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To:	Mike O'Dowd MassDOT Project Manager	Date:	January 28, 2019
From:	Nate Lash Howard Stein Hudson	HSH Project No.:	2013061.14
Subject:	MassDOT Allston I-90 Task Force Meeting #34 Meeting Notes of January 23, 2019		

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## Overview

On January 23, 2019, members of the Allston I-90 Interchange Improvement Project team and associated MassDOT staff held the 34<sup>th</sup> Task Force meeting for the job. The Task Force is composed of local residents, business owners, transportation, and open space advocates, as well as representatives of local, state, and federal governments. The purpose of the group is, through the application of its members' in-depth knowledge, to assist and advise the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) in determining a single preferred alternative to be selected by the Secretary of Transportation for documentation in a joint Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) document.

The Independent Review Team (IRT) provided an outside review of the work the project team has done on the section of the project known as the "throat" and finalized their recommendations in late November of 2018. A public comment period on the project and IRT was opened, accepting comments until November 30, 2018. On January 10, 2019, Stephanie Pollack, Secretary and CEO of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, announced her decision to select the Highway At-Grade Hybrid with Elevated Soldiers Field Road alternative. This option places I-90 on the ground and Soldiers Field Road on a new viaduct. With a preferred alternative selected for the so-called throat portion of the project, MassDOT will continue with efforts to advance the project for documentation through the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) so that the job can move towards preparation of a design/build package.

The purpose of this meeting was to provide the Task Force with an update on the status and next steps of the Highway At-Grade Hybrid With Elevated Soldiers Field Road concept, discuss proposed transit improvements in the project area, gather feedback on the West Station “Flip” concept, and provide an update on the FEIR transit modeling.

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## Detailed Meeting Minutes<sup>1</sup>

### Welcome & Opening Remarks

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**C: Ed Ionata, Tetra Tech:** Welcome. My name is Ed Ionata from Tetra Tech.

Tonight, we are going to try to hold to a 2-hour schedule. As stated in the announcement and agenda, we’ve four major items: the decision on the preferred alternative, an update on proposed transit improvements, the West Station flip concept, and an update on CTPS modeling. A lot of what you will hear tonight is about how we are going to approach continuing analysis and doing the detailed work that’s needed on the decision made by the Secretary of Transportation for the variation that we will be implementing in the throat.

We will start out with Mike O’Dowd for a little bit of an update and then go to Chris Calnan for next steps on the preferred alternative.

**C: Mike O’Dowd, MassDOT:** Welcome back everybody. I want to thank the IRT team for everything they have done to get us to this point. The announcement of a preferred alternative made by secretary was certainly impacted by the work of the IRT team as well as the work that you all did to help them through it.

For those of you who do not know, Jim Gillooly has spent many years working for the City of Boston in transportation and he retired today. I was hoping that he would make it here tonight, but he is not. This would have been his last Task Force meeting. He is going to be replaced by Bill Conroy. I do want thank Jim for all the work he has done on this project and throughout the

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<sup>1</sup> Herein “C” stands for comment, “Q” for question and “A” for answer. For a list of attendees, please see Appendix 1.

city. We have worked on many projects together throughout the city over many years. He has been instrumental in getting a lot of work done in and for Boston. I would also like to welcome Senator Brownsberger and Senator DiDomenico who are here with us this evening.

Everyone is well aware that the secretary has announced the alternative. It seems to be well supported by all the Task Force members that I have spoken to so, that is a good thing. There is a lot of work that will need to be undertaken over the next several months before we will be able to file an FEIR, assuming there are no interim supplementals desired by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA). There are still a lot of discussions we need to have with EEA relative to the FEIR. And we are collaborating and coordinating with the Federal Highway Administration on the status of the NEPA document. That will be going on throughout the course of this year.

We are intending to hold monthly task force meetings over the next six to nine months to keep everyone informed about what is going on.

**Q: Jessica Robertson, *Task Force Member*:** Can we get that schedule ahead of time?

**A: Donny Dailey, *MassDOT*:** I have the dates and agendas and just need to send it out.

**C: Jessica Robertson:** Great. Thanks.

**C: Mike O'Dowd:** Great. I think that is about it. I will let the team get started and if there are any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. I would like to get through as much of the presentations as possible before entertaining questions. Thank you.

**Q: Community Member 1:** When will the decision be on the internet so that non-task force members can know what you are doing?

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** It should be posted to the project website. The announcement was made on January 10, 2019.

**C: Senator Brownsberger:** It is there. It is on my website too.

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis, *Howard Stein Hudson*:** It can be hard to navigate the website. If you send me an email I can try and find it for you.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Secretary's decision memo can be read here:

[https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2019/02/08/AllstonDecision\\_throat\\_011019.pdf](https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2019/02/08/AllstonDecision_throat_011019.pdf)

## Presentation & Discussion

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**C: Chris Calnan, *Tetra Tech*:** Good evening, everybody.

The team is pretty excited now that we have reached this important milestone of the project. Having a preferred alternative gives us a chance to dig in and move this project forward. On behalf of the team, we are excited to see this get some traction. As the secretary mentioned in her memo, there is a lot of work to do. Our team is just beginning to dig in and get started. We realize this new alternative, the Highway-at-grade-hybrid, is just a concept. We need to vet issues, do more engineering, and advance the design ahead of upcoming NEPA and MEPA filings. I do have a few slides to walk through what we are looking at regarding major steps ahead.

The first is concept advancement. The IRT laid out some fundamentals for the throat area preferred alternative but we need to look at it a lot closer. Does the SFR viaduct run over the eastbound barrel of I-90? Do we have it over the westbound barrel? That is something the team is looking at right out of the gate. We know there have been comments and perspectives on that.

We need to look at the geometry. How will the profiles work? How will the alignments work? How low can we get the viaduct to facilitate the north-south pedestrian crossing over the highway to the Paul Dudley White Path?

Another interesting thing is the structural aspects. Having some degree of structural engineering done for the new viaduct is critical. We need to know the diameter of the columns and the substructure locations because that plays into how we can weave the elevated structure over the highway.

Finally, we are looking to do some modeling of it to give people a better visual as to what it could look like. The concept advancement is critical for our team to help people become comfortable with this alternative.

As Mike started to mention about the agency coordination and consultation, we have a whole list of folks we need to meet with: Federal Highway Administration, MEPA, and DCR. We need to meet with DCR to talk about the park land and what the new elevated parkway will look like. We need to talk to the City of Boston and City of Cambridge. We need to talk to the MBTA about rail operations and investigate how we can try to minimize impacts during construction related

outages. We would like to get in front of the Massachusetts Historic Commission to talk about putting the interstate and this facility into the park land and what their reaction to that is. Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) and Boston Water and Sewer (BWSC) are two key groups that we need to meet with to better understand and get their perspectives on the utility impacts. That is going to be key going forward. There are some substantial utilities out there and when we lower I-90, at-grade or below-grade, we have major crossings to deal including a 60-inch Boston Water and Sewer drain line at the easterly limit and a 64-inch watermain along Buick Street that takes a sharp dive and goes under the throat and over to Cambridge. We need to find out how these can be relocated. We also have the MWRA sewer line that runs parallel through the throat. There is a lot to deal with here. We also have the stormwater pump station which is a new element. There is one out there today and we need to find a new home for all the new drainage from the highway being de-elevated.

There is a comprehensive subsurface exploration program underway. I imagine some folks have seen some of the drilling that is going on out there. We have about 130 borings and we will be proposing test pits. The test pits will be starting soon and what they are geared towards is looking at all the utilities I just mentioned. We need to find out where and what size they are so that when we are laying out the geometry, we know where the utilities are and how they can be dealt with. That will be underway and will help inform the engineering for this preliminary preferred concept.

Staging is certainly a big challenge here. When we did the handoff with the IRT group, we both understood that this preferred alternative is the most complex of all the alternatives that were put forward. The secretary's memo talked about the Paul Dudley White Path impacts and how that will be handled during construction. The team is looking at that.

Similarly, with the rail operations and impacts, we are working with the MBTA to minimize the closures and outages for the Worcester mainline. A new piece will be maintaining the Soldiers Field Road and I-90 traffic. With the other alternatives, we did not have such dramatic changes in realignment to Soldiers Field Road. Our team is looking at how to maintain traffic from both of those facilities. At the end of the day, the Throat needs to fit into a much larger project. We have to look at the whole project, all the different elements and closures are how they fit together. The bottom line is we have our work cut out for us in identifying the staging and moving this project forward.

On the phasing side, the secretary's memo talked about West Station and how we can integrate it into an earlier build. Our team is looking into that and is trying to understand if there is

enough area for lay down, how it would fit in with construction of the entire interchange, and if it can be accelerated and put into an earlier phase of construction. We will be looking into that as well.

The memo talked about continuing development planning. We anticipate continued dialogue with the universities to better understand their planning and so that we can tailor the infrastructure to fit into what is being planned.

The CTPS<sup>3</sup> modeling is a critical next step. Scott Peterson is here, and you will hear from him in a little bit. That will certainly lead to follow on studies and analysis that we need to do traffic, air quality, noise, etc. All of those follow on studies are predicated on the CTPS model being complete.

It might be a little too early to talk about mitigation commitments now, but they are certainly in our minds and are outlined in the Secretary's memo. When it comes to construction, we need to get a handle on what those impacts will be in time for use to file the FEIR.

Finance planning is another key issue, not necessarily for the design team, but our job is to fine tune the construction estimates. As the project gets further refined and we look at the staging and all the elements that go into this, we will be preparing updated cost estimates to help the finance team better estimate the project.

As Mike mentioned, we will continue to have Task Force meeting and keep people in the loop as things advance. We have a lot of work to do. We need some time to catch up and get ahead of some of this. The IRT has given us a concept and now we need to further engineer it so that it is ready for filing. We have a lot of next steps and we wanted to share some of them with you all and get your ideas early on.

**C: Ed Ionata:** We have about five or six minutes for a few quick questions. I have two to start with. I know there is a long-term agenda for the upcoming Task Force meetings that will be sent out soon. Chris, can you guess what elements from your list might be ready for some input and discussion at our next meeting?

**A: Chris Calnan:** I think at the next meeting some of the conceptual geometry will be ready for discussion. Is the viaduct on the eastbound barrel or westbound barrel? We want to get that

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<sup>3</sup> Central Transportation Planning Staff of the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization.

geometry out in front of people to show what this thing looks like in greater detail. I think that will be the primary focus of the next one.

**C: Ed Ionata:** The second question I will ask and answer myself. We need to define what the MEPA/NEPA process will entail going forward. By the time we meet again, we will have met with Federal Highway and the MEPA/NEPA office to see what that looks like going forward and what the proper process will be to make sure we do the documentation in the correct order with the correct filings in compliance with all the rules we have to follow.

Any other questions? I know this is a lot of information to download. Once we move away from Chris, we are turning away from the throat area to talk about other elements of the interchange.

**Q: Community Member:** Can you begin to give us some elevations in graphic form moving forward? Much of the information has been horizontal. It would be really helpful to have some sections cut through to understand a little bit better.

**A: Chris Calnan:** Yes, I agree. We have been talking about the preliminary profiles and how this thing will look vertically. Part of our due diligence is having a better handle of where the major utilities are. Once we have those test pits, we will have a better handle of that and the utilities will drive the vertical aspects of the project as well. It will be incomplete until we get survey data.

**Q: Ed Ionata:** As we get closer to getting what we need for environmental filings, the renderings that you saw in the EIR will need to be made for the new design for the entire interchange. We have talked with MassDOT about some 3D modeling but that is yet to be determined. Mike, do you want to say something about that?

**A: Mike O'Dowd, MassDOT:** That's something that we have discussed since the Secretary's announcement. We have been talking internally for months about how in the future we will need to develop some kind of 3D model. The team is working on a subconsultant contract right now that would take some of these preliminary alignments and geometry that Chris' team will be working on and put them in graphic form. It would be a lot more descriptive and the picture will start to get a little clearer as to how everything will work.

**Q: Judy Kant:** As far as the subcontractors go, will there be new project members on this?

**A: Ed Ionata:** Yes, it will be the same team members that you have seen up till now and we will add the capabilities to render everything in three dimensions as advanced as we can get within the time and budget allowance.

Now we are going to move to the West Station flip with Mark Shamon from VHB.

**C: Mark Shamon, *Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc. (VHB)*:** Hi everyone. My name is Mark Shamon from VHB. My presentation is entirely graphical and not anatomically correct. We are just trying to show you some ideas of what the station is going to look like. Dimensions are all to follow.

This on Slide 8 is the West Station we described in the DEIR as the build without a transit way. It had two pedestrian/bicycle connections, one at the end of Babcock Street and the other at the end of Malvern Street leading up to the West Station concourse area and allowing pedestrians and bicyclists to get across the yard and highway.

We talked in the DEIR about a Phase 1 if West Station is not built immediately. The department is committed to providing two means of getting across the whole yard so, if it is only a highway project and there is no West Station in the short term, we will be creating a path at Malvern Street that goes from 76 Ashford Street, up a ramp, and it becomes a bridge section leading up to the highway interchange (shown on Slide 13). There is also a noise wall along the railroad track, paralleling the streets and houses up to the west side of the station. We are talking about having an earth ramp right up to the property line at the bottom of the ramp. The ramp is somewhat constrained because of the existing building at 76 Ashford Street. Part of our goal in this Phase 1 is to keep this building active. In order to keep it active, we need to have a driveway. The idea is to move up to a bridge structure as quickly as possible. We are taking quite a bit of parking from that building in this scheme and we want to allow as much parking under the bridge as possible. As soon as the ramp is high enough and becomes a bridge, we get parking underneath. We are also a little concerned about the width of this pinch point. We want to make sure it is wide enough for a truck to get through.

This is what a section of the shared use path's earth ramp would look like. You can see it is relatively close to the building. We are thinking about building this as an MSE wall and making it internally stable so that we can have relatively thin walls. Up on top we would have a ramp system wide enough to be a shared use path. We are looking at about 12 feet between rails so that it is wide enough for a bicyclist and a pedestrian to go up at the same time. Because we are using this type of railing system, it needs to be inside the structure itself. If we put the railings on top, the structure would have to be a lot thicker.



Looking at this in profile on Slide 17, we are taking advantage of Rashford Street being relatively high compared to the track level. We have relatively mild 3.5% gradient from Ashford Street to the end of the earth ramp where it becomes a bridge and it is still 3.5% to the top. Again, it is a relatively and short path from Ashford Street to areas over the railroad and we need to keep a 18.5 foot clearance over the railroad.

We are going to switch gears to talk about West Station and what it would look like if we have a transitway as part of the project. I have a few slides on the transitway and what it might look like. Again, this is not anatomically correct but gives you the concept of where the lanes and paths would be. The transit way would come off Ashford Street. In this case, because the lane width, the building would have to go in order to the width we need. We would need maybe 55 or 60 feet with all the accommodations we are trying to make. It comes up Ashford Street to West Station at that same 3.5% slope and allows for right turns into the bus loop or straight through on the way out. Transit can also come down and make the left turn into the station. We are trying to accommodate the moves that would be desired at the top of the station.

Looking at it more closely, here is the ramp itself. The top part would allow buses and cars because we do want to allow kiss and ride. As has been talked about before, we are looking at the bottom half of the ramp being transit only – not for general traffic. We need to have some kind of gating system either electronic or a transponder. We are not sure what that will be.

We are looking at a cycle track on the western side in blue. We want to have some walkways and those are marked in tan on both sides of the transit way in this concept. We also have a bicycle lane on the east side for people who want to cycle into West Station without having to cross the road to make that right turn. We are trying to make that accommodation for folks, and it would tie into the shared use paths on the north side of the station. Looking at the cross-section on Slide 20, you can the two-way cycle track, a little bit of a buffer, a walkway, one travel lane in each direction, a bike shoulder on the right side, and a sidewalk on the end.

I'll show a few aerial views of what this might look like from above. We will be very close to the house and property line on the west side of the ramp. This space on the right would be a walkway up to West Station. In this concept, the platform is on the south side so the walkway would allow individuals to walk right up the platform at grade. There might need to be a slight ramp but no steps. Again, there would be elevator access. If people do not want to walk up the ramp, they could go to the south platform and take the elevator up. Here is another perspective from the eastbound side of the access road at the top of the transitway looking southeast back into West Station and looking down the transitway ramp down to Ashford Street.

And while Slide 25 does not show a whole lot, this is looking north from the transitway with some of the connections on the other side for bicycles and pedestrians. You can get straight across from the top of the transitway to wherever you are going.

With that I will stop. This is all I have for this part of the presentation. I will take questions if anyone would like to ask something at this point.

**C: Jessica Robertson, *Task Force member*:** I am not sure if you were at the last meeting. City Realty has purchased that site and has plans to develop it.

**C: Clifford Kensington, *City Realty*:** I am trying to talk with Tad Read and met with Jim Gillooly at the site to talk about it, but I have not had a chance to talk with the project team yet. We are working on designing a plan for the site which would involve opening up a pathway. The width that we talked about in earlier meetings was around 50 feet. I don't know how set in stone some of these widths are because if we get over 50 feet on that particular lot, it makes it pretty unbuildable. We are already going to have a narrow building as it is. We are currently in the process of developing concept plans for a building on that site. This is something we should talk about offline. We purchased the lot. There is some storage in the building now, but it is not for long-term use. We are on a plan. Even during Phase 1, there should be some width to build a wider path even earlier than you were anticipated.

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** I would like to get your contact information and connect after the meeting.

**Q: Galen Mook, *Task Force member*:** Do we need a two-way busway there if we are looking at potentially narrowing the transitway?

**A: Mark Shamon:** We have not done any analysis to say what the buses will be or how often they will run. Could it would as an alternating one way? Perhaps, but I do not know.

**C: Galen Mook:** I am just trying to find a middle ground between the builder's needs and the transit needs. It could be there is a busway at the top and a busway at the bottom or something like that.

**Q: Wendy Landman, *Task Force member*:** – I wanted to understand whether the design is being designed in such a way that air rights development or a narrow band of development could occur to make the walking and cycling feel like a city street on the bridges crossing the rail and highway? The concern is very long bridges makes the crossing unappealing.

**A: Mark Shamon:** We have been working with Harvard and we want to set our foundations in places that work for whatever needs to be built. We want to make sure that the track spacing is sufficient so that you can get the foundations set for whatever development may happen nearby or over the highway.

**C: Wendy Landman:** Maybe you could think about, in the short term, creating some platform with landscaping next to the roadway so that if nothing happens for many years it is an area that is somewhat conducive to people walking and biking.

**C: Bill Deignan:** First I want to say that I am excited to see these images of what could be possible. I am sure there are a lot of details to work out. You said something about kiss and ride area. I would encourage you to design that in such a way that buses are getting priority through there and are not getting stuck behind cars. Maybe you could move that area away from the station, so they are not slowing down buses and making bus passengers cross a road where people are driving through for drop offs.

**C: Mark Shamon:** Just to explain a bit further, the bus pick-up and drop-off is in a bus-only area. The idea is that kiss and ride would happen in the lanes to the north. The people getting picked up and dropped off would have to cross the busway to get to the station. The operations are separate.

**C: Galen Mook:** I would encourage you to consider Ashford Street as an alternative to a kiss and ride because people on the south side are going to be doing the exact same thing as people on the north side. I do not know if it is a change of parking or how that would look.

**Q: Tom Nally, *Task Force member*:** I assume the bus layover would be on the northern side?

**A: Mark Shamon:** That is correct, and it would accommodate five buses in a layover situation.

Other comments or questions?

**C: Guss Driessen:** I think it is important that this exclusively remains a transit way so that it does not evolve into something else in 5 or 15 years.

**C: Mark Shamon:** Understood.

I am going to move forward with another new topic: The West Station flip concept. This has been brought up before but not presented. Again, this is very concept-level. We have been working with Joe and his team at Harvard. The graphics are an older set that we look at in some of our

earlier discussions. Joe and his team are continuing to work on things so what you see here is not perfectly aligned but it is enough to explain the flip concept.

This is the DEIR for perspective. We are looking at the railroad lines without West Station to see where the rail platforms, tracks, and layover yard are located. Here are the three platforms from the DEIR with the tracks kept very close to where they are today in Slide 27. Our yard area is up to the north and the Grand Junction tracks are also on the north side with a platform in between for a cross-platform transfer. The Grand Junction can operate on Track 3 while the commuter rail is on Track 1 and people can go from one to the other if indeed there is indeed a train operating to Cambridge at some point.

The flip concept flips the platforms and the station. Instead of having the platforms on the south side, they go to the north side of Beacon Park Yards. The layover tracks go south of the platforms and sit little bit south of where they are in the DEIR. In the flipped Harvard concept, there is a 35-foot buffer that goes from the south property line up to the limits of the yard and railroad operations.

The noise wall in the Harvard concept would go to the north side of the buffer park so there would be a separation between the railroad tracks and the buffer park to the south. In the short term, it would be open to the properties on the back there.

We have expressed some concerns with the flipped concept. In the DEIR concept, we are leaving the tracks where they are. They are all tangent tracks coming through and facilitate high speeds. Right now, by regulation, trains going out from this point can travel at 79 mph. That does not mean that they do, but regulations allow it. I know they get well over 60 mph through this stretch. In the flip concept, we have two reverse curves. Coming out of the Boston Landing Station, the tracks would have to shift to get under the Cambridge Street Bridge and then after they are under the bridge, they reverse again. Joe and his team are still working on what the speeds will be. They are trying to get it up to 50 mph at this point with the flip.

We do have other concerns with the flip. If we have freight traffic coming in with the yard on the south side, they would have to cross all of the operating tracks to get into the yard and they would have to do the same thing to get back out. Otherwise the freight trains would have to come through the station area, past the platforms. The platforms are not really designed to accept the sort of impacts from freight trains which tend to be a little wider and less stable. We are concerned about damage to the platforms from the freight trains. We are also somewhat concerned about wear to the switches if they have to cross the mainline tracks several times. That is a maintenance issue that is not a huge deal but is something to keep in mind. The

crossovers and lengths between the switches are problematic. The switches might be closer than the length of the train which means the train making the turn might be operating on two or three tracks at a time and would block other operations. Joe and his team are working on that.

This is a drawing on Slide 30 that Joe's team put together a few months ago. It has changed since then so think of it as conceptual.

One of the things that excites the Harvard team is the idea of having the Franklin Street path tie right into the buffer zone path, allowing for access along the south of the station and coming up the pedestrian path on Malvern. It also gives an opportunity for folks to come up Babcock Street and walk towards Commonwealth Avenue. In this concept, Harvard has put the bus concourse on the north side as well. It includes circulation for a bus path up in that area.

We have always tried to tie the commuter rail system into the Green Line through the stations that are at Babcock Street and Packard's Corner. We think the station at Babcock Street would be particularly attractive to people wanting to transfer to the commuter rail because of the relatively simple crossing. We like the idea of having a pedestrian path up Babcock Street. One of the things that concerns us from a pedestrian point of view is that with the flip configuration, we make the path quite a bit longer with additional incline to get over the tracks. The grade at the end of Babcock Street is at or below the existing track elevation. We would have to climb about 25 feet high for a pedestrian bridge to clear the tracks. The ramp would be quite long, and the walk would not be as attractive. In the DEIR concept, everything was at grade and people could walk right up to the bottom of the platform from Babcock Street and Packard's Corner.

This might be able to be mitigated in other ways but, in the initial concepts, the project team is concerned with the transit way coming up the Cambridge Street connector in the flip concept. We need to get conductors, maintenance personnel, and materials into the rail yard. The only way we see right now to get in is to come in off Ashford Street. This is a profile of the transitway coming up from Ashford Street. Pedestrians coming from the buffer path would come up a steep grade to get to Ashford Street and the transitway. Another consideration is that, there is going to be a retaining wall at the bottom of the ramp to hold back the soil which makes it somewhat of a blind pedestrian turn on both sides. So, these are some of our pedestrian concerns that we have with the overall West Station flip concept.

I have already talked a bit about bus operations. On Slide 35 you can see our layover berth and kiss and ride area. Harvard's concept flips everything over to the other side. We will have to find room for layover buses. This is the area they are thinking about for the bus layovers.

That is the extent of my slides. Joe, please.

- C: Joe Beggan, *Harvard University*:** One of the appealing things about the flip is the ability to have more than 5 stops and layovers. The grey area in Slide 36 would have the more capacity than what is in the DEIR.

The other piece is the inclusion of a bypass road which is possible in the flip but not possible in the DEIR. I will pose this as a quasi-question. If you go back to the DEIR plan, the tail running to the right was envisioned as access for the highway viaduct. Now with I-90 at grade, that's no longer possible. How are you going to access the railyard? That is one of the things you will have to wrestle with. Another part of it is you are showing access to West Station from the south only to that platform. To get to the other platforms, you would have to take a ramp up for bicyclists. Even in the flip, there are ramping options that reduce the distance to and from the site.

- C: Kevin Clancy, *Harvard University*:** When we started looking at the flip, the sustainability of the bus terminals is important.

- C: Joe Beggan, *Harvard University*:** And what we were envisioning with the Franklin Street Bridge is a simpler crossing. By moving the parking and noise wall away from private properties, there is greater separation. We saw that as another advantage.

- Q: Wendy Landman:** With the flip, could the pedestrian/bicycle path have a direct connection to the river? The advantage of the alternative in the throat is it allows a connection across the at-grade turnpike.

- A: Mark Shamon:** We would have to look at it more closely. With all the changes, we need to concern ourselves with where the track is when we get to Agganis Way because we are pulling it south. The throat options pull it and put it onto Boston University property. In order to get there, it will have to pull tight into the wall area. I don't know how much room there is.

- C: Wendy Landman:** That's an important design question.

- A: Mark Shamon:** Absolutely. Another thing to keep in mind is if we are going to keep Babcock Street access, we have that switchback ramp.

- Q: Bruce Houghton:** I might be confused, but I thought West Station was still 25 years away and this is pre-planning. When you have this project done in 10 years, what will be left where West Station will be? Will you have parts of West Station built and sitting there? What would you leave there?

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** There are still ongoing discussions about the West Station timeline. There are discussions about whether there is an opportunity to move that timeline up a little bit closer than what was originally stated in the DEIR. A lot of the information you read in the DEIR is going to be updated to reflect the status of the project when we file the FEIR. There could be a lot of changes made in the FEIR – one of them being about the timing of when West Station is built. There are a lot of things that will play out over the course of the next 9-10 months.

**Q: Bruce Houghton:** I am sure there is, and I recognize you need to do spatial evaluations. If it remains at 25 years from now, that is a long time. People will live here when construction is going on. What you leave behind after most of these folks are gone for the next people to argue about will be really important to accommodate what the station needs to be. I am curious about what the financing and plans are. What are we leaving behind in a shorter period? What is this neighborhood going to live with in the interim that accommodates what West Station needs to be?

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** Those are all great points. As we continue to talk with the City of Boston and the property owner, Harvard University, once that interchange is done and the properties are condensed from where they are now, the opportunity might arise to do something more. Our focus is on the transportation infrastructure, but you bring up some very good points about what the community will be left with for 20 years.

**Q: David Loutzenheiser:** What are the differences in seconds in operating times with the flip options?

**A: Mark Shamon:** We are doing that analysis now, so I do not have that answer right now. It's between a 20-30mph difference. It will not be minutes in difference. It is mostly on the outbound trains when they want to pick up their speed and get out west.

**C: Mike O'Dowd:** That is a concern of ours and we have asked VHB to do a rail simulation for the flip option to see how much longer the commute would be if they are approaching West Station in a flipped design. A lot of the commuters coming into the city from MetroWest are utilizing the express trains. Some of our concerns regarding the express and non-express are related to how a flipped design will impact the speeds of the trains. We are encouraging more transit use and do not want it to be slower.

One of the benefits of the flip is that it offers enhancements for the future urban rail system. One of the reasons why I asked Mark to pull this up is to see, for the future urban rail that will be utilizing Grand Junction, does the flip make it more attractive or less attractive.

**A: Mark Shamon:** For the flip, there is probably not a big difference for the Grand Junction. In both cases, the tracks come in pretty straight and the curves are not that bad. They will be constrained by the bridge.

**C: Kevin Clancy:** I want to get back to Bruce. One of the positive features of the Secretary's letter is regarding West Station, if that will occur, it would appear that Phase 2 of the DEIR would not be implemented.

**C: Mark Shamon:** To Kevin's point, in the DEIR, we did have all the mainline tracks on the south but in the area where West Station would be, we would have temporary layover tracks and they would have to be moved in the future

**Q: Community Member:** Why couldn't the express trains use the southern tracks instead of going through the station?

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** It's an interesting idea.

**C: Mark Shamon:** We have not drawn anything up, but it is something we considered. In the flip design, that is not an option because of the buffer path. If there were no buffer path, it would be an option.

**Q: Jessica Robertson:** Have you considered Babcock Street for vehicle access to the yard?

**A: Mark Shamon:** We have. In the flip design, we might be able to do that, but it would not work very well in the DEIR version because we have operating tracks on the south side and an at-grade crossing is something we'd prefer to avoid. It's not impossible and we are looking at it for emergency access but not for regular traffic.

**Q: Jessica Robertson:** Based on a point made a minute ago, the vehicle access to the rail yard is easier with the flip because you could use Babcock Street. In any case, it seems like an apples and oranges situation and not a ding on the flip. It sounds like you have more work to do on that.

Couldn't the buffer pathway gradually ramp up if you put cars on Babcock Street?

**A: Mark Shamon:** I don't know, I have not looked at it but conceptually, it makes sense. We'd have to look at it.

**C: Jessica Robertson:** Great. The last thing I will mention is that few people have heard all of the benefits of the flip. Maybe there is another time that Kevin and Joe can restate those. There are



a few benefits of the flip that are really attractive from a neighborhood perspective. The foremost is the buffer of some kind. Having a 25-foot wall in your backyard would not be so nice. Having a path would be nice and allow for an improvement to the bike network and it would help take traffic out of the Beacon Yards system and improve the Franklin Street pedestrian bridge. Those are just some of the advantages. It is important to sharpen the pencils and it is important to tell the group what the benefits are and how we can work them into whatever plan is chosen moving forward.

**C: Glen Berkowitz:** If I had given this presentation a title, I would say *All of the Reasons Why the Flip Makes No Sense*. You gave 14 reasons why it would not work. We have been hearing about this for 18 months. I hope there are some positives to it. What I would suggest to the team. This could be an example of Us vs. Them. The project team presents an idea that they didn't come up with and then open it up for rebuttal. Instead of just finding the flaws in what others came up with, I was hoping that in this post-IRT world we would look at each other more collegially and collaboratively.

**C: Mike O'Dowd:** This was the point of the presentation this evening. If there are some positive comments you would like to make about the flip, Glen, go for it.

**C: Galen Mook:** I concur with both Jess and Glen. You mentioned that we wanted to see more about the flip in our comment letters and I appreciate you presenting on it now. It doesn't seem like you are doing this the same due diligence you have done with other concepts. I would like to see it more developed with more renderings.

**A: Mark Shamon:** I didn't mean to make it seem any different.

**C: Galen Mook:** The Franklin Street foot bridge is absolutely critical to getting right because it will be the only safe north-south connection for 10 years.

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** There is no one on the team that would disagree with that statement.

**C: Galen Mook:** I'd love to see you all dive into it more next time. Bruce made a good point about what will be left – can we always keep that at the forefront? I want to get back to the phasing. Phase 1 is going to be a 12-foot-wide shared-use path, Phase 2 would be transit access. I would encourage you to think about transit access in Phase 1 and building that outright. You were asked in the MEPA process to look at bus access before trains, ideally in Phase 1. Let's not take that out of Phase 1. Let's do it all in one swoop. One thing I will ask for, one more time, is bus

connections from Harvard to Longwood so that we don't have to snake through the 66 bus route. Keep that in Phase 1 just like MEPA is asking you to.

Can you include in the flip analysis how access from the flip would connect to a pathway on the riverfront when you bring this back? I want to view this as a corridor. How would I get from Boston Landing to Kendall Square – how would I do that using this pathway? I encourage you to dive deeper and look at the flip to see how it fits in the whole network. We expressed in our comment letters that we like the flip. We like the buffer space, we like the linear park, we like early access to the trains, we like taking bikes and pedestrians off Commonwealth Avenue and more. I would love to see a rendering of what that space means to you.

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** the whole idea was just to open the dialogue and get a discussion started.

**C: Galen Mook:** I also want to say I really appreciate the fact that if we build Phase 1 with the flip, this would allow us to get bicycle paths put in during Phase 1 which would open up air rights and alleviate traffic. Let's get as much as we can first so that we are not battling for scraps later.

**Q: Tad Read:** I wanted to remind folks about the placemaking study also points to the shared use network. If there is a difference in terms of how big the station can be, that is important. The West Station Transit Study will give us an idea of what the demand will be. What do you think the process will be in coming to terms with some of these issues with the task force?

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** Scott's team at CTPS will be generating the modeling on what is the demand for buses, what is the MBTA's demand for buses, how will they operate on city streets through this community, etc. A lot of that information will come when CTPS has started that modeling and then we will be in a better place to start putting that into the design. As that takes place, we'll share it with the Task Force.

**C: Jack Wofford:** Between now and the FEIR, what is the process? I think we need to take Glen's comments really seriously. There are a number of complex and controversial issues to resolve between now and the FEIR. The FEIR will state this is our [MassDOT's] proposed solution. Between now and then you will need to deal with the river's edge intersection, the right turn lane, the throat, the parkland issue, the throat, etc. If your team can make a slight shift and not assume that you need to present what you think is the best answer to get comments – but rather, can you create a different dynamic where folks are invited in for working sessions. There are a number of lessons from that ABC listening sessions to create a much more productive process and experience. Your role shifts from saying "this is what we think" to "here are the options, what do you think?" It is a different approach.

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** Thank you, Jack. You bring up some great points. We do take everyone's comments seriously. We read all of the meeting minutes. We look at the questions that are generated and try to address them in subsequent meetings. Tonight's meeting was to bring us all up to speed on the preferred alternative. Two weeks ago, the project team had not seen the preferred alternative. Elevating Soldiers Field Road over I-90 was something that we had not considered before. As that information is being digested and integrated, we are bringing more information back to the group. I see it being complex. I do not see it as being controversial. There seems to be a lot of positive reactions to the decision the Secretary announced.

With that said, there are a lot of things that need to be integrated such as rail services, layover services, public access, bicycle and pedestrian access, etc. How all of that will be seamlessly integrated and transitioned between a neighborhood that currently exists, a railyard that no longer exists, and a new interchange is very complex. This is one of the reasons that we want to continue meeting with the Task Force on a monthly basis. As we generate information, we will share it with you. I think getting your feedback is the whole purpose of the Task Force to hear whether we are heading in the right direction. We do hear and listen to everyone's ideas.

**C: Jack Wofford:** I respect what you said, and I think it is right. You need to look at what the IRT came up with. I think we want more than just "here's what we do, we listen, go back to the drawing board, and then come back", can we have occasional working sessions? On the river's edge or other topics, you have 4 or 5 people that could be sitting with you and helping you generate those solutions. If you have that kind of approach, the solutions would be more innovative.

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** I fully expect to have some working sessions. As we develop the engineering and we get more information from the field, we will be better prepared to have those kinds of the working sessions. I think there will be opportunities for that. One thing we had thrown out 2 years ago was the idea of breaking out into subcommittees. If you want to have 5 or 10 break-out groups to focus on a specific issue, by all means, let's do it. We offered it and there was some nodding but overall, it seemed like all 50 people wanted to be involved with every component and decision going forward. I'll throw it out there that if subcommittees are wanted, we can do that.

**Q: Henrietta Davis:** What are the topics the Task Force will be discussing? It seems like the agenda for these meetings are as-needed. I think all of us hear want to know what we are going to cover, and do we agree about the agenda. It would be helpful to have a list generated of topics for discussion.

- A: Mike O'Dowd:** When we began tonight's meeting, I was under the impression that the next 6 months of Task Force dates with the discussion topics and agenda items had been sent out. I have learned that it was not sent out. Probably tomorrow or Friday, you will be getting an email with the dates and topics of discussion.
- C: Henrietta Davis:** A critical piece is that I think people here have an idea of what agenda items need to be covered as well as the project team. It would be helpful to have a session or even twenty minutes in this meeting to get feedback on the suggested agenda items. I don't know how the project team sets the agenda.
- Q: Mike O'Dowd:** Are there things you'd like to see on the agenda in particular?
- A: Henrietta Davis:** We'd like to see your list first. There are a lot of things I'd like to discuss such as the river's edge, the impact of traffic in Cambridge, and more. I think the important thing is for us to all agree that these are the important topics to be discussed. To Glen's point, I would hope it would be collaborative at least to the extent that we set the agenda together. As you come with "this is what there is", people feel frustrated because it is not what they were expecting. I myself thought we would be talking about construction mitigation tonight. I think working together about what the agenda will be is a good first step in collaboration.
- A: Mike O'Dowd:** A lot of this is being driven by trying to generate the survey, the baseline, the transition of West Station, the amount of green space, the river's edge, where the new alignments would be. There is a lot of information that we have only had two weeks to digest.
- C: Henrietta Davis:** My point is you have a list and a set of priorities. It would be helpful for you to share it and ask for people's suggestions for things.
- A: Ed Ionata:** We can send out the agendas for the next meetings and then spend some time at the next meeting to review them think about what else should be discussed.
- C: Tom Nally:** I put together a lengthy list of items of items that I thought were outstanding and needed to be resolved. It was very consistent to the list you showed today, included the geometry of Soldiers Field Road and how to connect it at the ends of the throat. I was encouraged to see that list. I think what will be telling is to see how you are being responsive to people's comments today to have some pros and cons of each topics.

**Q: Robert LaTremouille:** MassDOT has a weekly email report that comes out every Friday. This decision on the preferred alternative that happened two weeks ago still has not been printed in MassDOT's newsletter. Will this be kept a secret?<sup>4</sup>

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** Robert, it is my understanding that it was posted to the project website. Task Force members received it. For the community members who come to these meetings, we will make sure it gets posted. I was under the impression that it had been posted. I'll take care of that.

**C: Ed Ionata:** It was posted. And the press release was posted.

**C: Fred Salvucci:** I think this is terrific. You started this out with a lot of openness. Maybe we should be sending you some things now, so it doesn't wait. The physical challenges are terrific. One thing you have not mentioned is the Secretary's decision has I-90 at or below grade. That is a different physical location than any of the prior work. That will have to change everything else. The second aspect is in the secretary's letter is mentioned a hiatus to the project while another approach is being figured out. That would really kill a design-build approach. We need to figure out how to avoid a hiatus. This is really a good start.

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** Thank you.

**C: Ed Ionata:** That next Task Force Meeting is here on February 27 at 6pm. The next 9 dates and proposed agenda for the next 6 meetings will go out by end of business Friday. Before February 27, give us your comments on those agendas.

**C: Mike O'Dowd:** Once you have an opportunity to review the six months of topics, let us know. The agendas we came up with will be similar to the topics we discussed for the ENF and DEIR. There is information that needs to be generated before we can take the next step. It is the subject matter that needs to be analyzed and addressed for the FEIR. We are giving you the information as we get it. If we are missing anything, let us know.

**C: Harry Mattison:** Chris was right, there is a lot of detailed technical engineering work to figure out. You have a ton of engineering to figure out and everyone appreciates that. Are there issues that we could accelerate with collaborative discussions that Jack and others have been suggesting? Does this matter how many exact feet it is when we are talking about the design of green space along the river or the Franklin Street foot bridge? I would like it bigger, sure, but

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<sup>4</sup> At the time of this exchange, the memorandum in question had been posted to <https://www.mass.gov/lists/allston-multimodal-project-2019-documents-and-meeting-materials>.

the exact dimensions matter less than the general priorities. It seems like we could start meeting with DCR, MassDOT, and different agencies, advocates, and neighbors to have some of those conversations anytime.

**Q: Jessica Robertson:** I would like to piggyback onto that. Mike, some of the frustrations with how some of the previous documents have been produced is that everything is done in a linear process. You do not show us until it is fully baked because you are waiting until everything is set. And then if we have comments on it, it is too late. What Harry is saying is before we figure out exactly where we want all the columns and utility pipes, could you show us rough sketches of everything you are trying to figure out and what the major decisions are so can give feedback on them?

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** In this instance, you know as much as about the Secretary's decision by reading the IRT report as my team. Right now, we are just doing the surveying to understand the alignments and utilities to see if there are any conflicts. We are walking through this together. In the past, we have had time to evaluate and assess the different alternatives. The only thing we have of substance right now is the interchange between Franklin Street and the Throat Area. Am I right in that you are looking to see us more often?

**Q: Jessica Robertson:** Maybe it is part of the same conversation as what is on the agenda, but can we have one giant list of all the unresolved questions so that you don't go too far in the wrong direction?

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** One of the approaches I want to start taking is to provide responses to questions that are generated in meetings. Nate is going to be taking the meeting minutes as he has and the questions that are generated will get responses. The idea is we will try to respond to those questions – we can discuss it. Nate has the questions that were brought up in October and November. Take a look at what we have responded to and at the next task force meeting, let us know if you disagree with a response.

**C: Jessica Robertson:** It is not about specific questions. It is about are we doing a busway, or not. Will the busway come in Phase 1 or Phase 4? We were all very unpleasantly surprised to get a DEIR that had no busway at all. I do not want that to happen again. Can you at least let us know if these decisions are being made as they happen and that decisions aren't being made just because of inertia? That the value of the busway is not worth the challenges instead of just we don't have time to evaluate it. I want to make sure we are not preceding down a path of design with an assumed outcome of that decision.

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** Understood.

**C: Ed Ionata:** I think it would be helpful going forward is for MassDOT and the team to be clearer about what unshakeable constraints we are working with. You might not know why it's a constraint. It could be a policy issue or political issue and you might not know. I think the Task Force, if you hear that there is a constraint, you could be more accepting of those constraints. If we go forward with not challenging every policy and not remaining silent when we have a constraint or perceived constraint, it will go smoother.

**C: Henrietta Davis:** I can imagine a list of Task Force priorities and engineering priorities so that we could compare them and if there are any conflict, we pay attention to those issues. The question-and-answer approach is the wrong approach. There is no way you will get anywhere with that approach. I think you need to know and respect the priorities of the people in this room. You have your things you need to take care of. We have our things we have to take care of; we are not jelling just yet.

**Q: Harry Mattison:** Are there things that we know enough of that we can start working on now? Something that we don't have to wait a month to talk about? Maybe the Franklin St footbridge or the river's edge? If we ask MassDOT and DCR and DEP to meet with advocates and neighbors next week, can we just see if we are all on the same page? Can we do that?

**A: Ed Ionata:** I do not think we are there just yet. I think it will take some time. I think if we met with DCR, they would want to see more developed concepts and would ask where the viaduct structure is and is there a rough engineering yet. They would want to see more before they could react to how much parkway there will be.

**Q: Harry Mattison:** I was not asking about a meeting where someone reacts to an engineering proposal. I was asking about a meeting we talk about principles and goals for the new parkland and check in about our concerns. As people who bike and run, or as abutters, or DCR's thoughts, etc. we could sit down and talk about that stuff? And say, "we don't know if the viaduct will be on the eastbound or westbound side" but we have ideas?

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** I think that is one of the reasons why this task force was created several years ago. It brings together all of the decision makers for the project.

**C: Harry Mattison:** No, it does not Mike. We have never had a meeting with DEP.

**C: Mike O'Dowd:** Federal Highway participates. DCR participates. EEA has representatives that participate. They all hear and listen to your principles and concerns that you share as a Task Force. So, continue to share with them and us, what is important to you and the community. It is being heard by the decision and policy makers.

We have a good dialogue going on right now. We want to see that grow and get better so that we can continue to advance this project. Collectively, we all want to see this move forward. Now it is a matter of taking that decision on the preferred alternative and moving it into something that's being constructed. We're on that track and will keep it moving. When Donny sends out the agenda, let us know what you want to add and we would be more than happy to.

**Q: Community Member:** Are we set now on lane widths, shoulders, separations between column structures, etc.? It was laid out in the DEIR. Do we have to worry about that anymore?

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** You are asking questions that there are not definite answers for yet. We need time to dig into it and the implications associated with the preferred alternative.

**Q: Community Member:** But there is an assumption, say 11-foot lanes and 4-foot shoulders. That is an assumption that you are working on now?

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** My understanding from reading through the Secretary's memo is that 11-foot lanes and 4-foot shoulders are the ideal scenario. And I will correct myself at the next meeting if I need to.

**Q: Community Member:** I have a 30,000-foot question. Based on the selection of the preferred alternative, would putting West Station further north now be possible?

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** I have asked Mark and his team to look at it on the rail side. We need to make sure the alignments that were shown in the DEIR can seamlessly interchange with the preferred alternative and how we can make the alignment. We are working on that.

**C: Ed Ionata:** Scott Peterson from CTPS is here to give an update on what they have been doing.

**C: Scott Peterson, *Central Transportation Planning Staff*:** Hello everyone. It has been a while since I have been here. CTPS is Central Transportation Planning Staff and is the support staff to the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization. I am the Director of Planning at the agency.



We have a suite of modeling tools and software that we use on projects, especially multimodal projects like this, to look at a number of things and helps us understand things like traffic flows, transit usage, air quality, and environmental justice. We supported the DEIR and we have updated the model with new information. This is a status report. One of the first things we when we start a project is information gathering to understand what the usage of the turnpike is and what the vehicles types are. One of the things that has been completed is a system-wide commuter rail survey. In the DEIR we were using 2012 commuter rail data. There has been a lot of growth on commuter rail lines, especially the Worcester line. We also want to understand travel speeds, so we have purchased data from a provider that takes data from cell phone providers. Another piece of data is understanding land use. Our base year, 2016, is set. But 2040 projections have some land use assumptions. MAPC, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, is supporting our effort and they have updated land use for the entire state. Understanding what the growth is and background growth regional as well as growth for the development site is key. We are working with them to define that as best possible to add that in the model. New households generate new trips. Understanding the magnitude of trip making is a key piece.

Data gathering is ongoing. The next piece is calibration and validation to see how on the different roadways, transit systems, bus network, etc., how well we are doing. Once that base year is set, we can begin taking the service plans and assumptions from the project team and running it through our model to begin forecasting for 2040. So, that is where we are and I will take any questions at this point.

**Q: Jessica Robertson:** What assumptions is the model using for parking availability and parking price?

**A: Scott Peterson:** There is parking represented in the model as a function of times and cost to park in downtown geographies. The model uses something called Transportation Analysis Zones, or TAZs. Those TAZs cover a couple blocks.

**C: Jessica Robertson:** I mean the cost of parking within new development in the Beacon Yards project area.

**A: Scott Peterson:** If that information is available from the project team, the model can represent that.

**C: Jessica Robertson:** There is nothing there right now. So, if the model assumes new trip generation from development in that area, what are the assumptions being made regarding parking availability and cost?

- A: Scott Peterson:** If it is available, it would be coming from Harvard or we can make assumptions based on data from the project team.
- C: Ken Miller:** One of the issues with the DEIR that people had problems with was predictions of commuter rail usage. I think the model is good, but I think there are some issues with what the inputs were into the service plan model. I think it would be helpful to talk about what scenarios are you going to model with the Task Force before the modeling occurs so that when we get the output, we understand why.
- A: Scott Peterson:** I agree with you and want to be as transparent as possible. There are a lot of assumptions that go into the modeling process. Service plans, fares zones, and other things can play key pieces as to why one person would choose one mode over another. I would be open to hearing that.
- C: Jessica Robertson:** David got some very specific feedback at the last meeting about what scenarios we wanted to see modeled. It is fine to have a realistic scenario of what the MBTA thinks it can provide at this time, but we should also have an aspirational scenario. I think we would like to know which scenarios will be modeled before it happens.
- A: Ed Ionata:** We can look into that.
- C: Wendy Landman:** We should be thinking about congestion management for I-90 with things like increased bus service from the west during construction. The impact of how construction is managed is really important to how we are thinking about future demands on the whole system. I think somewhere in here; we need to do some scenario planning for the whole construction period. It is such a long construction period. The mitigation for people coming from the west will be critical for them and for the people here. There might be huge traffic diversions into the neighborhoods. I would like you to come back and talk about that as well. I'd like to hear how you will be treating the 9 or 10-year construction period and how the model could help us plan for that.
- A: Scott Peterson:** We have used the model for other construction projects before, projects like the Tobin Bridge, so it has been used in that way before.
- C: Wendy Landman:** This is a huge project and MassDOT needs to know how it will be handled. We want some idea about what will be done during construction, whether it will be 100 extra bus trips per day or increases commuter rail, etc.

- C: Tad Read:** The City sent a letter to the Secretary asking to complete a model for aspirational service in the FEIR, even if there is no plan to offer that service now. Assuming speed of transit service affects the desirability and effectiveness of use, we'd like to see bus lanes modeled in the street grid here and included in the model so that the additional speeds and facilitation of service can be recognized and perhaps influence decisions about mode choice. Have you seen that letter?
- C: Scott Peterson:** I have seen that letter. The model is sensitive to frequency and to a variety of factors such as fares, stop locations, access, pedestrian paths, etc. 15-minute headways on the commuter rail is something we are testing with the Rail Vision Project. We will defer to the MBTA and project team on the types of services plans they want us to examine.
- C: Mike O'Dowd:** That is one of the questions that we will take back and return with an answer.
- C: Glen Berkowitz:** It is hard not to conclude that the last 15 minutes have been a waste of time. You knew what we wanted for scenarios from the past meetings. The letter from the city is just the icing on the cake. You heard from Fred Salvucci that you should model more than two scenarios and one should be aspirational. Can you tell us today what you have decided?
- A: Mike O'Dowd:** No, I cannot.
- Q: Harry Mattison:** What passenger service on the Grand Junction are you modeling?
- A: Scott Peterson:** We are waiting on the project team for those service plans. I have not seen them yet, so I do not know.
- Q: Harry Mattison:** Will you have the service plans next month, Mike?
- A: Mike O'Dowd:** No, the service plans will not be done but we will know whether there is an expectation of future passenger service on the Grand Junction Line and what the service plans are. I don't have them today, but I will get them to you.
- C: William Brownsberger:** I can offer something on the Rail Vision Process. MassDOT has commissioned a major consulting study to look at what the possibilities are and the pros and cons of different visions for rail in the region. The consulting team has examined a huge number of service possibilities from all the rail lines and the set of possibilities is huge. There are about 8 different possibilities for each line. The first screen is whether or not that service type is feasible on a given line, given the number of existing tracks and potential lines, using complex modeling software. The group has narrowed those almost infinite possibilities down to about 7. From the status quo to a scenario where we electrify everything with 15-minute headways everywhere to a

mix with the possibility of urban rail, etc. All those things are on the table but up in the air on feasibility. One of the things we haven't begun to do is compare service across the lines and evaluate the system as a whole. The goal of that process is to finish in this year. We will have some big, high-level feasibility ideas. Right now, those things are still very much up in the air. The assumptions they have to make will be in the air because the analysis will be ongoing.

**C: Jessica Robertson:** We asked that one of the assumptions be aspirational. We are not designing those services or committing to it, we just want to know how the project would be impacted if there was exceptional service even if we don't know exactly what that service is.

**Q: Will Brownsberger:** We should be planning for the best possible scenario. We are trying to create additional modes. We are trying to get it in place before it blows up from a congestion standpoint. What is the question that the model is supposed to answer?

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** The development plan we are using, Senator, was given to us from Harvard in 2014. The land uses assumptions are based on what they were projecting at that time.

**C: Harry Mattison:** Those numbers were really, really low in Beacon Yards. It estimated something like 200 people per day working on the Enterprise Research Campus.

**C: Mike O'Dowd:** I don't think they were that low. I will take another look at them myself just to see what was projected for employment, service, retail, education, housing, etc.

**C: Scott Peterson:** Those are the demographic assumptions that MAPC is working on now to get a definitive statement on because the employment and households all generate the trips we are modeling.

**C: Harry Mattison:** The highway system is already broken. The Mass Pike and Cambridge Street and other streets are all way over capacity. If the model is just saying that transit will be like it is today, then we are building roads to handle tens of thousands of cars to come through these neighborhoods. That seems to contradict the idea that maybe we should have much better transit in 5, 10, or 20 years and we should design the neighborhood base on that.

**Q: Will Brownsberger:** What is the question that the modeling will answer? Is it saying, if we have this level of development, then our system of roads will be able to handle that?

**A: Scott Peterson:** We will be providing the project team with volumes, transit usage by mode, individual station usage, where these people are coming from, where they are going, how many off

the pike and go through Cambridge, and what the distributional patterns are. It answers a lot of questions about travel flows and usage as well as levels of service.

**Q: Will Brownsberger:** So that is input into the team's design decisions? I would concur that you model a maximum transit scenario to see how different levels of transit service could impact the project. Having a range of high, medium, and low inputs seems reasonable.

**C: Jack Wofford:** Senator, at the last meeting there was a lot of discussion around the role of West Station as a regional hub or just a stop on the rail line. There was a big push to model an aspirational scenario to see how we could accommodate regional growth and keep options open in the future.

**Q: Bill Deignan:** What is the timeline of the modeling?

**A: Scott Peterson:** We are hoping to finalize the base year calibration later this month and start the no-build scenario modeling right after we get the roadway network and pedestrian path information and changes to the transit network. There is a variety of information we need before we can model the alternative scenarios, but the model should be ready to go in February.

**C: Fred Salvucci:** I think there is a risk in waiting. The turnpike is getting worse each year. There will be a problem during the construction of this. You need a scenario showing how to get as much transit service as possible to see how we can get through the construction as quickly as possible. These 2040 projections are a distraction. The question is "what is the capacity with different regional rail projections?" This will affect the politics. If you add trains and the people in Worcester have the same level of service and other people get more service in Newton and West Station, it is politically viable. There needs to be some scenarios to see how this can work.

**C: Ed Ionata:** Thank you, Fred. Let's take one more and then call it a night.

**Q: Community Member:** Is there any way your modeling can look the possibility of returning Storrow Drive to a high-volume parkway instead of what it is today? Or any thinking of how to change it? Maybe enforcing speed limits, specifically?

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** I think DCR still looks at it as a parkway.

**C: Scott Peterson:** There is information about speeds, volumes, breakdown lanes, etc. That information can be reflected in the model. If we are trying to incorporate these transit plans or service plans, we have opportunities there. There are several scenarios and I am looking to the project team and the Task Force to get a handle on what those are.

**C: Ed Ionata:** Alright, I think we will end it here. The next meeting will be February 27.

## Next Steps

The task force will next meet on February 27, 2019.

# Appendix 1: Meeting Attendees

Last Name	First Name	Affiliation
Barbour	JoAnn	Charlesview Inc.
Beggan	Joseph	Harvard University
Berkowitz	Glen	Community Member
Bowser	Brandon	Allston Resident
Briones	Jorge	MBTA
Brownsberger	Will	Massachusetts State Senate
Cabral-Curtis	Nate	Howard Stein Hudson
Calnan	Chris	Tetra Tech
Ciommo	Mark	City Councilor
Dailey	Donny	MassDOT
Davis	Henrietta	Cambridgeport, resident
Deignan	Bill	City of Cambridge
Desrosier	Jason	Allston-Brighton CDC
DiDomenico	Sal	Massachusetts State Senate
D'Isidoro	Anthony	Allston Civic Association
Freedman	Nicole	City of Newton
Hamilton	Sarah	MASCO
Hoffman	Nelson	Federal Highway Administration
Honan	Kevin	State Representative
Hugland	Karl	Federal Highway Administration
Ionata	Ed	Tetra Tech
Jasinski	Laura	Charles River Conservancy
Landman	Wendy	WalkBoston

Last Name	First Name	Affiliation
Lash	Nate	Howard Stein Hudson
LaTremouiale	Rob	FOWA
Leary	Elizabeth	Boston University
Leslie	Anna	Allston Brighton Health Collaborative
Loutzenheiser	David	MAPC
McKinney	Renny	Allston Resident/Businessman
Miller	Ken	Federal Highway Administration
Mohler	David	MassDOT
Moll	Anna	Skanska
Mook	Galen	MassBicycle
Nally	Tom	A Better City
O'Dowd	Mike	MassDOT
Ostrander	Cassie	Federal Highway Administration
Peterson	Scott	Central Transportation Planning Staff
Po Marini	Christine	BPD
Pollack	Travis	MAPC
Read	Tad	Boston Planning and Development Agency
Robertson	Jessica	Allston Resident
Rubin	Staci	Conservation Law Foundation
Ryerson	Atazel	Resident
Salvucci	Fred	Community Member
Schluntz	Alexandria	Conservation Law Foundation
Silveira	Steve	Boston University
Strysky	Alex	MEPA
Walters	Emma	Allston Village Main Streets



Last Name	First Name	Affiliation
Wofford	Jack	Cambridge Resident
Worhunsky	Courtney	MassDOT