

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES

Date, Time & Place:
December 7, 2016, 5:30-7:30
MIT building E25, room 117

Attendance

Committee Members

John Attanucci, Devin Chausse, Jim Gascoigne, Doug Manz, Robert Ricchi, Simon Shapiro, and Alex Taylor

City of Cambridge

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

Presenters, official entities, and members of the public

Seven members of the public were present. Jason Zogg (Cambridge Redevelopment Authority) and Philip Groth (MBTA) were present.

Public Comment

James Williamson noted that there may be an opportunity to improve bus operations by adjusting signal timing at the Mass. Ave./Putnam/Mt Auburn St. intersections and that there are often problems with the real-time bus predictions around Harvard Yard. He wondered whether the idea of extending the Route 83 bus to Fresh Pond Parkway had been explored further. He requested that the drivers of the last buses out of Central Square remain in the bus to let waiting passengers board, especially in cold weather. He suggested that if the City continues to subsidize Hubway, that it also subsidize a bus that loops between Harvard and MIT. He wondered whether the City could replace the shelter at Russell Field and how citizens can advocate for its replacement.

Committee Introductions, Administrative Business, and Updates

The November notes were not approved because quorum was not met. Tegin Bennett reminded the committee that a meeting with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committees is scheduled for December 14, and another joint meeting is scheduled for January 30 to discuss DPW's 5-year plan. The committee discussed possibly canceling the regular February meeting. The City is currently accepting applications for the Vision Zero Working Group and is interested in identifying a representative from each of the transportation committees to serve on the working group. Tegin Bennett invited those from the Transit Committee who are interested to contact her.

Binney/Galileo Streetscape Redesign

Jason Zogg from the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA) presented on the Binney/Galileo streetscape redesign project work done to date and obtained feedback from the committee members.

Discussion:

- The committee and Mr. Zogg discussed data about the number of transit users (compared to users of other transportation modes) at key intersections. Non-MBTA bus (e.g., private buses) ridership should be included in the estimates if it is not already. Committee members noted that delay even to empty buses affects operations and riders boarding later.
- The committee urged the CRA and involved parties to plan for future transit needs (e.g., higher transit ridership, new/modified routes). Dedicated bus lanes and queue jump lanes should be considered where possible/useful. Parking near intersections should be removed to create queue jump lanes in areas with congestion. Dedicated bus infrastructure should be considered even in roadway segments with relatively little congestion now, because it might be harder to set aside the necessary width for buses later as continued development potentially brings more congestion. The committee wanted to ensure that future transit service on the Grand Junction right-of-way is considered.
- MBTA routings using Main St. and Galileo Galilei Way instead of Ames St. and Broadway could be considered. Transit priority treatments could be implemented on Main St. to benefit MBTA buses and other service such as EZRide. Jim Gascoigne noted that, however, high pedestrian volumes at the Vassar St./Galileo Galilei Way/Main St. intersection often make turns difficult for EZRide buses.
- Planning activities such as the Kendall Square Mobility Task Force will continue to provide input into the design of this corridor. The goal is to design this corridor so as not to preclude future transit service.

Kendall Square Transit Enhancement Program (KSTEP)

Jason Zogg from the CRA summarized the Memorandum of Understanding for this program, which allocates funding for transit improvements in Kendall Square. This agreement is a key project element to the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan. For more information, see <http://www.cambridgeredevelopment.org/kendall-square-1/>.

Discussion:

- The committee and Mr. Zogg discussed the selection of projects to be funded by the KSTEP. The committee felt that even projects not immediately self-sustaining could be funded, with the assumption that good projects would attract funding by other means once their benefits (e.g., induced ridership) were demonstrated. The committee discussed a few ideas for pilot projects that could be funded by the KSTEP. There was a desire to focus on projects not directly relating to the Red Line since the Red Line is a regional/statewide priority and the \$6 million initially in the fund can have a larger impact on bus service compared to Red Line service.
- It was discussed whether other development projects would be able to and be interested in contributing to the KSTEP. Other mechanisms (e.g., tax increment financing) for capturing the value that the transit system adds to projects in Kendall Square were discussed.

Final Public Comment

There were no further public comments.

Announcements, Events, and Updates

- *Mass+Main project review:* The committee had no comments or questions about the draft letter to the Planning Board, but the letter was not approved because quorum was not met.
- *Green Line Extension:* There are public meetings for this project on December 7 and 14.
- *MBTA overnight service survey:* The survey is open until December 23. Please forward to groups who would be interested.
- *Real-time display:* A real-time transit information display will be installed next week in Porter Square. Please send us feedback.
- *Participatory budgeting:* Voting ends Friday (12/9).
- *Kendall Square Mobility Task Force:* The December meeting has been rescheduled for January 2017.

Adjourned at 7:30 pm