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TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

**TOWN OF
STONEHAM
MASSACHUSETTS**

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June 16, 2022

MBTA

ATTN: Victoria Ireton
10 Park Plaza - Suite 3830
Boston, MA 02116

RE: Comments on Better Bus Redesign (Town of Stoneham, MA)

Dear Better Bus Redesign Project Team:

We write today to thank the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority for its continued work on the Better Bus Redesign Project. The Town of Stoneham is committed to quality, accessible, and reliable mobility options and believe that although our existing service is limited, through the Better Bus Project, we will see an increase in frequency, access, and an overall elevated user experience.

Stoneham applauds the thoughtful consideration of the Redesign Project, particularly in its prioritization for east-west connections to existing and new frequent service. Increasing service and access to high-frequency service, particularly to underserved and underrepresented populations, is of the utmost priority and we believe the Better Bus Redesign Project works toward those goals. The Town fully supports the two overarching priorities, which helps shapes the overall strategy for capital investment:

- Improve reliability of the system and modernize existing assets to accommodate current or anticipated growth.
- Make targeted investments in the expansion of the transportation network, in an effort to increase capacity or multimodal options.

We acknowledge that this is a five-year phased plan and we want to stress the importance of maintaining existing service while the MBTA builds out the project. The MBTA bus service is a critical part of the town's infrastructure. Stoneham has a number of businesses and anchor medical institutions resulting in reverse commuters coming to town for work. So many individuals rely on this system and we consider the 99, 132, and 325 routes as critical parts of the town's mobility landscape.

Residents and members of our business community continue to invest and seek alternative methods of transportation in order to become less dependent on personal vehicle use through its improvements with Complete Streets and Shared Streets programs as well as the recent opening of the Tri-Community Greenway. We firmly believe that this greater reliance on shared mobility can only work by maintaining service days and the frequency of our existing bus service which directly supports the statewide goal of reducing emissions while further advancing the clean energy economy.

The Town of Stoneham values the opportunity to work together with the MBTA to champion the Better Bus Redesign Project for our community and the region as a whole. Stoneham is prepared to expedite mutually beneficial infrastructure improvements to help facilitate implementation as soon as possible. We look forward to continuing conversations as we work together on implementation.

Please contact us with any questions.

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Dennis Sheehan
Town Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erin Wortman', with a cursive script.

Erin Wortman
Director of Planning & Community Development