

Welcome to Plaistow Town Hall

Plaistow/MBTA Project Public Information Forum

Wednesday, September 15th 2010



Plaistow/MBTA Project Team

- Supported by Plaistow Board of Selectmen
- Supported by Plaistow Planning Board
- Tim Moore, Chairman Plaistow Planning Board; New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority (NHRTA); Plaistow Conservation Commission
- Cliff Sinnott, Executive Director, Rockingham Planning Commission
- Scott Bogle, Sr. Transportation Planner, RPC
- Scott Bosworth, Fort Hill, LLC (former Under Secretary for MA Executive Office of Transportation)
- Kris Ericson, Viking Hill LLC (former Chief of Staff for the MBTA)
- Christopher “Kit” Morgan, Administrator, NHDOT Bureau of Aeronautics, Rail and Transit
- Mike Pillsbury, NHDOT Deputy Commissioner
- Leigh Komornick, Plaistow Town Planner
- Mike Izbicki, NHRTA Interim Executive Director

Town of Plaistow

Overview



3

- Plaistow ranks 40th in population (8,000) but would rank 5th or 6th if the Route 125 service population (30,000) were included
- **One of the State's highest in unemployment rates (9.3%)**
- Plaistow is the regional center, home to the regional middle school & regional high school
- As one of the gateway communities to and from New Hampshire, and key economic center in the region, the Town of Plaistow, has worked for over 20 years to improve strategies for transit oriented development and re-development.
- Every corner of New Hampshire—especially the Town of Plaistow—has suffered from the severe economic downturn with large layoffs and closures in retail, manufacturing sectors. As a major retail employment center, Plaistow continues to struggle to fill vacant properties along one of New Hampshire's busiest arterial roadways—Rt 125.
- Most recently, our efforts to re-establish Commuter Rail service in Town through a unique interstate—interagency agreement, represents a powerful commitment to enhance inter-state commerce, inter-state job creation and major transportation improvements to the economic vitality of both states.



Plaistow/MBTA Project History

- 1990 – Plaistow Area Transit Advisory Committee (PATAC) formed to bring commuter rail back to Plaistow. Former B&M rail service discontinued in 1968.
- 1994 – 1st phase of 3-phase PATAC plan established Route 125 commuter bus serving Epping, Kingston, and Plaistow. Plaistow stop at the Park and Ride.
- 1997 – 2nd phase of 3-phase PATAC plan completed when Park and Ride officially opened.
- 1997 – 2001 – 3rd phase of 3-phase PATAC plan (commuter rail service) on hold, waiting for establishment of Amtrak Downeaster service.
- 2001 Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) funds obtained for rail platform and 3 years operating subsidies.
- 2002 – 2008 – 3rd phase again on hold, getting trackage rights and funding in place.
- 2008 – MBTA approached Plaistow to see if interest still existed in locating a rail station in Plaistow.
- 2008 – MBTA interested in moving layover facility from Bradford, to a location north of the Haverhill station. They were looking at 2 sites; one at the Haverhill/Atkinson/Plaistow town line (Hilldale Ave.) and the other at the former Westville Homes site in Plaistow.
- 2010 – Apr – 2nd CMAQ application
- 2010 - Aug – TIGER II application

Plaistow/MBTA Project

Recent Public Presentations

5

- **Rockingham Planning Commission/MPO Forum (June 2010)** Rockingham MPO
2010-2035 Long Range Transportation Plan
- **Plaistow BOS Meetings (2009-2010)**
Many public updates on local access; BOS Letters of Support of both the CMAQ & TIGER II Grants
- **Governor's Advisory Committee on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT), October 1, 2009**
Ten-Year Plan Hearing-Plaistow Town Hall
- **New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority (March 2010, August 2010)**
Received support for Plaistow/MBTA project and letters of support for the CMAQ & TIGER II grants
- **Rockingham Economic Development Corporation (June 2010)**
Presented an overview of Plaistow MBTA project
- **NHDOT Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting (August 18, 2010)**
NHDES/EPA/Fish & Wildlife
- **Meetings with State Officials in Plaistow**
Various meetings with Commissioners from NH DRED; NH DOT; State/Federal Officials

Plaistow/MBTA Project Facts:

6

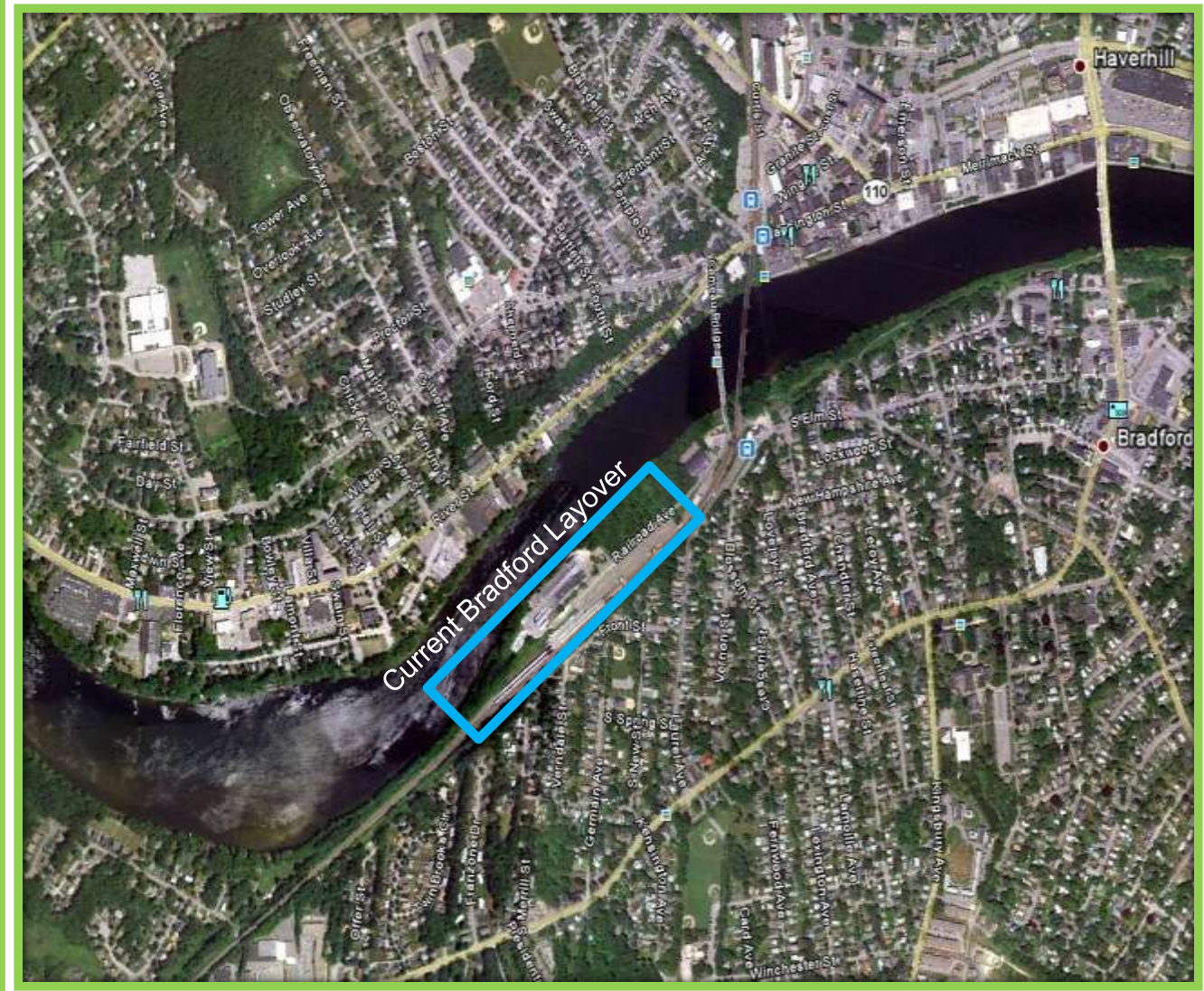
- NO agreements have been made between any parties
- NO decisions have been made regarding the proposed sites for the layover or Plaistow/MBTA Station
- The Town of Plaistow has been working to bring a commuter rail station to the Park and Ride Lot on Westville Road for over 20 years.
- During this same time, the MBTA has been working to relocate the Bradford Layover Facility north.
- In 2008, the MA state Legislature appropriated \$10 Million Dollars to relocate the Bradford Layover facility. (vetoed)
- TIGER II application names the Westville Homes site for the layover facility because the MBTA had identified the site back in 2008 after reviewing a number of sites (12), including one off Hildale Ave at the MA/NH line and at the Chart Site just east of 125.
- Additionally, in 2008, the owner of the former Westville Homes property in Plaistow approached the MBTA with a proposal to use the site for a possible MBTA layover site.
- In the Fall of 2008, the MBTA approached the Town of Plaistow to see if the Town was interested in pursuing a commuter rail station in connection with a Plaistow layover facility.

Bradford Layover Station

Q: What is the history of the Bradford Layover station:

A: Before 1987, the MBTA parked its commuter trains overnight in an isolated layover station between Haverhill's Little River and an industrial property at the edge of Hale Street. (A) The layover station was then moved to Bradford, just up from the Bradford train station.

- NO Sound wall
- NO Protective Berm
- NO Trees/Landscaping
- Minimal site mitigation
- Abuts residential on both sides



Existing Bradford Layover Facility—close up

8

Q: How many trains are currently stored at the Bradford Layover facility:

A: Currently, the Bradford layover facility can only store four (4) of the five (5) trains that serve the Haverhill line. One train set is “dead headed” down to Boston every night due to the lack of space at the Bradford Layover yard. This represents a significant inefficiency in terms of operational costs and environmental impact due to having an empty train traveling back and forth from Boston to Haverhill every night.



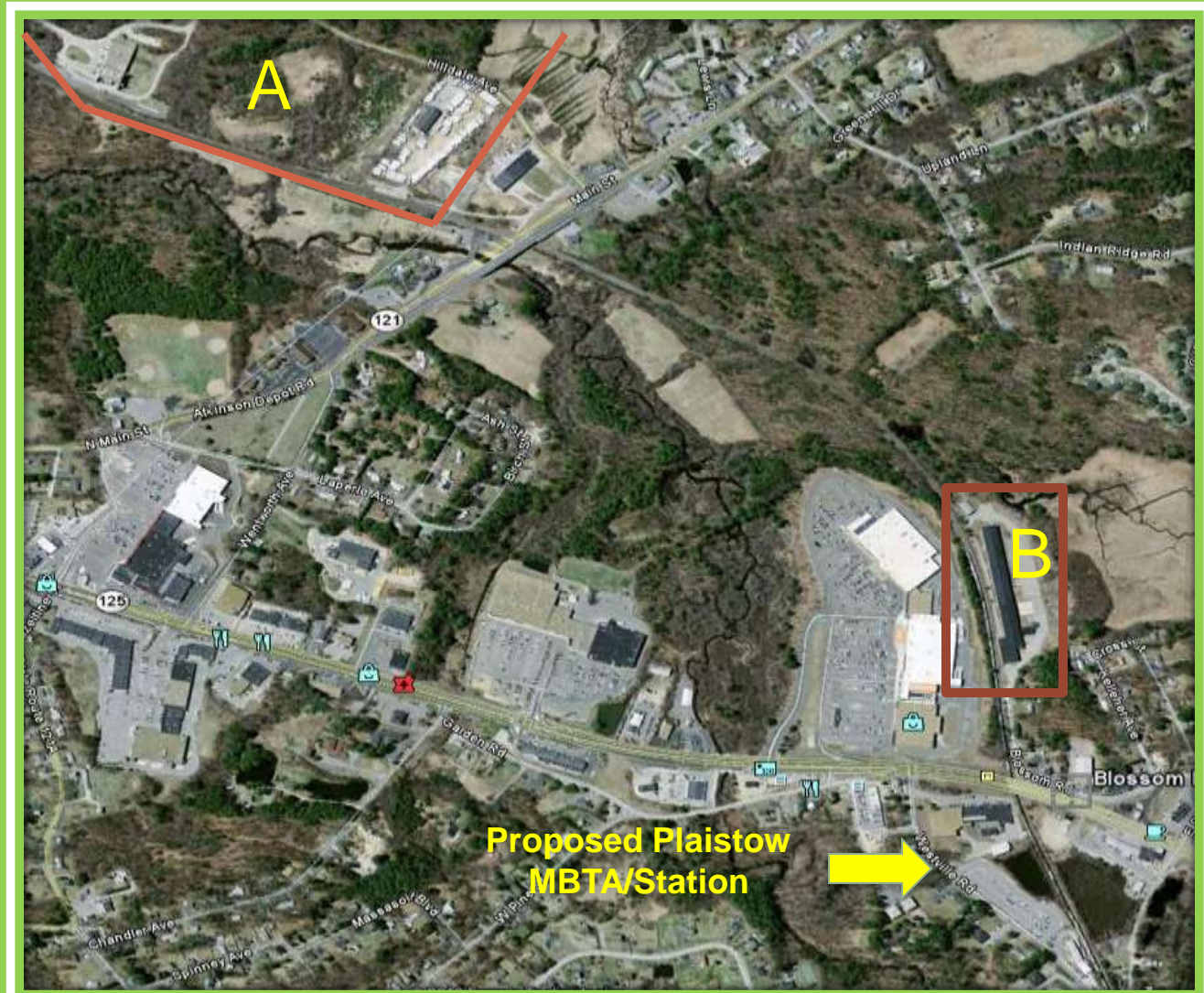
Proposed Layover Sites- Haverhill/Atkinson/Plaistow Line

Q: What efforts has the MBTA made to re-locate the Bradford Layover facility?

A: In 2008, the MBTA completed a study to evaluate 12 potential locations—north of Bradford as potential locations for a permanent layover facility for the Haverhill Line.

The 12 properties were narrowed down to two (2) properties as outlined—property “A” on the Haverhill/Plaistow/Atkinson line and “B”—the former Westville Homes property in Plaistow.

On the bottom right is the proposed location of the Plaistow MBTA Station.



Plaistow's "Michael C. Weston Memorial" Park & Ride Lot

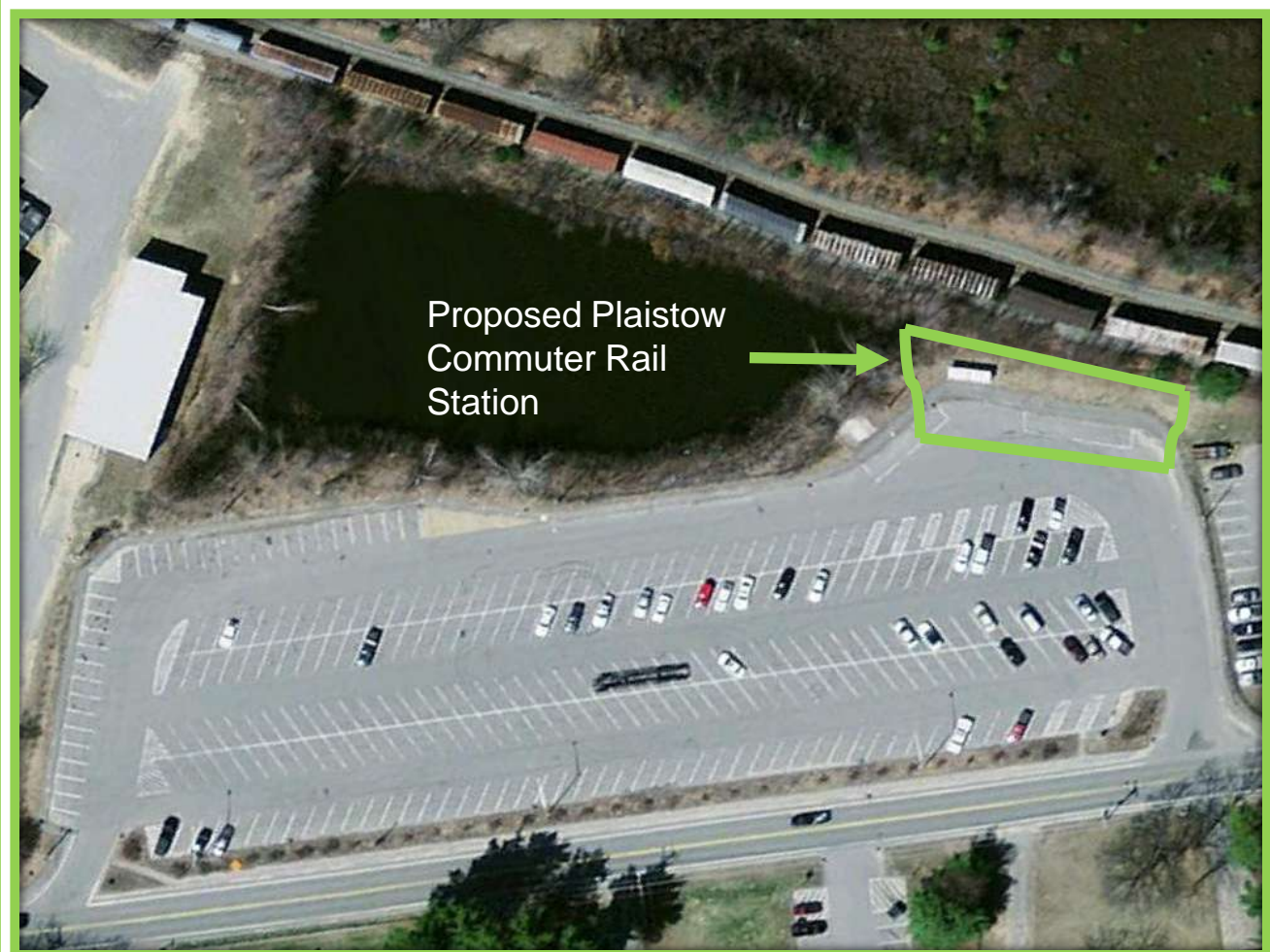
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Q: What is the history of the Plaistow Park & Ride Lot:

A: The Plaistow Park & Ride Lot was Established in 1996 as part of a 3 phased plan to bring commuter rail service to Plaistow.

The lot was designed with 277 parking spaces to support the future Plaistow inter-modal transportation center.

Plaistow's Park and Ride Lot is named after Michael C. Weston—a regional transportation leader from Danville.

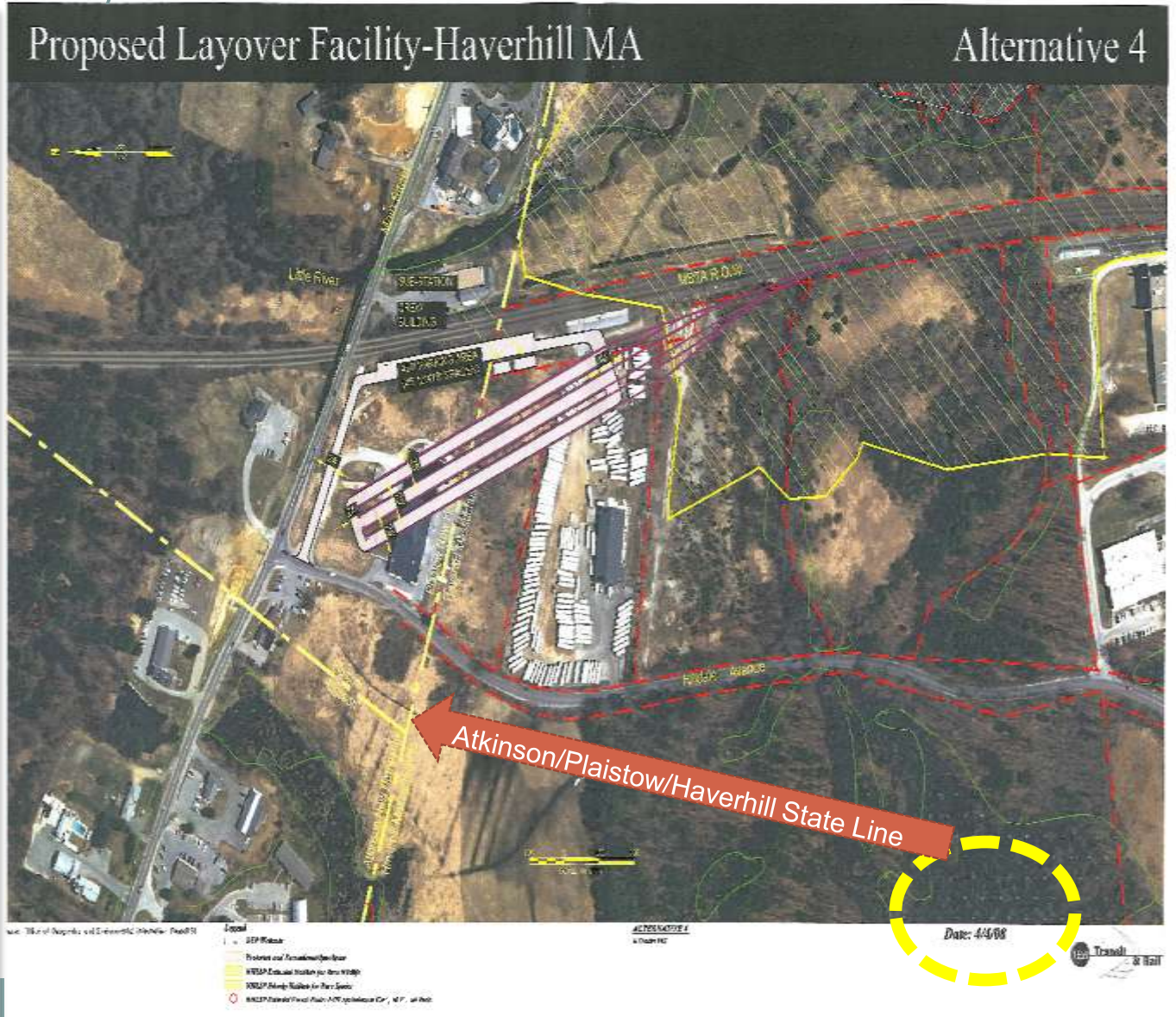


2008 Proposed MBTA Layover Site: Haverhill/Atkinson/Plaistow Line

Q: What is the history of the Plaistow Park & Ride Lot:

A: Before 1987, the MBTA parked its commuter trains overnight in an isolated layover station between Haverhill's Little River and an industrial property at the edge of Hale Street. The layover station was then moved to Bradford, just up from the Bradford train station.

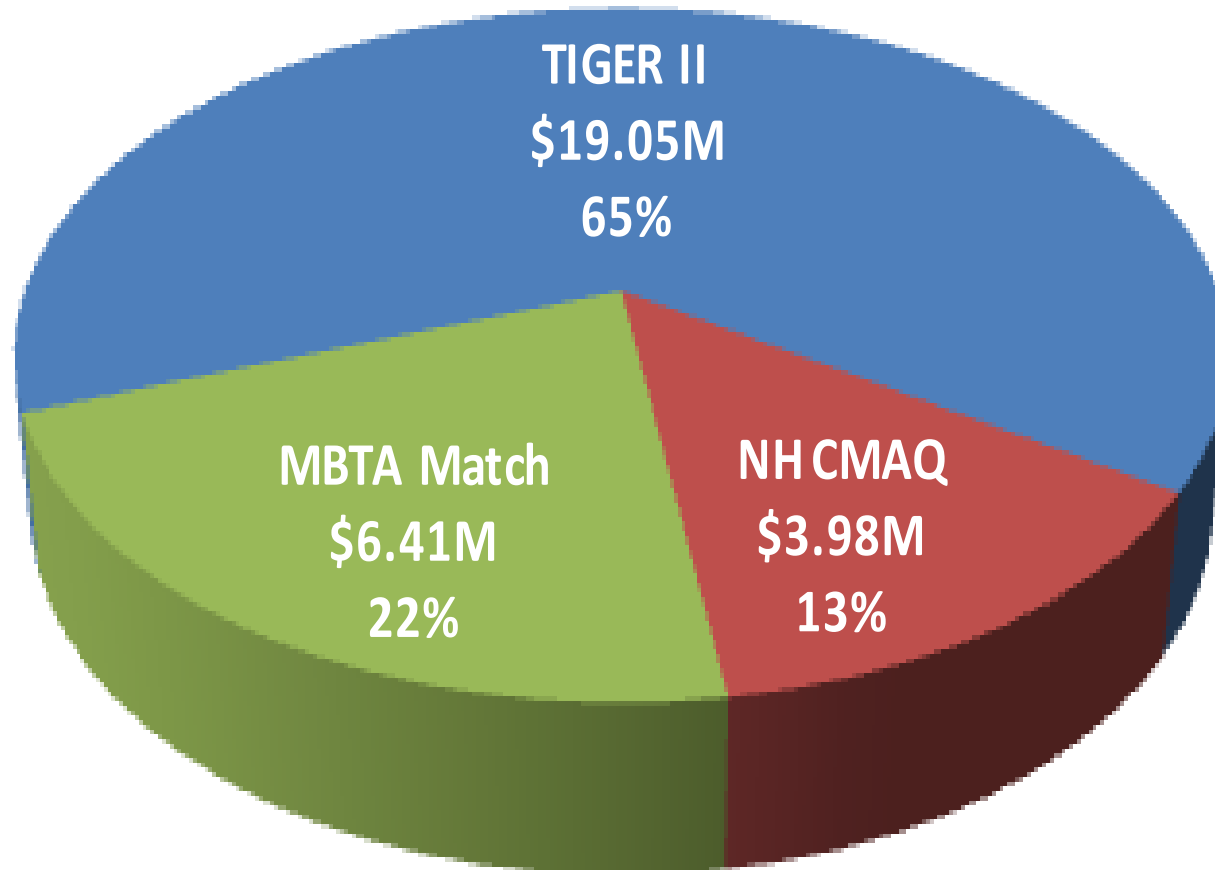
Additionally, the MBTA has recently done a site selection review for a new layover location is North Haverhill on the Haverhill/Atkinson State Line.



2010 Plaistow/MBTA Project



Plaistow/MBTA Project Funding



Plaistow/MBTA Project Components & Budget

Component	Total	Federal (80%)	Local (20%)	Notes
Preliminary Engineering	\$1,541,689	\$1,233,351	\$308,338	(10% ROW & construction costs
Purchase ROW (layover, siding)	\$3,055,000	\$2,444,000	\$611,000	Purchase land for layover, easement for 800 ft station siding
Station construction	\$1,348,800	\$1,079,040	\$269,760	Includes 600 ft platform
Layover construction	\$5,258,000	\$4,206,400	\$1,051,600	Includes funding for noise and vibration mitigation
Track, Crossover, switching, signals	\$5,755,085	\$4,604,068	\$1,151,017	Work that will be coordinated by MBTA for Station and Layover Train traffic
Passenger Cars (3 bi-level cars)	\$6,900,000	\$5,520,000	\$1,380,000	Basis for the "Pentucket Partnership" to offset the NH obligations
Contingency, project management	\$4,944,754	\$3,955,803	\$988,951	Standard capital project contingency (25%/10%/5%) Federal standards
Trackage rights value	\$654,192	\$0	\$654,192	Capitalized over a 20-year period
Total	\$29,457,520	\$23,042,662	\$6,414,858	
2001 CMAQ	(\$976,000)	(\$780,000)	(\$195,200)	Previously Awarded to Plaistow
2010 CMAQ (Revised)	(\$4,005,019)	(\$3,204,015)	(\$801,004)	Award estimated in November 2010
TIGER II Request	\$24,476,501	\$19,057,847	\$5,418,654	Award estimated in October 2010

Plaistow/MBTA

Benefit-Cost Analysis Prepared by HDR (August 20, 2010)

15

- Travelers who will use the Plaistow rail, instead of driving or taking the bus, will mean fewer users on the roadways, resulting in a reduction in emissions, congestion, vehicle operating costs, accidents, and pavement wear and tear.
- A comparison of the benefits and costs of the Plaistow project has provided an indication of whether or not this project is worthwhile.
- The Plaistow/MBTA project has received a very favorable **2.3 to 1** Cost benefit ratio over a **30 year time horizon**.

Plaistow/MBTA Project Benefits:

- Benefits to Existing Users \$ 11.3 Million
- Benefits to New Users \$ 87.8 Million
- Pavement Maintenance Savings \$ 0.3 Million
- Accident Reduction Savings \$ 45.6 Million
- Highway Users \$ 155.3 Million
- Environmental Benefits \$ 10.0 Million

TOTAL BENEFITS \$ 310.4 Million

How will future operating costs be funded?

- ❖ Tickets will be based on MBTA's Zone 8 fares – currently a 1-way ticket is \$7.75 and a monthly pass is \$250. There may be a small additional surcharge on the ticket prices to help fund the administrative costs of providing the service.
- ❖ New Hampshire will be responsible for providing the difference between the actual operating cost and the fare box revenues from ticket sales.
- ❖ New Hampshire will be responsible for purchasing additional rail cars as the NH ridership increases.

“Pilgrim Partnership” Agreement



- ❖ When the MBTA expanded service into Rhode Island agreements were made such that Rhode Island would purchase capital equipment for the MBTA in exchange for operating subsidies – those operating costs that exceed the fare box revenues.
- ❖ This kind of arrangement has become known as the “Pilgrim Partnership”.
- ❖ The NHDOT and the MBTA are working on the “Pentucket Partnership” that will be suitable for the Plaistow service.

Potential Owners and Operators

- ❖ NHDOT will likely own the land where the layover facility will be located and will lease it to the MBTA. Leasing agreement will probably be incorporated in the Pentucket Partnership.
- ❖ NHDOT will likely be the grantee of the easement for the rail siding.
- ❖ NHDOT will likely own the commuter rail service and will contract the service to the MBTA.
- ❖ Town of Plaistow will own and operate the rail station and will receive payments for kiosk rentals and hopefully the sale of electricity generated from solar panels on the station roof. (Goal is to cover the station maintenance costs and to make up the loss of tax revenue from the former Westville Homes site – approximately \$24,000 per year.)
- ❖ Parking fees will also be recovered by the Town of Plaistow; fee not yet established but will likely be \$2–\$4 per day.

Q. What the key environmental benefits of removing cars and increasing rail ridership for the Plaistow Rail Project ?

- A. The projected ridership for the Plaistow/MBTA project for 2013 is 737 trips/day
- Projected ridership in 2035= 2,079 trips/day
- Avoided Vehicle Miles Traveled= 929,698 in 2013(37 around the Earth); 314,958,859 over 30 years (12,650 trips around the Earth)
- Avoided CO₂ Emissions= 147,097 tons over 30 years—significantly improving air quality in a Federally designated non-attainment area

Q. What is different about the newer emission standards for trains?

*Electric Plug-in to keep warm in winter

*No idling all night

*No Re-fueling

*Full Cut off Lighting

- Locomotives do not run all night; they are plugged into an electrical outlet to keep the engines warm during cold winter weather.
- EPA has required all locomotives to use low sulphur diesel fuel—this means the fuel is cleaner and less impact
- Locomotives do start up 1 hour prior to start of service and no more than 30 minutes after service has ended.
- Noise mitigation is an engineered process tailored to individual home owners.

Q: What has the MBTA done to limit diesel locomotive emissions?

- **A: All MBTA diesel locomotives system wide will be modified as required to comply with new EPA regulations limiting locomotive emissions.**
- **These regulations took effect in 2007 and when fully phased in by 2010 will reduce nationwide locomotive emissions of NOx by two-thirds and emissions of hydrocarbons and particulates by half.**
- **In fact, the MBTA has already begun to implement these new measures nearly a decade ahead of the deadline.**
- **In addition, the MBTA is now using Low Sulfur Diesel on all of its trains, nearly four years ahead of the deadline switching to that fuel type.**

Q: Will trains at the layover facility in Plaistow idle all night long?

- **A: No. Even in unusual circumstances such as a power failure or unusually cold weather (below 10°F) the engines will be equipped with smaller auxiliary engines that will run to keep the larger diesel engines warm.**
- **The layover facility will be equipped an electrical heating system that the trains will be plugged into to allow the locomotives to be turned off overnight. The engines do require a warm up period of approximately 50 minutes before the train leaves the layover facility in the morning.**

Q: Are there other environmental concerns that will be addressed as part of the Plaistow/MBTA Project?

A: Yes—the NH Department of Transportation’s Bureau of Environment will prepare an Environmental Assessment for the combined project – layover facility and rail station. The total list of items to be addressed by the assessment includes the following:

- **SOCIAL/ECONOMIC AREAS OF CONCERN:**

Safety, transportation patterns, noise, displacements, neighborhoods, business impacts, land acquisitions, land use, tax base, recreation, public lands, construction impacts, farmlands, community services, energy needs, utilities, and environmental justice.

- **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AREAS OF CONCERN:**

Air quality, water quality, hazardous materials, stormwater management, wetlands, surface waters, groundwater, floodplains, wildlife, fisheries, endangered species, natural communities, wild & scenic rivers, storm re-channelization, NH designated rivers, forest lands, and coastal zone.

- **CULTURAL AREAS OF CONCERN:**

Historical, archaeological, stonewalls and aesthetics.

Q: What is the mitigation for vibration impact?

- **A: MBTA has installed rubber “ballast mats” under the track to dampen vibrations at most locations where vibration impacts occur.**
- **The mats can reduce vibration levels by up to 5 VdB, but actual performance depends on soil conditions — the mats work best over hard rock and are less effective over soft soils.**

Q: Will lights at the stations be on all night long?

- **A: Some limited lighting at the proposed layover facility may be necessary for cleaning or interior service.**
- **Most of the station lights will be timed to shut off after the last train of the evening (about midnight).**
- **Both the proposed station lights and proposed layover facility lights will comply with Plaistow's lighting ordinance that requires full cut-off lighting.**

Q: According to articles and letters in the Eagle Tribune article, the MBTA has Town Assessment authority? If true, what will the cost be?

- **A: This is factual—while the MBTA does assess its member communities in Massachusetts, it does not have the legal authority to assess NH municipalities.**

Q: Within the last 10 years, Plaistow and surrounding Towns had a non-binding referendum at town meeting requesting support for a Plaistow train station. What year and what were the results?

- **A: The year of the vote was 2004 and the results were:**
 - **Plaistow- 60% Favorable**
 - **Atkinson- 60% Favorable**
 - **Danville- 40% Favorable**
 - **Kingston-40% Favorable**
- **It is important to note that the non-binding referendum asked residents if they would support a share in the cost of a train station and park and ride lot for a Plaistow station.**
- **There was no mention of the proposed layover facility in the referendum.**

Q: What will fares be for the proposed Plaistow/MBTA Station?

- **A: The proposed Plaistow fares will be charged based on the MBTA's zone fare system in use system-wide. Reduced fares are charged for children and senior citizens.**
- **Monthly passes permit unlimited local bus and rapid transit use as well as commuter rail use up to the zone listed. Plaistow is expected to be in Zone 8 where a 1-way ticket is \$7.75 and a monthly pass is \$250.**
- **There may be a small additional surcharge to cover the administration of this service.**

Q: How will the proposed layover impact the adjacent wetlands ?



Bryant
Brook
Wetland

Proposed Layover Yard

- **A:** As part of the proposed Plaistow Rail project, \$100K has been earmarked to conduct an environmental assessment of the Westville Homes site. (This site was formally used to manufacture housing and used paints and solvents and other chemicals.) These funds will help identify any possible contaminants for the area and help untimely lead to a clean up of the water shed area.
- We are aware that The Bryant Brook wetland area, abutting the Westville site was named as a ‘candidate’ prime wetland in Atkinson’s prime wetland study a few years ago.
- The Environmental Assessment will address any potential impacts, but the layover facility can be accommodated within the existing site so no filling or disturbance is expected to impact the wetlands.
- The removal of the building and some of the paved area should also reduce the impervious surface area and stormwater runoff from the site.

Is the Westville Homes property in Plaistow the only property being evaluated for a possible layover?

- No—at this point our understanding is that the Westville site is the MBTA’s preferred site, however, the environmental assessment has not yet been conducted and conceivably could yield information that would direct the layover site elsewhere. It is our understanding that when it is conducted, the environmental assessment will include the review of other alternative sites and impacts.
- The Federal Transit Administration has a prescribed assessment process for facilities like layovers and train yards that specifically focuses on noise impact on residential and other noise sensitive uses. This analysis will have to be done for this project and presumably would factor into the site alternatives analysis as well.
- While no site has been rejected—any site that is not in the immediate vicinity of the planned station will not likely be feasible from the standpoint of the financial viability of the rail service itself.

Plaistow Rail Infrastructure Investments...

Good for Plaistow, Good for the Region

- ❖ Needed to relieve traffic congestion on Rt. 125 from Westville Road south to I-495.
- ❖ Needed to sustain economic viability.
- ❖ Needed to allow skilled workers from Massachusetts and New Hampshire access to jobs in both states.
- ❖ Needed to attract younger population to live and work in southern New Hampshire.
- ❖ Needed to support an increasing population in the region that has brought and will continue to bring additional economic investments to Plaistow and southern New Hampshire.
- ❖ Needed to improve access for the region to educational facilities, medical facilities, sporting events, shopping, and civic and cultural programs.
- ❖ Needed to improve safety and mobility for citizens with limited access to personal vehicles.

Next Steps

- **Site Visit to Newburyport Layover**
 - Late September/Early October, 2010
- **CMAQ Review– CMAQ funding Award**
 - October, 2010
- **Completion of the Pentucket Partnership between the MBTA and the NHDOT**
 - November, 2010 – Target date, may extend into December.
 - Requires approval of NH Executive Council, Governor
- **Notification of funding awards**
 - November, 2010 for CMAQ; no hard date has been announced.
 - November, 2010 for TIGER II – likely will be later December, 2010/January 2010; no hard date has been announced.
- **Mass legislature must approve a bill allowing the MBTA to operate in NH.**

Next Steps - continued

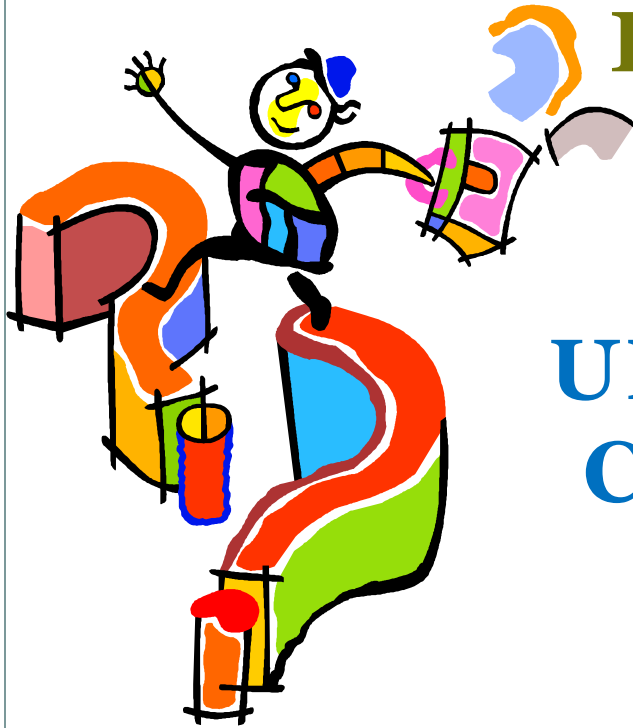
- Approvals required before CMAQ money can be spent
 - Plaistow Board of Selectmen must approve receipt of these funds before they can be spent.
 - NH House of Representatives, Senate, Executive Council, and Governor.
- Approvals required before TIGER II money can be spent
 - NH House of Representatives, Senate, Executive Council, and Governor
- NHDOT Bureau of Environment working on Environmental Assessment – must be complete before TIGER II funds can be spent.
 - Public Hearing to be conducted by NHDOT as part of this process – target date: 1st quarter, 2011.
 - July, 2011 - Environmental Assessment scheduled completion date.
- NHDOT completes site design for layover facility and rail station
 - Public Hearing to be held similar to site plan reviews held by local planning boards; not yet scheduled – probably early 2012 time frame.
- **This Informational Update is an informal community briefing—if the project is successful in attaining state and federal support, many more MANDATED project hearings will be scheduled.**



QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS



34



**PLEASE LET US KNOW
YOUR THOUGHTS...**

**WE WILL BE HERE
UNTIL EVERYONE HAS A
CHANCE TO ASK THEIR
QUESTIONS...**

**(PLEASE LET US KNOW
YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS)**

Thank You For Attending Tonight's Information Forum



35

