

Questions from the Reading Turnback Committee
for the MBTA Turnback Track Abutters Meeting 9/9/2025

1. Did the Scope of the Sound Study include placing sound devices on residents back walls on Hunt St., Vine St., Hancock St. and the Reading Housing Authority units?
 - a. Was the e-mail I sent on 4/23 to Reading Town Manager Matt Kraunelis regarding questions on the Scope of the Sound Study received and reviewed?
 - b. Why was this group not pulled into the Sound Study Scope creation and both parties agree on the Scope?
 - c. Please answer our detailed Sound Study questions within the “MBTA Reading Turnback Track Sound Study Questions 9-9-2025” document.
 - d. Since we residents are not experts in this Sound Study, we highly recommend this Sound Study be reviewed by MEPA, a non-bias third party that specializes in these studies.
2. Was a baseline of Air and Soil Quality taken on land adjacent to the Idling location and in residents backyards?
3. Can the larger community meeting on 15th be postponed to a later date, so questions from this Abutters meeting can be answered at another Abutters meeting?
 - a. Can there be a Reading Delegation Meeting where the MBTA presents, our small group presents our concerns/findings/alternatives and Reading Transit Advocate(s) present their thoughts?
 - i. If not, the Reading Delegation is hearing a one-sided story.
 - b. Once all questions have been answered, then schedule the larger community meeting currently scheduled for 9/15.
4. Alternative 1: **Revert to Pre-COVID Train Schedule** instead of the proposed Turnback Track was not addressed.
 - a. What are the MBTA’s thoughts on this?
5. MBTA Response to **Alternative Under I-93**
 - a. Under what I-93 location is the MBTA referring to?
 - i. Our refined Alternative #3 has the idling locomotive just before the Reading-Wilmington border.
 - b. MTBA “Located in wetlands; environmental impacts unclear” –
 - i. Were environmental impacts examined and/or discussed with the Reading Conservation Committee regarding these wetlands versus the Maillet Wetlands.

- c. MBTA “Substantial new infrastructure needed: signal house, radio base, control point, power feed” –
 - i. What is the infrastructure cost difference between the current Turnback Track location and our proposed location at the Reading/Wilmington border?
 - d. MBTA “Conflict with existing power lines will need to be relocated” –
 - i. The MBTA plans to doubletrack all the way to Haverhill in the future, why wouldn’t this be a good opportunity to move the power lines now?
 - e. MBTA “Location difficult to access for construction and maintenance” –
 - i. Isn’t there already an access point on Causeway Rd. in Reading or with a simple gravel modification, create an access point (this access point is ~1,800ft from idle location)?
 - ii. Is there an access point at Kilmarnock St. in Wilmington (~2,600ft from idle location)?
 - f. MBTA “Possible property impacts” –
 - i. If the MBTA already owns the train bed and is wide enough for doubletracking, where (why) are the property impacts?
6. MBTA Response to **Alternative Existing Reading Station (aka Alternative 2: Turnback Track at Current Reading Station (2nd Rail at Station))**
- a. Doubletracking the current Reading Station alternative has the most upside for both parties;
 - i. less Woburn/Willow crossings,
 - ii. removes 14 trains from idling in the new Maillet Conservation Land & the slow rolling trains behind the Vine-Hunt-Hancock Street-Reading Housing Authority homes from 5:30AM-7:30PM,
 - iii. the MBTA & riders get 30min service,
 - iv. the riders are able to wait on the train during inclement weather,
 - v. the Reading Station gets a double tracked and Washington St. gets double tracked in preparation for double tracking to Haverhill,
 - vi. the station gets an upgrade.
 - b. MBTA “Requires a second platform and supporting infrastructure” –
 - i. This has been done at multiple other MBTA Stations within the recent past for approximately \$3-4million. Why can’t this be done at Reading Station?
 - ii. As mentioned by MBTA representative in the 9/9/2025 meeting, there are other MBTA train stations that have been allowed to build ADA approved Mini High platforms without a complete rebuild. Why is the MBTA reluctant to work with State/Federal Agencies to approve a

temporary build, knowing the long range plan by the MBTA for complete Station rebuild? What Federal & State Agencies would need to approve this?

- c. MBTA “Potential property impacts” –
 - i. What property impacts, other than doubletracking the Washington St. crossing and possibly losing ~10 parking spots?
 - ii. Define the properties in Reading that would be impacted in/around the current Reading Station.
 - d. MBTA “Delay of ~6 years to 30-minute service” –
 - i. Alistair Sawers proposed this in an MBTA document dated 6/23/2022. “30min Reading Highlands Urban Service (Haverhill Line) o Planning new turn track at Reading station (Est \$1.5-2M) o Expected duration 12-14 months o Target completion 2023” --- Please explain why the MBTA did not do this?
 - ii. Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization March 16, 2023 “Addition of a turn track at Reading Station” --- Please explain why the MBTA did not do this?
 - iii. Six years, why such a long delay, list details?
 - iv. Why can’t the MBTA reuse the Beverly Depot Mini-High designs (save money and time), the station width dimensions are within inches of each other?
 - v. If the MBTA’s answer is adding a second track would invoke a full ADA compliant Station. Where in the ADA Laws/Regulations does it state this? May we have a meeting with the MBTA’s lead ADA employee?
 - e. If the MBTA mentions the current Turnback Track location removes noise from a more heavily populated area.
 - i. What happens at a Station?
 - ii. Why do people purchase homes near a station?
 - iii. What happens behind homes that abut train tracks away from a station?
 - iv. Are Abutters considered a densely populated area?
 - v. Why have the train idle away from passengers accessing it versus the train idling in the station giving people a way to escape the weather?
 - f. Can the proposed Turnback Track \$10.9 mil be reallocated to doubletrack the station?
7. MBTA “Commuter rail rider volumes are 96% of pre-COVID volumes as of 2024.”
- a. If that is true, why are all of the Reading Station parking lots combined not 96% full, they used to be overflowing pre-COVID?

- b. Present numbers and/or perform a new Study.
 - c. Are you doing this just because you have the money?
- 8. MBTA “Reading turn every 30 minutes during weekdays - Fewer in evening and weekends” –
 - a. What does “Fewer” mean, fewer 30min turns or the current evening and weekend schedule?
- 9. MBTA “Willow St., Washington St., and Main St./Ash St. will experience ~40% increase in frequency of gate closure” –
 - a. Please give us the Traffic Study data showing how often each gate will be closed and for what length of time.
 - b. Send us the exact schedule covering the proposed 14 Turn Trains and Haverhill Trains.
 - c. What day of the week and time of day were the traffic studies performed?
 - d. Is there a concern with the quantity of Road Crossings per Mile from Willow Street in Reading to the West Wyoming Ave in Melrose just North of Oak Grove Station?
 - i. This ~6mile stretch of MBTA track has if not the most grade level road crossings per Mile, it is definitely at the top within the entire MBTA Commuter Train system.
 - e. Will the Willow Street Gate close due to the proposed locomotive Idling location on the Turnback Track?
- 10. MBTA “Woburn St. will have the same service pattern as Washington St. and Main St./Ash St., which will increase the gate closure frequency” –
 - a. Woburn St. will have more closings than Main St. & Ash St. and possibly Washington St., is this true?
- 11. MBTA “Service will increase by ~50% with the turnback track” –
 - a. How many Trains currently leave Reading Station each weekday and how many with the proposed Turnback Track will leave Reading Station each weekday?
 - b. If you get ridership over 100% from pre-COVID and parking overflows into the neighborhoods, who is responsible for adding more parking?
 - c. If the town, does the town have a plan to add more parking?
- 12. Will the MBTA install visual/sound barriers from the proposed Idle Spot all the way to Woburn St.
- 13. What is the length of the Train being parked at the Turnback Track Idle location?
- 14. Did the MBTA know about the new Maillet Conservation Trail area prior to the original NOI?
 - a. Now the MBTA knows, correct?

- b. If so, is the MBTA concerned with Idling a Locomotive over Reading Residents while they walk around this new trail and sit to enjoy nature, along with local schools bringing their students to the trail area to have a class study nature and science?
- 15. Can the Old Locomotives use the latest and greatest “clean” diesel fuel?
- 16. Civil Action No. 10-11311 - CONSENT DECREE - UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, Plaintiff, v. MASSACHUSETTS BAY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY and MASSACHUSETTS BAY COMMUTER RAILROAD COMPANY, LLC Defendants.
 - a. III. DEFINITIONS (on page 6)
 - i. (d) "Layover facility" shall mean any facility or location owned, leased or used by permission by Defendants where any of Defendants' diesel locomotives routinely lay over, currently or in the future, at any time of day or night during weekdays and weekends;
 - ii. (e) "Lay over" shall mean any time when Defendants' diesel locomotives and/or passenger cars are stationary and are i) not carrying passengers, or ii) unavailable to carry passengers;
 - b. Who will be monitoring the Idling time of the Turnback Idling Trains to ensure they do not exceed the Law of 30mins (EPA, Town Officials, Residents)?
 - c. We plan to have another meeting with the EPA Rep we spoke to regarding this civil action and see where things are at with the MBTA adding descriptions to the Idling Data they report to the EPA due to this Civil Action.
- 17. If the proposed Turnback Track location is approved, as a condition will the MBTA install Sound/Visual barriers from the Idle location in Maillet and behind the Hunt/Vine/Hancock Street/Reading Housing Authority abutters?
- 18.