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Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor  
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May 26, 2020

Dear Riders,

The last few months have brought about immense change at the MBTA. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ridership has been down roughly 90%, service levels have been adjusted system-wide, and a number of new policies have been implemented to help keep riders and employees safe. And more change is on the horizon. As Massachusetts begins gradually reopening, the MBTA is preparing to provide service to additional riders in a manner that supports public health.

One thing that has remained constant is our commitment to providing a safe and accessible service for all of our customers. Accessibility for riders with disabilities and older adults continues to be integrated into all aspects of our decision and policymaking. We recognize that people with disabilities have been uniquely impacted by the pandemic and that the MBTA provides a critical service for those who rely on accessible transportation.

While much energy has been focused on responding to new concerns in light of COVID-19, many of our long-standing key accessibility initiatives that we highlight in the semi-annual reports have continued to advance. As always, we remain focused on our goal of building and providing a fully accessible fixed-route system.

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). As always, thank you for your continued partnership in making the T more accessible than ever.

Sincerely,

Laura Brelsford  
Assistant General Manager  
Department of System-Wide Accessibility

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### Subway Stations:

#### 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: 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. 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, detectable warnings, canopies, and benches.

Update: A construction contract was awarded in April of this year. Renovations are scheduled to be complete by fall 2021.

#### 3. Newton Highlands Station

Scope: This project aims to make Newton Highlands Station fully accessible and involves 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 two accessible routes down to the platforms.

Update: The design is approaching 100%. Construction of Newton Highlands Station will follow the ongoing Green Line D Branch Track and Signal Replacement Project, which is scheduled to be substantially complete by the end of 2020. In the interim, a temporary ramping system and raised platform have been installed to provide improved access.

#### **4. 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: While project progress has been impacted by constraints related to COVID-19, construction is underway and is expected to be complete in summer/fall 2021. The new elevator at the Washington St. entrance is scheduled to open in winter/spring 2021. The modernization of three of the station escalators has been included in the scope and expected to be completed by the summer/fall 2021 as well.

#### **5. 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 that work with Green Line Type 8 and 9 cars.

Update: Construction began in late 2019 and is scheduled to be completed in summer 2021.

#### **6. Beaconsfield, Chestnut Hill, Eliot, & 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: Conceptual designs have been completed for all 4 stations and designs are expected to reach 100% in spring 2021 with construction to follow.

## 7. Symphony Station

Scope: This project aims to make the inaccessible Symphony Station accessible by installing elevators, raising platforms, and achieving NFPA 130 compliance in a historically sensitive manner.

Update: A design firm has been selected. The station design is expected to be completed in early 2021 with construction beginning in spring 2021.

## 8. Hynes Station Renovation

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 MBTA is meeting with the developer on a bi-weekly basis to define the station's external dimensions, structural constraints, and utility upgrades. A design consultant began work in March 2020 and a conceptual design is underway. Full design is expected to be complete in June 2022 and it is anticipated that construction will be completed in December 2025.

## 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, LEP standards, and internal wayfinding requirements. Stations will include Back Bay, Downtown Crossing, Forest Hills, Harvard, Haymarket, Malden, North Station, Park Street, South Station, and State Street.

Update: Work on this project began at Park Street in April 2019 and is scheduled to be completed in fall 2020. Work at North Station, Haymarket, State Street, Chinatown, and Downtown Crossing began in summer 2019. The work on these stations has been accelerated and will be substantially complete by the end of 2020.

The design for improvements at South Station, Back Bay, Malden, and Harvard are complete. Work has begun at Harvard Station, however the work is temporarily suspended due to COVID-19.

## **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: Engineering and Maintenance (E&M), in partnership with SWA, has identified accessible station entrance locations for automatic door opener hardware to be installed. E&M is in the process of procuring materials and staffing support to begin work this summer. Pilot locations have been selected to begin installation, as soon as COVID-19 related work restrictions are lifted.

## **11. Path of Travel Improvements**

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

Update: SWA is compiling a list of path of travel upgrades that are required system-wide. These priorities will be provided to design firms

who have been selected in coordination with the Office of the Chief Engineer. Design work is expected to begin in fall 2020.

## 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 MBTA has been working with the vendor responsible for overseeing the implementation of the new fare collection system to evaluate several potential technologies that may enable a customer to pay their fare to open the fare gate without physically tapping their CharlieCard.

### Commuter Rail Stations:

#### 1. Mansfield Commuter Rail Station Renovation

Scope: This project includes constructing new compliant mini-highs, new accessible routes to cross under the tracks via MA Route 114, storm-water retention, and new accessible parking.

Update: The new ramps, stairs, and mini-high platforms were completed in early May 2020. Full project completion is anticipated in summer 2020.

#### 2. Chelsea Commuter Rail 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: Work continues on the construction of the new Chelsea Station platform, concrete piers, and footings to support the platform system. The platforms are being fabricated off site and are expected to start arriving this summer. Many of the other elements of the new station are in final review of materials, or in fabrication. Also, as part of this project, extensive railroad signalization is being performed to improve efficiency and on time status of the Commuter Rail. New railroad grade crossings are slated to be installed this summer at four roadway intersections. The station is expected to open in fall 2022.

### **3. Natick Center Station**

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

Update: Notice to Proceed was issued to the contractor in December 2019 and construction has begun on the east side of the station. Construction is expected to be complete in spring 2022.

### **4. Newtonville, Auburndale, and West Newton Stations—Design**

Scope: This project will produce a design to make all three stations accessible via a high-level platform at each station on the northern embankment. Each station will have ramps to access the high-level platform.

Update: Surveying and data collection are ongoing, with 30% design expected by May 2020 and final design expected by spring 2021.

### **5. Winchester Commuter Rail Station**

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

Update: Design is advancing for Winchester Station, with 100% design expected by the end of spring 2020 and construction to begin in fall 2020. Construction is expected to be complete in spring 2023.

## 6. Lynn Station and Garage

Scope: Lynn Station and Garage require significant structural repairs and upgrades to various components, including vertical circulation and life safety upgrades.

Update: A design consultant has been selected to begin investigation and start station design. Upon structural and systems assessment, a detailed project schedule will be developed; however, it is currently anticipated that the four existing garage and platform elevators will be replaced, as will the station platform.

## 7. South Attleboro Commuter Rail Station

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

Update: Design work commenced in April 2020 and is expected to take 18 months to reach 100% design.

## 8. Maintenance of Mini-High Platforms

Scope: All mini-highs throughout the Commuter Rail network will be evaluated for structural integrity and usability. Those found deficient will be repaired.

Update: Repairs to existing mini-highs that do not require significant work have been completed. Design concepts are underway for those mini-highs that require more substantial modifications.

## 9. 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: The MBTA and Keolis are identifying contracting methods to proceed with design and installation work on dozens of platforms.

## **10. Commuter Rail Bridge Plates**

Scope: Keolis, SWA, and Railroad Operations will standardize bridge plate design to the greatest extent feasible.

Update: Following the testing of a variety of existing bridge plates, an RFP is being developed for the design of a customized, lightweight bridge plate. The RFP is expected to be finalized this summer, followed by the procurement of a design consultant.

### *Vertical Transportation:*

#### **1. 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: The elevators were put into service June 14, 2019.

#### **2. Andrew 857, 858, 859**

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

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

#### **3. 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: The second headhouse with the new elevator, located on the southwest corridor park, was opened on November 5, 2019.

#### 4. Forest Hills Phase II

Scope: MBTA plans to upgrade the accessibility of Forest Hills Station. This includes the replacement of the 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 MBTA is in the process of procuring an engineering consultant to perform final engineering design and construction phase services. The design will begin this spring and construction will start in 2022.

#### 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: 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. Central 861

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

Update: 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.

## **7. 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: Construction began in summer 2018 and is phased in such a way that the station will remain 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 will be completed by late 2020.

## **8. 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. Following this work, existing elevators 848, 849, 850, 851, and 852 will be replaced.

Update: Construction of the new Commuter Rail platform and elevator 728 is ongoing. Rebuilding of the lower busway is mostly complete. Elevator 848 will be taken out of service once elevator 728 is in operation, which is anticipated for June 2020. Elevators 850 and 851 have been taken out of service for replacement, and are anticipated to be reopened June 2020. At that time, elevator 849, serving the Commuter Rail, will be shut down for replacement. Current forecasted substantial completion date for all work is November 2020.

## **9. 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 has commenced and is anticipated to be fully complete in October 2021. Elevators will be opened as they are complete. The first elevator scheduled to be complete is the replacement of existing garage/lobby elevator No. 806, which is expected to reopen in October 2020.

## **10. Central Square 860 & Redundant Elevators**

Scope: This project includes the construction of an additional (redundant) elevator on both the inbound and outbound sides of Central Square Station as well as the replacement and modernization of the existing elevator on the outbound platform.

Update: The design is expected to be completely in 2020. A construction timeline will be developed subject to funding approval.

## **11. 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 MBTA has procured a design consultant for final design and construction phase services. The design contract was awarded in March 2020 with work to begin in May 2020. The design is expected to be complete in spring 2022.

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

Scope: The following elevators will be brought to 100% design:

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

Update: Conceptual designs for each of the above elevators has been completed. Funding to advance design to 100% has been secured and four firms have been selected for the following groups of units:

- Wellington, Mass Ave. & Jackson Square
- Chinatown & State Street
- Davis Square & Broadway
- Arlington, North Station & Sullivan Square

### 13. 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: The MBTA has procured an engineering consultant who will be leading the effort to assess all current conditions of elevators and escalators, and to develop a long-term plan for the maintenance and modernization of systems. The consultant is currently performing evaluations, fieldwork, research, and data collection of the existing conditions of the MBTA elevators and escalators. Upon completing their review, the consultant will begin development of the Vertical Transportation Plan, as well as evaluation of elevator and escalator replacement delivery methods and the existing maintenance contract with KONE.

## 14. Elevator Cleanliness

Scope: An interdepartmental task force comprising 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: The task force was established in the summer of 2019 and identified a number of key components/activities to maintaining elevators in the cleanest manner possible. Several efforts have already been implemented and a documented plan for a holistic approach to elevator cleanliness is expected to be finalized in fall 2020. The following related activities are underway:

- Implementation of 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. Fifteen of the highest priority floors were replaced in 2019 and eight additional floors are scheduled to be replaced in 2020.
- Transit Ambassadors are conducting regular elevator inspections. Issues are reported in real time and yield an expedited request

for cleanup. Sample reports are being developed to help identify and track areas of concern.

- Identifying technology solutions to pilot, such as moisture detection devices in elevators

## 15. Digital Display Screens at Elevators

Scope: The MBTA will install digital screens at elevators that provide real-time elevator information and alternative service options, as needed. These will replace the printed flyers that are currently used to convey this information.

Update: A consultant has begun the process of doing in-station feasibility assessments at 13 stations, as part of the engineering design process. Results will be used to scope a pilot deployment of screens.

### Bus Stops:

#### 1. Critical Stops

Scope: In 2015, the MBTA identified 50 of its highest ridership stops that had significant accessibility barriers and warranted reconstruction. Following that effort, in 2017, the MBTA surveyed all 7,690 bus stops as part of the Plan for Accessible Transit Infrastructure (PATI) and determined that 273 were “critical”—meaning the stop is so inaccessible, customers using wheeled mobility must board/exit in the street. Of these 273, the MBTA determined 170 would be closed. The remaining would be reconstructed.

Update: Of the 170 stops slated for closure, 42 have been closed and the remaining 138 will be closed in the near future. For the 153 stops being reconstructed, 70 stops have been completed to date, and 19 more will be constructed by the end of summer 2020. Of the remaining 64 stops, 36 are under design and will be constructed by the end of 2020, and the final 28 will be constructed by other agencies as part of other projects within the next 2-3 years.

## 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 844 stops that are classified as high priority, with multiple barriers to access. The MBTA will be advancing the design and construction of access improvements at these locations.

Update: Three design and engineering firms were selected for the planning design and construction phase services for bus stops categorized as high priority. Throughout 2019, they worked with the MBTA's Service Planning Department to analyze a number of factors regarding each of the stops along with the overall stop spacing of each bus route. As a result, 450 of the high priority stops were recommended to move forward into design for reconstruction. Stops will be bundled by what city/town they are located in to make the municipal review process more streamlined. It is anticipated that roughly 100 high priority stops will be reconstructed by the end of 2020.

## 3. Sharing Bus Stop Data and Grant Information with Cities/Towns

Scope: Plan for Accessible Transit Infrastructure (PATI) town profiles will be created to summarize the PATI bus stop counts, scores, and types of barriers for each municipality served by the MBTA bus service. Each packet will be coupled with information regarding grant opportunities that the towns may pursue to potentially aid in advancing work.

Update: Throughout 2018-2019, SWA shared comprehensive survey data with a number of municipalities. Later this year, additional information including state and local funding opportunities for sidewalk/curb ramp upgrades will be circulated.

## **4. 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: The MBTA has finalized and released a Request for Responses (RFR) seeking municipal participation in the program and plans to work closely with municipalities and communities to update the MBTA's network of bus shelters and amenities. The technical specifications provided for the RFR were developed in close coordination with SWA.

## **5. Bus Stop "Ownership"**

Scope: Operations, Real Estate, and SWA will post on the MBTA website a list of all bus stops serviced by the MBTA, identifying the property owner of each stop (e.g. municipality, private owner, MBTA, etc.).

Update: MassDOT GIS Services uploaded all of the PATI bus stop data to the GeoDOT GIS mapping tool. The GeoDOT tool allows the PATI data to be viewable on a map with ownership of each bus stop noted. Ownership information will be reviewed in fall 2020.

# **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 six-car consist went into service in summer 2019 and one additional trainset went into service at the end of 2019. The additional 23 trainsets will follow.

## 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: Six pilot cars arrived in Boston in early October 2019 for testing. This first six-car consist is expected to go into service in summer 2020.

## 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 165 vehicles to replace the Type 7 and Type 8 fleets. Vehicles will be low-floor and approximately 40 feet longer than legacy fleets.

Update: Vehicle Engineering worked with numerous departments, including SWA, to finalize the RFP for design and ensure all key accessibility considerations were captured. The RFP was released in December 2019, with Notice to Proceed anticipated in 2021.

## 4. Priority Seating Decals on Subway

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

Update: Installation of new priority seating decals is underway. To date, new decals have been installed on the entire Orange Line fleet, and 61% on the Red Line fleet. Installation of decals on the remainder of the subway fleet has been temporarily suspended by the Rail Vehicle Maintenance Department as part of the MBTA's larger response to the

COVID-19 pandemic. Completion of decal installation on the entire subway car fleet is estimated for fall 2020.

## **5. 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 and unsecure themselves independently.

Update: The procurement of these buses is scheduled to begin at the end of 2020.

## **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 have continued regular meetings to develop an entirely new eight-hour accessibility certification and recertification program. The R-TAG customer engagement group has been actively engaged throughout the process of developing the materials, attending almost every content development meeting. Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, production of videos for the trainings, featuring customers with disabilities, were underway. However, for the safety of all participants, the video shoots, , have been indefinitely postponed and alternate content to present the customer perspective will be used in the interim. At this time, video content aside, the eight-hour training program is substantially complete and the recertification program is nearing completion with rollout dates to be determined.

### **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 has begun preliminary work on the updated training and will begin meetings with Subway Operations soon to start collaboration on the new training. Since video production for the Bus Operations training has been delayed due to safety precautions related to COVID-19, we expect to be able to combine video production for these two projects once it is safe to do so.

### 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: SWA has met with new members of the Customer Experience team responsible for the Ambassador training program to further discuss curriculum content. Changes have been made to online refresher materials which more clearly and substantively reflect MBTA accessibility policies and procedures. The remainder of the core curriculum will be developed through 2020.

### 4. Transit Police

Scope: The MASS Collaboration (comprising 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: Updates to the curriculum for a disability-based training program for Transit Police Officers are being finalized. Updates are based on feedback and recommendations received from Transit Police Detectives

and Supervisors who attended a pilot training class in spring 2019. Plans were initially in place to hold four training classes for Transit Police (commitment of 9-10 officers), Boston and Cambridge Police Officers, beginning in summer 2020; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the classes will be postponed until 2021.

## **5. Senior Leadership**

Scope: SWA will develop an access-related training module for Senior Leadership to undergo upon hire/promotion. (Senior Leadership constitutes staff at Director level and above.)

Update: The outline for this training will be developed in 2020.

## **6. 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: 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.

# **CUSTOMER COMMUNICATION / OUTREACH**

## **1. 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: 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. A total of 64 MBTA 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. A These guidelines clearly explain the steps which should be taken to complete an investigation and issue an appropriate resolution.

## **2. Notifying Customers of Upcoming Work**

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

Update: The MBTA has issued a new Public Engagement Plan that addresses how the MBTA notifies and engages with customers. Beginning this summer, a companion to a policy document will be

developed that provides details to employees regarding how to ensure that outreach is conducted in a successful and inclusive manner.

### 3. Marketing Campaign

Scope: Marketing 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 has 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 R-TAG and the BCIL plaintiffs provided feedback and direction to the team. Media and outreach strategies have been underway with the intention of a campaign launched in fall 2020. However, given the realities brought on by COVID-19, the campaign will be reimagined and rescheduled.

### 4. Audio & Visual Equivalency Policy

Scope: The Customer Technology Department (CTD) 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: SWA and CTD have worked to develop an audio/visual equivalency policy that outlines when audible information must be displayed visual and when digital visual information must be broadcast audibly. The policy will include examples/case studies of appropriate solutions. The final draft is expected in summer 2020.

### 5. Advertising Panels - Audio Solution

Scope: As part of a digital display screen roll-out, the MBTA will develop an app for making the screens' text-based information available audibly via a smartphone application.

Update: Customer Technology has begun the back-end work of supporting audio equivalence on all screens controlled by the MBTA, and has requested that our advertising concessionaire, Outfront Media, support the same functionality on their screens, too. Most immediately, CTD will update the push-button audio available on the 12 in-station, real-time information screens at major bus stations (Ashmont, Dudley, Forest Hills, Ruggles, etc.).

The development of the app itself is on pause after CTD's research and interviews with blind and low-vision riders suggested that these riders would not want or use an app that provided only this functionality. Discussions are ongoing regarding what additional functionality would be most valuable.

## 6. 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: 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 in English and Spanish and will be online shortly. Additional languages and alternate formats are also available upon request.

## 7. Stop Announcements

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: SWA is in the process of reviewing route guides currently distributed to all new Bus Operators which highlights those stops that must be announced at all times. Following the completion of this review, SWA will reconvene with Bus Operations to discuss next steps. Work on this initiative will be ongoing in 2020.

## **8. 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, Disability Commissions & Councils on Aging) to be used as a listserv for various service-related updates. In January 2020, the MBTA leveraged this distribution list to send snow removal best practice guidance to the key personnel in the various public works departments of the 52 municipalities with bus service. Future communications regarding accessibility-related topics will be developed and distributed on an ongoing basis, as relevant.

## **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: 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. Transit Education—Boston Children’s Hospital**

Scope: SWA will partner with staff from Boston Children's Hospital and Boston Medical Center's Pediatric Unit to provide information on fixed-route accessibility.

Update: Throughout 2019, SWA worked to develop a customized travel training program for parents of children receiving regular care at Boston Children's and/or BMC's Pediatric Unit. The program also equips hospital staff with fixed-route and community mobility service resources.

Sessions were provided in late 2019/early 2020 with early discussions underway to explore expanding to Mass General and Spaulding Rehab. Work on this effort is currently on hold due to COVID-19.

## **11. Transit Education - UMMS**

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

Update: Throughout 2019, SWA collaborated with UMMS to develop materials to educate future physicians regarding transportation policy, as well as what transportation and other mobility resources are available for patients and how to access them in various communities of the Commonwealth. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the way public transportation and community transportation will serve the needs of community residents is likely to change in significant ways. Discussions with UMMS will continue about how best to educate future doctors about changing mobility resources.

## **SYSTEM-WIDE OVERSIGHT**

### **1. System-Wide Accessibility**

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

Update: A policy outlining SWA's roles and responsibilities has been drafted and will be finalized this year. Following its release, charters with key departments will be developed that provide greater detail on when and how SWA should be engaged in projects and initiatives.

## 2. 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: Draft content has been reviewed by both SWA and the Customer Technology Department and is now going into the final round of revisions. The PATI web page is expected to go live in the summer of 2020.

## 3. 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: SWA, in coordination with Engineering & Maintenance, is currently compiling the set of elements to be included in the reports. Sample reports, which will include information on what accessibility-related defects are found and the length of time taken to resolve the issues, will be developed and refined this summer.

## 4. The Design Guide to Access

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

Update: SWA and the consultancy team are preparing to begin the internal staff review of the first full initial draft of the guide, which was completed this spring. The team has commenced development of the

accompanying website that will offer the same guidance content in a digital format on an online platform.

## 5. Snow Removal Monitoring

Scope: The Internal Access Monitoring Program will incorporate a mechanism to better assess the quality and timeliness of snow removal at bus stops for which the MBTA has taken responsibility (currently stops along the 15 Key Bus Routes). A protocol will also be developed for reporting any deficiencies to maintenance teams in real time.

Update: The Internal Access Monitoring Program took initial steps toward a pilot snow removal monitoring program in the winter of 2019–20. However, progress on this goal was hampered by the lack of accumulated snowfall during this winter season. While small-scale tests of different methods of monitoring both the quality and timeliness of snow removal were designed, only one was tested due to lack of snow throughout the season. Therefore, the goal remains to test pilots in the future, to determine and commit to a method, or set of methods, of snow removal monitoring that is effective, safe, and efficient.

However, the design and execution of these pilots in the 2020-2021 winter season will likely be affected by substantial changes to the Internal Access Monitoring Program due to precautions related to COVID-19, which we anticipate will continue to be a concern through the next year.