

## **Reading Turnback Committee (RTC) STATEMENT**

The Reading Turnback Committee (RTC) is a group of concerned community members who have come together to ensure that the health, safety, and quality of life in Reading are not compromised by ill-planned actions of the MBTA. We support responsible transit expansion but oppose MBTA's proposal to construct a train turnback track within the Maillet Conservation Land.

Under the MBTA's plan, 14 additional trains each day would leave Reading Station and pass slowly by the Reading Independent Living Center and nearby homes on Hancock, Vine, and Hunt Streets. Each train would then idle for 15–20 minutes before returning along the same residential route.

### **Key Concerns**

#### **1. Community Safety Risks**

This is not just a train abutters' issue—it affects the entire town.

- At least 28 additional daily road closings at Woburn Street and a projected 40% increase at Washington, Main, Ash, and New Crossing roads would delay first responders, particularly in West Reading.
- Increased demand on police and fire services could lead to higher taxes for residents.

#### **2. Protecting Residents' Health and Quality of Life**

Above all, the RTC's mission is to safeguard families, seniors, and schoolchildren from increased diesel emissions, noise, and vibrations. The MBTA's proposal would bring these risks directly into residential neighborhoods, undermining community wellbeing and threatening quality of life.

#### **3. Lack of Engagement and Dismissed Alternatives**

Despite repeated assurances that they would engage with residents following the February 2025 meeting, the MBTA failed to follow through. Community members were not contacted until just one week ago—mere days before the MBTA plans to file an updated Notice of Intent to begin construction.

At the same time, alternatives put forward by residents have been largely ignored. On March 28, 2025, the RTC submitted a refined list of three practical options to the MBTA via the Town Manager. Yet MBTA presentations continue to reference outdated proposals. The community-driven alternatives include:

- **Alternative 1:** Revert to the pre-COVID train schedule with more peak-hour commuter service before expanding 30-minute off-peak service. This requires no new infrastructure.
- **Alternative 2:** Construct a double track just beyond Main Street (Rt. 28) through Reading Station to Woburn Street, allowing turnback operations at the current station while supporting ADA-compliant platforms.
- **Alternative 3:** Relocate the turnback track north of Lowell Street, near the Reading/Wilmington border. This location would place idling trains 1,200 feet farther from residences, with I-93 noise reducing overall impact.

#### **4. Threat to Community Investment**

The MBTA's plan threatens the newly built \$5 million Maillet Conservation Land project. Community members fought hard for this tranquil nature space, which is now used daily by residents and students. Idling diesel locomotives just 100–200 feet away for up to seven hours a day would severely undermine its purpose.

We urge residents to make their voices heard. Attend the upcoming virtual meeting on [Monday, September 15](#), to provide input and hear updates on the MBTA's plan. Join, ask questions, and share concerns so that the MBTA fully understands the community's priorities and evaluates alternatives that protect public health, safety, and quality of life. Together, we can ensure that Reading's transit decisions are responsible and respectful of the community.

Monday 9/15/2025 at 7PM, scan QR Code to Register

