



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

Dear General Manager Eng:

We are 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.

Since 2015 both the City Council and our Zoning Board of Appeals have approved over 800 housing units in the three north-side villages served by the Worcester line through our Special Permit process or through the 40B program. An additional 307 units in Newtonville will be before the ZBA on Jan 10, 2024. The case was (and is) made that all these units are transit oriented. While the Worcester line does stop at the three Newton stations, and housing units are within walking distance of these stations – service in Newton is limited because of the lack of accessibility and the lack of access to both tracks. In the City Council’s recent submission under the MBTA Communities Act – we have shown our faith in the future of these stations by including all three north-side villages (Auburndale, West Newton, and Newtonville) in our submission to the Commonwealth in response to our responsibilities in Newton.

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.

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. As noted above 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.

In addition, we await the next stage of design for these stations to discuss these design plans. We met with representatives of your staff several years ago. We were told we would see the 75%-100% plans last spring and then later, this fall. Our constituents anxiously await this meeting with great excitement.

We would welcome your visit to Newton to have a look at the three stations. Please let us know when you are able to visit us.

Sincerely,

Marc Laredo, President  
David Kalis, Vice President  
John Oliver, Councilor-at-Large, Ward 1  
Susan Albright, Councilor-at-Large, Ward 2  
David Micley, Ward Councilor, Ward 2  
Tarik Lucas, Councilor-at-Large, Ward 2  
Andrea Kelley, Councilor-at-Large, Ward 3  
Pamela Wright, Councilor-at-Large, Ward 3  
Julia Malakie, Ward Councilor, Ward 3  
Joshua Krintzman, Councilor-at-Large, Ward 4  
Andreae Downs, Councilor-at-Large, Ward 5  
Bill Humphrey, Ward Councilor, Ward 5  
Alan Lobovits, Councilor-at-Large, Ward 6  
Vicki Danberg, Councilor-at-Large, Ward 6  
Becky Grossman, Councilor-at-Large, Ward 7  
Rick Lipof, Councilor-at-Large, Ward 8  
Stephen C. Farrell, Ward Councilor, Ward 8

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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 Balseer  
State Representative John Lawn  
Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary of Transportation Quentin Palfrey, Director of Federal Funds and  
Mayor Ruthanne Fuller