



STAKEHOLDER TASK FORCE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27, 2018 AT 6:00 P.M.

AT

THE FIORENTINO CENTER
123 ANTWERP STREET
BRIGHTON, MA 02135

FOR THE PROPOSED
ALLSTON I-90 INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

IN BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

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 Massachusetts Department of Transportation
 Jonathan Gulliver, Highway Administrator
 MassDOT - Highway Division
 Michael O'Dowd, Project Manager,
 MassDOT - Highway Division

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1 presentation with you in a few minutes. I know these
2 events are usually somewhat informal and people kind
3 of ask questions as they're going along. However, to
4 respect everybody's time, I'm asking you to please
5 hold your comments to the end. The Secretary has a
6 hard stop tonight. And when her presentation is
7 through, we'll be happy to go back and focus on any
8 slides or comments that you want. So, please take
9 notes as you're going along.

10 And, also, we do have a stenographer
11 here tonight. So, when you do speak, please -- every
12 time you get up to speak, even if it's multiple times,
13 please clearly state your name and the organization
14 that you're with so that we can get it correct for the
15 record.

16 So, with that, again, this is a project
17 that's been going on for a while. And for a number of
18 years now, this has been a project that's been very
19 close and near and dear to Secretary Pollack. And I
20 invite her up here to speak more about it.

21 Thank you.

22 (Applause.)

23 SECRETARY STEPHANIE POLLACK: Good
24 evening, everybody. I can usually yell pretty loud,

1 but if you can't hear in the back, like wave and I'll
2 know you can't hear.

3 So, I want to thank everyone who signed
4 -- who reupped or is newly joining the task force. As
5 Jonathan mentioned, we went through a period where we
6 were finalizing the Draft Environmental Impact Report,
7 submitting to MEPA, going through an extended public
8 comment period, and we've been taking a very hard and
9 serious look at all the comments that were received
10 and at the certificate. So, if you're sort of worried
11 that we've been ignoring all the obviously very
12 thoughtful work that went into the comments that's not
13 the case. In fact, the reason that we haven't
14 reconvened the group to kick off the process of moving
15 from the draft to the final EIR is we wanted to make
16 sure that we gave some serious thought to some of the
17 very well thought out feedback that we got on the
18 Draft EIR and that we reached out to some of our key
19 partners at the City of Boston, and the Metropolitan
20 Area Council, and others before we sort of constituted
21 this group.

22 So, this is really the kickoff to the
23 next phase of work, which is doing -- moving to a
24 Final Environmental Impact Report. And, obviously, in

1 the process of doing that, there's a lot of critical
2 decisions that need to be made. And we are well aware
3 that when it comes to some of those decisions, there
4 is some concern, some trepidation, some sense that we
5 may not be ready yet. So, I want to sort of lay out
6 our ideas for how we can get from where we are to
7 where we need to be in a way that is respectful of the
8 need to bring folks along, generate more information,
9 and make sure that we are being credible in how we are
10 approaching this very important project. It's a very
11 important project from a state and regional
12 perspective. And I also understand how important it
13 is locally. And it's really on us to strike that
14 balance appropriately, of course with lots of good
15 input and feedback.

16 So, thank you, Dan.

17 So, there's three things that we're
18 trying to accomplish this evening. And I apologize in
19 advance that I can't stay for the whole evening, but
20 I'll stay as long as I can and leave lots of great
21 folks behind to continue the conversation.

22 So, the first thing I know that people
23 want to know, what the heck have you guys been doing
24 since you got the certificate on the Draft EIR and

1 what is the FEIR process going to look like. So,
2 we'll do that.

3 I want to talk about an approach that
4 we have sort of put together for how we can address
5 what I see -- and there are piles of outstanding
6 issues, and that's what the FEIR process will tackle -
7 - but there are three big ones that I want to focus on
8 as Secretary.

9 And then, obviously, we want to hear
10 your ideas, and your concerns, and talk about what the
11 next steps are with the task force. And I can assure
12 you, it will be a busy task force. You'll be meeting
13 a lot more frequently than you have since October.

14 Okay. So, because of the new approach
15 that we're going to be describing this evening, the
16 Final EIR schedule has been pushed back to the spring
17 of 2019. So, those of you who think, you know, we've
18 already nefariously made all of our decisions about
19 preferred alternatives, and everything is baked, and,
20 you know, we're just going to sprint across the finish
21 line, that's not true. So, we have not a year, but
22 nearly a year to work through these issues.

23 I also want to assure you that the big
24 open issue in defining a preferred alternative that

1 was left in the Draft EIR, which is the "throat,"
2 there has been no decision. And we're going to talk
3 tonight about how that decision is going to be made
4 and when that decision is going to be made, but it has
5 not been made.

6 I also want to assure you that we are
7 committed to rephrasing the -- revisiting the phasing
8 plan that was in the Draft EIR specifically with
9 respect to the timing of West Station. We heard loud
10 and clear that people would like us to take a hard
11 look at sooner rather than later. We'll talk about
12 that tonight.

13 But I also want to be clear that while
14 I'm going to talk about some approaches to how we can
15 address those issues, there is also a lot of work that
16 goes into creating a Final Environmental Impact
17 Report, just as there was a lot of work that went into
18 creating the Draft Environmental Impact Report. And
19 some of that work is pretty independent of either the
20 phasing plan or the throat issue. And so Mike O'Dowd
21 and the team that you guys are all used to are going
22 to continue to work through those issues. And so at
23 task force meetings, some of our time will focus on
24 what I'm about to talk to you about on this new

1 approach, but some of your time will also focus on
2 continuing to work with the team on the many
3 important, but smaller, issues that will continue to
4 have to be addressed as we get from here to next
5 spring when we plan to be in a position to file the
6 Final Environmental Impact Report.

7 So, normally, what would happen after
8 you get -- so, let's take a step back. Normally,
9 quite frankly, MassDOT on a project of this size
10 wouldn't even file a Draft Environmental Impact Report
11 until it actually had selected a preferred
12 alternative. And then, you know, we'd put out our
13 preferred alternative, and folks who didn't like it
14 would be in a position of saying, "No, no, no. Don't
15 build that," but without a lot of information. The
16 last time I actually came to this task force was to
17 talk about the fact that I understood that there were
18 some serious ideas out there, particularly for the
19 throat, and that people wanted to make sure that
20 MassDOT was taking those seriously. And so I made a
21 commitment, which we kept, that the Draft
22 Environmental Impact Report would not select a
23 preferred alternative. And we did not do that.

24 Now, the thing about a Final EIR is we

1 do need to select a preferred alternative. You can't
2 do a Final Environmental Impact Report on a lot of
3 different things because you have to analyze in much
4 more detail a lot of the things that folks asked for
5 in your comments. You know, what's the phasing of the
6 construction going to look like? And how are you
7 going to mitigate it? How are you going to deal with
8 this issue and that issue? Can't get to those until
9 we all know what project we're talking about. Right?

10 So, normally, what would have happened
11 after we got the draft and what we had sort of hoped
12 might happen is we would synthesize all the comments
13 and the scope and we would say, "Okay. Given what
14 we've already done, and what we put in the draft, and
15 what we heard, here is the preferred alternative."
16 And so while you might not have to read about the
17 final preferred alternative until the FEIR comes out,
18 the actual decision would usually, honestly, get made
19 very early in the FEIR process because so much of the
20 analysis flows from that decision.

21 What was clear to me and the team was
22 if we did that, if we kind of came back and said,
23 "Okay. We've now selected the preferred alternative.
24 Let's take the task force and march through the

1 process of an FEIR," we'd have some unhappy task force
2 members.

3 So, what we're going to talk about is
4 how we're going to get to that preferred alternative
5 for the throat.

6 So, Dan, why don't you go to the next
7 one?

8 So, again, I just want to make this
9 clear. We have not made a decision on a choice, and
10 we're not going to make a decision on that for the
11 next 90 days while we go through the process I'm going
12 to describe to you today.

13 The three issues, in addition to that
14 issue, which I think is one of the number one open
15 issues post-DEIR, the other two issues that I want to
16 make sure that we are doing the additional homework
17 that we need to do before we get too deep into the
18 FEIR process. So, one is the current transit
19 situation. We heard a lot in the public comments, in
20 the written comments, in this task force, about
21 existing transit.

22 Now, technically, existing transit is
23 not the problem of this project because, by
24 definition, if it's already happening it is not

1 legally related to the project. That said, you should
2 not have to wait till we go build this project, which
3 is years away, before addressing those issues. So,
4 we're going to talk about near-term transit.

5 And then finally, obviously, West
6 Station timing is a big issue, and we'll talk about
7 that.

8 So, let's start with the throat and the
9 choice of a preferred alternative for the throat.

10 Next slide please, Dan.

11 So, in order to make that choice in a
12 way that is credible and transparent, which is what we
13 have heard loud and clear you guys are asking for, we
14 need to have what I would call an improved version of
15 something that's at-grade, and something that's on a
16 viaduct, so that you can compare. And since the DEIR
17 came out, there are some additional ideas that have
18 been developed, and there are also some I thought
19 legitimate points made about whether we really did as
20 thorough a look at at-grade as we did on viaduct.

21 I also -- and I say this in the
22 presence of my staff, and the consulting team, and
23 with all due respect to them -- what I heard both
24 explicitly in some cases, and implicitly in many, was

1 a concern about whether the team that has been working
2 on the viaduct alternative for the throat can really
3 conduct an unbiased analysis comparing at-grade and
4 at-viaduct alternatives, because while we didn't have
5 a preferred alternative, I think everyone was pretty
6 aware of which one was developed by the MassDOT team
7 and which one was developed by outside teams.

8 So, what's the solution?

9 Next slide, please, Dan.

10 So, my solution that I am proposing and
11 putting into place this evening is to put together an
12 independent review. What do I mean by an independent
13 review? I mean that I love Mike O'Dowd, but he's
14 actually not going to manage this review. And I love
15 the consulting team, and they're not going to do this
16 review. We are bringing in Ryan McNeil from MassDOT
17 to manage it. And we are bringing in a different
18 group of folks because I think that fresh eyes and a
19 fresh perspective are sort of essential. We've got
20 some folks who have already made their minds up. I'm
21 not sure there's much I can do about people who have
22 already made their minds up. I am concerned about the
23 credibility of people who have a genuinely, you know,
24 a perspective and concerns, but are really trying to

1 understand it.

2 And so we've done things like this
3 before, we being Transportation agencies in
4 Massachusetts, if you want to go all the way back to
5 the -- you could argue that's what the Boston
6 Transportation Planning Review is. You could
7 certainly argue that the whole sort of Scheme Z into
8 Zakim Bridge process was also a sort of stepping away
9 and opening ourselves up to new ideas.

10 The one that I'm the most familiar with
11 because it occurred since I became Secretary was the
12 Green Line Extension look back where we sort of had a
13 project that there was a lot of commitment to and it
14 kind of got sideways. And we found ourselves in a
15 position where we couldn't afford to build what we had
16 done, and we couldn't figure out how to proceed with
17 the project, make changes to the project back to
18 something we could afford to build. So, we brought in
19 an independent team. Jack Wright -- where's Jack?

20 JACK WRIGHT: Right here.

21 SECRETARY POLLACK: There he is. Jack
22 Wright, some of you who do a lot of different, may
23 remember was actually the interim project manager for
24 GLX for a while and sort of ran that process out of

1 Weston and Sampson.

2 And so that's what I think we need to
3 do. We need a team that has engineering expertise,
4 and risk analysis expertise, and design expertise, and
5 permitting and legal expertise that wasn't involved in
6 the development of the Draft Environmental Impact
7 Report, that isn't currently working for any major
8 projects for either the DOT or Harvard University, to
9 sort of put some fresh eyes on both at-grade and
10 viaduct versions and help us work through the process.

11 So, I've given the team 90 days. This
12 is making them very nervous. But Jack's been through
13 this before with me and he's thinking, "She doesn't
14 back down on those damn deadlines." I've given the
15 team 90 days -- next slide -- and what we've asked
16 them to sort of do is to get us and you to a place
17 where we all have a better understanding of the
18 alternatives, what I would call an improved version of
19 the alternatives in the DEIR, to reflect the comments
20 we got, to reflect the ideas that have come up since
21 the DEIR, and then to sort of compare them to each
22 other.

23 I am not asking the Review Team to make
24 a decision. The decision is mine and MassDOT's to

1 make at the end of the day. We have to decide. We
2 have to complete the Environmental Review Process. We
3 have to pay for it, and we have to build it, and we
4 have to operate it for decades to come. So, that's on
5 us. So, this is not about getting a recommendation.
6 It is about generating a common base of understanding
7 about what the throat options really are.

8 Next slide.

9 So, for example, the scope of work
10 includes some renderings, and some cross-sections, and
11 things that will help people visualize because a lot
12 of the back and forth on these two options is what
13 will it look like. What will it look like from the
14 river going back to Allston? What will it look like
15 from Allston looking across to the river? What will
16 it look like? What will it feel like? What will it -
17 - how high will it be? How wide will it be? So,
18 we'll do some visualization work.

19 We'll also, you know, basically create
20 sort of a risk -- sort of a matrix and say how do they
21 compare on safety, operations, constructability,
22 environmental impacts, impacts on and benefits to
23 parkland, permitting, and ease of permitting,
24 difficulty of permitting, structural and geotech

1 issues, resiliency issues. The Charles River Basin is
2 a giant floodplain. So, we need to look at all those
3 issues. And you will see every single piece of work
4 that is generated by the Independent Review Commission
5 and so will the public because the point is to get to
6 a common sense of understanding and have everybody be
7 able to engage in a well-informed conversation about
8 pros and cons, and challenges, and risk and benefits,
9 before we make a decision in the fall.

10 Next slide.

11 So, the team, Jack is going to direct
12 the team from Weston and Sampson.

13 For design and engineering support,
14 we've sort of married Howard Stein Hudson and Arup.

15 And, for environmental permitting, the
16 law firm of Noble, Wickersham & Heart.

17 And then we've got Ilyas Bhatti, who I
18 hope a lot of you know, who is a civil engineer and a
19 professor at Wentworth. Ilyas not only brings that
20 kind of transportation experience, Ilyas lived through
21 actually Scheme Z.

22 ILYAS BHATTI: Yes, I did.

23 SECRETARY POLLACK: But was on the MDC
24 side, so he also brings a huge appreciation for the

1 Charles River, the Charles River Basin, and the role
2 of the parkland. So, I think that combination of the
3 transportation and the park side really will help him
4 facilitate the conversation and make sure all the
5 different perspectives come out.

6 So, Weston and Sampson is going to work
7 to help us with project management and some other
8 areas of expertise.

9 Next slide.

10 Howard Stein Hudson is going to help us
11 with traffic and safety analysis, roadway design,
12 doing some of the visualization work. And, again,
13 like -- they also have a lot of experience on
14 transportation, but also a lot of experience in the
15 Charles River Basin, which I think is just critical to
16 the conversation we're about to have.

17 Arup was one of the firms that did the
18 Green Line Extension look back and really helped us
19 find, you know, new solutions and out-of-the-box ways
20 to think about things that, you know, the same folks
21 inside 10 Park Plaza had been kind of looking at the
22 same way for a very long time.

23 They were also involved several years
24 back in a San Francisco project called the Presidio

1 Parkway, which is actually somewhat similar. It's a
2 1.6-mile stretch of roadway near the -- leading up to
3 the Golden Gate Bridge where there was sort of a big
4 kind of design, how should we manage this thing. And
5 it turned into a public-private partnership.

6 So, they're going to help with a lot of
7 the engineering, planning assumptions, structural
8 engineering, geotech, constructability, resiliency
9 piece of all this.

10 And then Noble, Wickersham and Heart is
11 Jay Wickersham and Bennet Heart are the Wickersham and
12 Heart in that name. Jay was the MEPA Director, also
13 active in the Smart Growth Alliance, Boston Society of
14 Architects. Bennet was actually a colleague of mine
15 at the Conservation Law Foundation a while back and
16 went on to become General Counsel of the Executive
17 Office of Environmental Affairs and Executive General
18 Counsel of DEP.

19 And they have not actually done hardly
20 any work for us or Harvard, but there's no one that I
21 would trust more to be able to really lay out the
22 permitting challenges. And there are some very real
23 permitting challenges with this project that we need
24 to understand.

1 So, that's the team. So, let me just
2 finish, as Jonathan said, and then we'll come back to
3 all of this.

4 So, that's question number one, how are
5 we going to get to a preferred alternative for the
6 throat. And the answer is we're going to do it smart.
7 We're going to do it with some real outside expertise.
8 We're going to do it in a completely transparent way
9 where we generate and then share new information.

10 The second question is what do we do
11 about the existing transit situation without
12 necessarily having to wait until we finish the
13 environmental permitting, and construction, and
14 completion of this project?

15 We heard a lot about existing transit.
16 So, I don't think we should have to wait till we do a
17 project. We've done a lot of work with individual
18 communities who have transit challenges. So, what we
19 want to do is really there's a two-part strategy on
20 the near-term issue.

21 Dan, if you would go to the next slide?

22 So, one is to take a look at the
23 existing transit network, mostly the bus network.
24 We're also going to take a look at the Green Line.

1 We're also going to take a look at commuter rail --
2 and understand what the ridership is, what the traffic
3 conditions are, what we think the needs are, what we
4 can do better to put together some specific
5 recommendations for operational capital improvements
6 and potential new service alternatives.

7 Now, while we were thinking about this
8 at MassDOT -- and this would all be done, honestly,
9 before the FEIR is done because, again, if it's about
10 current needs, what's the point of driving things
11 back? While we were thinking about this and we were
12 talking to the City of Boston about what the scope of
13 such an analysis should be, the City of Boston
14 independently also came to the conclusion that there's
15 more work to be done to address both current and let's
16 say near- to medium-term needs that are being driven
17 both by existing demand and near-term demand caused by
18 development that's already sort of in the pipeline.
19 And they put together the idea for doing an Allston
20 Brighton Mobility Study. So, I'm actually going to
21 ask Tad Read from the Boston Planning and Development
22 Agency to explain what the City's is, and then we'll
23 have sort of two forums for making sure that those
24 near-term transit issues are not, you know, held

1 hostage to a much bigger process for a regional and
2 multimodal facility.

3 TAD READ: Thank you, Madam Secretary.

4 So, I think it's no surprise to anyone
5 that Allston and Brighton are going through a lot of
6 growing pains. We hear about it over and over again
7 from the community. And I think the other day, when
8 we were talking, Tony D'Isidoro put it really well and
9 he said, "You know, the infrastructure is not keeping
10 up with development in Allston and Brighton."

11 So, what we want to do is working
12 through, you know, a community engagement process,
13 figure out what the bottlenecks and what the issues
14 are, and then develop a set of recommendations to
15 improve mobility for all modes, so improve mobility
16 for pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and vehicles.
17 That would include inventorying all existing plans
18 because, as we all know, there are a number of plans
19 in effect in the Allston-Brighton neighborhood; and,
20 also looking at coordinating with a short-term transit
21 study that the Secretary just described, get a sort of
22 good baseline of what's on the ground now and what we
23 expect to see on the ground in the next five to ten
24 years; and then working with the community to figure

1 out really the best way to improve mobility. That's
2 the idea.

3 We would be issuing an RFP this summer,
4 selecting a consultant, and then kicking this off in
5 the fall.

6 SECRETARY POLLACK: And we really
7 appreciate the collaboration with the City, both on
8 our own, you know, quick look, I would say. Ours is
9 kind of quick and it's focused on existing transit and
10 how you can get from sort of existing services to a
11 better set of services in the relatively near-term.
12 And then the City can pick that up and bridge into
13 both a bigger geography and a set of issues that are
14 not limited to transit, which I think is great.

15 Now, I'm not naïve, and I understand
16 none of that answers the third big question that a lot
17 of folks have, which is when are we going to get West
18 Station and when are we going to get that wonderful
19 set of new transit opportunities that comes with this
20 regional transit hub located right here in our
21 community.

22 So, we already talked about the Transit
23 Improvement Study. So, I get that. So, first of all,
24 I would just want to make this clear. We did not say

1 we were going to build West Station in 2040. We had a
2 phasing plan, and it was in the last phase, and the
3 last phase ran through 2040. But, I get that the
4 separation of -- the putting of West Station in the
5 third phase, particularly coming after a layover, a
6 fairly large layover facility for the T, made some
7 people very unhappy. So, there's a couple of things
8 that I want to say. We are committed to building West
9 Station. The only question is when. There is no if.
10 Okay? So, if people are telling you there might not
11 be one, and we need to lobby them, that's not true.
12 And I'll show you in a second why I can show you in
13 writing why I'm sure that that's true.

14 The second thing -- and I just want to
15 be really clear on this because I do think there was
16 some confusion -- the first phase of the project is
17 not transit, it's building the replacement for the
18 structurally deficient viaduct, and the roadway
19 network, and some of the bicycle and pedestrian
20 facilities. While we are building that, there is no
21 place to build West Station. What will be West
22 Station in the future will be a construction site.
23 That will be true until roughly 2025, and only that if
24 I let Mike finish his Final Environmental Impact

1 Report and put out a design build package on the
2 schedule that we are currently on, which is now longer
3 than the schedule we were on six months ago because
4 we've added this extra time in to get these important
5 questions answered the right way.

6 So, when we talk about when we're going
7 to do West Station, there's one -- so, one answer I
8 can tell you is not before 2025. Okay? As a rail
9 station. We can talk about additional bus services
10 and where we might want to locate them, but access to
11 the area that will be the West Station Regional
12 Multimodal is simply not an option. That said,
13 there's still a big difference between 2025 and 2040.
14 And I get that, right? So, we'll talk about that in a
15 second.

16 The last thing that I just want to make
17 sure that you understand is when we say that we are
18 committed to building West Station, West Station is a
19 physical facility. But when I read the most
20 thoughtful comments, they were not about a station.
21 They were about service. They were about north-south
22 service over the Grand Junction and new bus routes.
23 So, you need to understand, service doesn't come out
24 of an environmental review process or a highway.

1 Service comes out of MBTA service planning, or maybe
2 there are private entities or institutions that are
3 willing to do service. Right? So, building West
4 Station does not mean that there will be multiple-unit
5 trains crossing the Grand Junction Railroad. Separate
6 issue.

7 So, neither the MBTA nor anyone else
8 has planned any of the service additions that folks
9 were talking about in those comments. No one has
10 committed to fund any of the that were talked about in
11 those comments. And no one has actually committed to
12 provide any of those services even if they were
13 funded. Okay? So, when I talk about the timing of
14 West Station, yes, we need to talk about when it's
15 physically possible to construct it. But we also need
16 to talk about when it's going to be able to support
17 the services that people want because you're not
18 asking for a building, you're asking for new transit
19 services. And I get that. But you need to understand
20 that even my promise to build you a station is not the
21 same as what you really want. And there are other
22 processes that need to be engaged to get to the point
23 of having new services.

24 So, what's the solution on the phasing

1 question? So, we are committed to working with the
2 City of Boston, the City of Cambridge, Metropolitan
3 Area Planning Council -- and I'm going to ask Eric
4 Bourassa to speak in a minute -- we need to -- we get
5 that people do not feel that the transit demand
6 analysis we did was credible. We get that you don't
7 like our CTPS model. If you know me, you know I don't
8 much like our CTPS model either. But, when we want
9 federal funding, we have to run that model. And that
10 is the model that got us a billion dollars for the
11 Green Line Extension. So, when it gets us a billion
12 dollars for the Green Line Extension, everyone likes
13 the model. Right? But when it doesn't give you the
14 right answer, nobody likes it. And it's the model
15 that tells us how many people are going to ride South
16 Coast Rail that convinced the Governor that we should
17 invest in South Coast Rail.

18 Now, that doesn't mean we can't run
19 another model. And we're going to talk about that.
20 But I just want you to be clear. We can run another
21 model, but we can't not use the CTPS model. Okay?

22 So, we're actually talking about
23 putting two other kinds of models together. And I'll
24 talk about that.

1 So, one of the things -- so, we need a
2 better understanding of what the real transit demand
3 would be, what the services would look like, when we
4 could produce those services, how they relate to new
5 development, how they relate to existing development.

6 So, Metropolitan Area Planning Council
7 has committed to putting together a scope for a study
8 that will help us better understand the future set of
9 both land use and transportation demand conditions
10 that will help us get smarter both about how we design
11 West Station, what kind of services we're designing it
12 to accommodate, and how we operate it.

13 So, if you can flip to the next slide,
14 Dan, I think that's Eric's slide. So, Eric, do you
15 want to talk for a couple of minutes about this?

16 ERIC BOURASSA: Yeah. So, the
17 conversations we've had -- by the way, Eric Bourassa.
18 I'm the Director of Transportation Planning with MAPC.

19 We've had conversations with MassDOT
20 and with the municipalities about trying to understand
21 what are the transit services, the bicycle/pedestrian
22 connections, the way that growth occurs in the Beacon
23 Park Yards area that will best accommodate non-auto
24 travel to/from that site and through that site as

1 well.

2 And so what we would be proposing to do
3 here is essentially do a quantitative process to try
4 to evaluate these various strategies. So, different
5 centers have different transit connections to, from,
6 through West Station, different rail services,
7 different bus services, under different development
8 conditions. So, we would work with the cities, we
9 would work with the property owners to look at
10 different development types, different densities,
11 different mix of land uses, and the trip generation
12 that comes from that.

13 We would then test that against
14 different mobility movements to try to understand,
15 again, what would have the most utility, the most
16 connection to the things in our region. We try to
17 estimate what the potential ridership of transit would
18 be, the utility of different bicycle/pedestrian
19 functions if they've sort of got a regional
20 connection. We can test what would be different areas
21 around how you even limit trips around parking
22 policies and things like that.

23 We're proposing to use a different type
24 of modeling as the Secretary talked about. The

1 traditional four-step travel model that CTPS uses is a
2 very high-end tool. It's a tool that uses lots of
3 data, lots of variables to try to understand the
4 complete picture of transportation movement across the
5 region. It's a great tool for asking certain types of
6 questions. It's not a great tool for doing scenario
7 planning where you're trying to do lots of different
8 scenarios, and iterations, and do that over a planning
9 process. And it's a slower sort of clunkier tool for
10 that type of thing.

11 So, we're proposing to use, to try to
12 develop a more accessibility type model that we can
13 use in a process that tests lots of different land use
14 development scenarios against different
15 transportation, again, to try to understand what would
16 have the most utility for providing this non-auto
17 travel to, from, and through this area. And that
18 would then be used to inform what the ultimate design
19 of a West Station would be like, so how many -- what
20 the track space would be, what the bus layover, the
21 physical size that the station would need to
22 accommodate, those types of things.

23 SECRETARY POLLACK: And I'm just going
24 to be honest with you. I'm very excited about this.

1 Eric knows this. I'm a huge fan of accessibility
2 modeling as a complement to, not substitute for,
3 regional travel demand modeling. But, it's new for
4 us, new for MAPC. It may not, probably won't be done
5 in the timeframe of the FEIR. But, I would just
6 remind everyone that for the Final Environmental
7 Impact Report, the thing we have to get right for West
8 Station is kind of its footprint, right, because we
9 have to build the viaduct around it, and its timing
10 because we owe the public, in the mitigation section
11 of our FEIR, when we're going to do what. But there
12 will still be a lot of time after the FEIR is done to
13 continue to develop the specifics. And we, you know,
14 we heard people saying that you're skeptical that the
15 transit ridership demand is really that which the CTPS
16 model showed.

17 So, I can keep running the CTPS model.
18 I can change the, you know, inputs and run it again.
19 But it's not going to do anything real different. I
20 think the accessibility modeling has real potential.

21 The other thing I want to mention --
22 and then I'm going to come back to the bottom line on
23 West Station -- Dan, if you could go to the next one -
24 - is this isn't the only thing that's going on to help

1 us get smarter about future transit service here in
2 the Commonwealth. So, right now, all we have is a
3 Five-Year Capital Plan. And I just told you we're not
4 building West Station before 2025, and so the Five-
5 Year Capital Plan that both the T and MassDOT boards
6 and the Commonwealth adopted earlier this month only
7 runs through fiscal 2023. Right? So, this stuff is
8 too important to just say we know what we're going to
9 do for the next five years and stop.

10 So, we've been working on, especially
11 for the T, a 2040, much more detailed 2040 sort of
12 capital prioritization exercise called Focus40. And
13 we just briefed the Control Board on that, and the
14 actual website will go live, and the draft plan will
15 be out in a few weeks. And we'll take the whole
16 summer to have a public conversation about Focus40.
17 And we encourage you to participate in Focus40, both
18 because it's relevant to things like West Station, but
19 also because it's really relevant to things that are
20 not going to be part of the Allston project. The
21 Allston project is the Allston project. It's the
22 viaduct, and Cambridge Street, and exit ramps, bicycle
23 and pedestrian facilities, and some changes to
24 Soldiers Field Road, and West Station because we've

1 said that West Station is part of it. But, I just
2 have to be honest with you. We're not going to expand
3 it to include, you know, a lot of the things that I
4 heard about in the comments, not because they're not
5 interesting things, but because, you know, this is a
6 project. It's not a planning exercise for the T or
7 for regional transit, it's a project.

8 So, if you go to the next slide?

9 So, the other study that you need to
10 understand is called Commuter Rail Vision. So, this
11 is the -- it's too small to read. Don't worry. We'll
12 give it to you when it comes out in a couple of weeks.
13 But, what Focus40 actually says about commuter rail is
14 really important for the people in this room to
15 understand because what it says is we're doing a study
16 called Commuter Rail Vision. We just actually
17 convened the advisory group for that and we're going
18 to be starting that process soon.

19 And the Commuter Rail Vision study is
20 going to create actually a third model. And the
21 reason is because traditional transportation
22 regional models like the CTPS model are not dynamic.
23 Okay? They assume land use and then the land use
24 generates trips, and then the trips get distributed.

1 But what doesn't happen is the trips and the
2 transportation infrastructure you build doesn't feed
3 back and change the land use. And that's actually
4 what I've heard a lot of people say, like, "Wait a
5 minute. The existence of West Station could change
6 things." That's true. Models don't capture that.

7 But there is a kind of modeling called
8 dynamic modeling, which is done mostly in Europe,
9 quite frankly, in which there's a feedback loop in
10 which the transportation investments, and particularly
11 the transportation services, actually produce
12 different modeled outcomes. And CTPS, I will tell
13 you, the difference between urban rail, and regional
14 rail, and commuter rail doesn't really come out that
15 well because that's not what the model does.

16 So, we are building -- we have
17 committed to, already set the money aside, already
18 hired the consultant firm, to building a dynamic model
19 for the commuter rail system because it's the most
20 important part of our system that we could run a lot
21 of different ways in the future. Right? The Red Line
22 is going to kind of run like the Red Line, much
23 better, much more frequently, after we get the new
24 cars and the signals, but it's kind of going to run

1 like the Red Line. And the buses, we can change up,
2 but we can actually change them up pretty frequently
3 because a bus lasts 12 years, and they drive on
4 asphalt and rubber tires. And if you kind of get the
5 buses wrong and you want to change the whole bus
6 network five years later, you can do that.

7 But, commuter rail is fixed and, yet,
8 we have a very specific service model called commuter
9 rail, which means we run a lot of trains -- not even a
10 lot -- but we run most of our trains during the
11 morning and afternoon peak. It's designed to get you
12 into town in the morning, get you home in the
13 afternoon, not much else going on in the middle.
14 That's one service model. But you could also run an
15 urban rail, which you basically take the same tracks
16 and you try to run them more like transit. And you
17 can run what people are calling regional rail, which
18 is it's not commuter rail. It runs, you know, at 15-
19 20-, 30-minute intervals all day.

20 We don't have a model that can help us
21 understand what the differences between those would
22 be. That's what this model is going to be. That's
23 what the Commuter Rail Vision study is going to be.

24 So, Focus40 actually doesn't say a lot

1 about commuter rail because what it says is, "As part
2 of the Commuter Rail Vision process now underway,
3 MassDOT/MBTA is examining various possible service
4 models for rail transportation in the Commonwealth.
5 Topics include the benefits and costs of urban rail
6 and regional rail, of service focused on reverse-
7 commute and the needs of Gateway Cities, and of system
8 electrification. Different service models will
9 require different near-, medium-, and long-term
10 capital investments." So, Focus40 doesn't lock in the
11 capital. It sort of says, you know, to be decided.

12 But -- next slide -- here's the one
13 thing it says. It doesn't actually say it in the
14 slide in giant red. I put it in giant red for you.
15 This is the way -- the way Focus40 is presented is
16 this category is called "We're Doing." So, this is
17 the objective for the system. We have 12 programs in
18 Focus40; each has an objective. So, for commuter
19 rail, it is "Serve more riders and non-commuting
20 trips, by providing better connections to more
21 destinations and potentially by implementing one or
22 more new service models pending the results of
23 Commuter Rail Vision." So, that's what we're trying
24 to accomplish by 2040.

1 It then lists for each of our 12, not
2 just commuter rail, what we're already doing, the
3 commitments we've made through 2023. So, all these
4 are actually funded.

5 The second category is called "We're
6 Planning." And this is identified as our next set of
7 priorities. And once we go through the public process
8 and finalize this and the Control Board votes it, that
9 is the menu for which we'll start designing and
10 pulling next projects in.

11 And while we listed very little in
12 commuter rail because we're pending Commuter Rail
13 Vision study, we listed Regional Multimodal West
14 Station as a next priority in Focus40 because we
15 wanted to make it clear that we heard you loud and
16 clear. Yes, it will be committed to in the
17 environmental documents for this project, but we also
18 wanted it to be part of the big picture.

19 So, now, Dan, go backwards two slides,
20 and I'll finish up, and we'll have a bit more of a
21 conversation.

22 So, the thing that I want -- go back
23 one more. One more. Okay. So, this is a thing I
24 want you to hear loud and clear. Okay? We will

1 figure out the right time to do West Station based on
2 the best information we have when we file the Final
3 Environmental Impact Report, informed as much as we
4 can by as much work as we can do between now and then.
5 But the commitment I am making to you tonight, and the
6 commitment that will be in the Final EIR, and the
7 commitment that will be in Focus40, is that we will
8 re-phase this project to start construction of West
9 Station as soon as it is, one, possible, and, two,
10 sensible. And the conversation that we really need to
11 have is when is it sensible to have West Station
12 built. And, to me, that relates back to the question
13 of what service are we going to be able to provide at
14 West Station. So, that's the conversation I'm hoping
15 that we can continue to have.

16 So, now, if you can just flip to the
17 last slide, Dan?

18 So, that's what we've been doing since
19 this sort of came out. We have not been scheming to
20 make all our decisions and freeze out the task force.
21 We have not been doing nothing because it is important
22 to move this project forward. I have a structurally
23 deficient viaduct carrying 150,000 vehicles a day and
24 pretty much all of the containers from the Port of

1 Boston to the freight rail facility in Central Mass.
2 So, we've got to get this done and on a schedule.
3 But, figuring out, reading your comments,
4 internalizing those comments, putting together with
5 the City, with MAPC, a series of additional pieces of
6 work that we can do so that we can make sure that we
7 do not rush to judgment too early in the FEIR process,
8 that's what we've been working on. That's what I came
9 here tonight to talk to you about.

10 So, what's the next step? Well, give
11 us a little while to get our team up-to-speed. And
12 they want to come back and talk to you guys about
13 making sure that we are all on the same page as which
14 at-grade and which viaduct option they're actually
15 going to be doing their analytic work on, right,
16 because there's some ideas that have come out since
17 the DEIR, there were two variants other than the
18 viaduct option. And so we've got to sort of sort out
19 what, you know -- very early in the process, we all
20 have to agree on what we're looking at. And I can't
21 do 27 different things. We're sort of trying to get
22 at what is the viaduct best, you know, sort of
23 improved viaduct, improved at-grade, what do those
24 look like. So, that's my Independent Review Team.

1 And that's Jack and those folks.

2 Mike and his team are also going to be
3 meeting with you guys because they've got a ton of
4 work to do on the FEIR analysis that's kind of
5 independent of the phasing analysis and the throat.

6 And then, finally, we're going to be
7 sort of chugging through some of the near-term transit
8 work this summer, and we will be in a position to come
9 back to the task force and talk about what we're
10 learning. And I assume the City will update us on how
11 they're doing, and MAPC will update them on how we're
12 doing. So, as I said, we'll be keeping you all busy.

13 So, I want to thank you for your
14 patience. I know that was a lot of listening. But
15 you just basically got what has taken us three months
16 to sort of think through and put together.

17 I'm going to turn it back to Jonathan,
18 and I'll stay for a little while to sort of open up
19 the discussion.

20 What I would appreciate is if folks
21 could start with sort of questions, clarifying
22 questions type things so I make sure that everybody
23 kind of understands what we want to do. And then,
24 obviously, the conversation will go where the

1 conversation goes.

2 JONATHAN GULLIVER: All right. So, my
3 job is easy after that. I'm just going to field
4 questions and direct them to the Secretary while she's
5 here. And, again, just as you speak, please state
6 your name and affiliation if you could, please.

7 JESSICA ROBERTSON: Hi. I'm Jessica
8 Robertson. I'm an Allston resident. And I've been on
9 the task force since the day one.

10 So, I just wanted to start by saying
11 thank you to the Secretary for coming and giving this
12 very thorough update. There's a lot in here to be
13 excited about. And it's excellent that there's new
14 analysis that's going on, and trying different methods
15 of analysis, and a fresh team. That's all very
16 exciting. So, thank you.

17 I have a couple of key points that I
18 wanted to ask about. The first is the list of
19 criteria for evaluating the throat options didn't
20 include the two biggest benefits of the at-grade
21 option, which are the ability to have some future air
22 rights, whether it's just a cap or actual development,
23 and the ability to have additional bike and pedestrian
24 connections from the BU area to the river. So, not

1 including those in the pro/con matrix is a big
2 oversight I would say.

3 SECRETARY POLLACK: So, I would say
4 that was not the matrix; that was representative. One
5 of the things we definitely would want input on are
6 what the comparison factors are. So that kind of
7 input is great, but that's not locked down yet.

8 JESSICA ROBERTSON: Okay. Great.

9 JONATHAN GULLIVER: And, you know, part
10 of the -- to add to that, part of the reason why we
11 have the team here tonight is so that --

12 SECRETARY POLLACK: To listen.

13 JONATHAN GULLIVER: -- they can hear
14 exactly that kind of feedback. So, we'll make sure
15 that they're hearing you. We're taking notes. We're
16 going to make sure that we have that in the comments.

17 JESSICA ROBERTSON: Great. Thanks.
18 And then two other quick ones. One is that the -- a
19 clarifying point about the timing of West Station
20 related to the constructability of West Station. We
21 have been pretty clear I think since the idea of
22 postponing the final West Station was first raised
23 about a year-and-a-half ago that we are interested in
24 some idea of an interim West Station that's a

1 temporary, barebones, you can just let people get on
2 and off a train but it's not big and fancy. And the
3 idea there is that the construction phase itself is
4 going to be extremely disruptive, and it's going to
5 last a very long time, and there's already a lot of
6 development happening in the area. And so the ability
7 to have people who work at BU, for example, or people
8 who might, you know, work in Longwood and connect to a
9 bus that goes to Longwood to take transit instead of
10 squeezing into fewer lanes of Mass Pike during
11 construction is something that should be looked at.
12 And so while it might not be possible to build the
13 final West Station, it would be great if we could
14 evaluate whether it's possible to put a platform
15 somewhere that can have a very barebones way of
16 letting people get on and off a train.

17 SECRETARY POLLACK: So, what I would
18 encourage folks to think about, and for this task
19 force to focus on, is interim transit services and
20 then let us worry about how you combine them. Okay?
21 So, an interim station is about a physical piece of
22 infrastructure. But, for example, and I'm not saying
23 we would do this, if all I did was take the Worcester
24 main line train and, instead of stopping at Boston

1 Landing for some of the runs I just move it another
2 mile down the track and stop it, honestly, that's not
3 a big increase in transit service. Okay?

4 And the barebones idea ignores the fact
5 that you can't get around the Americans with
6 Disabilities Act. Most of the things that you think
7 of as a barebones platform cannot be built, period,
8 end of statement. We had this request for the Cape
9 Flyer this summer. Can't you just like throw some,
10 you know, asphalt down it? You just, you can't.

11 So, let's talk about what services.
12 Because if it's a bus service, it doesn't necessarily
13 have to be right next to the Worcester main line.
14 Let's talk about services that people want to see
15 during the construction phase to make sure that people
16 can, you know, so that we mitigate the impacts of
17 construction and start to give people options. And
18 then let us worry, and we'll propose back to the task
19 force and in the FEIR how and where we would provide
20 those services. But I do worry that if people get
21 hung up on an interim station, then it's just a
22 conversation about can we stop the Worcester main line
23 trains somewhere other than Boston Landing, and I
24 don't actually think that's the most productive

1 conversation.

2 JESSICA ROBERTSON: My last point is
3 about the midday layover. And I think many of us on
4 the task force don't -- haven't seen any, or at least
5 any convincing justification for that layover and why
6 it needs to be here. And especially in the context of
7 the Commuter Rail Vision study and potential new
8 service models, having a commitment to putting midday
9 layover in there seems premature.

10 SECRETARY POLLACK: So, I would say two
11 things. One of the things that -- when I say we're
12 committed to re-phasing, that means the relationship
13 between when you do the layover and when you do West
14 Station is on the table. So, the phasing that was in
15 the DEIR that said you do the layover first and only
16 then West Station, that's on the table. Okay? But,
17 we said this in the DEIR. We can bring people back
18 in. These new service models are at least a decade
19 away. I'm just being perfectly honest. By the time
20 we run the model and figure it out, and then we have
21 to buy, and we have to change the signal system, and
22 we have to -- there's a lot of work to be done. Okay?
23 Maybe pilots sooner, but I mean really changing the
24 service model.

1 We did a complete evaluation of midday
2 layover locations, 28 locations. It went through
3 complete MEPA and NEPA review as part of the South
4 Station expansion. It was signed off in both the
5 interim and final MEPA certificates for that document.
6 It identified exactly three potential midday layover
7 sites in the entire region: Readville, Widett Circle,
8 and Beacon Park Yards. So, we can go back through
9 that. Happy to do it, happy to present it to the task
10 force. Unless there's new information since that
11 study, that is our midday layover options from now
12 until when we completely eliminate the existing
13 commuter rail and go to a new service model, and it's
14 been through MEPA review.

15 JESSICA ROBERTSON: I think it's more
16 of a -- it's more of a question not of where to put
17 the layover but why is it a better idea to do a huge
18 capital project that precludes other things that we
19 might want as opposed to running one extra run to
20 store the trains at the other end of the line in the
21 middle of the day.

22 SECRETARY POLLACK: That was all in
23 that study. We'll go through that.

24 JESSICA ROBERTSON: Okay.

1 JONATHAN GULLIVER: Wendy?

2 WENDY LANDMAN: I want to reiterate --

3 JONATHAN GULLIVER: Name? I'm sorry.

4 Name?

5 WENDY LANDMAN: Oh, I'm sorry. Wendy

6 Landman from WalkBoston.

7 JONATHAN GULLIVER: Thank you.

8 WENDY LANDMAN: Also a member of the

9 task force for many years.

10 I want to reiterate the thanks for
11 coming and being here this evening, Secretary, and for
12 the details you've given us, which is very important.

13 So, one of the things that has -- a lot
14 of us have spent a lot of time on since we sort of
15 ended the frequent meetings and what really wasn't in
16 the DEIR was looking at the throat from the
17 perspective of the river, and pedestrians, and
18 bicyclists, and actually creating an edge to this
19 project that it deserves and that the Charles River
20 deserves.

21 Can you talk about -- we've actually --
22 WalkBoston has put some materials together talking
23 about some of the things that are actually called for
24 in the MEPA certificate for the edge of the river,

1 which, you know, just haven't been addressed yet. Can
2 you talk about when in the process that will happen
3 and how that will happen as part of the work?

4 SECRETARY POLLACK: So, I mean one of
5 the reasons I said that we need to kind of define what
6 we mean by the at-grade alternative is because the at-
7 grade alternative, there are ideas for what it would
8 look like that are different than the ones that we
9 wrote in that. Everything that is in the MEPA
10 certificate will eventually get done. So, it will get
11 done as part of the process of selecting a preferred
12 alternative. And other things will be after we've
13 selected a preferred alternative, we will then have to
14 go back through the certificate and do all of the work
15 that the MEPA certificate calls for.

16 WENDY LANDMAN: So, basically, so the
17 issues that WalkBoston and the Charles River
18 Conservancy sort of put on the table with the throat,
19 which actually are --

20 SECRETARY POLLACK: Right.

21 WENDY LANDMAN: -- not tied to the
22 individual alternatives, but, no matter what, we need
23 to actually look at the edge of the river. That will
24 be included.

1 SECRETARY POLLACK: Yeah, that's the
2 kind of stuff that the team -- don't forget,
3 everything the certificate says we have to do, we have
4 to do it. And if it's not tied to a specific
5 alternative, then Mike and his team are going to be
6 working on it, you know, right up until when the FEIR
7 is filed. Some of them do vary --

8 WENDY LANDMAN: Yes. Right.

9 SECRETARY POLLACK: -- depending on the
10 alternative, and those we will have to wait until
11 after we pick the preferred alternative.

12 WENDY LANDMAN: Okay.

13 SECRETARY POLLACK: But if it really is
14 independent of it, that would --

15 WENDY LANDMAN: So that conversation
16 will start coming back to the task force pretty soon.

17 SECRETARY POLLACK: Yeah.

18 WENDY LANDMAN: Okay. Thank you.

19 TONY D'ISIDORO: Hi. I'm Tony
20 D'Isidoro, lifelong resident of Allston, original task
21 force member, and president of the Allston Civic
22 Association.

23 Madam Secretary, thank you for coming
24 this evening. I am excited about the information

1 regarding the short-term study that you were going to
2 be working on to examine the transit needs in Allston-
3 Brighton. And I've already thanked Tad for a mobility
4 study that's going to take place in Boston.

5 I have a couple of questions. One, how
6 does the Better Bus Program hook into these efforts,
7 both at the state level and at the city level? And,
8 secondly, in terms of the I-90 project, I would just
9 be interested -- I think it's related -- has the
10 finance funding committee met yet, and could you
11 provide us with an update on that? And has there been
12 any significant changes to the cost models that we
13 were presented with maybe five or six months ago for
14 the project?

15 SECRETARY POLLACK: All good questions.
16 So, the Better Bus Project is an ongoing MBTA effort,
17 which is focused on improving the performance of the
18 existing bus routes. So, it's a great process which
19 will continue not only in Allston, but for all of the
20 bus routes. They pretty much update the Control Board
21 monthly at this point. They just did an update
22 earlier in June. And by the end of the year,
23 wintertime, they'll come back.

24 But I just want to be really clear.

1 It's about existing bus routes. Nothing in the Better
2 Bus Project is going to generate a new bus route. So,
3 some of the comments that we got were about existing
4 routes that don't function so well. And that group
5 will continue to work on those. Some of them were
6 about there is no route from here to here, and we
7 think that's great. That is not part of the Better
8 Bus Project. So, that's one of the near-term transit
9 study issues that's part of -- I mean that's kind of
10 one of the dilemmas for the T, quite frankly, is given
11 that we already have a bunch of routes that are not
12 delivering for the people who use them, when do you
13 pivot from the existing systems you have to new ones.
14 In some cases, to be honest, communities have put
15 resources on the table, so we're looking at a bunch of
16 new routes in Cambridge for the Kendall Square area
17 because Kendall has chosen to put a transit impact fee
18 in place and to put money on the table for the T to
19 run those new routes.

20 Where there aren't resources, you know,
21 the Control Board continues to consider on a case-by-
22 case basis new service. But, I'll be honest with you,
23 it's slow.

24 So, for the Better Bus Project, if the

1 route exists and there's just an idea for making it
2 better, those are the ones reviewed.

3 In terms of the cost model, what I
4 would say is we're going to have to revisit and do
5 full lifecycle costing of all of the options. Till we
6 pick a preferred alternative, it's not a great use of
7 time. I mean we can start to cost the pieces that are
8 -- to resolve the throat issue, right, we don't have a
9 cost. And, similarly, on the finance plan, the
10 finance plan is pretty related to what the actual
11 project cost is. There is a joint board staff
12 committee that just looked so far at a very high-
13 level, not just for this project, but for other
14 projects like South Coast Rail that do not have a
15 finance plan, what would a finance plan look like,
16 what alternatives does the board want considered or
17 not considered. That's just barely getting underway.
18 It will all accelerate once we have price tags.

19 TONY D'ISIDORO: Thank you.

20 BILL DEIGNAN: Yeah, hi, Bill Deignan
21 with the City of Cambridge.

22 Thanks, again, for coming and
23 presenting here tonight. I think this is very
24 exciting to be looking at transit in new ways and

1 alternatives. And I really appreciate that, and also
2 looking at some better alternatives for the throat.

3 And in terms of criteria for the
4 throat, just some of the things that I'm hoping can be
5 looked at as part of that are the noise, and I know
6 you mentioned visual impacts on both sides of the
7 river. So, you know, the Cambridge side, Magazine
8 Beach is a very large park right adjacent to the
9 throat that is an extremely important park to
10 Cambridge. Also, to future connections to the Grand
11 Junction, both in terms of bicycle/pedestrian for a
12 path, but future transit as you talk about the
13 connection between Kendall and Longwood Medical is
14 extremely important. And we had concerns in the DEIR
15 about the constructability of a future two-track
16 system through there. So, we want to make sure that
17 that is really looked at.

18 Also, maximizing parkland, which I
19 think Wendy kind of alluded to.

20 And, also, I think in previous
21 conversations that we had with you and others, looking
22 at ways to maximize kind of what we call the boxes,
23 all the river western intersections on both sides of
24 the river to make sure that they work in the most

1 efficient way for all different modes. There's a lot
2 of future traffic that's getting shown in the models
3 that does not actually make it through, you know, the
4 Charles River area. And so we want to make sure that
5 that's something that is ongoing.

6 SECRETARY POLLACK: Great. Very
7 helpful.

8 TOM NALLY: Tom Nally from A Better
9 City.

10 Thank you, Secretary, for coming. And
11 we appreciate putting this team together because I
12 think this will provide a great opportunity for us to
13 share some ideas that we've come up with that are new
14 ideas.

15 We've been looking at the challenges
16 that were indicated both in the DEIR and the comments
17 to it, in the MEPA certificate. And we've been trying
18 to identify a range of options for addressing a number
19 of these challenges. And we really do look forward to
20 sharing what we've done so far. The last couple of
21 months, we haven't just been sitting around either.
22 We've been working on trying to come up with some
23 better ideas that will improve things. And our hope
24 is, in sharing those ideas with the task force and

1 other stakeholders, the City of Boston, Cambridge,
2 Brookline, and with the new team that's been put
3 together, we very much look forward to making some
4 evaluation of pros and cons of these ideas to see
5 which ones are viable, which ones may not be viable,
6 and then, hopefully, incorporating them into a new
7 version, because some of these are new ideas, a new
8 version of the at-grade solution because we think it's
9 -- it can be improved and we have things to talk about
10 to do that.

11 So, we look forward to this dialogue.
12 We look forward to the collaboration with all of us so
13 that we can have a really productive session and come
14 up with something 90 days from now that's better than
15 where we are today.

16 SECRETARY POLLACK: Thank you. We
17 appreciate it and look forward to seeing those, too.

18 DAVID LOUTZENHEISER: David
19 Loutzenheiser from MAPC. And I appreciate, again, you
20 coming.

21 The three options were developed
22 generally in separate rooms, or at least in separate
23 initiatives. And, with that, you have pluses and
24 minuses of all three options. And I guess the

1 question on the independent review is not only -- and
2 I think you did allude to this. It's not only will
3 they include some of the best components of each of
4 the options and try to eliminate some of the
5 negatives, but, also, when you look at -- you
6 mentioned the Presidio Parkway, but also there's the
7 Alaskan Way Viaduct in Seattle, that actually is being
8 buried underground.

9 And I know there's challenges with that
10 here. But the whole process of that is reducing the
11 impact of that structure. Right now, we have 12 lanes
12 of roadway and four lanes of travel. And in this
13 independent review analysis, can we look at ways to
14 actually reduce that in some way, through TDI
15 measures, through tolling, through whatever it is to
16 not just assume that we're just using the same -- but
17 how can we reduce the infrastructure so that we have
18 less of a barrier between the city and river?

19 SECRETARY POLLACK: So, I hear you.
20 And I just -- I don't want to overpromise. Okay?
21 This is a project. We defined the project when we
22 filed the Environmental Notification Form. The
23 project is not to cut the number of lanes on Soldiers
24 Field Road or the Turnpike. Okay? And there's a

1 traffic analysis that was in the DEIR that I think
2 more than justified the need for that number of lanes.
3 So, we're willing to look at lane widths. We're look
4 at shoulders versus no shoulders. We'll willing to
5 look at how you stack them. There's lots of things
6 we're willing to look at.

7 The fundamental project is, you know,
8 am I going to take two lanes off the Mass Pike and
9 hope that we can figure out how to get all the
10 passengers and, most importantly, freight traffic
11 through? No. That's actually outside the scope of
12 this project. So, we're not about redefining the
13 project. We're about taking the project objective --
14 and that's not what the MEPA process does. The MEPA
15 process takes a project and it helps us develop the
16 best version of that project. And, in this case,
17 there is a serious question about what the best
18 version of that project is as it goes through the
19 throat. And we really want to take the time to get
20 that right. But, no, we're not going to look at
21 changing the number of lanes. I don't want people to
22 expect that the Independent Review Team is going to do
23 something more than it's going to do.

24 DAVID LOUTZENHEISER: Okay.

1 JONATHAN GULLIVER: Jim, first.

2 JAMES GILLOOLY: Thanks, Madam
3 Secretary, and the whole team.

4 JONATHAN GULLIVER: Jim, name?

5 JAMES GILLOOLY: Oh, James Gillooly,
6 Deputy Commissioner of the Boston Transportation
7 Department.

8 It is very encouraging to have a chance
9 to have alternative throats looked at real -- under a
10 microscope because there have been advocates who have
11 made compelling cases for different alternatives to
12 the viaduct option. And it's important to the City to
13 really see the facts laid out on the table to find out
14 can we do the -- can we get the savings some people
15 have talked about? Can we get the better connections
16 to the river? And so we're anxious to see that
17 because we, like you, haven't come to a conclusion as
18 to what option should be the recommended one.

19 Doing the short-term study,
20 transportation studies, on these various modes is
21 really also very important, as you say, coming up with
22 a sense of what service is needed. I think that will
23 be very positive in the long run as we go through
24 those studies and gather that information.

1 I'm a little bit concerned to make sure
2 that as we're finalizing design for the highway
3 elements that we've got a place for the station. So,
4 I'm hoping that it will be clear when we get to an
5 FEIR that there's a pretty good sense of what would be
6 built when the right time comes to build it.

7 SECRETARY POLLACK: Yes.

8 JAMES GILLOOLY: That's very important.
9 We just want to make sure. Thank you.

10 SECRETARY POLLACK: Yes.

11 JAMES GILLOOLY: And I think that's the
12 major points I wanted to cover. Thanks.

13 GALEN MOOK: My name is Galen Mook.
14 I'm a resident here, but I'm here representing the
15 Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition.

16 I want to say, of course, thank you,
17 Madam Secretary, for coming, and, of course, Senator
18 Brownsberger and Rep. Moran. I just want to -- it's
19 been a long day. Good to see you, Kevin. And to
20 thank everybody for the four years of work we've
21 already put into this. I decided not to bring the
22 1,400 pages of meeting notes. But I do want to say
23 that we are building on a legacy of work that we've
24 built. And I thank you very much for coming,

1 addressing us to define what the process is forward,
2 and not only to hear the feedback, but then to also
3 deliver a response, because we don't usually get
4 responses from the DOT. So, this is a really nice
5 forum to have. I appreciate that.

6 SECRETARY POLLACK: That's because
7 they're really careful not to speak for me. Right? I
8 can speak for me.

9 GALEN MOOK: Oh, they're wise. And
10 we're happy to have you here, too.

11 A couple of points I do want to make.
12 I am very excited to hear the rail conversation. Even
13 though I'm here representing MassBike, this is also a
14 big transit project. To hear you speak of regional
15 rail and urban rail is very encouraging. And I like
16 that this can be a new format for discussing what
17 should and could be kind of a new transportation era
18 around here, and West Station could be a junction
19 point for it.

20 I also like though you may not be
21 redefining the project, you are rebranding it into an
22 intermodal project. It used to be a multimodal; now
23 it's intermodal. It makes me think that there will be
24 connectivity between the modes. So, it's not just

1 West Station separate from a highway, but maybe people
2 could use a highway to get to west Station, or use a
3 bike path to get to West Station, or use a sidewalk to
4 get to West Station. And to make it intermodal would
5 be very nice.

6 I also want to talk about the process
7 just very briefly. I would appreciate it, I think, if
8 we made this a little bit more of a regional
9 conversation as well to bring in folks from further in
10 the Worcester side, the Wellesley side, along the
11 train lines. And I know that could be part of the
12 Focus40 and the Commuter Rail Vision, but to somehow
13 have a process for more regional voices to contribute
14 to this task force process. I don't know how that
15 could work in our short timeframe, but I would
16 encourage that to be part of the thought process.

17 Everybody around here is very much an
18 abutter, which is important to have because we will be
19 suffering through the years of construction. But,
20 hopefully, everybody regionally will be benefitting
21 from what this project will bring.

22 I do also want to ask that we get ASAP
23 the calendar dates of the future task force meetings
24 because if we're going to be meeting three or four

1 times between now and the end of fall, I want to build
2 our schedules around that.

3 SECRETARY POLLACK: Okay. Fair.

4 GALEN MOOK: And that's my ask. We got
5 two weeks' notice for this meeting, and we all turned
6 out, which is great. So, there's importance. We all
7 feel this is very important, but two months' notice
8 would be much better.

9 SECRETARY POLLACK: Yeah. Yeah, we can
10 definitely put together a calendar. We will follow up
11 on the regional idea of --

12 JONATHAN GULLIVER: Secretary, if I
13 could make a point, too?

14 SECRETARY POLLACK: Yeah.

15 JONATHAN GULLIVER: I agree with him.
16 I think we should hold our next meeting in Worcester.

17 (Laughter.)

18 JONATHAN GULLIVER: It's much closer
19 for me to home, so --

20 SECRETARY POLLACK: Trying to impress
21 the District 3 Highway Directors.

22 I will -- so, we will think about it
23 for this project. I would say that the regional and
24 urban rail discussion will be a regional discussion.

1 We will start -- we're putting together an advisory
2 group for that study.

3 The other thing that folks may or may
4 not know is MAPC, and Transportation for
5 Massachusetts, and the 495 folks have put together a
6 commuter rail sort of -- what's the name, the Commuter
7 Rail Mayors Group? The commuter rail -- what are you
8 guys calling it? Communities --

9 ERIC BOURASSA: Commuter Rail
10 Communities Coalition.

11 SECRETARY POLLACK: Commuter Rail --
12 yes. I knew someone in this room would get it right -
13 - which, you know, I'm actually very excited about
14 because it's actually helpful to MassDOT and to the T
15 to get multiple voices in the room and not have it be
16 pitting one set of needs against another set of needs,
17 but sort of understand them.

18 And, again, we have to -- we have to
19 gather information, gather input, look at data, make
20 decisions, and move this project ahead. So, some of
21 these issues, we will have to get through in order to
22 get this project built and file an FEIR. Others, the
23 conversation will continue beyond this room, both
24 geographically beyond this room and temporally beyond

1 this room. But the more we can connect all the
2 different conversations, like Focus40, and the Rail
3 Vision, and current service, and Better Buses, you
4 know, there's a reason that all those things are
5 happening and it's because there's a real commitment I
6 believe at MassDOT, and at the T, and among the staff
7 and the leadership at the boards that we understand
8 that we are in a moment when transportation is
9 changing and we need to be open to those changes. And
10 studies aren't the end of that process. They're the
11 beginning of that process. But they're how we start
12 to redefine things. I'm excited.

13 GALEN MOOK: Okay. And my last point I
14 do want to make from a bicycle standpoint is we really
15 should kind of put back on the table kind of thinking
16 about how we can safely move the bikes and pedestrians
17 through this project, to this project, which I just
18 want to make a pitch. The DEIR did not do a very good
19 job of making me feel that the bicycle infrastructure
20 will be separated from the highway interchange and a
21 safe and efficient way to get my neighbors from my
22 neighborhood to the river. So, I do want to advocate
23 that we should be looking for in the matrix the
24 stress-free bike and pedestrian movements through this

1 area. And whatever that matrix should finally come
2 out to be should be a process through the task force
3 as well. And, level of service is not necessarily the
4 same as accessibility or stress-free connectivity.

5 SECRETARY POLLACK: I hear you.

6 GALEN MOOK: Thank you.

7 MARGARET VAN DEUSEN: Margaret Van
8 Deusen, Charles River Watershed Association.

9 I obviously echo the thanks to the
10 Secretary for the independent review. And, my
11 question is how will the independent review outreach
12 and sort of data gathering work?

13 SECRETARY POLLACK: So, I mean there's
14 a lot of data that's been gathered. I think it's more
15 -- so, I'm not saying there's not new data to be
16 gathered, but a lot of it is pulling together what we
17 have, getting the matrix right, getting the
18 alternatives right, sort of mapping everything into a
19 format, which it's clear to me the DEIR did not
20 provide because it didn't help people sort of work
21 through the issues that really sharply presents people
22 with clear information about what we know. I mean
23 there may be information that you just can't generate
24 in the 90 days, but we will.

1 So, they'll be interacting with the
2 existing database that's already been created. They
3 will be interacting with the task force. If there are
4 other sources of data that you want to point us to, we
5 are happy to be pointed to other sources of data. But
6 it is a 90-day review because we continue to have the
7 need to move the project along. And so at some point
8 the goal will be to take the best information that we
9 can in the context of well-defined alternatives and a
10 good sort of comparative matrix and put it out there.
11 And then, again, we'll have another conversation,
12 hopefully a more informed one than the Draft EIR
13 generated, and then at that point we're just going to
14 have to make a decision on the preferred alternative
15 so we can -- because once we've made that decision, as
16 folks have said, there's a lot of other things that
17 have to get done between that decision and an FEIR to
18 get everything right and to respond to all of the
19 requirements of the certificate.

20 But are there specific data sources
21 that you were worried about?

22 MARGARET VAN DEUSEN: No, I was really
23 -- I thought what you said was that there would be
24 outreach during the independent review process. And

1 maybe I misunderstood.

2 SECRETARY POLLACK: So, I mean we
3 definitely told the team they need to talk to this
4 group. Whether there are other groups, we haven't yet
5 decided. But there's outreach in the sense of -- you
6 know, so meeting with Tom who says we thought more
7 about the, you know, alternatives, making sure we
8 understand what that is, you know, if folks, you know
9 -- how did that conversation with this group or others
10 about do we have all the right factors listed in that
11 table, comparison table, before we, you know, go out.
12 We're not -- we're not planning to do like big public
13 meetings as separate from the task force process.
14 It's more making sure they talk to folks who have
15 information that would be useful to them.

16 JONATHAN GULLIVER: Right. If I could
17 add to what the Secretary is saying, you know, this is
18 -- honestly, this is where we could use some input
19 from this group. This task force has been the driving
20 force behind the development of the alternatives that
21 are currently out there. And for the -- what our
22 initial thinking has been is that we need to speak
23 directly with the people who are the main proponents
24 for those alternatives, you know, so we're talking

1 about ABC, and I just saw Fred Salvucci walk in a few
2 minutes ago, talking to those teams and getting really
3 specific as to what data they can provide to us, as
4 well as to the team that developed the viaduct option.

5 We also need to engage this group.
6 And, again, we're not -- I think, as the Secretary
7 said, it's not going to do us any good to go to a
8 broader public process at this point because this has
9 been the group that's engaged. You guys understand
10 these alternatives better than anybody else. So, we
11 need to -- one of the things we need to do is figure
12 out, to Galen's point, to get a schedule together for
13 the next three months that we're going to come back
14 and meet and we'll update you and, again, get feedback
15 from you.

16 SECRETARY POLLACK: We also -- my bias
17 as Secretary is I rely very heavily on our partners in
18 the cities, MAPC, our other partners. So, if BPDA or
19 BTM says, "We really think you should talk to XYZ, or
20 you should talk -- you know, you should have this kind
21 of data," we try to follow their lead where we can
22 follow their lead. But, again, we want this to be as
23 well informed and well put together a process as it
24 can. It's not designed to be a big, broad, public

1 process. And, again, there will be another big
2 public, anyone can weigh in, at the end of the FEIR.
3 We've just got to get to an FEIR so we can gauge
4 those. And there's a need for process, too, because
5 it is a federal process. Right, Ken?

6 KEN MILLER: That's right.

7 GLEN BERKOWITZ: Glen Berkowitz, A
8 Better City.

9 I just want to, again, Madam Secretary,
10 it really is very sincerely sort of unbelievable that
11 a cabinet secretary can come and spend the last over
12 an hour now talking at the level of detail, and the
13 breadth, and the sincerity, and your commitment to
14 working with -- it's almost unbelievable. And I just
15 -- other than that works, and I don't know what to
16 think of, I just wanted to say thank you. It's
17 amazing.

18 Everyone's already touched upon like
19 the top nine most important, you know, starting with
20 the safety of vehicles up on an elevated highway. So,
21 I'll just skip through those. And I just wanted to
22 ask if you would consider taking kind of a leadership
23 role on the issue of pedestrians and bicyclists on
24 something called the Paul Dudley White Multiuse Trail

1 along the Charles River.

2 As my boss on this subject, Tom Nally,
3 knows, I understand the DEIR today a hell of a lot
4 better than I did back in January and February. It's
5 an amazingly thorough, dense document. It really,
6 truly is. One of the things it did was say we should
7 take the Paul Dudley White, starting at the western
8 half of the job at River Street, to about the middle
9 of the job going east-west, and we should change it
10 from a skinny, shared, eight-and-a-half-foot-wide
11 thing, and we should give a really wide space for
12 bicyclists and we should give a separate really wide
13 space for pedestrians. And that's the way the Paul
14 Dudley White should be. And I can't imagine that
15 anybody would disagree with it.

16 But what the DEIR did for the eastern
17 half of the project is every single option -- I'm
18 being option agnostic with this statement -- it failed
19 to provide two separate paths for the Paul Dudley
20 White for the eastern half of the project for every
21 option. There was no option in the DEIR that provided
22 separate paths for bicycles and pedestrians till the
23 year 2050. Right? We want thousands of people to be
24 commuting on the bicycles back and forth to downtown.

1 They're going to be zooming along the Charles River,
2 the Paul Dudley White. We want people to jog and walk
3 safely. Do we really want them sharing, squeezing
4 into the same narrow space? Whether it's eight-foot-
5 wide or 12-foot-wide, it's not the same as two
6 separate, using MHD lingo, multiple treadway design.

7 And I guess I just wanted to ask if you
8 would consider that whatever options, you know, your
9 90-day team is going to look at, whether it could look
10 at providing a shared use path, whether it's 12-foot-
11 wide or eight-foot-wide, but also look at providing
12 separate multiple treadways, separate paths, and give
13 you both of those toggles for whatever options they
14 look at. Because I really think it's a leadership
15 question for MassDOT. Does it want to try to create
16 separate pedestrian and bicycle paths the whole length
17 of this project or doesn't it? And the DEIR said,
18 unequivocally, yes, to the western half. And it
19 really kind of punted the question -- and I'm not
20 trying to criticize -- of the eastern half. And I
21 really, you know, would ask if you would just at least
22 consider, you know, how to address that. And I'm not
23 asking you to make a decision that you'd agree to two
24 paths, but at least maybe give some sort of charge to

1 the team that allows them the freedom to come back and
2 say, "Well, if it's a shared path, it could look this
3 way for both options. And if it was two separate
4 paths, it could look this way."

5 Thank you.

6 SECRETARY POLLACK: I appreciate it.
7 And I appreciate your kind words at the beginning.
8 And I don't have an answer for you tonight. And I do
9 have to head out. And the rest of the folks will stay
10 here as long as necessary to make sure everybody gets
11 a say. But this is what I would just say to folks in
12 this room. We will do what we can reasonably do
13 within the four corners of this project. I spent a
14 lot of my career in an advocacy role. And I am as
15 guilty as everyone around this table of trying to glom
16 every single issue I ever cared about into whatever
17 proceeding happens to be moving because, you know, it
18 is, and it has to get to MEPA, and the Secretary is
19 actually here listening to us. But there is a reason
20 that we have a statewide pedestrian planning process
21 right now, and a statewide pedestrian plan, and a
22 statewide bicycle plan, and a Rail Vision process, and
23 a Focus40 process, because I am serious about trying
24 to identify and lift up transformative ideas for our

1 transportation system.

2 But what I would say to you is, just
3 like I'm trying to be respectful of all of your
4 comments tonight and on the DEIR, we'll do what we can
5 inside this project. But, at some point, this project
6 has to have boundaries. And we're not going to fix
7 the entire bicycle and pedestrian network in the
8 Charles River Basin. That's actually not my job.
9 It's not even my asset. Right? It belongs to DCR.

10 But the pedestrian plan talks about the
11 Charles River Basin, and it talks about trails, and it
12 talks about things that are not necessarily ours. It
13 talks about the 92 percent of sidewalks in the
14 Commonwealth that aren't even owned by MassDOT.
15 Right?

16 So, what I would say to you is if we
17 can't accommodate what you're asking for because it
18 just stretches the bounds of this project beyond what
19 we can do with this project, don't give up on good
20 ideas. We've really tried to create as many possible
21 forums as I can during the time I've been Secretary
22 and at the T to have these conversations. These are
23 really important conversations. How do we take
24 pedestrians and cyclists as seriously as we take

1 people in cars? So, we'll have some of those
2 conversations in this room. We may not get to all the
3 ones that all of you want. I'm just going to be
4 honest with you. There are limits. I'm trying to
5 stretch them. I'm trying to be elastic. I'm trying
6 to accommodate you. There will be a limit. And, at
7 some point, there will be this is the project and this
8 is not the project.

9 But even if it's not the project, it
10 doesn't mean we can't have the conversation. We just
11 have to have that conversation someplace else. Okay?

12 So, I don't know the answer to your
13 question about whether this is or isn't the project.
14 I just don't know that detail enough. Mike will talk
15 about it. And a lot of the bicycle and pedestrian
16 stuff goes well beyond the throat. And that's why I
17 wanted to make clear from the beginning, while we're
18 working on the 90-day review, all the other stuff in
19 the certificate, all the other parts of the project,
20 the team, Mike's team, is going to keep working on
21 that. Right? We're not pressing the pause button on
22 everything for 90 days. We're pressing the pause
23 button on the throat for 90 days. All that other
24 stuff we need to keep going full steam ahead on and

1 having the conversations.

2 ERIC BOURASSA: A very quick question.

3 When is --

4 JONATHAN GULLIVER: I'm sorry. Name,
5 again.

6 ERIC BOURASSA: I'm sorry. Eric
7 Bourassa, MAPC.

8 When is the intent to file the FEIR?

9 SECRETARY POLLACK: Spring of 2019.

10 And, as I like to remind my staff, spring seasons have
11 about 90 to 100 days in them.

12 (Laughter.)

13 KEN MILLER: Ken Miller, Federal
14 Highway Administration.

15 Thank you, Madam Secretary. We view
16 this as a really positive development, the
17 reassessment. And we want to offer our assistance to
18 the reassessment team to discuss the flexibilities
19 that you can avail yourself of through the Federal
20 Highway Program.

21 And, also, to echo I think what Galen
22 said about having a predictable and ongoing public
23 process, that's something we were quite concerned
24 about, this gap in the task force process. So, we're

1 glad that it's restarted and we're looking for a
2 predictable process.

3 And, finally, maybe add an issue, maybe
4 it's 3A, or maybe it's issue number 4, and that is the
5 connectivity across -- not in the throat area
6 necessarily, but more in the development area, you
7 know, what happens with Malvern Street or any other
8 connection across, if we're concerned about a mile-
9 and-a-half that you just can't get across. And so we
10 know there were some options on the table. And so we
11 think that's an issue that warrants some additional
12 evaluation.

13 SECRETARY POLLACK: Thank you. Others?
14 I'm going to have to leave in a minute or two, but I
15 just want to make sure --

16 WENDY LANDMAN: Secretary, I just
17 wanted to -- I wanted to echo what Glen said. And,
18 actually, I want to read you -- because we actually
19 brought a handout which we'll hand out. We can give
20 you one. But, just I wanted to quote from the MEPA
21 certificate, which is, "The FEIR should provide an
22 alternative that restores the riverbank and improves
23 bicycle and pedestrian access along the Charles."

24 So, I understand that within the 90

1 days on the throat, there may be things that get
2 addressed and things that don't. But I think that
3 looking at the banks of the Charles and actually
4 seriously addressing the walking and biking issues is
5 actually called for in the MEPA scope. So, somewhere
6 in the task force process, I think we need to
7 anticipate that it is actually a part of the process
8 and a part of the project.

9 SECRETARY POLLACK: Yeah. And, as I
10 said, we will get to every issue in the scope. We
11 have no choice.

12 WENDY LANDMAN: Yeah, thank you.

13 SECRETARY POLLACK: All right. I
14 appreciate everybody's patience, and I appreciate
15 everyone's thoughtful comments both in the 1,400 pages
16 of existing task force notes and this evening. And I
17 look forward to hearing both from Mike's team, and
18 from Ryan and Jack, and the independent review team.

19 And thank you all for your continued
20 and passionate interest in this project and for
21 helping steer us in what I hope will ultimately be a
22 direction that we can all feel good about.

23 Good night.

24 (Applause.)

1 JONATHAN GULLIVER: All right. So,
2 next to the Secretary, I'm a little bit of chopped
3 liver, but I'm happy to try to answer any questions
4 that you have.

5 (Laughter.)

6 JONATHAN GULLIVER: So, yes?

7 PALLAVI MANDE: Pallavi Mande with the
8 Charles River Watershed Association.

9 I was wondering if it's possible for
10 the task force to have a sense of the scope that the
11 team is going to be tasked with for the 90 days just
12 so that we understand what the specific highlights are
13 that we would could be expecting to hear from them? I
14 know there was few elements that were kind of --

15 JONATHAN GULLIVER: Yeah, you saw the
16 elements that we had on there. I mean that's the
17 high-level one. We're still developing -- again, you
18 heard the secretary mention a matrix a number of
19 times. That matrix is going to be developed as we
20 gather more information and they get a better
21 understanding about each of the project elements.

22 So, again, part of what we're doing
23 here tonight is to get feedback from everybody and to
24 make sure that we're looking at the right things. So,

1 we'll make that available to everybody as soon as we
2 have it.

3 PALLAVI MANDE: In that case, I just
4 wanted to also highlight the whole conversation around
5 the technical analysis. And I notice that since Eric
6 is part of the team, and they do bring some unique
7 expertise, and it's something that we've been really
8 trying to get as a high-level analysis, so anything
9 that they could do on that particular subject would be
10 really helpful.

11 GALEN MOOK: This is Galen Mook again.
12 This is more of my resident hat on. And I want to
13 take the opportunity to address the folks in the City
14 who are here. Thank you, Tad and Jim, for offering
15 the services of the City to do this Allston Brighton
16 Mobility Study. This is a little bit separate from
17 the greater DOT conversation, but definitely pertinent
18 to the Allston-Brighton conversation.

19 We've been waiting for this, I will
20 say, but developers haven't. They are still
21 developing, to Tony's point, it's outpacing what we
22 are looking at even, not even fixing, but we aren't
23 even looking at some of the biggest issues where these
24 developments are taking place.

1 We have a few very channeled roads,
2 Everett Street, Market Street, Cambridge Street, which
3 are under like intense development right now. It's
4 the only way to cross the Turnpike. It's the only way
5 to connect the neighborhood. We are unable to make
6 proper decisions about how development should go, in
7 my opinion. This is just me speaking as me. I can't
8 evaluate a development if I don't know how it's going
9 to impact the greater transportation network. If the
10 transportation network is going to change, if we're
11 going to get a bike path, if we're going to get better
12 transit services, that may determine that, you know,
13 parking ratios could be different, etc., etc. You
14 understand this. I just want to stress that we are
15 waiting for it, and we'll wait another three months
16 until something is chosen, and then we'll have another
17 six months of discussion about it. But I want that to
18 be a public process.

19 I would like you to come to the
20 neighborhood and have these style of meetings, not
21 really task force-esque but something that is engaging
22 so you will hear from the needs of the residents not
23 just the intermittent, you know, developer meetings at
24 the zoning board.

1 I also want to stress that in that
2 plan, are you going -- this is my question, actually --
3 - are you going to include the disruption that this
4 project will bring to the neighborhood? We don't know
5 the phasing, and we're unsure about what's going to
6 happen to the interchange. Do they need to shut it
7 down so everybody is going to start to come from
8 Newton, for instance? Are we going to channel more
9 cars onto Soldiers Field Road, if that's the case? I
10 don't know if you're looking at it regionally, so I
11 guess that's my question. During the seven years, or
12 ten years, or 15 years of construction that we are
13 about to face with this project, is that being taken
14 into consideration in your mobility plan? And then
15 does that influence how the developers are basically
16 asking the neighborhood to, you know, bend over a
17 little bit to allow for these -- bend over backwards,
18 I meant to say, to allow for the stress on the roads
19 that we're going to get with all this new development?

20 TAD READ: So, if the question is will
21 there be extensive public engagement as part of the --

22 GALEN MOOK: That's one of the
23 questions, yeah.

24 TAD READ: -- Allston-Brighton mobility

1 study, the question is absolutely yes. We've tried to
2 create a substantial budget for this so that it can be
3 -- can include extensive engagement.

4 I think, you know, a lot of the ideas
5 will come out of sort of professional and technical
6 analysis. But, inevitably, we find that some of the
7 best ideas come out of the community, and we expect
8 that will happen in this process as well. So,
9 absolutely.

10 And then in terms of the I-90 project
11 and construction-related traffic impacts, to the
12 extent that we can have that conversation with MassDOT
13 and talk about that, we'd love to.

14 The soonest this would start
15 construction is --

16 JONATHAN GULLIVER: Well, again, it's
17 going to depend on the limit of the permit. But, let
18 me just say, too, I mean constructability is going to
19 be something that we have to review and get a better
20 understanding of. You know, the options presented
21 each have their own challenges. And our goal with any
22 construction project is to make it as the least amount
23 of disruption as we can. So, we will certainly --
24 when we have a better understanding of what it is that

1 we're building, we will also have a better
2 understanding of how we're going to do it. So, we'll
3 be sure to be communicating that with anybody who
4 needs it. So, certainly for mobility, for your study
5 purposes, you're probably going to want to know what
6 that is and the duration of the construction and so
7 on.

8 GALEN MOOK: Cool. I guess maybe I'd
9 just encourage you to be flexible about the modeling
10 then. If you're not currently including what could be
11 incredibly disruptive construction projects, then it's
12 false models in a sense. So, maybe this needs MAPC
13 involvement as well to figure out what this dynamic
14 modeling could look like because I think -- I'm
15 expecting this to be very disruptive to the streets of
16 Allston and Brighton for the duration of this entire
17 project.

18 TAD READ: Jonathan, when would you
19 know about the construction --

20 JONATHAN GULLIVER: So, Mike, what's
21 the -- I'm going to defer to Mike behind you. What's
22 your current thinking on construction, assuming we
23 meet the 2019 deadline? I'm sorry. That's Mike
24 O'Dowd who is the MassDOT project manager.

1 MICHAEL O'DOWD: Mr. Administrator,
2 we're actually working on that. As part of the MEPA
3 scope, they want us to dig -- delve into a little bit
4 deeper on the options that were discussed in the DEIR
5 and the constructability and staging. So, the team is
6 ongoing doing that work right now based upon the four
7 original concepts that were developed in the EIR. So,
8 we'll be in a position probably later in the summer to
9 be able to share that with the task force for those
10 concepts that we're evaluating.

11 JAMES GILLOOLY: I'll just add a couple
12 of -- Gillooly for the note taker.

13 Typically, if there's a big project say
14 like Longfellow Bridge, we don't go about the
15 perimeter and widen roadways and do things because of
16 the displacement. What we try to do is -- I think the
17 Administrator probably mentioned it or the Secretary -
18 - that we've got to talk with MassDOT about what is
19 the mitigation plan during construction. I don't
20 think the objective of the study -- and correct me if
21 I'm wrong, Tad -- is -- goes beyond taking a fairly
22 stable highway environment, assumed, and saying where
23 are the choke points in the towns of, you know, in the
24 neighborhoods of Allston and Brighton, and what can we

1 give to the developers to do -- to help us open up
2 those pinch points, making intersections work better,
3 make bike lane connections that don't exist. But, I
4 think we would be foolish to design our neighborhood
5 streets. It goes against Complete Streets and every
6 other principle to start overreacting to what might
7 happen during some years of construction. We should
8 be dealing with that. And that's where the
9 construction phasing that's possible under the three
10 throat options is going to be very interesting to look
11 at. We've got to see what's doable under each of the
12 options because you're right; we don't want to spend a
13 few years and have the throughput through the
14 construction zone be hampered more than we'd like it
15 to be.

16 Now, of course, that's not the only
17 factor there would be, but a very important factor for
18 the issue you raise. And I would say we need to kind
19 of get an assessment of what the impacts are to the
20 Turnpike and try to figure out a strategy to
21 accommodate the construction without blowing up
22 streets in the neighborhood so bad that everybody
23 regrets this whole thing.

24 TONY D'ISIDORO: Yeah, Tony D'Isidoro,

1 again. Just to continue on what Galen was saying,
2 too, and I would expect it to happen, but I just want
3 to reiterate it as well. I expect full and active
4 participation of the City -- and I know they will --
5 in the state's short-term study, and vice versa. I
6 would expect very active participation of the T and
7 MassDOT in the mobility study, especially attending
8 whatever public sessions take place because you will
9 learn a lot and you will get a lot of information and
10 accumulate a lot of data about some of the pressure
11 points and some of the spots that need state attention
12 fairly quickly.

13 So, I just want to reiterate that. I
14 know there will be mentions back and forth and some
15 interaction, but I want to make sure that it's really
16 active participation on both of these initiatives that
17 we're talking about tonight.

18 JONATHAN GULLIVER: I think Jim and Tad
19 would agree. We have a very strong relationship with
20 the City. We meet with them regularly on a variety of
21 issues.

22 TONY D'ISIDORO: Thank you.

23 JONATHAN GULLIVER: So, we'll certainly
24 be well engaged.

1 Yes?

2 EMMA WALTERS: Hi. Emma Walters from
3 Allston Village Main Streets.

4 I have a question a bit more about some
5 of the short-term aspects of the Mass Pike project,
6 specifically about the conversations around the
7 Franklin Street Pedestrian Bridge and also the
8 Cambridge Street Bridge.

9 So, are there any updates on kind of
10 when we can expect conversation and movement forward
11 in regards to the Cambridge Street deck and the
12 replacement of that? And then, also, new designs or
13 updates on the Franklin Street Pedestrian Bridge? I
14 think in the conversation of pedestrian mobility and
15 safety, those are two things that are currently in
16 pretty bad disrepair and falling apart, and updates on
17 that would be --

18 JONATHAN GULLIVER: So, that's actually
19 not part of the scope that we're asking these guys to
20 do or for what we're prepared to discuss tonight.
21 But, Mike, I don't know if you have any general
22 updates you can provide on that?

23 MICHAEL O'DOWD: Yeah, we're still
24 trying to secure the funding --

1 JONATHAN GULLIVER: Yeah.

2 MICHAEL O'DOWD: -- for that project.

3 The Cambridge Street Bridge would be a bridge
4 replacement deck project over CSX, over the rail yard.
5 So, at this time --

6 JONATHAN GULLIVER: So, that one's not
7 in the five-year study?

8 MICHAEL O'DOWD: No.

9 JONATHAN GULLIVER: Yeah. So, we base
10 all of our project needs on -- especially when it
11 comes to bridges -- they are programmed very
12 specifically based on condition and need. So, in
13 general, and, again, not knowing those projects very
14 well myself, they were not -- what happened -- because
15 they're not in the five-year STIP, that means that
16 they're not in a condition yet that we have to replace
17 them, so they would not compete statewide with other
18 bridges. But, again, I don't want to get too bogged
19 down on that. That's really not the focus of what
20 we're talking about tonight.

21 GALEN MOOK: Can I clarify just for the
22 stenographer?

23 JONATHAN GULLIVER: Go ahead. Yeah.

24 GALEN MOOK: This particular overpass

1 that Emma was talking about was already slated as a
2 failing overpass in 2012, and was funded fully, 100
3 percent. We had meetings about 100 percent design.

4 JONATHAN GULLIVER: Okay.

5 GALEN MOOK: They had to close lanes on
6 it because it couldn't bear the weight of that much
7 truck traffic. They had to close a sidewalk on it
8 because the sidewalk was literally crumbling. You
9 could see the Turnpike underneath it.

10 JONATHAN GULLIVER: Yeah.

11 GALEN MOOK: So, I fully respect that
12 that is -- it is the reason for things to be on the
13 STIP, but this was on the STIP and then became off the
14 STIP based off the greater I-90 conversation because,
15 to Mike's point, when we start I-90, we might need to
16 redo all the superstructure. So, we put that project
17 on hold. Now, that project is one of the only
18 connections between the neighborhood which we live,
19 and it is in worse repair than it was six years ago.

20 EMMA WALTERS: Absolutely.

21 JONATHAN GULLIVER: So, why don't we do
22 this then?

23 GALEN MOOK: I will fall back. I just
24 wanted that clarification for the record.

1 JONATHAN GULLIVER: Understood. So,
2 we'll get some more information on that for the next
3 time we meet.

4 GALEN MOOK: Yeah. And thanks, Emma,
5 for bringing that up. It's very important.

6 FRED SALVUCCI: I just wanted to make a
7 brief point on the subject of the likely disruption of
8 traffic by the necessary reconstruction of the
9 Turnpike.

10 JONATHAN GULLIVER: I'm sorry. Do you
11 mind? The stenographer is having a hard time hearing
12 you. Fred Salvucci, by the way.

13 FRED SALVUCCI: My name is Fred
14 Salvucci.

15 I just wanted to make a comment on the
16 point about the disruption to traffic that will occur
17 during almost any successful reconstruction of the
18 Turnpike given how severe the problems are. And I
19 guess my observation would be when God gives you
20 lemons, figure out how to make lemonade.

21 The only way, in my view, to mitigate
22 what inevitably will be a tough period, seven years
23 based on the most recent projections, is a lot more
24 public transportation service. And everybody in the

1 room that cares about public transportation knows that
2 the answer has been whenever someone says, "Why don't
3 we improve service on this bus line?", well, where
4 would you like us to delete some service, which is why
5 the process is gridlocked and we haven't had any
6 improvements in public transportation.

7 When you're doing a rebuild like this,
8 and you did it decades ago on the Southeast
9 Expressway, you can use capital funds to do transit
10 mitigation to make this process work. So, there are
11 two things that can happen. One, the seven years can
12 be a lot less painful than they would have been if
13 there's a lot more public transportation there, and
14 you have a means to pay for it if it's attached to
15 this project as a mitigation package.

16 And, number two, the transit mode
17 share, which we're all supposed to be trying to figure
18 out how to make it grow -- I mean the climate change
19 plan of the Commonwealth calls for tripling the mode
20 share. Well, that can only happen with a hell of a
21 lot more service. But if that extra service is
22 provided using the mitigation strategy, the mode share
23 will change in response to that. So, the number of
24 people willing to use public transportation, given the

1 much more awful automobile experience, if that's
2 combined with a much better transit experience, we can
3 come out the other end with a much higher transit mode
4 share.

5 And we ought to be doing that in real
6 time. We ought to be consciously planning for that
7 step change in transit mode share as part of the City-
8 MAPC overall transit. It should not be let's just
9 mumble some more of the same mumbles we've had for the
10 past several years about which bus route would you
11 like to delete if you want a little more service on
12 the 66. This is a chance to say, "No, we're going to
13 put more service on the key routes." We've got to
14 figure out what they are and just to -- but the real
15 constraint has been the fiscal austerity of the MBTA
16 on the operating budget. And this provides a
17 temporary -- but seven years is a long temporary --
18 opportunity to fund transit improvements, including
19 the operating costs, with capital funds. That will
20 both serve the mitigation needs, which is going to be
21 very substantial within the seven years; it will also
22 give us a much better future. And it really is a
23 chance to make lemonade out of the lemon.

24 So, I would just ask people to consider

1 that I would call it need rather than possibility.

2 CAROL MARTINEZ: Hi. I'm Carol
3 Martinez. I'm a Brighton resident.

4 I just want to give and, especially, I
5 just want to reiterate that the mitigation for the
6 construction of the Mass Pike is the responsibility of
7 the state, of MassDOT. And so even though MAPC, and
8 even though your study, you know, could include some
9 of those pieces of it, it's still your responsibility
10 in the MEPA, and mitigation is the responsibility of
11 the state. And so we don't, I don't think, want to
12 have too much of the City carrying that because their
13 study really needs to be on, you know, what the long-
14 term look projections are for building in Allston-
15 Brighton.

16 So, I would hesitate to do too much of
17 that, although I would really appreciate if you guys
18 stayed on top off what they're doing, to Fred's point,
19 to make sure that, wherever possible, our lives are
20 made, you know, as least hellish as possible during
21 the seven-year construction period of this.

22 But, you know, it is their
23 responsibility to handle construction mitigation and
24 to make it as easy for us as it can be. And it's our

1 responsibility, the City's and us, I think to hold
2 them to that.

3 So, I mean, you know, it is your
4 responsibility. And I know that you take it
5 seriously. But you just need to keep watching what it
6 is they're going to do and push for what makes the
7 most sense for our community.

8 JONATHAN GULLIVER: Any other
9 questions?

10 HARRY MATTISON: Thank you, Mr.
11 Gulliver. I'm Harry Mattison. I'm the Allston
12 resident with the Charles River Conservancy.

13 The Secretary's presentation was really
14 fantastic. And I want to thank you, and Kate Fichter
15 and everyone else on the team who I'm sure had a lot
16 of work -- contributed a lot to make that presentation
17 as promising as it is.

18 My question is about what is on the
19 plan for not the independent review of the throat but
20 for other parts of the project, and if a few key items
21 are planned to be evaluated during the next, you know,
22 period between now and the FEIR. Is that plan
23 sufficiently developed for me to ask about specific
24 items or --

1 JONATHAN GULLIVER: So, I'm going to,
2 again, kick that over to Mike, if you have any
3 specifics on that, Mike.

4 MICHAEL O'DOWD: Yeah, so the team is
5 in the process right now of addressing a lot of the
6 comments. There were over 500 comments that were
7 receiving on the DEIR. Going through that scope, they
8 are working on refining a lot of the issues that were
9 brought upon the MEPA cert. And, yeah, we'll be in a
10 position of actually starting to conduct some of these
11 task force meetings over the next several months to
12 discuss what the team has been doing to address and
13 react to the scope that was provided to by EEA.

14 So, we'll go through it similar to what
15 we've always done, Harry, walking through all of the
16 elements that we have and how we've been addressing
17 them.

18 HARRY MATTISON: So, could I ask if a
19 few specific items are being designed or --

20 MICHAEL O'DOWD: No. I mean we're
21 addressing the comments that have been received, and
22 also reacting to the scope that was provided to us.
23 So, what we'll do is we'll show you, walk you through
24 how we are going through that.

1 HARRY MATTISON: So, for example, the
2 Malvern Street busway, it was something we've talked
3 about for a long time but it's never been drawn or
4 designed. Are there plans to do that?

5 MICHAEL O'DOWD: So, what we're doing
6 right now is we're going through the additional
7 traffic analysis right now. We are looking at, you
8 know, as the Secretary pointed out today, as to
9 whether or not there are some service improvements
10 that might be generated. One of those would also be
11 the transit way or the busway that you mentioned for
12 Malvern Street. So, I think we'll be in a better
13 position to show you what we have or how it could be
14 incorporated into the design of the FEIR preferred
15 alternative, but there's no fixed design. We're still
16 going through a lot of that information ourselves as
17 part of the review of the scope and the analysis that
18 they had asked us to do.

19 JAMES GILLOOLY: So, more to come.

20 HARRY MATTISON: So, I would like to
21 just list off the rest of these, what I think are some
22 of the key items that we certainly hope we'll be
23 working together to act.

24 A response to the DEIR comments can be,

1 "Yes, we're not doing that." Right? I think what
2 we're hoping is that here are, you know, some key
3 issues that have been discussed for years that we're
4 hoping actually will be designed and given some more
5 complete evaluation than they have in the past. So,
6 that's the Malvern Street bus connection; the two-
7 track interim West Station that Jess and others
8 mentioned earlier; the lip of the rail yard and active
9 lines and commuter rail tracks; Cambridge Street
10 bypass road; I think as Galen mentioned earlier, a
11 lane reduction on Cambridge Street and the
12 intersecting roads; the pathway improvements that we
13 call in choke a throat, that Wendy, and Glen, and
14 others mentioned; reconstruction of the Grand Junction
15 Bridge over Soldiers Field Road; and ecological
16 restoration of the existing riverbank.

17 JESSICA ROBERTSON: And the people's
18 pike.

19 HARRY MATTISON: Yes, and better -- the
20 people's pike route that was talked about, the low-
21 stress, all ages and abilities route to walk and bike
22 most of our neighborhood toward Central Square and to
23 the river.

24 MICHAEL O'DOWD: So, what I can say

1 right now is based upon the list that I just took of
2 what you just mentioned, Malvern Street and the
3 busway, you know, as the Secretary pointed out earlier
4 today, some of those short-term studies fall into
5 looking at whether or not there are service
6 improvements that can be made prior to West Station.
7 Now, the transit way connection was a component of the
8 station in the DEIR. But, if there are an
9 opportunity, or if there is an opportunity to make
10 improvements in those bus services and it gets fleshed
11 out, that report that's going to be worked on
12 collaboratively with MassDOT and with MAPC, and the
13 cities of Boston and Cambridge, then that's something
14 that we'll further look into and dig into. Grand
15 Junction --

16 JESSICA ROBERTSON: Can I pause for a
17 clarification on that, Mike? This is Jessica
18 Robertson talking. Just a clarification. It's my
19 understanding that MAPC's study and some of these
20 other studies won't be complete by the time the FEIR
21 is filed.

22 MICHAEL O'DOWD: There's a short-term
23 study, Jess, that's going on. And the results of that
24 are supposed to be back to us within six months. And

1 it will influence some of the decisions that are being
2 made by the Secretary on the FEIR.

3 JESSICA ROBERTSON: Okay. But I think
4 what Harry is trying to say is that if we don't start
5 figuring out how we might do a Malvern Street
6 connection until six months from now, then it's not
7 going to make it into the DEIR. So, we need to start
8 looking at that sooner.

9 MICHAEL O'DOWD: Yeah, that's fine. We
10 have -- I mean we have ideas and we have concepts that
11 we're looking at right now.

12 JESSICA ROBERTSON: Okay.

13 MICHAEL O'DOWD: And we can show them
14 to you.

15 JESSICA ROBERTSON: That would be great
16 to see them.

17 MICHAEL O'DOWD: The riverbank
18 restoration, things like that, I think that some of
19 that stuff may actually be discussed as part of the
20 independent review because it falls within the throat
21 area. So I think that's something that's best left to
22 them to look at.

23 HARRY MATTISON: Just to clarify on
24 that point.

1 MICHAEL O'DOWD: Outside the throat
2 area?

3 HARRY MATTISON: For the extent of the
4 entire project area, from BU Bridge to the River
5 Street Bridge, I think it's not specific to the
6 throat.

7 MICHAEL O'DOWD: Okay. And the interim
8 West Station is also something that the Secretary also
9 mentioned earlier today. So, I think, you know, she
10 was pretty clear on how she addressed that question
11 when it was raised earlier. So, I don't think it's
12 necessary for me to have to keep going back over that
13 again right now.

14 And certainly as far as people's pike
15 go or the connections for bicycles and pedestrians,
16 you know, like Glen mentioned earlier, separations for
17 cyclists and pedestrians, we're certainly looking into
18 that. So, we'll have information to show you. And,
19 you know, we'll solicit feedback from you.

20 JONATHAN GULLIVER: So, we have a need
21 to wrap everything up pretty quick, and especially
22 while I have our consultant team here who is on
23 billable hours right now.

24 (Laughter.)

1 JONATHAN GULLIVER: So, if you have any
2 more questions, if anybody hasn't spoken yet and wants
3 to, I want to hear from you, especially with regards
4 to feedback that we can get on this review. And then
5 we'll wrap it up. So, a couple more questions.

6 HENRIETTA DAVIS: Just a quick
7 question. Will the --

8 JONATHAN GULLIVER: And, I'm sorry.
9 Your name, again?

10 HENRIETTA DAVIS: Henrietta Davis,
11 Cambridge.

12 Will the slides be available from
13 tonight's presentation?

14 JONATHAN GULLIVER: I believe so, yeah.
15 I believe we're going to make them available. Yeah,
16 we'll make sure they're available to you.

17 And I should have also said, if there's
18 anybody who didn't -- who wants to -- who didn't think
19 of a question they wanted to ask tonight, they can get
20 a hold of us.

21 DONNY DAILEY: They'll be on the
22 website.

23 JONATHAN GULLIVER: We have our
24 website.

1 DONNY DAILEY: We'll post something
2 tomorrow morning.

3 JONATHAN GULLIVER: Any other
4 questions?

5 All right. Well, thank you all for
6 coming. And I'll end with one shameless plug. You've
7 heard a couple of people talking about construction
8 disruption. Just a reminder for anybody who goes
9 anywhere near the Comm Ave. Bridge, July 26th.

10 (Laughter.)

11 (Whereupon, the proceedings were
12 concluded at 7:52 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Judith A. Luciano, do hereby certify that the foregoing record is a true and accurate transcription of the proceedings in the above-captioned matter to the best of my skill and ability.

Judith A. Luciano

Judith A. Luciano

**** ALL NAMES NOT PROVIDED WERE SPELLED PHONETICALLY TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY**

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