

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MART TO EXPAND SERVICES AND BUS STOPS IN GARDNER

MART to install new bus shelters throughout the City as a result



Figure 1 City Council President Elizabeth Kazinskas, MART Administrator Bruno Fisher, Mayor Michael Nicholson, and Ward 5 City Councilor Aleksander Dernalowicz stand in front of the new bus stop and shelter installed at the former Prospect Street School site.

GARDNER, MA – July 13, 2022 - After joint lobbying efforts from Mayor Michael Nicholson and Ward 5 City Councilor Aleksander Dernalowicz, Gardner is welcoming a new fixture to its public transportation system in the form of a recently installed bus shelter in front of the old Prospect Street School. Working with the Montachusett Regional Transportation Authority (MART), the new bus shelter is the first of several to be added in Gardner.

Bruno Fisher, Administrator of MART, which serves the greater North Central Massachusetts area, said “The addition of this bus shelter to the fixed route bus service in the City of Gardner is an important first step to improving the overall services to our customers. We look forward to working with the City of Gardner on locating additional shelters for the benefit of our riders.”

“The impetus behind this bus shelter was South Gardner resident Bonnie Marabello. She saw a need in the area and reached out to see what could be done,” said **Ward 5 City Councilor Alek Dernalowicz**. “The real work was done by the City's DPW crew and the team at MART who worked together to investigate, plan, and install the shelter. I can't thank them enough for their hard work.”

The glass and metal structure provides a much-needed amenity for public transit riders in the South Gardner area as a safe place to wait for the bus, as well as protection from inclement weather. Additionally, it is hoped that the structure's presence may help to further advertise the

public bus route that serves the area. The shelter structure was provided by MART and the concrete foundation was installed by the Gardner Department of Public Works (“DPW”).

“I’m very excited to see how we can grow the services MART has to offer to the residents of our City,” said **Gardner Mayor Michael Nicholson**, who was also recently elected to serve as the **Chair of MART’s Advisory Board**. “Throughout the City, people rely on public transportation to be able to get to where they need to go and initiatives like these help connect the work we are doing to grow and develop Gardner as a whole, not just for the benefit of one specific area.”

“Access to transportation is essential for our community,” said **City Council President Elizabeth Kazinskas**. “We are fortunate to have a reliable partner like MART right here in Gardner. The new bus stops will support our current residents and visitors, and the expected growth from residential and commercial development happening throughout the City.”

MART was recently awarded \$180,000 by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation under their Shared Streets and Spaces Grant program, and will use the funds to install an additional twenty shelters on their lines in 2022 and 2023, 4 to 10 of which will be placed in Gardner.

“I’m very happy the City of Gardner and MART are able to team up and make these investments to use these funds,” said **State Representative Jonathan Zlotnik**. “Public transport is very challenging in rural areas but is nevertheless very important and investments like this will help improve those services.”

Echoing these sentiments, **State Senator Anne Gobi** stated, “Increasing ridership on MART requires, in part, ease of access. The new bus stops in the City of Gardner, including areas that have not had one before, are a welcome addition. Congratulations to MART and the City on obtaining this funding.”

The MART Advisory Board is comprised of one representative of the government of every municipality served by the MART system. Mayor Nicholson was elected by the representatives of the representatives of the 22 member communities to serve as the Board’s Chair in May of 2022, replacing Fitchburg Mayor Stephen DiNatale.

###

Office of Mayor Michael Nicholson
Colin Smith, Executive Aide
csmith@gardner-ma.gov

Bruno Fisher, Administrator of MART

City Council President Elizabeth Kazinskas

City Councilor Alek Dernalowicz

Office of State Representative Jonathan Zlotnik
Nolan King, Legislative Aide

Office of State Senator Anne Gobi
Lucas McDiarmond, District Director