

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS MINIARD CULPEPPER AND BRIAN WORRELL



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY SIX

RESOLUTION URGING THE MASSACHUSETTS BAY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY AND THE CITY TO CANCEL PROPOSED CENTER RUNNING BUS LANES AS PART OF THE BLUE HILL AVENUE TRANSPORTATION PLAN PROJECT AND REALLOCATE FUNDS DEDICATED FOR THE CENTER RUNNING BUS LANES TO FUND THE CONTINUATION OF THE FARE-FREE BUS PROGRAM

WHEREAS, Blue Hill Avenue serves as one of the most significant economic and cultural transportation corridors for Black, Brown, and low-income residents in the City of Boston; *and*

WHEREAS, Decades of public disinvestment in streetscape beautification, tree canopy expansion, pedestrian infrastructure, and sanitation conditions along Blue Hill Avenue have contributed to disparate public realm conditions when compared to other major corridors in the City; *and*

WHEREAS, Public rights-of-way, including streets, sidewalks, and transportation corridors, are components of publicly funded programs, services, and activities that must be implemented in a manner that does not produce unjustified disparate impacts on communities of color; *and*

WHEREAS, The proposed multimodal redesign of Blue Hill Avenue includes dedicated center-running bus lanes supported by approximately \$44 million in combined federal, City, and MBTA investment, including a \$15 million RAISE Grant administered by the Federal Transit Administration; *and*

WHEREAS, Many residents, workers, and small business owners along Blue Hill Avenue have raised concerns regarding the lack of thorough community consultation on the proposed center-running bus lanes, and that without meaningful engagement reflecting the realities of those who rely on the corridor for work, caregiving, and commerce, the design risks deepening inequities and creating new barriers to economic participation and mobility; *and*

WHEREAS, The implementation of dedicated bus-only travel lanes will reduce general purpose travel lanes, curbside access, and parking availability for residents, customers, and small businesses, potentially resulting in increased congestion, longer travel times, reduced economic activity, and barriers to mobility for corridor residents who rely on personal vehicles for transportation; *and*

WHEREAS, The prioritization of bus-only travel infrastructure along a corridor serving predominantly Black, Brown, and low-income communities risks producing a disparate impact on residents who work in trades, have shift-based employment, and caregivers whose travel patterns are not easily accommodated by fixed-route transit service; *and*

WHEREAS, The reduction of general purpose travel lanes and on-street parking associated with dedicated bus lane implementation may disproportionately burden corridor residents with limited access to alternative transportation options by increasing travel times, limiting curbside access for essential services, and creating barriers to economic participation; *and*

WHEREAS, The Blue Hill Avenue corridor includes numerous small businesses, houses of worship, healthcare facilities, and community-serving institutions that rely on curbside access for deliveries, customer access, and essential services; *and*

WHEREAS, Since 2022, the City of Boston has partnered with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority to implement a fare-free pilot program on Routes 23, 28, and 29 in order to improve access to reliable and affordable public transportation for Boston residents; *and*

WHEREAS, Routes 23, 28, and 29 travel through neighborhoods including Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan, and serve many low-income residents, essential workers, seniors, students, and families who rely on the fare-free bus program as a critical means of accessing employment, healthcare, education, and other essential services; *and*

WHEREAS, Since implementation of the fare-free pilot program, nearly 24,000 fare-free trips have been taken each weekday on Routes 23, 28, and 29, and ridership on these routes increased by approximately 35 percent during the first year of the pilot, which was more than double the MBTA systemwide average; *and*

WHEREAS, Surveys indicate that more than one quarter of riders save at least \$20 per month through the fare-free program, allowing households to redirect funds toward essential expenses such as food, housing, healthcare, and education; *and*

WHEREAS, The fare-free pilot program has been extended through City funding supported by COVID-19 relief funds that are set to expire on June 30, 2026, creating uncertainty regarding the program's long-term sustainability for riders who depend on this vital service; *and*

WHEREAS, As the City and MBTA consider long-term funding options for public transportation infrastructure along the Blue Hill Avenue corridor, reallocating available funding from the Blue Hill Avenue Transportation Plan Project toward sustaining the fare-free bus program will improve equitable access to transit for corridor residents who depend on these routes; ***NOW THEREFORE BE IT***

RESOLVED: That the Boston City Council urges the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority and the City to cancel the proposed center-running bus lanes associated with the Blue Hill Avenue Transportation Plan Project and to instead reallocate available project funding toward sustaining and expanding the fare-free bus program for Routes 23, 28, and 29.

Filed on: March 4, 2026