

City of Cambridge

Transit Advisory Committee

Meeting Notes

Wednesday, May 2, 2018

Ballroom, Citywide Senior Center, 805 Massachusetts Avenue

Attendance

Members (12) Jon Attanucci (Chair), Kelley Brown, Devin Chausse, Chantal Eide, Charles Fineman, Robert Fitzgerald, Mark Jensen, Katherine Rafferty, Arthur Strang, Alexander Taylor, Miles Taylor, Melissa Zampitella

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

Others (4) Wes Edwards (MBTA), Andy Smith (MBTA), Sarah Paritsky (Consultant to MBTA), 1 member of the public

Tegin Teich (TT) opened the meeting at 5:35 PM. The Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) moved to change the order of the items on agenda to accommodate late arrivals due to public transit delays.

Actions: Committee Introductions and Approve Minutes

The TAC moved to approve the April 2018 meeting notes. Katherine Rafferty (KR) moved to approve with a second from Chair John Attanucci (JA). The meeting notes were unanimously approved by voice vote.

Public Comment: 1 member of the public

Mary Nykorck, member of the public, who is interested in urban and universal design, shared an idea of how to address shade and heat island effects in open spaces. She proposed creating a combined heat sink/shade structure for public open spaces including transit waiting areas. This was based off her experience in a design charrette organized by a local university.

Discussion: Summary of Meeting with City Manager

JA summarized the meeting with City Manager Louis Pasquale (CM). At the meeting, JA gave a presentation on the TAC's priorities, including the City's input into the MBTA's bus service planning process, use of Kendal Square Transportation Enhancement Program (KSTEP) funds, and the Cambridge Parking and Transportation Demand Management (PTDM) ordinance and supporting policies. JA reported that the CM was generally receptive of the ideas. JA also mentioned that the CM had questions about the MBTA's response to requests that the city makes in the MBTA bus service planning process. TT clarified that city staff are engaged with the MBTA staff running the MBTA service planning process and also advocating for consideration of the ideas that the TAC has developed. JA also posted the question to the group: how to encourage further action from the city. TAC discussed changes to the

MBTA bus network with the Green Line Expansion (GLX) project and expressed hope to meet with the CM in advance of those bus network changes. In addition, the TAC discussed the need for advocacy at the state house for additional funding for the MBTA. Several TAC members voiced their support of the Vice Mayor's Transportation and Public Utilities Committee meeting earlier in the month. TAC members reported that Councilors were interested in the priorities identified by the TAC. The TAC further discussed the KSTEP funding and the decision-making process for KSTEP funds. TT provided an update saying that while the memorandum of understanding had been signed, the governance document hasn't been finalized by all the KSTEP partners. Adam Shulman (AS) provided a history of the KSTEP planning process.

As an aside, Mark Jensen referenced the upcoming Harvard bus tunnel construction project as a way to further collaborate with other citywide or neighborhood associations in the same way that the neighborhood associations in Kendall Square were engaged for the Kendall Square Mobility Task Force. He suggested further engaging with the Harvard Square neighborhood association as the bus tunnel and station elevator work was discussed at their last meeting.

Discussion: Next Steps for Transit Strategic Plan and MBTA Service Planning Process

TT presented ideas of how to move forward on a Cambridge-led effort to supplement the outreach work for the MBTA Better Bus Project. TT presented the current proposals for public process and public outreach, which include street teams, presenting at existing community events, business association meetings, school committees or other school meetings, and additional neighborhood-based meetings. TAC discussed scope of this future outreach work and its effects on the Transit Strategic Plan. For the Transit Strategic Plan (TSP), Cambridge staff and TAC members discussed additional work to graphically present the TSP ideas, and updates to the TSP text to reflect changes since the TSP was completed in 2015. TAC members further discussed the goals of the outreach effort.

MBTA Presentation & TAC Discussion: Better Bus Project

Wes Edwards (WE), MBTA/MassDOT Director of Operations Planning and Outreach, introduced himself and Sarah Paritsky from Regina Villa, the MBTA's public participation consultant. WE presented on the MBTA's Better Bus Project for the TAC members. Previous to WE's term at the MBTA, he was involved in an effective bus service planning program in Seattle that focuses speed and reliability enhancements. The main goal was to improve bus service and keep up with the congestion issues. WE defined the role of the transit operator in the Seattle region as a facilitator of better interactions with municipalities.

With that experience, WE introduced the MBTA's current service planning process, called the Better Bus Project (BBP). WE provided a summary about the MBTA bus service network, where the BBP fits into the MBTA's strategic plan, and emphasized that the BBP is a way for the MBTA to achieve the metrics defined in the service delivery policy in the nearer-term. In addition, WE presented on the service delivery trade-offs that may come into play as the service plan is developed. TAC members asked for clarification on the consultants mentioned as assisting in this process. WE responded with IBI Group, Nelson\Nygaard, and Regina Villa Associates.

WE stated that the MBTA has already reviewed some of the ideas that the TAC has proposed and then asked if there were additional studies or work that the MBTA should look at. The TAC members

mentioned additional studies: K2C2, Central Square Bus Access Study, Kendal Square Mobility Task Force, and CTPS' Alewife studies.

WE presented the MBTA's public process which includes outreach to municipalities and the TAC for identifying opportunities to partner on improvements to the bus service network. WE presented an effort from Seattle where the transit operator King County Metro created a regional guide based off of the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Transit Street Design Guide. This regional guide helped the transit operator facilitate partnerships with municipalities. In addition, King County Metro did hotspot and corridor level analyses for their transit routes to identify the areas where they would need the most support from municipalities to achieve better bus operations. TAC members discussed with WE the interactions and dynamics of partnership between King County Metro and municipalities, the types of partnerships and investments, the leadership roles of the transit operator and the municipalities.

TAC members asked WE if hotspot type analysis going to be included in the MBTA BBP process. WE and Andy Smith (AS) answered that the MBTA is already engaging in such a process with the BBP utilizing both data and the input of bus operators. TT requested that as further hotspots are identified that the MBTA share this information with Cambridge so that city departments can internally coordinate to identify street construction projects that may affect these hotspots.

TAC members also asked for clarification on some of the following topics:

- The timeline for this type of partnership building
- Transparency in discussions on tradeoffs between different service priorities
- Funding limitations and further investments in service

WE responded with the public outreach timeline for the BBP and also responded by saying that he will take any feedback given and share with appropriate groups. WE also reiterated that the MBTA's Service Delivery Policy is the measuring stick for all of the conversations on tradeoffs. In addition, the Fiscal and Management Control Board is the ultimate arbiter of how to balance the service delivery tradeoffs. WE also stated that the MBTA will have to balance the individual community priorities with a comprehensive understanding of priorities the region, for example, what may be a priority in Cambridge would also be balanced with neighboring communities.

TAC members further discussed the plans to get to Service Delivery Policy baselines and inquired about the expected scenarios and evaluation. WE stated that, currently, MBTA staff expect to report back to the FMCB at the end of 2018 with three scenarios that will get the MBTA bus network closer to meeting the standards defined in the Service Delivery Policy including a scenario where operational funding remains relatively unchanged from current funding levels. TAC members discussed the most productive ways to provide input to the MBTA, increased transparency in MBTA decision making, and the best way to conduct outreach for changes that appear to downgrade service on a local scale, like stop consolidations or removals.

TAC members also asked about how the MBTA expects to discuss the Better Bus Project in the context of Transportation Network Companies/Ride-hailing companies, private shuttles, and Transportation Management Associations operating services. WE stated that the MBTA is continuing to looking to other organizations to fill localized gaps in the transit service that the MBTA isn't able to provide and is also

meeting with these organizations to discuss issues. TAC members suggested that the MBTA consider integrating fare systems as a way to bridge some of the gap between private operators and the MBTA.

TAC members also suggested a free-ride week as part of the Better Bus Project outreach as a way to encourage non-riders to try the MBTA system and provide feedback on improvements to the bus network.

AS from the MBTA asked the members of the TAC if they have any specific suggestions as to bus operations or other issues related to services that they may want further information on. TAC members responded with several ideas:

- Employ Strict terminal departure discipline to even out headways on congested and/or crowded routes
- Perform additional analysis on certain key corridors such as Cambridge Street, Broadway, Main Street, Walden Street and Sherman Street, Alewife area, Fresh Pond Parkway corridor
- Add bus routes on circumferential (to the rapid transit network) streets in Cambridge
- Better understand the needs of Cambridge Rindge and Latin School students, especially from Cambridgeport
- Further explore post-GLX bus network service changes

MBTA staff handed out BBP postcards to TAC members and also asked the TAC to promote the online engagement tool and the upcoming BBP project meeting on Wednesday, May 30th, at 6:00 PM at the Cambridge Ridge and Latin School.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.