



Maura Healey, Governor
Kimberley Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor
Monica Tibbitts-Nutt, Secretary & CEO
Phillip Eng, General Manager & CEO



Mark Ferroni
Associate Administrator for Planning and Environment
Federal Transit Administration
United States Department of Transportation –East Building
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

December 3, 2024

RE: Request to Enter the Small Starts Project Development Phase for the Blue Hill Avenue Transit Action Plan

Dear Administrator Ferroni,

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) is pleased to submit this letter requesting entry into the Project Development phase of the Small Starts program for the Blue Hill Avenue Transit Action Plan. Entrance into Project Delivery will help advance this project and deliver critical transit and safety benefits for the corridor's thousands of daily users. The requirements for completing Project Development are understood by the MBTA and our partners. The MBTA will act as the lead agency, responsible for completing the requirements in a timely manner as described in the Federal Transit Administration's Final Interim Policy Guidance for the Capital Investment Grant Program. This letter and attachments represent the documentation required to request entry as per the enabling legislation.

Sponsors and Partners

The Project is sponsored by the MBTA. The MBTA will deliver the project in partnership with the City of Boston which owns the right of way on which the facility will operate. MassDOT and the Department of Conservation and Recreation will serve as key project partners, as vehicles will operate and/or interact with key roadways or facilities owned by each entity.

Project Management and Key Staff

- Ryan Coholan, Chief Operating Officer, MBTA
- Wes Edwards, Deputy Chief of Operations Planning Scheduling and Strategy, MBTA
- Jascha Franklin Hodge, Chief of Streets, City of Boston
- Vineet Gupta, Director of Transportation Policy and Planning, City of Boston

Description of Corridor

This three-mile long segment of Blue Hill Avenue is situated midway between two MBTA heavy rail rapid transit lines. This corridor is served by more than 1,250 MBTA buses each day across nine routes. The primary benefits—dramatically improved safety, access, speed, and reliability—will accrue to 40,000+ existing daily bus riders. It provides significant transportation connectivity to other transit

lines, including MBTA's Commuter Rail Line and Mattapan High Speed Line, and connects the commercial nodes of Grove Hall in the north, Mattapan Square to the south, and residential and commercial uses in between, including two of the City's oldest and most significant parks.

Current Levels of Transit Service

The following table highlights the geography and weekday service characteristics of the nine (9) bus routes that serve within the three-mile corridor area:

Route	Approx Service Extents within Project Area	Weekday Service Metrics			
		Span of Service	Peak Headway	Off-Peak Headway	Latest Ridership
14	Northern third of corridor	6:00a - 8:00p	30 min	45 min	1,200
16	Franklin Park area	4:30a - 1:30a	15 min	20 min	6,800
19	Grove Hall area (northern stops)	6:00a - 7:30p	15 min	30 min	2,900
22	Middle third of corridor	5:00a - 1:00a	6 - 8 min	20 min	8,200
23	Grove Hall area (northern stops)	5:00a - 1:00a	6 - 8 min	20 min	11,800
28	Full corridor	4:00a - 1:30p	6 - 8 min	20 min	11,800
29	Southern 80% of corridor	6:30a - 12:30a	40 min	75 min	1,200
31	Southern half of corridor	4:45a - 1:00a	10 min	15 min	3,300
45	Franklin Park area	5:15a - 1:00a	15 - 20 min	30 min	1,900

Purpose and Need

40,000 bus riders travel the Project corridor each day. During the peak hours, more than half of the people on Blue Hill Ave are riding the bus. These riders are subject to substantial travel time variability and delay due to the high motor vehicle traffic on the roadway. Due to frequent double parking the length of the corridor, passengers with mobility disabilities are often unable to make use of accessibility features like the wheelchair ramps. The existing corridor is exceptionally dangerous for all users: along the project corridor, there have been three fatal collisions between 2015-2020, with a non-fatal crash reported once every 2.5 days across all modes. Vulnerable road users experience non-fatal collisions once every 11 days. These safety and mobility challenges directly impact the Project corridor's two Environmental Justice communities.

Proposed Project

This Project will repurpose Blue Hill Avenue's existing wide, concrete median island into a pair of exclusive, center-running bus lanes and will redesign Mattapan Square, the corridor's southern

terminus, to better accommodate bus movements in and out of the Mattapan Red Line light rail station. The Project will also include improved pedestrian refuges, protected bicycle lanes, signal changes, and place-making elements. Improvements will support the long-term vitality of the corridor, leveraging city-led economic development initiatives and two Opportunity Zones as identified through the Massachusetts Opportunity Zone Map. The Project has undergone several years of community outreach and design development, leveraging a variety of event types and engagement formats. The Project anticipates achieving the 15% design milestone by the close of 2024. The project scope elements are included in this below:

- Design and Environmental Review
- Center-running dedicated bus lanes
- Nine to twelve pairs of fully-accessible median bus stop platforms
- Parking protected curbside bike lanes
- Redesign of Mattapan Square intersection
- Sidewalk and accessibility improvements
- Roadway repair and repaving
- Updated traffic signals and street lighting
- Enhanced public realm and green infrastructure

Previous Studies

The Project has undergone several years of community outreach and design development. The project is consistent with the needs identified in the following plans: [City of Boston: Go Boston 2030](#), [Imagine Boston 2030](#), [MBTA Bus Network Redesign](#), [MBTA Transit Priority Vision](#), [City of Boston: Plan Mattapan](#), Franklin Park Action [Plan](#), [Cummins Highway Redesign](#) (construction ongoing), Fairmount-Indigo Planning Initiative, [PLAN Mattapan](#).

Cost Estimate

Project Development Cost

The Project development through final design is anticipated to cost approximately \$ 16,040,000.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Professional Services</i>	<i>\$ 13,240,000</i>
<i>Project Administration</i>	<i>\$ 2,800,000</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$ 16,040,000</i>

Total Project Cost Estimate

The Project is anticipated to cost approximately \$ 152,600,000 to design and construct (inclusive of

the project development costs noted above). This estimate is based on pre-15% design and is expected to evolve as the project design advances.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Professional Services</i>	\$ 13,240,000
<i>Construction</i>	\$ 120,370,000
<i>Field Inspection</i>	\$ 1,220,000
<i>Force Account</i>	\$ 1,140,000
<i>Project Administration</i>	\$ 2,800,000
<i>Project Contingency (10%)</i>	\$ 13,880,000
<i>Total</i>	\$ 152,650,000

Project Funding

Currently, \$44,224,000 is secured for project development and construction of this Project. In 2021, this Project was awarded \$15,000,000 from the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program. To support this award, local sources were confirmed as part of the RAISE grant obligation process. Local share from the MBTA and the City of Boston are committed as identified below:

Funding Source	Amount
FTA RAISE (2021)	\$ 15,000,000
MBTA (Local)	\$ 11,000,000
City of Boston (Local)	\$ 18,224,000
Total	\$ 44,224,000

Key Milestone Timeline

The Project has already undertaken a multi-year community engagement and design process and will reach the 15% design milestone by December 30, 2024. The project secured NEPA clearance in 2022 and obligated the RAISE grant in 2024. With the 15% design milestone achieved later in 2024, the project team will work with the MPO to enter the project design into the long-range transportation plan. There is no design alternative being advanced; for the purposes of this application, the locally preferred alternative is equivalent to the 15% design package. The Project

will continue to progress to the 30% milestone while working with the FTA on the Small Starts project development milestones. Dates for key milestones are as follows:

Key Milestone	Target date
NEPA Clearance	November 17, 2022 (Actual)
Selection of Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)	December 30, 2024
Adoption of LPA in Long Range Transportation Plan	June 30, 2025
Completion of activities required for project rating	July 31, 2025
Receipt of construction grant agreement from FTA	June 1, 2026
Start of revenue service	May 31, 2029

This Project is an important part of the Commonwealth's efforts to provide safe, effective, and accessible public transportation for the people of Massachusetts and will encourage ridership to support our aggressive climate goals. I ask that you give this application your fair and full consideration.

DocuSigned by:


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Phillip Eng
General Manager and CEO
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

Fig. 1 Blue Hill Ave Transit Corridor activity centers



Fig. 2 Blue Hill Ave at Walk Hill St looking south (existing conditions)



Fig 3. Blue Hill Ave at Walk Hill looking south (15% Concept)

