Natick Center MBTA Commuter Rail Station

FEASIBILITY STUDY AND CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FOR UPGRADES

Public Meeting
June 19, 2014
Project Purpose & Need

- Upgrade the MBTA commuter rail station in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Provide enhanced access for all modes of travel
- Develop a multimodal transit hub
- Support community development in Natick Center
Station accessibility has been a longstanding goal of the community, and was cited in the 2008 Natick 360 Strategic Plan adopted by the Town.

In 2011, the state completed the acquisition of the CSX Main Branch from Boston to Worcester to provide increased passenger service and track/station improvements.

Natick Town Meeting appropriated $80,000 in Fall 2012 for a feasibility study and conceptual development of a new Natick MBTA Station.

The MBTA Station Advisory Committee was established by the Natick Board of Selectmen in January 2013.

The Committee developed a Request for Proposals for consulting and engineering services, subsequently issued by the Board of Selectmen; three firms responded and McMahon Associates was selected in August 2013.
# MBTA Station Advisory Committee

- 4 members at large
- Representatives from the MBTA, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) and MWRTA
- BOS, Community Development Director and Natick Center Associates representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael Avitzur (Clerk)</td>
<td>Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles M. Hughes</td>
<td>MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA)</td>
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<td>Joshua Ostroff (Chair)</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen Representative</td>
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<td>Patrick Reffett (Vice Chair)</td>
<td>Community Development Director</td>
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<td>Seth Asante</td>
<td>Central Transportation Planning Staff</td>
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<td>Dan Brainerd</td>
<td>Member</td>
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<td>Greg Dysart</td>
<td>Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ron Morgan</td>
<td>MBTA Capital Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Betty Scott</td>
<td>Natick Center Associates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Supple</td>
<td>Member</td>
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Re-Designed Station Concept

One ramp
One stair

One elevator
One stair

One ramp
Center Platform

Center Platform Concept

Example of Gauntlet Track to Accommodate Freight
Examples of Vertical Access
Extend Moran Park

Examples of Parks Built Over Rail or Highway

Moran Park

Manning Community Park, Boulevard Street over Interstate 93
Milton, MA

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority/Intermodal Transportation Center
Pittsfield, MA
North Avenue

Passenger pick-up/drop-off and/or MWRTA bus stop area

Remove parking and retain one-way circulation

8’ wide bus lane

Wide sidewalk/esplanade with reconstructed retaining wall

Roadway widened to 30’ from Walnut to Washington St

Bus shelter and seating

Town of Natick
Natick Center Commuter Rail Station
Station Concept

Explore options for access to station from bridges
Explore potential public-private development
Station Concept

* Railroad tracks shift slightly north
Station Concept

Explore connections to Cochituate Rail Trail
Bridge abutments may impact platform configurations
Track grade considerations for potential center platform
Coordinate need for freight rail access with station design
Transit Considerations

**MBTA Commuter Rail**
- Service Worcester to Boston
- 22 inbound weekday trains
- 21 outbound weekday trains

**MWRTA buses**
- Operates 25-foot cutaway buses, with one front door.
- Two fixed routes (10 and 11)
- One employee shuttle (Route 12)
**Transit Ridership**

**MBTA Commuter Rail**
AM Peak: 432 on / 68 off  
PM Peak: 53 on / 349 off  
Approx. 800 total typical weekday inbound boardings (2012)

**MWRTA Commuter Rail Shuttle**
50 to 80 boardings/day (total)

**MWRTA Fixed Routes 10 & 11**
7 to 10 boardings/day at Natick Center stops

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**Town of Natick**

**Natick Center Commuter Rail Station**
Public Outreach & Stakeholder Coordination

Advisory Committee Meetings
- 12 meetings; 3 held with consultant team
- Posted and open to the public
- Attended by Natick Commission on Disability

Stakeholder meetings
- MBTA RR operations
- MWRTA
- MBTA Systemwide Accessibility

Public Meetings
- Open house November 2013
- Public meeting June 2014

Public Survey
- 233 participants
- Supplemented input received at the public meeting, including from under-represented groups
Public Outreach

Public open house November 12, 2013

- Public input on station problems and concerns, and identification of the features and attributes that would encourage increased ridership.

- Online survey of station users and neighbors. 233 individuals participated to provide similar input to the open house.

- Concerns about access, safety, shelter, convenience and connections to parking, buses, bikes and walking routes were strongly expressed.
**Project Goals**

**Transit** – Integrate MBTA commuter rail and MWRTA bus services by providing ADA-compliant, efficiently operated transit stations and connections for inbound commutes to Boston, and reverse commutes to Natick to access employment opportunities.

**Access and Circulation** – Integrate ADA accessibility, along with safe and convenient accommodation for local bus transit passengers, pedestrians, bicycles, and motor vehicle parking, pick-up/drop-off, and circulation to support the first/last mile of commutes associated with Natick Center Station.
Project Goals

**Community Development** – Pursue visual and infrastructure improvements that enhance the quality of Natick Center, integrate the CRT with station design, and explore joint development opportunities that may unlock potential funding sources.

**Costs** – Consider the relative costs of alternatives and pursue a variety of funding sources.

**Environmental** – Ensure that the station and associated development is compatible with the community, architecturally and functionally, while minimizing impacts on environmental resources.
Benefits of Center Platform
• Passenger convenience
• Flexible for railroad operations
• Single platform is less capital intensive
Focal Point on Main Street

Town of Natick
Natick Center Commuter Rail Station
Station Location Considerations

- Straight Track
- Access Points
- Trip Generators
- Permit parking lot
Platform Concept

One ramp
One stair

One elevator
One stair

One ramp
Transit Rider Amenities

- MBTA bench
- Attleboro ITC Bus Shelter
- MBTA Silver Line
- Cambridge Central Sq.
- Chicago decorative shelter
- Covered Bicycle Parking

Town of Natick
Natick Center Commuter Rail Station
Conceptual Street Improvements

- Sidewalk and pedestrian improvements along Cochituate/Spring Streets
- MetroWest bus stop (Routes 10, 11, 12)
- Pedestrian “gateway” improvements at key intersections
- Passenger pick-up/drop-off
- New station entrance at Washington Street
- Potential pedestrian path between public safety, parking lot and station
- Sidewalks and pedestrian improvements along Middlesex Ave., and consolidate driveways
- New air rights plaza
- New center platform
- Bus shelter, seating, and covered bike parking
- New station entrance at Spring Street
- Accessible parking (4 spaces)
- Pedestrian “gateway” improvements at key intersections
- Pedestrian improvements along South Ave. between Hayes and Main St. and consolidate driveways
- CSX Actonville Branch Commuter Rail Trail
- Pedestrian “gateway” improvements at key intersections

Town of Natick  Natick Center Commuter Rail Station
Street space can be reallocated to wider sidewalks, street trees and seating to create a more inviting pedestrian environment.

*sample street cross-section*
Pedestrian Improvements – Gateway Treatments

- Active Pedestrian Beacon
- Raised Crosswalk
- ADA Curb Ramp
- Stamped Asphalt Decorative Crosswalk
- Crosswalk Curb Extension
- Crosswalk Curb Extension
Long-Range Options

- Create a more formal intermodal transit center, to accommodate MWRTA buses
- Develop a visitor center with transit information and elevator access
- Explore air-rights real estate development
- Design a connection between the Station and the proposed Cochituate Rail Trail (CRT) on the former Saxonville branch.

Alewife Station connection to Minuteman Trail
Hyannis Transportation Center
Attleboro ITC
Fenway Center
Long-Range Options
Long-Range Options

- Remove parking and retain one-way circulation
- Pick-up/drop-off area or on-street parking
- Roadway widened to 30' from Walnut to Washington St
- Busway entrance
- Bus rider boarding and alighting area
- Busway exit

Town of Natick

Natick Center Commuter Rail Station
Implementation Framework

1. Ongoing Collaboration of Project Parties – MBTA, MWRTA, and Town of Natick should work together to achieve streamlined design and implementation, while ensuring needs of transit providers are met.

2. Outreach, Public & Business Support – Continued engagement with the community will build support for a multimodal transportation station and boost advocacy at the state and federal level.

3. Secure funding – A wide range of funding options may be pursued for design and construction of the rail and bus station, and ancillary pedestrian and bicycle improvements.
Implementation Framework

**Immediate**
- Advocacy & Collaboration

**Short-Term**
- Improvements
- CRT Connection
- Funding Streetscape Improvements
- Funding Station Design & Construction

**Medium-Term**
- Design & Permitting of Station
- Implement Streetscape Improvements

**Long-Term**
- Construction of Station
- Air Rights Development
# Natick Center Commuter Rail Funding
## Avenues for Improvements

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<tr>
<th>Federal</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Local</th>
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| **TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery)**  
- Trails to transit connections  
- Other transportation linked to economic development | **MassDOT**  
**CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement)**  
- Non-single occupancy vehicle travel to improve air quality  
  - Potential CRT funding source  
  - Pedestrian improvements  
  - Bicycle improvements  
**TAP (Transportation Alternatives Program)**  
- On & off-road pedestrian/bicycle facilities  
- Non-driver access to public transportation  
- Enhanced mobility  
- Community improvement | **PPP (Public-Private Partnerships)**  
- Elevator access to transit  
- Air rights development  
**Development Mitigation**  
- Reduced parking requirements for pedestrian & bicycle infrastructure  
- Landscaping & streetscape improvements  
**BID (Business Improvement District)**  
- Streetscape improvement and beautification |
| **FTA (Federal Transit Administration)**  
- MBTA  
- MWRTA |  
**Discretionary Funds**  
- Associated Transit Improvements (Transportation Enhancements)  
- Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and People with Disabilities (Section 5310)  
- National Research and Technology for public transportation (Section 5312)  
- State of Good Repair (Section 5337)  
- Transit Capital Investment (Section 5309) |  
**MassWorks**  
**Infrastructure Program**  
- Improve infrastructure and create development-ready sites that will spur business expansion. |
Natick Center MBTA Commuter Rail Station

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION