



FRIENDS OF THE  
CHARLESTOWN  
NAVY YARD

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November 20, 2020

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MBTA Fiscal Management Control Board

**Re: Friends of the Charlestown Navy Yard Comments on Forging Ahead Proposals**

Dear Board Members:

The Friends of the Charlestown Navy Yard (FCNY) is a nonprofit organization comprised of approximately 300 individuals and over 100 businesses whose mission is to improve the quality of life for residents of and visitors to the historic Charlestown Navy Yard. In furtherance of that mission, FCNY offers its comments regarding the MBTA's Fiscal and Management Control Board ("FMCB") Forging Ahead proposals. While FCNY appreciates the FMCB's efforts to determine the best path forward for the MBTA to (a) provide safe, adequate, and equitable transit service during the COVID-19 pandemic, (b) support the future return to the workplace, and (c) tackle challenging budget projections. FCNY feels that the proposed cuts in service, including the elimination of water ferry service is a short-sighted approach to a long-term problem.

As a threshold matter, FCNY urges the MBTA to defer voting on transit service reductions that impact FY22 to determine if additional federal COVID-19 relief legislation includes another round of transit funding, as well as give the state legislature time to complete its work in the current legislative session in the event addition funds are allocated to the MBTA. In the meantime, the MBTA should continue strategic redeployment of resources and transit service that meet current demand and allow quick redeployment of service to stimulate and support the Commonwealth's post-COVID-19 economic recovery.

It is imperative that the MBTA avoid transit service cuts that will harm Massachusetts' economic recovery and weaken the Commonwealth's ability to meet increased ridership as workers return to the workplace. We will soon see steady increases in workers returning to the workplace as early as next spring and summer, and commuters will return to the same transportation mode they used prior to the pandemic. It is critical that more transit service is available in FY22 to immediately accommodate increased commuter ridership, avoid roadway congestion, and address equity and environmental goals. Once transit service cuts are implemented, it can take up to 18 months to redeploy skilled and specialized transit professionals needed to maintain and run service across all transit modes to be fully operational.

Affecting our members directly is the proposed elimination of the water ferry service. Elimination of the water ferry service is a huge step in the wrong direction. Many Charlestown residents rely heavily on the ferry because it is a reliable, and COVID-19 safe, way to get to work, doctor's appointments, shopping and other daily activities, especially with the North Washington Street Bridge construction still years away from completion. Once we emerge from the Covid crisis, the water ferry promises to be an even more

integral part of an expanded Inner Boston Harbor transportation network, taking stress off the roadways and connecting neighborhoods all along the waterfront. Eliminating ferry service may stall that much needed network for years. The costs of keeping the water ferry operationally now is minimal and offset many times over by the benefits of an expanded water transit network.

As we saw during the shutdown of the T during the winter of 2015, our transit system is an important part of our economy. Cuts in transit service now will only make economic recovery from the Covid crisis longer and harder, a consequence the Commonwealth's economy and citizens need not unnecessarily suffer. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Friends of the Charlestown Navy Yard

cc: Senator Sal DiDomenico  
Representative Daniel Ryan