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MEMORANDUM

Date: January 12, 2023

To: Alex Strycky, Environmental Analyst, Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office

From: Tess Paganelli, Manager of Environmental Construction, MBTA

Subject: MBTA South-Side Maintenance and Layover Facility, Readville Yard 2 EENF Supplemental Memorandum

As described in the EENF, the MBTA identified the need for a new locomotive and coach heavy maintenance and repair facility for commuter rolling stock operating on the south-side of Boston. Operations on the south-side of Boston make up two-thirds of the commuter rail service provided by the MBTA. The South-Side Maintenance Facility Project will support the continuing and future need to provide routine service, periodic inspections, and heavy repairs, of the MBTA's south-side commuter rail's rolling stock. In exploring options for siting the maintenance facility, the MBTA evaluated eight locations, including Beacon Park Yard which is within the Allston Multimodal Project area and Widett Circle. Also included in this evaluation was the existing Readville Yard 2, where periodic inspections and light repairs are currently performed. Readville Yard 2 also currently provides mid-day and overnight layover storage of commuter rail trainsets, which function must be retained given its importance to the operation of south-side commuter rail. As described in the EENF alternatives analysis, none of the alternative locations better met the operational and programmatic needs of the MBTA for a heavy maintenance and repair facility than Readville Yard 2.

The space required for a heavy maintenance and repair facility at Readville Yard 2 would cover the footprint of the existing layover yard. Readville Yard 2 is the largest existing layover on the south-side. To include both a new maintenance and repair facility and the current layover capacity for south-side operations, it was determined that the adjacent parcel would need to be acquired. The new heavy maintenance and repair facility at Readville Yard 2 will not result in the creation of new or additional permanent layover capacity; it would simply preserve the layover capacity that currently exists by relocating the layover facilities to the adjacent parcel.

As the MBTA continues to maximize the efficiency of current commuter rail operations and plans for the future growth and evolution of both commuter and regional rail service, the location and capacity for sites to host additional trainset layover facilities will be considered separate and apart from planning of maintenance facilities. Two such sites have recently been discussed as potential layover facility locations, but it should be made clear that neither would satisfy the requirements for a heavy maintenance facility.

- The MBTA recently announced a plan to acquire Widett Circle for a layover yard to support existing service and expanded service on the south-side associated with South Coast Rail and potentially other regional rail expansion. An initial concept plan for a layover yard at Widett Circle was originally described and evaluated as part of the South Station Expansion Project EIR in 2016. Neither the previous 2016 conceptual plan nor the current plan for increased layover at Widett Circle would allow for a heavy maintenance and repair facility meeting the needs for South-Side service.
- The Allston Multimodal Project being progressed by MassDOT includes a provision for mid-day storage of up to 8 trainsets at Beacon Park Yard as part of the 3L-Realignment Alternative described in the July 2022 MEPA Notice of Project Change.

These additional layover yards under consideration are independent of the South-Side Maintenance Facility Project; however, they do presume that the base-case scenario consists of at least 12 trainset layover tracks continuing to be available in Readville.

In conclusion, the MBTA is proposing the South-Side Maintenance and Layover Facility to address a critical need for heavy maintenance and repair. The MBTA conducted an alternative site assessment focused on the size and location needs for a maintenance facility. Readville Yard 2 was determined to be the best location for a maintenance facility. The fact that Readville Yard 2 currently provides layover that will be maintained to support south-side storage does not change the overall purpose and need for the new maintenance facility.