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Dear Riders,

Welcome to our semi-annual update on the major accessibility initiatives underway here at the MBTA. As always, our first update of the year coincides with the emergence of warmer weather across the state. And that, for many of us, brings renewed opportunities to connect safely to the people, places, and activities we love. Because we know the critical role public transit plays in making this possible, we're continually finding new ways to ensure that getting there on the MBTA is a safe, reliable, and accessible experience.

To that end, we are pleased to share our progress on projects we've had in the works at the MBTA. Here are some of the highlights:

- Renovations at Brookline Hills have been completed and the station is now fully accessible
- The installation of automated door openers at all subway stations is nearing completion
- Customer Information Displays that contain real-time information, including elevator alerts, are rolling out across the subway system
- Designs are being finalized for the construction of a fully accessible connection between the Red and Orange Lines at Downtown Crossing
- Preparations are underway to move forward with major accessibility improvements at Ruggles and Symphony stations this fall

And in addition to the initiatives within this report, there's more progress coming in the year ahead—from the expansion of Transit Ambassadors throughout stations, to [the comprehensive redesign of our bus network](#), to [the full opening of the long-awaited GLX](#).

As always, these initiatives were selected based in no small part on priorities identified by you, our riders. If you would like further details about any accessibility project, or if you have suggestions for new ones, we'd love for you to get in touch at [swa@mbta.com](mailto:swa@mbta.com).

Thank you for your continued partnership as we move ever closer to the goal of a 100% accessible MBTA.

Sincerely,

Laura Brelsford & the System-Wide Accessibility Team  
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## INFRASTRUCTURE

### Subway Stations:

#### 1. Oak Grove Station Upgrades

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

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

#### 2. Ruggles Phase II – Design

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

Update: The design for this project is expected to reach 100% in June 2022. Construction funding has been allocated in the draft Capital Investment Plan (CIP) which will be reviewed by the Board of Directors this May. I. Construction is anticipated to start in 2023. The construction phasing and schedule is currently being developed.

#### 3. Newton Highlands Station

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

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

#### 4. Brookline Hills

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

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

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

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

Update: Conceptual designs have been completed for all four stations. Designs are expected to reach 100% in fall 2022, with construction to be completed in early 2024.

## 7. Symphony Station

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

Update: The overarching station design has been completed and the 100% design for utility work is expected to be completed in July 2022, with utility work expected to begin in September. Station construction is planned to start in fall 2023. Additionally, the Green Line Transformation team is working with the City of Boston to develop a separate bicycle plan that will become part of the project.

## 8. Hynes Station

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

Update: The station design is currently at the 30% phase. Designs for the headhouses at Boylston St. and Massachusetts Ave. are in progress, as are the proposed changes to convert the Newberry St. exit into an entrance. The station will include redundant elevators, as well as an area of rescue assistance and upgraded restrooms. Additionally, designs are underway to modify the existing pedestrian tunnel below Massachusetts Ave. to make it accessible from the west side of Massachusetts Ave. to Hynes Station.

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

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

Update: Throughout 2018 and 2019, the MBTA conducted track replacement along parts of the Green Line B and C branches. As part of that work, portions of the platforms were removed and replaced, motivating additional work to make them accessible. Conceptual designs are underway

for all affected platforms, and early timelines project that depending on the stop, construction will begin between 2023 and 2024.

## 10. Station Wayfinding

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

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

## 11. 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: Capital Delivery remains in the process of installing automated door openers at all subway stations. As of May 2022, 24 of the 32 stations have been completed. The remaining stations are expected to be addressed by the end of the summer.

## 12. Path of Travel Improvements

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

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

## 13. “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 defined technical requirements for a solution that allows a rider to “tap” their CharlieCard for entry at subway stations without any physical interaction with the card or gate. The vendor responsible for overseeing the implementation of the new fare collection system continues to advance the design of the new technology and its integration into existing accessible fare gates. The next step in the design process is for a working prototype of the gate to be set up in the Fare Transformation test lab, where it will undergo user testing with MBTA customers. The MBTA is working with the vendor to finalize the cost and schedule for full deployment.

## Commuter Rail Stations:

### 1. Mansfield Station

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

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

### 2. Natick Center Station

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

Update: Construction of the two ramps at the east end of the station is underway. Full station accessibility, of which the ramps are a key component, will be achieved at the anticipated fall 2022 completion of construction. Other work includes ongoing upgrades to the electrical infrastructure for the station and preparation to construct temporary platforms.

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

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

Update: The 30% design for these stations was submitted and reviewed in early spring 2022. Design is expected to be completed by April 2023.

### 4. Winchester Station

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

Update: The construction Notice to Proceed was issued in December 2021, with construction beginning on-site in early May. The project is expected to be finalized in April 2024. The station remains closed for construction, with nearby Wedgemere Station serving as the primary alternative for commuters.

### 6. Worcester Union

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

Update: The construction Notice to Proceed was issued on November 29, 2021, with anticipated final completion in December 2023. The accessible temporary platform was commissioned on March 12, 2022, for use during the project.

## 7. Lynn Station

Scope: Lynn Commuter Rail Station will be reviewed and upgraded to address a number of elements, including the station platform and vertical circulation.

Update: The consultant has presented the 30% design to the MBTA and has received design feedback. The new station will have two new enlarged elevators, a new full high-level platform, and a new canopy. The 100% design submission is expected in August 2022.

## 8. South Attleboro Station

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

Update: MBTA Commuter Rail service to South Attleboro Station has been temporarily suspended (as of February 26, 2021) due to the structural condition of the pedestrian bridge; service will remain suspended until the station is fully renovated. The South Attleboro Station parking lots are open for customers. RIPTA and GATRA bus service is still in operation to and from the South Attleboro Station area. The 100% design was submitted in April 2022, and the MBTA is currently looking at options to fund the construction of the station.

## 9. North Wilmington Station

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

Update: Pending an FTA review of the conceptual design and operational plan, design work is expected to be substantially completed by end of 2022, with construction to follow.

## 10. Maintenance of Mini-High Platforms

Scope: An evaluation of the conditions of mini-highs throughout the Commuter Rail network will be conducted and required repairs will be advanced.

Update: Survey work of mini-highs was completed. Repairs to existing mini-highs that did not require significant structural work have been completed. Capital Delivery is working to establish an on-call contract to address mini-highs that require more complex solutions. The mini-highs at Beverly Station are currently under design.

## 11. Detectable Warnings on Commuter Rail Platforms

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

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

## 12. Commuter Rail Bridge Plates

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

Update: As a first step toward identifying the most appropriate bridgeplate design, a system-wide survey will be conducted of each Commuter Rail platform and Commuter Rail coach, as well as of the platform gaps resulting from the relationship between the platforms and train cars. Following this data collection, concepts for a universal bridgeplate design will be developed and tested. The MBTA remains in the process of developing contract language to begin this work.

### Vertical Transportation:

#### 1. Forest Hills Phase II

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

Update: The new headhouse and elevator on the southwest corridor park, which provides a second accessible entrance to the Orange Line platform, opened on November 5, 2019, under the Phase I project. The design for the broader station upgrades—including the new elevator between the upper and lower busways and the replacement of the existing elevators—is underway and is expected to be completed in late 2022.

#### 2. Ruggles Phase I

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 6. Vertical Transportation Study

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

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

Update: For this study, the MBTA has procured the engineering consultants WSP and Lerch Bates. These firms are leading the effort to assess all current conditions of elevators and escalators, in addition to developing a long-term plan for system maintenance and modernization. As of May 2022, evaluations of all vertical transportation assets within the rapid transit system have been completed. The team is currently working to finalize the database, which captures key facts for each unit along with recommended timeframes for upgrades/replacement. Also underway

is a line-by-line report summarizing the state of the units, and a capital planning report which will include strategies, technologies, and improvements the MBTA can consider in replacing units system-wide—including repair versus replacement strategies, ways to expedite construction, and more.

## 7. Urine Detection Sensor Pilot

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

**Update:** The development of a prototype device was undertaken in 2020 and a demonstration was conducted in early 2021. A larger-scale pilot is planned for summer 2022, in which devices will be installed in five elevators in the downtown area.

## 8. Customer Information Displays in Station Lobbies

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

**Update:** The Customer Technology department has successfully procured the hardware and developed the software necessary for this project. As of May 2022, large digital displays have been installed and are operational at Government Center, Tufts, Maverick, Back Bay, Forest Hills, and Wellington Stations. All displays include push-button audio access for blind/low vision riders; the MBTA will be seeking ongoing feedback from these riders about how to optimize this feature. Deployment of displays throughout the subway network will continue throughout the year.

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

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

**Update:** The Customer Technology team is in the final stages of securing the hardware necessary for installation of the displays at four Forest Hills Station elevators, for a total of eight screen locations (two displays per elevator, one on each level served). These displays are expected to be operational by the end of summer 2022.

## Bus Stops:

### 1. Critical Stops

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

**Update:** To date, 55 of these priority stops have been fully reconstructed and an additional 24 are either under design or construction. Another 12 stops will be upgraded as part of outside

municipal projects. Additionally, 128 have been or will be eliminated due to safety concerns and/or extremely low ridership. The remaining critical stops will move into design in FY 23.

## 2. High Priority Stops

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

**Update:** To date, 19 of the high priority stops have been fully reconstructed and an additional 187 are either under design or construction. Another 16 stops will be upgraded as part of outside municipal projects. Additionally, 85 have been or will be eliminated due to safety concerns and/or extremely low ridership. The remaining critical stops will move into design as funding becomes available.

**Note:** In addition to the critical and high priority stops that have been rebuilt, another 48 stops have been reconstructed to improve accessibility. These have typically been stops that are directly across from stops that were reconstructed.

## 3. Bus Stop Amenities

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

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

# VEHICLES

## 1. Deployment of New Orange Line Vehicles

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

Update: The first new Orange Line cars went into service in summer 2019. In 2021, due to a derailment on the Orange Line involving the new cars, the MBTA took the precautionary measure of removing both the new Orange Line and Red Line cars from passenger service until a thorough evaluation could determine what led to the incident.

The Vehicle Engineering team, along with other internal and external stakeholders, managed the evaluation process of both the cars and infrastructure. Once the root cause was determined and necessary adjustments were made, the new Orange Line cars began returning to limited service in August 2021 and were back in full service by early 2022.

In addition to the six new trainsets operating on the Orange Line today, more new cars are being delivered by the manufacturer on a regular basis and are undergoing preparation to join the in-service fleet.

## 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 PAVMS system, and other accessibility improvements.

Update: The first new Red Line cars went into service in December 2020. As described above, due to a 2021 derailment involving new Orange Line cars, the MBTA took the precautionary measure of removing both the new Orange Line and Red Line cars from service until a thorough evaluation could determine what led to the incident. The root cause was identified and necessary adjustments made.

In early 2022, the new Red Line cars were returned to full passenger service. The manufacturer continues to deliver new cars that are being reviewed by Vehicle Engineering.

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

Scope: The MBTA will design and procure the next-generation Green Line train. The procurement will be for vehicles to replace the Type 7 and Type 8 fleets. Vehicles will be 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 to ensure all key accessibility considerations were captured. The RFP was released in December 2019 and proposals from core builders were received in August 2021. Proposals are undergoing evaluation by the MBTA's selection committees. It is expected that during the summer of 2022, a car builder will be selected to begin work.

## 4. New Securement System – Pilot

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

Update: A new automatic securement system called [Quantum](#) was installed on 10 of the MBTA's newest buses, which went into service on Route 111 in February 2021. A customer feedback survey remains in place on buses with the Quantum securement system to help inform decisions about its use in future bus procurements. Four "on the road" open houses were held throughout

the fall of 2021 in order to collect additional feedback. Recommendations regarding the future use of the new securement system will be developed in spring/summer 2022.

## **TRAININGS**

### **1. Bus Operations**

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

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

The R-TAG customer engagement group and the Daniels-Finegold plaintiffs' group were actively engaged throughout the process of developing the new training materials. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the filming of first-person videos featuring customers with disabilities had been underway; however, for the safety of all participants, the video shoots were postponed. Alternate content presenting the customer perspective was developed and is being used for the training in the interim. As of May 2022, SWA is back in the process of filming these videos and expects to incorporate them into the training later this summer.

### **2. Subway Operations**

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

Update: SWA and Subway Operations collaborated to develop an entirely new accessibility training for all new hires. The training, which was modeled on the Bus Operations 8-hour Accessibility Certification training, was launched in July 2021. Customer feedback via an online survey, as well as several meetings with R-TAG and the Daniels-Finegold plaintiffs' group, helped inform both specific content and the thematic direction of the new training. SWA is currently in the process of filming short videos that will be incorporated into the training in summer 2022.

### **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: Following the development of the Subway Operations training described above, SWA began working with the Customer Experience department on opportunities to enhance training provided to Transit Ambassadors. The draft training has largely been completed, with feedback provided by R-TAG and the plaintiffs' group. The contract for the Transit Ambassador program is currently being rebid, with a contractor expected to be selected in spring 2022. All new Transit

Ambassador hires will be required to attend the enhanced accessibility training as part of this new contract.

#### 4. Transit Police

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

Update: Development of the curriculum for a disability-based training program for Transit Police Officers is complete. Plans were initially in place to hold four training classes for Transit Police Officers (with a commitment of 9-10 officers), as well as for Boston and Cambridge Police Officers, beginning in summer 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the classes were postponed and next steps are currently being discussed.

### **CUSTOMER COMMUNICATION / OUTREACH**

#### 1. Notifying Customers of Upcoming Work

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

Update: The MBTA has issued a new [Public Engagement Plan](#) that addresses how the MBTA notifies and engages with customers about changes affecting service. A companion to the policy document is being drafted, detailing ways for employees to ensure that outreach is conducted in a successful and inclusive manner. This will include detailed protocols related to everything from temporarily relocating a bus stop to soliciting rider feedback regarding a major station redesign.

#### 2. Marketing Campaign

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

Update: The MBTA had contracted with an advertising agency to assist SWA and Customer Experience in the design and deployment of a marketing campaign for fixed-route access. In the fall of 2019, campaign goals and concepts were developed, and both R-TAG and the BCIL plaintiffs provided feedback and direction to the team. Media and outreach strategies were underway, with the intention of a campaign launch in fall 2020. However, given the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, the campaign will be reimaged and rescheduled for a tentative launch date of fall 2022.

#### 3. Audio & Visual Equivalency Policy

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

Update: The Customer Technology department, in conjunction with SWA, has developed a working set of guidelines regarding audio/visual equivalency policy, and has identified known best

practices and practical solutions for a range of scenarios. One of the key takeaways in talking to blind/low-vision riders, as well as digital signage manufacturers and out-of-home advertising companies, is that there is no universal solution for audio-equivalence for digital signage. Because of this, audio/visual equivalence will be achieved using a variety of solutions, depending on a variety of factors (screen hardware, location, informational context, etc.), and the guidelines will be updated to reflect emerging best practices.

#### 4. Stop Announcements on Bus

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

Update: SWA, Service Planning and Bus Operations have worked together to develop a policy that requires Operators to contact the Operations Control Center as soon as possible if any issue arises involving the automated stop announcement system so that an alternate vehicle can be secured. Operators are required to make manual announcements for all stops along the route, with particular emphasis on major intersections and transfer points. As part of the Bus Network Design process, the MBTA will work to further refine what specific stops, route by route, are most critical to be manually announced if the automated system fails.

#### 5. Improved Coordination with Cities and Towns

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

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

Since that time, SWA, Service Planning and others have been working to develop guidelines to formalize processes for messaging to and collaborating with municipalities around issues affecting accessibility. A survey was distributed to local municipal partners in order to update contact information; in addition, a protocol was established that encourages municipalities to contact the MBTA if they are planning any work adjacent to a bus stop or station, in order to help ensure accessibility-related considerations are incorporated. Future communications to municipal partners will include information on snow removal at bus stops as well as the importance of ensuring that bus stops are not obstructed by illegally parked or idling vehicles.

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

Scope: Historically, SWA's travel training program (focused on empowering riders to use the fixed-route system) has been managed separately from The RIDE (paratransit) eligibility center and eligibility process. That will change in 2022, when the MBTA will be launching a new Mobility Center that serves to help older adults and riders with disabilities learn more about all of the accessible mobility options available to them based on their own unique needs. The center will

house the paratransit eligibility process, new travel training services (virtual and in person), and assistance with trip planning, as well as a streamlined reduced-fare acquisition process. The center will also assist in holding outreach events with local communities and organizations.

Update: In December 2021, the MBTA awarded the Mobility Center contract to MTM Transportation. Mobilization efforts are currently underway and the center will open for business on July 1, 2022. The center will be accessible through a number of channels, including its physical location at 1000 Massachusetts Avenue. Complete information regarding its services will be shared later this spring/summer.

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

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

Update: A consultant, Howard Stein Hudson, was selected in fall 2021 to support SWA in the development of an outreach plan. Two surveys—the first to community organizations, and the second to riders—were distributed in early 2022 with the aim of identifying preferred means of learning about accessibility improvements. Updated outreach materials, including brief training videos and printed materials, will be created and will incorporate best practices identified, and a plan will be issued this fall.

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

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

Update: As of May 2022, the MBTA has launched online applications for the Senior CharlieCard (eligible riders age 65 and older) and Youth Pass CharlieCard (eligible riders age 18-25). Online applications for the Blind Access CharlieCard (eligible riders who are legally blind) and Transportation Access Pass (eligible riders with disabilities) are under development and expected to be available later this year,

## SYSTEM-WIDE OVERSIGHT

### 1. Maintenance and Barrier Reporting

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

Update: SWA and the Engineering and Maintenance department have worked together to identify each of the accessibility-related barrier types that need to be coded into Trapeze, the new maintenance database. Programming has been completed and sample reports are under development. As part of this process, timelines for the expected resolution of each barrier type have been reviewed and modified, if needed.

## 2. The Design Guidelines for Accessibility

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

Update: Throughout 2021, SWA and the Design Guide Working Group of internal stakeholders met regularly to draft and review content related to the MBTA's standards for accessible and inclusive design. Early chapters, including those that cover requirements for project scoping and accessible routes, are expected to be finalized and online in summer 2022.

## 3. 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 conducted pilot testing of various methods of monitoring snow removal that included the active assessment of bus stops at various intervals post-snowfall as well as monitoring of contractor progress in real time via an online reporting tool. These methods will be formally integrated into the program's protocols as we head into Winter 2022/2023.

## INITIATIVES RECENTLY IDENTIFIED AS COMPLETE IN PRIOR REPORTS

### 1. Wollaston Station Renovation

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

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

### 2. Downtown Crossing Phase I

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

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

### 3. Andrew 857, 858, 859

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

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

### 4. Forest Hills Phase I

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

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

### 5. Harvard 821

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 7. Central 861

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

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

## 8. Bus Evacuation Drills

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

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

## 9. Transit Education

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

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

## 10. Fixed-Route Brochure

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

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

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

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

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

## 12. Building a Virtual Travel Training Experience

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

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

## 13. Transit Education - UMASS Medical School

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### 15. Chelsea Station

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

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

#### 16. Priority Seating Decals on Subway

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

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

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

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

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

#### 18. Elevator Cleanliness

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### 20. System-Wide Accessibility Charter

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

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