

Meeting Notes

Date: June 18, 2020
1:30 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.

Place: Virtual Meeting

Notes Taken By: Lynn Transit Action Plan Team

Project Name: Lynn Transit Action Plan
Advisory Committee – Meeting 4

ATTENDANCE

Advisory Committee Members

Senator Brendan Crighton
Jon Tilbault, Office of Senator Brendan Crighton
Alberto Calvo, North Shore Latino Business Association
Lisa Orgettas, Independent Living Centers
Jonathon Feinberg, New Lynn Coalition
Representative Donald Wong
Mayor Thomas McGee
Andrea Baez, YMCA of Metro North, Lynn
Colin Codner, Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce
Susan McDaniel, representing Representative Capano
Tonia Scalcione, EOHED
Representative Daniel Cahill
Kurt Gaertner, EEA
Gordy Hall, Lynn Business Partnership

MassDOT/MBTA

Alexandra Markiewicz, MassDOT
Doug Johnson, MassDOT
Jacquelyn Goddard, MassDOT
Matt Grew, MassDOT
Madison McGlinchey, MassDOT
Benjamin Muller, MassDOT
Kristen Pennucci, MassDOT
Eric Burkman, MBTA
Erica Baker, MBTA
Wes Edwards, MBTA
Andrew McFarland, MBTA
Tom Quattromani, MBTA

Consultant Team

Essek Petrie, VHB

Other

Jeff Parenti, DCR
Robert O'Brien, City of Revere
Aaron Clausen, City of Lynn
Rich Benevento, WorldTech
Angelo (last name not provided)
Sezan McDaniel Soytok, Rep. Capano's Office
Julie DeMauro, City of Revere
Arnold Bilansky
Bianca Carlson, The Procopio Companies
Sezan McDaniel Soytok, Rep. Capano's Office

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This document summarizes the discussion at the June 18, 2020 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.

WELCOME

Alexandra Markiewicz, MassDOT Project Manager, welcomed the members of the Advisory Committee as well as the members of public. Markiewicz expressed that questions were welcome throughout the presentation, and that there would be additional time for questions at the end of the meeting.

PROJECT UPDATE

Markiewicz gave an update on the project since the third Advisory Committee meeting. She also stated that the Lynn Transit Action Plan project team will be finalizing the report in the next month and will be transitioning the recommendations to agency partners for next steps and implementation.

RECAP OF APPROACH

Markiewicz walked through the methodology and process that the project team followed to gather and analyze data, including: demographics, bus ridership and delay, mode-agnostic travel patterns, previous studies, and stakeholder and public input. Markiewicz then summarized how this data and input was used to generate and refine the recommendations that range from near-term capital investments to longer term coordination with systemwide initiatives presenting larger scale changes. Markiewicz also noted that stakeholder and public input was critical in understanding the travel needs of the residents of Lynn and developing appropriate recommendations for the final report. In addition to the public input survey, Advisory Committee meetings, and public meetings/open houses, the project team regularly collaborated with partner agencies to ensure a cooperative approach and results.

KEY FINDINGS

Markiewicz presented the key findings of the project distinguished by two unique travel patterns for residents of Lynn; local travel needs and access to Boston. Local travel needs have been demonstrated by the high percentage of trips that begin and end in Lynn and the high percentage of trips that are under 2 miles. Transit generally covers these travel patterns, however low frequency and poor reliability coupled with lack of accessible stops make transit less competitive compared to driving.

Access to Boston is critical to support economic development for the City of Lynn. Current travel patterns show that Boston is the second most frequented municipality, after trips within Lynn itself, and commuter rail and express bus fares are a challenge for some low-income residents.

After detailing the project's key findings, Markiewicz noted that the remainder of the presentation will be focused on the recommendations developed by the Lynn Transit Action Plan.

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Comments from the Advisory Committee:

- Colin Codner inquired if the percentage of local trips (67% of trips originating in Lynn, end in Lynn) is typical compared to other similar communities. Markiewicz responded that in general this is not out of the ordinary. The percentage may seem high, but it is not abnormal relative to what we see in other communities. This is just an indication that there is an opportunity to potentially support some of those short, internal trips with pointed interventions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With no further questions or comments from the Advisory Committee, Markiewicz presented the project recommendations. The recommendations were grouped into three primary categories:

- Prioritize buses on roadways using bus lanes and transit signal priority to improve reliability and frequency.
- Improve access to transit and enhance the customer experience by removing barriers and providing upgraded amenities.
- Reimagine how the network functions through coordination among transportation network improvement initiatives that will affect future service plans in the long-term, both locally and between Lynn and Boston.

Markiewicz discussed in greater detail the recommendations for bus prioritization included a discussion on citywide transit signal priority as well as details on dedicated bus facilities along the following corridors:

- Western Avenue (Route 107) Shared Bus/Bike Lanes
- Multimodal Improvements on Route 1A, Central Square to Wonderland
- Broad Street Bus Lanes
- North Common Street Bus Lane

She also discussed in greater detail the recommendations to improve access to transit and enhance customer experience, which included the following:

- Improve Amenities at Bus Stops
- Improve Access to Information
- Improve Bicycle and Pedestrian Access
- Stop Consolidation and Accessibility Improvements
- Central Square-Lynn Garage Improvements
- Apply Transit Supportive Urban Design

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Comments from the Advisory Committee:

- Mayor McGee noted that he is supportive of the bus lane concepts, but emphasized the need for a continued discussion and stakeholder engagement on whether the Western Avenue corridor should be all-day or peak period only.
- The Mayor also noted that there is a great opportunity on Broad Street to connect routes 441/442 from Swampscott to the garage and through to the Lynnway. He noted that the City is investing \$1.6m on Washington Street and \$800,000 on other intersection improvements in the area. He emphasized the opportunity to build off of these investments by connecting city and state investments, particularly at the intersection at Washington/Broad Street.
- Gordy Hall asked if there would be one or two general purpose travel lanes on North Common after the bus lane implementation. He noted that he doesn't feel it is necessary to have two travel lanes on either North or South Common Street and the reduced capacity would be helpful to slow traffic down. He also inquired how shared bus/bike lanes work. Markiewicz noted that the current concept allows for two general purpose travel lanes and on-street parking in addition to the bus/bike lanes and added the shared bus/bike lanes work well when travel speeds are maintained at a comfortable level for cyclists. Eric Burkman added that the MBTA has had success implementing these in other areas and it they function best with relatively low speeds and lower frequencies. Hall noted that his biggest concern is lowering vehicle speed and Burkman reiterated that the added striping and narrowed lanes will assist in lowering speed.
- Bob O'Brien noted that the City of Revere very much understands the value of bus lanes, but they are concerned that the 1A concept will be taking one travel lane out of two and they have concerns related to queuing and traffic congestion. He noted that the City looks forward to working with MassDOT in modeling the potential impact.
- Jon Feinberg commented that this is very exciting opportunity for the City and noted that some of these recommendations are anticipated in the nearer term. He asked if additional outreach will be necessary before implementation. Markiewicz responded that prior to implementation, additional coordination and outreach would be conducted during the design development phase.
- Feinberg then asked about the timeline on implementation. Eric Burkman responded that typically it would be 6-9 months, but due to Covid-19 there are funding challenges that may impact timing. These bus lane concepts are a high priority for the agency and the MBTA is looking at ways to advance these, but there is some uncertainty on funding availability. At the time of this meeting, construction beginning in 2021 is feasible if funding is identified and there is community support for the project.
- Feinberg also asked if there any plans around multilingual outreach to members of the community. Mayor McGee noted that the City and the MBTA are working on a two-month reduced fare pilot and are working on a broad outreach program related to it. Mayor McGee also noted that particularly in the Western Ave corridor, there is a diverse community that would be reached out to concerning this project. Alberto Calvo noted that the North Shore Latino Business Association is ready to support and help share information with the community.

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- Bob O'Brien asked how the designs on 1A relate to design of the General Edwards Bridge. Markiewicz noted that the project team has been in contact with the project manager for that project and that coordination will continue.
- Feinberg asked if there is a digital flyer associated with the Pilot Fare reduction program. Markiewicz noted that she will follow up with MBTA customer experience and send any further information to the Advisory Committee.

Markiewicz presented the remainder of the project recommendations, including the coordination with other ongoing efforts related to the larger transportation network. These topics included: Bus Network Redesign, Rail Transformation, and Ferry Service.

- Mayor McGee expressed his frustration that the grant for the ferry procurement has expired and with the conclusion regarding ferry service in the report. He stated that he feels it is unfair to report that ferry service is not feasible. He noted that the Hingham Ferry started with low ridership and turned into one of the most successful ferry services. Regarding regional rail, he stated that MassDOT should be looking at more near-term changes in addition to long term changes. The Mayor noted that he is excited for the bus opportunities, but emphasized the need for more rapid transit like regional rail. He stated that he does not feel that the City has received enough support from the administration for ferry service and that he felt it was unfair to base the feasibility of the service on previous pilots.
- Codner noted that he would like to reiterate from the business community standpoint – he is embarrassed for the State that the grant for the ferry expired. He finds that a ferry service is an important component of supporting the needs of the North Shore community. He urged the group to maintain momentum on improving transit through any small steps, including for example, improving signage in the Lynn Garage.
- O'Brien stated that he fully supports the improvements to the commuter rail, both in the long and short terms. He also stated that the commuter rail improvements are essential to support the bus recommendations.
- Gordy Hall noted that he would like to echo the comments the Mayor made about the ferry service. Additionally, he supports anything that can be done to help with the commuter rail garage signage. He also really likes the reimagining of the Lynnway and hopes that the shared use path is included as part of it, urging DCR to consider it. Kurt Gaertner stated that DCR and the MBTA would be coordinating on the design development process for the Lynnway and would be considering the shared use path as part of that process.
- Rich Benevento noted that he works for a firm that is the transportation consultant for City of Lynn and is involved in several TIP projects throughout the City, including Essex Street. He noted that the Western Ave corridor has a high ADT (18,000). He also noted that Lynn has 8 intersections on the State's top 200 crash list, with Summer Street/Western Ave being among them.
- Alberto Calvo asked if there are options to make local travel more transit-based, including using smaller buses. Markiewicz noted that it is challenging to make transit competitive for trips under

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two miles, but it is certainly worth exploring the possibility of using small buses and other alternatives for these types of trips, as well as focusing on bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

- At the conclusion of the meeting, Mayor McGee and members of the Advisory Committee expressed their appreciation of the Lynn Transit Action Plan process and their support of the recommendations made in the plan.