



CAPE RAIL STUDY

Meeting Notes

Date: November 19, 2020
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 1

ATTENDANCE

Advisory Committee Members

Senator Susan Moran
Judith Froman, Town of Bourne
Leilani Dalpe, Town of Middleborough
Alan Slavin, Town of Wareham
Anthony Schiavi, Town of Bourne
Glenn Cannon, Town of Bourne
Lieutenant Brandon Espip, Bourne Police Dept.
Deputy Chief Joseph Carrara, Bourne Fire Dept.
David J. McPherson, Bourne Town Administrator's
Advisory Committee on Pedestrian Bicycle Path
Maria Oliva, Cape Cod Canal Chamber of Commerce
Admiral Francis X. McDonald, Massachusetts
Maritime Academy
Joe Gordon, Buzzards Bay Resident
Bob Campbell, MBTA
Jody Ray, MBTA
Ryan Coholan, MBTA
Tom Cahir, Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority
George Slade, Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority,
Bourne Advisory Board
Kristy Senatori, Cape Cod Commission
Stephen Mealy, Cape Cod Commission

MassDOT/CTPS Team

Benjamin Muller, MassDOT
Scott Peterson, CTPS
Ben Dowling, CTPS
Bruce Kaplan, CTPS

Cape Cod Commission Staff/Cape Cod MPO

Steven Tupper, CCC
David Still, CCC
David Nolan, CCC
Colleen Medeiros, CCC
Lev Malakhoff, CCC
Sarah Colvin, CCC

Consultant Team

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

Public

Lily Hennessy
Bob Frazee
Dick Elkin
John Carroll
MJ Mastrangelo
Rick Carey
Peter Meier
Liz Hartsgrove
Mike Rausch
Barbara Lachance
Bill Staff
Caper
Jay Batson
Renee Gratis
Un-named Person on Phone
Un-named Person on Phone



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This document summarizes the discussion at the November 19, 2020 MassDOT/Cape Cod Commission 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, a project background, a goals and objectives discussion, a service alternatives discussion, and 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.

J. Froman, Town of Bourne Select Board Chair, gave a brief welcome thanking everyone for participating in the discussion. J. Froman further detailed the Bourne Select Board's position and emphasis on encouraging economic development in the Town of Bourne and a larger regional shift towards rail.

INTRODUCTIONS

S. Tupper introduced the role of the Advisory Group. 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 emphasized that the Advisory Group would be vital to the study and that their opinions would help determine the alternatives. S. Tupper then identified who is represented on the Advisory Group for the public's benefit and introduced the Advisory Group members present.

T. Cahir, Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority Administrator, then provided a brief overview of the history of rail infrastructure in the region, particularly improvements or efforts made in the last several years and the benefits, both from an economic and environmental standpoint, that would result from having commuter rail service to the Cape. Senator S. Moran ended the introduction portion of the agenda with opening remarks on the real benefits to Bourne that would result from rail access to the region.

S. Tupper opened up the floor to any elected officials who wished to speak. L. Dalpe spoke of how South Coast Rail has been important to Middleborough and noted the Town's emphasis on connecting Middleborough as a starting point for rail, including for people to commute to or from other locations on the Cape. A. Slavin spoke of the Town of Wareham's support of getting the project done in an effort to provide people with new places to live, with the added ability of being able to commute to the places across the region that they would like to go, making Wareham an attractive place to live. P. Meier thanked everyone for participating and for moving the project forward.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

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 explained that the team would be developing two alternatives based on input from the Advisory Group and would bring the analysis back to the Advisory Group for additional input and feedback. B. Muller noted that the MBTA's Forging Ahead initiative will have implications on the project, which will look more at a longer-term result and implementation given COVID-related financial constraints in the short-term. The project schedule was also presented, and B. Muller spoke about how the Advisory Group members will provide input to the team to help the team develop the alternatives, which will be formally defined in December 2020.

B. Muller discussed the existing conditions in the region, focusing on rail. This discussion included noting the lack of positive train control (PTC), the need for signal upgrades, low existing speeds, and the vertical lift bridge as potential challenges for bringing commuter rail into the Cape region. Lastly, B. Muller provided a brief overview of previous studies on rail in the region, as well as related studies and projects.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES DISCUSSION

B. Muller introduced the goals and objectives discussion by asking the Advisory Group about what they would prioritize for service to the region and offered potential examples. Discussion was opened to the Advisory Group.

Comments from the Advisory Group included questions about if there would be a survey for the project, and if so, for more details on how a survey would be conducted. B. Muller replied that there is no intention to directly survey the public and that the team intended for the Advisory Group to serve as representatives of the public. Other comments highlighted Advisory Group members' desires to see a balance of affordability and frequency, while prioritizing weekday commuting patterns during the peak hours. The discussion also included requests to look at the different options that are available to the public on how to travel to and from Cape Cod for various reasons, including travel during the peak tourist seasons and to access healthcare. Reverse commuter ridership was mentioned as a consideration, particularly with the understanding that rail service would provide an alternative to driving and could help drive and support economic growth in the region. The Advisory Group noted that the reduction of greenhouse gases by commuters and tourists switching to rail from personal vehicles should be a priority. Other comments noted the importance of providing a safe and reliable service. Additional comments noted that parking availability would be a vital component to rail's success in the region, and to consider possible asynchronous use of parking facilities with Massachusetts Maritime Academy. One Advisory Group member mentioned that the frequency of the vertical lift railroad bridge could impact rail service south of the canal.

B. Muller summarized the main goals and objectives as providing both commuting options to Boston and into the Cape and Massachusetts Maritime Academy, building on the economic development and amplifying additional development through regional rail, and providing easy and reliable alternative

access to the Cape Cod region (with consideration given to non-driving options for Cape Cod retirees needing to access health care facilities in Boston). He also noted parking as a key issue.

S. Tupper noted that the resources and previous studies would be published on the project site's website for people to further investigate, as a follow up to the meeting, prompted by chat participants.

SERVICE ALTERNATIVES CRITERIA

B. Muller spoke of the service variables that the project teams will use to develop the alternatives.

B. Muller again emphasized that the alternatives would not be finalized tonight, but rather in December. The poll was then introduced as a series of questions on the different variables that would be considered: Purpose, Day/Time, Locations, Terminals, Frequency, Transfers, and Prioritization. S. Tupper noted that if people had additional comments or other answers that they should make note of it in the comments section.

Each poll question was displayed on the participants' screens and meeting participants were given time to answer each poll. When a sufficient percentage of votes had come in, S. Tupper closed the poll question and displayed the results. B. Muller then briefly summarized the results of each poll question. When polling participants about the level of frequency they would like to see, M. Gordon described the MBTA *Service Delivery Policy* frequency.

At the conclusion of the polling, B. Muller summarized the results. He noted that he saw a lot of support for hybrid weekday peak service, with some for weekend. Results were mixed on including existing or new stations in the alternatives, with additional clarification coming from comments in the chat session that some participants thought that "new stations" meant rebuilding stations at existing locations, not new station locations. Responses to the terminal of the service were mixed between Hyannis, Buzzards Bay, and Bourne (with a majority of respondents preferring service to Hyannis and the remainder nearly evenly split between Buzzards Bay and Bourne). B. Muller noted that most people would prefer to have an option for one seat trips. He added that the service day/time and frequency were the top two priorities of respondents. After summarizing the results, discussion was opened up to the Advisory Group.

The Advisory Group discussed how the length of time that people would be on the train would affect ridership, and how bicycle transportation and shared pedestrian/bicycle paths could provide new opportunities for people to commute to rail stations safely via bicycle, while also making the Cape a destination to use bicycle paths. Advisory Group members also spoke about the concerns and realities of the bridge and maritime traffic at Hyannis, including a suggestion that going to Buzzards Bay should be the priority, with further evaluation about the economic viability of the line going to the south side of the canal. One suggestion included that the team focus on a goal that is attainable in the shorter term.

Additional comments from the chat session included suggestions for a new station in West Barnstable, and consideration of a ferry connection to North Falmouth. An additional comment expressed concerns that the cost of building new stations could affect the overall implementation. Participants in the chat session reiterated the discussion around bicycle connections and travel time, noting that ridership

demand would decrease if travel time from the north side of the canal to South Station exceeded two hours.

B. Muller summarized that the team will be grappling with creating alternatives that balance the realistic nature of developing the scenarios and something that captures the frequency and ridership demands expressed.

B. Muller discussed how the results will be framed and measured, calling them metrics of success. Examples were given as: ridership, emissions, travel time, operating costs, and capital costs. Discussion was then opened to the Advisory Group.

The Advisory Group reiterated the importance of measuring travel times, as travel times could drive ridership, particularly compared to auto or bus travel times. Other Advisory Group members noted the benefits of comfort amenities, such as Wi-Fi, having an impact on ridership, and the importance of including an emissions analysis in the study, particularly looking at the summertime when the congestion from tourists' cars is significant.

Additional comments from the chat session included support and desire for ensuring that service eventually occurs on the south side of the canal as residents would be willing to live with the time delays due to the rail bridge frequency, but not with no service to the south. Other comments asked for the study to consider affordable fares in comparison to bus services.

B. Muller summarized the feedback as an emphasis mostly on travel time and comfort for metrics of success. He reiterated that comments would be followed up on and additional input would be emailed out to Advisory Group members.

NEXT STEPS

B. Muller wrapped up the presentation with information on next steps by walking through the plan for developing alternatives and an evaluation framework. He noted that meeting notes and recordings would be posted on the project site's website and the alternative analysis would begin once the alternatives were finalized following review of the input from the Advisory Group. B. Muller added that there will be an additional follow up Advisory Group meeting, likely in the spring to allow time for the model to be built and the results to be analyzed. Monthly updates would be provided to the public through the Cape Cod MPO meetings.

PUBLIC COMMENT

B. Muller and S. Tupper invited public comment. One member of the public spoke, noting that they would like the study to identify challenges to implementation, citing an example from a previous study that discussed how changing seats in Middleborough would be a factor. The member of the public also asked how the relationship between economic development and housing in Bourne and the rail service could work and what Bourne could do to help move the project faster. Lastly, the member of the public spoke about how the timing and cost for a regular commuter would need to be looked at.

The logo for the Cape Rail Study features a stylized arrow pointing to the left, composed of three overlapping triangular shapes in shades of blue, green, and light green. To the right of the arrow, the words "CAPE", "RAIL", and "STUDY" are stacked vertically in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below this, the words "Meeting Notes" are written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

CAPE RAIL STUDY

Meeting Notes

Additional comments from the chat session included further emphasis on stations offering parking, particularly overnight parking. A comment from the chat session also indicated the importance of transit hubs making it easier for riders to choose between modes that meet their individual needs, noting that there needed to be a consideration of coordinating bus and train schedules.

B. Muller again acknowledged that the comments in the chat session have been recorded and noted. He wrapped up the meeting by providing contact information and thanking all those who participated.