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To:	Mike O'Dowd MassDOT Project Manager	Date:	November 21, 2019
From:	Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis Howard Stein Hudson	HSH Project No.:	2013061.14
Subject:	MassDOT I-90 Allston Interchange Project Briefing to the Brookline Transportation Board Meeting Notes of September 26, 2019		

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## Overview

On September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019 members of the I-90 Allston Multimodal Project team appeared before a specially scheduled meeting of the Brookline Transportation Board. The project had most recently been before the Board during the series of meetings in late 2017/early 2018 to introduce the communities of Allston, Brighton, and Cambridge to the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR).

In the intervening months between January of 2018 and September of 2019, MassDOT Secretary Stephanie Pollack issued her decision regarding the part of the project adjacent to the I-90 viaduct, commonly called “the throat,” and the project has embarked on the federal environmental permitting process. With regard to the throat, the determination has been made that I-90 will be placed at-grade, or in some areas lowed into an open cutting, and that Soldiers’ Field Road (SFR) will be placed above the interstate on a new, smaller viaduct. The Worcester Mainline commuter rail will run generally at-grade and the Grand Junction Line (GJL) will run through most of the project at-grade before climbing over I-90 and SFR to cross the Charles River to Cambridge. In terms of federal environmental permitting, MassDOT will be filing first a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and then a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). This is the highest level of permitting and each document includes a public comment period. The federal environmental permitting for the project is being conducted under One Federal Decision which requires completion of the process within 24 months of its commencement.

The purpose of the meeting documented herein was to introduce the Brookline community to changes which had been made to the I-90 Allston Multimodal Project since filing of the DEIR and to explain the federal environmental permitting process through which the project will go. The project team appeared before the Board at the request of Guus Dreisen who represents Brookline on the I-90 Allston Taskforce.

Much of the discussion focused on West Station. While attendees were pleased that the station includes a Malvern Street transit-way, concerns voiced in 2018 that this connection must remain for transit vehicles only were repeated by many audience members. Support was also voiced for inclusion, as part of the project, for a bicycle and pedestrian connection from Agannis Way to the

Paul Dudley White Bicycle Path. At present, this connection is not precluded by the project, but is not considered part of it. Audience members also voiced support for the idea that the configuration of the future West Station should not do anything to limit flexibility in the area, both for future transit connections and land development.

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

### Welcome & Opening Remarks

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**C: Chris Dempsey:** Good evening. Thank you for being here. My name is Chris Dempsey. I'm the chair of the Brookline Transportation Board. This is not a transportation board meeting, but it's obviously a meeting that has a lot to do with transportation. While the project is beyond the borders of Brookline, it will have real impacts on neighborhoods in North Brookline and throughout the entire town. So, we're grateful for you being here to engage in this process. It's going to be a better process when we hear from you, when you weigh in with the transportation board, the select board, Representative Vitolo, and others in the State House that represent us in Brookline, and with the MassDOT team itself, who are here to present. So, thank you for being here. Thank you for being engaged. I'll point out that there are a few other members of the Transportation Board here and then I also want to point out Guus Dreisen, who is Brookline's representative to the Task Force for this project. Guus has been following the project for us and giving us regular updates. So, Guus thank you for the time you've put in on that and with that I will hand it over to the MassDOT team who's here to share information with you, take questions, and get feedback on what you hear tonight. Thank you, team.

### Project Background

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**C: Chris Calnan:** Well, good evening everyone. It is a little bit of a damp evening, so we're glad everybody could make it tonight. My name's Chris Calnan and I'm with Tetra tech. With me tonight we have Eric Maki from Tetra Tech, Nate Cabral-Curtis and Doug Johnson from Howard Stein Hudson, and Jim Keller from Tetra Tech as well. Our project manager, Mike O'Dowd from MassDOT, is running a little bit late, but he'll be here shortly. Tonight's slide show is less than half an hour. We'll run through some quick slides and give you an overview of what we've been working on and so forth. Then we'll spend some time trying to answer your questions. I figured that we'd have most of the time set up to do that and go through some of the issues that you may have here in Brookline.

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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. For copies of meeting flipcharts, please see Appendix 2.



This is the agenda that we have for tonight. We will go through what we refer to as the Independent Review of the throat area, this is the narrow section of the project between the Boston University dorms, the Viaduct on I-90, and the Charles River, and review what's happened there. We'll talk about some of the key project elements, what we're looking at for next steps, and then get into some Q&A. I'm curious: how many of you have heard of the MassDOT Independent Review Team on this project? Anybody? A few folks – looks like about half.

So, the last time MassDOT presented to Brookline we were in the process of introducing the DEIR to the communities around the project. After that was done, MassDOT took all the comments it received on the DEIR and decided to convene an Independent Review Team (IRT) to refine the variations presented in that document, after which they provided their findings to the Secretary.

In the fall of 2018, Secretary of Transportation Pollack used the IRT's analysis to help craft and formulate her decision on what we would be doing in this specific area of the project, throat area. She selected what was then called the "Highway At-Grade Hybrid" alternative with Soldiers Field Road Alternative. What this alternative does is it puts I-90 down at-grade or below-grade and actually takes Soldiers' Field Road and puts it on top of I-90.

This is a pretty dramatic change and I have some slides to show you that. That decision was earlier this year, in January. Since then the MassDOT team and the Design Team has been looking at how we build it and further advance the concept. That's what we've been working on for the last 6 months or so. That's a little bit of the background of what's been happening for the last couple of years since we've been before Brookline. So, moving on to some of the key project elements.

There are a lot of key elements of the project that we'll be reviewing tonight. I thought I'd run through these five and show you a little bit of what's happening. I don't know if anybody got a chance to see the boards that we had out in the lobby. But this is the latest concept that we call alternative 3L, it's a refinement. Before 3L, a couple of years ago when we filed the draft EIR, we were at concept 3K. 3L has lot of similarities to what we presented a couple of years ago. You still have I-90 being realigned, it's now further up there today; you've got a pretty extensive street grid happening here, this is that very tight area, the throat area between Boston University and the Charles River. The throat area has some of the most dramatic changes of what's being proposed.

You've got the West station area here, with the layover and so forth. Then along the river there's quite a bit of changes as far as Soldiers' Field Road. We're planning on shifting Soldier's Field Road inwards towards the land side, freeing up quite a bit of space for some new open space. I want to add that the changes since a couple of years ago with this alignment have to do with the Throat Area. We've got a new configuration for West station and up at River Street here, the Soldiers' Field Road off-ramp. Previously the proposal was to close that off-ramp and reroute the traffic through the interchange to go over to Cambridge. The latest development is that we would maintain that off ramp for right turns to Cambridge only. We're still going to do some pedestrian and bicycle improvements on that off-ramp we've got some changes there from what was presented earlier. Then we got also this here in the Malvern transit way, which we'll get into in a little bit.

So again, we're going to be realigning I-90. There will be what's called a collector/distributor roadway system and that's how the traffic is handled going to and from I-90.



We are going through, or I should say CTPS, the Central Transportation Planning Staff, is going through a new trend to present model updates with new land use assumptions. This analysis has been proposed over the last six to nine months. CTPS is going through an extensive study right now. They will be updating their model once analysis is over. Once they have that done, we will update our traffic results and integrate that into our proposal.

Realigning Soldiers' Field Road will help us better offer a street grid in the area. We would then be able to do complete streets and improve on what's out there today. This is a photo of the Throat Area itself. You see the Boston University dorms to the left, the Charles River, and you have I-90. As you know there is a lot of attention being put in this area of the project. The challenge is to fit everything in here. Today, you have I-90 up top, rail is underneath, and Soldiers Field Road. When the IRT folks looked at this, they asked what if everything was put at one elevation? We did look at that as an option. We included it in the draft EIR. What was concluded was that something has to be stacked, something has to be on top of one another, because you just don't have the physical width to fit it all in there and not be in the river.

This image is a little washed out from the back, but this gives you a better perspective in the third dimension. So, on this side is the BU side. We've got the two Worcester Mainline tracks heading into town. Here are the two tracks that were the Grand Junction Rail Line, they will continue over to Cambridge, and then down below here, this is I-90. So, you have I-90 Eastbound heading into city and then you have the Westbound barrel. Here is where Soldier's Field Road gets stacked above I-90. What that stacking does is it allows us to widen the path system next to the Charles River. Here is a video of what that looks like.

- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** While this is coming up folks, the graphic that Chris presented to you that he said is washed out is on a board that is facing you when you walk out. So, if you want to see the dimensions, they're on that.
- C: Chris Calnan:** So, this is looking West. You have the dual paths along the river. Just to the left of that is the relocated Soldier's Field Road. It's climbing up and it's going over the interstate below it. You've got in that open area: I-90 Westbound, the Eastbound barrel underneath Soldiers' Field Road, and then the Worcester mainline to the South of that. These are pretty extensive changes here. We think of it as what's on the ground today gets elevated and what's elevated goes on the ground. It's flipping the orientation of the elements and that gets quite complicated.

Again, this shows where Soldiers' Field Road gets kicked out even further for more park and open space in that area. But this is the working preferred alternative that the Secretary outline in her decision back in January. So, this is Eastbound, traveling Eastbound at a car level, above that, that's the viaduct structure for Soldiers Field Road, and again, to the left would be I-90 Westbound. Off to this right here is where the trains are you can just kind of see them. There's a retaining wall that trains are going up, whether they're going to Grand Junction or the Worcester mainline downtown. This is the train bridge that goes overhead and continues towards the river and over to Cambridge. That's the Commonwealth Avenue bridge over there. Hopefully this was a good animation to show you what's in store and how things will be reconfigured.

So, let's move on to some of the West Station elements. When we were here before, West Station and the Commuter Rail layover were proposed to be phased construction. Right now, DOT is looking to build this as one project. Right now, we're looking to have West Station have a 2-platform configuration. It would have the Worcester main line express tracks going through the area, provisions up top at the concourse area for this bus loop, and provisions for shuttles and



taxis. In the future, we would have the ability to connect into that urban rail service over to Cambridge sometime in the future.

On the commuter rail layover yard side there's been several alternatives developed here and we're continuing to make refinements. For the layover yard, we're looking to have space for the midday layover of eight consists – that's the coaches and the locomotive to pull them. There is a need on the South side of the commuter rail system for that layover. It would include some light maintenance activity. So, the trains would come in midday, get cleaned, receive some other minor inspection, and then they go back out to service.

Also included here are noise barriers along the South side, along Pratt and Ashford Streets. They do meet the threshold for the noise and that will be part of the project as well. So, here's an illustration of the platform and yards concept. We put here in parenthesis flip because it's different from what we proposed in the Draft Environmental Impact Report.

This flip is a new concept, it was a direct result of the comments that MassDOT received from the public process through the draft EIR. They were asked "what if you flipped things around such that you have your layover yard to your South and the station to the North"? This is what that configuration does.

This is the South side, on the Boston University side of the project. You have two express tracks that would continue basically what's there today. Those two tracks would allow trains to run past West Station and continue into town. Just to the North of that, that's where the layover yard would be and that's where you're seeing eight train sets in that area. Then to the North of that is where we end up with a couple of platforms. Two platforms here have provisions for trains on the Worcester Mainline making local stops and the ability to do a cross platform transfer to a future Grand Junction service into Cambridge.

Again, this whole station was previously down here, and the layover was to the North. So that's what we're calling the flip. This configuration looks to balance some of the MBTA operational challenges that we're seeing, as well as, not preclude some of the future air rights development over West Station.

This graphic is looking at the bus concourse option. There's going to be some more work done on this, but to give you an idea of what's happening, it's a little bit of a zoomed in scenario. This is the platform that's down below. The circulation is the bus loop here that works for this flip scenario with the layover yard underneath. This is one possible scenario that we have. We will be looking at it further.

There will be some storage for live bus berths here. This area here allows for a kiss and ride. There are provisions to connect to the transit way and I'll get into that in a minute. This configuration also allows for a Cambridge Street bypass road to the West which would be built by others in the future when the air rights come into play. More work needs to be done for this configuration, but this is the latest options we're looking at.

On to the Malvern Street transitway. The transitway certainly is something that we understand is important with the folks in Brookline. I would say right off the bat, similar to West station and the layover yard being part of the project. When we looked at this previously, it was more along the lines of a do not preclude and, we've studied different options for general purpose vehicles, bus only, et cetera. Right now, DOT is thinking that this will be part of the project as a transit way only. Meaning buses, bicyclists, and pedestrians only with no general-purpose traffic, but



primarily for the buses. I think this graphic actually came from our draft EIR. We had studied 4 different routing options for the buses.

First option, was to come in along Commonwealth Avenue, head up Malvern Street, head up right to the station, and then coming back also use Malvern Street to go South through Packard's Corner. That had some major challenges because of trying to change the signal at that intersection. We looked at another alternative in which you would go North on Malvern Street inbound, then as you come out of West Station you would make a couple of turns, come down to Commonwealth Avenue, and head out that way. The 3<sup>rd</sup> alternative was taking Malvern Street, ducking out the backside of Boston University and coming out of Buick Street. The 4<sup>th</sup> alternative was to use the existing street network, come in on Commonwealth Avenue, head North to the station and then head out on I-90 and continue into town. So, a few different options for the routing. What we found was that heading North on Malvern Street from Packard's Corner, and then for the Southbound move coming down the first part of Malvern, making a left on Gardner, and then right on Babcock and out to Commonwealth Avenue was the least disruptive option.

I think there is some parking issues that we need to deal with, but this is what we concluded would be the least disruptive of them all. There are fewer impacts to Boston University, certainly to their operations at the arena. It doesn't require a long viaduct structure to get to the backside of Buick Street. It's also provides opportunities for more direct, intermediate stops between West Station and the LMA. I should say that the service routing is not part of this project. What we're trying to do is build some of the infrastructure for the future. Currently, MassDOT is not committing to any route configuration. Again, we are just building some of the infrastructure so routing can happen in the future.

So, on to some bicycle, pedestrian, and open space slides. This is the Malvern transit-way off to the left. On the right is an animation that we've been using to show how the transit-way will function. In addition to the buses only, we're to have robust pedestrian-bicycle connections from the South. So, we're looking at cycle tracks, bicycle lanes, and shared use paths. However, nothing's been decided regarding the configuration, but this facility will be a two-lane roadway with robust pedestrian bicycle facilities on either side. I'll point out that we are working with, the new owners of 76 Ashford Street. They have some ideas that they want to develop and MassDOT's trying to work with them too. So, there could be some collaboration with this development as well.

We also have connections at Babcock Street. Again, nothing has changed here in the last couple of years. We are still looking at the bottom of Babcock street to have a connection so that you can come up this ramp, scoot in, get to West Station, and be able to continue beyond the station. So, for any of these pedestrian connections from the South the idea is you would be able to continue to the North and if you want to, go up and make the connection to get to the river. This is an illustration of what that might look like. Here at the end of Babcock street you have that ramp system to get you up and over the tracks to get to West station, and beyond.

Another key element here is the Franklin Street pedestrian bridge, the footbridge that's here today. The bridge doesn't meet accessibility requirements. We'll be replacing the bridge and we'll go over one of the design options. This one provides the most direct visual and physical connection over the turnpike, but we're still working on the bridge type. This one here is a steel arch. This one is a cable-stayed bridge. There should be other interesting designs of what that structure will look like as things get further developed.





Then on the last slide are the bike, pedestrian, and the open space area that's next to the river here. So, we're looking to shift Soldier's Field Road considerably into the site and open up over 5.5 acres of new open space in this area right here. This is a dramatic change to what's there today. I think everybody knows how narrow things are and since we're shifting Soldiers Field Road over, we'll gain a lot of new open space in that area. There's only about two or three acres in that area today.

Also, later this fall, part of that process with the notice of intent will be the issuance of a scoping document. That scoping document defines the alternatives that we're going to study further, it talks about what the purpose and need of the project is, it talks about the public involvement plan, the agency coordination plan, and the methodologies that we'll be using to study these concepts. Again, that'll be coming out later this fall and folks in the public will have an opportunity to comment on that document. We're in the middle of the MEPA process since we filed a draft EIR in November of 2017. So, we're going to go back and file what's called the notice of project change that brings the MEPA side up the date.

In other words, we've got some refinements that we've been working on over the last couple of years on the MEPA side. So, we would file that document in early 2020 to bring everybody up to speed with MEPA on the state side. We've got an upcoming Task Force meeting in a couple of weeks, in October 10<sup>th</sup>. This gives you an illustration of the overall project timeline. We're in the third quarter of 2019 and we're cranking away on the MEPA, NEPA, and the permitting. This process is going to continue for a couple of years. We're planning to parallel that effort with advancing the preliminary design. Currently, it's hard for a lot of folks to drill in on the details. For a lot of things, we're just not there yet with specific details, since we're in the environmental documentation phase.

I think that's it for the main part of the presentation. I did want to point out that Mike O'Dowd from MassDOT just joined us, he's in the back now. Good evening Mike. And I think we're ready to start. I don't know how you guys want to do Q and A.

- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** All right, so we'll try to make this equitable. I see there's already some hands up so I'm going to go that way to the back, then I'll work back this way to the front, and try to give everybody a fair shot at it. So, ma'am, with the glasses you were first, so go for it.

## Detailed Meeting Minutes<sup>2</sup>

### Question and Answer

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- C: No Name Given:** I was at your presentation last week at the Watertown yacht club. For some reason you haven't presented any of the things that you presented, namely the fact that you are considering putting a 2000-foot temporary bridge tenured structure in the Charles River to accommodate your installation with this.

- C: No Name Given:** That's a big deal.

- A: Nate Cabral Curtis:** It is, that's a big deal. So, I think Chris and Jim can talk a little bit about that. Chris mentioned that the throat is one of the most constrained areas. We have a lot of things that we must move in that space. Things that are up, must go down, things that are down,

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must go up and it's all very constrained in this section. Typically, before Brookline, there's been a lot of interest in West station, so we've tried to present on that tonight. There's also been a lot of interest in the Malvern street transit connection. So, we tried to present on that tonight. But would you gentlemen like to give a thumbnail overview of the temporary trestle?

**C: No Name Given:** The river is important to me. To the entire community.

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** No doubt.

**C: No Name Given:** It's going to impact us. I'm also a little shocked by your video that shows that we are now adding to our beautiful city two sound barriers.

**A: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** So, I think Chris can talk to you a little bit about why those barriers are there.

**C: No Name Given:** I understand why they are there. It's just not how we're used to approaching the city.

**Q: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** That is so. Do you want to give a thumbnail, Jim? Maybe about the trestle?

**A: Jim Keller:** Again, my name's Jim Keller and I'm with Tetra Tech on the MassDOT project team. As Chris touched on, the IRT study came out in October and Secretary Pollack made her decision on the preferred alternative in January. That's when our team picked up that concept, which that Soldiers' Field Road be elevated viaduct over I-90. At that point we started looking at some of the elements that the IRT didn't really have time to get far into in the 90 days that they had. One of those was the constructability of the option.

So back in the DEIR, if any of you folks who reviewed it there's a whole section of it that got pretty detailed into staging of the full at-grade. What we found through the process was, because of the dramatic change in all of the travel modes within this constrained throat section building, it is going to be a very difficult proposition for MassDOT to take on this preferred alternative; this alternative that was very much endorsed by the public and by the stakeholders. What we found was, as was presented in April to the taskforce, is that we were starting to get a little bit concerned about how much room there was within that tight 200 foot or so width, which we would need to take on bringing the existing highway viaduct down, all while maintaining all the travel modes to the maximum extent practicable.

We concluded at that time, at the end of the April meeting, that we were already being pushed somewhat into the river because we're constrained by Buick street and Boston University to the South. That hard line would make it hard to demolish the highway viaduct, maintain I-90 traffic, build a new and elevated viaduct for Soldiers' Field Road, maintain Soldiers' Field road traffic, and commuter rail service. The independent review team did state in their small, kind of limited constructability review was that the Paul Dudley White Path would've had to been closed entirely throughout the duration of construction. Both MassDOT and the public agreed that was not an option. So as we get to all of these different elements, I'm trying to give it quick, but as you pile this all into that 200 feet, we came to the very quick conclusion that it's very difficult to construct this viaduct over I-90, while maintaining all traffic without getting some more room. The only place to get room was to the North and going further into the river. We looked at different options. We investigated the environmental impacts. We also reviewed temporary versus permanent impacts. This alternative made us feel more comfortable from DOT's perspective, to construct a project without any major constraints other than going into the river with this temporary trestle.





As Chris alluded to several times, we're in the environmental documentation process. We're not even far into the preliminary design, but at this time, MassDOT and the project team feel that the trestle is a reasonable and proper route to take. The structure would allow for all modes of transportation to be accommodated to the maximum extent possible and construct the project.

**Q: No Name Given:** Why wasn't a permanent new bike path outside the riverbank decided? I mean this could be a state of the art, beautiful amenity instead of having it up against some sound barrier.

**A: Jim Keller:** Yes, we understand that sentiment.

**Q: No Name Given:** Is that what allows you to access the sewer pipe and everything else?

**A: Jim Keller:** Yes, and Secretary Pollack's decision was made public, I believe it's been on the website since January. Within that decision it's very clear that going into the river from an as a permanent condition is not an option. The agencies essentially put a stake in the ground, saying if there are not any permanent impacts on the river, then you can get into the least environmentally damaging practical alternatives. There are options that don't require that impact, but we understand fully where you're coming from. We completely understand the comment and that's where things are now. I'm in no way saying everything is final. That's not what I'm doing. What I'm saying is that's where we're at.

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** And if anybody wants to know, there's more on this. The only reason you're not hearing about this trestle business is, as I said, because we were trying to respond to the interest that we'd had in this community when we've been here before. We've got an ongoing dialogue with river users. The first part of that is a series of meetings that have been posted to the project website. If you want to go and read a set of 20-page meeting minutes about the trestle and how that interacts with the river, it's there, it's on the 2019 documents page on the website.

**C: Name Not Given:** I would advocate that you show the trestle as a dashed line in your presentation. It's not the end solution you should use but you should show it.

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Sure, that that's not the hardest thing to do. Yes sir, go right ahead.

**C: Name Not Given:** Thank you. This is a combination of question and comment on the Malvern Street transitway. I really appreciate that. I'm aware that in previous meetings there was support for a transit line there, which would widen Malvern Street for buses so there'd be more direct routes from say Longwood up to Harvard square. So, that part is good, but in North Brookline, there is huge concern that if that road is Malvern Street, and the entire length is widened enough for buses that there may in the future be public pressure to also widen it for private cars and trucks.

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** I attended that meeting.

**Q: No Name Given:** And you showed us how a huge percentage of them would be coming down into North Brookline. So, it's fantastic that you're calling it just a transit way and the best way to ensure it stays that way and any of the buses going through is putting a barrier there. Number one, is it possible to build such a thing? Number two, if it's not possible to build a physical barrier are there bomb-proof legal, prohibitions, restrictions that in the future we can prevent the possibility of private cars and trucks dumping North/South there?

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Chris says he's got you. So, I'm going to let him answer.



- A: Chris Calnan:** So, some great questions there. I first want to start off with we're not widening Malvern street. Malvern Street is pretty narrow today and that's one of the challenges we have with if we ran buses two way all the way down, and into Packard's Corner. That would be a very narrow stretch there. We're not taking buildings. Hopefully, that kind of puts a little bit at ease as far as what can happen there. But we're not winding Melbourne. There are some, I would say, improvements that's planned right at Packard's Corner to help with the buses that make a right turn head North. But from that point on the street width is what it is. There's parking there. Some of the parking may need to come out to help with the bus maneuvers, but we're not looking to widen Malvern Street.
- Q: Name Not Given:** O.K. that is helpful because I had thought I should walk up there and look at the width. I had gotten the impression that right now, because there's a building very close to Malvern that it's only wide enough at the Northern edges of it for a very narrow pedestrian path. This path would not be wide enough for cars and so, are you saying that right now it's in fact wide enough for 1-way bus lane?
- A: Chris Calnan:** yes.
- Q: No Name Given:** Okay. So, you're saying that it really wouldn't need a physical barrier at the North, the West station itself, preventing private cars and trucks?
- C: Chris Calnan:** So, I think the logistics as far as how you limit a general-purpose traffic at the West Station site still need to be worked out. DOT and MBTA need to think about that. But it's been clear through DOT and the MBTA we are not looking to have general purpose traffic to go down that road. So, whether its gates, whether it's some type of easy pass type system that would allow that, all those things have to be worked out. So, and again, as I mentioned earlier, we're not looking to set up the routes or the on the service for this. We're kind of planning the infrastructure building and the infrastructure. Then as this project develops, somebody else, maybe the T, we'd be looking at bus routes and you know, the rush shuttles who would use this, that type of things. But it's not a planned activity with DOT that we're going to redirect buses to use on day one when the project opens. Anything to add on that Mike or no?
- C: Mike O'Dowd:** That's fine.
- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** So, I'm going to recognize one of our task force members. Although, I think he's here in a resident capacity tonight, Tom Nally.
- C: Tom Nally:** Good evening, I am Tom Nally, member of the task force, and also a Brookline resident and I am here in both capacities tonight.
- C: Nate Curtis-Cabral:** Excellent.
- C: Tom Nally:** I think a lot of people in Brookline had expressed to me among other concerns, to have better access to the edge of the river. One of the options that's been discussed and advocated by many individuals and groups is a pedestrian and bicycle connection at what's called Agganis Way next to the football field. This connection could go over the transportation facilities and ramp down to the edge of the river to provide that pedestrian and bicycle connection. That lines up pretty much across Commonwealth Avenue, with the streets in Brookline. I think it's with Pleasant Street in that location. I think we should provide good access for cyclists where there's been very little access for a long time, and not much direct access at all from Brookline itself. So, I think we recognize that's not part of the project, but it's been discussed and the I think that the perspective from Brookline and ABC is that it should be fully integrated into the job and not just a do not preclude.



We think it's important to understand that there is a desire for people in North Brookline and beyond to have that connection somehow provided, whether that's part of the project or provided after the project. But some commitment made to have that happen down the road. Thank you.

- C: Nate Curtis-Cabral:** Thank you sir. Yes sir. Then I'll come forward from where Tom is through the audience. I've got you, sir, go ahead.
- C: Jules Milner-Brage:** I want to underscore the significance of this area as a place that also historically was once Brookline actually and provided river access there before it was annexed become part of Boston. So, it really is a significant loss currently. Allston and Brookline are not connected in the zone and I want to thank the whole team for including the North South transit way complete street non-private car connector.
- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** That's its name from now on, getting that down.
- C: Jules Milner-Brage:** Whatever you want to call it. Non-private cars with transit and walking, biking. I'm really excited to see that. I don't view that as an alternative or replacement for connections to the riverbank path system between Agganis way and the Boston University bridge. You don't necessarily need more than one connection around the station, but Malvern Street is not a substitution, they're two great things that we should have both when it comes to walking and biking.
- C: Nate Curtis-Cabral:** So just to be clear, I understand what Tom said and I just want to make sure you understand this part of the project, because what you said sounds a little bit like you missed something. So, there's two walk-bike connections associated with this right now.
- C: Jules Milner-Brage:** Yes, but the connections outside Agganis Way represent a very circuitous route through the station, taking the long ramp, then diverting to the West going North and diverting far to the East again. Compared with the relative proximity near Agganis Way, that's a very long way around.
- C: Nate Curtis-Cabral:** Yes, and I just wanted to make sure you understood the number that was already there, that's all. I think we had next, you ma'am with the glasses, then yes ma'am with the glasses, and then yes ma'am with the glasses. That's not going to work. Go ahead, you first.
- C: Name Not Given:** I am very interested in open space, pedestrian, cycling access from Brookline to the Esplanade and frankly disappointed with that overpass. That one slide you showed with the overpass somehow or another I had in my mind a more park like structure that looked over the traffic. I think that from our point of view it is very important. That looks like a very unfriendly ramp to use to get to the river. I would like to not see it somewhere down the line. I want to see part of this project considerations for a very attractive, friendly pedestrian and bicycle ramp.
- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Chris showed you some of this earlier. The goal with the non-motorized accommodations is fully protected intersections for bicycles, separated facilities for bicycles, and pedestrians within the parcel. The one thing that we have to be careful of is what was then BRA now BPDA, went through a lot of thinking about how this space might develop a few years back. So, there is a balance to be struck between making a friendly bicycle and pedestrian connection which might be wider but limiting what you can do for future development, because the thought is that over time some of what you see now is empty space will fill in as development. We understand, we've certainly heard from members of the task force, the desire to not have the wind-swept plank effect, but we have to balance that against having something like the North



Washington Street Bridge which has the unintended consequence of making it such that the spaces to either side stay vacant forever and ever. But understand the comment is well taken.

- Q: No Name Given:** Can you talk about what is planned at Charlesgate for crossing over the traffic?
- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Before we do that, I just want to thank State Representative Vitolo for making an appearance.
- C: Rep. Vitolo:** I just took a Route 39 with the front bicycle rack coming from the theater to here, without getting wet, mostly. So, thanks to the MBTA for that that.
- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** I'll be on that bus tonight after I drop my car off at Morrison Autorite for service.
- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Ma'am, can you state your question again just about the North bank section?
- Q: No Name Given:** I understand that there are plans to connect Charlesgate to the river and to the Esplanade. From what I understand about that that new connection it's probably very different in terms of what you have here, but is it likely that this could be made into more parkland as opposed to just an overpass?
- A: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Yes, I'm familiar with that project and while it's not quite started yet, I'm actually on a project team that's dealing with that job as well. I think one of the differences is that where Charlesgate is, you have the Muddy River corridor, and then after Beacon street you have the ramps connecting the Bowker Overpass to Storrow Drive. It's nothing but ramps weaving around through that space. You don't have some of the challenges we have here like the Worcester Mainline and I-90 running under there. There are some thoughts about taking two bridges that take Storrow Drive through that space and merging them together so that it's one smooth path out to the river.
- That's not here [pointing at the Malvern Street connector], but you'd have something very much like that here [pointing to the end South Cambridge Street]. So, what's going to happen as Chris told you, this purple section, Soldiers Field Road, will drop and the folks who are riding their bicycles along the edge of South Cambridge street along a cycle track with trees and protected intersections will be able to come right out to Soldiers' Field Road into this greatly widened park area, with nothing over them. In a way that would be not dissimilar to what's planned for Charlesgate. Only at Charlesgate you'd still have a few ramps for the Bowker Overpass going over you. Down in this area there's some challenges that are not present at Bowker. So, there's I-90 that's present. Then there's the rail link, which is also present, which is not there. So, in this area, you're always going to have to hop over something. In this case, we're able to depress Soldiers' Field Road and kind of bring in something that would be more like what you may have seen proposed for Charlesgate.
- Go ahead ma'am. Thank you.
- C: No Name Given:** Can you go back to the slide where you're showing West Station and the route of the bus, please? Maybe with the four options? Well, actually both slides.
- A: Chris Calnan:** So, this one here, you would come in on Commonwealth Avenue to Packard's Corner, make a right, and come all the way up to West station. So, that's the inbound route and then the outbound route is there in white. You'd come out down Malvern, make a left on



Gardner, to Babcock, come out of signal, and then you're on Commonwealth Avenue to go back downtown.

- C: No Name Given:** You're going to want to take a right to get to the left, that street's awfully narrow.
- C: Eric Maki:** We would be making Gardener one way and removing parking on both sides to accommodate the buses because it's too narrow. We would then do the same thing on Babcock, in order to have two lanes coming out to the traffic light. So, we can make it operate little more efficiently. Right now, we just have one lane coming out and Malvern is so tight. There would be no parking on Malvern, no parking on Gardner so that the buses can maneuver and make the turns around the corners in order to make this route fit.
- C: No Name Given:** The traffic signal at that intersection of Babcock and Commonwealth Avenue would have to be coordinated well. If you're having MBTA buses going over the tracks to take a left to head down to Kenmore that is going to just cause a huge amount of congestion if that's not coordinated right. If the cars can't get around a turning bus, it's going to make for some real problems.
- C: Eric Maki:** That's why we're recommending removing the parking on Babcock so we can add another travel lane there. We could have a separate left turn lane with a through/right lane next to it. So, we can double the number of lanes coming out of there to make it work a little more efficiently because we want traffic to keep flowing on Commonwealth Avenue.
- C: No Name Given:** Well, yes, but at that intersection where T Anthony's is and if you want to go towards Packard's Corner you have to go over the tracks and then take a left heading towards where Star Market is, that's already crowded. So, I'm asking you what the coordination of the lights there is because, right now that intersection is very busy as it is.
- C: Eric Maki:** Absolutely.
- C: No Name Given:** I can't imagine what it's going to be like when you have buses going over the tracks heading over to take a left to head back down towards downtown. That's why I am asking you about the coordination of the lights.
- C: Eric Maki:** I know the city has a project plan for Packard's corner. We don't have a picture of it here, but it's going to be completely redone.
- C: No Name Given:** I'm not talking about Packard's Corner. I'm talking about a very specific intersection at Babcock and Commonwealth Avenue.
- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** You've modeled that Eric? I mean you'd make sure that that would work. What I think Eric is telling you is that you'd have a combination of changes to the lane configurations around there. With the loss of some parking and then changes to the traffic signal would make it so that everything would continue working. Is that correct?
- C: No Name Given:** The traffic would be backed up all the way into Brookline.
- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Well, the goal is to take steps at that signal to avoid that.
- C: Eric Maki:** Yeah. Sorry, I was confused. I was thinking coming southbound through the University, but you're talking coming northbound on Babcock, right? We have to balance these things. In this area there's more lanes on Commonwealth Avenue. Obviously, there's a lot of traffic on Commonwealth Avenue and the city works very hard to keep these lights coordinated



as much as they can, but that's part of what we would look at is the balancing of the traffic so that everything works as well. We wouldn't penalize the Brookline side in order to add some buses. The buses are going to be on around 10-minute headways, I think. So, it's not really that much more volume. So, six buses an hour, seven, buses an hour. We know that's something that we're going to study more, but that's the current plan.

**Q: No Name Given:** Is that there will be more traffic on Babcock? The other thing is I thought at one point we we're going to, after we look at the number 3, going down Buick Street. Why was that not looked into?

**A: Chris Calnan:** So, we did look at that. Number 3 acquires quite a bit of infrastructure. If you came out of West station then you'd have some kind of viaduct structure all the way from here, all the way down to Buick street to get at-grade, and then you'd run Buick street on the backside here. So, it an 1100-foot-long viaduct just to do that. Then you're really in the backside of Boston University's operations with the Agganis arena. There are complications there. I think we had some signal challenges at Buick street, coming up here as well.

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** And Buick is narrower. I believe you talked about that and then I think, Chris, you yank me by the necktie if I'm wrong, but for the point of the folks who are interested in some kind of additional pedestrian hop over in this space, once you begin introducing an 1100 foot bus viaduct it's an added layer of complication, that kind of takes it further out of the realm of "do not preclude" and more into the realm of "that's getting awful difficult."

So, I think Abby Swain had her hand up and I'll never forget to do this, but Abby gave me my first informational interview for getting into this field when I got out of college. I'm always happy to call her on her. So, go ahead.

**Q: Abby Swain:** the question is related to your introduction to West station about shuttles and taxis. Are you envisioning that in the North only? Or are you envisioning bus shuttles, private bus shuttles coming from the South as well?

**A: Chris Calnan:** We still need to work this out, but right now from a modeling perspective we are thinking about MBTA buses and private shuttles as well.

**Q: Abby Swain:** And then the definition of taxi is changing nowadays. Would taxis only be accessing West Station from the North?

**A: Chris Calnan:** No, we're not thinking taxis on the transitway. Buses and shuttles could ride on the transitway, but taxis would have to stay either to the North or South of the station.

**Q: Abby Swain:** The funny thing about shuttles is they can proliferate, and they're not always very efficiently operated in terms of maximizing ridership from geographical areas. So, I'm curious as to sort of what management tools for that are in our toolbox.

**A: Chris Calnan:** I think that I mentioned that the team right now is trying to plan for this infrastructure and not necessarily to program it, but as far as the restrictions in place or the specific details of that route or those elements to prevent taxis or whatever, that's really on the operation side. That it's really not our team. We're trying to plan for the infrastructure, build the infrastructure and then we hear what folks are saying, and that has to kind of work its way into an operational plan with a different team.

**Q: Abby Swain:** Okay, just curious.





**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** The one thing I'd say to that about the shuttles is there's a plan right now going on for consolidation of shuttle buses in the Seaport and plans going on for consolidation of shuttles around, you know, North station. So those will play out before we get these built. So, they'll probably be some lessons that we can learn there. HSH is actually doing the Seaport one in conjunction with a few other firms I don't know about. So, if I find out anything good, I'll be sure to fork it over to Chris and Mike so that can be looked at.

**Q: Guus Driesen:** Can you enlighten us about the Agannis Way bicycle crossing. How does that fit into the project?

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** So my direction, Gus, is that we are to establish an alignment that would allow for the future development, implementation, and installation of a pedestrian way at Agganis Way over the railroad as well as I-90 and Soldier's Field Road, dropping back down onto the open spaces created as part of this project. But it's included as part of the project at this point in time. But we are ensuring that an alignment and a grade that could accommodate that in the future will be taken into account.

**Q: Gus Driesen:** There's nothing precluded?

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

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Yes sir.

**Q: No Name Given:** A couple of questions about West station. There's been a lot of great update on this. It sounds like it's happening earlier in the project and the right kinds of decisions are being made about the transit way, but about the plans for the station itself, with a slightly later start time in the project with the EIS process now through the Federal Government, and the timeline here. My recollection is that the need for layover tracks on this side of town was reduced as time went forward and that as a result, I'm wondering what the purpose is of having the layover tracks there. Especially since we're not talking about an opening until, you know, I know it's all placeholder, but 2024, 2020, 2026, 2030, whatever it is, do we still need layover tracks there? Especially as we can get all the conversations about regional rail with more frequent all sort of all-day service that would also reduce the need to store lots of trains all day in the middle of the day.

And then similarly along those lines, I'm wondering about the need for the express tracks. If we're talking about the transfer, platform transfers to the Grand junction Railroad at West station, why would we have trains bypassing the ability to make that connection.

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** We should take you out to Worcester to ask that question.

**C: No Name Given:** They don't believe that they'll get faster train service with a regional rail service. I know they want their express tracks. They're very much about their, their travel time. But we can talk as a region about like things that we need to do in order to ensure fast, reliable transit and that conversation is happening. There was a poll on the news today that showed very high support for that type of public service. So assuming that we can build that service because we should, how do the express that tracks fit in there and then does the plan maybe have a trigger to pull them out? If we decide that we are going to build regional rail? And then we don't need to have your express tracks there.

**C: Michael O'Dowd:** Very good points on all of that. Going back to when we started our outreach on this job in 2014, MassDOT has always expressed that there is immediate need for additional layover yards just to support today's service. So, for any of you that are familiar with it, during



off-peak hours where it is a need for MassDOT to store or temporarily layup trains. The trains will stay in layover until such time as the peak hour demand is placed into effect again. Whether that be in the AM or the PM. In this instance and based on the public documents that were filed with the South Station expansion, there has been a need demonstrated by MassDOT and the MBTA railroad operations division that there is a warranted need for additional layover space.

We had looked at several different locations and applied a number of different screening criteria to them, and this is the best location relative to the overall commuter rail network. There are other locations that were looked at, Widdett Circle, and Readville. Out of those three, operationally, Allston is the best spot. From where we started to where we are today the proposed layover's capacity to store trains has been reduced drastically, but it's based on supporting the service plan that's currently being operated and what's anticipated for the near future. You bring up a great point. There are a number of different rail studies and rail visions that are being undertaken right now. Many of those we don't have, those are planning studies so we don't know whether or not they will be ultimately implemented.

**C: No Name Given:** To clarify, given that we have these studies in process that could dramatically change commuter rail service.

**C: Michael O'Dowd:** I don't disagree with that.

**Q: No Name Given:** The question for the planning process is can there be conditional plans ready such that you've got something to construct in the event that we do have electrified service? Service that will better acceleration and doesn't need to skip as many stops or whatever the, the variation may be?

**A: Michael O'Dowd:** I think you're bringing up a great point there as well is that, and this is something that many members of the task force have communicated to us as well, as have many of those that are in the MetroWest and Central Massachusetts, is their concern that we may be prohibiting our opportunity to be able to expand and make changes as need be as years go on at West Station and elsewhere in the commuter rail system. Obviously, transportation in Massachusetts and the city and in the region has changed over time and we expect changes in the future. What we're proposing to do will not prevent our ability to be able to adapt and react, with whatever changes may come.

One element, for instance, is how we're intending to include the Grand Junction Line in West Station. Though we're not proposing to provide services to Cambridge on that line at West Station through this project, we're certainly making provisions now so that we could accommodate the future passenger rail service across Grand Junction to service Kendall square and ultimately North Station. We need to ensure that what we're doing now addresses today's needs as well as the plans for the future.

**C: No Name Given:** And I'll stop because I know that other people that have questions, but just be clear, I'm not asking just about the future, but given as a 10-year construction project, that's still a few more years of planning.

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

**C: No Name Given:** So, it's not just taking steps so as not to preclude the future, but the ability to shift the project while it's in motion.



- C: Mike O'Dowd:** It's difficult to tell what happens tomorrow from where we stand today, but we are basing our plans on the current service plan that's being conducted and operated by the T; that's how we're advancing the project.
- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Representative you had your hand up.
- C: Representative Vitolo:** Sure. Thank you for having meetings in Brookline. Obviously, meetings elsewhere aren't that far away, but it's meaningful to me at least to make sure that you're here, which is a really important signal to our community that you are paying attention to our needs. So, thank you for that and I apologize for being a little late. I have two comments, the first is, Kevin Costner taught us about 25 years ago, that "if you build it, they will come." In this particular case, if you don't build it, they may come anyway, what I'm specifically talking about is South of West station, if you don't build kiss and ride, if you don't build taxi and ride share queues, do you think people are just not going to use the area for that? Of course, they will and if we don't plan for it, I'm concerned we're going to gum things up, right? So, I just want to make sure that we're being thoughtful about whether it's Wadsworth or Ashford streets. I fully expect people will figure out how to get off the platform, go a block South and get on some kind of vehicle.
- And I just want to make sure that even if we're not building some substantial infrastructure for that, that we acknowledge that it's going to happen anyway, and that we at least have the ability to be flexible around it and whether it's changing parking or something else. I'm not asking for a full solution. I just don't want us to think that if we don't do it, then it just won't happen there.
- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** No, we're well aware of that and Chris is nodding to me to indicate that we are in fact looking into that.
- C: Representative Vitolo:** And the other part of it is in some cases if you don't build it, they can't come. Here, I'm talking about the access to the Charles from something closer to Agganis arena. So, I've said it before, I'll say it again. One more piece of feedback to, to, to run up the flagpole: we want it now. The idea of building everything else, waiting around five or ten years, making it my job every budget cycle to advocate for the extra money that we should have had in this project in the first place and then causing delays extra because we're building something as an add-on five or ten years late, it doesn't make any sense. We should get it done as one piece.
- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** So, I'm going to go Anne, she had her hand up. Then you ma'am and then back Tom and then Ari and then anybody else who hasn't had a first bite at the apple. Ari Ofsevit is also a task force. Yes, ma'am go ahead.
- Q: Anne Lusk:** Climate change, it hasn't been mentioned tonight. I know it's on everybody's mind. This should be responsive to climate change and it is so car centric. It does have trains in there. I know you're adding in a bicycle provision, but all of us know that the people on the interstate are traveling a long distance, fast. The people on Storrow Drive are in cars traveling a fairly long distance, fast. The people on the trains are on the trains traveling a long distance, fast. If you're walking or biking, you need a really finely grained system because you can't walk or bike that far for that long. We can't afford to think of the Charles River paths as just about recreating anymore; it has to be thought of as a transportation route. Riders need to be able to get on and off at multiple access points. Right now is when you should be planning a climate change design for this and showing it to the public, that this is the response that's coming from MassDOT, because all of us know that your funding is coming from the government and they've said you've got to be much more multimodal than you have been in the past.



So, to look good, we had sent you Adrian Coates designs for the Hovenring in the Netherlands. It's a beautiful cable stay bridge that is iconic, that will look beautiful from the Charles river that ABC, has already proven could work and we've also asked you multiple times to put a cantilever off of the Grand Junction so we can get the pedestrians and the bicycles from the Boston University side over to the Cambridge side and that that entire bike path over there. How would we better tell you to respond to climate change? To make you look good and say, we've heard all the citizens, we've now heard the citizens about the West station. Now we've responded to the citizens and we're putting in much more finely grain bike and pedestrian provisions in the plans right now and not saying there's no climate change. You're not saying we don't sponsor biking and walking. We don't sponsor BRT, we don't sponsor trees. We're going to have all the cars parked all over the place and we're going to have everybody driving. You're, you're better than that. I know all of you.

- C: Mike O'Dowd:** I know we've transformed over the last 20 years and it's due in part to your advocacy and many like you that we've made a significant headway on how we are addressing non-motorized services on this project alone. Not to mention everything else that the DOT has undertaken over the last several decades. If you look at this project, in terms of where we are today versus when we first stepped out in front of public on this in 2014, in terms of non-motorized users and transit riders, we have made significant steps forward. In terms of introducing that new pedestrian connection you're mentioned right now, I've seen some, I unfortunately couldn't make the meeting you're referencing, but I am aware of it and many of the ideas that were proposed.

As I mentioned, what we are ensuring is that we are not precluding the ability to construct some sort of crossing adjacent to the Charles at Agganis Way so that we can accommodate those users between Commonwealth Avenue and the riverbank.

- C: Anne Lusk:** And the Grand junction.

- C: Mike O'Dowd:** And the Grand Junction. you bring up a great point there as well. What we are constructing right now would be able to accommodate a system of paths to accommodate a future crossing.

- C: Anne Lusk:** But, look good now.

- C: Mike O'Dowd:** I mean those are all things that we're keeping in mind. I understand that there's a lot of demands.

- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Yes, ma'am go ahead.

- C: No Name Given:** Could you put the slide back up that shows this?

- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Yes.

- C: No Name Given:** Okay. So, I just want to reiterate what others have said about needing a crossing at the Agganis Way. I'm a town meeting member for residents who live directly below Commonwealth Avenue between Babcock, Pleasant, and Saint Paul Streets, and we are extremely frustrated with the lack of access to the river and we feel walled off. So please don't forget that we want to get to the river with the bicycle or walking. I think that the Babcock street access is adequate for getting to West station, but it is wholly inadequate for getting to the river. I'm seeing that you have a fine, two-way bicycle facility, but it's on the North side of the street. So that's not going to help people coming from the South and you've got to go through all those



intersections. I want to reiterate what others have said about keeping out single occupancy vehicles especially. Private vehicles can never, ever be allowed to come North South on Malvern.

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** So, Eric Maki has shown, not in this room, but in other rooms, what I call the heart attack map. You know, there's nobody on this team who wants to do that. That is not what that ramp is for. Mike has taken that back to leadership multiple times and nobody wants to turn that into the Haul Road in South Boston. It's just for taxis and buses, and trucks sometimes. and now cars, too. We hear the concern.

**C: No Name Given:** We see all the bicycle and bus lanes in Cambridge.

Just one other little idea and I'm so glad we're talking about the regional rail and I think we're going to hear from our friends in the back right after me, hopefully, but, think about that as a mitigation to the construction. I mean we just heard in the beginning about needing to put a platform out into the river to accommodate all the traffic. Why not try to get at the public transit up to snuff enough to take care of the congestion that just going to result from the 10-year construction project and get people thinking about changing modes already. I'm assuming this is the same number of lanes on I-90 as there exists now?

**A: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** No, there will be no additional lanes on I-90. It's the exact same number. To your point, one of the things that I've liked about this project for a long time is the things that are being added are for bicyclists and pedestrians, new connections, new facilities. The things that are being added are for people who want to recreate along the river, green space that is not available today with dual separated bike and pedestrian facilities out there. The things that are being added are new transit connections. The things that are effectively being made safer but staying the same, that's the auto stuff. So, it's not like we're saying another lane on the turnpike would be swell. Or more lanes on Soldier's Field Road would be swell. That capacity is going to get safer. It's going to get better organized, but it's not going to get grossly bigger. It's not like we're saying: "hey, let's double the width of I-90."

**Q: No Name Given:** Well, I used to work on doing the modeling with CTPS and I would say model the regional transit with this and see if you can make the roads small. I mean, has that ever been done?

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** So, the demands being placed on transportation have grown significantly over the last 10, 15, 20 and 30 years. Having been around the agency for a number of those years and having worked with the veterans at CTPS, those volumes consistently trend to grow, significantly more on the transit side. We recognize that, which is why DOT, as you see on a regular basis, we're striving to make more and more improvements, meet the demands placed service and minimize the headways between services. We're not increasing capacity for the motorists on I-90 or on Soldier's Field Road, but what we are proposing to do is to make them safer. So, there's significant improvements being made for transit and hopefully by what we are doing overall, both in this project and throughout the region is to encourage more use of the transit.

**C: No Name Given:** That's my point. The better you make it the more people shift. That's just the way it is.

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** Agreed. I think that's what a lot of people are anticipating with a number of these various planning studies that are underway. At West Station, in Worcester, in MetroWest everyone wants to see how we can continue to optimize service along this route without imposing any further delays for those of us that are coming from, Worcester, Framingham, Ashland,



Natick. It's a difficult balance and you're constantly trying, striving to balance where is one mode transportation going to be further impeded versus how another one is going to be expanded. It's very difficult having worked with CTPS and these models. You recognize that and since the old days, we've introduced pedestrians, bicyclists into the model as well. So, trying to take into account all the various users and where are those transportation demands going to be and how best to accommodate them. It's very difficult to try and make all of that happen in this area, but I think we're at a point right now where we're confident that we have arrived at a point where the general outline of the project is supported by the community, but there are more improvements to be made. That's why we keep coming out to the public to see if there are any other ideas or other opportunities to improve this over and above what we're showing me now.

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** All right, Ari, go ahead.

**C: Ari Ofsevit:** All right. Yeah, thanks for having these meetings. I know I come to way too many of them and ask them a lot of the same questions. So, I guess the first question regarding the express tracks, I've asked this question before, I'll get it on the record here, too. We've been told that it will take the train extra time to go through the station even if they don't stop, and you have the actual amount of time that that would take.

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** We're proposing to present that in the October Task Force meeting.

**C: Ari Ofsevit:** Express trains can go through the station without stopping. We have that in many of the commuter rail stations. So, that's obviously something that's been happening. The calculation will probably show that it's a couple of extra seconds, no more than 30. We don't know. Anyway, that's sort of a piece one.

Piece two is there's sort of an issue with the Agganis footbridge as the tail wagging dog here. So, what keeps being shown in the renderings is that the railroad tracks are about 15 feet below Agganis Way. If you stand at the end of Agganis Way, you're able to look over the top of the train.

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** It depends on where you are, but I'd say that at the end of Agganis Way you're less than 15 feet above the tracks.

**Q: Ari Ofsevit:** It's being proposed that those tracks are raised 16 feet, is that correct?

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** I don't know what the exact measurements are of those.

**C: Jim Keller:** That's at the narrowest point, Ari, the cross section that we're showing. The team has been working very hard to get that much lower. So, what's happening with that crossing now is it's not driven by the rail height. The Soldiers' Field Road Viaduct is what's driving the height of a pedestrian crossing from Agganis Way. If you're thinking of what you saw back in February, the tracks are lower than that now by a good bit.

**C: Ari Ofsevit:** So, the renderings that we see outside that's...

**C: Jim Keller:** That rendering is further to the East than Agganis Way.

**Q: Ari Ofsevit:** So, is that going to induce some kind of roller coaster effect to the track or difficulties for the interlocking?

**Q: Jim Keller:** For the main line you're saying?

**A: Ari Ofsevit:** Yes.





- A: Jim Keller:** Well that was the concern with the original profile that was presented back in February that had it higher. I'm not the rail designer so take this with a grain of salt, but there's a comfort level that we are able to lower it because we wouldn't be proposing it or showing it this way if we weren't comfortable we could lower it and avoid that undulation. Based on what we've heard from all of you, we didn't want a crossing from Agannis Way to be driven higher by the rail if we didn't have to do it.
- C: Ari Ofsevit:** I've been told that every two hours is optimal for Worcester service even though every hour is optimal for Lowell. Even though there are twice as many riders on the two-hour Worcester train as compared to the one-hour Worcester train. Be that as it may, you are doing what you've been told to do by the MassDOT rail people who I vehemently disagree with but who are not here to defend themselves.

So what I'm trying to say, the trains that we're proposing to store here during the middle of the day have crews that drive them up here and then the crew has to sit somewhere and do something and play cards or split a shift and then will bring it back to the evening. If we just took them and ran service to Worcester every hour during the day, which would be really nice for everyone in Newton and Wellesley and Natick and Framingham and Ashland and Southborough, and Westborough and Grafton and probably Northborough and all the other, Marlborough, and all the other cities and towns in central Massachusetts go out into Worcester and beyond where that service will help them having a train every hour to Worcester would be very helpful for Worcester.

If we did that, we would not need as much layover, and we could also look in the Providence line where we have a train every two hours to Providence, the second largest conurbation in the region. If we put a train to Providence every, every hour, maybe Rhode Island will be willing to kick in some money for that, but because there's so little vision coming from MassDOT we have to come back and say, "oh well Brookline, we're not really going to be able to put in the optimal footbridge. We're going to have to have all these changes in grade it's going to make the project overall more expensive so that we can have this layover so that we can run less service to Worcester."

So, the tail wagging the dog is that if we just said we want to run more service, we want to provide more services to citizens of the Commonwealth, which I think is a goal, we just saw the poll that came out today that said 80% of people support more rail service in the Commonwealth. I mean you can't get 80% of people the sky's blue. So, if we can get to the point where we're saying we have all these trains in the middle of the day, and right now 75 percent of the trains go to sleep, let's do something with them. We can maybe get to a point where we say that we don't need this layover.

I think we need push back and I think we need to folks like a Representative Vitolo and folks from across the Commonwealth push back and say, let's go to MassDOT and say we want more rail service, 80% of the Commonwealth agrees and if we want get more rail service we don't have to build this layover here. Then we can have the more simple projects and probably maybe we can get the tracks down even a couple more feet, have a better transition and get a better bridge over again Agannis way.

So, I've been yelling about this for years and I understand that your hands are kind of tied by what you're hearing from MassDOT rail, but I just want to make it really clear that we should be talking about how we can we can build the best project, not how we can work it in around a layover yard we don't need.



**Q: No Name Given:** Can we have them actually come present here?

**A: Mike O'Dowd:** I am asking them to be present at our October task force meeting which is at the Jackson-Mann community center. You are all welcome to come.

**Q: No Name Given:** Could they also be asked to present at Brookline?

**A: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** If Todd will ask us back, assuming we've been good.

**C: Todd Kirrane:** We can have you back when you have new information.

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** O.K. So, the audience is starting to leak badly. Tom Nally, and you sir in the blue shirt and then unless anybody has anything burning, we'll call it. Go ahead sir.

**C: Tom Nally:** A couple of quick additional comments on express track. We understand that people from MetroWest and Worcester and points in between are concerned about their trip time and we recognize that there's a rail speed issue. How fast you need to get the trains through here relates to the geometry of the tracks and we need to look further at what that geometry might be. We don't believe the express tracks are necessary. We think that any delays at West Station can be mitigated by building high level platforms at the stations in the Newtons. We believe we can reduce the dwell time in those stations and change the geometry at West Station so that the time penalty for the trains going through West Station practically disappears.

If all that can happen, you can eliminate the express train tracks to restore the original concept that Harvard suggested of having a buffer, which is in the footprint of the existing tracks and the express track that are proposed that makes it great, major benefit for the residents who live along that edge to provide continues connections for pedestrians and bicycles. All the way from the foot bridge on the West side all the way to the footbridge at Agganis way and as it's a major benefit, if indeed those express tracks are not necessary and we can further study if needed to see whether or not they are necessary. We'll find out more soon.

**C: No Name Given:** One thing that really struck me when I looked at this is the approach of Soldiers Field Road into River Street. It looks like it substantially changed from what was presented as part of the DEIR.

**A: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Yes, it has.

**C: No Name Given:** So it used to be that there was no right turn and traffic to Cambridge took a diversion onto the East ride connector to set folks up to go straight onto River street which had a real substantial benefit of widening the park land in the spot where it's absolutely brutally with the narrowness on the bicycle path. Having driven that periodically, I can say it's also really terrible for driving right now because you really can't get many folks in a car to make a right hand turn on River Street because of the congestion in the intersection.

So, it seems to me like we've gone backwards in this area. You've reduced the capacity of the intersection and provided less of an improvement for the cyclists and pedestrians.

**A: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** So, I can provide some responses on that and the team can back me up if I'm completely wrong. We'll start with yes; the project team is very aware of the narrowness. I had my first ever bicycle accident there when I was four. I tangled into my father's pedals and over we both went. So, I'm aware of the space. Originally the thought in the DEIR was to get rid of it completely: no through movement there, no left turn movement there, no right turn movement to Cambridge and then all that space would be turned over to green space and



pathways for the cyclists and pedestrians. However, the response we got on that from the City of Cambridge and residents of Cambridgeport was very negative.

- C: Ari Ofsevit:** A few people in the City of Cambridge that are not representative of the overall population. As someone from Cambridge I'll point that out.
- A: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Respectfully, the comments we got from the City staff, the City Council, and the comments received on the DEIR from Cambridge were in favor of the compromise you see here in front of you tonight.
- C: Ari Ofsevit:** Can I quickly translate this as a member of the Cambridge community? A few people in Cambridge complained to the City Council. I don't think the City Council understood what was going on. I think every one of the project team agreed they had come up with a nice park facility, but a few people complained "oh, it's going to take me slightly longer to get home."

We're losing a park to put a road in. This really doesn't look good. If you know a Cambridge City Councilor, or have friends in Cambridge, explain this to them. If you need it, find me at [Ari.Ofsevit7@gmail.com](mailto:Ari.Ofsevit7@gmail.com). Email the city council. Ask them to have a council meeting where we can actually have this discussion because it's buried under a lot of other things and I think the City of Cambridge is on the same page as Brookline. I think a few people managed to make themselves look like they spoke for more people than they did. I hope this is something that can come back into the project because if we can't, we'll wind up putting in an unnecessary road when we could have a park by the river.

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Thank you for having us, Todd.

**A: Todd Kirrane:** Thank you for coming.

## Next Steps

The next meeting of the I-90 Allston Intermodal project will be a session of the project's task force on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Unlike most meetings of the task force, this meeting will take place at the Jackson-Mann Community Center rather than the Fiorentino Community Center.



# Attendance

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Lee	Biernbaum	
Nate	Cabral-Curtis	Howard Stein Hudson
Chris	Calnan	Tetra Tech
Guus	Dreisen	I-90 Allston Task Force
Ethan	Finlan	Transitmatters
D.M.	Goldstein	
Karl	Haglund	DCR
John	Harris	
Dave	Jack	
Ambar	Johnson	
Doug	Johnson	Howard Stein Hudson
Jim	Keller	Tetra Tech
Adelaide	Ketchum	
Cindy	Lee	
Anne	Lusk	
Erik	Maki	Tetra Tech
Joe	Marangano	
Hugh	Mattison	
Arlee	Mattison	
Judy	McCullag	
Christian	McNeil	
Jacob	Meunier	
Jacob	Meunier	
Jules	Miles-Brage	
Thomas	Nally	I-90 Allston Task Force
Mike	O'Dowd	MassDOT
Linda	Pehall	
Steve	Pell	
Mary	Pell	



First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Jennifer	Pieszak	
Abby	Swaine	
David	Trevevett	
Casey	Uy	