Better Bus Project

Making transit better together

Virtual Open House

Thursday, August 26, 2021
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

Closed Captions

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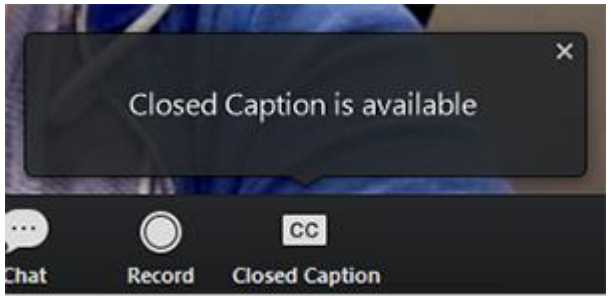

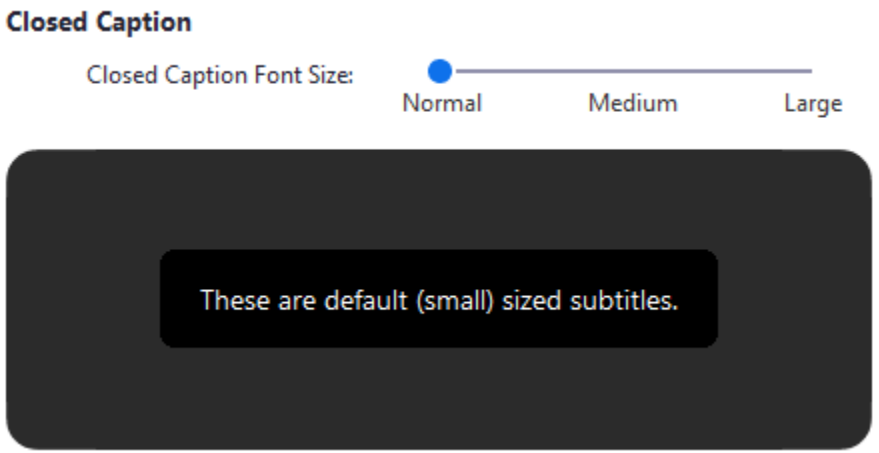

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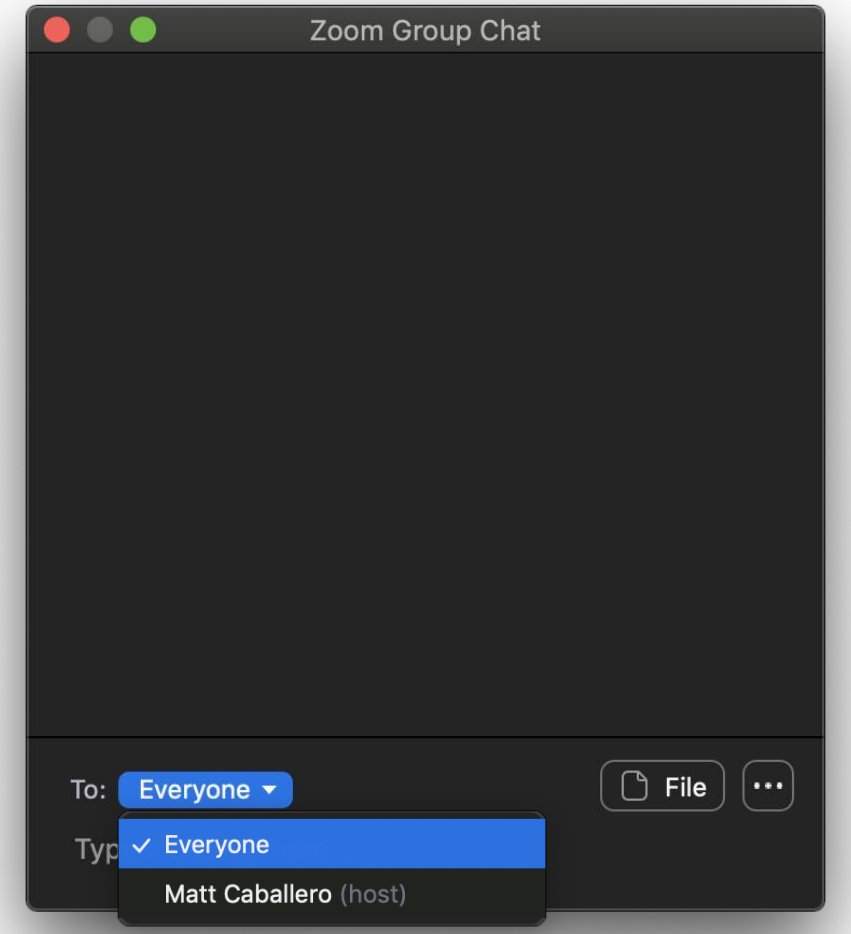
- If you have a technical question about Zoom or the features of the meeting, please use the chat function.
- Our technical assistant will attempt to troubleshoot your problem and get back to you.



MBTA Participation

Steve Poftak
MBTA General Manager

Lynsey Heffernan
Asst. General Manager for Policy & Transit Planning

Anthony Thomas
Deputy Director of Community Engagement

Makayla Comas
Community Liaison

Plus staff representing over 7 MBTA and MassDOT Departments

We Want to Make Bus Better for Riders

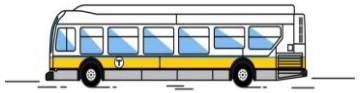
The **Better Bus Project** is the MBTA's process to improve how the bus works for our riders: from **service**, **frequency**, **speed**, and **reliability** to **access**, **comfort**, and **sustainability**.

Photo of MBTA bus

We're building a bus network where

- It is easy to find the best route to your destination
- The bus, stop, and sidewalks are comfortable, safe, and accessible
- At the stop, there is good information on what route to take and when the next bus is coming
- The bus is frequent, and the trip is fast, reliable, and direct
- It is easy to board (even with a wheelchair, stroller, or luggage)
- Connections are easy to understand, reliable, and comfortable

How are we going to get there?



	It is easy to find the best route to your destination	*The bus, stop, and sidewalks are comfortable, safe, and accessible*	*At the stop, there is good information on what route to take and when the next bus is coming*	*The bus is frequent, and the trip is fast, reliable, and direct*	*It is easy to board (even with a wheelchair, stroller, or luggage)*	*Connections are easy to understand, reliable, and comfortable*
Bus Transit Priority	○	○	○	●	○	●
Bus Network Redesign	●	●	○	●	○	●
Bus Stops	○	●	●	○	●	●
Bus Modernization	○	●	○	●	●	○
Passenger Information	●	○	●	○	○	●
Bus Operations	○	○	○	●	○	○

Mini-Presentations

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

Bus Network Redesign

Caroline Vanasse
Manager of Transit Planning
MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning

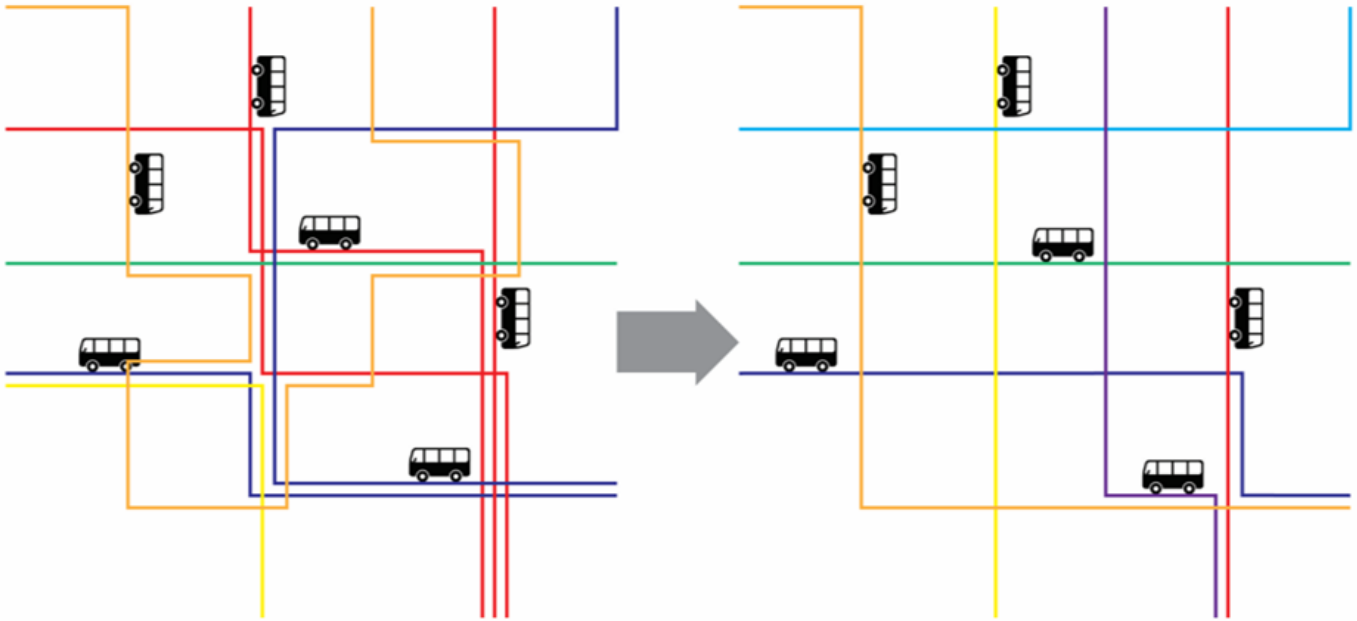
Image of a bus on a snowy night

Bus riders have waited long enough.

BUS NETWORK REDESIGN

A complete re-imagining of the MBTA's bus network to better reflect the travel needs of the region and create a better experience for current and future bus riders.

What is a bus network redesign?



A network redesign generally serves the **same neighborhoods and streets**, but it connects them in **different ways to make a network that is better for riders.**

What can you expect?

- A **more equitable network** that better serves transit-critical populations.
- A network that's **simpler and easier to understand**.
- More **service in busy neighborhoods**.
- More **service where you work or study.**
- A focus on **all-day service** with more buses in the midday, evening, and weekends.

Bus Network Redesign Project Timeline

Stay informed! www.mbta.com/busnetworkredesign

Bus Network Redesign (2020-Ongoing)

Summer/Fall 2021 | Winter/Spring 2022 | Summer 2022 | 2022

Research + Service Design
Data on travel patterns + Service design principles

Review Feedback
Examine rider feedback from Better Bus Project

Draft Metrics
What success looks like for the project

Outreach Phase 1
Where do people need to go and what makes etransit a good option to get them there?

Draft Network
Proposal for new bus network

Outreach Phase 2
Public comment on draft bus network map

Finalize
Final network design based on public comments

Outreach Phase 3
Rider outreach to review draft map with routes and frequencies.

Implementation
Phase 1 of new bus service

Bus Network Redesign 5-year implementation timeline

Project		CY 2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Bus Network Redesign	Planning	Draft network Adopt final network Commit to full implementation				
	Infrastructure	Transit Priority, Bus Stop Installation, Busway Modifications, Signage				
	Service	Rolling route changes				

We are planning for 3-5 phases of implementation for the Bus Network Redesign that will potentially be rolled out by geography. Implementation timing will depend on structure of the new network, staff and public outreach capacity, and the ability to implement bus priority.

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

Service Planning:
Fall Service Changes

Melissa Dullea
Senior Director of Service Planning
Plans and Schedules Department

Image of a bus on a rainy day

Our Plan to Bring Back Service

- During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the MBTA reduced service in line with decreased ridership and revenue
- The MBTA also reallocated service to different parts of the system to maintain quality service for transit-critical populations
- **Now, as the economy reopens and travel increases, we are bringing back service in different ways to best accommodate new travel patterns as some riders return to in-person work, school, and other travel.**

Fall 2021 Bus Service Changes—starting 8/29

With these changes, the MBTA will be running **93%** of pre-COVID bus service hours

What's changing	Routes affected
Restored routes	67, 351, 428, 451, 456, 505
Routes with increased frequency	24, 52, 95, 100, 101, 354, 501, SL4
Routes with additional frequency & routing changes	10, 75

For a **complete** listing of other bus routes or transit services with changes not shown here, please visit www.MBTA.com/servicechanges.

Skate

Building a Better Bus Dispatch App

Ashli Molina

Product Manager, Bus Technology

MBTA Customer Technology

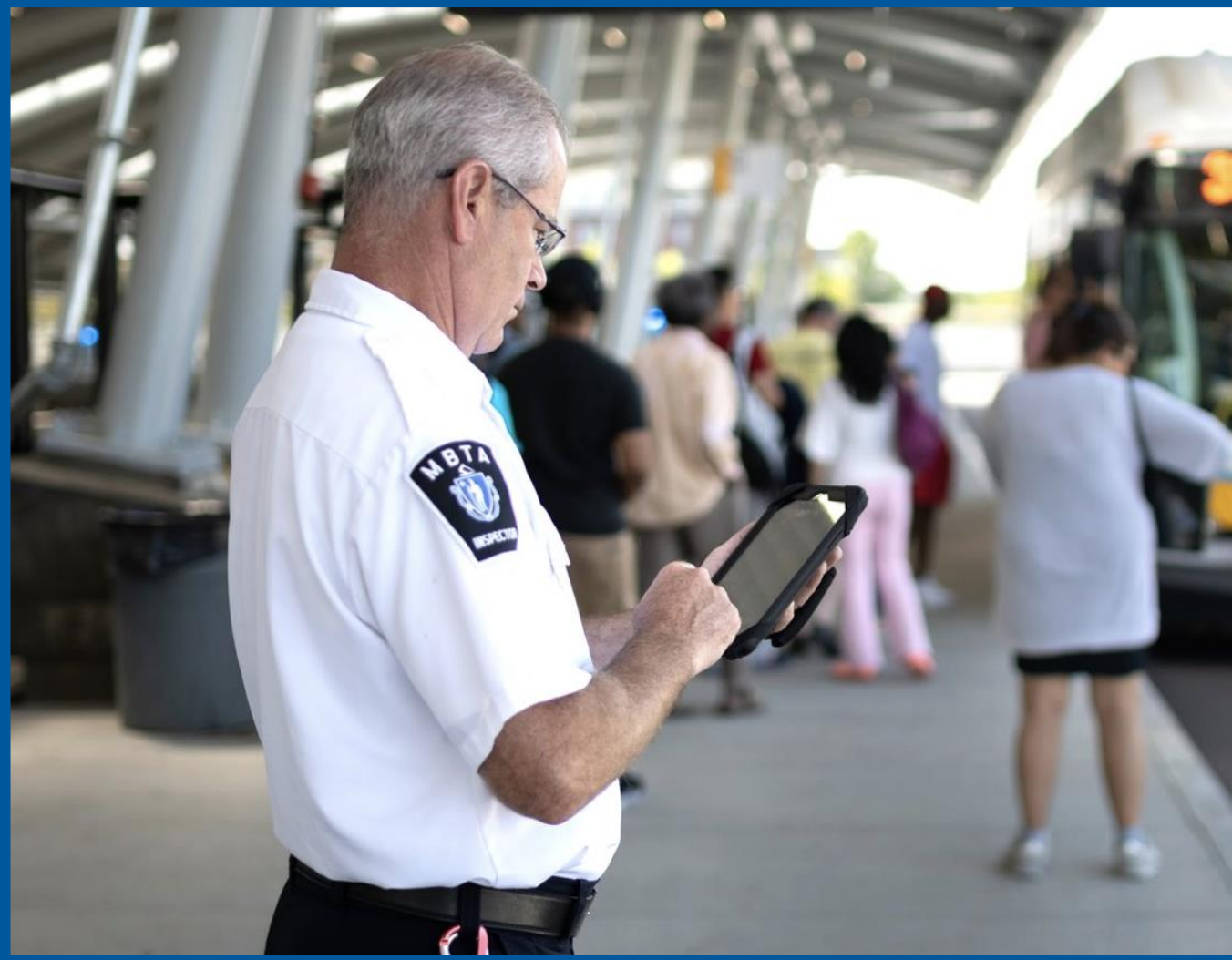


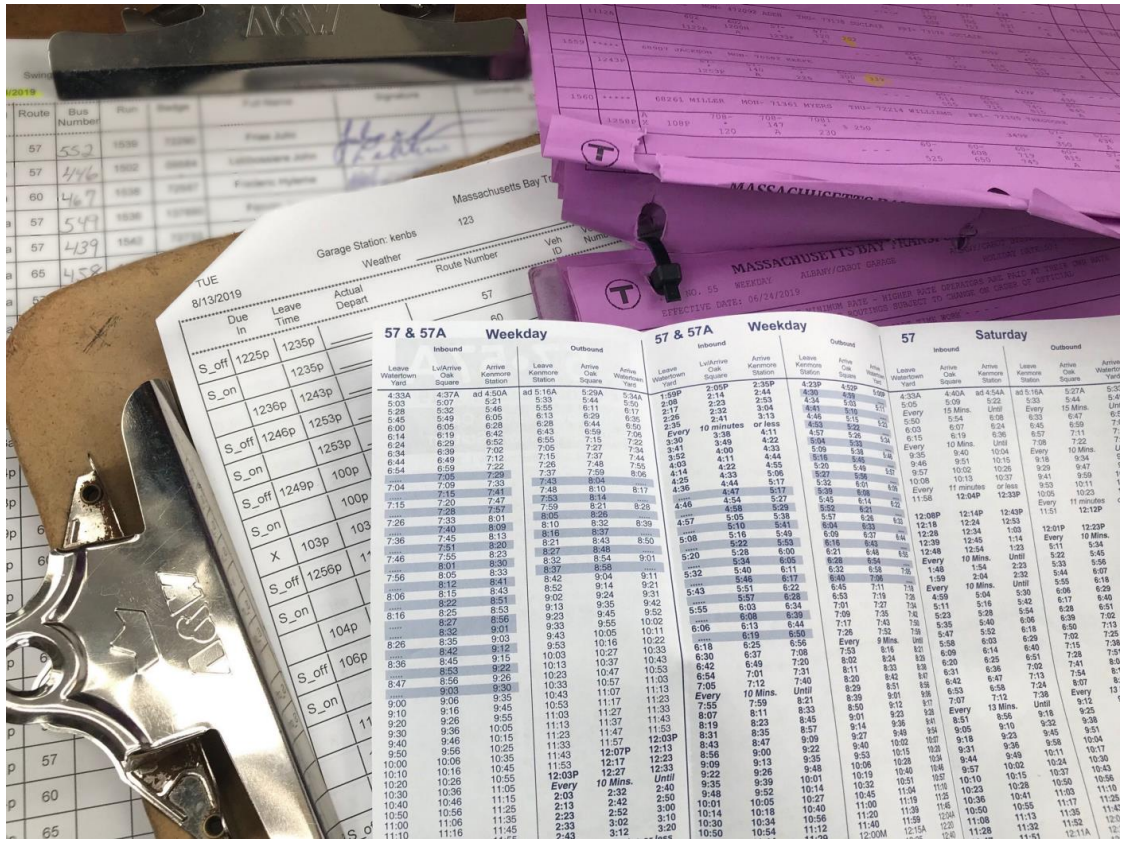
Photo of MBTA bus inspector

A lot of people run our bus system. They don't always have what they need.

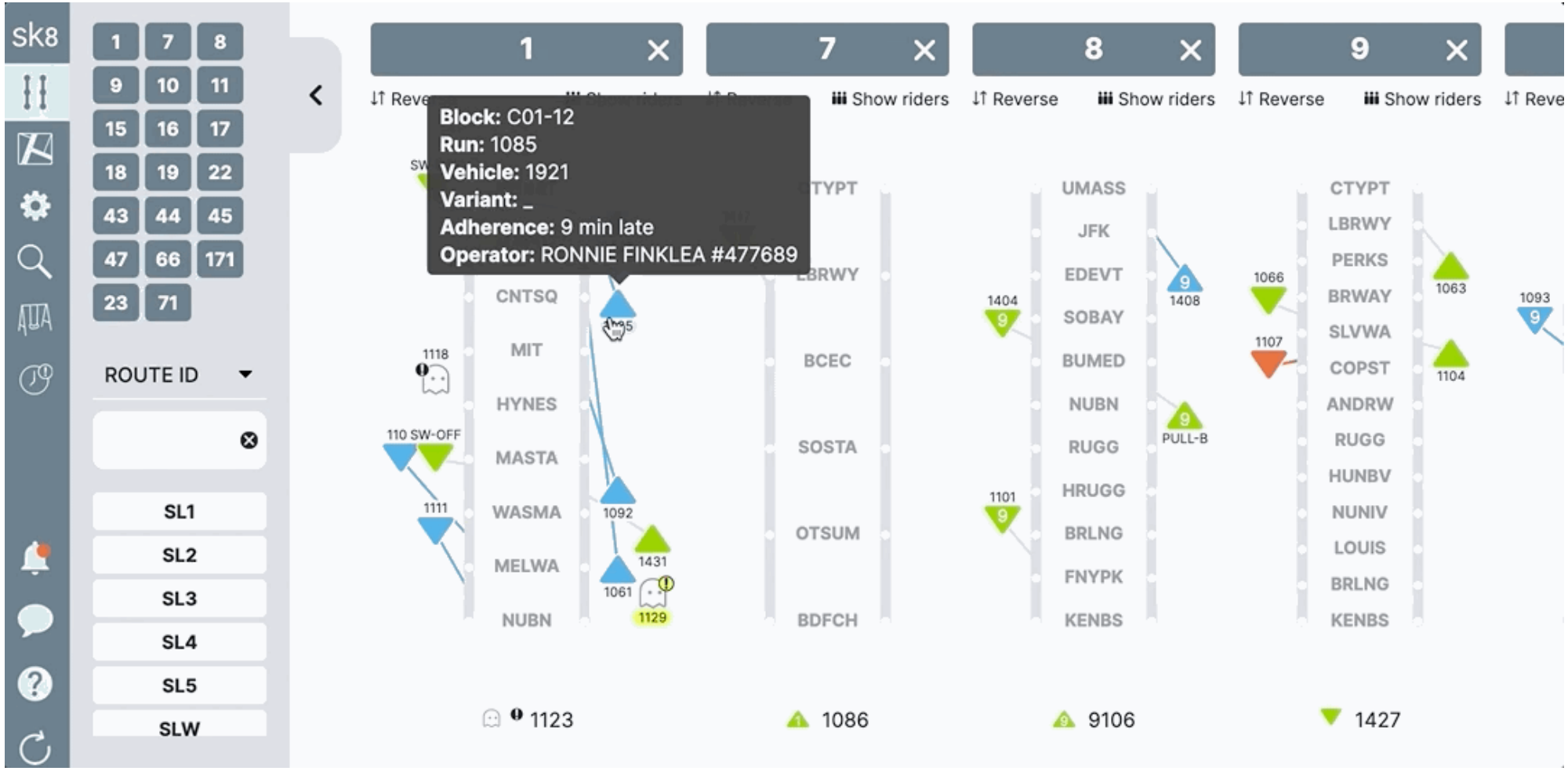
Meet your bus operations team

Bus operators
Station officials
Mobile officials
Pull out officials
Desk officials
Dispatchers
Supervisors
Instructors

and more...



What is Skate?



"With Citrix I had to remember how to do a million things. **Now it's just there. I push the button and it makes sense.**"

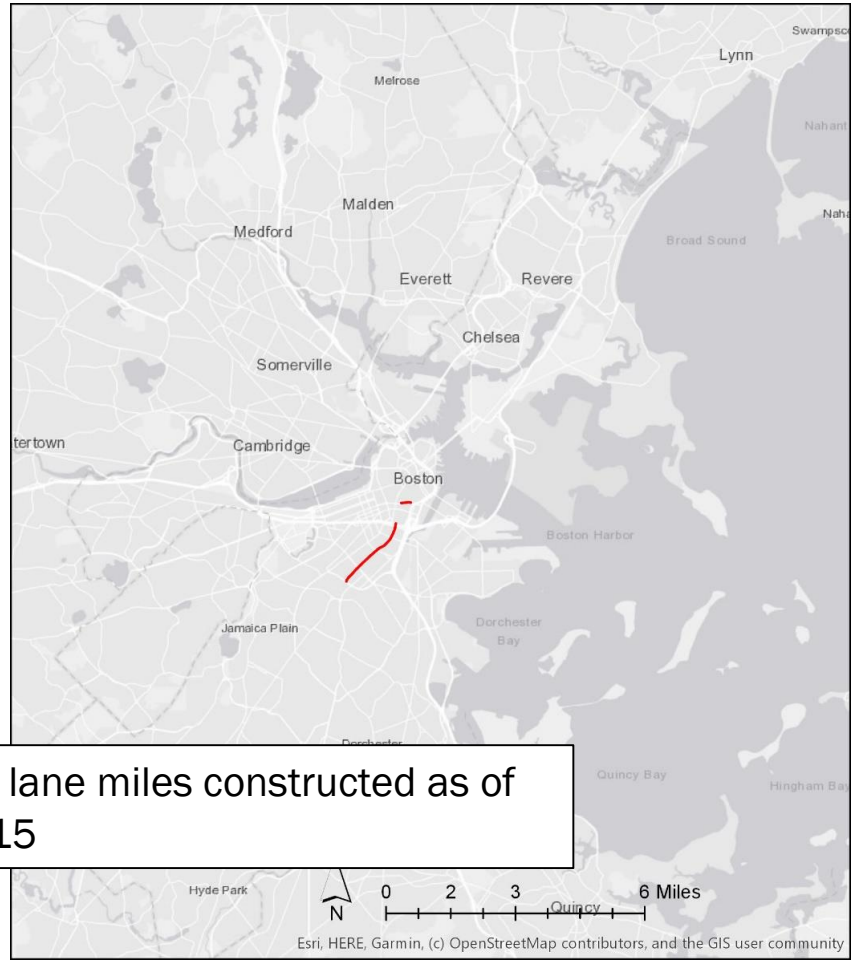
"The Citrix seems so in the past now... I was thinking, 'Remember that old machine that used to sit on the desk all day?' **It's easier to move around, to look at operators, to see where they are, who they are.**"

Transit Priority

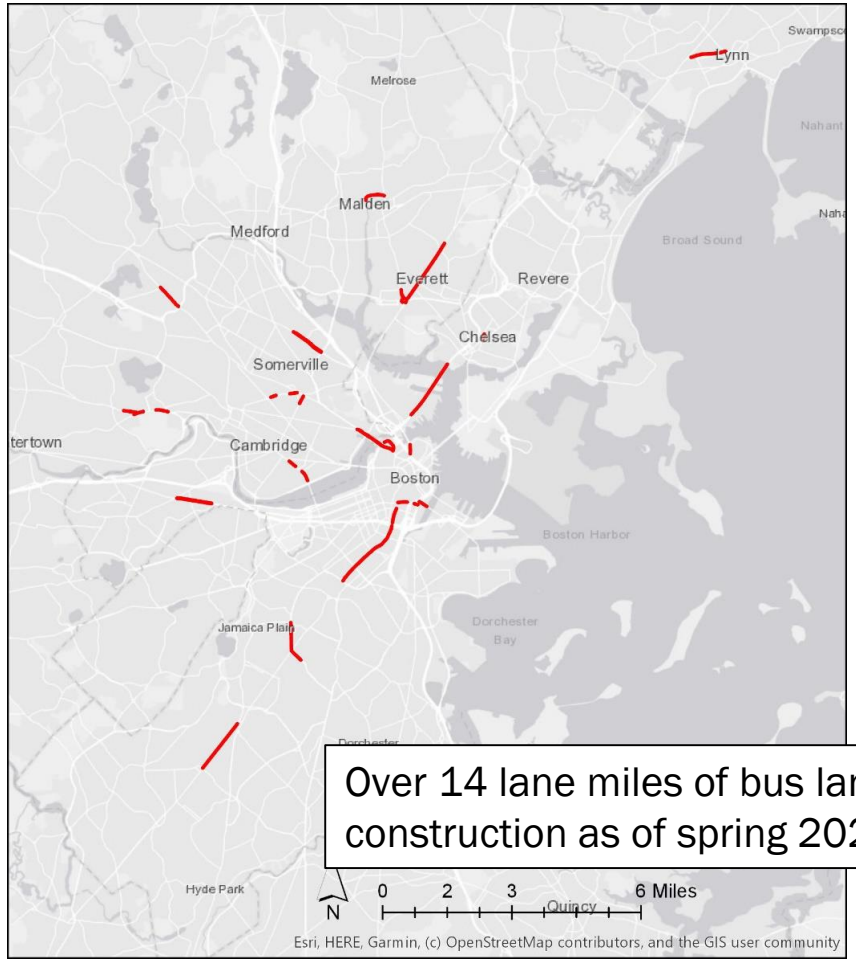
Eric Burkman, AICP
Director of Transit Priority
Operations Planning, Scheduling, and Strategy

Image of Columbus Ave Bus Lane Under Construction

Recent Bus Lanes Expansion



2.8 lane miles constructed as of 2015



Over 14 lane miles of bus lanes constructed/in-construction as of spring 2021; Includes pilots

New Partnerships and Regional Firsts

Welcoming new municipalities to the bus lane club!

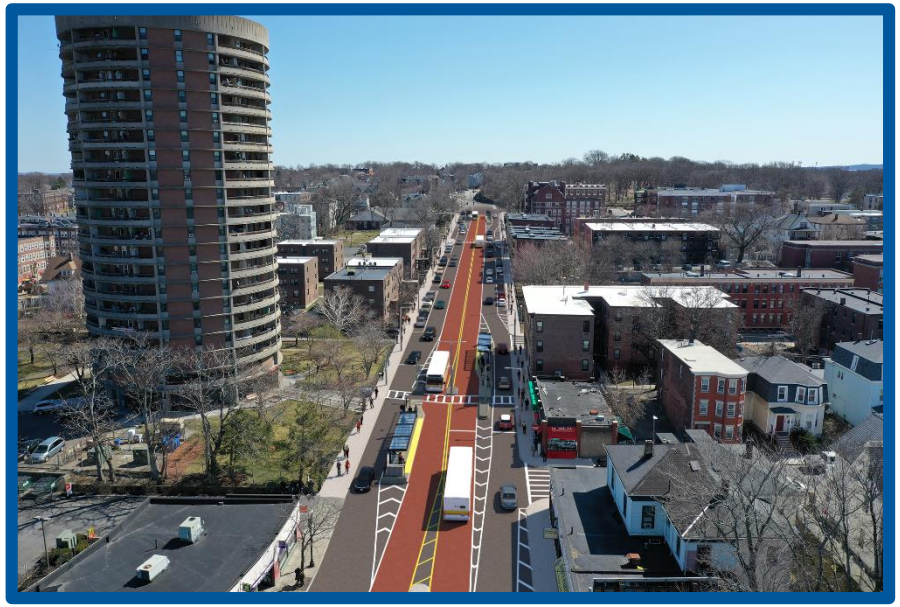
Florence St, Malden

N Common St, Lynn

Broadway, Chelsea

Upcoming Projects

- **Under construction & to be expanded:** Columbus Ave Center-running Bus Lane, Jamaica Plain/Roxbury
  - New type of bus lane facility for New England
  - High-quality facility type that includes:
    - Upgraded bus stop amenities
    - Traffic calming
    - Pedestrian accessibility improvements
  - Opening this fall!
  - Extension of facility to Ruggles
- Additional high-quality corridors
- Quicker-build projects
- Next Generation Transit Signal Priority



Photos of upcoming bus priority projects

Silver Line Extension

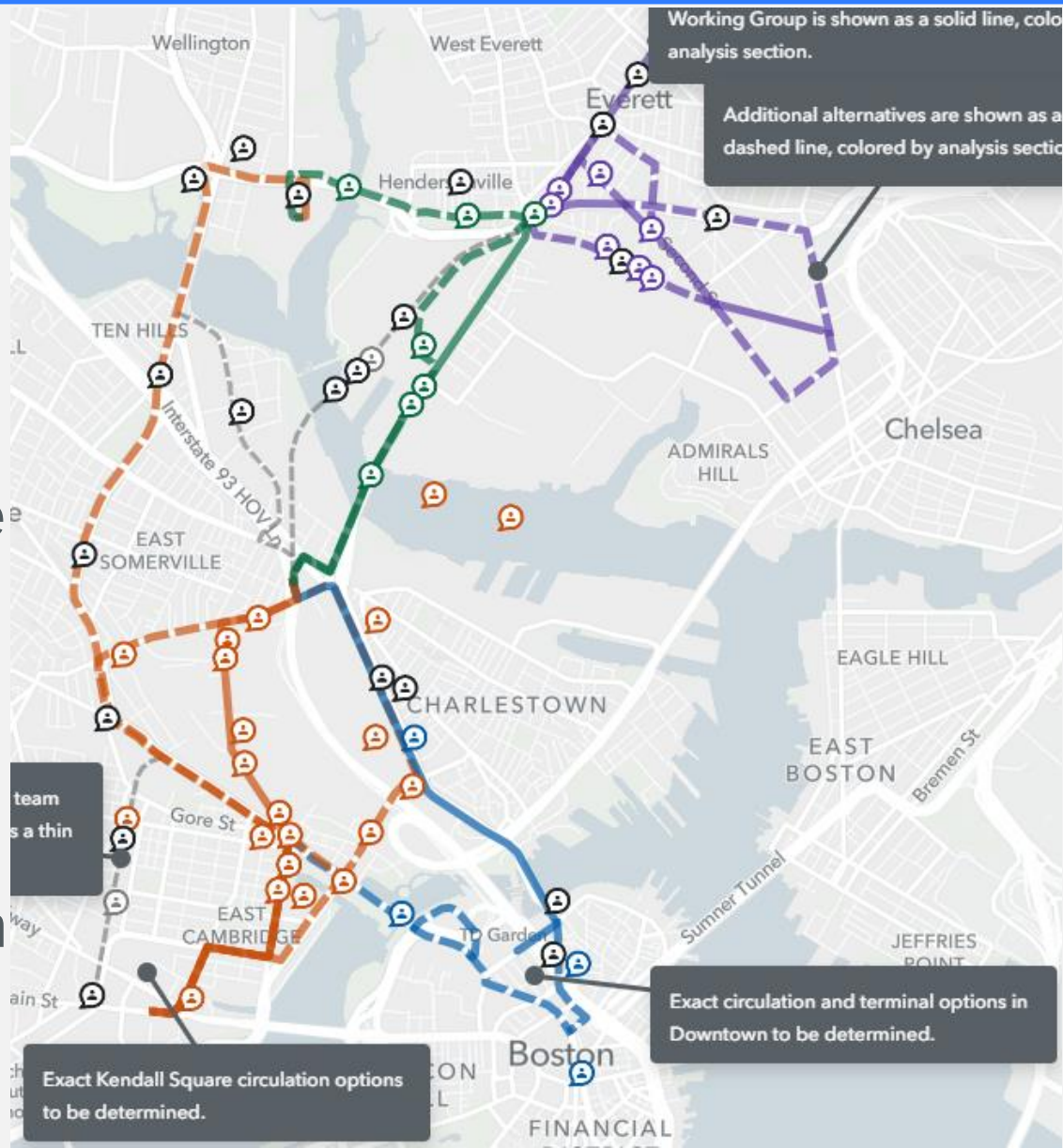
Doug Johnson, AICP
Transit Planner
MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning

Photo of the SL3

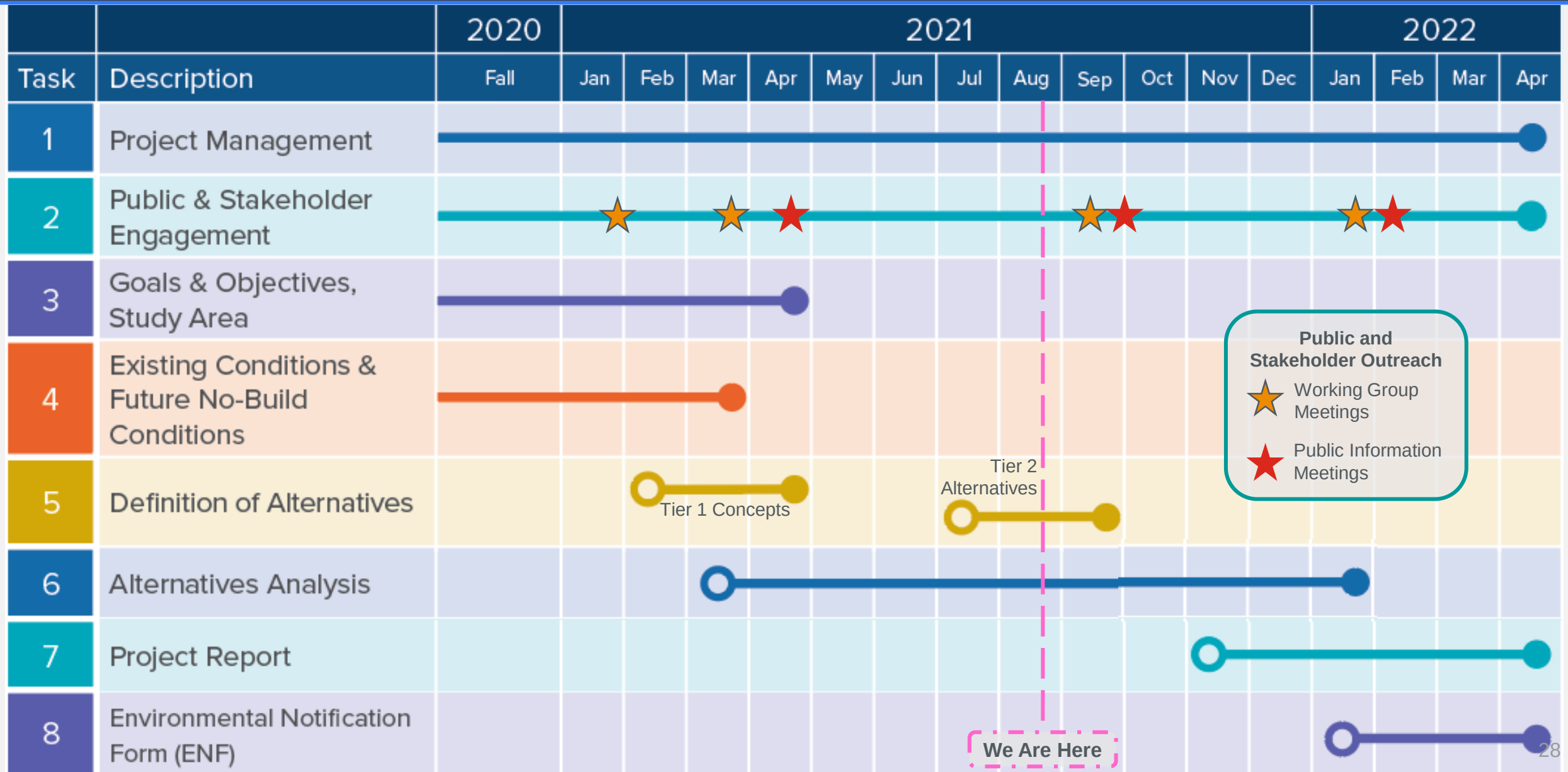
Silver Line Extension Alternatives Analysis

The ***purpose*** of the Silver Line Extension Alternatives Analysis is to assess the feasibility, utility, and cost of various alignment and service frequency options of an extension of the Silver Line, providing high quality transit from Chelsea through Everett and on to Somerville, Cambridge and/or Boston.

We have identified different alignments that a Silver Line Extension could use. We are evaluating these alignments and combining them into different Alternatives for further analysis.



Project Schedule



Next Steps

Tell us your ideas on our Online Feedback Form! (Links will be posted in the Zoom Breakout Room and on the project website.)

The next Public Information Meeting will be on **September 28, 2021**

Visit the project website for more information: mbta.com/slx

Fare Transformation

Heather Hume
Director of Transition
MBTA Fare Transformation

Anna Sangree
Equity & Sales Network Analyst
MBTA Fare Transformation

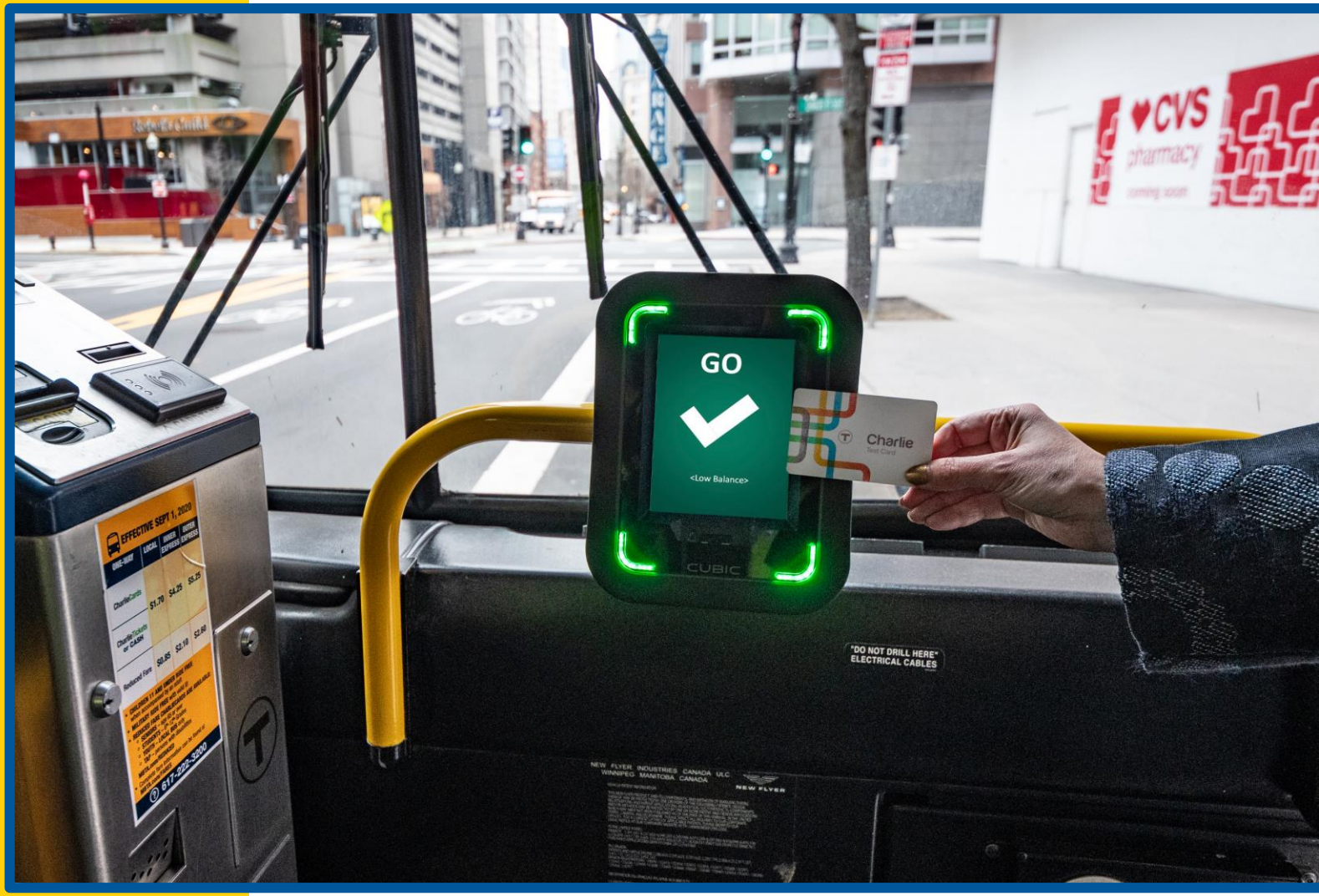


Image of new Charlie reader

Fare Transformation

Riders will see the benefits of Fare Transformation rolled out in five phases. This incremental approach allows us to be responsive to concerns and make the transition process more manageable for all stakeholders.

1 Key frustrations addressed

2020

- ✓ Tap on to Fairmount Line using my Charlie Card
- ✓ Get a new Charlie Card from a location in my community
- ✓ Pay the same fare regardless of whether I use a CharlieCard, CharlieTicket or pay with cash
- ✓ See fewer subway gates out of service or in need of repairs
- ✓ Take advantage of the new fare options being piloted

2 Easier to get a Charlie Card

2021

- Get a new Charlie Card from a vending machine at any subway station
- Apply for or renew a reduced fare pass more easily (for seniors, youth and persons with disabilities)
- See fares being collected consistently on Commuter Rail using gates at terminal stations

3 New ways to pay

2022

- Tap using my contactless credit card, Apple Pay or Google pay on the Orange Line, Green Line, and select bus routes
- Participate in a pilot and be the first to have the new Charlie Card and mobile app
- Board on the rear door on at the busiest stops on select bus routes
- Get a Charlie Card and reload at a growing number of retailers

4 Faster buses and Green Line trains

2023

- Tap using my mobile device, contactless credit card, or new Charlie Card on all bus and subway routes
- Board at any door on buses and Green Line trains
- Use the Charlie website to manage my account online
- Download the Charlie mobile app to view my balance and reload on the go
- Get a Charlie Card and reload at many bus stops and even more retail locations

5 Seamless payments on all modes

2024

- Use the same card to tap no matter where I travel
- Tap on and transfer between all MBTA modes (including Commuter Rail, ferry, subway and bus)
- My employer has new tools to manage the pass I get through work and I have self-service options to manage my own account
- See improvements to MBTA services overall, stemming from use of better ridership and revenue data

Fare Transformation – Expanded Fare Sales Locations

1 – Key frustrations addressed
2020

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Fare Transformation – Expanded Fare Sales Locations

Goal

- Equitably locate sales locations across the MBTA Network, to ensure access for riders who need them most

Guiding principles

- **Prioritize communities that use cash onboard today:** Riders who lack sales location access or who are unbanked
- **Prioritize high total ridership:** These are locations of high use with a demonstrated need for amenities
- **Prioritize seniors and riders with disabilities:** These are populations who cannot travel far to get to a sales location
- **Prioritize locations with high number of low-income and/or Black or Latinx riders:** These are riders who have been traditionally underserved by the banking and transportation systems
- **Incorporate geographic distribution to cover need across the network.** Recognizing the geographic diversity of our region so we can distribute sales locations evenly and ensure all communities have equal access.
- **Prioritize distributed sales location types, including retailers, fare vending machines and administrative points of sale at community organizations:** To ensure riders can access the type of location that works for them

Fare Transformation – Expanded Fare Sales Locations

Station fare vending machines

- Dispense Charlie Cards
- Reload Charlie Cards with passes and transit value
- Account inquiries, including account histories
- Transfer balance from temporary card to standard fare card
- Dispense cash from account credit
- Cash, credit & EBT accepted

Streetscape fare vending machines

- Dispense Charlie Cards
- Reload Charlie Cards with passes and transit value
- Cash, credit & EBT accepted
- Overpayment in cash is stored as account credit
- Account credit can be cashed out at a station fare vending machine or Account credit can remain in account for future travel use

Retail stores

- Dispense Charlie Cards
- Reload Charlie Cards with passes and transit value.
- All retailers must accept cash

Bus Fleet & Facilities Improvements

Scott Hamwey
Director of Bus Facility Modernization
MBTA Office of the Chief Engineer

Rendering of new Quincy Garage

Bus Transformation Goals: Fleet and Facilities

MBTA does not view fleet and facility decisions in isolation – they are an integrated strategy, with the following goals:

- **Convert the entire bus fleet to zero emissions technology** and implementation of associated facility investments in support of Commonwealth's carbon reduction goals (plan to achieve before 2040 presented to FMCB on April 26, 2021)
- **Modernize all bus maintenance facilities** to accommodate zero emissions technology and improve conditions for our workforce to support their efforts to keep our service reliable for our passengers
- **Transition to a more uniform bus fleet replaced on a predictable, annual timetable** to reduce capital, maintenance, and operations costs in support of fleet reliability for our passengers
- **Allow for an increase in fleet size** to position the MBTA's bus network redesign to meet the needs of growing ridership

The goals for the MBTA's Fleet and Facilities support the Bus Transformation's overall aim to center rider benefits through focus on equity, service, reliability, and sustainability.

MBTA Bus Facilities: Initial Priorities

New Quincy

Rationale: Existing facility only accommodates oldest diesel buses (currently already 12 - 15 years old); poor conditions hinder workforce ability to work effectively

Project Scope: New 120 bus facility on new site will usher in the modern era for the MBTA

- First fully BEB facility to support fully zero emissions fleet
- First all indoor facility, built with room to grow fleet size

Schedule: Demolition of Lowes warehouse 12/21; main construction contract begins in Spring 2022; project completion 2024

New Arborway

Rationale: 35% of households along routes served are low income and 55% are non-white; temporary facility built 20 years ago; existing CNG fleet to be retired at end of decade

Project Goals: New 200 bus BEB facility on existing site that allows for:

- Electrification of additional routes in Roxbury/Dorchester
- Upgrade overcrowded routes to higher capacity 60’ buses
- Partner with stakeholders to address other community goals on site

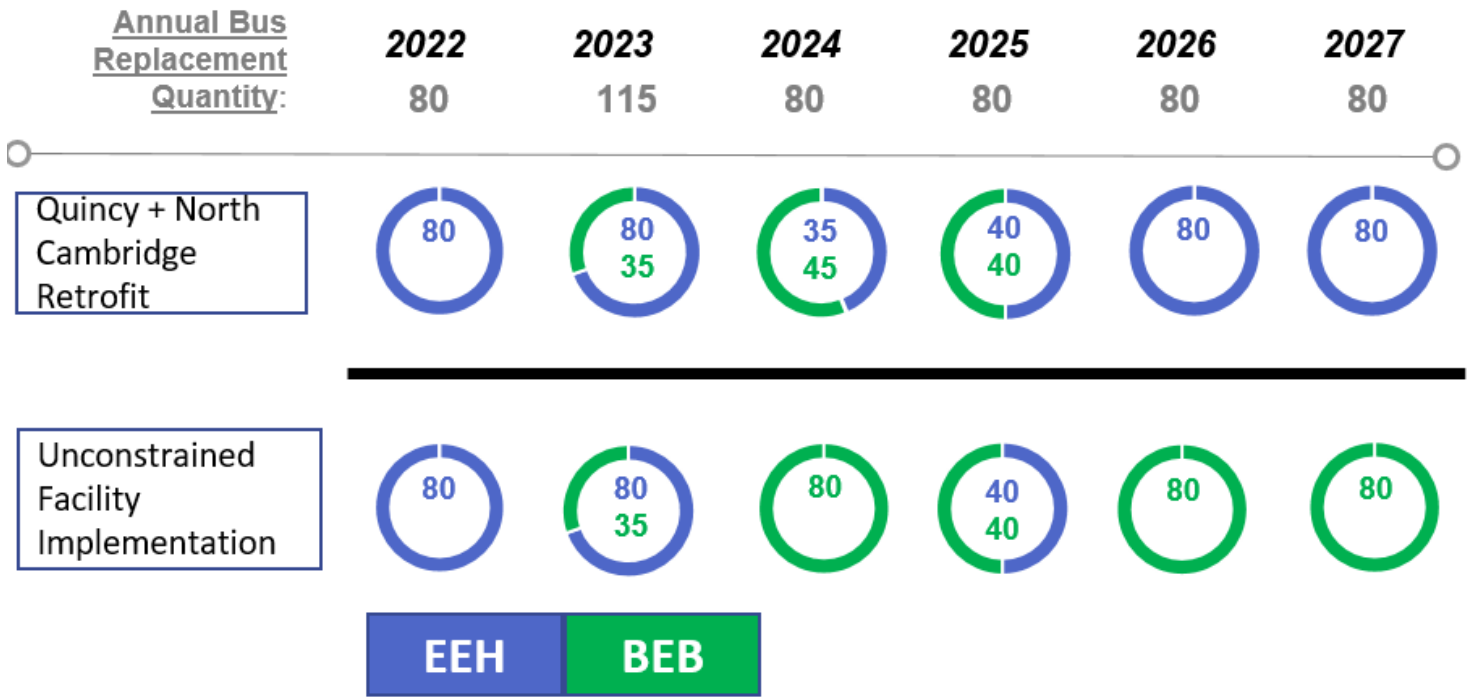
Schedule: Initiate community process and design effort in Fall 2021

North Cambridge too small for full modernization, but trolleybus retirement and multi-year roadway projects requiring overhead catenary removal will allow MBTA to retrofit existing facility for BEBs

MBTA Vehicle Procurement Strategy

MBTA to continue to modernize fleet and reduce emissions with 80 to 100 new buses per year. Parallel contracts* give flexibility to adjust EEH/BEB ratio, determined by facility BEB charging capacity

The pace of MBTA bus facility modernization efforts will govern the pace of bus electrification.



* MBTA Vehicle Engineering strategically plans each FTA-approved bus procurement contract - maximum 5 year duration

** Bus procurement options total 80-100 annually and will be split between the two available contracts

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

Improving Accessibility On & Off the Bus

Laura Brelsford

Asst. GM Systemwide Accessibility

MBTA Systemwide Accessibility

Kathryn Quigley

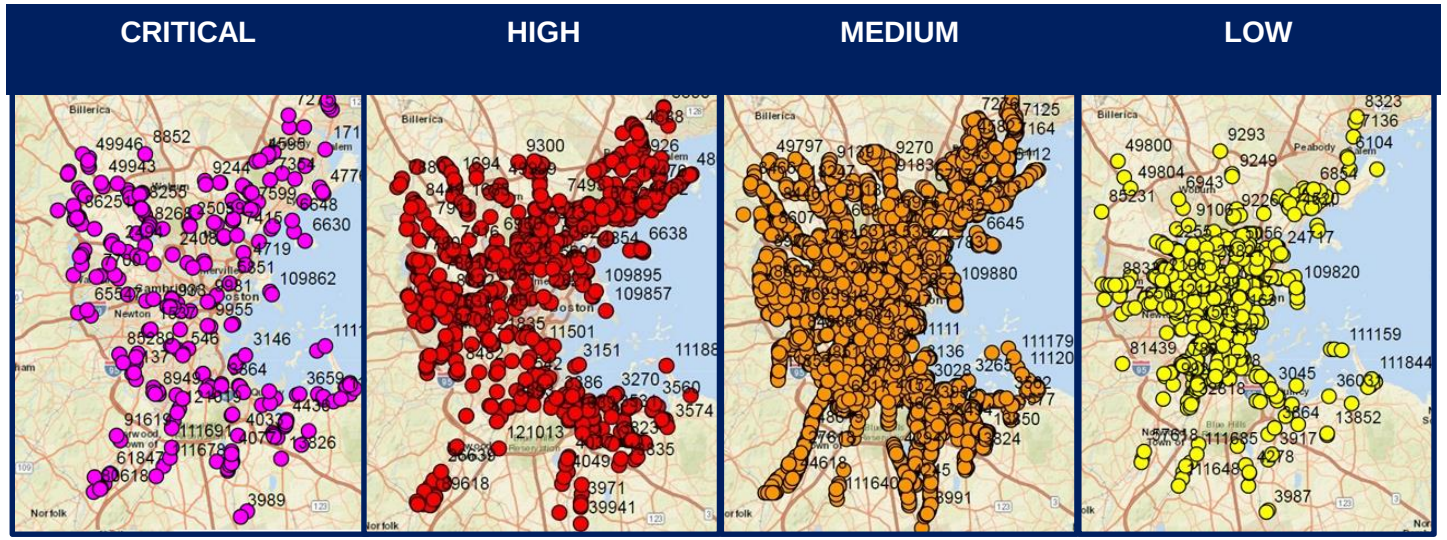
Deputy Director of Strategic Planning

MBTA Systemwide Accessibility

Photo of rider boarding bus with ramp

PATI | Plan for Accessible Transit Infrastructure

- **Survey** - All MBTA Bus Stops
- **Database** - All meaningful barriers to accessibility at stops, dimensions and amenities
- **Method** - With guidance from community stakeholders, establish a repeatable methodology for prioritizing access improvements
- **Plan** - Develop recommendations for expanding access system-wide over next 20 years
- **Barrier Removal** – Reconstruct critical and high priority stops and crossing between paired stops



Bus:
7690
Bus Stops Surveyed
51
Towns Impacted
184
Routes Covered

Municipal Ownership & Coordination:

- **99%** of bus stops are located on municipal property
- MBTA committed to address:
  - All critical stops with reconstruction (**81**) or stop elimination (**135**)
  - **255** High priority stops are in design/under construction4
  - **220** Medium/low priority stops are in design/under construction (paired with critical or high stops)

PATI | Bus Stop Reconstruction

Stop at time of PATI Survey (Before)

PATI stop reconstruction (After)

Stop 1623: West Boundary Road @ Cedarcrest Road, Hyde Park

PATI | Bus Stop Reconstruction

Stop at time of PATI Survey (Before)

PATI stop reconstruction (After)

Stop 1617: OPP Crown Point Drive, Hyde Park

PATI | Bus Stop Reconstruction

Stop at time of PATI Survey (Before)

PATI stop reconstruction (After)

Stop 8178: Watertown Square Terminal, Watertown

Bus Operator Accessibility Training

- Full-day training refreshed in Spring 2021
- Developed based on feedback from riders with disabilities as well as operators
- Will showcase new video on assisting riders with disabilities during emergencies

Automated Securement Pilot

Digital Screens & Other Stop Amenities

Karti Subramanian
Director of Digital Ride
MBTA Customer Technology

Photo of e-ink sign at Route 66 stop

Digital Screens & Other Stop Amenities

Solar-powered Electronic Ink (E Ink)

What we've done

- 18 signs in six municipalities that provide real-time arrival information at high-ridership stops
- Added real-time crowding info on the screens

What's up next

- ~20 more stops in 2021
- Add high-priority service alerts & other stop-specific information to the screens

Digital Screens & Other Stop Amenities

New “Gold-standard” Bus Shelters

What we’ve done

- Eight (8) new shelters on Columbus Ave, incl. seating, fare vending machines, & more *
- Real-time info with built-in audio-equivalence

What’s up next

- Add similar shelters to other bus priority corridors
- Add similar digital signage to other, high-impact locations

** Still under construction!*

Digital Screens & Other Stop Amenities

New “Street Furniture” Program

What we’ve done

- New partnership with Intersection to deliver rider amenities at bus stops & raise new revenue
- Co-investment opportunity with municipalities for system-wide rollout

What’s up next

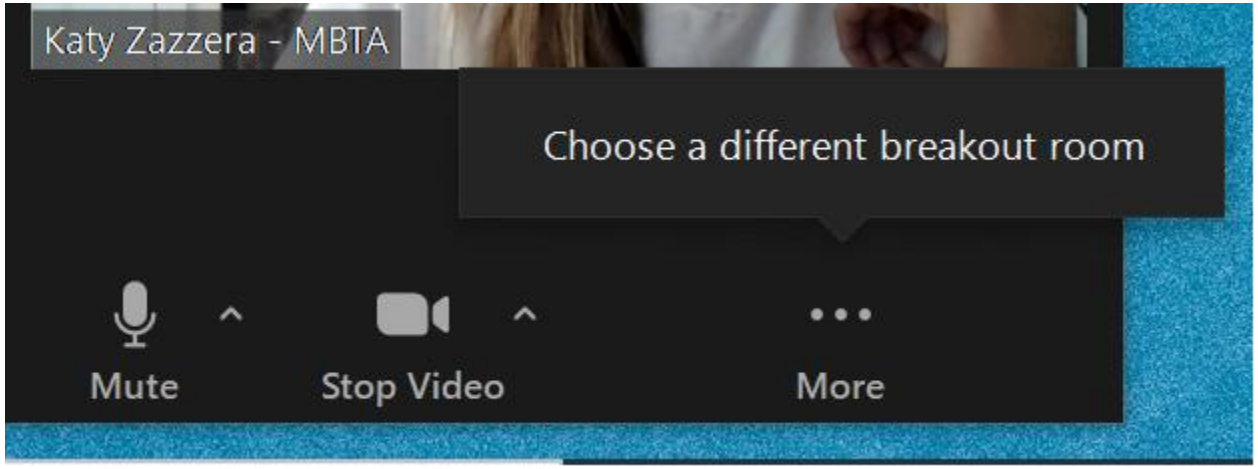
- First two kiosks planned for Winter 2021/2022
- Additional kiosks & new bus shelters in 2022+

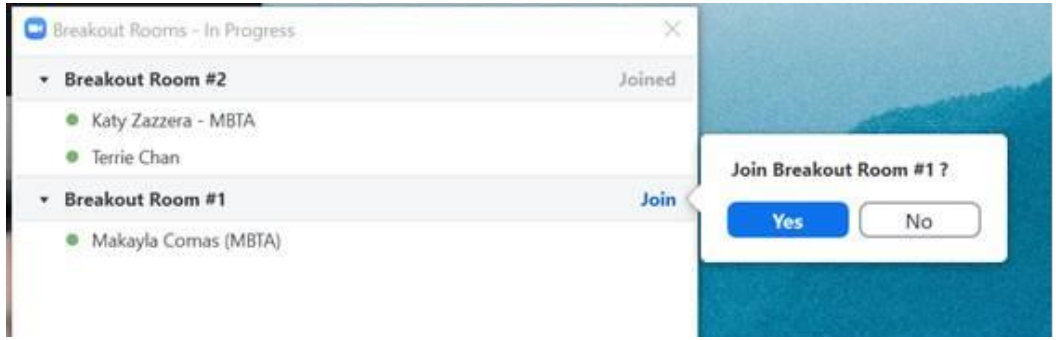
** Renderings of Intersection “Street Furniture” from LA & Philadelphia*

Breakout Sessions

Breakout Logistics

- Shortly we'll open up the breakout rooms, where you can engage staff on various projects.
- You will be able to select which Breakout Room you'd like to join.
- Find the project you'd like to join, then select "Join"
- Please chat tech support for any issues
- The Breakout Sessions will last for 15-20 minutes, and attendees may move between breakout rooms



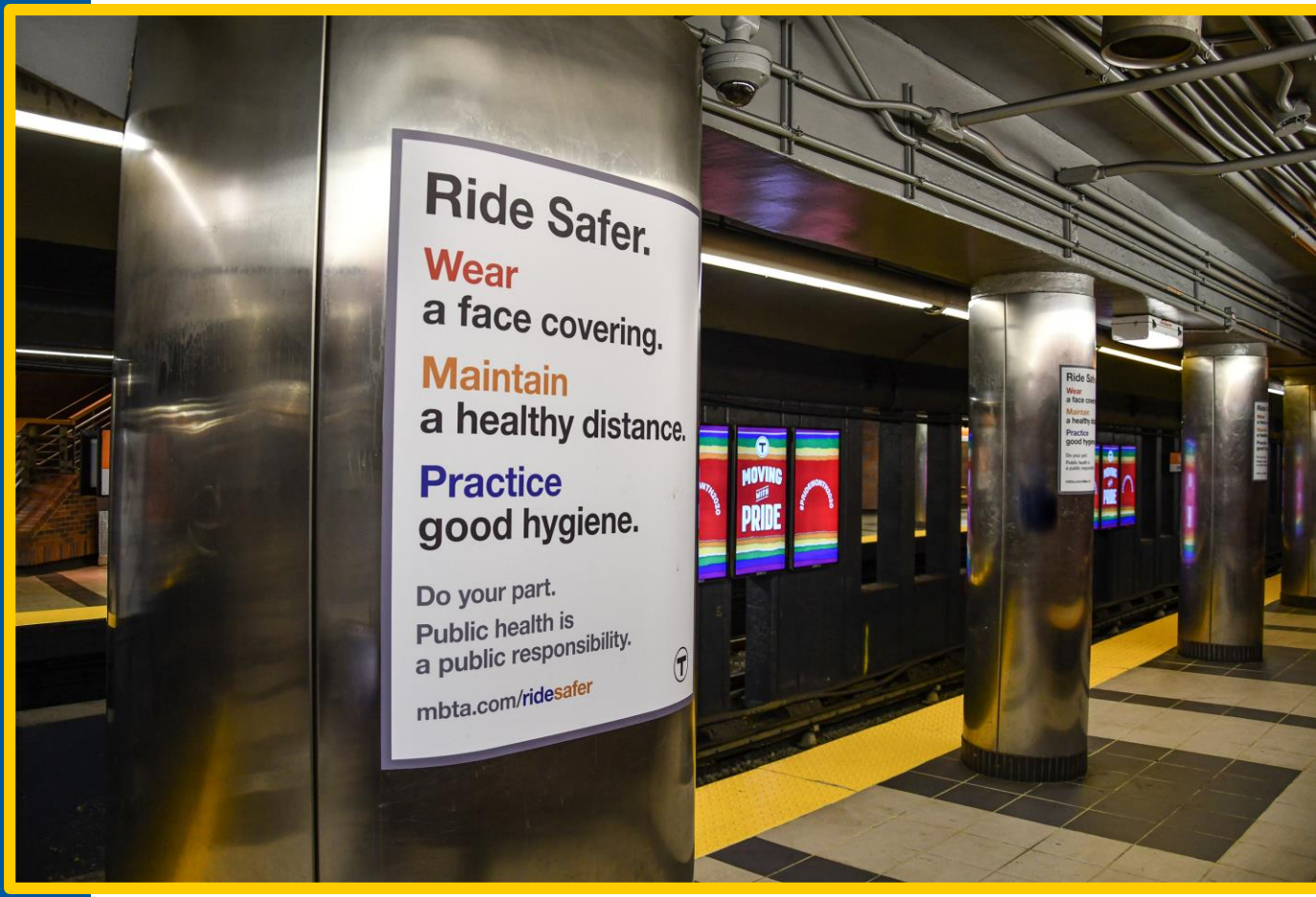


Continue Getting Involved

- MBTA Customer Opinion Panel:
  - Whether or not you've been riding the T recently, your input can help us ensure we're prepared to respond to the changing transportation needs of the region.
  - Join our monthly customer opinion panel survey to give us feedback about how we're doing, what we can do better, and how we can plan for the future.
- www.mbta.com/survey

- Upcoming Events:
  - Late September: Silver Line Extension Public Meeting
  - Late October: Bus Network Redesign Public Meeting
- More details at www.mbta.com/events

Thank you!

Email us at betterbus@mbta.com.

www.mbta.com/betterbus