

**Fitchburg Line Working Group
Meeting Notes
September 27, 2019**

Attending: Bruno Fischer, David Martin, Astrid Stumpf, Chris Ryan, Isabella Alera Rrep Higgins) , Mo Khan, Jim Varney, George Kahale, John Orison, Tory Mazzola, Mary Jo Bohart, Franny Ozman, Jessica Strunkin, Peter Lowitt

Satellite Parking: Mr. Lowitt announced that he had spoken with Representative Gouveia and that she had approach the transportation committee leadership about supporting satellite parking for commuter rail. She will keep us posted as this issue progresses.

Devens Shuttle: Bruno Fisher of MART reported that the Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce held a meeting for HR managers in the region served by the Devens Shuttle to educate them about the Shuttle and how they can connect their employees to it. Mr. Lowitt noted that this underscores the necessity of continuous communication with the public and our ridership to promote first and last mile solutions. He also noted that the Ayer Commuter Rail Parking Lot construction is on time and on budget with an expected completion in mid December 2019. Mo Khan noted that MART is using a local taxi company to provide gap service in the region and that it is working well.

Commuter Rail Communities Coalition Meeting: The morning of October 11 at 50 Milk Street in Boston the next meeting of the Commuter Rail Communities Coalition will meet. Mayor Thomas McGee of Lynn and Town Manager Sarah Stanton of Bedford co-chair this coalition which is modelled on the Fitchburg Line Working Group. Commuter rail communities will establish a set of common priorities and begin to lobby for them as a group. Those wishing to attend can register here

<https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07egjvsjgd12cf3dd8&oseq=&c=&ch>

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Fall Commuter Rail Schedule Tweaks: Torry Mazzola from Keolis noted that the schedule on the Commuter rail lines will be tweaked in the next couple of weeks, and that he will send out the revised schedule to the working group members. This twice annual event is expected to have a minor impact, of a couple of minutes here and there. Please check the schedule when its emailed to you. He also reported on the annual passenger satisfaction survey which is conducted by a 3rd party contractor. Noting that Keolis has maintained a 5 on a 1-7 scale. He will email us the specific results for the Fitchburg Line survey. Thanks Torry

MART Satellite Operations Center at Devens: Bruno Fisher brought up that MART will begin staffing a satellite operations center at Devens in the future. There are plans to coordinate COA vans to increase flexibility for commuters and users. Ms. Strunkin of MassDevelopment welcomed this new development.

Acton: David Martin noted that the town has created new parking rates to incentivize the use of remote marking lots and come into balance with Littleton and Concord. Acton also closed on a property for additional parking near the station in South Acton. There will now be approximately 500 spaces plus 60 remote spaces in the system.

Crosstown Connect: Franny reported that CTC applied for a CMAQ grant to fund and operate a Concord Shuttle. Also under a Community Compact grant, MAGIC and CTC are collaborating for a microtransit

service (Uber and Lyft) to fill in service needs and gaps within the region. Sudbury is the lead MAPC community on this grant.

Fitchburg Update: Mary Jo noted that momentum is building in downtown Fitchburg with its 2 new opportunity zones. The City is looking to build on the new mixed use developments near the transit center, one of which just received its tax credits and expects to be under construction in the next year or so. The City is also working with MASSINC and the Transformative Transit Oriented Development program to move development forward. MASSINC has a conference in Worcester on 11/20.

Harvard: Chris noted that Harvard continues to discuss possible commuter lots near the Route 2/111 interchange, but that there is not a lot of traction on the idea as of yet.

Rail Vision Process Continues: The seven alternative futures for Rail Vision were discussed as background for a presentation by Jim Varney of Alstom, on their hybrid train technology and the possibility of attracting a pilot program to the region in late 2020. The hybrid hydrogen technology is an alternative to full electrification of a line as proposed in the Commuter Rail Vision Plan being developed by the MBTA. ALSTOM has developed a hybrid train technology with the same range and performance characteristics of diesel, using the ILINT train body. It is highly energy efficient, scalable, and interoperable (the ILINT works well when mixed with diesel cars). It holds out the possibility of converting diesel electric locomotives (not straight diesel only). Power can be produced off peak as well. So this could be an appropriate renewable type alternative to electricity on the north side of the mbta system. The South Side is likely to convert to electricity as the infrastructure is there to support it from AMTRACK. John Orison of HNTB would like to develop a road map to get this technology tested on the Fitchburg Line. He noted a train set is coming to Vancouver in the fall of 2020 for a conference and that it could be redeployed to the east coast afterwards if the stars come into alignment. David Martin suggested putting him in touch with the North South Rail Link folks as this might be a niche that would benefit this project. It was noted that there will be a lag time of 15-20 for conversion of any rail fleet and this could work with a mixed fleet strategy. Ms. Strunkin ask about a cost comparison of Diesel Mus versus Hydrogen Mus (currently higher cost). Jim noted that when you look at the life cycle costs and the costs of additional electrification infrastructure, then the HMUs are cheaper. They represent a clean energy alternative to fully electrifying the line. People interested in receiving a copy of the presentation should contact Astrid Stumpf. Here is here email STUMPF Astrid <astrid.stumpf@alstomgroup.com>