

TOWN LETTERHEAD

Mr. Peter Butler
Regional Administrator – Region 1
Federal Transit Administration
55 Broadway Street
Cambridge, MA 02142

Mr. Les Fiorenzo
Regional Administrator – Region 1
Federal Railroad Administration
55 Broadway Street
Cambridge, MA 02142

July 23, 2018

Re: Natick Center MBTA Station Stair Replacement and Accessible Design

Dear Administrators Butler and Fiorenzo:

On behalf of the Town of Natick, please accept this letter in support of the MBTA's efforts to effect emergency replacement of a decaying stairway on the outbound platform of the Natick Center MBTA station, as we work with the MBTA to complete design and secure construction funding for a fully accessible station.

Many constituents in Natick and the region have requested the Town's support in repairing or replacing these stairs. The MBTA has undertaken temporary repairs, but the underlying structural issues posed a serious safety risk to the 1000+ daily users of this important station. We are therefore appreciative of the MBTA's diligence in replacing the stairway.

This station even, in its current state, is critical to the community. Among the many users of the Natick Center station are Natick residents with visual impairments. The new stairs will make their journey safer in the short term. A fully accessible station is essential, and the stair replacement is but an interim step.

The Town has advocated for a new, accessible station for several years, and developed a feasibility study and conceptual design for a new station, using local funding, with work product provided to the MBTA in 2014.

We are grateful that, subsequent to this work, the station was funded for full design in 2016. Town representatives have been actively engaged with the design, through participation in a working group. As recently as May 23 of this year, the Town hosted a public forum to gather feedback on the preliminary design. The Town of Natick is committed to this participation and to advocating for construction funding.

Should the station be closed, the consequences to the community would be drastic, because there are no practical alternatives for most station users, and no accessible rail stations between Natick and Boston.

We take the position that replacing these stairs on an emergency basis does not relieve the MBTA of the duty to make this station accessible. We would prefer that construction of an accessible station be imminent, but we also understand, given the design timetable, that it may be about a year before that project is underway, subject to securing construction funding.

More broadly, the Town respects the Americans with Disabilities Act, including directives noted in FTA Circular C 4710.1 as they apply to Transportation Facilities. We have endeavored to make our public ways and facilities accessible, and we consider this station to be a vital public asset and a cornerstone of our efforts to make our Town more welcoming and inclusive.

We also note that the Federal government, through the FTA, has a vital role in supporting transit improvements, and we respectfully ask for increased resources to be directed to the MBTA for accessibility improvements.

Thank you for considering our input as representatives of the majority of the station's users. Town leaders and members of the Natick Commission on Disability are available to discuss this matter at your convenience, and we request the opportunity to meet prior to any decision that may be made affecting the station's operation.

Respectfully,

Amy Mistrot, Chair, Board of Selectmen

cc: Luis Manuel Rameriz, General Manager, MBTA
Peggy Griffin, Civil Rights Officer, FTA
Selene Dalton-Kumins, Acting Associate Administrator for Civil Rights, FTA
Calvin Gibson, Civil Rights Officer, FRA
Melissa Malone, Town Administrator
State Representative David P. Linsky
State Senator Karen E. Spilka
State Senator Richard J. Ross