



South Coast Rail Project Overview

Fiscal & Management Control Board

August 8, 2016

Overview

- Commonwealth is committed to connecting the South Coast to Boston by rail
- Prior Environmental Reviews have determined service via the Stoughton Route to be the preferred alternative
- 15% design has been completed
- 3 independent reviews of cost projections and timeline
- Continuing to advance current design



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Benefits of the Current South Coast Rail Design

- Provide time-saving and convenient option for travel between Boston and South Coast
- Spur real estate development and improve property values along project corridor
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality
 - Approximately 256,000 fewer vehicle-miles travelled per day (61,000 tons CO₂/year)
- Increase freight rail efficiency by increasing speeds from current 5-10 mph limits
- Improve auto safety and reduce congestion
- Create 3,500 new long-term jobs and upwards of 6,800 construction jobs



SCR Project Overview

- 40 Trips Total
 - 20 Trips to New Bedford
 - 20 Trips to Fall River
- Trip Time
 - New Bedford to South Station - 77 Minutes (52.0 Miles)
 - Fall River to South Station - 75 Minutes (52.7 Miles)
- Projected Ridership
 - 4,570 Daily Riders
- Stations
 - Canton Center (Reconstruction)
 - Stoughton Station (Reconstruction)
 - North Easton
 - Easton Village
 - Raynham Place
 - Taunton
 - Taunton Depot
 - Freetown
 - Fall River Depot
 - Battleship Cove
 - King's Highway
 - Whale's Tooth



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Alternatives Considered

- Extensive Alternatives Analysis over the course of the planning and environmental review process
 - Over 65 alternatives examined
- Alternatives fall within 5 basic categories
 - Rail Service along three different corridors
 - Stoughton Corridor
 - Attleboro Corridor
 - Middleboro Corridor
 - Non-Commuter Rail Alternatives
 - Baseline Alternative



Bus Rapid Transit Alternatives Considered

- Examined three Bus Rapid Transit Services from FR & NB to:
 - Stoughton Station
 - Middleborough Station
 - Attleboro Station
- Dedicated Right of Way along the two rail corridors.
- Stations similar to the commuter rail stations
- Total travel time – including the transfer to rail – was as long and often longer than auto travel resulting in poor ridership
- Significant capital and operating costs resulted in non-cost effective service.



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Express Bus Service Alternatives Considered

- Examined 2 Express Bus Services from FR and NB to:
 - South Station
 - Route 128 Station
- Dedicated HOV travel lane for buses
 - Lane along Route 24 and SE Expressway for Boston
 - Lane along Route 24 only for Route 128
- Existing roadways are heavily congested and could not accommodate loss of travel lane. New additional lanes required
- New lanes resulted in significant wetland impacts as well as significant community impacts along SE Expressway



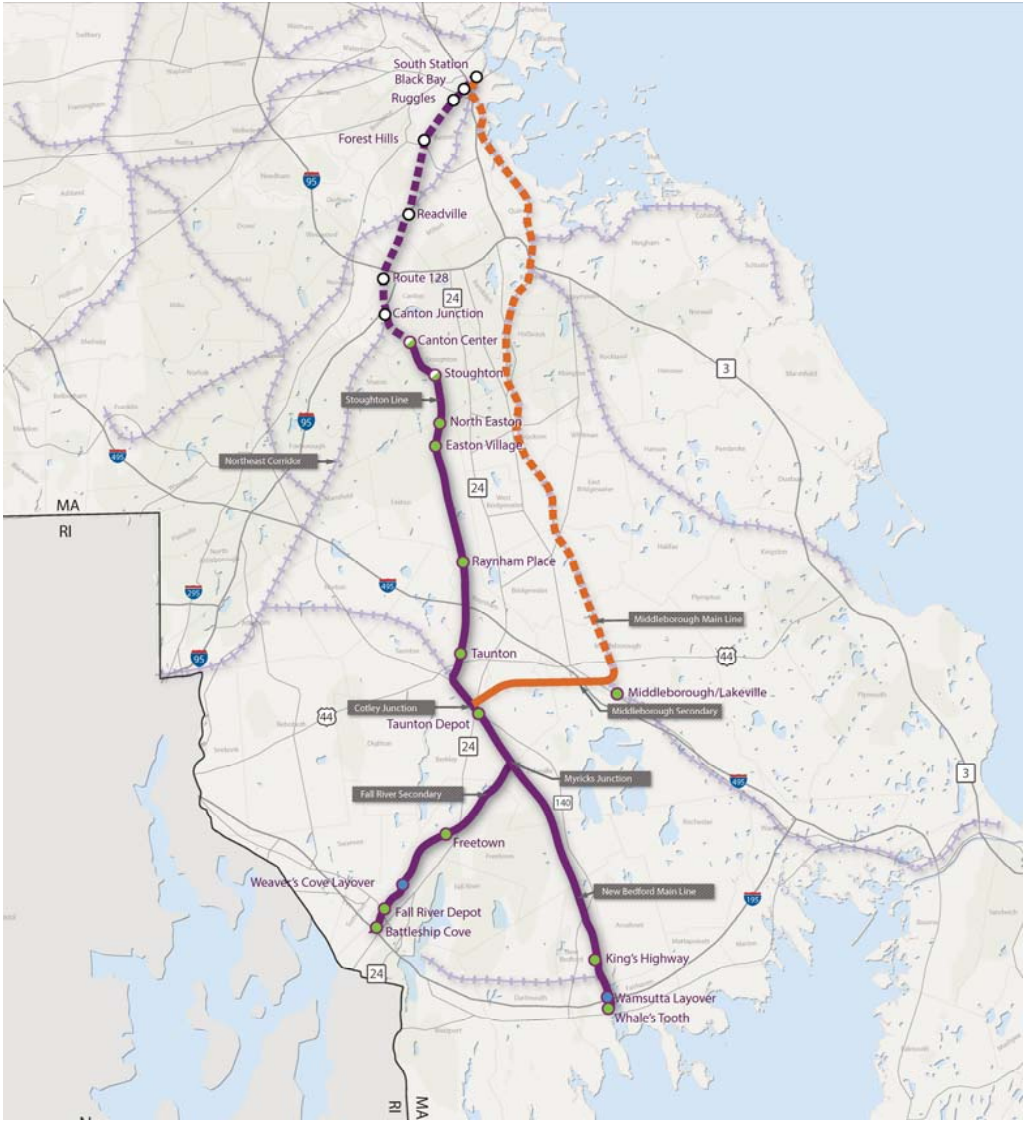
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Express Bus Service Alternatives Considered

- Expand contract with existing or new private carriers servicing Taunton, New Bedford and Fall River
- Provide new/expanded park and ride facilities as well as new buses
- Provide multi-route services from each city directly to Boston.
- Existing congestion on roadways – especially Route 24 and SE Expressway – resulted in little to no travel time savings
- Travel demand modeling showed very little switch from auto to bus.



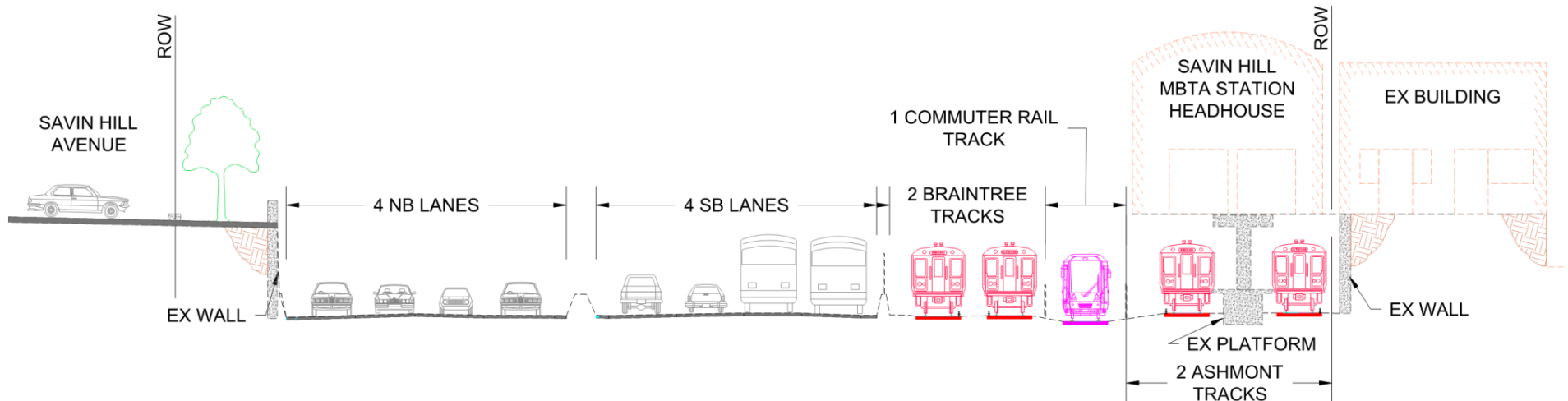
Stoughton and Middleborough Alternatives



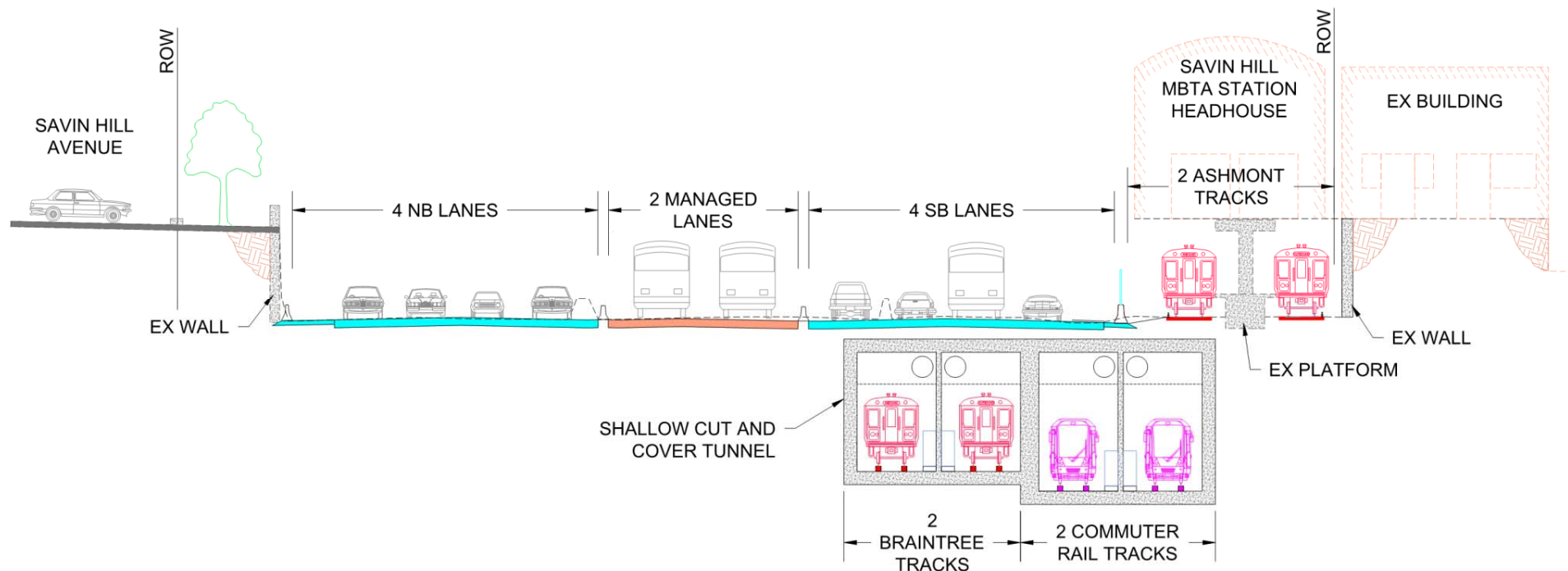
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Middleborough Concept – Savin Hill Pinch Point



TYPICAL EXISTING CROSS SECTION NEAR SAVIN HILL STATION



TYPICAL CROSS SECTION WITH NEW RAILROAD TUNNEL AND WIDENED HIGHWAY

Additional Assessment and Planning Required

- Current Stoughton Line Concept
 - Extensive Permitting Analysis and Review as well as likely delay from litigation
 - Anticipated 6 to 8 years of design and permitting prior to any construction beginning
- New Middleborough Line Concept
 - Currently only at conceptual phase
 - Additional design and feasibility analysis needed before this alternative can be considered viable.

In the interim, New Bedford, Fall River and Taunton continue to lack quality transit access to Boston. Recommend investigating the feasibility of interim rail service that:

- Leaves options open so that either alternative could be put in place
- Provides an opportunity to bring options to adequate level of design to make informed decision
- Limits capital improvements to those that would be used whether Stoughton or Middleborough Route is ultimately selected



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Proposal for Interim Service via Middleborough

- Benefits
 - Faster time to deliver service
 - Possible that SCR service could be delivered in same timeframe (6-8 years) that would be required just to permit current Stoughton Alternative
 - Lower construction costs and risks
 - Nearly entire right-of-way already owned/controlled by MBTA and MassDOT
 - Service could begin without South Station expansion (no need for extra tracks since trains would arrive in existing Middleborough/Lakeville “slots”)
- Challenges
 - TOD at existing Middleborough Station
 - Maximum of 4 trains during peak hours – 2 peak trains to each city



Focus on the “Southern Triangle”

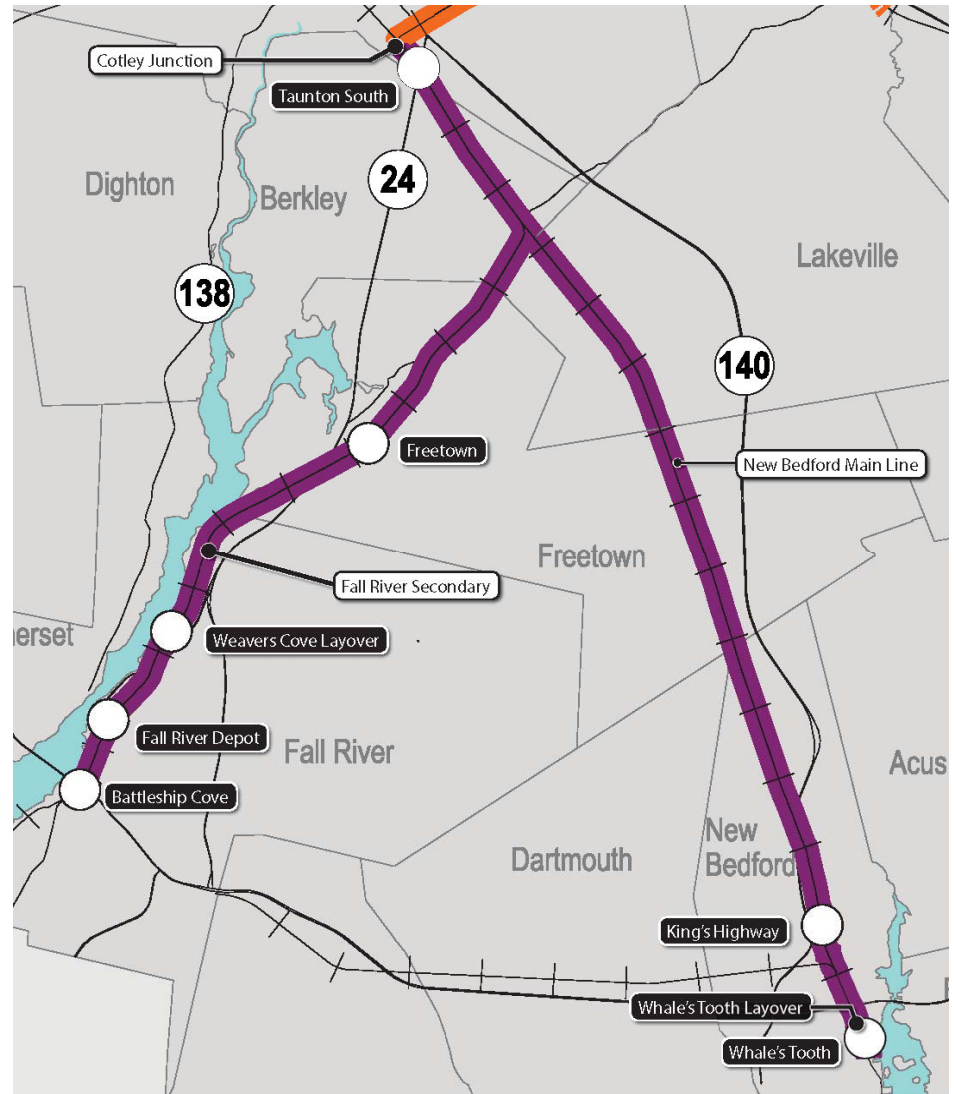
Advance the Design and Permitting of the New Bedford and Fall River Branches

- Six Stations
- Two Layovers
- Bridges & Grade Crossings
- Signals and Systems

These segments are common to the Stoughton Alignment and Middleboro Alignment

- Common to any permanent alternative
- Key to providing interim phase service

Investing in advancing the southern triangle is a responsible use of capital funds.



Seek Community Input on an Interim Phase Service

Begin a public process this fall that seeks public input on:

- Overall public preference for the Stoughton Concept vs. Middleborough Concept given environmental hurdles and cost and schedule impacts
- Determine community support for an interim service
 - Provide overview of travel time, service levels and operational considerations
- Seek Community Input on Middleborough Station options
 - Relocation of Middleborough Station
 - Continue use of existing Middleborough Station with new cross platform connection
 - SCR passengers transfer at station north of Middleborough
 - If so, determine best location for station



Next Steps for Interim Phase Service

- Public Process to begin in September
 - Identifying dates and locations for 7 community meetings
 - Coordinate with local legislators and local elected officials
 - Present both the 15% design as well as interim phase service concept
- Develop preliminary cost and schedule estimates for an Interim Phase service with a focus on minimizing construction and accelerating project completion.
- Develop new ridership and O&M cost estimates for the Interim Phase Service that is reflective of up to date land use, travel times, *etc.* so as to compare to updated estimates for other previously studied alternatives
- Continue to advance the design and initiate permitting of the southern triangle segments since it is common to all options

Report Back to FCMB and MassDOT Board to seek direction on the path forward

