

## Public Comments Submitted to the Boston Region MPO

March 31, 2022

Written comments were submitted for the following projects since the last MPO meeting on March 17, 2022:

- **Belmont:** Chenery Middle School Bicycle Parking (two letters, pages 2-3)
- **Belmont:** Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1) (#609204) (three letters, pages 3-9)
- **Braintree:** Grove Street Corridor (one letter, page 10)
- **Brookline:** Rehabilitation of Washington Street (#610932) (two letters, pages 11-12)
- **Natick:** Several projects, including Bridge Replacement, Route 27 (North Main Street) over Route 9 (Worcester Street) and Interchange Improvements (#605313) (one letter, pages 13-14)
- **Newton:** NewMo Microtransit Service Expansion (one letter, pages 15-16)

March 1, 2022

The Chenery PTO supports the installation of a sheltered bike rack at the Chenery Middle School. Riding a bike to school both cuts down on traffic around the school and promotes healthy habits amongst teenage students. As parents of Chenery Middle school students, we wholeheartedly support this project!

Sincerely,

Jenny Kresse and Jess Smith  
Chenery PTO Co-Presidents

Dear Mr. Mohler and Members of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization,

We write to you as students in the Belmont High School Climate Action Club, in support of the Belmont Community Path Phase 1 (Project 609204).

This important path and its tunnel would be transformative to students commuting to Belmont High School. It would create safer and more appealing foot and bicycle access and reduce congestion on the roads by promoting sustainable and healthy methods of transportation. Reducing congestion would also make transit to and from school safer, as traffic on Concord Ave in front of the high school has led to hazardous conditions for all students walking, biking and driving to school. Additionally, the promotion of active methods of transportation would provide ecological benefits, improve air quality, and help our community reach the Town's Climate Action Plan Resolution. Furthermore, the Belmont Community Path would stimulate local businesses by providing direct connections to Belmont Center and other key locations.

We are delighted to see funding for the Belmont Community Path (TIP Project 609204) included in two of the three scenarios currently under consideration for the Draft FFYs 2023-2027 TIP and strongly support its being included in the final FFY 2023-2027 TIP. Given the importance of improved student safety and potential to promote sustainable transport as well as the project's regional importance, we encourage that this project be considered for earlier fiscal years than FY26 or 27, as other project readiness allows.

We also strongly support including the Chenery Middle School Bicycle Shelter Project in the FY23 TIP. This is a relatively small Community Connections grant project, yet it has a very high impact for encouraging the Town to improve bike parking infrastructure at all Belmont public schools.

Thank you for considering

Sincerely,

Francesca Celi Kitch ('22)  
Leader, BHS Climate Action Club  
69 Hillcrest Rd, Belmont MA 02478

Jack Coelho ('22)  
Community Path Liaison, Climate Action Club  
43 Elizabeth Rd, Belmont MA 02478

Clara Roth ('24)  
Climate Action Club  
78 Watson Road, Belmont MA 02478

## **Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)**

March 16, 2022

Mr. Matt Genova  
Transportation Improvement Program Manager  
Central Transportation Planning Staff

RE: Belmont Community Path

Dear Mr. Genova,

It appears that another letter writing initiative supporting the Belmont Community Path has been launched at the local level (Housing Authority, Health Department, Town Administrator). You will probably be hearing from someone at the State level soon, none directly impacted by the path in any way. This process has been fraught with politics, misleading press releases, and deliberately deceptive reports to sway decision making.

There is no doubt that Belmont's residents would benefit from a Community Path, but it is not a necessity, it is a desire, and an expensive one. The burden this path will create should not be placed on any one neighborhood, yet that is not the case for the Eastern segment from Brighton Street to Belmont Center, which is the only route option ever considered for this section.

There is a new Concord Ave Bike Plan, (see attachments) which was one of Pare's alternative route options. Pare originally recommended a different route for the path than the Brownsberger desired North side. Do millions of dollars need to be spent on an additional path which would run parallel to the Concord Ave bike lane, and could be designed to end in the same location?

Tying the underpass and the bike path projects together seems to be a ploy to ensure the path gets built on the North side. At one time they were two separate plans, so why is one necessary for the other?

The tunnel should be paramount and immediate to ensure the safety of all the children who will be using the new school.

There seems to be no ownership of concern for safety at the Brighton Street crossing (ID #052315W). It's absurd to think about introducing additional bikes and pedestrians to an already congested and problematic area, allowing crossings in such close proximity from trains traveling at 60-79 mph. An area where it's not unusual for gates to get stuck, and cars to get caught in the safety box because of the high volume of traffic.

There have been numerous pedestrian and vehicle accidents involving trains at similar designed junctions throughout the commuter rail system. Has anyone from the Federal Railroad Administration looked at the videos and done an analysis? Who is responsible for public safety at this intersection? Have they weighed in? Will they accept responsibility, and liability in the event of another fatality?

I have observed a total disregard towards the abutter that granted an easement through his property. A recent conversation with the proprietor confirmed that there has never been any dialogue regarding the construction of the path through the property, access, and how it will effect business operations.

Path planners should be taking the time to instill positive feelings among affected residents and commercial property owners by engaging them in the planning process, presenting information directly to them that refutes their fears, and initiating conversations that address their concerns. If asked, abutters will tell you this has not been the case. Town officials, and path proponents may tell you otherwise, but I can assure you as a Channing Road resident living along the proposed route, no one has directly reached out since November of 2019.

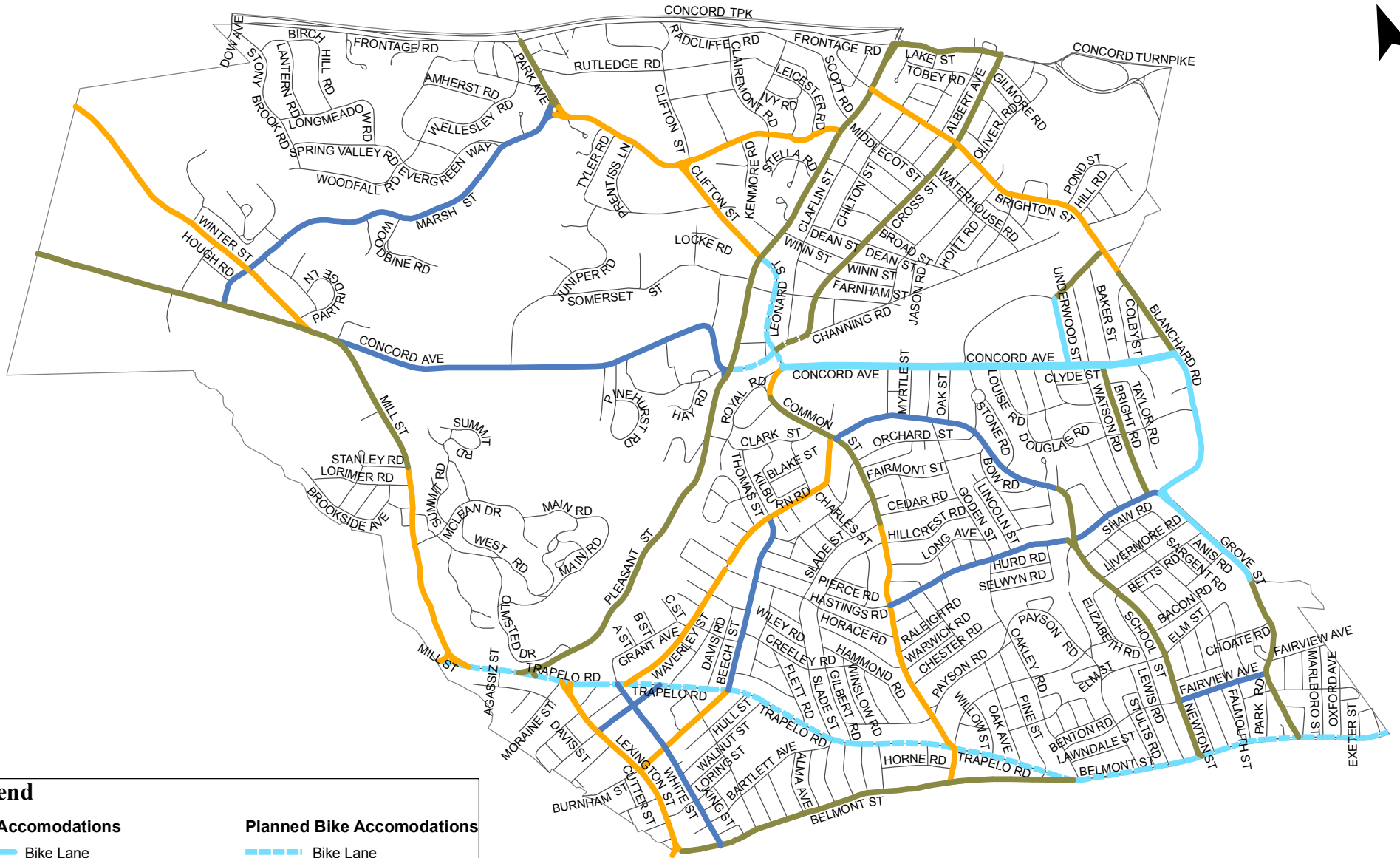
The current path committee has representation from various entities that have a stake in this project, yet there is no one representing abutters living along Channing Road and Pleasant Street, the ones who will be strongly and permanently effected.

This entire process has been flawed since it's inception and the reality is that no one wants to take a stand to do the right thing because of it's political fallout.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Cindy Taylor  
Belmont, Ma

# Bicycle Accommodations - Belmont Massachusetts



**Legend**

<b>Bike Accomodations</b>	<b>Planned Bike Accomodations</b>
Bike Lane	Bike Lane
Edge Line	Edge Line
Shared Lane Pavement Marking	
Shared Street	

## Legend

**Bike Lane** – A dedicated bicycle lane is present on the roadway.

**Edge Line** – A double yellow centerline is present. A painted shoulder is present, not wide enough to be called a bike lane.

### Shared Lane Pavement

**Marking** – A double yellow centerline is present. The motor vehicle travel lane is shared with bicycles. A *Sharrow* pavement marking is present.

**Shared Street** - No double yellow centerline is present. The roadway is shared with bicycles. A *Share the Road* sign is present.

Belmont is a great place to ride your bike. And it is one of the best ways to get some exercise while keeping our air clean.

Please be prepared and bike safely by following these simple guidelines:

**Always wear a helmet.**

**Follow the rules of the road.** Obey traffic signals and signs.

**Wear bright clothing** and reflective gear and use lights.

**Watch out for parked cars!** Ride 3 feet from them to avoid being hit by a door opening.

**Yield to pedestrians.** Bike cautiously around kids and pets.

**Use hand signals** to indicate when and where you plan to turn.

## Town of Belmont



## Bicycle Accommodations Map

March 25, 2022

David Mohler  
Chair, Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150  
Boston, MA 02116



Dear Mr. Mohler and Members of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization,

We write in support of the Belmont Community Path Phase 1 (Project 609204). It is encouraging to see the project programmed in two scenario options for the Draft FFYs 2023-2027 TIP. We urge the MPO to include it in the final FFYs 2023-2027 TIP as readiness advances for this regionally important project that has broad community support.

As you may recall, there was active public engagement regarding this project during the MPO process to develop the FFY 2022-2026 TIP. Last spring, 384 people wrote letters to the MPO regarding the Belmont Community Path with 361 (94%) in support. Broad support has been consistent over the years, with a 2013 Town of Belmont questionnaire showing 91% Supportive and 5% Opposed (1,427 responses).

Interest in the project grows as the design moves forward. Over 100 people joined the November 4 town forum to review the 25% design submitted to MassDOT. Multiple high school students participated in that public forum and increasingly seek to shape the design of a path that greatly enhances safe access to their campus. One key development was that the new cost estimate of \$17 million barely increased with the updated 25% design.

Strong public support is reflected in the formal town process to prepare this project for construction. On June 7, Belmont Town Meeting voted by a wide margin of 200 to 50 to approve \$200,000 from Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds to support efforts in securing the right of way (e.g., title and deed searches, appraisals of temporary easements). In total, \$1.7 million has been appropriated by the town for the path. With readiness for Phase 1 advancing well, the town initiated efforts for Phase 2 that extends the path to Waltham. Funding from Massachusetts bill [H5250](#) provides \$250,000 for design. Belmont Town Meeting will soon vote on an application for \$200,000 in CPA funds to cover the remaining costs through 25% design. The Select Board expanded the charge for the Community Path Project Committee (CPPC) to include Phase 2 and added two committee members to provide additional support to accelerate the work.

With progress on readiness and momentum to complete the path through Belmont, we were excited to see funding for the Belmont Community Path (TIP Project 609204) included in two of the three scenarios currently under consideration for the Draft FFYs 2023-2027 TIP. During the March 17 MPO meeting, we were pleased to hear MPO members indicate a preference for Scenario 2, which programs Project 609204 a little sooner in FFY 2026. Given the project's regional importance and community support, we encourage the MPO to support funding for this project in earlier fiscal years as project readiness allows.



With Waltham now beginning construction of the neighboring section of the MCRT, our community is eager to do its part in closing a key gap. The Friends of the Belmont Community Path will continue to support efforts that finalize readiness of Phase 1, accelerate design for Phase 2, and coordinate with grassroots organizations across the region that yearn for a complete network of safe, off-road paths to connect our communities.

Finally, we continue to be impressed with the professionalism of the MPO members and staff. In particular, we thank the MPO staff for clear and transparent communication regarding the process and response to individual inquiries. Given the level of engagement with only one of numerous projects under consideration, we can only imagine how much effort this takes. On behalf of a broad community of engaged citizens, we express gratitude to the MPO for engaging communities and individuals in the process of constructing effective public infrastructure.

Sincerely,  
Jarrod Goentzel  
Chair, Friends of the Belmont Community Path  
96 Agassiz Avenue, Belmont, MA 02478

Sara Smith  
Secretary, Friends of the Belmont Community Path  
52 Slade Street, Belmont, MA 02478

Meredith Boericke  
*President*  
District 5

Shannon L. Hume  
*At Large*

David M. Ringius, Jr.  
*At Large*

Julia Flaherty  
District 1

Joseph Reynolds  
District 2



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*At Large*

Elizabeth Maglio  
District 3

Stephen C. O'Brien  
District 4

Lawrence C. Mackin, Jr.  
District 6

## OFFICE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

March 23, 2022

Tegin Teich  
Executive Director, MPO Staff  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150  
Boston, MA 02116

RE: Project Number 13421 – Grove Street Corridor, Braintree, MA

Dear Executive Director Teich,

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization prepares to review the Subregional Corridor Study, I urge you to prioritize funding for Grove Street in Braintree from Columbian Street to the John Mahar Highway. Selecting Grove Street for roadway improvements furthers the MPO's goals by

- **Enhancing safety** for both vehicles and pedestrians by repairing narrow, uneven sidewalks that do not currently meet ADA requirements; by improving sight lines to reduce accidents; by increasing visual cues to slow vehicles such as adding flashing beacons at crosswalks, and improving lighting. According to the MPO's press release of March 25, 2021, vehicle crashes along Grove Street exceed the statewide average for similar roadways, and pedestrians and cyclists are at higher risk of accident and injury.
- **Providing opportunities for multimodal transit:** the MBTA red line is less than 2 miles from the intersection of Liberty and Grove Streets, however, unsafe conditions along sidewalks and no bike lanes for cyclists deter travel by foot and bike. In addition, current conditions hinder residents who live along the Grove Street corridor from walking or cycling to the local shopping plaza for groceries and other amenities. Residents who live in the senior housing complexes on Grove Street, many of whom do not have access to a car, have to find alternate means to get necessities, enjoy a coffee out, or simply take a walk.

I know the MPO values the public process and as the District 5 Councilor representing the residents in the Grove Street neighborhood, for years I have been working with residents to find solutions and I have witnessed the hazardous conditions along Grove Street. Only the Commonwealth, however, has the power to provide the necessary funding for the improvements that will enhance the quality of life for all.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration. Please be in touch if you need additional information.

Best,

Meredith Boericke  
Braintree Town Council, President, District 5 Councilor  
Email: [mboericke@braintreema.gov](mailto:mboericke@braintreema.gov)  
Phone: 339-235-8807

cc: Mayor Charles Kokoros  
Senator John Keenan & Senator Walter Timilty  
Representative Mark Cusack  
Neighbors of Grove Street

29 March 2022

Mr. Matt Genova  
RE: Transportation Improvement Program Manager  
Central Transportation Planning Staff

Dear Mr. Genova:

Please accept this letter in support of the continued inclusion of the Rehabilitation of Washington Street project on the FFYs 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Plan. This project is number 610932, and it is currently programmed for funding in FFY2027. This project had the broad backing of the Town of Brookline's entire elected delegation, as well as wide support of many, many stakeholders including members of the disability, bicycling, pedestrian, public transit, complete streets, Vision Zero, and driving constituencies.

Washington Street is a regionally significant corridor, connecting the Brighton and Mission Hill. Furthermore, Washington St. serves as the home of thousands of Brookline residents and small businesses. The Town of Brookline has recently engaged a community-directed Design Review Committee to work closely with all stakeholders to ensure that the project's milestones are met. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*James A. Lee*

Chair: Brookline Commission on Disability

March 29, 2022

Mr. Matt Genova  
Transportation Improvement Program Manager  
Central Transportation Planning Staff  
mgenova@ctps.org

Dear Mr. Genova:

As a Brookline resident, Chair of Brookline's Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and a Steering Committee member of the Brookline Community Aging Network, I'm writing to express my personal support for the continued inclusion of the Rehabilitation of Washington Street project on the FFYs 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Plan. This is project number 610932, currently programmed for funding in FFY2027.

Washington Street is a major corridor in Brookline for multiple modes of transportation, with a wide variety of key establishments and destinations along its length, some directly on the street itself and others just around the corner. There are shops, restaurants, and other commercial establishments; Brookline's Town Hall, main Library, and Police headquarters; a K-8 school; medical facilities; plus single-family homes and apartment buildings. It is also a major corridor to and from Boston's Brighton neighborhood to the northwest and the Mission Hill area to the southeast.

Like many other Brookline residents, I am excited by the prospect of a major reconstruction of this important thoroughfare.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*David Trevvett*

177 Babcock Street #1, Brookline MA 02446

## Natick Select Board

Karen Adelman-Foster, Chair  
Richard P. Jennett, Jr., Vice-Chair  
Michael J. Hickey, Jr., Clerk  
Susan G. Salamoff  
Paul R. Joseph  
PHONE 508-647-6410  
EMAIL: selectboard@natickma.org



LOCATED AT  
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13 East Central Street  
Natick, Massachusetts  
01760

## Town of Natick • Select Board Office

Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150  
Boston, MA 02116

Honorable members of the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization:

The Town of Natick respectfully seeks your support for several transportation projects of local and regional significance as you develop the FFY 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Plan and future amendments.

### **Route 9/27 Interchange (MassDOT 605313)**

This critical project, initiated in 2008, is currently awaiting 25% design based on a revised concept. This is a high-crash location for which an innovative modified diverging diamond design has been proposed by MassDOT. The current structure is failing and unsafe. The proposed design will provide bicycle and pedestrian accommodations to help connect nearby neighborhoods, schools, and commercial destinations, while also incorporating a connection to the new Cochituate Rail Trail.

### **Natick Center CRT Connection (MassDOT 610691)**

This project will connect the Cochituate Rail Trail to Natick Center, providing bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to the community's central business district, cultural hub and transportation nexus. Design is underway, with 25% submittal imminent, and we expect that this will be ready for advertising in FFY 2024. This project should be timed to commence construction as soon as possible after the completion of the MBTA Natick Center Station Accessibility Improvements Project.

### **Lake Cochituate Path (MassDOT 610680)**

This MassDOT project, currently at 25% design, will establish connectivity from the Cochituate Rail Trail to residential and commercial districts in West Natick. Subject to agreement by MassDOT, we would request it be programmed for FFY 2024.

### **Boden Lane Bridge (MassDOT 607420)**

This project will replace a vehicular and pedestrian bridge that was damaged and removed in 2019. Design is underway, and we await a schedule to request programming on a future TIP.

**Spring Street Bridge (MassDOT 610869)**

This project will replace a failing Natick Center vehicular and pedestrian bridge over the MBTA Worcester Line that has been out of service for decades. MassDOT has initiated a replacement to improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity. MassDOT has initiated design.

**Speen Street Bridge (MassDOT 612178)**

This project will replace a substandard bridge over the MBTA tracks. MassDOT has initiated design.

In addition to the above projects that have received preliminary MassDOT approval, the community is seeking ways to improve mobility by improving bicycle and pedestrian connectivity and safety, leveraging Complete Streets, Shared Streets and Spaces, Bottleneck Reduction, and other programs and funding streams. We are in regular communication with MassDOT, MAPC and other agencies to identify opportunities to promote clean transportation, equitable access, reduced travel times, and policies that complement smart growth.

The Town of Natick is grateful for the work of the MPO and Central Transportation Planning Staff, and for your past support for projects in and around Natick. We are available to discuss any of these projects at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Karen Adelman-Foster, Chair

cc: State Senator Karen Spilka  
State Senator Becca Rausch  
State Representative David Linsky  
Representative Katherine Clark  
District 3 Director Barry Lorion  
Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Subregion



Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

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March 16, 2022

David Mohler  
Chair, Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Boston Region MPO State Transportation Building  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150  
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Mr. Mohler,

I am writing to thank the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization for its continued support of Newton in Motion, or NewMo, the City of Newton's transportation system. NewMo is a low-cost, on-demand, ride-share service with seven dedicated vehicles.

The seed money, provided by the MPO, has served as an incubator of our city's new, responsive and efficient transit service. NewMo is successfully meeting the challenging mobility, sustainability and equity goals originally laid out. With NewMo now open to everyone in Newton, for trips everywhere in Newton, ridership has increased dramatically. We now see more than 1100 trips per week and 250 trips per day with particularly high ridership by seniors, low-income riders, youth and individuals from car-free households. Notably, the data shows that:

- 58% of our riders come from households earning less than 80% of the AMI for a family of three.
- More than a third of non-senior trips are to/from public transit.
- More than a quarter of our trips are now school-related – in fact, our most popular destination is Newton South High School. We are so pleased to be able to offer this climate-friendly transportation alternative to parent pick-up and drop-off, and to help advance independence and choice among our young people.

With continued funding, NewMo is poised to expand into neighboring municipalities, add additional service vehicles, and move toward an all-electric fleet.

We believe that NewMo matches well with the goals of the Community Connections program. We look forward to continuing to work with the MPO to build and expand on the success of this new system.

Sincerely,

Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor, City of Newton



