# Transit Advisory Committee October 2025 Abbreviated meeting summary

## Attendance

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| **Members** | ***Present*** (14): Clyve Lawrence, Devin Chausse, Ian Hatch, Jim Gascoigne, Matt Martin, Matthew McCominskey, Miles Robinson, Nick Lessin, Patrick Delaney, Pete Septoff, Sandhya Ramakrishnan, Andrew Zhou (Secretary), Matthew Kramer (Vice Chair), Jackson Moore-Otto (Chair) |
| | ***Absent*** (7): Annalisa Bhatia, Arthur Strange, Bill McAvinney, Craig Tateronis, David Rangavi, Katherine Rafferty, Melissa Zampitella |
| **City staff** (2) | Andrew Reker, Marcella Cannatti (DOT) |
| **Others** (3) | Alexandra Hallowell (MBTA), Members of the public (2) |
| **Note:** | DOT = Department of Transportation |

## Welcome and Committee Introductions

Jackson Moore-Otto (JMO) opened the virtual meeting at 6:01 PM by welcoming attendees, members, and presenters. JMO reviewed the agenda and announced that between the presentation and the city updates, committee members will have opportunity to share feedback and thoughts on the Alewife walkthrough.

Secretary Andrew Zhou (AZ) took roll – 13 members were present, 8 were absent.

JMO asked the committee to approve the last meeting's minutes: 13 votes yes, 1 vote abstains.

## Presentation – MBTA Automated Camera Enforcement

JMO introduced Alexandra Hallowell (AH), the presenter from the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA).

AH introduced "Make Way for Buses," the MBTA's automated camera enforcement program. AH explained that a recently passed state legislation allows for the MBTA, the Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) and municipalities to use cameras to enforce regulations on parking in bus stops and bus lanes. AH said that the final version of regulations will be published soon and will become law soon after.

AH explained that the law requires automated camera enforcement programs to be revenue neutral. This means that the MBTA, RTAs, and municipalities cannot use any fines as a source of revenue. The fines may cover operation of the program however, all fine income will instead go to the Commonwealth Transportation Fund.

AH explained the reasoning for increased enforcement. First, AH reviewed ridership statistics. This included: 40% of MBTA ridership is on the bus. Bus riders are the most likely to rely on the T. AH also noted that blocked bus stops are accessibility barriers. This is because blocked stops make it impossible for people with disabilities to get on and off the bus.AH said that there are a number of reasonable exceptions for the automated enforcement. Some examples are specifically vehicles that pull into a bus lane or stop to make way for emergency vehicles. They also said that there would be no double ticketing, if a vehicle was already ticketed by a municipality for the violation.

AH said that the MBTA proposed warnings for the first offense. They pointed out that some drivers may not be familiar with bus infrastructure. This would mean that warnings would serve to encourage drivers to learn and do better in the future. The law also allows the MBTA to issue warnings for situations like new bus lanes and situations where enforcement can be "consistent."

AH, then, introduced the fine schedule which was set by the state legislation. The fines for occupying a bus lane range from $25 to $125. There will be different fines for vehicles with personal registrations and commercial registrations. Fines will increase based on number of fines within a "lookback" period. AH mentioned that the lookback period for commercial vehicles will be one year. This is longer than the lookback period for personal vehicles, which is 180 days. In addition, the initial fines for commercial vehicles are higher. Separately, any bus stop violation is $100. This is also set by state law.

AH stated that the state law has data privacy protections. They acknowledged concerns about the use of camera enforcement to track or surveil people. In response to this, the MBTA has asked vendors to use certain data protections. This includes a regulation that photos and videos cannot be used for any other purpose other than bus lane and bus stop enforcement except by court order. In addition, captured images will not be considered public records, cannot be used to identify the operator, passengers, or contents of a vehicle, and must be deleted after 120 days unless retention is required by law or for an enforcement action.

AH stated that the MBTA is in the process to procure bus-mounted cameras for automated enforcement. AH also said that all incidents will be reviewed by a human before a violation is sent. This means that the program will not rely on artificial intelligence (AI). The violation will be sent by mail and a process will be available for appeal. As a reminder, there will also be an education program before fines go live.

AH then introduced the MBTA's plans for launch and roll out. The first garage will be Southampton. Then, the MBTA will roll out on a garage-to-garage basis. The first launch would be expected in 2026 subject to contract negotiations.

AH summarized the launch roadmap, noting that regulations have been drafted and adopted, and RFI and RFPs have been issued. Looking forward, a technology pilot will begin at the end of year 2025 to determine who will win the contract, and then a public education period to a soft launch in spring 2026, and expansion in the rest of 2026.

TAC members had the following comments and questions. Presenter responses are below the question in italic text.

> A member asked about the purpose of a lookback period for bus lane fines?

*AH: We would have liked to have scaled fines for both, but bus stop fines are already established previously. In conversations with other camera-enforcement programs at other agencies, the MBTA learned that most offenders do it once and then never again. An example is that San Francisco found that 5-10% of offenders were responsible for 70-80% of the fines. The MBTA hopes that warnings and a lookback period will encourage offenders to reconsider behavior. Allowing for a lookback period allows for a reset to lower fines with good behavior.*

One member asked about options are for changing the fines if the current enforcement strategy is not effective?

*AH said that the fine amounts are set by the legislature for the entire Commonwealth. This means that any change would require action by the legislature. Separate from the price of the fine, the MBTA has some additional abilities to encourage enforcement. If individuals do not consistently pay fines, the MBTA has the power to freeze vehicle registration after 5 unpaid fines accrue. AH expects that the MBTA would primarily use this power against owners of registered commercial vehicles. AH mentions that the logistical headache for businesses caused by frozen vehicle registration may drive businesses to change their behavior.*

One member asked about the ability for a city to use the same vendor as the MBTA to start enforcing bus lane rules?

*AH said that the regulations don't dictate a process for this. However, the MBTA has reached out to municipalities to coordinate. The MBTA will focus first on an effective, good rollout of the bus-mounted camera enforcement system. The MBTA expect that data from the bus-mounted program can guide coordination with the municipalities for challenging areas for enforcement. AH acknowledged that the MBTA does not have the ticketing infrastructure that other municipalities do, so the MBTA will continue to closely work with the cities if needed.*

A member asked how the camera system will be triggered to take a picture?

*AH said that operators will not be triggering the automated camera system. For history, bus operating leadership was very insistent on this. This means that the system is fully automated. Specifically, there are two cameras in the automated systems.One camera captures an image of the context of the violation, and another specifically designed to capture and "read" the license plate. The automated camera system is designed to work together to identify infractions.*

# Presentation – EZRide

JMO introduced Jim Gascoigne (JG), executive director of the Charles River Transportation Management Association and TAC member.

JG started with a brief history of EZRide. EZRide started in 2002 mostly as commuter service. Mid-day and weekend service was added starting April 14, 2025. EZRide is privately funded, open to the public, and fare-free. JG stated that 2025 ridership is projected to be more than 400,000 passengers, and that ridership is slowly approaching pre-pandemic levels.

JG then showed a month each of ridership data for September 2023, 2024, and 2025. JG noted that evening ridership has expanded to be higher than morning ridership, and mid-day ridership is now double what it used to be.

JG said that EZRide was created to fill a gap in service and provide a one-seat ride from North Station to Kendall. The service also serves as a circulator for the Green and Red lines. JG said that some of EZRide's passengers are coming from the Orange line via the Community College and Charlestown stops.

JG noted the importance of significant pilot project funding for the success to EZRide's recent expansion. The funding came from both the state and from local businesses, especially Cambridgeside. JG also mentioned the importance of long-term operator contracts. The current EZRide operator is on a 7-year contract. Shorter commitments may drive contractors to use older or worse quality equipment or to charge higher prices.

JG also noted the city of Cambridge's role in EZRide's success, especially with the parking freeze and other local regulation that have built a "market" of ridership. The EZRide model has survived some significant economic strains, including the 2008 financial crisis and the 2020 pandemic, in part thanks to those policies.

EZRide held a launch event in April for the launch of mid-day service at Cambridgeside.

Meeting participants had the following comments and questions. Presenter responses are below the question in italic text.

> AR asked how much return to office is a driving force in ridership? What other factors are affecting EZRide's ridership?
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> *JG said they don't have specific numbers, but it seems to them that Kendall Square is far livelier and busier than it was a few years ago. With expanded EZRide service, the system is more consistent and better suited to serve individuals coming and going at odd times. JG mentioned the bleak press regarding the future of Kendall, but stated that Kendall seems as lively as ever.*
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> One member thanked JG for the EZRide service and the presentation.
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> *JG emphasized that despite being a private service, EZRide is effectively public transportation, especially because it is fare-free to riders.*

## City, MBTA, and TAC Updates

JMO then turned it over to city staff for city and state project updates.

Marcella Cannatti (MC) began by reminding committee members that update slides were sent in advance and then began to discuss new data on the 74 and 78 routes along Concord Ave.

MC stated the city analyzed route data for stops between Blanchard Road and Alewife Brook Parkway. MC showed a chart summarizing ridership data. The chart indicated that the majority of Route 74 and 78 ridership comes from stops along Concord Ave. MC then showed a chart of the median and 90th percentile total runtimes for the corridor. These charts illustrated that the 90th percentile runtime is consistently a couple minutes longer than median runtimes. Most of the variability in route timing is concentrated around the rotaries, with significant jumps between

the median and 90th percentile runtimes on segments near the rotaries in both the inbound and outbound routes.

> One member asked if the data is being used to support or drive any particular projects?

> *MC said that it is in part being used as context for the HealthPeak development so the city can understand how transit signal priority could be used to mitigate congestion on this corridor.*

> *AR said that although neither route is part of the Bus Network Redesign, the city could do some repaving/road reconstruction in anticipation for future traffic with the new development. The data can also be used by the TAC to inform future discussions with HealthPeak.*

AR then asked if there were any questions from the committee members on the state of any future projects

No questions.

JMO then asked members if there was any feedback on the Alewife walking tour.

> One member thought the walking tour was really helpful and expressed support for doing more site visits in the future.

> One member said they liked that members of the community were in attendance and agreed that the committee should do more walking tours in the future.

> One member asked if there is an opportunity to taking photos or videos for non-attending members, or to potentially even taking notes?

> JMO agreed that this was a good idea and that the committee should look into doing that in the future.

## Public comment

No public comment.

JMO closes the meeting at 7:14 PM.

## Version Information

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