

City of Cambridge

Transit Advisory Committee

Meeting Notes

Wednesday, January 9, 2018

Ballroom, Citywide Senior Center, 806 Massachusetts Avenue

Attendance (15 people)

Members (9) John Attanucci (Chair); Devin Chausse; Chantal Eide; Robert Fitzgerald; Jim Gascoine; Mark Jensen; Kristiana Lachiusa; Arthur Strang; Saul Tannenbaum; Alexander Taylor

City Staff (3) Tegin Teich, and Andrew Reker (CDD); Adam Shulman (TPT)

Others (3) Andy Smith (MBTA); 2 members of the public

This meeting of the Cambridge Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) began at approximately 5:35 PM. As the result of moving to Watertown, Mark Jensen (MJ) announced that this would be his last meeting as a member of the TAC. (Note: many thanks to Mark for his participation since 2017.) Tegin Teich (TT) opened the meeting with self-introductions by TAC members, city staff, and members of the public. TT then reviewed this meeting's planned agenda. John Attanucci (JA) asked about February meetings and potential updates from the Better Bus Project. Andy Smith (AS) stated that the MBTA expects to have BBP recommendations "go live" on January 22. [MBTA state at a following meeting that recommendations would be published online on January 28.] TT will follow up with BBP team on an update presentation from the BBP team.

Public comment

No members of the public made a comment.

Report: Transit Signal Priority in Cambridge

Adam Shulman (AdS) gave an update from the Traffic Parking and Transportation (TPT) Department on the transit signal priority systems in Cambridge. He outlined that in the past year, the largest part of TPT's work has been identifying and

evaluating a sufficiently robust communications link between the City of Cambridge and MBTA. AdS then stated that the location and type of communications link has recently been finalized between the City of Cambridge and the MBTA and the next step is to identify the software upgrades and code needed to allow for MBTA's bus location systems to communicate with the City of Cambridge's traffic signal control system and control center. This software development is in progress. In addition, AdS stated that the MBTA is executing a contract to develop transit signal operations plans for the entire Mass Ave corridor in Cambridge that will include identifying needed technology upgrades. Returning to the original intention behind this initiative, AdS stated that the City's effort has been focused on developing and deploying the most reliable transit signal priority system possible for the city. This has led to the vision of a "center-to-center" type transit priority system that involves communication between the City's traffic signal control system and the MBTA's operations center.

TAC members shared their concerns about:

- Scope creep with respect to the original participatory budgeting project
- Lagging timelines and project management
- Evaluation of travel time benefits from transit signal priority

AdS responded to state that the MBTA, as a partner, has also been focused on creating a system that works for all the municipalities in the region rather than create a custom system for each municipality. This has led to some additional delays but will also lead to a more robust system that allows for the MBTA to sustain a transit signal priority system. TT also stated that the City has a better understanding of the work required to complete this initiative than at the time of the original participatory budgeting initiative in 2016.

[Discussion: Transit Strategic & Action Plans Updates](#)

TT introduced the current version of the transit Implementation plan and outline. Responding to the introduction of the transit implementation plan, TAC members asked for:

- Project plans for each individual implementation item
- Information about partnerships

TT shared that previous “work plan” versions of this document had included more detailed project plans and information about required partnerships; however, that in the past few years the TAC and City staff have focused on higher-level updates rather than specific project plans.

TT then walked through the document focusing sharing updates for the first two sections. TAC had questions about the following topics:

- Ames Street shelter installations
- Involvement of relevant departments of the Commonwealth
- Enforcement of bus priority facilities
- Capital investment plans to enhance bus priority lanes
- Availability of KSTEP funding
- “CT4” demand estimates
- Grand Junction-adjacent development proposals
- City’s strategy on wayfinding and Central Square
- GLX bus service planning

Updates and announcements

Saul Tannenbaum (ST) shared an update on his work to investigate the non-disclosure agreements that municipal staff signed as a condition of working with the Green Line Extension design documents. ST wondered about the negative effect that the non-disclosure agreements would have on a robust public process for the Green Line Extension. ST stated that he is planning to continue to investigate.

Public comment

One member of the public, James Williamson (JW) made a comment suggesting a survey of the travel patterns of the members of the TAC and other regular participants.

JW also made a comment expressing concern about inaction on issues that he has raised in the past:

- Difficulties for buses on MBTA Route 83 to turn around at Russel Field
- Shelter design with “hostile” elements
- Noise and nuisances at Harvard Square

- Updated design of mezzanine at Harvard station
- M2 pass availability and harmonization with MBTA fares
- MBTA faregate operations for “reduced fare” passes
- Difficulty with changes to realtime announcements such as “stopped” terminology
- Issues with the design of transit screens
- Location of Route 1 bus stop at Harvard Square

Version Information

Draft: 1/23/2019 AR

Approval: 2/6/2019