

# Friends of Melnea Cass Boulevard

c/o Valerie Shelley  
5 DeGautier Way  
Roxbury, MA 02119

January 15, 2019

The Honorable Martin J. Walsh  
Boston City Hall  
One City Hall Square  
Boston, MA 02201

Re: *Melnea Cass Boulevard Re-design Project*

Dear Mayor Walsh:

We would like to meet with you to explain our position regarding the re-design and construction of Melnea Cass Boulevard (MCB) and to get your ideas and feedback about the project going forward. **The Friends of Melnea Cass Boulevard (FMCB)** have been meeting together and working with BTM over many years and have successfully achieved many positive design changes that will make the Boulevard much more of an asset and amenity for its neighbors, the residents of Roxbury. However, there are additional changes that the FMCB feel would help make the redesign a truly model project. We strongly suggest the following:

1. Create a Citizens' Oversight Committee This Committee should be composed of neighborhood residents and advocates who will monitor the construction and the long-term maintenance of the project. This Committee could be modeled after the Emerald Necklace/Muddy River Restoration Management and Maintenance Oversight Committee, established by the state in the late 1990's to ensure best practices and accountability.

The current chaotic state of Commonwealth Avenue reconstruction by BU reinforces our concern for the neighborhood and the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. Once built, cooperation between the City and local residents will assure the positive legacy of this project.

2. Establish Construction Procedures to Preserve the Trees During Construction, Holding Contractors Accountable. Many mature beautiful trees line the Boulevard forming an impressive canopy. Yet the design plan lists 268 trees in jeopardy, i.e. there is a real danger they will be damaged or destroyed by the roadway construction. The loss of these trees would completely alter the Boulevard's aesthetic and serve as a betrayal of the neighborhood's expectations. Preservation of the trees that line the boulevard has always been the priority for neighbors and their allies, the Friends of Melnea Cass Boulevard and other stakeholders and interested parties. Although we managed to "save" over two hundred trees that make up MCB's canopy (pictured on page 422-423 of the Imagine Boston 2030 report) during the planning process, which goes back to 2011, it now appears that BTM's caveat regarding potential construction damage to the trees and their consequent demise is a way around a true commitment to preservation of the trees on Melnea Cass.

Unsettlingly, there is a history of construction projects in Boston destroying many trees. Such examples include: Commonwealth Avenue, Forest Hills, and the Bowker Overpass. MassDOT contracts have only a 1-year guarantee although recent studies show that 3 years are needed to ensure true preservation and protection from construction damage. If the State will not do so, the City must step in and create its own follow-on establishment contract to meet its obligations.

Additionally, the number of trees in the current plan that will be intentionally removed to make way for roadway re-design remains a moving number, despite BTM and design consultant assurances. The number of mature trees to be removed appears to range from around 50 to over 80, according to the group *Friends of the Trees* who, during the December meeting at Boston Water and Sewer, pointed out the discrepancy in the numbers that have been put forth over a long period of time by BTM and design firm Howard Stein Hudson.

3. Design a Traffic Signal System that does Not Require Pedestrians to Push a Button to get a WALK to cross the Boulevard Throughout the planning process the City, design consultants and the FMCB agreed that the traffic signals should provide an automatic WALK to cross the Boulevard. We were shocked at the public meeting on December 10, 2018, to learn that pedestrians must now push a WALK button to cross the Boulevard which will result in unnecessary delays in crossing. Moreover, such long delays will result in many pedestrians waiting for gaps in the traffic to cross which will result in serious pedestrian injuries and fatalities.
4. Select Lighting Fixtures to Reduce Glare and Increase Lighting at Intersections The lighting fixtures along the Boulevard should reduce glare and should adequately light the intersections. The current plan calls for acorn fixtures along the sidewalk and bike path. The FMCB recommend LED downlights which the City and DCR currently use on other projects. Also, the shape of the lights should not be teardrop or acorn. No advertising should be allowed to be attached to the fixtures.

The FMCB would look forward to meeting with you to get your ideas and suggestions and to reach agreement on how the above issues can be resolved so the Boulevard can truly prioritize pedestrians and bicyclists, providing a pleasant and safe transportation experience for all users. We remain optimistic that this project can be more than a traffic project, embracing some important Complete Streets principles to which BTM says it has a commitment.

Sincerely,

Dorothea Hass; Kenneth Kruckemeyer; Kay Mathew; Alison Pultinas; and Valerie Shelley  
On behalf of Friends of Melnea Cass Boulevard

Cc:  
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Next Steps

Metrics





# City of Lynn



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February 21, 2019

*Thomas M. McGee*  
Mayor

Secretary Stephanie Pollack, Chairwoman  
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization  
State Transportation Building  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150  
Boston, MA 02116-3968

Dear Secretary Pollack and Members of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization:

On behalf of the City of Lynn I would like to thank Massachusetts Department of Transportation and the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for their support of our efforts to improve the transportation infrastructure of our City. For many years the City of Lynn has regressed in keeping pace with its transportation infrastructure needs. From my years in the Legislature and as the former Senate Chairman of the Joint Committee on Transportation, I know firsthand how vitally important it is to have an efficient, economical and up to date transportation system that ensures a better quality of life for our citizens and inspires economic growth that will sustain us in the future.

The three projects that were recently approved by MassDOT's Project Review Committee will provide critical transportation infrastructure and safety improvements at crucial locations in the City of Lynn. Each project will correct long overdue safety deficiencies while also providing comprehensive corridor enhancements for all modes of transportation: cars, pedestrians, bicycles and transit riders. These projects will improve traffic safety and operations at five Top 200 high crash intersections, as well as multiple HSIP pedestrian and bicycle crash cluster locations. All of these projects have received high initial evaluation scores by Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), further validating the urgent need for the City of Lynn to continue to advance this effort.

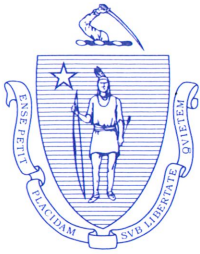
We recognize that we are very early in the process but are here today to reaffirm our commitment to the members of the Boston MPO and MassDOT that my administration is committed to advancing these projects. We fully understand that we will be responsible for the design, right of way, and regulatory permitting for the projects, and are committed to this obligation to provide the support necessary to ensure that the state and federal design requirements are met.

Thank you again to MassDOT and the Boston MPO members for you continued support in addressing our transportation infrastructure needs, and I look forward to working together to expeditiously advance these projects in the City of Lynn.

Sincerely

**Thomas M. McGee**  
Mayor





# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

House of Representatives

State House, Boston 02133-1054

Peter L. Capano  
State Representative  
11<sup>th</sup> Essex District

February 21, 2019

Secretary Stephanie Pollack, Chairwoman  
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization  
State Transportation Building  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150  
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Secretary Pollack,

I am writing to respectfully request the support of the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the funding of the following three roadway and safety improvement projects in the City of Lynn:

- Reconstruction of Western Avenue from Market Square to Eastern Avenue
- Reconstruction of Essex Street from Eastern Avenue to Rockaway/Joyce Street
- Traffic & Safety Improvements at Broadway, Euclid Avenue and Jenness Street

All three projects include reconstruction and improvements to intersections listed among the 'Top 200 High Crash Locations' in Massachusetts. Investment into these roadways will help address long overdue traffic and safety deficiencies in Lynn and ensure residents have access to a safe and efficient transportation system.

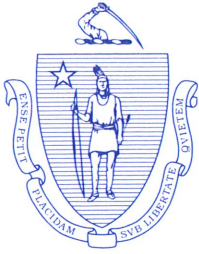
Thank you for your attention to this matter and please do not hesitate to reach out to my office with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter L. Capano".

Peter L. Capano  
State Representative  
11<sup>th</sup> Essex District





# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

House of Representatives

State House, Boston 02133-1054

February 21, 2019

Stephanie Pollack  
MassDOT Secretary and CEO and MPO Chair  
10 Park Plaza #2150  
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Chair Pollack:

I regret that I am unable to join you in person today, but I wanted to express my support for the New Boston Street Bridge Reconstruction Project in Woburn, Project File No. 604996.

The New Boston Street bridge is a critical project that will join a highly productive yet isolated section of industrial area, the New Boston Street corridor, to the rest of the city of Woburn. This isolation not only inconveniences local businesses, but creates rush hour traffic and safety hazards as heavy trucks and machinery are forced onto smaller residential streets in order to access the area.

In addition to the traffic issues that will be remedied by a completed New Boston Street bridge, bike and pedestrian access throughout Woburn will also be improved. Much as cars and trucks must take round about routes to get from one side of New Boston Street to another, cyclists, joggers, and walkers are unable to pass over the highway at this juncture. Facilitating pedestrian and cyclist access will eliminate the need for unauthorized MBTA right of way crossings, a dangerous occurrence that happens with some frequency now.

Linking both ends of New Boston Street provides an opportunity for the state to promote regional economic development, improve the safety of Woburn residents, and reduce traffic congestion throughout the region.

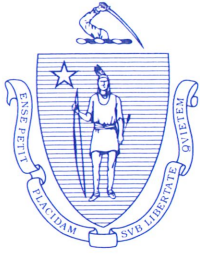
Moving forward, I will continue to work with the MPO, my colleagues, and the citizens of Woburn to ensure that high need infrastructure projects such as this that increase quality of life are prioritized and completed in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michelle Ciccolo".

Michelle Ciccolo  
Massachusetts State Representative  
15<sup>th</sup> Middlesex District





The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
House of Representatives  
State House, Boston 02133-1054

Stephanie Pollack  
Chair of the Boston Region MPO  
10 Park Plaza #2150  
Boston, MA 02109

Dear Chair Pollack,

I write to today to offer my strong support for the construction of the New Boston Street Bridge in Woburn.

The construction of the New Boston Street Bridge offers three direct benefits to the City of Woburn and the Commonwealth including increased regional economic growth, traffic congestion remediation, and expanded access to Anderson Regional Transportation Center.

As way of background, the Commonwealth has invested heavily in the Commerce Way area of Woburn for over two decades. First by constructing Commerce and Presidential Ways, literally paving the way for hundreds of thousands of commercial real estate space and hundreds of housing units. Secondly by constructing Exit 37C and providing direct access to that area off of Route 93. Thirdly the Commonwealth constructed Anderson Regional Transportation Center, one of the busiest transportation hubs in Massachusetts.

Today the Commerce Way area is home to such major employers as Raytheon, Cumming Properties, American Tower, and Randstad – all possible because of the sound planning partnership between Woburn and the Commonwealth.

Now we look to expand upon our shared success. I believe we can emulate that same economic growth along the parallel roadway, New Boston Street, with the construction of the New Boston Street Bridge. The regional economic benefit is expected to be substantial and landowners along New Boston Street are already planning for future development opportunities including housing, mixed-use developments and life science company expansion.

Today pedestrians, cars, and trucks on New Boston Street must travel nearly three miles to access Anderson Transportation Center or Route 93. The construction of the bridge will cut that distance by two-thirds and reroute traffic off of congested roadways in Woburn, Reading, and Wilmington.

Anderson Station is currently accessible from only one side of the tracks and the proposed bridge will provide improved access to the regional transportation center for vehicles as well as pedestrians. It is easy to envision a day when many of the businesses and homeowners in neighborhoods off of New Boston Street will be able to walk to the train station to go to points north and south.

I respectfully request your support for this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard M. Haggerty".

Richard M. Haggerty  
State Representative, 30th Middlesex District  
State House, Room B1  
Boston, MA 02133