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Dear Riders,

Enclosed you will find our semi-annual update on each of the major accessibility initiatives underway here at the MBTA. As 2022 draws to a close, we appreciate this opportunity to reflect on the progress made towards our goal of becoming a model for accessible public transportation. While much work remains, we look forward to advancing these efforts, as well as your ongoing collaboration, in the new year.

Some of the highlights within include:

- The launch of the MBTA's new Mobility Center – a one-stop shop for those interested in learning about, and how to use, all of the accessible transportation options available to them, from our fixed-route network of buses, trains and ferries, to THE RIDE, to local community services
- The program to install automated door openers at all subway stations is nearly complete
- Individuals looking to apply for reduced-fare Senior, Blind Access, and TAP (Disability) CharlieCards can now do so online
- The construction of replacement and redundant elevators at Oak Grove station is complete
- 26 inaccessible stations are actively under design and/or construction for full accessibility upgrades

As always, if you would like additional information on any project, or would like to suggest an area of focus, please contact us at [SWA@mbta.com](mailto:SWA@mbta.com). We hope to have safe and happy holiday season, and we look forward to continuing our work together.

Sincerely,

Laura Brelsford & the System-Wide Accessibility Team  
Department of System-Wide Accessibility  
[mbta.com/accessibility](http://mbta.com/accessibility)

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## INFRASTRUCTURE

### Subway Stations:

#### 1. Oak Grove Station Upgrades

Scope: The Oak Grove Station upgrade project includes making the inaccessible Washington St. side of the station accessible by installing a new elevator. New elevators will also be added to both the Orange Line platform and the busway/parking lot entrance side of the station. Existing elevators in these locations will be replaced in kind but cannot be substantially enlarged. Various other upgrades to the busway, accessible parking, crosswalks, sidewalks, and curb ramps are included in the project scope.

Update: The new elevator at the Washington St. entrance went into service in February 2021. The new elevator from the Banks Place busway/parking lot entrance to the lobby opened in early May 2022. Additionally, the new redundant elevator from the lobby to the Orange Line platform went into service in August 2021, and the replacement of the adjacent elevator went into service in November 2022.

#### 2. Forest Hills Phase II

Scope: This project will expand the accessibility of Forest Hills Station. The scope includes the replacement of three existing elevators: lobby to Orange Line platform, lobby to Needham Commuter Rail platform, and lobby to lower busway. A new elevator–stair tower will be designed to connect the upper busway directly to the lower busway.

Update: The new headhouse and elevator on the southwest corridor park, which provides a second accessible entrance to the Orange Line platform, opened on November 5, 2019, under the Phase I project. The design for the broader station upgrades—including the new elevator between the upper and lower busways and the replacement of the existing elevators—is underway and is expected to be completed in early 2023.

#### 3. Ruggles Phase II – Design

Scope: In addition to the station upgrades that were accomplished as part of Ruggles Phase I (see below), the Ruggles Phase II project will advance additional accessibility upgrades, including constructing an accessible entrance on Columbus Ave.; creating additional accessible entrances to the Orange Line and Commuter Rail platforms; upgrading paths of travel around the station; and other repairs to bring the station into full code compliance for a permanent certificate of occupancy.

Update: The design for Ruggles Phase II reached the 100% design milestone in August 2022. Due to escalation caused by material price increases, inflation, and other factors, the construction estimate increased by 25 million dollars over the current project budget. The project team has requested additional funding to cover the escalation cost. The team is also looking re-sequencing and re-packing the work into two separate construction contracts, to utilize the current available funding and address the most pressing accessibility and code compliance deficiencies in the near-term

#### 4. Newton Highlands Station

Scope: This project aims to make Newton Highlands Station fully accessible by raising and extending both the inbound and outbound platforms, as well as installing detectable warnings, canopies, and benches. Located within an approximately 20-foot deep cut, site work will include providing three accessible routes down to the platforms.

Update: Interim accessibility upgrades were completed on platforms in December 2020 (a portion of the platform has been raised 8 inches above top of rail on both the inbound and outbound sides to provide accessible boarding). Design for the full station upgrade is expected to be completed in early winter 2022, with construction to begin in late summer 2023.

#### 5. Beaconsfield, Chestnut Hill, Eliot, and Waban Stations Renovation

Scope: This project will provide accessibility at these four stations through raised platforms and improvements to the paths of travel leading to the platforms.

Update: Designs for all four stations have reached 100%. The project is expected to be advertised in February 2023 with construction beginning in summer 2023.

#### 6. Symphony Station

Scope: This project will upgrade Symphony Station to a modern, accessible, code-compliant facility. It includes the construction of accessible routes from the street level to the platforms by means of four new elevators (two per platform), as well as raised platforms, accessible restrooms, improved wayfinding, and overall station brightening and modernization.

Update: In 2022 the project was split into two different phases: 1) Symphony Utility Relocation; and 2) Symphony Station Improvement/Accessibility project. The Symphony Utility Relocation project went out to public bid on August 24, 2022, with bid opening on September 22, 2022. The utility work is expected to begin in Spring 2023. The Station Improvement/Accessibility design is 100% complete and construction work is anticipated to start in Spring 2024.

#### 7. Hynes Station

Scope: MassDOT has designated a private developer to construct an air rights development over Hynes Station and the MassPike I-90 at the northeast corner of Boylston St. and Massachusetts Ave. The design will provide a renovated and fully accessible station with a reopened Boylston St. entrance incorporated into the new air rights development.

Update: The station design is currently at the 30% phase. The design of the headhouses at Boylston St. and Massachusetts Ave. are on hold, pending design information from the private developer. The station will include redundant elevators, as well as an area of rescue assistance and upgraded restrooms. Additionally, designs are underway to modify the existing pedestrian tunnel below Massachusetts Ave. to make it accessible from the west side of Massachusetts Ave. to Hynes Station.

#### 8. Packard's Corner, South Street, Sutherland Rd, Chiswick, Chestnut Hill Ave (B Branch); Tappan, Fairbanks, Summit Ave, Hawes, St. Paul Street, Englewood, Brandon Hall, Kent Street (C Branch)

Scope: Each of these street-level Green Line stops will be modified by raising the existing platforms by 8 in. and adjusting nearby infrastructure as needed in order to provide accessibility. Project scopes vary stop to stop, but each requires meaningful coordination with the City of Boston and/or Brookline.

Update: Throughout 2018 and 2019, the MBTA conducted track replacement along parts of the Green Line B and C branches. As part of that work, portions of the platforms were removed and replaced, requiring additional work to improve accessibility. Designs are underway for all affected platforms, with the B Branch reaching 30% design and C Branch reaching 15% design. Early timelines estimate that B Branch will begin construction in Fall 2023 and complete construction Summer 2024, with the C Branch following 6 months behind.

## 9. Station Wayfinding

Scope: Wayfinding signage is currently unclear, inconsistent, and non-compliant. The Wayfinding and Station Improvements Project will replace signage at the “Top 10” stations to bring them into full compliance with ADA/MAAB regulations, LED standards, and internal wayfinding requirements. Stations include Park Street, Downtown Crossing, State, Haymarket, North Station, Chinatown, South Station, Back Bay, Malden, and Harvard.

Update: Work at Park Street, North Station, Haymarket, State Street, Chinatown, and Downtown Crossing is complete. The designs for wayfinding, lighting, and station improvements at South Station, Back Bay, Malden, and Harvard are nearing completion.

## 10. Automated Door Openers

Scope: At least one entrance to each subway station will be equipped with an automated door opener (when doors are required to enter/exit a station).

Update: As of November 2022, automated door openers have been installed at all accessible subway stations with the exception of Braintree Station which is being addressed as part of a broader station upgrade.

## 11. Path of Travel Improvements

Scope: Leveraging data from Plan for Accessible Transit Infrastructure (PATI) surveys, the MBTA will develop a program to address serious path-of-travel deficiencies (broken curb ramps, sidewalks, etc.) at subway stations.

Update: Locations for path of travel improvements were identified by prioritizing stations with both the heaviest ridership and the highest number of significant barriers within the path of travel in and around the station. The first set of stations to receive upgrades are Back Bay, Savin Hill, JFK/UMass, Malden Center, Fields Corner, Park Street, and Stony Brook Stations. Designs have been completed and construction began at Fields Corner and JFK/UMass in October 2022. Upgrades at this first set of stations will conclude in spring 2023. A second set of stations is currently being identified for path of travel improvements.

## 12. “Hands-Free” Fare Gate Feasibility Study

Scope: As part of the Fare Transformation Initiative, the MBTA will explore the feasibility of piloting a “hands-free” system for customers who have difficulty reaching and interacting with the fare gate targets.

Update: The vendor responsible for overseeing the implementation of the new fare collection system continues to advance the design of the new technology and its integration into existing accessible fare gates. The next step in the design process is for a working prototype of the gate to be set up in the Fare Transformation test lab, where it will undergo user testing with MBTA customers. The MBTA is working with the vendor to finalize the cost and schedule for full deployment and expects to award the contract by the end of the year.

### Commuter Rail Stations:

#### 2. Natick Center Station

Scope: This project will make Natick Station fully accessible. The two inaccessible low-level platforms will be replaced with relocated, full high-level platforms accessible by elevators and ramps. This relocation work is necessary to facilitate the installation of a third track.

Update: Construction is approximately 45% completion. The construction of two ramps at the east end of the station is nearly complete. These ramps will be utilized for access to newly constructed temporary low-level platforms that are approximately 95% complete. Utilization of the new temporary platforms will allow the contractor to demolish the existing low-level platforms and begin construction on the west end of the station, while passengers use the new temporary platforms on the east end, allowing for uninterrupted service. The new temporary platforms are expected to open in mid to late December of 2022. Full station accessibility, of which the ramps are a key component, will be achieved at the anticipated fall 2024 completion of construction.

#### 3. Newtonville, Auburndale, and West Newton Stations – Design

Scope: This project will produce a design to make all three stations accessible via a full high-level platform at each station on both sides of the track. Each station will have ramps to access the full high-level platforms.

Update: After reaching 30% design in November 2020, the MBTA met with the City of Newton and local officials and decided to advance design of two side platforms at each of the three stations. The 30% design for this modified scope was submitted and reviewed in early spring 2022. Design has continued toward the 75% miles stone. As part of the design process, the MBTA has modified the scope to incorporate additional means of accessible independent egress (pedestrian ramps) at at West Newton and Newtonville Stations.. As a result, the design is now expected to be completed by February 2024

#### 4. Winchester Station

Scope: This project will make Winchester Commuter Rail Station fully accessible. The station design features full high-level platforms, canopies, elevators, and ramps.

Update: Construction is approximately 25% complete. The project is anticipated to be completed in April 2024. The station remains closed for construction, with nearby Wedgemere Station serving as the primary alternative for commuters.

## 6. Worcester Union

Scope: This project will restore double track service by building a full high-level center platform with elevators on both sides.

Update: Construction is approximately 40% completed. An accessible temporary platform is in place for passenger use. Construction is anticipated to be complete by February 2024.

## 7. Lynn Station

Scope: Lynn Commuter Rail Station will be fully rebuilt with two new enlarged elevators, a new full high-level platform, new canopy and more.

Update: The MBTA received the 75% design submission and currently incorporating feedback from internal stakeholders. Once design feedback is incorporated, the MBTA will pause the design phase to evaluate the bridge structures that support the station, and traverse Lynn Central Square,

Due to the station's deteriorated condition, and to further evaluate the condition of the bridge structures below, the station was closed October 2022, with shuttle service provided between Lynn Station and Swampscott. The MBTA is currently designing temporary platforms north of Silsbee Street, as mitigation for the station closure. The temporary platforms are anticipated to open in the Summer of 2024.

## 8. South Attleboro Station

Scope: This project will make South Attleboro Station fully accessible through the construction of full high-level platforms, with two accessible paths to each platform via a combination of ramps and elevators.

Update: MBTA Commuter Rail service to South Attleboro Station has been temporarily suspended (as of February 26, 2021) due to the structural condition of the pedestrian bridge; service will remain suspended until the station is fully renovated. The South Attleboro Station parking lots are open for customers. RIPTA and GATRA bus service is still in operation to and from the South Attleboro Station area. The 100% design was submitted in April 2022, and the MBTA is currently looking at options to fund the construction of the station. Additionally, to prepare for the future station work, MBTA is pre-emptively demolishing the pedestrian bridge above the railroad tracks to eliminate any potential future safety issues and to reduce the duration of the overall South Attleboro Station Accessibility Improvements Project.

## 9. North Wilmington Station

Scope: This project will make North Wilmington fully accessible through the construction of a short raised platform that will serve all active doors of the train, as well as through path of travel upgrades.



Update: Design work is expected to be complete by Spring 2023 with construction lasting approximately one year.

## 10. Interim Boarding Solutions at Inaccessible Commuter Rail Stations

Scope: There are 29 Commuter Rail stations that are fundamentally accessible and do not allow for level boarding either through full-high platforms or mini-high platforms. As the MBTA continues to advance designs (and identify construction funding for) full-high level platforms, it is working to design a temporary free-standing platform solution that would allow for accessible boarding. If the design proves to be successful, the solution would be rolled out at several stations.

Update: The design of a free-standing temporary raised platform is nearing completion. Plans to deploy and evaluate the solution at Beverly Depot station are expected to be complete before Spring 2023. Parallel to this work, site surveys at 13 stations where primary station infrastructure is comprised solely of inaccessible low-level asphalt platforms have occurred to identify potential locations for such a platform as well as other additional station work required to provide an accessible path to the raised platform. Note: Because these platforms are intended to be temporary in nature, they will not be suitable at stations that require extensive additional upgrades. For those locations, full station upgrades (including full high-level platforms) will be required.

## 11. Detectable Warnings on Commuter Rail Platforms

Scope: Detectable warning panels will be placed along the edge of all Commuter Rail platforms where they do not currently exist.

Update: Capital Delivery and SWAR working on establishing a method/on-call contract to advance the installation of detectable warning panels at several Commuter Rail stations. The first set of stations where new detectable warning panels will be installed will be identified in the coming months.

## Vertical Transportation:

### 1. Quincy Adams 805, 806, 807

Scope: This project includes the replacement of two existing garage/lobby elevators and one existing platform/lobby elevator, as well as the addition of one platform/lobby elevator to provide redundant elevators for both the platform and garage. The construction will be phased to keep at least one redundant elevator in service at all times.

Update: Work on this project is approaching completion. Three of the four elevators are in service, and the fourth one (Elevator 805) will be put into service by December 2022.

### 2. Downtown Crossing Elevators Phase II and Park Street 808

Scope: The MBTA will construct one elevator that connects the Washington St. surface to the Orange Line (both paid and unpaid area) and Red Line southbound areas of Downtown Crossing Station. It also will include an elevator that connects the Orange Line northbound to the Red Line



southbound, and an enlarged Elevator 808 at Park Street as an alternate connection between the Orange Line southbound and the Red Line northbound via the Winter Street Concourse.

Update: The designs for the elevator connecting the Oak Grove-bound platform to the Ashmont/Braintree-bound Red Line platform (located by Macy's), the elevator connecting the Forest Hills-bound Orange Line platform to the Ashmont/Braintree-bound platform (located at Winter Street), and the Park Street Elevator 808 replacement design are at the 75% stage. Construction advertisement is expected in 2023.

### 3. Designs for Future Replacement and New (Redundant) Elevators

Scope: The MBTA will advance designs for the following elevators:

- Central: 1 replacement + 2 new units
- Sullivan: 1 new unit at lower busway + 2 replacements
- Davis: 3 new units (including Red Line platform redundant) + 2 replacements
- Chinatown: 2 new units + 2 replacements and lobby rebuilds
- North Station: 2 new units – Valenti Way lobby to Orange Line platforms
- State Street: 2 new units at City Hall entry + 2 replacements & lobby rebuild at OSMH
- Mass Ave: 1 new unit + 1 replacement
- Broadway: 2 new units + 2 replacements
- Jackson Square: 1 new unit + 1 replacement
- Arlington: 3 new units at Berkeley exit / emergency entrance
- Wellington: 3 new units + emergency egress and 2 replacement units

Update: The designs for all replacement and redundant elevators have been divided between four design firms. The design for elevators at Central Square has reached 100% and all other locations are at or approaching the 75% stage except for Wellington and Sullivan, which are at 30% design stage. The projects will move forward into final design over the next year and select projects will move into construction if funding becomes available.

### 4. Vertical Transportation Study

Scope: The MBTA will develop a system-wide elevator and escalator replacement plan. The MBTA will have a consultant develop the fiscally unconstrained 20-year SGR Vertical Transportation Plan, based on:

- reviewing and revising prioritized inventory of existing units
- determining what future changes may be needed to the maintenance contract to maintain or exceed current levels of uptime
- determining at what rate units must be replaced in order to maintain or exceed current levels of uptime
- identifying any roadblocks to replacing elevators and escalators quickly and efficiently, and providing recommendations for their resolution

Update: For this study, the MBTA has procured the engineering consultants WSP and Lerch Bates. These firms are leading the effort to assess all current conditions of elevators and escalators, in addition to developing a long-term plan for system maintenance and modernization. Evaluations of all vertical transportation assets within the rapid transit system have been completed. The team is currently working to finalize the database, which captures key facts

for each unit along with recommended timeframes for upgrades/replacement. A capital planning report which will include strategies, technologies, and improvements the MBTA can consider in replacing units system-wide—including unit prioritization, repair versus replacement strategies, ways to expedite construction, programmatic improvements, and more. This capital plan report will set the basis of MBTA vertical transportation strategies for the next twenty years and will be completed in early 2023.

#### 5. Urine Detection Sensor Pilot

**Scope:** The MBTA will oversee the development of a prototype urine detection device to be used in elevators, with the goal of providing real-time notifications to the Maintenance Control Center regarding the need to clean a unit.

**Update:** The sensors are installed in four elevators in Chinatown, Downtown Crossing and Park Street stations. The pilot started in October 2022 and is expected to run for three months. Data is being collected on how reliably the sensors detect urine and cleaning agents, and how often they go offline.

#### 6. Customer Information Displays in Station Lobbies

The MBTA will develop and install large digital displays in pre-fare station lobbies, near the fare gates, with information about elevator outages across the subway system. The displays will provide information about current and upcoming outages, as well as details about alternate accessible routes.

**Update:** These displays are now live in 10 rapid-transit stations—Ashmont, Back Bay, Charles/MGH, Forest Hills, Government Center, Maverick, Porter, Tufts Medical, Wellington, & Wonderland. The MBTA has an agreement with its advertising partner, Outfront Media, to install these in every rapid-transit station over the next 2-3 years.

#### 7. Customer Information Displays at Specific Elevators – Pilot

**Scope:** The MBTA will pilot the use of smaller digital displays at select elevators, which will include details about that specific elevator in addition to elevators system-wide.

**Update:** This will be a one-station pilot at Forest Hills, which is expected to launch in early 2023. The hardware has been received and the electrical work has been completed. Customer Technology is currently developing the software that'll power the information on these screens, and a plan to collect actionable feedback from riders and other stakeholders.

### Bus Stops:

#### 1. Critical Stops

**Scope:** In 2017/18 the MBTA surveyed all 7,690 bus stops as part of the Plan for Accessible Transit Infrastructure (PATI) and identified 280 stops that were categorized as “critical”—meaning the stop is so inaccessible, customers using wheeled mobility must board/exit in the street. Out of these 280 stops, a number of them will be fully reconstructed while others that experience extremely low ridership will be closed.

**Update:** To date, 102 of these priority stops have been fully reconstructed and an additional 22 are either under design or construction. Another 7 stops will be upgraded as part of outside

municipal projects. Additionally, 97 have been or will be eliminated due to safety concerns and/or extremely low ridership. Finally, there are 57 at which progress has been temporarily paused while various issues related to property abutters and/or easements are negotiated and resolved.

## 2. High Priority Stops

Scope: In 2017, the MBTA surveyed all 7,690 bus stops for accessibility barriers as part of the Plan for Accessible Transit Infrastructure (PATI). Bus stop elements were scored based on level and number of barriers present. Bus stops were identified as critical, high, medium, and low priority. High priority stops have more than one significant barrier present such as, but not limited to, a sloped landing pad, narrow sidewalk, lack of a curb, or unusable curb ramp. The MBTA identified 668 stops that are classified as high priority, with multiple barriers to access (that were not already captured as “critical stops”). The MBTA will be advancing the design and construction of access improvements at these locations.

Update: To date, 136 of the high priority stops have been fully reconstructed and an additional 183 are either under design or construction. Another 16 stops will be upgraded as part of outside municipal projects. Additionally, 17 have been or will be eliminated due to safety concerns and/or extremely low ridership. Progress on an additional 298 stops has temporarily paused as various issues related to property abutters and/or easements have been resolved. The remaining critical stops will move into design as funding becomes available.

Note: In addition to the critical and high priority stops that have been rebuilt, another 91 stops have been reconstructed to improve accessibility. These have typically been stops that are directly across from stops that were reconstructed.

## 3. Bus Stop Amenities

Scope: As the MBTA’s current 15-year agreement with JCDecaux, its shelter manager, comes to an end, the MBTA is developing and will procure an updated and expanded program of bus shelters and amenities.

Update: In response to rider requests for more bus shelters as well as greater availability of real-time information, in 2021 the MBTA partnered with the media company Intersection to expand amenities across the bus network. This project includes the introduction of bus shelters and interactive digital information kiosks, which will feature real-time service information, maps, and trip planning. Revenues from kiosks and shelter advertising will be used to fund additional shelters, shelter amenities, and other upgrades. Information kiosks are being piloted at Maverick and Roxbury Crossing and new bus shelters will start to be installed across the bus network in Spring 2023, with a priority on locations with high ridership and service to transit-dependent populations. Designs for the new shelters and kiosks have been reviewed by SWA to ensure physical and virtual accessibility for riders with disabilities.

# VEHICLES

## 1. Deployment of New Orange Line Vehicles

Scope: The MBTA has ordered and will deploy an entire fleet of new Orange Line vehicles with wider doors, seating areas for wheeled mobility device users, an improved PA/VMS system, and other accessibility improvements.

Update: The first new Orange Line cars went into service in summer 2019. To date, 70 new cars are used to support passenger service. Currently, only new cars are used for daily service and as service requirements increase this will be supplemented by both legacy cars and new cars as they arrive. The schedule for the arrival of new cars is under continuous MBTA evaluation and discussion with the manufacturer. Impacts from Covid 19 and global supply chain delays influence schedule disruption.

## 2. Deployment of New Red Line Vehicles

Scope: The MBTA has ordered and will deploy an entire fleet of new Red Line vehicles with wider doors, seating areas for wheeled mobility device users, an improved PA/VMS system, and other accessibility improvements.

Update: The first new Red Line cars went into service in December 2020. To date, 10 new cars are available for use in passenger service. The schedule for the arrival of future cars is under continuous MBTA evaluation and discussion with the manufacturer. Impacts from Covid 19 and global supply chain delays influence schedule disruption.

## 3. Green Line Type 10 Vehicle Design and Procurement

Scope: The MBTA will design and procure the next-generation Green Line train. The procurement will be for vehicles to replace the Type 7 and Type 8 fleets. Vehicles will be 100% low-floor and approximately 40 feet longer than legacy fleets.

Update: Vehicle Engineering worked with numerous stakeholders / departments, including SWA, to finalize the RFP for design and to ensure all key accessibility considerations were captured. The performance based RFP was released in December 2019 and proposals from numerous vehicle manufacturers were received in August 2021 and underwent evaluation by the MBTA's selection committees. On August 31, 2022 the MBTA's board of Directors awarded a contract with CAF USA Inc. to manufacture 102 new Light Rail vehicles at a value not to exceed \$810,925,658.00. Additional vehicles are available within the contract terms in the event the Authority requires more to support future needs.

## 4. New Securement System – Pilot

Scope: As part of its next bus fleet procurement, the MBTA will pilot a new rear-facing securement system that enables the wheeled mobility user to secure themselves independently.

Update: A new automatic securement system called Quantum was installed on 10 of the MBTA's newest buses, which went into service on Route 111 in February 2021. Four "on the road" open houses were held in 2021 to gather user feedback to help inform the MBTA's decision about whether to equip newly procured buses with the Quantum. Certain feedback collected and observations made during the 2021 open houses unveiled several issues with the system which motivated SWA and MBTA Vehicle Engineering to conduct user testing in the spring of 2022. Throughout the summer Vehicle Engineering worked with the Quantum vendor, Q-Straint, to resolve the concerns identified. SWA plans to evaluate the solutions implemented by Q-Straint in

the winter of 2023, then make recommendations regarding the future use of the new securement system shortly thereafter.

## **TRAININGS**

### **1. Bus Operations**

**Scope:** Operations and SWA will review and revitalize the eight-hour accessibility training program. The training will include classroom and hands-on material, as well as videos documenting first-person perspectives from customers with disabilities.

**Update:** SWA and Bus Operations collaborated to create an entirely new 8-hour Accessibility Certification training course. This course has been used to recertify supervisory personnel and selected bus operators since February 2021, and since May 2021 it has been utilized to train new hires.

The R-TAG customer engagement group and the Daniels-Finegold plaintiffs' group were actively engaged throughout the process of developing the new training materials. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the filming of first-person perspective videos featuring customers with disabilities had been underway; however, for the safety of all participants, the video shoots were postponed. Alternate content presenting the customer perspective was developed and is being used for the training in the interim. In May 2022, SWA filmed multiple first-person perspective and employee instructional videos. Most of the videos are still in the process of being edited and should be ready to be incorporated into the training curriculum in the winter of 2023. One recently completed instructional video has since been incorporated into the curriculum.

### **2. Subway Operations**

**Scope:** Operations and SWA will review and revitalize the accessibility-related modules within the Subway Recertification programs. The training will include videos documenting first-person perspectives from customers with disabilities.

**Update:** SWA and Subway Operations collaborated to develop an entirely new accessibility training for all new hires. The training, which was modeled on the Bus Operations 8-hour Accessibility Certification training, was launched in July 2021. Customer feedback via an online survey, as well as several meetings with R-TAG and the Daniels-Finegold plaintiffs' group, helped inform both specific content and the thematic direction of the new training. In the winter of 2022, SWA and the MBTA Transportation Training Schools will incorporate a batch of first-person perspective and employee instructional videos into the new training curriculum. The videos, filmed in May 2022, are in the process of being edited by SWA and the filmmaker.

### **3. Transit Ambassadors**

**Scope:** SWA will work with Block by Block (the Transit Ambassadors contractor) and MBTA Customer Experience to review and revitalize the accessibility training module for newly hired Ambassadors. The training will include classroom and hands-on material, as well as videos documenting first-person perspectives from customers with disabilities.

Update: Throughout the summer and into the fall, SWA and Customer Experience performed multiple rounds of edits to the fully updated accessibility training curriculum. The training curriculum is awaiting final approval by SWA and Customer Experience, at which point it will be implemented into the Transit Ambassador new-hire training program. All existing Transit Ambassadors will be re-trained using the updated curriculum. Final approval of the curriculum will occur by the end of 2022.

Furthermore, on September 28, the MBTA Board of Directors approved a five-year contract with three one-year options with Mydatt Services LLC (owner of Block By Block), for the operation of the Transit Ambassador Program. In addition to securing the program for years to come, this new contract better enables the MBTA to increase the Transit Ambassadors on staff and expand coverage to additional stations.

#### 4. Transit Police

Scope: The MASS Collaboration (composed of SWA, BCIL, MBTA Transit Police, and the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center) will develop and implement a curriculum for a disability-based training for Transit Police Officers.

Update: An early draft of the curriculum for a disability-based training program for MBTA Transit Police Officers was initially completed in early 2020. Plans were in place to hold four training classes for Transit Police Officers, as well as for Boston and Cambridge Police Officers, beginning in summer 2020, until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic forced the Collaboration to postpone the classes indefinitely. In October 2022, work resumed to finalize the training. The curriculum is under review by the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Violence Against Women (OVW)—the department that funded and supported the project. Once the revised curriculum is approved by OVW in early 2023, the Collaboration will host one class for officers and 1-2 train-the-trainer classes training personnel representing Transit, Boston, and Cambridge Police Departments, over the course of the spring and summer of 2023.

## CUSTOMER COMMUNICATION / OUTREACH

### 1. Notifying Customers of Upcoming Work

Scope: In concert with the Title VI Public Participation Plan, the MBTA will develop a public engagement plan for older adults and people with disabilities.

Update: The MBTA has issued a new [Public Engagement Plan](#) that addresses how the MBTA notifies and engages with customers about changes affecting service. A companion to the policy document is being drafted, detailing ways for employees to ensure that outreach is conducted in a successful and inclusive manner. This will include detailed protocols related to everything from temporarily relocating a bus stop to soliciting rider feedback regarding a major station redesign. Throughout the summer of 2022, the MBTA's Service Planning Department and System-Wide Accessibility drafted guidelines regarding changes to bus stops and received feedback from the Daniels-Finegold plaintiffs' group. The guidelines are currently being revised and are expected to be finalized in early 2023.



## 2. Marketing Campaign

Scope: The Customer Experience department and SWA will develop and implement a marketing campaign designed to highlight improvements to fixed-route access and to spread the message that access benefits all customers.

Update: The MBTA had contracted with an advertising agency to assist SWA and Customer Experience in the design and deployment of a marketing campaign for fixed-route access. In the fall of 2019, campaign goals and concepts were developed, and both R-TAG and the Daniels-Finegold plaintiffs provided feedback and direction to the team. Media and outreach strategies were underway, with the intention of a campaign launch in fall 2020. However, given the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, the campaign was postponed. The campaign content is currently being reviewed and reimagined, with a tentative launch date of spring 2023.

## 3. Improved Coordination with Cities and Towns

Scope: The MBTA will establish a protocol for communicating key accessibility information to the municipalities it serves in order to better collaborate on providing accessible service. This may include the sharing of information on bus-stop snow removal guidance, strategies for keeping bus stops clear of illegally parked vehicles, etc.

Update: Throughout 2019, various departments created a database of key municipal contacts—including public works departments, disability commissions, and councils on aging—to be used as a listserv for various service-related updates. In January 2020 and December 2020, the MBTA leveraged this distribution list to send snow removal best-practice guidance to key public works department personnel in the 50+ municipalities with bus service.

Since that time, SWA, Service Planning and others have been working to develop guidelines to formalize processes for messaging to and collaborating with municipalities around issues affecting accessibility. A survey was distributed to local municipal partners in order to update contact information; in addition, a protocol was established that encourages municipalities to contact the MBTA if they are planning any work adjacent to a bus stop or station, in order to help ensure accessibility-related considerations are incorporated. Additionally, this December (2022) the MBTA hosted a meeting with all local municipalities to discuss the importance of coordinated snow removal. In addition to these discrete efforts, the MBTA is also in the process of drafting an overarching communication plan to guide efforts into the future

## 4. Re-envisioning Travel Training and Launch of MBTA Mobility Center

Scope: Historically, SWA's travel training program (focused on empowering riders to use the fixed-route system) has been managed separately from The RIDE (paratransit) eligibility center and eligibility process. That will change in 2022, when the MBTA will be launching a new Mobility Center that serves to help older adults and riders with disabilities learn more about all of the accessible mobility options available to them based on their own unique needs. The center will house the paratransit eligibility process, new travel training services (virtual and in person), and assistance with trip planning, as well as a streamlined reduced-fare acquisition process. The center will also assist in holding outreach events with local communities and organizations.



Update: The Mobility Center opened its “doors” on July 1, 2022. The center is accessible through several channels, including its physical location at 1000 Massachusetts Avenue, our website, or via phone 617-337-2727 (711 for MA Relay). In a shared space, the Mobility Center is a service, education and information hub, providing tools and information needed to empower each customer to make the best decision about the way they want to ride. The Center has a singular intake process for all customers and the menu of services include eligibility determination for the RIDE, travel training for individuals and groups, trip planning, technology training, and assistance with reduced fare card applications.

## 5. Improving Outreach Through a Focus on Diversity and Inclusion

Scope: SWA will develop a strategic plan to expand the MBTA's accessibility-related outreach efforts, including its connections with individual and group stakeholders, by working to identify and address disparities in information access. Outreach strategies will incorporate best practices for information sharing that speaks to the needs and preferences of riders of different age groups in racially, ethnically, and economically diverse communities throughout the MBTA service area.

Update: In early 2022, SWA surveyed community organizations and riders on their preferred means of learning about accessibility improvements at the T. Findings are being incorporated into SWA's broader strategic outreach plan and that of the Mobility Center's community outreach efforts. In addition, SWA used survey findings to update [printed material available to partner agencies and riders](#) and created [new training videos about the MBTA's accessibility features](#) with ASL interpretation in English. Videos in Spanish and Chinese come with closed captioning.

## 6. Creation of Online Application for Free and Reduced Fare CharlieCards

Scope: The MBTA will develop online applications to allow eligible older adults and people with disabilities to apply for one of the MBTA's free or reduced fare programs remotely on the web—this includes the Senior CharlieCard, Transportation Access Pass, Blind Access CharlieCard, and Youth Pass CharlieCard. The new online option will provide applicants with an alternative to the current paper-based or in-person application process.

Update: As of December 2022, the MBTA has now launched online applications for the four free and reduced fares programs:

1. [Senior CharlieCards](#) (eligible riders age 65 and older);
2. [Youth Pass CharlieCards](#) (eligible for low income riders aged 18-25);
3. [Blind Access CharlieCards](#) (eligible riders who are legally blind); and
4. [Transportation Access Pass](#) (eligible for riders with disabilities).

Riders utilizing any of these four programs can submit an initial application, request a renewal of their Reduced Fare CharlieCard, or request a replacement CharlieCard to these programs remotely and have their free or reduced fare CharlieCard mailed to their home.

In person support continues to be available at the [CharlieCard Store](#), [Mobility Center](#), and participating [Youth Pass cities and towns](#).

## SYSTEM-WIDE OVERSIGHT

### 1. Maintenance and Barrier Reporting

Scope: Enhanced and customized reports will be developed using the MBTA's new maintenance database in order to track accessibility-related barriers that are flagged by Station Officials and others as part of their daily inspections.

Update: In the spring of 2022, SWA collaborated with MBTA Asset Management to create a customized transit facilities maintenance report of every service request generated for station and bus stop accessibility feature defects reported by customers and MBTA Officials. The report—generated by MBTA's maintenance database (Trapeze) at the beginning of each month—is designed help SWA verify if accessibility asset defects are being identified and reported and monitor the timeliness of repairs. SWA continues to receive and review accessibility maintenance reports on a monthly basis.

## 2. The Design Guidelines for Accessibility

Scope: The MBTA will publish *The Design Guidelines for Accessibility* to provide clarity on design expectations as well as best practices in universal design.

Update: Throughout 2021-22, SWA and the Design Guide Working Group of internal stakeholders met regularly to draft and review content related to the MBTA's standards for accessible and inclusive design. Early chapters, including those that cover requirements for project scoping, accessible routes, and parking facilities are expected to be finalized and online by the end of the year.

## 3. Expansion of the MBTA's Internal Access Monitoring Program

Scope: The Internal Access Monitoring Program, overseen by System-Wide Accessibility, historically focused on monitoring the fixed-route system (bus, subway, Commuter Rail, ferry), will be expanded to include the monitoring of paratransit services (i.e. THE RIDE).

Update: SWA, in conjunction with R-TAG's subcommittee on THE RIDE, has developed a draft set of goals for the expansion and sample survey questions. These will be refined and piloted over the coming months pending the hiring of an additional staff person to help oversee the expansion and implementation.

## INITIATIVES RECENTLY IDENTIFIED AS COMPLETE IN PRIOR REPORTS

### 1. Wollaston Station Renovation

Scope: Wollaston is the last inaccessible station on the Red Line. This project will make the station fully accessible and address critical state of good repair issues. Specifically, the existing station will be completely demolished and rebuilt with a new headhouse, three elevators, and an accessible pedestrian route from Newport Ave toward Hancock St.

Update from November 2019 report: The station was shut down for construction in January 2018. The fully accessible station was reopened to the public on August 16, 2019, making all stations on the Red Line accessible.

### 2. Downtown Crossing Phase I

Scope: This project includes the construction of two new elevators (within a combined hoistway shaft) to connect the Orange Line northbound (Oak Grove) platform and the Red Line northbound (Alewife) platform.

Update from November 2019 report: The elevators were put into service June 14, 2019.

### 3. Andrew 857, 858, 859

Scope: Capital Delivery will finalize the design and construction of Andrew 857, 858, 859 elevator replacements.

Update from November 2019 report: All Andrew elevator replacements opened on October 18, 2019.

### 4. Forest Hills Phase I

Scope: As part of the Casey Overpass project, MassDOT will construct a second accessible entrance to the Orange Line platform at Forest Hills Station.

Update from November 2019 report: The second headhouse with the new elevator, located on the southwest corridor park, was opened on November 5, 2019.

### 5. Harvard 821

Scope: Harvard elevator 821 will be replaced and the existing shaft will be expanded to provide an enlarged elevator pass-through cab design.

Update from November 2019 report: The Harvard replacement elevator 821 reopened on October 31, 2019. The original unit measured 4'1" x 4'8" (19 square feet) with a 3'-wide door opening, and had virtually no visibility in or out of the elevator cab. The new elevator is 60% larger: 5.0' x 6.0' (30 square feet) with a 3.5'-wide door opening, and has a fully transparent cab and shaft.

### 6. Tracking Accessibility-Related Customer Complaints and Feedback

Scope: The MBTA will finalize enhanced guidelines for tracking and resolving accessibility complaints. Additionally, a new module within the MBTA's complaint database will be created to facilitate information-sharing and data analysis internally.

Update from November 2019 report: In October of 2018, an effort was begun to build a new employee-facing portal for handling accessibility complaints. Many departments were involved in creating this new portal, including SWA, OCC, Information Technology, Bus and Subway Operations, and Customer Experience. The common goal was to create a "one-stop shopping" workspace for SWA customer complaint investigations.

On June 17, 2019, the new IRIS SWA Investigation Screen went live. Leading up to the launch, SWA held training classes for Bus, Subway, and various other areas that conducted SWA investigations. All relevant staff members received training on the new screen. The impact this new process had on the overall complaint system was immediately realized. Positive results:

- Easier collaboration and information sharing between departments
- Easier Oversight by Operations Management
- Ability to create quarterly reports much more quickly
- A significant reduction in the amount of time between a complaint being filed and an appropriate resolution

In addition, enhanced complaint investigation and resolution guidelines are complete. These guidelines clearly explain the steps which should be taken to complete an investigation and issue an appropriate resolution.

## 7. Central 861

Scope: The existing shaft of elevator 861 will be expanded to provide an enlarged pass-through cab design.

Update from May 2020 report: This fully modernized elevator was completed and put into service on April 2, 2020. The new elevator is now pass-through and largely transparent on all sides.

## 8. Bus Evacuation Drills

Scope: SWA, Security, Safety, and Operations will collaborate to implement a series of bus evacuation drills focused on the potential impacts on customers with disabilities.

Update from May 2020 report: MassDOT Security & Emergency Management and the MBTA conducted four small-scale bus emergency evacuation drills in October of 2019. Findings from the drills have been used by SWA to inform the development of the updated curriculum for new bus operator accessibility training and bus operator recertification training programs—each of which include instruction on assisting customers with disabilities during an emergency evacuation.

## 9. Transit Education

Scope: The Human Service Transportation Office of the Commonwealth, in collaboration with the MBTA, will develop a program of information-sharing about community transportation options, tools, and resources with aging and disability service providers; other social service agency staff; and individual riders.

Update from May 2020 report: Content has been developed and training video posted at <https://www.mass.gov/manual/transportation-training-for-staff-of-aging-and-disability-service-providers>.

## 10. Fixed-Route Brochure

Scope: SWA will update its core promotional brochure, originally published in 2012 and titled *Accessibility at the MBTA: Your Guide to Fixed Route Services*. New sections will be dedicated to the Riders' Transportation Access Group (R-TAG) and the MBTA Travel Training Program.

Update from the November 2020 report: The new SWA promotional brochure, *Access in Motion: Your Guide to MBTA Fixed-Route Services*, went to print at the end of summer 2019. Since then, the brochure has been distributed at numerous public meetings and transit-education sites. An accessible electronic version of the brochure is now [available online](#). Additional languages and alternate formats are also available upon request.

## 11. Plan for Accessible Transit Infrastructure (PATI) Website

Scope: SWA will build a web page dedicated to updating customers on PATI and the MBTA's efforts to expand access system-wide.

Update from the November 2020 report: The "[System-Wide Accessibility Improvements](#)" [web page](#) launched in July 2020 and includes a mode-by-mode snapshot of the current state of accessibility as well as descriptions of capital projects currently in the works.

## 12. Building a Virtual Travel Training Experience

Scope: SWA's travel training program will work to develop and incorporate virtual learning tools for trainees in order to supplement in-person training experiences and allow for travel training to continue while social distancing remains critical.

Update from the May 2021 report: Through its current contractor of travel instruction services, SWA developed webinar material for older adults, individuals with disabilities, as well as agencies serving these populations to improve rider knowledge about resources, accessibility information and skills regarding how to ride public transit. Training can be requested via live Zoom webinars. All training material will also be posted on the MBTA's website and be available on demand starting in May 2021. In addition to webinars, the T is also working on short videos about how to access and ride the T. The first of 5 videos is titled "Planning your Trip" and is posted under "Resources for Riders" at <https://www.mbta.com/accessibility/travel-training>.

## 13. Transit Education - UMASS Medical School

Scope: SWA partnered with the University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS) in 2019 to develop a curriculum on transportation as an important element of health, and to integrate that curriculum into UMMS' existing multidisciplinary clerkship program.

Update from the May 2021 report: In 2020, for the second year in a row, SWA collaborated with UMMS to develop material that educates future physicians about transportation policy. The

material also provides education about the transportation and other mobility resources that are available for patients in rural areas, and how to access those resources in various communities of the Commonwealth. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the manner in which public and community transportation serve the needs of community residents is changing. Discussions with UMMS will continue about how best to educate future doctors about evolving mobility resources and a need to improve digital literacy in the communities they serve.

#### 14. Babcock, Pleasant St, BU West, and St. Paul Stations

Scope: Currently, each of these four stops along the Green Line's B branch is inaccessible. This project will consolidate the four stops into two fully accessible stops with raised platforms, canopies and seating.

Update from the November 2021 report: On November 15, 2021, two new, fully accessible, Green Line stops – Amory and Babcock – opened for passenger service, replacing four inaccessible stops that have been decommissioned and demolished.

#### 15. Chelsea Station

Scope: The MassDOT-led Silver Line Gateway Project was divided into two phases: Phase I, which has been completed, built 4 of 5 new Silver Line Bus Rapid Transit stops along abandoned Right of Way (ROW). Phase II relocates the existing inaccessible Chelsea Commuter Rail Station to the southwest, near the Market Basket supermarket and shopping area and the terminus of the new Chelsea Silver Line Gateway. The Commuter Rail station will feature two full-high 800'+ platforms, as well as canopies and benches.

Update from the November 2021 report: On November 15, 2021, the brand-new and fully accessible Chelsea Commuter Rail Station opened for service.

#### 16. Priority Seating Decals on Subway

Scope: The MBTA's new priority seating decal will be installed on existing subway cars.

Update from the November 2021 report: In addition to new priority seating decals being installed on the entire bus fleet, these decals have now been installed on all subway cars.

#### 17. Alewife 813, 814, 815

Scope: This project includes the replacement in kind of the existing elevators 813, 814, 815; repair or replacement of certain curb ramps; and minor modifications to restrooms.

Update from the November 2021 report: This project is now complete. Construction began in summer 2018 and was phased in such a way that the station remained accessible at all times. Elevator 813 (lobby to platform) opened for service in the summer of 2019. Elevator 815 opened for service in March 2020. Elevator 814 was completed in September 2020.

#### 18. Elevator Cleanliness

Scope: An interdepartmental task force consisting of Engineering and Maintenance, Operations, Customer Experience, Customer Technology, Transit Police, and SWA will develop and document a protocol for addressing the issue of elevator cleanliness.



Update from the November 2021 report: The task force was established in the summer of 2019 and identified a number of key components/activities for maintaining elevators in the cleanest manner possible. These have been implemented and will be ongoing, representing a holistic approach to elevator cleanliness. Several of the specific activities underway include:

- Implementation of a new cleaning contract. In March 2020, the MBTA launched a new performance-based station cleaning program, of which elevator cleanliness is the key component.
- Replacement of elevator floors with new non-absorbent flooring materials at key locations. 30+ of the highest priority floors have been replaced since 2019 in addition to each of the recently modernized elevators (discussed above).
- Regular inspections conducted by Transit Ambassadors. Issues are reported in real time and yield an expedited request for cleanup. Monthly reports have been developed to help identify and track areas of concern
- Formation of a subcommittee consisting of Ambassador Management (MBTA contract oversight), Block by Block (contractor), E&M and SWA. The group meets on a regular basis to discuss the previous month's report. The data and subsequent analysis alerts the group where opportunities for improvement exist and resources can be shifted to address areas of concern.
- Sharing of elevator cleanliness reports with TPD on a monthly basis to alert them of potential areas of concern.
- Development of a prototype of a urine detection device. A demonstration of this device was conducted in early 2021. A larger scale pilot is planned for Spring/summer 2022.

#### 19. Green Line Rear Door Boarding Awareness Campaign

Scope: The Customer Experience Department and SWA will develop and implement a marketing campaign designed to highlight the availability of accessible rear door boarding on Green Line trains.

Update from the November 2021 report: Decals advertising the rear door boarding policy as well as drawing attention to the ISA button customers may push as one option to request access to the rear door were installed on all Green Line trains throughout the spring of 2021. Additionally, audio and visual (both poster and digital) messaging were deployed in Green Line stations and stops to educate customers about the rear door boarding policy in the summer.

#### 20. System-Wide Accessibility Charter

Scope: The MBTA will develop and issue a policy outlining when and how an MBTA project or initiative must be approved by SWA.

Update from the November 2021 report: A memo documenting SWA's roles and responsibilities was issued to all senior staff by the General Manager in May 2021. This document represents the memorialization of practices that have been in place for a number of years.

#### 21. Brookline Hills

Scope: The Town of Brookline is building a new high school building over Brookline Hills Station. As part of this work, the Town will be reconstructing the station with raised platforms and a number of path of travel upgrades.



Update from May 2022 report: Construction began in late 2019 and was completed in January 2022.

## 22. Mansfield Station

Scope: This project includes the construction of new compliant mini-highs, as well upgraded accessible parking, and accessible routes to cross under the tracks via MA Route 114.

Update from May 2022 report: The mini-high platforms and the new ramps for accessible routes were completed in early May 2020. All other upgrades were completed and approved in March 2022.

## 23. Ruggles Phase I

Scope: This project will install a new Commuter Rail platform along Track 2 at Ruggles Station and a new elevator (728) to the busway center platform. Existing elevators 848 (lower busway), 849 (Commuter Rail), 850 (Orange Line), and 851 (Forsyth St.) will also be replaced.

Update from May 2022 report: Construction is complete and all new elevators are in service as of February 2022.

## 24. Audio & Visual Equivalency Policy

Scope: The Customer Technology department and SWA will develop a policy that defines when, and by what means, digital signage must have an audible component as well as when information that is broadcast audibly must have a visual component.

Update from May 2022 report: The Customer Technology department, in conjunction with SWA, has developed a working set of guidelines regarding audio/visual equivalency policy, and has identified known best practices and practical solutions for a range of scenarios. One of the key takeaways in talking to blind/low-vision riders, as well as digital signage manufacturers and out-of-home advertising companies, is that there is no universal solution for audio-equivalence for digital signage. Because of this, audio/visual equivalence will be achieved using a variety of solutions, depending on a variety of factors (screen hardware, location, informational context, etc.), and the guidelines will be updated to reflect emerging best practices.

## 25. Stop Announcements on Bus

Scope: SWA and Bus Operations will develop a policy denoting when and/or where bus operators are required to make stop announcements along a route if the automated announcement system is not functioning.

Update from May 2022 report: SWA, Service Planning and Bus Operations have worked together to develop a policy that requires Operators to contact the Operations Control Center as soon as possible if any issue arises involving the automated stop announcement system so that an alternate vehicle can be secured. Operators are required to make manual announcements for all stops along the route, with particular emphasis on major intersections and transfer points. As part

of the Bus Network Design process, the MBTA will work to further refine what specific stops, route by route, are most critical to be manually announced if the automated system fails.