



*LivableStreets Alliance StreetTalk 10-in-1
Tuesday, December 5, 2017
6:00-8:30 PM
Old South Meeting House, Boston*

Thank you for the warm welcome and thank you to Livable Streets Alliance for inviting the Barr Foundation to be a part of tonight's StreetTalk 10-in-1 event. It's an honor to be part of an event that showcases innovation and focuses on solutions to our transportation challenges.

I'd like to begin by acknowledging Secretary Pollack for her leadership and for joining us tonight. You have been active, engaged, and constructive partners to us and to so many who believe that Massachusetts deserves a world-class transportation system. We are proud to work with you and grateful for your leadership.

I also want to acknowledge my colleague, Mary Skelton Roberts, Co-Director of Barr's Climate Program, for her vision and stewardship of this project. Barr's interest in BRT is part of our Foundation's larger commitment to advance solutions to climate change – in clean energy, mobility, and related to climate resiliency.

When Barr helped launch the BostonBRT initiative in 2013, we had seen BRT become wildly successful in other global cities, carrying millions of people a day. And bringing benefits related to climate, equity, and access. In this country, other cities are ahead of us – there is BRT in Hartford, Cleveland, Albuquerque, and elsewhere. We wanted to understand whether BRT was feasible in our region, so we asked whether BRT could make a sufficient difference for people who already rely on buses – as well as for others who might consider riding a bus if it provided a higher quality experience in terms of speed, efficiency, and reliability. And, perhaps most importantly: we wanted to test whether local leaders and residents would want BRT in their communities.

Four years later, through extensive research and community engagement by the BostonBRT team, we know the answer to all these questions is a resounding “yes.”

Tonight is an important moment in this project as it brings us into the next critical phase of this work: actually testing ideas on-the-ground, in multiple communities, to see how they influence the transit experience of thousands of riders.

We experimented with this on the Silver Line in Boston this past summer, when we partnered with the MBTA and the City of Boston to try all-door boarding for two weeks. Surveys of 900 riders showed that even incorporating that single element of BRT created a better bus experience. Now, as we embark on a series of pilots over the course of 2018, we're seeking to answer two new set of questions: First, by showcasing multiple features of BRT – such as dedicated lanes, signal technology to give buses more green lights, and platform-level boarding – can we do even more to spark the public imagination around

all that is possible for buses? And second, can these examples of municipalities, state agencies, and local neighborhoods working together inspire others across our state to believe that we can create a world-class, reliable, and resilient transit system that everyone can count on.

We've been deeply encouraged by what we've seen so far through this process. The municipalities selected for pilots have shown exciting ambition around re-imagining their streets. As they did with the Silver Line demonstration this summer, the MBTA and MassDOT continue to devote their expertise and staff time. This has been an unprecedented partnership, and we're excited to see where this collaboration will lead next.

I am thrilled to announce the recipients of the BRT pilot grants this evening. As I do, I'd like to invite Secretary Pollack to the stage with me to welcome our recipients. I'd also like to welcome Mary Skelton Roberts and Lisa Jacobson from the Climate team at Barr.

- **The Town of Arlington**, which will launch a one-month pilot on the #77 route, one of the top 15 highest-ridership routes in the entire MBTA system. The pilot will include dedicated bus lanes and timed traffic signals so that buses get more green lights.
- **The City of Everett**, which will expand its successful dedicated lane along Broadway, create timed traffic signals, and construct platforms at two bus stops in Everett Square that allow riders, including people in wheelchairs or with baby strollers, to "level-board" the bus quickly and with dignity as they would a subway.
- **A partnership between Cambridge and Watertown**, who, together, will pilot BRT elements on routes 71 and 73, including all-day dedicated bus lanes, timed traffic signals, and "queue jump" lanes to move buses more quickly through intersections.

We anticipate these pilots will positively impact more than 30,000 bus riders, but we will need your help to make them a success. BostonBRT, Livable Streets Alliance, and the pilot communities will be in touch as we get closer to launch around how you can get involved. Indeed, in the almost four years I have been in Boston, I have been deeply impressed by how active and engaged the advocacy community is with regard to transportation. Your voice is critical, and I hope you'll continue to exercise it to speak out for solutions to our mobility challenges, including advancing solutions like BRT.

In closing, we know the elements of BRT work, that each on its own improves the bus experience. And we will be excited to see the impacts in each of these pilot projects. We also look forward to seeing which city, in Massachusetts, will be the first to step up and go for Gold Standard BRT.

From Barr's vantage point, we have been grateful for the opportunity to work with so many of you to open this conversation, and to spark an exploration into the potential of BRT. Now, to actually bring these ideas to life, Massachusetts, a transportation system that rivals the best in the world. Thank you.

###