

<i>For Office Use Only</i> Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
MEPA Analyst:
Phone: 617-626-

NPC

Notice of Project Change

The information requested on this form must be completed to begin MEPA Review of a NPC in accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act and its implementing regulations (see 301 CMR 11.10(1)).

Project Name: Silver Line Service to South Station		EOEA #: 6826/11707	
Street: Washington Street/Essex Street and Kneeland Street			
Municipality: Boston		Watershed: Boston Harbor	
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 4690960N, 32961E		Latitude: 42° 21.15'N Longitude: 71° 3.88'W	
Status of project construction: 100% complete (For Silver Line/Washington Street)			
Proponent: Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority			
Street: 10 Park Plaza, Room 6720			
Municipality: Boston		State: MA	Zip Code: 02116
Name of Contact Person From Whom Copies of this NPC May Be Obtained: Lois Baxter			
Firm/Agency: MBTA		Street: 10 Park Plaza	
Municipality: Boston		State: MA	Zip Code: 02116
Phone: 617-22-3124	Fax: 617-222-1557	E-mail: lbaxter@mbta.com	

In 25 words or less, what is the project change? The project change involves a new Silver Line Surface Route along Essex Street. This program includes making roadway modifications to indicate bus only lanes and stops.

See full project change description beginning on page 3.

Date of ENF filing or publication in the Environmental Monitor: **July 22, 1998**

Was an EIR required? Yes No; if yes,

Note – An EIR was not required for the Washington Street component of Silver Line. EIR's were required for the other two elements of the Silver Line (Phases II and III).

- was a Draft EIR filed? Yes (Date:) No
- was a Final EIR filed? Yes (Date:) No
- was a Single EIR filed? Yes (Date:) No

Have other NPCs been filed? Yes (Date(s): 5/25/99) No

See attached summary of prior MEPA filings.

If this is a NPC solely for lapse of time (see 301 CMR 11.10(2)) proceed directly to "ATTACHMENTS & SIGNATURES" on page 4.

PERMITS / FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE / LAND TRANSFER

List or describe all new or modified state permits, financial assistance, or land transfers not previously reviewed: **No new or modified permits or land transfers are required for the new Silver Line to South Station service. The project will be funded 100% via federal funding (ARRA Funding). No MBTA or Commonwealth Funds are being used for the project.**

Are you requesting a finding that this project change is insignificant? (see 301 CMR 11.10(6))

Yes No; if yes, attach justification.

Are you requesting that a Scope in a previously issued Certificate be rescinded?

Yes No; if yes, attach the Certificate

Are you requesting a change to a Scope in a previously issued Certificate? Yes No; if yes, attach Certificate and describe the change you are requesting:

Summary of Project Size & Environmental Impacts ¹	Previously reviewed	Net Change	Currently Proposed
LAND			
Total site acreage	32.7 acres	9.81 acres	42.53 acres
Acres of land altered	0	0	0
Acres of impervious area ²	0	0	0
Square feet of bordering vegetated wetlands alteration	0	0	0
Square feet of other wetland alteration	0	0	0
Acres of non-water dependent use of tidelands or waterways	0	0	0
STRUCTURES			
Gross square footage	0	209 ft ²	209 ft ²
Number of housing units	0	0	0
Maximum height (in feet)	0	10 feet	10 feet

¹ All project size dimensions refer to the previously reviewed and approved Silver Line Phase I (Washington Street) project plus the proposed Essex Street dimensions. Calculations do not include the elements of Silver Line Phases II or III.

² All roadway work is utilizing existing impervious surfaces. No new impervious areas are proposed.

Summary of Project Size & Environmental Impacts ¹	Previously reviewed	Net Change	Currently Proposed
TRANSPORTATION			
Vehicle trips per day ³	336	144	480
Parking spaces	0	0	0
WATER/WASTEWATER			
Gallons/day (GPD) of water use	0	0	0
GPD water withdrawal	0	0	0
GPD wastewater generation/ treatment	0	0	0
Length of water/sewer mains (in miles)	0	0	0

Does the project change involve any new or modified:

1. conversion of public parkland or other Article 97 public natural resources to any purpose not in accordance with Article 97? Yes No

2. release of any conservation restriction, preservation restriction, agricultural preservation restriction, or watershed preservation restriction? Yes No

3. impacts on Estimated Habitat of Rare Species, Vernal Pools, Priority Sites of Rare Species, or Exemplary Natural Communities? Yes No

4. impact on any structure, site or district listed in the State Register of Historic Place or the inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth?

Yes No; if yes, does the project involve any demolition or destruction of any listed or inventoried historic or archaeological resources? Yes No

5. impact upon an Area of Critical Environmental Concern? Yes No

If you answered 'Yes' to any of these 5 questions, explain below:

PROJECT CHANGE DESCRIPTION (attach additional pages as necessary). The project change description should include:

- (a) a brief description of the project as most recently reviewed
- (b) a description of material changes to the project as previously reviewed,
- (c) the significance of the proposed changes, with specific reference to the factors listed 301 CMR 11.10(6), and
- (d) measures that the project is taking to avoid damage to the environment or to minimize and mitigate unavoidable environmental impacts. If the change will involve modification of any previously issued Section 61 Finding, include a proposed modification of the Section 61 Finding (or it will be required in a Supplemental EIR).

SILVER LINE SERVICE TO SOUTH STATION- PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As part of its recently available funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the MBTA is proposing a series of projects and improvements to all components of the system. As part of this program, the MBTA seeks to make a series of bus service improvements along the Silver Line/Washington Street corridor from Washington Street to

³ Vehicle trips includes all current Silver Line Phase I vehicles per day plus the proposed vehicle trips to South Station. Figure does not include the vehicle trips on the other two phases of Silver Line.

South Station. The MBTA proposes the use of ARRA money for the infrastructure funds necessary to make these improvements. Additionally, the most heavily traveled component of the existing Silver Line/Washington Street Service is between Dudley and north of New England Medical Center (to either NEMC, Chinatown or Temple Place). Currently, 72% of all Silver Line/Washington Street passengers begin and end their trips at these points. By adding supplemental service along the Silver Line, the MBTA will be able to provide better and improved service between these critical transit destinations.

In prior MEPA filings, the MBTA proposed and consequently implemented a Bus Rapid Transit service from Dudley to downtown Boston, traveling along Washington Street to Temple Place at Downtown Crossing. That service included various stations along the corridor as well as a short contraflow lane across the Massachusetts Turnpike Bridge. Service along this route began in 2002 and continues to operate today.

To supplement this service, the MBTA proposes a new service which will operate along the existing Silver Line Washington Street and terminate at South Station. This service will be in addition to and a supplement to the existing Silver Line service to Temple Place. (No reductions in service from Dudley to Temple Place will occur as a result of this new service to South Station.) The proposed South Station service is slated to arrive every 15 minutes until 8 PM, and every 20 minutes afterwards, 7 days per week. The Temple Place service arrives every 5 minutes during rush hours, every 8 minutes during the midday, and every 10-15 minutes during the evening. The new service will require four additional 60' Silver Line buses and limited bus stops and roadway improvements. The MBTA will introduce the service using its Compressed Natural Gas vehicles. The MBTA is also currently purchasing new 60 foot articulated hybrid buses to be used on the bus network. The MBTA will be investigating whether or not these buses should be dedicated or used on the new South Station route.

Prior to the implementation of the Silver Line/Washington Street, the corridor was served by the former MBTA Bus Route #49 which carried approximately 7300 passengers per day. At the time of the MEPA review of Silver Line/Washington Street, the MBTA estimated that the transit ridership on the corridor would grow to 11,800 riders per day with the new BRT service. Ridership on the line has significantly exceeded those projects, with the Silver Line/Washington Street carrying over 14,500 passengers per day. The MBTA estimates that the new service to South Station will add approximately 1400 new transit riders to the Silver Line system. In addition, the MBTA anticipates another 1200 new transit riders as a result of the increased service to NEMC and Chinatown.

This project includes making a number of roadway modifications, primarily street striping and special pavement and pavement markers to indicate bus only lanes, bus stops, *etc.* A map of the route is attached. The graphic identifies those segments of the route that will be bus only lanes or provide transit priority. The project also involves the building of a new bus waiting area at South Station, along Essex Street near the intersection with Atlantic Avenue. The bus shelter will include signage, benches, trash receptacles, Charlie Card validators (to allow for off board fare collection) and security cameras. The shelter will be heated for customers waiting in inclement or cold weather. This bus shelter will be equipped with a roof top photovoltaic system which will serve to generate electricity to be used for the lighting and heating of the shelter.

The bus shelter will be located on Essex Street approximately 100 feet west of the intersection with Atlantic Avenue. South Station, which is listed on the National Register, is

located across Atlantic Avenue. The shelter, which is the only structure or above ground element associated with this project, will not directly impact or alter South Station Headhouse or any other historic resource in the area. The shelter is across the street from South Station and as such, will not alter the view of the resource. Additionally, the shelter will be part of the street furniture typically found in a dense, downtown urban environment. The shelter will be transparent and of a minimalist design so as to not conflict with any of the surrounding buildings. A rendering of the shelter, as well as a plan showing bus lanes and the bus stop location is attached.

The MBTA, through its funding partner, the FTA, consulted with the Massachusetts Historical Commission to receive input on what, if any, impacts to historic properties would result from the project. On May 7, 2009, the MHC concurred that the project would have no Adverse Effect on historic properties. A copy of the FTA letter and MHC's concurrence is attached.

The project will not have any adverse environmental impacts. All improvements will be on the public right of way. The only structure to be built will be a new bus shelter on Essex Street. The shelter will be predominantly transparent with stainless steel finishes.

The roadway enhancements will include bus only lanes along most of the route. These lanes will be created through the elimination of some on street parking, and as such, will not alter the roadway capacity along the corridor and will not result in a traffic disruption. The MBTA and the City of Boston are currently working to develop some alternative to on street parking areas to accommodate the businesses in the area. The bus lanes will be created by scarifying the roadway and removing the top layer of bituminous concrete. This layer will then be replaced with a visibly different color of concrete so as to easily distinguish between the bus only lanes and the auto travel lanes. The bus lanes and the travel lanes will then be stripped and marked. Modifications to sidewalks at intersections may be necessary to make the sidewalks and crossings conform to ADA and Massachusetts Architectural Access Board standards. Working with the City of Boston Transportation Department, changes and modifications to the street signal system will be implemented to provide transit priority to the MBTA buses.

As a result, the Silver Line to South Station Bus Service Enhancement Project will not generate any new noise, vibration, traffic, parkland, wildlife, hazardous materials or air quality impacts, in either the construction phase or when currently built. Because the project will be on the public right of way owned by the City of Boston, or on MBTA property and on areas previously disturbed, the Silver Line Service to South Station project will not have any effect on any cultural resources.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) in conjunction with the MBTA, have used a variety of methods to solicit public input and public comment on the project.

On May 21, 2009, the Executive Office of Transportation, in cooperation with the MBTA, held a community meeting to present the proposed service to South Station. The MBTA provided notice of the meeting through the use of "seat drops" or notices on buses to advise our Silver Line/Washington Street customers of the meeting. Additionally, working with the Mayor's Office and its neighborhood liaisons, the MBTA reached out to residents in the South End, Chinatown and Leather District to inform them of the meeting. Notice of the meeting was

placed on both the MBTA and EOT websites. EOT and MBTA also issued press releases to local papers regarding the community meetings.

At this meeting, the Secretary of Transportation presented the purpose and need for the project, the proposed route, the station location, etc. Staff from EOT provided supplemental information on the proposed project and took questions and comments from the public.

Over the course of the past few weeks, the Secretary of Transportation as well as staff from EOT and the MBTA have also met with transit advocates and others interested in transit issues along the corridor (*e.g.*, The T Riders Union, MASSPIRG, Conservation Law Foundation, Washington Street Gateway, *etc.*) to brief them on this project as well as other transit projects to be funded by ARRA.

EOT staff also presented the Silver Line to South Station project at a meeting of Move Mass on June 19, 2009. Move Mass is a broad-based coalition of leaders from labor, business, community and environmental organizations to help resolve issues surrounding the Big Dig. Move Mass hosts monthly membership meetings attended by a rich mix of leaders in government, politics, business, consulting firms, academia, and advocacy. The purpose of the meeting was to provide information and feedback on this project as well as other ARRA funded transit projects.

The MBTA has also met on multiple occasions with the owners and/or representatives of 686 Atlantic Avenue (formerly the Essex Hotel) as well as the developer of Two Financial Center (currently in construction) to discuss the potential siting and location of the proposed shelter at South Station (on Essex Street).

Additionally, the MBTA and EOT have been meeting regularly with the various departments at the City of Boston (*e.g.*, Boston Transportation Department, Boston Public Works, Boston Redevelopment Authority, *etc.*) to discuss the planning and implementation of the project. Based on these meetings and consultations, EOT, the MBTA and the City of Boston made proposals for the route, stop location, station design, *etc.*

CONSIDERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Using the guidance found at 310 CMR 11.10 (6) ("*Secretary's Consideration of Environmental Consequences*"), the MBTA believes that the Silver Line to South Station Bus Service Enhancement Project does not warrant any additional environmental review. The MBTA draws this conclusion based on the following:

1. **Expansion of the Project** – While the project does expand the geographical boundaries and reach of the proposed transit service, (as compared to the originally reviewed Silver Line/Washington Street service) this expansion does not result in any significant expansion of impacts but will in fact, result in an expansion of the benefits. The service will utilize existing urban city streets. It does not require any land takings.
2. **Generation of further impacts** -- The project is not expected to generate further impacts. The downtown intersections are readily equipped to accommodate the additional four bus trips per hour (fewer in the evening and weekend hours). The vehicles will be state of the art alternatively fueled transit vehicles resulting in very low emissions. While no ridership and air quality analysis has been done for this project, the

emissions of the buses will be offset if not negated by corresponding reduction in auto trips. As confirmed by the Mass Historic Commission, the project will not have an Adverse Effect on historic properties.

3. **Change in expected date for Commencement of the Project, Commencement of Construction, completion date for the Project, or schedule of work on the Project** – the Silver Line/Washington Street project is completed; while the third phase of the Silver Line is not completed, that component of the project is not the subject of this NPC.
4. **Change of the Project site.** – The new service to South Station does not change the project site. The Silver Line service is still anchored on the Washington Street corridor. The South Station service is a supplement to this existing service.
5. **New application for a Permit or New request for Financial Assistance or a Land Transfer.** – The service to South Station does not require any permits from any state agency, nor does the service require any land acquisitions. The roadway improvements are being built by the MBTA but the road will remain in its entirety under the ownership and control of the City of Boston. The project will be funded 100% by the Federal Transit Administration via the ARRA program.
6. **For a Project with net benefits to environmental quality and resources or public health, any change that prevents or materially delays realization of such benefits** – the environmental benefits anticipated in the MEPA review of the Silver Line/Washington Street project are currently being realized. In fact, ridership on this route is significantly higher than the levels predicated at the time of the environmental review.
7. **For a Project involving a lapse of time, changes in the ambient environment or information concerning the ambient environment.** – This NPC is not the result of a lapse in time, is not due to any changes in ambient environment, or information concerning the ambient environment.

MEASURES TO AVOID ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

No new environmental impacts will result from the operation of the Silver Line Service to South Station and as such, mitigation measures for impacts are not warranted. Minor impacts during construction may result and the MBTA will take the following steps to mitigate and reduce these impacts:

1. A Construction Management Plan, including a Traffic Management Plan, will be prepared in collaboration with the BTD to identify necessary measures to maintain pedestrian, bicycle and automobile traffic during construction.
2. A Soils Management Plan will be developed to establish procedures for characterizing, reusing and disposing of soils during construction.
3. Construction noise and vibration will be minimized to the extent feasible.
4. Construction vehicles will have emission reducing control devices in accordance with the

MADEP's Clean Construction Initiative.

In addition, construction of the Silver Line to South Station service will be controlled by the MBTA's contract specifications and will comply with local, state, and federal standards. These specifications include provisions to protect abutters and adjacent communities from impacts during construction.

Additionally, the MBTA project staff and the contractor will continue to coordinate with the communities as construction progresses and will respond to communities during construction. The MBTA will work with retailers and all abutters along the alignment so as to minimize any distractions to businesses or economic activities. Construction Management Plans will be developed so as to ensure access to all businesses during construction.

HISTORY OF THE MEPA REVIEW

MEPA review of the Silver Line commenced with what had originally been referred to as the South Boston Piers Transitway: a tunnel connection between South Station and Boylston Station, providing transit connections to the Red, Orange and Green Lines. The original alignment for this phase, extending from South Station along Essex Street, Avenue de Lafayette and Avery/Tremont Streets to Boylston Station terminating in a loop underneath the Boston Common in the vicinity of the Central Burying Ground, was reviewed and approved as part of the 1993 FEIS/FEIR. The Secretary of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) issued its FEIR Certificate on February 16, 1994, which completed the state-level Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) review. A Process Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was also executed with the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC), containing the MBTA's commitments to mitigate impacts to historic and archaeological resources.

The MBTA subsequently proposed the integration of the Washington Street Replacement Service (now Silver Line Phase I) and Transitway projects (now Silver Line Phases II and III) into the combined Silver Line in the *Washington Street/Silver Line Transit Service Environmental Notification Form (ENF)*, filed with EOEA for review under MEPA in July 1998. On August 21, 1998, the Secretary of EOEA issued a Certificate that allowed the MBTA to prepare a Notice of Project Change (NPC) to address issues raised in both the Certificate and the ENF comment letters relating to the full Silver Line project. In response, the 1999 *Notice of Project Change, Washington Street/Silver Line Transit Service and Roadway Improvements; Response to Comments, South Boston Piers Transitway* formally presented a description of the combined Silver Line, including the Phase III element analyzed in this document. On August 9, 1999, the Secretary of EOEA issued a Certificate requiring the MBTA to prepare annual informational updates on the Silver Line. The Certificate also required an evaluation of any additional environmental impacts associated with the extension of the Phase III tunnel to a proposed portal on Washington Street.

Annual Updates were prepared for each of the years 2000 through 2006. (As previously agreed to by MEPA, the Annual Update for 2005 took the form of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) where the MBTA proposed and analyzed four possible alignments for the Silver Line Phase III tunnel. MEPA issued a scope for the FEIR on August 15, 2005.

The Annual Update for 2006 took the form of a Notice of Project Change in which the

MBTA updated the progress to date and also identified and proposed a new portal alignment for Phase III. This new portal location came as a result of public comments received on the 2005 SEIR. MEPA issued a scope of review for that new portal on November 16, 2006.

The MBTA had planned to file a Final EIR for the project in early 2008, which would serve as its last Annual Update and therefore complete the MEPA review of the project. The MBTA submitted the draft of the Final EIS to the Federal Transit Administration in the spring of 2008 for its review. (NEPA requires the Federal agency to review and approve the publication of the document prior to its release to the public.) While FTA reviewed the document, they had not approved its release.

In December 2008, the FTA verbally informed the MBTA that the MBTA's most recent New Starts submittal, prepared and filed by the MBTA in September 2008) has been reviewed preliminarily. FTA has determined that the Silver Line project will receive a *Medium High* for its land use and project justification. In May 2009, the FTA released its Annual New Starts Report which contained this statement as well. The MBTA's financial analysis demonstrated, however, that the MBTA's current financial situation identifies a higher level of debt and reliance on future borrowing, and as such, the project will receive a *Medium Low* for the financial component of the review, resulting in an overall *Medium Low* for the project.

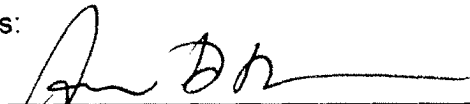
Projects receiving a Medium Low are ineligible to move into Final Design. Based on this, the FTA determined that until the MBTA's financial situation is corrected, it would not approve the public release of the Final EIS.

ATTACHMENTS & SIGNATURES

Attachments:

- A. Secretary's most recent Certificate on this project -- **Copies of the SEIR Certificate dated 8/15/09 as well as the Secretary's Certificate on the NPC dated 11/26/06 are attached.**
- B. Plan showing most recent previously-reviewed proposed build condition -- **Copy of the Silver Line existing conditions graphic is attached.**
- C. Plan showing currently proposed build condition - **Copy of the Silver Line to South Station Route plan is attached.**
- D. Original U.S.G.S. map or good quality color copy (8-1/2 x 11 inches or larger) indicating the project location and boundaries. – **Project Locus graphic (“Direct Connect to South Station”)**
- E. **Graphic Showing the design and location of the proposed shelter at South Station (along Essex Street).**
- F. Federal Transit Administration's letter with MHC with its Finding of No Adverse Effect (Letter from FTA dated April 21, 2009 with concurrence by MHC dated May 7, 2009).
- G. List of all agencies and persons to whom the proponent circulated the NPC, in accordance with 301 CMR 11.10(7) -- **List of all agencies receiving a copy of the NPC is attached. Also attached is a list of the 650+ people who commented on the most recent 2005 SEIR and the 2006 NPC. Each of these commenters received a letter informing them of the availability of the NPC and information on how to view the NPC on the MBTA's website (www.mbta.com). A copy of the letter dated July 6, 2009 is also attached.**

Signatures:

7/1/09 

Date	Signature of Responsible Officer or/Proponent	Date	Signature of person preparing NPC (if different from above)
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Andrew D. Brennan	Name (print or type)	Name (print or type)
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Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority	Firm/Agency	Firm/Agency
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10 Park Plaza	Street	Street
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Boston, MA 02116	Municipality/State/Zip	Municipality/State/Zip
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617-222-3126	Phone	Phone
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