



## **Josh's Plan to Improve a Transportation System Stuck in the Past for a City Ready to Move Forward**

### **Introduction**

Boston is one of America's oldest cities, and its transportation system often feels like it. Colonial-era streets, aging infrastructure, and inconsistent planning have created a system that struggles to meet the needs of a 21st-century city. Compared to peer cities, Boston lacks a reliable and accessible way to move people efficiently and affordably.

Today, getting around Boston has become a confusing and frustrating experience. Riders do not know if the bus will come, cyclists are not sure if the bike lane will continue, and drivers find themselves trapped in bottlenecks. Too often, our transportation "solutions" create new problems rather than solve old ones.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the MBTA subway system, otherwise known as "the T." Once a national model, it is now beset with delays, service interruptions, and aging infrastructure. Years of disinvestment and patchwork repairs have eroded public confidence, leaving riders uncertain whether they will get to work, school, or home on time. Under General Manager Phil Eng's leadership, some promising ideas and long-overdue reforms have been introduced, but many residents in Boston have not felt the effect of these changes.

On transportation, Josh believes there is an opportunity in front of us, a once-in-a-generation inflection point. This is a chance to reimagine how we move through our city: to reduce traffic congestion, lower carbon emissions, and connect housing and transit planning in a smarter, more equitable way. Boston has the tools, talent, and urgency to modernize its transportation system. What we need now is the leadership and political will to get it done.

## I. A New Era of Roadway Stewardship

### Managing Our Bike Lanes: Creating a Better System for Everyone

Josh believes bike lanes are a critical piece of our city's transportation puzzle. Embracing this alternative mode of transportation makes our air cleaner, offers a low-cost transportation option, and promotes a healthier lifestyle. However, the Wu Administration's misguided approach to how, where and when to install bike lanes across Boston has created a dangerous, unpredictable situation on our roads.

As Mayor, Josh will work with cyclists, drivers, small businesses, other community stakeholders and the state to better understand how we can most effectively use our shared roadways. To achieve a successful transportation network, Josh would:

- **Place a temporary pause on new bike lane construction** to conduct a city-wide audit on the efficiency and functionality of the existing and proposed bike lanes.
- **Identify unsafe "hotspots"** for cyclists, drivers and pedestrians and implement safety upgrades.
- **Work with BPD officers to ensure safety for all cyclists, drivers, and pedestrians**, including a long overdue clampdown on double-parking and unauthorized electric scooters.
- **Prioritize and study how bike lanes are impacting small businesses**, many of which are seeing business down as a result.<sup>1</sup>

### Back to Basics: Paved Streets and Safer Sidewalks

Josh knows that effectively delivering basic city-services should be a priority of any mayoral administration. Potholes and sidewalks in disrepair are an all-too-common thorn in the side of all Bostonians. Across our city, roadways with gaping holes present dangerous obstacles to drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians. To fill the potholes and create safer sidewalks and streets, Josh will:

- **Create a "Pothole Rapid Response Team,"** a dedicated office solely responsible for identifying and fixing potholes across the city. While city officials claim that once a complaint is received, pothole repairs take 48 hours to complete, potholes exist in all areas of the city.<sup>2</sup> This team will operate as a

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<sup>1</sup> [This Bike Lanes Story Isn't About Bike Lanes](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Boston potholes: Track the latest data](#)

separate entity within the 3-1-1 department to ensure our roads are adequately maintained.

- **Launch the “Step Up Boston” initiative**, a citywide plan to fix and modernize Boston’s broken sidewalks. As the *Globe* reported, almost 6,000 sidewalks across Boston are in disrepair, and entire stretches of the city remain inaccessible to people with disabilities.<sup>3</sup> The initiative will prioritize sidewalk repairs in high-need areas, require full ADA compliance from day one, and publish a public-facing dashboard to track progress.
  - Josh will improve accessibility through universal design by working closely with the disability community and making age-friendly city planning a priority. Whether it is a narrow sidewalk, a bus lane that blocks crosswalk access, or uneven curbs, these details matter and need to be addressed.
  - Josh will bring back a requirement initiated by Mayor Menino to not only have utility companies repair any streets and sidewalks impacted by their work, but to leave them in better condition.

## **Street Safety and Regulation: Rules for a Changing Streetscape**

Boston’s streets are evolving quickly, but our rules and enforcement have not kept up. As new transportation modes like mopeds, motorized scooters, and rideshare services fill the streets, we need modern policies to keep all users safe and accountable.

One increasingly visible issue is the rise of moped-based food delivery, especially in high-density neighborhoods like Fenway and Back Bay.<sup>4</sup> These vehicles often operate without license plates, weave between car lanes and bike lanes, and occupy sidewalks while idling or waiting for orders. Without clear regulations or consistent enforcement, they create safety risks for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers alike.

The goal is not to target working-class delivery riders, many of whom are immigrants or gig workers with few protections. The goal is to ensure that everyone using Boston’s public streets follows the same set of rules. To that end, as Mayor, Josh will work with the Boston Transportation Department, Boston Police, and state agencies to:

- **Clarify where mopeds can and cannot ride**, especially in relation to protected bike lanes and sidewalks.
- **Deploy targeted enforcement** in neighborhoods experiencing frequent violations, starting with Fenway, Back Bay and other commercial hotspots.
- **Require registration and visible license plates** for all mopeds and scooters operating on public roads.

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<sup>3</sup> [Boston’s broken sidewalks are a challenge for people with mobility aids](#)

<sup>4</sup> [I signed up to Drive for Doordash. Now I know why food delivery causes traffic chaos.](#)

- **Establish designated delivery parking zones** to reduce sidewalk and bike lane blockages.
- **Educate riders and employers** (including app-based platforms) about compliance and safety expectations.

By bringing smart, fair regulation to these new transportation modes, we can protect vulnerable street users, reduce friction between delivery workers and residents, and restore trust in our shared public spaces.

## **Managing the Curb: Creating a Functional System for Shared Space**

In a dense city like Boston, curb space is one of our most valuable, and overlooked, public resources. From delivery trucks and rideshare drop-offs to outdoor dining, bike lanes, and bus stops, a “Survivor-like” competition for limited curb space unfolds in our commercial districts. Without a coherent strategy, the result is chaos: double-parked delivery vans, blocked bike lanes, inaccessible sidewalks, and frustrated drivers.

Josh believes that managing the curb is not just about parking enforcement or raising revenue, it is about fairness, functionality, and making the most of limited space in a modern city. Right now, the system does not work for anyone. Commercial drivers waste time circling blocks, small businesses struggle with unpredictable deliveries, and public safety is compromised as curbs get clogged with vehicles trying to get to their destination.

Cities like Washington, D.C. have piloted and scaled up dynamic curb management systems that allow commercial delivery vehicles to reserve space in advance through digital permitting platforms. In D.C.’s case, their “ParkDC Permits” program charges freight operators a small fee to reserve space in high-demand areas, reducing double parking and improving turnover.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, New York City’s “Curb Management Action Plan” outlines a framework for using curbside data to better allocate space for loading zones, micromobility, and deliveries.<sup>6</sup>

Josh believes curbs remain an area of underutilized potential. Before the expansion of bike and bus lanes, the lack of curb planning created daily dysfunction for all modes of transportation. Now it is even worse. With better technology and coordination, we can transform the current chaos into a system that reduces congestion and increases safety.

Josh’s “Clear the Curb” strategy will include:

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<sup>5</sup> [ParkDC: Permits](#)

<sup>6</sup> [NYC Department of Transportation. Curb Management Action Plan](#)

- **Commercial loading zone reservations**, potentially piloted through a digital permitting system;
- **Flexible curb use schedules** that prioritize deliveries in the morning, rideshare in the evening, and public space on weekends;
- **Geofenced enforcement zones** that alert drivers when they are blocking bus or bike lanes;
- **Stakeholder coordination**, especially with small businesses, delivery companies, and neighborhood associations;

This is the kind of day-to-day challenge a Mayor can and should take on. With strong leadership from City Hall, working closely with the Boston Transportation Department, the MBTA, and City Council, we can build a curbside policy that makes our streets safer, more efficient, and more equitable.

## II. The Scope of Transportation: Housing, Accessibility, and Affordability

### MBTA Oversight and Regional Equity

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) is the backbone of Boston's transit system. Yet, despite Boston being the largest single financial contributor and primary beneficiary of its services, the city holds only one of nine seats on the MBTA board.<sup>7</sup> This limited representation undermines Boston's ability to advocate effectively for the needs of its residents and businesses.

To put it in perspective: more than 100 cities and towns collectively fund the T, but Boston alone covers about one-half of the local contribution, roughly \$90 million annually out of a \$188 million total.<sup>8</sup> Yet Boston's voice on the board is just one seat. This imbalance means Boston often lacks the direct influence necessary to push for prioritized investments, operational improvements, and accountability measures critical to serving its dense population and dynamic economy.

Boston will lead efforts to ensure that all cities and towns that rely on MBTA services pay a fair share of the costs. This will promote equity and relieve some of the funding burden currently shouldered by Boston's taxpayers.

As Mayor, Josh will be an advocate for:

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<sup>7</sup> [MBTA Board of Directors](#)

<sup>8</sup> [About \\$115 billion — that's what it might take to fund the MBTA over next 15 years; MBTA Sources of Community Value](#)

- **Expanded representation on the MBTA Board** commensurate with Boston's financial stake and ridership, including a stronger city role in decision-making related to service planning.
- **Closer collaboration between City Hall and the MBTA** to align transit investments with Boston's broader housing, economic development, and climate goals.
- **Equitable funding models** that require surrounding municipalities to contribute their fair share toward the transit services they use.

## Bridging Housing and Transportation

Boston's transportation challenges cannot be solved in isolation; they are deeply intertwined with the city's housing crisis. Creating more affordable, accessible housing is essential to sustaining Boston's economic growth and ensuring equity.

Data underscores this link:

- Nearly 75% of Boston workers commute from outside the city, placing heavy demand on transit corridors and roadways.<sup>9</sup>
- The average Boston commute time is 10% higher than the national average, reflecting both housing affordability pressures pushing workers farther out and congestion within the city.<sup>10</sup>
- Hybrid and remote work models, accelerated by the pandemic, have changed travel patterns drastically, rush hours are less predictable, and demand for transit fluctuates daily rather than following traditional 9-to-5 cycles.<sup>11</sup>

This new reality offers an inflection point: Through an “**AccessBoston**” initiative, the City has a unique opportunity to coordinate housing growth with transportation improvements, reducing emissions, travel times, and costs while expanding access to jobs and services.

To lead this initiative, Josh will create a **Housing & Transportation Czar** position within City Hall, a senior, dedicated leadership role with the expertise and political savvy to integrate housing and transit planning at every level.

Josh's Housing & Transportation Czar would be empowered by the City to:

- **Serve as a central liaison** among the MBTA, MassDOT, state and federal agencies, developers, and city planners.

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<sup>9</sup> [Getting to Work in New England: Commuting Patterns across the Region - Federal Reserve Bank of Boston](#)

<sup>10</sup> [U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 2022](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Boston's Economy 2024: Recovery, Resilience, and Growth](#)

- **Align transportation investments with housing development priorities** to ensure new neighborhoods are transit-accessible and affordable.
- **Spearhead innovative policy initiatives that leverage federal infrastructure** and housing funds to achieve dual goals.
- **Bring data-driven decision-making** to balance transit capacity with projected housing growth.
- **Advocate for residents of Boston**, especially previously underserved communities, and drive accountability across agencies.

By elevating the intersection of housing and transportation, Boston can capitalize upon the shift created by hybrid work, building a future where our transportation network is part of the solution.

### **III. Innovation and Opportunity: Expanding the System, Growing the Workforce**

#### **Exploring Water Transit: Boston's Untapped Possibilities**

Boston is surrounded by water, yet we barely use it to move people. In a city with limited road space, aging subway infrastructure, and growing commuter demand in places like the Seaport and East Boston, ferry and water taxi service should be a much bigger part of our transportation strategy.

Unlike laying new rail or widening roads, water transit takes advantage of abundant, underused space. It offers a low-emissions way to relieve pressure on our overburdened systems, and it is especially well-suited for connecting waterfront job centers like the Seaport, World Trade Center, and Logan Airport.

Boston has tried seasonal ferries from East Boston to Long Wharf, including a promising pilot in 2022–2023 supported by \$1 million in funding from the state.<sup>12</sup> It drew strong ridership, over 11,000 riders in just two months, but was not made permanent.<sup>13</sup> Other services provided by the MBTA have offered further glimpse of success, yet there has been no consistent city support or integration into the MBTA system. These efforts demonstrate demand and a lack of follow-through. City Hall has often taken a back seat, even when the MBTA initiates new service. That needs to change.

#### **A smart way to prepare for office return and urban growth**

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<sup>12</sup> [The East Boston ferry makes a comeback](#)

<sup>13</sup> IBID

With thousands of employees returning to Fidelity's World Trade Center campus, and more companies eyeing Seaport office space, Boston's transportation network needs new methods that do not rely solely on the roads and subways.<sup>14</sup> Ferries connecting East Boston, South Boston, and the Seaport would offer fast, car-free commutes, and help reduce congestion on the Sumner and Ted Williams Tunnels.

Josh believes that what is missing is not the boats, but political will. As Mayor, he will:

- **Champion water transit publicly and visibly**, using the bully pulpit to rally regional and private partners.
- **Make pilot routes permanent** and better integrated into the CharlieCard system, by working with MassDOT, using the City's expanded role within the MBTA.
- Push for **more permanent options**, not just temporary trials.
- Ensure ferry stops are **linked to walking, biking, and bus networks**, seamlessly aligning with the rest of our network.

Water transit will not solve all our transportation problems, but it is a smart, scalable, and long-overdue piece of the puzzle.

## **Smarter Bus Service, Not Just More Bus Lanes**

Buses are the workhorses of Boston's transit system, especially for working-class residents, seniors, and students. However, under Mayor Wu, the city has prioritized *painting more bus lanes* over actually improving *bus service*. Residents rightly worry about lost parking, confusing road changes, and routes that still run late or not at all.

Josh believes in better buses, not just more red paint. As Mayor, he will shift the focus from bus lane quantity to bus service quality by:

- **Conducting a full review** of existing bus lanes to measure performance and community impact before adding new ones.
- **Prioritizing improvements on key high-ridership routes**, including those where bus riders face the longest delays.
- **Protecting access for local businesses and residents** by balancing curb use and parking needs in any new design.

Bus reform in Boston cannot be one-size-fits-all. With smarter planning, we can build a system that is faster for riders, fairer for neighborhoods, and trusted by everyone who depends on it.

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<sup>14</sup> [Fidelity Seeks 803K SF Sublease at 245 Summer St Amid Relocation Plans](#)



## Transportation as Climate Action: Cleaner, Smarter, Fairer

Transportation is the largest source of carbon emissions in Massachusetts, and in Boston, cars are still the default for many trips.<sup>15</sup> If we want to meet our climate goals, improve public health, and build a livable city for the next generation, we need to make it easier to get around without a car.

Josh's transportation vision recognizes that climate progress is not about punishing drivers, it is about creating better options. Beginning with reliable public transit and safer roadway infrastructure, we can shorten commute distances and reduce dependence on cars. It also means building a transportation system that works better for kids, seniors, and people with disabilities, not just peak-hour commuters.

As Mayor, Josh will:

- **Make walking, biking, and transit a viable option** for short trips by improving first/last-mile connections, maintaining well-lit sidewalks, and creating a common-sense bike network.
- **Prioritize “green infrastructure” projects** that absorb stormwater and cool heat islands, especially in high-pollution, low-canopy neighborhoods.
- **Expand EV charging access**, particularly in commercial areas and underserved neighborhoods, by partnering with retailers and utilities to bring fast, reliable chargers to more parking lots and garages.
- **Coordinate with the Housing & Transportation Czar** to make sure new housing is built near transit, reducing the need for long, emissions-heavy commutes.

By making cleaner, healthier choices easier and more affordable, Josh believes we can build a Boston that is more breathable, more beautiful, and better prepared for the challenges ahead.

## Training the Workforce That Builds Boston: The Next Generation of Transportation Careers

As Boston modernizes its transportation infrastructure, we must also invest in the people who will plan, build, and maintain it. That means creating real career pathways, from Boston Public Schools to union apprenticeships to long-term employment, for students and workers who have historically been left out of the innovation economy. Josh believes this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to link infrastructure investment with workforce equity.

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<sup>15</sup> [Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Metrics | Mass.gov](#)

Josh's [education plan](#) already commits to revitalizing vocational education in BPS through new "Vocational Hubs" that bring together schools, unions, local businesses, and community organizations to prepare students for high-growth, high-impact careers. Nowhere is that opportunity greater than in transportation. Whether it is installing EV charging stations, repairing track and signals, maintaining electric buses, or designing next-generation infrastructure, these are good jobs with strong unions and clear ladders for advancement.

Under Josh's leadership, City Hall will align his plans for workforce development and transportation by:

- **Launching a Transportation Workforce Development Council** that brings together BPS, Madison Park Technical Vocational High School, the MBTA, local colleges, labor unions, and private-sector firms to identify skill needs, align curricula, and create apprenticeship pipelines.
- **Embedding transportation trades into BPS Vocational Hubs**, giving high school students direct access to real-world experiences in transit operations, green energy installation, construction, planning, and logistics.
- **Expanding youth internships and pre-apprenticeships** in collaboration with MassDOT, MassPort, and local trade unions, with a focus on low-income neighborhoods and students of color.
- **Prioritizing local hiring and prevailing wages** on publicly funded transportation and street infrastructure projects, ensuring that Boston's workers benefit from Boston's growth.
- **Partnering with community colleges** like Bunker Hill and Roxbury Community College to develop fast-track certificate and associate degree programs in transit technology, clean energy, and project management.

Josh believes Boston can become a national leader in training the transportation workforce of the future, while building a stronger, more inclusive city in the process.

## **Making Government Work Through Partnership & Technology**

Maintaining our transportation networks are a shared responsibility of city, state, federal, and private entities. It is crucial to manage our roads, railways, and sidewalks with transparency and communication. Like many other city priorities, the Wu Administration has not effectively coordinated with all necessary stakeholders to manage Boston's transportation network. Josh knows that close relationships between state officials and private partners are crucial to delivering a safer, more efficient system. To accomplish this, he will:

- **Deepen collaboration with MassPort**, ensuring that City Hall adequately represents and advocates for the needs of residents in Boston surrounding

Logan Airport. Whether it is noise complaints or environmental concerns, there are a litany of issues that derive from Logan. It is crucial that the Mayor's Office remains intimately involved in these issues, especially as the airport's footprint continues to grow.

- **Invest in a “Shared Systems Platform”** to manage roadwork and construction efficiently. Through a public-private partnership, companies and city officials would be able to schedule, implement, and coordinate when, where, and how construction will take place. Currently, the City provides information about public transportation projects and uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to assist with traffic signals, but it does not go far enough. With new AI tools we can optimize roadwork to minimize traffic disruptions and increase safety for cyclists, pedestrians, and drivers.<sup>16</sup>
- **Boost accountability through data transparency and performance tracking.** Josh is a big believer in accountability. As Mayor, he would ensure better use of public dashboards to track project timelines, delays, and budget usage, monthly performance reports on the T, bike lanes, sidewalk repair, and open-data initiatives that allow citizens and researchers to assess policy outcomes.

## **A Brighter Future for Boston Enhanced by Our Transportation System**

With the right leadership, Boston's transportation system can be the reason our future works, not what holds it back. Instead of the frustrating patchwork of transit options, pothole-ridden streets, and uncoordinated planning that does not listen to community needs, Josh is offering a transportation vision that calls for practical, people-first changes. Boston deserves not just temporary fixes, but long-term building blocks for a healthier, cleaner, more connected, and equitable city.

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<sup>16</sup> [Project and Construction Coordination Map - Transportation](#)