



# Town of Brookline

## Massachusetts

### Department of Public Works

#### Engineering & Transportation Division

TRANSPORTATION BOARD  
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October 29, 2020

Stephanie Pollack  
Secretary & Chief Executive Officer  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
Ten Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116-3973

Dear Secretary Pollack:

The Town of Brookline appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Allston I-90 Interchange Improvement project as presented at the virtual MassDOT Public Information Meeting on October 20, 2020. In consultation with Gustaaf Driessen, the Transportation Board liaison to the project, the Transportation Board has requested that I reiterate and reaffirm their previously communicated support of the following design elements of the project, as they promise to fulfill the Town's goals of creating a healthy and sustainable transportation system that promotes and prioritizes alternative modes:

Modified All At-Grade Option best meets the stated project purpose to address roadway deficiencies and safety concerns, and the stated project need to address the multimodal deficiencies within the broader transportation system. We concur with the Select Board's Climate Action Committee that the Modified All At-Grade Option provides the following additional climate benefits including: 1) the flattened and straightened highway will yield an overall reduction in vehicles emissions; 2) this option reduces the use of materials such as steel and concrete which, when manufactured create significant climate related impacts; 3) the potential for a living river bank brings storm water management and ecosystem benefits.

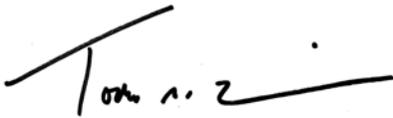
North-South Connections via Malvern, Babcock, and Agganis Way will provide an important travel link between North Brookline, Allston, and the New District. The crossing at Malvern should allow bus transit access to and egress from West Station, the proposed commuter rail station on the Boston to Worcester line. A well-designed, true roadway would also allow pedestrians and bicyclists to more conveniently reach the Station from the south, as well as the commercial and residential areas on both sides of the Station and beyond. Allowing vehicles other

than buses and shuttles to use the roadway could have substantial traffic consequences in North Brookline and around Boston University, however, so at this time we do not favor allowing all-vehicle access. Babcock Street and Agganis Way will compliment this access with important pedestrian, bicycle, and micro-mobility connections. All three of these connections should be part of phase 1 of construction, and not delayed to future years, to ensure the project provides the best multi-modal transportation benefits to the abutting communities to achieve both the Town's and the Commonwealth's climate goals around greenhouse gas emission reductions from the Transportation sector.

West Station will provide improved commuter rail access to other stations to the east and west. It could also create a new light rail connection to Kendall Square in Cambridge and to North Station via the "Grand Junction" line. Similarly, the construction of West Station should be part of phase 1 of construction, and not delayed to future years, to ensure the project provides the best multi-modal transportation benefits to the abutting communities to achieve both the Town's and the Commonwealth's climate goals around greenhouse gas emission reductions from the Transportation sector.

We appreciate you taking the time to consider these comments and we strongly urge MassDOT to move beyond the Highway outlook of this project and toward implementing a truly multi-modal approach that priorities and promotes alternative modes, seeks to induce mode shift away from single occupant vehicles, and works toward achieving the Governor's ambitious climate goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Warmest Regards,



Todd M. Kirrane  
Transportation Administrator  
Town of Brookline

CC: Honorable Cynthia Creem, Ed Coppinger, Nika Elugardo, Michael Moran, Thomas Vitolo  
Brookline Select Board  
Brookline Transportation Board  
Melvin Kleckner, Town Administrator  
Erin Chute Gallentine, Commissioner – Department of Public Works  
Alison Steinfeld, Director – Department of Planning & Community Development  
Kara Brewton, Director – Economic Development  
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Gustaaf C.M. Driessen, PE