

MASSACHUSETTS SILVER HAired LEGISLATURE

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Senator William Brownsberger
The State House, Room 504
24 Beacon Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Dear Senator Brownsberger:

Thank you for inviting me as Senate President of the Massachusetts Silver Legislature ("SHL") to offer thoughts on the Governor's Commission's Report ("COFT"), *The Future of Transportation in Massachusetts*, created under Executive Order No. 579.

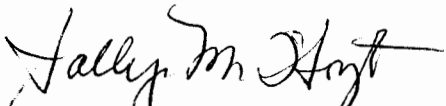
Our older generation, along with other age groups in Massachusetts, is directly and indirectly affected by these issues. However, elders have particular interest in transportation and the potential limitation of their options inherent in some policies and practices. Keeping in mind that technology is merely a tool, we must be sure our older Americans do not sacrifice guaranteed rights and liberties as provided under the U.S. Constitution.

I would like to share with you some excerpts from the "Thoughts on the Future of Transportation in Massachusetts" white paper authored by Christine Bowman, Esq. Consultant. Please find the attached excerpts (referenced below) from Section IV, The Status Quo Undermines Our Bright Future and Section V, The Architecture of Future Transportation.

1. Description of how the status quo undermines our future. Section IV, (B) *Physical Infrastructure and (C) Traffic Congestion and Gridlock*. (p. 8)
2. Mass Transit options/ Disney model, Section V (B) *On-Site Powered Environments, Physical Infrastructure & Transportation* (p. 16-17)
3. Some proposals (Boston Business Network) and rethinking beyond modes of transportation/ Houston and Toronto. Section V (C) *Ungirding Traffic Congestion and Gridlock* (p. 19-21)

If you would like further information, please contact me.

Respectfully,


Sally Hoyt

Attachments: (6 pages) Excerpts - Bowman Transportation White Paper 2019

Excerpt #1 - Thoughts on the Future of Transportation in Massachusetts – C. Bowman

Section IV - p. 8

A. Physical Infrastructure

It is no secret that the State's roadways, railways, subway rails, and bridges are in disrepair, and yet the Massachusetts Department of Transportation ("MassDOT") is wasting millions of dollars in little projects to benefit developers in urbanizing the residential towns, rather than properly maintaining, repairing, and renovating the major bridges, highways, and roadways across the State. With increases in unbridled massive development projects all over the State, emanating from the executive branch in Boston, the highways, roadways and bridges are increasing in disrepair at a very fast rate due to heavy truck traffic. The rail system itself, for trains and subways, needs an overhaul, but cannot be another version of what currently exists...

B. Traffic Congestion and Gridlock

To bring about the highest positive aspects of the future of transportation, new methods on top of old traffic flow problems is the wrong approach, the existing traffic congestion and gridlock must be addressed beforehand. Without this, any future endeavors are automatically thwarted, because things do not get better with a pre-existing monkey-wrench mentality.

For decades, the traffic in and out of Boston by the heavily traveled highways at "rush hour," which is many hours now, is majorly congested coupled with gridlock, and is worse in the winter. This congestion must be significantly reduced, requiring a rethinking in transportation efforts outside of and in Boston proper before improvements can have the desired effect. COFT recommends designating transportation hubs around Boston and the State, but modeling this after what already exists is not solving the problems, it is just spreading out the traffic congestion and gridlock. This is unsustainable. We must do better.

Excerpt #2 - Thoughts on the Future of Transportation in Massachusetts” – C. Bowman

Section V - p. 16-17

A. On-Site Powered Environments, Physical Infrastructure & Transportation

Transportation. Although many people use mass-transit because of its convenience or relatively low cost, local trains (aka “commuter rail”), buses and subways, it does not invoke pleasant thoughts. Mass-transit does invoke thoughts of being overcrowded, noisy, smelly, dirty, and unreliable.

It doesn’t have to be this way. For instance, the mass-transit system at Walt Disney World in Florida has the opposite effect, it is leisurely, quiet, innocuous smelling, clean, reliable, and fun. Walt Disney improved upon Disneyland in California, which was marred by urban sprawl, traffic congestion and gridlock, and lack of opportunities to expand for future projects.

The challenge is to substantially transfer the Disney model from a designed future city (1971, almost 50 years old) to one where the cities are on the order of hundreds of years old (Boston, 1630, almost 390 years old). Also, Boston has the oldest subway system, since 1897; and is operated by the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (“MBTA”). But the technology has evolved since 1971 to make this a reality.

The local trains run on diesel. The subway cars are electrified, via the “third rail” from the electric grid, as are the lights in the stations and in the tunnels. Buses run on diesel, natural gas, overhead electric lines, or hydrogen fuel cells (introduced in 2016 through the National Fuel Cell Bus Program), see <https://www.nuvera.com/blog/zero-emissions-fuel-cell-bus-and-hydrogen-station-in-service-at-mbta>.

The MBTA recently ordered a number of battery-electric and hybrid diesel-electric buses to update its fleet, see <https://www.greencarcongress.com/2019/01/20190108-mbta.html>, and <https://www.newflyer.com/2019/01/mbta-expands-bostons-electric-hybrid-footprint-with-buses-from-new-flyer/>. Also, the MBTA is using some alternative fuel sources for energizing the subway system, such as solar and hydrogen fuel cell electric generation and implemented several energy-efficient methods and equipment, see <https://www.mbta.com/sustainability/energy-conservation>.

All of this is in the right direction, but more is needed.

In addition to mass-transit, personal vehicles are used because it is more independent, you can go directly to your destination, there are too few trains and too few destinations, and an overcrowded and unreliable bus and subway system. The current proffered idea, and COFT

recommendation, advocates eliminating human-driven personal vehicles with “improved” mass-transit and automated vehicles. This is short-sighted.

Personal, human-driven automobile ownership replaces horse ownership historically, and everything it symbolizes, representing freedom, independence, and mobility to travel beyond the local environment and explore at our own discretion. The hallmark of our American and Western civilizations. Our challenge is to think outside of the box by envisioning, creating, innovating, and applying new perceptions and technologies that enhance our basic rights, not restrict or eliminate them because it is more expedient for bureaucracy or its reasons or its draconian thinking.

We must dictate the use of technology that compliments us, and not allow technology to dictate how we must compliment it, otherwise our birthright, freedom, and social fabric will erode and disappear. Being so quick to toss aside our basic rights, independence, and freedoms, regardless of the apparent reason, shows no commitment to our foundational values. Thus, no commitment, honor or respect to the U.S. Constitution and the guaranteed rights therein. This is unacceptable.

Excerpt 3 - Thoughts on the Future of Transportation in Massachusetts – C. Bowman

Section V – p. 19-21

A. Ungirding Traffic Congestion and Gridlock

Ungirding the gridlock is possible, but our perceptions must change, we must be able to see things differently to bring about the desired outcome, while wisely using our resources and invigorating and innovating our thinking – from old and tired pixilation to wholistic approaches.

The notion that we must find better ways of transporting millions of people into and out of Boston for work needs upending. Touting “better ways” that create the same effect, is just more of the same, no matter how “updated” or “modernized” it is. It is this one-point destination by the many that creates traffic congestion and gridlock, from points of origin, along, and into Boston. This notion is too restrictive.

Again, transportation is not just about the modes of transportation, it is much, much more.

Rethinking the one-point destination of Boston for work requires a better application of our existing resources on multiple fronts. Increasing housing outside of Boston (moving people from Boston to residential towns, which is happening now) for more people to get into Boston, where a majority of the jobs are, just inflames the traffic congestion and gridlock, contributes to urban sprawl, contributes to ecological and environmental damage, contributes to waste, and contributes to accelerating climate change, among other things.

Just increasing the frequency of local trains or commercial rail (no matter what it is called) or subways or buses does not address the real problems. This is just shuffling things around, and making it worse, without a real solution.

But a new viewpoint can open up new possibilities and opportunities.

To minimize influx into and outflow from Boston during “peak” hours, move the reason for it. There are not that many companies with good paying jobs leaving Boston, otherwise it would be reflected in the traffic congestion and gridlock...and it isn't. Just the opposite, it is getting worse, not better.

Thus, Boston needs to restrict the number of large commercial and industrial businesses in Boston proper. Along with large commercial businesses moving to the outskirts of the city, the State needs to offer financial and other incentives to these businesses to make it worth their while. And in so doing, create the Boston Business Network (“BBN”), linking Boston to multiple hubs in an arc around Boston (“Arc”); and similarly, the Massachusetts Business

Network (“MBN”), with multiple strategic points throughout the State, like Worcester and Springfield, connecting BBN businesses to their MBN branch offices throughout the State.

The BBN corporate businesses, within Boston and around the Arc, can be connected using a Houston Tunnel System passageway approach linking corporate businesses to each other, with retail, restaurants, other service businesses (ie., banks, hotels, etc.), mass-transit and trains:

“The **Houston tunnel system** offers additional walk-friendly passageways and “is a network of subterranean, climate-controlled, pedestrian walkways that links 95 full city blocks 20 feet (6 m) below Houston's downtown streets. It is approximately 6 miles (9.7 km) long.^[1] There are similar systems in Chicago, Dallas, Oklahoma City, Montreal and Toronto... The Tunnel is a series of underground passageways that, with above-ground skywalks, link office towers to hotels, banks, corporate and government offices, restaurants, retail stores, and the Houston Theater District. Portions of the tunnel contain gift shops, newsstands, banks, technology centers, flower shops, copy centers, dry cleaners, and food courts similar to a major shopping mall. They are widely and heavily used by office workers and tourists. Only two buildings, Wells Fargo Plaza and McKinney Garage on Main^[3], offer direct access from the street to the Tunnel; other entry points are from street-level stairs, escalators, and elevators inside buildings that are connected to the tunnel. Access is allowed to the general public into these buildings with few restrictions, during normal operating hours, in order to reach the Tunnel” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Houston_tunnel_system).

Also, see Toronto’s PATH Network, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PATH_\(Toronto\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PATH_(Toronto)); Montreal’s Underground City, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Underground_City,_Montreal; and, Calgary’s +15 System, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%2B15>.

Thus, Boston as “The Hub” with inner connections and spokes radiating out to the connected Arc Hubs, then further out to the Strategic Points across the State, provides a more business-friendly environment, a more pedestrian-friendly environment, and a more tourist-friendly environment State-wide. Stream-lining business, pedestrian, and tourist access in and around Boston makes the State more attractive across-the-board, increasing opportunities for a vigorous economy. Boston and Massachusetts have a lot of catching up to do, as we have not kept pace with better uses of resources, reducing waste, less damage of ecological and environmental systems, nor cleaner futuristic concepts or designs.

In addition, implement commercial and industrial transport schedules prior to and after “rush hour” timeframes, keeping these vehicles off of the highways and streets during “rush hour” as part of the “doing business” daily routine easily reduces traffic congestion and gridlock. Also, designating or “carving out” and/or constructing separate routes for commercial and industrial trucking from personal transportation and buses, further reduces traffic congestion and gridlock.

Therefore, creating BBN aggregates people to the resources and businesses to the people. The BBN and MBN ungirds the traffic congestion and gridlock, decreases the number of vehicles on and wear and tear of the highways, roadways, and bridges, and not just in Boston. New passageways, skyways, tunnels, and mass-transit linking businesses and people to each other with ease for better access, operation and function in and arcing around Boston, and to strategic locations outward will generate excitement, new possibilities, and a desire to locate here. A better use of resources and ease of access inspires more effective “people energy” for ingenuity, creativity, innovation, positive growth and wealth, and a sense that Boston is where the future is.