



Fairhaven Select Board Meeting Minutes

November 7, 2022

Present: Select Board members Chair Stasia Powers, Vice-Chair Leon Correy, Clerk Robert Espindola, Select Board member Keith Silvia, Select Board member Charles Murphy Sr., and Town Administrator Angie Lopes Ellison.

The meeting was videotaped by Cable Access and Zoom meeting application.

Ms. Powers opened the meeting at 6:31 pm.

Minutes

Motion: Mr. Murphy motioned to approve the open session minutes of October 17, 2022. Mr. Silvia seconded. Vote was unanimous. (5-0-0)

Motion: Mr. Murphy motioned to approve the executive session minutes of October 17, 2022. Mr. Silvia seconded. Vote was unanimous. (5-0-0)

Town Administrator Report

Ms. Ellison updated the Select Board on:

Staff Updates:

- Amy Almeida was introduced as Executive Assistant to the Town Administrator.
- Wendy Graves submitted her retirement notice for January 20, 2023. A transition plan will be put into place regarding roles and responsibilities and we will be posting for a replacement. Ms. Ellison thanked her for her dedication to the Town.

Board of Health (BOH) Flu Clinic for Employees:

- Will take place on Tuesday, November 15, 11am-1pm, for employees only, the BOH is partnering with the new Fairhaven Pharmacy

Fairhaven's Public Treasures of American Art:

- This is a Fairhaven TV production. Sponsorship with the Fairhaven Fine Arts Department; the presentation will be posted on the Fairhaven TV YouTube page.

Town Buildings Closed to the public – Thursday, December 8, 2022

- The building will be closed for an educational and staff development day; staff will be completing statutory HR training requirements like sexual harassment, workplace violence, etc. Also included are Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Conflict Mediation, education on First Amendment auditors filming in public buildings. The information will be posted on Town's website.

Collective Bargaining Updates

- Reached tentative agreements with 5 of the 7 Collective Bargaining units; there is one signed MOU; the respective Collective Bargaining Unit memberships will vote on ratification and acceptance of their agreement. Once signed, will be presented at Special Town Meeting for ratification and vote.

Premium Holiday:

- For employees participating in the Town's health insurance plan, for four weeks in the month of December there will be no premiums deducted. The decision was made based on employee feedback of the financial impact for their first 8 weeks of double deductions. Going forward, four weeks will be banked for new enrollments.

Financial Summary:

- Moving to the November 21, 2022 meeting

Other:

- Acknowledge a Conservation Commission achievement; Kelly Camara is now certified through MACC
- Emergency Management is looking for volunteers; application process is online at the Fairhaven Fire Department's website, under E.M.A. <https://www.fairhaven-ma.gov/fire-department-ems-ema/em>

Committee Liaison Reports

Mr. Espindola reported:

- He attended a 2-day conference on Broadband, *see attachment A*
- Broadband Study Committee met on November 3, 2022 and discussed CCC Grant regarding FHA project at Oxford Terrace properties
- SRPEDD met on October 26, 2022; they updated on the South Coast Rail project.

Ms. Powers asked about Representative Straus' projection of readiness as early as next Fall. Mr. Espindola referred to the updates in the South Coast Rail Fall 2022 newsletter, *see attachment B*

Mr. Correy reported:

- SRTA met and reviewed their plans for next few years and current state of the agency. They experienced a drop with COVID and are coming back now. SRTA had discussed cutting back one of their services to Fairhaven. Mr. Correy made the point that Fairhaven has three of the top ten active stops and they should reconsider as they look to generate revenue and increase usage. There is a plan for free ride service on Thanksgiving with a formal announcement to be made.
- The Economic Development meeting was canceled.
- The Library met and reviewed their investment strategy. The budget is sound and the trustees have decided to make investments based on the market for the long term.
- The Belonging Committee meets November 9, 2022.

Ms. Powers reported:

- She participated in the 40R group on Saturday, November 5, 2022; Mr. Silvia also attended. They looked at the 40R overlay district opportunity. Many community members were in attendance and gave input on how the community wants the Town to grow and develop. There are more workshops planned. School Superintendent, Tara Kohler, attended and discussed with the Planning Director, Paul Foley, the opportunity for high school students to be involved and participate; a special workshop is planned for them. Mr. Espindola commended Mr. Foley for his work on the 40R and the \$75,000 grant that was recently received.

Mr. Silvia reported:

- The Historical Commission meets November 9, 2022

Mr. Murphy reported:

- Lagoa Friendship Pact Committee will be starting the reconnection between the high schools; the 12-hour time difference is the biggest obstacle.

ACTION ITEMS

Broadband Municipal Light Board

Mr. Espindola introduced Ms. Gayle Huntress, Director of the Shutesbury Broadband program who joined via zoom. Ms. Huntress discussed an overview of the process Shutesbury followed and described their process from 2014-2019 to create an all-fiber network passing all homes. She described some of the challenges and decisions needed during the process and answered various questions from the Board.

The options before the Board at this time on the structure of a Municipal Light Board (MLB) are: 1) the Select Board, 2) the Board of Public Works (BPW), or 3) a separately elected board. Ms. Huntress suggested a fourth option of an appointed broadband committee. Shutesbury currently has a three-member board with a Municipal Light Plan (MLP) Manager taking direction from that three-member board.

Ms. Powers asked if the Select Board could become the MLB temporarily while the Broadband Study Committee continues to research and then, once it is ready to implement, turn it over to BPW. She also asked if the Board makes a decision now can it be changed later. Ms. Ellison's recommendation is to appoint the Select Board as the MLB now. The Select Board would manage the project and have the Broadband Study Committee continue the work as a subset of the Board. Ms. Ellison would then have implementation and supervision unless the Board deems differently. The Board can later re-assign and re-appoint because they are the authority. The Board cannot relinquish the authority over the MLB now and then take authority over the MLB back later without another process.

Ms. Powers thanked Ms. Huntress for the information on Shutesbury's MLP project.

Motion: Mr. Correy motioned to assign the Municipal Light Board project to the BPW. Mr. Silvia seconded the motion. **Vote:** Mr. Correy in favor, Mr. Silvia in favor; Ms. Powers opposed, Mr. Espindola opposed, Mr. Murphy opposed. Motion does not carry. (2-3-0).

Mr. Murphy recommended having a joint meeting first to gain buy-in from the BPW. Ms. Ellison suggested not making a decision tonight if there are more questions.

Motion: Mr. Espindola motioned to have a joint meeting with the BPW and prior to the joint meeting, a meeting with Mr. Espindola and Ms. Ellison to meet with the BPW Superintendent, Mr. Vinnie Furtado, to discuss best approaches for a joint meeting of the Select Board and the BPW. Mr. Murphy seconded. Vote passed unanimously. (5-0-0)

Digital Equity Plan

Mr. Espindola referred to *attachment C*. Following-up to the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) Conference he attended and future opportunity for communities to apply for grant funding. Fairhaven can apply for funding to use to hire a consultant to develop a Digital Equity Plan for the community. MBI is seeking input for a statewide Digital Equity Plan from regional planning authorities, like SRPEDD, and local communities, like Fairhaven, who would create their own Digital Equity Plans first. MBI requires the community to have a point person that is either an elected official or a staff member.

Mr. Espindola asked the Board to consider making the appointment and said he is willing to be the point person if that is what the Board votes because it has to be either an elected official or a staff member.

Mr. Correy volunteered to be appointed as the elected official.

Motion: Mr. Murphy motioned to appoint Mr. Correy as the Digital Equity elected official to work in

conjunction with the Town Administrator to apply for a grant and to establish the Fairhaven Digital Equity Plan. Mr. Silvia seconded. Vote passed unanimously. (5-0-0)

Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC): Approval of Seasonal Population

The Board reviewed the yearly seasonal population increase estimation for 2023.

Motion: Mr. Murphy motioned to approve the 2023 Seasonal Population increase estimation as 1582 to be submitted to the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission. Mr. Silvia seconded.
Vote passed unanimously. (5-0-0)

Event Permit: Supreme Perfection: Town Hall Auditorium: December 18, 2022, 12pm-5pm

The Board reviewed an Event Permit from Supreme Perfection to hold their Community Christmas and Nutcracker Show in the Town Hall Auditorium on Sunday, December 18, 2022 from 12:00-5:00 p.m.

Motion: Mr. Murphy motioned to approve the event permit for Supreme Perfection to take place on December 18, 2022 from 12pm-5pm at the Town Hall Auditorium for their Christmas and Nutcracker Show. Seconded by Mr. Silvia. Vote passed unanimously. (5-0-0)

Proclamation Vote: MOLIFE - Stephen Cornish

Mr. Murphy recused himself from this item

Ms. Powers asked for a vote to establish the proclamation after the fact

Motion: Mr. Silvia motioned to approve the proclamation for Stephen Cornish in recognition of his many accomplishments and work with MOLIFE. Mr. Correy seconded.

Vote: Mr. Correy in favor, Mr. Silvia in favor, Ms. Powers in favor, Mr. Espindola in favor, Mr. Murphy abstained. Motion carries. (4-0-1).

Public Comment - no public comment

Board Member Items

Ms. Powers reminded everyone to vote tomorrow, it is important to make your voice heard

Mr. Correy reminded everyone to go to the town website and look for volunteer opportunities. He welcomed new town members; we are always looking for new members to get involved. Thank you to Fairhaven TV for a great Halloween event, he had a great time and it was a great opportunity for a Halloween photo op with his son. Thank you to the Firefighters for the Trunk-or-Treat at Hastings School. Great attendance at both events. NFIA's Horribles' Parade was another great event.

Mr. Correy said he has had concerns brought to him about the bike crew and he would like to appeal to the parents to get involved to prevent further escalation, prevent bullying and work with the other parents. We love our town and it takes a village.

Mr. Murphy said he received a call today about adding language to the article on the police officers aged 65-70. Ms. Ellison clarified that the article will meet our needs and it is changing the age limit from 65 to 70 and cleaning up the language.

Mr. Espindola said historically the Board has met to review the articles for the Special Town Meeting. Ms. Ellison clarified that the only open item was related to the Collective Bargaining Agreements which is Article 12.

Mr. Espindola asked about the Tree By-law, Article 16.

Motion: Mr. Murphy motioned to schedule a Special Select Board meeting on Monday, November 14, 2022 at 6:30pm. Mr. Silvia seconded. Vote passed unanimously. (5-0-0)

Notes and Announcements

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Select Board is **November 21, 2022** at 6:30 pm.

Executive Session

Motion: Mr. Murphy motioned to enter into Executive Session Pursuant to MGL Ch. 30A§ 21(a)(3) To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares: New England Preservation and Development, LLC & another Vs. Town Of Fairhaven and not to return to open session. Mr. Silvia seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Espindola in favor, Mr. Correy in favor, Mr. Silvia in favor, Mr. Murphy in favor and Ms. Powers in favor. Motion carries. (5-0-0).

Adjourned to Executive Session at 8:18pm

Respectfully submitted,
On behalf of the Select Board Clerk. (aa)

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Committee Liaison Report
- B. South Coast Rail – Fall 2022 Newsletter
- C. MBI Planning Program Presentation

Committee Liaison Report – Bob Espindola – November 7th, 2022

Broadband Study Committee.

I attended a two-day conference offered by the Mass Broadband Institute that I found to be very helpful. It focused, primarily, on Digital Equity and state plans to develop a digital equity plan that will be sent to the Federal Government to, then, be eligible for access to the \$65B in funds available for Broadband infrastructure. The state (MBI) will need help from Regional Planning Authorities (like SRPEDD) and from municipalities in doing their work. I will explain more during our regular agenda.

The Broadband Study Committee met on November 3rd. The committee reviewed the status of the CCC Grant to add Broadband at the Fairhaven Housing Authority, the Mass Broadband Conference that I attended and the concept of developing a Digital Equity plan in Fairhaven.

With regard to the FHA project, I met with a representative of the Architectural / Engineering firm that is working on the \$8.5M construction project at the Oxford Terrace properties to review the possibility of leveraging the open access that now exists in certain wings of the building during the project. They were able to provide us with drawings of the construction project and a project schedule so that we can see if we can fit the broadband project into the same time frame.

We also met to discuss existing infrastructure in the FHA properties that could, possibly, be utilized for some elements of the project buildout, to save cost on the project.

The FHA Director sent out the attached Survey to residents and had some positive feedback about interest level but also there were some questions about security if the end result is a WiFi solution. I spoke with experts at the MBI conference who said that there are multiple ways to address security through firewalls and they said education of the residents is a major factor. One Broadband Study Committee member, Sean Daly, has worked in network security and offered to assist in any messaging and training that would need to be done.

Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) SRPEDD met on October 26th. Jean Fox, Project Manager for the South Coast Rail project provided an update at the midpoint of construction. See attached Fact sheet for details.

Southeastern Mass. Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMMPO). The SMMPO will be meeting next on November 15th.

Internet Access at Fairhaven Housing Authority



LET'S CONNECT!

Fairhaven Housing Authority has been identified as a possible location where increased Internet access could help residents be in touch with family, access health resources, and register for other services available online.

The Authority and the Town of Fairhaven would like to hear from you on how having low or no cost internet access in the building would benefit you. In order to bring this project to possibly all of the properties within the Housing Authority portfolio your input is needed.

Please complete the following survey (on the back of this flyer) to be entered into a drawing for a \$50 Visa gift card.



Surveys must be completed and returned to Kendra Rebello & Diane Rocha, RSC to the Main Office @ 275 Main St. Fairhaven to be entered.
A mailbox will be posted outside the office for easy drop off.

Surveys are due by TUESDAY October 18th The winner will be announced by a post on the Building Bulletin Boards & in the November newsletter Tuesday, November 1st.

Thank you for being a part of this project!



Fairhaven Housing Authority

Name: _____ Apt #: _____

Do you currently have internet access in your apartment?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If No, why not?

- ☐ I don't need it
- ☐ It's too expensive
- ☐ I don't know how to subscribe
- ☐ I don't know how to use the internet
- ☐ I don't have a device to use the internet on
- ☐ I'm concerned about privacy
- ☐ Language barrier
- ☐ Other: _____

If Yes:

What device do you use?

☐ Phone ☐ Computer ☐ Tablet (Ipad)

Do you pay for the connection? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is it expensive? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What do you use it for?

- ☐ Pay bills
- ☐ Talk to friends/family
- ☐ Shop
- ☐ Doctor visits or other health information
- ☐ Register/manage other resources (SNAP, Social Security, other benefits)
- ☐ Other: _____

If Fairhaven Housing had free internet access, would you use it?

☐ Yes ☐ No

What supports could be provided to help you get online?

Do you have issues or concerns about a public WIFI network being installed in Fairhaven Housing lobbies and hallways?

☐ Yes Why? _____
☐ No

Should there be access in the apartments, or just the lobby ?

☐ Apartments ☐ Lobby ☐ Apartments & Lobby


www.mass.gov/southcoastrail

South Coast Rail Passes Midpoint of Construction

This Summer, South Coast Rail Phase 1 passed the midpoint of construction of the MBTA's restored commuter rail system. Exciting signs of progress are visible all along the right-of-way at Taunton, Fall River and New Bedford. Stations and track work are approaching completion on the Fall River Secondary Line, as that contract was awarded first. The Middleborough Secondary/New Bedford Main Line contains more track miles, includes the signal system and was started a bit later. Yet the construction contractor has laid 56,000 linear feet of track, completed 12 of 18 grade crossings, and stations in Middleborough and New Bedford are recognizable.

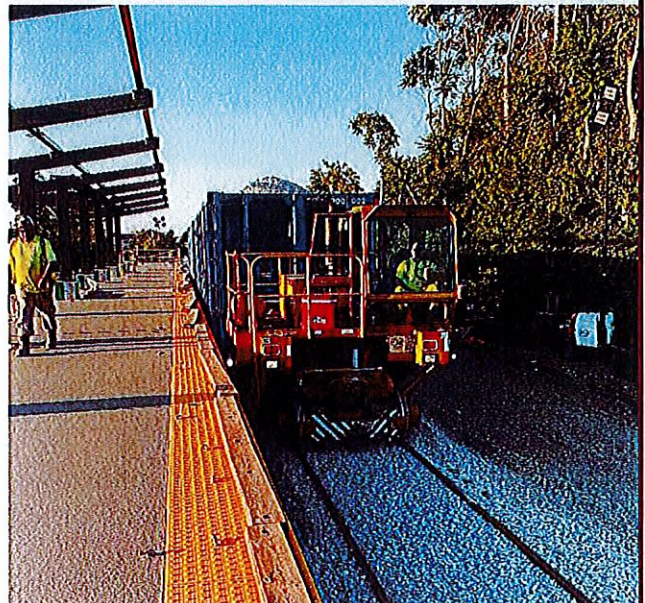
Fall River Secondary: Hitting a Milestone

In May 2020, the MBTA awarded a nearly \$159 million contract to Skanska DW White JV (Joint Venture) for the Fall River Secondary (FRS), the first major SCR construction package. The contract includes building new commuter rail stations in Freetown and Fall River, with accessible high-level side platforms. In addition, the contractor is completing work at Weaver's Cove Layover in Fall River. The layover is where trains are stored, cleaned and fueled when they are not in service. The first train each day will leave the layover early in the morning and the last train of the day will be tucked in there for the night.

Major construction on the FRS station structures in Fall River and Freetown will be completed this Fall along with paving and striping parking lots, installing parking lot lights, testing signals and fiber optics, and grading and seeding landscaped areas. Contractors will be destressing 10.7 miles of track and completing sidings and other special track work.

At Weaver's Cove, the crew and mechanical buildings have taken shape. Final work includes grading and landscaping and paving the employee parking lot.

Over this time period, the contractor will be working on a punchlist, completing items such as fencing, site cleanup and site utilities. This work will be completed in December or into early 2023. While the stations will look ready for service, they await installation of signal boxes along the ROW. The signal contractor will pull the signal cables from north to south. This work will continue for several months until the entire line is tied together. Once this has been completed, the contractor, partnered with MBTA and Keolis, will go through a rigorous testing and commissioning process of all the new equipment.



Fall River Station

Middleborough Secondary/New Bedford Main Line

The Middleborough Secondary/New Bedford Main Line (MS/NBML) contract was awarded to SCR Contractors in August 2020. The \$403.5 million construction package includes building the New Bedford Main Line and the Middleborough Secondary, along with the signal and communications systems for the entire corridor.

There's also great progress on this contract. The Middleborough Station platform is under construction and next steps include paving the parking lot and setting the lights. A separate contractor is working on the station entrance and upgrades at Routes 105 and 28, including a pedestrian crossing signal that is part of traffic mitigation for SCR.

Two New Bedford stations are under construction. Church Street station is in North New Bedford. The station has been rough graded with on-going underground utility work. Work will continue as the contractor prepares for the arrival of the new station Fiber-Reinforced Polymer (FRP) platforms.

Because the New Bedford station is separated from the historic city center by Route 18, access will be provided by an ADA-compliant pedestrian bridge that is in final stages of design.

Wamsutta Layover will be the main overnight storage facility for trains on the New Bedford Line. Utilities and foundations for a new crew building and power structures are being installed along with utilities and drainage for the yard track area. Wamsutta will also serve as the layover for the MassCoastal freight railroad.

Signal Instrument Houses are beginning to be installed along the ROW. These are sheds of various sizes that contain the equipment that manages signals, operations, and track switches. Crews will be pulling cable, fiber wires and completing the tie-ins that will operate the system.

Off-site traffic mitigation has begun and will be visible in a number of SCR communities. These projects are improvements to roadways, crossings and station entrances for vehicles and pedestrians. The MBTA committed to the mitigation as part of the SCR program. These changes address safety and access. They include traffic lights and pedestrian crossing lights. The work is timed for completion by the startup of commuter rail service.

Looking Ahead

It's been many years since the vision of a restored South Coast Rail began to take shape. With completion of the Fall River Line a few months away, and the New Bedford Line to follow, the project team will prepare for training crews and testing equipment and infrastructure next Summer. To stay up to date with the latest information, schedules and safety information, sign up on our project website for email updates. You can also watch project videos with construction updates, histories of the region and other topics. You'll be ready to ride the rails.



Setting ties on the right of way

Fall River Secondary Facts and Figures

| Project Element | Status |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Stations: Fall River Depot & Freetown | In final stages |
| Culverts | Complete |
| 9 Bridges | Complete |
| 10 Grade Crossings | Complete (although not yet activated) |
| Walls: Sheet piling, Soldier Piles and precast modular block wall | Complete or installed |
| New Track | 10.70 miles installed |
| Sidings | Complete |

Controlling Dust on SCR Work Sites

A dry, hot Summer can have many impacts, from drought to wind-blown dirt and dust around construction sites. Construction typically kicks up a lot of dust on any project and managing it is a challenge all year for the MBTA's South Coast Rail team. Dust control measures are an essential part of a contractor's responsibilities. They help to protect public health and maintain a clean environment. Keeping work sites clean and managing dust make South Coast Rail a good neighbor across the region.

Dust control measures are conducted throughout each workday. The MBTA employs effective strategies used across the industry. Perhaps the most visible is spraying water on the sites and on routes that trucks take to dampen the dust and dirt to prevent it from blowing around or tracking on to neighbors' yards. Spraying water also works on exposed soils and stockpiles. Other strategies that MBTA's contractors use across the program include: using wet sweepers on paved surfaces to remove tracked dust; maintaining truck pads at site exits to prevent vehicles from carrying mud and debris onto roads; and applying calcium to the soil and gravel road surfaces so they retain moisture and limit dust generation potential. Calcium is an effective dust control agent.

The team performs dust monitoring throughout the workday at three to four locations around each site. The levels of dust are measured to check for effectiveness and used to direct additional measures, if needed.

Dust control is most important at locations where there is a lot of earthwork underway. Residents who note any issues are encouraged to let our team know by sending an email to SouthCoastRail@dot.state.ma.us.



Dust control Cotley Street right of way

Safety First

It's great news that South Coast Rail is coming, traveling between Boston and Taunton, New Bedford, and Fall River very soon. With a new service, MBTA is making safety a top priority. We don't want you, your friends, your family, or your pets in harm's way.

For about 60 years, the only traffic along the right-of-way (ROW) consisted of slow-moving freight trains. Freight runs at up to 25 mph, which is much slower than 79 mph commuter trains. If you are near or live along the tracks, you can hear the freight trains before you see them most of the time. That is going to change very soon.

Commuter trains are quieter and faster than freight trains. They will also be operating on new welded rail and will operate much more quietly than the clickety clack you can hear now. In less than a year, commuter rail test trains will be operating along the tracks at high speeds.

Until testing begins, significant construction is underway. Here are safety practices to live by and share with friends and family:

- Stay off the tracks for your safety. Don't cross the tracks because it is a faster route to your friend's house; don't walk the dog along the tracks; don't drive any type of vehicle along the tracks; you will actually be trespassing
- It is never safe to be near or around railroad tracks
- If you see something, say something. Blue signs are posted at all grade crossings with a phone number to call if you see someone or something on the tracks. That number goes right to the dispatcher, who will make sure that any trains in the area and the proper authorities are notified.

South Coast Rail will be taking these messages to every community, reaching out to schools, organizations and neighborhoods. Watch for our safety videos, and please stay off the tracks.





Claw dropping some SCR granite pieces into local waters to build up the reef

Cape Cod Artificial Reefs

Construction typically produces debris that is recycled or ends up in a landfill. South Coast Rail (SCR), the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the MA Department of Fish and Game's Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) developed an alternative future for construction materials from the MBTA's SCR project. Granite block and concrete are being added to artificial reefs to provide habitat for fish and promote marine life on sea floors in Yarmouth and Harwich.

The plan came to life when the DEP representative for the south coast, Chris Ross, approached SCR's Director of Community Engagement, Jean Fox. DEP had learned about the 46 granite culverts and several old bridges with granite abutments that were going to be replaced. MassDOT initiated these early action projects to get a head start on construction. Ross set up a meeting with DMF, where details of the potential program were developed.

The cross-agency plan reuses the materials in an environmentally friendly way. The solution avoids impacts associated with crushing the materials for another use, such as trucking, greater use of fossil fuels, noise and particulate pollution. The Baker-Polito Administration provided up to \$500,000 in funding to improve recreational fishing.

"With approval from MassDOT's Secretary," said Jean Fox, "we worked with the City of New Bedford and prepared a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a storage/staging area in the city from which the granite could be placed on barges and shipped to the two sites. The material for the reefs is being transported by barge from New Bedford Commerce Terminal."

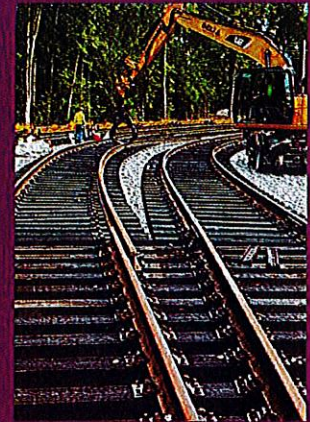
The reefs attract fish and benefit marine research. They also have a positive economic benefit, attracting anglers and recreational divers to the area.

The Yarmouth artificial reef is the first of its kind in Massachusetts. It was created by the Town of Yarmouth's Department of Natural Resources in 1978 with help from DMF. The 127-acre site is located over two miles south of Bass River. It supports more than a dozen species of fish, including black sea bass, butterfish, cunner, knobbed whelk, lesser amberjack, lobster, squid, scup, tautog, and both summer and winter flounder.

The Harwich artificial reef is the newest in Massachusetts waters. It was created through a collaborative effort between the Town of Harwich and DMF in 2016. The 10-acre reef is located two miles south of the entrance to Saquatucket Harbor. The original deployment included 1,600 cubic yards of concrete rubble from the former Harwich High School and was funded by revenues from DMF's recreational saltwater fishing permit funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

What to Know about Construction:

- Typical hours of construction are Monday-Friday, 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM or until dark; crews may arrive at construction sites prior to this time
- The exception is for track outages: these are 24-hour day work periods usually over 4-5 days; communities will be notified in advance of these events
- Construction pest and rodent management are required and ongoing
- Dust control and management are required and monitored
- Safety is embedded in all of the work on South Coast Rail



Construction Questions

To report a construction-related issue on the South Coast Rail project, call the hotline at 617-222-4099. It will be answered Monday-Friday, between 7:00 AM and 3:30 PM (except holidays). All voicemails left outside of these hours will be received on the following 7:00 AM to 3:30 PM weekday shift. We will respond to all complaints. A separate line is established for off-site improvements in SCR communities, such as for road improvements, crosswalks and sidewalk construction: 423-375-4086.

There are also contact points for inquiries related to the Noise Program. scrnoise@mbta.com; 617-449-7387

The SCR team is available to talk with or meet with residents, businesses and elected officials during construction to discuss issues and update stakeholders. Write us at SouthCoastRail@dot.state.ma.us.





Middleborough Station

Contact Us


For more information, contact us at:

 SouthCoastRail@dot.state.ma.us


 617-222-4099

 To learn more about the project and sign up for email updates, visit the website at: www.mass.gov/southcoastrail

Connect with MBTA for transportation news and updates!

 mbta.com

 blog.mass.gov/transportation/category/mbta

 [instagram.com/thembta](https://www.instagram.com/thembta)

 twitter.com/MBTA

 facebook.com/theMBTA

Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program

Program Overview

The ability to engage in digital equity planning activities will be a critical step for municipal leaders and staff to build a broad understanding of how internet access, or lack thereof, affects residents of their community. The goal of the Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program is to enable municipalities, or other local bodies of government, to engage in planning activities related to digital equity and bridging the digital divide. These planning activities will result in strategic documents designed to guide future municipal decision-making and investments related to procuring services and key community assets that will increase access and usage of the internet for the populations most impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic. Specifically, the Digital Equity Planning activities will accomplish two goals:

1. Guide municipal decision-making and investments related to services and infrastructure that will increase access, adoption and usage of the internet for the populations most impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic.
2. Prepare municipalities to submit grant proposals to existing or forthcoming state or federal programs to support digital equity activities.

Similar to planning activities in the economic development field, it may be beneficial to adopt a regional approach to digital equity planning to enable resource sharing, coordination and achieve economies of scale, and therefore, regional approaches will be allowed and encouraged under this program.

The Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program will offer two options to pursue digital equity planning activities with the support of a pre-qualified planning consultant, a short term planning charrette or a longer term Digital Equity Plan process. Both options are intended to yield similar outcomes, but will differ in process, duration of the planning activities and level of detail and nuanced information provided to the municipality that will be incorporated into deliverables at the end of the planning process. Municipalities will be able to take advantage of both planning options if they so choose, thus enabling a pathway for municipalities to advance their thinking related to digital equity planning over time.

Consultant Prequalification Process

Interested organizations can apply to become prequalified consultants by following the instructions outlined in the Municipal Planning Consultant RFQ. Consultants will be pre-qualified on a rolling basis until such a time that MassTech deems it has sufficient capacity to fully execute the Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program.

View the RFQ for Consultants to provide Municipal Digital Equity Planning Services </request-qualifications-municipal-digital-equity-planning-services>

Municipal Application Process

The municipal application process will open in Fall 2022. Municipalities will be able to apply for digital equity planning support individually, or jointly as “regions”. Municipalities applying for the Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program will be required to designate a staff member – either a municipal employee or elected official – who will be responsible for coordinating the municipality’s involvement and engagement in the planning activities. This designation will be a prerequisite for any municipality to be eligible to receive digital equity planning support.

Contact Us

For questions or additional information about the Digital Equity Partnerships Program, please contact us at broadband@masstech.org.

Contact <https://broadband.masstech.org/contact>

Map Gallery [map-gallery](#)

Public Notices [news-and-updates/public-notices](#)

Procurements [procurements](#)

Privacy Policy [privacy-policy](#)

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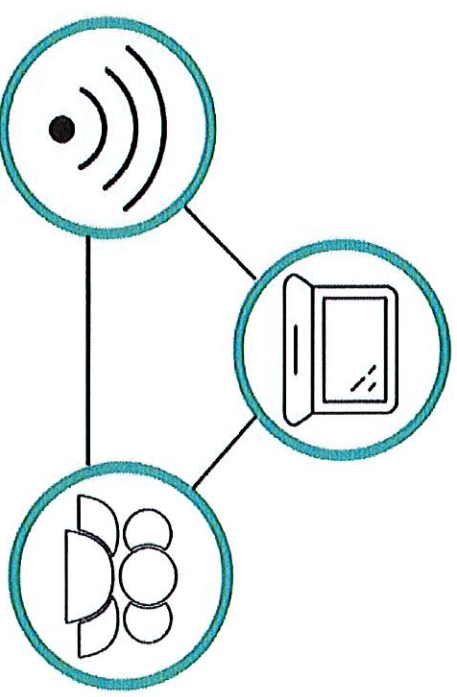
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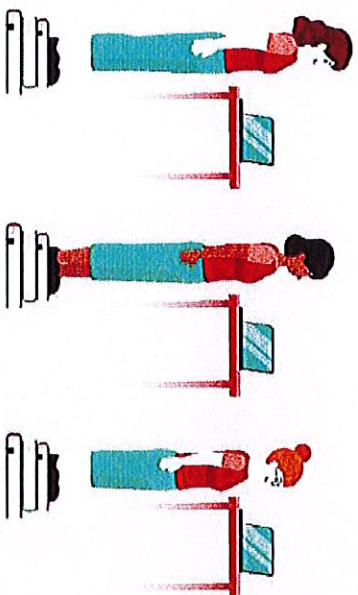
Digital Inclusion: The Work

The activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

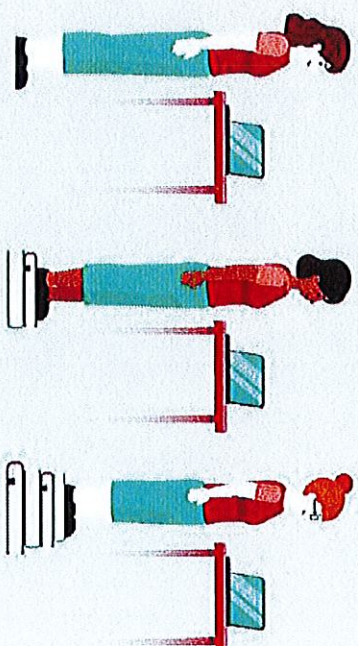


Why 'Digital Equity'?

EQUALITY

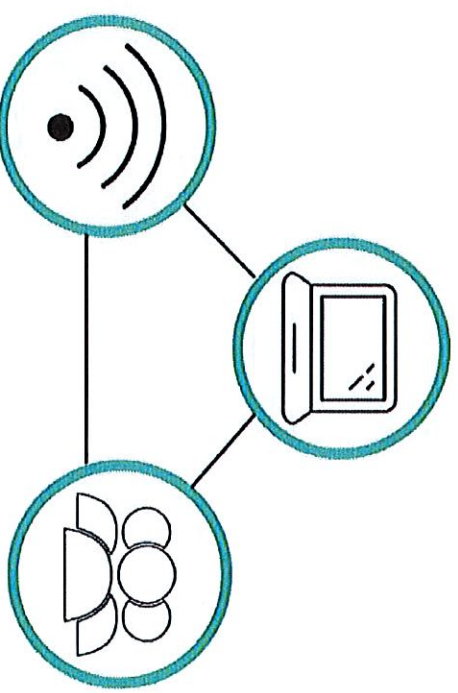


EQUITY



Digital Inclusion: The Work

The activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).



Digital Divide: The Issue

The gap between those who have affordable access, skills and support to effectively engage online and those who do not.

The digital divide disproportionately affects Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, Black people and other people of color, households with low incomes, people with disabilities, people in rural areas and older adults.

Key Barriers to Digital Inclusion



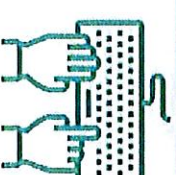
BROADBAND

- ✗ Unaffordable
- ✗ Unreliable service
- ✗ Digital Redlining
- ✗ Complicated by land ownership rights on Tribal Lands



DEVICES

- ✗ Unaffordable
- ✗ Outdated software
- ✗ No access to device
- ✗ Device is not matching the needs of the user



DIGITAL SKILLS

- ✗ Limited digital skills
- ✗ Trainings are not accessible
- ✗ Fear & shame
- ✗ Privacy concerns

The Solution

Affordable Broadband

Appropriate Devices

Digital Literacy Trainings

Broadband Adoption

Broadband adoption is daily access to the internet:

- At speeds, quality, and capacity necessary to accomplish common tasks,
- With the digital skills necessary to participate online, and
- On a personal device and secure, convenient network.



NDIA Resource: Affordable Connectivity Program Page

ACP Resource Page includes:

- Resources from the FCC
- Community FAQ
- ACP Updates from NDIA

AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM (ACP)


\$30
off per month


\$75
off per month on
Tribal Lands


\$100
off a device

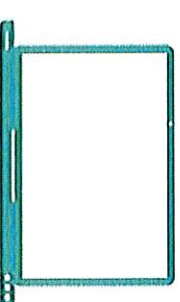
Appropriate Devices



- ✓ Most portable device
- ✓ Multiple connection options
- ✓ Long battery
- ✗ Does not replace a laptop



- ✓ Great for accessibility
- ✓ Long battery
- ✗ Cannot make calls without a cellular data plan



- ✓ Mandatory for many jobs and applications
- ✓ Large storage
- ✗ Shorter battery life
- ✗ Least affordable option