



TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

7 Twin Circle Drive, Arlington, MA 02474

Memorandum

To: Arlington Board of Selectmen
From: Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)
Subject: MBTA Bus Shelters
Date: March 8, 2010

The TAC, Planning Department, and Sustainable Arlington have all expressed interest in bringing bus shelters to Arlington. Bus shelters provide a comfortable place to wait with seating, coverage from the elements and useful route information and maps. The rationale is that by improving the overall transit experience, bus shelters could encourage greater transit use and thereby reduce vehicle traffic and pollution.

MBTA bus shelter program. The MBTA operates a free bus shelter program through a private contractor, Cemusa Inc. (pronounced Samoosa). The cost of the shelters and their maintenance are paid for with advertisements on the shelters. Stops with more than 100 average daily boardings qualify for the program. There are 22 such stops in Arlington, all located on Mass. Ave. The shelters are attractive, lit from within and provide a bench seat, as well as an informational panel with a route schedule and map. Cemusa is financially motivated to keep the shelters clean and graffiti-free given their commitments to advertisers. If the Selectmen decided to proceed, the town would negotiate and sign a licensing agreement with the MBTA and Cemusa. The Town would get a small amount of revenue from this agreement, estimated at about \$1000/shelter/year. Cemusa and the MBTA prefer to begin with a minimum of ten shelters, but we may be able to start with fewer locations.

Conversely, if the Town were to construct its own shelters, without advertising, the cost for installation is estimated to be about \$15,000 per shelter, plus the cost of maintenance.

Issues for Discussion with MBTA Shelters.

- **Advertising.** Some may object to the presence of ads on the bus shelters. The MBTA has guidelines regulating their ads that prohibit the following:
 - ads for tobacco,
 - ads that are demeaning or disparaging,
 - contain profanity,
 - depict firearms or violence,
 - depict obscenity or nudity,
 - ads for unlawful goods, services or conduct,
 - contain political campaign speech,
 - or false, misleading or deceptive commercial speech.

Transportation Advisory Committee Members:
Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Jean Clark, Lt. Paul Conroy, Susan Doctrow, Jeff Maxtutis,
Howard Muise, Michael Rademacher, Scott Smith, Edward Starr, Laura Wiener
Web site; www.tac.arlington.ma.us/

Advertisements for alcohol are allowed, with a warning about drinking age and dangers of alcohol. The City of Somerville negotiated in their agreement no alcohol ads, but gave up 10% of their revenue to do that. It was suggested that Arlington might be able to negotiate no alcohol ads near the High School and/or Middle School.

- **Maintenance and graffiti.** Planners in Somerville, Cambridge, and Chelsea, communities that have adopted the Cemusa program within the last five years, all report that the shelters are maintained in excellent condition. Cemusa's interest is to keep the shelters in good condition, to be attractive to advertisers.
- **Sidewalk clearance.** The standard bus shelter is 8' wide, 9' high, 4' deep. Many of the busiest bus stops in town are in areas where the sidewalk is 10-15' wide. The Town would recommend locations for the shelters that are at least 10' wide, leaving 6 or more feet of sidewalk clearance. This would meet all ADA requirements.

Next Steps. If the Selectmen would like to learn more about the MBTA bus shelter program, we suggest inviting a representative from the MBTA to a future meeting for a short presentation to learn more about the program, see pictures of existing bus shelter options, and obtain answers to any questions you may have. If you choose to proceed, then the next step would be negotiating a license agreement with the MBTA.