

## Questions from the FMCB on the Overnight (Early Morning and Late Night) Pilot Proposal and Staff Answers

Following staff presentation on July 31, 2017

### *Clarify the proposals for Overnight service.*

#### NightBus Peak

Add additional trips to high demand existing routes on the edges of the existing service hours (1-3am and 4-5am), operated by the MBTA

#### NightBus Continuous

Pilot a small number of routes from 1-5am, either MBTA operated or contracted out

### *Would it be possible in the context of a 9-10 month pilot to provide The RIDE services on an on-demand basis?*

Almost all The RIDE costs are fixed in nature, not the variable aspect of providing individual trips (i.e., costs same for 1 or 1,000 trips). Doing trips on-demand for The RIDE is actually more costly than booking in advance.

### *What are the general routes you are considering for the pilot? If we authorized two or three pilot routes, do you have a general idea what they would look like? For example, the slides suggest a strong demand for late night travel from downtown to East Boston, Chelsea and Revere.*

For a pilot of NightBus Continuous, the MBTA would work with the sponsors of the pilot to develop routes that made sense given what we know about overnight demand once have a budget for the pilot and know whether we are developing an RFP or operating internally.

The proposed routes would combine both rail lines and existing bus routes. The exact routes would depend on how many routes are being proposed. The connection from downtown to East Boston is a top priority.

### *How would an outsourced pilot deal with fare collection?*

Fare collection was one of the main reasons that the two RFI responses weren't able to fulfill all of the requirements. The FMCB required the ability to use MBTA fare products, including passes.

Until the implementation of AFC 2.0, it is unrealistic for any outsourced service to accept CharlieCards. Our private contractor routes currently accept cash and visually validate passes on CharlieTickets. If we set the fare for an Overnight Service as the Rapid Transit/Zone 1A fare, we could also collect one-way tickets on CharlieTickets without any changes to the Fare Vending Machines.

Based on the results of the RFI it seems unlikely that a TNC would be willing to take cash or CharlieTickets.

*Does the response you received from the RFI suggest that NightBus Continuous as proposed would be more likely to generate private sector interest than NightBus Peak?*

The RFI was for the Nightbus Continuous idea (1-4am). The Nightbus Peak would likely generate less response since it is some additional service from 1-3am and 4-5am. This seems like it would be even harder to staff.

*Can you provide more detail on any additional ride, supervision, police costs?*

The RIDE costs include fixed costs for the call center and a single vendor assuming a limited overnight service area.

The proposed early AM service trips assumes supervision is handled by existing employees. This service is overall fairly small and is within the existing service envelope. Overnight pilot route requires two additional inspectors to ensure sufficient coverage seven nights per week.

The police costs assume a limited overnight service area.

*Describe the vulnerabilities to this pilot costing more than estimated*

If the pilot is adding additional MBTA service early in the morning and late at night on existing routes the cost drivers are the same as existing MBTA bus service. If the pilot is outsourced, it will depend on the nature of the contract. A service that has a per trip subsidy (TNC model) makes it harder to control the budget liability than a per revenue service hour subsidy (our existing contracted bus service).

*Describe what additional costs would be experienced should the pilot proceed to adoption; by example would this require bus fleet and storage expansion?*

A limited addition of service at the edges of our existing service hours and operated by the MBTA will not require additional buses or bus storage.

*Have we fully accounted for equipment wear and tear and marginal maintenance cost increases?*

Wear and tear costs were not included in the cost estimates for the pilot. If the FMCB asks staff to advance an MBTA operated Nightbus Continuous proposal, we can estimate the additional miles from the proposed routes and the wear and tear impacts.

Maintenance labor costs were included in the NightBus proposal. The proposed early AM service trips assumes one additional fueler with other maintenance handled by existing employees. The NightBus Continuous pilot route is bigger—it assumes two more fuelers and a machinist for a hypothetical pilot route that operates continuously with three buses.

*What have we anticipated about the “last mile” connection? By example a worker could take an afternoon bus to the Blue Line at Wonderland but face a dilemma at 3am when arriving at Wonderland from Boston.*

The goal of the route design will be to select routes as close as possible to a 15-minute walk from the demand as expressed by the data we have. Ultimately NightBus is not a replacement service for the subway, or the entire T bus system. While possible, any last mile service would require additional subsidies and complexity for a pilot project. Also, in corridors with existing bus stops, there may be some opportunity to include bus stops between rail stations to improve coverage.

*When serving what may be a very diverse (language, incomes, etc.) population how do we market the service and how do we communicate about delays and cancellations? Are these costs included?*

The marketing budget does include funds for translating marketing materials. We would develop a marketing plan that fit the potential users of the service. To communicate about delays and cancellations we would use all of our existing channels. If the service is outsourced we will ask the operator to partner with us to develop new methods to communicate about the service.

*Have we adequately sized the needs for reserve bus drivers in case a bus breaks down or is otherwise disabled?*

Service Planning estimated the cost to operate the service using standard cost estimates for operating MBTA bus service. If the service is outsourced, we would require spares and a reliability level in the RFP.

*How do we propose to determine ridership counts? Are these costs included?*

If the MBTA operates the service we will make sure to get a large enough sample of trips on buses equipped with Automated Passenger Counters. If the service is outsourced, we will require ridership counts as part of the RFP.

*If approved could this program initiate during the FY 18?*

If the limited Nightbus peak pilot is approved to be operated by the MBTA it could start during FY18 (earliest is 12/31/17). If a more extensive NightBus Continuous pilot operated by the MBTA is approved, it would require a later start date to hire additional staff. If a pilot is approved to be contracted, the start date would depend on the RFP results.

*Please provide a critical path schedule that would cover board approval to determination of success/failure at Pilot's conclusion. To the extent that the project is considered a success and continued, what does the critical path look like toward final implementation?*

Here is a list of decision points for a pilot:

- FMCB determines type of pilot (NightBus Peak or Continuous) and whether to operate in-house or put out an RFP and sets a budget
- Staff and sponsors design the pilot given those decisions and the results of an RFP, if required
- Staff and sponsors set performance measures for the pilot, including targets based on the service design and cost to operate, and data collection plan.

- Pilot starts
- Data collection plan implemented
- Review of pilot after 6 months
- Review of pilot after 9 months with decision whether to continue based on performance measures, DI/DB equity analysis completed if the pilot is a major service change
- Pilot either ends before 12 months are complete or is continued. How the pilot continues depends on the operating model, if an RFP an option year will be included to allow for continuity of service