

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH RAIL SERVICE FOR CAPE COD

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Service for Cape Cod





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Introduction

The Cape Cod Transit Task Force and EOTC enlisted the aid of Transit Safety Management, Inc. of Georgetown, MA to evaluate three concepts for rail service. The evaluations were intended to develop the issues and a range of costs associated with potential rail service to Cape Cod. The following summary includes a brief description of the concepts evaluated, the issues that need to be explored further and conceptual costs to upgrade tracks on and off-Cape.

The Cape Cod Transit Task Force believes that rail will become an essential element in transportation for Cape Cod and recommends that proposals for passenger rail service be sought for Cape Cod that address the issues identified by the evaluation. The Task Force also recognizes that the Commonwealth is unable due to its enabling legislation, at this time, to subsidize service any proposed passenger rail service to Cape Cod.

Concepts evaluated

Cape Cod Feeder Rail Passenger Access:

“A four-stage proposal for public-private cooperation to conduct trial railroad passenger service between Middleboro/Lakeville, Hyannis and Falmouth, Massachusetts, with connecting service to Boston and an optional extension to Attleboro”. This proposal was presented to the Cape Cod Transit Task Force (CCTTF) by George C. Betke, Jr., John F. Kennedy, and Alfred E. Michon. The proposal describes the implementation of a multi-phase rail passenger service between Boston and Cape Cod over a 36-month period, operating a daily, year-round service.

Cape Cod – Acela Express Connector

The Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority (CCRTA) and the Greater Attleboro-Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA) have submitted a proposal to the Cape Cod Commission entitled, “A Locally Initiated High Quality Passenger Rail Connection from Cape Cod, the Islands, and Capeway Communities to Amtrak’s Hi-Speed Acela Express Service – A CMAQ Proposal”. The two Authorities have proposed to launch a Congestion Management/Air Quality (CMAQ) project to operate a seasonal rail connection between Cape Cod, the islands of Nantucket and Martha’s Vineyard, “Capeway” communities, and the urban regions of Attleboro and Taunton with Amtrak’s Northeast corridor high-speed Acela trains.



This proposal was withdrawn but the concept was felt to be worthy of further evaluation by EOTC and the Task Force.

Cape Cod – New York Direct Service on Amtrak

There is no proposal or plan for this service, which is essentially a re-creation of the direct New York/Cape Cod service that Amtrak operated between 1986 and 1996. The state-subsidized Amtrak trains included destinations to Hyannis in a seasonal, weekend-only service. This service was operated to Attleboro on the Northeast Corridor, then on to the Middleboro and Buzzards Bay secondary tracks from Attleboro to Buzzards Bay. Just south of Buzzards Bay, at Canal Junction, the trains continued to Hyannis.

Amtrak has not expressed any interest in operating or subsidizing this service. Amtrak has also expressed concerns over their ability to operate through Connecticut, which restricts the number of trains Amtrak can operate. Restoring the Cape Codder it may affect the number of trains Amtrak can run to Boston.

Implementation issues

A number of issues were identified, some germane to the concept being evaluated and some universal among the concepts. Any proposal for rail service will require a comprehensive public process to identify impacts on a number of levels. The major impacts will include; affects on abutters, potential safety issues, and impacts to marine traffic at the Canal crossing, environmental concerns, and impacts to the character of Cape Cod.

Freight Coordination

Concerns were expressed by the current freight operator, Bay Colony Railroad, that the nature of the single track and the limited number of sidings would create problems for the existing freight service. It has been pointed out that the current scenic rail service has not encountered any freight coordination problems, though it should be understood that the scenic rail service is a seasonal, limited service. However, in the 1980's, when there was more freight traffic, with Amtrak service and 5 round trips a day between Braintree and Hyannis, freight coordination was not a problem.

Any proposal for passenger rail service must address this issue and provide assurances that existing freight providers will not be significantly impacted. In addition to the actual operating constraints, it should be noted that any potential passenger service operator will also be required to enter into an operating agreement with Bay Colony Railroad to address dispatching costs, track inspection, road maintenance charges, and signal maintenance charges.



Equipment

The concepts all had different equipment associated with service. The costs of obtaining, leasing, maintaining, and/or refurbishing this equipment and its availability must be developed in sufficient detail by any proposed service to assure that it is available, appropriate, reliable, and can be accommodated by the proposed budget. The Commonwealth would like to see providers propose the use of equipment that is in compliance with the Americans with Disability Act and will address this issue in any Request for Response that it issues.

Station Capacity

Concerns were raised about the capacities at Middleboro and Providence stations for transfers between trains. Proposals must be clear on the operations at any station shared with another provider and include details on the proposed dispatching and coordination between rail service providers. Accommodations to make stations compliant with the Americans with Disability Act will need to be addressed by the provider and EOTC.

Schedule

The running times included in the concepts were non-existent or inconsistent with historic service in the same corridors. Proposed service should include a detailed operating plan, including schedules and schedule assumptions.

Institutional Issues

Coordination with Amtrak, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, local Regional Transit Authorities, and freight providers must also be included in any rail proposal as appropriate.

Track Costs

The following summary of track costs was prepared to provide a “ballpark” cost estimate of the required improvements for various routes and, in some cases, various operating speeds. The public comments received on the rail issue and the opinion of EOTC and the Cape Cod Transit Task Force is to have restricted maximum operating speeds east of the Canal crossing to FRA Class 2 (30 mph). This is reflected in the following summary. Proposals for passenger service for Cape Cod must respect this restriction. Further detailed engineering evaluations of rail infrastructure will need to be conducted to obtain a firm figure on actual costs of the reinstatement of passenger rail service. Funding sources for all improvements will also need to be identified.



Summary of Cost Estimates for Various Track Improvements

On Cape Improvements	Maximum Speed	Miles	Cost
Buzzards Bay to Hyannis No change in current operating speeds	30 mph	25	\$0.00
Buzzards Bay to N. Falmouth (end of track) No change in operating Speeds to MP 6.8	30 mph	6.8	\$0.00
N. Falmouth to Falmouth (MP 6.8 to 13.8) Rehabilitate track and structural section Canal Wye	30 mph	7.0	\$4.1 million* \$0.9 million

"Off-Cape" Improvements

Buzzards Bay to Middleboro Restore to Class 3 - 60 MPH Modifications to Middleboro Station	60 mph	18	\$1.4 million** \$1.0 million***
Middleboro to Attleboro Class 2 - minor track work Class 3 upgrade Bridge Repairs	30 mph 60 mph	22 22	\$1.4 million** \$14.5 million** \$1.5 million

*\$110/ft average cost, a more detailed estimate is required

**Transit Safety Management

***EOTC/MBTA

Conceptual Track Costs Compared

(based on the costs and operating speeds presented above)

	Maximum Speed	Cost
Cape Cod Feeder Rail Passenger Access		
Stage 1 - Middleboro to Buzzards Bay	60 mph	\$2.4 million
Stage 2 - Buzzards Bay to Hyannis	30 mph	\$0.00
Stage 3 - Buzzards Bay to Falmouth	30 mph	\$5.0 million
Stage 4 - Middleboro to Attleboro	30 mph	\$1.4 million
"Stage 5" - Middleboro to Attleboro	60 mph	\$16 million
Acela Connector (no Falmouth service)	30/60 mph	\$19.8 million
Restore Cape Codder Service (includes Falmouth service)	30/60 mph	\$24.8 million

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