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MBTA Board of Directors, June 9, 2022, Agenda Item 4

Members of the Board, thank you for the opportunity to submit comments today.

- The FY23 Operating Budget is on the agenda for discussion and possible action today. As you determine whether to approve the budget, A Better City urges you to consider the following:
 1. The proposed FY23 budget allocates \$493 million to system maintenance & security, which represents 25% of the \$2.5 billion budget. This is level funding in terms of % from FY22 despite safety incidents.
 2. In December 2019, the Safety Review Panel delivered their report to the MBTA with 34 recommendations and 61 suggested corrective actions, as well as these findings:
 - Budget cutbacks and fiscal controls were causing critical PMIs and QA/QC to not take place as required and that some inspections were intentionally not being performed;^{1 2}
 - The 2019 Red Line (and other accidents) were directly linked to systemic maintenance deficiencies and lax of Quality Control oversight;³
 - There was too much focus on capital delivery at the expense of operating needs.;⁴
 - A robust safety culture at the T was lacking.
- In February 2022, this Board received an update on implementation of the Safety Report recommendations and corrective actions. It was informed that three of the four financial review corrective actions and the safety culture corrective action were on hold.
- The FY23 operating budget must prioritize safety, and A Better City recognizes the targeted efforts to do so; however, there must be a path forward to ensure safety and provide riders with frequent, reliable, affordable, and adequate service. The riding public counts on you to ensure this happens.
- A Better City stands ready to help identify and develop both funding and technical solutions that achieve the balance the system needs. One possibility would be to reverse some of the \$500 million this Board voted to transfer in FY22 from the T's operating budget to its capital budget (despite continued safety incidents, a looming fiscal cliff, and a system still running and staffed for below full service.)
- Thank you.

¹ Better City (2020): On the MBTA Safety Review Panel Report

² Safety Review Panel Report, ES-2

³ Safety Review Panel Report, page 8

⁴ Safety Review Panel Report, page 30