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DORCHESTER, MATTAPAN, ROXBURY, SOUTH END

Transit study on corridor between Red, Orange lines set to begin

Posted by Matt Rocheleau January 6, 2011 12:46 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Officials are poised to launch a 15-month transit study of a major city corridor, between the Red and Orange MBTA lines, to explore travel needs and enhancement possibilities – from improving bus service to building new transit lines.



(Courtesy: MassDOT)

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three neighborhoods Roxbury, Mattapan and Dorchester, along with portions of the South End.

When complete next spring, the study is expected to produce a list of recommendations and strategies “that can guide future investment in the corridor,” but ideas generated during the study will also be considered for more immediate implementation, officials said.

“While there are no funds currently dedicated to implementing study recommendations, the hope is that some of the recommendations will be short-term in nature and could be implemented as part of the MBTA's ongoing service planning,” said MBTA spokeswoman Lydia Rivera in an e-mail. “More ambitious long-term improvements would require continued advocacy on the part of the community, their elected officials and stakeholders, in partnership with the MBTA and MassDOT to secure necessary funding.”

The study is the state transportation department's effort to continue planning in the corridor after some elected officials, residents and commuters requested MassDOT pull back on a proposal unveiled in spring 2009 to redesign MBTA bus Route 28. Opponents of that proposal sought more community input before its implementation.

The study that begins this week will hone in on areas between the Red and Orange lines that are not within a half-mile radius of the stations along either line. Organized and funded by the state transportation and the MBTA, the study area mainly covers

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A flyer announcing the study poses a series of questions, "Would you like your local MBTA service to: Get you to your destination more quickly? Have more comfortable stops and stations? Arrive on time dependably? Provide connections to more destinations? Offer enough capacity for all riders?"

The study will solicit community input from commuters as they ride the T and at community events, workshops and public meetings.

"It's your transit service and your neighborhood, so the success of the study will depend on your participation," says a website created to provide study progress updates.

A 30-person study advisory group will be created to identify and refine recommendations that will then be submitted to state transportation and MBTA leaders. At least half of its members will be regular transit riders in, and representation will be balanced across, the study area.

Aside from public input, T and state transportation officials may also offer alternative ideas, which will be evaluated against a set of criteria to be determined as part of the public process.

The first in a series of two-hour meetings on "The Roxbury / Dorchester / Mattapan Transit Needs Study" will be held Saturday at the William J. Devine Golf Course clubhouse in Franklin Park at 10:30 a.m. A second will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 12 at the Mattapan branch library. A third will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Jan. 13 at the Dudley branch library.







After kickoff gatherings this month, meetings will be held every one to two months for a 12-month period at a rotating list of locations throughout the study area's neighborhoods.

The state transportation department planning staff will conduct the study. The department, which oversees the conceptual planning of all major T investments, has budgeted to spend up to \$291,000 for consultant support, in addition to "significant participation" on the part of its own and the MBTA's staff, Rivera said.

"While there are a number of ongoing initiatives in this area ... MassDOT is taking a fresh look at strategies to improve public transportation service in the study area and is not advocating for any particular project or outcome," she said.

Before the state transportation department stopped pursuing the proposal to convert bus Route 28 into Route 28X, officials had applied for over \$115 million in federal stimulus funds. Designed to improve service between Mattapan Square and Ruggles Station the revamped bus route would have been launched in January 2012 and included dedicated bus lanes, higher-capacity buses, new stations and traffic upgrades.

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