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Subject: MassDOT
I-90 Allston Interchange Improvements Project
Task Force Meeting #31
Meeting Notes of November 30, 2017

Overview

On November 30, 2017, members of the Allston I-90 Interchange Improvements Project team and MassDOT staff associated with the job held the 31st Task Force meeting, to introduce the membership and the public to the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), and outline the process for submitting comments on the document. The Task Force is composed of local residents, business owners, transportation, and green space advocates, as well as representatives of local, state, and federal governments. The purpose of the group is, through the application of its members' in-depth knowledge, to assist and advise MassDOT in determining a single preferred alternative to be selected by the Secretary of Transportation for documentation in a joint Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) document.

The DEIR was provided to the Task Force at the end of this meeting, one week earlier than the document's official posting in The Environmental Monitor of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA). This courtesy distribution is in keeping with how the Task Force was provided notice of the filing of the project's Environmental Notification Form (ENF) in 2014. Both were intended to ensure that Task Force members are fully equipped to work with their represented constituencies to provide EEA's Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office with directed and informed commentary on the DEIR. Given the complexity and length of the document, MassDOT opted to make the document publicly available beginning on the night that it was distributed to the Task Force.

This meeting was the first in a series of public information meetings, all intended to introduce the public to the DEIR. These include public information meetings in Allston on December 5, 2017 and in Cambridge on January 3, 2018; a guest presentation at the Brookline Transportation Committee on December 12, 2017; and two Task Force workshops on December 13, 2017, and January 11, 2018, intended to help the group's membership understand the document and provide an opportunity to ask specific clarifying and technical questions related to the document in order to direct written comments to the MEPA office.

The series of public meetings has been noticed in local newspapers in Allston, Brighton, Brookline, Cambridge, and Boston. Physical copies of the DEIR, bundled with digital appendices, have been made available for reference in libraries in Brookline, Boston, and Cambridge. The comment period for the DEIR, at the time of this writing, is officially 45 days and ends on January 19, 2018. This is a 15-day extension of the standard 30-day comment period. In combination with MassDOT's voluntary distribution of the document on November 30 in advance of posting in the Environmental Monitor, means that the document will have been available for 52 days, as of the end of the comment period.

Following a presentation that provided an overview of the structure and high-level content of the document, the floor was opened to discussion. The major focus of discussion was on West Station, specifically the currently-projected project phasing, which places construction of West Station sometime before 2040, in the third phase of the project. This subject has been a part of Task Force discussions throughout 2015 and 2016. The station as now conceived has evolved from a Commuter Rail platform and overpass, like Yawkey Station or Boston Landing Station, as envisioned in the 2014 ENF. This evolution occurred in cooperation with Task Force and public desires for a transit hub that includes both Commuter Rail platforms and bus connections, along with the associated platforms and layover space; bicycle and pedestrian accommodations to, through, and around the station as well as bike parking including Hubway; and flexibility to not preclude potential services like taxis and transportation network companies (TNCs). The idea of the station being phased to facilitate development of parcels within the Beacon Park Yard was also discussed at length by the Task Force's Harvard University representatives, in a presentation to the group in October 2016.

At this meeting, Task Force members expressed shock, alarm, and opposition at the phasing of West Station that is currently projected in the DEIR, with many suggesting that it amounted to MassDOT removing all rail components from the project; as one member put it, constituting "a major policy shift for MassDOT". Project Manager Mike O'Dowd explained that the decision to phase the station as outlined was based on current direction from MassDOT leadership, available funding, the existing and substantial need to provide layover capacity to support existing commuter rail service, and anticipated short-term ridership projections at a possible West Station before any development at

Beacon Park Yard. The project team also noted that the new Boston Landing station on the same Worcester Line already provides commuter rail access to existing residents within Lower Allston. Since this meeting, these remarks have also been reinforced by comments given by members of MassDOT leadership to a joint meeting of the MassDOT / MBTA Board.

Throughout the meeting, the Task Force members who offered comment remained passionate in their opinions, that West Station should be front-loaded as a “down-payment” on a transit-oriented future in Allston, and/or as a “mitigation” for Allston hosting the interchange and commuter rail layover facility, and/or in order to preserve regional mobility during construction of the interchange, which is expected to reduce capacity on I-90 by one lane in each direction for a period of years. Some members suggested that a temporary, “opening day” West Station must be built as a way to achieve some of these goals, in advance of the full-build station. This sentiment has since been echoed at the public information meetings in Allston and Brookline during December 2017 and seems likely to be raised at the Cambridge meeting on January 3, 2018. Based on public comments offered at this meeting and elsewhere throughout this project, it is worth here defining ‘mitigation’ as used by MassDOT and the MEPA office. Mitigations are *only* proposed on a project basis, in response to any unavoidable impacts of that project. Projects do not provide mitigations for impacts by other construction jobs, past or present, and cannot provide mitigations unrelated to the impacts of the project. Further, as West Station is a component of the purpose and need of the project, as stated throughout presentations to the public and the Task Force, it cannot also be considered a mitigation for the same project.

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Detailed Meeting Minutes¹

Welcome & Opening Remarks

C: Mike O'Dowd (*MassDOT Project Manager*): Thank you all for coming. I know that there is a Christmas lighting ceremony tonight, so if you if you need to duck out to go, we won't take offense. On my way over, I was thinking that I haven't seen most of you since April, at our meeting in Cambridge. Since then, Ed, Chris, and their team have been doing lots of work developing the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), taking all of the information that we have gathered and that the public has conveyed to us, and putting it all into print. The document is huge—hundreds of pages, with plenty of graphics as well. The Task Force members will all get a copy tonight; if you need a print or digital-download copy, Nate Cabral-Curtis will take your information and will coordinate a download link for you. This document will not be posted directly on MassDOT's website due to its size. A link to email Nate will be on the page, though.

As you know, for both the Task Force and the public, we have several Public Information Meetings subsequent to tonight. This is an opportunity to thank you all for the work you have done to help us get to this point, and to distribute copies in advance of the official posting in the Environmental Monitor and the official opening of the comment period. Following this, there will be a public information meeting on December 5 at the Jackson/Mann Community Center. Then, on December 12, we will be in front of the Brookline Transportation Board at the Brookline Town Hall.² On January 3, we will be at the Morse School in Cambridge.

We are also hosting two technical working sessions for the Task Force, if you have any specific questions relative to the document to aid you in writing your comment letters; subject matter experts from the project team will be on hand to answer questions. Those are on December 13 and January 11, both here at the Fiorentino. Nate will keep you apprised of those and send you a reminder email.

If any of you have been at the project site recently, you may have seen some helmets and vests. The design team is performing some geotechnical investigations: probes and borings within the Beacon Park Yard (BPY) and interchange area. This is an opportunity to start evaluating the

¹ Herein "C" stands for comment, "Q" for question and "A" for answer. For a list of attendees, please see Appendix 1. Please note that Task Force and project team members are identified by their full name and organizational affiliation the first time that they speak, and thereafter by name only. Members of the public not on the Task Force are represented by name only.

² The location of this meeting, hosted by the Brookline Transportation Board, was subsequently changed by the hosting Committee to the Pierce School in Brookline, in order to accommodate more attendees.

existing conditions of our structural materials, and the work will continue for the next two months. Now, Ed Ionata is going to walk you through our presentation, and Chris Calnan will overview the document itself, then we'll open up to questions.

C: Ed Ionata (*TetraTech*): Thanks, Mike. Here is our agenda for tonight. Chris will be running you through the DEIR, including how it is organized and the content of the document. We will also go a bit into project phasing, construction costs, and funding. To wrap up, Nate will discuss next steps and schedule, including how to submit comments on the document.

I want to make the point that we are not here tonight to receive comments on the document: this is not a hearing. We are here to give you the document so that you can read it, digest it, and send formal comments through the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office. This document conforms with the MEPA Environmental Notification Form (ENF) Certificate scope; you can see the format that we need to follow in the document, which may not otherwise be intuitive. There will be a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) with a single throat variation; the DEIR does not select a variation in the throat. It organizes and presents analysis for many different elements, including noise, air quality, historical and environmental impacts, and many more. It also includes renderings and conceptual drawings to give a closer look at those variations. Again, I need to stress that MassDOT needs to stick with the MEPA process here: that means comments, written and set in letters, sent to MEPA. Now, Chris will walk you through the document.

C: Chris Calnan (*TetraTech*): Thanks all, and good evening. My name is Chris Calnan, and on behalf of the entire team, I want to start by saying that we are excited to have filed this DEIR today. This was a monumental effort for all of us, and all of you here. Congratulations to everybody. I want to start by talking about the organization of the document.

Organization of the DEIR

This is the cover page here. This document is an 11"x17" book, and as Mike alluded to, it is nearly 600 pages of content. There are also more than 100 figures, which does help to break up the text and organize the information. As Ed discussed, this conforms with the ENF Certificate, and we have to follow that structure. It looks first at the overall project: the I-90 Interchange Preferred Alternative 3K. We had a preferred alternative for the ENF, and we also have one here, except this one is presented with three variations in the 'throat' area. Each of these is analyzed fully and fairly in the document.

I'll run quickly through the organization, chapter-by-chapter. Chapter 1 is a description of the project, the sort of quick-read summary. It includes a description of the project, the evolution and development of alternatives, the required permits and approvals, a summary of impacts, and a summary of mitigation.

Chapter 2 describes the Purpose, Need, and Goals for the project, including West Station, the bike and pedestrian connections, and the interchange itself. Chapter 3 provides the alternatives analysis: we've studied many different alternatives over the course of this project, including connections on Franklin Street, modal connections to Commonwealth Avenue ('Comm Ave'), and maintaining the River Street Bridge right-turn from Soldiers Field Road. Those and others are all overviewed in Chapter 3, including descriptions of the throat variations.

Chapter 4, "Affected Environment", really means the existing conditions in the area of the project. There are more than 20 subject areas in this chapter, and plenty of detail.

Chapter 5, "Assessment of Impacts" is one of our largest. This is the analysis of all the subject matter areas described in Chapter 4. Noise, Historic concerns, Bike & Pedestrian Facilities, Stormwater, etc. It is all in here.

Chapter 6, "Compliance and Consistency with Environmental Laws, Regulations, and Programs," summarizes compliance with the various regulatory concerns, in a tabular format.

Chapter 7, "Mitigation", presents potential mitigations with regard to those impacts. Wherever impacts cannot be avoided, that is where mitigations are proposed. Again, many subject areas, and they match the same organization as Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 8 is a determination of the appropriate public benefit associated with affected tidelands.

Chapter 9 is the public involvement summary and response to comments; this is where you will find the formal written responses to all comments received on the ENF, as well as a summary of the public process undertaken over the past three years.

Then, finally, there are 13 appendices. These are provided electronically and are not a part of the book. These provide additional detail on their subject matters, to supplement the report.

Content of the DEIR

Next, let's go through a very high-level overview of the content of the document. Lots of the document describes the preferred urban interchange alternative, and then each of the three throat-area variations; the structure repeats for each in order help keep consistency.

In 2014, this image shows where we were. It shows a basic concept, with not a lot of detail at all—basically just some lines on a slide. There are some lines connecting to Cambridge Street, and an outline of the area of West Station. Then, as we advanced to the ENF, with Preferred Alternative 3J, we fleshed out more detail. Overall, this will look pretty familiar to those who've seen where we are now, but some important things have changed. For instance, as of 3J, the placemaking elements suggested by the City of Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) Placemaking Study had not yet been integrated.

Through a very robust public involvement process including lots of meetings, as well as the BPDA Placemaking Study, we continued to refine the design and develop a higher level of detail. We ended up at Preferred Alternative 3K, which you can see here and which I'm sure you're all very familiar with. Just a reminder, by the way: the graphics you see tonight are lifted right out of the book, so as you get reading, you should see a lot of these throughout the document.

The Preferred Alternative includes many elements outside and independent of the throat area; it realigns the Turnpike; provides a context-sensitive urban street grid; adds extensive bike and pedestrian improvements and new connections including Franklin Street, Malvern Street, and Babcock Streets, as well as at-grade connections to the Paul Dudley White Path; expands the rail yard and operations; provides a new West Station including both rail and bus operations; relocates Soldiers Field Road with a new underpass section—added through the Placemaking Study; expands greenspace along the Charles River, which we accomplish by relocating Soldiers Field Road; and adds noise walls along the Pike. This last item hasn't gotten a lot of discussion through the project, but it is there. Next, I'll run through the three variations in the throat area.

CONCEPT 3K-HV VARIATION (HIGHWAY VIADUCT)

The highway-viaduct variation provides a widened elevated highway with the rail at-grade, very similar to the existing configuration. It shifts Soldiers Field Road south towards the viaduct in order to gain open space near the river; and allows us to incorporate a widened Paul Dudley White Path and a widened landscape buffer between the path and Soldiers Field Road. Here, you can see a cutaway rendering showing the highway viaduct with the rail system underneath, with Soldiers Field Road and the bike path to the left. These renderings have all been updated for this document. This looks east towards downtown, with the river to the left. Next, here is a

conceptual rendering of a view looking east towards downtown, just west of the tightest portion of the throat. This gives you some perspective on the experience of the path, and you can see the viaduct off to the right.

CONCEPT 3K-AMP VARIATION (AMATEUR PLANNER)

Next, 3K-AMP, which originated from Ari Ofsevit, throat variation provides an elevated rail with the highway at-grade; it raises Soldiers Field Road in the eastbound direction 4' higher than the westbound direction, in order to help minimize the wheel noise of the road for users of the Paul Dudley White Path. This alternative also incorporates a widened PDW path of 12', and a landscaped buffer between the path and Soldiers Field Road. Unique to this variation is an elevated shared use path connection from West Station to the Paul Dudley White path. This variation includes replacement of the Grand Junction Line Bridge over Soldiers Field Road; which also allows for some additional Paul Dudley White path connections near the Grand Junction Line Bridge and the BU Bridge to give direct connections without the boardwalk.

C: Glen Berkowitz: Excuse me, I thought that we weren't personalizing the names of the variants; I thought that that was Mike told us when we met with him a week ago.

C: Mike O'Dowd: We think it is important to acknowledge and credit the original authors.

C: Chris Calnan: Here is the cutaway rendering, and you can see the elevated eastbound Soldiers Field Road, the river, and the path. I should mention, these cutaways for all are taken in the tightest section, and the renderings are all from slightly west.

Q: Harry Mattison (*Allston Resident*): Did you prepare any cutaways and renderings besides these ones in the narrowest section?

A: Chris Calnan: Yes, there are plenty of renderings in the book, showing multiple sections.

CONCEPT 3K-ABC VARIATION (A BETTER CITY)

Next and finally, the 3K-ABC variation, which originated from A Better City (ABC). This eliminates the viaduct structures and places the roadway and rail elements at-grade. Similarly to 3K-AMP, this raises Soldiers Field Road eastbound to help with noise. It maintains the Paul Dudley White Path in its currently width at the narrowest point; also includes replacement of the Grand Junction Line Bridge; and provides additional path connections at the Grand Junction Line and BU Bridges. Here is the cutaway view at the narrowest location; you can see everything roughly at the same plane. And then the conceptual rendering, showing the view from the Path.

Project Phasing

Next, I'll run through how MassDOT is currently looking at phasing the project. Phase 1, which is targeted for substantial completion in 2025, is the largest phase, addressing the viaduct, interchange and street grid, and the bike and pedestrian improvements. It includes reconstruction and realignment of the Turnpike; the realignment of Soldiers Field Road and construction of the underpass; building the street grid with the bike and pedestrian accommodations including separated bike lanes, on-street lanes, shared-use paths, etc.; rebuilding Cambridge Street as a Complete Street; building a two-way shared use path adjacent to Cambridge Street South as an at-grade connection to the Paul Dudley White Path; building a new bike & pedestrian connection at Malvern Street; reconstructing the Franklin Street pedestrian/bike bridge; making improvements to the existing Beacon Park Yard in order to store up to 8 train sets; and constructing noise walls along the Turnpike. All of this is important, and all will be a part of the first stage of the project.

Phase 2 is focused on the Beacon Park Yard, and is targeted for between 2025 & 2040. It is focused on constructing additional layover tracks and switches for storage of up to 16 train sets. This also includes crew quarters, storage sheds, and other infrastructure to support light maintenance. For this and for Phase 3, there are no set dates; this is our current expectation.³

Phase 3 is focused on the construction of West Station, and is targeted sometime prior to 2040. This will involve construction of the station, rail platforms, bus concourse, and bike and pedestrian connections. It will reconfigure the rail yard to store 8 train sets—down from the 16 sets in the interim condition—and construct a new bike and pedestrian connection from West Station to Babcock Street. It will also build out the remaining balance of the at-grade streets to the north of Cambridge Street as well as the Stadium Way Connector, currently shown on the project plans as being constructed by the landowner.

Construction Costs & Funding

The design team collaborated to include conceptual construction costs for Alternative 3K with all variations, including a no-build scenario. Here you can see the full project build-out costs, to ease your comparison. As you can see, the no-build scenario—which is basically a replace-and-repair of the existing infrastructure—is the least expensive by far. Among the build variations, 3K-ABC is the least expensive, 3K-HV the second-most, and 3K-AMP the most expensive.

³ At this point, an unidentified person in the room hisses in response.

MassDOT is currently developing a finance plan, and presented at the recent Board Meeting. A funding & financing committee has been launched to prepare a finance plan, focusing on options including P3s (public-private partnerships), 3rd-party contributions, and public financing. The funding presents some notable challenges on this project, including that toll-revenue money can only be used for the toll facility. That means that it likely couldn't be applied to fund the bike-pedestrian bridges, or anything related to the rail, for example.

C: Ari Ofsevit (*LivableStreets Alliance*): Excuse me, but there's an addition error on the cost totals that I want to make sure is corrected.

C: Chris Calnan: We're very nearly done; Nate will go through next steps and schedule, and then we'll open it up to discussion and lead with you.

Commenting on the DEIR

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis (*Howard Stein Hudson*): Here is the comment process. The DEIR document was filed today, November 30; official notice will be placed in the Environmental Monitor on December 6, 2017. That will kick off a 45-day comment period, which will end on January 19, 2018. Print versions will be made available on library reserve at the State Library of Massachusetts in the State House—fair warning, for anyone who carries a pocket knife, you cannot bring it into the building—as well as the Copley Main Library and the Honan-Allston Branch of the Boston Public Library; the Cambridge Main Library and the Cambridgeport Branch of the Cambridge Library in Central Square. MassDOT's website will not house the document due to size; the Documents page is set up to email directly to me with requests. It is a big file, even digitally, so I will recommend starting the download and getting some coffee.

Q: Tony D'Isidoro (*Allston Civic Association*): Can you also place copies at the Brighton and Faneuil Branch Library?

A: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Of course.

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Here is how to submit comments to MEPA, with the relevant addresses. I recommend a quick smartphone photo, but this presentation will also be posted online, and the details will be in the Environmental Monitor on December 6. Make sure, when you send your comments to Secretary Beaton, that you CC Jim Cerbone at MassDOT.

There are lots of meetings upcoming; in the interest of fairness, we are going to give an echo version of this presentation several times in the coming weeks: first, on December 5 at the

Jackson/Mann Community Center. Then, on December 12, we will be hosted by the Brookline Transportation Committee; and finally, on January 3, we'll be at the Morse School in Cambridge. As Mike mentioned, there will also be daytime working sessions here, on December 13 and January 11. These are intended to answer specific questions that you have about the document, and we will have our project team subject matter experts on hand, so you can be fully informed and give the best comments that you can to MEPA. Then, after this process, what comes next?

All the comments received by MEPA on the DEIR will be taken in; like with the ENF, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs will deliver MassDOT a scope for a Final Environmental Impact Report. MassDOT will use that commentary from coordinating agencies as well as the public in order to select a final preferred alternative and continue to develop the design. Throughout that, MassDOT will continue coordination including public outreach, coordination with municipalities, and with the landowning and abutting universities—both Harvard and Boston University.

The schedule of the project requires that we have the MEPA process done—meaning, through the Final Environmental Impact Report—in early 2019. The key driver of that schedule is the increasingly tired viaduct. We need to keep this project moving through the environmental process and into further design. Here is the schedule chart, as you've seen before: we are here, in the final quarter of 2017. This is our current 'best-guess' pending the FEIR scope.

C: Ed Ionata: Two quick notes: the notice in the Environmental Monitor, may include an Environmental Analyst, which we can have Nate send around if needed. That name will be good to add to your comment letter. Again, I would recommend that everyone aim for crisp, concise comment letters, with specific points of agreement and disagreement regarding the analyses given. That is what is needed to advance the project. Now, we'll open to discussion.

Discussion

C: Ed Ionata: Let's start first with Ari, who had requested correction of an addition error.

C: Ari Ofsevit: I realized that it had been corrected; a previous version had shown an error, which I was looking at on my phone. Never mind.

Q: Glen Berkowitz: One question, for now. Go back to the Chapter 5 slide, please. My question is, if I go down the list, it says "5.22 Construction Phasing and Costs." It says that that is only one page. I thought—many of us thought—that there would be a bunch of phasing detail, which was not referenced at all in this presentation. What is in the document? Is it only one page?

A: Chris Calnan: In Chapter 5.21 and 5.22, you'll find staging information for each of the various throat options. There is also a whole series of figures stepping through each envisioned stage for every variation. Like I said, this is a graphic-intense document; there is some text, but most of the staging is delivered in graphics.

C: Ed Ionata: Remember also that the document is 11"x17" pages; there's real estate on the page that allows us to provide more detail in the drawings.

Q: Fred Salvucci: Thank you, first of all, for the clarity of your presentation. On the question of the environmental process: you said that the timeline calls for completion of the FEIR in early 2019, but I see no reference to the federal process. This project will ultimately need federal documentation as well as state documentation; we know that the Green Line Extension lost two years as a result. For the sake of argument; if these comments require additional work, do you envision that that happens in the FEIR and then is given over to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for a new process? Or are they overlapping? Or have you not yet figured that out? That would be fine. How is it integrated?

A: Ed Ionata: I'll go out on a limb, and MassDOT can correct me if needed. It is my understanding that because the federal process is tied to funding, that the financing committee that was established will need to do some work first in order to determine that. Our hope—as you said—is to develop a parallel process for the FEIR and both MEPA and NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) documentation. Mike, is that right?

C: Mike O'Dowd: Yes.

C: Fred Salvucci: You're saying that there won't be any federal money involved, but we will need to comply with NEPA even if there is no federal money. It would be a big mistake to defer figuring that process out: the funding won't change the process and the need for integration. It's more work early, but it will save delay later. It's okay if you haven't figured it out yet, we just want to know. If it's not the right time in the process yet, that's fine, we just want to know.

C: Ed Ionata: We understand that it will be an important element. If I have it right, until the funding is determined, FHWA won't offer a formal opinion on whether this project will fall under an Environmental Assessment (EA) or something greater, for the purposes of the NEPA process. There is a process at the beginning to determine the funding and financing.

C: Ken Miller (*Federal Highway Administration*): That's basically right. There are three classes of action: a Categorical Exclusion (CE); an Environmental Assessment (EA); and an

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We can give advice on what category we think it may be; but we cannot take any formal actions until it's in the pipeline. And it cannot be in the Boston Regional Transportation Plan until there is a reasonable expectation that funding is secured. It is not bad that the DEIR is going out: we haven't talked about this with MassDOT, but I think we can use that information and look at the comments; if the project is highly controversial, we can use that to help inform what the Class of Action may be for the project.

- C: Fred Salvucci:** Thank you, that is helpful. One other detail that I want to include: assuming that some work towards a funding strategy happens, my guess is that there is a difference between traditional FHWA funding, with decades of stable rules, versus the P3 (public-private partnerships) model, which I believe is administered out of the USDOT (United States Department of Transportation), which isn't quite the same as FHWA. This could be an important wrinkle, because I'm surprised if the funding doesn't use both traditional funding and P3s. that will add complexity to the project; the more thinking you can do early, the greater the chance of avoiding big SNAFUs later for procedural reasons.
- C: Ed Ionata:** For those in the room who don't know these acronyms: under the federal process, the potential requirements run a range from the very brief—the Categorical Exclusion, the CE—to a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). There is often an opportunity to parallel those processes; I'm sure many of you have seen EIR/EIS documents on other projects. A lot of how that paralleling of processes will proceed from here will depend on the comments and the decisions made from the DEIR for the FEIR scope. You'll also see, in this document, some terms like Purpose & Need that come from NEPA, not MEPA, in order to assist with that process.
- C: Jessica Robertson (*Allston Resident*):** Go to the image of the Preferred Alternative, please. I don't really know where to start. This looks almost exactly the same as a year and half ago. There are a number of things that we've been asking for since 2014 that are not included, including some things that MEPA asked you to look at. The vehicle connection at Malvern Street: everyone agreed on that, and BU was on board. Where is that? If there are alternatives that show different street layouts that comply with the Boston Complete Streets and Vision Zero frameworks, which say that we don't want a dozen new intersections with 6-8 lanes on all sides. Are those in the document somewhere, and if so, why are they not in the Preferred Alternative?
- C: Chris Calnan:** Regarding Malvern Street first, we studied that as asked. In Chapter 3, we look at that connection for general-purpose traffic, and for bus-only traffic: we do not say which we think is better than the other: we were asked to study it, and MassDOT is not prepared to say

that such a connection would be part of the Preferred Alternative. It's not precluded, but it is not a part of the core of the project for MassDOT.

C: Jessica Robertson: Okay, so DOT gets to decide what is preferred.

C: Chris Calnan: MassDOT is the proponent of the project; you get to offer comments through the MEPA process. Right now, MassDOT is saying that it's not part of the project, but we have studied it, and all the impacts are described in the document.

Q: Jessica Robertson: What about the size of the streets?

A: Chris Calnan: The size of the streets is part of the refinement that will happen throughout the design process as we continue to proceed through design.

Q: Jessica Robertson: Well then can you show them narrower now and we can go wider later, if we determine that we need to go wider?

A: Chris Calnan: This is where we are now. At the level of the DEIR, we have to be conservative, in order to describe all of the impacts that could be proposed. We assume that, working with the City of Boston and the Boston Transportation Department, the details of the street layout will be hammered out. This is the resolution we're at, at this stage of the project and in this document.

C: Jessica Robertson: I just want to register for the notes that Jim Gillooly from Boston Transportation just nodded as I spoke.

C: Jim Gillooly (*Boston Transportation Department*): I nodded because I've asked this same question of the project team a number of times, and I have gotten a satisfactory answer: at this stage, we do not have to have all that refined to that level right now. As I've said before in this room, let's make the streets as big as they need to be, and not bigger.

C: Jessica Robertson: Going back to my original question, it should be clear to the reader of this document that this is not the Task Force's preferred alternative.

C: Chris Calnan: I think the document clearly depicts this as MassDOT's preferred alternative, in response to the MEPA scope. If, for example, someone disagrees with not including Malvern Street connection in the Preferred Alternative, the ammunition you could use in arguing for it is in this document. You could look at the analysis and determine for yourself whether the analysis shows that it should be a part of the Preferred Alternative, and then write a comment to that effect. There is an effort made to answer all of the Secretary's questions to us, lots of which came

from your comments on the ENF. Even if a given thing isn't in the Preferred Alternative, things have analysis in the document. Chapter 3 is the evolution chapter, and most of it is in there. Also, for the analysts in the room, there is a traffic appendix that is voluminous: more than 7,000 pages of the traffic data and analyses. I assume that the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) will be interested especially in that, as will others. The basis of these conclusions is found in the document, and these analyses can be referred to throughout comments.

- C: Jessica Robertson:** To close the point: the elected representatives in this room worked with MassDOT to set up this Task Force. They set it up so that the community and stakeholders would be able to influence the design. We have influenced it a lot, and that lots of progress has been made in this room over the years. But I don't speak only for myself when I say that progress stalled, and the project hasn't evolved for a year and half. We have these issues that we keep raising over and over and over again, and frankly, it's insulting to see those not addressed. I want this to be perfectly clear so that everyone has an understanding of what the role of the Task Force actually is, and to what extent our comments will be incorporated.
- C: Ed Ionata:** Understood. I would add that the Task Force members should take advantage of the workshops so that we can delve in more deeply about these issues, so you can make well-pointed comments to MEPA and Secretary Beaton.
- Q: Galen Mook (*Allston Resident*):** Before I get into my comment, I 100% agree with Jess, and Harry's clapping. Thank you for all your work, you've put a lot into this document. I also think that the purpose of this document was hopefully so that we wouldn't have to write comments about how we oppose things; that you'd incorporate some of it before this document. I want to drill into transit. My question is whether you included transit in the traffic analysis—not just the Commuter Rail but bus as well? I'm inferring from the presentation that you will build an interchange in 2025, and possibly add some sort of rail service in another 15 years. That does not serve the needs of the community or the region. Did you include transit in the traffic modeling, as requested, and second, is there a model that shows transit in some form incorporated in Phase 1, as well as the ripple effect that that might have on street size and impact to the community?
- A: Chris Calnan:** Yes, the traffic analysis includes all the transit analysis that CTPS did, using a regional model of development in the area that includes the project area as well as others like Cambridge, and transit and bus are all part of the modeling and inform the traffic volumes. To the opening year: we also did an opening-year traffic analysis not reflective of West Station, which has some bus routes but not the station.

Q: Galen Mook: Why not? I don't know who else was there at Beacon Yard when we were there with Deval Patrick, Mayor Walsh, Rich Davey, and other elected officials. Their comment to us was "keep fighting; we're going to get this." What happened?

C: Senator Will Brownsberger: I was there, I was invited and I attended. What's happened since is that the whole concept of the station has changed dramatically. When they were originally planning that, what they announced was more like Yawkey Way: basically just a couple of platforms, with some shelters. It was a small project. Now you've got a much more involved process, with all these connection issues: it now has bus transportation, bus layover, and all these very-involved connections.

C: Fred Salvucci: I would respectfully disagree with the Senator's characterization. At the press conference announcing the station, the concept was clearly a station that would have a Commuter Rail station and a rail shuttle from West Station to Kendall and North Station, so that we wouldn't have the huge traffic volumes that are inundating Kendall Square. It was anticipated that this would be a big deal: we all assumed that bus access would be a part of the station. On a different historical note: the original Turnpike interchange was built at an odd moment in history. In many ways it was the last of the big mistakes. Just after that, Cambridge stopped the Inner Belt from running through Cambridgeport and Central Square, and then Governor Sargent made the dramatic shift to a transit-oriented strategy. Allston-Brighton and the entire western corridor were left out of new policies because the Turnpike was built just before. It took more-or-less a 6-track cross-section, with local stations at Allston Depot, Market Street, Brook Street, and Newton Corner, and eliminated those stations. 1 in Newton Corner, and 3 in Allston-Brighton, and it cursed the west with a single-track constraint for 60 years. This is the prime reason why on-time service is so poor for the western suburbs, and non-existent for the urban areas. Reversing that decision isn't just about developing for Harvard, it's about the serving the existing LMA (Longwood Medical Area) and Kendall Square development. All of that is good, it's development, it's jobs. But people can't get there from the western suburbs because of that fundamental mistake. This is the best opportunity in a century to fix this, and it has to be done on the front end. Doing a "mañana" to West Station would be a travesty.

I know that this is not the venue for public comment, but the rest of the region and Cambridge benefitted from a much more enlightened transportation policy that got rid of the Inner Belt. Kendall Square is booming: those strategies worked. This is our turn for the Frank Sargent / Michael Dukakis strategies to be used for our community. It ought to be a non-starter to conceive

of this as a highway-only project. It is not what the history calls for, and it is not what we thought that we were celebrating on that rainy day in 2014.⁴

C: Senator Brownsberger: I think you're absolutely right, Fred: one of the tragic things that happened is that loss of track capacity. That's happened not only on this line but in several other directions radial to Boston. One of the other things that has happened—and I don't think this really has to do with any of the people that are sitting at this table—but there was a time, when Rich Davey was talking about, "let's build those close-in shuttles, let's use the tracks we have to run 10 minute service from Brighton, and Belmont, Cambridge, and Readville... from the north and the south. There was talk that you could take those lines, and use them to run DMUs (Diesel Multiple Units). When Rich put that out, it was a thrilling idea—I loved it. It sounded like the answer, because now you could create an additional subway-like service out of Brighton. I would be thrilled to have that, and passionate about supporting it. It could even be the same on the Fitchburg line, or any other—the service on those lines for close-in communities is not there.

What has happened since, I think, is that MassDOT's and the MBTA's perceptions have changed, and that it's a lot harder than they thought. Precisely because of what Fred has pointed out: that loss of track capacity. You can take issue with this, but not with anybody who's in this room—the MBTA planners have said, "that would be great, we'd really love to do that, but we can't see how to handle the freight service on those lines at the same time as running that short service". Their perceptions have shifted about their ability to create that kind of service. That has almost certainly affected the decisions being made at this level.

The phasing on that is really not this group's call: the question is when we would be able to take advantage of that kind of service. What I've heard from my conversations with MBTA planners—because I love this idea—is that that requires a much bigger change: stopping the long-run service at Rt. 128, creating stations there to have people transfer to a different kind of service. That's not a 5-year plan; that is a 15- or 20-year plan. I hope we can get to that kind of vision, and that's one of the things that I want to push for. But their sense—and I'm not here to say whether they're right or wrong, although it makes sense to me—is that that is a much longer-term thing than Rich Davey thought it was when he was talking about it five years ago.

C: Fred Salvucci: The Senator's comment is helpful and I thank him for it. But there are a lot of "theys" at MassDOT. Massachusetts was one of the first places in the country to develop rail. Allston Depot was one of the oldest Commuter Rail stations in the US. When the rail started, it was successful because it had three robust, high-quality components: urban service, those five

⁴ Applause in the room at the conclusion of the comment.

stations—and by the way, Market Street to Allston Depot was about the same distance as West Station to New Balance; second, suburban service; and third, intercity service. The railroad did a frontal lobotomy on itself and got itself out of two of those businesses. It now provides a bit of miserable intercity service; it thought it was staying in freight, but that didn't happen; and it dropped urban service. The Fiscal Management Control Board (FMCB) just commissioned a new study of the Commuter Rail, which right now doesn't pull its weight.

C: Senator Brownsberger: I agree, the Commuter Rail needs improvement.

C: Fred Salvucci: We need to go in Davey's direction. The people you're talking to at MassDOT, Senator, are dead wrong. They start with a conclusion and go backwards from there. The FMCB study is starting from "how to get it done", not "why can't we do this?". This isn't Mike's fault, or the team's fault—they've been here, with us—but policies shift back and forth. The FMCB shift isn't yet reflected in the MassDOT bureaucracy. This isn't Mike's fault, it's a changing target. But we need to be aware of the other processes, which are directly relevant to this process and which need to be integrated into it. It would be a tragedy of incredible proportion to miss this opportunity. This is the chance of the century to change what was screwed up just before Frank Sargent got us onto a good page.

C: Galen Mook: I want to clarify, too, that I don't want us to refer only to rail. Bus service is apparently not involved in this Preferred Alternative, since there is no through bus service, providing a connection from Porter Square to Harvard Square to the LMA to Brookline Village. If you haven't modeled that, including not modeling the rail, or modeling only in 2040, then you haven't been listening to us when we've asked you for that modeling. To the Senator's point: yes, this is a shift; but you can do it quickly and in stages, with buses, if you include it. My concern is that the transit modeling is incomplete, and therefore that that is causing a skewing of the numbers and a skewing of the design in ways that we've been trying to get across for three years and have yet to see. Not just as a local stop on the rail line, but also the regional connections north/south between the rail lines, including Grand Junction and buses. I want to hear someone from MBTA or MassDOT to talk about this piece of it.

C: Mark Shamon (VHB): We did do modeling of it all. Even in 2040, the CTPS model came in with a demand at this station that is quite low—200 people per day, per the model on the Commuter Rail, with bus service about 3-4,000 people per day. You'll see all of that in the document. The bus service model included Harvard Square to Kendall Square to West Station, and another route from the LMA to West Station. I believe that these were included in 2025. The 2040 model has the rail numbers, since until Harvard develops on this land there really isn't substantial

Commuter Rail demand. The model also takes Boston Landing, Yawkey, and the subway into account.

Q: Jessica Robertson: You didn't model any bus service through the project area? That's ridiculous, we've been asking for that for three years.

A: Chris Calnan: Again, Chapter 3 looked at these as alternatives. It's not in the Preferred Alternative, but it is in there, with impacts, for you to use in your comments.

Q: Jessica Robertson: But it's not included in the model?

A: Chris Calnan: It is analyzed in the document. I honestly don't remember right now if it's part of that particular model. The 2040 full-build Preferred Alternative does not include a through bus connection through to Commonwealth Avenue.

Q: Ari Ofsevit: Regarding West Station, what data are you using to say that there is no demand? I worked in Kendall Square for the Charles River TMA. We surveyed MIT and 4-5 of the largest employers—about half of Kendall Square, maybe 20,000 commuters—and found that about 2,000-2,500 people are coming per day from the west, and 80% of those are driving. If you look at other corridors where transit is a better alternative; like the southwest corridor going down towards Attleboro, Mansfield, and Sharon, 75%-80% of people use the train because it is faster than driving. If you build competitive transit, people will ride it. If you want to come from Framingham to Kendall Square right now, it's about a mile from Kendal. If the train could stop and let you off, it would be faster to walk than to go to South Station and then taking the Red Line. If you built a rail shuttle, so you could walk across the platform and get on that shuttle to get to Kendall, you'd save people 40-50 minutes per day. To look at that and to say that no one is going to be using it, I just can't believe it. If the CTPS model is putting those numbers out, then the model doesn't make sense.

C: Mark Shamon: That modeling is for the Commuter Rail.

Q: Ari Ofsevit: So is there any Grand Junction connection included in that model?

A: Mark Shamon: No.

C: Ari Ofsevit: The point of West Station is a connection to Kendall Square. Saying that there is no demand for the station but not actually putting in the demand that the station creates is disingenuous.

A couple of other points. Newton is finally getting their act together, with help from MassDOT, to put in high-level platforms to increase service; there are a lot of people who would like to take that train and can't. On the Worcester line, 1972, there were 3 trains per day and 600 people rode it. Now, there are 30-40 trains per day, and 16,000 commuters. On rush hour, there are as many people on trains as there are driving on the Turnpike. The longest train is eight cars, and packed to the gills; if you took all those people and put them in cars, it would be a traffic jam stretching from here to Newton Corner. If we give those Kendall commuters better options, they'll switch. They're not driving because the driving is good: they're driving because there's no other option. If we're not modeling that, the model is completely flawed; we need to run one that includes that alternative.

The final thing I'll say is that when we first saw West Station, the cost was about \$25 million: with 4 elevators and 2 platforms, it was about double the size of Yawkey Station, and roughly double the cost, which made sense. Now the numbers we see put it at about \$100 million, and I'm sure that that includes a lot of other elements. But with this phasing, we're going to build 8 tracks, build 8 more, then tear 8 out, then build West Station. That process seems to add a lot of cost and a lot of complexity. Why not build West Station first, put those platforms down as a down-payment on transit? As we grow, we can't just put more and more cars into a system that is already full.⁵

Q: Ed Ionata: Mike, for one of the workshops, can we get someone from CTPS in the room?

A: Mike O'Dowd: Sure, we can.

C: Jessica Robertson: It's not a question of how they did their model, it's a question of what this project team asked them to model. We can't properly evaluate all the options that have been raised, because some of them were modeled and some of them weren't. All of us are directing our comments at MassDOT, so it would be great if someone from MassDOT could respond to them so we can hear what you have to say.

A: Mike O'Dowd: I think, Jess, that that is exactly why we have this document, to hear these comments and the feedback, as to how important you feel these connections will be.

C: Harry Mattison: Come on. Let me tell you some of the things that I've been hearing. Last month, I went to a listening session that the Secretary of Transportation and the Secretary of EEA put on, where they talked about how we can reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in

⁵ Applause in the room at this point.

transportation. Earlier this week, the mayor announce Carbon-Neutral Boston, where he wants the city to be carbon-neutral, somehow, by 2050.⁶ Last night, I was in a meeting where Harvard about building thousands of new jobs, which I think is a great thing. They showed this beautiful map saying “it’s only a mile from the LMA, only 2 from MIT, look how close you’ll be!” They are talking about connecting Harvard and the LMA, which we’ve been hearing about needing for decades.

In the last month, I’ve gotten two emails from Senator Brownsberger saying, first, “traffic is bad and only going to get worse” and second that “we need better bus service”. I can tell you, sitting in this room right now, that at 7:30 it’s still rush hour out on Cambridge Street. It’s a parking lot from at least the Pizzeria Regina at Harvard Street to the River Street Bridge. Emma Walters knows that Harvard Ave is a parking lot, too, as is Brighton Ave. If you have a small business there, and people don’t want to drive there or go there at all because getting there is such a disaster, then that’s not really good for anyone.

I’m flabbergasted that we’ve been telling you, Mike, for years and years and years, going back way before this project, that we need better buses and transit and to be environmentally friendly. To come here and say “we made a Preferred Alternative that does almost nothing for buses” and will make the 64 way worse, since it will now have to sit in seven traffic lights to go from the Pizzeria Regina to River Street... this will make transit much worse. It is unimaginable that we’re here, after all this time. It really shows our values and priorities, and I’m surprised that transit doesn’t make the cut. It’s really sad. I’m embarrassed to say that I’m a part of this project at this point, because we’re building a highway. I don’t know how to say it differently this time than all the others; so yeah, we’ll send our comment letters, and they’ll be really sad.

C: Senator Brownsberger: The thing is that I think we need to be shoulder-to-shoulder, fighting for what Fred and Ari are talking about. But these things actually do go well beyond this project, and take much more to accomplish. You can’t just do this project and then have 10-minute train service downtown on these rail lines. You can’t just do this project and have service to Kendall Square. Those are additional projects, so we have to fight for those, too. If we can get those projects done, fighting shoulder-to-shoulder together, then this phasing will move.

C: Harry Mattison: Senator, if they build this highway, though, and they don’t build a connection... they’re not even talking about a footbridge, I thought that they were going to give us the footbridge to Malvern Street in an earlier phase. Now that won’t even get built.

⁶ There is scattered laughter in the room at this point.

- C:** Chris Calnan: Yes it is, in Phase 1. The Babcock connection is 2040.
- C:** Okay. I don't have a number, but you have what, six lanes on the mainline and a couple of lanes of frontage roads on either side, and then the railyard. Out of all those lanes, we're talking about what, 200' of pavement? To think that someday you'd come back and build that road, after everything is already up and operational, is nuts. Someone needs to explain how that will be built. You can't run the buses or have any of these conversations until that's built. To think that someone will come back in 2027 and build a road over the highway is nuts.
- C: Senator Brownsberger:** For those of us who care deeply about an expedited transit vision, as Fred has worked on beautifully throughout his career, we have to have a different set of conversations to get us to that next level. This project is a conversation about what goes on in this box; we're talking about things that go well beyond that box—
- C: Jessica Robertson:** We were promised West Station as part of that box.
- C: Senator Brownsberger, contd:** Fair enough. But to the extent that we're not getting that first, it has to do with things beyond the box. What I would like, and I would offer, is that we have a separate meeting, with the five of us who are talking right now, to strategize on how to make this vision happen. I'm thinking about this conversation all the time: how to move forward to get to the vision we're talking about as soon as we can. They are big changes that need to be made.
- C: Jessica Robertson:** The problem is that we have been asking for West Station and a north/south bus connection for three years. We were promised West Station, and the previous MEPA report mandated that you guys study it. I don't understand how you don't do a traffic model that includes those things.
- C: Senator Brownsberger:** Well, I can't answer that.
- C: Jessica Robertson:** I know; that wasn't meant for you.
- C: Senator Brownsberger:** What we have now is a process for saying, "hey you guys mucked up." Put that in writing and tell them, if that's what you believe, and it will go up the chain.
- C: Ari Ofsevit:** I very much agree that we need to have a better vision. I might be stealing Fred's story, but in 1968 we started building the Tufts Medical Station (which was then New England Medical), and finished in 1972. Does anyone know when the first service ran?
- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** 1987.

- C: Ari Ofsevit:** Yes, 1987. That required a vision, to relocate the Orange Line, but let's build it now when we're already digging the hole. We had the idea, to invest in infrastructure now so that when the time comes, it's already there. We've seen way too many times in this city that mitigation gets pushed off.⁷ The Green Line Extension was supposed to be done 15 years ago. What we're saying is that we don't want that to happen here. We don't want this to keep getting pushed past 2040, past 2045. We want it part of this project. We think that when there are construction impacts during this project, it could be helpful to mitigate some of the traffic on the Pike itself. We are asking you not to kick the can down the road.
- C: Mike O'Dowd:** We are writing this document in order to solicit all these comments. We are looking at the constraints that we have financially, to come up with a phasing plan that we think would work. That doesn't mean it's the only phasing plan. If a revenue source with funding and financing became available, that would be fantastic. But we have to acknowledge our limiting sources, and financing & funding is a critical aspect of those limits. What we are showing now, at a minimum, would establish the backbone on which everything else can be built.
- C: Ari Ofsevit:** Then let's build the cheapest version, which saves \$100 million by not building a viaduct, and then let's build West Station.
- C: Bill Deignan (City of Cambridge):** Essentially, what people are saying is that this plan doesn't have any vision to get where people want to go. Are we going to rely on modeling to tell us what has to happen, or are we going to build the future that we want to see? People see this as a transit-oriented area, and you'll never see that in the model. The CTPS model is crazy, and it is not a multi-modal model. The traffic numbers that it shows for Cambridge often just don't make sense. I understand, Mike, that financing is difficult. The state needs to buckle down, and I hope that people send the message to MEPA and the FMCB that they need to come up with a plan to get West Station earlier, with at least bus connections first, and then quickly getting West Station done. Without that, you'll end up with a neighborhood that is hard to change.⁸
- C: Glen Berkowitz:** If it's not too much trouble, could you put the cost slide up? I think that everyone in the room would agree that you've all made lots of positive changes, working with the Task Force, in the plan: the underpass at Soldiers Field Road, for example. This whole discussion of West Station, I have to admit that I was confused through much of it. The issue of north/south

⁷ As noted elsewhere, mitigations are *only* proposed on a project basis, in response to any unavoidable impacts of that project. Projects do not provide mitigations for impacts by other construction jobs, past or present, and cannot provide mitigations unrelated to the impacts of the project. Further, components of the purpose and need of a project cannot also be considered a mitigation for the same project.

⁸ Applause in the room at this point.

connections is separate from the issue of West Station. It is fair to say, as Jess and Galen said, that the Task Force asked for north/south connectivity because the current street grid is already overwhelmed. It's hard to imagine the next 50 years working with just those streets. MassDOT has never said that it would include that in the Preferred Alternative; it didn't say in it in the ENF and you didn't say it here, so you've at least been consistent. But I don't think that that's the case with West Station: on this, people were asking for it and MassDOT was silent. In the ENF, you said that there will be a West Station. Now, this new logo doesn't even have a train in it anymore.

C: Galen Mook: It's the same logo, Glen.

C: Glen Berkowitz: Okay. Well, I think it's fair to say that MassDOT said that it would be a multimodal project in Phase 1, with West Station in Phase 1. Is that what most of us remember?⁹

So however disappointing it is to hear it, you deserve credit for being honest with us, because you are tonight announcing a major policy change. You've certainly hinted at it, but this is the first time that you're announcing that, where the old MassDOT said that this will be a multimodal project in Phase 1, the new MassDOT is announcing that West Station will be built at some point after 2040. That is a major policy change, and it boggles the imagination that this state—with all the things that Harry just referred to—is proposing to build in Phase 1 only some combination of the 1st and 2nd row, depending on which variant you end up choosing. You are announcing that you are going to spend a half a billion dollars in Phase 1 with no new transit connection for a neighborhood that had it taken from them 50 years ago. I cannot believe that we would spend \$500 million and not have a train station. One last piece: if the cost had grown so much that it became impossible for you to support it, then why don't you ask the Task Force if they want a temporary West Station now, and then the gold-plated station can come a decade or two later?

C: Jessica Robertson: When Harvard first presented the idea, we asked for a temporary, scaled-back West Station.

Q: Glen Berkowitz: Does the document include evaluation of a temporary West Station?

A: Chris Calnan: The document looks at a full-build of the project, not an interim station.

⁹ Scattered Task Force members say yes or agree; did not capture specific people.

Q: Jessica Robertson: But you have a three-phase rail layover plan where you put a bunch of tracks in and take them out again. You're being inconsistent: if all you are evaluating is a full and final condition, why are you studying one thing in an interim condition and not another?

A: Chris Calnan: The rail is already out there.

C: Jessica Robertson: But one slide said 8 consists, then 16 consists, then back to 8 consists.

C: Chris Calnan: Again, we can't resolve these tonight; we are listening to all of this but just to repeat the point, MEPA needs written comments.

C: Galen Mook: We need to understand where your heads are at, to direct our comments.

C: Jessica Robertson: This is a very specific question. We asked for a temporary West Station to be evaluated, and apparently it wasn't. We're trying to find out why that is, and the reason that you gave for not doing so was unsatisfactory because another temporary condition is already in the plan. I am not satisfied by that answer.

C: Chris Calnan: I don't recall that specific request.

C: Ed Ionata: We definitely did discuss that. I don't want to mislead people: it's not like this is a MEPA rule, that we couldn't assess about a temporary station. It is not a part of the Preferred Alternative. Phasing of projects is up to the proponent to decide.

Q: Jessica Robertson: So you're saying what? That you forgot, or you decided not to include it?

A: Mike O'Dowd: What we are showing in this document would not prevent us from being able to incorporate a temporary station, if the comments to MEPA demonstrate to the Secretary and to the Board that there is a public desire.

C: Jessica Robertson: I'm just having a hard time understanding why my comments tomorrow will be taken more seriously than all the comments I've been making for three years.¹⁰

C: Mike O'Dowd: Your comments are all equally weighted.

C: Tony D'Isidoro: I am a lifelong Allston-Brighton resident, and I've seen the neighborhood before it ever got cluttered with cars. Lots of the work that I do includes being involved with development projects as well; the biggest concern for Allston-Brighton residents is the

¹⁰ Applause in the room.

unprecedented, historic level of regional development: as Fred said, that's not a bad thing. It's good for the people who are fortunate enough to be able to get those jobs. Last night's meeting characterized this area as Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). That describes the need for West Station. It is difficult to call it TOD if the only transportation asset they have moving forward is the Turnpike. The problem, at all levels of government, is that all of our streets are clogged—especially at rush hour but also in the off-peak. There is lots of pass-through traffic through Allston-Brighton because of the regional growth. If the people of Allston-Brighton think that they've seen development to-date, they should just wait. Here's the basic problem: at all levels of government—local, state, and federal—the community is being told “we're doing TOD.” Now you have Boston Landing, which is just Commuter Rail, maybe some buses added.

The frustration, as a resident, is that we're “doing TOD” without the transit. The deal seems to be, “we'll jam in as much as we can, and we'll take care of the supporting infrastructure later. We'll get to Complete Streets, to Police and EMS and Fire, to buses and transit, all eventually.” In the meantime, the situation is getting worse by the month. You can see it if you just walk around. As a lifelong resident, listening to this presentation, what I'm hearing is that I have no relief from the City of Boston to help us to some transportation planning. But now I'm also being told that at the state level, and the federal level because Congressman Capuano is involved, that no one is going to help us, that we are on our own for the next 15-30 years. “Good luck, hopefully it works, and hopefully nobody gets killed, and hopefully the environment doesn't get worse.” I sit here and hear you saying that you want to do this transit-oriented development but that you're not prepared to build the infrastructure to support it.¹¹

C: Senator Will Brownsberger: I think you're 100% right, Tony, that that's where we are. We don't have the solutions to meet the transit need: there are the micro-issues: transit-signal priority, bus improvements, et cetera. But there are also the macro-issues like those Fred is trying to move us towards. I want to move us towards that process and work together to do that; and again, that's much bigger than this one interchange. So we have to work on that together. Again, I'm going to call a meeting, so we can have a communication and understand what we're all doing together. This isn't like “let's start working”—we're already all working on these things individually. But we need to work together, beyond this project. To Jessica, and your question of “how can they put in a temporary rail yard but not a temporary station?”—and to Glen: I think you're right that this project does reflect MassDOT's higher priorities, coming down to this team. They think that they absolutely need that layover space in the rail yards—I've been hearing that for years. They think that they're not ready to provide that urban rail service that we all

¹¹ Applause in the room at this point.

passionately think is the best solution, and so they're slowing that part of it down. What I see here is absolutely driven by the top-level policy of MassDOT. I think that we need to work together to change those priorities—and to give people like this as much support as we can to get us there. It goes well beyond this box.

C: Jeff Jones: My grandmother moved here in 1874. My mother sang at the opening of the Turnpike in 1964. I was nine, by the way, when they said we'd stop paying tolls. I just want to say that, during Red Sox games especially, Allston is a nightmare. It is an early exit for people wanting to go to the games. I love the Sox, and I love to have people coming to the city, but we can't get out of our driveways and our neighborhood during games.

C: Pallavi Mande (*Charles River Watershed Association*): I want to reinforce the points that have already been made: there is a lack of vision, and you can find community support for these things. These have been plaguing us since day one. We do not see a vision for a place that people can feel comfortable with, never-mind that they can support. This is also tied to the Enterprise campus, and it all comes down to what can be afforded by whom, and who needs what, rather than what this community needs today.

I want to talk about open space, and climate change resilience. I'm looking forward to reading the DEIR, but based on past experience, the emphasis usually seems to be on an approach of building out and then mitigating, rather than avoiding. From Harvard's perspective, I don't know how they're all talking to each other—whether you've assumed a specific full build-out of the parcel or if you've guessed, for the model. We saw some plans yesterday from them, and you can see that their development parcels don't emphasize open space. You really have to squint to see those spaces, left over after everything else is built out. I feel like this project is being viewed in completely the wrong direction: you are precluding placemaking. And that is not all on MassDOT; the City of Boston sponsored the Placemaking Study, which I really feel like is a lost opportunity, because we never got it to a vision that people could support—it was all, 'do not preclude.' Neighborhoods cannot be built that way.

C: Fred Salvucci: I want to make explicit one other issue: urban / suburban equity. We heard, ad nauseam, about the need for layover. None of us like layover, but we were told that we needed to put up with layover in order to get West Station. This means money spent on what we don't think is important, and none spent on what we do want. I'm not looking to foster suburban / urban conflict, but partnerships have to be built on trust. We had this single-track constraint for decades, until MassDOT and Harvard spent a lot of money to buy the CSX space and lay the groundwork. There was real money on the line, to buy the Right-of-Way and make it happen.

This gave extra capacity to the western corridor—more than tripled the capacity. There should be urban benefits to that improvement as well as suburban benefits. If we don't get West Station at the front, then we will be told by the suburbanites that they don't want an extra stop. The people at the T don't have any idea that they are supposed to be working for urban people and suburban people. This is the same as in Dorchester: when Keolis didn't have enough trains for other corridors, they moved them from Mattapan and Dorchester, an act of blatant racism. I'm not blaming Keolis, they didn't have the equipment. But now, Foxboro wants service, and all of a sudden there isn't a shortage anymore, while the Fairmount line gets screwed. I don't want to screw the suburbs: we all need a fair shake. The picture now says 'no West Station' and 'yes to Layover'. Take the layover out, and do West Station instead. We shouldn't ignore the fundamental equity issue, and I'm not being anti-suburban. The suburbs have already gained a lot, thanks to this Task Force, and service in the western corridor is already better. But if we don't have service at the front, then we are screwed.

C: Ari Ofsevit: To echo Fred: I know this is outside the scope of this project, so whether this is talking to you, or working with Senator Brownsberger as he just offered, right now the MBTA works on an 1835 railroad and operates like an 1835 railroad. That's when these lines were built, and personally, I'd like to see West Station before the 200th anniversary of the Boston to Worcester railroad charter. Trains spend an average of 35 minutes at South Station on layover. So we hear that South Station is over capacity but then we also hear that 35 minute turnaround figure, and that there's only a 15 minute turnover in Worcester—we have to wonder what's going on there. Anyways, they sit, and then we send them out, and then they wait again. There is a two-hour service gap on the Worcester Line in the middle of the day—rather than just running service every hour, the train has to sit and wait. We could obviate the need for layover yards completely if we just ran more goddamned service. We could run a train to Springfield and back within the layover time, and then we wouldn't need a yard. We need layover only so that we don't have to run more trains. Now, the MBTA is going to build a bigger South Station that just sets these same problems in place. We have to wonder what the "multimodal" part of this project is about, knowing all that we know. If we just include West Station, it will make the project somewhat of an easier pill to swallow.

C: Galen Mook: Since this will be our last Task Force meeting—

C: Ed Ionata: I can't imagine that this will be the last time we meet.

C: Jessica Robertson: It has been a year since our last meeting.

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis: We last meet with you all in February of this year, not a year ago.

- C: Galen Mook:** Okay. I feel like tonight, we only talked about transit, but we haven't given full due to the other elements of the project. Transit touches everything, from parks to street widths to traffic. Everything we care about here hinges on transit, but we have hours more to talk about. For all the public in the room, I just want to make sure you understand that this isn't only the train group; we've listened to everything you said, this is just the subject of today's conversation. We will have another opportunity next week at the public meeting, and I encourage you all to give more comments in that venue. I want to thank the Charlesview for hosting us for the past three years. And finally, I just want to say that I don't think a Task Force like this has ever existed, except for maybe on the Longfellow Bridge project. I appreciate all the work, all the meetings, all the consultant hours, that have gone into this. I'm still upset that we hear things like "I didn't hear that request" from the team; the process, though thorough, is still flawed, because we are not seeing the results that we've been trying to get you to. This is me venting: for all the work that you've done, this is still disappointing, and I'm sorry to say that.
- C: Ed Ionata:** Thank you all for coming. As Nate said, we have a series of meetings coming up, and we hope to see you there. We're going to distribute flash drives now, and I hope you all have a good night.

Appendix 1: Meeting Attendees

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Priscilla	Anderson	Resident
Gerald	Autler	Boston Planning and Development Authority
Joseph	Beggan	Harvard University
Brandon	Bowser	
Alexa	Brown	Northeastern University
William	Brownsberger	Massachusetts Senate
Shawn	Burns	Boston Police Department - District 14
Nate	Cabral-Curtis	Howard Stein Hudson
Chris	Calnan	TetraTech
Donny	Dailey	MassDOT
Henrietta	Davis	Cambridge Resident
Bill	Deignan	City of Cambridge
Jason	Derosier	Allston-Brighton CDC
Jeff	Dietrich	Howard Stein Hudson
Anthony	D'Isidoro	Allston Civic Association
Stacey	Donehue	MassDOT
Guus	Dreisen	
Mark	Fobert	TetraTech
Jim	Gillooly	Boston Transportation Department
Joe	Grilli	HNTB
Karl	Haglund	DCR
Nelson	Hoffman	Federal Highway Administration
Kevin	Honan	MA House of Representatives
Bruce	Houghton	Houghton Chemical
Ed	Ionata	TetraTech
Thomas	Jackson	Office of Councilor Ciommo
Jeffrey	Jones	Resident
Marc	Kadish	

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Jim	Keller	TetraTech
Guus	Larson	
Liz	Leary	Boston University
Oscar	Lopez	Rep. Honan
Pallavi	Mande	Charles River Watershed Association
Christine	Marini	Boston Police Department - District 14
Harry	Mattison	Allston Resident
Anne	McKinnon	Jacobs
Ken	Miller	Federal Highway Administration
Anna	Moll	Skanska
Galen	Mook	Allston Resident
Michael	Moran	MA House of Representatives
Tom	Nally	A Better City
Paul	Nelson	Federal Highway Administration
Mike	O'Dowd	MassDOT Project Manager
Ari	Ofsevit	LivableStreets Alliance
Warren	O'Reilly	Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services
Travis	Pollack	MAPC
Jessica	Robertson	Allston Resident
Fred	Salvucci	
Steve	Silveira	
Bob	Sloane	WalkBoston
Art	Trapotsis	Consolidated Sterilizer
Margaret	Van Deusen	
Geri	Vatan	MassDOT - District 6
Emma	Walters	Allston Village Main Streets