

Rail Transformation and the Fitchburg Line

TAC Meeting
Thursday September 7 2023

TRANSITMATTERS



About Me/TM

Me: Jackson Moore-Otto, member of TAC and employee of...

TransitMatters: Boston-based NGO that advocates for a sustainable, equitable, and reliable public transportation system accessible to everyone in Metropolitan Boston by advancing proven best practices as well as high-impact, low-cost initiatives

Today: speaking about **Fitchburg Line** and an investment that would lead to **higher frequencies** for Cambridge and other communities



Fitchburg Line

North Station (Boston) to Wachusett

Relatively lower-ridership line

Hourly / bihourly frequency

Within 128: serves Porter, Belmont, Waltham



Regional Rail

Idea to transform the commuter rail network

- Electrification
- High-level platforms
- Trains \geq every 15 minutes
- Fare integration

Make commuter rail network like a second subway system



Rail Transformation

- 2019: T's then-board endorses regional rail service on three priority corridors
- Since then: planning, incremental improvements
 - Not limited to the priority lines!
- This year's CIP
 - Preliminary electrification
 - Other improvements
 - Fitchburg: turn track
- **Fitchburg line planned to receive infrastructure for 30-minute service**
 - Additional trackage would allow trains to turn around within 128, which allows additional frequency with the same # of trains



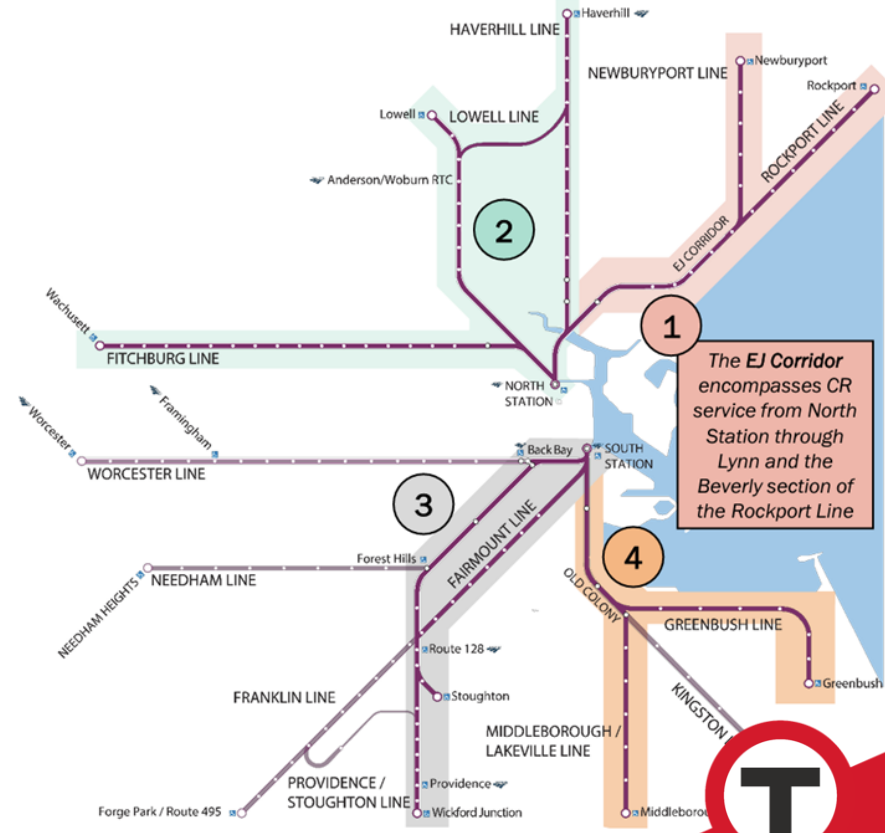
Spotlight | Regional Rail and Rail Electrification

The first phase of Regional Rail Transformation includes targeted CIP investments on the North and South Side of the Commuter Rail:

- 1 On the **Environmental Justice (EJ) Corridor**, these investments include:
 - o Conceptual design of power systems, substation, signal and track upgrades, and other critical path activities for EJ Corridor electrification
 - o Beverly turn tracks improvement (nearly completed)
 - o Planning of track and platform upgrades for 20-minute service to Beverly
 - o Site clearance and conceptual design of Salem's maintenance facility
- 2 On the **Haverhill, Lowell, and Fitchburg Lines**, the CIP supports design and construction of turn tracks and other improvements for 30-minute urban rail service to stations within Route 128/I-95
- 3 On the **Fairmount and Providence/Stoughton Lines**, the focus is on the planning and design of power upgrades, implementing 30-minute service on the Fairmount Line, and permitting for a decarbonized pilot
- 4 On the **Old Colony Lines**, the CIP includes design funding for double-tracking to deliver hourly service on the branches and start planning for the megaproject to double track between Boston and Quincy Center

Additionally, the CIP includes key efforts across the Commuter Rail:

- o Including future fleet and operator procurement, rail crossing safety improvements, new bi-level unpowered coaches, North Station Draw 1 Bridge replacement, South Station Tower 1 Interlocking Early Action, among other efforts



Implications

- 30-minute service for Porter Square
 - Particularly relevant in the Red Line's current era
- More options, more kinds of trips
- Greater reliability
- Potential added benefits of infill station in **Alewife**



Porter + Alewife: Current Situation

- Porter: high-ridership stop on system, transfers
- BUT: station not fully accessible

- Alewife: proposed location for infill stations, exact siting unclear
- Would serve major new+existing apartment buildings, North Cambridge, reverse commuters + bus connections



Discussion



Action Items

- TAC positions
- Request briefing

