



SOUTH STATION

EXPANSION

Planners estimate that 553 trains a day will move in and out of South Station by the year 2035, representing an overall increase of 20 percent above current levels. MassDOT must redesign the station to safely and efficiently handle that anticipated traffic.

Engineering a New Rail System at South Station

A key goal of expanding South Station is to improve its “rail capacity” – the ability of the station to efficiently and safely handle the movements of many trains in and out of the station – to provide for more and better service for Amtrak and MBTA passengers. Simply put, more capacity makes it possible for more trains to use the station more quickly and with fewer delays.

When the station first opened at the turn of the century, it included 28 tracks. As passenger rail travel decreased over the 20th century, about half of the original station was sold off or torn down. Most notably, 18 of the original tracks were demolished in the 1960s to make room for the

construction of a US Postal Service General Mail Facility, now located on Dorchester Avenue. By 1972, only eight of the original tracks were still in use. A major renovation of the station in the 1980s increased the total number of tracks to 11. Two more were added for the restoration of the MBTA Old Colony lines in 1992. The current layout is a complex system of 13 passenger tracks, not nearly enough for the volume of trains and passengers using the station every day.

Importantly, South Station is a *terminal* station – literally, the end of the line. This means that trains do not pass through but instead have to pull in and pull out

A 1904 photo of the original track configuration and train shed at South Station.



of the station. For every one train, two movements are needed – one entering and one leaving the station. This only increases the complexity of managing the station.

As a result of the many demands placed on it, South Station has become a transportation chokepoint and an obstacle to providing expanded rail service for the thousands of workers, residents, and visitors who rely on it.

To address this problem, the MassDOT South Station Expansion rail engineering team is working to ensure that the facility will meet future service demands with tracks, concourses, and waiting areas that are safe, comfortable, inviting, and appropriate complements to the historic architecture of Boston South Station.

In particular, elegant and seamless connectivity – between the existing South Station and its new facilities, between the station and its surrounding neighborhoods, and between the various levels of the station itself – is of utmost importance to MassDOT. To make sure that all aspects of the project are well integrated, the team includes specialists in the fields of civil engineering, track design, rail operations, pedestrian planning, architecture, and urban design, among many others. Their work is part of a complex design puzzle.

MassDOT rail engineers are exploring ways to build an anticipated seven new tracks and four new platforms at South Station, all east of the existing thirteen tracks and

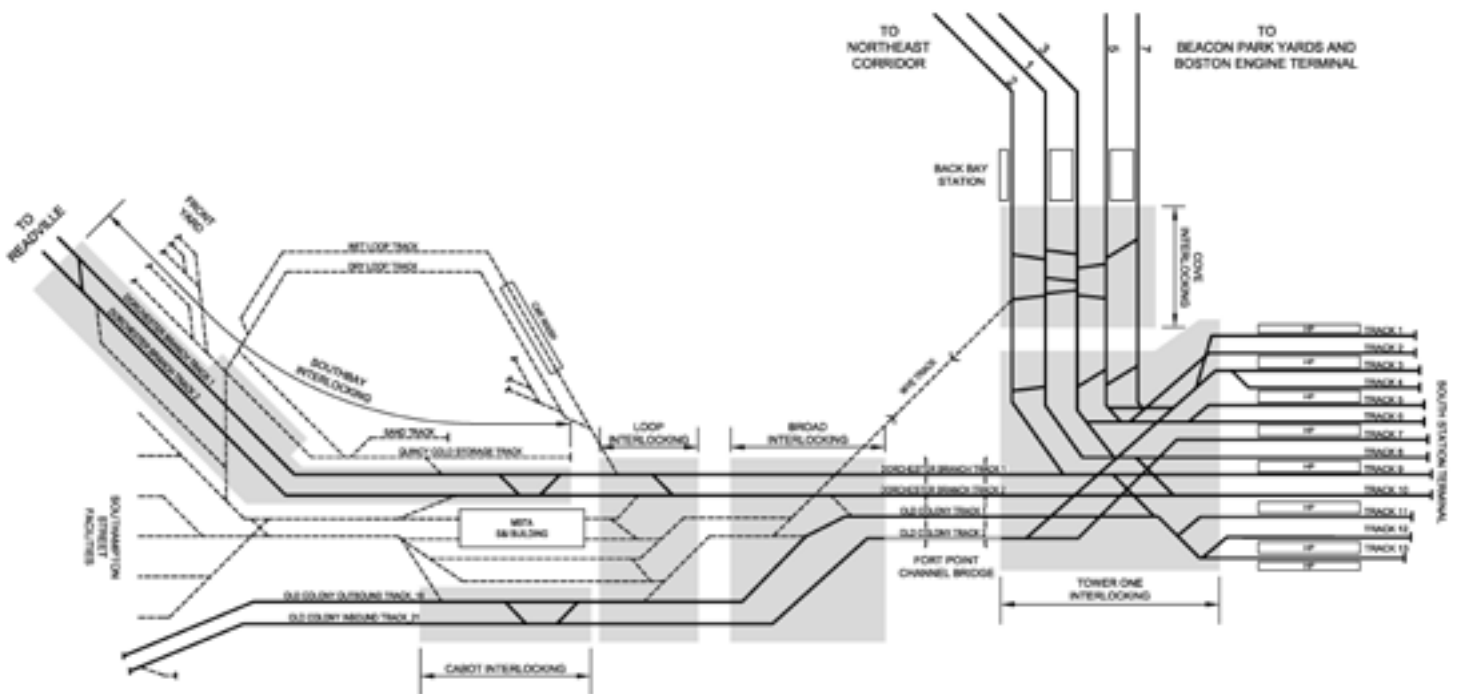
seven platforms. Other rail infrastructure improvements include reconfiguring tracks at interlockings (which allow trains to follow a safe order in and out of the station, preventing conflicting movements) and at yards outside of the station.

Rail engineers working at South Station are faced with the physical constraints of the station site itself: highway ramps, tunnels, and ventilation buildings; Fort Point Channel; and the MBTA Red Line and Silver Line tunnels. Other challenges include the need to accommodate longer future Amtrak and MBTA Commuter Rail trains needed to carry more passengers to and from Boston. Working around these challenges requires skill, patience, and creativity.

Our engineering efforts are focused on optimizing flexibility at the station so that trains can be efficiently dispatched, while also planning for anticipated future growth in the number of trains traveling in and out of South Station. Once different alternatives for expanding the rail system at the station have been evaluated and MassDOT has chosen a preferred alternative, impacts to the environment will be analyzed, construction costs will be estimated, and the major project elements will be further defined.

Rail engineering requires looking ahead to make sure that today's planning will keep pace with tomorrow's needs – and that every track, pole, and signal is in the right place.

An image of the existing South Station layout of 13 tracks.



'Tis the Season at South Station

As the weather turns cold, holiday cheer (and holiday crowds!) return to South Station. South Station's tradition of vibrant holiday decorations and events can make even the speediest and most frazzled commuters slow down to admire the attractions. So, what can you expect to see in the station this holiday season?

As in years past, a train display – beloved by adults and children – is exhibited in the heart of the station. Designed by Ted Furst and constructed by Mark Carroll, this year's theme is "New England through the Decades." The display features 200 feet of tracks and 5 running trains, including replicas of MBTA trolleys and commuter rail trains. Mr. Carroll has also constructed 58 model buildings. Travelers can catch the display through the holiday season.

South Station also hosts musical attractions to entertain holiday travelers. Live piano performances take place at noon every Wednesday. Carolers and other roving musicians can also be found throughout the month of December, serenading visitors and travelers.

It's the most wonderful time of the year, and one of the busiest when it comes to traveling. For holiday travelers journeying both short and long distances, South Station is a key component of many holiday travel plans.

To ensure that these travelers get where they need to go safely, smoothly, and efficiently, the South Station Action Team – which includes representatives from all train, bus, subway, security, public safety, and facilities management entities present at the station – meet to plan every detail of the holiday rush (as much as humanly possible!). Recently their challenges have only increased, as ridership is up and portions of South Station are undergoing repair and reconstruction.

With many winter festivities occurring mid-week, South Station officials also expect the holiday rush itself to expand, spanning multiple weeks. Though the eves of many holidays tend to be the busiest travel days, travelers should anticipate heavy traffic up to a week before and after each holiday. To accommodate such an influx of travelers, station managers and the 10 inter-city bus carriers plan accordingly, with bus runs added and extra personnel on duty for cleaning, security, and customer service.

Amtrak makes similar provisions for the weekends that bracket each holiday week. Northeast Regional and Acela services are adjusted to meet the demand and additional staff (Red Caps and Customer Service Representatives) is on hand to help travelers reach their destinations.

Amtrak also redeploys personnel to more quickly assist customers. "Instead of just being behind the window, ticket agents now go out on the floor, helping those with e-tickets or who have other questions," says Paul O'Mara, Amtrak's Northeast Operations Superintendent.



Passengers view the miniature train display, a South Station tradition since the 1990s, while waiting for their trains.

The MBTA also adjusts its services in peak travel periods, including on the Silver Line to and from Logan Airport (a Silver Line ride from Logan to South Station is free).

So, whether you're just passing through on your way to work or are waiting for a long-distance train, make sure to plan your travel ahead of time and to save a few minutes to enjoy the festivities that fill South Station during the holiday season. From all the staff at South Station, we wish you a happy holiday season and safe travels.

Holiday Travel Tips

Here are some tips to keep in mind if you are planning to travel through South Station during the busy holiday season:

- **Plan, book, and arrive early:** Purchase tickets in advance to ensure a seat. Many trains and buses sell out. Amtrak tickets cannot be purchased onboard and tickets purchased onboard MBTA Commuter Rail trains include a surcharge. Allow extra time for getting to and through the station.
- **Use technology:** Book tickets online or through the e-ticketing apps offered by Amtrak, the MBTA (mTicket), and inter-city bus carriers (check individual websites). Check on-time status via the web, Twitter, or T-alerts. And remember to bring your charger for mobile devices.
- **Travel light:** Baggage space is at a premium on trains and buses; avoid hassles by packing fewer items in smaller bags.
- **Meet at the bus garage:** The bus terminal parking garage, accessible from HOV lanes on I-93 and the Mass Pike, offers free 15-minute parking for passenger pick-up and drop-off and is open 24/7.

Faces of South Station: Linda Perlman

This is the second in a series of articles featuring people who work at South Station.

She has been inside the building thousands of times, but Linda Perlman's eyes still light up and a broad smile emerges whenever she speaks of her favorite Boston landmark: South Station.

"It's a very special place for me, my anchor," says Perlman, a retired teacher from Brookline who leads free monthly tours of the historic terminal. "South Station was my gateway to the world. It holds a lot of memories for me."

In Perlman's childhood, South Station was the magical place of arrival by bus from South Boston for shopping "in town" at the big department stores. It was also where an 11-year-old Perlman and her family departed on a midnight train to New York for an ocean voyage to France. "I've been to a lot of places since then," Perlman says, "but that will forever be my most exciting trip."

A South Station devotee, Perlman can rattle off facts and trivia with the best of them. On her tours, she notes the 45,000 spruce tree pilings that supported the original structure; the rare clock on the façade that is still hand-wound today; and the long-gone theater, chapel, and employee bowling alley.

But Perlman also interjects anecdotes about how station activities so often were connected to the events of the day. "I like to have people think beyond the brick and mortar and tell the human story as well," she says.

She'll show a newspaper clipping about how 3,000 soldiers, who were being deployed from South Station on November 12, 1918, learned that the armistice had been signed the day before, ending World War I. She'll recall her mother's memory of watching newsreels at the South Station theater, which was across from the old Track 27 near Dorchester Avenue. Or the time Franklin Roosevelt's presidential train was missing upon his return to the station – it had been taken to Riverside for service – so he fetched an open-air car and cruised around the neighborhood waving at startled bystanders.

Perlman, who also leads historic walking tours for Boston By Foot, is ever grateful to the passionate individuals who rose up to halt the demolition of South Station in the 1970s, and is heartened by its re-emergence as a thriving transportation center now in need of expansion.

"I saw it go through such a sad time. For many years the beauty of South Station lay hidden by neglect," Perlman says. "How wonderful for us all to see it refurbished and revitalized. There's a whole new love affair with trains right now that's very exciting."

Perlman likes to concur with the closing words of Mayor Josiah Quincy at the dedication of South Station on December 30, 1898, when he called the new terminal "one of the great buildings of this city – a source of pride to its



Linda Perlman describes the South Station art installation "Musclebound for Miami," made of train car couplers.

citizens, an object of admiration to strangers. We invite everyone in the world to enter its limits."

And if you're lucky, Linda Perlman will be your tour guide.

Linda Perlman leads free tours of South Station on the first Saturday of every month starting at 1 p.m. from the concierge desk in the lobby of the front entrance. For groups of eight or more, please call 617-217-2236 to make arrangements. Private tours also are available.

How to Get Involved

MassDOT provides a variety of opportunities to meet with the project team, learn about the South Station Expansion project, and share your ideas and opinions about planning for the future of South Station. Ways to participate include:

- Request a community briefing. Check www.mass.gov/massdot/southstationexpansion for information on contacting the Project Team.
- Fill out the online questionnaire to tell us how you use South Station, your biggest gripes and what improvements and amenities would make your experience better. Visit fluidsurveys.com/s/SouthStation to complete it.
- Sign up for regular updates on different aspects of the project, from architecture and urban design, to rail engineering and sustainability, to job creation and economic development through MassDOT's blog at blog.mass.gov/transportation/category/south-station-expansion.
- Visit the project website to learn more about the project: www.mass.gov/massdot/southstationexpansion.
- Contact MassDOT Project Manager Katherine Fichter via email or mail: katherine.fichter@state.ma.us, or Katherine Fichter, South Station Project Manager, MassDOT, 10 Park Plaza, Room 4150, Boston, MA 02116.

We welcome your participation and invite you to be part of this exciting project!