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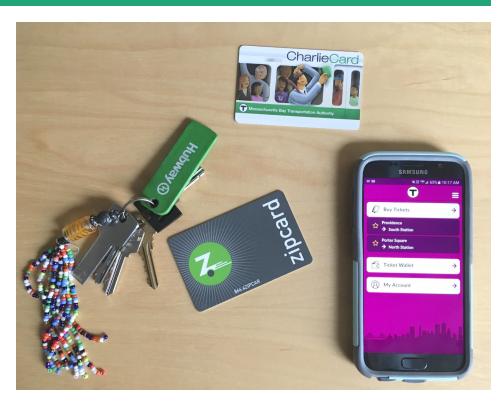
Key to the City

Payment technology to access all transportation services

Policy Description

Instead of paying for transportation services separately–with a Charlie Card, Commuter Rail ticket, bikeshare membership key, Zipcar membership card, ride-hailing app, quarters or an app for parking meters, and an EZPass to pay tolls in your car–a Key to the City would enable transportation users in Boston to pay for a suite of transportation options through a single platform on either a chip card or with a mobile phone. While technology options are changing rapidly and many important legal agreements need to be worked out, these payment systems would enable easier transfers on multimodal trips and reward people who use a combination of transportation options with lower greenhouse gas emissions. It may also allow for price reductions for people traveling outside of commuter peaks to incentivize travelers who don't contribute to congestion.

Benefits and Issues Addressed

Similar "universal access passes" used in other cities across the country have shown a notable uptick in transit ridership when the barrier of not having the right pass on-hand is removed. A seamless multimodal transaction can eliminate the delays of transferring, increasing speed and convenience. One of the greatest potentials for a single transportation payment platform is that people with limited income or special mobility needs could get credits similar to housing vouchers or food stamps that allow them to select from a menu of services to find the combination that best suits their needs.

Implementation

Approximate Cost: To be determined
Potential Funding Sources: Service providers such as the MBTA, car, ride and bikeshare companies, and BTD for meter parking integration
Who's Responsible: Service providers
Time Frame: Within zero to five years

Best Practices

In Los Angeles, CA, the TAP Card: LA's TAP card allows use of dozens of transit systems throughout Los Angeles County with the same card including the Metro and commuter rail as well as LA's Metro Bikeshare Program.

www.taptogo.net/articles/en_US/Website_content/where-to-ride
and *bikeshare.metro.net/how-it-works/faq/*

Public Input

"Make it easier to pay for the bus. If you just take the bus, it's hard to get and refill a Charlie Card, but without one, it's more expensive to ride."