

MOBILITY HUBS

ADVANCING EQUITABLE & SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY IN EAST BOSTON

TransitMatters & The Harborkeepers



Boston Planning and Development Agency

WHAT IS A MOBILITY HUB?

Mobility Hubs aggregate several sustainable and accessible transit options in a strategic and legible location, informing travelers and enabling them to choose the modal option that is best for them, and making multimodal travel easier.

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Introduction

Our Team

TransitMatters

TransitMatters <http://transitmatters.org> is dedicated to improving transit in and around Boston by offering new perspectives, uniting transit advocates, and informing the public. We are data driven and people-focused. We utilize a high level of critical analysis to advocate for plans and policies that promote convenient, reliable, and equitable transportation for everyone. We aim to do this by advancing proven best practices as well as innovative high-impact, low-cost initiatives.

TransitMatters is led by Jarred Johnson and an incredible volunteer board of directors, and operated as a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Jarred is a queer man of color with a background in political organizing and community development. He has experience in community participatory research, affordable housing development, and program design. Jarred is also a housing advocate and a member of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council.

The Harborkeepers

The Harborkeepers <http://www.harborkeepers.org> was founded in 2016 as a non-profit grassroots-based organization with a mission to build equitable and sustainable coastal community resiliency and foster environmental stewardship. These lofty goals require intentional engagement with all stakeholders through meaningful trust-based, relationship-building in community urban spaces where people can thrive equitably. As local residents who live, work and play in the community that we are based in, we leverage everyday meaningful engagement opportunities with environmental programming while building critical partnerships and generating collective advocacy to build coastal resiliency. For us, building social resilience is just as important as building physical infrastructure that will protect our environment and communities from increasing climate and environmental impacts.

The Harborkeepers are led by Magdalena Ayed. Magdalena is an Arab-American, born in Argentina and raised in New Jersey. Magdalena has been an East Boston resident for more than 12 years. Magdalena founded the Harborkeepers on the heels of the City's Climate Ready plan to engage the community, especially young people, around resilience, sustainability, and stewardship.

Why East Boston?

East Boston is the only Boston neighborhood completely separated from the city proper by water. Developed in the early 19th century as the “East Boston Company,” the community became known for its working port and the home of the Daniel McKay shipbuilding business. East Boston attracted the working poor and lower middle class for most of its history, hosting evolving patterns of immigrants from Ireland, Italy and more recently South and Central America. More than 30% of households in East Boston do not have access to vehicles, 59% do not have drivers licenses, and have household incomes less than \$52,000 a year.¹ East Boston is perceived as transit-rich because of the presence of the Blue Line. This perception was challenged in 2013 by a thoughtful report prepared by the Dukakis Center for Urban & Regional Policy at Northeastern University. That report, *The Toll of Transportation*, noted that “access to public transit service is insignificant if the service that is provided does not adequately meet the needs of its users.”² The report described those features of mobility in East Boston that make it an ideal candidate for a Mobility Hub: “East Boston residents are more likely to be able to walk or bike to work than participants from any other city in our sample. . . [but] this does not mean that their transportation situation is high-quality. . . Although transit service may be more accessible to East Boston residents, the service is not seen as efficiently transporting people to some vital destinations in a convenient way.”³

This circumstance cries out for the utility of a Mobility Hub as a legible local destination where residents can access multiple modes of (mostly sustainable) transportation within proximity to existing transit options. The *Toll of Transportation* noted that “the most common way for East Boston respondents to access the grocery store is by taxicab.”⁴ That costly paradigm can change when a strategically located Mobility Hub provides people with efficient and affordable alternatives. Mobility Hubs offer the opportunity to rethink how residents experience their neighborhood and equip them with the tools to choose the mode of transportation that suits them best and advances sustainability. Mobility Hubs are designed with true universality so that non-English speakers, those with mobility challenges, seniors - and indeed anyone - can feel safe and empowered.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 5-year American Community Survey; BPDA Research Division Analysis

² *The Toll of Transportation*, p.17

³ *Id.* pp. 22-24

⁴ *Id.* at p. 224

Why Mobility Hubs?

A Mobility Hub is a designated, easily identifiable location where multiple modes of transportation converge, guaranteeing that on a 24/7 basis, people can find at least one (and optimally several) sustainable modes of transportation to get them to their ultimate destination. Mobility Hubs are designed to fit into their specific locations and be contextual while also being easily replicable. These Hubs also serve as a convenient place to find accurate, real-time information about transit schedules and sustainable mobility choices. A Mobility Hub also adds vibrancy, safety and legibility to the public realm.

A Mobility Hub is anchored by access to frequent, high-capacity transit. Therefore, urban hubs must be located at or in very close proximity to a station serving a subway or rapid transit line, a Key Bus Route, or a combination of the above. (See the section “Mobility Hub Elements” for more specifics). These locations would include assigned spaces for buses and other modes of transportation.

The basic concept of a “Mobility Hub” is not unique. Regional governance structures from Los Angeles to Toronto have used the term to define locations with connectivity to multiple transportation options. The *Go Boston 2030* report addresses the concept for use in Boston neighborhoods. The Mobility Hub model we have developed goes a step further, and innovates by reducing barriers to sustainable transit, prioritizing wayfinding, consolidating options and responding to resilience issues that are of particular concern in East Boston.

Our Mobility Hub Vision

Our Mobility Hub vision can best be understood through the following short narratives using composite characters and potential sites as illustrative.

Janna

Janna works the late shift downtown near Government Center. She uses a wheelchair, and lives near Central Square. Before the Mobility Hub came to Central Square, safety was an issue with taking the bus at night to Maverick - her bus stop was poorly lit, and the sidewalks between her house and the stop were difficult to navigate. The lack of a shelter at her stop made inclement weather difficult to deal with - very often, she had to use a TNC or a taxicab to get downtown, which increased her transportation costs considerably.

Since the Mobility Hub was implemented, the sidewalks near her stop are more accessible, and better shelters and lighting at her stop make it safer to use. In addition, emergency phones near the stop make it feel safer, and she's felt comfortable enough to take the bus more often, which reduces her transportation costs. The addition of level boarding ramps at her bus stop has made the process of boarding quicker, and she's able to get onboard the bus faster and get where she's going sooner. For Janna, the increased **safety** and **accessibility** means a **better commute** and **more independence**.

Carmella

Carmella is 78 and lives on Lexington Street. She has arthritis and uses a cane for stability. Since her husband died, she depends on friends or relatives to take her grocery shopping because she never learned how to drive. She would like to do simple things on her own, like spend a few hours at the East Boston Library, or shop at the Chelsea Market Basket, but she is not sure how to access either a bus or the Silver Line 3 to Chelsea, and she is afraid to cross the multi-directional traffic in Day Square.

The new Day Square Mobility Hub has opened up new opportunities for Carmella. Day Square is no longer the scary and confusing car-centric place she avoided, but a pleasant and safe place that she can navigate to reach the Library, the Greenway and the Silver Line. The new wayfinding kiosks and level boarding bus have opened up her world by giving her access to bus transit to destinations she could only reach with the help of others. Carmella may not be able to fully describe it in words, but she knows that the Mobility Hub has **improved the quality of her life** in specific and immeasurable ways.

Luis

Luis moved to Eastie recently, sent to live with relatives by his parents. His English is still limited, and the poor signage in his area before the renovations made navigation difficult. Luis enjoys bicycling, and would like to use his bike to get around, but bike lanes in East Boston are mostly unprotected. He's had a few near misses, and it's not always easy to have the confidence to ride in shared lanes with Boston drivers. After the improvements, signage with clear destinations and icons has made wayfinding more accessible, and the improved bike facilities around the new Mobility Hub have made biking through that area easier, safer, and more comfortable. Luis has been able to bike to school more often, and on the weekends, bike to the T to go downtown with some friends. Plus, the protected bike lane system connects to the East Boston Greenway, and he's better able to enjoy the amenities it offers like its public library, soccer fields and access to the harbor. For Luis, the **improved wayfinding** and **bicycle facilities** have **improved his ability to navigate, access key destinations** and **built confidence**.

What Problems do Mobility Hubs Solve?

- Mobility Hubs solve the last-mile problem for busy transit routes, by providing a variety of connecting options.
- Mobility Hubs provide space for bike/scooter-share storage, possibly with a financial contribution from operators.
- Mobility Hubs allow commuters to acquire fare payment media and find reliable real-time information about connecting transit.
- Mobility Hubs provide dedicated space for transportation network companies (TNCs) taxis, and private shuttle pickups, making access/egress safer and reducing congestion.
- Mobility Hubs aggregate several transit options in a strategic and legible location, informing travelers and enabling them to choose the modal option that is best for them, and making multimodal travel easier.

Mobility Hub Elements

The components of a Mobility Hub fall within four categories: transport, wayfinding/trip planning, placemaking, and resiliency. Elements from each of these categories can be implemented in different ways at a Mobility Hub to provide an informed, connected and integrated transit experience that responds to its location and associated public realm.

Transport

Bus Shelters

Bus shelter infrastructure will vary and be dependent on the location and size of, and the bus routes serving, a Mobility Hub. Mobility Hubs will be located at sites co-located with bus and/or transit or rail services, with waiting areas that make the individual feel safe, comfortable, and secure. Bus shelters, for example, should be able to provide basic seating, lighting, shading, and protection from the elements, but should also include features such as real-time transit information, transit fare card dispensing stations, smartphone charging stations, and wayfinding signage.

Level Boarding

An essential component to a seamless rider experience is level boarding, which aims to eliminate the need to ascend steps in order to board a bus. Level boarding comes with significant additional benefits beyond accessibility such as faster boarding, shorter dwell times, and improved service and reliability. The city of Everett has recently installed platforms at two of their bus stops as part of their long-term Everett Transit Action Plan. The plan's goal is to move their bus system towards Bus Rapid Transit ("BRT") in order to create one of Greater Boston's strongest transit corridors.



Bike Share

Mobility Hubs bring together first-and last-mile multimodal mobility by piecing together existing transit and mobility options together in one, easy-to-access location. Docked bicycles offer a meaningful mobility option for many able-bodied people. Blue Bike stations should ideally be located at Mobility Hubs, and they should be made highly visible, helping extend the mobility network by offering people a sustainable mobility choice to reach their destinations.

Bike and Scooter Parking

In addition to bike sharing amenities, a Mobility Hub could also be equipped with bike parking facilities in order to accommodate those who commute on personal bikes. These facilities also may provide amenities such as bike repair tools, tire pumps, and electric bike charging stations. For travelers who commute on dockless bikes and scooters, a Mobility Hub could also have dedicated parking areas for bike drop off and pick-up. Depending on the layout of each individual hub, enclosures may be free-standing or within buildings. Bicycle parking facilities should be placed in areas around a Mobility Hub that are highly visible, well-lit, secure, and are in-line with the existing sidewalk areas.



Walking

First-and last-mile connections for some still might best be served by walking; therefore Mobility Hubs should provide generous, accessible sidewalk space located on common walking paths and local wayfinding maps that identify walking & cycling times to common destinations (see “Wayfinding and Trip Planning”). It is also important to incorporate features such as adequate lighting, appropriate paving material for sidewalks, and clear multilingual signage along heavily walked areas to ensure comfort and ease, especially for travelers who may have physical disabilities.

Wayfinding and Trip Planning

Mobility Hubs should have effective wayfinding signage to guide travelers and should be laid out in a manner that is accessible and safe. A successful wayfinding system allows travelers to easily find their destination or transfer point, understand where they are relative to the rest of the Mobility Hub, access real time travel information including schedules, and allow them to discover what each location has to offer. Strong wayfinding is critical to helping travelers make informed decisions about what mode of sustainable mobility may be best-suited for them. In East Boston, effective wayfinding elements will be multilingual in order to maximize their usefulness to local residents.

Signage

Visual identification of the Mobility Hub is critical. The Mobility Hub will have iconic identification signage that allows it to be identified from afar, similar to the MBTA “lollipop” signs. Within the Mobility Hub, it is important to make sure signage clearly communicates what is available for travelers and pedestrians to make it an easy journey. A Mobility Hub will have signage related, but not limited to, maps of each route, a diagram of the local transit network, timetables and fare information in multiple languages, as well as local maps with walking and cycling information to popular destinations. Multiple elements described above may be combined into a single diagram or map, helping travelers make decisions on what mode of travel to utilize along with discovering new options, which they may not have realized were available. The rise of digital signage, such as provided by companies like Soofa and Civiq, creates an opportunity to deliver messages quickly and in real-time, which helps keep travelers engaged and well-informed.



The Paris metro system is an example of a system that has effective public transit signage. For example, the bus stop sign (above left) includes the routes that pass through that stop as well as gives travelers details on the number of minutes until the next bus arrives. Dynamic signs are

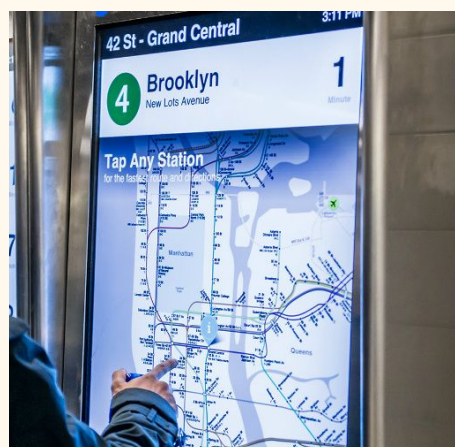
easy-to-understand and can also be used to convey details about other mobility modes available to travelers (bike, train, e-scooters, etc).

Digital Wayfinding

A key feature of a Mobility Hub is the ability to integrate digital wayfinding information into the design, perhaps linked to a smartphone application, as a means to provide clear, relevant, and local directions. It's particularly important that this digital wayfinding and trip planning be accessible to people for whom English is not their first language.

Reaching the level of technology needed for smart communications means building out hard, physical infrastructure, which can be costly and therefore challenging for municipalities with limited budgets. However, third-parties have been working on solutions that aim to provide smart infrastructure projects at no cost to cities, choosing to source their revenues instead from advertisements. The principle at the heart of these third party solutions is to make local, live information accessible, interactive, and to create better journeys. Specific potential vendors can be found in the appendix.

In addition, when implementing different modes of transport in a neighborhood, there isn't always an opportunity to integrate and link everything together into an areawide wayfinding scheme. Transit agencies, with the advent of big data, have massive data-sets detailing movement in fine detail. The sources of riders' stress lies in figuring out their connections and how to get to places. There is an opportunity to optimize what currently exists and effectively present that information in a Mobility Hub. Overall, real-time information improves the experience, and travelers will be more willing to use public transit or other sustainable modes.



Placemaking & Community Building

Mobility Hubs can complement or serve as public space that offers multi-functional utility. Mobility Hubs can be located on or next to public plazas, or can contain plaza-like areas themselves, including parklets in on-street parking spaces. Active businesses along the edges, or even within the Hub, can generate pedestrian activity. More activity and “eyes on the hub” will help increase safety for all, for those who are enjoying the public space or who are waiting for a transit vehicle.

Public spaces in or around a Mobility Hub should be flexible. They can accommodate different uses at different times, for example cafe seating, outdoor markets, festivals, etc. They should invite social interaction and community participation.

Public spaces in and around Mobility Hubs can include:

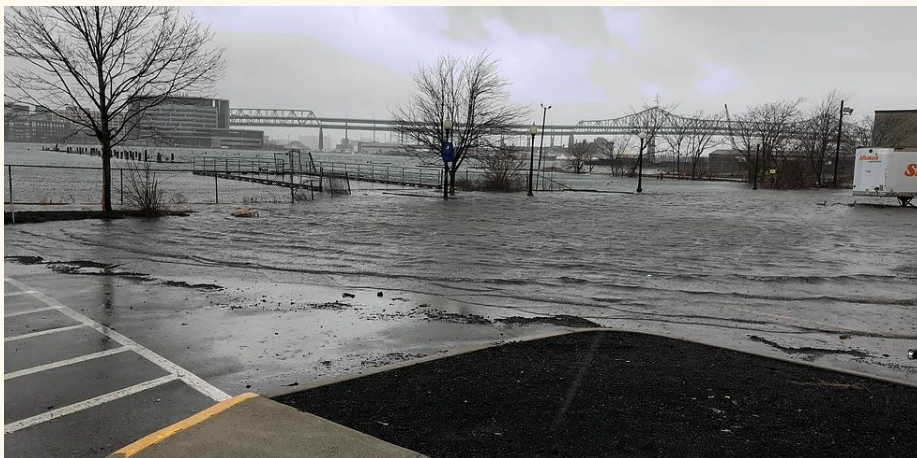
- trees and landscape elements to provide shade and a sense of enclosure
- seating, preferably movable, such as cafe tables and chairs, in addition to any fixed seating for transit passengers
- public art (sculptures, murals, painted street surfaces, etc)
- permanent retail establishments that face the public space (in particular food-related)
- mobile retail such as food trucks, retail carts, and kiosks
- high quality materials and building facades
- human-scaled lighting
- good visibility from outside and within the Mobility Hub

Safety

Mobility Hubs will be inviting and, in the evening hours, properly illuminated. Among other features, there should be consideration given to mobile phone charging and wifi connectivity, a designated emergency information station and “blue light” safety phone centers.

Resiliency

One of East Boston's greatest assets, its unique access to the harbor, is also its greatest vulnerability. Boston's sea level could rise (from 2000 levels) by at least nine inches by 2030, 21 inches by as soon as 2050, and 36 inches by as soon as 2070. The neighborhood is particularly vulnerable to flooding from climate change events. The neighborhood's main link transit to the rest of Boston is by a century old tunnel susceptible to flooding. East Boston's population is left uniquely vulnerable as the Blue Line is routinely put out of service during certain winter weather conditions, and there is currently no plan to solve this recurring issue. In addition to providing alternative modes of transport in the event of severe delays or service stoppages on the Blue Line, Mobility Hubs can offer intentional design interventions with sustainability and resilience in mind.



Sustainability & Climate Change Adaptation

The Mobility Hub itself should be designed and constructed as sustainably as possible and with climate change impacts in mind. The Mobility Hub could function as a legible location for shuttles into Downtown to depart from in the event of Blue Line failure. Mobility Hubs offer the opportunity to implement sustainability and resilience features such as green power generation and the use of sustainable construction materials such as reclaimed wood and environmentally-friendly paint.

Additional Opportunities

Mobility Hubs can become the catalysts for important changes that will combine to improve local mobility and quality of life. Some examples are described below.

Bus Lanes

Mobility Hubs can be the catalyst for the introduction of dedicated bus lanes. Dedicated bus lanes are important when it comes to reducing travel time, and should be considered when designing a Mobility Hub. The primary benefits of bus lanes are that they help reduce delays caused by vehicles and make transferring to other modes of transport quicker. Recent initiatives in Boston, Everett and Arlington have shown that bus lanes were able to cut travel times by an average of 4 to 10 minutes and are an improvement that can be replicated in different locations. Having bus lanes will be an important element of a Mobility Hub in order to realize the full benefits around seamless mobility.



Bike Lanes

The lack of safe cycling routes is the number one impediment to get more people to use cycling as a serious means of transportation. Minority communities often have the highest rates of cycling fatalities. The introduction of safe cycling lanes in East Boston, radiating to and from strategically located Mobility Hubs, could transform the community by calming traffic and providing residents with a safer and more sustainable mobility infrastructure.

Sidewalk and other Public Realm Improvements

Mobility Hubs can become catalysts for public realm improvements that contribute to public convenience and safety. These improvements — such as new sidewalk and curb treatments, pedestrian crossings, street lighting, street trees, and furniture — help enliven the streetscape and, in a community like East Boston, can have a beneficial effect on the growth of pedestrian traffic essential to supporting thriving small businesses.



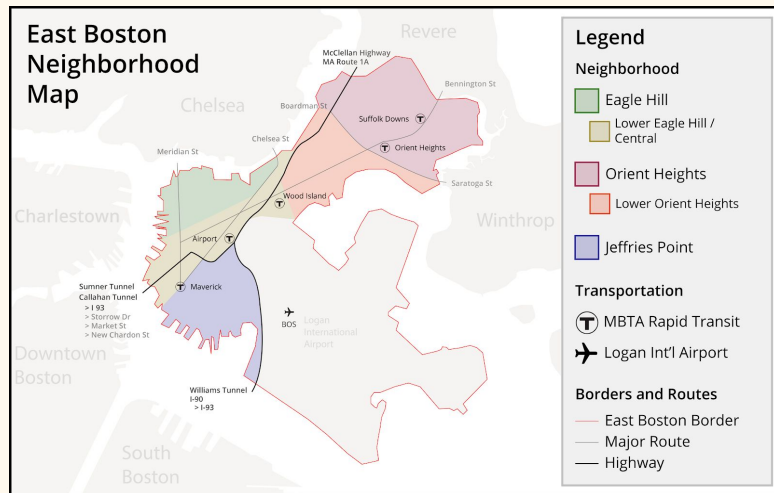
Site Selection Criteria

A Mobility Hub should be a center of activity: a vibrant location with a definite sense of place. Some features of a Mobility Hub, such as ticket machines, wayfinding, and bus stop shelters, are interventions. Others, such as commercial activity, residential density, and transit stations, can be seen as necessary as-built conditions. A successful Mobility Hub needs to be sited and

designed through a robust collaborative process where residents are engaged in a meaningful way. We will actively seek and encourage public input during an active civic engagement process to determine the location(s) best suited for this initiative.

In order to prioritize sites in East Boston for the implementation of Mobility Hub features, we have developed the following criteria:

- **Transit route frequency:** The success of a Mobility Hub is tied inextricably to the frequency of fixed-route transit service to it.
- **Mode options and connections:** Choices among modes enable more trip flexibility, and connections to dedicated infrastructure - bus lanes, high-quality bikeways, the Community Path - mean that service quality is better, more reliable, and more useful.
- **Walkshed residential population:** The success of a Mobility Hub will be determined in large part by the residential population within proximity to it - the travelers, passengers, and pedestrians who can make use of the transportation choices offered by a Mobility Hub.
- **Commercial, Social, and Civic destinations:** It's important that Mobility Hubs be anchored by destinations that attract visits and keep eyes on the street.



What We Will Deliver

Mobility Hub Prototype Design

Our team will deliver design documents that can be translated into construction documents for a Mobility Hub in a location to be determined by community engagement. The design documents will call out features in each of the elemental categories: transport, signage/wayfinding, placemaking, and resiliency. The design document will also call out the necessary utility needs and directly related infrastructural improvements for the MBTA and BTD (as well as optional improvements). The design will have cost estimates and where necessary specific material choices and more.

Mobility Hub Design Kit

Our team will also create a toolkit that can be used by municipalities, non-profits, community groups, and others to replicate this process. We will include the following:

- Community engagement materials like surveys, activity instructions, and the like
- Insights from our concept development phase and templates to inform future Mobility Hubs
- An appendix of cost estimates, sustainability research, and detailed funding resources

How We Will Deliver It

Our Plan

The project will be divided into four phases: community engagement/site selection, concept development, refinement, and design document completion and implementation.

Community Engagement/ Site Selection

The team will conduct robust community engagement to determine possible locations, analyze current mobility challenges, and identify creative solutions. A significant component of this engagement will be youth-led. It is crucial that the community feels a real sense of ownership and has meaningful input in the design and implementation of these Mobility Hubs.

Community engagement teams would conduct 2 weeks of surveys, conversations, and activities to get information that would inform our charrette. The charrette would allow for the design team and the community engagement team to get real-time feedback on high-level design concepts. Our approach to community engagement will be inclusive, also reaching out to local businesses and elected officials for their input.

Concept Development

The concept development team would take the information from the charrette and work with the Sasaki team and others to integrate the feedback from the charrette into a more detailed design concept. The community engagement team would remain engaged to provide feedback as the concepts advance. The design will advance to 60% design during this stage allowing the team to identify spatial challenges, cost estimates, and utility needs.

Refinement

Once the design is at 60%, the concept development and community engagement teams will host another community meeting to present the further advanced concept. It is important that the community sees their input from the initial engagement the charrette incorporated. This meeting will be a gut-check for the concept development team to see how well they are doing. After the community presentation, the concept development team will incorporate the additional feedback into the design and work towards 100% design.

Design Document Completion and Implementation

After incorporating the final round of input and finishing the 100% design, the team will work with our partners at the City of Boston, the Barr Foundation, and others to move beyond design. We have identified potential sources of funding (*see Appendix*). The community engagement team will also continue to engage the community with updates, demonstration projects, and calls to action.

Our Proposed Budget

Category	Amount
Concept Development	\$2100
- Staffing	(\$1300)
- Honorarium	(\$500)
- Materials & Food	(\$300)
Community Engagement	\$1800
- Materials & Food	(\$450)
- Staffing	(\$1350)
Charrette	\$2700
- Printing & Materials	(\$400)
- Promotion	(\$100)
- Food & Entertainment	(\$500)
- Childcare	(\$150)
- Transportation	(\$200)
- Staffing & Translation	(\$850)
- Honorarium	(\$500)
Design Review Presentation	\$1900
- Printing & Materials	(\$400)
- Promotion	(\$100)
- Staffing	(\$650)
- Food & Entertainment	(\$450)
- Childcare	(\$100)
- Transportation	(\$200)
Continued Engagement	\$900
- Materials & Food	(\$360)
- Staffing	(\$540)
General	\$5600
- Organizational Support for Harbor Keepers & TransitMatters	(\$5000)
- Contingency	(\$600)
Total	\$15,000

Appendix:

Funding and Vendors

Funding

State and Local Funding:

A variety of potential funding sources may be available, including the use of municipal TNC fees, funding via a state transportation bond issue, and tax surcharge funding (if Regional Ballot Initiative legislation is enacted). Funding available through the regional MPO earmarked for “Complete Streets” initiatives may also be available.

Foundations:

Boston’s philanthropic community is particularly interested in many aspects of the Mobility Hub concept, sustainability, mobility (and specifically buses), underserved communities and placemaking. We believe there are opportunities to leverage grant funding to complement the sources outlined in this Appendix.

Federal Programs:

There are a number of federal grant programs that can be used for Mobility Hubs. A few of those grant programs include the following:

BUILD Program / TIGER Grants

The Department of Transportation offers the Better Utilizing to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant for projects related to road, rail, transit and port projects that promise to achieve national objectives. Projects that qualify include those related to connected vehicle technology, signaling systems to reduce congestion, etc. This grant targets innovative approaches to

transportation safety. Applications for this grant should be worked on together with the relevant planning authority to ensure that the project is included in the appropriate plan.

Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Grants

The FAST program manages several annual grants with some that are up to \$12 million. The grant most relevant to Mobility Hubs is the FAST Act Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment Program (ATCM) which focuses on innovative uses of transportation technologies to reduce traffic congestion and emissions, improving multimodal systems and more.

Private Partnerships, Funding Alternatives

Another alternative to explore is collaboration with the private sector in building Mobility Hubs. Boston can leverage both public investment and private capital, and the Mobility Hub can be built according to shared interests between both parties. Boston can look to partner with corporations that are situated near the proposed sites for a Mobility Hub, who could potentially benefit. The benefits of a private-public partnership include, but are not limited to:

- Lower expenses related to the design, construction, and maintenance of a Mobility Hub
- Faster project completions
- Drawing on private sector expertise and new sources of capital
- Relieving pressure on East Boston's resources

Another important consideration to keep in mind is that a grantor will be expecting, and eager to see, the potential dividends from their investment in the form of improved access to health services, education, and other services via reliable and affordable methods of transportation. A Mobility Hub is a project that can bridge the gap between the initial grant investment and the “measurable” impacts on the community.

Vendors

Digital Wayfinding

Soofa

Based in Cambridge, MA, Soofa is focused on bringing smart, citizen-centric, and solar-powered infrastructure to cities globally. Their mission is to create people-focused technology, blending useful transit and neighborhood information with relevant local messagings. What fundamentally makes them different is that they give everyone an opportunity to respond and create their own information, in addition to providing it. The unit only takes four bolts on the ground to install — which makes the installation unobtrusive. The time required to install is typically no more than 30 minutes.



Soofa models start at about \$3,800 and go up with extra data-collection features. Boston recently installed a few in the Seaport neighborhood that were estimated to have cost about \$4,900 each.



Civiq

Another smart city provider is Civiq, who makes similar products, the only difference being that their devices are larger and are equipped with sensor technology. The devices provide access to and enhance public information, commerce, safety and efficiency to create “smartscape.” Civiq has also created a scalable funding model that allows cities to implement customized hardware solutions with up to 100% of the total cost covered by non-tax revenue streams.