

## South Station Expansion

# Train Topics

## MBTA Commuter Rail Storage

The South Station Expansion project is advancing several important transportation objectives. It will improve the terminal's operations with more tracks and platforms, and create new passenger areas and amenities. MassDOT also needs to resolve a lack of daytime storage space for commuter rail vehicles.

### *The Existing Deficit*

The MBTA cannot meet growing demand for new and better commuter rail service without more space to store trains during the day. For more than a decade, the MBTA has maintained and expanded commuter rail service while coping with inadequate daytime layover space. Daytime layover facilities are places where trains are stored during non-peak hours of service.

Today, the MBTA is short of daytime storage for the equivalent of six full-length commuter rail trains. As a result, the MBTA has to store trains in the South Station terminal, reducing already limited capacity for active trains to serve South Station, or it sends non-revenue trains from South Station to lay over at overnight facilities located at the end of the lines. This situation produces operational conflicts; increases crew, vehicle, and infrastructure costs.

### *What Happens at a Layover Facility*

Using nearby layover yards is an integral part of South Station's daily operations. There are four layover areas that currently support South Station during the midday:

- Amtrak's Southampton Street Yard
- Amtrak's Front Yard
- MBTA's South Side Service and Inspection Facility
- MBTA's Readville - Yard 2

Approximately 28 MBTA trains may be out of revenue service at any time during the midday hours. The average layover duration is approximately 4 hours and 30 minutes. Layover facilities provide a central location to stage trains and relieve train crews between the morning and afternoon peak periods. They also store essential supplies for the

*Train Topics will be produced occasionally to respond to questions and concerns that MassDOT is hearing about the South Station Expansion Project in meetings and via email. Please send your suggestions to Steve Woelfel, [steve.woelfel@state.ma.us](mailto:steve.woelfel@state.ma.us), or 857-368-8889*



locomotives such as fuel, sand, lubricants, and coolants; and they provide for sanitary system maintenance and water for the coaches equipped with restrooms. The interior of each coach is cleaned and minor running repairs are performed while each train is out of service.

Routine service, inspection, and repairs are generally conducted at the MBTA's South Side Service and Inspection Facility. Existing midday facilities are not equipped to perform heavy maintenance (such as extensive plumbing, electrical, or engine repairs). Extensive equipment repairs are conducted at the MBTA's Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility located on the North Side of the MBTA Commuter Rail System. At the end of the day, the trains return to the overnight layover facilities where they are shut down, cleaned out, and made ready for the next day's service.

### *Identifying Potential Locations for Additional Storage*

MassDOT conducted a comprehensive alternatives analysis to identify potential locations to satisfy future layover needs. The first level of screening evaluated each site on its ability to meet the project objectives using criteria such as property requirements, effect on operations, and ability to integrate into the existing rail and roadway networks. Of the 28 initial sites considered, 10 locations advanced to the next level of evaluation.

The second level of screening involved two elements: developing conceptual designs and preliminary operating plans and identifying infrastructure requirements for each site. Criteria included consistency with adopted plans and zoning, ability to meet location requirements, railroad operations, environmental impacts, site suitability, and capital improvements. During this second level of analysis, MassDOT determined that no single site could meet future physical and operational requirements.

During the third level of screening, MassDOT tested combinations of four sites to see if they could meet storage needs and how they would integrate with the existing layover sites that serve South Station:

- Beacon Park Yard
- Boston Transportation Department (BTD) Tow Lot
- Expansion of Readville-Yard 2
- Widett Circle Area

The BTD Tow Lot site was not advanced because of the considerable impacts its use would have on critical City operations, and the lack of a suitable location to relocate these functions in the City of Boston. MassDOT selected the combination of Beacon Park Yard (BPY), Readville-Yard 2, and the Widett Circle Area to advance for further environmental review:

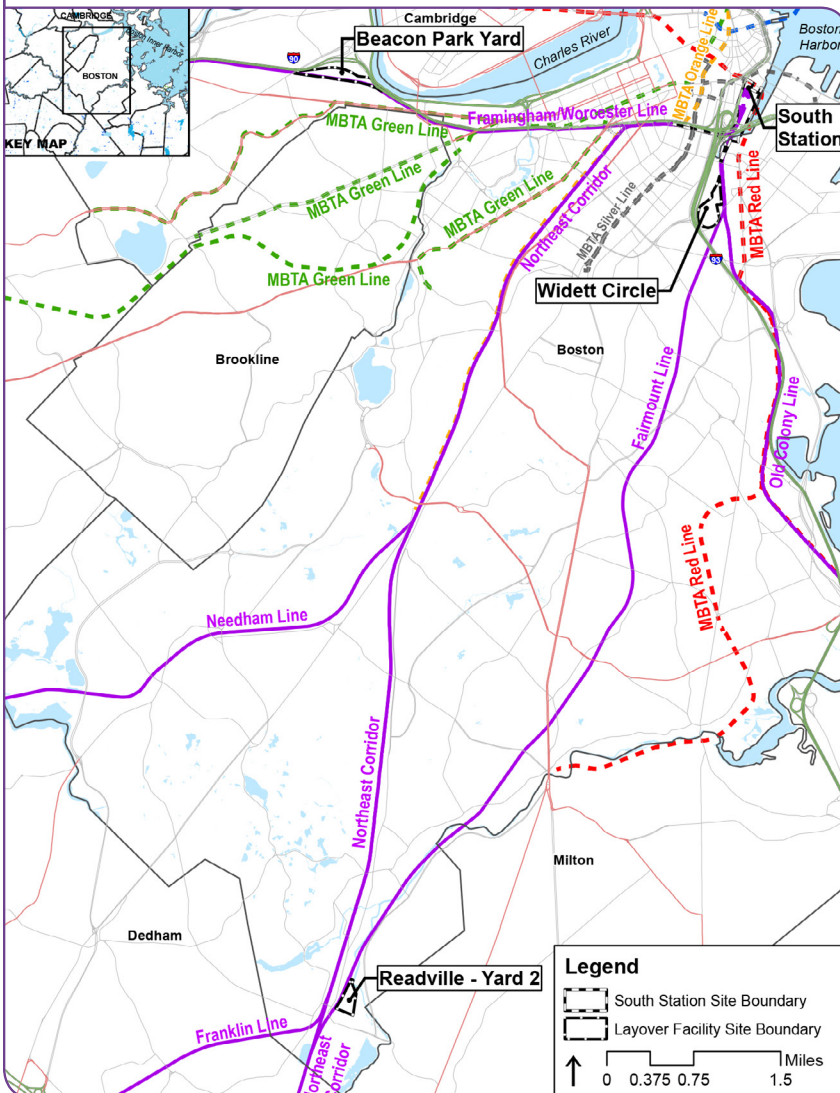
- Beacon Park Yard is located along Cambridge Street in the Allston section of Boston between the Massachusetts Turnpike Allston Toll Plaza and the MBTA Framingham/Worcester Line. This

30.0-acre site is approximately 3.8 track-miles from South Station.

- Readville-Yard 2 is located primarily at 50 Wolcott Court in the Readville section of Boston and is the site of the existing MBTA layover facility. The yard, approximately 17.5-acres, is located along the MBTA Dorchester Branch (also known as the Fairmount Line), approximately 8.8 track-miles from South Station.
- Widett Circle Area is located at 100 Widett Circle and 1 and 2 Foodmart Road in Boston, within an industrial-zoned area. The approximately 30.2-acre site is located along the MBTA Dorchester Branch, approximately 1.1 track-miles from South Station.

As described in the October 2014 Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), the use of BPY was identified as a preferred alternative, but is subject to environmental review as part of the I-90 Allston Interchange project. The SSX project will continue to evaluate the Widett Circle and Readville-Yard 2 area sites for additional layover capacity to support expansion of the terminal.

*Potential site locations advanced for further evaluation.*



*Next Steps*

The next stage of the project will include:

- Completing a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) to comply with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and an Environmental Assessment (EA) to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
- Seeking public feedback on the results of the analysis and preferred alternative.
- Initiating preliminary engineering and subsequent project development.

*How to Learn More*

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

- Receive regular updates on wide-ranging aspects of the project through MassDOT’s blog at: [blog.mass.gov/transportation/category/south-station-expansion](http://blog.mass.gov/transportation/category/south-station-expansion).
- Visit the project website to request a community briefing, sign up for the project mailing list, and learn more about the project: [www.mass.gov/massdot/southstationexpansion](http://www.mass.gov/massdot/southstationexpansion).

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

