

I-93 Transit Investment Study Public Meeting Summary of Comments

April 10, 2007
Methuen City Hall, Methuen, MA

The following comments were received at the I-93 Transit Investment Study public meeting held on April 10, 2007 at Methuen City Hall, Methuen, Massachusetts.

- There was a comment thanking the project team for excellent work. The alternatives should be considered in relation to air quality impacts. The M & L line alternative looks promising. There is a great opportunity for Massachusetts towns to benefit from this project.
- There was a general concurrence with the above comments. The scope of the project is excellent. Derry, Salem, and Methuen have multiple town centers, one of which is a result of rail. Provided a reminder of how this project came to fruition. Boston is not just an employment destination, but also a medical, sports, and educational destination. Must remember to consider reverse commute and the positive effect on property values that result from transit. For example, Haverhill is enjoying a renaissance because of transit.
- There was a comment that the I-93 congestion will continue to worsen in the coming years. This type of planning effort takes 10-12 years to occur, and the corridor should be built now. Questioned the length of time to reinstate the M & L line.
- There were questions raised regarding the I-93 widening including what if they only widened the highway to three lanes in each direction and the fourth lane was dedicated to transit? What if the median was used for transit? What if there was a toll for single occupant vehicles? What about considering rail from Boston to Concord, NH? What if transit were faster and more visible to drivers who were stuck in traffic?
- There was a comment about the congestion bottleneck on I-93 around I-495. This makes Methuen a good candidate for a rail improvement to absorb transportation traffic headed south. Any new lanes built between Methuen and Concord will always fill up. The bus parking lots are already full. The Route 28 alignment is a good candidate for rail as there is existing (but not operating) rail beds there and it goes through downtown areas.
- There was a written comment submitted that stated: "The work done so far and the work planned for the immediate future are very commendable and very encouraging. However, the facts of the rapidly worsening conditions in the I-93 corridor suggest that this is a much more urgent matter than has been recognized up to now. Something should be done very soon to prevent further encroachment upon the railroad right-of-way."

- There was a written comment that stated: "I would like to see some form of rail travel from Manchester, NH to Lawrence and/or Woburn, via the M & L branch line. Rail transit is more reliable in bad weather."