

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR MINIARD CULPEPPER



## CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY SIX

### ORDER FOR A HEARING TO EXAMINE THE CIVIL RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS OF RAPID TRANSIT INEQUITIES IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

**WHEREAS,** Access to reliable, high-capacity public transportation is a civil rights issue that directly affects equal access to employment, education, healthcare, housing, economic opportunity, public services, and civic participation, and transportation infrastructure has historically played a significant role in either advancing or limiting opportunity for historically marginalized communities, with inequitable transportation investments producing disparate impacts on protected communities; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The Blue Hill Avenue corridor, which serves predominantly Black, immigrant, and working-class communities in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan, has long functioned as a train desert. Residents rely upon the busiest bus corridor in the Commonwealth despite lacking the permanent rapid rail infrastructure available in many other Boston neighborhoods, and for decades have experienced significantly less access to rapid transit than residents elsewhere in the City, raising important civil rights, racial equity, and disparate impact concerns regarding the fair and equal distribution of public transportation investments; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Documents dating back to at least 1979 repeatedly recognized the need for significant transit investment along the Blue Hill Avenue corridor, including the 2012 Roxbury–Dorchester–Mattapan Transit Needs Study, which evaluated rapid transit options connecting Dudley (now Nubian Square), Grove Hall, Blue Hill Avenue, and Mattapan, as well as subsequent planning efforts such as the Urban Ring planning process and the Fairmount Indigo Corridor Plan, which continued to identify improved rapid transit connections as important regional priorities and subsequent planning efforts continued to identify improved rapid transit connections as an important regional priority, raising important questions regarding whether the corridor has received the same level of consideration afforded to other communities when transformational rapid transit investments were made; *and*

**WHEREAS,** In 1987, the elevated Orange Line was removed from Washington Street, eliminating the one-seat rapid transit connection that had directly linked Roxbury to downtown Boston, and residents were promised that comparable rapid transit service would replace the stations at Dudley Square, Egleston Square,

Northampton, and Dover; nearly four decades later, that promised comparable rapid transit service has yet to be realized, contributing to the continued existence of the Blue Hill Avenue train desert and leaving generations of residents in predominantly Black neighborhoods with persistent disparities in mobility and access to employment, education, healthcare, economic opportunity; *and*

***WHEREAS,*** The failure to provide comparable replacement rapid transit service has perpetuated historic patterns of unequal public investment, and contributed to ongoing rapid transit inequities that remain a significant civil rights concern; *and*

***WHEREAS,*** The City of Boston has an obligation to examine how transportation planning decisions have produced disparate impacts on protected communities and contributed to ongoing civil rights and racial equity disparities, and to ensure that future transportation investments are guided by principles of equal opportunity, meaningful public participation, and equitable access to public infrastructure; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

***ORDERED:*** That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing regarding civil rights, transportation equity, train deserts, including an examination of the civil rights implications of the City's persistent disparities in rapid transit access; the failure to provide comparable replacement rapid transit service to the affected communities to fulfill commitments made nearly forty years ago; whether the historic and present-day distribution of rapid transit infrastructure has produced disparate impacts on Black communities and other historically marginalized populations; whether the Blue Hill Avenue corridor has received equitable consideration for transformational rail investment comparable to other neighborhoods; and that representatives from the Boston Transportation Department, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, and other interested parties shall be invited to attend.

Filed on: July 8, 2026