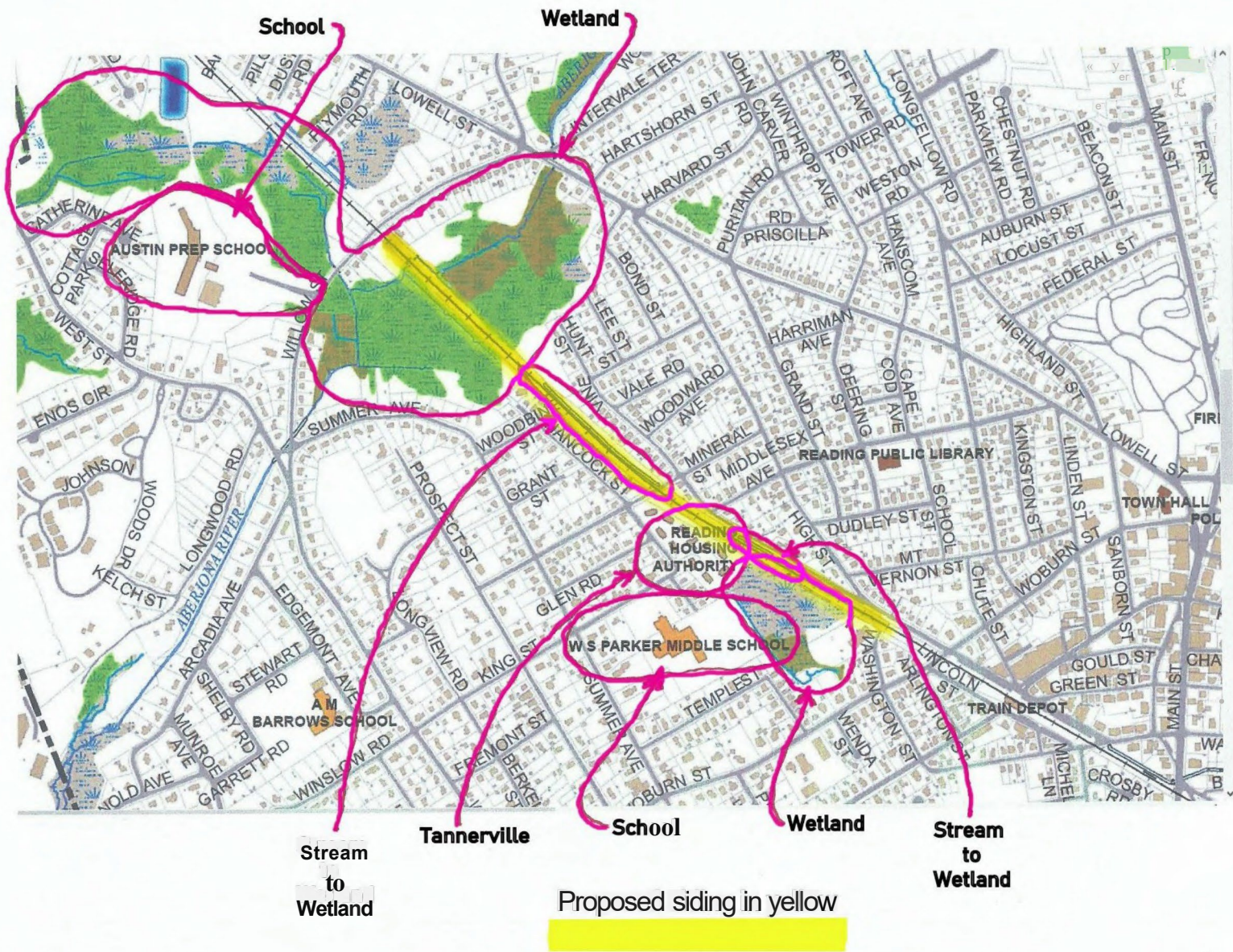


Introduction





Health & Wellbeing for Reading Residents

3. Town of Reading: Will maintenance equipment be staged for long periods of time or overnight on the turnback track?
 - a. MBTA: No, all service, inspection, and maintenance will continue at Haverhill and Boston facilities. No vehicles will be stored on these tracks for long periods of time.
4. Town of Reading: How long will trains be on turnback track and will more than one trainset be on the turnback track at a time?
 - a. MBTA: Likely one hour, but this may be adjusted once schedule is finalized with the updated 30-minute service to Boston. Only one train at a time will be on the turnback track.
5. Town of Reading: Was the turnback track location considered to be installed closer to Readings DPW (Ash Street and Walker Street) where there are already double tracks in that area?
 - a. MBTA: No, as it would require the engineer to switch ends in the station (twice) which does not work for 30 minutes frequencies which is the goal of the project. Trains move north from Wakefield to Reading, offload passengers at the station, continue north past Woburn Street onto the turnback track, stop before Willow Street, train engineer walks to opposite end of the train to reverse directions, train moves south through Woburn Street and into Reading Station, loads passengers, and continues to Wakefield and ultimately to Boston.

Drone Video of Proposed **MBTA** Turn back Track
Provided By Reading Recap

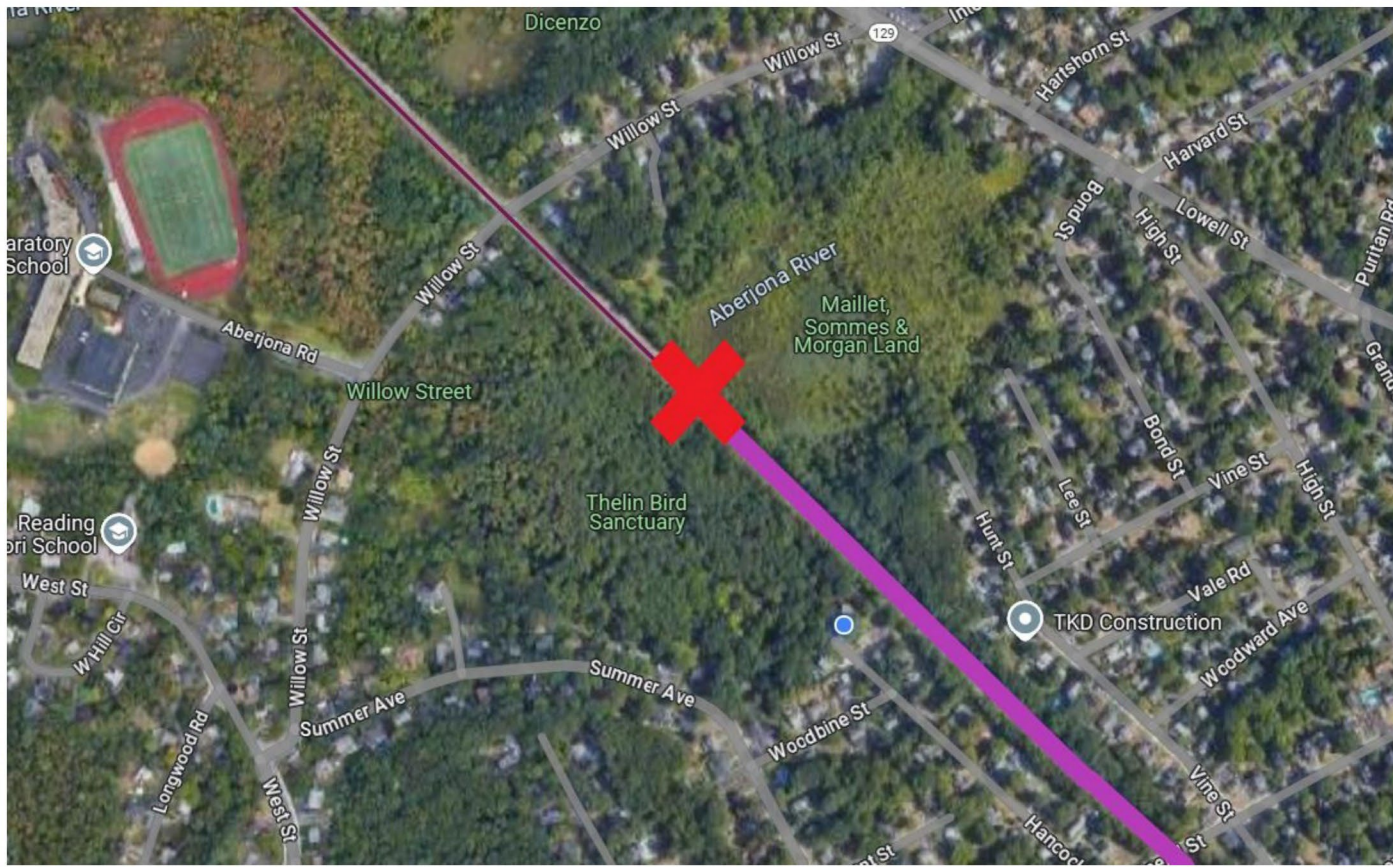
Alice M. Barrows Elementary School Student
Kaden Barcikowski Discussing the
Maillet, Sommes, & Morgan Conservation Land use by Kids



Jim Riley

Background, Issues, Recommendations & Concerns

- The Reading Residents Health & Wellbeing MUST take precedence over MBTA business issues!!!



Proposed Alternatives to the MBTA's Reading Turnback Track

Reasons For This Document

- To protect our families, friends and neighbors. To quote Governor Healey's Commonwealth Address 1/16/2025 "To protect and strengthen the things we love."
- The MBTA has proposed installing 4,500ft of Turn back Track from North of Woburn Street to just South of Willow Street. The proposed idling location for the locomotive is inside of the conservation land.
- The MBTA's reason for this is to offer more frequent trains in and out of Reading Station. This Turnback Track will allow an increased number of diesel locomotives idling in the conservation land near resident homes for a maximum of 30mins per layover starting at 5AM through the day until 11 PM at night.
- United States of America v. MBTA Civil Action No. 10-11311 filed in 2010 regarding MBTA diesel locomotives idling excessively. We are concerned that the MBTA self-policing themselves is not enough.

Goals

- Provide alternatives that help protect Reading citizen's health/wellbeing and Reading's conservation land, including the wildlife.
- Provide alternatives that advocate for commuter train transportation and its modernization moving forward to help protect the environment.

References

- The source for some of the Alternatives proposed below have been taken from a white paper called Modernizing the Haverhill Line written by TRANSITMATTERS in 2021 ([Haverhill+Final.pdf](#)).



Figure 1: Modified TRANSITMATTERS route map showing the Wildcat Branch (in Wilmington) and the proposed closure of the track between Reading and the Wildcat Branch. TRANSITMATTERS recommends moving the Haverhill Line to the Lowell line via the Wildcat Branch, allowing the closure of track between Reading and Wilmington.

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- Page 4-5 - Alternative 1 a - Perform the Train Turn back functions southeast of Main Street (Rt. 28) using existing infrastructure, ~4,000ft from Ash Street to Interstate 95. This is an immediate alternative using existing infrastructure.
- Page 6-8 - Alternative 1 b - Install double track northwest just beyond Main Street (Rt. 28) through Reading Station up to Woburn Street (does not cross Woburn Street). Allowing the Train Turn back functions to be performed at Reading Station.
- Page 9-12 - Alternative 2a -Alternative 1 a above allows planning and construction of a new modernized Reading Station southeast of Main Street (Rt. 28) behind the Market Basket area and/or the 55 Walkers Brook business building.
- Page 13 - Alternative 2b - Alternative 1b above would most likely keep the Reading Station at the current location, requiring the station's pedestrian platforms to be modernized and raising them to train entrance level.
- Page 14-19 - Alternative 3 -Alternatives 1 a and 2a above would allow for a new modern Reading Station to be built and allow for a much **bigger vision**, including benefits for communities **beyond** Reading.

Alternative 1a - Perform the Train Turnback functions southeast of Main Street (Rt. 28) using existing infrastructure, ~4,000ft from Ash Street to Interstate 95. This is an immediate alternative using existing infrastructure.

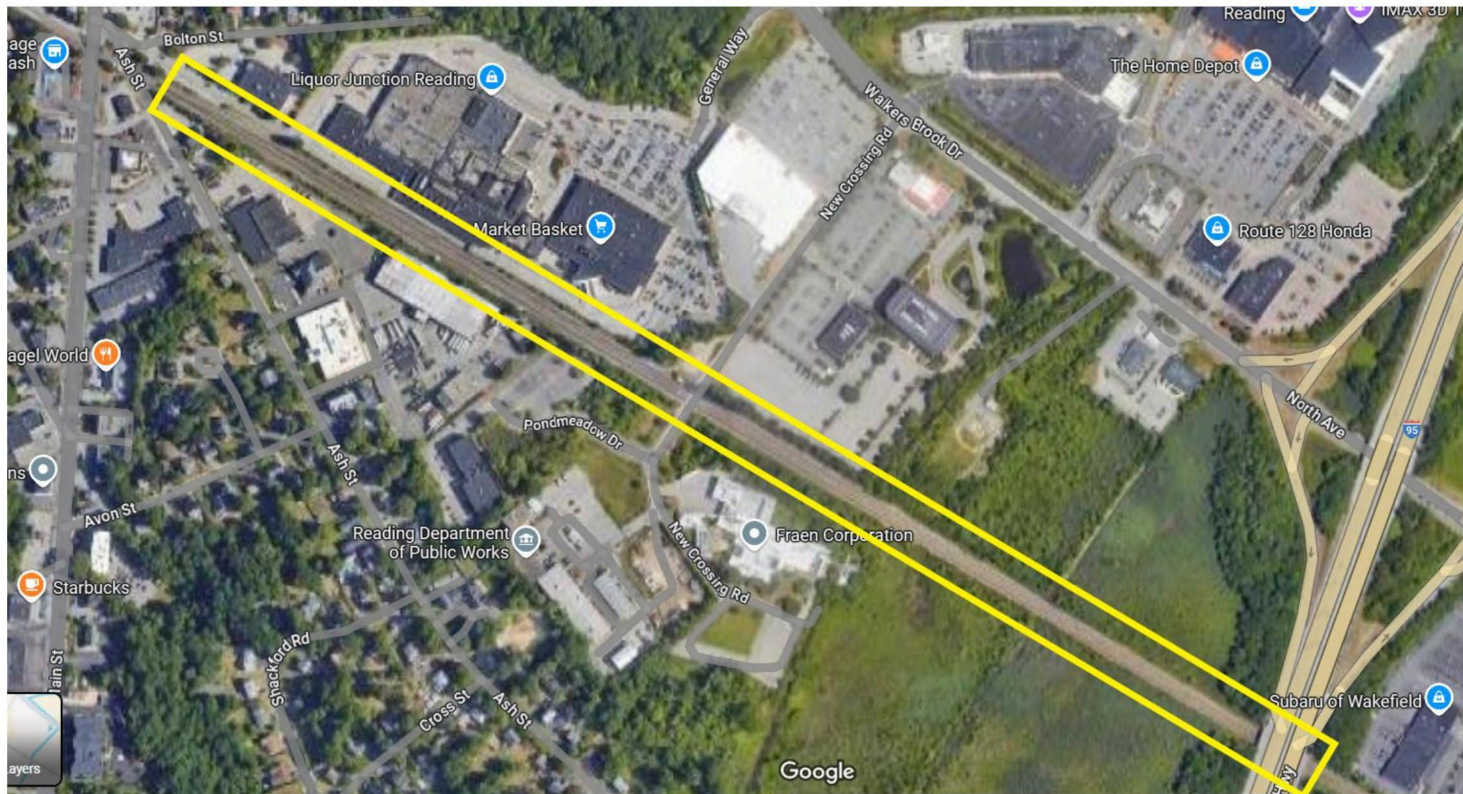


Figure 2: Satellite view showing ~4,000ft of current Double Track and Triple Track behind Market Basket plaza to under Interstate 95 where the engineer is capable of performing the Train Turnback functions.



Figure 3: Current train (railroad) switches southeast of Main Street (Rt. 28) allowing train to access 2nd and 3rd available track, view on left is looking from Ash Street towards Interstate 95.

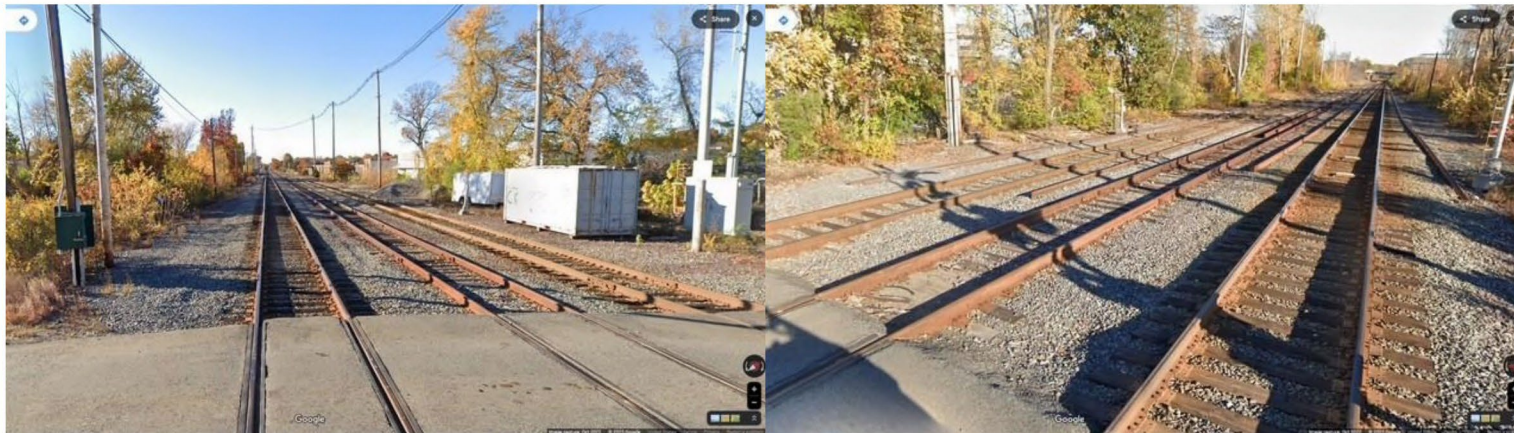


Figure 4: Current infrastructure (triple track) looking Northwest and Southeast from New Crossing Road respectively.

Alternative 1b-Install double track northwest just beyond Main Street (Rt. 28) through Reading Station up to Woburn Street (does not cross Woburn Street). Allowing the Train Turnback functions to be performed at Reading Station.



Figure 5: Satellite view showing proposed location of a train (railroad) switch just northwest of Main Street (Rt. 28).



Figure 6: Satellite view showing ~1,600ft of double track between Main Street (Rt. 28) and Woburn Street.

This approximate 1,600ft versus the MBTA proposed 4,500ft, is an assumed cost savings, helping with the cost of doubletracking Washington Street.



Figure 7: Current Reading Station looking northwest showing the available space for a second track on the Northeast side of the current track.

With the train stopped in the current Reading Station, that would allow passengers to board the train and wait in comfort during hot and cold inclement weather. Instead of waiting in the elements as the train is stopped 4,500ft away in the conservation land.

Would eliminate two additional road crossings from Woburn Street.

Alternative 2a -Alternative 1 a above (page 4) allows planning and construction of a new modernized Reading Station southeast of Main Street (Rt. 28) behind the Market Basket area and/or the 55 Walkers Brook business building.



Figure 8: Two potential locations for the new Reading Station.

There is much more space on either side of the tracks in these two locations to install the electric wire support structures, compared to the current Reading Station.

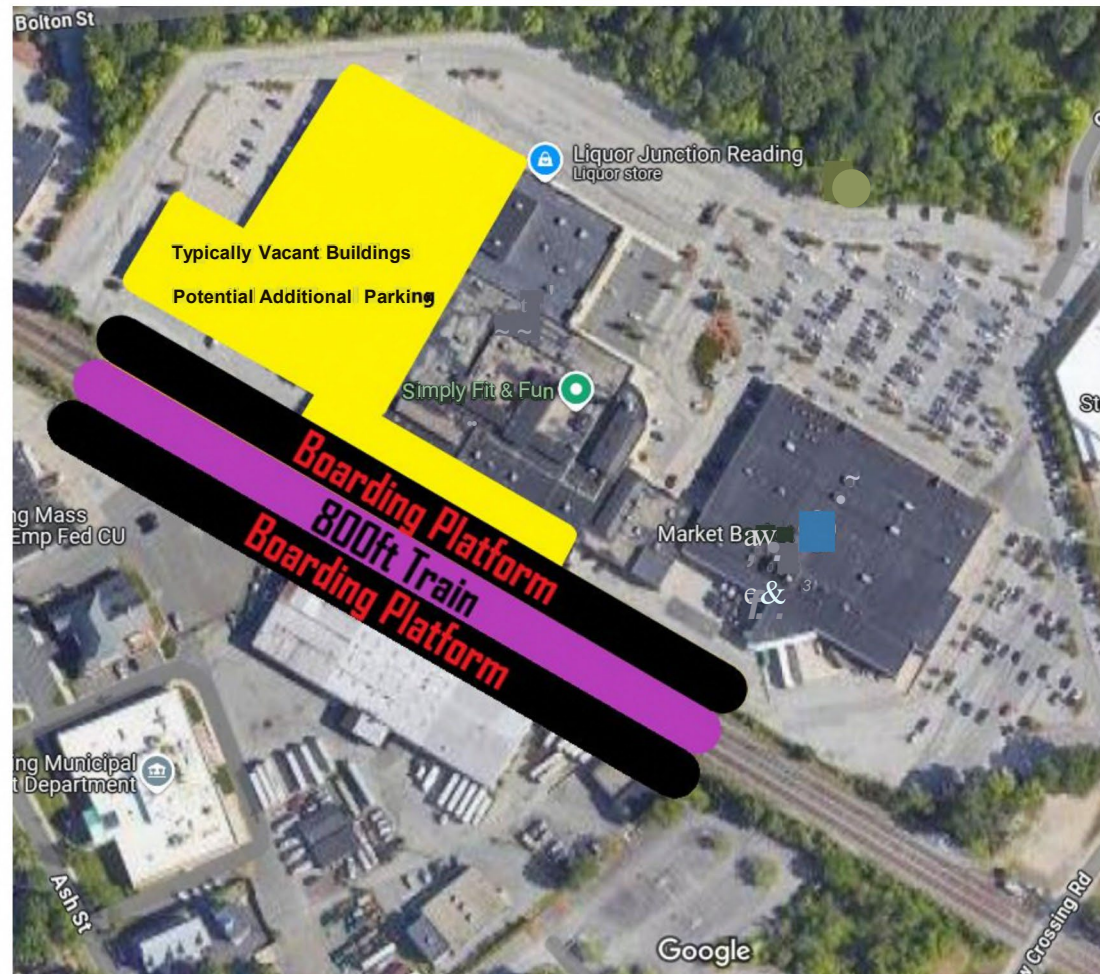


Figure 9: Proposed location #1 of new Reading Station is behind the Vacant Building(s) Southeast of Walgreens to behind Market Basket, approximately 1,250ft plus of current infrastructure with double/triple tracks (Southeast End of Bolton Street to New Crossing Road).

A Southwest Boarding Platform may not be required.

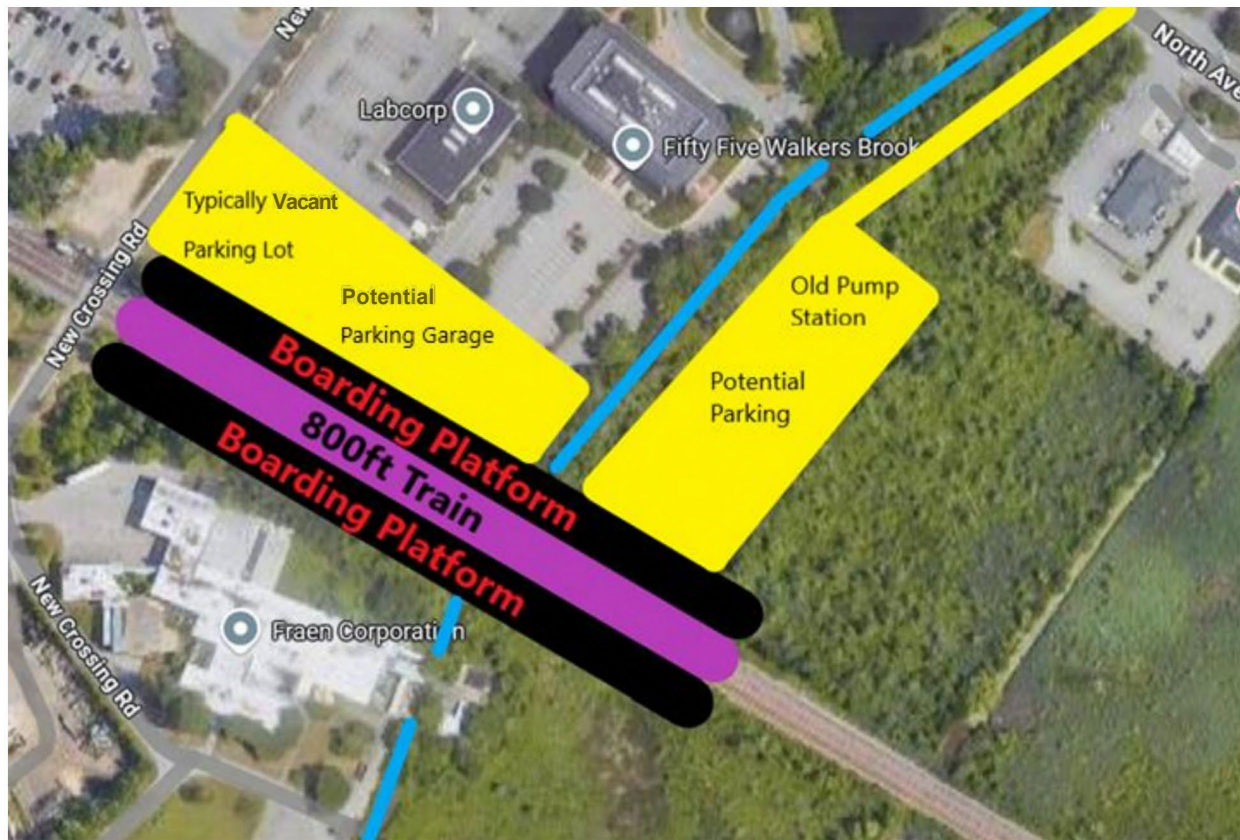


Figure 10: Proposed location #2 of new Reading Station behind the 55 Walkers Brook Office Building to behind the Old Water Pump Station, approximately 2,000ft plus of current infrastructure with triple tracks (New Crossing Road to Interstate 95).

We believe this is the best Alternative, moving the idling locomotive as far away from residents as possible. Offering Reading and other communities many benefits.

A Southwest Boarding Platform may not be required.



Figure 11: Pictures of large parking lot abutting the train tracks at 55 Walkers Brook drive, showing a lack of cars using this lot (location #2 potential parking garage).

Alternative 2b-Alternative 1 b above (page 6) would most likely keep the Reading Station at the current location, requiring the station's pedestrian platforms to be modernized and raising them to train entrance level.

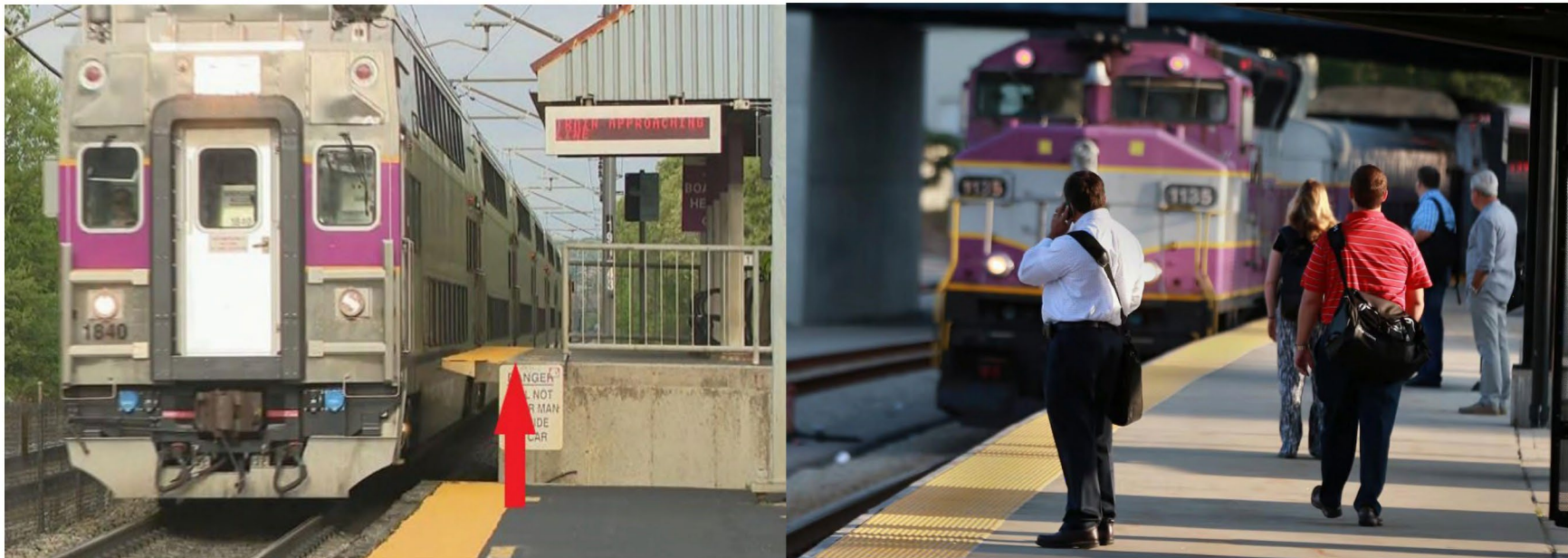


Figure 12: Example of raised platforms allowing pedestrians easier access to the train at entrance level compared to ground level.

Alternative 3 -Alternatives 1 a and 2a above (pages 4 & 9) would allow for a new modern Reading Station to be built and allow for a much **bigger vision**, including benefits for communities **beyond** Reading.

Potential Multi Community Benefits:

- 10 Train Street Crossings removed or mitigated from Ash Street in Reading to Salem Street in Wilmington.
- Traffic congestion alleviated and safety improved by removing 10 train crossings in Reading and Wilmington.
- Property values along the current Reading to Wilmington track would potentially increase, instead of decrease with the idling/slow moving trains.
- Ease of access to and from Interstate 95 for other communities.
- Potential for the Market Basket plaza and/or 55 Walkers Brook business building area to be revitalized by adding shops and apartments/condos (e.g. Lynnfield and Woburn plazas)
 - **Added tax revenue for Reading.**
 - **Potential location to help accommodate Reading's acceptance of the MBTA Communities Law.**

- Adding a parking garage behind 55 Walkers Brook to accommodate the proposed more frequent trains in and out of Reading Station.
- Depending on conservation laws, the old water pumping station could be a grade level parking lot and add some nice green space along Walkers Brook and a footbridge across Walkers Brook to the New Crossing Road side.

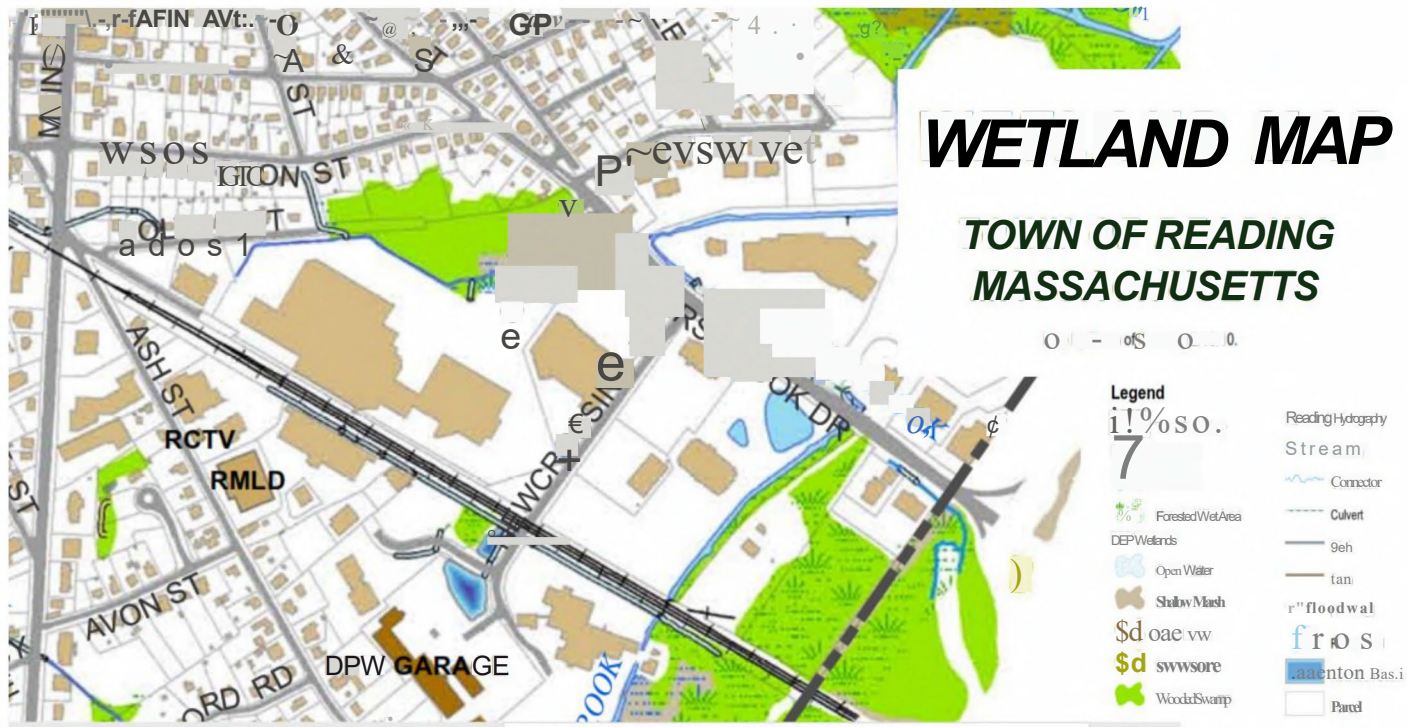


Figure 13: Screenshots from a 2010 Reading Wetlands Map (unaware if current), showing Walkers Brook and the wetlands around the old water pumping station.

- Current parking at Reading Station if moved to a new location will free up more downtown parking for Reading Residents and surrounding communities to use and frequent Reading Businesses.
 - Ideally reverting the recent Reading Pay Parking back to Free Parking.
- Rail Trail from current Reading Station to North Wilmington Station.
- Eliminating (or significantly reducing) trains service from Ash Street in Reading to Salem Street in Wilmington (or to the Wildcat Branch interchange in Wilmington) would save the MBTA tens of millions of dollars (guesstimate) not needing to update this section of track.
 - **This cost savings can be reallocated to updating and doubletracking the Wildcat Branch. Allowing the Haverhill Line to run on the Lowell Line instead of the Reading Line.**
 - **Elimination of this section of track would save on maintenance costs moving forward.**
 - TRANSITMATTERS white paper **Modernizing the Haverhill Line** "There are two routes from Haverhill to North Station. The routing used by nearly all MBTA commuter trains comes via Reading. The Wildcat Branch, used by a handful of Haverhill Line trains and by Amtrak, bypasses Reading and uses the lower Lowell Line to reach Boston. The Regional Rail concept requires the MBTA to either run all Haverhill trains via Reading or run them all via the Lowell Line. Today's divided routing does not work for a frequent, tightly integrated timetable'. Since the Lowell Line routing skips the inner portion of the Haverhill Line, that option would require

additional trains on the old routing up to Reading. There are pros and cons to each option, **but we recommend the Lowell Line option**, for the reasons explained in this document."

- o TRANSITMATTERS white paper **Modernizing the Haverhill Line** "Despite having two platforms, the current Reading station only has a single track. Moving the station slightly south removes the need to build a second track, and helps avoid several nearby grade crossings."
- o TRANSITMATTERS white paper **Modernizing the Haverhill Line** "There are two routes between North Station and Haverhill: the current route via Malden and Reading, and the Lowell Line and its Wildcat Branch via Winchester and Wilmington. Nearly all Haverhill Line trains use the Reading route, but a handful use the Wildcat Branch, especially reverse-peak. Amtrak's Downeaster service to Portland runs over the Wildcat Branch as well. Under a Regional Rail operating model, the MBTA must choose either of the routes and run all trains on it. Alternating between trunk lines creates scheduling complications and cuts frequency to intermediate points in half. One option is more or less the status quo: all Haverhill trains would go to Boston down the present-day route via Reading. The North Side MBTA lines would then operate as four fully independent trunks - Fitchburg, Lowell, Haverhill, Newburyport/Rockport. North-South Rail Link service would treat the North Side as a system with four relatively equal lines. The other option is to send all trains to Lawrence and Haverhill via the Wildcat Branch. The outer Haverhill Line would become a branch of the Lowell Line, just as the

Newburyport and Rockport Lines are branches of the same system. North Wilmington station would be closed, while the Reading to North Station segment would operate as its own separate, shorter line, which could be a standalone line like the Fairmount Line or an extension of the Orange Line. The existing North Wilmington station is cut off if Haverhill trains run via the Wildcat Branch. However, it only served 58 daily riders as of 2018. Fortunately, merging Lowell and Haverhill trains onto the Lowell Line and Wildcat Branch still gives the town of Wilmington 15-minute headways all day at Wilmington station, in both directions. We recommend the Wildcat Branch option, for three reasons:

1. Budget uncertainty. If money is limited then the system still works and there is the future option of an Orange Line extension. In contrast, upgrading the entire Haverhill Line right now locks the MBTA to operating the Haverhill Line via the Reading route forever, regardless of future changes.
2. Speed. The Wildcat routing provides a faster trip to and from Boston from the outer Haverhill Line, optimizing the schedule for fast service to the population centers of Haverhill and Lawrence.
3. Costs. The status quo option requires more double tracking through North Wilmington. With NSRL, demand for higher frequencies may increase given the one-seat ride to downtown Boston, requiring upgrades through the built-up area between Malden and Boston. It may be more cost-effective to provide capacity via an Orange Line extension."

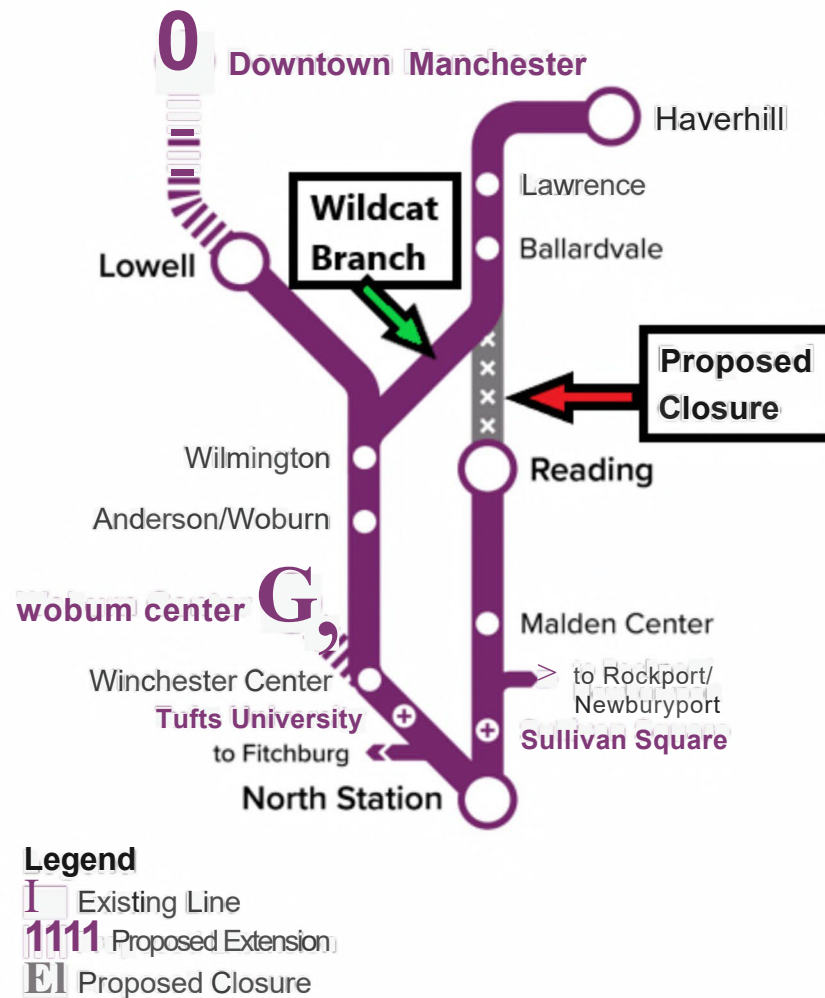


Figure 14: Modified TRANSITMATTERS route map showing the Wildcat Branch (in Wilmington) and the proposed closure of the track between Reading and the Wildcat Branch. TRANSITMATTERS recommends moving the Haverhill Line to the Lowell line via the Wildcat Branch, allowing the closure of track between Reading and Wilmington.

- Proof moving the Haverhill Line over to the Lowell Line via the Wildcat Branch will improve safety, less traffic congestion and most likely speedup the travel time to North Station.

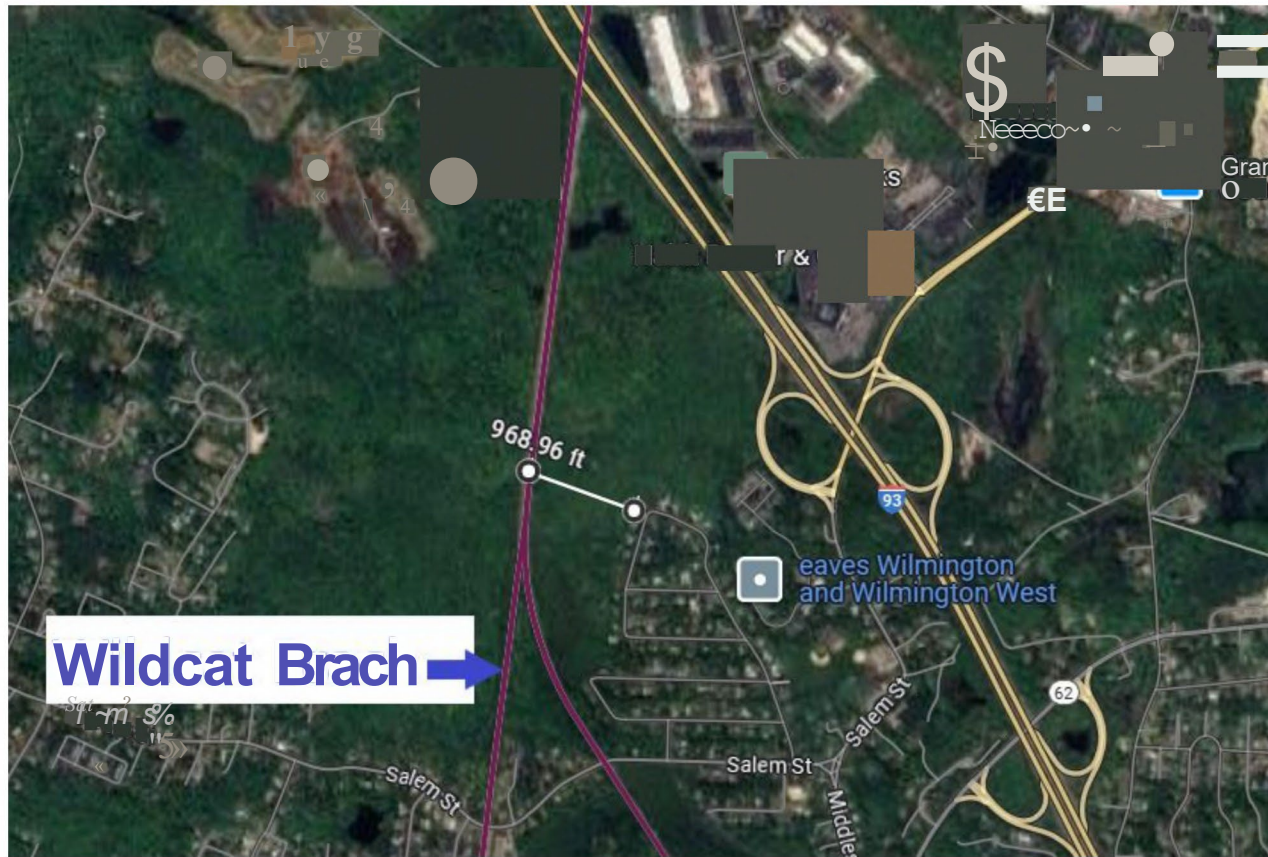
#	Haverhill via Wildcat Branch to Lowell Line Grade Level Crossings to North Station		#	Haverhill via Reading Line Grade Level Crossings to North Station	
1	Salem Street	Wilmington	1	Salem Street	Wilmington
2	Glen Road	Wilmington	2	Middlesex Ave (Rt. 62)	Wilmington
3	Clark Street	Wilmington	3	Concord Street	Wilmington
4	Main Street	Wilmington	4	Woburn Street	Wilmington
5	Homans Asses Access Rd.		5	Kilmarnock Street	Wilmington
6	High St. West Medford		6	Willow Street	Wilmington
7	Canal St. West Medford		7	Woburn Street	Reading
			8	Washington Street	Reading
			9	Main Street	Reading
			10	Ash Street	Reading
			11	Prospect Street	Reading
			12	Chestnut Street	Wakefield
			13	Albion Street	Wakefield
			14	Broadway Street	Wakefield
			15	Forest Street	Wakefield
			16	Greenwood Street	Melrose
			17	Franklin Street	Melrose
			18	West Emerson Street	Melrose
			19	West Foster Street	Melrose
			20	West Wyoming Ave	Melrose
				None beyond Oak Grove Orange Line Station	

- o The Lowell line is better equipped to handle more train traffic due to fewer grade level road crossings.

- o Has the MBTA made the towns of Reading, Wakefield & Melrose aware of the increased grade level road crossings that increasing the frequency of trains out of Reading would cause?
 - Increased road crossings cause increased congestion on the town streets.
 - How often would there be a road crossing?
 - Other than the safety issue with the Orange Line's electric third rail, there is a reason there are no road crossings from Oak Grove to North Station. They wouldn't be able to offer the frequency of Orange Line trains.

Alternative 4- There is an additional Immediate Alternative North of the Wildcat Branch intersection.

- Just after this intersection headed Northwest towards I93 there is current infrastructure with Double Track, this area is well removed from resident homes.
- This would allow the MBTA to offer more frequent trains starting out of the North Wilmington Station.



Do you want an idling train as your view in the new Maillet, Sommes & Morgan Conservation Land?



Or just a vacant track (or potential rail trail)?



Help protect this & fellow Reading residents!

