



**Massachusetts Bay  
Transportation Authority**

# Forging Ahead: Service Planning

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Fiscal and Management Control Board

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# What Is Forging Ahead?

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- Forging Ahead is a process the MBTA is using to focus its operating and capital resources on the customers who depend most on the MBTA for frequent and reliable service.
  - We are prioritizing equity to ensure we are serving people currently riding and those most likely to come back over the next year.
- This is a short-term process over the next 3 months to inform the FY22 budget and an ongoing iterative process to understand how ridership will return to inform future decisions
- Includes a public and stakeholder engagement component with multiple points for input in the process



# What We Know

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- Before COVID we had a network with gaps and that had not kept up with our changing region, that is why we have been working to transform bus and rail.
- And now, that is even more true, but perhaps in different ways. This is especially likely for commuter rail.
- Our goal for recovery should not be to just go back to the network we had before.
- We need to **forge ahead** building the foundation for the transit service that will power an equitable and sustainable economic recovery for Massachusetts.



# What We Know We Don't Know

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We are currently managing through uncertainty. We don't know with certainty:

- When we can relax social distancing guidelines
- How our fare revenue will recover
- How travel patterns have changed in a more permanent way due to telework, housing and land use changes, or mode shifts
- The length and nature of the economic recovery
- Congestion levels and how competitive our service will be

**We do know that our decisions also play a role so they should be guided by principles for the future we want and scenarios using the best data we have.**



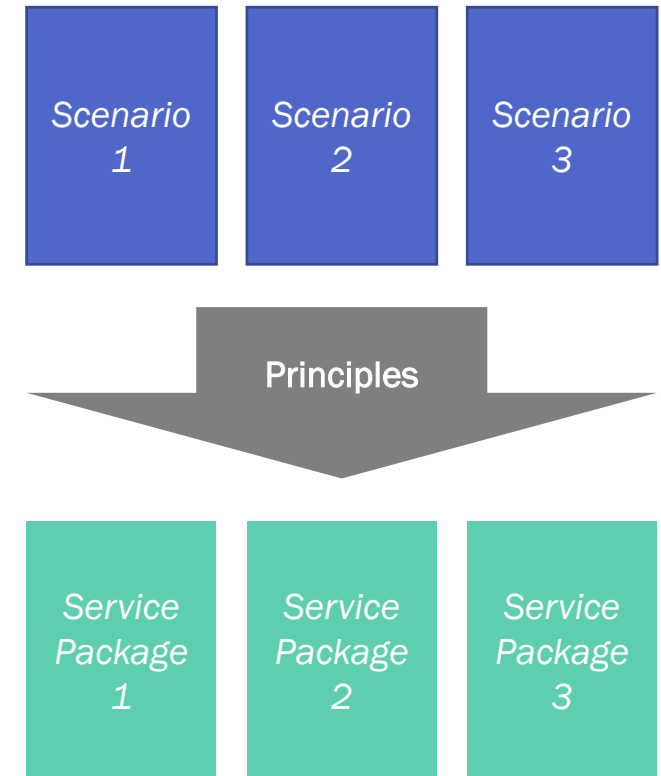
# Scenario Planning

- The MBTA is working with MassDOT and CTPS to understand the best data we have and develop scenarios
- The scenarios will consider:
  - Short (FY22) and medium (2-3 years) timeframes
  - Ridership propensity based on demographics, land use, and economic factors
  - Economic recovery projections
- The short-term effort will identify the essential service that needs to be preserved and then develop options based on fare revenue projections
- The medium term effort will inform continued service planning, capital planning, and the future fare structure under Fare Transformation



# Service Principles: Trade-offs to Develop Service “Packages”

- Alignment on **principles** help us redesign service:
  - In the short-term to serve those who need us most
  - In the medium term as a foundation for recovery
  - Are scenario-agnostic, but help translate the scenarios into service plans
- **Principles answer three key questions:**
  - What people and places (or trips) are we prioritizing?
  - What kind of system do we want at the “end”, regardless of whichever scenario(s) is most likely?
  - What are acceptable service outcomes (based on decisions above)?



# Principles

| Key question  | Recommended Principle   | Alternative ( <i>not recommended</i> )  |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>What people and places are we prioritizing?</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Existing and likely to return ridership</b>, including durable ridership during COVID-19 and environmental justice communities</li> <li>• Possible service level changes to <b>all modes</b>, but analyzed at the route and line level</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize fare revenue or cost per passenger to drive decision-making</li> <li>• Exclude some mode(s) from service change analysis</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>What kind of system do we want?</b></p>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Simpler, less redundant, and more equitable system</b>, which is therefore more resilient, efficient, and easier to use</li> <li>• Preserve/invest in <b>quality service</b> (frequency) in key areas instead of degraded service everywhere</li> <li>• These are <b>permanent</b> changes – if and when additional resources available, we <b><u>will not</u></b> recreate the pre-COVID system</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target same % reduction across all modes, lines and/or routes</li> <li>• Try to maintain existing network structure in long term</li> </ul>    |

Does the Board agree with the Recommended Principles? Are there any additional principles to add?

# Defining Our Essential Services

Analysis will be done at the bus route/corridors, rapid transit lines, commuter rail lines/corridors, ferry routes, and overall RIDE service area

|  | Serving high transit critical population   | Serving low transit critical population              |
|--|--|--|
| Higher ridership (current or propensity) | Preserve or enhance service / access<br><i>(though individual trips may still be affected)</i> | Consider trade-offs depending on budget availability |
| Lower ridership (current or propensity)  | Consider trade-offs depending on budget availability   | Most likely to reduce service levels                 |

Transit critical is defined as low-income, people of color, zero or low car households. Transit propensity includes demographics, land use and employment factors.





# Potential Service Outcomes Based on Principles

Example service outcomes to be discussed in more depth on 9/21 (not exhaustive):

- Riders may need to **walk further, transfer more, or switch transit modes (incl. RTAs)**
- Riders may need to **pay more** due to transfers, mode switches, or coverage changes
- **Frequency, time of day, and coverage** may all be changed
- Routes and/or line service patterns may be **restructured**
- Some pre-COVID ridership may **lose transit access** (>0.5 miles from transit)
- We will consider trade-offs between **reducing fleet sizes** to decrease maintenance, as alternative to deeper service reductions
- **Alternative service models** (vehicle sizes, etc.) may be considered for long-term

Are there any additional potential outcomes that should be discussed on 9/21?

# Timeline for Service, Budget, and Capital Updates

