

Transit Advisory Committee

July 2021

Abbreviated meeting summary

Attendance

Members	Present (10) John Attanucci, Kelly Brown, Devin Chausse, Jim Gascoigne, Jackie Jones, Bill McAvinney, Sylvia Parsons, Katherine Rafferty, Saul Tannenbaum
	Absent (6) Joseph Beggan, Matthew Coogan, Kristiana Lachiusa, Margaret McKenna, Robert Ricchi, Arthur Strang, Alexander Taylor, Melissa Zampitella
City staff (3)	Andrew Reker (CDD); Joe Barr, Brooke McKenna, Patrick Baxter, Adam Shulman (TPT);
Others (2)	Melissa Dullea, Olivia Mobayed, Josh Weiland (MBTA); 5 members of the public

Welcome and committee introductions

Andy Reker (AR) began the virtual meeting at 5:30 PM by welcoming members of the TAC, members of the public and presenters. AR gave a tour of the virtual space for people joining by application and telephone and shared some ground rules for virtual meeting participation. AR then turned the meeting facilitation over to John Attanucci, Chair (JA). TAC members introduced themselves.

Presentation: MBTA Route 47 Proposal + MBTA service updates

Josh Weiland (JW), MBTA, provided a PowerPoint presentation about the MBTA's response to the Cambridge Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) recommendation to change the Route 47 to serve Massachusetts Avenue, especially for connections to the Red Line. Josh presented a summary of the MBTA's thinking and shared further details about the analysis including what metrics were used and how things were calculated.

TAC members asked the following questions, JW provided some responses:

- *Was the time to cross Mass Ave included?*
JW included a 37.5 second wait time for crossing Massachusetts Avenue given some data provided by the City of Cambridge.
- *Are you accounting for walk distances to/from Green Street stops?*
JW said that the analysis did not include a walk benefit/disbenefit. JW is happy to include some longer distances for people walking to/from Green Street stops.
- *Pre-pandemic there were some buses that were laying over at Central Square and some buses appeared to be running with additional slack time.*

If there was slack, it would be more effective to be put into the Green Street routing and potentially run an additional trip or two. On some good days there could be buses – total time to equal to 90th-percentile so that 9 times out of ten

- *Don't other events also overwhelm some of the potential benefits as well? It feels like you're too focused on just optimizing in Central Square.*

Other events and destinations do affect bus travel, in particular the Longwood Medical Area and in/out of the Fenway area. We do try to evaluate solutions throughout the route that help the MBTA run service. The Route 47 is something to think about in the Bus Network Redesign process and if this should be thought about as running "through" Central Square.

Melissa Dullea (MD) from the MBTA provided a brief update about the MBTA's scheduled changes proposed for Fall 2021.

- Additional frequency – Route 75 (with 72), Red, Orange, Green BCDE
 - 6:30 to 8:45 AM Huron Ave Frequent Corridor - ~every 15 minutes
 - Rindge and Latin School – school trip will not directly serve CRLS (!), will only go to Harvard
 - Adjusting to have additional service during earlier peak-of-peaks in Fall
- Restored Routes – 67 (for midday service), 351 (new routing)
 - Alewife to Burlington as a Route 2 local (351 to 350 local)
- Routes with routing changes – Harvard Bus Tunnel Routes
- Minor trip changes – 66, 69, 83, 85, 87, 88

Questions

- *Route 75 short trips returning are great!*
- *We had problems with coordinating between the longer and shorter route – how are you going to manage this in September?*
Trying to monitor
- *Rush hour service – are you thinking that Monday or Friday are different to other days of the week*
For now, we're not building schedules around – through employers (the MBTA's employer panel survey) we've been hearing that there's some alternative "work weeks". We'll wait to see how fall works before we begin scheduling. During the pandemic, Friday seems to be much higher rider than other "weekdays".
- *Can you talk about how travel patterns have evolved since the middle of the pandemic?*
- *Are there draft schedules available?*
We're working on getting updated details with fall information for the [MBTA.com/servicechanges](https://www.mbta.com/servicechanges) website and are planning for a public meeting about the service changes.

Presentation: Cycling Safety Ordinance Implementation

AR introduced Joe Barr (JB), Brooke McKenna (BM), and Patrick Baxter (PB) for a presentation on the Cycling Safety Ordinance implementation. JB shared some opening words about the Cycling Safety

Ordinance, the policy origin, and the hope to improve transit as streets are changed to install separated bike lanes. Many of the streets are important for cycling and transit and so we're looking to make transit work better and that transit priority is a high priority as this work is done. JB then turned over the presentation to PB.

PB covered the history of the ordinance including the original ordinance in 2019 and the amendments in 2020. PB also presented the requirements + timelines including locations where separated bike lanes are required. Patrick also shared information on the following points:

- How will the City measure impact to transit?
- How will the City mitigate any potentially foreseen impacts?
- What should the TAC and riding public do to have their voices heard?

TAC members asked:

- *Bus riders don't always have much time to participate in the public processes*
- *Person-delay needs to be put into the impact studies.*
- *Can queue jumps be compatible with separated bike lanes?*
Queue jumps do not count for the ordinance.
- *How about Huron Avenue what about that project?*
Consultant is continuing to work on the analysis.
- *Mass Ave. is one of the locations where I think it would be good to consider it?*
For streets like Mass Ave., Hampshire, Broadway, Cambridge, we are unable to consider it. We did have some conversation about additional flexibility for further consideration for transit. There wasn't a lot of openness.
- *No understanding of the constraint about the amended CSO; this tempo is shocking. Good luck. We want to try and support you – and not sound like we're just being whiners/losers. That said, it is so important to have before/after analysis. There is an argument around equity/service to*
We do want to look very closely.
- *There are some very legitimate concerns that drove this – safety and comfort for people cycling – we shouldn't minimize the concerns. We shouldn't disregard this.*
- *What's the TAC's best potential way to help?*
How do we deal with changes to parking, pedestrians, transit – we're still having to make those decisions. We're having to have pieces to fall in. Mid-Mass Ave is an example of where the street changes are
We are working very hard to treat all feedback equally – not just prioritizing the loudest voices in the room at a public meeting. Even if you have to write us an e-mail in your spare moments, we're trying to give all the input a fair review and account.
- *Is there a way that this committee can be a conduit to make sure that the conversation*

Public comment

A member of the public made the following comments:

- Concern regarding recent negative experiences riding buses and the Red Line, including announcements that are too loud and impacts on service.

- Question regarding if one needs to go to Downtown Crossing to replace a CharlieCard if it expired.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:10 PM

Version Information

Draft: 10/22/2021, AR, KT

Approval: 11/3/21 Unanimously with 6 votes