

Transportation & Infrastructure 2026 Policy Agenda

Improving the Region's Transportation System

A Better City is committed to advancing a safe, reliable, and modern transportation system that supports the future growth of the Greater Boston economy. Our 2026 Policy Agenda outlines the key priorities and actionable strategies that are needed to upgrade our transportation infrastructure, improve accessibility and affordability, and advance our climate goals. Through collaboration with member companies and institutions, government partners, and transportation advocates, A Better City will continue leading the efforts to create the transportation system this region deserves.

Goal I: Advocate for Safe, Accessible, Affordable, and Frequent Public Transit Service

A Better City will actively advocate for continued improvements to transit service across all modes that prioritize near-term reliability, frequency and accessibility. We will work to ensure that the recent progress at the MBTA continues, and that public transit is increasingly seen as a reliable option for commuters and visitors alike. Our goals include:

- **Advocate for continued service improvements** that help the MBTA deliver meaningful results in 2026, through investments that will increase speed, frequency, and reliability across all modes, including bus and ferry. We will continue to emphasize the need to enhance transit options and routes that serve vulnerable, transit dependent communities, increase the number of battery electric buses, and minimize disruptions that jeopardize customer experience.
- **Support the implementation of the MBTA's Mobility Integration Plan** across the five domains of integration: "physical," "digital," "service," "fares," and "mobility hubs." A Better City will track these initiatives and continue to advocate for seamless connections between modes, including subway, bus, commuter rail, and micromobility options, especially for first/last-mile trips. Additionally, we will promote policies and investments that improve access to and from transit stations, such as platform upgrades, integrated fare systems across modes, inclusive wayfinding, improved pedestrian infrastructure, and implementation of Bus Lane Camera enforcement. We will continue to actively participate in the MBTA Policy Development Working Group to advance this goal.
- **Support ongoing diversions for the installation of the Green Line Train Protection System (GLTPS) and other infrastructural improvements** in preparation for the delivery of the "Type 10" vehicle fleet, including efforts to with capacity grant funding for Green Line station improvements.
- **Advocate for increased transparency on the accelerated delivery of remaining Red Line Cars being produced by CRRC** to install new trainsets and improve service delivery. To date, the MBTA has received approximately 50 of 252 new red line vehicles.
- **Support the future growth of the water ferry system by assisting MassDOT's Water Transit study and MBTA procurement plans for ferry service in Boston.**
- **Examine the capacity of the Silver Line system that serves downtown Boston, the Seaport, and access to Logan Airport.**
- **Track implementation of agreements with Boston and Everett related to construction and operation of the proposed soccer stadium in Everett**, including advocating for transportation improvements that will be added to the proposed site in Everett, such as

the proposed SL-6 service on Broadway to Sullivan Square and opportunities for ferry service and comments in the MEPA review documents and permitting for the soccer stadium that will take place in 2026.

***Potential Deliverables:** Continued MBTA and MassDOT Board testimony, media engagement, and member programming, as well as targeted research and analysis tracking and communicating the impact of MBTA infrastructure improvements, identifying priority projects, and emphasizing the need for improving multi-modal connectivity between transit and bikeshare. Comment letters, member events, and a potential report that examines the future of the Everett soccer stadium includes an overview of the mitigation agreements, and recommended transportation infrastructure investments that are needed in this area.*

Goal 2: Maintain Focus on Advancing Governor Healey's Transportation Funding Task Force Recommendations

A Better City took a leadership role on the Governor's Transportation Funding Task Force, which resulted in significant benefits to the transportation system in 2025, such as stabilizing the MBTA operating budget and increasing funding for statewide transportation infrastructure plans. The final report also included specific steps to enhance and transform our transit system, reduce carbon emissions, and grow the regional economy. We will work to keep attention on the vision of the Task Force by:

- **Establish a 50/50 distribution of Fair Share funding between transportation and education programs.** Based on this primary recommendation of the Task Force, the Governor and Legislature supported an even balance of Fair Share dollars in 2025, but as the Commonwealth enters a more challenging fiscal climate, this balance could be in jeopardy. We will advocate for funding in the annual state budget process, and through another supplemental budget, to utilize Fair Share reserve funds to support the MBTA operating budget needs and other transportation priorities like road and bridge maintenance, culverts, and decarbonization efforts.
- **Increase the amount of Fair Share dedicated to transportation infrastructure projects.** In 2025, Governor Healey announced an \$8 billion transportation investment plan that would improve roads, bridges, and public transit throughout the Commonwealth through a funding plan initially proposed by A Better City. The legislature adopted a version of this plan that will guarantee a portion of Fair Share dollars will be set aside to directly finance new capital improvements, but it was a lower amount than the Governor initially proposed. We will seek to increase the portion of Fair Share that is available for statewide transportation infrastructure needs and pursue additional strategies that expand funding for transportation.
- **Advance the Task Force recommendations to enhance and transform the system.** Efforts may include assessing the current transportation user-based fees (e.g., TNC fees, RMV fees, gas tax, delivery fees), and review of policies to encourage and support electric vehicle adoption. We will conduct research and advocacy efforts that assist elected officials on this topic and also support options for municipal governments to increase revenue for transportation, and analyze the potential for new pricing strategies (e.g., roadway pricing, Vehicle Miles Traveled, variable time of day pricing) that could work for both the highway system and transit fares.
- **Assess the options for a more equitable roadway pricing system.** With the recent data and impact from the congestion pricing program in New York City, there will be increased attention and questions on the potential to replicate this plan in other places, including Greater Boston. We will continue to play an expert role on assessing

the various state laws and federal programs that might govern roadway pricing programs in Massachusetts.

Potential Deliverables: Testimony to Legislative leaders, leadership on advocacy coalitions seeking new revenue for transportation, reports on the history and current impact of New York's roadway pricing program.

Goal 3: Support the MBTA Rail Modernization Plan and Transformation of the Commuter Rail System

A Better City recognizes the significant opportunity presented by the ongoing MBTA Commuter Rail procurement process to build a modern, equitable, and regional rail system that improves safety, frequency, and reliability while prioritizing decarbonization, connecting affordable housing with employment centers, and boosting economic competitiveness. To support this transformation, we will:

- **Champion near-term efforts to improve commuter rail service** including the recent successful structural repairs, the acquisition of funding to overhaul aging HSP46 locomotives, and procurement efforts to replace single-level coaches with all new bi-level coaches, which will maintain and increase service frequency, service hours, and connectivity across the commuter rail network in near-term.
- **Actively Participate in the MBTA Rail Modernization Working Group**, which convenes public and private stakeholders to advance the implementation of regional rail by maintaining transparency on the rail modernization plan, encouraging discussion and agreement on key issues such as funding, technology, and timelines, communicating the positive economic, social, and environmental impacts of the project, coordinating with related sectors (i.e., housing, climate, economic development), and developing outreach materials to promote and advance rail modernization.
- **Advocate for strategic capital investments** that modernize rail infrastructure and advance Phase 1 of the Rail Modernization program, including prioritizing no regrets investments outlined in the Capital Investment Plan.
- **Support the Fairmount Line Decarbonization Pilot** by advocating for timely implementation and development of metrics to track pilot success and viability of technology across the commuter rail network.
- **Advocate for new fare options** to increase transit ridership and pilot programs that appeal to commuters who previously used transit in prior years, while also supporting important equity goals to better serve riders from transit dependent communities.
- **Assist the development of public-private-partnership legislation (P3) to support the infrastructure costs and capital delivery plans of rail transformation**

Potential Deliverables: MBTA Rail Modernization Working Group leadership, continued MBTA and MassDOT Board testimony, media engagement, and member programming, as well as targeted research and analysis communicating the positive impacts of strategic investments in rail modernization in A Better City reports.

Goal 4: Streamline Permitting and Capital Delivery Procedures on Major Infrastructure Projects

In the last year, the Healey-Driscoll Administration took steps to streamline the permitting process for housing and clean energy projects. A Better City will now advocate for a similar effort for major transportation projects. This is intended to help clarify any conflicts between state government agencies, while still maintaining strong environmental protections during the oversight and approval process. This way, the Commonwealth can deliver on beneficial infrastructure projects that not only improve the transportation system, but also advance statewide housing, economic development, and decarbonization goals:

- **Support the creation of a General Consolidated permit** for defined transit improvement projects and build off the goals of state legislation filed in the State Senate seeking to support transit electrification efforts and reforms to the MEPA process.
- **Promote transit-oriented development** that aligns with the MBTA Communities Law and state capital grant programs that can jump-start early design plans for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) projects necessary to deliver the new housing that meets the growing need of our statewide economy, including redevelopment of the MBTA Alewife parking garage
- **Communicate the value of public transit** to build support from lawmakers that helps lead to sufficient funding for the MBTA and results in improved transit service, a safer system, and promotes mode shift that increases transit ridership.
- **Encourage and support transportation sector decarbonization plans** by working with state environmental agencies that are updating state policies as part of the 2030 Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan (CECP). This involves tracking the progress on the number of EVs in the Commonwealth and reviewing the state's existing incentives for EV purchases, the delivery of EV charging infrastructure, and different strategies to reduce VMT. A Better City will also advocate for the elimination of any regulatory barriers blocking EV uptake and will support the implementation of the recommendations of the Special Commission on Micromobility to increase access, improve safety, and standardize usage of e-micromobility.

***Potential Deliverables:** Update the Transportation Dividend report and conduct additional analysis to help identify any solutions supporting the CECP targets on EV adoption, and testify at legislative hearings on rail electrification permitting legislation in the Senate and working with MassDOT & MBTA staff on potential language for a General Consolidated Perming approach.*

Goal 5: Advance the I-90 Allston Multimodal Project

A Better City will continue to support and advocate for the technical progress of the I-90 Allston Multimodal Project while independent review is underway. To do this, we will engage in the following activities:

- **Attempt to influence the independent review of the Multimodal Project** by working closely with MassDOT leadership, collaborating with stakeholders, actively participating in the monthly project Task Force meetings, and preparing comments on the material shared with the Task Force.
- **Resolve rail and station design issues** as the unresolved designs most critical to the success of the project by supporting the resolution of outstanding rail and layover yard issues to advance the West Station design; refine construction staging strategies; and support Grand Junction connections through continued advocacy for technical solutions that minimize service interruptions on the Grand Junction Continue advocacy for technical solutions Line.
- **Support the development of a project funding strategy** to ensure the project advances despite federal uncertainty.
- **Build and maintain regional support by convening meetings with stakeholders in MetroWest, Worcester, and Western Massachusetts as well as local stakeholders** to build consensus and coordinate advocacy efforts; support planning initiatives by the City of Boston by actively participating in the Beacon Park Yard planning process; and collaborate with key stakeholders by coordinating closely with A Better City members and groups like the People's Pike to advance shared goals.

Potential Deliverables: Analysis of layover opportunities in and adjacent to Widett Circle; analysis of West Station track options; refined study of access to the Grand Junction Line during a large part of Multimodal Project construction period; studies and analysis of options for outstanding design issues; analysis of the Multimodal Project schedule and staging plans; and comments on reports prepared by the independent review consultants and MassDOT team.

Goal 6: Support Active and Public Transportation Options to Enable Modeshift and VMT Reduction

The A Better City Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Transportation Management Association (TMA) team will continue to promote micromobility options both as a standalone options and as first/last mile connections to transit. In addition, we will press the City for more deliberate action related to balancing public roadways for all mode types. Finally, we will make our neighborhood shuttle in Allston Brighton fully accessible to the public. To achieve these goals, we will:

- **Scale the Guided Ride Series (GRS), which will launch season two** in April; launch a pilot program providing an e-bike certification course for new riders; continue our micromobility safety policy effort with Electric Avenue and help champion the recommendations of the Special Commission on Micromobility.
- **Address Right of Way issues through the City of Boston's nascent curb management pilot program;** promote the positive results of the Better Bike Lane analyses and help assess the path forward for new infrastructure projects, lean into the conversation around autonomous vehicle (AV) policy in the Commonwealth.
- **Fulfill our FHWA Congestion Relief Grant award** to expand the Allston Brighton shuttle into a multi-route, multi-vehicle neighborhood transit system that connects with the MBTA in several places, is open to the public, and free to ride.

Potential Deliverables: Continue operations of the GRS; implement a pilot e-bike certification course for TMA members; engage with agencies and legislators to implement the results of the Special Commission on Micromobility; publish blog(s) to highlight the findings of the Better Bike Lane evaluative reports; engage in the stakeholder conversations related to AV policy that are convened by Mass Mobility Hub; launch expanded AB Shuttle service in July with FHWA funding.

Goal 7: Find Opportunities at the Federal Level to Improve the Commonwealth's Infrastructure

- **Advocate for Massachusetts's needs in the next federal surface transportation reauthorization bill** in hopes that Congress can increase funding for public transit operating budget assistance. We will continue to work directly with the Massachusetts congressional delegation and peer business-organizations through coalition work on this major federal spending bill.
- **Continue to identify federal infrastructure grant funding opportunities** that may still be available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, Inflation Reduction Act, and other sources, working in coalition with the business community, transportation advocates, and state government partners.
- **Work with state officials to accelerate, obligate, and use any existing federal dollars**

Potential Deliverables: Research and analysis to evaluate performance and inform future opportunities.

Goal 8: Support the Transportation and Mobility Needs of Greater Boston during the Summer of 2026

This year, the City of Boston and eastern Massachusetts will celebrate multiple events that will bring thousands of tourists to the area and require careful planning to meet the increased need for transportation services and public safety oversight. Between June and July of 2026 there will be the 250th Celebration of the United States, The FIFA World Cup, and the Tall Ships in Boston. A Better City will work with our partners in the City of Boston, MassDOT, and our members to properly plan for the dramatic increase in visitors and the demand for transportation services. This will require significant planning and coordination with employers and public agencies in the next few months.

***Potential Deliverables:** Member meeting with leading tourism and event organizers to inform the City, State, and transportation agency plans, communications to members on increased commuter transportation options, coordination with members and TMAs to inform employers about street closures, public events, and changes to transit schedules.*

DRAFT FOR REVIEW