

**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING NOTES**

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**Date, Time & Place:** August 5, 2015, 5:30-7:30 PM  
Cambridge Main Library Community Room

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**Attendance**

Committee Members

John Attanucci, Phineas Baxandall, Joseph Beggan, Devin Chausse, Karen Dumaine, Charles Fineman, Jim Gascoigne, Marcus Goodwin, Joseph Maguire, Jeremy Mendelson, George Metzger, Susan Pacheco, Arthur Strang, Saul Tannenbaum, Alexander Taylor, Ritesh Warade

City of Cambridge

Tegin Bennett and Cleo Stoughton (Community Development), Joe Barr and Adam Shulman (Traffic, Parking and Transportation), Michelle Monsegur (Finance)

*7 members of the public were present. Philip Groth (MBTA) was present.*

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**Committee Introductions and Approve Minutes**

- Tegin Bennett welcomed new and returning Committee members and gave an overview of the application and approval process. The Committee now has 23 members, with 15 returning members and 8 new members.
- The Committee voted to approve the June 2015 minutes (12 votes of approval; 2 abstentions).

**Announcements**

- Michelle Monsegur from the City's Finance Department gave an overview of the Participatory Budgeting (PB) process. PB is a democratic process through which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget. After a successful pilot PB process in 2014-2015 for \$500,000 of the FY16 Capital Budget, the City kicked off its second PB process, which will run from June to December, 2015. This time, the City is setting aside \$600,000 from the FY17 Capital Budget for project ideas to improve the community. For more information, visit the [PB webpage](#). Tegin Bennett noted that the City is looking into installing real-time arrival signs on bus shelters in Inman Square, which were proposed during last year's PB process but ultimately did not receive funding through that process.
- As part of the Traffic Impact Study for MIT's special permit application for its Kendall Square Planned Unit Development (PUD), VHB studied current and projected Red Line conditions, including ridership, loading, trip generation, and other measures. The June meeting of the Kendall Square Task Force also addressed Red Line capacity. The City will plan to coordinate updates to the Committee on these two efforts for a Committee meeting later this year.

**Regular Updates**

At each Committee meeting, the City will provide short updates on a number of ongoing projects.

- TransitScreens: The City is looking into installing TransitScreens at three additional locations: Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, the City Hall Annex (344 Broadway), and a Cambridge Public Health location to be determined. The City is continuing to receive feedback and test out improvements to the Citywide Senior Center screen. The Committee had a number of suggestions: hold a design contest for the screens, install a large (and highly visible) TransitScreen in one of the major squares (e.g., Harvard Square), try out TransitScreen's projection system (which can be paired with wayfinding), and explore a partnership with the Cambridge Office for Tourism.
- Kendall Square Mobility Task Force: A meeting was held on June 23. Slides, including future meeting dates, are located [here](#). The next meeting will take place on September 8, 2015.

- Transit priority – Alewife: No specific updates. This discussion will be part of the citywide planning process. The Committee urged the City to think about where in the area priority treatments are most necessary and would be most impactful.
- MBTA Service Delivery Policy: The City distributed a Service Delivery Policy FAQ sheet from the MBTA. Tegin Bennett will attend a meeting later this month to provide feedback into this update. Please send any feedback about the process to her. Jim Gascoigne noted that there is also a meeting for transportation management associations (TMAs) the week of August 16.
- MBTA Program for Mass Transportation (PMT): This process has been delayed for various reasons, including the need to develop a one-year capital improvement plan (CIP). The City would like to discuss with the MBTA about how to have more productive public input into the PMT.
- Transit Strategic Plan cover letter: A Committee member graciously drafted a cover letter to accompany the Transit Strategic Plan as it is read by the Mayor, City Manager, City Council, and others in the community. The Committee praised the letter and provided some additional suggestions. The Committee discussed the definition of “transit” used in the letter and in the Plan (e.g., subway, buses, light rail), the City’s role in improving transit (e.g., by making improvements on city streets and sidewalks), and how to translate strategic planning concepts into actions. Tegin Bennett will edit the letter as discussed, send it to Committee members, and, pending further edits, seek Committee approval.

### **Public Comment**

- Quinton Zondervan asked whether the City is thinking about congestion pricing. Although congestion pricing is not directly under the purview of this committee, this question sparked a discussion about commute patterns in and out of Cambridge, as well as a discussion about innovative ways, including congestion pricing, to generate revenue beyond the traditional methods to provide for improved transit service.

### **New Committee Structure and Bylaws Discussion**

Tegin Bennett revisited a draft set of bylaws that had been presented to the Committee earlier in the year. With adoption of these bylaws, the Committee would elect three officers: a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. The bylaws also outline the purpose, membership, member responsibilities, voting requirements, and other aspects of the Committee. The Committee strongly advocated that a City staff person serve as Secretary whenever possible. Committee members who are interested in serving as Chair or Vice Chair, or who would like to nominate someone to serve either of those roles, are asked to contact Tegin Bennett before the September meeting.

### **Introduction of Joseph Barr, Director of Traffic, Parking & Transportation Department**

The City’s Director of Traffic, Parking, and Transportation (TP&T) Department since March 2015, Joe Barr described his background and his interest in and experience with transit, both in Cambridge (and the greater region) and in New York City, where he was involved in the implementation of NYC’s first two bus rapid transit routes. He discussed the TP&T Department’s role in transit planning and operations, as well as current transit-related challenges and opportunities. Specific topics addressed included:

- New transportation technologies, including bus priority treatments (such as transit signal priority (TSP) and off-board payment systems) and “smart” parking meters. The City is coordinating with the MBTA and IBI Group to potentially pilot TSP at an intersection in Cambridge in the coming year.
- The allocation of street space for various uses—for example, transit (e.g., buses, shuttles), driving and parking single occupancy vehicles, biking, and revenue-generating (e.g., metered parking) versus non-revenue-generating uses—and the costs and benefits of allocating more space to each use.
- Parking, including: increasing the cost of resident parking permits; the (improper) balance between resident-only and non-resident-only parking, especially close to major squares; the idea of geographically restricting residential parking permits; the idea of implementing parking rates that vary by location and/or time of day/week; and moving more parking off-street.
- Joe Barr’s initial thoughts about the most pressing transit-related issues in Cambridge, which included unreliability and lack of schedule adherence for buses and inadequate Red Line capacity.
- Committee and City interest in doing more pilot projects to test out new designs or programs.
- The trade-off between parking and affordable housing, especially in the context of the Green Street garage in Central Square.

### **Discussion of Tour of MBTA Operations Control Center (OCC)**

The Committee opted to discuss their tour of the OCC at a future meeting so as to spend more time talking with Joe Barr.

### **Final Public Comment**

- Quinton Zondervan introduced a few ideas, including: making better use of the Kendall Square parking garage, which is largely empty at night; increasing the cost of resident parking permits; re-evaluating why buses aren't free; and considering whether buses are the future since our trains and subways are old and buses are more flexible.
- James Williamson noted that the library location is not as accessible by transit as the Citywide Senior Center. He complained that he expressed interest in the OCC tour but was not invited to attend. Tegin Bennett explained that the OCC tour filled up with Committee members and that she would look into a second tour for others who are interested. Williamson requested a survey of Committee members to assess their transit use. He commented that the bus stop at Holyoke Street in Harvard Square should be moved to its original location. He noted that Beacon Street in Somerville is in need of reconstruction and that Cambridge should contribute funds toward this effort.
- Committee members and members of the public further discussed Committee meeting locations. The City will look into alternatives.
- Steve Kaiser noted that the MBTA Fiscal Management Control Board has had 3 meetings and that there is a public comment period at the meetings. He suggested the Committee discuss the MIT development plan. Tegin Bennett noted that this was discussed earlier in the meeting and is potentially on the docket for the October meeting. Kaiser called attention to the environmental impact report submitted by the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority with Boston Properties. He noted that the Volpe zoning doesn't address transit.

**Adjourned at 7:30pm**