

North Shore

Transit Improvements

Winter 2003

Progress on DEIS and MIS

In 2002, the North Shore Transit Improvements project evolved to include two parallel processes: a **Major Investment Study (MIS)** and a **Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)**. The MIS evaluates the transit needs and potential solutions for 32 communities in the study area with a particular focus on the area from Salem north. The DEIS specifically evaluates potential environmental, social and physical impacts of transportation alternatives only for the "corridor" between Revere and Salem.

In late summer 2002, the MBTA finalized the scope for the DEIS and began analyzing its five alternatives (see accompanying article on this page for more information). The MBTA has also worked with its Steering Committee on this study to fully develop the list of projects for the MIS (see pages 2-3 for more information on the MIS Universe of Projects). These proposed items will be examined *in addition* to those alternatives being studied in the DEIS. The purpose of the MIS is to prioritize capital improvements on the North Shore, while also possibly identifying projects that require further planning and environmental review.



North Shore commuters boarding the afternoon trains at North Station.

Glossary

MIS – The **Major Investment Study** is assessing the transit needs of 32 communities on the North Shore and proposing and prioritizing potential solutions with an emphasis on the area from Salem north.

DEIS – The **Draft Environmental Impact Statement** is evaluating the potential environmental, social and physical impacts of transportation alternatives for the corridor between Revere and Salem.

DEIS Preparation

Since the set of DEIS alternatives was finalized in the summer of 2002, the MBTA and its consultants have been analyzing those options. The five alternatives included in the DEIS scope are: (1) **No Action**; (2) **Transportation Systems Management (TSM) alternatives**; (3) **Blue Line extension to Lynn/Salem via the Commuter Rail Eastern Route Main Line**; (4) **Blue Line extension to Lynn/ Salem via the Narrow Gauge Right of Way**; and (5) **A connection between the Commuter Rail and Blue Line near the Wonderland Station in Revere**. (For further details about these alternatives, please consult the Fall 2002 North Shore Transit Improvements newsletter.)

A report summarizing the DEIS scoping process was published on August 26, 2002. This scoping report includes the views of those participating in the scoping

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DEIS Information Meeting

An informational meeting will be held on **February 6, 2003 at 7 PM** in the **Revere City Hall Auditorium** to discuss the DEIS preparation. For more details, please contact Stephen Woelfel, MBTA, at 617-222-5237. Project team members will be available at 6:30 PM to discuss the project at an Open House.

Major Investment Study (MIS) Projects Defined

The Major Investment Study (MIS) is designed to determine the needs and prioritize possible transit investments that could be made on the North Shore. The MIS could also suggest projects that should be studied in greater detail.

During the past 20 months, the general public and the project's Steering Committee have proposed a number of projects. The public suggestions came through a successful ridership survey and through several public meetings. Based on these comments and suggestions, the MBTA developed a list of projects for analysis and evaluation through the MIS process. The Study Area map (right) highlights these options. All options included in the MIS are undergoing analysis. The proposed improvements fall into four categories: Commuter Rail (CR); System-Wide; Bus and Water.

The list of projects associated with the MIS is *in addition* to those projects being studied as part of the DEIS for the service corridor between Revere and Salem. The public will have an opportunity to comment on MIS projects in a series of informational meetings.

Some proposed items represent operational changes while others include new facilities and related capital investments. After the various items are evaluated, the "packaging" of the various elements into projects or programs will be examined. The Steering Committee will use these evaluations to help prioritize projects for the region.

The table on page 3 provides a description of the projects that will be analyzed as part of the MIS.

MIS Information Meeting

An information meeting will be held on **March 12, 2003 at 7 PM** at the **Peabody Institute Library at Danvers**, 15 Sylvan Street, Danvers, to discuss the MIS. For more details, please contact Stephen Woelfel, MBTA, at 617-222-5237. Project team members will be available at 6:30 PM to discuss the project at an Open House.



MIS Universe of Projects

Type of Service	Location	Project	Description
Commuter Rail (CR)			
	West Gloucester	Station Improvements	To be defined
	Salem	Station Improvements	Parking/Amenities
	Beverly	Station Improvements	Parking/Amenities
	Gloucester	Station Improvements	Parking/Amenities
	Rockport	Station Improvements	Parking/Accessibility/Amenities
	South Salem	New Station	Construct in vicinity of Salem State College
	Newburyport and Rockport CR branches	Increased frequency	Increase "reverse direction" commuter service; operate off-peak service hourly in each direction on each branch
	Beverly-Boston	DMU/Shuttle Service	Implement a shuttle type of service, using a single or two-car diesel multiple unit (DMU) type of vehicle between North Station and Beverly
	Salem-Danvers via Peabody	New CR Route	Implement a 4-mile CR service between Salem and Danvers passing through Peabody; service to Boston would join the current CR at Salem
System-Wide			
	Newburyport and Rockport CR branches	Double/Passing Track Installation	Provide a second track on Newburyport and Rockport branches where only a single track is presently available
	Salem	Second Tunnel	Provide a second track within a new tunnel alignment at Salem
	Newburyport and Rockport CR branches	Highway Grade Crossing Improvements/Eliminations	Improve signalization and geometry at highway grade crossings as identified by consultation with municipalities
	Newburyport and Rockport CR branches	Additional Coaches	Procure new bi-level coaches in order to accommodate additional ridership
	Newburyport and Rockport CR branches	Station Upgrades	Includes upgrading to full-length high level platforms at stations not equipped, subject to the accommodation of any site constraints and track alignment
	Newburyport and Rockport CR branches	Signal System Upgrade	Upgrade existing wayside signal system to cab signal system, in order to increase capacity and to improve reliability and safety
Bus			
		Express Routes	Increase frequencies and expand Park and Ride lot capacity
		Equipment	Passenger shelters, improved displays of schedules, and operating real-time information as part of the MBTA's Systemwide Enhancement program
Water			
	Salem – Boston	Ferry	Evaluate potential of seasonal and year-round services to Boston
	Lynn – Boston	Ferry	Evaluate potential of seasonal and year-round services to Boston

process and the resulting summary of the issues to be analyzed in the DEIS. The report is available at the following locations:

- On-line at:
www.mbta.com/projects_underway/nsti.asp
- In the reference departments of the 32 public libraries in the MIS study area and the State Transportation Library
(10 Park Plaza, 2nd Floor Boston, MA, 02116;
Telephone: 617-973-8000)

The current focus of the DEIS is to document the existing conditions within the project study corridor. This includes collecting existing background data on numerous impact categories such as: land use, socioeconomics, historic, wetlands, traffic, noise, and air quality. A topographic survey is also underway that will be used as the foundation for conceptual design of the project alternatives. The MBTA will use the baseline information being collected to identify potential physical, social and environmental impacts for each build alternative.

For more information:

Please visit the project website at:

www.mbta.com/projects_underway/nsti.asp

To add your name to the project mailing list or to receive meeting notices, past editions of newsletters and other information, call Stephen Woelfel, Project Manager, MBTA at 617-222-5237.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Mitt Romney, *Governor*

Kerry Healey, *Lt. Governor*

Daniel A. Grabauskas, *Secretary and MBTA Chairman*

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

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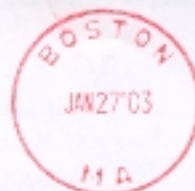
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North Shore Transit Improvements

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