



TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2023

5:00 p.m.

VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM

Present: Ramachandran (Rama) Balakrishna (chair), Franny Osman, Paula Walsh, Zhengyu Huang.

Absent: There is currently one open position on the committee

Select Board Representative: not present.

Invited guests: Emi Azar (Council of Aging Liaison) and Austin Cyganiewicz (Director of Governmental Affairs)

1. Opening

Chair Rama Balakrishna opened the meeting at 5:03 p.m.

2. Regular Business

A. Approval of Meeting Minutes –

- a. There were no available minutes for review, any outstanding minutes will be reviewed at the next meeting.
- b. The Town Clerk's office is missing some of the approved minutes from 2022. Paula Walsh will forward all 2022 minutes she completed to the office.

B. Regular Business:

- a. Austin Cyganiewicz, the Acton Director of Governmental Affairs updates:
 - i. Ridership: Ridership on the CAT and the Curb-to-Curb services had very strong numbers despite the fact that the Rail Shuttle and one Curb-to-Curb van are still not running.
 - ii. Taxi Program: There has been a regional grant from the state for the towns of Sudbury, Bolton, Acton and one other town. Acton's share is \$80,000. Taxi companies are being vetted, but currently the companies want 24-hour notice. Austin is hoping to find one that is more flexible. Discussion was held as to whether multiple companies could be contracted, at least one now that may require 24-hour notice while we continue the search for a company with more flexibility. The aim is to contract with one company and have another as backup. Additionally, it was suggested that a Boston-based company be contracted for return medical trips.
 - iii. Boston Medical Day Run: An additional idea being considered was to have a dedicated day of the week for anyone needing to go into Boston for medical care. It was pointed out that a single day may not be able to cover various doctors' fixed schedules. We could potentially ask residents about their doctor visit schedules as part of the proposed transit ridership survey.



- iv. \$40,000 in ARPA funds (to be spent by the end of 2026) have been allocated to expand CAT service. However, SB would like to create a survey to assess the current services as well as any recommendations and suggestions for improvements. We might be able to leverage MAPC's experience with such surveys. Concerns were raised about the limited money being spent on a study rather than service enhancements. However, the resulting planning document may serve to bring more funding in the future. Other funding sources appear to require such a planning document too.
- v. Travis Pollack of MAPC is seeking to coordinate a meeting to discuss the creation of a town Transportation Action Plan. The survey would be funded using ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds. ARPA funding money must be spent by 2026,
- b. Sidewalk Summary: Corey York (Director of Public Works for the Town of Acton) and QinRui Pang (Town Engineer) sent updates at the request of Rama Balakrishna.
 - i. Roughly half of the Taylor Road sidewalk has been finished, and much of the remaining section has been cleared and graded.
 - ii. A current sheet summarizing the status of various sidewalk locations was obtained.
 - iii. River Street: Temporary one-way infrastructure and redesign of School @ River Street are in progress.
 - iv. Hayward and Main: A safety audit is planned for late March/early April per the request of town manager, John Mangiaratti, to address questions raised about increased cut-through traffic down Musket/Jefferson to avoid the proposed lights at Hayward.
 - v. Route 2 at Piper and Taylor Roads: Numerous studies have been conducted over the years. Any proposed changes at this location must be done in cooperation with the State. A couple of alternative proposals are being evaluated. A consultant is also studying other remedies such as automatic all-red extension when a car has been detected to have run a red light.
 - vi. Great Road: The Complete Streets effort is underway. The study for the section of Great Road from the Concord town line to Main Street has been completed, and funding has been secured for Main Street to Littleton town line.
 - vii. Powder Mill Road: Conceptual design and outreach efforts are completed. Design has begun.

C. Select Board Update:

- a. No updates

3. New/Special Business:

- A. It was noted that the rail trail signage motion passed at the SB meeting.



- B. There was discussion around how TAC can best obtain reports and updates from town staff. Rama Balakrishna and Paula Walsh volunteered to meet with pertinent town staff (particularly engineering) approximately one week prior to TAC meetings.
- C. Rezoning petition: Franny Osman informed TAC that she submitted a Kelley's Corner re-zoning petition to the SB. She did this as a private citizen and not as a representative of any of the committees she serves on.
- D. MASSPIRG: Laura Davis (Concord TAC) has expressed interest in conducting a public outreach event at NARA Park to coordinate with the official opening event of the Route 2 Bike Path Bridge.
- E. TAC meeting schedule: There was a unanimous decision to have a consistent meeting date and time of the fourth Wednesday of the month at 5:30 pm. Meetings are expected to run for roughly ninety minutes and the new schedule will begin on April 22, 2023. However, there will be an interim meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 29, 2023 at 5:30 pm.
- F. Senior Center Update: Emi Azar relayed that according to Sharon Mercurio, the Senior Center Director, transportation for the Senior Center has been going well. Paula Walsh echoed this (as a recent rider on the COA van, she heard only positive comments about the service, and in particular, riders adore the drivers). Rama Balakrishna suggested that Google be contacted to improve navigational directions to the door of the senior center.
- G. South Acton and Train Station: There is an input process underway which will continue for several years. MBTA towns must identify 50 acres for multi-unit, low income housing, 10 of which must be within ½ mile of the train station.
- H. Regional transportation authorities (RTA) serve 55% of the population, yet receive only 7% of available funding. Residents were requested to encourage Simon Cataldo to support a bill to allocate more funding to RTAs.

A motion to close the meeting was made by Franny Osman and seconded by Paula Walsh and approved unanimously, The meeting ended at 6:20 p.m.

Acronyms:

ADA= Americans with Disability Act

ARPA= American [COVID-19] Recovery Program Act

Boston MPO= Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization, the part of MassDOT that disburses federal transportation funds

BAG= Bicycle Advisory Group (formed January 2021)

CMAQ= Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality

COD= Commission on Disabilities

COVID= Novel Coronavirus 2019 causing a worldwide pandemic in 2020

CTPS= Central Transportation Planning Staff, within the Boston MPO, within MassDOT

**Landline= a signage and wayfinding project to connect communities by bike and pedestrian, by MAPC and MassTrails of MassDOT.*

MAGIC= Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination, which is our 13-town subregion of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council



MAPC= Metropolitan Area Planning Council

MassDOT=Massachusetts Department of Transportation

MBTA= Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

NRG=Nashoba Regional Greenways Coalition

SATSAC= South Acton Train Station Advisory Committee

SB=Select Board

TAC= Transportation Advisory Committee

TMA= Transportation Management Association