

SOUTH STATION

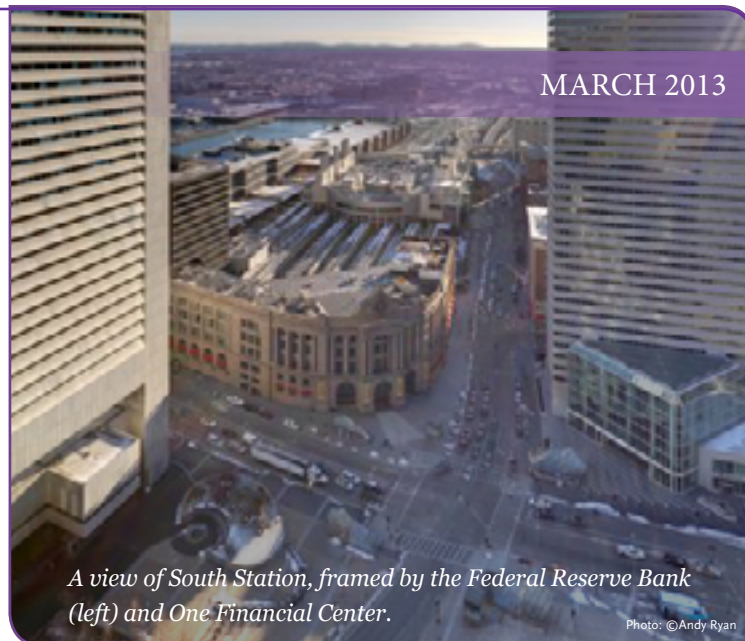
EXPANSION

About the Project

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is leading an effort to improve and expand Boston South Station for the future. South Station is an architectural icon in downtown Boston and the principal passenger rail hub in New England. It is the northern terminus for Amtrak's Northeast Corridor Acela and Regional rail service, as well as the Lake Shore Limited service from Chicago. South Station also serves the MBTA commuter rail system, and it connects to the MBTA Red Line and to Logan International Airport via the MBTA Silver Line. The adjacent South Station bus terminal is also a hub for local, regional, and intercity bus services.

MassDOT is collaborating with the Federal Railroad Administration, the MBTA, Amtrak, the City of Boston, and many other stakeholders including the general public to develop preliminary designs to expand and improve South Station. This effort is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation High-Speed & Intercity Passenger Rail program, with additional funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This effort will include analyzing track, signal, and railroad operations at South Station, as well as performing planning, engineering, and environmental permitting work. Planning and design for improvements to the sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and roadways around South Station – including re-opening Dorchester Avenue, which has been off-limits to the public for decades – will be included in the project, as will an analysis of the potential for future joint development at or over an expanded South Station. No construction activities are included in this phase of the project.

During this multi-year effort, MassDOT welcomes your interest in the past and future of South Station and your ideas for improving the station that we all use and share. See the box on page 4 for contact information and suggestions on how to participate in the project.



A view of South Station, framed by the Federal Reserve Bank (left) and One Financial Center.

Photo: ©Andy Ryan

MassDOT Submits State Environmental Notification Form

One of the first steps in a major design and construction project is to investigate the potential environmental impacts of the project. To kick off that process, MassDOT filed an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office, known as MEPA, on March 15, 2013. This is an important milestone for the South Station Expansion project. The ENF outlines the current scope and understanding of the project and identifies potential impacts that MassDOT may need to avoid or mitigate as the project advances.

The ENF includes a description of the transportation services currently provided at South Station, alternatives that MassDOT will study and evaluate for expanding South Station, potential locations to store trains between the daily rush hours, and a list of permits and approvals the project will require for eventual construction.

As part of the South Station Expansion project, MassDOT will also pursue environmental review under the federal National Environmental Policy Act.

Project Elements

The ENF provides a broad outline of the alternatives that MassDOT will evaluate for the four main elements of the South Station expansion effort. These elements are:

- Expansion of the South Station terminal facilities, including new tracks and platforms and a new passenger concourse and amenities. This work will also include reconstructing the railroad track interlocking at the approach to South Station, a complex of signals and switches that control train movements in and out of the station.

- Acquisition and demolition of the adjacent U.S. Postal Service mail facility located on Dorchester Avenue to provide space for the station expansion. MassDOT will explore the re-opening of Dorchester Avenue for public use and station access, including an extension of the Harborwalk along Fort Point Channel.
- Potential joint public/private development next to or over an expanded South Station.
- Identification of a site or sites for layover, where trains can be stored during the day between peak periods of service.

The ENF does not indicate a preferred alternative for any of the elements of the project. After a scoping session and public review of the ENF, the Secretary of Environmental Affairs will provide a scope outlining any additional environmental investigations that MassDOT should undertake to gain a full understanding of the impacts – positive and negative – of the South Station Expansion project. MassDOT will then prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) to submit both to the MEPA Office and for public review.

Project Alternatives

MassDOT proposes to investigate four alternatives for the expansion of South Station.

Future No-Build Alternative maintains the existing South Station facilities essentially unchanged from their current form. The Postal facility on Dorchester Avenue would remain in place, Dorchester Avenue itself would remain closed to the public, and there would be no new private development within the footprint of the station. The No-Build Alternative would take into account other projects planned for the South Station area, including a proposed

project of hotel, residential, and office space (as well as improvements to the South Station bus terminal) to be built above existing South Station.

Future Build Alternative 1 would include only transportation improvements at South Station. South Station would expand onto the Postal property with the construction of additional tracks and platforms; track interlockings would be reconstructed to accommodate the new tracks; and additional layover space would be located at one or more sites within reasonable proximity of South Station. Dorchester Avenue would be opened to public use.

Future Build Alternative 2 - Joint Development Minimum Build and **Future Build Alternative 3 - Joint Development Maximum Build** differ in the degree of potential private development that could be built at South Station.

Under **Alternative 2**, approximately 850,000 square feet of mixed use development with a maximum height of 12 stories would be proposed for South Station. The new construction could also include parking.

Under **Alternative 3**, the potential for future private development at an expanded South Station would be limited by the Federal Aviation Administration’s height limit – approximately 290 feet – in the area of the station. A development of this height – approximately 26 stories – could include as much as 2.5 million square feet of development in a mix of uses, as well as additional parking.

Both Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 would include the transportation improvements described in Alternative 1.

Each of these alternatives would require different permits, zoning changes, compliance with Chapter 91 (the Massachusetts Public Waterfront Act) regulations, and the possible development of a new Municipal Harbor Plan for the South Station area. MassDOT will work with the City of Boston and other stakeholders to address the impacts and opportunities of each alternative.

Rail Layover

Layovers are locations where trains are stored, serviced, and inspected during off-peak periods. Daily tasks such as cleaning, fueling, and inspection take place in these yards. The MBTA and Amtrak have separate facilities in the area of South Station for maintenance and repairs of their different trains.

The ENF describes the four layover yards that Amtrak and the MBTA currently use to support South Station operations. Under existing conditions, these sites currently fall short of providing sufficient capacity for both MBTA and Amtrak layover needs. Considering the potential for greater future demand for passenger rail transportation and the possible need for the MBTA



Photo: © Andy Ryan

to give up some space it currently uses at an Amtrak layover facility, the MBTA may need more layover capacity in the future. The lack of adequate mid-day layover space for trains serving South Station can cause delays and inefficiencies for both commuter rail and intercity train service.

MassDOT developed a multi-step process to identify the layover space requirements for the MBTA and Amtrak today and in future years (2025 and 2040). Working with the City of Boston, Amtrak, and the MBTA, MassDOT identified 28 potential future layover sites, all with compatible land uses, appropriate size and orientation, adjacency to a rail line, and reasonable proximity to South Station.

MassDOT assessed the 28 sites using a two-tiered process. In the first tier, the South Station Expansion team evaluated each site for potential public support, efficiency of rail operations, ease of potential land acquisition, and ability to integrate into the existing rail and roadway networks. Nine sites met these criteria and were passed into the second tier for analysis. At this level, the team developed conceptual designs and identified infrastructure requirements.

The team identified three locations as best meeting the needs of the South Station project. The locations are:

- Boston Transportation Department Tow Lot (or BTD Tow Lot), located along Frontage Road in Boston. It includes about 11 acres and is located on the MBTA's Fairmount Line, about one track-mile from South Station. It also includes Department of Public Works facilities.
- Readville Yard 2 is an active rail yard owned and operated by the MBTA. This site is located on the MBTA Dorchester Branch approximately 8.8 track-miles from South Station. This alternative would use existing MBTA property and would not require property acquisition.
- Beacon Park Yard is located along Cambridge Street in Allston between the Massachusetts Turnpike Toll Plaza and the MBTA's Framingham/Worcester Line. The 22-acre site is four track-miles from South Station.

These potential locations, which are all currently home to transportation and industrial uses, will be further evaluated in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the South Station Expansion project. In the DEIR, MassDOT will explore potential combinations of the three remaining alternatives to meet existing and future layover needs. Results of the analysis will be coordinated with the City of Boston, project stakeholders, and the public to identify a preferred alternative to advance to preliminary engineering and project development.

Did you know?

Atlantic Avenue Elevated

In the late 1800s, the Boston Transit Commission began looking at options for providing rail service for downtown Boston and its growing suburbs. One of the outcomes was to develop an elevated rail system called the "Atlantic Avenue Elevated." This Atlantic Avenue service was one of two elevated lines that connected to the "Main Line El" – the original name for what ultimately became the MBTA Orange Line – which served the neighborhoods south of downtown Boston. Service along the Atlantic Avenue El opened in 1901.

This waterfront route gave people access to South Station and the working waterfront, including the passenger ferries that ran both north and south. The elevated track passed South Station and continued north along Atlantic Avenue and Commercial Street. The train made stops at the following stations: Beach Street, South Station, Rowe's Wharf, State Street, and Battery Street Station, ending at Keany Square (at the Charlestown Elevated). Part of the elevated track was damaged in the Molasses Disaster of 1918.

Service on the south side of South Station was closed after a fatal crash at the curve of Harrison and Beach Streets in 1928. The 1920s also saw a decline in the fishing and maritime industry in Boston, the stoppage of Boston Harbor ferry service and an increase in automobile traffic, supported by the construction of the Sumner Tunnel. These events caused the ridership on the Elevated lines to drop and the Atlantic Avenue service ultimately closed in 1938.

Elevated station at Rowe's Wharf on Atlantic Avenue.



PHOTO: Courtesy of the Boston Public Library/LeSLie Jones Collection.

South Station: Then and Now

The top photo is a bird's eye view of Dorchester Avenue circa 1928 when it was still possible to drive along Fort Point Channel south into Dorchester. Currently, Dorchester Avenue is a private way that leads to the US Postal Service building (lower photo). MassDOT will explore reopening the roadway and reconnecting it to South Boston and Dorchester as part of the South Station Expansion Project.

1928

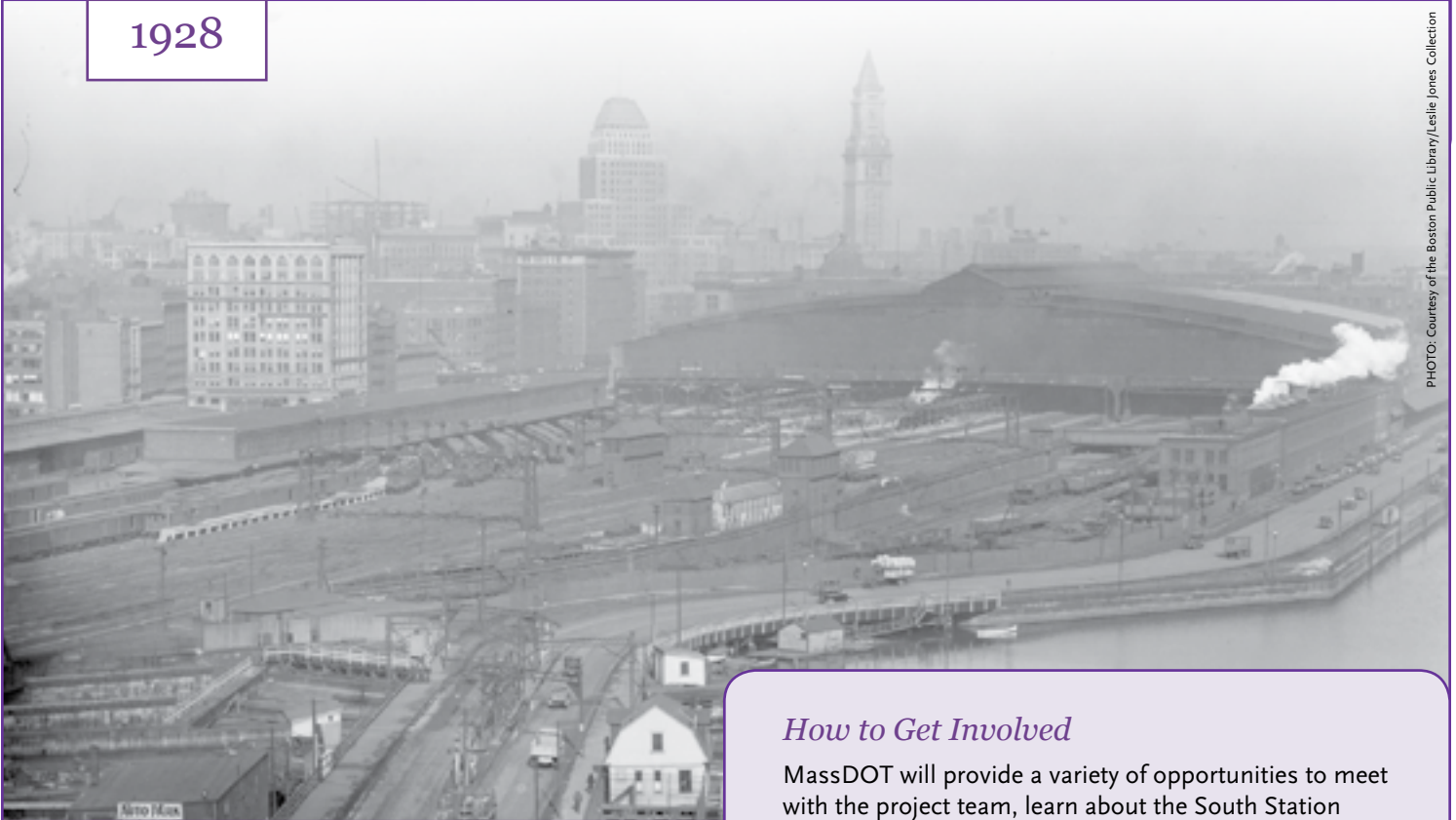


PHOTO: Courtesy of the Boston Public Library/Leslie Jones Collection

2013



How to Get Involved

MassDOT will provide 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:

- Attend in-person events such as open houses and community briefings.
- Visit the project website to sign up for project updates and learn about other opportunities to participate at: www.massdot.state.ma.us/southstationexpansion.
- Comment on the Environmental Notification Form by April 9. You can find the ENF online at the project link above; request a copy from Joe Grilli [(617) 532-2244 or jgrilli@hntb.com]; or participate in the scoping session on April 1, 4 pm to 6 pm, at South Station.
- 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, or (TTY) 857-368-0655.

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