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South Coast Rail Enters a Landmark Year

The year 2020 will begin the four-year process of making South Coast Rail (SCR) a reality. The MBTA will advertise for construction bids to build Phase 1 of the SCR Program over the next few months. The process began in February with the first advertisement for the Fall River Secondary contract package (see the map on page 2). The second package, for the New Bedford Main Line, the Middleborough Secondary and the signal system for the entire Phase 1 corridor, will be advertised in the spring. Both elements of Phase 1 construction will be underway by the end of 2020. The MBTA is targeting the end of 2023 for the start of regular service.

The SCR Program will restore passenger rail service to the South Coast region for the first time since the late 1950s. The Program has been extensively studied in various configurations for more than 20 years. In 2016, after meetings with southeastern MA communities, the Baker-Polito Administration authorized the Phase 1 project to advance service to Fall River, Taunton and New Bedford. The Phase 1 project received environmental approvals in 2019, and MassDOT began early action construction (see page 3). Design of the Full Build option, also known as the Stoughton Electric Route, will continue.

What's Coming

The MBTA will build six new stations in Middleborough, East Taunton, North New Bedford, New Bedford, Freetown and Fall River. The Fall River and Freetown Stations are part of the first construction package. This first package includes 8 overhead bridges, 10 new grade crossings, 4 interlockings and a layover facility to store trains overnight on the Fall River Secondary at Weaver's Cove.

The Fall River Depot station will be located at 825

Davol Street, not far from the original station that closed in 1958. A rendering of the station appears on page 3. The Freetown station will be at 161 South Main Street. Previously, stations were located in Assonet at Elm Street and Crystal Spring (Thwaites) at Copicut Road. Service also ended in 1958.

The second construction package is for the New Bedford Main Line, Middleborough Secondary and Signal and Communication Systems. New stations include Middleborough, East Taunton, North New Bedford, and New Bedford. The New Bedford Main Line layover facility will be located at Wamsutta, adjacent to an existing layover site. The contract will also include six bridges, 18 grade crossings, 14 interlockings and 35 track miles. This package includes procuring equipment and installing fiber optic cable, signals for the entire right-of-way and Positive Train Control (a system that helps to improve train safety). The scope provides for testing and commissioning the entire new system.



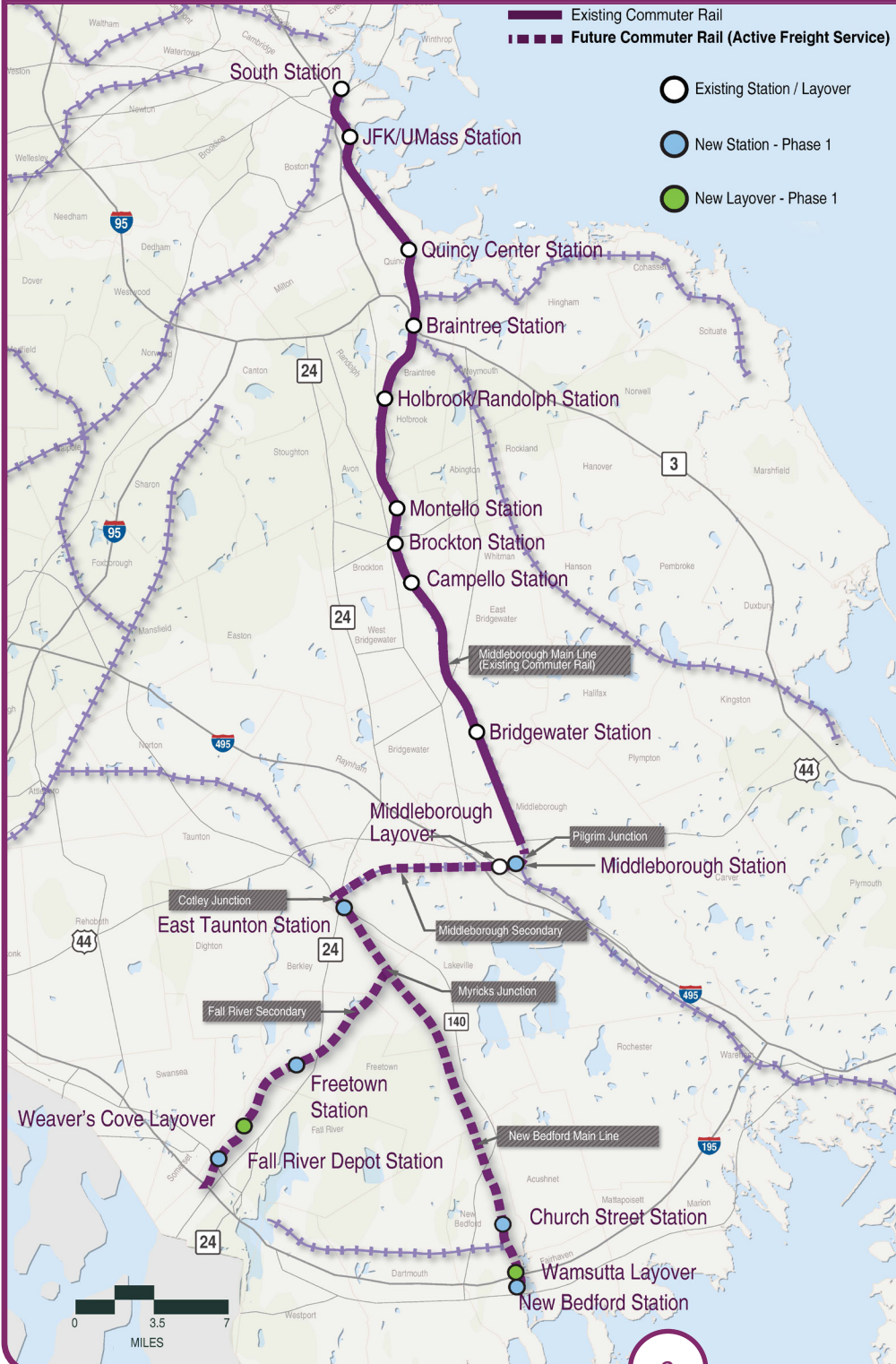
Precast culverts delivered, Lakeville

Benefits of Phase 1

- Provides a one-seat ride by extending the existing Middleborough/Lakeville commuter rail service from Boston to Taunton, Fall River and New Bedford
- Delivers service to the South Coast by the end of 2023
- Reconstructs 17.3 miles of the New Bedford Main Line and 11.7 miles of the Fall River Secondary
- Upgrades the existing Middleborough Secondary track

from Pilgrim Junction to Cotley Junction (a distance of 7.1 miles)

- Will operate 3 morning peak trains and 3 evening peak trains to both New Bedford and Fall River and operate up to 6 morning and 6 evening peak trains to Taunton and Middleborough because all of the trains will pass through these communities
- Phase 1 will also improve freight service to the region



On the Move

South Coast Rail has completed the transition from a MassDOT planning project to a growing MBTA construction team. MassDOT is managing Early Action work on bridges and culverts that will be completed this year. The MBTA has been acquiring properties needed for the stations and is negotiating land acquisition in places where there has been construction on the right-of-way or access is required for construction and operation. In addition to beginning construction, the MBTA is looking ahead to operating the system. In October 2019, the Fiscal and Management Control Board (FMCB) approved the purchase of 16 bi-level coaches to be ready for commissioning and service late in 2023.

South Coast Rail Corridor Map showing the project's first phase. Phase 1 will extend the existing Middleborough/Lakeville Commuter Rail Line to provide earlier service to Taunton, New Bedford, and Fall River.



All Aboard: Fall River

With crews, shovels and equipment set to dig in on Phase 1 this year, the MBTA is sharing renderings and information on the new stations. The Fall River Depot Station, 825 Davol Street, is located near the site of an original, historic station. Beginning in 1847, express “boat trains” traveled from Boston to a Fall River wharf, where passengers boarded luxury liners to New York City at a time when many railroad lines served southeastern MA.

The new South Coast Rail station will include an accessible bus drop off on North Main Street, as well as parking spaces for 220 vehicles, and electric vehicle and handicapped parking. The high level platform will be fully accessible and include two canopies. Bike parking will also be available. The station will include signage and benches.

It won't be too long before this image comes to life and riders will be filling the platform for their journeys.

Early Action Project Update

Early Action construction projects for Phase 1 of South Coast Rail have made visible progress since they were introduced in the Spring 2019 Fact Sheet. These projects include culvert construction, grade crossing improvements, and railroad bridge reconstruction. Scheduling these elements early is preparing the railroad right-of-way (ROW) for main line construction.

The contractor has completed 44 of 46 culvert replacements and cleaned 16 culverts. The two remaining culverts and five wetland mitigation areas will be completed this spring. Work also continues on four railroad bridges to bring them up to MBTA Commuter Rail standards. In addition, the contractor is focusing on cleanup along the ROW.

SCR News and Notes

Going out to Bid: The MBTA held a Contractor Forum on January 31 to provide interested contractors with the opportunity to learn about the scope and bidding schedule for upcoming Phase 1 packages and to connect with other potential partners/subcontractors. The forum outlined the elements of Phase 1 and

opportunities to bid on a diverse scope of work. The forum presentation is posted on the MBTA's Business Center website (bc.mbta.com/business_center/bidding_solicitations/current_solicitations).

New Program Manager: Jennifer Tabakin has joined the MBTA as the Program Manager for South Coast Rail. As Program Manager, Jennifer serves as the chief executive for South Coast Rail.



Rail welding at a culvert in Taunton

Field Office Opens: With construction planning well underway and contract bidding beginning soon, South Coast Rail has opened a field office in Bridgewater for the design and Program Management/Construction Management teams, resident engineers, environmental staff and MBTA team members who will be building and overseeing Phase 1 of South Coast Rail. Coordination is an integral part of a large construction project and having the MBTA and consultant team members in one location saves time and improves communication.

Community Updates: Community meetings and abutter notification meetings will be scheduled as the startup of construction approaches. To sign up for regular emails, you can visit the project website.

Environmental Update: The MBTA has obtained the required permits to begin construction. The permits specify limits of the project, such as in water work that can only take place at certain times of the year to protect species reproduction, for example. The MBTA has a Lead Environmental Monitor, who will be confirming contractor compliance with all permit requirements.

Rail and culvert photos (pages 3 and 4) show preparation for major construction.



Installing box culverts in Lakeville



Resetting track panel over culvert in Lakeville



Track restoration completed, Lakeville

Contact Us

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To learn more about the project and sign up for email updates, visit the website at: www.mass.gov/southcoastrail

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