

Rapid Transit & Bus Committee

MINUTES (DRAFT)

Tuesday, June 2, 2026

- A. Call to Order:** Co-Chair Matt Moran (Boston) called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM.
- B. Minutes:** M. Moran requested a motion to approve the minutes of the May 14, 2026 meeting. John DePriest (Chelsea) motioned to approve and Frank Tramontozzi (Quincy) seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- C. Bus Network Redesign Update:** Justin Antos (MBTA Senior Director of Bus Transformation), Sanja Stegich (MBTA Bus Transformation Office Project Manager), and Becca Wolfson (Transit Priority Planning Project Manager) joined to brief the committee on the Bus Network Redesign plan for the MBTA's Better Bus Network program.
- a M. Moran thanked MBTA staff for their presentation and expressed excitement from the City of Boston over the reversal of the cuts on the 18, 43, 44, 202, and 504 routes. M. Moran asked if the MBTA could distribute this presentation to the committee, which S. Stegich said they could. He also asked when comments from municipalities be most helpful and S. Stegich answered that comments would be welcome anytime. The public process was announced to the Better Bus Project External Task Force in

- April and the MBTA has engaged with municipal partners who have reached out since then. Municipalities are invited to host one on one discussions with project staff anytime. Additionally, public feedback is being collected through an online survey and public virtual meetings. B. Wolfson specified that feedback from municipal partners would be most helpful in the next two months prior to the Board of Director's vote. M. Moran also asked about routes 11 and 42, and where the extended 42 was planned to terminate in the Seaport. J. Antos answered that the MBTA has an idea for a terminus location, however they are open to feedback from the city for a different location.
- b Andy Reker (Cambridge) commented that it is good that the MBTA is having an amendment process after some prior lack of clarity around the implementation processes in 2022. This follows past MBTA practice of having a service "tune-up" plan every 2 years with additional long-term network plans every 5-10 years. This is a positive sign and great for managing the bus network and communicating more broadly that the bus network can change in meaningful ways. The City of Cambridge is skeptical about some of the changes and cites concerns that what the city's comments submitted in 2022 have not been reflected in the MBTA's recent proposals. Specifically, there are a couple routes that are proposed to become peak-only where Cambridge disagrees with this assessment. The city has heard additional concerns about the 91 and 47 routes and is concerned that the project is not reflective of some of their highest

- priorities. A. Reker asked how the proposals were developed and how the final 11 amendments were decided on. J. Antos answered that these changes are a starting point, and, if there are changes that have not been reflected so far, the city should reach out. The proposals were developed to highlight changes that fell into two buckets: preserving service where riders with limited mobility needs require front-door service and minimizing changes where implementation would result in abandonment or underserving of areas. A. Reker responded that the city has provided feedback, specifically around cuts to a route like 68 that would result in loss of service for the area. This presentation of changes is helpful, however there remains feedback from Cambridge that has not received acknowledgement and he asked what additional work the city can do to draw attention to those areas. B. Wolfson answered that the city should continue to submit comments as there has been some turnover in the office and the project has faced a large number of requests that have not been able to be addressed yet. A. Reker asked about the threshold for developing the proposals and determining which concerns were considered first.
- c Todd Blake (Medford) commented that Medford was happy to see the 80 and 94 on the list as the city has submitted many comments of support for maintaining both of those routes. T. Blake asked about the MBTA's plan for outreach around the public engagement meetings and if the municipalities could help amplify the events. S. Stegich answered that the

- website went live yesterday with the June virtual public meeting date and she will be in contact with municipal partners for assistance reaching all relevant parties in advance of the upcoming meetings once they have been scheduled. T. Blake asked if the plan was to have regional or city-specific meetings. S. Stegich answered that the amendments are only relevant to a few municipalities so they will be targeted toward the impacted riders and not on a regional level. B. Wolfson added that the June 15 meeting will be regional to introduce the concept and the 11 amendments and other meetings will be held for individual municipalities.
- d Lenard Diggins (Arlington) agreed with Andy on the benefits of undergoing this process on a regular basis to engage in regular public engagement. Additionally, it is important to signal to the public that changes will have a degree of permanence so that people know they can rely on a service for a while. L. Diggins asked what the threshold is between changes that can be enacted by staff and changes that require approval from the Board of Directors. B. Wolfson answered that there is a definition for the level of service change required to necessitates a Board approval. The changes currently being presented reach the threshold of “major” and, therefore, require a disparate impact analysis and a public engagement process. L. Diggins asked the MBTA to communicate with municipalities about anything they can do to help improve bus service locally and added that running the 80 to Arlington Heights will be a big win for residents. Finally, L. Diggins commented that he hopes decisions aren’t being made based

- on what will be perceived as a political win and instead on what makes service best for the greatest number of riders.
- e Jenn Martin (Newton) thanked project staff for the restoration of the 504 weekend service. During the outreach, Newton will submit feedback reaffirming their goals from the initial Bus Network Redesign discussions to return direct, one-seat, express bus service from North Newton to Washington Steet, West Newton and Newtonville, direct service to downtown Boston, and consider extension of the 60 bus to the Newton Center Green Line station to support ongoing development in the area. Ned Codd (Newton) added that there are hundreds of new multi-family units coming online in Newton in the Washington Street corridor consistent with MBTA Communities while the reconstruction of the Newtonville Commuter Rail Station will cause the station to be offline for multiple years.
 - f Steve Olanoff (Westwood) commented that one of the principals of the project is to consolidate routes for better service, however some revisions have had to reinstate routes where communities on the periphery of the bus district may be losing service. He commented that one solution to this might be to support the provision of on-demand local shuttle bus services to transport residents to fixed routes and around individual communities.
 - g M. Moran thanked the guests for their presentation and discussion.



D. Old Business/New Business: Hanna Switekowski (Deputy Director) told members to reach out over the summer if any topics for committee discussion arise.

E. Next Meeting Dates: September 8, 2026 at 10:00 AM.

F. Adjourn: M. Moran called for a motion to adjourn which L. Diggins made and J. DePriest seconded. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.

Attendees:

Committee:

Arlington

Boston

Brockton

Cambridge

Chelsea

Medford

Newton

Newton

Quincy

Westwood

Len Diggins

Matt Moran

Alan Castaline

Andy Reker

John DePriest

Todd Blake

Jenn Martin

Ned Codd

Frank Tramontozzi

Steve Olanoff



MBTA:

Justin Antos
Becca Wolfson
Sanja Stegich

Advisory Board Staff:

Hanna Switekowski
Isabella MacKinnon

Deputy Director
Budget & Policy Analyst