

**DRAFT**



Section 2

# Previous Work and Plans

## Section 2

# Previous Work and Plans

## Ongoing and Previous Planning and Work

The South Boston Seaport has always served as a major transportation conduit serving all aspects of life in the Boston Area. Over the past decade, the South Boston Seaport has undergone a major urban renaissance and now, this new 'urban hub' in historical downtown Boston continues to be one of the fastest growing and densest neighborhoods in the City of Boston.






The South Boston Seaport shift from acres of surface parking lots, to urban focal point, is the result of ongoing and previous investment by the City of Boston, MBTA, MassDOT, MassPort, MCCA, and the private sector in the area's transportation and transit system. These investments are based on a variety of different planning efforts that have considered master planning, urban design, development planning, and transportation network needs for the South Boston Seaport.

Many of these plans directly address the transit system and the demand for efficient transit connections to, from, and within the South Boston Seaport. In recent years the City of Boston, MassDOT, the MBTA, MassPort, MCCA, and the Seaport TMA have already implemented many of these recommendations, including:

- Continued build out of the pedestrian network and public realm in conjunction with private development
- Replaced the Silver Line vehicle fleet
- Completed construction of Summer Street in the Fort Point District
- Advanced pedestrian wayfinding in the South Boston Seaport with new signs
- Implemented ferry service from Lovejoy Wharf at North Station to the Fan Pier
- Improved signals along Atlantic Avenue and for the Silver Line at D Street,
- Increased frequency for MBTA bus routes 7 and 9, and
- Consolidated private shuttles.
- Advanced designs for an improved Cypher Street

While substantial progress has been made in the South Boston Seaport area, there is uncertainty over what should be done going forward to support the area as it continues to evolve and grow. This is a result of having a number of different strategies identified across a variety of planning documents. This study will solve this dilemma by providing a prioritized list of strategies to improve transit service to, from, and within the South Boston Seaport.

The project team reviewed these studies to help inform the goals the South Boston Seaport Strategic Transit Plan aims to achieve and the strategies it tests. The goals and strategies found in the studies reviewed were classified by theme, including:

-  Improved transit service  
*e.g. more frequent, reliable bus service*
-  Enhanced transit infrastructure  
*e.g. bus lanes and new vehicles*
-  New connections  
*e.g. service to more places*
-  Access to transit  
*e.g. better walk / bike access to stations*
-  Better transit policy and information

*Theme symbols are included with the plan description to signalize what the plans aim to advance*

# DRAFT

This chapter provides background on the efforts reviewed.

**South Boston Waterfront Sustainable Transportation Plan (2015, A Better City, City of Boston, MassDOT, MassPort, MCCA)**

improved upon the South Boston Transportation Plan (2000) and set the stage for the South Boston Seaport Strategic Transit Plan. The plan outlined a series of short-, mid-, and long-term transportation system improvements for the next 20 years (2035). The plan provides dozens of strategies improving transportation in the district, but did not quantify or prioritize the recommendations.



for

Advancing

**Imagine Boston 2030 (2017, City of Boston)**

is the citywide master plan with initiatives in housing, education, transportation, technology, planning, and more. The plan identifies the South Boston Seaport as a target for walkable, mixed-use development with better transit infrastructure. The South Boston Seaport is portrayed as an important destination for Boston's future, as with connections from North Station and the Fairmount Line commuter rail, as key recommendations in the overall report.



Advancing

**Go Boston 2030 (2017, City of Boston)**

is the City of Boston's transportation action plan outlining short and long-term projects and policies to advance transportation and transportation equity in the city. Among the policies and projects recommended (see Strategies Chapter for a complete list), the South Boston Seaport district was identified for two of the of the seven priority projects: a North Station to South Boston Waterfront rapid bus and ferry and a smart signal corridor and district in the South Boston Seaport. These, along with other recommendations from the plan, aim to shift Boston's primary mode of transportation away from private vehicles and towards active transportation and transit.



Advancing

**Focus 40 (2019, MBTA)**

is the MBTA's 20-year investment plan. The plan is centered around their goals of sustainability, livability, equity, and economic competitiveness. Rather than focusing on projects, the MBTA identified priority places where improved transit is needed. The South Boston Waterfront is one of these priority places, as it is a major employment district in the region and lacks adequate transit service, and will be a focus of future MBTA projects.



Advancing

## Massachusetts Bicycle Transportation Plan (2019, MassDOT)

is the State's plan to increase biking trips while decreasing the number of bicycle injuries and fatalities. In addition to increasing bike safety, the plan discusses the importance of convenient routes to transit stops and bike accommodations at stations to encourage the use of bikes for first-mile / last-mile connections. The plan emphasizes the importance of the cyclist in transportation planning efforts throughout the state.



Advancing 

## Massachusetts Pedestrian Transportation Plan (2019, MassDOT)

is the State's plan to increase walking trips while decreasing the number of pedestrian injuries and fatalities. In addition to increasing awareness for pedestrian safety, the report emphasizes the importance of crosswalks nearby transit stops to encourage safe crossing when accessing transit. The plan emphasizes the importance of the pedestrian in transportation planning throughout the state.



Advancing 

## Massachusetts Freight Plan (2019, MassDOT)

is the State's plan to improve freight operations and support economic and workforce development.

While the plan discusses all of Massachusetts, it specifically cites challenges in the South Boston Seaport. The South Boston Seaport is a booming mixed-use development that experiences congestion for all modes, including trucks and freight. It recommends that MassDOT preserve existing truck routes and enhance truck connections, as access from Conley Terminal, Fish Pier, and the Flynn Marine Park to I-93 and I-90 is critical to their competitiveness.



Advancing  

## 2020-2023 Capital Investment Plan (2019, MassDOT)

is the State investment plan for transportation projects in the next few years. The investments and projects are designed to address reliability, modernization, and expansion. Although there are no South Boston Seaport projects identified in the CIP, there are additional funds for MassDot to use for clean transit vehicles and other transportation improvements in the South Boston Seaport.



Advancing 

**DRAFT**

**Automated Fare Collection 2.0 (2020s, MBTA)**

is the new fare payment system designed to improve the customer experience, ensure equal access, upgrade infrastructure and software, improve revenue control, operate buses and trains more efficiently, and support future MBTA changes and growth. The new system allows passengers to pay fares with Charlie cards, a mobile app, and contactless credit and debit cards at all vehicle doors. This will speed up boarding on all trains and buses. The new system is expected to be in place in 2021.



Advancing     

**Better Bus Project (2018-19, MBTA)**

is one part of a larger effort (including the Bus Network Redesign) to improve bus service in the region. In early 2019, 47 proposals to change particular bus route services were released and these changes were implemented in September 2019. The study recommended changes to 5 of the 7 bus routes operating in the South Boston Seaport in addition to the Silver Line 2. In September, Route 4 was realigned to no longer provide service on Northern Avenue and the commuter buses (Routes 448, 449, and 459) terminated service at Wonderland, no longer coming into the South Boston Seaport.



Advancing    

**Better Bus Tracking and Predictions (2018, MBTA)**

is the MBTA's effort to improve accuracy of bus prediction by increasing the frequency that bus locations are updated. Buses are now tracked instantly and in real time. These improvements increased the accuracy of arrival estimates by 10%, improving predictability for riders.

Advancing  

**Early Morning and Late Night Bus Service Pilots (2018-19, MBTA)**

began bus service before 5 am and extend bus service after 1 am were tested in 2018. The pilots became permanent in April and September 2019. As a result, service on the SL1, SL2, and SL3, as well as Route 4 in the South Boston Seaport increased.

**Early Morning and Late Night Service Becomes Permanent**

Updated on July 15, 2019



Advancing   


**Silver Line Capacity Study (2019, MassPort)**

is designed to assess the capacity of the MBTA Silver Line routes in the South Boston Seaport: SL1, SL2, and SL3. The study will look at existing and long-term capacity, existing and forecasted demands, and understand the systems needs, including those unmet. The study is still underway.

Advancing   

### **Station Brightening (Ongoing, MBTA)**

is the MBTA's process to improve bus and rapid transit stations by deep cleaning stations, repairing broken tiles and cracked sidewalks, addressing underground leaks, and landscaping. This effort also includes updating maps and providing better wayfinding tools to ease passenger access to stations and improve their transit experience.

Advancing 

### **Track 61 Right-of-Way Protection Policy (2014, City of Boston)**

is the City of Boston's set of policies to preserve the rail line that connects the Old Colony Line adjacent to Widett Circle to Falcon Terminal. Preservation of the Track 61 ROW is a paramount concern for the City of Boston as a means to ensure potential future passenger or freight use. The policy includes dimensional requirements for development on lots neighboring the ROW, restrictions on grade crossings, a commitment to not preclude future passenger or freight service with City decisions, and a commitment to intergovernmental cooperation.

Advancing 

### **Track 61 DMU Study (2014, MCCA)**

is the MCCA's exploration of connecting Back Bay Station to the Boston Convention and Exposition Center using diesel multiple unit (DMU rail vehicles). The study found that under a preferred operational scenario, travel time from Back Bay to the BCEC would be 9-12 minutes with headways similar to the MBTA's subway services and there are several rail crossings and bridges that make building the shuttle complicated, including Amtrak yard crossings.



Advancing 

### **North South Rail Link Feasibility Reassessment (2018, MassDOT)**

is a continuation of research considering the opportunity to connect the North Station and South Station commuter rail and Amtrak lines. In addition to service planning and design options, the study assesses the cost-benefit of the project, including the opportunity to connect North Station to the South Boston Seaport.



Advancing 

### **Boston Inner Harbor Passenger Water Transportation (2001, City of Boston)**

identified the key to stimulating potential projected growth of the Boston Harbor water transportation network is to greatly expand capacity and improve the quality of Inner Harbor terminal facilities, along with their respective intermodal connections on the downtown waterfront, the financial and visitor core of the metropolitan area. The critical challenge moving forward will be to determine how and where to provide appropriate terminal and fleet facilities to meet the increasing demand for routes and services.

Advancing 

# DRAFT

### ***Business Plan for New Water Transportation Service - Inner Harbor Connector (2019, Boston Harbor Now)***

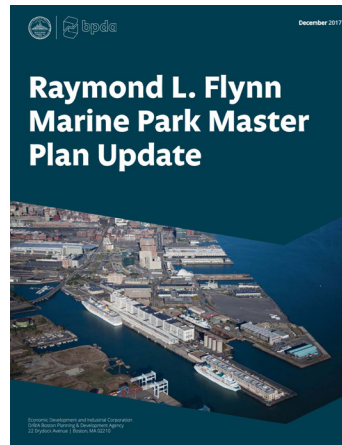
looks at existing ferry service from Downtown Boston and Charlestown and proposes to expand this service to connect East Boston and the South Boston Seaport. Boston Harbor Now provides a full business plan, including anticipated schedules and ridership, vessel type and costs, and a full pro forma of the new service.



Advancing 

### ***Raymond L. Flynn Marine Park Master Plan (2017, BPDA)***

is the Boston Planning and Development Agency's planning document for the industrial-zoned property at the far eastern end of the South Boston Seaport. The plan's goal is to encourage the market to build new state-of-the-art industrial space and provide a source of revenue that can be reinvested in the park to improve both truck access and necessary repairs to crumbling infrastructure on the water's edge. Specifically in regard to transit, the plan proposes expanding the Seaport Transportation Management Area's membership to tenants in the park to coordinate vanpools and shuttle services.



Advancing  

***East and West First Street Planning and Rezoning*** was to establish the zoning regulations for the South Boston Neighborhood District as required by the South Boston Waterfront Interim Planning Overlay District. This study builds upon previous planning work to establish a future vision for the area and collaborated closely with the First Street Working Group and the South Boston Community. It is intended that First Street will redevelop as a safe and walkable street, which will include additional setbacks to provide dimension for wider sidewalks and street trees to create a pleasant pedestrian environment.

Advancing  

### ***Climate Ready Boston (2016, City of Boston)***

is a plan to address climate change and its impacts in the City of Boston. The study looks at sea level rise, flooding, extreme heat, and other climate-related emergency situations expected to impact Boston in the coming 10-50 years. The South Boston Waterfront receives special attention due to its proximity to the Boston Harbor and tendency to flood. Transportation infrastructure, including the Silver Line in the South Boston Seaport will act as a means for emergency evacuation, suggesting any transit improvements should be resilient towards changing climate and weather.

Advancing 

### ***Climate Action Plan (ongoing, City of Boston)***

is the City's roadmap for reducing the impact of greenhouse gases on the environment and create a more sustainable city. The move towards sustainability includes continuing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, specifically by rethinking how the transportation and transit systems emissions. As part of this plan, the City has committed itself to becoming carbon neutral by 2050, a promise that can be read about more in the Carbon Free Boston report.

Advancing  

**Article 37 Green Buildings Guidelines (2014, BPDA)**

is to ensure that major building projects are planned, designed, constructed, and managed to minimize adverse environmental impacts; to conserve natural resources; to promote sustainable development; and to enhance the quality of life in Boston. It provides guidance and direction on how development applications can receive Boston Green Building Credits and how those credits may be included in the calculation toward achieving a LEED Certifiable.

Advancing  

**Age-Friendly Boston (2017, City of Boston)**

is the City of Boston's plan to become an age-friendly city with accessible and inclusive services and infrastructure for people of all ages and abilities. The plan addresses many aspects of urban living, including transportation with the goal for creating a city in which older residents can travel safely by all modes, including transit.

Advancing 