



Phase 1 Freetown Meeting Summary

Date: Thursday, October 25, 2018

Location: Freetown Elementary School, Auditorium
43 Bullock Road, East Freetown, MA

PRESENT

Elected and City Officials

Senator Michael J. Rodrigues

Representative Carole A. Fiola

Skylar J. Cowley, Office of Representative Paul A. Schmid

Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Jean Fox

Project Team

Ken Caputo, VHB

Rick Carey, VHB

Jeff Kellner, VHB

Sean Krause, VHB

Charlie Passanisi, VHB

Jason Ross, VHB

James Chabinec, HNTB

Mike Stoffel, HNTB

Kate Barrett, RVA

Samantha Souto, RVA

Public Attendees: see page 6

Open House Stations (available before and after the presentation)

- Phase 1 Overview
- Freetown Station
- Grade Crossings
- Noise Mitigation

- Mapping

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC MEETING PRESENTATION

Opening Remarks

Jean Fox, MassDOT South Coast Rail Project Manager, opened the meeting. Ms. Fox invited Representative Carole A. Fiola to the podium for opening remarks. Rep. Fiola stated that the South Coast Rail project was extremely beneficial for the surrounding communities and she was looking forward to the results. Kate Barrett, RVA, introduced the Project Team and reviewed the presentation agenda.

Agenda:

- What is Phase 1?
- Program Update
- Infrastructure Improvements
- Next Steps
- Open House – Specific issues

Ms. Fox announced that there are comment sheets available for participants at the sign in table, and that everyone should sign up for email updates on the project.

SCR Proposed Phasing and Why Build Phase 1 Now?

Ms. Fox explained that Phase 1 would allow commuter rail service to begin in the South Coast by 2022, but without a stop in Back Bay. Passengers would be able to have a single-seat ride from New Bedford/Fall River into Boston. Ms. Fox explained that during Phase 1, there will also be a new stop near the Freetown Stop and Shop that would serve residents of Freetown and North Fall River.

Extending the Stoughton commuter rail is the preferred alternative, but extending the Middleborough/Lakeville line in Phase 1 would allow for service to begin much sooner. Ms. Fox explained that there are environmental permitting issues with the proposed Stoughton extension and service on the Full Build Stoughton Electric alternative will not begin any earlier than 2030. The cost of the Stoughton Full Build has increased to \$3.2 billion while the design and construction timeline has increased. Implementation of Phase 1 allows the MBTA to utilize the rail infrastructure already in use on the Middleborough Line.

What Elements are Included in Phase 1?

Ms. Fox said Phase 1 would extend the existing Middleborough/Lakeville service. The trains used will be diesel-powered and extend service into New Bedford and Fall River. During Phase

1, 17.3 miles of rail will be reconstructed as part of the New Bedford Main line and 11.7 miles for the Fall River Secondary line. Ms. Fox said there will also be upgrades to the existing Middleborough Secondary track from Pilgrim Junction to Cotley Junction (7.1 miles of work). MassDOT will construct two new layover facilities and six new stations.

Ms. Fox then displayed a map of the proposed new stations and layover facilities. The six new stations MassDOT will construct are Whale’s Tooth Station, King’s Highway Station, Fall River Depot Station, Freetown Station, East Taunton Station and Pilgrim Junction Station. The two layover facilities will be called Wamsutta Layover and Weaver’s Cove Layover.

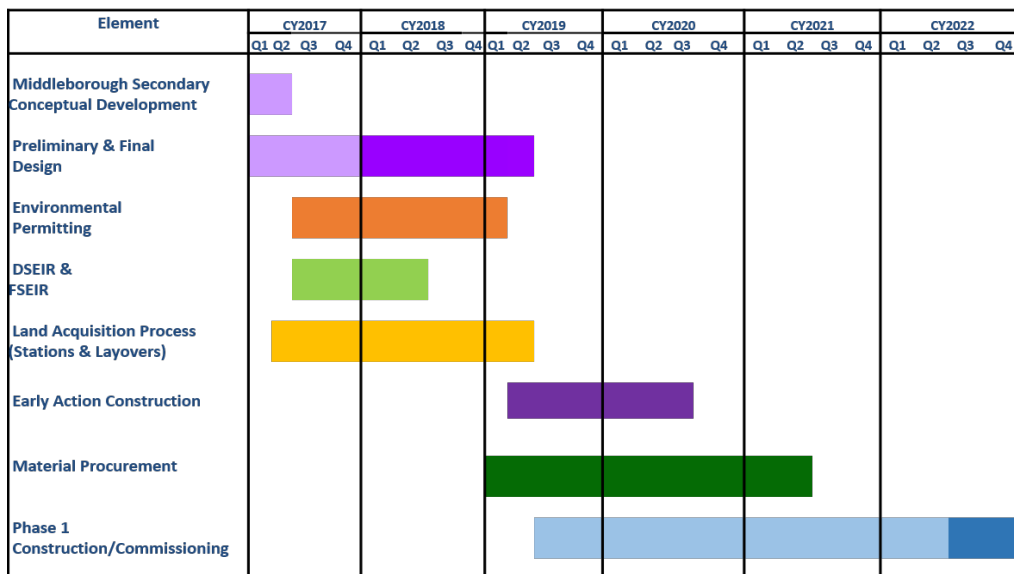
Benefits of Phase 1

Ms. Fox explained some of the benefits of Phase 1. Phase 1 gives MassDOT the ability to provide service to the South Coast in 2022, while working on the Stoughton Electric alternative at the same time. It will provide a foundation for Stoughton Electric Service and serves the region while Full Build complexities are addressed.

Also, during Phase 1, air quality, economic and smart growth benefits will occur much sooner as detailed in the comprehensive Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR).

Planned Phase 1 Schedule

Ms. Fox shared a graphic of the proposed Phase 1 Schedule with the start of service in late 2022. Work on Early Action Construction, Material Procurement, and Phase 1 will begin in 2019.



Ms. Fox explained that MassDOT is working closely with its federal partners and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection for permitting.

Permitting and Contract Packages

Ms. Fox shared two tables that show the status of the necessary permits and contracts for this project.

Proposed Weekday Service Under Phase 1

Ms. Fox discussed the proposed weekday schedule under Phase 1. Trips from Freetown Station will take approximately 70 minutes to South Station.

	INBOUND	OUTBOUND	TOTAL	PEAK PERIOD
New Bedford	7	7	14	3 Morning Peak Trains 3 Evening Peak Trains
Fall River (Freetown Station)	6	6	12	3 Morning Peak Trains 3 Evening Peak Trains
Taunton & Middleborough	13	13	26	6 Morning Peak Trains 6 Evening Peak Trains
TOTAL	13	13	26	6 Morning Peak Trains 6 Evening Peak Trains

Freetown Station

Ms. Fox said the Freetown Station is located on the Fall River Secondary line. The Freetown Station will be located off South Main Street. There will be 107 parking spaces, which will accommodate the projected ridership necessary for the Full Build.

Fall Brook Bridge and Grade Crossings

Ms. Fox then discussed the Fall Brook Bridge. The Fall Brook Bridge is part of the Early Action 4 Bridge Program, which also includes the Cotley River North Bridge, the Cotley River South Bridge, and the Cedar Swamp Bridge. Work on these bridges will begin in Spring 2019 using rapid construction techniques.

Ms. Fox then shared a list of all the reconstructed grade crossings and equipment grades.

Reconstructed Grade Crossings:

- Chace Road

- Braley Road
- East Chipaway Road
- Beechwood Road
- Richmond Rd - North
- Richmond Rd - South
- Forge Road – North
- Forge Road - South
- Brightman Lumber

Equipment Upgrades:

- Elm Street
- High Street
- Copicut Road

Richmond Road/Forge Road Grade Crossing

Ms. Fox explained the Richmond Road/Forge Road Grade Crossing in more depth. She explained that MassDOT is coordinating with the fire and police departments regarding this crossing. She also stated that the Project Team would be meeting with the Board of Selectmen and the impacted property owners. This crossing posed significant design challenges and required frequent coordination with the town and public safety officials to achieve the necessary safety requirements and to avoid extensive roadway realignment and property impacts. Some safety improvements for this crossing include signal gates, pavement markings, and signage.

Noise Mitigation

Ms. Fox then presented noise mitigation measures during construction of this project. Residential buildings close to the tracks (within 100 feet) will be eligible for soundproofing enhancements. Eligible homeowners will receive funding to replace windows and doors with options that will reduce interior noise levels. These homeowners will receive a letter describing the soundproofing program. They will be invited to respond if interested.

MassDOT will provide a list of typical noise reduction improvements, but not evaluate or provide specific recommendations. Homeowners will be responsible for all aspects of implementing the soundproofing enhancements, including obtaining quotes, selecting contractors, and obtaining permits. Ballast mats will be installed under the rails in certain areas to reduce vibration.

Next Steps and How to Stay Informed

Next steps include completing the state and federal permitting process and advertising early construction contracts. MassDOT will advance the final design and incorporate any additional permit requirements, while continuing to coordinate with communities.

Ms. Fox then displayed a slide with the project website and project email and opened the meeting to questions.

Question and Answer Session

A meeting attendee asked about the noisiest times of service (in reference to the train's horn). Ms. Fox said that the peak times would be in the late afternoon/evening and in the early morning, but not earlier than 6:00 AM. She noted that they would be following the schedule of the Lakeville line that is available online.

Another attendee asked where the new station in Fall River would be located. Ms. Fox responded that the station is at Davol Street and Pearce Street, near the new medical building. She noted that the team had to design around the medical building. South Coast Rail originally proposed using the entire site for the commuter rail station, but in the years since environmental review, the property owner sold the parcel, and the building was subsequently constructed. The current design has fewer parking spaces, but there is room for expansion if needed.

An attendee asked if Phase 1 would include Battleship Cove. Ms. Fox noted that it is not part of Phase 1 at this time.

The meeting was adjourned, and the open house reconvened for the remainder of the meeting.

Public Attendees:

Wendy Bethaney
Robert Fitzgerald
Sharon Fitzgerald
Emily Jerome
Manny Jerome
Joshua Levyer
Dana McLane
Moiria McLane
Lisa Menino
Jerry Nangan
Steven Tripp