



Governor Baker Announces SCR Finance Plan and Final Permitting

Construction Begins on Early Action Projects

On April 22, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and the MBTA joined Governor Charlie Baker in announcing the achievement of two key milestones for Phase 1 of South Coast Rail (SCR): the Finance Plan is complete and the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has approved the final federal permit required to advance the project. At the same time, early action construction has been approved and is moving forward.

Governor Baker highlighted the increased access to economic opportunities that SCR will offer to both the South Coast and Boston. He pointed out that these actions also move SCR further than it has ever been. His administration is committed to working with local partners throughout the project.

Transportation Secretary and CEO Stephanie Pollack said that SCR will be 100 percent funded by the Commonwealth. The MBTA will not be required to commit any capital funding or issue any revenue bonds that might otherwise impact the agency's future operating budget. The Finance Plan was created after independent cost and schedule reviews were conducted by three firms: the current project manager, the MBTA's owner's representative and an outside firm. The three reviewers held a workshop to review their submissions and achieved a consensus program cost of \$1.047 billion. In consultation with the Executive Office of Administration and Finance, a decision was made to fund Phase 1 through a combination of general obligation bonds and special obligation bonds under existing authorization for the Rail Enhancement Program.

Based on the consensus of the three independent reviews, the date for start of passenger rail service between Boston and Taunton, New Bedford and Fall River is now projected for late 2023.

In one more important step, the MBTA awarded a contract for Program Management/Construction Management (PM/CM) to AECOM to manage the final design, bidding and construction management of Phase 1. This team will provide resident engineering and inspection services, monitor costs and scheduling, and oversee the testing and commissioning on the line for service. Preliminary design of the Full Build will continue to be advanced by the Joint Venture of VHB/HNTB. The Finance Plan incorporates funding to continue to advance preliminary engineering design.

SCR Phase 1 will provide service to New Bedford, Fall River and Taunton using the existing Middleborough/Lakeville Commuter Rail Line and making new connections to the region. For the next phase, MassDOT and the MBTA will continue to design and advance the Full Build, which consists of new track and stations between Canton Center and Cotley Junction. Phase I will restore service to the region years ahead of the Full Build, which presents more pressing challenges related to wetland impacts, complex structures, electrification and cost.

Early Action Projects

The MassDOT Board of Directors (Board) has approved contracts for the replacement, cleanout and/or removal of a total of 63 culverts and reconstruction of 4 railroad bridges within the limits of Phase 1. In addition, special trackwork

procurement was awarded in December 2018. These contracts are a major step forward in preparation for the upcoming Phase 1 main line construction contracts.

Initiating specific construction projects has benefits for advancing Phase 1. These projects will ready the right-of-way for main line reconstruction from Middleborough to New Bedford and Fall River by installing new track turnouts, replacing bridges, improving a grade crossing and replacing and cleaning culverts along the project limits. Completing these early action projects now will ease constraints on main track reconstruction. Reconstruction of the four railroad bridges on the New Bedford Main Line will begin early this summer.

Culvert Construction and Tarkiln Hill Road Grade Crossing

A culvert is an open structure that allows water to pass safely beneath the railroad tracks. Culverts serve an important purpose as cross-drains for maintaining flow in drainage ditches or stream crossings along the railroad. They also provide a safe crossing for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. From Middleborough to New Bedford and Fall River, the contractor will replace a total of 46 culverts with new precast structures, clean an additional 16 existing culverts, and remove 1 out-of-service culvert. The culverts meet the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Standards, so most will be large enough for wildlife, including foxes and other small mammals.

As part of the culvert improvements project, MassDOT



MassDOT will upgrade a number of culverts and bridges as part of Phase 1 work.



This Cotley River Bridge is one of four that will be replaced as part of the project's early action.

has been working closely with the City of New Bedford on the Tarkiln Hill Road grade crossing. Critical roadway drainage improvements, which are necessary to prepare for follow-on construction and future Phase 1 service, are being coordinated and scheduled ahead of a City of New Bedford roadway project at King's Highway.

This contract also includes constructing six wetland mitigation areas adjacent to the railroad right-of-way. The final design team was able to reduce the wetland impacts to less than 1/2 acre. The final mitigation was developed during the state and federal environmental process and specified in the MA Department of Environmental Protection Section 401 Water Quality Certificate for Phase 1. As additional project mitigation, MassDOT partnered with the MA Division of Marine Fisheries to provide excess granite from the old culverts to be repurposed in creating artificial aquatic reefs off Cape Cod to improve fisheries habitat.

The culverts, Tarkiln Hill Road grade crossing and wetland mitigation will be completed by early 2020.

Railroad Bridge Replacements

Four railroad bridges will be reconstructed to bring them up to MBTA Commuter Rail standards, ensuring they will carry future South Coast Rail trains safely for a long time. The bridges are located in less populated areas on the New Bedford Main Line, with two in Berkley, one in Lakeville, and one in Freetown. Once



A Look Ahead

With construction beginning on early elements of Phase 1 this spring, it's possible to begin thinking about South Coast Rail service in reality. Phase 1 will include six new stations in Middleborough, East Taunton, Freetown, Fall River and New Bedford. The rendering (above) depicts the Freetown Station, which will include an accessible high level side platform, two canopies, a kiss & ride, and 107 parking spaces.

In future fact sheets, the MBTA and MassDOT will provide additional renderings and information on the station names, locations, parking and access. In the meantime, this rendering is a look at how southeast Massachusetts residents will be launching their transit trips in the next few years.

these bridges are completed, no remaining bridges along the New Bedford Main Line will require repair or replacement for South Coast Rail. The bridge construction package was awarded in April 2019. Substantial completion of the bridges is expected in fall of 2020.

Special Trackwork

This contract is for the early procurement of turnouts required along the Phase 1 route. Turnouts, which are also known as interlockings or switches, are specialized segments of track that allow trains to switch safely from one track to another by merging two tracks together. Special trackwork is a long-lead item because of the lengthy manufacturing time required for delivery. Ordering these critical track components ahead of time will ensure they will be available when required to support the Phase 1 construction schedule.

Other 2019 Activities

Working with property owners is an important component of Phase 1. MassDOT and the MBTA are securing permanent and temporary easements for construction, along with license agreements and leases for properties. Land acquisition is underway for station sites, layovers, signal equipment, some sections of the

right-of-way and track. The MBTA is having discussions with and extending offers to property owners.

In other Phase 1 news, the Clean Water Act's Section 401 permit was awarded on March 15, 2019, and the Federal Section 404 permit was awarded on April 2, 2019.

Other activities include:

- Finalizing permitting: completing one remaining local wetland permit process
- Initiating the process for procuring new coaches and locomotives
- Coordinating with MBTA Railroad Operations to refine the new service schedule and determine crew sizes and staffing

Coming Next Time

Design and Construction Update
Permitting Summary
Stations and Early Action Update

Communities

The project team continues to brief Phase 1 communities on elements of the project. This has included meeting with local boards, councils and planners. MassDOT and the MBTA will continue ongoing consultation with host communities in preparation for construction. Later this year, as the Phase 1 Program Management/Construction Management (PM/CM) team is in place, the agencies will share the details of the schedule and construction startup with the communities.

MassDOT has provided Technical Assistance to southeastern MA cities and towns through the development of planning and design for South Coast Rail. This financial assistance supports implementation of the project's Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan. The Corridor Plan was developed in conjunction with local and regional partners. It seeks to create great places at new stations, encourage transit-oriented development and new zoning and establish priorities for protecting the land and beauty of the region. Phase 1 communities are eligible to apply for this assistance by working with their regional planning agencies and submitting an application to MassDOT.

Contact Us

For more information, contact us at:



SouthCoastRail@dot.state.ma.us



(857) 368-8853



To learn more about the project and sign up for email updates, visit the website at: **www.mass.gov/southcoastrail**

Connect with MassDOT for transportation news and updates!



www.mass.gov/massdot



blog.mass.gov/transportation



www.twitter.com/massdot



www.facebook.com/massdotinfo

Meet the Team: Lars Carlson, VHB Senior Project Manager

An infrastructure project as large and complex as South Coast Rail comes with numerous environmental requirements. Lars Carlson, Ph.D., PWS, Senior Project Manager at VHB, leads the effort in tracking and maintaining all the required environmental permits and approvals.



Photo by Ken Legler

Lars brings years of experience to South Coast Rail and is very familiar with the intricacies of a rail project. Previously, he worked at the Jacobs Engineering Group, where he oversaw the environmental permitting for the MBTA's Wachusett Extension and the Old Colony Lines, including Middleborough/Lakeville, Plymouth/Kingston, and Greenbush.

Lars has been working on an expedited permitting schedule for Phase 1 of South Coast Rail. The Southern Triangle (New Bedford Main Line and Fall River Secondary) and the Middleborough Secondary are already active freight lines. MassDOT/MBTA's Phase 1 can offer rail service earlier than the Full Build because the permitting is more straightforward. Upgrading freight lines to include passenger rail service has much less of an impact on the environment than building new passenger rail on an abandoned rail bed, as will be the case for much of the Full Build.

The design of the Full Build, which continues, needs to contend with strict environmental requirements that govern the work to protect sensitive resources that have recolonized near the abandoned tracks. Lars' extensive experience and expertise will be central to this effort.

Lars is looking forward to his role as Environmental Monitor for Phase 1 construction. He will be responsible for ensuring that contractors are meeting all of the requirements of the permits.

With the arrival of spring, there is day sailing on weekends and racing on Thursday evenings. You can keep an eye out for Lars and friends sailing in Boston Harbor year round, with the best months on the horizon.