



II. Boston Layover Study

PRESENTATION

- **Susan Harrington (Harrington), MassDOT and Josh Bendyk (Bendyk), VHB**, presented the project background, study purpose, and site alternatives included in the Boston Layover Study which is being conducted by MassDOT and VHB. They also presented a project update of ongoing tasks and next steps. A summary of that presentation is below.
 - Project Background. To support increased rail service, the project purpose and need includes layover within Beacon Park Yard (BPY) as part of the Allston project. The necessity for layover was supported by MassDOT's Railroad Layover Need Analysis that concluded in March of 2025. This analysis showed that even with the planned build-out of layover at Widett and Readville, additional layover is needed to meet capacity needs. Until an alternate location can be found, Beacon Park Yard within the Allston Project limits continues to be considered the primary site for accommodating the needed layover.
 - Study Purpose. The Layover Study's purpose is to identify potential alternative locations for layover within the City of Boston and in proximity to South Station that can accommodate four tracks with eight train sets. Site feasibility takes into consideration spatial and functional layout, track geometry, preliminary operational considerations and order of magnitude costs. At the conclusion of the study, sites that MassDOT, MBTA and the City agree on would need a full rail operations analysis to understand impacts on the larger rail system. Sites previously identified through the 2013 South Station Expansion (SSX) Layover Facility Alternatives Analysis were re-evaluated for potential opportunity. At this time, no property owner or other parties have been notified or engaged as part of this analysis.
 - Site Alternatives. Five sites are being analyzed as part of the Layover Study. Each of the sites are being compared to Beacon Park Yard as a baseline for their viability. Each of the sites are further described below.
 1. *Frontage Road – North in South Boston*. This site is currently owned by the City of Boston. The site would be accessible via the Fairmount Line. Layover at this site would impact city-owned facilities and the West 4th Street Bridge.
 2. *Frontage Road – South in South Boston*. This site is also currently owned by the City of Boston and would be accessible via the Fairmount Line. Layover at this site would impact city-owned facilities.
 3. *A Street in the Seaport neighborhood of Boston*. This site is on property owned by USPS, MassDOT, and other private landowners. Layover at this site would require reverse movements on a single track mainline and would require use of Track 61, which is currently used as a test track for the MBTA's Red Line.
 4. *NStar Parking Lot in Dorchester, Boston*. The site is owned by multiple private landowners and would be accessible via the Fairmount line. Layover at this site would



require reverse movements on the mainline and faces significant grading challenges that would require additional structures.

5. *Front Yard of Amtrak's Southhampton Yard in South Boston.* This property is currently owned and operated by Amtrak and is also already used by the MBTA. Site complexities limit expanding the track length and capacity.

- Project Update of Ongoing Tasks. MassDOT is developing alternative site concepts and site screening analysis, which will be reviewed by MBTA and Amtrak. Ongoing analysis will assess the potential benefits, impacts, and considerations of each site. The benefits and impacts will consider the physical site sizes, rail operations, and environmental factors. As part of the alternatives analysis, order-of-magnitude cost estimates will be developed for each site which look at direct costs, the cost of environmental mitigation, construction add-on costs, construction and design contingencies, and project soft costs.
 - Next Steps. Next steps include completing the site screening and concept development, the alternatives analysis and cost analysis. The Layover Study is expected to be completed within the next month or two.
- **Luisa Paiewonsky (Paiewonsky), MassDOT,** emphasized that the study is still in progress but it should hopefully come to a conclusion in the next month.

DISCUSSION

- **Matthew Petersen (Petersen), City of Boston,** described the effort to date as a pre-decisional technical study that outlines alternatives and options that will be a predecessor to more in-depth negotiations and discussions between the City of Boston and the State around potential future dispositions and usages of those different sites. He emphasized that although the outcome of the study may be complete in a month or so, there will likely not be a complete resolution to layover. However, the City continues to progress the issue and work toward a resolution.
- **Stacy Thompson (Thompson), Livable Streets Alliance,** appreciated the level of detail provided making it possible for the Task Force to have a robust conversation. She asked about the difference between existing service and planned service, what percentage in the analysis is based on planned service and how much of that planned service is actually funded. She asked if that information could be provided either at next month's Task Force meeting or documented and distributed separately. **Paiewonsky** confirmed that MassDOT could clarify the extent of planned services that will be considered in the alternatives analysis within that timeframe.
- **Thompson** asked why the alternatives analysis appeared to omit consideration of community and economic impacts, and that environmental justice concerns as well as potential economic development tradeoffs should be more directly incorporated into the evaluation framework. **Paiewonsky** explained that the Boston Layover Study was not intended to function as a full environmental review like an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), but rather more narrowly focused on whether layover could be moved out of



Beacon Park Yard in the City of Boston with the broader topics addressed in the environmental documents to follow.

- **Thompson** asked about a decision-making framework that could take into account community and economic impacts. **Bendyk** answered that environmental considerations as part of the alternative analysis assessments would include community impacts. **Petersen** added that community and economic impacts will be considered by the City of Boston as part of the analysis. **Paiewonsky** emphasized that there is still agreement on the goal of finding an alternate location for layover outside of Beacon Park Yard.
- **Thompson** asked that elements considered for each alternative be presented in the final report in a matrix like check box.
- **Peter Dunn (Dunn), City of Worcester**, asked the Task Force to keep the regional perspective in mind. He said improving connectivity along the corridor between Worcester and Boston was one of the original priorities of this project and it should remain a priority. He noted that residents already accepted impacts from CSX with the expectation of future improvements. Dunn cited highway congestion as an important community impact to consider.
- **Jim Curley (Curley), Boston University**, asked whether all layover capacity needs to be at one site. **Harrington** answered there could be more than one site so long as when combined they met the full capacity need.
- **Curley** asked what is considered proximate to South Station – is it just South Boston and Beacon Park Yard or the entire City of Boston. **Harrington** responded that it needs to be in the City of Boston and work within the system as well as Beacon Park Yard does. **Laura Gilmore (Gilmore), MBTA**, added that the study focused on sites within Boston that are close to the center of the City to work within the rail system for both agencies.
- **Kane Larin (Larin), Charles River Alliance of Boaters**, requested that the 2013 South Station Study be shared with the Task Force. MassDOT agreed to provide.
- **Albert Ng (Ng), Harvard University**, asked how many train sets each of the considered locations can accommodate. **Petersen** answered that the Layover Study is still in the early evaluation stage.
- **Ng** asked what instruction will be provided to the Independent Consultant about layover. **Paiewonsky** answered that the instruction is to look at all major components of the project including layover, and that the prior layover analysis will be provided to the consultant which is consistent with all elements where prior studies have been performed being provided to the consultant.
- **Harry Mattison (Mattison), Allston Resident**, asked to what extent the layover analysis was considering differences between midday layovers and overnight storage. **Bendyk** answered that the study did not distinguish between these use types and was focused only on geometric feasibility, meaning whether tracks and facilities could physically fit at each site. **Petersen** added that the City is approaching this study as a geometrical, technical fit test and after that there will be in depth discussion of what year the layover will be needed and what times of the day it will be used.



- **Mattison** noted that he thought that level of service would need to be considered in the analysis. **Petersen** responded that after the conclusion of the Layover Study there will be questions that need to be addressed and the City has similar questions.
- **Mattison** noted the difference in impacts of midday versus overnight layover of trains. **Paiewonsky** responded that the City and the Commonwealth are focused on finding space within the City where layover could fit to provide a viable alternative to Beacon Park Yard and not at this time addressing every issue associated with commuter rail or other types of rail service.
- **Mattison** asked whether maintenance activities are considered part of layover. **John Weston (Weston), MassDOT Rail & Transit Division**, answered that the layover facility would support light maintenance, which would include routine daily servicing such as cleaning, minor repairs, and preparing trains, but not heavy maintenance such as major overhauls.
- **Mattison** asked about MBTA and MassDOT Rail and Transit being involved in the operational needs for layover. **Gilmore** confirmed that the work is based on the March 2025 layover analysis .
- **Mattison** asked whether Amtrak’s needs were factored into the layover analysis. **Weston** answered that Amtrak was not included as part of the layover needs being studied because they already have their own dedicated yards that are operated independently.
- **Mattison** asked for a summary of what the other major sites were in the 2013 South Station analysis that are not being considered at this time. **Petersen** answered that there were many sites that were screened out that the City agreed with and suggested that the full list and reasons for elimination could be shared separately.
- **Mattison** asked why the Readville site was not included in the site screening analysis. **Harrington** answered that it wasn’t included in the analysis because that space has already been accounted for in the layover analysis and through a series of screenings with the City of Boston, MBTA and MassDOT it was decided not to be included as a possible layover site to accommodate layover needs currently programmed for BPY. **Petersen** added that the City also has concerns about impacts at that location, which influenced the decision not to consider it at this time.
- **Mattison** asked whether a full build out of Readville had been assumed, including acquiring adjacent lots that had previously been proposed. **Harrington** answered that it was her understanding that for environmental considerations the planning for Readville does not include all the adjacent lots that were previously proposed. **Gilmore** replied that the Layover Study is focused on sites to replace Beacon Park Yard and if a site is already programmed to support other layover needs that was not considered to be additive. She added that one of the other major considerations is to try to stay closer to the core of Boston. **Petersen** reiterated that the focus of the study was on identifying sites that could replace Beacon Park Yard within Boston, and that sites already in use or outside this focus area were not considered in this analysis.



- **Mattison** asked when looking at operations, whether the study assumed any service from West Station over the Grand Junction line. **Gilmore** answered that no major changes to Grand Junction service were being assumed as part of this study. **Weston** added that operation in the context of the study meant getting in and out of the immediate layover area only, not a bigger network analysis.
- **Salvucci** offered his view that Widett is a very good location to address the layover needs that were otherwise assumed for Beacon Park Yard. He stated that it could provide an economy of scale with maintenance facilities and added efficiency. He stated that Readville should not be left out of the analysis and that it would be better to store equipment for the Fairmount Line at Readville, thereby freeing up space at Widett. **Gilmore** replied that at the highest level, the 2025 Layover Analysis showed that the MBTA and MassDOT will need additional layover beyond the capacity of existing and planned facilities and that as part of that Layover Analysis Widett was fully programmed. Therefore, even when Widett is fully built out there still is not sufficient layover in the system to meet all the needs.
- **Thompson** asked if a one page summary could be provided listing the sites from the 2013 South Station Study and bulleted reasons why they were eliminated from further consideration. **Petersen** answered that there is a slide deck that addresses that and the City would be comfortable with that information being provided.
- **Thompson** stressed the importance of having very good service between Boston and Worcester and beyond. She expressed concern that land identified for layover to support service that might not be added, underscoring the need to have a clear understanding of what planned service means.
- **Salvucci** also stressed greater clarity around the timing of when layover would be needed, particularly considering the equipment that would drive the need for additional layover is not included in the Capital Plan. He added that there needs to be a greater sense of urgency regarding decision making and securing funding under the new Reauthorization Bill and that time matters. **Petersen** responded that these issues are still being worked through and will be addressed in ongoing coordination between the City and State.

III. Lincoln Street Noise Barrier

PRESENTATION

- **Harrington, Rob Cahoon (Cahoon), VHB, and John Amodeo (Amodeo), Urban Idea Lab** presented an overview of the Lincoln Street Noise Barriers and timeline of community outreach, project design, proposed wall treatments, public art opportunities and next steps.
 - **Project Overview.** **Harrington** stated that MassDOT is currently working on the detailed design plans so that the project is ready to advertise for construction by the end of the summer. These detailed designs include subsurface exploration, utility coordination and intensive coordination with the City of Boston as to how this can be an enabling project for a follow-on shared use path in this location. To that end, the noise barrier project provides



additional grading, additional consideration to retaining walls and places the barrier as close to the I-90 guardrail as possible to provide as much space as possible for the future Lincoln Street shared use path. **Cahoon** described the Lincoln Street project's eligibility for noise barriers under MassDOT's Tier Two Program, which provides funding for noise barriers to neighborhoods that meet the threshold of noise impact from existing highways, and summarized the community outreach that has occurred starting in the Fall 2025.

- **Project Design.** **Cahoon** highlighted that the design includes accompanying retaining walls to be built primarily from I-90 due to overhead utility constraints that would make it difficult to get equipment into place from the Lincoln Street side. He noted that work being planned by Eversource within the project area is being coordinated with MassDOT and the City of Boston. As part of the noise barrier construction, MassDOT will grade the terrain and place loam and grass seed between the wall and Lincoln Street. The existing chain link fence will be maintained along the edge of Lincoln Street to separate the neighborhood from the work site for the duration of construction and may be removed once construction is complete.
- **Wall Treatments.** **Amodeo** explained that the noise barrier will use textured surfaces created with form liners to add visual interest through geometric form and shadow line and to break down the scale of the wall. He described the barrier's appearance from multiple perspectives, including views from close-up, nearby office buildings, and both directions of I-90. He also said that public art will be located at the side street intersections on Lincoln Street so that it is a focal point when approaching the street. Vines will be planted along the base of the wall, running the length of the barrier except where the art panels are planned.
- **Public Art.** **Harrington** explained that the designs reflect a high level of detail driven by public feedback, including the proposed incorporation of public art. She said that five potential art locations have been identified, positioned at the end of several side streets where they intersect with Lincoln Street. All artwork will be required to follow MassDOT's permit process and policy requirements. She added that the goal is to coordinate with the community, City, and local officials to develop a process for selecting the artwork.
- **Next Steps.** **Harrington** stated that next steps include finalizing the design plans and specifications, public advertisement for construction, and site preparation activities. After awarding a construction contract, the first phase of construction will be relocating MassDOT-owned utilities in advance of the construction of the noise barriers which are expected to be constructed in the Spring and Summer of 2027.

DISCUSSION

- Regarding the public art, **Petersen** explained that the City is still determining how they will engage the local artist community and may work directly with artists in Lower Allston. He added that the project could provide a valuable opportunity to support local muralists by offering the noise barrier as a canvas for community-driven art.



- **Galen Mook (Mook), MassBike**, commented that he appreciated the effort to include local art, but asked that a specific Black Lives Matter guerrilla art piece near the Lincoln Street footbridge be preserved. He urged that it not be removed or subjected to standard approval requirements. **Petersen** said the City would make sure that that piece of art is not unduly disturbed and determine how its presence can be maintained in the neighborhood while going through the art selection process. **Harrington** said that MassDOT would take into consideration preserving that art piece and relocating if necessary.
- **Petersen** commented that Eversource is planning a cable upgrade project along the Lincoln Street corridor that could impact the curb line and future path. Construction of this project is currently slated for around 2028 or potentially earlier. He said the City is coordinating this work with Eversource, MassDOT, and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) so that the corridor can be restored with a completed path and improved connections at Market Street, Everett Street, and Franklin Street, including the Franklin Street Footbridge.
- **Mattison** noted that it was good to see the noise barriers project moving forward and the incorporation of public art and asked if there could be more discussion at a separate meeting about how the MassDOT project could incorporate an interim path which could help to address existing Lincoln Street safety concerns. **Paiewonsky** noted that this was raised at the February Open House and that MassDOT would take into consideration how much can be done to accommodate the future path. However, doing that is more complicated than it may appear and MassDOT's primary focus is getting some construction started for the Allston project. She added that at the next Task Force meeting MassDOT could provide a fuller response. She also reiterated the importance of building momentum for the Allston Multimodal Transportation Project and getting started on the noise barriers.
- **Mattison** explained that he did not want to delay the project, rather he is looking to accelerate public safety benefits and would like to know when the next public meeting will be. **Petersen** responded that the timing of a public meeting to discuss the path depends on the City's discussions with Eversource and the City's design approach for dealing with design constraints to determine what the scope of the project is that the City can delivery.
- **Mattison** clarified that he is asking whether MassDOT can advance the shared use path project in some form and whether MassDOT and the City could hold a public meeting in June. **Paiewonsky** reiterated the public process that has been conducted for the Noise Barriers Project, noted the project is at the 100% design phase, and that MassDOT has not planned additional public meetings. She added that MassDOT would, however, be happy to participate in any City-sponsored public gatherings primarily focused on the bike path and that MassDOT could provide information on the noise barrier.
- **Petersen** stressed that the largest portion of work that is required for the path is being done by MassDOT. That includes the enabling work associated with grading that is being done as part of the wall construction. He added that that is a significant capital investment that the City would likely not have made and that if MassDOT was not doing that work as part of the noise barriers, the shared use path would not be constructed. He went on to say that the work



MassDOT is doing is being done not to preclude future construction of the path but is actual work that is needed for the path construction. He stated that it is a complicated process in terms of what can be delivered on which timelines by what parties and there a number of different agreements required among participating parties.

- **Anabela Gomes (Gomes), Brighton Allston Improvement Association**, asked how MassDOT will manage illegal graffiti on both sides of the barrier. **Harrington** said that MassDOT and Urban Idea Lab are looking into an anti-graffiti coating that could be applied to the wall on top of the art installation. This coating would not affect the sound dampening abilities of the wall and would allow for easy removal of graffiti. Harrington also noted that based on community feedback, MassDOT is considering having one or two of the wall locations dedicated to graffiti.
- **Mook** asked if the City is considering any safety improvements along Lincoln Street such as adding stop signs or other traffic calming solutions. **Petersen** answered that it is the policy of the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) not to use stop signs strictly for speed control, however, the conditions for stop signs could be met at the intersection of Everett Street and Franklin Street. Petersen added that BTD will look into other traffic calming measures that could be implemented. Mook suggested speed bumps as a potential traffic calming solution. He pointed out that he is unaware of any speed bumps installed in Lower Allston and North Brighton as part of the BTD's roll out of speed bumps over the past few years.

IV. Independent Consultant Review

- **Paiewonsky** updated the Task Force on the status of the Independent Consultant Review. She said that Arcadis was selected to conduct the review. Paiewonsky noted that she has worked with several members on this team in the past and is optimistic about the review.
- **Thompson** asked if MassDOT could provide insights into why Arcadis was selected and what updates the Task Force should expect from MassDOT going forward now that the consultant is on board. **Paiewonsky** and **Harrington** both stated that they were not part of the selection committee, however, MassDOT can provide the Task Force with the thought that went into the selection. Paiewonsky noted that MassDOT is working with the consultant laying out the tasks and timelines. The expectation is that as deliverables are prepared the consultant will come to the Task Force to discuss them and that MassDOT will update the Task Force on a regular basis as to where the consultant is at on delivering their scope and how close they are to making a deliverable.
- **Thompson** asked if the Task Force will be able to see what information MassDOT sends the consultant from the Task Force meetings. Specifically, if the Task Force has comments on the deliverables, how is that information communicated back to the consultant. **Paiewonsky** said when the consultant is at a Task Force meeting to discuss a deliverable they can hear directly from Task Force members then. Otherwise, MassDOT will make sure to get the information to the consultant.



- **Mattison** asked what the value of the contract is, the length of the contract and when it would start. **Paiewonsky** answered that it is a \$1.4 million, 12 month contract.
- **Petersen** asked if it was possible to get a copy of the consultant's proposal. He added that it would be of interest to see what their approach is going to be.

V. Cambridge Street Preservation Project

- **Harrington** gave a brief presentation on the status of the Cambridge Street Preservation Project and noted that MassDOT is expecting the sidewalk on the north side of the bridge to be re-opened by November 2026. Emails can be sent to the following email address for further comments and questions on the preservation efforts: allstonpreservation@dot.state.ma.us. MassDOT Highway Division District 6 has requested that all questions and comments be directed to them instead of through the Allston Multimodal Transportation Project Team. **Paiewonsky** added that it would be helpful to copy Luisa and Susan on inquiries so that they can help track the response.

VI. Looking Forward

- **Larkin** reviewed the status of upcoming Task Force meetings. She noted that the next Task Force meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 23, 2026 and that because the date fell on a Tuesday and the Fiorentino Center is not available on Tuesday nights, the meeting will be held at 10 Park Plaza. She described how the project team had previously looked at alternate sites and did not find a location of suitable size within the community that wanted to host the group on a regular basis. Larkin also described some of the audio issues during recent Task Force meetings and the impact those issues had on remote participants which make up about two thirds of meeting attendees. Larkin asked Task Force members for their feedback on holding Task Force meetings at 10 Park Plaza in downtown Boston and the Fiorentino Center in Allston.
- **Thompson** said that as someone who has participated remotely, the reliability of the audio in the MassDOT Board Room is more important to her than the location of the meeting being close to the project vicinity. However, Thompson also added that it is important for residents to have easy access to these meetings in person when the topic concerns more local issues.
- **Brendan Kearney (Kearney), WalkMass**, commented that the audio for remote participants was good this evening.
- **Mook** added that his preference would be to hold the meetings in the neighborhood because it is nice to have community members there. He also supported agenda items influencing where the meeting takes place. He suggested that when the topics are closely related to impacts on Lower Allston, the meetings should be held within Allston so that members of the community can participate. He reiterated that the goal when restarting the Task Force meetings was to do as much as possible in person and that that is easier to do if the meetings are in the neighborhood. He also suggested getting a better audio/visual vendor.



- **Larkin** asked about the willingness to consider other meeting formats, more along the lines of an open house with meeting stations so that those interested in particular topics could spend more time talking about topics of interest to them. She acknowledged that the logistics would need to be worked out to determine if a hybrid open house is an option versus totally in person.
- **Anthony D’Isidoro (D’Isidoro), Allston Civic Association**, expressed his support for open house meetings at the Fiorentino Center because they give members of the community the opportunity to learn about the project and talk to the project team. He also noted that the more relaxed format tends to bring in more community members. **Paiewonsky** agreed with D’Isidoro and added that MassDOT would be interested in having an open house meeting on an Allston focused topics at the Fiorentino Center in either July or August.
- **Thompson** strongly recommended not having a Task Force meeting in either July or August due to the predictable low turnout due to vacations. Thompson also suggested that it could be more effective for MassDOT to offer smaller, more focused meetings on topics that a few Task Force members may be very passionate about so that it doesn’t take up valuable time during meetings with the Task Force at large and shared other projects where this has been successful in the past. She specifically referred to the topic of layover.
- **Kearney** added that when considering having the location of the meeting dependent on the agenda items, it could be beneficial to hold meetings that have a focus on the Metro-West connections in the Metro-West area. For example, Worcester-Framingham connections are a topic that could be discussed in Worcester. He specifically referenced the opportunity to talk about challenges and opportunities of improving the Worcester Line crossings for rail service to make sure other Metro West communities are clued into the discussion and brought in for regional support. Kearney added that he is sharing this not just as a Walk Massachusetts Task Force member, but as a Framingham resident.
- **Dunn** offered to host a Task Force meeting at Union Station in Worcester. Dunn also mentioned that the Worcester Regional Research Bureau has completed the second of two reports on the Worcester Framingham commuter rail line and it could be presented to the Task Force. He noted that he had shared the second report with Larkin who would be distributing it to the Task Force.
- **D’Isidoro** let everyone know that there is an open street event in Allston Village every year that gets a huge turnout and could be an excellent opportunity to conduct community outreach for the Allston Multimodal Transportation Project. He encouraged MassDOT along with the Task Force to have a table specifically on Allston issues. The Allston Village Street Fair is being held on September 27, 2026. **Paiewonsky** accepted the invitation on behalf of MassDOT.