

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES

Date, Time & Place:
MIT building 66, room 144
February 7, 2018, 5:30-7:30

Attendance

Committee Members

John Attanucci, Kelley Brown, Devin Chausse, Chantal Eide, Jim Gascoigne, Mark Jensen, Andrew McFarland, Arthur Strang, Saul Tannenbaum, Miles Taylor

City of Cambridge

Tegin Teich, Greg Hanafin, and Bridget Martin (Community Development), Adam Shulman (Traffic, Parking and Transportation)

Presenters, official entities, and members of the public

Andy Smith (MBTA), Katherine Adam (Denterlein), Adrian Gill (Adhoc), 3 members of the public were present

Committee Intros, administrative business, and updates

Committee members briefly introduced themselves.

There was an edit to the December meeting notes, changing the word “paths” on page 2 to “pass”. Meeting notes for the December and January meetings were approved after a motion, a second, and affirmative voice vote by TAC members.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Mount Auburn Bus Priority Pilot

Tegin Teich reviewed the discussion about the Barr Foundation-funded Mt. Auburn Bus Priority Pilot from the January Committee meeting. She introduced representatives from Denterlein and Adhoc, who will be helping the City with media relations and public outreach for the pilot.

Katherine Adam (Kat) explained the role of Denterlein and Adhoc in this process, which is to offer support to Cities as part of the BostonBRT initiative and help with community engagement. Their goal is to help demonstrate that this is not a “one and done” project. They want to bring together work from other grant recipients and other regional efforts to show how transit is improving more broadly. Adrian Gill added that they want to reach as many people as possible, and are developing strategies for influencing people to try the pilot improvements to bus service. Kat explained that at this meeting they want to talk through potential questions about the pilot with the Committee. She asked the Committee members who they thought were the key audiences for the pilot.

John Attanucci responded that the bus riders are a key audience. He was concerned about controversy around the project and objected to the use of the word “pilot.” Arthur Strang suggested that the Committee get in touch with the Watertown proponents who advocated for better bus service before the DCR Mt. Auburn Corridor Study started. Mark Jensen agreed that the word “pilot” gives the impression of it being too temporary. He said that it will be important to engage the neighborhoods around the project area.

Andrew McFarland offered the alternative view that the “pilot” language could be helpful in engaging riders to advocate for keeping the pilot in place. He suggested that business concerns need to be addressed, and that notices should be placed at the Mt. Auburn Hospital parking lot to let employees know about the pilot. Saul Tanenbaum noted that there may be objections to the project regardless of the terminology. He recommended that there be outreach to elected officials.

Kat asked the Committee if they were concerned that drivers would oppose for the project. Even though the DCR work will improve traffic flow overall, because one travel lane will be dedicated to buses (instead of a

parking lane), members were concerned about drivers' reactions. It was noted that it will be important to anticipate those objections and reactions and address them out front. It was also noted that the project start date is in the summer time during a period of less congestion.

Members discussed how removing a traffic lane from a four-lane road can actually make traffic flow more smoothly. For example, on Mass Ave in Arlington a travel lane was taken away to add a bike lane and this caused traffic to flow better. One member emphasized the need to communicate to people who will benefit or could benefit, rather than focusing on the people who will dislike the project.

The Committee then discussed the bicycle and pedestrian improvements included in the project. A new north side bike lane will be added on Mt. Auburn Street and the south side will be a bus/bike lane. The Mt. Auburn/Fresh Pond Parkway intersection will be improved for pedestrians and cyclists as part of the DCR short-term project that will be implemented at the same time as the pilot. Andrew M. noted that cyclists supported the bus/bike lane that was piloted in Roslindale.

Members then discussed the role of outreach to bus drivers. Saul said that outreach efforts should feature the infographics that show the differing capacity between buses and cars. Jim Gascoigne asked if there was a way to engage with bus drivers in a way that is convenient to them.

Devin Chausse asked if focus groups have been done with people from the surrounding neighborhoods and businesses, and said that outreach should also make use of social media and a pre-developed Q&A. Tegin responded that the City is working on the Q&A and is in the process of ramping up social media efforts. She talked about targeted outreach in the Strawberry Hill area. Arthur added that there should be engagement with the private schools in the area, and wondered if the bus lane and intersection projects should be marketed separately.

Kat asked the Committee to think about ideas for building momentum. Suggestions included:

- Using the video screens in subway stations for ads
- Creating before/after videos and using a hashtag
- Canvassing door-to-door in neighborhoods adjacent to the project

Real-time Sign Update

Greg Hanafin gave a brief update on the real-time bus arrival sign pilot. It was decided that the Committee would discuss this project in more depth at the March Committee meeting.

Project Prioritization and Implementation Plan

Tegin said that the City Manager is willing to meet with the Committee to discuss their priorities. This would likely consist of a small group from the TAC going to the City Manager this year, and in the future may include combined meetings with all of the transportation committees. John summarized some of the priorities he has identified:

- The Mt. Auburn Street bus priority pilot
- The use of the mitigation money for Kendall Square
- Developing an implementation plan

Additional Updates and Final Public Comments

Tegin announced that there are two upcoming joint committee meetings with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committees on February 26 and March 26.

Marc Ebuña (TransitMatters) brought up the idea of the Committee submitting a proposal for PARK(ing) Day, such as a floating bus stop or a real-time sign.

Andrew M. encouraged people to submit comments on MassDOT's I-90 DEIR, deadline February 9.

Adjourned at 7:30