

February 4, 2021

Ms. Melissa Dullea
Senior Director of Service Planning
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
45 High Street
Boston, MA 02110

Dear Ms. Dullea,

Thank you for your briefing at the Cambridge Transit Advisory Committee meeting on January 13, 2021 regarding the MBTA's proposed Forging Ahead service reductions. The Committee will be forwarding some specific response comments to that briefing separately to you and the General Manager and FMCB, outlining its general and route-specific reactions and suggestions to the changes that you described. This letter is to follow-up our separate discussion during that meeting about our proposal to change the Central Square terminal routing of bus route 47.

Public comments from the initial River St. reconstruction project elicited many objections to removing Route 47 from its Mass Ave. terminal and start stops, as proposed by the MBTA and Cambridge planning staff. These objections came primarily from actual Route 47 riders transferring to and from the Red Line who simply do not want to walk to/from Mass Ave to the proposed new Green St. terminal stops as well as from smaller rider segments using various bus service combinations. These objections are borne out by the MBTA's origin-destination-transfer data that was analyzed by Cambridge staff as well as other observations showing:

- On an average weekday, about 36% (360) of all riders boarding Route 47 in Central Square transfer at the Mass Ave./Pearl St. stop from either the Red Line, Route 1, or Route 70 and 36% (295) of all folks alighting in Central Square from Route 47 transfer immediately to the Red Line or Route 1;
- Some smaller group of current bus riders at the Mass Ave/Pearl St. stop say they wait and take either Route 47 or Route 1 for the ride to the BMC area of Boston, depending simply on which bus is leaving first from that stop;
- Crossing Mass Ave. to access the northbound Red Line service and Route 1 towards Harvard is a harrowing and difficult pedestrian move, especially for elderly and disabled passengers; and
- The sidewalk paths from the Red Line to and from Green St. either through Carl Barron Plaza and especially on Pearl St. are crowded and generally not conducive to large numbers of pedestrian movements.

The TAC is suggesting that the MBTA/Cambridge pilot a new Route 47 routing right now and well in advance of the completion of the River St. project. This proposal actually improves service substantially for transferring Route 47 riders and enhances current MBTA layover/supervision practices at an insignificant additional deadhead routing cost. The attached figure shows the new proposed Route 47 routing (in red), changing the current Route 47 inbound to Central Square route to continue down Brookline Ave. to Mass. Ave., make a left and then stopping at the current Route 1 stop near Prospect

St. (right next to the Red Line access) as its last stop, then continue empty north on Mass Ave. to Pleasant St. where it can make a left for two short blocks and another left onto Franklin where it goes straight through for a final left onto Magazine St. to return for its first stop at the main Central Square stop where most folks now board. The City can designate curb space on Magazine St. for its layover, keeping those buses out of the busier areas on Mass. Ave. or Green St. and within sight of the Carl Barron Plaza supervisor.

Given the need to rebuild ridership post-pandemic and the faster running times now being experienced, right now is the perfect time to improve access to service on this important route to many Cambridge riders. This change will also help riders in the long term with the completion of the River St. reconstruction project.

Sincerely,

John P. Attanucci

John Attanucci, Chair
On behalf on the Cambridge Transit Advisory Committee

Figure 1. Diagram showing Transit Advisory Committee's proposal in red dashed lines

TAC Proposal for Route 47

- Review: TAC developed proposal for changing Route 47
- Motivations:
 - Shorter transfers and connections on Mass Ave, i.e. to Route 1 and Red Line

