



Charles D. Baker, Governor
Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor
Jamey Tesler, Acting MassDOT Secretary & CEO
Steve Poftak, General Manager



June 10, 2021

The Honorable Marylou Sudders
Secretary of Health and Human Services
1 Ashburton Place, 11th Floor
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Secretary Sudders,

Thank you for reaching out to me regarding recent inquiries about the Arborway Bus Yard, which I understand are being made in conjunction with the planning your team is doing with DCAMM for the future of the Morton Street site that currently houses Shattuck Hospital. I have reviewed the materials from your community engagement process, and applaud the thoughtfulness of the process. MassDOT planning staff has begun working with DCAMM to better understand the transit, traffic, cycling, and pedestrian changes that might result from the redevelopment project.

We at the MBTA fully recognize the importance of this facility and how difficult it would be to provide desperately needed human services to Jamaica Plain and surrounding neighborhoods without this critical investment. The Commonwealth and the City of Boston committed 60 years ago to use the Morton Street campus site for public health purposes, and we look forward to continuing to work with you to address mobility needs as you determine what the next generation of those programs look like at the Morton Street site.

The MBTA Arborway Bus Yard has been the topic of decades of discussion with the Jamaica Plain community. During the April 26th Joint MassDOT-FMCB board meeting, we announced our strategy to transform the MBTA's bus fleet and our bus maintenance facilities. That strategy begins to be realized later this year when we start construction on a new bus facility that will house all-new electric battery buses in Quincy. Our future plans include a similar use for the Arborway Bus Yard, making any proposed alternative use of the facility extremely challenging and disruptive.

The MBTA's fleet and maintenance plan has four goals. First, to convert the entire bus fleet to zero-emissions technology to help support Governor Baker's and the Commonwealth's goals of carbon reduction. The second is to modernize all of the maintenance facilities to improve conditions for our workforce as well as maintain a carbon-neutral and reliable bus fleet. Third, transition to a more uniform bus fleet replaced on a predictable and annual timetable. Lastly, replacing and modernizing these facilities will allow us to increase our fleet size to meet the needs of growing ridership.

The bus routes out of Arborway rank near the top when compared with other MBTA bus facilities in terms of ridership and the proportion of low income households served. The Arborway Bus Yard currently accommodates 10% of our fleet and serves a total of 13% of our bus riders. Of these riders, 35% reside in low income households and 55% are from households of color.

A replacement of the Arborway Bus Yard represents one of the MBTA's best opportunities to bring zero emissions bus technology to marginalized populations within the City of Boston. The MBTA has identified Arborway as next on our list of bus facility investments to replace and modernize, and the fleet operating out of Arborway is due to be replaced by 2028-2029. Given current needs and space requirements we cannot commit to releasing any land for alternative uses.

The MBTA will continue to engage with local elected officials and members of the community as this process moves forward.

If you or your staff have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



Steve Poflak

General Manager

cc: Acting Secretary Jamey Tesler, MassDOT
Commissioner Carol Gladstone, DCAMM
Secretary Michael J. Heffernan, Executive Office for Administration and Finance