

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY



May 11, 2022

The Honorable Michael Moran
Assistant Majority Leader
State Representative
24 Beacon Street, Room 39
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Representative Moran,

Thank you for your May 9th letter regarding Harvard University's role in planning critical elements of the Allston Multimodal Project. With other stakeholders and members of the community, Harvard shares a vision for the Project that will support mobility, connectivity, and regional economic growth while also addressing civic and community needs across Allston-Brighton. We are pleased to continue to work with state, city, and community partners to support a Project that will enhance the Allston-Brighton community and advance inclusivity, vibrancy, and health throughout the region by transforming an obsolete brownfield site.

In an April letter to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), the Wu Administration and the City of Boston noted this Project's potential to be catalyzed through the deliberate execution of several key project elements. MassDOT's decision to pursue an at-grade interchange design reflects the clear community consensus that has existed for years. A truly multimodal West Station, integrating rail, bus, bicycle and pedestrian connections within an urban street grid, is another. If appropriately designed, West Station can make Allston more accessible to the Greater Boston region and do so in a way that reduces automobile dependency and related greenhouse gas emissions. To realize this potential, West Station needs to be woven into the transportation system and urban fabric, which is why Harvard has been focused on decking above and around the station since as far back as 2014. Expanding platforms around West Station to bridge across the currently impenetrable rail yard and highway, an infrastructure divide which has existed for upwards of 150 years, will create connectivity across historically separated north and south Allston neighborhoods and will provide access to new multimodal transportation infrastructure and increase access to the riverfront.

To date, our conversations with the Commonwealth and the City, and as consistent in task force and other public meetings, have focused on preserving the technical viability of any future decking beyond what would be required to support an expanded, multimodal West Station. While the University has focused on the role of decking for many years, Harvard has not yet begun any planning for specific development projects above decking – a process that will involve extensive city, state and community engagement. Notably, in our February 23rd letter addressed to Mayor Wu, you, and your fellow Allston-Brighton elected officials and community members, Harvard committed to an area-wide public planning process. Any future development plans, whether above decks or on buildable adjacent ground, would be subject to that City-led planning, zoning and subsequent large project public review process. That process is a prerequisite for Harvard to be able to commit to or even define the extent of decking that is economically

feasible or appropriate from a placemaking perspective. We welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss that process, and we are enthusiastic to participate in public meetings of the Harvard Allston Task Force, as you have requested.

Harvard has long supported the prioritization of West Station because of the critical role it will play in anchoring both a neighborhood and the region. The University looks forward to continuing to work alongside the Commonwealth, the City of Boston and the community to ensure that West Station is designed to advance the promise of a truly connected and multimodal transportation hub.

Sincerely,



Katie Lapp
Executive Vice President
Harvard University