



SOUTH COAST RAIL



www.southcoastrail.com



On September 29, Secretary of Transportation Bernard Cohen announced the recommended list of station sites for the South Coast Rail Phase 1 alternatives. A total of 18 rail and bus station locations will be included in the state and federal environmental review process. South Coast residents, elected officials and business community members participated in a July Station Siting workshop, and 50 comments were submitted on the locations. The Station Siting Report is posted on www.southcoastrail.com. The article below summarizes the process and locations.

This fact sheet also highlights the community priority preservation and priority development underway in South Coast communities.

Station Sites

Over the past months, the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) has worked with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), South Coast communities and the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) to identify potential rail and bus station sites. SRPEDD met with city and town planners and elected officials to consider historic and new locations along the five alternative routes that are advancing to Phase 2 of the alternatives analysis. After a rigorous analysis EOT is recommending 18 stations for the five alternatives (listed on page 4).

The stations will serve different purposes. Some should help to catalyze village-style development with homes and shops close to the station, convenient for walkers, bicyclists and area residents and encouraging local businesses. Other stations will mainly serve commuters and include regional parking. Some stations might be good candidates for redevelopment projects, clustering jobs and housing nearby.

The alternatives were presented to the communities and the Commuter Rail Task Force and discussed at an Open House. EOT invited comment letters and emails over a two-month period. The Station Siting Report includes these public concerns and responses.

The station sites are being identified before the selection of the final route so any potential environmental effects can be identified in the state and federal review process. In addition, the team needs station locations to calculate how many people are projected to use the different routes and to craft the smart growth corridor plan, which will assess the economic development potential at each station site. The sites are not set in stone, but they are EOT's preferred and proposed stations at this point in the process.

Next Steps

The team will continue to develop information for each station site. This includes calculating ridership, laying out parking and transportation access requirements, evaluating potential environmental impacts and developing a conceptual design for each rail or bus station.

EOT will conduct a series of Station Workshops between November 2008 and February 2009 to invite people in the region to contribute ideas for each of the stations. Neighborhoods, businesses, abutters and community planners will help EOT develop visions for the stations. The schedule for the workshops will be posted on the website, www.southcoastrail.com, announced to media and Town Clerks and emailed to the project list later this fall.

Continued on page 4.



A Community Chooses

The Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) is helping the region’s cities and towns develop blueprints for growth and preservation. SRPEDD and EOT are partnering in this effort, helping communities to put new zoning in place around potential stations and in village centers and to identify land that should be preserved to protect the character of communities and their natural environment.

Nancy Durfee, Comprehensive Planner, is one of the SRPEDD staff members meeting with planners, elected municipal officials and citizens in 18 communities. We asked Nancy to describe this work, and she focused on the recently completed report for Freetown on its **Priority Development Areas (PDAs)** and **Priority Protection Areas (PPAs)**.

SCR: What was your role in working with Freetown to identify town priorities?

Nancy: As a regional planning agency, SRPEDD had been working with Freetown for three years on an open space plan, but the process was moving slowly due to financial constraints. Like many smaller communities, Freetown had the interest but not the resources to develop a master plan and zoning to lay the groundwork for development and preservation. There was little zoning in place, so SRPEDD helped line up the resources to help translate local goals into plans.

SCR: How did the process work?

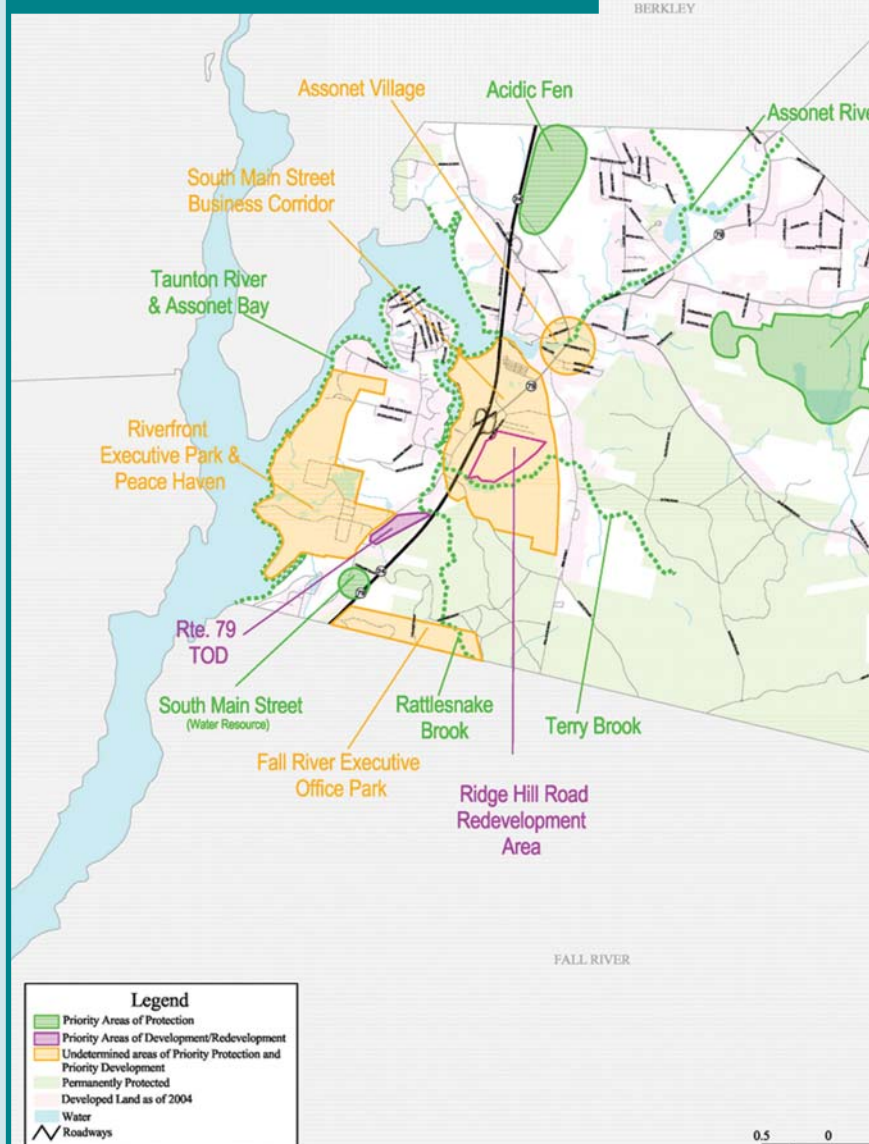
Nancy: In March, SRPEDD approached the Freetown Board of Selectmen to discuss creating a priority map and report to help guide the community’s zoning and development plan. The board approved SRPEDD’s suggestions for a priority mapping committee that included the town planner, town administrator and some selectmen. The committee held a couple of public meetings. In this case, public support was particularly enthusiastic: between 25 and 30 people participated.

SCR: What was SRPEDD’s role?

Nancy: SRPEDD brought a number of resources to the town, including maps outlining municipal property, water resources, biodiversity, current

“SRPEDD gathers knowledge the communities have and guides it into a technical format that reflects local priorities.”

FREETOWN’S PRIORITY MAP





Nancy Durfee and Freetown residents working to create the priority map.



zoning, a 2004 development map and a soil map. The committee and members of the public used colored markers to outline their ideas for areas to develop, protect or think about. This workshop format engaged people and encouraged brainstorming.

SCR: What happened next?

Nancy: We went back to the Selectmen with a map of priority development and preservation areas and a draft report. The report outlines each area of Freetown and describes why it should be protected or should be developed, and what development would be best suited for the area. The Selectmen reviewed and approved the report. When Goody Clancy creates its regional corridor plan, it will put all the priority maps for the South Coast together to present them to the communities to promote cooperation in protecting key places and catalyzing development in others. Then we will seek local sign-off by the chief elected officials.

PDAs - Priority Development Areas: Areas within a city or town that can accept more development. Key factors include good access, available infrastructure (primarily water and sewer), an absence of environmental constraints and local support. PDAs can range in size from a single lot to many acres. Areas designated under state programs such as Chapter 43D (expedited permitting), Chapter 40R (smart growth zones) or Economic Opportunity Areas can be PDAs. These designations include the local recommendations for developing these sites.

PPA - Priority Preservation Areas: Areas within a city or town that deserve special protection. They include significant environmental factors and natural features, such as endangered species habitats, areas critical to water supply, scenic vistas or areas of historic significance. Like PDAs, protection areas can vary greatly in size. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), aquifer recharge areas or designated priority habitats are examples of PPAs.



What's Coming up

The Schedule: The next South Coast Rail milestone is filing of the state Environmental Notification Form and the federal Notice of Intent in November. The state document will outline the alternatives, provide an

overview of regional environmental conditions and compare the impacts of each alternative. It will list the permits and approvals the team anticipates for the project, and outline the proposed scope of work for the next milestone, the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIR/DEIS). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Massachusetts

Environmental Policy Act office will host joint state and federal scoping public meetings to gather comments on the documents. After the meetings are held and the comment period closes, the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the Corps of Engineers will issue a formal Scope of Work for the project. The DEIR/DEIS is scheduled for filing in late spring 2009.



Contact Us

If you would like more information about the project or to be added to the project distribution list for email and U.S. Mail notifications of meetings and other updates, please contact Kristina Egan, South Coast Rail Manager at EOT, by email at Kristina.Egan@eot.state.ma.us or phone at 617-973-7314. Project information and updates, including a schedule of upcoming meetings, are posted on the project website at www.southcoastrail.com.



The Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works
Ten Park Plaza, Room 4150
Boston, MA 02116
Kristina Egan, South Coast Rail Manager

Recommended Stations for Five Alternative Routes

Battleship Cove – A seasonal station with bus connections, but no parking, located near downtown Fall River and serving the tourist areas of the waterfront.

Fall River Depot – A multi-modal transportation center with transit-oriented development one-mile north of downtown Fall River on Davol Street.

Freetown – A station located at the current U-Storage site, serving nearby industrial parks and commuters throughout the region.

Freetown Park – A bus-only station located near the interchange of the proposed Exit 8 1/2.

State Pier – A part-time station with bus connections, but no parking, geared toward serving downtown New Bedford's residents and tourists.

Whale's Tooth – A multi-modal transportation center close to the Hicks Logan area mill redevelopments in New Bedford.

King's Highway – A multi-modal station in north New Bedford with potential for new jobs and housing, serving commuters throughout the region.

East Taunton (north) – A station for the Attleboro or Stoughton rail alternatives, located behind the current Target Plaza.

East Taunton (south) – A station for the Middleborough and Attleboro-Middleborough Hybrid rail alternatives, located at the current Mini Golf site.

Dean Street – A multi-modal transportation center with transit-oriented development close to downtown Taunton, serving the Stoughton rail alternative.

Taunton Metro – A multi-modal transportation center with transit-oriented development in downtown Taunton, serving the Attleboro and Attleboro-Middleborough hybrid alternatives.

Whittenton – A station in Taunton with mill redevelopment potential, serving the Whittenton variation of the Stoughton rail alternative.

Galleria Station – A bus-only station located in the current Saturday overflow parking lot at the Galleria Mall in Taunton.

Raynham Park – A station located at the current Greyhound Track in Raynham that would serve commuters throughout the region and has potential for large-scale transit-oriented development, serving the Stoughton rail alternative.

Easton Village – A village-style station with limited parking in downtown Easton, close to the historic train station, serving the Stoughton rail alternative.

North Easton – A regional parking station serving commuters throughout the region, serving the Stoughton rail alternative.

Middleborough Center – A village-style station with limited parking in downtown Middleborough, serving the Middleborough and Attleboro-Middleborough Hybrid rail alternatives.

Barrowsville – A village-style station with limited parking in Norton, at the old train station site serving the Attleboro and Attleboro-Middleborough Hybrid rail alternatives.