



# CHELSEA

Chelsea Commuter Rail Station Project  
Public Information Meeting  
Thursday, September 19, 2019

Chelsea City Hall  
500 Broadway, Chelsea, MA 02150

**MBTA Attendees**

Dan Beaulieu  
Jonathan Hines

**Project Team Attendees**

Frank Astone, AECOM  
Nancy Farrell, RVA  
George Katsoufis, AECOM  
Matt Sanchez, AECOM  
Chris Kivior, MassDOT  
Kyle Olsen, RVA  
Sarah Paritsky, RVA  
John Pastore, A.A. Will Corporation  
John McNamara, AA Will Corporation

**Public Attendees (from sign-in sheets)**

Tom Ambrosino, *Chelsea City Manager*  
Susan Backstrom  
Maria Belen Power, *Green Roots*  
Janice Benton Audson  
Maureen Cawley  
Angie Curro, *Chelsea Record*  
Theresa Czerspica  
Terry Englen  
Maura Garrily  
Paula Garrity, *Green Roots*  
Roberto Jimene, *Tufts University*  
Sarah Levy, *Green Roots*  
Chris Lornell, *ACS Development*

Lou Mammolette, *Chelsea DPW*  
Chris Manatis Lornell  
Sharlene McLean  
David McLean, *Market Basket*  
Roman Plicko  
Mark Rossi  
Jan Rubin  
Patricia Simbdi  
Lauren Siracusa, *Acorda Therapeutics*  
Adam Swift, *Chelsea Record*  
Carmine Tomas, *Market Basket*  
Deborah Washington, *Chelsea Black Community*

**Meeting Purpose**

The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the Chelsea Commuter Rail Station Project, explain why the current station needs to be replaced, give a summary of how construction will affect abutters and collect feedback from the public.

**Meeting Format**

The meeting began with a presentation at 6:00 PM followed by time for public comments and questions.

**Materials (Available on project website: [www.mbta.com/ChelseaStation](http://www.mbta.com/ChelseaStation))**

- PowerPoint presentation (in English and Spanish)

**WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

Tom Ambrosino, Chelsea City Manager, opened the meeting and explained that he’s worked closely with the MBTA to secure funding for the Chelsea Commuter Rail Station project. City Manager Ambrosino introduced Dan Beaulieu, MBTA project manager, who outlined the meeting agenda. Frank Astone, AECOM project manager, pointed out there are Spanish interpretation services available, if needed.

**POWERPOINT PRESENTATION**

Mr. Astone began the presentation by introducing the project team and showing an aerial view of the new Chelsea Commuter Rail Station location in relation to the existing station. Mr. Astone explained that the current station does not meet the MBTA and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards for accessibility. The new Chelsea Commuter Rail Station will include high level boarding, canopies, better lighting, security cameras, variable message signs, police call boxes and improved wayfinding signage.

Mr. Astone explained that the new Chelsea Commuter Rail Station platform will be approximately 800 feet long, compared to the current station platform which is about 400 feet long. Access will be maintained on both sides of the station to provide transfers to the Chelsea Silver Line 3 (SL3) station and accommodate future abutting redevelopment projects.

Aesthetically, the new Chelsea Commuter Rail Station canopies will mirror the current Chelsea SL3 stop, with concrete and glass canopies. Mr. Astone explained that along with creating a cohesive look, this design incorporates elements that make long-term maintenance easier. Once completed, the new Chelsea Commuter Rail Station and Chelsea SL3 stop will become a multi-modal station.

Mr. Astone then explained that railroad system upgrades would be made along the Newburyport/Rockport line from Everett Junction to Wonderland and would consist of replacing power and signal cables, rehabbing or replacing railroad gates, and integrating traffic signals with preemption. Additionally, grade crossings will be reconstructed on 2<sup>nd</sup> St., 3<sup>rd</sup> St., Everett Ave.,

Spruce St., 6<sup>th</sup> St. & Arlington St., and Eastern Ave. These railroad improvements will be made to help the system run more efficiently.

Mr. Astone outlined the project schedule, explaining that construction on the project began in August 2019, and is expected to continue through Fall 2021. He explained that during construction, the existing commuter rail station will remain open and service will be maintained except for six weekend closures required for grade crossing construction. During these weekend closures, bus shuttles will be used between Lynn and North Station. Additionally, some partial and full roadway closures will be necessary for grade crossing work. Mr. Astone assured the audience that there will be proactive and adequate notice before detours and closures, and noise mitigation techniques will be in place throughout construction.

Mr. Astone invited attendees to email the project inbox ([ChelseaStation@mbta.com](mailto:ChelseaStation@mbta.com)) with questions and to sign up for project email notifications. He shared the website link for more information before opening the floor to questions: [www.mbta.com/ChelseaStation](http://www.mbta.com/ChelseaStation)

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS & QUESTIONS**

Maura Garrity, a Chelsea resident, expressed concern about obtaining information on the Chelsea Commuter Rail Project when there are so many other projects being completed in Chelsea. Ms. Garrity suggested the project team share information about this project through the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) project website or email list. City Manager Ambrosino clarified that a goal of his is to have residents sign up for a list that provides information on all projects relating to Chelsea. Nancy Farrell, RVA, said the team will make the request to MassDOT.

Ms. Garrity then explained that given the size of Chelsea, full or partial roadway closures can cause a sizable impact for commuters and residents. She asked if the project team was considering other projects when planning detours. Mr. Beaulieu explained that the project team is aware of other projects in the area and will coordinate with the City to get the word out as early as possible. City Manager Ambrosino explained that a positive aspect of the project is that it's mostly being performed behind Market Basket and the impacts are less frequent than other projects.

Lou Mammolette, Engineer for the City of Chelsea, wanted to know about service impacts to the current Chelsea Commuter Rail Station when there are weekend closures. Mr. Beaulieu explained that shuttle buses will stop at the existing Chelsea Commuter Rail Station before going to North Station.. Mr. Mammolette expressed concern about customers being confused about the timing of shuttle buses compared to the Commuter Rail schedule. Another participant wanted to confirm that shuttle buses will operate on the same schedule as the Commuter Rail trains. Mr. Beaulieu confirmed that they will.

A participant explained that the 111 bus has a stop close to the current Chelsea Commuter Rail Station and wanted to know if there were any plans to connect other Chelsea bus routes to the

new commuter rail station. Mr. Beaulieu explained that he would talk to other MBTA departments about bus integration.

Sharlene McLean, a Chelsea resident, explained that media has been saying the new Chelsea Commuter Rail Station will be a boom to Chelsea and neighboring communities, and wanted to know if there have been conversations about leasing property for parking to accommodate this growth. David McLean, Market Basket, explained that while Market Basket is in favor of the project, there have been similar concerns about enforcing parking, especially since the new location has less street parking than the current station. Ms. McLean asked if there have been conversations between the MBTA and Market Basket about leasing parking spaces, explaining that some people already use the parking lot to access the SL3 bus. Mr. Beaulieu explained that there have been internal conversations with MBTA Real Estate and Parking staff, and that he will try to continue having conversations on parking.

Lauren Siracusa, Acorda Therapeutics, echoed Ms. McLean's concerns about parking during and after construction, explaining that her abutting business is already tight on parking.

Roman Plicko explained that the 111, 112, 114, 116 and 117 buses all stop close to the current Chelsea Commuter Rail Station, and asked where they will stop when the new station is complete. Another participant clarified that currently, the 112 bus stops at Market Basket, making it the only direct connection to the new commuter rail station. Mr. Plicko suggested that the project team should build a parking garage similar to the one at the Salem Commuter Rail Station for buses, commuter rail customers, and shoppers. Mr. Beaulieu reiterated that he will discuss bus connections with MBTA bus operations staff.

Ms. Garrity asked if there would be countdown clocks and fare machines at the new Chelsea Commuter Rail Station. Mr. Beaulieu explained that there would be variable message signs that indicate when the next trains will be coming and a separate sign for SL3 arrivals. Mr. Astone explained that the project team is working to have all infrastructure ready for the MBTA's new Automated Fare Collection system (AFC 2.0). George Katsoufis, AECOM, explained that the AFC 2.0 system predicts adding fare to smartphones will be more popular than using a Charlie Card, but many attendees expressed interest in having a fare vending machine at the new station. Mr. Beaulieu explained he didn't know at this stage of the design. Nancy Farrell, RVA, clarified that the intent of AFC 2.0 isn't to limit payment options, and that one of the goals is to be able to purchase pre-loaded Charlie Cards at places where gift cards can be purchased.

A participant expressed concerns about losing value on a Charlie Card if it's not used and the future of limited use cards for people with disabilities and the elderly.

Another participant pointed out that fare vending machines with single use, paper Charlie Cards are easier for visitors. Mr. Astone explained that there is more information about AFC 2.0 on the MBTA website: [www.mbta.com/projects/automated-fare-collection-20-afc-20](http://www.mbta.com/projects/automated-fare-collection-20-afc-20).

Ms. Garrity asked about the size of the New Chelsea Commuter Rail Station platform. Mr. Beaulieu explained that it will be 800 feet long with a width that varies from 10-12 feet. Ms. Garrity then asked about the abutting development that's being planned, and if the new commuter rail station can accommodate the increased ridership. Mr. Beaulieu explained that the MBTA service planning staff evaluates ridership yearly and demand forecasting to make train service decisions. The new station is designed to have adequate capacity for local development growth.

A participant noted that the Acela train stops at Route 128 and Back Bay Stations before arriving at South Station, and the same could happen with Chelsea before arriving at North Station. She also explained that the ridership evaluations may not be indicative of potential ridership since the current station is inaccessible and some people do not know it exists.

Ms. Garrity echoed the concerns on accurate ridership, explaining that she felt the MBTA hasn't come to the community to ask about connections and other modes of transportation. Another participant emphasized Ms. Garrity's point, explaining that there isn't much ridership because it's hard to get to the commuter rail station. Mr. Katsoufis explained that the new Chelsea Commuter Rail Station will be more accessible to commuters, and that these concerns are more related to connectivity with other modes of transportation.

Mr. Mammolette asked if the MBTA tries to minimize the trip duration from Chelsea to Downtown Boston. Mr. Beaulieu explained that he is responsible for managing the design and construction of stations, but he will bring the concerns about bus connections to MBTA service planning. Mr. Mammolette suggested that someone from a relevant department host a separate meeting to explain these complex issues. Ms. Garrity agreed with Mr. Mammolette, explaining that MBTA Operations staff should attend public meetings to understand Chelsea's service gaps and how to fill them.

City Manager Ambrosino clarified that the intention of this meeting is to discuss the construction of the commuter rail station and related impacts. He meets monthly with the project team and plans to discuss bus operations, parking, and other issues going forward.

A participant requested that when the project team talks to operations staff at the MBTA they bring up a direct bus connection to the new commuter rail station.

A participant noted that she usually drives to her appointments to avoid confusion, as she didn't know where to board a train heading for Rockport in the past. A participant mentioned that it can be very difficult to flag down the commuter rail train and request a stop at the current Chelsea commuter rail station. She said a buzzer or button would be easier and safer.

Mr. Mammolette explained that during the winter the Chelsea Department of Public Works helps with snow removal at bus stops, and requested that the MBTA helps remove snow on sidewalks near the new commuter rail station. Mr. Mammolette then asked if the project team had any plans for dismantling the old Chelsea Commuter Rail Station, explaining that it's close to

residents and is located next to a crowded intersection. Mr. Astone explained that the contractor must create a demolition plan addressing these concerns and he will follow up at the monthly team meetings about this.

A participant explained that she owns property along Everett Avenue, and wanted to know if the grade crossing upgrades would alleviate or exacerbate traffic, and when they would be completed. Mr. Astone explained that the hope is traffic will be alleviated. Construction is expected to continue through Fall 2021.

City Manager Ambrosino thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

### **Written Comment Forms**

Written comment forms were available for attendees to complete and turn in during the meeting. Only one was submitted and is transcribed below:

- Excellent presentation. Best I ever went to – I go to a lot of presentations. In future have central garage and terminal for 111, 112, 114, 116 and 117. Will meet with Alex Train, Access Plans and Specs then get back to you with constructive comments. Biggest concern GRID LOCK caused by closures to vehicular traffic at grade crossings.