



City of Boston
Mayor Martin J. Walsh

August 26, 2020

To: South Boston Seaport Residents, Businesses, and Community Stakeholders
Subject: South Boston Seaport Strategic Transit Plan Draft Recommendations

Dear South Boston Seaport Residents, Businesses, and Community Stakeholders,

In recent days, Massport transmitted a written email request to many business organizations in and around the South Boston Seaport. Massport asked businesses to contact the Boston Planning & Development Agency (“BPDA”) to express objections to draft recommendations for short-term transit improvements that have been developed alongside the community as part of the ongoing South Boston Seaport Strategic Transit Plan (“the Plan”); these recommendations were recently released for review and comment.

The BPDA and City of Boston ask recipients of that outreach from Massport, and all interested stakeholders, to consider the following points about how the draft transit recommendations and the study as a whole have been developed and what they seek to accomplish for the South Boston Seaport and the City:

- 1) The Plan has focused on bus priority while also allowing trucks to use bus lanes, as agreed to by the MBTA.** By far the most advanced work to date has focused on exploring the design of bus lanes in the Summer Street corridor. At the time that Massport raised their objections to the Plan recommendations, there was disagreement between the MBTA and Massport on the use of the Summer Street lanes by trucks. However, since then the relevant agencies have agreed to work out how trucks can utilize potential future Summer Street corridor bus lanes. This will result in improved freight movement within the Seaport.
- 2) Massport has been involved in the development of the Draft Plan Recommendations since the inception of, and throughout, the planning process.** The need for a more robust and focused effort to improve transit service, including public and private bus service, the Silver Line, and ferry service, was agreed upon by all parties as a follow up to the South Boston Waterfront Sustainable Transportation Plan. These parties include Massport, MassDOT, MBTA, the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority, and the City of Boston, along with the BPDA--the same parties who are currently partners in the development of



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the South Boston Seaport Strategic Transit Plan. All of these agencies have been involved since the drafting of the scope of work for the Plan; all have been involved in development of the Draft Transit Plan recommendations through recurring inter-agency working sessions and other ongoing communication. This Plan also has been coordinated with the ongoing Massport/MBTA-led Silver Line Capacity Study that has been sharing data and assumptions.

Massport has been involved in every step of the process, including helping to develop and review draft Plan recommendations. For many months the BPDA has been working to engage partners, stakeholders and the community to develop the draft Plan recommendations and harmonize competing interests. It should be noted that analysis of the draft plan recommendations has also included evaluation of their impacts on other modes of travel, including general traffic and freight movement.

3) Massport has added significant new development and density on its own land for years. Since the early 1990s, Massport has successfully planned, permitted and constructed over 7.4 million square feet of new non-port related development in the South Boston Seaport district. This includes residential, office, hotel and other commercial uses. With this development and density and pressure on transportation infrastructure, Massport has generated significant revenue and is therefore in a position to support mobility solutions and improvements. Massport needs to be holistic and help create real solutions that serve the needs of the entire South Boston Seaport community and all users (residents, retail shoppers, tourists, conventioners, restaurant patrons, commercial office and industrial and R&D workers) and all modes [mass transit, cars, pedestrian, bikes, and the trucks that also serve the BPDA's tenants at the Raymond L. Flynn Marine Park (RLFMP)].

4) We care about all modes and all users of the transportation network including trucks that serve Massport and BPDA priorities, but our emphasis is on the needs of the entire community and all users. As detailed above, the Seaport Strategic Transit Plan was an agreed-upon, important step by all agencies to work with the community to define and determine much needed short and longer term improvements for transit in the South Boston Seaport. Since many of the BPDA's tenants in the RLFMP are dependent on truck freight service, the BPDA understands the important role that truck freight serves both presently and in the future in the Seaport. Going forward, we will work with Massport and our other agency partners and review the evaluation methodology for our recommendations to ensure we are adequately accounting for negative impacts on freight movement and make adjustments as needed. Nevertheless, it is the purpose of the Seaport



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Strategic Transit Plan to be comprehensive; and is the role and responsibility of each partner agency to take a holistic view.

We have historically collaborated with Massport in developing better truck access and infrastructure including the Conley Freight corridor, Cypher Street design and extension, and enabling E Street to accommodate direct truck moves in and out of the neighborhood.

We hope that you will weigh all of these factors as you consider what transportation and transit issues are important for the future economic success of residents, business organizations and all other community members in the South Boston Seaport. We will work with our agency partners to revise these short term transit improvement recommendations as well as continue to develop our longer term recommendations that we will share with the community this fall for further review and feedback.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions about the draft recommendations, please do not hesitate to contact Jim Fitzgerald, Assistant Deputy Director for Transportation & Infrastructure Planning, BPDA, James.Fitzgerald@Boston.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Osgood".

Chris Osgood
Chief of Streets, Transportation & Sanitation
City of Boston

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian P. Golden".

Brian P. Golden
Director
Boston Planning & Development Agency