

Kendall Square Mobility Task Force Meeting

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

DATE/TIME OF MEETING: June 23, 2015 from 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

TASK FORCE ATTENDEES:

Joe Barr, City of Cambridge – Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department
Kelley Brown, MIT – Office of Campus Planning
Brian Dacey, Kendall Square Association (Co-Chair)
Bob Dorer, Volpe National Transportation Systems Center
Melissa Dullea, MBTA
Tom Evans, Cambridge Redevelopment Authority
Jim Gascgoine, Charles River TMA
Scott Hamwey, MassDOT
Ben Lavery, Boston Properties
Patrick Magee, East Cambridge Business Association
Michael Owu, MIT Investment Management Company
Susanne Rasmussen, City of Cambridge – Community Development Department (Co-Chair)
Jeffrey Rosenblum
John Sanzone, Friends of the Grand Junction Path

MASSDOT AND PROJECT TEAM ATTENDEES:

Matthew Ciborowski, MassDOT (Facilitator)
Pete Sutton, MassDOT
Joanne Haracz, McMahon Associates
Natalie Raffol, McMahon Associates
Duncan Allen, IBI Group
Laura Riegel, IBI Group
Ritesh Warade, IBI Group
Regan Checchio, RVA

PUBLIC:

David Beller, Loyal Nine
Kate Briggs
John Hawkinson, Freelance Reporter
David Montague, Park & Pedal
Eric Plosky, U.S. Department of Transportation (Volpe Center)
Arthur Strang

PURPOSE/SUBJECT: Task Force Meeting #2

SUMMARY:

Introductions and Task Force Business

Matthew Ciborowski, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, opened the meeting at 4:10 PM and invited the Task Force members to introduce themselves (see Attendance). He

asked the two Task Force Co-Chairs, Susanne Rasmussen, City of Cambridge, and Brian Dacey, Kendall Square Association, if they had any comments to share.

Ms. Rasmussen announced a new transportation innovation, an eco-totem bike counter on the median on Broadway. This counter will collect daily bike information as well as the data cumulative over one year. Soon, people will be able to monitor the data remotely, from their computers.

Mr. Ciborowski explained that the meeting presentation will focus on Existing Conditions, but that there will be far more information contained in the Existing Conditions report than he is able to include in a presentation.

Mr. Dacey asked if the materials will be posted on the project website. Mr. Ciborowski said the meeting presentation will be posted right away. As the Existing Conditions report is completed, draft chapters will be sent to the Task Force for review and comment. Once finalized, the report will also be posted on the project website.

Mr. Ciborowski also updated the Task Force on the status of two members. Barbara Broussard and Mark Moses have confirmed they will not be participating. Mr. Ciborowski said MassDOT is working with the Task Force co-chairs to identify who can be involved in their place, as residential interests should be represented on the Task Force.

Mr. Ciborowski said the upcoming meeting schedule has also been updated, based on feedback at the last meeting. The next Task Force meetings will be: September 8, October 27, January 5, and February 23. The public meeting dates will be in September, November/December, and February. He said the specific meeting date for the September public meeting will be identified soon.

Jeff Rosenblum suggested piggybacking on existing meetings already planned in the corridor through the use of open houses. Mr. Ciborowski agreed, noting that MassDOT has already identified opportunities at the state level such as Program for Mass Transportation public meetings (which will begin in the fall). He said he will also work with the City of Cambridge to identify other local opportunities.

Mr. Ciborowski then reviewed the study goals and outcomes that had been developed at the first meeting. He explained that the focus of this meeting is to examine the current conditions of Kendall Square transportation to establish a baseline for comparison, identify issues and opportunities that emerge, and develop goals and objectives to reach the desired future.

Mr. Rosenblum suggested mentioning scenario-development in terms of the goals and outcomes of the study. He said that this approach might help in ultimately developing a final marketing document. Mr. Ciborowski agreed that scenario development was part of the process.

Existing Conditions: Built Environment

Mr. Ciborowski then reviewed the history of the built space at Kendall and the land use today. He compared development projections for the area between existing development (City of Cambridge 2010 data), the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)

development summary (2014 data), and the proposed development for the year 2030 under the K2C2 plan. He noted that the robust figure seen in the K2C2 plan needs to be accommodated by the transportation network.

Mr. Ciborowski reviewed the roadway network, noting that Kendall Square is difficult to access from the west, where congestion becomes high. He also pointed out that local roads combined many modes (bus, bikes, and automobiles).

Mr. Ciborowski reviewed the bicycle and public transit networks. He also reviewed the bus services to Kendall, noting that majority of bus users connect to the Red Line. He showed the location of the EZ Ride service as well. Ms. Rasmussen said that while there are some good bus lines in the area, Kendall is relatively underserved compared to other stations in Cambridge, such as Central and Harvard.

Bob Dorer, Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, asked if the project team had any pedestrian data. Mr. Ciborowski noted that data can be hard to come by. Ms. Rasmussen said that the City of Cambridge is now gathering some of this information through the Parking Transportation Demand Management (PTDM) process. She explained that PTDM is part of a 1998 ordinance that has certain requirements of developers who are expanding parking in the City, including annual reporting of survey data. She noted that a year ago, the survey was expanded to include mode by ZIP code.

Mr. Rosenblum said the bus service map reflects physical bus line locations, not frequency or time of day, which should be included in the analysis. He noted that bus lines are set where historic trolley lines used to be, and Kendall historically had no trolley service. He noted that because MBTA bus service is a zero-sum game, it becomes hard to add service to Kendall.

Scott Hamwey, MassDOT, noted that instead of buses taking riders directly to downtown Boston, MBTA bus service is targeted to transfer to rapid transit lines for service to Boston. Ms. Rasmussen pointed out that only adds to Red Line congestion.

Joe Barr, City of Cambridge, said that there was even less bus service to Kendall historically. Mr. Ciborowski added that it can be a challenge to move bus routes.

Mr. Dacey asked about the figure Mr. Ciborowski had quoted that there are 18,900 transit trips to the study area each weekday. Mr. Ciborowski explained that those are bus and Red Line riders getting off in Kendall.

Existing Conditions: Travel Patterns

Mr. Ciborowski reviewed the existing trips based on 2010 zoning versus the 2030 forecasted trips under the K2C2 proposal. He noted that K2C2 projects a 44% increase in PM peak period person trips. Many more people are coming to Kendall for work than are leaving Kendall in the AM. He pointed out that the K2C2 plan desires to keep these trips local in nature and change trends on where people live.

Looking at employee origin data, the greatest number of Kendall employees come from Boston, Cambridge, and the Northwest region. Locally, the greatest concentration of employees come from Cambridge, Boston, Somerville, and Arlington.

Mr. Ciborowski also shared some of the travel time data, noting that “time” is not the only thing that matters for people’s commutes. He noted that commuter rail services with direct connection to the Red Line offer better door-to-door times, average speed of a commuter line matters, and that there are good bus connections from Lexington to Alewife, among others. He pointed out that “backtracking” into Green Line territory increases travel time relative to the distance. Local bus connections in Cambridge, Somerville, Medford, and much of Boston are slow and/or indirect.

Mr. Dacey asked how travel time is measured for these purposes. Mr. Ciborowski explained that it is a benchmark comparing travel times to Kendall Square from Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs) of similar distance. He noted, for example, that the North Shore’s travel time varies. Areas around I-93 have longer travel times, while those with access to the commuter rail lines have relatively faster travel times, and so rank higher. He added that dense residential parts of the city (Orange Line, Green Line, and much of Somerville) have relatively poor travel time grades.

Tom Evans, Cambridge Redevelopment Authority, noted that this analysis is based on schedule. He asked if the data could be overlaid to commuter data for travel time and mode to work. Mr. Ciborowski said the team will be looking at expected travel times versus actual.

Mr. Rosenblum said that when developing future scenarios, the Task Force also needs to be thinking about residential trips taken on nights and weekends, and for recreation. He also said that there is a growing need for work trips during the day between research centers. Mr. Ciborowski agreed and said he would like feedback from the business community about whether they see businesses further consolidating or spreading out. Mr. Dacey said he sees a current issue with individuals coming to Kendall to meet clients and having difficulty parking in the middle of the day. Mr. Dorer said that even if those individuals wanted to take transit (for example the Red Line), parking at Alewife fills up early in the day.

John Sanzone, Friends of the Grand Junction Path, asked to what extent is the group an Eastern Massachusetts Task Force, as the mobility issues extend beyond the area of Kendall Square. If there are regional (or non-Cambridge) solutions that could solve Kendall issues, should the group be looking at them? Mr. Ciborowski said that is a decision for the Task Force to decide. In his opinion, it is appropriate to look outside of Kendall. He noted that both MassDOT and the City of Cambridge have mode shift goals that need to be addressed on both ends of a trip.

Existing Conditions: Travel Trends

Mr. Ciborowski then looked at current Kendall Square employee mode share (for the year 2014) and the projected K2C2 mode share goal, noting that the 2030 goal for transit mode share is actually slightly less than the current share, while the walk share goal looks to increase from 5% today to 25% in 2030. He said that implies the goal is for the area to become more residential.

Ms. Rasmussen noted that the increase in bike share projected primarily comes from trips switching from transit.

Mr. Ciborowski then reviewed the current transit mode share in detail. He noted that while the regional-scale market for travel to Kendall is stronger to the north and west, a higher share of the market from the south uses transit. It noted that the Green Line service area has a high transit share, despite being less well connected than the Red Line station vicinities.

Mr. Ciborowski also reviewed the employee “drive alone” data. 41% of Kendall Square employees drive alone to work. He pointed out that once you extend west in Newton beyond the Green Line service area, the transit mode share decreases.

Mr. Rosenblum said it would make sense to lay out the mechanics of how people made these decisions about what modes to take. Mr. Ciborowski agreed, noting that there is a gap about how you would expect people to behave versus how they do behave, pointing to the high percentage of transit users in the Green Line corridor despite the difficult trip. Mr. Evans said part of this story is the supply of parking on the residential side, which is limited in places like Brookline. He said that property values and the cost of parking on both sides of the trip have an effect on behavior. Mr. Rosenblum agreed, noting for the aforementioned Newton residents, that the cost of parking in Kendall may not be enough to deter them from driving.

Mr. Ciborowski said that one question he has is whether individuals move based on a job or take a job based on where they live. Mr. Rosenblum suggested that MIT could look at LinkedIn data to research this question. Mr. Hamwey said another interesting fact is that the job market that is currently in Kendall, has historically been located in the Rt. 128 corridor.

Michael Owu, MIT Investment Management Company, said that big factors influencing where people choose to live are their children and the school system. He suggested that there might be a lifecycle effect for these decisions. It may be useful to look at age data to make inferences about possible travel decisions. He added that the biggest driver of mode choice is time, although cost is a component.

Mr. Lavery said that a recent *Boston Business Journal* article said that employees decide to locate due to a sense of place. This is also true for where people choose to live. Walkability and transit access are very important.

Mr. Ciborowski also reviewed bicycle growth in Kendall and presented bicycle crash data. Ms. Rasmussen pointed out that the presentation showed raw crash counts. She said that the Cambridge Police Department recently performed a detailed analysis of 10 years of crash data and showed that while the raw numbers have increased, the crash rate has decreased. Mr. Ciborowski agreed that the crash data statistic may be misleading, as Cambridge has a high number of bicycle riders. Jim Gascgoine, Charles River TMA, suggested altering the title of the slide from “Bicycle Safety” to “Bicycle Crashes.”

Mr. Ciborowski presented the Hubway data, but noted that it was 2013 data, and that 2014 data from Hubway should be available next week. He said the 2014 data will be used in the final report.

After looking at auto ownership rates and traffic growth, Mr. Ciborowski turned to parking issues. He pointed out that there was more activity going into Cambridge Center parking garages in 2014 than in 2013. Mr. Evans wondered about parking for day trips, and asked if data was available on parking utilization. Mr. Rosenblum requested that the intersection Level of Service graphic be color coded to better show the conditions.

Mr. Ciborowski then showed how people arrived at Kendall on weekdays via public transit. He noted that 78% of the 18,900 transit trips included the Red Line. 19% came directly to Kendall via bus.

Mr. Dorer asked if this data captures bike transfers at places like Alewife. Mr. Ciborowski said he was not sure that level of data was available. Mr. Evans wondered if the bike cages collected CharlieCard data.

Mr. Ciborowski looked at the pockets of issues with connectivity – Longwood Medical and Academic Area (LMA), Roxbury, Charlestown, Everett, East Boston, Winter Hill (Somerville), and West Medford.

Mr. Ciborowski then reviewed the Red Line's physical capacity versus its effective capacity, based on loading and operational considerations. While the theoretical capacity per train is 1,350 riders, the effective capacity per train is 760, given existing operating conditions. He then shared a MTA video that showed how these conditions affect capacity.

Mr. Ciborowski highlighted issues of dwell times, noting that the longest dwell times on the entire line are at Park Street and Downtown Crossing.

Kelley Brown, MIT, asked how potential upgrades to the Red Line signal system fit into this analysis. Mr. Ciborowski said that there is a capacity based on the existing signal system, but the significant dwell times downtown do not allow the system to run at capacity. Improvements to signals are important, but dwell time may be as important. Increased reliability would decrease dwell times.

Mr. Rosenblum said he believes these are two different issues – signal improvements and reliability. Mr. Ciborowski agreed.

Mr. Dorer suggested that operational changes, such as aggressive policies of short dwell times (closing the doors with people waiting) could improve. Mr. Ciborowski said one issue is that it is hard to hold trains between stations on the Red Line because the trip lengths are shorter than systems like New York. Mr. Dorer said that a mixed fleet also creates issues.

Ms. Rasmussen asked how frequently Red Line trains could be spaced at theoretical capacity. After some discussion, Duncan Allen, IBI Group, suggested headways could be at 4

½ minutes. Melissa Dullea, MBTA, said the Red Line is scheduled to operate at 4-5 minute headways currently.

Mr. Barr said he could not believe that dwell times are planned for 90 seconds. He suggested the group work on drilling down this data and bringing that number down.

Mr. Rosenblum suggested that this information could be presented more clearly. The way the data is presented currently is confusing.

Mr. Evans asked if there would be enough cars to run at more frequent headways, if the operational issues were solved. Mr. Ciborowski said there was not today. Ms. Dullea said that better frequencies could be achieved if the trains had less time at the stations.

Mr. Ciborowski noted that the project team has only begun to scratch the surface of these issues and will continue to evaluate. He encouraged the Task Force to share ideas to keep the process moving forward. He said the next step will be to set the objectives of a future Kendall.

Public Comment

Mr. Ciborowski then opened the meeting to public comment.

John Hawkinson asked how much the headways would be affected by fixing the dwell times. Mr. Allen said that doing something meaningful at three stations – Park Street, Downtown Crossing, and South Station – would have an effect.

An attendee from the general public asked if there is a possibility for other EZ Ride routes, such as from Lechmere. Mr. Gascione said that was one of the reasons a recent survey was conducted. New routes come down to raising funds and picking the right ones. He said that there will be many opportunities at the new Lechmere station once the Green Line opens. The attendee also noted the unpleasant and seemingly lengthy walk from Lechmere to Kendall after exiting the 87 bus, and wondered if routes ending at Lechmere could be extended. Ms. Rasmussen said there has been discussion within city government about extending bus routes that terminate at Lechmere to Kendall.

Conclusion

Mr. Ciborowski said the next Task Force meeting will be September 8.

The meeting adjourned at 5:55 PM.