

Rail Vision Stakeholder Engagement

The Rail Vision team began its stakeholder engagement by developing a strategy for successful involvement of a wide variety of stakeholders. The first goal was to identify a broad group of stakeholders with an interest in the Rail Vision effort. Stakeholder engagement includes communicating with and receiving information from a variety of interested persons, groups, and government organizations on developing the Vision. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan outlined the process for engaging a wide range of stakeholders – current and potential customers – in the future of MBTA’s Commuter Rail.

Purpose of Stakeholder Engagement

Engaging stakeholders informed development of the Rail Vision alternatives, enhanced the likelihood of MassDOT’s and MBTA’s success in implementing the recommendations, and anticipated concerns about the process and study.

The team identified four main goals for the engagement:

- ▶ *Restore goodwill:* Build and maintain trust that MBTA is interested in improving commuter rail service frequencies and reliability.
- ▶ *Educate:* Provide information about the nature of the effort by presenting project information in an easy-to-understand format, and by making all project information readily accessible. This created a baseline and general understanding of the effort, including who was doing it, what the expected outcomes might be, the timeline, and how to get involved.
- ▶ *Involve:* Welcome stakeholders – individuals, businesses and organizations in the study area – including central Boston, the inner and outer suburbs, and the outer metropolitan areas – to contribute to the decision-making process.
- ▶ *Build champions:* Ultimately, implementing a vision requires champions to propel them into reality. Stakeholder engagement should ideally identify and build champions who will make sure the plan becomes a reality.

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan provided a structure to create a transparent and informative dialogue with the public, local agencies, elected officials and other interested parties so that Rail Vision could be as thorough and insightful as possible. The team leveraged a multi-channel approach and best practices to ensure the information gathering process and subsequent recommendations supported success.

Elements and Phases of the Engagement

Successful stakeholder engagement is about building trust, understanding, and reaching consensus. The MassDOT and MBTA team divided the outreach into three phases: Phase 1 built the structure for participation; Phase 2 involved the stakeholders in reviewing ideas to build the

alternatives; and Phase 3 defined and advanced the vision for internal and public review and comment (Figure A-1). These critical pieces were necessary to advance alternatives to propel Rail Vision from a set of concepts to a detailed set of plans for public review and comment.

Phase 1: Needs and Opportunity – Winter and Spring 2018

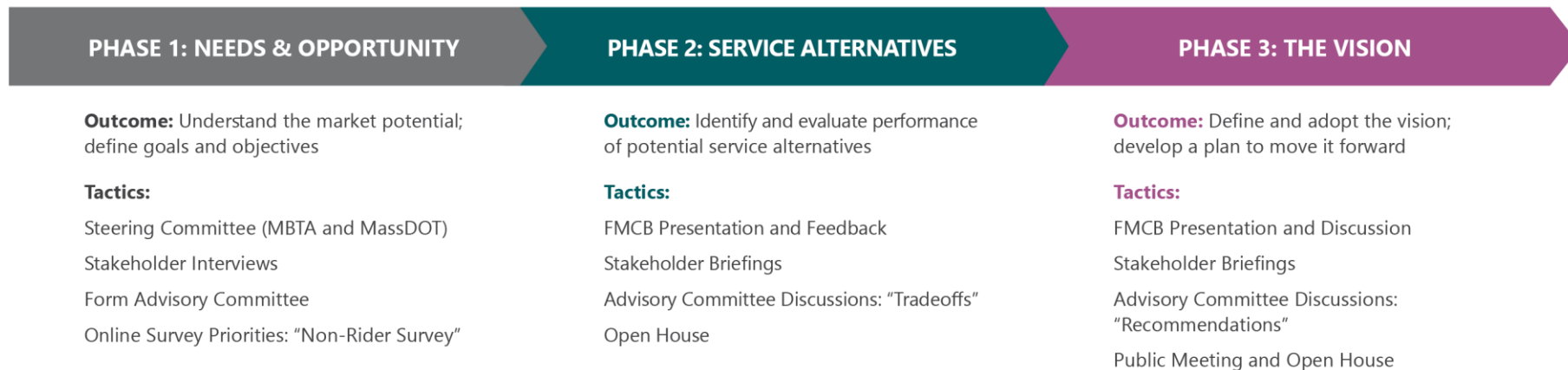
Outcome: Understand the market potential; define goals and objectives

Phase 1 included the following outreach activities:

- ▶ Established online presence (web and social media): mbta.com/railvision;
- ▶ Formed Steering Committee (composed of MBTA and MassDOT key decision makers);

- ▶ Formed Advisory Committee and held initial Advisory Committee meeting(s);
- ▶ Briefed Fiscal Management and Control Board (FMCB) and other boards and commissions on plans for and results of market analysis including peer market review, draft goals and objectives, with all FMCB presentations also posted on the [FMCB's website](#);
- ▶ Developed an email database to use throughout the project to alert stakeholders about Advisory Committee and public meetings, the addition of new information or documents to the website, or other major events. The database consisted of 486 recipients at the outset of the study and grew to 1,492 recipients by November 2019;
- ▶ Logged and tracked issues; provided written materials; and,

Figure A-1 Stakeholder Engagement Process



- ▶ Conducted a quick Rail Vision Non-Rider **online survey** in February and March of 2019 that encouraged nearly 3,000 people who do not frequently use the Commuter Rail to share their reasons and preferences. The results are posted on the project [website](#) and informed the study. **Figure A-2** shows an example of survey question, while **Figure A-3** provides an example of the compiled survey responses.

Phase 2: Service Alternatives – Summer 2018 through Spring 2019

Outcome: Identify and evaluate performance of potential service alternatives

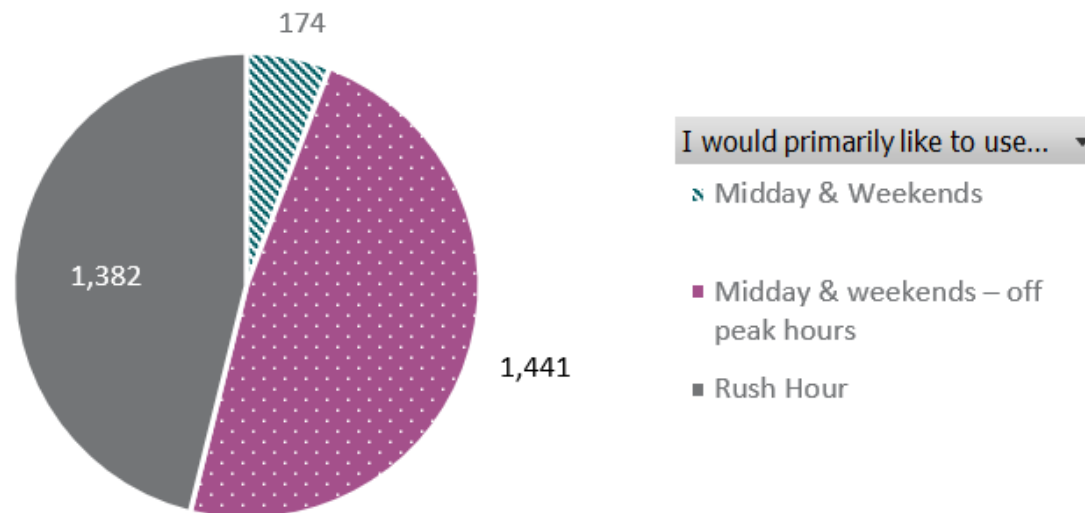
Phase 2 included the following outreach activities:

- ▶ Maintained online presence;
- ▶ Used emails to alert stakeholders to meeting and website updates;
- ▶ Began to conduct briefings on the study for metropolitan planning organizations, City Councils, and Select and Planning Boards throughout Eastern Massachusetts;
- ▶ Held Advisory Committee meetings to present service alternatives and initial results; welcomed public comment and posted materials on the website;
- ▶ Briefed state legislators at the State House on February 28, 2019;
- ▶ Briefed FMCB and other boards and commissions;

Figure A-2 Sample online survey question



Figure A-3 Example survey response data

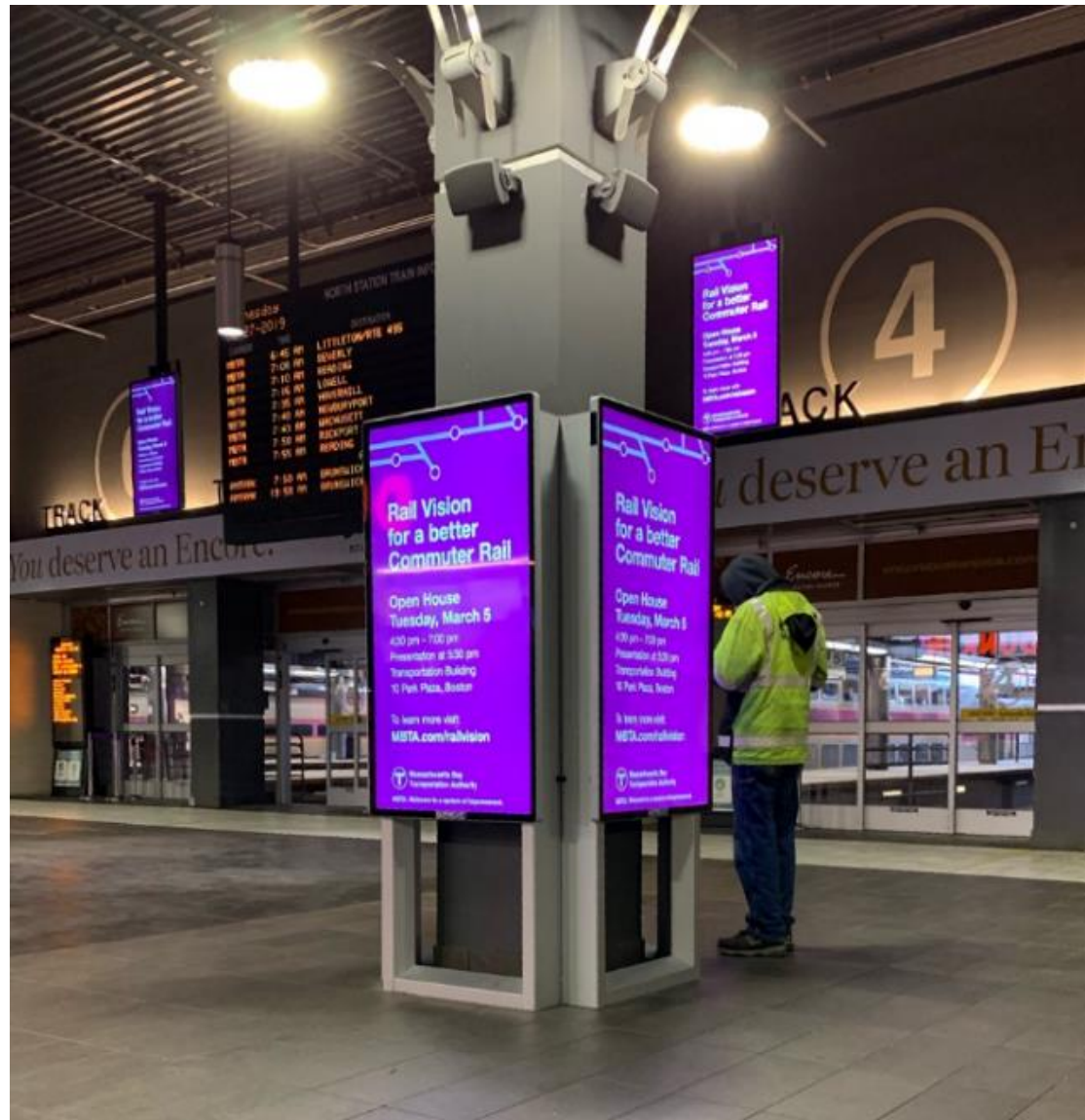


- ▶ Employed Street Teams at North Station and South Station to distribute a project post card to increase awareness of the project, encourage participation in an open house, and encourage sign-ups for the project website to receive future information (Figure A-4); and,
- ▶ Conducted first open house on March 5, 2019, with 100 attendees and 19 comment forms (see Figure A-5 for example of advertising prior to the open house).

Figure A-4 Street team presenting Rail Vision information at North Station



Figure A-5 Digital advertisements for Rail Vision Open House at North Station



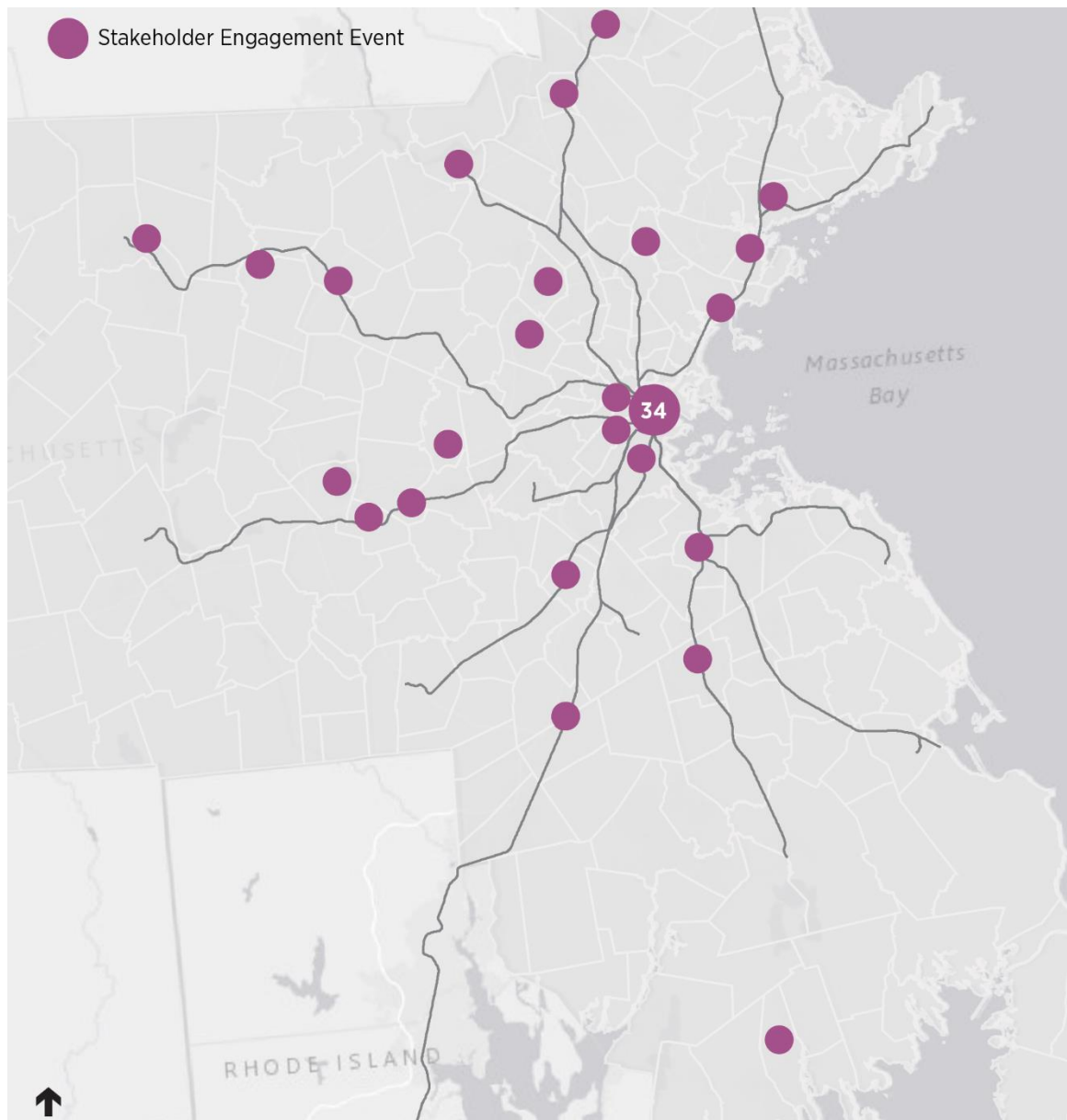
Phase 3: The Vision – Summer and Fall 2019

Outcome: Define the Vision, develop a plan to move it forward

Phase 3 included the following outreach activities:

- ▶ Maintained online presence;
- ▶ Used emails to alert stakeholders to meeting and website updates;
- ▶ Continued to conduct briefings (staff gave more than 45 briefings by late Fall 2019, as illustrated in **Figure A-6**);
- ▶ Held Advisory Committee meetings to present alternatives, phasing, and moving into implementation; welcomed public comment and posted materials on the website;
- ▶ Briefed state legislators at the State House on November 1 and November 7, 2019;
- ▶ Briefed FMCB and other boards and commissions;
- ▶ Brought representatives of Toronto’s Metrolinx system for a presentation and discussions with the Advisory Committee and FMCB (in public session);
- ▶ Held a public meeting and open house on October 23, 2019, to present the alternatives and gather comments, with 81 attendees and nine comment forms; and,
- ▶ Stakeholders sent the team 158 **emails and comments** as of November 18, 2019; numerous individuals commented at Advisory Committee, public and FMCB meetings.

Figure A-6 Map of Stakeholder Engagement Events as of Fall 2019



Advisory Committee

The role of the Rail Vision Advisory Committee was to provide informed advice to MBTA leadership and the project team. The members represent the diverse perspectives of the MBTA service area and included elected officials:

- ▶ Jim Aloisi, Principal, TriMount Consulting
- ▶ Helena Fruscio Alstman, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Technology, EOHEd
- ▶ Senator Joseph A. Boncore
- ▶ Senator William N. Brownsberger
- ▶ Michael Cahill, Mayor, City of Beverly
- ▶ Congresswoman Katherine Clark (Wade Blackman, Alternate)
- ▶ Stephanie Cronin, Middlesex 3 TMA
- ▶ Rick Dimino, President & CEO, A Better City (Kathryn Clarkson, Alternate)
- ▶ Representative Carolyn C. Dykema
- ▶ Ben Forman, Research Director, MassINC
- ▶ Peter Forman, President & CEO, South Shore Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Ray LeDoux, Administrator, Brockton Area Transit (Mike Lambert, Alternate)
- ▶ Paul Matthews, Executive Director, 495/MetroWest Partnership
- ▶ Jesse Mermell, President, Alliance for Business Leadership

- ▶ Congressman Seth Moulton (Lucas Santos, Alternate)
- ▶ Timothy Murray, President and CEO, Worcester Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Chris Osgood, Chief of Streets, Transportation, and Sanitation, City of Boston (Matt Moran, Alternate)
- ▶ Joshua Ostroff, Partnerships Director, T4MA
- ▶ Travis Pollack, Senior Transportation Planner, Metropolitan Area Planning Council
- ▶ Susanne Rasmussen, Director of Environmental and Transportation Planning, City of Cambridge
- ▶ Daniel Rivera, Mayor, City of Lawrence
- ▶ Representative Daniel J. Ryan

The Advisory Committee met seven times and participated in optional workshops, which allowed detailed discussions on background topics. In addition, the Advisory Committee members met with representatives of Toronto's Metrolinx and with the FMCB.

The Advisory Committee meetings included discussion and input on the following topics:

- ▶ Reviewing more than a dozen domestic and international [peer rail systems](#);
- ▶ Developing clear objectives for a future MBTA rail system;
- ▶ Evaluating more than 60 service concepts across all 14 Commuter Rail lines to understand potential ridership benefits; required

infrastructure changes; capital, operating and maintenance costs;

- ▶ Reviewing six service alternatives, featuring a range of service approaches and technologies, to move forward into the next phase of analysis; and,
- ▶ Participating in seven Advisory Committee meetings to provide feedback about the study's objectives, service concepts, initial results, and the service alternatives

Presentations and summary notes from all of the meetings were posted on the project [website](#).

The MBTA and MassDOT team is grateful for the deep engagement of the Advisory Committee members. Their questions were thorough and thoughtful and enhanced the process of developing and reviewing alternatives.