



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Planning, Development, and Transportation
Sharon Durkan, Chair

One City Hall Square 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02201 ♦ Phone: (617) 635-3040 ♦ city.council@boston.gov

REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

February 18, 2025

Dear Councilors,

The Committee on Planning, Development, and Transportation was referred the following dockets for consideration:

Docket #0396, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Seven Hundred Seventy-Five Thousand Eight Hundred Fifty-Five Dollars (\$775,855.00) in the form of a grant for the 2025 Community Connections Program grant, awarded by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, passed through the Boston Regional Metropolitan Planning Organization, to be administered by the Transportation Department.

Docket #0448, Order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Fourteen Million Four Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$14,400,000.00) in the form of a grant, Safe Streets and Roads for all, awarded by US DOT-National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, passed through the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, to be administered by the Transportation Department.

These matters were sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu and were referred to the Committee on February 5, 2025 (Docket #0396) and February 12, 2025 (Docket #0448) .

Summary of Legislation

Docket #0396 is an order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of seven hundred seventy-five thousand eight hundred fifty-five dollars (\$775,855) in the form of a grant, the 2025 Community Connections Program grant, awarded by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, passed through the Boston Regional Metropolitan Planning Organization, to be administered by the Transportation Department. This grant will fund the replacement and electrification of Blue Bikes Stations and repurpose 1,600 single-space parking meter poles with bicycle racks.

This grant will fund three key projects managed by the Boston Bikes Team:

1. **Bluebikes Station Replacements:** The team will replace Bluebikes stations that have reached the end of their lifespan. Bike share has been operational in Boston for over 14 years. To maintain the system's reliability, ensure its proper upkeep, and preserve its visual impact on public spaces, the team will replace stations approximately every 10 years. This grant will support the replacement of about 12 stations. A list of potential stations for replacement includes: East Boston Neighborhood Health Center (20 Maverick Square), Bennington St at Constitution Beach, Honan Library, Wentworth Institute of Technology - Huntington Ave at Vancouver St, Roxbury YMCA - Warren St at MLK Blvd, Boylston St at Jersey St, Blue Hill Ave at Southwood St, The Lawn on D, W Broadway at D St, Franklin Park Zoo - Franklin Park Rd at Blue Hill Ave, Congress St at Northern Ave, Brighton Center - Washington St at Cambridge St, Bunker Hill Community College, Washington St at Egremont Rd, Government Center - Cambridge St at Court St,



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Deerfield St at Commonwealth Ave, Ink Block - Harrison Ave at Herald St, Savin Hill T Stop - S Sydney St at Bay St, Troy Boston, Oak Square - 615 Washington St. The aforementioned potential stations represent more stations than what is supported by the grant funding; the City will utilize developer mitigation funding to complete the remaining stations.

2. **Electrification of Bluebikes Stations:** The City is piloting the electrification of two Bluebikes stations, which will enable e-bikes to charge directly in the docks, eliminating the current reliance on battery swapping. E-bikes were introduced to the system over a year ago, and their popularity has been remarkable, making up 25% of all trips last year, despite comprising less than 15% of the fleet. To maintain e-bike functionality, the City's operator currently uses battery swappers to exchange depleted batteries. Data from other systems suggests that electrifying about 30 of the busiest stations could reduce the need for battery swapping by 80%, as a significant percentage of trips occur at these stations. However, electrified stations are costly due to higher equipment prices and additional installation requirements such as trenching and engineering. This grant will fund the electrification of two stations as a pilot project, allowing the City to evaluate real-world implementation costs and the permitting process before considering a larger scale electrification effort. The team plans to select stations for electrification from the top ten Boston stations by e-bike trips, which are as follows: South Station - 700 Atlantic Ave, Charles Circle - Charles St at Cambridge St, Boylston St at Fairfield St, Cross St at Hanover St, Valenti Way at Haverhill St, Christian Science Plaza - Massachusetts Ave at Westland Ave, Chinatown T Stop, Commonwealth Ave at Agganis Way, Nashau Street at Red Auerbach Way, Landmark Center - Brookline Ave at Park Dr.
3. **Bike Parking Conversion:** As the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) modernizes the City's parking meters with multispace meters, the team will convert as many existing parking meter poles as possible into bike parking racks. The grant will fund the purchase of bike rack "sleeves," which fit over existing meter poles and are easily secured. This efficient method will significantly increase bike parking in high-demand commercial areas of the city.

The total grant amount from the Massachusetts Planning Organization is \$775,855, with a required municipal match of \$193,963. These matching funds will come from the City's existing budgets for bike share and bike parking.

Docket #0448 is an order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of fourteen million four hundred thousand dollars (\$14,400,000) in the form of a grant, Safe Streets and Roads for all, awarded by US DOT-National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, passed through the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, to be administered by the Transportation Department. This grant will fund systemic safety improvements to traffic signals at 50 locations across the City of Boston. Upgrades will comply with the City's updated Signal Operations Design Policy, which places a stronger emphasis on pedestrian safety by allocating more time for crossing pedestrians and minimizing high-risk turns. The project will specifically target upgrades in key locations and focus on enhancing conditions for all road users along the City's High Crash Network.

Signal upgrades will aim to achieve the following:

- Minimize dangerous conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers



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- Implement focused improvements in areas with vulnerable social groups, including those identified by age, income, and ability
- Enhance overall pedestrian comfort, promoting healthier behaviors and improved health outcomes
- Support the City of Boston's Vision Zero commitment, focusing resources on proven strategies to eliminate fatal and serious traffic crashes by 2030.

Information Received at Hearing

On Thursday, February 20, 2025 the Committee held a hearing to discuss Dockets #0396 and #0448.

Kim Foltz, Director of Boston Blue Bikes, Streets Cabinet, Amy Cording, Director of Engineering, Boston Transportation Department (BTD), and Louisa Gag, Bike Share and Active Transportation Planner, Streets Cabinet testified on behalf of the Administration.

The Administration presented a detailed overview of how the monies will be used across the City. Docket #0396 will fund the replacement and electrification of Blue Bikes Stations and repurpose 1,600 single-space parking meter poles to create bicycle racks. Docket #0448 is the US DOT-National Highway Traffic Safety Administration grant that will support BTD in implementing upgrades in line with Boston's Signal Operations Design Policy, which emphasizes pedestrian safety by increasing crossing times and reducing high-risk turns. These improvements will be targeted at key intersections, particularly those in Boston's High Crash Network, where data shows the greatest need for intervention.

Committee Chair Recommended Action

As Chair of the Committee on Planning, Development, and Transportation I recommend moving the listed docket from the Committee to the full Council for discussion and formal action. At this time, my recommendation to the full Council will be that these matters **OUGHT TO PASS**.

Sharon Durkan, Chair
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