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MassDOT Project Manager

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From: Jeff Dietrich  
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HSH Project No.: 2013061.14

Subject: MassDOT  
I-90 Allston Interchange Improvements Project  
Public Meeting Introducing the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) – Allston  
Meeting Notes of December 5, 2017

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## Overview

On December 5, 2017, members of the Allston I-90 Interchange Improvement Project team and MassDOT staff associated with the job held the first in a series of public meetings to introduce the public to the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), and outline the process for submitting comments on the document. This series of 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.

At the time of this meeting, the comment period for the DEIR was scheduled to end on January 19, 2018. Since the meeting, on December 20, 2017, MassDOT announced an additional extension of the comment period to February 9, 2018. This represents a total of 72 days since the document was made publically available at the Task Force meeting on 11/30/2017, and a total of 66 days between the official kick-off of the comment period on 12/06/2017 and its closure.

Following a presentation that provided an overview of the structure and high-level content of the document, the floor was opened to discussion, to elected officials, members of the public, and members of the Task Force—in order to ensure that members of the public had the first opportunity to speak as the Task Force has had ample dedicated opportunities to ask questions and provide input.

Throughout the discussion period, there were no questions regarding the process for providing comments on the DEIR, and few questions related directly to the contents of the document or the

location of information to use in writing comments. While these minutes document the comments given at the meeting, the project team has stressed that formal comments at this stage, per Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office (MEPA) requirements, must be submitted to that agency, in writing via mail or email, before the closure of the comment period in order to be evaluated for the purposes of generating a scope of work for the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR).

Members of the public and Task Force who spoke were focused largely on prioritization of transit elements in the project, and the width and “car-focus” of the street grid in the urban interchange. The definition of ‘transit elements’ varies from person to person, but generally includes some or all of the following:

- West Station “as part of the project”, meaning built in the first phase along with the urban interchange and highway elements;
- The inclusion of a north/south transit connection through West Station using Malvern Street to access Commonwealth Avenue, generally imagined as part of a new MBTA bus and private shuttle route connecting Harvard Square, West Station, the Longwood Medical Area, and eventually perhaps Roxbury, Dorchester, and Porter Square; and,
- The introduction of an urban rail system, typically running on Diesel or Electric Multiple Units (DMUs/EMUs) on the Grand Junction Line, connecting Kendall Square to the Worcester Commuter Rail line via transfers at West Station.

Some commenters expressed alarm at the phasing of West Station that is currently projected in the DEIR; many comments included the statement or direct implication that West Station has been “removed from the project” as a result of this phasing. West Station remains a core feature of the Preferred Alternative, and has not been removed from the project: the expectation that the station will be phased as outlined is based on current direction from MassDOT leadership, available financing and funding, the existing and substantial need to provide layover capacity to support existing commuter rail service, and anticipated short-term ridership projections at West Station before any of the expected development occurs at Beacon Park Yard. The concept of somehow phasing West Station has been discussed throughout the project’s DEIR period between summer 2015 and fall 2017, including an extended discussion on the issue led by a presentation by the Task Force’s Harvard University representatives in fall 2016.

Part of the reason for this phasing is the evolution of West Station from a Commuter Rail platform and overpass like Yawkey Station or Boston Landing Station, as envisioned in the 2014 ENF, to a much more robust, multimodal connection including bus and rail elements—more comparable to

Forest Hills or Ruggles stations than Boston Landing or Yawkey. 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). Throughout the meeting, many comments requested that West Station be front-loaded as a “down-payment” on a transit-oriented future in Allston, and/or as “mitigation” for Allston hosting the interchange and commuter rail layover facility.

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. As in the Task Force meeting on November 30, and in public discussion on social media since, strong support continues within Allston and the Task Force for an interim, “opening day” West Station to be built as a way to achieve some of these goals, in advance of the full-build station that the project will deliver in Phase III.

The second major issue of comment was the street grid of the urban interchange. Since the early days of the project, there has been near-universal consensus that a suburban-style interchange, like that which exists today, is not appropriate for the context of the neighborhood and the project. As a result, the project instead advanced an urban street grid design. This grid has been sketched out at a planning level of resolution for the DEIR: this includes only foundational items such as lane counts, intersection configurations, and the existence and type of bike and pedestrian facilities. Specific engineering details and the configuration of every street have not yet been finalized. The project team expects that close coordination with the City of Boston, which will ultimately own the streets, will influence these designs, within the bounds of the character of an urban street grid.

The street grid is designed to meet City of Boston’s Complete Streets standards, serve the goals of the Vision Zero initiative, provide bike and pedestrian facilities throughout the street grid, and appropriately process the vehicular traffic from the Turnpike without introducing unacceptable levels of congestion and idling. Of particular note is Cambridge Street, which will be reconstructed as a Complete Street with protected intersections, parking-protected bike lanes, integrated bus stops, medians, and improved pedestrian facilities.

Despite these improvements, some members of the Task Force believe that the new Cambridge Street and, by implied extension, the street grid writ large, represents an unsafe and unpleasant condition for bikes and pedestrians, specifically due to the number of intersections that must be crossed. This street grid design, without a separated above- or below-grade dedicated bicycle path, is a direct response to Task Force and public direction to avoid long, physically separated, isolated bicycle connections, which the project team understands are considered unsafe by many cyclists.

Many commenting members of the public spoke to the importance of safety for bikes and pedestrians in the street grid; most described the project as having made substantial strides in meeting these goals.

Some members of the public and the Task Force also appear to harbor a belief that the highway is being expanded as part of this project—in fact, the project proposes to keep the lane count of the Massachusetts Turnpike as it exists; the expanded physical width is proposed in order to accommodate wider shoulders for the purposes of safety, including traffic enforcement, errant vehicle recovery, snow removal, and stormwater management.

Comments on the DEIR must be submitted MEPA by the closure of the comment period on February 9, 2018; comments can be submitted electronically or mailed. Details are available on the presentation given at this meeting and posted to the MassDOT project website at: <http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/highway/HighlightedProjects/AllstonI90InterchangeImprovementProject/Documents.aspx> (also accessible by Googling “I-90 Allston Interchange Improvement Project”).

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# Detailed Meeting Minutes<sup>1</sup>

**C: Mike O'Dowd, *MassDOT Project Manager*:** Welcome everyone, thank you for coming to the public information meeting to discuss the DEIR filing for the I-90 Allston Interchange Improvement Project. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to discuss the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), filed with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office (MEPA) last week, November 30, 2017. We held a Task Force meeting that day to present the DEIR to them. Tonight, we will walk the public through the document, encourage you to read it and offer comment. If you haven't gotten a copy, we can get you one tonight, as well. When you leave tonight, please encourage your friends and neighbors to read the document; it is very important to solicit feedback for the MEPA office of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEOEA) as part of this process.

I'm Mike O'Dowd, MassDOT Project Manager. Tonight we are joined by: Jim Cerbone, MassDOT Environmental Services, responsible for reviewing comments received by MEPA and drafting responses; Jeff Dietrich from Howard Stein Hudson, who will be creating a transcript of the meeting. On that note, when you talk, please identify yourself, including your name, affiliation if any (whether you're an abutter, a commuter, etc.) so we can keep track of that in the minutes. As well, please sign in if you haven't, and provide your contact information, so we can contact you regarding future public meetings. We also have Chris Calnan, TetraTech lead design project manager; Nate Cabral-Curtis from Howard Stein Hudson, responsible for outreach and engagement including taking in comments and feedback; we also have Alex Stryisky, our MEPA Environmental Analyst for the project. With that, Jim has a bit of background to cover before

**C: Jim Cerbone, *MassDOT Environmental Services*:** Thanks Mike. Thank you all for coming. I want to offer a little background on what the DEIR actually is: three years ago this past Halloween, we filed the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the project; since then, the team has continued to refine the preferred alternative that was first presented in that document. In the DEIR document, you will see 3 sub-alternatives in the throat section at the southeast portion of the project. There is a heavy confluence of infrastructure in this confined area, including the highway viaduct, rail infrastructure, Soldiers Field Road, and the Paul Dudley White Path. Since the ENF, we have had the Preferred Alternative identified for the interchange

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<sup>1</sup> Herein "C" stands for comment, "Q" for question and "A" for answer. For a list of attendees, please see Appendix 1.

area, but we haven't selected a preferred alternative in the throat area. Your comments will be especially valuable in that effort. As Mike said, the document was officially filed on November 30, 2017. Notice will be published tomorrow in the Environmental Monitor, which formally initiates the comment period. Comments can be submitted electronically, and the appropriate contact information will be included in that posting. Chris, ready to go?

## DEIR Organization

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**C: Chris Calnan, TetraTech:** Good evening and welcome all. Tonight, as you've heard, the focus is to step through a high-level overview of the DEIR. We want to explain how it's organized and what you'll find in it as you prepare your comments. Here is the cover page.

This is a very big document: more than 600 11"x17" pages. There are also 115 pages of figures. The document was designed to be graphic-intense, in order to help with ease of reading comprehension. The structure of the document conforms with the scope of the ENF Certificate: it describes the Urban Interchange Preferred Alternative 3K. As Jim mentioned, this Preferred Alternative is specific to interchange itself; outside of that area, there are three throat variations where we haven't yet selected a variation. There are 10 chapters in the document:

Chapter 1 is the summary, the 'quick-read' for those who cannot or don't want to read the entire document. This describes the project in overview, outlines its evolution, and talks about the impacts analyzed and the mitigations proposed.

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 that we've studied, including the Franklin Street footbridge, various connections to Commonwealth Avenue ('Comm Ave'), and maintaining the River Street Bridge right-turn from Soldiers Field Road.

Chapter 4, "Affected Environment", means the existing conditions in the area of the project. There are more than 20 subject areas in this chapter, and plenty of detail, all describing how things are operating out here today.

Chapter 5, "Assessment of Impacts" is organized in the same way as Chapter 4, but assesses the impacts to all those subject areas described in Chapter 4. This includes analysis of Noise, Historic concerns, Bike & Pedestrian Facilities, Stormwater, etc. This is one of the largest chapters and includes plenty of detail.

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 response to comments and public involvement: this is where all comments received on the ENF are formally responded to, and it also includes a summary of the public process undertaken to this point. Chapter 10 is the circulation list for the DEIR.

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

## DEIR Content

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Next, I'll go into a high-level look at what's in the book. This first slide shows the interchange as of 2014. There's not a lot of detail on these lines: only three ramp connections, and an area reserved for rail infrastructure. From there, we moved to the Urban Interchange Preferred Alternative 3J, which was what we filed with MEPA in the ENF. This is similar in many ways; we advanced the level detail, but it was still basically a sketch concept. It included connections for West Station, and some additional streets; it did not include the comments received subsequent to this point, to flip those ramps.

Since the ENF, driven by public process that we've all been part of, including 23 Task Force meetings, Public Information Meetings, and the Placemaking Study from the City of Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA), the design evolved to where we are today: Urban Interchange Preferred Alternative 3K, with the three throat variations. This graphic is similar to those on boards in the back of the room, and shows the level of detail we're currently at in the process. A key point to keep in mind here: the graphics that we are showing here are all straight from the book, so you can see them all as you're reading.

This preferred alternative includes many core elements outside of the throat that are shared between all three throat variations: it realigns the Turnpike south; provides a context-sensitive urban street grid, connecting the street grid and new development to the highway and to

Cambridge Street; makes extensive improvements and adds new connections for bikes and pedestrians, including the Franklin Street bridge, a connection on Malvern Street, and connections to the Paul Dudley White Path; expands operations at BPY including the new West Station for both rail and bus operations; relocates Soldiers Field Road including the introduction of an underpass that expands available open space; and it adds noise walls along the Turnpike.

### **CONCEPT 3K-HV VARIATION (HIGHWAY VIADUCT)**

The highway-viaduct variation provides a widened elevated highway with the rail at-grade, very similar to what's there today. The widening accommodates safety elements. It does not add lanes to the Turnpike. It shifts Soldiers Field Road south towards the viaduct which allows us to gain more 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. Overall, there aren't many changes in this variation from what we've been showing, just some tweaks to make things work better. 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. I should note that there are lots of other renderings in the DEIR; we've just pulled these out for tonight to give you a sense of what to expect.

### **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, flipping the viaduct from what's out there today; 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, along the rail viaduct and above the highway. 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. Here's the cutaway view showing an overview of the elements followed by a conceptual rendering, just west of the tightest part of the throat. This wall-like structure is the elevated Soldiers Field Road.

### **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; in other words, everything is on one plane, with no vertical stacking. 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

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MassDOT currently expects this to be a phased project. Phase 1 is the largest, focusing on addressing the aging viaduct, the street grid, and bike and pedestrian connections. 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, which we've been talking about since day one of this project; building a two-way shared use path adjacent to Cambridge Street South as an at-grade connection to the Paul Dudley White Path and the river, an idea which was added from the BPDA Placemaking Study; building a new bike & pedestrian connection at Malvern Street from the interchange to the south; reconstructing the Franklin Street pedestrian/bike bridge; making improvements to the existing Beacon Park Yard to store up to 8 train sets; and constructing noise walls along the Turnpike.

Phase 2 is targeted for completion after 2025, and is focused on Beacon Park Yard: construction of additional layover tracks and switches to store up to 16 train sets, as well as crew quarters, storage sheds, utilities, and other infrastructure to support light maintenance.

Phase 3 is targeted prior to 2040, to evolve based on demand and need. This is all focused on West Station. This includes 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 bicycle 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. These are the so-called ‘orange streets’.<sup>2</sup>

## Construction Costs & Funding

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Lots of this data was presented to the MassDOT & MBTA joint board meeting few weeks ago. This is a conceptual cost, presenting an “all-in” if everything is built at once. It includes base construction, contingency, and escalation, all as standard for these projects. It is not intended to reflect the costs for each anticipated phase of construction. The takeaway for this chart is that the no-build is the least expensive alternative, but still \$426 million once you factor in contingency and escalation. Of the build variations, 3K-ABC is the cheapest at \$983 million; then 3K-HV at \$1.05 billion; then 3K-AMP at \$1.25 billion. There is no doubt that there will be lots of challenges for funding in this project, and lots of attention is being paid to the issue. MassDOT recently established a funding & financing committee to develop a finance plan for this project; that group is looking at public-private partnerships (P3s), public financing, 3<sup>rd</sup> party contributions, basically anything that could be used do to fund this massive project. Part of the challenge here is that toll revenues produced by the Turnpike and the commuters who use it cannot go towards other elements, such as West Station or the pedestrian and bicycle connections: they have to be used exclusively for toll facilities and feeders. Next, I’ll hand it to Nate to talk through the next steps and how to comment.

## Commenting on the DEIR

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**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis, *Howard Stein Hudson*:** Thanks Chris. Folks, we are rapidly getting towards the end of the presentation. I’ll go through how to comment on this document. The posting in the Environmental Monitor on December 6 kicks off a 45-day comment period that ends on January 19, 2018.<sup>3</sup>

Print versions of the DEIR are available at the State Library of Massachusetts, the Copley Main Library, the Honan-Allston Branch Library, the Cambridge Main Library, and the Cambridgeport Branch Library. In addition, today, we delivered copies to the Brighton and Faneuil Branches of the Boston Public Library, in response to a request from the Task Force.

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<sup>2</sup> So called because they are typically shown in orange on the project team’s overview graphics of the project.

<sup>3</sup> On December 20, 2017, MassDOT announced an additional extension of the comment period to February 9, 2018. This represents a total of 72 days since the document was made publically available at the Task Force meeting on 11/30/2017, and a total of 66 days between the official kick-off of the comment period on 12/06/2017.

The MassDOT website a link to download the document, and if you need any help accessing that link, here is my contact information. This document is a tome: I recommend downloading on a wired connection, and maybe getting a cup of coffee once you press start. Depending on your connection, it can take a while to download, usually around three minutes

This slide shows to whom you should direct your comments: I'll keep this slide up at the end of the presentation for cell-phone photos, and the information will also be posted in the Environmental Monitor. When you make your comments to MEPA, please CC Jim Cerbone at MassDOT, to make sure everyone gets everything in a timely fashion.

There are two upcoming meetings after tonight, if you have questions that arise while you're reading the document. We will be delivering the same presentation at each, so you can choose which makes the most sense for your schedule and location. We are here tonight, then a week from tonight we will be in Brookline at the Transportation Committee meeting, and finally on January 3 in Cambridge. I want to highlight for everyone that in case of bad weather in January, there is an already-advertised snow date planned for that meeting, on January 10. We do this just as a backup, to ensure that even if there is a storm, all the needed meetings occur before the end of the comment period.

Finally, I'll quickly go through the next steps after the DEIR. The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) will provide MassDOT with a scope, similar to the ENF process. This will serve as the basis for the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR). MassDOT will use the comments from coordinating agencies and the public in order to continue to refine and improve the 3K concept and select a variation for the throat. Throughout, there will be continued outreach with the abutting communities, municipalities, stakeholders, and the universities.

The schedule of the project requires that we have the MEPA process done in early 2019. In large part, this scheduled is driven by the declining health of the main MassDOT asset in this area, the highway viaduct. Here is the schedule chart: we are here, in the final quarter of 2017. Construction of Phase 1 is expected to continue until 2025. Note that this is our current 'best-guess' pending the FEIR scope.

## Discussion

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**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** We will ask elected officials to speak first, and then go through the list of those of you who indicated that you'd like to speak, starting with members of the public and then proceeding to the Task Force. We've used this process throughout the project; it is designed to ensure that the public gets an opportunity to speak tonight, since the Task Force met last week

and also have two working sessions at their disposal to assist them in commenting. Senator Brownsberger and Representative Moran are both here, I know. Senator, the floor is yours.

**C: Senator William Brownsberger, 2<sup>nd</sup> Suffolk and Middlesex:** Thank you. My name is Will Brownsberger, the state senator for this area as well as Watertown, Belmont, and Back Bay. I want to offer a few thoughts about how this process fits into a bigger picture. We are having a conversation here about a project: this interchange, and the placemaking that we can get along with it, including parkland, bike paths, and West Station. It's a box, really: you can see the physical area. I encourage you all very much to participate in the comment process, and give input about the things that will be inside that box. That's what this meeting is about tonight, to give formal input to their decision-making process about this box. But there are also other important boxes to think about, and which I and other elected representatives including Representatives Moran and Honan, and Councilor Ciommo, will be working on together in the coming years.

First: a conversation about funding at the MassDOT-wide level. This is a terribly important and difficult conversation about where the money for projects like this will come from. There is an option on the table which would give us almost none of the benefits associated with the others, just rebuilding what's there with nothing that we're hoping for. We have to ask MassDOT to commit up to a half a billion dollars more to deliver all of that. Maybe some comes from Harvard, and some comes from other places. These are big questions, and we all need to engage in that conversation. The MassDOT Board is laying the foundations for that conversation with the financing committee.

Second: a conversation about the overall transportation vision for the City of Boston. We know from all the work that we've done over the past few years on this project and around the city that more and more congestion is ahead of us. This should be of great concern for all of us. The assets we have in place will not be able to handle the traffic from what we're building. We are building a lot, and not keeping up with the infrastructure. Going back to January 2013, the Patrick administration had a bold and exciting vision to redo a lot of our services, and add new services. One of the most exciting of those was urban rail: subway-like, frequent service, back-and-forth from downtown, and running on existing heavy tracks, to give us here 10-minute service to downtown Boston on the Worcester line.

That plan was predicated on passing a state income tax increase to pay for it; that didn't fly in the legislature. I and others spent the spring fighting for more, but we ended up with a smaller—but still substantial—tax measure. This included the gas tax indexing, and it was a foundation

for a scaled-back transportation vision, which still urban rail. In September 2014, Governor Patrick made a series of announcements of this new, exciting, urban rail service; there was one in Roslindale, and one here in Beacon Park Yard, with a great ribbon-cutting ceremony in a train, in the rain. This was going to be a new way to get downtown from Brighton—which is a desperate need, since it can take an hour on bus routes like the 57 or on the Green Line.

What happened after that, though, was that voters across the state voted to repeal the gas tax index that we had put in place in order to support transportation. Now, the people around here didn't vote for that, but overall in the state, that was the decision. This significantly dialed back our ability to fund that transportation vision that we had all supported. The other thing that has happened—and I know that some planners have a different opinion on this—is that there's now a sense that it's much harder to do urban rail than we initially thought: that doing short-haul service on long-haul tracks is difficult, and that the longer-term for urban rail will likely have to be further down the line—that it will be more like 2040 before that vision can be realized, if at all. This is part of what caused West Station to back up further here. There are a lot of other pieces of that conversation, including the MBTA's Focus40 long-term plan, and we and MassDOT need to continue to communicate. The next meeting of the MassDOT Board is next Monday at noon, at 10 Park Plaza. In that meeting, they will be talking about the transit aspects of this project. I'll be there, to try to understand the overall thinking on how everything fits together, between the overall transportation vision and this box.

Third and lastly: There will be, on the ballot in November 2018, a proposal to increase the state's income tax on those earning over \$1 million. The mechanism for this would be a constitutional amendment, and the measure would dedicate all of that revenue—projected about \$2 billion per year – to education and to transportation. If that ballot question passes, that will radically change the conversation that we are having here, where we have to fight for funding even just to do the basic stuff in this box. I ask you all to keep your eyes on that prize: we need to get that ballot question passed. I look forward to working with you all to get these larger things done.<sup>4</sup>

**C: Representative Mike Moran, 18<sup>th</sup> Suffolk:** It's always tough to follow the Senator. Thank you; I will make a few points in addition. My name is Mike Moran, and I represent the community that will be most directly affected by this project. The Senator is correct: this process is about conveying to MassDOT our opinion on what we see tonight, as well as our opinion on the sum of the three years that have gone into this process so far. We can now say what we do and what we don't like about this project. I usually don't like to speak at meetings like this: I feel like

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<sup>4</sup> Applause in the room.

I'm speaking over the public who need this opportunity to speak. But this project is big enough and important enough that I will say just a bit.

In September 2014, then-Secretary Davey came into my office, and put this plan on the table. I joked, "jeez, this certainly looks like Harvard will benefit a lot from this". I've also joked, which didn't go over so well, about who from the administration was going to go work at the Kennedy School at the end of the term. This was spring 2014. Then the ribbon cutting was that September. It was really, "isn't this wonderful!" People got excited—and they had a right to be.

The history of this community is that we've been overlooked by transportation. This line came in from the suburbs, picking everyone in the 'W' towns—and then, when it got to Brighton, skipped right over the neighborhood and went downtown. One of my first civic acts was during the Weld administration, attending a meeting at the Smith Center, where they told us we couldn't get a Commuter Rail stop because it would slow down the trains from the west. You can guess how much I cared about that.

This ribbon-cutting was our opportunity to be excited about a transportation stop in our community, to pick up our residents, and get them into Boston. So, after that ribbon cutting and the ride into the city, we started the process. I'll be honest, I came to the first meetings, and they were very long, and I started sending staff instead. Now, we're here, after three years.

I have to tell you that what I initially said in spring 2015 is accurate: there are winners and losers here. Winners first: Harvard, who gets all this land; certainly, the people driving in on the Pike, because their commute will now be better; certainly, the Commuter Rail riders, whose commute will be quicker, because they don't have to make that stop now.

But I don't see much for us. That stop is the most important piece of this development for us, so I am disappointed that I'm hearing that it won't happen until 2040 or beyond. I'll be almost 70; I'm not sure if I'll even be here or able to control my bodily functions. You all should be disappointed, because I am. It is time for us to let them know how disappointed we are. Let the institutions in this community how disappointed we are: that we want this to be their first priority. If they should benefit, we should benefit. I intend to stay focused and engaged to the end.

To the team, thank you guys, because you have a thankless job. You're taking the arrows, and I understand that you can't make all these decisions. So I thank you for the process. Thanks to all of you who took the time to come here tonight. I hate to say it, but this is the start line. We have to let them know what we want, and be loud and clear.

- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Thank you both. I'm assuming that most you have seen this method before. I will invite batches of people to the microphone, and I will try to read handwriting and pronounce names correctly. Please accept my apologies in advance. And please, try to keep your questions to two minutes or less; there are many people here tonight who want to talk.<sup>5</sup>
- C: Jason Desrosier, *Allston-Brighton Community Development Corporation*:** I was hoping not to be first, but I suppose I'll set the bar low for everyone. I am in charge of community building and engagement with the ABCDC on Linden Street. As part of that, I have spent considerable time mapping out all the proposed developments in our area. There are 1,600 units of development planned by the BPDA, not counting Harvard's Enterprise campus. We need investment in transit, not just more traffic. Most of you all received the email notice from ABCDC: we are hosting, with the People's Pike group, info sessions to provide assistance to the public in writing comment letters. Please RSVP on Facebook and come if you can.
- C: Tony Arias:** I am a concerned resident. The main thing I want to say is: it's bullshit that all the public transit options are being delayed until at least 2040, or later. I don't know what this neighborhood will look like, or what the transit needs will be by then, and it could be pushed back another 20,30,40 years at that point.
- C: Tracy Wu:** I actually used to work for MassDOT. Hi Mike.<sup>6</sup> Now I'm sort of on the other side of the table. If you look at the development patterns, it is lots of condos and apartments. Transit is important, and this is disappointing to see. Maybe money is the issue, but I think that this is the key element of the whole design—from the perspective of noise and air pollution, congestion, and more, transit should be very important to MassDOT.
- C: Karen Smith:** Good evening. I was at the Task Force meeting last week. I am hugely disappointed to hear that we're still talking about conversations that we've had 23 times, and yet the highest priority is somehow gone from the project. The beauty and excitement of this project was this was going to be multi-modal, and now it's just a highway project. This development just isn't working, and 2040 is magical thinking. We couldn't hold the promise of West Station for three years—why should we pretend that we can hold it for 20? There is no commitment to finishing this project. The Return on Investment for this project needs to consider all the development lost because this place will be completely unlivable if this is not dealt with seriously.

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<sup>5</sup> The calling of names is omitted from these minutes for brevity and clarity.

<sup>6</sup> Laughter in the room.

- C: Anne Lusk:** I work at the Harvard Chan School of Public Health. My thanks to Tracy Wu, for getting a wonderful cycle track in Brookline. I have worked on bike issues for 36 years. You're planning now, but this will be built in the future. Shared use paths are out-of-date, and all research shows how unsafe they are. Complete Streets are out-of-date; sharrows and painted bike lanes in the door zone are unsafe. Paris, the Netherlands, Copenhagen, Denmark, are all building bicycle superhighways, that are bicycle exclusive and wide. The train station needs to allow bikes on trains, and bike parking at the station. Boston has many pedestrian-only parks because of the legacy of Olmsted. You should cover the throat with a lid, and create a destination for bike superhighways. Dockless bikeshare is coming, park-and-ride and bikeshare are here, and this will mean more bikes in the city than we've ever seen before.
- C: Arcady Goldmints-Orlov:** I represent TransitMatters. First, I know that this is a thankless job for you all; I have been following this project for a while and I have seen big improvements, thank you for that. That said, this is really not good enough. In particular: West Station is absolutely critical and needs to be in the project. Some of the assumptions going into the deferral are faulty. Apparently, in 2040, the Worcester line is predicted to have even less service than it does now: you used a timetable from before the MBTA added another train just recently. You guys need to reconsider your assumptions: West Station is important. Transit is important. The other piece: this street layout continues to have huge, wide streets, which are all about cars. The philosophy of this entire project, and of all transportation projects in this state and this country, is that cars are not optional, and that everything else is optional; that what's really important is getting the suburbanites into the city quickly. Air pollution, noise, people getting it, that we all just "have to deal with." We need more transit.
- C: Jacob Seib:** I am a resident, and I want to echo a lot of what was just said. The basic assumption of this project seems to be that we have to funnel everybody into a car and onto the Pike. This is a big project, and would be the only opportunity to invest in transit, and invest in north/south connections. This should not make the neighborhood extremely unfriendly: I already feel like I'm going to die. The width of the roads today scares me, and they'll get even scarier with this. You are spending a bunch of money to create elevated highways, and that is exactly the wrong place to spend money.
- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** To clarify since we've heard a few comments now about this issue: there are new bicycle and pedestrian connections in Phase 1 of the project. That phase includes Cambridge Street being reconstructed as a complete street without highway ramps, much more like an urban street. The grid may not be as small as you'd like, but it is a much more urban

street-grid, and everything is being rebuilt with protected intersections. This is all in the document and the project: the team has listened to these concerns.

**C: Jake Dempsey:** I am a resident; thank you for the opportunity to speak. I have similar sentiments to those who've spoken. I am currently working on renovating my house, and I've found it true that budgets show priorities. People in this neighborhood would like to see West Station become a priority. I have commuted downtown for a decade: I switched to biking because it's quicker and cheaper than driving. There will be thousands of new units here, and people will need to be able to get downtown. If there is no transit, it will be harder to get around. If we don't pay for West Station, we will pay somehow: whether it's by dedicating square feet to parking, or by slowing traffic, or by time people spend driving and looking for parking.

**C: Laura Gray:** I am an Allston resident, and have lived in the city for a couple of years in different places. I wasn't intending to talk, so I'm sorry if I get ramble-y. I went to Northeastern University, and while I was there, Allston was this place you just never visited. Now I've lived here, and it's a great neighborhood—housing, bars, restaurants. But it's still frustrating to try to get your friends out to Lower Allston, because there's no good way to commute there unless you take a bus. I used to walk everywhere in college: some bridges are newly rebuilt, like in Harvard Square, and some look super-sketchy. This project should make things friendlier, and less car-heavy. I don't want to walk on Cambridge Street right now, because I'm afraid that I'll get hit. I don't want to walk over the bridge because it's dimly lit and I'm afraid I'll get attacked. I encourage you to think about pedestrians and bikes, and another station in the area in addition to Boston Landing would be very helpful to us.

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Thank you. The Franklin Street footbridge is a key part of the project, and reconstructing it is in the preferred alternative.

**C: Laura Gray:** Excellent. I'll brave whatever, but I know others won't. I look forward to reading and commenting on the document. Thank you.

**C: Jules Milner-Brage:** I live in Brookline. I use the Beacon Park Yard area daily—biking, walking, occasionally driving, or using transit. I appreciate the points-of-reference you've given to the document and the work of the team to this point. I have a couple of points.

First: north/south mass-transit connections, well east of Cambridge Street, in order to provide a credible mechanism to reduce the use of Single-Occupancy Vehicles (SOVs). This is absent in all options presented, and should be in all of them at the start of the project.

Second: include as many north/south connections as possible, throughout the project. Not just Malvern Street but also Babcock Street. The AMP option is the only one that comes close to providing these connections, but it seems that they could be added to other options.

Third: you should build the lowest highway structure possible, in order to enable development on caps, with human-centered facilities on top. The ABC and AMP options provide this opportunity far-and-away better than the HV.

Fourth: our elected leadership should pursue funding mechanisms including congestion and cordon pricing, to balance motor vehicle use. These areas cry out for better investment. In the area where I live in Brookline, people mainly bike and walk. The vast majority of the neighborhood, including the building I live in, was built only after, and as consequence of, inclusion of an electric railway line in 1890.

- C: John Kyper:** I represent the Massachusetts Sierra Club, and a member of the ‘amen chorus’ tonight. I am appalled that West Station is tentatively postponed to 2040. I’ll be pushing daisies by the time it’s built. Not having that station there could have very detrimental effects on development in the area, and especially on whatever gets built in the former rail yards, because it’ll be auto-centric rather than transit-, bike-, and walk- dependent. I live in Roxbury, and I lived and worked here in Allston many years ago. I am familiar with getting around here as a former biker, a constant pedestrian, a taxi driver, and a transit user. Biking and walking along Cambridge Street, I’ve never felt safe. That experience is symptomatic of many problems that this proposal needs to remedy.
- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Thank you. The plan includes Cambridge Street reconstruction in Phase 1.
- C: Hazel Ryerson:** I am a resident. I want to support what already said: West Station needs to be in Phase 1. Including transit will reduce the need for people to drive; as Jason said, there is so much development coming, and all those people will want to use transit if it’s available.
- C: Fred Salvucci:** Thank you for the time to speak. I support the need for West Station, or an interim West Station, at the beginning of the project; and I suppose north/south connectivity, at least for public transit buses, from Day 1 of the project. I would urge that that aspect of this document be corrected because it’s not there now. I am probably the oldest person in this room, or close to it. I have lived in Brighton all my life, but for two years. The first public meeting I went to on transportation, which led me to the field, was back when the Turnpike Authority held a public meeting: they took my grandmother’s house on Lincoln Street—this was a neighborhood of Lithuanians, Poles, Italians, Irish... all poor, all with no connections in the city, and all of

them got screwed. My mother was given \$1, with no offer for 7 months on house. It was atrocious, on an individual level. And it was atrocious on the neighborhood level: the railroad that had existed to that point included stations at Allston Depot, Market Street, Brook Street, and Newton Corner. All of these were totally removed, and this community lost all of its rail service. Our congestion today is so bad precisely because our rail access was destroyed when the Turnpike was built. This is the chance to fix it.

West Station is no closer to New Balance than Allston Depot was to Market or Brook Street, nor is it closer than the Newton stations, or Wellesley stations. Yet somehow, here, they're called too close to each other. The population density is higher here, and getting higher. This nonsense, that "you already have one, so that's enough", is crazy.

I also want to be very mindful that we don't pit urban and suburban against one another. This is the result of the single-track constraint that was stupidly put in with the Turnpike, and totally decimated the urban rail stations—that constraint also made service on Worcester Line the most unreliable in the network, because it had to run on one track for both directions. This only ended a few years ago when Harvard and MassDOT spent a bunch of money to buy out CSX and help them relocate to Worcester. Now it's a two-track operation, so the suburbanites have gained service and reliability because of you all and because of this process.

There has been progress; that's the point of coming to these meetings, that we will win important things. To echo Senator Brownsberger's very good comments regarding the opportunity to speak next Monday: I urge people to be there, and to talk about our need for better rail transportation. MassDOT just started a study of how to make our underused commuter rail system much more like the regional rail systems in Europe. I worked in London, and saw a crummy Commuter Rail service—infrequent, dangerous, and unwanted—transformed with better signal systems and investment. Now, those lines are almost as good as the London Underground. This is in a city even older than Boston: major rail transformations can happen. It just takes will, and it could begin here, with this line. So, let the Fiscal Management Control Board (FMCB) hear that you're looking at that study and should have the chance to participate. There are people within MassDOT who think that the Commuter Rail should be only suburban service, but I think the FMCB is saying that they don't think that's right.

My 2<sup>nd</sup> point: the referendum on the millionaire's tax is an important opportunity. But if we don't have a plan ready for how to spend money on better transit, people won't vote for that referendum, because they won't believe money will be spent on transportation. What has proven critical in cities on the West Coast is to have plans ready to go, so that people will believe that

the referendum will directly benefit them. If this DEIR doesn't include, at least, an interim West Station and north/south connectivity, there will be no reason for people to believe that if it is passed, that there is anywhere for that money to go, because this document will already have locked out all the transit options. It is critical to participate in that process, but within this process, we must insist that these necessary features get locked in. We all know that getting the EIR right doesn't guarantee all built as quickly as we would like, but we know if it's not right, it's never going to happen. As Representative Moran said, this is very important: we will still have to fight for funding, but if it's not in EIR, it is guaranteed that we will not get it. We need to improve this project—there have been lots of improvements so far, but we need more.

We need to demand here and to the FMCB that the rail system is for us, too. Allston Depot was one of the first Commuter Rail stations in the country. The original concept for the railroad system included urban, suburban, and intercity service. We lost all the urban service, but it is possible to have a system that serves all three. It's done in Europe, and luckily, the FMCB is looking at that.<sup>7</sup>

**C: John Shields:** I think that Fred might be older than me, but he's a hell of a lot sharper, too. I am an architect and urban designer, and I have been involved in looking at the potential of the Charles River Basin, in cooperation with volunteer architects, landscape architects, and engineers. We were approached, two years ago, by community leaders, to look at a vision for what this area could be, beyond roadways and rail lines. Particularly, we wanted to look at things from the point-of-view of the Charles River, which has been sorely lacking in this process since Day 1. I'm not going to try to compete with West Station, or put it and parklands over each other—in fact, they go hand-in-hand, interlinking with bike paths, open space, stormwater, all together. We're not seeing that reflected in this plan. This is a very traditional look at highways and railways, with the leftovers being picked up by open space or West Station.

We put together a synthesis of all these elements, talking to everyone in the community and gathering everyone's ideas. We asked people in Cambridgeport, river users, and people in Allston: "what do you want to see happen here?" This is an incredible piece of open space in the middle of our urban area. Can't we do better than planning as a highway project?

This is that document; I have copies of it, if people want to see. The point is, we've been through this process—what has happened is that from Day 1, you knew that you were short on funds, so it's been a diminishing process, rather than a process that looked broadly. As a result, what we

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<sup>7</sup> Applause in the room.

have now are little pieces of all the ideas, but nothing that ties together, and even that is phased over 30-40 years. That vision says, “here are 5 things in Phase 1 to start with”.

Rethinking that approach, given the budget crisis, I would propose that we ask “what’s minimum we can do now” and then wait for the other elements when the time is right. That minimum should include rebuilding the Turnpike; I think at-grade is best and there are lots of ways to accomplish that. We should focus on West Station as an idea; thinking about it as “we’re going to do a transit-oriented, large-scale village,” rather than from the backwards notion that we’ll put lines through here and wait for things to happen. I understand that this is not MassDOT’s purview alone, and that we would have to get Harvard and BU and the City of Boston on board. That’s our challenge as a community. There are lots of savings associated with taking the at-grade scheme—and I think it would be cheaper, by far, than even what’s shown in that cost estimate. With that difference, there are so many things you could do to upgrade: you could build West Station alone with the delta from viaduct or no-viaduct. I encourage you to step back, do the minimum now—at-grade Pike, West Station, and protection of the river—then move forward.

**C: Jessica Mink:** I haven’t lived in Allston for 40-plus years, but I do bike through this area every day on my way home from work. I have been a bike activist for almost 40 years, working to get the Charles River Bike Path extended upstream, and on getting bikes on the T for the first time. I know lots about multi-modalism. I’ve also been fighting in JP, around Forest Hills, to take care of all users. This project emphasizes east/west travel at the expense of north/south travel. Right now, north/south means only Harvard Street, Everett Street, and Market Street. Taking down the expressway would give you lots of opportunities to interconnect Lower Allston. There will be a bunch of new streets with at-least medium high-rise development—as we’re seeing at Forest Hills. The transportation infrastructure really needs work: the bike paths as proposed, West Station; buses that get people to West Station when they can’t walk—since when people need to get around this part of the city with snow on ground, buses are often better than walking, or bikes if people are comfortable on them. We need to look at north/south connections more than you have been. I see narrow walkways across the Turnpike, and they are not much wider than Franklin Street, which is scary today. You need to think about personal safety on those connections.

**C: Eliot Wiener:** I’m a JP resident, but travel all around the city. When I picture this neighborhood, I see a great place to get on and off highway. That’s not what I think of makes a great neighborhood in Boston. The 93 ramps and the Massachusetts Avenue Connector are not a nice place to walk. The nice places—the North End, Beacon Hill, Harvard Square, Downtown Boston, Allston—all have mixed use development, relatively narrow streets, and decent transit

connections. That's the neighborhood that I want to see. That's what inspires people: not a place just to get off the highway, but a place where they can live, work, go to school, go to church. And it works for economic development; companies like Amazon don't say "I want to move to a city with great highway access"; they're looking for dense, walkable neighborhoods and connections to transit. This proposal doesn't provide what I'd look for.

**C: Annie Carlson:** I'm an Allston resident; only for a couple of years so far, but I would like to live here a long time. I walk nearly everywhere, except in really bad weather, in which case I use transit. I would like to bike but don't feel comfortable at my skill level. I have similar sentiments to everyone else, so won't harp on those points. The Massachusetts Legislature committed, in the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA), that we would reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 80% by 2050. This is a toothless piece of legislation already, but it won't mean anything if the money we put into transportation is spent to expand highways instead of making places more bikeable. I believe that any money that we put into transportation should be entirely focused on that. Of course, there are more radical changes than transportation needed as well, but I find it incredibly strange that we have that goal and we're talking about expanding a highway.<sup>8</sup>

Regarding bus connections: I would like, as much as possible, for you to run studies on what the best bus connections would be for the project. These are giant financial commitments, and the upfront cost is worth it in order to create the best system that we can. I'm not an expert, so I don't have specific suggestions, but I would emphasize that TransitMatters and the People's Pike are all smart people and know plenty about these issues, so I would appreciate if you take everything that they say very seriously.

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** There is a full section on those bus connections in the DEIR.

**C: Patrick Greenwall, *TransitMatters*:** I have four points, so far, after skimming through the document, which I got last week—a bit of light holiday reading.

First: you indicate that there is no real Commuter Rail demand for West Station listed, but there is also no real indication of other modes being shifted—people who bike, or people who disembark from new development in this area or from new transit-oriented developments in Framingham and Natick. Those mode-shifts would definitely indicate some demand for WS, so I would ask you to reexamine that. You've done some LoS (Level-of-Service) indications for streets, but it feels like you're lacking in transit decision data.

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<sup>8</sup> The project proposes to keep the capacity of the Massachusetts Turnpike identical to existing conditions; the expanded physical width is proposed in order to accommodate wider shoulders for the purposes of safety.

Second: without West Station, it will be hard to do transit-oriented development in the area. Without the station, you will end up with developments that have underground or surface parking spaces, eating up more of the available space. This will impact the economics of the development and of the overall area.

Third: on the staging, you mentioned moving layover tracks onto what would eventually be the West Station footprint in Phase 2, then moving them up into their final resting place. I would ask that you look at moving them to their final place at the beginning of the project, to save money. This might complicate construction phasing, I recognize; I'd suggest that you talk to the MBTA about running those trains instead of sitting in a yard, to help get us towards a true regional rail vision.

Fourth: If a West Station with north/south connections, especially for transit, bikes, and pedestrians isn't there, I don't imagine people wanting to bike through a big empty lot, or over a railyard. If there are no buildings, and no development, it won't be a place. It will take a long time to fill that development, and until then, I don't see this area as a friendly environment for people. It makes sense that if you have West Station, it will provide a hub for development: people will see activity in the area. The Comm Ave is already anchored with ongoing development, so there are people there and ready to jumpstart the development process. Please, go back and look at north/south transit connections, which will provide opportunities and connections for people in and around the neighborhood.

Finally, proceeding with one of the options that leaves the highway at-grade will have a great environmental impact for emissions. Electric vehicles are coming, but until then, cars are still gas and trucks are still diesel. Going up-and-down hills means extra emissions from these massive vehicles, which could be coasting at cruising speed instead.

**C: Alana Olsen, Office of Councilor Essaibi-George:** I live on Windem Street, and I lived on Franklin Street when this project started. I have been standing in the back of the room going between two strong emotions: first, I am incredibly pissed that I've been lied to for three years. This is ridiculous. The second is bewilderment: I am confounded by how we have managed to turn a transformative project to one that moves the Turnpike closer to where we live, and opens up land for Harvard with no guarantees of getting anything back. And Nate, please, don't give me any quips about how this is in the DEIR. We're talking about this because these things didn't make it into the final plan. I'm just so floored. Public transportation is important to me. I don't own a car. West Station, just as a value statement about our transportation priorities, would be

important. But it is also important as mitigation: this project puts trains running 9' behind property line, and then a highway. 2040 is ridiculous. I'm sorry, I'm just really mad.

We should be talking about how we're decking over the layover space and doing air-rights development in order to sew together the neighborhood. These conversations got swallowed up by us begging you not to build another highway. I feel like I've been going to these meetings for so long. The Governor Patrick announcement was my 25<sup>th</sup> birthday, and here I am feeling years later like you guys are recycling Powerpoints: you have the same slides at the beginning and end as you have for three years. It's clear that the people in this room don't matter to the Governor and to MassDOT as much as Harvard does. I want to thank you, my neighbors, for going to these meetings—I'm glad you're all emotionally secure right now because I am a mess. I would honestly rather us just replace the viaduct and leave where it is, and then have Harvard beg the state to let them redevelop those 80 acres. 80 acres! That's huge, that's the size of Charlestown. They get to build Charlestown, and you can't even promise us just one train station? These intersections are already failing, and you can't rebuild those? My neighborhood deserves attention on this. Fred talked about what happened to this community a generation ago; this is insulting. Seriously Nate, don't quip at me, I'll be very upset with you if you do. This is personal, I know. I hope that everyone will join me to share their disappointment – this is a travesty and should not be allowed to happen. Make Harvard beg. I get to be more important than Harvard.

**C: Tom Nally, *A Better City*:** I am pleased to see the detailed analyses in this document; it is a good starting point for our understanding and for our comments. I will say, though, that there is a lot in this document to absorb in 45 days and then produce intelligent and useful comments. As we review, we expect that we will highlight areas that will require additional analysis, before a final preferred alternative is selected. At this point in our review, we can say that Phase 1 should include at least an interim West Station, similar to Yawkey Station, to provide improved transit service for the neighborhoods in the near-term, to provide a first step in the development, and to build the foundation for future bus and rail operations. I am also pleased to see that most of our at-grade recommendations included in this document—not quite everything, but most.

The at-grade option produces the lowest initial construction cost as well as a lower lifecycle cost: it is simply cheaper to maintain a highway at-grade than on a viaduct. I hope that you can take those savings and invest in other elements of the project, like West Station and other improvements.<sup>9</sup> The construction sequence that we proposed is much simpler than the HV

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<sup>9</sup> As has been discussed elsewhere in the course of this project including Chris Calnan's presentation in this meeting, 'savings' generated in one portion of the job cannot necessarily be repurposed elsewhere within the job, particularly for toll-generated revenue, which can only be used for toll highway elements.

variation. Putting all of the transportation elements at-grade, where the cross-section will allow for columns, means that decks can be built at a level where the highway viaduct would otherwise be. Where there is enough space to put in air-rights columns, it should be done.

In the eastern end of the throat, near the BU Bridge, the at-grade structure can be covered over with decking—this is not shown in the DEIR, and we have proposed it. This will provide a better connection for pedestrians and bikes, where the structures can be placed. At eastern end, we suggested replacing the rail bridge over Soldiers Field Road to reallocate space, provide for a more generous Paul Dudley White Path, and to open up more space around the BU Bridge.

As others have suggested tonight, a flat and straight Turnpike will be safer for motorists, and for trucks, it means that no up-and-down movements are there to generate pollution and noise. Without a highway viaduct over the throat, we can provide a much better visual connection to the river, and it is important to make those anywhere we can. This will be critical in the future, and the at-grade option is further compatible with improvements others have suggested along the river; I would ask you to explore those further. Thank you.

**C: Donny Dailey, *MassDOT Legislative Affairs*:** Representative Honan, thank you for coming; if you would like to say a few words, please feel free.

**C: Representative Kevin Honan, 17<sup>th</sup> Suffolk:** Thank you all again for coming. I know my colleagues Mr. Moran and Mr. Brownsberger already spoke, and I'm sure that I share their concerns about traffic, proposed development, and the need for West Station. I look forward to joining them and you all in advocating for this project.

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Thank you all. We'll move on now to Task Force members.

**C: Harry Mattison:** Thanks to all of you for coming, everything you've said is fantastic. Please, send your comments in—this handout has the contact information for those of us who have been working on this project and trying to convince MassDOT to do this. Even if it's only three sentences long, we need to get everything that you said into writing.

Before I offer my comments: I encourage you all to Google "Massachusetts Environmental Justice." The results of that search will touch on lots of this. As you heard from Fred's history, and from Alana and others, we are all breathing dirty air, and suffering from noise pollution, from the highway. When our kids say "why is that bike white?" and we have to say "someone died", it's because we've been dealing with this for 50 years. Anyone who wants to take the highway to get everywhere else in Boston drives our neighborhood streets. And they're proposing

a noise wall, and some space for bikes on the side of five-lane roads. That's not safe, and those are dangerous intersections. There is nowhere in Boston with that many 4-5 lane roads clustered together. The Mass Ave Connector, Melnea Cass Boulevard, Malcolm X Boulevard, these are all big, nasty streets, and that's what they want to build here, because transit is not given its fair share.

Regarding north/south bus routes: in their meetings, Harvard always says that the LMA (Longwood Medical Area) and Allston are connected—but that's only if you can get there safely. The DEIR says “sorry, we're not doing it”, and I can't figure out why. Harvard has been talking about West Station for 10 years, but I guess we're not doing it. Imagine Boston 2030 has West Station, and understands that it is a multimodal transit hub, with connections north, south, east, and west. Alex, when you are reviewing this document, please understand: they sandbagged the whole review of the station. They say that it will be “good for people who live within a quarter-mile”. If that's your understanding, then you have missed everything that has been said about how transit needs to connect to transit. You need to study to try to make it work, not to show why it can't. They say that it's empty, so no one will use the station. Please, all of you, keep being involved, send in your comments and include the need for safe streets and how transit is essential. Hopefully we'll come back to see something a whole lot better, otherwise Alana will be absolutely right.

**C: Bob Sloane, *WalkBoston*:** Wendy is in India at the moment, so I'm here speaking on behalf of WalkBoston. First, I'm afraid that I have to humiliate Fred, because he's alleged he's the oldest person in the room. That is certainly me, and that is also why I asked for 60 days to review this document. But I only got 45, and I'm having a great deal of trouble wading through the document. It has been a real burden. Even so, I have found one thing in addition to the concerns about West Station. The pedestrian access in this area will focus on West Station, and that is not realized in here. We know already that you can't walk here right now: big and not walkable means that there is a need for West Station and for bus service. I did a test to see what bus service might be added. In the document, this may be that the one thing that's missing and should be added back in: a north/south bus route was talked about many times in the Task Force, running from Harvard Square to the LMA via West Station, and maybe beyond—Porter Square, Roxbury, Dorchester. But it has to go through this area, specifically on Malvern Street. As I understand it, BU has agreed that this is the obvious place. But this study, as I read it, does not include that bridge from Malvern into the northern network of streets: it's not in any variation, and not even in 2040. If there is no bridge, there is no bus service. If my understanding is correct, this should be corrected in the document—because otherwise north/south bus service is left out.

**C: Galen Mook:** I won't read every page of this, don't worry. This 1,400 page printout represents the past 3 years of Task Force minutes. This is the time we spent together, printed out. Thanks, Nate, for taking such detailed notes. This is 1,400 pages of community comments, elected officials, with not much from Harvard or BU although they were present for all of the process. Don't worry, I'll collect this before I go, I'm not leaving it with you.

I think that this would be a good start for our MEPA comments, to have all documentation of all the comments that we've been trying to get across. At last week's Task Force meeting, when you unveiled you were going to go with the DEIR plan, Mike said "every comment has equal weight." So, let's review the comments, and where things have changed. I made a searchable .pdf of all the comments; you can search for West Station. It first appears on April 14, 2014. All of this work we've been doing—all the meetings, all the conversations... I'm wondering where it will lead, because I know it hasn't led to this DEIR. I don't know how else to express everything that we've said, so I'll leave as a visual representation of the tome of work the community has put in.

I can't really add more today, or even once I digest the DEIR, than what has already been expressed. I will say thanks to the community that is here—it is very encouraging to see everyone here. As Jason said, we will have seven information sessions hosted by ABCDC in January. If you want help digesting the document, talk to Jason, and get to one of those workshops: we'll be bouncing all around Allston and Brighton, at libraries and coffee shops. These will be an opportunity to write your own comment letters, in your own handwriting. All the thoughts you've shared tonight can be documented for MEPA.

On the subject of bike infrastructure: what Nate keeps referring to on Cambridge Street will only be slightly improved from current because the on- and off-ramps are only slightly further away. If you want to bike from the Pizzeria Regina to the river, you will cross a: 4-lane intersection, a 4-lane intersection, a 4-lane intersection, a 4-lane intersection, a 5-lane intersection, and a 5-lane intersection. If you're at Ashford Street, and want to get to the river, you'll have to cross: a 4-lane intersection, a 5-lane intersection, a 5-lane intersection, a 4-lane intersection, and a 5-lane intersection. This is not the off-street, multi-use pathway that we've been talking about since the bike ride with Mike O'Dowd.

You claim that West Station will only have a ridership of 250 people per day—I mean, do you all believe that? This is the traffic data they're using, which will people's need to have cars, which is what is necessitating the wide intersections. 250 people? If you had traffic-modeled a system with our intentions: connecting north/south and east/west, I imagine 250 people would take the first train. There are serious flaws with what I've been seeing.

You gave us four days to review this document since the Task Force meeting. There is a discrepancy between these 1,400 pages and the 45-day comment period. I also want to say, without West Station, you cannot have transit-oriented development. I saw lots of developers in the room today—most have left because we've gone so long—proving that Allston-Brighton is one of the 'hot' neighborhoods. We are in a boom that has never been seen before. BPDA gives these wonderful presentations about what New Balance, Harvard, and St. Gabriel's will do, all because we have such great transit. You cannot have transit-oriented development without transit. So, we won't be able to handle development, so we're going to have to stop the development. This should scare the city and the state: that means a real loss of tax income. We have 80 acres of abandoned railyards, tractor trailers, etc. and I agree that they should be redeveloped, but not at the cost of inundating the neighborhood with congestion that would paralyze us with overburdened streets. Thank you Jim [Gillooly, Boston Transportation Department] for coming: my plea to you and the city is that if you want that development, you have to focus on the transit side of the TOD first. We cannot wait 25 years down the line, to maybe have a 250 people per day Commuter Rail stop. I hope that that's getting through in this process.

To Senator Brownsberger: thank you for all your participation and your reminder of the bigger picture. This is a conversation that goes well beyond the box, and I 100% agree that that conversation is not about this parcel, which Harvard will benefit from. But this is a crucial step in the whole interconnected network; if we can't get this parcel as a sign of the policies that we need MassDOT and the Governor to take, we won't have any faith to go on to move forward, and we will stall on this project. It would be a real roadblock, a real wall, if we only "do what we can with a few buses." We want connections from Porter to Allston to the LMA, from Worcester to Kendall Square...that north/south connections represents more than this one project, but if we allow the MassDOT Board to build only the highway, we buying into the death of the policy that could bring us urban rail. I'm not willing to accept "it's a hard conversation, so let's give this project a pass." This is the step we need to take, so let's do it. That's why we were on the platform in 2014. The former governor—but the current mayor—told us to keep fighting. I do not begrudge the project team because they are under constraints. You are under a directive to make sure that the freeway doesn't fall down. So I implore my elected officials, the City of Boston, Harvard University, to help change that directive on a policy level, so that this is not just a freeway project—and that's quoting Marty Walsh, there. You, the team, don't set policy. But you, the public, do. This is the time. We have 45 days to make this message heard—not to the project team, but to the Governor and the Board, that this is what we're asking for, what we need, and our vision.

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** We are through the list. Assuming no one else wants to speak... all right. There are more meetings to be had: Brookline, Cambridge, and the Task Force working sessions, as well as Jason's workshops. Thank you all for coming. Good night everyone.

## Next Steps

A second public meeting to introduce the DEIR will be hosted by the Brookline Transportation Board on December 12 at 7:00PM. The location for this meeting was originally scheduled to be Brookline Town Hall, but was moved to the Pierce School Auditorium at the Town's direction. The Pierce School is located at 50 School Street in Brookline. The final public meeting of the DEIR comment period is scheduled for January 3, 2018, at the Morse School (40 Granite Street) in Cambridge, with a pre-advertised snow-date of January 10, 2018.

# Appendix 1: Meeting Attendees

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Tony	Arias	
Joe	Beggan	Harvard University
John	Bowman	Brookline Bicycle Advisory Committee
Brandon	Bowser	
William	Brownsberger	State Senate
Juanica	Buchanan	
Nate	Cabral-Curtis	Howard Stein Hudson
Chris	Calnan	TetraTech
James	Capobianca	
Annie	Carlson	
Michelle	Castro	
E.	Cecook	
Jim	Cerbone	MassDOT Environmental Services
I	Crid	
Donny	Dailey	MassDOT Legislative Affairs
Henrietta	Davis	
Michael	Deare	
Jake	Dempsey	
Edna	dePaula	
Jason	Desrosier	Allston/Brighton CDC
Jeff	Dietrich	Howard Stein Hudson
Anthony	D'Isidoro	Allston Civic Association
Stacey	Donahoe	MassDOT
Jay	Doyle	
Courtney	Dwyer	MassDOT District 6
Scott	Englander	Brookline Transportation Board

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Hilary	Feldman	
Paola	Ferrer	
Jim	Gillooly	Boston Transportation Department
Arcady	Goldmints-Orlov	TransitMatters
David-Marc	Goldstein	TMM, AC
Laura	Gray	
Patrick	Greenwell	TransitMatters
Karl	Haglund	Department of Conservation and Recreation
Matthew	Harless	
Kevin	Honan	Massachusetts House of Representatives
Sarah	Hosman	
Bruce	Houghton	Houghton Chemical
Ed	Ionata	TetraTech
Mike	Jezenicki	BRA
Louise	Johnson	
Kathleen	Keen	VHB
Gregory	Kelly	
Cliff	Kensington	
Jordan	Kimmel	
David	Kroop	
John	Kyper	Sierra Club
Liz	Leary	Boston University
Margarita	Lebron	
Kimberly	Lehan	
Alexandra	Levening	CRA
Andrew	Lew	
Brighton	Lew	

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
David	Lew	
Tom	Lew	
Ethan	Long	
Oscar	Lopez Jr.	Office of Representative Honan
Anne	Lusk	Harvard School of Public Health
Sydney	Maes	
Christine	Marini	Boston Police Department - District 14
Harry	Mattison	Allston Resident / Charles River Conservancy
Hugh	Mattison	TMMS Brookline
Jeff	Maxtutis	AECOM
Kevin	McCloughlin	Office of Councilor Ciommo
Walter	McDonald	
Colleen	McGuire	
Michelle	Meiser	
Ken	Miller	Federal Highway Administration
Jules	Milner-Brage	
Jessica	Mink	Boston Bikes Advisory Group, Mass Paths.net
Galen	Mook	
Mike	Moran	Massachusetts House of Representatives
Tom	Nally	A Better City
Mike	O'Dowd	MassDOT Project Manager
Alana	Olsen	Office of Councilor Essaibi-George
Warren	O'Reilly	Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services
Dave	Pantalone	Climate Action Brookline
Nick	Pesiridis	Boston Liquors
Bob	Pessek	Allston Civic Association
John	Pusatin	

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Richard	Rogers	
Hazel	Ryerson	
Fred	Salvucci	MIT
Rani	Schloss	
Jacob	Seib	
Willow	Shetler	
John	Shields	Charles River Alliance
Jacob	Simmons	City Realty
Bob	Sloane	WalkBoston
Mike	Small	
Skip	Smallridge	
Karen	Smith	
Alex	Strysky	MEPA Office
Lisa	Tran	resident, HCC (ABCDC)
Emily	Welden	Allston Brighton CDC
Eliott	Wiener	
Tracy	Wu	
Thalia	Zeduk	
William	Zimroh	
Cathy	Zusy	Cambridge Neighborhood Association