

Transit Advisory Committee

October 2020

Abbreviated meeting summary

Attendance

Members	Present (11) John Attanucci, Devin Chausse, Matthew Coogan, Jim Gascoigne, Jackie Jones, Bill McAvinney, Sylvia Parsons, Katherine Rafferty, Arthur Strang, Saul Tannenbaum, Melissa Zampitella
	Absent (6) Joseph Beggan, Kelly Brown, Kristiana Lachiusa, Margaret McKenna, Robert Ricchi, Alexander Taylor
City staff (3)	Greg Hanafin; Andrew Reker (CDD); Adam Shulman (TPT);
Others (2)	Melissa Dullea (MBTA); 1 member of the public

Welcome and committee introductions

Andy Reker (AR) began the virtual meeting at 5:30 PM by welcoming members of the TAC, members of the public and presenters. AR gave a tour of the virtual space for people joining by application and telephone and shared some ground rules for virtual meeting participation. AR then turned the meeting facilitation over to John Attanucci, Chair (JA). TAC members introduced themselves.

Presentation: “Forging ahead”: MBTA scenario and service planning

Melissa Dullea (MD), MBTA, provided a PowerPoint presentation about the MBTA’s July 2021 schedule and a service analysis. She talked about the service analysis include trade-offs by mode and the MBTA public engagement plan. MD said the MBTA is expecting and planning for at least a \$300 million deficit beginning in July 2021.

TAC members asked the following questions, MD provided some initial responses

- *What percentage \$300 million is to the full MBTA budget?*
MD said the full budget is about \$1 billion.
- *What kind of cost savings would there be to reducing Red Line service?*
MD said that is a difficult question because it depends on multiple factors, such as ridership. There was a discussion about understanding ridership during COVID-19 by time of day. MD said all ridership is down about 40% over all hours in a day and about 60-70% down during peak times.
- *What input does the MBTA want from the public?*
MD said the most helpful input would be comments on the MBTA’s service adjustment methodology and how they should balance different conditions. JA said he was impressed with the thinking by the MBTA but would like to see actual savings numbers from alternative service

options to understand how to balance cost savings and impacts The MBTA should show the cost savings analysis to the public.

- *Has the MBTA advocated to the legislature or the federal government for additional emergency or special funding?*

MD said she can't speak to that but said they are planning for a scenario where funding doesn't fall from the sky.

- *Are hospitals considered to be important destinations as the MBTA considers bus route changes?*
MD said yes, they are considered.
- A TAC member commented that gas taxes should be raised.

The TAC also discussed how peer transit agencies are responding, how much sales tax is down, why the MBTA hasn't asked for money from the state, and about homeless people in shelters.

Presentation: Cambridge updates

AR reviewed ongoing City projects including the recently-implemented Inner Mount Auburn Corridor Safety Improvements project, River Street Reconstruction in planning, and Concord Avenue transit signal priority in planning and funding.

Adam Shulman presented an update on development projects in the City undergoing project review including two major projects – CambridgeSide Galleria and 325 Binney Street.

JA indicated he was most interested in the First Street and Second Street corridor study to be funded by the Cambridgeside 2.0 project and the bridge over the railroad tracks in the Alewife Area which he heard may be part of a development project in the Quadrangle.

JA talked about the TAC letter submitted to the City with comments on the Bicycle Safety Ordinance.

Public comment

A member of the public made a comment about recent negative experiences riding buses and the Red Line, including announcements that are too loud and impacts on service.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:10 PM

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