

# Transit Advisory Committee

## June 2026

### Abbreviated meeting summary

#### Attendance

**Members**                      **Present** (14)

In-person participation (2): Andrew Zhou, Jackson Moore-Otto

Remote participation (12): Annalisa Bhatia, Arthur Strang, Bill McAvinney, Clyve Lawrence, Devin Chausse, Ian Hatch, Jim Gascoigne, Katherine Rafferty, Matt Martin, Matthew McCominsky, Melissa Zampitella, Patrick Delaney

**Absent** (6): Craig Tateronis, Miles Robinson, Nick Lessin, Pete Septoff, Sandhya Ramakrishnan, Matthew Kramer

**City staff** (1)                      Andrew Reker, Fernando Aguiluz

**Others** (1)                      Logan Casey (MBTA), Sandy Johnston (MBTA), Laura Gilmore (MBTA), 4 members of the public

**Notes:**                      DOT = Department of Transportation

#### Welcome and Committee Introductions

Jackson Moore-Otto (JMO) opened the meeting at 6:08 PM by welcoming members and presenters to the meeting. JMO went over the meeting etiquette, gave an overview of the physical room and space, and gave instructions for members of the public joining remotely and in-person. JMO reviewed the purpose of the meeting, the code of conduct, and read through the agenda to for the meeting.

Andrew Zhou (AZ) took roll - 14 were present, 6 were absent during roll call.

JMO moved to approve the May 2026 minutes, after corrections. 14 members voted yes.

Corrections included:

- Public commenter in May also referred to the challenges of precipitation, heat, and inclement weather when routes are changed and require new transfers
- A typographical error which will be corrected in the final version of the meeting summary

#### Presentation: Focus 2050 Overview

JMO introduced the members of the MBTA staff in attendance to present on the MBTA's Focus 2050 plan, then gave the floor to Focus 2050 Project Manager Logan Casey (LC)

LC began by introducing the MBTA team members involved in the Focus 2050 plan and then gave a brief overview of what was covered in the MBTA's presentation.

LC gave the floor to Sandy Johnston (SJ) to introduce Focus 2050. SJ described Focus 2050 as the MBTA's long term plan for the development of the MBTA and the latest update to the Program for Mass Transportation. The goals of the Focus 2050 project are:

- Helping guide future MBTA short-term goals
- Connecting MBTA's strategic plans to the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan)
- Identifying fiscal and capital difficulties
- Predicting shifting trends in climate and ridership.

MBTA GM Eng wants Focus 2050 to focus on “no regrets” investments. The MBTA is currently in the public engagement phase of the project, and wants the project to demonstrate the impact of the MBTA to the public.

SJ then summarized the 18-month timeline for Focus 2050. The project will include:

- Gathering feedback and comments on the state of the system
- Looking at future trends inside and outside the MBTA that might shape the system,
- Asking what riders want to see
- Prioritization of investments
- Planning for the future

SJ then explained the major initiatives that the MBTA is actively working on, including:

- The Green Line “Core Capacity” system, which is focused on improving the Green Line from an old trolley system and turning it into a proper light rail system
- Improvements and expansions to water transportation
- Rail modernization for the region

The MBTA recently announced they will be developing an updated strategy for regional rail. They are working on identifying both short-term and long-term improvements that can be made to transform the existing commuter rail system. Public engagement for the rail modernization plan has not begun yet, but there is a website for the project, and an email address folks can reach out to.

SJ then gave the floor back to LC, who went over the strategic plan for development of the Focus 2050 plan. The plan will be developed in two phases. The first half of the first phase, which is public engagement section with riders, municipalities, and other stakeholders, is almost complete. The second phase will involve the development of new scenarios based on feedback heard in the first phase.

LC talked about what has already happened for the Focus 2050 public comment phase. The project team has held multiple popup events at MBTA stations, ride-alongs on the Commuter Rail, meetings with stakeholders and transit advocates (LC specifically mentioned TransitMatters), and they have received 600+ feedback forms, 80+ emailed comments, and other comments submitted through other MBTA public engagement phases (such as for the CIP). LC then briefly discussed the public meetings and open houses held for Focus 2050, noting that feedback was received at the recently approved CIP meetings. LC summarized a brief selection of comments heard during this period: requests for faster buses, more comfortable rides, better accessibility and connectivity, etc. LC noted that the comments align

well with the project's initial assumptions, and that there is strong public desire for a modernized MBTA.

LC discussed other sources of public comment: customer support tickets, board meeting comments, CIP plan comments, etc.

LC then summarized the completed work for Focus 2050. So far, the project team has:

- Reviewed the progress made since Focus40,
- Reviewed major MBTA initiatives
- Analyzed general trends in public transportation and Boston in general
- Reviewed the MBTA's strategic goals and current conditions, etc.

The website for Focus 2050 is updated regularly and is the best source to get more information about Focus 2050 as it progresses.

LC gives the floor back to SJ to cover. SJ states that the MBTA's strategic goals and objectives include:

- Bringing the system back to a state of good repair
- Improving communication with users
- Expanding the workforce
- Expanding service
- Improving the system's resilience
- Helping to drive ridership up and away from driving
- Being open about the MBTA's costs and investments

The MBTA said its goals are in alignment with the transportation goals of the state, especially in increasing access to housing, improving economic development, environmental sustainability, and personal mobility and access.

The MBTA is focused on proactively reaching out to regional partners and municipalities Sandy Johnston and Tony Collins are the people to reach out with questions or comments from the city.

Committee members had the following questions and comments. Presenter answers are in italics.

- Are electric trains with no catenary poles a real possibility for commuter rail in the next decade?
  - *Battery-electric units are currently in development from the MBTA, but the electrification of the entire commuter rail will be a multi-decade project*
- Will scenario planning also consider housing and density impacts from the MBTA Communities Act?
  - Yes.
- What is the strategic, long term, funding plan for the MBTA?
  - *Prior MBTA plans have evaluated the MBTA's financial situation.*
- Is the MBTA considering connections to other RTAs and state transit agencies?
  - *Yes, the MBTA is working closely with other RTAs. SJ said he is working on helping integrate other RTAs with the commuter rail schedule*

- Is this the first time this plan is being developed in-house at the MBTA?
  - *Yes. There will be some consultants involved, but the project itself is being led and developed by the MBTA for the first time in decades. Prior projects were put together by MassDOT and consultancy agencies, but the MBTA feels it is important now that this work is done in-house. Consultants are being used for survey work, outreach, and scenario planning.*
- What's an appropriate type of comment that would be helpful at this moment, versus the next time we hear back about the specific strategic scenarios?
  - *SJ: The focus of this phase is to generate a list of ideas, so it is pretty open ended. For example, a circle line has been one of the ideas that we have heard the most from the public so far. If folks want to throw out specific project ideas, we'd be open to that, but right now we'd really like "general" sections of investment*
  - *LG: Very broad feedback would be the most helpful, although any feedback is helpful. Focus on specific ideas will start to come around in the fall*
- Regarding station safety, with the focus of making sure the system is in good repair, it's also important to look at improving visibility in stations, especially at night. For example, Quincy Center's commuter rail platform is rather dark
  - *We've heard this a lot in public engagement, and the MBTA has just established a new stations team that should start to progress that work.*
- WMATA (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority) recently advanced many modernization projects, namely platform screen doors – can the MBTA plan for future automation of the system? Especially as rolling stock on the system – notably the Blue Line – is aging, this is a good time to think about it.
  - *LC: Yes, there was a request for information on platform screen doors, and they were included as part of Focus40. Automation is something that will be considered in Focus 2050.*
  - *SJ: Agreed – this is something that will be considered but it will take a lot of investment.*

JMO then thanked the MBTA staff members for attending.

## Discussion: TAC Focus 2050 Outreach

JMO stated that in the past the TAC provided formal input on community engagement processes like this. This is an opportunity for the advisory committee to engage residents and provide localized input to the MBTA.

JMO opened the floor for any discussion on potential actions. There was no comment. AR then asked committee members if this was the first time that they had heard of Focus 2050 process. One member said they had heard of it and knew it was occurring, but did not know that the MBTA is in the public engagement phase. They noted that the number of comments gathered via email and letters seems rather low. Several other members agreed with that sentiment.

AR added that long-term planning is quite hard to get people out to comment on, but the low level of awareness for this specific phase of the project is a little surprising.

## Advocacy: Charles River Crossings

JMO asked if there were any comments or amendments to the TAC's letter on Charles River Crossings, and there were none. JMO then moved to approve that letter drafted by the TAC be approved and sent to relevant agencies. AZ ran a roll call vote, and 12 members voted yes. The vote was approved.

## Advocacy: 2026 Bus Network Redesign Amendments

JMO then introduced the TAC's letter responding to the 2026 Bus Network Redesign amendments and asked for comments.

Andrew Zhou asked whether the letter is specifically on keeping service as-is. or improving service. JMO clarified that the letter is asking to keep service as-is as, but the MBTA is looking to reduce service on the corridor.

JMO then moved to approve the letter – AZ ran a roll call vote, all 12 members voted yes.

## City, MBTA, and TAC Updates

JMO then gave the floor to Andrew Reker to discuss city and state projects.

No comments from TAC members on city project updates.

No comments from TAC members on state project updates.

AR went over the dates of upcoming meetings and potential meeting topics. AR suggested that a future meeting could be an in-person workshop about the implementation plan. JMO, Bill McAvinney, Katherine Rafferty voiced support for an in-person meeting. AR said there will not be a joint meeting on June 17<sup>th</sup>, but Healthpeak has been asked to present in a future meeting. JMO asked about when Mass Ave Partial Construction might have enough material for a joint meeting, and AR said late summer.

## Public comment

JMO then opened the floor for public comment.

A committee asked about the Alewife Bridge Replacement Project that MassDOT is starting soon.

- AR: It could be a topic of a future presentation and said he would follow up.

No other public comment.

JMO closed the meeting at 7:26 PM.

## Version Information

Draft: 6/4/2026

Approval: \_