

MEETING MINUTES

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PTAC)
TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2016 @ 7:00 PM
BROOKLINE TOWN HALL, ROOM 408
333 WASHINGTON STREET, BROOKLINE MA 02446

7:00 CALL MEETING TO ORDER, APPOINT NOTE TAKER AND APPROVE MINUTES FROM APRIL 26, 2016 MEETING.

PTAC members present: Abby Swaine (Chair), Deborah Dong (note taker), Sherry Flashman, Linda Jason and Jane Gould.

Also present: Shalini Sen (MBTA planner), Guus Driessen (Brookline representative on I-90 Allston Interchange Project Task Force), Margaret Murphy (representing developer Chestnut Hill Realty).

Approval of April minutes deferred to next PTAC meeting.

7:05 TAKE PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA.

Margaret Murphy said she is attending due to interest in areas underserved by public transportation.

Sherry Flashman announced that she is resigning from PTAC, effective after this meeting, due to time constraints from her commitments to social justice issues. PTAC members expressed their dismay on her leaving, but wished her the best and will miss her.

7:15 MISC UPDATES: I-90 ALLSTON INTERCHANGE PROJECT, MBTA FISCAL MANAGEMENT CONTROL BOARD PRESENTATIONS, TRIPPS MEETINGS, ETC

Guus Driessen updated PTAC about the April 28th I-90 Allston Interchange Project task force meeting he attended (at the Fiorentino Center on Antwerp Street in Allston). During the 4-hour meeting (attended by ~25 people), they discussed a matrix for evaluating alternative designs, including the "No Build" scenario, MassDOT 3K, A Better City, and the "Amateur planner" Ari Ofsevit. PTAC members noted that their concerns appear to be listed in the matrix criteria, including mass transit, commuter rail tracks, quality of life issues for the neighborhood, etc. Guus said that more information will be available soon.

Abby and Guus summarized some points from their meeting with Paul Nelson of MASCO* (held the morning of April 28th prior to the task force meeting). MASCO's primary concern for public transportation is for its employees (since most patients travel via car). Most of their employees travel via the Yawkey station, so MASCO is not very interested in West Station as a commuter rail stop. They have interest in bus travel to/from Harvard Square through connections at West Station because current bus routes are "tortuous" now. Possible routes could run from Park Drive to West Station to points north, or via Malvern to have less conflict/traffic near Boston University. A loop dropoff south of West Station so people can switch buses there could be adequate. MASCO would like bus access to the station for their shuttles, which are used for their employees (and MASCO is not open to making those buses available for public use).

Linda and Jane reported that they rode the Brookline High special 51 bus route from the high school to south Brookline. The bus was standing room only (~70 students) and may have left some students

* The Longwood "Medical Academic and Scientific Community Organization."

behind (a frequent occurrence according to students they chatted with). There was a car parked where the bus stops that created a delay. There is no sign for the bus stop. The bus stops were very flexible (~two dozen stops, not all official Route 51 stops, including 3 in Putterham Circle), and the extended route covers more of south Brookline, including Newton Street and the Skyline Park area. Driver was attentive and required students to pay their fares (many paid in cash), but there is no regular driver for the route, and some drivers appeared unfamiliar with the route and official stops. The ride was ~30 minutes, with 70% of the students disembarking during the first 15 minutes, and ended at Horace James Circle. Sherry reported that her daughter occasionally took the special 51 route home after school, and her experience was that the bus sometimes skipped stops but stopped whenever a student pressed the buzzer.

There was discussion about whether there can be additional buses made available for the special 51 run, perhaps on a slightly staggered schedule. Shalini said that it could be considered if buses are available and there are more than 60 riders expected, but any additional buses would have to finish the route by 3:30 in order to get back to the station in time for the evening rush hour. One possibility is for the special 51 bus to finish the remainder of the regular 51 route to Forest Hills after it is done transporting students to south Brookline. Another is to reduce the number of stops in order to complete each trip in 20 minutes. Ridership numbers are expected to increase if the high school expands onsite. Shalini also noted that the T's bus coordinator has talked with Mary Murphy at the high school to resolve the problem of buses arriving late at the school.

7:30 PLAN BUS STOP CENSUS PROJECT

Shalini provided maps showing route variations through Brookline, PDF documents listing the bus stops, and Excel spreadsheets listing stops by route. PTAC members discussed what is reasonable to expect at bus stops, including safety/lighting/visibility, cleanliness, when benches or shelters are desirable, shoveled in winter, proper signage, etc., and brainstormed on how certain criteria (i.e. curb cuts or ADA accessibility) or apparent demand or nearby amenities could be most efficiently assessed and observed. Tentative plan is to have a pilot run, either by walking (perhaps for the key routes) or by car (i.e. for the 51 or 60 routes), develop a matrix listing criteria, review the T's bus stop guidelines (to be distributed by Abby), and to attempt to mark landmarks at the bus stop level (perhaps help can be requested from the Town's GIS group or Andy Martineau). This will be discussed in more detail at the next PTAC meeting.

8:30 PLAN OTHER NEAR-TERM WORK IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS, AND SET DATE & AGENDA TOPICS FOR JUNE MEETING.

- MBTA BUS & SUBWAY SERVICE
- SERVICE FOR UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS & AREAS
- COORDINATING WITH RELATED GROUPS
- BUILDING TRANSIT INTO BROOKLINE DEVELOPMENT
- BIG-PICTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Abby gave a brief history of PTAC's efforts to improve T service in south Brookline, including the past study to evaluate re-routing the 51 bus. Margaret Murphy indicated she was attending due to interest in public transportation in south Brookline, especially in light of Chestnut Hill Realty's proposed plans to significantly increase the number of apartments at Hancock Village (approximately 161 units in its first phase and 228 in phase 2). Linda indicated it would be helpful to know where Hancock Village residents travel to/from, and Margaret indicated that many work in the Longwood area. Hancock Village runs a shuttle service for its residents during rush hour, to/from Reservoir Station (2 shuttle vans seating ~14 people, ~60-100 passengers/day). Linda suggested that perhaps MASCO can run shuttles to/from Hancock Village and the Longwood area for these employees. Sherry suggested that CHR could commit more resources to transit, including to/from the high school. Margaret said that she could not make any

commitments to resources, but will gather more detailed information about the residents, where they work/commute, etc., and will bring that info to PTAC at a future meeting to help with brainstorming and planning. She also described that Chestnut Hill Realty had a traffic study done for its first 40B project at Hancock Village, and based on the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) standard numbers, the findings were about half of the expected car traffic at night, so residents are apparently working from home, working odd hours, or walking and biking. CHR also has properties throughout Brookline, including a development being built at the Kessler Woods site in Newton at the Brookline border near Rangeley and LaGrange Streets (88 unit apartment building) and that CHR runs shuttles for that development as well.

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 21st.

9:00 ADJOURN.