

ViewPoint: Rail link would boost jobs, benefit the city

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By Robert Beal and Thomas N. O'Brien

The city of Boston is an international hub for innovation; it has some of the best academic and health care institutions in the world; and it is also the most energy-efficient city in the entire country.

Boston is at a crossroads.

We are faced with a choice: investing in an antiquated, 19th century solution for a 21st century problem, or making a smart, sustainable investment in our future. If we want Boston to stay competitive, we must invest in advanced transportation infrastructure. The key to this is the North South Rail Link.

Making transformative infrastructure investments is essential for business growth and job creation - we know, we've been doing it for a combined 70 years. Cities around the world have already made this smart choice.

London's transformative investment in its transportation system will connect the entire city and result in reduced congestion, better connections, and more direct travel opportunities. Because of its strong commitment to new construction-management processes and technologies, London's Crossrail project is on time and on budget.

Today, Boston is served by two unconnected rail systems divided by a one-mile gap. The rail link would connect our existing commuter rail and subway lines, resulting in one unified system. It would unlock enormous economic development and job creation opportunities, connect the fastest-growing regions of the state with available workforce and housing, and it would drastically change and improve the way we commute.

North-South Rail Link would transform critical parcels of land north and south of Boston — including Widett Circle and the U.S. Post Office at South Station — from train parking lots



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to thriving neighborhoods. There is tremendous potential for these properties. In fact, we estimate that the latent value of this land exceeds \$10 billion.

We would all benefit from this investment. North-South Rail Link would provide more frequent and reliable service resulting in 55,000 fewer cars on the road. Commuters from north of Boston could get to South Station and the Seaport area in under an hour — easily shaving 30 minutes off their commutes, or an hour daily. The same is true for commuters west and south of Boston.

The infrastructure investments made by our region in the 1990s have allowed the city of Boston to thrive. The decision to build a new central artery and third harbor tunnel was not an easy one at the time, but the benefits we see today are obvious.

If we want to compete in an international economy, we shouldn't take the benefits of connectivity, quality of life and access to jobs and workforce lightly. The transportation investment that London is making today is a smart one. We hope Boston does the same.

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