



Presentation: Cambridge Bus Service Planning

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Welcome

Purpose

Get feedback from appointed members of the TAC, the City's "community experts", on City projects and MBTA initiatives

Outcomes

TAC to know the previous bus service planning ideas and community feedback; TAC to know next steps for subcommittees

Process

Presentation from City staff followed by discussion – we invite every TAC member to ask questions or make comments

Public to type in questions in zoom Q&A or speak verbal comments during public comment period



We are about to start evaluating and discussing MBTA's proposals in the BNR

MBTA announced that the Bus Network Redesign will kick-off public engagement on Monday May 15

- First virtual public meeting will be on Thursday, May 19 - Please register, attend, and participate
- Plan to have BNR team attend TAC meeting on Thurs., June 2

Tonight, we would like to review BNR and previous Cambridge outreach



What is being studied and how

Will propose a “new” system map, which means that:

- Changes will be over the entire MBTA bus service area – core and suburbs
- Transit priority (dedicated lanes and signal priority) are a core component
 - MBTA has committed to not adding new service on routes that lack sufficient bus priority
- MBTA is now proposing added bus service - mostly outside of rush hour (midday, evenings, weekends)

Data analysis used

- Travel data using anonymous location information from smartphones
- Additional information from surveys
- Does not use traditional formal 4-step transportation modeling



Review

MBTA Bus Network Redesign is trying to accomplish:

1. Equity first, **prioritizing needs of those who depend on buses** and need frequent reliable service
2. Most **frequent service in busy neighborhoods**
3. More **all-day service**
4. **New connections** to more places (including non-downtown)
5. **A simpler, easier-to-use** network



Previous discussion

We went through an exercise in November 2021 where we considered different bus network tradeoffs.

- Multiple parallel routes or more frequent route with fewer stops
- Deviations to serve destinations or more direct routes
- Many routes to many destinations or fewer routes with high frequencies
- Fewer express routes or more frequency on local routes
- Routes that match demand or consistent routing and destinations



Background on previous outreach

In 2018, the City of Cambridge engaged the public to clarify goals for bus service planning and to provide input into the MBTA's Better Bus Project (BBP) process.

We identified several priorities through this initiative. Presented below are some of the details from Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) priorities, public priorities, and relation of the feedback to to MBTA BBP Service Policy Goals.



Summary

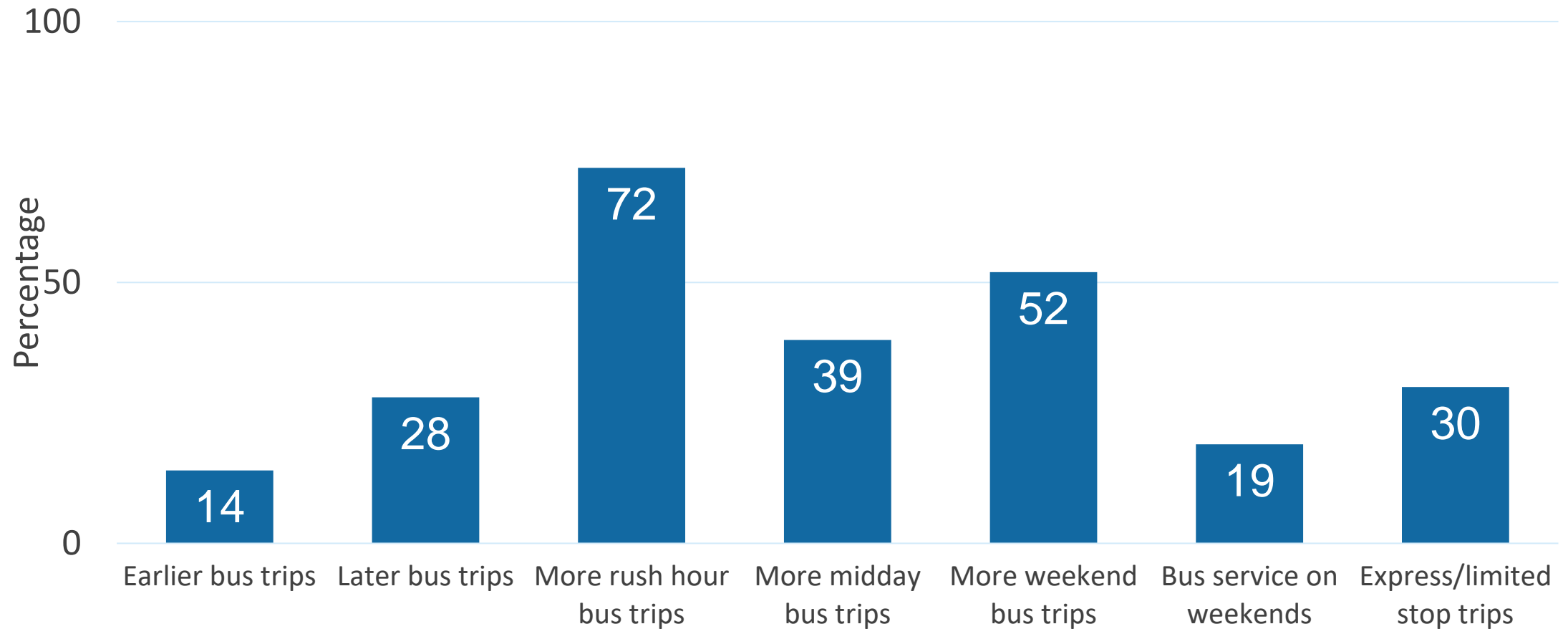
Asked public about important destinations, changes to schedules, changes to routes, and other important needs while riding bus

Feedback included:

- Suggestions on important destinations
- Suggestions on scheduling changes
- Desire for real-time bus information

Suggest a deeper dive for the MBTA project subcommittee

Changes to scheduling





1. There is a need in Cambridge for **more bus reliability and frequency.**

Run more frequent bus service, especially during rush hour

- Some interest in more frequent service on weekends, midday, and late service

Improve bus reliability overall

- Improve information through technology
- Implement real-time bus arrival information and displays at bus stops
- Improve reliability and accuracy of Transit App

Add bus priority infrastructure

Add new service in growing + underserved neighborhoods



2. There is a need in Cambridge for **better bus access, directness, and route simplification.**

Implement more one-seat rides between major neighborhood centers.

- Create routes with better connections to retail and services.
- Create routes that connect across bus hubs instead of all terminating at a hub.

Enhance directness of routing, access, and usability.

- Simplify + reroute to improve directness and access.

Pair routes that can be easily connected.

Accommodate multimodal travel with bus system.

- ex. Covered bike shelters near bus stops; better coordination with train arrival/departure times)

TRANSIT IDEAS MAP

The ideas on this map are intended to be Cambridge's input into MBTA's BBP.

The MBTA's Better Bus Project (BBP) is a short-term project to change bus service so that it meets MBTA's own service quality standards. The MBTA will formulate proposals and consult with the public about the proposed changes. Between now and 2020, MBTA bus riders can expect to see the Better Bus Project service changes and improvements.

The City of Cambridge with its Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) brainstormed ideas to improve bus service. To supplement the MBTA's outreach, the City reached out to Cambridge residents, workers and visitors asking for more ideas. The most popular ideas from this recent public outreach and the original ideas from the City's work with the TAC are presented on this graphic.

21 December 2018



Connections

- 1 Implement frequent bus service through East Cambridge connecting North Station, Lechmere Station, Kendall Square, and Harvard Square, e.g. extend #68 toward Lechmere/ North Station.
- 2 Implement bus service between Kendall Square and Porter/Davis via Hampshire Street.
- 3 Implement new service in West Cambridge to provide better connections to existing transit, neighborhoods, and shopping.
- 4 Implement service from Assembly Square to Harvard and/or Central Square.
- 5 Provide a bus connection to fill the existing transit gap between Rindge Avenue and Concord Avenue over the Alewife Brook Parkway Bridge.
- 6 Implement bus service from Harvard to Fresh Pond/Danehy Park area, e.g. extend #68 west.
- 7 Implement express service from Sullivan Square through Kendall Square to Boston/Yawkey Station.*

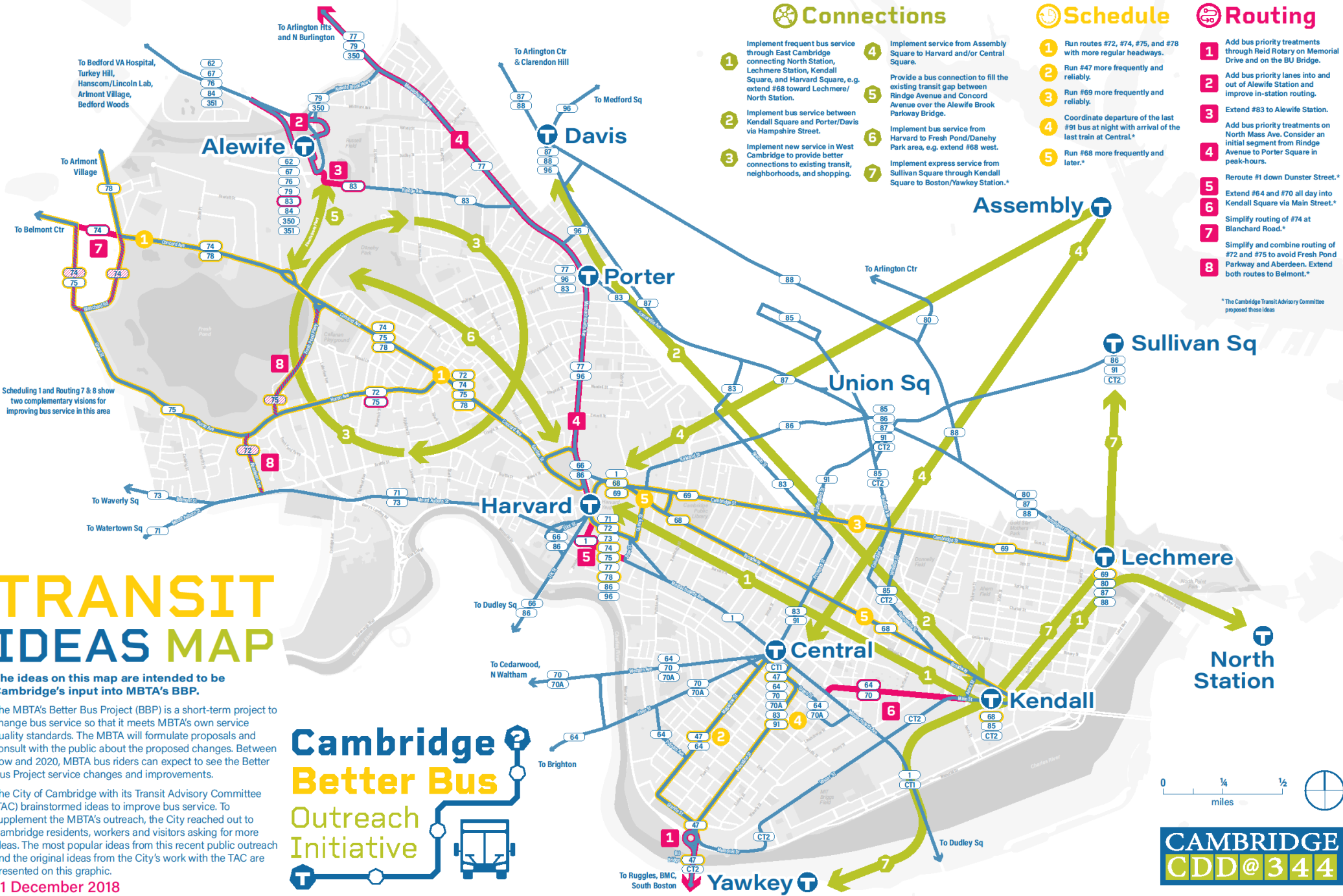
Schedule

- 1 Run routes #72, #74, #75, and #78 with more regular headways.
- 2 Run #47 more frequently and reliably.
- 3 Run #69 more frequently and reliably.
- 4 Coordinate departure of the last #91 bus at night with arrival of the last train at Central.*
- 5 Run #68 more frequently and later.*

Routing

- 1 Add bus priority treatments through Reid Rotary on Memorial Drive and on the BU Bridge.
- 2 Add bus priority lanes into and out of Alewife Station and improve in-station routing.
- 3 Extend #83 to Alewife Station.
- 4 Add bus priority treatments on North Mass Ave. Consider an initial segment from Rindge Avenue to Porter Square in peak-hours.
- 5 Reroute #1 down Dunster Street.*
- 6 Extend #64 and #70 all day into Kendall Square via Main Street.*
- 7 Simplify routing of #74 at Blanchard Road.*
- 8 Simplify and combine routing of #72 and #75 to avoid Fresh Pond Parkway and Aberdeen. Extend both routes to Belmont.*

*The Cambridge Transit Advisory Committee proposed these ideas





These priorities were identified from:

- City of Cambridge / TAC Transit Ideas Map (see next slide)
- 2018 Memo from the City of Cambridge to MBTA Better Bus Project Team
- Prioritization list based on outreach
- Previous TAC meeting presentations discussing these principles



MBTA or City implemented some of the proposals in the Ideas Map

- Routing ideas
 - #2 near Alewife – inbound has been implemented, outbound being discussed as part of IQHQ development
 - #4 on North Mass Ave – some sections of bus lanes by City
 - #5 near Harvard Square – Implemented in Better Bus Project (Mar 2022)
 - #7 and #8 in West Cambridge by MBTA
- Schedule ideas
 - #1 – Implemented with Routing #7 and #8 in Better Bus Project by MBTA



Some of the proposals in the Ideas Map remain unrealized

- Routing ideas
 - #1 Bus priority at the BU Bridge
 - #3 83 Bus to Alewife – No clear routing
 - #6 Main Street
- Schedule ideas
 - Most ideas were not implemented
- Connection ideas
 - Many ideas were not implemented
 - #2 – Further feedback after 2018 revealed North Cambridge riders desiring connection with Central Square, instead of Kendall
 - #3 #4 and #5 – Desire to connect with shopping or other non-work destinations



Progress since 2018

- Staff has been working on including bus priority measures in projects throughout the city
 - “Inner” Mount Auburn Cycling Safety Project
 - South Mass Ave Bus Priority Project
 - North Mass Ave Cycling Safety Ordinance Project
 - Belmont Street Reconstruction
 - River Street Reconstruction
- Previous pilot projects – Mount Auburn St Bus Priority + original South Mass Ave Corridor Safety Improvements
- Further outreach is planned with the public later in May and into June on thoughts about bus priority – suggest City project committee participate in this outreach initiative

Thank you for participating in this Transit
Advisory Committee meeting.

Stay healthy and well.

Thank You