

To: The Board of Selectmen  
 From: The Planning Board  
 Date: October 19, 2011  
 Re: MBTA Pilot Service study for Foxborough.

In September 2010, a study was conducted by the MBTA and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED) that explored the feasibility of offering full-time commuter rail service to the existing special-event rail station in Foxborough, MA. The findings of this study concluded that “the ridership data contained in this report provides a compelling argument that expanded MBTA service to the Foxborough Growth District will offer a number of benefits to the service region and the MBTA system.”

The Planning Board recently received a copy of a study entitled I-495/Southwest Regional Commuter Rail and Operations Study Draft Report from the law firm of Mirick & O’Connell. Prepared by VHB, this study builds on the 2010 Feasibility Study and proposes one year weekday pilot service from Foxborough to South Station, via Walpole station and the Franklin line, splitting at Readville in Dedham to utilize the improved “Fairmount” line into the city. The purpose of a pilot program “is to provide cost-effective transit service to the underserved communities between the MBTA’s Franklin and Providence commuter rail lines. These services would be low-cost in nature by utilizing existing infrastructure to the maximum extent possible with minimal infrastructure upgrades.”

This study evaluates the existing infrastructure along the CSX-owned Framingham Secondary section of railroad right-of-way between Walpole and Mansfield to determine if an opportunity exists to expand passenger rail services to this region with a minimal capital expenditure. Additionally, this study also includes the development of an operations plan for the pilot program that would provide peak period service for commuters (ideally, three peak period trains in each direction), as well as some off-peak trips, utilizing available existing MBTA equipment with minimal disruptions to existing commuter rail services on other lines. The study also identifies potential order-of-magnitude costs for infrastructure improvements and operations and maintenance costs.

The 2010 *Foxborough Commuter Rail Feasibility Study* presented an alternative (“Option C”) similar in type to the service plan developed for the pilot program. This alternative estimated 990 boardings at Foxborough Station and assumed sixteen roundtrips a weekday with eight of them being during the peak period. The average travel time between Foxborough Station and South Station was about 58 minutes.

The schedule in the study for Foxborough service is as follows:

Task	2011		2012				2013	
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Track and Drainage Improvements	■	■						
Design Grade Crossings	■							
Procure Grade Crossings		■	■					
Install Grade Crossings			■	■				
Design Signal System	■	■						
Procure Signal System		■	■	■	■	■		
Install Signal System						■	■	
Begin Service								■

A number of questions remain: Who will pay the \$6-31 million for the improvements and operation of a one year pilot study? Who is the proponent? Etc. We look forward to meeting with you on the 25<sup>th</sup>.