

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING NOTES

Date, Time & Place:  
October 7, 2015, 5:30-7:30  
MIT building E25, Room 117, Carleton Street

## Attendance

### *Committee Members*

John Attanucci, Phineas Baxandall, Devin Chausse, Karen Dumaine, Charles Fineman, Denise Jillson, Joseph Maguire, Doug Manz, Jeremy Mendelson, George Metzger, Katherine Rafferty, Rob Ricchi, Simon Shapiro, Arthur Strang, Alexander Taylor, Ritesh Warade

### *City of Cambridge*

Tegin Bennett and Cleo Stoughton (Community Development), Adam Shulman (Traffic, Parking and Transportation)

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

Seven members of the public were present. Additionally, Michael Owu and Sarah Gallop (MIT), Susan Sloan-Rossiter and colleagues (VHB), Jason Zogg (CRA), and Philip Groth (MBTA) were present.

## Committee Introductions and Administrative Business

Committee members verified that the September 2015 meeting notes state that the Committee agreed to write a letter to Secretary Pollack in support of completing the Green Line Extension. The City will make this note more noticeable. Pending that modification, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the September 2015 minutes.

## Public Comment

Mike Stanley talked about his Transit X proposal and support from various entities including universities.

## Announcements and Regular Updates

### *Discussion of recent events*

- Open Meeting Law training: Committee leadership attended a recent training by the Massachusetts Attorney General's Division of Open Government and reported that the presentation was well done, there was good turnout, and that, as far as they can tell, the Transit Committee's processes are in full compliance.
- The Committee discussed the September 23 Planes, Trains, and Automobiles (and Bikes) event at the Harvard Kennedy School, which featured a presentation and Q&A session with Frank DePaola, General Manager of the MBTA. The Committee discussed the following:
  - The public process for the Green Line Extension and the importance of moving forward with the project as planned.
  - MBTA/MassDOT preparations for the upcoming winter. There is concern that the focus has been on issues with subway operations in the winter and not enough focus on problems with bus operations.
  - Systematic scaling back of bus operations during winter storms, as well as unplanned shutdowns due to very heavy storms. The City and businesses should receive as much advanced notice of unplanned shutdowns as possible. More information about systematic scaling back of bus operations during storms is requested from the MBTA.
  - Need to plan for worst case winter storms, when multiple (or all) subway lines are out of service. An emergency network of bus routes was suggested. Adam Shulman noted the City has snow routes (with no parking), some of which are aligned with bus routes. The City will look into this further.
  - Tangentially, the Committee discussed real-time information displays, including adding more signage at the Harvard Square station. Tegin Bennett referred to efforts to install more TransitScreens, as well as the display going in at one entrance to the Central Square station. Larger screens are desired, TransitScreens don't meet ADA requirements (so the MBTA must use other systems for now), Committee members and the general public are encouraged to contact MBTA customer service with suggestions/requests, and Ritesh Warade offered to discuss options for providing real-time information with anyone interested.
  - It was noted that Committee meetings conflict with the Planes, Trains, and Automobiles speaker series, but the Committee did not discuss rescheduling Committee meetings because the speaker series ends at 5:30 when the Committee meetings start.

*At each Committee meeting, the City will provide short updates on a number of ongoing projects*

- MASCO M2 shuttle tickets will soon be sold at City Hall, and the City will make this information public.
- TransitScreens will be installed at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 344 Broadway, and the Cambridge Department of Public Works at 147 Hampshire St. One more location is being considered.
- On October 15, there will be a public meeting for the Kendall Square Mobility Task Force.
- Tegin Bennett presented the Transit Strategic Plan to the Transportation and Public Utilities Committee of City Council on October 6. The Transit Advisory Committee discussed how best to continue coordinating with the Council on transit issues.
- The City will provide information about the MBTA Service Delivery Policy update when available.
- The MBTA's Program for Mass Transportation process will begin soon. In addition, MassDOT launched their "Capital Conversations" series. There is a meeting in Cambridge on October 22 at 6:30 pm at the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. MassDOT requests input on transportation investments in the Commonwealth.
- The Committee discussed how best to follow up on the Transit Strategic Plan. Tegin Bennett referred to the Work Plan that was part of the Strategic Plan and now serves as a living document of all transit-related activities the City is working on. At the November meeting, the Committee will discuss the Work Plan and other follow up actions.

### Red Line Capacity Analysis

The Traffic Impact Study (TIS) for MIT's special permit applications for two Planned Unit Development (PUD) areas in Kendall Square contained a new type of capacity analysis for the Red Line. Michael Owu, Director of Direct Real Estate at MITIMCo, and Susan Sloan-Rossiter, Principal at VHB, presented and discussed the background of the proposed development and results of this analysis.

Background information:

- Information about the Kendall Square Initiative by MIT
- Summary of the presentation to the Planning Board
- TIS summary sheet and other special permit application documents (see PB302 and PB303)

*Details and discussion:*

- Michael Owu introduced MIT's plans to redevelop six buildings over the next 7-10 years, making the most of the valuable real estate with good access to transit.
- Susan Sloan-Rossiter presented the Red Line capacity analysis, which consisted of, among other methodologies, platform observations to examine the "peak of the peak" (the peak 15 minutes within the peak hour) in the morning and afternoon rush hours. The observations were limited by resources available, and were done for each platform over two days (one platform per day). VHB staff observed each car of the Red Line trains and judged how full each car was. They also noted how many people were left behind on the platform due to overcrowding. This analysis provides a more detailed look at the capacity compared to traditional capacity analyses, which calculate the average load over the course of the hour and assumes that there is even loading across cars. As expected, the analysis found that if there were issues with service (i.e., headways were longer than expected), crowding was worse than typical. It also found that trains were more crowded after a longer wait time between trains.
- The Committee noted that it would be useful from the City's perspective to consider all development not only in Kendall Square but the region as a whole to better understand how Red Line capacity will be affected. The City noted that the K2C2 report looked at all development in Cambridge. The City will look into this issue further.
- The Committee and members of the public discussed the fact that this analysis consisted of only one observation period— one data point. It was suggested that it is possible to determine, using other datasets, whether the day during which observations were made was a "typical" day or not. In addition, Michael Owu noted that this is a new type of analysis that was being piloted, and that future analysis could include observations over a larger number of time periods. Furthermore, it may also be possible to do this analysis in a more automated way while still making some use of platform observations, and the MBTA has been interested in using these methodologies.

### Transit Enhancement Fund

Jason Zogg of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority discussed financing options for transit improvements and the development of a draft memorandum of understanding with Boston Properties to establish a Transit Enhancement Fund.

*Details and discussion:*

- Jason Zogg described the history of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority and the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan. He noted that improved access to transit is a top priority in Cambridge and is part of mitigation for large development projects.

- Jason Zogg went on to describe the concept of establishing an enhanced transit fund, which would be based on a formula applied to the development and estimated number of transit trips generated by that development, which could be managed by a board and used to fund transit improvements near the development.
- Committee members asked about the transparency of the process and discussed how to be involved in the conversation about setting up the Transit Enhancement Fund. Jason Zogg noted that CRA monthly board meetings are open to the public and that there is a [website](#) to solicit input from the public. The City and CRA will continue to work together on this idea and solicit input from the Committee.
- The Committee discussed how funds contributed to the Transit Enhancement Fund would be allocated, including: whether funds would be given directly to the MBTA or to other entities as well; whether funds would be spent within Kendall Square/Cambridge or in other parts of the MBTA system; and whether it made sense to specify that a certain amount be used for operations versus capital purchases, as is often done in other cities that have established similar funds. The Committee noted that developers would be more interested if funds were spent locally, and that bus service may be a good target for improvements. The CRA will continue to work out these details with input from stakeholders.

#### Other Committee Comments

- Committee members suggested that fewer items be placed on future agendas so that more time for discussion can be allocated to each agenda item.

#### Final Public Comment

- Members of the public contributed to the discussions of both the Red Line capacity analysis and the Transit Enhancement Fund, and there were no additional comments.

Adjourned at 7:48pm