

The Everett Professional Soccer Stadium and Waterfront Park: A Conceptual Plan for Future MBTA Service

Executive Summary

Enacted in 2025, the Mass Leads Act facilitated the redevelopment of land in Everett to enable a future professional soccer stadium and waterfront park. This legislation required the MBTA to develop a plan to provide access to the proposed campus. The MBTA has conducted a **preliminary analysis** to understand where its current planning efforts and other external proposals align with the legislation's goal of increasing transit access to the proposed stadium and park.

The analysis documented here is conceptual and **should not** be interpreted as a commitment by the MBTA or the project proponent to provide or fund additional service to the proposed stadium. Project mitigations are formally determined through state and federal (if applicable) environmental review processes including Chapter 91 and MEPA. Moreover, more design work is needed to understand both the costs and benefits of many of the transit services discussed in this conceptual plan. The MBTA looks forward to working with the project proponent at the appropriate time and through the above-mentioned public processes to understand those details if the project proceeds.

This preliminary conceptual plan highlights the need for further site planning and forecasting to understand the transportation demand that will be induced by the proposed stadium, especially on event days. Without more detailed information on stadium capacity, site layout, facility design, and expected event attendance, the MBTA cannot predict how much additional transit service is needed to adequately serve the stadium and waterfront park. For example, it is critical to know more details about the stadium proposal itself, such as confirmed seating capacity and expected event attendance to better forecast a plan. Without these important inputs, the MBTA will not be able to develop a final service plan. The MBTA looks forward to further collaboration with stakeholders as the project proponent refines their development plans for the site.

The MBTA has engaged in a conceptual exercise that examines where current planning efforts – both internal and external – and the MBTA's experience with special event service align with the **legislation's goal of increasing transit access** to the proposed stadium. First, the proposed extension of the Silver Line 3 (SL3) could offer a significant

improvement in direct transit access to the site and region along Broadway in Everett, which is already served by Route 109, a high-frequency bus route launched in December 2024. However, the full cost of the SL3 extension – currently estimated at around \$104 million – is not funded in either the MBTA’s Capital Investment Plan (CIP) or through other sources.

Secondly, using the Sullivan Square Orange Line Station as a transit hub, the MBTA could increase service on the Orange Line and area bus routes on stadium event dates. The Sullivan Orange Line Station is walking distance to the proposed stadium site, and this would be in line with MBTA service enhancements to support similar large-scale events at TD Garden and Fenway Park. However, at the time of this report no funding for enhancements to serve the proposed stadium currently exists, either in the MBTA’s operating budget or through other sources.

Third, the MassDOT Highway-led Mystic River Pedestrian Bridge, which will connect Draw 7 Park in Somerville to Everett, may have the potential to support active mode connections to the proposed stadium on event days from Assembly Orange Line station, although Sullivan Square is a more direct connection to the stadium site.

Fourth, the MBTA acknowledges that local stakeholders have advocated for a new Commuter Rail station in Everett, which could potentially provide another transit option to the Everett region, including the proposed stadium. However, there is no funding in the MBTA’s CIP or through other sources for such an effort. Finally, stakeholders have also suggested that the MBTA explore water transportation options to serve the proposed stadium. MassDOT is conducting a broad study that will examine the region’s water transportation system, which will include significant public and stakeholder engagement, in addition to reviewing the utilization of existing shuttle service to better understand commuter demand.

The MBTA looks forward to future collaboration with stakeholders as development plans mature for the site.

Background

In November 2024, the Massachusetts Legislature passed and Governor Healey signed into law the Mass Leads Act (Chapter 238 of the Acts of 2024). This law provides a pathway for the construction of a professional soccer stadium and a waterfront park in Everett on a 43-acre parcel that was formerly a fossil fuel power plant and consists of Eversource substation switchyards. The law also requires the MBTA to put forth a plan to provide access to the proposed stadium via public transit:

*SECTION 295. (f) The construction of the professional soccer stadium and waterfront park and any site redevelopment, pursuant to subsection (a), shall include improvements to increase the availability of public transportation through Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority to access the stadium and waterfront park; provided, however, **that the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, shall develop a plan on to how to provide access to the professional soccer stadium and waterfront park through public transportation, including, but not limited to, bus routes and shall publish said plan to its website not later than March 1, 2025.***

In efforts to finalize these preliminary recommendations, the MBTA sought feedback on this analysis from several stakeholders, including members of the Massachusetts House of Representatives and Senate, local municipal leaders and staff, transportation advocacy groups, and the project proponent. These conversations generated valuable feedback to further refine this conceptual plan. We look forward to future conversations and partnerships about how MBTA service may support the future use of this site.

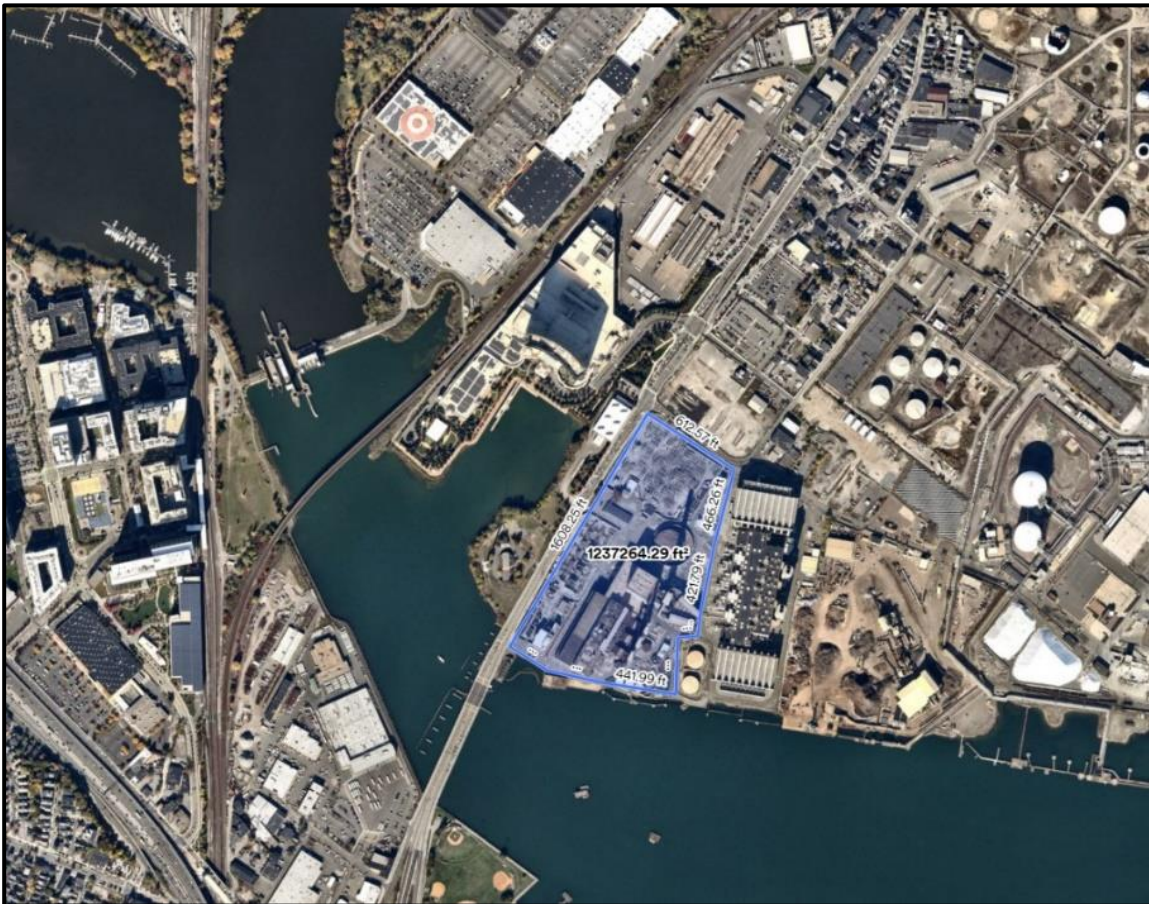


Figure 1: Approximate location of the 43-acre parcel for the proposed stadium in Everett

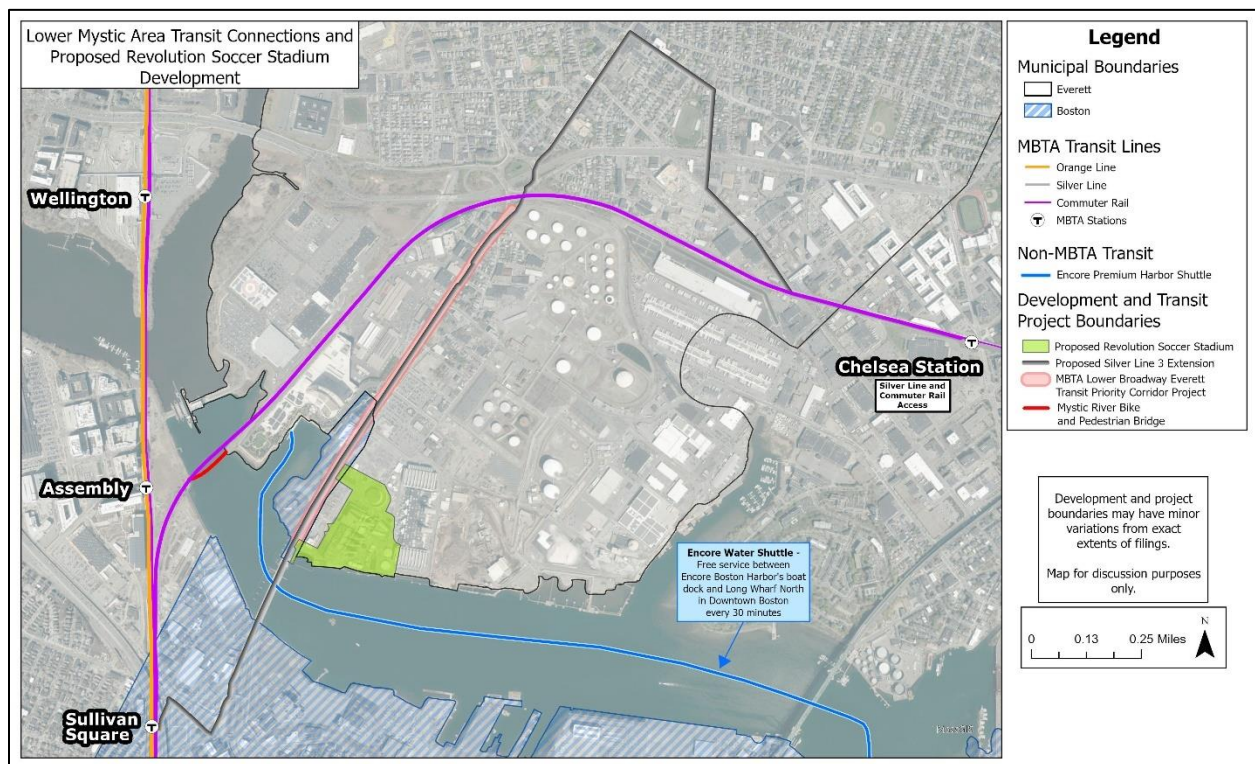
Existing MBTA Service near the Proposed stadium

The most proximate existing transit service to the proposed stadium is the High Frequency Route 109 bus service on Broadway connecting Sullivan Square Rapid Transit Station (Orange Line) to Linden Square, Everett via Everett Center.

The proposed stadium is also within 2 miles of several major transit hubs, with connections to the Orange Line, local buses, the Silver Line, and the Commuter Rail's Newburyport/Rockport Line including:

- Sullivan Square Station Orange Line Rapid Transit (0.75 mi)
- Chelsea Commuter Rail Station (Newburyport/Rockport Line) (1.5 mi)
- Chelsea SL3 Bus Rapid Transit Station (1.5 mi)

Besides Route 109, Sullivan Square station also has connections to several other bus routes, including Sullivan Square the CT2, 89, 89/93, 90, 91, 92, 93, 95, 101, and 105. Continuing to support transit priority projects, including transit signal priority projects or bus infrastructure, to ensure surface transportation options are efficient, will be a key strategy for moving large amounts of people to the proposed site.



Bus – Relevant Planning Efforts: SL3 Extension

In 2024, MassDOT published the [*Silver Line Extension Alternatives Analysis*](#) which identified the alignment shown below as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). The LPA extends the existing Silver Line Bus Rapid Transit SL3 Route from its current terminus in Chelsea to connect to Everett Center and southward to Sullivan Square Orange Line Station via Broadway (see Figure 2).

Modeling conducted in the Alternatives Analysis indicates that extending the SL3 is likely to “increase daily ridership on the SL3 by over 15,000 riders, with a full daily ridership of over 27,800 riders.” However, this model run did not include the stadium nor other proposed developments in the area and their associated demand. More information is needed about the characteristics of the proposed stadium to accurately model the demand that the stadium will generate. For example, stadium capacity and the amount of parking at the site and in the surrounding area will impact mode share (i.e. how many visitors drive to the stadium vs. use public transportation or other modes). This information will help the MBTA determine how much SL3 service would be needed to supplement the existing High Frequency Route 109 service to support the proposed stadium.

The Alternatives Analysis proposes three stations along Broadway including one at Horizon Way, which is one block north of the northern edge of the parcel in which the soccer stadium is proposed. The Analysis proposed 10-12 minute frequencies 7 days per week for the full span of service. Using the MassDOT study as a basis, the MBTA staff developed a construction estimate of \$104M (2023 dollars); it would also require additional Silver Line vehicles and increased head count. The project was not funded due to severe constraints on the MBTA’s overburdened CIP program.

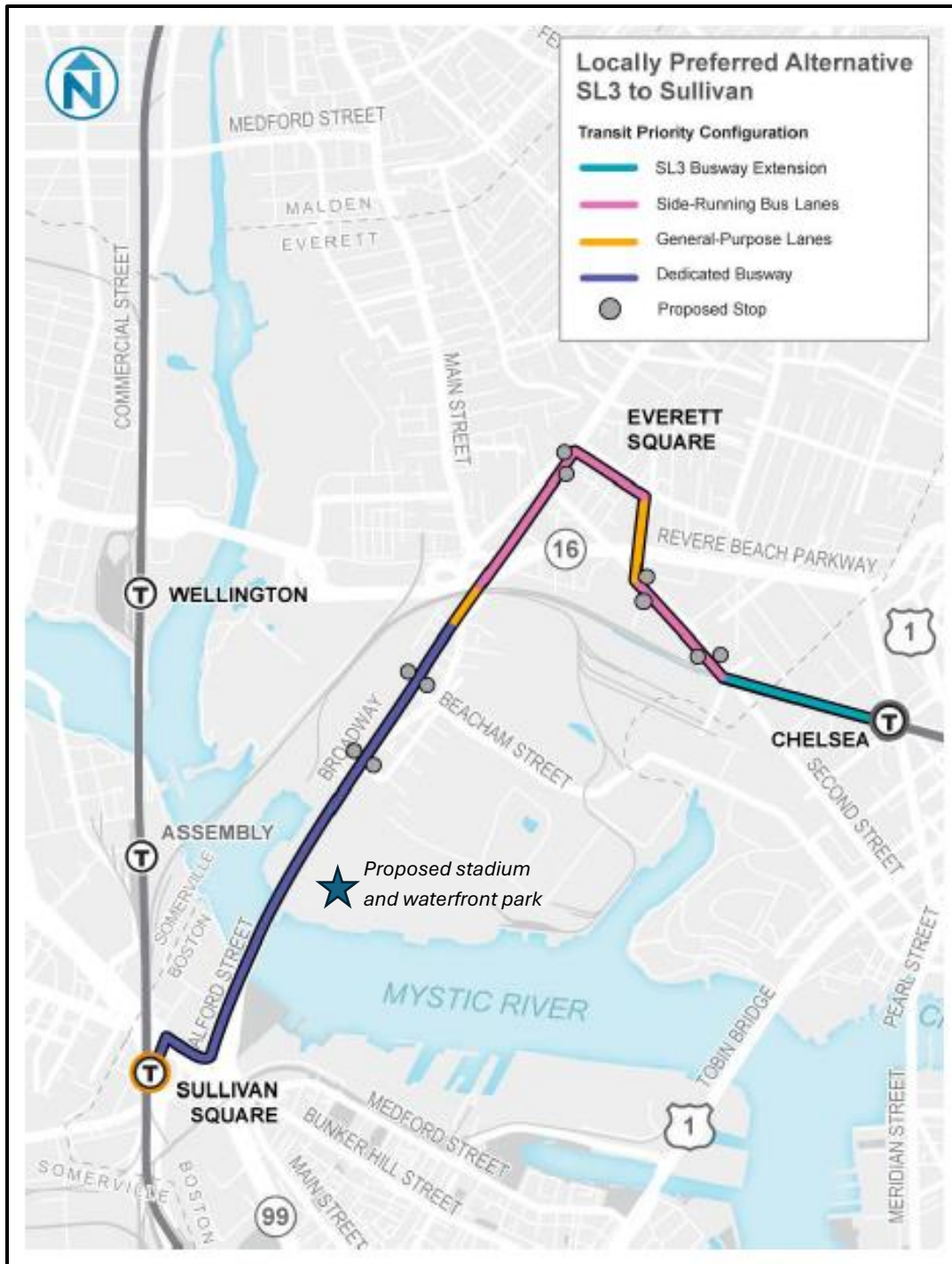


Figure 2: Silver Line Extension Locally Preferred Alternative - SL3 to Sullivan

Bus and Subway: Enhanced Service on Stadium Event Days

MBTA heavy rail and bus service will provide invaluable transit options to the proposed stadium and park, especially on event days. The Orange Line provides high-frequency, high-capacity rapid transit service to Sullivan Square, which is less than one mile away from the proposed stadium. Running adjacent to it along the Lower Broadway corridor, Route 109 launched as a high-frequency bus route in December 2024. This route will provide capacity to the proposed stadium at its busiest times. In addition, if the Silver Line 3 extension were to be funded and constructed, it would add significant capacity to and from the proposed stadium area. **Taken together, Route 109 and a future Silver Line extension can provide valuable transit options, with connections at Sullivan Square to other modes.**

However, without detailed demand modelling and knowledge of stadium specifications (stadium capacity, private vehicle parking, etc.), the MBTA is unable to assess whether its existing services – and the unfunded SL3 extension – would be adequate to meet demand to the proposed stadium. The MBTA expects to receive those details through future stakeholder conversations and the public processes in place (Chapter 91 and MEPA).

If regularly scheduled bus and Orange Line service proves to be inadequate, the MBTA could add enhanced service on the heavy rail system and on area buses to meet the induced demand on event days. For example, to accommodate special events at Fenway Park and TD Garden, the MBTA occasionally adds enhanced service on existing routes to support induced demand. Similar arrangements could potentially be made to accommodate events at the proposed stadium as well. However, the MBTA would incur additional operating expenses to add service and at the time of this report, no sources of funding have been identified to provide this enhanced service.

Active Modes - Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing (MassDOT Highway)

The Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing is a planned shared-use pedestrian/bike bridge that will connect Somerville's Draw 7 Park to Everett's Encore Casino, which is being led by MassDOT's Highway Division. This project will add pedestrian and bike connection across the two sides of the Lower Mystic. As MassDOT Highway notes on the project [webpage](#), there "is currently no safe or viable off-road, bicycle and pedestrian shared use connection over the Mystic River between the Fellsway and Route 99/Alford Street. The construction of a new bridge will form a critical shared use path connection between the

Northern Strand Trail, the Mystic River Greenway, the Malden River Greenway, with connections back into Boston.”

While the MBTA is not leading this project, many stakeholders emphasized that this connection could serve as an additional route to the proposed stadium, via the Assembly Orange Line station. On event days, the MBTA expects that spectators using the Orange Line will primarily travel to Sullivan Square station. However, the MBTA supports and encourages any additional connections to our network by active modes. Should this pedestrian and bicycle connection across the Mystic River attract sufficient usage, an additional entrance to the Assembly Orange Line station could encourage transit usage as currently riders would need to walk to the station entrances on Great River Road. This station access point, known as a headhouse, is not currently designed or funded in the MBTA’s CIP.

External Proposals: Everett Commuter Rail Station

Although the MBTA Commuter Rail’s Newburyport/Rockport Line passes near the proposed stadium site, there is not a Commuter Rail station in Everett. The nearest Commuter Rail Station is in Chelsea, 1.5 miles from the stadium location. In the future, the MBTA has an aspiration to introduce more frequent decarbonized service on the Newburyport/Rockport Line using Battery Electric Multiple Unit (BEMU) vehicles. A new Commuter Rail station in the vicinity of the Stadium could support service to the proposed stadium. However at this time, given this constrained funding for MBTA’s capital needs, there is no funding for either planning, design, or construction of a new station in Everett in the MBTA’s CIP.

The MBTA acknowledges that Commuter Rail has the potential to provide direct service from the North Shore to the proposed stadium and will continue to evaluate proposals for a station to allow for this service. The Authority acknowledges that there are multiple stakeholders with a desire for a station in Everett, but a preferred location has not been agreed upon by external stakeholders. These aspirations are reflected in a recent Federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods planning grant awarded to the City of Everett. Regardless of the chosen site, any proposal to add a new Commuter Rail station in Everett would need to identify funding for design, construction, and on-going operations & maintenance (O&M) costs; address the MBTA’s operational needs; and align with the Authority’s line- and system-wide planning goals. In addition, for other origin points on the Commuter Rail network, it will be important to have strong transportation options from both North and South Station to ensure transit connectivity from around the region. The MBTA understands that significant development projects are underway in Everett, for which Commuter Rail may provide important transit connections.

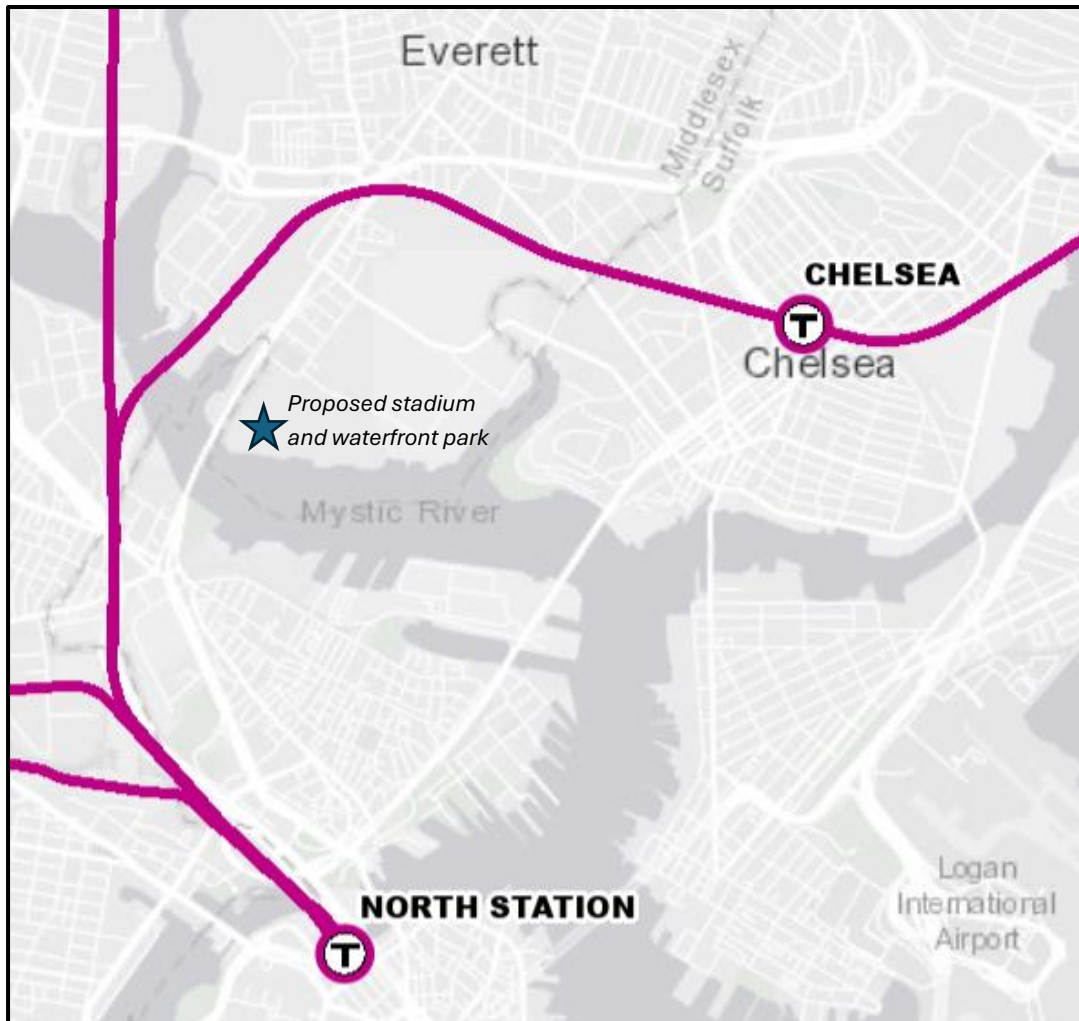


Figure 3: MBTA Commuter Rail Newburyport/Rockport Line in the vicinity of the proposed stadium

Ferry – Water Transportation Connections

Stakeholders also expressed an interest in examining ferry service options to support service to the proposed stadium. Currently, Encore Boston Harbor runs a complimentary ferry service that connects Boston's Long Wharf to a dock on its property in Everett. While water transportation may be attractive, for event days it is unlikely to be a mode that can move large numbers of people given the current size and capacity of the MBTA fleet. In addition, there would need to be investments in the docking infrastructure to support additional accessible ferry service.

Although the MBTA is not currently planning an expansion of ferry service to Everett, MassDOT's Office of Transportation Planning is leading a study to evaluate future needs for ferry service in Boston Harbor and its connecting waterways and will include rigorous infrastructure and vessel assessments. This study will be launched soon, and will include

extensive public and stakeholder engagement. This study should look at possible service options for ferry service to Everett.

Conclusion

In response to the Mass Leads Act, the MBTA identified internal planning efforts, relevant large-scale event experience, and external proposals that are aligned with the Legislature's mandate to develop a plan to serve the proposed stadium and promote transit access. This review shows that increased capacity on a combination of modes may be able to support access. However, this document emphasizes that further site planning and demand analysis is necessary to better understand the need for additional transit capacity, especially on event days. Moreover, this conceptual exercise does not represent a commitment by any state or third party to provide or fund additional service to the proposed stadium. As project planning advances, the MBTA looks forward to working with stakeholders through the environmental review process to determine how best to fund and provide a robust set of transit options to the proposed stadium and waterfront park.