

Securing Affordability

Restructure transportation costs to address income disparities

Vision

Picture a Boston where every neighborhood has affordable housing and quality transportation choices. Vulnerable groups including young people and seniors will be able to afford to use bikeshare, ride the bus, or take a train. State and city agencies will invest in and expand the transit network so that affordable options exist while service quality is maintained. Transportation improvements will not cause rents to rise and displace residents, because good connections will be everywhere.

Goals

Protect affordable housing when improving transportation

Upgrades to the transportation system should not make housing more expensive for residents with fixed or limited income. Places like South Boston should preserve affordability even as transit and bike networks through the neighborhood improve. Enhanced transit along the Fairmont Line or other corridors will be accompanied by a mix of housing options for all incomes. With all Bostonians living within a short walk of transit stations, carshare spots, and biking routes, more residents can avoid the high costs of owning a vehicle.

Make transportation affordable to those most in need

Transit in Boston will be affordable to all, including youth, students, people with disabilities, elders, and people on fixed incomes or with minimum wage jobs. Innovative ways to fund and subsidize transportation for historically underserved populations—such as Boston Bikes’ subsidized Hubway memberships and the expanded Youth Pass “S-card”—will reduce the cost of transportation so that the expense of getting around is no longer a barrier to finding work, getting to school, or improving quality of life.

Invest dollars fairly to distribute costs evenly and reduce long-term debt

Funding strategies will ensure that capital investments made today will not create legacy debts to be paid-off by future generations the way that the Big Dig did. Project financing that leverages Boston’s booming economy will pay for maintenance and service improvements, thereby reducing the strain on T riders and taxpayers. Any increase in the cost of transit must correspond to improved levels of service.

Average Transportation Costs as % of Income for a Median Income Family by Neighborhood

South Boston Waterfront	6.6%
Beacon Hill	8.0%
Fenway	9.4%
North End	10.6%
East Boston	10.7%
West End	10.8%
South End	11.5%
Back Bay	11.7%
South Boston	11.7%
Downtown	12.0%
Allston	12.2%
Charlestown	12.2%
Jamaica Plain	12.3%
Mission Hill	12.3%
Roxbury	12.4%
Mattapan	12.5%
Longwood Medical Area	12.6%
City of Boston (average)	13.0%
Brighton	13.7%
Dorchester	14.3%
Roslindale	15.1%
Hyde Park	16.4%
West Roxbury	16.5%

Source: Location Affordability Index

Aspirational Targets

Reduce the transportation cost burden for very low income individuals to the citywide average for a median household.

— in 2015, from 33% of income spent on transportation to 13%.

The cost of subsidized transit passes will remain constant relative to inflation.

— based on \$1.05 per subway ride for seniors and students in 2015.

Double the number of jobs reachable within a 30-minute transit commute.

— from 27% to 60%.

Questions Bostonians Asked

When will the youth of Boston get free rides to school and back?

I am a student. I have disabilities. I am an elder. I lived on a fixed income. I have a minimum wage job. In 2030, will I be able to afford to commute to a job or school in Boston?

How do we fund upgrades without burdening fare payers?

How do we better maintain our transportation equipment?

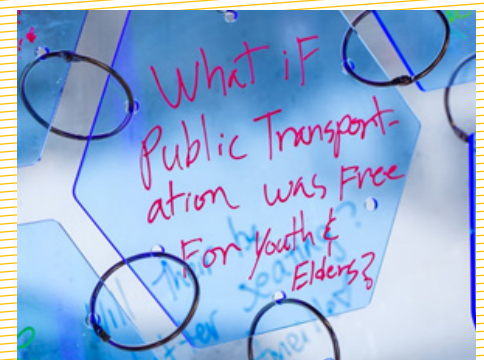
How can Boston engage its citizens as owners, not merely users, of our public transit?

How will the City guarantee protection from displacement for people who live near new and improved transit projects?

What if public transportation was free for youth and elders?



“Ensure that existing residents can stay close to transportation options as service improves.”



“What if public transportation was free for youth and elders?”
—Collected in February of 2015

Rising cost of taking the T MBTA Subway Fare History 1918 – 2016

