



MBTA Acting General Manager and Fiscal and Management Control Board
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116

January 23, 2017

To the Acting General Manager and Fiscal and Management Control Board:

I respectfully submit this letter from the City of Cambridge in support of the concept of providing overnight bus service. While we recognize the fiscal impacts of providing late night service on the MBTA, we believe this service to be critical to provide affordable and safe transportation options as well as support economic development. City staff have coordinated with the MBTA to assist in dissemination of both the electronic as well as paper surveys in hopes of reaching the population that is most disproportionately affected by the potentially higher costs of commuting, primarily late night and early morning shift workers, as well as customers to our businesses open after MBTA service now ends.

We are very pleased that the MBTA made a significant effort, partnering with cities and organizations, to carry out a survey in many languages, ensuring that decisions about future services arise from a comprehensive public process. We strongly urge you to prioritize understanding the needs of workers who might be disproportionately burdened by the cost of transportation in your analysis of the survey results.

A recent proposal to the MBTA includes a route that runs along Massachusetts Avenue through Cambridge; we encourage you to continue to consider routes that serve Cambridge, informed by the results of the survey. Additionally, if this service is designed to fill a need for affordable, accessible transportation options, we urge you to provide service that is as usable for all as routine bus service. For example, the service should not require smart phones, and the service should accept cash, use known vehicles that use marked bus stops, and operate according to a predetermined schedule.

Overnight service provided every day of the week on a fixed route and schedule, such as that proposed to the FMCB in September of this year,¹ would especially benefit late night and early morning shift workers, who are often disproportionately burdened by the cost of finding alternate methods of transportation (e.g., taxis, rides-hailing services). Overnight service also supports the restaurant and entertainment industries and employment sectors that provide services every night of the week, in many cases—not only on Fridays and Saturdays. For these reasons, we believe that fixed-route service with headways of an hour or less would be the core of an effective late night service. If another approach, or a mix of fixed service supplemented by on-demand service, is pursued, we support using clearly defined, predetermined measures to understand the effectiveness of the service, particular from the perspective of equitable accessibility and economic development goals.

Finally, we would like to support that no matter what the approach to providing late night service, that data be collected and shared at the finest grain of detail so that full analysis can be carried out to understand the impact of the service and inform future decisions.

The MBTA is a critical component of an equitable and sustainable transportation system that supports and strengthens our region. We look forward to continuing to work with the MBTA to better serve the users of our public transit system.

Very truly yours,

Louis A. DePasquale
City Manager

Cc: Stephanie Pollack, Secretary & Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Transportation

¹ [http://www.mbta.com/uploadedfiles/About_the_T/Board_Meetings/K.%20Expanded-service-hours%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.mbta.com/uploadedfiles/About_the_T/Board_Meetings/K.%20Expanded-service-hours%20(2).pdf)