Gil Propp
Boston, MA

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Dear Rachel,

As someone who has frequented the Fort Point/Seaport area, I have experienced firsthand the need for sustainable transit in the area. Currently, the Silver Line is at or very near capacity, packed with an ever-growing number of commuters to and from South Boston's growing business and innovation scene in addition to suitcase-laden Logan Airport traffic. As the Seaport continues to develop and Boston's prominence in the business and innovation world continues to grow, both neighborhood and airport traffic will only increase. If Boston is chosen to host the 2024 Summer Olympics, tourists headed to and from Logan Airport will only bring the Silver Line further over capacity. Not to mention that the D Street Crossing currently subjects in-service Silver Line buses to waits that can approach two minutes long. Particularly in a neighborhood such as a Seaport with an abundance of wide main streets that can accommodate high car traffic, it is crucial that a sustainable transit system that presents a reliable, viable alternative to driving be engineered so as to ensure the Seaport remains pedestrian-friendly and accessible to all.

The first and foremost measure that should be taken is to install transit signal priority (TSP) at the D Street Crossing. Already recommended as a short-term improvement in the South Boston Waterfront Sustainable Transportation Plan (SBWSTP), TSP installation will significantly increase the Silver Line's speed as well as cut back upon the bunching of Silver Line buses that currently takes place at the crossing. TSP will ensure that Silver Line trips remain properly, evenly spaced such that passengers can be optimally served on set headways and the buses' capacity is properly taken advantage of with each trip.

Another measure that should be taken is to reopen the Northern Avenue Bridge to pedestrian and bike traffic. The Northern Avenue Bridge, with its wide deck, presents a once in a lifetime opportunity to build a dedicated artery to carry pedestrians and cyclists between the Seaport/Fort Point and downtown. One side of the bridge could become a dedicated, high-capacity cycle track—a safer, wider cycle route than the unprotected bike lanes on Seaport Boulevard. Such a cycle track, as well as protected cycle tracks on Northern Avenue, Seaport Boulevard, Congress Street and Summer Street in the Seaport and Fort Point, would ensure that cycling remains a viable, safe, economical and environmentally-friendly transportation option in the area for years to come. The remainder of the Northern Avenue Bridge's deck could likewise be reserved for pedestrians. Given the bridge's width, the Northern Avenue Bridge could even play host to some small shops and cafes with outdoor seating.

The Northern Avenue Bridge is also a historically significant resource that would be a shame to lose. With the impending demolition of the Charlestown Bridge, the Northern Avenue Bridge will be the last riveted swing bridge in Boston. Having initially served as a freight rail bridge, the Northern Avenue Bridge serves as a tangible link to the Fort Point area's rich history of industrial innovation. Until the bridge's closure, the recent installation of variable light emitting diode (LED) lighting on the Northern Avenue Bridge served as a beautiful showcase of the bridge's unique architectural character, honorably transforming the bridge into a distinctively intriguing junction of the times. With the modern lighting, the Northern Avenue Bridge served, and can serve again, as a beacon representative of carrying forth triumphs and lessons learned from Boston's industrial past, thereby keeping the longstanding spirit of innovation alive in Boston. If left in place, the Northern Avenue Bridge will continue to inspire technological innovation in Boston for generations more.

Likewise, the construction of a direct Red Line-Blue Line connector is a measure that would relieve the Silver Line of some of the airport traffic that is currently crowding the buses. As it stands, with no direct connection between the Red and Blue Lines, the only viable option for people travelling between Logan Airport and anywhere along the Red Line, as well as around South Station, is to take the Silver Line. With so much of the Silver Line taken up by Logan Airport thru traffic, the Silver Line's capacity to directly serve Fort Point and the Seaport is dramatically reduced. Transferring some of the Silver Line's airport traffic to the higher-capacity Blue Line would allow the Silver Line to serve neighborhood commuters and visitors at a higher capacity.

Another transit connection that should be made is a direct connection between the Back Bay and the Seaport. Currently, travel between the Back Bay and the Seaport is a convoluted two-transfer ordeal involving Green-Red-Silver or Orange-Red-Silver line combinations. The route currently proposed that would run diesel multiple units (DMUs) between the Back Bay and the Seaport using long-dormant Track 61 will be unnecessarily complicated and expensive. Track 61 will require extensive restoration to handle frequent service. Even then, Track 61 will be constrained by the fact that it is one track wide between South Bay and the Seaport, limiting the frequency with which DMU service can be operated. Additionally, the proposed DMU route is overly long, extending very far southward—almost to the Roxbury line—before rounding low-speed, truck traffic-laden Widett Circle to return to the downtown area via the South Bay Rail Yard.

A lower-cost, easier to implement alternative that requires little to no construction to enact and, with simple upgrades such as TSP, could provide Back Bay-Seaport service at frequency comparable to or greater than the proposed Track 61 DMU line is an optimized bus between Copley & Back Bay stations and the Seaport. Such a bus is currently proposed by the SBWSTP—I strongly encourage the implementation of such a bus along with TSP installation at all intersections along the route. The further addition of a Back Bay-Seaport bus

stop along the A Street Corridor would make the bus more accessible to Fort Point users and further relieve the Silver Line of increasing pedestrian traffic.

Another existing bus route that would benefit from TSP installation, as well as a more direct routing via either Congress Street or the Greenway, is the Number 4 Bus. The Number 4 Bus currently runs in a loop around the North End and provides rush hour service between North Station and the Seaport on a give-or-take 15 to 20 minute headway. The North Station-Seaport connection is a key corridor for both areas, as well as for Southie residents who would benefit from frequent service to and from North Station. Accordingly, I propose that service be offered on the Number 4 Bus throughout the day on frequent intervals. Frequent, TSP-enhanced bus service along Congress Street or the Greenway would, in addition to encourage commuting by transit, provide the growing number of professionals working and meeting in the Seaport with a viable, reliable, affordable daytime transit option for travel between the Seaport and the Financial District/downtown as opposed to driving or using a taxi/rideshare service.

In the long term, direct, high-capacity rapid transit connections between the Seaport and other Boston neighborhoods should be constructed. Such rapid transit lines could be integrated with the Seaport street grid so as to encourage pedestrianized growth in the area as opposed to continued automobile dependency. I have consolidated my vision for transit in and around South Boston, as well as other areas of Boston, into a page on my website, bostonstreetcars.com, titled “Streamlining Boston Transit to Olympic Specifications.” I encourage you to take a look at my ideas at http://goo.gl/o7Ti69.

To summarize, my proposals for South Boston include:

- **The extension of the Orange Line from Back Bay Station to City Point via South Station and the South Boston Piers Transitway.**
    - The South Boston Piers Transitway would be retrofitted with the infrastructure necessary to run Orange Line trains. The Orange Line would stop at Courthouse and World Trade Center stations plus new stations by Boston Marine Industrial Park and City Point.
    - A second Orange Line Extension could also be built to the Longwood Medical Area, Brookline and Allston/Brighton. The northern Orange Line Extension would end at Beacon Park Yard/Boston University, thereby establishing new direct transit connections between the Seaport and western areas that currently require two transfers to get to and from the Seaport. Areas served would include innovation hubs such as Northeastern University and Boston University, plus the under-development Beacon Park Yard.
- **An interim Longwood-Seaport via Ruggles Station and Roxbury rapid bus (r Line).**
    - The r Line would connect the Seaport to the Longwood Medical Area, Northeastern University, Roxbury and the South End—all key

residential and commercial areas as well as areas with a growing innovative presence.

  - R Line buses would be TSP enhanced and would run via the South Boston Bypass and dedicated bus lanes on Melnea Cass Boulevard. A similar bus has been proposed in the SBWSTP that would run Ruggles-Boston Marine Industrial Park; a Longwood extension would establish a further direct connection between the Seaport and the Fenway, the Longwood Medical Area and Brookline.

- **The construction of a surface trolley along Summer Street in the Seaport/Fort Point that would continue to North Station and/or Kendall Square via Congress Street downtown (i Line).**
  - The i Line would connect some of Boston's principal centers of innovation—the Seaport, the Financial District, Government Center and Bulfinch Triangle—via electric surface streetcars. A second spur would connect the Seaport to Kendall Square via Government Center and would serve Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and Kendall Square/MIT, additional innovative areas.
  - The Kendall Extension would stop at both Bowdoin (Blue Line) and Charles/MGH (Red Line) stations, in addition to a midway stop directly before MGH, thereby acting as a Red Line-Blue Line connector.
  - Surface trolley lines are scenic and are proven to attract riders, in addition to serving as economical, environmentally friendly, efficient transportation options. Buses could alternatively serve the i Line as a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line.
  - A surface trolley along Summer Street in the Seaport could serve as an impetus for a pedestrianized Summer Street that could include protected cycle tracks, wide sidewalks, greenery and outdoor seating/cafes, among other pedestrian-friendly, vitality-inspiring additions.

- **The construction of two additional trolley lines branching off of the Summer Street "Main Line"—one to City Point via D Street and West/East Broadway, and another to Columbia Point in Dorchester via D Street and Dorchester Avenue (s Line).**
    - The s Line would connect the Seaport and Downtown to two developing yet transit-starved regions—Southie (s1 Line) and Columbia Point (s2 Line). Along the way, the s Line would connect with Andrew and JFK/UMass stations, acting as an infill line for the region of Dorchester Avenue in Southie designated by Mayor Walsh for further middle-income housing development. An additional stop would be made in Dorchester's Polish Triangle.
- **The construction of two enhanced bus routes from Ruggles Station to the Seaport and downtown via Dorchester and Roxbury—one running via Martin Luther King (MLK) Boulevard and Quincy Street, and the other running via Seaver Street and Columbia Road (s3 Line).**
    - These two bus lines would provide residents of inner Dorchester and Roxbury who live further from the Red Line, the Orange Line and the Fairmount Line with direct transit links to the Seaport and downtown. By directly connecting Dorchester and Roxbury to the downtown area, the s3 Line would provide new opportunities for the development of practical affordable housing along transit lines that does not require a car to get to and from.
    - The s3 Line would be TSP-enhanced and would receive dedicated lanes along wider MLK Boulevard, Seaver Street and Columbia Road.

To reiterate, more detail on all of the aforementioned transit expansions I propose is available at http://goo.gl/o7Ti69.

Together, the extensions I propose would provide direct connections between the South Boston region and outlying neighborhoods/suburbs of Boston, ensuring that South Boston is accessible to all and stimulating the region's continued growth. The Orange Line Extension, as well a Back Bay-Seaport bus and the i, s and r Lines, would significantly ease travel between the entire South Boston region and other neighborhoods/suburbs for area workers and residents alike.

Thank you very much for taking the time to review my thoughts and develop a greater overall vision for transit improvements in Fort Point, the Seaport and Southie. With the South Boston region developing as rapidly as it is and the influx of pedestrian traffic in the area, it is absolutely necessary that key transit corridors be identified and subsequently provided with sustainable transit service.

Thank you again for your consideration.

Best regards,

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