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MEMORANDUM

DATE June 21, 2012

TO Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization

FROM Mark S. Abbott, P.E., MPO Staff
Sean Pfalzer, MPO Staff

RE Safe Access to Transit for Pedestrians and
Bicyclists: Selection of Stations to Be Studied

Many MBTA transit stations are within walking and bicycling distance of significant numbers of riders, actual and potential. However, in some cases, walking and bicycling to a transit station can be inconvenient, uncomfortable, and/or unsafe, owing to lack of pedestrian and bicycle accommodations or lack of safe and well-maintained facilities.

The study Safe Access to Transit for Pedestrians and Bicyclists will examine non-motorized accessibility issues related to transit stations and identify low-cost, quick-implementation measures that can significantly improve pedestrian and bicyclist access to the MBTA system. The measures will create and maintain easy, pleasant, and safe access to transit stations to benefit riders, help promote the use of public transit, reduce congestion, and enhance the character of neighborhoods surrounding transit stations. Another reason for promoting pedestrian and bicyclist access is to avoid adding parking capacity at stations, which is expensive.

As was explained when the scope of work was presented to the MPO for approval, one of the first steps has been to select the stations to be studied. The following stations are hereby submitted for your approval:

- Braintree Station – Red Line

- Morton Street Station – Fairmount commuter rail
- Oak Grove Station – Orange Line
- Riverside Station – Green Line D Branch

For each of these stations, the local municipality has shown interest in the development and implementation of recommendations. This selection includes both commuter rail and rapid transit stations. The selection process, including particular reasons for choosing these four stations, is described below.

Initially, 21 stations were selected as possible subjects for study. This process sought stations that:

- Need improvements according to qualitative MBTA station access assessment based upon the regional “Needs Assessment” found in volume 2 of the MPO’s Long-Range Transportation Plan, *Paths to a Sustainable Region*
- Are in an area with a high density of employment, retail activity, and/or population
- Have relatively low pedestrian and bicycle use, based upon existing passenger survey data
- Have or will have bicycle racks or cages
- The local municipality has shown an interest in improving in terms of pedestrian and bicycle access
- Are in an area with a high crash rate for vehicles, pedestrians, and/or bicycles
- Have future development potential or for which other land use changes are pending

Interest on the part of the local municipality was a particularly important factor in making the final selection. A willingness was sought on the part of the municipality to make efforts to achieve implementation of the study’s recommendations.

All commuter rail and rapid transit stations in the Boston Region MPO area were considered. Employment and population density data were reviewed for each station along with existing passenger survey data and MAPC

station type data¹. The selection criteria led to the identification of 11 commuter rail stations and 10 rapid transit stations, presented in Table 1, for the initial list. From these, the final four stations were selected based on feedback from municipalities and other factors. Some of the factors considered in the case of each of the final four stations are as follows:

- Braintree: There are over 1,300 parking spaces at Braintree Station, and parking is consistently at capacity (99% utilization). Of the large number of passengers boarding or alighting at Braintree (almost 4,400 on an average weekday), only about 13% walk or bike to access the station or to travel from the station to their destinations. This is relatively low in comparison to other stations along the Braintree Branch of the Red Line.
- Morton Street: This station has the lowest percentage of walk and bike access among stations with high population or employment densities. The surrounding area also lacks pedestrian amenities. There is no parking at the station.
- Oak Grove: Parking is consistently at capacity (99% utilization). There is a high number of boarding and alighting passengers (almost 6,000 on an average weekday), only about 33% walk or bike to access the station or to travel from the station to their destinations. Improved bike connections from Melrose are needed.
- Riverside: This station has high parking utilization (90%). Of the large number of passengers boarding or alighting at Riverside (almost 2,200 on an average weekday), only about 22% walk or bike to access the station or to travel from the station to their destinations. This is a relatively low percentage in comparison to other stations along the D Branch of the Green Line.

¹ Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), “Growing Station Areas: The Variety and Potential of Transit Oriented Development in Metro Boston”, June 2012.

TABLE 1
Initial List of Potential Stations for Study

	Station	Line	City/Town	Interest by City/Town?
Commuter Rail	Beverly Farms	Newburyport/Rockport	Beverly	
	Chelsea	Newburyport/Rockport	Chelsea	
	Concord	Fitchburg	Concord	
	Hamilton/Wenham	Newburyport/Rockport	Hamilton	Yes
	Ipswich	Newburyport/Rockport	Ipswich	
	Littleton/Route 495	Fitchburg	Littleton	
	<i>Morton Street</i>	<i>Fairmount</i>	<i>Boston</i>	<i>Yes</i>
	Roslindale Village	Needham	Boston	Yes
	Southborough	Framingham/Worcester	Southborough	
	Uphams Corner	Fairmount	Boston	Yes
	West Gloucester	Newburyport/Rockport	Gloucester	
Rapid Transit	Andrew	Red	Boston	Yes
	<i>Braintree</i>	<i>Red</i>	<i>Braintree</i>	<i>Yes</i>
	Dudley Square	Bus	Boston	Yes
	Eliot	Green – D Branch	Newton	Yes
	Newton Highlands	Green – D Branch	Newton	Yes
	<i>Oak Grove</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Melrose/Malden</i>	<i>Yes</i>
	<i>Riverside</i>	<i>Green – D Branch</i>	<i>Newton</i>	<i>Yes</i>
	Shawmut	Red	Boston	Yes
	Stony Brook	Orange	Boston	Yes
	Waban	Green – D Branch	Newton	Yes

The stations in italicized boldface were selected for study.