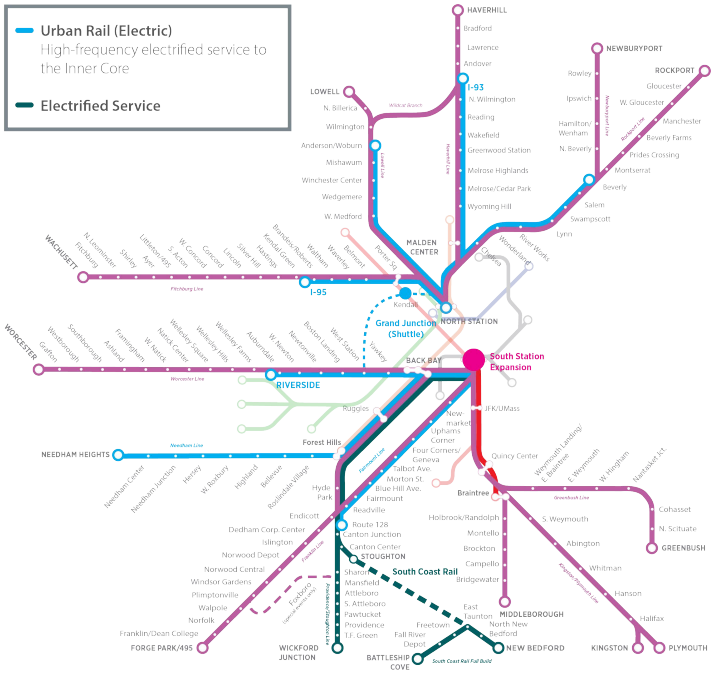
ALTERNATIVE 5

About Rail Vision

Rail Vision identifies cost-effective strategies to transform the Commuter Rail into a system that better supports improved mobility and economic competitiveness in Greater Boston. The Rail Vision team is evaluating the costs and benefits of 7 possible service alternatives.

Alternative 5: Urban Rail (Electric)



Urban rail is high-frequency service to **inner core stations.*** This alternative uses self-powered electric trains known as electric multiple units (EMUs) that operate more like our current subway trains. Service to outer stations would be equal to or better than current levels.

***Inner core stations** are located in dense urban environments up to 15 miles from downtown Boston. Kingston/Plymouth, Middleborough/Lakeville, and Greenbush lines do not receive urban rail service due to the nearby Red Line.

Benefits

- **Faster, more frequent service to inner core stations:** EMUs accelerate and decelerate faster than diesel locomotives, so travel times between stations are shorter, and trains can run closer together
- **Reduced crowding:** With fast, direct service to downtown Boston, people will rely less on the overcrowded bus routes that provide connections to nearby subway stations
- **Reduced emissions:** The current system relies on diesel locomotives in the inner core, electrification reduces overall emissions

Trade-offs

- Increase in costs and time needed to maintain both EMUs and diesel locomotives
- Significant capital investment required for electrification
- Electrification requires removing trees alongside routes
- Electric trains may not be as reliable in inclement weather

Service Features

Frequency

- Every 15 minutes to inner core stations, all day
- Every 30 minutes to outer core stations during peak service
- Every hour to outer stations during off-peak service

Connections

- On the Haverhill Line, some trains would provide service to North Station via the Lowell Line, local service to inner core stations may require a transfer near Reading
- More frequent connections between Fairmount and Franklin lines

Accessibility

Stations where there are plans for accessibility updates will get **high-level boarding platforms.***

Electrification

All inner core stations, the entire Providence Line, and the new South Coast Rail Line would be electrified. EMUs would be in operation for trips to inner core stations, while long-distance trips to outer stations would still use diesel-powered locomotives and cars.

Expansion

- **South Station Expansion:** Allow for more trains at the station during the peak periods.
- **South Coast Rail Full Build:** Extend Stoughton Line to Taunton, Fall River, and New Bedford
- Shuttle service every 15 minutes on the Grand Junction route (currently not in operation), connecting North Station to the future West Station through the MIT/Kendall neighborhood.

***High-level platforms** enable level boarding at every door, which improves accessibility and reduces overall boarding time for all customers.

Other Rail Vision Alternatives

Alternative 5 is just 1 of the 7 proposed futures for the Commuter Rail. Download the other alternatives below, or learn more at **mbta.com/railvision**.

Alternative 1	Alternative 4	Alternative 7
Alternative 2	Alternative 5	
Alternative 3	Alternative 6	