



# Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

**Forging Ahead: Service Proposal** -- Current Proposal  
reflective of and responsive to stakeholder outreach  
program

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Submitted to MEPA as part of Environmental Notification Form  
February 1, 2020

# Revised Approach to Forging Ahead Service Planning

- Based on **customer feedback during public engagement** AND **additional analysis of ridership**, the MBTA made adjustments to the November 9th service proposals
- The MBTA is focused on service changes that better **match service with current and likely near-term ridership**
  - Given the importance of adjusting base service levels for the current fiscal year, while ridership remains low relative to the amount of service being provided, staff have found ways to accelerate service adjustments so that **new commuter rail and ferry schedules can be implemented in January and new bus and rapid transit schedules in March**
  - The revised base service proposal being presented today provides 85-90% of pre-COVID bus service for 41% of pre-COVID bus ridership, 75-80% of rapid transit service for 22% of pre-COVID ridership, and 70% of commuter rail service for 13% of pre-COVID ridership
- Independent of the budget situation, the MBTA **should not be running more service than needed to support current and near-term likely ridership** for the remainder of FY21 and into FY22, so that the resulting budget savings are available to increase service frequency when needed
  - Savings from service cuts will be used to increase service frequency later, when warranted by ridership and revenue and, consistent with the timing of post-vaccine economic reopening, the return of ridership and availability of revenue to pay for additional service



# Revised Approach to Forging Ahead Service Planning

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- The new base service levels proposed today, consistent with feedback from the public and from stakeholders, focus on **maintaining more services while reducing frequency to match ridership needs**
  - The revised base service maintains more hours of operation (span) and access to service (reducing the number of planned routes eliminated entirely) and avoids some of the service changes that would have required customers to divert to alternative services
  - **Changing service primarily by reducing service frequency will make it easier to restore service** when warranted by ridership and revenue, as restoration will primarily involve increasing service frequency
- In designing and implementing the revised, proposed FY21 base service, staff has put a **premium on flexibility and optionality so that the MBTA is well-positioned to increase service frequency when appropriate**, consistent with the timing of post-vaccine economic reopening, the return of ridership and availability of revenue
  - While layoffs remain on the table, the MBTA is actively working with our major unions to assess all available options for implementing service changes and achieving budget savings while positioning the MBTA to bring back service with its current trained and experienced workforce
- No additional service adjustments are being proposed today for FY22 (beginning July 1, 2021)
  - We will know more about the FY22 outlook by March, in terms of factors influencing both ridership demand and state and federal funding, and will **plan for FY22 service levels during the budget process** in the spring



# FY21 Budget Outlook & Funds Available for FY22 Budget Gap

- Identifying current FY21 budget projection and the Operating Budget Deficiency target , available to partially offset the FY22 budget challenge
- **\$54M projected budget gap** , identified with the October revision to the FY21 Budget fare revenue projections.
- **\$79M budget challenge** after COVID-19 spending and overtime exposures above budget
- **\$301M in identified solves** in FY21 including capital funding reallocation, passing capital salaries proposal into law, and department/programmatic cost-saving and revenue initiatives
- **\$92M in sales tax revenue upside**, reflects updated State Sales Tax Projection,
  - \$52M, in increased sales tax, above the guaranteed Base Revenue Amount (BRA)
  - Includes \$40M Sales Tax Acceleration
- Service level planning cost savings and impact to FY22 budget challenge will be calculated following FMCB decisions

Description Figures in \$M	FY21
<b>Budget Gap (October Revision)</b>	<b>-54</b>
<i>COVID-19 Spending</i>	-13
<i>Overtime</i>	-12
Subtotal of Identified Risks	-25
<b>Budget Challenge (Gap + Risks)</b>	<b>-79</b>
<i>Federal Formula Funds</i>	171
<i>Capital Salaries</i>	66
<i>Department/Programmatic</i>	64
<b><i>Service Level Planning (Net)</i></b>	<b>TBD</b>
Subtotal of Identified Solves	301
<i>Sales Tax Upside &amp; Acceleration Proposal</i>	92
<b>Potential Funds Available for FY22</b>	<b>314</b>

# Prioritizing Service Packages

- Online comment tool priorities for service packages based on importance to the region
- Riders consistently prioritize the restoration of the services that they personally used
- Common Priorities
  - High Priority: **Essential Services** - Most riders across modes rate the restoration of **Rapid Transit** and **Essential Bus** service as extremely important
  - Low Priority: **Suspended Modes** - Few riders who didn't use **Ferries** or the **E Line** believe their restoration is extremely important

Percent of Respondents Who Believe Restoring Service is “Extremely Important” to the Region by MBTA Modes

	Rapid Transit			Commuter Rail			Bus				Ferry	
	Frequency	Evening Service	E Line Service to Heath Street	Weekend Service	Evening Service	RailVision	Essential Bus Frequency	Non-Essential Bus Frequency	Evening Service	Bus Network Redesign	Hingham/Hull	Charlestown/Boston
Rapid Transit Riders (n = 539)	64%	55%	30%	43%	44%	35%	61%	36%	49%	31%	19%	19%
E-Line Riders (n = 50)	56%	53%	75%	51%	51%	27%	49%	24%	39%	22%	18%	16%
Essential Bus Riders (n = 264)	69%	58%	28%	46%	46%	36%	72%	46%	58%	35%	21%	22%
Non-Essential Bus Riders (n = 227)	53%	41%	21%	27%	31%	22%	72%	55%	49%	25%	12%	12%
Commuter Rail Riders (n = 474)	51%	46%	30%	62%	64%	31%	46%	31%	38%	26%	21%	22%
Ferry Riders (n = 182)	35%	31%	25%	20%	28%	22%	29%	18%	23%	16%	51%	75%
<b>Average Across Modes</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20%</b>

Forging Ahead Online Feedback Form 1,500 responses as of 11/29/20




# Framework for Proposing Modifications

Type	Proposed Changes
Lack of Access	Some bus route elimination, Hingham/Hull ferry elimination, suburban subsidies, commuter rail stop closures
Lack of Span	Late night bus, Late night rapid transit, evening commuter rail, weekend commuter rail
Divert to alternative route	Charlestown ferry, E Line stopping at Brigham Circle, some bus route eliminations
Less Frequency	Commuter rail weekdays, rapid transit, bus



- Based on feedback and analysis, believe priority for modifying base service is focusing on **access & span**, specifically for transit critical riders,
- Thus using public feedback to identify **behaviors and travel trends of transit critical riders that would lose access and span**
- **Examples include:**
  - Bus Routes with higher stranding based on current ridership (number and durability vs. pre-COVID)
  - Municipalities losing all MBTA modal options
  - Need for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shift medical workers to have access to some transit, especially across Boston harbor
  - Services where large number of current users may represent a larger portion of 0-1 car households than pre-COVID ridership

# Bus – Changes to Base Service

What we heard		What we changed
<p>Maintaining access is more important than frequency; limit the number of <b>current</b> riders who are stranded (greater than ½ mile from bus or rapid transit)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Do not suspend routes with larger number of Fall 2020 riders stranded (&gt;30).</b> Keep some access for:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Malden/Melrose:</b> Continue some service on 131 (peak only) and 136 (combine with 137)</li> <li>• <b>Quincy:</b> Continue to operate 230 between Braintree and Quincy Center</li> <li>• <b>Hull:</b> Continue some service on 714</li> <li>• <b>Canton:</b> Continue some service on 716</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Maintain the <b>Suburban Subsidy program</b>, which partially funds service in five communities (<b>Bedford, Beverly, Burlington, Lexington, and Mission Hill (Boston)</b>)</li> </ul>
<p>Though a low number of riders, believe that riders using system <b>after midnight</b> are likely to be essential workers</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Continue to operate bus service after midnight</b>, though may reduce some frequency</li> </ul>
<p>Route elimination with will significantly negatively impact <b>people with disabilities and Seniors</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to operate some service on route 43 (<b>Roxbury &amp; South End, Boston</b>) as even though within ½ mile of alternative rapid transit or bus, concerns raised about accessibility and access to Tufts Medical Center</li> </ul>

# Bus – Proposed FY21 Base Service




Fall 2020 ridership (vs. pre-COVID)	Projected ridership for July 2021 (vs. pre-COVID)		FY21 Scheduled service hours	
	Scenario 3	Scenario 2	Modified Proposal for 12/14	Original proposal (11/9)
41%	51%	55%	85-90% est.	85%

Type of Service Change	Modified proposal for 12/14	What changed vs. 11/9
Hours of operation (span)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change to hours of operation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service after midnight will continue</li> </ul>
Route elimination/consolidation (access)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suspend 20 routes, consolidate 16, shorten 4, and a few routes will operate peak only (many of changes already in effect as part of COVID schedules)</li> <li>Continue suburban subsidies to 5 communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 Bus Routes (43, 131, 136, 714, 716) proposed to remain included in base service</li> <li>1 bus route (230) proposed to continue to run to Quincy Center</li> </ul>
Frequency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20% frequency reduction system-wide non-essential routes</li> <li>5% frequency reduction system-wide essential routes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No proposed changes</li> </ul>





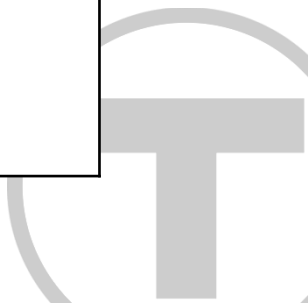
# Rapid Transit – Changes to Base Service

What we heard		What we changed
<p>The <b>Blue Line</b> is currently at capacity at some times, especially in the AM</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Only reduce Blue Line frequency (time between trains) by up to 5% during lower ridership times, and review on regular basis</li></ul>
<p>Stopping the <b>E Line</b> at Heath Street will significantly negatively impact people with disabilities and Seniors, and makes access to the VA Medical Center more challenging</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to operate the E Line to Heath Street, serve all stops</li></ul>
<p>Though a low number of riders, believe that riders using system <b>after midnight</b> are likely to be essential workers</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to operate rapid transit service after midnight, though may reduce some frequency</li></ul>



# Rapid Transit – Proposed FY21 Base Service

Fall 2020 ridership (vs. pre-COVID)	Projected ridership for July 2021 (vs. pre-COVID)		FY21 Scheduled service hours	
	Scenario 3	Scenario 2	Modified Proposal for 12/14	Original proposal (11/9)
24%	28%	46%	75-80% (est.)	70%

Type of Service Change	Modified proposal for 12/14	What changed vs. 11/9
Hours of operation (span)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change to hours of operation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service after midnight will continue</li> </ul>
Route elimination/consolidation (access)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change to operating footprint</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue E Line to Heath Street</li> </ul>
Frequency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20% frequency reduction to Green, Orange, and Red Line</li> <li>Up to 5% reduction to Blue Line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue 95% of Blue Line service</li> </ul>



# Commuter Rail – Changes to Base Service

What we heard		What we changed
<p>Maintaining access is more important than frequency; there are essential riders who need the <b>Commuter Rail on the weekend</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Maintain some weekend service</b> on the higher ridership and/or Transit Critical Commuter Rail lines (Providence, Worcester, Middleboro, Newburyport/Rockport and Fairmount), and only suspend the lower ridership lines</li></ul>
<p><b>Cedar Park stop</b> (on Haverhill line) serves a large walkshed and a community with lower car ownership</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to serve <b>Cedar Park stop</b></li></ul>



# Commuter Rail – Proposed FY21 Base Service

Fall 2020 ridership (vs. pre-COVID)	Projected ridership for July 2021 (vs. pre-COVID)		FY21 Scheduled service hours	
	Scenario 3	Scenario 2	Modified Proposal for 12/14	Original proposal (11/9)
13%	16%	29%	70% (est.)	65%

Type of Service Change	Modified proposal for 12/14	What changed vs. 11/9
Hours of operation (span)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>End weekday service at 9 PM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Change</li> </ul>
Route elimination/consolidation (access)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain partial weekend service Worcester, Providence, Newbury/Rockport, Middleboro and Fairmount; suspend on low ridership lines</li> <li>Close 5 stations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partial weekend service on high ridership and transit critical lines</li> <li>Continue to serve Cedar Park stop</li> </ul>
Frequency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce peak and offpeak service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Change</li> </ul>



# Estimated Commuter Rail Weekend Ridership


Line	FY18 weekend ridership (Sat + Sun)	Oct. & Nov. 2020 weekend ridership (Sat + Sun)	% of pre-COVID ridership
Providence	7,660	2,370	31%
Newburyport	4,550	2,200	48%
Worcester	5,060	2,160	43%
Middleborough	1,920	990	52%
Haverhill	1,290	800	62%
Fitchburg	2,930	790	27%
Fairmount	500	670	134%
Franklin	2,180	590	27%
Kingston	1,680	550	33%
Lowell	1,890	500	26%
Greenbush	810	420	52%
Needham	660	270	41%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31,130</b>	<b>12,310</b>	<b>40%</b>

Providence, Newburyport, Worcester, Middleboro and Fairmount represent 2/3 of all weekend ridership

Notes: FY18 ridership synthesized from mTicket data and CTPS counts; 2020 estimates based on conductor counts



# Ferry – Changes to base service

What we heard		What we changed
<p>Maintaining access is more important than frequency, some essential workers rely on Hingham/Hull ferry, and it will be easier to tell when to ramp up frequency if at least minimal service continues to operate</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Continue to operate some Hingham/Hull weekday ferry service</b>, exact schedule still to be determined and if all Boston stops will be served, though service may be limited to peak/commuter hours (but will still serve both Hingham and Hull)</li></ul>



# Ferry – Proposed FY21 Base Service

Fall 2020 ridership (vs. pre-COVID)	Projected ridership for July 2021 (vs. pre-COVID)		FY21 Scheduled service hours	
	Scenario 3	Scenario 2	Modified Proposal for 12/14	Original proposal (11/9)
12%	16%	29%	>0%, exact service TBD	0%

Type of Service Change	Modified proposal for 12/14	What changed vs. 11/9
Route elimination/consolidation (access)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suspend Charlestown and Hingham direct service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Change</li> </ul>
Frequency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce weekday Hingham/Hull ferry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain partial Hingham/Hull weekday service (<i>also qualifies as access change</i>)</li> </ul>

# Service Proposal

Mode	Fall 2020 ridership (vs. pre-COVID)	Projected ridership for July 2021 (vs. pre-COVID)		FY21 Scheduled service hours		FY21 Service Proposal	
		Scenario 3	Scenario 2	Modified Proposal for 12/14	Original proposal (11/9)	Modified proposal for 12/14	What changed vs. 11/9
<b>Bus</b>	41%	51%	55%	85-90% est.	85%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change to hours of operation</li> <li>Suspend 20 routes, consolidate 16, shorten 4</li> <li>20% frequency reduction system-wide non-essential routes</li> <li>5% frequency reduction system-wide essential routes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service after midnight</li> <li>6 Bus Routes (43, 131, 136, 230, 714, 716)</li> <li>Suburban subsidies to 5 communities</li> </ul>
<b>Rapid Transit</b>	24%	28%	46%	75-80% (est.)	70%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No changes to hours of operation or footprint</li> <li>20% frequency reduction to Green, Orange, and Red Line</li> <li>Up to 5% reduction to Blue Line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service after midnight</li> <li>Continue 95% of Blue Line service</li> <li>E Line to Heath Street</li> </ul>
<b>Commuter Rail</b>	13%	16%	29%	70% (est.)	65%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain partial weekend service Worcester, Providence, Newburyport/Rockport, Middleboro and Fairmount; suspend on low ridership lines</li> <li>End weekday service at 9 PM</li> <li>Reduce peak and weekday service</li> <li>Close 5 stations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to serve Cedar Park stop</li> <li>Partial weekend service on high ridership and transit critical lines</li> </ul>
<b>Ferry</b>	12%	16%	29%	>0%, exact service TBD	0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suspend Charlestown and Hingham direct service</li> <li>Reduce weekday Hingham/Hull ferry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain partial Hingham/Hull weekday service</li> </ul>
<b>The RIDE</b>	38%	40%	46%	No changes	No change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjust scheduling window from 30 to 40 minutes</li> <li>Adjust ADA to Premium based on fixed route changes</li> <li>Adjust hours of operation of Premium service to match Commuter Rail span</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changes only reflect changes made to other modes</li> </ul>



# Implementation Timeline

Mode	Take effect January (decision in December)	Take effect March / April	Takes effect June / July (decision in early March)	Takes effect later (pending ridership)
<b>Bus</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequency adjustments</li> <li>Suspend 9 routes (1 delay until GLX)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any changes that are not completed in March/April</li> <li>Potential other adjustments pending social distancing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement consolidated or suspended Somerville bus routes once College Ave. Branch of GLX opens</li> </ul>
<b>Rapid Transit</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce peak and off-peak service on Red, Orange, Green lines</li> <li>Minor modifications to Blue Line service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential further frequency adjustments pending social distancing</li> <li>Review Blue Line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional Green Line frequency changes with opening of GLX</li> </ul>
<b>Commuter Rail</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced Winter schedules (incl. reduced weekend service), planning add'l service to Lynn, Brockton, and Fairmount</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revised schedules, including stopping service at 9 PM</li> </ul>		
<b>Ferry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suspend Charlestown and Hingham direct services</li> <li>Reduce Hingham/Hull service</li> </ul>			
<b>The RIDE</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scheduling window change</li> <li>ADA coverage area impacted by fixed route changes</li> <li>Hours of operation for Premium Service</li> </ul>		

Note: Bus, Commuter Rail and Rapid Transit implementation timelines accelerated in response to public feedback and internal operating changes

# Integrated timeline for service changes

	January	February	March	April	May	June/July 1
<b>Service Adjustments (customer facing)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Commuter Rail:</b> reduced Winter schedules including reduced weekend service</li> <li>• <b>Ferry:</b> Suspend Charlestown and Hingham direct services; reduce Hingham/Hull service</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bus:</b> frequency adjustments, some route restructuring/suspension</li> <li>• <b>Rapid Transit:</b> reduce peak and off-peak service on Red, Orange, Green lines; minor modifications to Blue Line service</li> <li>• <b>The RIDE:</b> Most changes</li> <li>• <b>Commuter Rail:</b> Revised schedules, including stopping service at 9 PM</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bus:</b> Remainder of frequency adjustments and route restructuring</li> <li>• <b>Rapid Transit:</b> Potential further frequency adjustments</li> </ul>



# Continued Outreach on Forging Ahead Implementation

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- **Following today's Board vote on Forging Ahead proposals:**
  - *Winter 2021*
    - Community Liaisons will circle back to community organizations previously contacted to inform them of changes to proposals
    - Outreach to inform riders impacted by early implementation service reductions
  - *Spring 2021*
    - Outreach to inform riders impacted by Spring rating changes
    - Outreach to inform riders impacted by Summer rating changes
- **Outreach to include:**
  - New schedules available on website and print versions at stations
  - Posters on vehicles and in stations
  - Signage at bus stops and digital screens in stations
  - In-person outreach (as possible based on COVID)
  - Outreach to community organizations and local elected officials
  - All outreach in multiple languages based on rider demographics



# The Approach to Adding Back Service

- Because most FY21 service changes involve frequency (rather than access or span), we can **monitor ridership and know if ridership is increasing to the point where additional service is needed**
  - FY21 service levels assume the need for social distancing and therefore can accommodate growing ridership after social distancing is no longer required based on public health guidance
  - The proposed FY21 base service level provides 85-90% of pre-COVID bus service for 41% of pre-COVID bus ridership, 75-80% of rapid transit service for 22% of pre-COVID ridership, and 70% of commuter rail service for 13% of pre-COVID ridership, accommodating ridership growth
- In addition to ridership, **staff will monitor other data sources** including passenger surveys, employer surveys, roadway data, general travel data (LBS), economic recovery planning
  - Planning scenarios will be refined and revised as necessary and ridership will be compared to scenario projections to understand which scenario most accurately predicts future ridership
  - Every month we will show the Board where ridership is compared to the scenarios
- The **timing of service restoration will depend on public health guidance** (including guidance on the continued need for social distancing) and the timing of the Commonwealth's post-vaccination re-opening plan
- **FY22 service levels will be planned beginning in February/March** as part of FY22 budget process

