

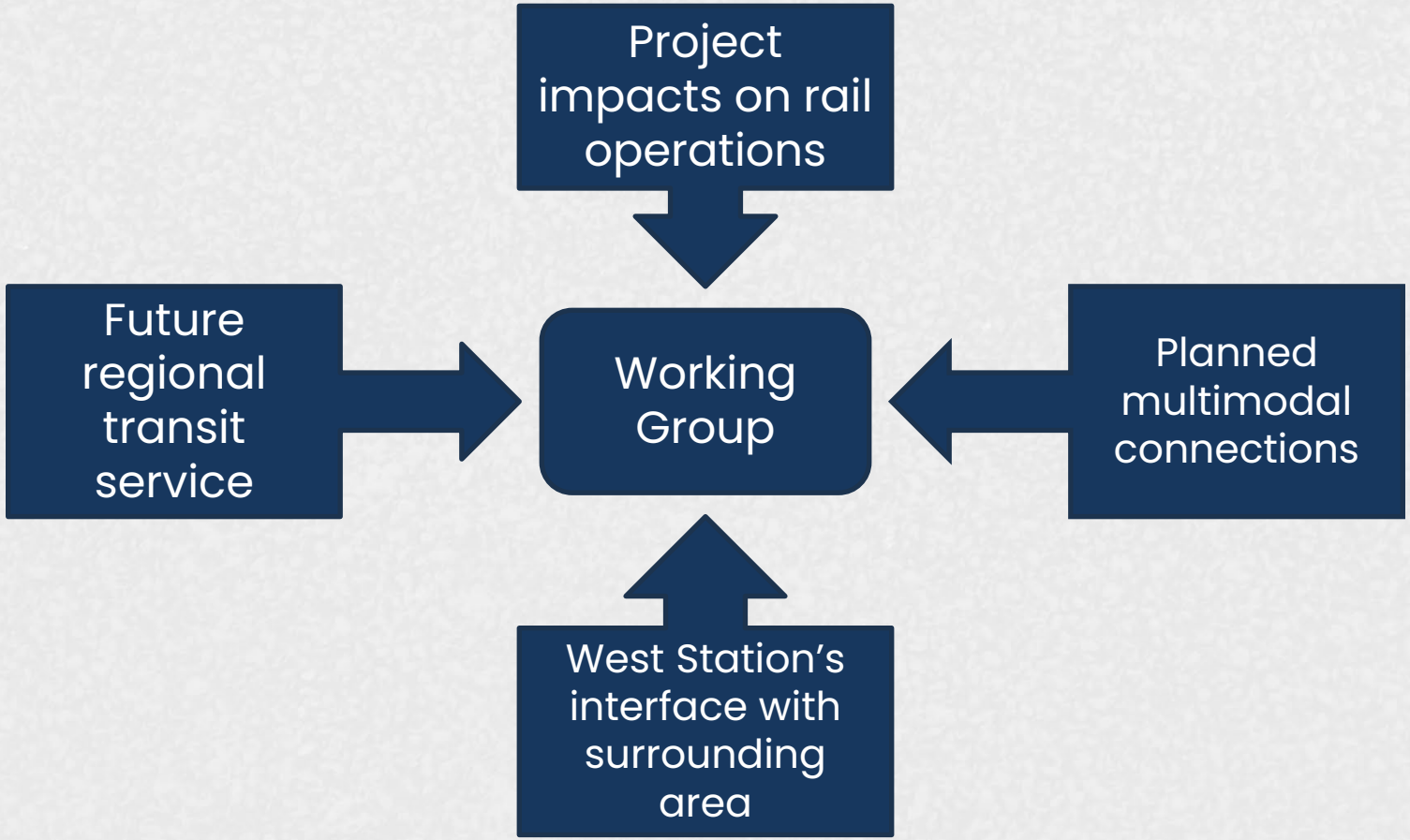
ALLSTON MULTIMODAL PROJECT
Rail & Transit Working Group Meeting
January 31, 2025

DRAFT – FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

Agenda

- Introductions and Opening Remarks
- Review of Key Discussions from Working Group #1
- West Station Configuration
- MassDOT/ MBTA Layover Analysis
- MassDOT Worcester Mainline Operations Analysis
- Next Steps and Timeline

WG #1 Review: Topics of Interest



WG #1 Review: MassDOT and MBTA Future Service Plans

MassDOT and the MBTA are planning for enhanced future transit service:

MassDOT Compass Rail

- Short-term (2030): Increased intercity service between Boston and New Haven via Springfield
- Long-term: Increased and new intercity service across the Commonwealth and beyond, including between:
  - Boston and New Haven
  - Boston and Albany
  - Greenfield, Springfield and New Haven

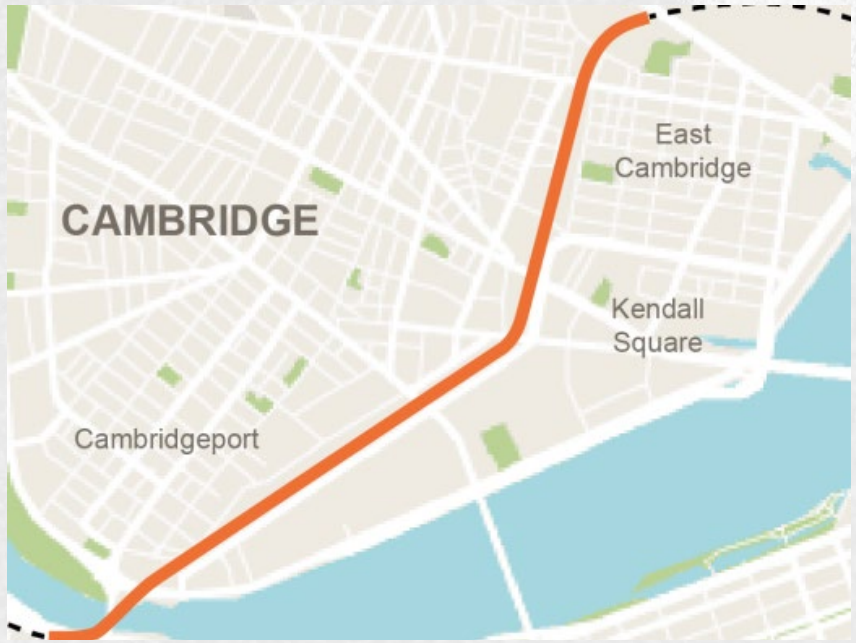
MBTA Regional Rail

- Short-term: Fairmount Decarbonized Service (~2028), "Worcester 30-30"* (2026), and South Coast Rail (2025)
  - 20-minute service on the Fairmount Line
  - Half-hourly local service to/from Framingham all-day
  - Half-hourly zonal express to/from Worcester all-day
  - Restoration of rail service to New Bedford and Fall River
- Long-term: Increased all-day bi-directional service across all lines

*Framingham will receive four trains per hour to/from Boston

WG #1 Review: Grand Junction closure would necessitate new maintenance facilities

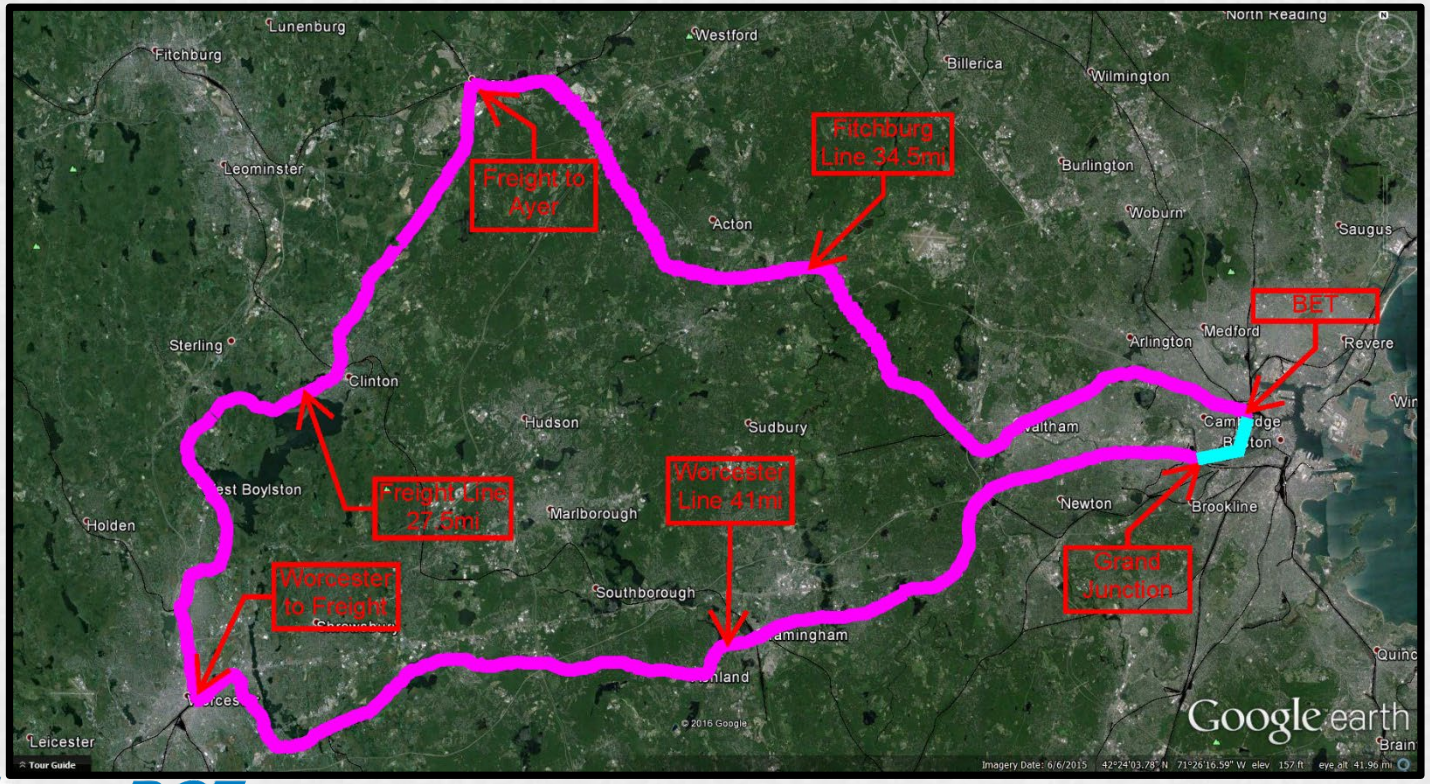
- Boston's passenger rail infrastructure is split between a "northside" and "southside" connected by the Grand Junction.
- At-grade alternative for the Allston Multimodal project will sever the Grand Junction for 5-7 years
- The MBTA's only heavy maintenance facility (the Boston Engine Terminal) is on the northside
- MBTA service would cease within weeks without southside heavy maintenance facilities
- Northside's Downeaster service would lose access to Amtrak's heavy maintenance facility in South Boston during closure.
- MBTA proposed Southside heavy maintenance facilities are currently unfunded





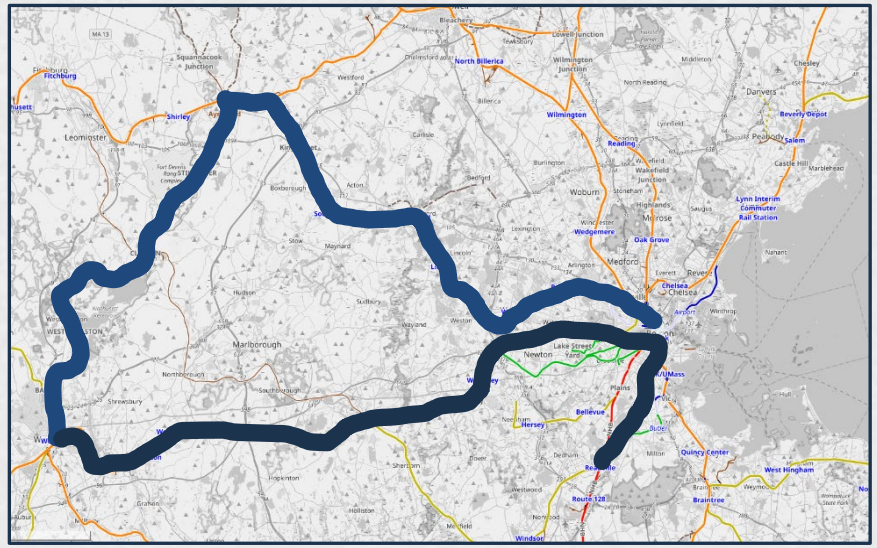
Closure of the Grand Junction has significant impacts on Amtrak and MBTA maintenance operations

Alternative route to Amtrak/MBTA facilities requires a 100+ mile detour. Not feasible for the MBTA and challenging for Amtrak.



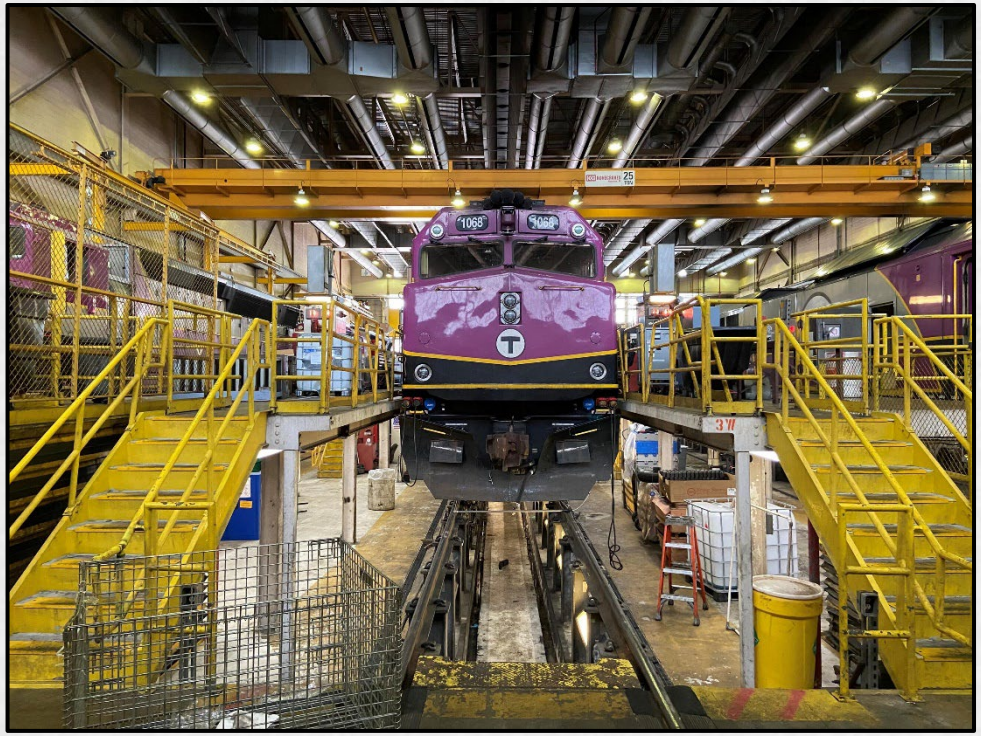


Grand Junction route to MBTA Boston Engine Terminal in Somerville



Detour route to BET via Ayer

WG #1 Review: Layover and Maintenance Needs

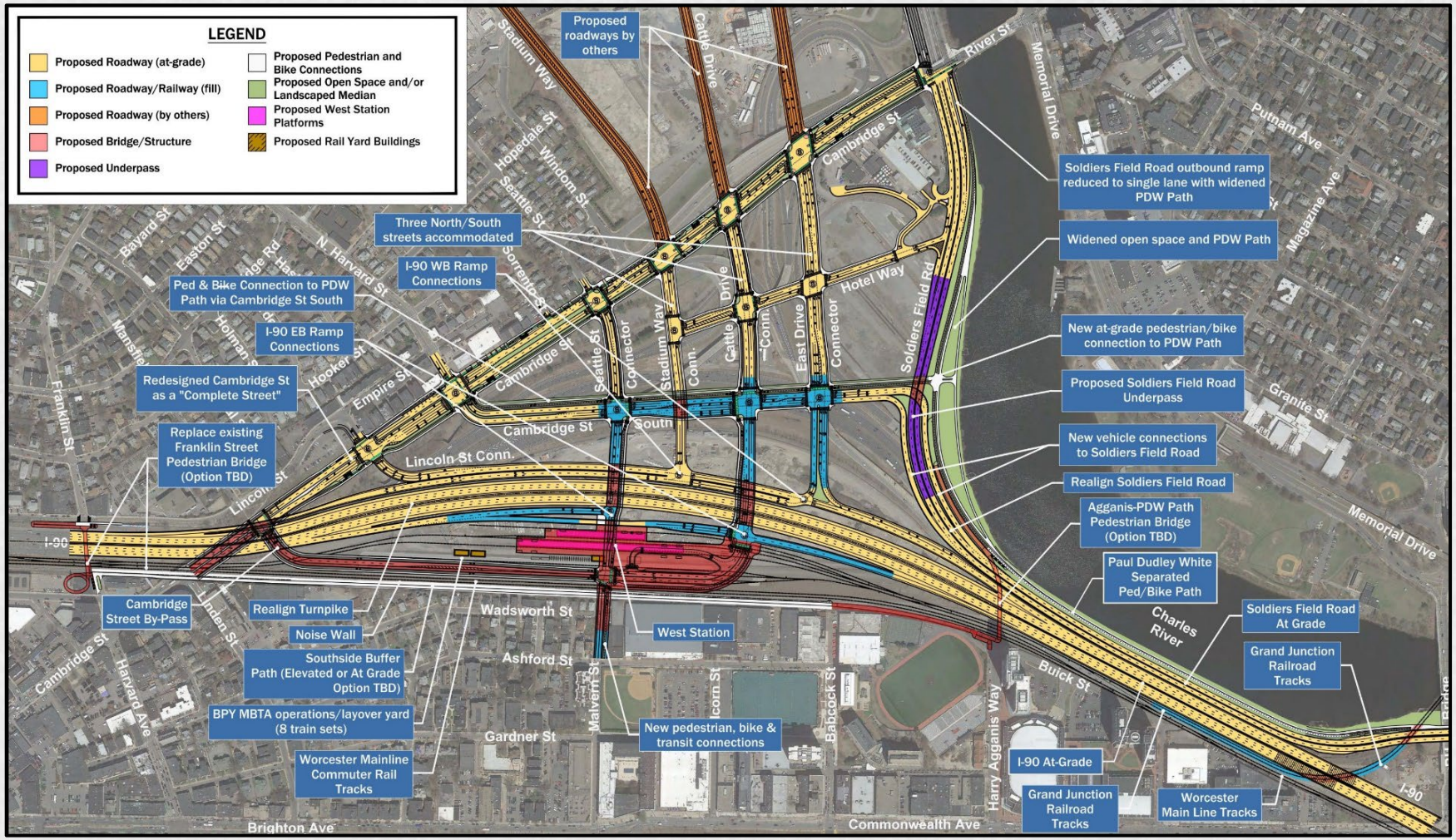


- The closure of the Grand Junction would accelerate the need for layover capacity on the southside of Boston's system.
- The southside fleet would require a "spare ratio," or contingency fleet
- MassDOT would require sufficient layover capacity to initiate Compass Rail
- To accommodate the closure, the MBTA would need to build maintenance facilities on top of existing layover space which requires replacement layover elsewhere.
- These maintenance facilities would need to be diesel facilities to support existing fleet
- Replacement layover and maintenance facilities would need to be complete before Grand Junction closure to ensure continuity of service

Grand Junction Closure Options

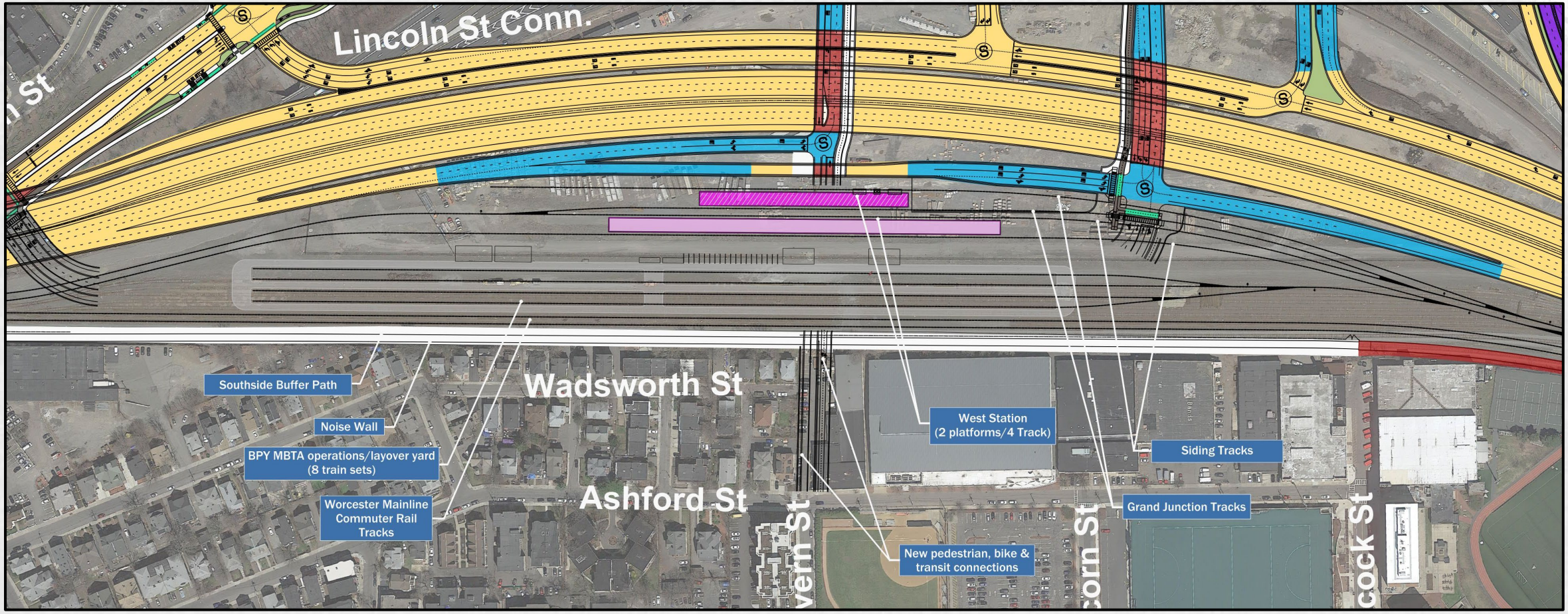
- MassDOT and the MBTA are examining options to mitigate the layover and maintenance impacts of the Grand Junction closure
- Some Allston Task Force members have suggested potential alternative solutions to these challenges
- The Allston Multimodal team will consider the feasibility of alternative proposals
- To avoid the need to build out maintenance facilities on the southside, any proposed solution would need to limit the Grand Junction closure to a maximum of a few weeks

Allston Multimodal Project: Plan View



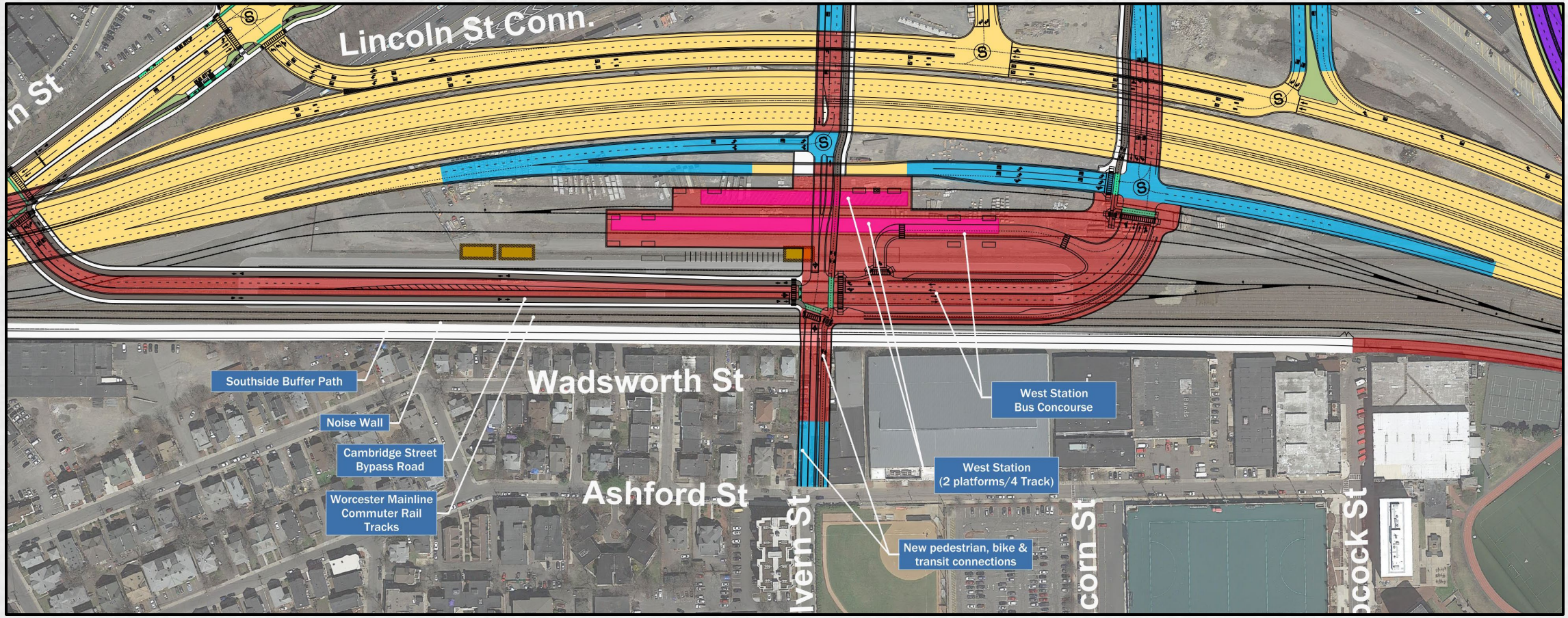
3L Modified Realignment Interchange Alternative

Proposed Rail Facilities



West Station Railyard

West Station



West Station Bus Concourse

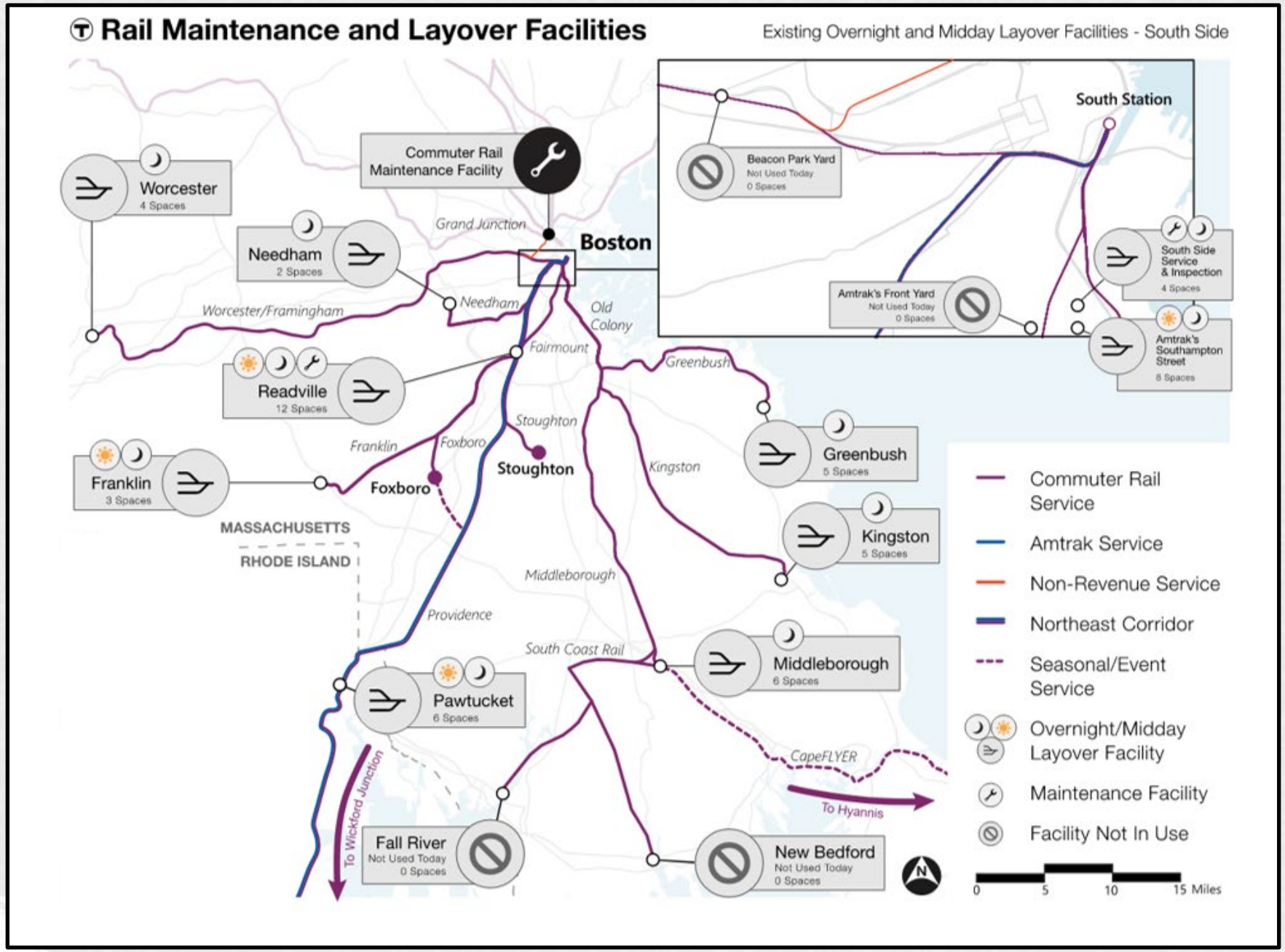
Layover Overview

What is layover?

- Layover facilities ensure passenger trains are ready to serve customers. These facilities allow railroad personnel to:
  - conduct safety inspections
  - carry out routine light maintenance
  - sanitize passenger coaches
  - Muster crew and conduct safety briefings
- Layover facilities are used for train storage during the midday or overnight
- In 2021, the MBTA shifted to all-day bi-directional service, which requires less storage at midday but far more space overnight. This is because a much larger future fleet will be in revenue service all day.

Impacts of Layover Shortages

- Layover facility locations work best when well-balanced on both ends of the lines
- Insufficient or poorly balanced layover facilities can create operational issues
  - Backlogs for maintenance, service, and inspection
  - Inability to expand future fleet
  - Smaller fleet = less redundancy, reducing service reliability
  - Greater emissions due to more “deadhead” (non-revenue trips across system to move trains)
  - More personnel at a greater number of sites

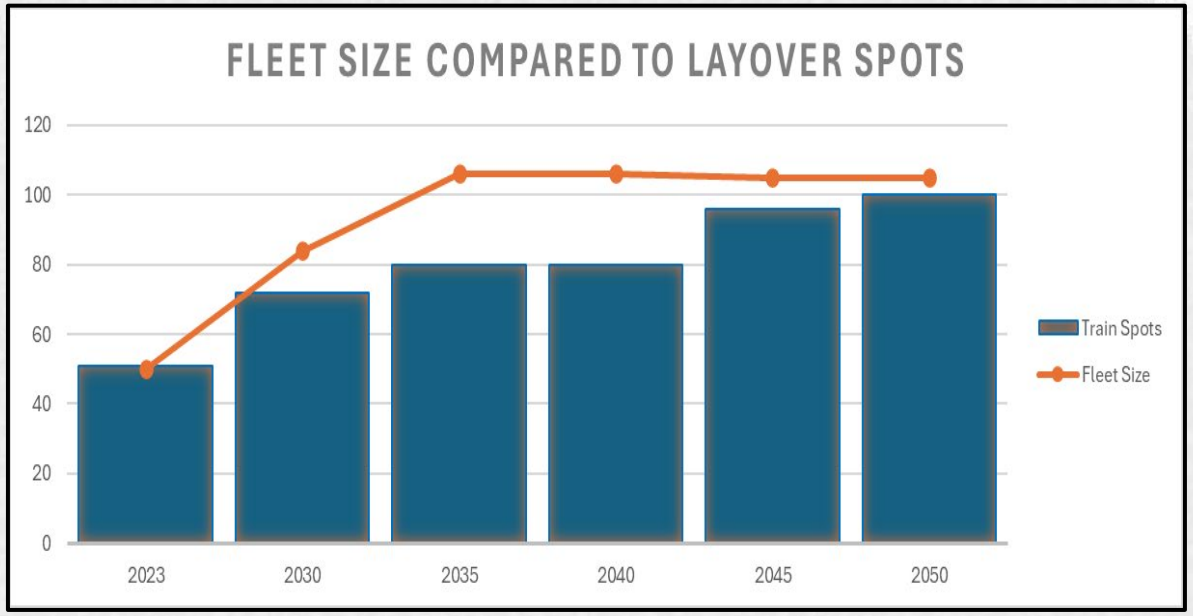


In collaboration with Amtrak, MassDOT and the MBTA modeled long-term layover needs on the southside rail system

Note: Analysis considers current layover locations and does not assume any site which is not currently owned by rail operators

Layover Analysis Results

- **Relevant Assumptions:**
  - Service assumptions consistent with future MBTA and Compass Rail operations
  - Beacon Park Yard layover will be available in 2035 after AMP completion
  - At Widett Circle, 6 spots will be available in 2030 and 20 additional spots at a future date
  - MBTA's "spare ratio," or redundancy fleet, must increase once the Grand Junction closes
  - Grand Junction closure begins in 2029
- **Conclusion:**
  - Analysis demonstrates a shortfall in layover capacity
  - Deficit would be greatest during the closure of the Grand Junction



Each rail operator's maintenance and layover requirements vary. Amtrak's design standards for layover facilities are different from the MBTA's standards and will require more space than the standardized unit utilized in this report.

Worcester Main Line Operations Analysis Update

- MassDOT and the MBTA are analyzing the potential impacts of West Station design alternatives on Worcester Mainline operations
- Analysis will assist project team in understanding the operational implications for service along the Worcester Line based on different rail layout alternatives
- Project team will present the results of this analysis at a future Allston Task Force meeting
- Analysis will also be incorporated into the environmental review documents

Allston Multimodal: Permitting and Design Timeline

- The Rail & Transit Working Groups have provided invaluable feedback to MassDOT Highway, while giving insight into the interests of its members

- The Allston Multimodal project team continues to advance an ambitious permitting and design timeline:

Date	Milestone
Winter 2024 – Fall 2025	Preparation and Agency Review of draft DEIS and SDEIR
Fall 2025	Public Review of filed Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Report (SDEIR) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
Winter 2025 – Fall 2026	Preparation and Agency Review of Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)
Fall 2026	Public Review of filed Final Draft Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)
Fall 2026	Design-Build Request for Qualifications (RFQ)
Fall 2027	Design-Build Contractor Notice to Proceed