

City of Cambridge

Transit Advisory Committee

Meeting Notes

Wednesday, August 1, 2018

Ballroom, Citywide Senior Center, 806 Massachusetts Avenue

Attendance

Members (13) John Attanucci (Chair), Joseph Beggan, Kelley Brown, Devin Chausse, Chantal Eide, Jim Gascoigne, Andrew McFarland, Katherine Rafferty, Rob Ricchi, Arthur Strang, Saul Tannenbaum, Alexander Taylor, Miles Taylor

City Staff (3) Tegin Teich and Andrew Reker (CDD), Adam Shulman (TPT)

Others (5) Andy Smith (MBTA), 4 members of the public

Tegin Teich (TT) opened the meeting at 5:31 PM.

Committee introductions and approval of June meeting notes

TAC committee members, city staff, the MBTA representative, and members of the public present at the start of the meeting introduced themselves. June meeting notes were amended to correct names of speakers in the public comment period. The TAC, then, moved to approve the June minutes with the corrections.

Public comment

James Williamson (JW) made a comment on the continuing difficulty that route 83 buses have to turn around at Russell Field. Andy Smith (AS) from the MBTA will examine the possibilities for fixing the issues.

JW made a comment on accessibility issues at Harvard station with escalator maintenance and elevator reconstruction work. Without any additional signage, this means that access is unclear for people who have mobility difficulties. AS will bring the comment to the department that is managing the project.

JW also asked about the schedule for the refurbishment of the Harvard busway tunnel. TT reported that the latest information from the MBTA is a project start in 2019. John Attanucci (JA) asked about the Route 72 as it relates to temporary changes for this work.

JW commented on Sherman Street train horns and the establishment of a railroad quiet zone at that crossing.

JW made a comment about disrepair on the mezzanine level of Harvard station. TT responded that the City has been communicating with the MBTA about the state of the stations. AS responded that the MBTA is also aware of the issues and said he would bring back the comments to the appropriate MBTA staff.

[Presentation: Review updates to Implementation Plan](#)

TT presented background to the implementation plan. As a precursor to the supplemental outreach to the MBTA's Better Bus Project, city staff revisited and updated the TAC-supported transit strategic plan implementation plan. TAC members discussed the items on the current draft of the implementation plan. Questions and answers for specific items are described below.

Arthur Strang (ArS) asked if DCR is involved with transit signal priority implementations. TT responded that there is expected to be a queue-jump signal that DCR owns at Coolidge Avenue. Andrew MacFarland (AM) asked about transit signal priority at signalized intersections on Mass Ave. TT responded that the city has transit signal priority at one location and is looking into feasibility at all signalized intersections on Mass Ave. At the same time, there has been gaps in staffing at the MBTA that has meant that some of this work had not advanced for a short period. AM asked about coordination with DCR and MassDOT with transit signal priority or transit priority lanes. TT responded that the city is collaborating with MassDOT and DCR on specific projects as well as the MassDOT-led bus priority study on State-owned roadways. Adam Shulman (AdS) mentioned previous intergovernmental coordination efforts with MassDOT, MBTA, and other municipalities.

Saul Tannenbaum (ST) asked about the South Mass. Ave. project and the current project timeline. TT responded to say that while this project has an aggressive schedule for implementation (tentatively September), the City has done some

additional outreach this summer to make sure to additional members of the community. JA commented that the current design lacks priority for buses at key locations and suggested that some of areas where space is dedicated to people on bikes could be shared. ArS commented that, if transit works well with this safety project, it could be an example for the rest of the city.

Regarding the River Street reconstruction project, ST asked to reconfirm which streets would be involved. TT responded that the project would include River Street and a short portion of Green Street, including the MBTA bus facilities. Kelley Brown (KB) asked about the timeframe. TT responded that the project could start as early as Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 or 2021 and to reference the Department of Public Works' Five-year construction plan. JA asked if stakeholder process would involve the TAC. TT responded that multiple TAC members could have various stakeholder roles. TAC members advocated for having a discrete TAC representative.

AS (MBTA) asked to clarify the Route 85/CT2 bus priority item. TT pointed to the Kendall Square Mobility Task Force study with recommendations to improve the streets that host routes 85 and CT2.

KB asked to clarify the difference between "service planning" and "BBP". TT responded that she is using BBP and "service planning" as more-or-less the same. AS added that the MBTA would consider all ideas to change service; however, the MBTA may move ideas to the "network redesign project" if the idea would have a large impact on the bus network. For network redesign, AS gave examples of new routes, extensions, or significant changes that the TAC has proposed: a CT4 service between Sullivan and Longwood via Kendall and Lechmere, extending MBTA Route 68 to Fresh Pond via Observatory Hill, or extending the same route to North Station.

JA asked how the MBTA would respond to TAC suggestions from previous brainstorming. AS responded to say that every suggestion that the TAC has made will get a response. JA also asked about how the MBTA would discuss trade-offs. AS responded that the current thinking is to focus efforts on Key Bus Routes (KBR) followed by the next tier of high-ridership routes and to discuss trade-offs at the MBTA's Fiscal Management and Control Board meetings.

ArS asked about unserved origin-destination pairs. TT pointed to other planning efforts such as MassDOT/MBTA Focus40, MassDOT/MBTA Network Redesign, and some of the work that Cambridge is engaging in as processes in which to discuss new service.

[Presentation: Update to Cambridge Service Analysis](#)

TT presented the 2018 update to the Cambridge Service Analysis. TT reviewed the methodology, purpose, and outcomes. TT also reminded TAC members that the purpose of the Cambridge Service Analysis study leads to potentially different ways to measure bus service issues than the MBTA employs. The City wants to identify where infrastructure improvements or changes in other things that the City controls would help transit.

The Cambridge Service Analysis identified three categories of areas where buses experience the most delay: the Charles River crossings, traffic “knots” around Red Line stations, and Massachusetts Avenue from Harvard Square to the Arlington town line. AM commented that the Allston I-90 planning effort appears to focus in on some of the Charles River crossings. ArS commented that the squares have multiple, complicated transit and travel issues.

[Discussion: Supplemental outreach for MBTA BBP](#)

TT presented on the scope for the supplemental outreach process to the MBTA’s BBP; this included the purpose, timeline, and additional events. TAC members discussed the timeline and public input to the MBTA’s project. AS commented that the MBTA hopes to release some recommendations by October. JA asked about the best way to give input to the City and MBTA. TT explained that goals for the City outreach process is to both educate the public about the MBTA Better Bus Project and currently-identified Cambridge priorities, and to solicit additional priorities and service planning ideas from them. TT also asked TAC members about preferred ways to engage with the public. Devin Chausse recommended smaller-scale activities especially for those who may not engage with traditional public outreach.

[Additional updates](#)

TT asked TAC members to review the Focus 40 draft report in advance of the September meeting and think about potential comments. In addition, TT asked

TAC members to prepare for the September meeting by thinking about supplemental outreach as part of the MBTA's Better Bus Project public process.

ST commented that this would be Miles Taylor's (MT) final meeting as a member of the Transit Advisory Committee. The TAC applauded MT for his contributions and TAC members wished MT well on his undergraduate studies.

Public Comment

No additional public comment.

At 7:30 PM, TAC moved to adjourn.