CAPE RAIL STUDY
Meeting Notes

Date:	June 9, 2021 5:30 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.	**Notes Taken By:**	Cape Rail Study Team
Place:	Virtual via Zoom	**Project Name:**	Cape Rail Study Advisory Group – Meeting 2

ATTENDANCE

Advisory Group Members

Senator Susan Moran
Peter J Meier, Town of Bourne Board of Selectmen
Alan Slavin, Town of Wareham
Anthony Schiavi, Town of Bourne
Glenn Cannon, Town of Bourne
Jeanne Azarovitz, Town of Bourne Planning Board
Deputy Chief Joseph Carrara, Bourne Fire Dept.
David J. McPherson, Bourne Town Administrator's Advisory Committee on Pedestrian Bicycle Path
Joe Gordon, Buzzards Bay Resident
Mercedes Rodman, Friends of the Bourne Rail Trail
Bob Campbell, MBTA
Jody Ray, MBTA
Tom Cahir, Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority
George Slade, Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority, Bourne Advisory Board
Judith Froman, Cape Cod MPO
Kristy Senatori, Cape Cod Commission
P. Christopher Podgurski, Mass Coastal/Cape Cod Central Railway

MassDOT/CTPS Team

Benjamin Muller, MassDOT
Sanjay Kaul, CTPS

Consultant Team

Michael Gordon, VHB
Kristine Wickham, VHB
Lara Seltzer, VHB

Cape Cod Commission Staff/Cape Cod MPO

Steven Tupper, CCC
David Nolan, CCC
Colleen Medeiros, CCC
Mallory Kender, CCC

Other Attendees

Daniel Ackerman, WCAI
Admin
CCC-17
Cape Cod Broadcasting News Center
John Carroll
Rick Carey
Ken Cheitlin
Susan Chapman
Dennis Coffey, HNTB
Becky Sue Epstein
Angela Fellows
Fred
Freddie
Mark Forest, Cape Cod MPO
F. Thomas Fudala
Ben Heckscher
Jeannette Hinkle
Larry Hurwitz
Jane
Frieder Klein
Scott Lajole, Cape Cod Realtors
Peter Lapre
Carol Lynch

CAPE RAIL STUDY

Meeting Notes

Other Attendees (cont.)

Madison, Wareham Week
Marissa
Mary Jane Mastrangelo, Bourne Board of Selectmen
Jennifer McGrail
Michael
Fred Mottley
Amelia Nagoski
Paul @ West
Mike Rausch
Bill Reidy
Clint Richmond, Sierra Club
Diane Rielinger
Kevin Rutherford
Bill Stafford
Nancy Wendlant

This document summarizes the discussion at the June 9, 2021 Cape Rail Study Advisory Group meeting. All references to slides relate to the presentation that has been posted to the project website.

WELCOME

S. Tupper, Cape Cod Commission (CCC) Transportation Program Manager, introduced the Cape Rail Study, as well as the other members of the team, and thanked everyone for coming. The public was invited to make comments or ask questions at the end of the meeting during the Public Comment agenda item. S. Tupper reviewed the meeting agenda, which consisted of: introductions, an overview of the alternatives analysis framework and the findings from the alternatives analysis, a review of next steps, and public comment. Additionally, S. Tupper read announcements regarding the methods of participating through Zoom and resources for technical support, as well as notifying participants that the meeting was being recorded.

INTRODUCTIONS

S. Tupper introduced the members of the Advisory Group that were present. B. Muller, MassDOT Project Manager, further elaborated on his role as the Project Manager and introduced the team from VHB, the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) of the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Cape Cod MPO, and CCC. B. Muller noted that this is the second meeting of the Advisory Group, with the first meeting having occurred in November 2020 and that an online recording of the first meeting is available online.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

B. Muller opened the presentation with the context and purpose of the Cape Rail Study. The presentation noted the purpose of the Study is to analyze options to expand passenger rail service to the Cape region and to provide data and information that is meaningful to understand the expected outcomes and costs and benefits of bringing rail service to the Cape. B. Muller additionally noted the wider context of passenger rail being studied and expanded by MassDOT and neighboring state agencies and how this Study in particular is an opportunity to align the energy and enthusiasm behind passenger rail on the corridor to the Cape with operating plans, Order-of-Magnitude cost estimates, and service alternatives that MassDOT believes are feasible and reasonable. The presentation emphasized that the intent of the Study is to provide the region with a starting point towards potential implementation and is not selecting

a preferred alternative. B. Muller added that the Study is also not MassDOT, MBTA, or any other agency initiating a project to begin service on this route, nor is it a preliminary design process or environmental review. The Study further assumes SCR (South Coast Rail) Phase 1 is an existing condition and the Study is not making any adjustments or recommendations regarding that schedule and operating plans to accommodate future Cape service. B. Muller reiterated that the Study is looking at two alternatives for passenger rail operating plans under current constraints and providing data for what the benefits and impacts of those alternatives might be to the region.

B. Muller walked through the schedule that has happened so far including the first Advisory Group meeting in November where the goals and objectives, service limits, and service patterns were discussed and from that meeting the service alternatives and goals and objectives were decided upon. The service alternatives were then analyzed using metrics discussed with the Advisory Group. B. Muller described how this Advisory Group meeting would be used to share the outcomes of those alternatives analyses and to gather feedback and comments from the Advisory Group that will then be incorporated into a report. The report will ultimately document the findings and will be shared with the Cape Cod MPO, the general public, and posted to the study's website.

B. Muller walked through the goals and objectives that were decided upon and described the general overview of the service alternatives development process. He noted that feedback indicated interest in looking at both a more incremental approach to get service up and running more quickly and a more expansive approach, by including recreational trips and crossing the Canal. He then described in further detail the specifics that were decided upon for each of the alternatives, which included the purpose, day and time, locations, terminals, frequency, and transfers. B. Muller noted that both service alternatives assume the continuation of Cape Flyer service on weekends and while the alternatives may look similar on paper, they do provide nuances that can be seen in the analysis and provide insight to future opportunities.

FINDINGS FROM THE ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

B. Muller introduced the Findings from the Alternatives Analysis overview by describing the process of schedule development, which began with the interfacing of the proposed schedules with the SCR Phase 1 schedule. He explained that this was done so the region can understand the capacity constraints that exist along the corridor and how those constraints are reflected in each of the alternatives and cost models. B. Muller called special attention to the inclusion of one-seat-ride trips to/from Boston in Alternative 2 and how those one-seat-ride trips would use the existing Middleborough/Lakeville station. He also noted that the proposed schedules do not serve as a proposal for a final operating plan, but rather are seen as a feasible operating plan that can be used to understand travel times, be input into the ridership model, and to identify some of the cost elements, such as infrastructure needs and operating and maintenance costs. For that reason, the ridership and operating costs are ballpark estimates, but represent possible outcomes of a feasible operating plan and schedule. B. Muller dove deeper into describing the schedule and operations findings from each alternative, including how Alternative 1 served as the baseline level of service with Alternative 2 expanding upon it by adding service to Bourne and adding some additional trips, including the one-seat-ride trips. To wrap up the discussion of the schedules and operation plans,

B. Muller described the operations findings for each alternative. He noted that Alternative 2 has slightly longer travel times to account for travel across the Canal to Bourne and the one-seat-ride trips were scheduled where capacity allowed on the Old Colony Line, which still allows for trips to be made for more recreational purposes.

B. Muller described how the ridership modeling was conducted, which included using the CTPS Statewide Travel Demand Model for 2030 future conditions, increased to account for induced demand and recreational ridership. B. Muller noted that the ridership modeling requires a lot of assumptions about land use, existing travel patterns and times, trip frequencies, and station locations. The ridership modeling assumed, based on discussions with the MBTA Fare Policy Team, MBTA Zone 9 fares for Wareham, Buzzards Bay, and Bourne, and also assumed free unconstrained parking at each station in the Study Area to understand the overall demand for parking in the area so the Study can inform future discussions about what that parking capacity actually looks like. B. Muller noted that the induced demand and recreational ridership factors were used to account for riders not captured in the Travel Demand Model. To wrap up the discussion of the ridership modeling findings, B. Muller described the projected daily ridership findings for each alternative. B. Muller noted that in Alternative 1 the largest proportion of trips were anticipated to be from a shift from current driving trips to train trips, resulting in a reduction in vehicle trips per day. He additionally made note of riders in Alternative 2 shifting from Buzzards Bay to Bourne, likely people coming from further south and choosing not to cross the Canal given the option and that the higher ridership in Alternative 2 was largely due to the addition of the Bourne Station and higher frequency.

B. Muller described the process of calculating the Order of Magnitude Capital Costs, which was largely based on costs from SCR and escalated to 2021-dollar values. He highlighted that the costs are for planning purposes only and that the cost elements include track upgrades, signaling and communications upgrades, interlocking and grade crossing improvements, the construction of the second platform at the new Middleborough station, and signal interfacing on the Cape Cod Canal Railroad Bridge, but do not include fleet requirements. B. Muller also noted that many of these costs would benefit all users of the rail line on existing services, so they do have the potential to be addressed independently through other efforts. He noted that costs were itemized in the Study so that the Region can understand what is required to get potential passenger rail service up and running and to provide additional support for finding opportunities to fund those needs. To wrap up the discussion of the Capital Costs findings, B. Muller described the findings for each alternative. He noted that the line is currently in dark territory and that as a requirement of the Federal Railroad Administration, any new commuter passenger rail services must have full signal systems with PTC. Given that this is a benefit to all users of the rail line, this need could be met cooperatively, independent of the Cape Rail service, but given that the upgrade is needed the costs were included in the Study as they are integral to getting service up and running. B. Muller noted that the additional signals and communications needed to communicate with the Bridge and necessary track upgrades on the other side of the Canal drove up the costs for Alternative 2.

B. Muller described the process of calculating Order of Magnitude O&M costs, which used the MBTA's 2019-unit costs as shown in the National Transit Database and escalated to 2021-dollar values. He noted that the calculations used MBTA estimates since they are useful and reliable values, but that the Study is

not assuming that the MBTA would operate the potential service. B. Muller went into detail of the O&M costs for each of the alternatives and mentioned that age of the fleet vehicles, facility and track needs, and the ultimate operator of the service could affect the O&M costs.

B. Muller described the process of calculating the change in VMT and auto emissions, which involved using the ridership model's projected auto diversions to estimate the VMT savings and their respective approximate trip lengths. He noted that the process estimates auto VMT and auto related emissions reductions but does not include any increase in rail VMT and emissions as that would require a more in-depth process with more concrete assumptions. To wrap up the discussion of the change in VMT and auto emissions, B. Muller described the findings for each alternative, which generally showed reductions in harmful emissions and auto VMT in both alternatives.

To conclude the overview of the findings from the alternatives analysis, B. Muller shared a brief summary of all of the different results for both alternatives. He noted that each alternative shows ridership is driven by a mode shift from auto trips to rail trips, with some new trips and that service would not noticeably impact non-automobile options. B. Muller reiterated that MassDOT is not proposing to select an alternative but is rather analyzing options to advance the shared understanding between MassDOT and the region on potential service. He added that new implemented service is typically a hybrid of different elements of alternatives, so the Study is meant to help identify which elements are meaningful. Discussion was opened to the Advisory Group.

Comments from the Advisory Group included questions about what the design of the new Middleborough station would be like and for further clarification about the use of the existing Middleborough/Lakeville station. B. Muller replied that there is a sketch plan of what the second platform at Middleborough will be under the SCR project and that the second platform at the new Middleborough station will be used for all Cape service, except for the one-seat-rides, which will use the existing Middleborough/Lakeville station due to the alignment of the track at the new station making it less direct for the one-seat-rides.

Other comments highlighted Advisory Group members' concerns about parking availability at the stations and more riders coming to Wareham, due to its location, than the ridership projections estimated.

The discussion also included comments about the emissions reductions values and if the benefits of electrifying the system or the impact of future freight capacity was considered as part of the Study. B. Muller noted that the Study tried to stay within the limits of what was already there, but that in regard to electrification a conversation likely would happen when it is closer to a project initiation stage and a brief summary about future freight capacity could be incorporated into the report with a note as a topic to explore further in future work.

Additional questions asked about the possibility of expanding to a double track, to which B. Muller reiterated the Study's focus on staying within the limits of existing conditions and that a second track would require doing land surveys and right of way examinations, so would also likely be a part of a conversation likely to happen closer to a project initiation stage.

Advisory Group members also asked for further information regarding what exactly was captured as part of the ridership modeling and if it was specifically focused on recreational ridership just to the Cape or in both directions, and if there had been any further exploration into the reverse commute and encouraging or soliciting information from the Mass Maritime Academy about reverse commute patterns. B. Muller replied that the ridership modeling was agnostic about which direction people were traveling in for recreational purposes, but that the model did use the existing Cape Flyer ridership to drive and understand recreational ridership patterns. He also noted that the Study and the ridership modeling did not look specifically at what type of reverse trips riders would be making, but rather the model just identifies job centers and where people are living. The Study also found that meeting the peak commute period number of trips limits how many trips can be run in the reverse direction due to the single track, which B. Muller noted would be discussed in the report and would be something to discuss as the project is continued.

An additional question was asked about if the Study considered people carrying bikes to and from the train to which B. Muller replied that the Study did not look closely at bikes but that there would likely be space on the train for bikes and that it would be something to look at further closer to an initiation stage when the fleet was identified. J. Ray later noted that the MBTA dedicates space for bicycles on trains.

NEXT STEPS

B. Muller wrapped up the presentation by reiterating that the Study presents options to expand passenger rail to the Cape region and serves to provide the region with the data and information about potential options. He noted again that the Study does not include picking an alternative or proposing a plan. B. Muller discussed the implementation considerations that would need to be a part of future conversations, which included systemwide MBTA changes, determining the most appropriate operator of the service, and the coordination with the Cape Cod Canal Railroad Bridge operator to accommodate a more regularly scheduled weekday rail service. Future considerations also include the financial case, which would include looking to other state and federal sources for resources and grants, who would take the lead in filing for those grants, and if the needs for upgraded signals could be funded through an additional independent source. Other considerations would be related to parking and developing or identifying a fare structure. B. Muller noted that there are a lot of additional moving parts outside of the scope of this Study and that there should be continuing outreach and work done related to this corridor to further explore passenger rail service in the region.

B. Muller wrapped up the next steps discussion and mentioned that this analysis will include a final report that will document the findings discussed today and will incorporate the feedback from this meeting. The report will be published on the Study's website and a final presentation will be given to the MPO Board.

PUBLIC COMMENT

B. Muller and S. Tupper invited public comment. Public comments included expressing interest and desire in having rail service cross the Canal to Bourne with the suggestion of a phased approach to crossing the bridge. Members of the public and Advisory Group member D. McPherson suggested the first phase should provide service to Buzzards Bay and some level of service across the bridge, with the second phase providing more service across the Canal and including in the conversation the possibility of service to

Falmouth and Hyannis. The desire for the capital costs to not inhibit the progress and wanting to see some level of service implemented soon was emphasized.

Other public comments mentioned a desire for weekend service beyond the Cape Flyer as it is not really beneficial for Cape residents wanting to go to Boston on the weekends and, for regional equity purposes, wanting an emphasis on day-time trips to Boston from the Cape instead of trips oriented from Boston, for medical appointments, reverse commuting, etc. Other comments expressed interest in having other areas beyond Boston looked into as places that could drive ridership, having the ridership numbers broken out more to have a clear breakdown to show what types of ridership there is, and in having the price per rider compared to the equivalent for SCR Phase 1.

Members of the public also noted that it would be helpful to look at one realistic passing siding to allow for additional reverse commuting patterns and to have more information related to the costs of the signals and the specific costs of the track work that would be required beyond the installation of PTC and signals. B. Muller replied that the costs for track work is something that could be spoken to in the report as the cost was a per mile assumption based on the SCR given that surveyors have not been sent out yet so the specifics are not specifically known, so a reasonable assumption was used.

A member of the public also asked for the emissions numbers to be looked at seasonally given that emissions in the Cape region are seasonally driven. Other members of the public expressed concern about freight trains passing through residential areas, the availability of parking given the number of reduced auto trips, and the ability of the bridge to be lowered as frequently as required for passenger rail service.

Additional comments from the public included asking for clarification regarding how the two platforms at Middleborough would work, which Middleborough station would be used, and what a one-seat-ride is. M. Gordon and B. Muller replied that the shuttle trips would use the second platform at the new Middleborough station and riders would make a cross platform transfer at Middleborough to/from SCR trains and that the one-seat-rides which are direct trips to/from Boston and the Cape would use the existing Middleborough/Lakeville platform due to the orientation of the track at the new station not permitting a one-seat-ride trip.

Advisory Group member C. Podgurski spoke of Mass Coastal being ready to work with both passenger and freight rail service and would be interested as a potential operator of the passenger service.

Comments from the chat session were read aloud by S. Tupper and included questions about the percentage of car trips that would be reduced by each alternative. S. Kaul of CTPS replied that it is likely 25% of auto trips will become transit trips based on the journey to work and mode shift data. Other comments included raising concern about horns blown at grade crossings and a question about the health of the rail bridge. M. Gordon replied that the bridge has been rehabbed but there would be some necessary upgrades tying the signal system into the bridge. Another comment asked if any consideration had been given to what would happen to Cape riders and ridership levels when SCR Phase 1 is terminated and Phase 2 begins, connecting the SCR trips to the Providence/Stoughton Line, to which B. Muller replied that given the timeline for SCR Full Build, the Study chose to focus on creating alternatives that could be more closely initiated and that there will be time for those types of conversations to occur when

SCR Full Build is closer. A comment from the chat asked if there had been any consideration given to adding stations between Middleborough/Lakeville and Wareham in the future, such as the former Rock Village station in South Middleborough, to which B. Muller replied that would be a conversation likely to happen closer to a stage of implementation for a project. Additional comments included that the use of clean renewable energy should continue to be a part of the conversation, with a question about where the trains will layover and if they will run all night. M. Gordon replied that trains will mostly layover at the Middleborough Yard, with some staging of trains north of the Buzzards Bay station during the day. K. Wickham added that no trains will idle overnight per regulations.

S. Tupper and B. Muller wrapped up the meeting by providing contact information and thanking all those who participated.