

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING NOTES

Date, Time & Place:  
March 2, 2016, 5:30-7:30  
MIT building 32, Room 144, Vassar Street

#### Attendance

##### *Committee Members*

John Attanucci, Phineas Baxandall, Kelly Brown, Devin Chausse, Karen Dumaine, Robert Fitzgerald, Jim Gascoigne, Denise Jillson, Doug Manz, George Metzger, Susan Pacheco, Katherine Rafferty, Robert Ricchi, 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*

Five members of the public were present. Philip Groth (MBTA) was present.

#### Committee Introductions and Administrative Business

February 2016 notes were approved.

#### Public Comment

There were no public comments at this time.

#### Development Review Sub-Committee Update

Interested Committee members met prior to the regularly scheduled meeting to discuss a draft memo to the Planning Board regarding MIT's NoMa/SoMa special permit application. This group then provided an update to the larger group during the regular meeting.

##### *Information and discussion:*

- After discussion, the full Committee voted to submit a memo, modified from the draft as discussed during the meeting, to the Planning Board. Committee members Attanucci, Brown, and Manz abstained from the vote; all other members approved of the plan.
- In general, the draft memo notes that although the plan to renovate a headhouse at the Kendall/MIT MBTA station is generous, other commitments would better advance the main goals of the Committee. These commitments could include: subsidizing transit passes of workers and residents; providing real-time transit information displays above ground; ensuring that commuters pay for parking daily, not monthly; contributing to a transit enhancement fund should one exist in the future; and providing funding for studies and potentially pilots of new bus routes.
- Committee member John Attanucci presented work that had been done on a proposed "CT4" bus route, which would run from Sullivan, through Lechmere and Kendall, to Kenmore. The route would attract approximately 8-9,000 riders per day. It could be phased in over time, eventually offering ten minute headways during peak hours.
- Individual Committee members and members of the public are also able to submit comments to the Planning Board.

#### Bus Routing Charrette

Participants noted gaps in service and brainstormed new or modified bus routes to better serve Cambridge.

##### *Problems, questions, gaps in service:*

- Route 68 runs too infrequently and does not run late enough
- Need more one-seat rides into Cambridge
- Need more crosstown routes
- Need better Commuter Rail (West Station, Yawkey, etc.) connections to Kendall Square
- Route 83 doesn't quite go to Alewife
- Need bus trips to take children to Danehy Park after school and adults to the Fresh Pond area from other parts of the city. Routes to Fresh Pond mostly start at Harvard (not further east). There's a general need for one-seat rides to the Fresh Pond area from elsewhere
- Why does Route 74 deviate from Concord Avenue to loop around Blanchard and Bright Roads?

- Why doesn't Route 83 continue on Beacon St all the way to Porter Square?
- Bus routing and connections to future Lechmere station
- Need better connections from the routes serving West Cambridge (e.g., 71, 72, 73) to Alewife
- Need better connections to Assembly Row
- Bridges across the Charles serve as bottlenecks

*Potential improvements:*

Note that each idea was only briefly discussed. Some opportunities and challenges were identified, but a full analysis would need to be conducted before any ideas are recommended.

- Implement proposed Route CT4 (see description above), and extend it to Yawkey station to serve Commuter Rail users
- Extend Route 68 through Harvard Square, along Concord Avenue, and out to the Fresh Pond area
- Run Route 75 along Huron Ave for longer (instead of routing it up Fresh Pond Parkway to Concord Avenue)
- Have the 83 continue down Beacon to Porter, or reroute the 87 to serve this segment
- Improve the connection on Route 83 to Alewife station. For example, the route could continue down Rindge Avenue, turn left on Alewife Brook Parkway, and turn around at the rotary at Concord Avenue
- Identify a common routing for the routes that run through Cambridgeport
- Extend Routes 70 and 70A to Kendall Square
- Have the Route 1 in Harvard Square turn left on Dunster St and layover there. Then, the route could pick back up by turning left on Mt Auburn Street
- Run a route from Hynes Convention Center, down Massachusetts Avenue, to Kendall Square
- Have the last trip of the Route 91 wait for the last train of the night at Central Square
- Run a route that connects the Belmont Commuter Rail station to Alewife/Fresh Pond area

The Committee then discussed how to further this conversation. A weekend-long charrette was suggested, as was using academic and consultant resources to do further analysis. It was noted these and future ideas would tie in well to Cambridge's citywide planning process, Envision Cambridge, as well as the MBTA's service planning process. It's likely that during the normal course of work, individual ideas will be brought up and discussed by City staff and at Committee meetings.

### *Mt Auburn Street Bus Priority*

Committee member Arthur Strang discussed his ideas about bus priority on Mt Auburn Street, which include implementing a bus only lane during the morning commute hours along the complete 71 bus routing. (Note that the Route 71 and 73 buses share a common routing along Mt Auburn Street through Cambridge.)

*Information and discussion:*

- This work ties in to a couple of other ongoing or completed studies and processes: the Transit Service Analysis, completed for the City of Cambridge, which found some of the worst delay and reliability problems for Route 73 buses on Mt Auburn Street between Aberdeen Avenue and Coolidge Avenue, problems which also affect Route 71 buses and numerous private commuter shuttles; an ongoing study of the Fresh Pond Parkway and Mt Auburn Street area led by the Department of Conservation and Recreation; and the start of a discussion in neighboring Watertown about future construction on Mt Auburn Street.
- Mr. Strang proposed converting parking (where it exists) on the eastbound side of Mt Auburn Street to a bus only lane during the morning rush hour. He notes that there are challenges to implementing the bus only lane in certain stretches of Mt Auburn Street. These challenges include a Hubway station, parking in front of Mt Auburn Hospital, a taxi stand, and existing curb extensions. The Committee discussed these challenges, especially the issue of parking in front of the hospital, since the morning rush hour coincides with a shift change at the hospital, and is also a time when patients are stopping in for brief appointments.
- The Committee generally supports implementing bus priority in this corridor. Given some of these challenges, however, there seemed to be more support for piloting a bus only lane initially only in segments of the corridor where fewer challenges currently exist and where the benefit to transit users would be the greatest. The pilot could be expanded if successful and if the identified challenges could be addressed.

### Final Public Comment

- James Williamson noted that the turnaround for the Route 83 bus at Russell Field is often crowded with parked cars such that the bus gets stuck and can't make the turn. He also noted that users of the 70 and 64 at the layover location at University Park don't have shelter from the weather. Finally, he requests that the Route 1 bus stop in Harvard Square be moved further downstream, closer to the Square.

### Announcements, Events, and Updates

- Next month's Committee meeting will address transit signal priority and real-time transit information displays.
- The Fiscal and Management Control Board of the MBTA will be voting on the future of the Green Line Extension in April or May.
- On March 21, the Harvard Kennedy School will host an event called "MBTA Reform Progress Report." Visit this [website](#) for more information.

Adjourned at 7:30 pm