



MASS. TRANSIT NEWS

Newsletter of the Association for Public Transportation
Massachusetts Association of Railroad Passengers

Number 46

ISSN 1087-5263

Summer 2015

Inside

Letter from the President	2
Get Local!	2
North/South Rail Link	3
Membership Renewal Form	3
Allston-Brighton Commuter Rail	4

Contact APT

Phone:

781-797-RAIL (7245)

E-mail:

info@aptparp.org

APT Board

Frank DeMasi, President
 John Hostage, Treasurer
 Barry Steinberg, Clerk
 Richard Arena
 Kurt Marden
 Jim RePass
 Marilyn Wellons

Special Assistants

Jake DeMasi
 Tom Girsch
 Christopher Parker

Notice of Annual Meeting

APT 2015 Annual Meeting
 Thursday, September 24
 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM
 Northeastern University
 Alumni Center

See insert for more details

South Station Expansion:

Transportation Band-Aid or Strategic Project of the Century?

South Station opened in 1898. It underwent a complete overhaul in the 1980s, while Governor Dukakis was in office, to increase capacity and provide direct access to Red Line service. It is the busiest station within the MBTA system, currently serving nearly 42,000 commuter rail riders on a typical weekday, plus roughly 4,000 Amtrak riders.

South Station's Expansion (SSX) is a complex and expensive initiative. South Station's location and the need to move the abutting US Postal Service mail-handling annex hamper the redesign. APT and many other transportation professionals are concerned that its configuration as a dead-end terminal means it will never be able to reach the capacity needed to support current and future commuter rail and Amtrak requirements.

South Station is already operating at its designed capacity for efficient train operations. All 13 tracks are fully utilized by Amtrak and the MBTA. Increasing riders and services now exceed capacity at the MBTA's layover facilities at mid-day. These layover capacity constraints, combined with track capacity constraints and current operating practices, force Amtrak and the MBTA to store trains in the South Station terminal while waiting for slots at the existing south-side layover yards.

The North/South Rail Link (NSRL) would remedy commuter rail congestion and eliminate the need for extensive layover facilities near South Station. The NSRL would also extend the Northeast Corridor (NEC) to northern New England. Current plans for expansion include private investment in structures over the station whose underpinnings (pilings) would endanger the underground right-of-way needed for the rail link tracks and platforms. The proposed relocation of new interlocking plants west and south of the station and layover facilities at the Boston Tow Lot and Widett Circle seem to compromise the NSRL right-of-way and its portals.

Contrast this with other station expansion/redevelopment projects across the country, where the tracks are being built underground. This design allows the street-level areas to be leased out to retail, restaurant and other business interests, making for a better passenger/commuter experience while also helping to defray the costs of the improvements and expansion. Such a plan at Boston would mark an important first step toward the NSRL. Once the underground tracks and platforms are completed, the NSRL would require only a tunnel extension..

The Baker administration and the City of Boston need to be informed of the current South Station Expansion project's negative impact on the North/South Rail Link. They need to see the NSRL's construction as the most viable and strategic solution to regional and commuter rail congestion in Boston. APT's advocacy for the North/South Rail Link now is extremely critical. We hope our members and friends will rally to join us in our support of this vital transportation and economic development project. ■



Letter from the President

APT Members and Friends:

This is my first opportunity as incoming President to address you in our APT Newsletter. Several changes since the last annual meeting have led to my filling the position. Richard Arena recently moved out of the Northeast and has resigned as President, but he will continue as a board member. Ernest Loewenstein, our long-serving Co-Vice President, has also resigned as officer and board member, but will continue his APT membership.

My priority is to continue the good work of our past president and outstanding Board of Directors. We are working diligently on APT's next annual meeting, now planned for the evening of 24 September at Northeastern University's Alumni Center in Boston.

The meeting's focus will be on Massachusetts and regional issues. Little is happening to improve transportation and economic development throughout the state. We are interested in strategic improvements and alternative funding strategies for them, such as Public/Private Partnerships, Infrastructure Bank, Value Capture, and Transit-Oriented Development. An esteemed panel of public officials, moderated by former governor Michael Dukakis will discuss these issues at the annual meeting.

Founded in 1973, APT will retain its charter and purpose as a leading advocate for robust and well-funded public

transportation. We hope to increase our impact on infrastructure proposals and programs through our collective participation at public venues and by direct correspondence with legislators, Mass DOT, and the MBTA.

For continuing and effective advocacy, we aim to enlist our members' commitment to and participation in a revitalized committee structure. We need to mobilize your talents and experience to frame our advocacy for specific transportation projects at this critical time. APT's primary new initiative will be to coordinate members' communications to the state executive and legislators, to convey our considered priorities and recommendations for the MBTA and commuter rail, among other issues.

Improvements to our transportation infrastructure are essential to ensure the Northeast Region's competitive advantage in national and international markets. For intercity rail projects and issues, APT will continue its partnership as the Massachusetts affiliate of the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP). For High Speed Rail, APT will remain involved in advocacy through collaboration with the Northeast High Speed Rail Association.

The Board of Directors and I are planning a productive FY2016 for our organization. We are depending on your active participation in the APT to advocate for much-needed, better public transportation.

Frank S. DeMasi
President

Get Local!

In April, the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) held its annual "Day on the Hill" advocacy event in Washington, DC. APT members John Hostage and Tom Girsch, both elected to represent Massachusetts on NARP's Council of Representatives, attended. They visited with staffers for 9 out of 11 members of the Massachusetts congressional delegation, and Representative Capuano (D-7th) personally met with them. Support among members of the delegation for rail and transit projects, including the NSRL, was near-unanimous and often enthusiastic, even in Western MA. But Hostage and Girsch repeatedly heard that our representatives need

to hear more from local level constituents as well as from elected officials.

Staffers reported that senators and representatives more easily win federal funding for projects like the NSRL if a state has officially requested them. Massachusetts must put together a formal project and ask for federal funding, or it will go nowhere. State inaction on NSRL also explains why the project doesn't appear on NARP's "United States of Underinvestment" map.

It falls to local advocates to make more noise. Contact APT to find out how you can get involved. Your voice does matter. ■

Reflections on the North/South Rail Link

Richard J. Arena

It's time for a serious discussion about the North/South Rail Link (NSRL), an underground rail tunnel that would connect North and South Stations in Boston. Governor Baker recently doubted the NSRL would significantly improve transportation in Boston and the region.

Whatever the source of these doubts, the Governor should know that prior work, including the project's 2003 Major Investment Study, has estimated the NSRL would remove 55,000 cars from Boston roadways, unclog commuter bottlenecks, and reduce subway overcrowding, especially in core stations like Park Street.

It would do so by transforming two stub-end terminals, with their large rail yards, into proper through-stations. Current plans for South Station necessarily retain its layover commuter rail yards and thus reduce its peak-time platform and track capacity by more than 50%. Rather than converting the Postal Annex's street level to high-value commercial use and higher floors for office and residences — all for income stream — these plans ignore

Transit Oriented Development (TOD). They turn the Annex into unproductive rail platforms. Substituting a platform of shops above Widett Circle for street-level commerce at South Station does not begin to match revenue from the latter, as any developer can attest.

Other cities are following this model of best-in-class, 21st Century TOD for their train stations: New York at Hudson Yards in conjunction with Penn/Moynihan Stations; Washington, DC with Union Station; San Francisco with the Transbay Center.

South Station must be expanded for South Coast Rail. It is even more important, however, to expand it for High Speed Rail (HSR)—90-minute rail service to NYC, three hours to Washington, DC. Together with the NSRL, HSR will be as transformative to Boston and the region in the 21st Century as Logan Airport was in the 20th.

A 21st Century South Station and the NSRL can be the linchpin of a regional economic development plan

Continued, see NSRL on Page 4

Association for Public Transportation, Inc.
P.O. Box 51029
Boston, MA 02205-1029

Membership Form

Please choose your level of support for APT and enclose a check or money order payable to the Association for Public Transportation. Thank you for your support.

Home phone: _____ Fax: _____
Work phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Name: _____
Address: _____

Please enter your address above. APT is a 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- ___ \$100 Gold Member
- ___ \$75 Silver Member
- ___ \$50 Bronze Member
- ___ \$30 Regular member
- ___ \$15 Senior/student member

To save valuable funds, APT will send future newsletters via e-mail, if we have an e-mail address on file for you. If you prefer to continue receiving a paper newsletter, please check here:

NSRL, continued from Page 3

championed by Governor Baker. It will establish seamless connectivity among the business, housing, academic, recreational, and medical clusters throughout New England.

What the region also needs for this is an engaged Congressional delegation. To the south, we see New York Senator Schumer promoting the \$20 billion Gateway Project for a revitalized and expanded Penn Station. Our competitor neighbor's project includes two new tunnels under the Hudson, several new bridges in New Jersey, more underground tracks and platforms at Penn/Moynihan Station, and expanded subway service to the new station. Senator Schumer has already secured billions for NY rail transportation under various programs, including 9/11 funds, Hurricane Sandy relief, Homeland Security programs, Amtrak authorizations, and PTC grants.

When is the Massachusetts delegation going to follow Schumer's lead and be more proactive in securing funds for Massachusetts and New England? Who will champion our city's and region's future? ■

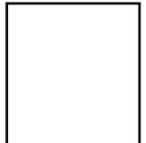
Public/Private Allston-Brighton Commuter Rail Station Under Construction

Construction is now underway for the new Boston Landing commuter rail station. It will provide the Allston-Brighton area and New Balance commuters access to the Worcester-to-Boston commuter line. The new station is adjacent to the Massachusetts Turnpike and is expected to open in fall 2016, two years later than the original projected completion date.

The station is a good example of public-private investment in transportation infrastructure. Funded by New Boston Landing LLC, a New Balance development company, the cost is estimated at approximately \$20 million (\$4 – \$6 million more than the original projected cost). It will give employees direct access to the company's planned Boston Landing development, a complex of restaurants, shops, a hotel, and athletic facilities. ■



Association for Public Transportation
P.O. Box 51029
Boston, MA 02205



Please renew your APT membership. Not a member? Join now! Details inside.