

We, *Transportation for Massachusetts, Alternatives for Community & Environment, Bikes Not Bombs, Boston Cyclists Union, Liveable Streets Alliance, TransitMatters, Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition, and New England Community Project* believe that the unsafe conditions on Blue Hill Avenue must be addressed as soon as possible.

Safety improvements must serve everyone who uses the corridor, not only people in cars, but also bus riders, cyclists, pedestrians, people with disabilities, and other micromobility users. We urge the City of Boston and the MBTA to prioritize safety, accessibility, and transportation equity in their approach. The needs of people who rely on buses must not be treated as a last priority.

Improving bus service and pursuing an Orange Line extension are not mutually exclusive. We support the Commonwealth and local government in identifying and securing the resources necessary to fund a rail extension in the future. In the meantime, however, there is an immediate need to improve bus service and make the corridor safer and more accessible. Better bus service can help move more people efficiently today, while complementing rail service if and when an Orange Line extension is built in the future.

Affordability is an integral part of this conversation. Not everyone has access to a car, and many people rely on the bus as their primary means of transportation. Transportation investments should recognize and respond to these realities. We must ensure that the City provides meaningful housing support to address displacement and gentrification for existing residents who may experience housing instability or displacement as transportation and infrastructure changes move forward along the corridor, we

We expect the project team to establish a community-informed construction mitigation strategy before construction begins while prioritizing local contractors for construction work. Construction impacts should be anticipated and addressed in ways that minimize disruption to residents, workers, riders, and local businesses. In particular, measures should support local businesses during construction, including establishing a Disruption Impact Fund to help businesses manage the economic impacts of prolonged construction and reduced access or visibility.

We want community members to have access to clear, accurate information about the real options, costs, benefits, and trade-offs under consideration, including any changes to MBTA bus service during construction. We call on the City of Boston and the MBTA to continue meaningful and sustained dialogue, both in person and virtually, with community members and advocates throughout this process.

Finally, we do **not** support returning federal transportation dollars. These resources represent an important opportunity to make needed safety, accessibility, and transportation improvements, and we urge decision-makers to work collaboratively to ensure the available funding benefits the community.

We are united in calling for a transportation approach that makes the corridor safer, more accessible, more affordable, and more equitable for everyone who depends on it now and in the future.

