

Meeting Notes

Date: June 17, 2019
1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.

Notes Taken By: Lynn Transit Action Plan Team

Place: Lynn City Hall

Project Name: Lynn Transit Action Plan
Advisory Committee – Meeting 1

ATTENDANCE

Advisory Committee Members

Senator Brendan Crighton
Representative Daniel Cahill
Representative Peter Capano
Representative Lori Ehrlich
Mayor Thomas McGee
Rick Jakious, representing Congressman Seth Moulton
Andrea Baez, YMCA of Metro North, Lynn
Colin Codner, Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce
Amanda Dooling, North Shore Community College
Pam Edwards, Mass Senior Action
Jonathon Feinberg, New Lynn Coalition
Gordy Hall, Lynn Business Partnership
Lynne Havusha, representing Natasha Soolkin, New American Association of Massachusetts
Fred Hogan, City Council Ward 6
James Marsh, City of Lynn
John Meany, representing Edward Shinnick, Traffic Commission
Lisa Orgettas, Disability Resource Center
Kathleen Paul, Mass Senior Action
Tonia Scalcione, Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development

MassDOT/MBTA

Alexandra Markiewicz, MassDOT
Scott Hamwey, MassDOT
Kat Benesh, MBTA
Lara Seltzer, MassDOT
Eric Burkman, MBTA

Consultant Team

Essek Petrie, VHB
Kristine Wickham, VHB
Chris Henry, Fitzgerald & Halliday

Public

Tina Ascolillo, Representative Ehrlich's Office
Richard Benevento, World Tech Engineering
Charles Patsios, Lynnway Associates
Michael Procopio, Procopio Companies
Paulina Salano, Economic Development & Industrial Corporation of Lynn
Sheri Warrington, Senator Crighton's Office
Jeff Weeden, Lynn Housing Authority

This document summarizes the discussion at the June 17, 2019 MassDOT/MBTA Lynn Transit Action Plan Advisory Committee meeting. All references to slides relate to the presentation that has been posted to the project website.

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WELCOME

A. Markiewicz, MassDOT Project Manager, introduced the Lynn Transit Action Plan (LTAP), as well as the other members of the team and thanked everyone for coming. The public was invited to make comments or ask questions at the end of the meeting and A. Markiewicz mentioned that there would be additional opportunities for public comment throughout the process. A. Markiewicz reviewed the meeting agenda, which consisted of: introductions, a project overview, a review of the existing conditions analysis, a goals and objectives discussion, and a review of the community engagement plan and next steps.

INTRODUCTIONS

A. Markiewicz asked each member of the Advisory Committee (AC) to introduce themselves and their organization. Each AC member was also asked to share what the "one most important outcome [they] would hope to achieve from improved transit service for Lynn." The major takeaways from AC members were the need for transit in Lynn to be reliable, affordable, equitable, and accessible. Accessibility was discussed as both an issue of access to important destinations in Boston and around the region and as an issue of easy physical access to transit at stop locations. A. Markiewicz followed the introductions by commenting that the LTAP was going to look at connecting the residents of Lynn to Boston and other places in the region that residents want to go in a reliable and quick manner. In addition, A. Markiewicz informed the AC members that they will help the team integrate those discussed desires into goals and objectives for the LTAP.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

A. Markiewicz gave a presentation on the context and purpose of the Lynn Transit Action Plan. The presentation noted the significance of Lynn as a "Priority Place" in Focus40, the MBTA's investment plan for the needs of Greater Boston between now and 2040. A. Markiewicz discussed how the LTAP will holistically assess the transit demands and needs in Lynn across four modes (bus, commuter rail, ferry, and rapid transit) and pointed to the Everett Transit Action Plan as an example. The yearlong schedule was presented and A. Markiewicz spoke about how the AC members will serve as a conduit for broader public involvement, while also representing their agency's opinions and concerns through feedback on analysis and findings.

Comments from the Advisory Committee:

- R. Jakious asked if pedestrians, bikes, and scooters will be looked at and included in the LTAP analysis. A. Markiewicz responded that the LTAP is going to think about bike/pedestrian access to transit, but is focused on public transportation within the T and will therefore only think about it in context of access to public transportation.
- J. Feinberg said that the LTAP should include the Dukakis Center report about transit access for Latino populations, as Latinos are typically a group that has a hard time accessing transit. A.

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Markiewicz asked members of the AC to please send the team or let them know about any other studies that should be included.

- C. Codner asked who is going to be the recipient of the recommendations, the timeline's effect on making recommendations, and the feasibility of the communication of the recommendations. A. Markiewicz responded that some recommendations will be in the purview of MBTA and MassDOT and some will be the City. She elaborated that it will be based on the types of recommendations and on who is the best to release the recommendations. Since this study is not cost constrained, A. Markiewicz said the team will look at who is the best entity to feasibly raise the funds to implement any recommendations. There will be longer term recommendations that will warrant longer plans, but in the shorter term the team may be able to pilot short term plans.
- J. Feinberg, referring to the list of Advisory Committee members, asked if there was the possibility to expand the AC further to include bus riders as members. A. Markiewicz replied that they could definitely talk after the meeting to see if there are ways to augment the group. She also noted that the team has room in the schedule to have briefings with people who ride transit, as well as room for other public outreach opportunities in the schedule. E. Petrie mentioned that the team would be talking with this group about those types of opportunities.
- Representative Capano talked about the need to look at transit, specifically commuter rail, bus, and ferry, in a holistic manner to ensure that the effects of trains being full when reaching Lynn, no bus shelters to cover riders in the rain, and poor ferry advertising are taken into consideration as they can have major impacts on ridership. A. Markiewicz said that the team will be doing a thorough analysis to see where people need to go and where people want to go beyond the current bus routes to understand what the gaps are in the system so that we can understand how to implement and make changes.

EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

A. Markiewicz asked the AC members how they define a good transit system. C. Codner defined good transit as consistent, affordable, frequent, and safe. L. Orgettas said a good transit system is one that is fiscally accessible for people with disabilities. The overall takeaway was that the Lynn stakeholders felt reliability, affordability, accessibility, and safety were the main features that created a good transit system.

Comments from the Advisory Committee:

- Mayor McGee said that a good transit system in Lynn meant addressing the blue line and the bus. He said that road congestion negatively affects bus service. A. Markiewicz responded that it is really important when looking at bus to understand and know how congestion is affecting bus service.

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- Representative Ehrlich said that it would be a great opportunity to get people to places within the region, specifically between Marblehead and Salem where there is currently no servicing bus route. A. Markiewicz responded that the team will definitely look at that connection, but that it specifically might be a bit more than the purview of this project with its focus on Lynn. She noted that there are other processes like the Network Redesign that could take such a connection into account.
- Mayor McGee said that the Massachusetts Gateway City, the Better City report, and Transit Matters report on an electrified rail system would be useful studies to include in the LTAP process. A. Markiewicz said the team would look into the studies.

A. Markiewicz brought the discussion of good transit qualities into looking at the existing conditions of Lynn. The presentation showcased the existing population density, land use patterns, and environmental justice communities in Lynn, in addition to the existing commuter rail and blue rail lines and the bus routes and their current frequencies.

Comments from the Advisory Committee:

- J. Feinberg asked to hear about the methodology being used to understand who is using the bus. A. Markiewicz said that the team has data from the automatic bus counters on the buses and that they can use that data source to understand delay and ridership. She noted that the data is scaled up to recognize certain factors and through this the team is able to get a great understanding of bus ridership. J. Feinberg asked further about calculating bus users, particularly regarding how the team is able to capture people who want to take the bus but are unable to do so because the bus is full. A. Markiewicz clarified that the team is able to understand from those automatic bus counters where there is a full bus and it will be seen as a red flag if the bus is full and delayed on arrival. In addition, A. Markiewicz asked AC members to please let the team know any additional thoughts they may have on where people are being left behind.
- Representative Cahill asked about the time frame for viewing commuter data. A. Markiewicz said that the team will be conducting analysis in the next few months, but wouldn't go out in the summer to do traffic counts since they are aware that there will be less people. A. Markiewicz also clarified that the team is out doing some traffic counts now, but will be going back out in the fall.
- Mayor McGee noted that many people no longer take transit because the trains and buses are full. A. Markiewicz said the team is able to look at ways that people are traveling via private vehicles and can see if people are taking the same roads as the bus route in a private vehicle, which can then help identify where changes could be made. A. Markiewicz asked again for AC

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members to please follow up with the team if they know of areas where a lot of people are being left behind by full buses. E. Petrie and A. Markiewicz also announced that the team will be doing a survey in the fall to get additional input to fill in the data gaps.

- C. Codner spoke of the importance of looking at land use, both as it is currently and what it is going to be in the very near term. A. Markiewicz responding by saying that the team will be doing due diligence to ensure that they are accounting for all near term projects, but asked again for AC members to let the team know if they know of any projects.
- R. Benevento told A. Markiewicz that the work he did for Lynn looking at transit signal priority and BRT will be made available to the team.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A. Markiewicz discussed Focus40's three broad goals, Equity, Economic Development, and Environment being put into the context of Lynn's transit system. She then asked the AC members what those goals mean for Lynn.

Comments from the Advisory Committee:

- Senator Crighton said that having access to rapid transit and commuter rail across a line of incomes is really what Lynn counts on and the fares need to be competitive with Wonderland and the cost of taking a vehicle or bus to Wonderland. A. Markiewicz summarized his comments by saying that we need to have a more equitable, frequent and affordable way of accessing the rail systems.
- Mayor McGee said that there needs to be interchangeability on different modes with a fare pass system.
- Representative Capano said that having shelters at bus stops is critical and that providing bus shelters seems like an easy immediate fix to ensure people are able to use the bus even in the rain. A. Markiewicz summarized his comments by saying goals were access and safety, especially focused on people with different needs.
- J. Feinberg said that it was really critical to look at the "for who" question in the context of Transit. Additionally, he said he would like to see protections for the people that are already in Lynn, in some capacity, to ensure that low income groups can live where the transit is that they really need. A. Markiewicz summarized that a goal would be to look at housing implications of transit.

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- G. Hall said that the parking garage needs to be addressed, especially because people will still not be inclined to take a more reliable and frequent train with the current state of the garage. A. Markiewicz summarized that safety and accessibility should be goals for the LTAP.
- P. Edwards said that there needs to be a lot more put into transit because right now transit is not reliable and can be just as long as driving, so people are choosing to sit in their own cars in traffic instead of using transit. A. Markiewicz summarized that goals would be bringing up the level of competitiveness and making transit the obvious choice you want to take.
- Senator Crighton said resiliency of the system is a goal and suggested that public transit be looked at as a tool to mitigate worsening congestion during construction projects between Lynn and Boston.
- P. Edwards said that a goal should be to also look at the potential future problems with transit.
- R. Jakious said two goals would be electrification and grade level platforms, which are especially important from an equity standpoint. Additionally, R. Jakious mentioned that Lynn is the largest single feeder to Salem State. A. Markiewicz said that Rail Vision is looking at all of those features and the team is very much plugged into that process, as she is actually on that team, and the team can certainly look at potential shorter term solutions.
- J. Feinberg said that emergency vehicles are also being negatively impacted by congestion. A. Markiewicz said that for the scope of this project, the team is more limited in looking at MBTA service, but it does have broader outcomes on congestion.
- C. Codner said that it is extremely important for Lynn that there is a healthy robust transportation system to support strong, sustainable economic growth. A. Markiewicz asked the group as follow up, what are the features of transportation that are most important to economic development, whether it is faster connections or about where in or outside of Lynn the connections are to. C. Codner responded that at an underlying standpoint, trust in the system is crucial for getting people out of their cars. T. Scalcione shared her personal experiences of herself and friends choosing to take private vehicles over transit because of a lack of trust in the system and high fare costs.
- P. Edwards said that a goal should be asking private partners to buy monthly transit passes for their employees. A. Markiewicz said that the team is looking at other ways, beyond the actual physical system, that they can look at transit in Lynn. She added that the team is looking at other ways to bring stakeholders into the process to fill in those gaps.

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NEXT STEPS

A. Markiewicz wrapped up the presentation with information on next steps by walking through the plan for engaging riders and residents. She noted that there will likely be public outreach between phase 2 and 3 of the LTAP, but in the meantime asked AC members to please let the team know if they have any meetings that they would like the team to attend or think would be good for the team to attend. E. Petrie said really any type of meeting is good for the team to be at, so to please let them know about the events because those are all great opportunities. A. Markiewicz added that the team will have a public meeting towards the end of the phase 3 process to talk about recommendations and gather support as the plan goes forward.

PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Markiewicz invited public comment. Some concerns were raised about the inclusivity of the LTAP, to which A. Markiewicz assured the group that all groups would be considered and included in the analysis and recommendations.

- R. Benevento said that bus service is probably the biggest issue for the City within Lynn. There are other competing challenges within Lynn because the City doesn't have complete streets and everyone is competing for the right of way. Bus shelters are great but only if they are being done correctly and in compliance with ADA guidelines. He asked that all these issues be considered.
- K. Paul said that the addition of parking meters in front of the library, despite people choosing to not pay the meters and just quickly run in and out of the library, has made it difficult for seniors to access their bus. The bus is no longer able to pull up to the sidewalk and seniors are now struggling to get on the bus.
- C. Codner said that there is a component of momentum and urgency to what the LTAP is doing. He asked that the process continue to be done with a sense of urgency as people have transit problems today.
- Mayor McGee called for both a short and long term plan. A. Markiewicz responded that the LTAP would do just that.