



RAPID TRANSIT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

November 13, 2024, 4:00 PM

- A. Call to order:** Chair
- B. Minutes:** Motion to approve Committee meeting minutes from 01/08/2024.
- C. MBTA Service Delivery Policy Presentation:** Dr. Jenn Elise Prescott, Senior Director of the Office of Performance Management and Innovation at MassDOT & MBTA, joined to present proposed changes to the MBTA Service Delivery Policy. These changes fall under the categories of reliability, accessibility, availability, and comfort. Following the presentation, the discussion opened for questions.
 - a. Steve Olanoff (Westwood) clarified how the heavy rail reliability metrics measured late trains. J. Prescott explained that the former metric did not accurately reflect rider experience and that the updated metric of “excess trip time” measures the actual travel time, including wait time, as compared to a benchmark trip time. Anything that goes over the benchmark trip time is considered excess. S. Olanoff questioned if these metrics would be applied to lines other than the Red, Orange, and Blue. J. Prescott answered that eventually



they would, however the process is lengthy and takes years of data service and infrastructure updates.

- b. Len Diggins (Arlington) questioned what the data gap is. J. Prescott explained the Lightweight Application for Managing Performance Project is where the T stores their performance data. This software system takes movement data from the signal system and translates it to train activity. L. Diggins complimented the switch to an in-house system. L. Diggins asked if the service reliability metric will also apply to the non-frequent bus routes. J. Prescott answered that no changes would be made to the local bus routes and clarified that frequency referred to the delivery of the service not the scheduling process.
- c. Andy Reker (Cambridge) commended the T on their service frequency and provision of service. He expressed confusion as to why the definition of frequent bus routes had been addressed but not also the changes that are included in the Bus Network Redesign local routes. J. Prescott said that she would check with her policy team for an answer on the thought process.
- d. Jay Monty (Everett) asked for clarification on the definition of a benchmark trip time. J. Prescott answered that the team decided against using one single year in favor of observing the fastest travel time among every single segment and combined them into a composite “perfect day”. J. Monty asked if this benchmark would



change over time and J. Prescott answered that it would remain consistent for now, but longer term it may be updated.

- e. Susan Barrett (Lexington) asked if there was a metric to track a decrease in scheduled service or coverage. J. Prescott answered that coverage changes are noted in the Service Delivery Policy, but that coverage rarely changes outside of expansion projects. S. Barrett also questioned the bus route benefit cost ratio using a particular formula, and whether they factor into those calculations when a bus route is a lower frequency bus. J. Prescott answered that they have been moving away from this ratio as a metric, and moving towards the metrics identified in Bus Network Redesign like competitiveness and access to destinations.
- f. M. Moran congratulated the team on their work on the policy updates. M. Moran asked if someone could return to the Rapid Transit Committee at a later date to discuss the groups questions about the assessments of local routes following the changes in the reliability metric. J. Prescott said they will and by the end of next year, they will be able to report on bus updates. M. Moran clarified if there were no guidelines for bus stop accessibility prior to this policy change. J. Prescott said that they had no way of measuring this before due to the number of buses stops and other complicating factors. They leveraged data from an ongoing audit of bus stops.



- g. David Koses (Newton) asked how longer portions of frequent bus routes will be measured with the 15-minute head-way metric. Melissa Dullea answered that the calculation is a weighted average by stop so it becomes a blended number based on the average headway times for each.
- h. Alan Castaline (Brockton) thanked the team for their presentation and asked what the application of these findings would look like, especially in the case of significant budget difficulties for the authority next year. A. Castaline also asked if there was an ideal minimum for the metrics such as passengers per hour. J Prescott said the application is an annual report in which the authority measures itself by these standards, additionally the operations team sees monthly updates about how the service is performing based on these metrics. B. Kane emphasized A. Castaline's questions, and urged the team to push the management aspect of this report to the operations teams. The public is demanding more of the MBTA when their resources are in jeopardy and so anything that can be done to use this information in real time to the authority would be beneficial. J. Prescott answered that these specific metrics are rider-facing, but similar metrics are used to report in real-time to operations. She pointed members to the mbta.com/performance metrics where the sum of the service delivery policy metrics live.



- i. B. Kane thanked J. Prescott and the team for their presentation and reminded the Chair that the Advisory Board has a statutory requirement to weigh in on Service Delivery Policy, and so he asked what the committee is interested in doing. M. Moran supported writing a letter to describe the committee's comments from the meeting. B. Kane said he would put together a document and share it with the group. L. Diggins asked that the document reflect the committee's appreciation for the excess trip time metric.
- D. Motion to adjourn:** Will all business transacted, L. Diggins moved to adjourn, a motion which D. Koses seconded. This motion was approved unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:58 PM.

Note: These minutes were approved by vote of the MBTA Advisory Board at its 2/27/25 meeting



Attendees

Committee

Andy Reker

Jay Monty

Erin Chute

Susan Barrett

Alan Castaline

David Kosas

Frank Tramontozzi

Steve Olanoff

Cambridge

Everett

Brookline

Lexington

Brockton

Newton

Quincy

Westwood

Other

Justin Antos

Jen Elise Prescott

Jake Stern

Laura Brelsford

Lee Burnbaum

Kathy Lynn

Melissa Dullea

MBTA

MBTA

MBTA

MBTA

MBTA

MBTA

MBTA

MBTA AB

Brian Kane

Hanna Switekowski

Isabella MacKinnon

Executive Director

Deputy Director

Budget & Policy

Analyst