affordability of the MBTA transit system with other transit systems in the country.
Under “opportunities,” We need to not restrict discussion to transit, but understand roadway
design for all users. There are opportunities to better coordinate with private shuttles. We should
be mindful of actions that Cambridge can take to improve transit and actions that are required
by the MBTA or state. U-Pass program and MIT parking/transit pilot program should be included
as “opportunities.”

Workshop: Transit and Demographics Data, led by Jeff Rosenblum
The goal of this workshop is to get feedback from the committee on what transit and
demographics data and analysis would be useful to the committee to help better understand
who uses transit, how it is used, its impact on other urban planning and development issues,
and identify opportunities for transit expansion. We do not have the capacity to conduct analysis
on all of the suggestions given by the committee. Instead, the results from this exercise will be
used to help our transit planning staff develop a workplan that prioritizes the data analyses that
will conduct.

Using the Transit Data Exercise worksheet as a guide, committee members brainstormed data
that they would be interested in. A compiled list of comments, including comments from
committee members who were not present but submitted comments, is attached.
Short films: “Open Data” initiatives for transit arrival information.
These short films show how the "Open Data" movement, the publishing of information on-line in real time, has allowed software developers to produce a myriad of tools (for free) that have changed how we interact with our transit system. The following two videos were shown:

   http://www.streetfilms.org/a-case-for-open-data-in-transit/

   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-UAujyy45k

Presentation: Preliminary transit data analysis
Chaoqun “Charlie” Guo, an intern with the City of Cambridge, is a recent Masters graduate from Northeastern University’s Civil Engineering program. He presented some preliminary draft results from our origin/destination study to give committee members a sense of how we plan to use data to help understand transit and travel behavior.

Public comments
Steve Kaiser passed out a copy of his analysis, “A Progress Report on Independent Field Measurements to Improve Red Line Service.” He indicated that 10 years ago, the MBTA conducted a capacity analysis of the red line. Kaiser’s recent analysis indicates that there is significant unused capacity of the Red Line today but because the system currently operates unbalanced it leaves some trains virtually empty while others are full. He attributes this to a management problem at the MBTA. He feels the MBTA is enlightened at the top, and encourages Cambridge to integrate the committee’s work with MBTA planning activities and work of independent groups. An appendix of his report points to videos of operations in Japan that he feels demonstrates optimized capacity. A copy of his report can be found here:  
   https://www.box.com/s/yf2t2ak4yolcrnny499

John Hawkinson complimented Charlie for showing maps that used gradated shading rather than traditional color differentiation. He encouraged Cambridge to support the use of LED bus arrival countdown timers by commercial establishments similar to what is done at JP Licks in Jamaica Plain.

Adjourned at 7:35pm