

Transit Advisory Committee

March 2025

Abbreviated meeting summary

Attendance

Members

Present (20)

In-person (9) Andrew Zhou, Arthur Strang, Bill McAvinney, Ian Hatch, Jackson Moore-Otto, Matthew Kramer, Omriqui Thomas, Patrick Delaney, Sandhya Ramakrishnan

Remote (11) Annalisa Bhatia, Clyve Lawrence, Craig Tateronis, Devin Chausse, Keisha Greaves, Matt Martin, Matthew McCominsky, Melissa Zampitella, Miles Robinson, Nick Lessin, Pete Septoff

Absent (3): David Rangazviz, Jim Gascoigne, Katherine Rafferty

City staff (2)

Andrew Reker, Nika Lea Tomicic (CDD)

Others (4)

Adam Kamoune, Amanda Bright, Michael Foglio (MBTA); 1 member of the public

Note: CDD = Community Development Department; TPT = Traffic Parking and Transportation Department; MBTA = Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

Welcome and committee introductions

Andy Reker (AR) began the virtual meeting at 6:05PM by welcoming members of the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC), members of the public and presenters. AR gave a tour of the virtual space for people joining by application and telephone and shared ground rules for virtual meeting participation.

Nika Lea Tomicic (NLT) then conducted a roll call of the members of the Transit Advisory Committee – 18 members were present, 5 were absent.

Presentation: Red Line Updates

AR then introduced MBTA Staff who gave an update on Red Line projects. Adam Kamoune (AK), Amanda Bright (AB), and Michael Foglio (MF) introduced themselves to the committee

MF shared updates on the Red Line

- MF is Deputy Chief of Stations for MBTA
- The MBTA's current initiatives are to:
 - Understand current station conditions
 - Become more expedient/efficient
 - Establish state of good repair for stations/facilities

- Develop internal depth – dynamic work teams, build institutional knowledge to prepare for long-term projects/improvements
- The MBTA's focus on preventative maintenance & inspection program is to
 - Identify and address deferred maintenance
 - What are the immediate and future plans for maintenance
 - Examples:
 - Porter Square water intrusion
 - Built a trough to redirect water to drains
 - Thinking about immediate mitigation and long-term solutions for problems like this
 - Pump rooms
 - Restored/repared, proactive inspection and maintenance plans developed

TAC members had the following questions

- Where is the water put after being pumped out of stations?
 - The water enters the municipal storm sewer system
- Could you please elaborate on dynamic teams?
 - These are “Composite Gangs,” that is, groups of workers from different groups of trades that are grouped together. This means that there's little time between work done by the different trades and craftworkers – often they're part of the same “composite gang”. This is so that work can be done quickly using these different trades to do repair and restoration projects.
- How long are preventative measures are in place?
 - Measures have been in place for about 9 months, still establishing protocols for station inspections. Been able to perform station inspections at least twice so far per station.
- Uniformity of platform gaps are inconsistent. An example is at Charles/MGH – gap is wide, tactile strip is uneven and another is at Central – gap size is inconsistent along platform, between trains.
 - We are definitely looking at these. Rub rail installs have helped minimize gaps and inspection protocols being developed to check gaps on a schedule.
- Follow-up: In design of new stations, please include non-slip floor materials.
 - Working with custodial vendors to ensure safe floor conditions. Testing some mats at (non-Red Line) stations.
- Will the result of team development be less dependence on consultants?
 - We would like to see that, want to bring a lot of skills and knowledge in-house at MBTA, establish good training programs for knowledge transfer
 - By doing things in-house we can lower cost per project, cover more projects on the same budget. There's pride associated with station quality, and in-house teams that can improve the stations.
- Are the panels that fell in Harvard in any other stations?
 - They are in other stations, we do daily inspections, we will repair them if defects are noticed
- Is there a way for the public to see what issues are being addressed in stations?

- Not sure if there's anything public facing. Best to report to MBTA customer service center. Station related issues get routed to MF's team. Looking at long term solutions for each type of issue.
- Bringing repairs in-house like this is very important, thank you for doing this. Do you have the resources to get ahead of the backlog of deferred maintenance?
 - Doing the best we can with our resources.
 - We don't receive as much funding as we really need, result of loss of trust in the T. We could use funding in terms of billions of dollars to fix elevators/escalators across the system. Need to rebuild trust with proven work delivered, get more funding, then take on more projects.

AK presented updates on construction schedule planning

- AK reminded the members of the TAC of the metaphor he used last year: had to do a lot of painful work last year (2024) to bring the tracks back to where they need to be kind of like some heavy dental work; future years will be focused on regular maintenance that is less disruptive focusing on enhanced service reliability and safety
- Continuing this trend of improvement in 2025
- Set up annual program maintenance
 - Communicating planned service outages so public is aware of upcoming interruptions well in advance
 - Regular maintenance will be less intrusive than TIP
 - Doing bridge work on commuter rail lines
 - Accessibility upgrades: entrances, platforms, elevators
 - Emphasis on green line improvements
 - Real-time information improvements to provide train timing information to customers
 - Public outreach won't be as robust as TIP, but will still provide info in-station, on app/website

TAC members had the following questions:

- Is there a date for automatic train protection controls on the green line? (preventing collisions)
 - It's in progress, being tested in phases along with existing green line shutdowns
- If I report something on MassConnect, does that get forwarded to the MBTA?
 - Reports are forwarded to the appropriate agency but this method is much slower than contacting MBTA directly.
 - 3200 number and online support are very robust for MBTA reports. A heat ticket is generated for each report, gets forwarded to the appropriate team. Reports in this way skip many intermediate steps.
 - There's also an all-inclusive form for reports, our team gets them every day, we make sure we get the right team on it to correct it as quickly as possible.

Discussion: TAC work plan and nomination of TAC officers

AR introduced updates on the TAC work plan

- As a reminder, this is updated once per year AR's previous notes are lost! Starting over today.
- Can remove old items, add new items, modify existing items
- TAC does a quick overview together of the TSP Implementation Plan to make sure all members have some familiarity.

TAC members made some suggestions and had the following questions, as follows:

- Some things fall into a category of "not completed, but not current". Should we add a category for that?
 - AR: We can do this to make it more clear which items are priorities, which items should just be monitored.
- Where can TAC members best exercise their efforts?
 - AR: Monitoring large development projects to provide comments at opportune moments. Telling MBTA service planners how to make some desirable changes. In street design projects, advocate for transit as part of the project.
- What's the deadline for reviewing this?
 - AR: Next month's meeting
- Regarding station maintenance & brightening, can TAC take actions on this?
 - AR: We've done station visits in the past, taken notes, provided feedback to MBTA. We can do this again.
- More accessible transportation for disability community
 - AR: We can definitely include this.
- is there an explanation for acronyms in the document
 - AR: We have a glossary that we can share with the TAC.
- MBTA equipment made in China will be subject to tariffs. Also, Cambridge should have a sense for how budget items will be affected.
 - AR: We're definitely monitoring it and the city is working on getting an idea of the scope of the impacts across the city.
- TAC often notes they received a report on various projects. Is there a place to find past presentations to TAC?
 - AR: Available online on Transit Advisory Committee website, meeting materials archive.
- Homework for TAC members: review the TSP Implementation Plan. AR will review feedback.

AR introduced a review of Officer elections

- No current officers, seeking all officers - Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary
- Can self-nominate or nominate others. Need to have a vote during a scheduled meeting that's an agenda item. Need a quorum to vote. Simple majority of people present is required.
- Candidates to write brief statements of interest in the positions. Elections to be held at next month's meeting.
- Jackson nominated for Chair, Matthew Kramer and Matthew Mccomiskey nominated for Vice Chair, Andrew Zhou nominated for Secretary.
- A TAC member noted that it would be nice to have at least one woman as an officer.

Presentation: City and State Project Updates

NLT introduced City and state project updates – presentation slides have been posted to the TAC webpage for more detailed information.

- Concord Ave transit signal priority
 - Work in progress, developing signal and controller logic.
- Bus stops moving at Central Square bus terminal
 - Bus stop closures and construction scope detailed.
 - AR: Notices have been posted at stations.
- Aberdeen Avenue will have separated bike lanes installed this spring.
 - No bus stops to be moved/modified
 - Omriqui: Will bike lanes interfere with buses with left-hand boarding?
 - AR: stops will not be in the median, so not left-handed
- Mass Ave Partial Construction
 - Open house in late March
 - Will create separated bike lanes and street design modifications
 - Sandhya: what part of Mass Ave is this?
 - AR: This project is between Harvard and Porter.
- Mass Ave Planning Study
 - Vision plan between Alewife Brook Parkway and Cambridge Common
 - Upcoming meeting on March 13th
 - Bill: These two projects overlap our walk, are our notes somewhere for new members?
 - AR: Yes, we can send those out.
 - Omriqui: My grandfather gets confused with bus lanes while driving at night, is there a plan to repaint them to make them brighter?
 - AR: Yes, the city may need help from Eversource because of their utility work the street has been dug into.
- Real time transit screens
 - 10 locations proposed
 - Focused on neighborhood centers
- New bus shelter installation in progress
 - Part of KSTEP
 - Ames St/Main St
 - Installed in spring 2026
- Alewife station access road
 - Evaluation complete on feasibility of adding separate bus lane
- Selected MBTA projects
 - North station Draw One project: environmental analysis draft published in December 2024
 - Question: Is there any follow-up on commitment to bike-ped crossing?
 - AR: No tangible updates.
 - Alewife Commuter Station ridership assessment

TAC members had the following questions:

- Regarding the Concord Ave project, that would just be making the light green for transit vehicles, not a queue jump?
 - AR: Correct, just a signal timing update.
- Suggestion for signal at rotaries so buses can go first
- Has anyone talked to Bruins/Celtics to push for the bike-ped crossing to push for it?
- How can I learn about projects like these so I can provide thoughtful input?
 - AR: We may send these updates before TAC meetings going forward. Most items are mentioned in monthly newsletter.

Announcements

- Next TAC meeting April 3rd

Public comment

No members of the public chose to speak during this time.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:35PM

Version Information

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