

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
DRAFT MEETING NOTES

Date, Time & Place:
February 3, 2016, 5:30-7:30
MIT building 32, Room 144, Vassar Street

Attendance

Committee Members

John Attanucci, Kelly Brown, Devin Chausse, Karen Dumaine, Charlie Fineman, Robert Fitzgerald, Jim Gascoigne, Doug Manz, Jeremy Mendelson, Susan Pacheco, Katherine Rafferty, Robert Ricchi, Simon Shapiro, Arthur Strang, Saul Tannenbaum, Alexander Taylor, Ritesh Warade

City of Cambridge

Tegin Bennett, Stephanie Groll, and Cleo Stoughton (Community Development), Adam Shulman (Traffic, Parking, and Transportation)

Presenters, official entities, and members of the public

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

Committee Introductions and Administrative Business

January 2016 notes were approved.

Public Comment

Susan Ringler commented on the public hearings that the MBTA has been hosting. She has started a petition to keep Late-Night serve and not raise fares, and invited committee members to sign it.

Parking and Transportation Demand Management (PTDM)

Stephanie Groll (Environmental and Transportation Planning Division, Community Development Department) gave an overview of the PTDM ordinance and described how it is applied to non-residential development projects in Cambridge that propose adding parking above a registered number.

Information and discussion:

- The PTDM Ordinance was first adopted in 1998 and made permanent in 2006.
- Participation is triggered when an owner of a non-residential property proposes to add parking above the registered number (based on an original inventory).
- Projects are classified as “small” if the number of spaces is 5 to 19, and as “large” if the number is 20 or more, and there are different requirements for the two sizes.
- PTDM plans include TDM measures, such as providing employees with transit passes.
- Process: Groll receives a draft PTDM plan, provides comments, the plan is revised, and she gives her approval or not. PTDM plans may be required before developments are granted special permits, for example.
- A Committee member asked which TDM measures were most effective. Groll responded that these measures are among the most effective: making sure there is not an oversupply of parking, charging employees for parking (on a daily, not monthly, basis), and doing workforce development to encourage local hiring.
- The PTDM ordinance applies to non-residential projects, and is also triggered by a change in land use.
- Groll and the Committee discussed how the increase in development in Kendall could have been associated with no increase in traffic, and whether this means that future development can also occur without adding to congestion.
- There was also discussion about how best to study what effect the PTDM ordinance has on commuting patterns, and then be able to communicate the benefits and advocate for an expansion of PTDM in Cambridge.
- There was discussion about the multiple pieces to development review (e.g., traffic impact study (TIS), planning board) and how the schedules align.
- The Committee and members of the public talked about how to have more input into the PTDM plan approval process. The Committee and members of the public are always able to submit comments to the planning board regarding special permits.
- There is interest among some Committee members in reviewing a standard TIS and potentially suggesting that more transit-related measures be added.

Committee Involvement in Development Review Process

A group of Committee members met before the regular meeting to establish a subcommittee to guide the Committee in providing input into the City's development review process. This subcommittee will likely discuss submitting a letter with transit-related comments regarding the MIT Kendall Square NoMa/SoMa project. Any subcommittee activity will be summarized to the larger committee and anything requiring a vote will be voted on at regularly scheduled committee meetings if there is quorum.

Discuss Recent News Items and Public Meetings

- Proposed changes to MBTA fares and late-night and commuter rail service
 - The City will craft a response and send to the FMCB and late-night and fare proposal committees.
 - The Committee also voted unanimously to send a letter, with three key points: use the commonly understood fare increase proposal of 5% per year; retain late-night service; and explore a portfolio of possible revenue sources (e.g., revisit a gas tax increase), in addition to modest and predictable fare increases. In general, fare increases should be paired with identifiable service improvements.
 - In general, the Committee was concerned that service degradation and cuts would lead to further decreases in ridership, leading to more cuts in the future. A long term funding solution needs to be found, and then service quality needs to improve.
 - The Committee discussed various funding sources (e.g., gas tax, increased assessments for cities that the state would match).
 - Committee members noted that the MBTA is much more in the public and political arena than some other state agencies.
 - Jeremy Mendelson passed around a fact sheet from his organization, TransitMatters.
- Kendall Square Mobility Task Force – The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 23.

Final Public Comment

- Ken Terrell noted that a new maintenance facility is not needed for the Green Line Extension; the MBTA could store new cars elsewhere.
- John Hawkinson reminded the Committee that the kickoff for Envision Cambridge is February 11 from 6 to 8pm.

Adjourned at 7:30 pm