



Ruthanne Fuller
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General Manager Philip Eng
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
10 Park Plaza, Suite 3510
Boston, MA 02116

Dear General Manager Eng:

I am writing to urge the MBTA to apply for the USDOT All Stations Accessibility Program (ASAP) Grant for the three Newton Commuter Rail stations in FY 2024, consistent with the recent Notice of Funding Opportunity published on December 1, 2023.

In the first round of ASAP funding, the MBTA ambitiously applied both for the Newton projects and for Symphony Station, and was fortunately successful in securing funding for Symphony.

The Newton Stations are currently approaching final design, and we are eager to see progress on the construction of these long-awaited investments that will unlock transformative, accessible, regional rail as well as accessible and more frequent service in Newton. We recommend that the MBTA should seek offsetting federal funding for these critical station improvements (elevators and double sided platforms) to supplement federal money secured by Rep. Auchincloss and the recent Transportation Bond Bill authorization voted by the State Legislature with the leadership of Senator Creem and Representative Khan.

As your team well knows, federal grants are critical to the MBTA's ambitious capital program. We anticipate that the MBTA will put forward the best candidate projects for every funding opportunity, and submit that the Newton stations should be featured in the MBTA's next application given that they were in the previous ASAP application and the needs of the 3 Newton stations (Newtonville, West Newton, and Auburndale) are so critical. For example, these three commuter rail stations are the only ones in the entire system with platforms on only one side.

The recent Capital Needs Assessment and Inventory does an admirable job in documenting the scale and scope of the MBTA's future investments. As the City of Newton has made clear, we support your focus on safety and reliability.

We also believe that overdue investments to address historic injustice deserve priority consideration, and that accordingly **the Newton stations should be in both the next Capital Investment Plan and in the ASAP funding application** when it is submitted in January 2024.

Housing and Transportation are complementary. We appreciate that among the Governor's highest priorities is solving our housing crisis. Newton has, and will continue to advance policies to increase housing opportunities proximate to MBTA stations, including the first meaningful changes to our zoning ordinance in seventy years. On Monday, Dec. 5, the City Council by a huge majority voted to approve by right zoning compliant with the MBTA Communities Act near all three commuter rail stations (as well as other village centers). A substantial amount of this new housing will be accessible to people with disabilities, which of course complements another key rationale

for improvements to the Newton stations. (All three commuter rail stations require traversing more than 50 steps to get to the platform.)

The City of Newton and our State and Federal delegations are available to be of any support you may require in this important work.

Thank you for your work to get the MBTA to where it needs to be, to the Newton stations project team, and to your staff who are assiduous in securing grant funding to support capital programs.

We value your leadership and partnership, and are available to be of any assistance your team may require in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,



Mayor Ruthanne Fuller
City of Newton

Cc: Governor Maura Healey
Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll
U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren
U.S. Senator Ed Markey
U.S. Representative Jake Auchincloss
State Senator Cynthia Creem
State Representative Kay Khan
State Representative Ruth Balser
State Representative John Lawn
Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary of Transportation
Quentin Palfrey, Director of Federal Funds and Infrastructure
Newton City Council