



Massachusetts Department of Transportation

**Transit Commitments
December 2009 Status Report**

December 17, 2009

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INTRODUCTION

This report is being submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to provide an update on the status of the four outstanding State Implementation Plan (SIP) transportation control measure (TCM) projects: (1) improvements to the Fairmount Line, (2) the siting and construction of 1,000 new commuter parking spaces, (3) the design of the Red Line/Blue Line Connector, and (4) the construction of the Green Line Extension to College Avenue (Medford) and Union Square (Somerville). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved the projects as part of the SIP on July 31, 2008. A complete description of the process by which those projects were included in the SIP is provided in the Boston Region MPO's long-range transportation plan – JOURNEY TO 2030 Amendment adopted on September 24, 2009. As part of the approval of the JOURNEY TO 2030 Amendment, FHWA and FTA stated:

“The demonstration of timely implementation of TCMs in the SIP is required for a conformity determination. In order to ensure that the TCMs are completed as scheduled, the Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works shall prepare monthly progress reports to FTA, FHWA, and EPA. In addition to these progress reports EOT (MassDOT after November 1, 2009) shall convene monthly meetings with all interested parties to discuss the status of each TCM. This reporting requirement will be effective starting November 2009.”

This is the second of the required status reports, to be presented at the Boston MPO's Transportation Planning and Programming Committee at their December 17, 2009 meeting. This report builds on the *State Implementation Plan Transit Commitments 2009 Status Report*, submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection on July 1, 2009. This report will be posted on the website of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

I. FAIRMOUNT LINE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Project Description

The 9.2-mile Fairmount commuter rail line runs from South Station, currently serves four stations (Uphams Corner, Morton Street, Fairmount, and Readville) in the communities of Dorchester, Mattapan, and Hyde Park, and terminates in the Readville section of Boston. The line, which uses right-of-way entirely owned by the MBTA, also includes 41 bridges. It is the only MBTA commuter rail line that exclusively serves neighborhoods within the City of Boston, but ridership has historically been low and passenger facilities along the line do not meet modern standards.

The Fairmount Line Project includes the rehabilitation of the existing Uphams Corner and Morton Street Stations, construction of four new stations – Newmarket, Four Corners, Talbot Avenue, and Blue Hill Avenue – reconstruction of six existing railroad bridges (located over Columbia Road, Quincy Street, Massachusetts Avenue, Talbot Avenue, Woodrow Avenue, and the Neponset River), and construction of a new interlocking and upgraded signal system (required to advance the bridge reconstruction work). These upgrades will enhance future service, allowing for increased frequency on the line.

Project Cost

The total estimate for the Fairmount Line Improvements SIP Project is \$138,105,000.

Project Funding

In August 2007, MassDOT and the MBTA executed a contract to transfer approximately \$39 million in Commonwealth bond funds from MassDOT to the MBTA to support the costs of (1) signal work, (2) reconstructing three major bridges on the line (the Columbia road, Quincy Street, and Massachusetts Avenue bridges), (3) designing three others (the Talbot Avenue, Woodrow Avenue, and Neponset River bridges), and (4) designing the remaining three new stations (the Newmarket, Talbot, and Blue Hill Avenue stations). A supplemental funding agreement providing \$23,756,574 in Commonwealth bond funding has been executed for the cost of construction of the Four Corners Station, enabling construction procurement to take place in Fall 2009 with bid opening Oct. 2009 and construction contract award authorization by MBTA Board of Directors in Dec. 2009.

SIP Deadline

“Before December 31, 2011, construction of the following facilities shall be completed and opened to full public use: Fairmount Line improvements consisting of enhancements of existing stations including without limitation: platform extensions; improved lighting and improved access; a new station in the general location of Four Corners, and a new station in each of the neighborhoods of Dorchester, Mattapan and Roxbury; and bridge upgrades and other measures to improve service and increase ridership (the Fairmount Line project).”

Project Status

Systems

The upgrades to the interlocking and signal system have been completed and are currently in use, allowing for the reconstruction of structurally deficient bridges along the Fairmount Line.

Bridges

A construction contract to replace the Columbia Road, Quincy Street, and Massachusetts Avenue bridges was awarded in October of 2007, with work currently scheduled to be completed in 2010. The design of the Talbot Avenue, Woodrow Avenue, and Neponset River bridges is 100% complete and construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2010. Talbot Avenue and Woodrow Avenue will be constructed under the same construction contract as the Talbot Avenue Station with the project construction bid advertisement anticipated for January 2010 with finalization of the state funding agreement. The Neponset River Bridge will be a stand-alone construction project occurring at the same time.

Existing Stations

The MBTA held a station-opening at Uphams Corner on January 23, 2007. The reconstruction of Morton Street was celebrated at a station-opening on July 17, 2007. New elements at both stations include extended high-level passenger platforms, accessible walkways, canopies, benches, windscreens, signage, bicycle racks, variable messages signs, lighting, and landscaping.

New Stations

The MBTA has completed the design of **Four Corners Station**. Construction bids were then opened in October 2009. The MBTA Board of directors approved authorization of a \$17.7 million construction contract award to S & R Construction at its December 2009 meeting.

Currently, **Talbot Avenue Station** is at 100% design and the MBTA anticipates putting the project out to bid for construction in January/February 2010. This construction package will also include the rehabilitation of the Talbot Avenue and Woodrow Avenue Bridges. An approximately two-year construction period is anticipated, with the completion of the station and the bridges by November/December 2011.

Newmarket Station is currently at 100% design. An anticipated project construction bid advertisement is for February 2010.

Blue Hill Avenue/Cummins Highway is at 60% design, but concerns raised in the community process have compelled the MBTA to review potential alternative locations for Mattapan Station. A technical assessment of an alternative station site in

the River Street area is underway and is expected to be completed by the end of December. Depending on the outcome of the assessment and the ongoing civic engagement process, the MBTA hopes to complete final design of a Mattapan Station in 2010 and maintain the schedule for meeting the December 2011 deadline.

Potential Challenges

Abutter opposition and an extended civic engagement process/technical review could slow progress on constructing a new station in Mattapan.

II. CONSTRUCTION OF 1,000 NEW PARKING SPACES

Project Description

The MBTA will construct 1,000 new parking spaces at the Beverly Commuter Rail Station (500 spaces) and the Salem Commuter Rail Station (500 spaces) to encourage commuters and other travelers to make use of the public transit network for trips into downtown Boston.

Project Cost

Beverly cost estimate (concept level): \$20,300,000

Salem cost estimate (pre-30%): \$45,000,000

Project Funding

MassDOT will fund the costs of the Beverly and Salem parking projects and will require that the development be completed in time to meet with the SIP deadline of December 31, 2011.

SIP Deadline

Before December 31, 2011, construction of the following facilities shall be completed and opened to full public use: 1000 new park and ride parking spaces serving commuter transit facilities within the 101 cities and towns constituting the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Project Status

Beverly

On June 8, 2008, the MBTA issued a solicitation for a mixed-use development – to include the parking as well as other uses – for appropriate parcels in the vicinity of the Beverly commuter rail station. Proposals were received by the advertised deadline of August 8, 2008, and based on these proposals, MassDOT and the MBTA selected a preferred location on a series of parcels on Rantoul Street in downtown Beverly. Based on that selection, the MBTA completed the federal environmental review of the project. At its meeting on June 4, 2009, the MBTA Board of Directors voted to acquire the property using state and federal funding. Land acquisition was completed over the summer.

No responsive bids were received in Fall 2009 for joint public-private development of the garage facility. An alternative implementation plan is underway to initiate design of a stand-alone garage facility and undertake a Construction Management At Risk procurement under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 149A. Action is pending for the MBTA Board of Directors at the Board's January 2010 meeting seeking authorization for the Authority to apply with the Inspector General's office to pursue the alternative procurement option and facilitate meeting the SIP project deadline of December 2011. MassDOT has agreed to assist in the public costs of the Beverly project with the primary requirement that the project meet the overall completion deadlines identified in the SIP. Proposed schedule for implementation includes:

- December 2009/January 2010 through Summer 2010: Design/Permitting
- Fall 2010: Construction Start
- Spring/Summer 2011: Construction Completion (34 weeks)

Salem

The parking garage at the Salem commuter rail station would contain approximately 750 spaces in a multi-level structure to be shared proportionately between the MBTA and the Department of Capital Asset Management (DCAM). Currently, DCAM proposes to contribute \$3 million in exchange for the use of 150 spaces to serve the new Essex County Courthouse complex. The project is estimated to cost approximately \$45 million. In addition to the \$3 million in DCAM funding, the FTA has earmarked \$3.375 million for the project.

The contract amendment to advance design of the 750 space Salem parking garage to 30% was approved by the MBTA and work commenced in early June, 2009. The 30% design was completed in December 2009. The funding agreement is pending to complete the final design. The final design contract scope is scheduled for MBTA Board of Directors approval in January 2010.

Potential Challenges

MassDOT acknowledges that it has failed to meet the first of the interim milestones required for this element of the SIP. MassDOT is also mindful of the approaching 2011 deadline, and is collaborating with the MBTA to advance the projects to implementation. If that becomes unachievable, MassDOT will notify DEP and the public and will identify any necessary mitigation, as required by the SIP, in a timely manner. MassDOT realizes that there is an aggressive design/construction schedule for implementation.

III. RED LINE-BLUE LINE CONNECTOR - DESIGN

Project Description

The proposed Red Line/Blue Line Connector – intended to improve mobility and regional transportation access for residents of East Boston and North Shore communities and the residents of Cambridge and the northwestern suburbs, as well as relieve congestion in the central subway – consists of an extension of the MBTA Blue Line under Cambridge Street to the Red Line station at Charles/MGH. As currently envisioned, the project consists of two major components: (1) a new tunnel extending the Blue Line under Cambridge Street from Joy Street to Charles Circle and (2) a new underground Blue Line station connected to the existing Charles/MGH station. The project will also consider whether and how to make use of the existing Bowdoin Station – which will require significant rehabilitation – possibly including the relocation of underground trackage and platforms at Bowdoin Station. The exact configurations of both the Charles/MGH platform and the new Blue Line station have not yet been determined.

Project Cost

It is estimated that it will require \$30,000,000 to complete the legal commitment (the current consultant contract is for \$3,000,000 to complete a Draft Environmental Impact Report by June 2010).

Project Funding

The ‘immediate needs’ Transportation Bond Bill of 2007 provided state bond funding for the design of the Red Line/Blue Line Connector project. The costs of this project will be supported using funds from that source.

SIP Deadline

Before December 31, 2011, complete final design of the Red Line/Blue Line Connector, from the Blue Line at Government Center to the Red Line at Charles Station.

Project Status

On September 14, 2007, MassDOT filed an Expanded Environmental Notification Form with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office. A public scoping session was held on October 17, 2007, and the Secretary of Energy & Environmental Affairs issued a certificate on the project on November 15, 2007. Based on the project scope as defined in the MEPA Certificate, MassDOT issued a Request for Proposals on March 27, 2008 for a consultant to complete the necessary environmental reviews and engineering for the project. MassDOT awarded a consultant contract during the summer of 2008.

MassDOT is completing the necessary environmental reviews and conceptual engineering for the project, as described below.

Public Outreach

- Five Working Group meetings have been held with the most recent one on December 14. Additional Working Group meetings will be scheduled every two months until the Draft Environmental Impact Report is submitted.
- A project website has been launched.

Refinement of Alternatives/Conceptual Engineering

- The refinement of alternatives was performed for three options: (1) a no-build option, (2) a tunnel option with Bowdoin Station remaining open, and (3) a tunnel option with Bowdoin Station eliminated. The refinement of alternatives also included an evaluation of potential construction options (a mined tunnel vs. a cut-and-cover tunnel) and construction phasing schemes.
- The Definition of Alternatives/Conceptual Engineering Report was completed in November 2009.

Design Criteria

- A draft Design Criteria Report was prepared and was included with the Definition of Alternatives Report.

Alternatives Analysis

- Alternatives Analysis will be completed between November 2009 and January 2010.

Design

- The conceptual design of the project is underway.

Cost Estimates

- Conceptual cost estimates were included in the Definition of Alternatives Report.

Construction Staging and Sequencing Plans

- Construction Staging and Sequencing Plans were included in the Definition of Alternatives Report.

Real Estate Requirements

- Potential real estate impacts will be identified as part of DEIR/EA.

The following major milestones are anticipated over the course of the next year:

- Alternatives Analysis Report – January 2010
- Draft Environmental Impact Report – June 2010

By filing an Expanded Environmental Notification Form and having successfully selected a design consultant, MassDOT is advancing the Red Line/Blue Line Connector project. MassDOT currently believes that it is on track to meet the SIP requirement to complete final design for the Red Line/Blue Line Connector by December 31, 2011.

Potential Challenges

There has been some unfavorable press coverage about the Red Line/Blue Line project spending \$3 million on a project that does not currently have capital funds for construction. There is the possibility that soliciting proposals for the approximately \$25 million required to comply with the legal commitment will generate additional negative publicity given recent reviews of the state of the MBTA's finances.

IV. GREEN LINE EXTENSION TO SOMERVILLE AND MEDFORD

Project Description

This project - the purpose of which is to improve corridor mobility, boost transit ridership, improve regional air quality, ensure equitable distribution of transit services, and support opportunities for smart growth initiatives and sustainable development – will extend the Green Line from a relocated Lechmere Station within the MBTA's Lowell Line commuter rail right-of-way to Medford with a branch line along the MBTA's Fitchburg Line commuter rail right-of-way to the vicinity of Union Square in Somerville.

Stations are currently proposed to be located in the vicinity of:

- **Mystic Valley Parkway/Route 16** – Located in the vicinity of the intersection of Mystic Valley Parkway/Route 16 and Boston Avenue in Somerville/Medford, south of the Mystic River. The station platform will be located south of the Mystic Valley Parkway/Route 16 undergrade crossing of the MBTA's Lowell Line commuter rail tracks. Access to the station will be provided via property adjacent to Boston Avenue and Route 16. *This station is proposed to be constructed as part of a second phase of the project, to be completed after the December 31, 2014 legal deadline.*
- **College Avenue/Medford Hillside** – Located at the intersection of College Avenue and Boston Avenue in Medford, adjacent to Tufts University. The station platform will be located on the north side of the College Avenue overgrade bridge crossing of the MBTA's Lowell Line commuter rail tracks. Access to the station will be provided from both Boston Avenue and College Avenue.
- **Broadway/Ball Square, Medford/Somerville** – Located at the intersection of Broadway and Boston Avenue on the north side of Ball Square (located in both Somerville and Medford). The station platform will be located on the north side of the Broadway overgrade bridge crossing of the MBTA's Lowell Line commuter rail tracks. Access to the station will be provided from both Boston Avenue and from Broadway.
- **Lowell Street, Somerville** – Located at the Lowell Street bridge overgrade crossing of the MBTA's Lowell Line commuter rail tracks, adjacent to the proposed Somerville Community Path. The station platform will be located on

the north side of the Lowell Street Bridge and access to the station will be provided from Lowell Street.

- **Gilman Square, Somerville** – Located in the vicinity of the Medford Street crossing of the MBTA’s Lowell Line commuter rail tracks, behind Somerville’s City Hall, Public Library, and High School. The station platform will be located on the north side of the Medford Street overgrade bridge crossing of the MBTA’s Lowell Line commuter rail tracks. Access to the station will be provided from Medford Street. The proposed Somerville Community Path will be located in close proximity to the station.
- **Brickbottom, Somerville** – Located in the vicinity of Washington and Joy Streets in Somerville’s Brickbottom/Inner Belt area. The station platform will be located south of Washington Street’s undergrade crossing of the MBTA’s Lowell Line commuter rail tracks. Access to the station will be provided via property on Joy Street, with potential access also to occur from the City’s proposed Inner Belt development on the east. The proposed Somerville Community Path will be located in close proximity to the station.
- **Union Square, Somerville** – Located east of Prospect Street in the vicinity of Union Square in Somerville. The station platform will be located within the MBTA’s Fitchburg Line commuter rail right-of-way east of Prospect Street from both the street and bridge levels. Access to this station will be provided from Prospect Street.

Support Facility

The Green Line Extension will also require the construction of a new light rail maintenance facility for vehicle care and storage in the vicinity of the Green Line Extension. MassDOT has identified a three-part parcel known as Yard 8 – in the Brickbottom/Inner Belt area of Somerville – as the preferred location within the project corridor for the facility. In addition, MassDOT is currently studying two alternative locations for the maintenance/storage facility, known as ‘Mirror H’ and ‘Option L’. MassDOT has prepared a preliminary analysis of these additional sites, which is available on the Green Line Extension project website (www.mass.gov/greenlineextension). MassDOT also presented the information at a public meeting on December 16 in Cambridge.

Project Cost

The DEIR/EA includes concept plans (at the 10% level) for the alternative alignments considered for the Green Line Extension project, as well as detailed capital cost estimates for those alternatives. The capital improvements include, but are not limited to: construction of track, station structures, drainage, utilities, property acquisitions and relocations, vehicle acquisitions, and the construction of a vehicle maintenance facility. The project cost also includes relocating the existing Lechmere Station. The total cost is estimated at \$805 million in 2008 dollars, including \$76 million for the purchase of new vehicles. The total estimated costs for the project have been increased to include inflation

for the implementation period (Year of Expenditure Dollars or “YOE”). The YOE dollar costs for the project are projected to be \$932.4 million.

Project Funding

MassDOT intends to pursue federal funding – through the competitive New Starts program managed by FTA – for the Green Line Extension. MassDOT worked with an independent consultant retained by FTA in order to verify and refine project plans and estimations in anticipation of submitting a formal application for New Starts funding. Should the Green Line Extension not be successful in the New Starts application process, the Commonwealth will be responsible for funding the full costs of the project on its own. This would compel MassDOT to review all project components and costs for affordability.

SIP Deadline

Before December 31, 2014, construction of the following facilities shall be completed and opened to full public use: 1. The Green Line Extension from Lechmere Station to Medford Hillside; 2. The Green Line Union Square spur of the Green Line Extension to Medford Hillside.

Project Status

The following work has been completed or is currently on-going in support of the Green Line Extension project:

Public Outreach

- Advisory Groups– 11 held
- Station Workshops (February 2008) – 5 held
- Interagency meetings (ongoing) – 31 held so far
- Neighborhood briefings– 16 held so far
- Public agency and local official briefings (ongoing) – 43 held so far
- Institution and business group meetings (ongoing) – 3 held so far
- Public Meetings – 5 held so far
- Advisory Group Tutorials– 3
- Public Hearing – 1 held for DEIR/EA

Refinement of Alternatives

- Completed

Development of Design Criteria

- Completed

Station Location Program and Siting

- Completed

Support Facility Program and Siting

- Completed

Design of Green Line Vehicles

- Underway (using funding provide by MassDOT, the MBTA and their consultant are currently developing vehicle specifications). The MBTA intends to advertise for vehicle procurement early in 2010.

Alternatives Analysis

- Completed

Conceptual Engineering

- Completed

Design

- Completed

Cost Estimates

- Completed, currently being reviewed by FTA

Construction Staging and Sequencing Plans

- Completed, currently being reviewed by FTA

Real Estate Requirements

- Completed, potential real estate impacts have been identified as part of DEIR/EA. MassDOT will continue to work with the project team and the MBTA to investigate opportunities to minimize property impacts during Preliminary Engineering.

The following major milestones are anticipated for the next few months:

- FTA New Starts Application – Winter 2010

Potential Challenges

The siting of the needed vehicle maintenance/storage facility has been the most significant planning challenge for the Green Line Extension project. MassDOT is continuing to work closely with the City of Somerville and community residents to develop a solution for the siting of the facility that meets the needs of all parties, but the delay caused by controversy over the location of the facility has cost the project valuable time.