

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

In cooperation with FRA, Amtrak, and the MBTA, MassDOT is pursuing the expansion of South Station by circulating this EA, as well as other project development activities. The Preferred Build Alternative, analyzed in this EA, would meet the established Purpose and Need of the project by acquiring and demolishing the USPS facility in order to expand South Station Terminal capacity, reopen Dorchester Avenue, and extend the Harborwalk. The Build Alternative would provide related layover capacity in order to meet current and future high-speed, intercity, and commuter rail service needs. The Build Alternative would enable growth in passenger rail transportation within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and along the NEC. The Build Alternative will not preclude the improvements proposed by the NEC FUTURE program; rather, the SSX project includes investments that can later be leveraged by MassDOT and FRA to implement the additional improvements proposed by the NEC FUTURE program to accommodate service levels beyond 2035. Expanding the terminal would improve the passenger experience at South Station, while updating track and signal infrastructure and related layover capacity would improve service reliability and will help prepare the station to accommodate future growth defined through FRA's NEC FUTURE program.

There are four primary components of the SSX Build Alternative (presented in order of proposed construction sequence):

- Acquire and demolish the USPS facility;
- Reopen Dorchester Avenue and extend the Harborwalk;
- Expand the South Station Rail Terminal; and
- Construct rail layover facilities.

Together, these four main components would provide many benefits related to transportation services, the environment, and public amenities, including:

- **Rail Service**
 - Improves reliability and service
 - Increases operational efficiency
 - Supports increased ridership
 - Addresses midday layover deficiencies
 - Prepares the station to accommodate future growth associated with FRA's NEC FUTURE program
- **Passenger Experience**
 - Implements ADA upgrades
 - Provides expanded South Station Terminal facilities
 - Improved passenger amenities throughout

- **Pedestrian Connections**
 - Extends the Harborwalk
 - Improves pedestrian connections through and around South Station
- **Bicycle Accommodations**
 - Provides new cycle track on Dorchester Avenue
 - Provides additional bicycle storage at South Station
- **Vehicular Circulation**
 - Reopens Dorchester Avenue for public use
 - Improves overall roadway and intersection operations
 - Provides new curbside facilities for pick up and drop off at the station
- **Multimodal Connections**
 - Improves connectivity between the rail station and bus terminal
- **Environment**
 - Reduces greenhouse gas emissions
 - Improves area resiliency to future sea level rise
 - Improves stormwater management
 - Increases public open space
 - Restores public waterfront access via the Harborwalk

The Build Alternative, as currently designed, would meet MassDOT’s performance objectives for passenger rail operations in the 2035 horizon year, including:

- Meeting 95% OTP goals and minimizing delays;
- Providing sufficient track and platform capacity;
- Accommodating passenger service needs;
- Providing adequate train layover capacity; and
- Preparing the station for expansion beyond 2035.

In accordance with NEPA, an assessment of impacts of the Build Alternative and any adverse effects, including indirect and cumulative effects, was performed in consultation with appropriate federal, state, and local authorities that have jurisdiction by law or special expertise regarding particular resource areas and impacts. Primary impacts related to the construction of the Build Alternative are addressed through mitigation measures (as summarized in Table 6-1). Environmental enhancement measures (for example, the implementation of sustainable design measures, water efficiency measures, pedestrian and bicycle amenities, etc.) are proposed to further minimize impacts as discussed throughout the EA.

Table 6-1 — Environmental Resources, Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Environmental Resource	Potential Impacts of the Build Alternative	Proposed Mitigation
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant air quality impacts. • Reduces carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from locomotives in the immediate vicinity of South Station. • Increases CO₂ emissions from other mobile sources locally. • Beneficial regional impact on CO₂ emissions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No mitigation required.
Noise and Vibration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generates moderate noise impacts at 245 Summer Street. • Generates non-significant impacts to sensitive noise receptors across the Fort Point Channel. • Generates moderate noise impacts along Wolcott Street and Wingate Road, and Riley Road and Sierra Road in the vicinity of Readville – Yard 2. • No vibration impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An approximately 1,450-foot long, 18-foot high noise barrier will be constructed at the South Station site. • The existing berm/noise barrier at Readville – Yard 2 will be extended to up to 800 feet long and 18-foot high.
Water Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant impacts to water resources. • Reduces net impervious cover at South Station and Widett Circle. Increases net impervious cover at Readville – Yard 2. • Provides ground water recharge at South Station. • Improves water quality. • Reduces water use and wastewater generation at Widett Circle. Increases water use and wastewater generation at South Station and Readville – Yard 2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) will mitigate changes in stormwater peak flow rates, runoff volumes, groundwater recharge volumes, and water quality, and limit construction impacts. • Site-specific Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans and Operation and Maintenance (O&M) plans will be prepared. Water efficiency measures will be incorporated. • An Infiltration/Inflow (I/I) plan will be developed to mitigate for increased wastewater flows at the South Station site.
Wetlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct wetland impacts at South Station and Widett Circle. • Non-significant resource impacts at South Station include land subject to coastal storm flowage, coastal bank, and buffer zone to coastal bank. • Non-significant resource impacts at Readville – Yard 2 include riverfront area, isolated vegetated wetlands, and buffer zone to Neponset River bank. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No mitigation required for Widett Circle. • Work at South Station and Readville – Yard 2 will comply with appropriate performance standards and any conditions required by the Boston Conservation Commission. • Mitigation (if required) for disturbed wetland impacts at Readville – Yard 2 to be determined through consultation with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).
Floodplains and Sea Level Rise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not impact flood storage capacity. • Helps mitigate current and future flooding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raises a portion of the seawall to help mitigate flooding from projected two feet of sea level rise by the year 2050. • Additional site-specific elements will be implemented to mitigate flooding

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		due to rising seas, storm surge, and hurricane impacts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drainage systems will be sized for future climate conditions where necessary.
Waterways and Coastal Zone Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replaces a nonwater-dependent use with publically accessible development, transportation infrastructure, and open space. • A Chapter 91 license for a new nonwater-dependent infrastructure project and a Public Benefits Determination will be obtained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No mitigation required.
Energy and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces stationary source GHG emissions in compliance with the Massachusetts Stretch Energy Code. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To further minimize impacts, use of renewable energy, such as solar photovoltaic energy, solar hot water, district energy steam, and electric plug-ins for trains are under consideration.
Aesthetics and Design Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves the viewshed along Dorchester Avenue and from across the Fort Point Channel through the removal of the USPS facility and introduction of landscaping, pedestrian and cycling facilities, and the expanded headhouse. • Does not impact other views as the height of the proposed structures is lower than existing structures. • Includes a headhouse expansion with a prominent entrance along Dorchester Avenue that respects the primary historic entry at Dewey Square. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No mitigation required.
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases ridership. • Improves pedestrian circulation and enhances the pedestrian experience. • Increases pedestrian flow on Silver Line and Red Line platforms. • Improves or retains Level of Service (LOS) at most impacted intersections. • Relieves curbside congestion on Atlantic Avenue. • Improves bicycle infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian improvements will be implemented at eight signalized intersections.
Possible Barriers to Handicapped and Elderly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) regulations. • Provides adequate space and appropriate facilities to safely and conveniently manage the projected peak-hour pedestrian demand. • Complies with current egress capacity and travel distance requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No mitigation required.

Environmental Resource	Potential Impacts of the Build Alternative	Proposed Mitigation
Land Use and Zoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires acquisition of the USPS property, a parcel adjacent to 245 Summer Street, land and right-of-way at the Widett Circle site, and land adjacent to Readville – Yard 2.¹ Includes the reopening of Dorchester Avenue. Is consistent with local zoning and other local planning and development plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Footprints required to support site functions will be minimized. Property acquisitions and relocations will be conducted in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, 42 USC 4601; CFR 49 Part 24 and/or Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L.) 79A. Fair market values will be paid for property acquisitions at the Widett Circle and Readville – Yard 2 sites. Impacts to Department of Public Works operations near Widett Circle will be minimized.
Socioeconomic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides approximately 200 new permanent jobs at South Station. Supports the continued economic growth and expansion of the Downtown Financial District and adjoining South Boston Waterfront/Innovation District. Results in the relocation of approximately 1,000 USPS jobs. Displaces approximately 30 private businesses currently operating at the Widett Circle layover facility site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As discussed for Land Use and Zoning, required relocation assistance and compensation would be provided.
Environmental Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits environmental justice (EJ) populations that use the station by providing improved transportation facilities and additional areas of open space, including the new Harborwalk on Dorchester Avenue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No mitigation required.
Public Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves passenger, traffic, pedestrian, and bicycle safety. Minimizes surveillance problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following will be prepared and implemented: a Safety and Security Program Plan (SSPP), a Preliminary Hazard Analysis, a Threat and Vulnerability Assessment, a Preliminary Safety and Security Design Criteria Manual, and site specific Health and Safety Plans (HASPs). Phase II Environmental Site Assessments will be completed. Asbestos-Containing Materials (ACM) and hazardous materials will be identified prior to demolition.

¹ As described in Chapter 1 and Appendix B, the SSX project involves acquisition and demolition of the USPS GMF located on Dorchester Avenue adjacent to South Station, which would provide an approximately 14-acre site on which to expand South Station. Although demolition of the USPS facility after it is vacated is part of the project, the relocation of USPS operations is not part of the project. For the purposes of this indirect assessment, it is assumed that the USPS GMF could be relocated to a site in South Boston on the Reserved Channel in Boston’s Seaport District (Figure 1 of Appendix B) that the USPS had previously identified as potentially being appropriate to accommodate a relocated USPS GMF. The USPS would determine the future location(s) to which its operations would be relocated, and the relocation would be subject to its own environmental review as required by state and federal regulations as a separate project. The actual relocation of the USPS GMF would be subject to negotiations between the USPS and MassDOT/the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Environmental Resource	Potential Impacts of the Build Alternative	Proposed Mitigation
Parks and Recreational Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides significant benefits and recreational opportunities associated with reopening Dorchester Avenue, including a cycle track, Harborwalk extension, and increased access to the Rolling Bridge Park and the Fort Point Channel waterfront. • Has no adverse impacts on parks and recreation areas in the vicinity of the project sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No mitigation required.
Historic and Archaeological Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves views to and from the Fort Point Channel Historic District. • With mitigation, has Conditional No Adverse Effect on historic properties. • Contains no archaeologically sensitive sites. 	<p>The following mitigation will be required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The seawall will be reconstructed to meet Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. • Approximately 1,450-foot long, 18-foot high noise barrier will be constructed at the South Station site. • MHC will review 30% and 60% design plans.
Construction Period Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant construction impacts. • May temporarily impact rail service. • May temporarily disrupt traffic and increase congestion. • May cause temporary dust emissions, direct emissions, noise, and vibration from construction equipment, and indirect emissions from vehicles. • Impacts from potential exposure to contaminated soils, debris, or groundwater during construction. • Provides permanent employment within South Station and in system-wide rail-related employment, as well as temporary construction jobs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following will be prepared and implemented: a construction phasing schedule that balances duration and impact by optimizing overnight work windows, weekend work outages, and strategic track closures; a Construction Management Plan (CMP); a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP); a Dust and Emissions Control Plan; a Construction Noise Control Plan; appropriate soil management procedures; and Soil Erosion and Sediment Control measures. • MassDOT’s specifications for traffic management requirements and work hour provisions will be followed. • Vibration levels will be monitored during construction and any needed mitigation measures will be anticipated and facilitated. • Provisions in the Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC) Stormwater Permit and Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) 8(m) Permit will be followed. • Soil erosion and sediment controls for construction activity proximate to wetland resources will be implemented.

The Build Alternative was selected among several considered alternatives as it best meets the project's Purpose and Need, and goals and objectives. The Build Alternative would expand the South Station Terminal, adding seven new tracks and four new platforms, upgrading the station area at the existing South Station Transportation Center, and increasing capacity at two layover facilities, Widett Circle and expanded Readville – Yard 2. The Build Alternative includes the following:

- **Acquire and Demolish the USPS Facility:** Includes acquisition and demolition of the USPS GMF located on Dorchester Avenue adjacent to South Station, which would provide an approximately 14-acre site on which to expand South Station.
- **Reopen Dorchester Avenue and Extend the Harborwalk:** Restores approximately 0.5 miles of Dorchester Avenue (which is currently closed off for USPS postal operations only) for public use and for station access, reconnecting Summer Street to the South Boston area. Includes landscaping and improved pedestrian and cycling connections and facilities, including adjacent sidewalks and crosswalks, and construction of a 0.5-mile extension of the Harborwalk.
- **Expand the South Station Terminal:** Includes addition of seven new tracks and four platforms for a total of 20 tracks and 11 platforms; reconfiguration of several existing tracks and platforms; upgrades to existing rail infrastructure, including interlockings; addition of an expanded headhouse; and addition of a mid-platform elevated concourse.
- **Construct Rail Layover Facilities:** Provides layover space by constructing a new facility at Widett Circle and expanding the existing Readville – Yard 2 MBTA layover facility to meet layover facility program needs and operational requirements.² Support facilities would include a crew building, a support shed, and a power substation at each location.

² BPY in Allston, previously identified as a third layover facility alternative in the DEIR, is now subject to environmental review as part of the I-90 Allston project (EEA No. 15278). The I-90 project is further refining the concept design and environmental evaluation of BPY, which is occurring concurrently with the SSX project.

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