

Kendall Square Mobility Task Force Meeting

LOCATION OF MEETING: One Broadway, 5th floor, Cambridge, MA

DATE/TIME OF MEETING: September 8, 2015 from 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

TASK FORCE ATTENDEES:

Chris Barr, Biogen Idec
Joe Barr, City of Cambridge – Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department
Brian Dacey, Kendall Square Association (Co-Chair)
Bob Dorer, Volpe National Transportation Systems Center
Melissa Dullea, MBTA
Tom Evans, Cambridge Redevelopment Authority
Jim Gascoigne, Charles River TMA
Scott Hamwey, MassDOT
Ben Lavery, Boston Properties
Michael Owu, MIT Investment Management Company
Jeffrey Rosenblum
John Sanzone, Friends of the Grand Junction Path

MASSDOT AND PROJECT TEAM ATTENDEES:

Matthew Ciborowski, MassDOT (Facilitator)
Christi Apicella, McMahon Associates
Joanne Haracz, McMahon Associates
Duncan Allen, IBI Group
Regan Checchio, RVA

PUBLIC:

John Attanucci, MIT
David Beller, Loyal Nine Restaurant
Tegin Bennett, City of Cambridge
Kate Briggs
Hannah Clark, Linnean Solutions
Bill Johnson, Terracon
Andrew Joseph, Boston Globe
Steve Kaiser
Alexandra Lee, Kendall Square Association
Adam Shulman, City of Cambridge
Susan Sloan-Rossiter, VHB
Chris Southwick
Mike Stanley, Transit X
Saul Tannenbaum

PURPOSE/SUBJECT: Task Force Meeting #3

HANDOUTS:

- Agenda
- Task Force Meeting #3 – Problem Statements

- Task Force Meeting #3 – Prioritization Worksheet

SUMMARY:

Introductions

Matthew Ciborowski, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, opened the meeting at 4:10 PM. He reviewed the agenda and noted that the next Task Force meeting will be held on October 27. He said that MassDOT intends to hold the first community meeting before that date. MassDOT believes the meeting will be held on October 15, but the location is still being finalized.¹

Tom Evans, Cambridge Redevelopment Authority, asked about the responsibilities of the Task Force at the community meeting. Mr. Ciborowski suggested that Task Force members who are present should mingle with attendees, including during the Open House portion of the meeting, as they are ambassadors of the project. He said that the meeting will include a presentation by MassDOT and hopefully by Brian Dacey, Kendall Square Association, and Susanne Rasmussen, City of Cambridge, as they are the Task Force co-chairs. Mr. Ciborowski added that if Task Force members could not attend the meeting, that would be fine as well.

Issue Prioritization

Mr. Ciborowski said the project team had developed a list of problem statements that captured key issues that have arisen through Task Force meetings and through his individual meetings with Task Force members. He distributed this list of 20 problems statements in a handout, organized by topic. He noted that the list is broad and far-reaching, so the project team is looking to try to focus attention on the key issues of importance to the Task Force.

Task Force members were organized into three groups and asked to fill out a worksheet prioritizing the problem statements.

- Group 1 consisted of Chris Barr, Biogen Idec; Scott Hamwey, MassDOT; Michael Owu, MIT Investment Management Company; and John Sanzone, Friends of the Grand Junction Path.
- Group 2 consisted of Mr. Evans; Jim Gascoigne, Charles River TMA; Ben Lavery, Boston Properties; and Jeff Rosenblum.
- Group 3 consisted of Joe Barr, City of Cambridge; Mr. Dacey; Bob Dorer, Volpe National Transportation Systems Center; and Melissa Dullea, MBTA.

The groups were instructed to identify the top five problem statements, provide a reason for why each is important, and develop a recommended performance metric to address each one. Task Force members were asked not to focus on providing specific wording changes of problem statements, but rather focus on the general idea of each. After about thirty-five minutes of work, each group reported back to the larger group its results. Task Force

¹ The community meeting will be held on October 15 at the Kennedy-Longfellow School in Cambridge. Meeting details are available on the project website:
<https://www.massdot.state.ma.us/planning/Main/CurrentStudies/KendallSquareMobility.aspx>

members facilitated their own group discussion, while members of the project team recorded the outcome.

Mr. Dacey asked about the intent of the exercise. Mr. Ciborowski said that the project team wants to spend most of its time analyzing issues that are of highest priority to members, but not ignore the rest. He noted that the second half of the meeting would feature a brainstorming exercise to generate solutions and alternatives to these problems. Mr. Dacey confirmed that members were supposed to ignore issues of resources and length of time for implementation for the purpose of the exercise.

Mr. Ciborowski briefly reviewed the problem statements on the handout:

PROBLEM STATEMENT	TOPIC
a. Many urban residential areas without a direct Red Line or bus connection to Kendall have higher auto mode share and/or travel times	Lack of Direct Transit Access
b. Suburban communities to the north without a commuter rail connection to the Red Line have higher auto mode share and/or travel times.	Lack of Direct Transit Access
c. Many urban commercial or transportation nodes without a direct Red Line or bus connection to Kendall have higher auto mode share and/or travel times.	Lack of Direct Transit Access
d. Limited evening and weekend service on existing bus routes limits the ability to use transit for non-work trips to and from Kendall Square.	MBTA Service
e. Operational constraints affect Red Line reliability, and customers often encounter over-capacity trains.	MBTA Service
f. There is a concern that capacity is lacking on the Red Line and that it cannot absorb future demand to accommodate a desired mode shift to transit and additional development.	MBTA Service
g. Traffic congestion has increased in intensity and spread in duration beyond the peak period. The final segment of driving trips to Kendall Square from regional connectors (Route 128, I-93, I-90) are often through overburdened local streets. In particular, access through Cambridge from the west is difficult.	Local Streets
h. Bicycle crash rates have declined, but safety continues to be a concern due to the increased popularity of the mode.	Local Streets
i. There is a perception that there is insufficient on-street parking to support retail development, and publicly available bicycle parking is insufficient to serve existing and future needs.	Local Streets
j. Limited ridesharing at key locations during peak periods diminishes its effectiveness as an alternative form of transportation.	Local Streets

k. Construction and deliveries, while vital to the growth of the area, compete for precious curb space with bike lanes, sidewalks and bus stops.	Local Streets
l. Poor wayfinding and large block sizes within Kendall Square can dissuade pedestrian trips.	Local Streets
m. Management of residential parking to achieve mode share goals does not have as rigorous a level of control through the PTDM ordinance as it does for business	Policy/Outreach
n. Policy and employer programs such as transit subsidies, pre-tax purchase of transit passes, and Guaranteed Ride	Policy/Outreach
o. Development and transportation project evaluations are inconsistently implemented, resulting in unequal problem identification and improvements. The Kendall	Policy/Outreach
p. Kendall property owners and developers lack a coordinated and formalized approach to investing in transportation and infrastructure improvements.	Financing
q. Beyond the Longfellow Bridge and new Red Line vehicle procurement, there are no other major infrastructure project commitments to support Kendall's continued	Financing
r. Existing efforts by developers to mitigate transportation impacts of new projects are of insufficient scale to address some of the area's most pressing challenges.	Financing

Mr. J. Barr asked about the rideshare reference in "J." He asked if it referred to MassRides or services like Uber and Lyft. Mr. Ciborowski said it was any kind of rideshare program, including Hubway and Zipcar, for example.

Discussion

During the report back portion of the meeting, a representative from each group provided the worksheet results:

Mr. Hamwey shared the results from Group 1:

The group selected "A," a combination of "F/E," "D," "J," and "Q" as its top priorities. Mr. Hamwey said the "lack of direct transit access" problem statements seemed to refer to the urban shed, suburban shed, and Kendall distribute. He said the group agreed that the urban community market was most important.

He noted that some problems not included in the list of problem statements include parking capacity at Alewife and the lack of capacity for Hubway at North Station in the morning.

Mr. Hamwey suggested performance metrics for these problems include an increased population of people making transit trips to Kendall and an increase in peak-hour capacity of the Red Line.

Mr. Evans shared the results from Group 2:

He noted that the group had focused on the vision statement Mr. Ciborowski had shared regarding the whole Task Force. He added that the group had developed these priorities based on the idea that jurisdictionally, these made the most sense for this Task Force to address.

The group selected a combination of “E/F” as operational issues. The second priority was a combination of “A/B/C” under the category of expansion of service. The issue is systemwide capacity, not just at Kendall. He said that a metric for this item could be an increase in the number of places served. The group chose “C” and the metric included increased funding, including diverse and creative sources. The group also added a problem statement as a fourth priority – addressing the issue of interagency coordination and engagement. Mr. Ciborowski suggested that was the purpose of the Task Force. Mr. Rosenblum agreed, but said the conversation needed to be bigger and was a core to the overall transportation discussion.

Mr. Dacey shared the results from Group 3:

The group selected a combination of “F/E” and wanted to add parking at MBTA stations to that issue, particularly at Alewife Station. Members also chose a combination of “A/B” and wanted to add buses and North Station connections. This combination was grouped as an overall access issue. The next selection was “Q” and then a combination of “P/R.” Mr. Dacey made the point that private resources could be coordinated for Q, P, and R. This group also selected “H” noting the road problems with bicycling. Mr. Hamwey said that figuring out these local roadway configurations could be where interagency coordination might be very appropriate.

Mr. Ciborowski noted that 10 of the problem statements had not been prioritized by any of the groups. He asked for more feedback on why groups chose “A” and noted it was interesting that no groups mentioned traffic congestion.

Ms. Dullea noted that “A” included the experience of the commute, unlike the others. She pointed out that buses are slow and have increased overall travel time, which is due in part to roadway congestion. Mr. C. Barr also noted that with “A,” a lot of commuters come from within 6 miles of their destination in Kendall Square and many are driving. He said a goal would be to alleviate that traffic. He said that his group briefly discussed “C” in terms of direct connections to Logan Airport, but then moved on.

Mr. Ciborowski said that there may not be similar solutions to “A” and “B” with existing infrastructure. Mr. Evans suggested that as networks expand, they should serve multiple kinds of trips. The study should look at new connections or improving existing ones. There were references to urban versus suburban commutes, and focusing on new connections as well as improving existing trips. Work trips appeared to be emphasized during the discussion.

Mr. Hamwey suggested that the emphasis should be placed on the mode and service that carries the most people to Kendall Square. Cost-effectiveness should be considered on a per passenger basis. Commuter rail may not be where the focus should be put.

Mr. Rosenblum said that the contribution of Kendall development on Red Line capacity is very small. He said that the Red Line would be over-capacity with or without Kendall

development due to development occurring along the length of the Red Line corridor in Boston. He said that this is a political problem – should Kendall stop developing in order to not increase existing Red Line capacity issues? Is Kendall the cause of the issue or the recipient of the problem created by Red Line demand elsewhere?

Mr. Evans said that in Boston, people tend to look at the Red Line as the gold standard, but it is not the only transportation mode of importance. He suggested it was important to look at innovative and long-term solutions as well as short-term ones.

Mr. Ciborowski asked for more detail about the choice of “E/F,” noting that there had been a reference to bus rapid transit (BRT) service. Mr. Evans said that the CT2 bus route is clearly a desire line for people, and that buses are definitely part of the solution. Mr. Rosenblum added that there are multiple ways of expanding – finding new ways to get people to places as well as using existing services better.

Mr. Sanzone suggested finding unifying solutions like combining private shuttles with MBTA service. He said that their services could operate as more than corporate drop-off and pickup.

Mr. Hamwey noted that the reality is that the biggest cost item is the Red Line. Mr. Rosenblum said that he believes that is the purpose of the Task Force – to provide a layout for longer-term investment. He suggested that MassDOT can bring the stakeholders together to accomplish this in a way stakeholders cannot on their own. He said the issue of configuring streets is an example where MassDOT is the perfect convener.

Alternatives Development

Mr. Ciborowski said that he was looking for Task Force members to brainstorm ideas to address these problems.

Mr. Dacey asked if there are ways that the Red Line’s capacity and reliability issues could be addressed in the short-term. Ms. Dullea said that capacity and reliability issues can be addressed through new vehicles, improved signaling, and improving boarding at crowded stations. Mr. Dacey asked if more maintenance would be helpful.

Other potential solutions that Task Force members suggested reviewing include:

- Short term reliability/capacity of the Red Line
 - New vehicles
 - Signals
 - Station crowding
 - Orderly swell time
 - Short-term maintenance
 - Transparency with passenger (similar to information released about commuter rail)
- Operations and scheduling of the Red Line
- Comprehensive analysis of bus lines serving E. Cambridge/Lechmere once the Green Line Extension is built
- Lechmere/Kendall connections with or without the Green Line Extension

- Use of Memorial Drive and Land Boulevard, including transit and bike facilities
- Short-term actions on Red Line for long-term, generational solutions.
- Bus subcontracting including procurement incentives for innovation
- On-street bus priority (including traffic signaling)
- Better passenger information prior to station entry (i.e. last bus arrived)
- Red Line package of investments to generate excitement to improve existing services
- Extend Red Line to Route 128
- More information about the magnitude of the cost of improvements in order to set priorities for implementation
- Grand Junction corridor
 - Options (physical, financial, mode)
 - Implications
 - Connections
 - Physical and operational issue understanding
- Water transportation

Mr. Ciborowski said that these would be discussed at the next Task Force meeting.

Public Comment

Mike Stanley, Transit X, urged participants to support Bill 1837 currently in the Transportation Committee in the MA House of Representatives. This bill allows the use of a personal transit system, like Transit X, a Boston-based company. He urged those present to learn more about Transit X and offered to provide additional information.

Steve Kaiser presented historical observations about Red Line headways, which he says have increased by a factor of 3 since World War II. He said that similar increases in headways have happened in New York. He suggested getting back to earlier levels by copying what was done in the past. There are opportunities to examine the Red Line in more detail and advance improvements, such as the Cambridge Initiative for Transit, the Planning Board's review of MIT, and other initiatives. Mr. Kaiser said he supported looking at problems "D," "F," and "Q."

Conclusion

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 PM.