



**Massachusetts Bay
Transportation Authority**

Accessibility at the MBTA

Update on the MBTA's path towards compliance with the *Daniels-Finegold v. MBTA* settlement agreement.

December 6, 2023

Language Accessibility

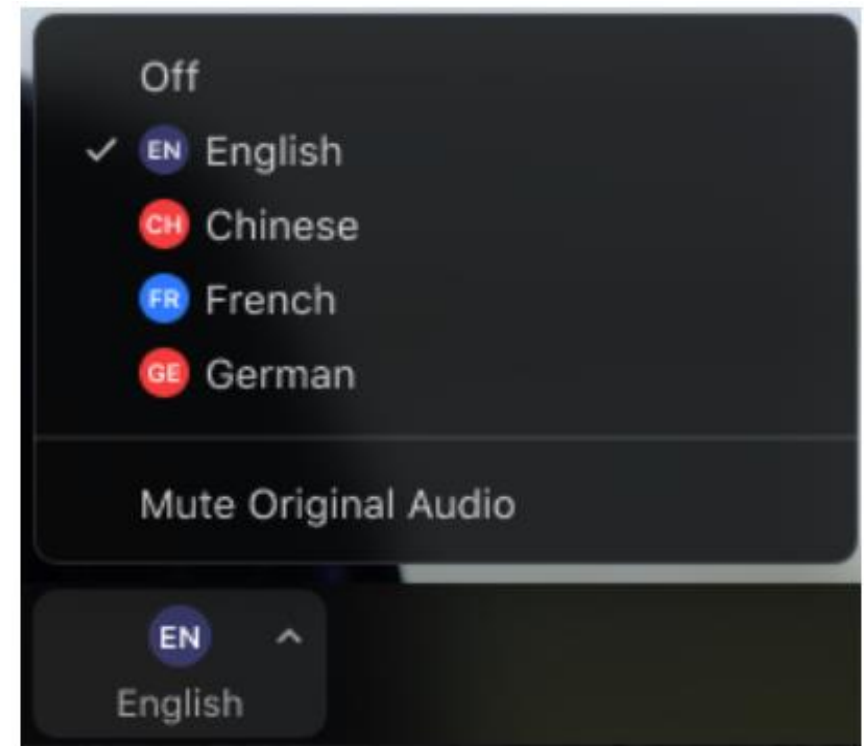
Our Spanish Interpreters for the meeting today are **Daniela Caride** and **Kendal Castano**.

English

- We offer interpretation during this meeting. In your meeting controls, click Interpretation (the small globe icon) and click the language that you would like to hear.

Spanish

- Ofrecemos interpretación en español durante esta junta. Para escoger el audio en Inglés o en Español tendrá que escoger el botón de interpretación, el cual tiene un imagen de un mundo. Después por favor de escoger el idioma que le gustaría oír.



Notification of Recording

- This virtual public meeting will be recorded. The MBTA may choose to retain and distribute the video, still images, audio, and/or transcript. By continuing attendance with this virtual public meeting, you consent to participate in a recorded event.
- If you are not comfortable being recorded, please turn off your camera, and keep your microphone muted, or you may choose to excuse yourself from the meeting.

Other Important Notes – (use this whether you record or not)

Keyboard shortcuts:

- Alt + Y is raised hand
- Alt + H takes you to the chat box
- Alt + A toggles audio off/on
- Alt + V toggles video off/on
- **Your microphone and webcam are automatically disabled upon entering this meeting.**
- The meeting will be open to questions and answers at the end of the formal presentation.



ASL Interpreters

Our ASL interpreters are **Denise Martinez** and **Cat Dvar**.

To view their videos:

- Find the interpreter's video in the gallery.
- In the top right corner of the interpreter's video, click the ellipses
- Then, click the "Pin Video" option. This will keep the interpreter's video on your screen.
- When the interpreters switch, follow the same steps to pin the other's video.



CART Captioning

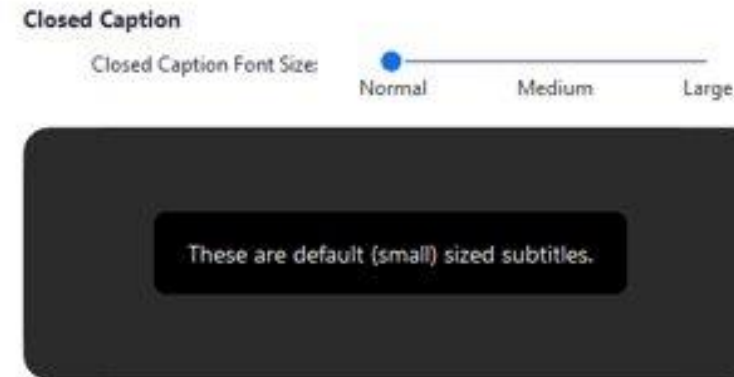
Our CART Captioner is **Denise Gracia**

To start viewing closed captioning click **Closed Caption** with the **CC** icon

Tip: Click and drag the closed captioning to move its positioning in the meeting window.

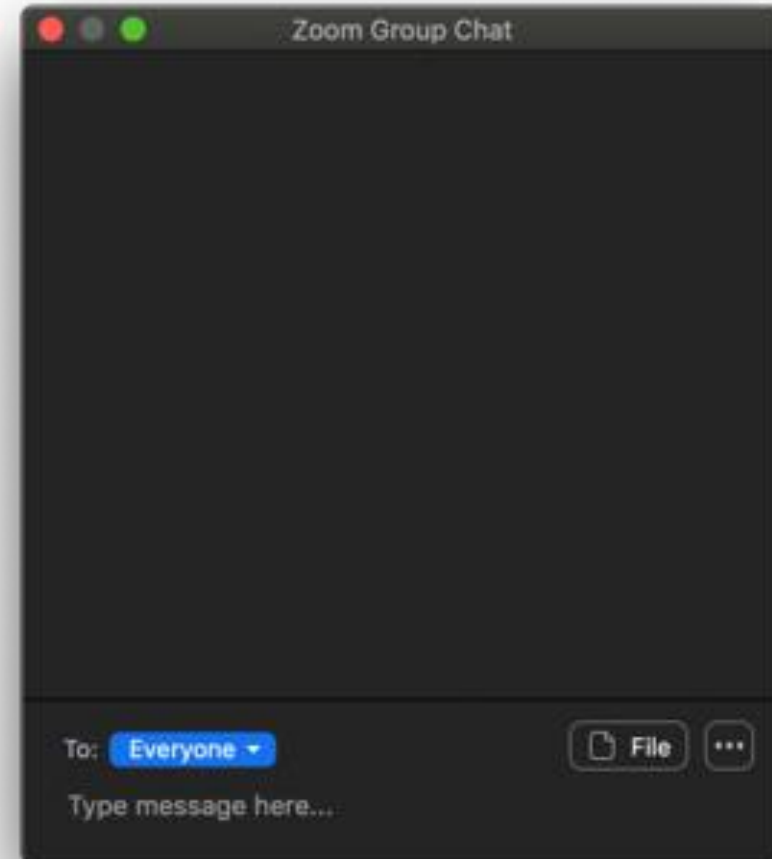
To adjust the caption size:

- Click the upward arrow next to **Start Video / Stop Video**
- Click **Video Settings** then **Accessibility**
- Move the slider to adjust the caption size



Use Chat For Technical Questions

- 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.



Diversity and Civil Rights

English

All MBTA activities, including public meetings, are free of discrimination. The MBTA complies with all federal and state civil rights requirements preventing discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, limited English proficiency, and additional protected characteristics. We welcome the diversity from across our entire service area. If you have any questions or concerns, please visit www.mbta.com/titlevi to reach the Office of Diversity and Civil Rights.



Agenda

- **Welcome and Noteworthy Updates** – Phillip Eng - General Manager
- **Status of Settlement Agreement** – Hon. Judge Patrick King
- **Statement from Plaintiffs and Riders' Transportation Access Group**
- **Updates on Key Accessibility Initiatives**
 - Accessibility-related Priorities within Operations
 - Development of Municipal Communication & Coordination Plan
- **Feedback and Q&A**



Updates from Daniels-Finegold Plaintiffs & Riders' Transportation Access Group (RTAG)

Joanne Daniels-Finegold, Lead named plaintiff and RTAG Board Member

Nora Nagle, Co-chair of the RTAG Executive Board



Plaintiff Statement: Joanne Daniels-Finegold



Over the Last 6 Months

- Provided feedback to SWA on five additional sections of the MBTA's Design Guidelines for Accessibility
- RTAG hosted listening sessions on platform gaps on the Orange Line and snow/ice removal at bus stops and stations
- RTAG submitted letter to Secretary of Transportation to request revisions to current bike lane guidelines in order to incorporate accessibility considerations
- Met with GM Eng to discuss concerns regarding accessibility during diversions
- Collaborated on the creation and launch of Access in Motion campaign



Strategic Planning Session

On 11/2, Named Plaintiffs & RTAG Executive Board met in person with SWA and the GM.

Goals:

- Review the status of the settlement agreement and past progress
- Identify shared concerns facing older adults and riders with disabilities
- Develop plans for continuing to raise awareness regarding these concerns



Examples of Top Accessibility-Related Concerns

1. Lack of reliable safe/accessible access to bus stops/Frustration with municipal engagement
 - Illegally parked vehicles in bus stops
 - Snow/ice in bus stops
 - Bike lanes in/or adjacent to bus stops
2. Platform Gaps on Orange Line
 - Notably worse over the past year



More Examples of Top Accessibility-Related Concerns

3. Accessibility during Diversions

- Accessibility-challenges with coach buses
- Inadequate experience/training of third-party drivers
- Lack of staff at key locations to provide assistance

4. Lack of accessible real-time information on vehicles

- Ex: elevator outages, service diversions



Updates on Key Accessibility Initiatives

Laura Brelsford,
AGM System-Wide Accessibility



To Learn More

- **Accessibility at the MBTA:** [MBTA.com/accessibility](https://www.mbta.com/accessibility)
- **Complete Initiatives Report:** [MBTA.com/accessibility-initiatives](https://www.mbta.com/accessibility-initiatives)
- **Questions, Complaints & Commendations?**
 - 617-222-3200
 - [MBTA.com](https://www.mbta.com), click on "Support"
 - Tweet @MBTA
- **Upcoming RTAG Meeting:** Thursday, Dec. 14th, from 5:30 P.M. to 7:30 P.M.
- **Judge King Semi-Annual Settlement Update Meeting:**
 - Wednesday, June 26, 2024, from 5:30 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.



Accessibility Priorities within Operations

Ryan Coholan
Chief Operating Officer

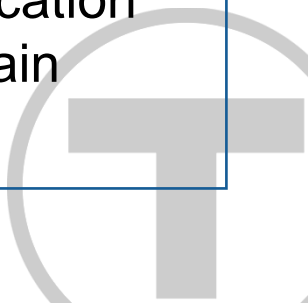


Introduction

Ryan D. Coholan
Chief Operating Officer



- Previous experience:
 - 10 years as Chief Railroad Officer for the Commuter Rail
 - 30+ years of railroad and transportation experience
- As the MBTA's COO, oversees Rail Transportation, Bus Transportation, Commuter Rail, Ferry, the RIDE, and the departments supporting Rail/Bus including Engineering & Maintenance, Vehicle Maintenance, the Operations Control Center, and the Training School
- Maintains an active locomotive engineer certification – it's not uncommon for him to drive his own train home!



Progress Over the Years

The MBTA is proud of the great progress it's made in recent years to make the Commonwealth's transportation system more accessible for all customers across all modes

In recent years, the MBTA has:



Introduced a **new bus fleet** comprised entirely of low floor, ramp equipped buses with more priority seating



Established a **close working relationship** between SWA to ensure continued collaboration and progress



Improved audio and visual messaging systems on all vehicles and in stations



Implemented **new trainings for all front-line employees** focused on providing best in class accessible service



Made **stations more accessible** than ever before, with 98% of Heavy Rail stations now accessible and 60% of Green Line stations accessible (with over 20 more to be made accessible within next five years)

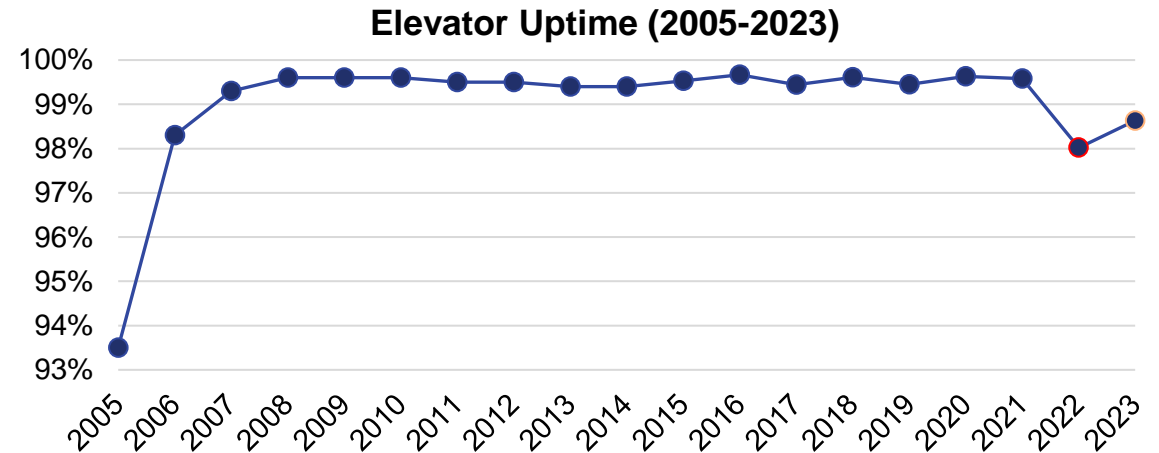
However, we recognize that there are still a number of accessibility challenges that warrant ongoing attention and/or renewed effort to address



2022 Drop in Elevator Uptime

Elevator uptime has been a primary focus of the MBTA, and we are proud that levels have consistently reached or exceeded 99.5% between 2008-2021.

However, uptime levels began to drop noticeably in early 2022, representing a meaningful increase in both the number of daily outages and in the duration of outages.



What we are doing

Established an interdepartmental working group in 2022 to investigate/address the issue and to identify corrective actions and next steps to improve long-term performance

- Investigation ruled out some theories (e.g. no correlation between the age of our elevators and frequency of outages); work continues to identify the cause(s) for the downturn
- Tasked with pulling together additional corrective actions – including heightened contract oversight
- Exploring enhanced partnership with the industry to ensure the MBTA has access to the best possible support

Implementing a comprehensive QA program for elevators / escalators within the Office of the Chief Engineer (OCE)

Identifying the top 5 “worst offenders” and prioritizing the repairs (or replacement, if needed) as soon as possible

Platform Gaps at Subway Stations

Substantial work has gone into reducing platform gaps – both vertical and horizontal – and bringing platforms and tracks into proper alignment wherever possible over the last decade, which has resulted in noticeable improvements.

However, issues causing vertical gaps remain (particularly at locations where tracks are attached via direct fixation), which we are working to address and/or mitigate in a number of ways:

<i>Issues</i>	<i>What we are doing</i>
<p>Introducing new vehicle types / mixed fleets can result in exacerbated platform gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specific to Orange Line: Worsened gaps have been reported following the deployment of the new Orange Line cars – early investigation reveals that the cars are “coming in high” at a number of stations along the line	<p>More advanced fleet configuration planning to minimize adjustments that will have to be made upon arrival of new vehicles in Boston</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specific to Orange Line:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) OCE overseeing a comprehensive survey of platform gaps at each station as a first step toward identifying a solution2) Vehicle Engineering investigating potential car-based solutions (e.g. adjusting air bags, etc.) should survey results reveal that a universal reduction in car height would result in fewer gaps<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A comprehensive survey of the <i>Red Line</i> will follow
<p>Work on the tracks can impact alignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• With a significant amount of work planned through 2024, there will likely be ongoing alignment impacts	<p>Expanding the QC process after track work has been completed to go beyond track, ties, rail, etc. and also include checks to ensure an acceptable interface between trains and the platform</p>

Accessibility of Third-Party Bus Shuttles

The use of third-party buses is often necessary to transport the public during rail diversions; however, the MBTA is aware of and working to address several issues that result in subpar accessibility for customers when utilizing third-party services

Issues

The **training third-party bus providers receive is not as comprehensive** as the training and oversight MBTA bus operators receive

Third party buses **introduce more accessibility challenges** (particularly high floor coach style buses)

What we are doing

Working to increase oversight and establishing protocols for third-party providers to better validate that contractors are providing training for their Operators and that they're delivering it in a high-quality and effective manner

Current efforts:

- Contract terms in **place penalize contractors for violating** requirements for vehicle accessibility
- Developed process by which coaches from **out-of-state through vendor subcontracts are inspected** by MBTA to ensure vehicles meet minimum standards
- Actively working to change organizational processes to **plan diversions further in advance**, which will allow us more time to secure and confirm accessible vehicles and to work with SWA to review and ensure acceptable accessible shuttle plans and diversion logistics

Longer-term efforts: Identifying opportunities to utilize spare MBTA buses during diversions (potentially operated by third-party providers) and/or reducing our dependency on third-party providers altogether



Accessible Real-Time Communications on Vehicles

Despite the deployment of the new Orange Line trains, the Passenger Information Systems are currently limited in their flexibility to broadcast on ad hoc messaging

Two specific accessibility-related scenarios that are most impacted:

- 1 **Elevator outages can not be updated and broadcast in real-time**
- 2 **There is no way for emergency information to be pushed to the train *both audibly and visually***



What we are doing

- Continuing to **upgrade the vehicle fleet to modernize cars and increase our technological capabilities**; simultaneously, Vehicle Engineering is **actively engaging with CRRC**, the company building the MBTA's new Orange Line and Red Line train cars, to better understand the changes required to address these challenges on the new vehicles
- **Exploring tools used across the industry** that could enhance and streamline real-time communication capabilities



Development of Municipal Communication & Coordination Plan

Angel Donahue-Rodriguez,
Assistant General Manager for External Affairs



Background & Purpose

- The MBTA serves over 176 cities/towns, 51 of which are served by MBTA buses
 - The vast majority of our bus stops and path of travel leading to our stations are owned and maintained by the municipalities
- To ensure safe and accessible access to all bus stops and stations, we require municipal support with:
 - Snow/ice removal at bus stops
 - Accessibility upgrades on sidewalks, curb ramps, crossings and bus stops
 - Thoughtfully designed bike lanes adjacent to bus stops and stations
 - Enforcing the Bus Stop Law – illegally parked vehicles in bus stops
 - And more



Development of the Draft Plan

- **Interdepartmental working group**
 - General Manager's Office
 - System-Wide Accessibility
 - Operations Planning
 - Policy Department
 - Engineering & Maintenance
 - Commercial Strategy
- Met throughout 2023 to identify key goals and objectives



Key Provisions Within Plan

Creation of one Position within General Manager's Office. Responsible for:

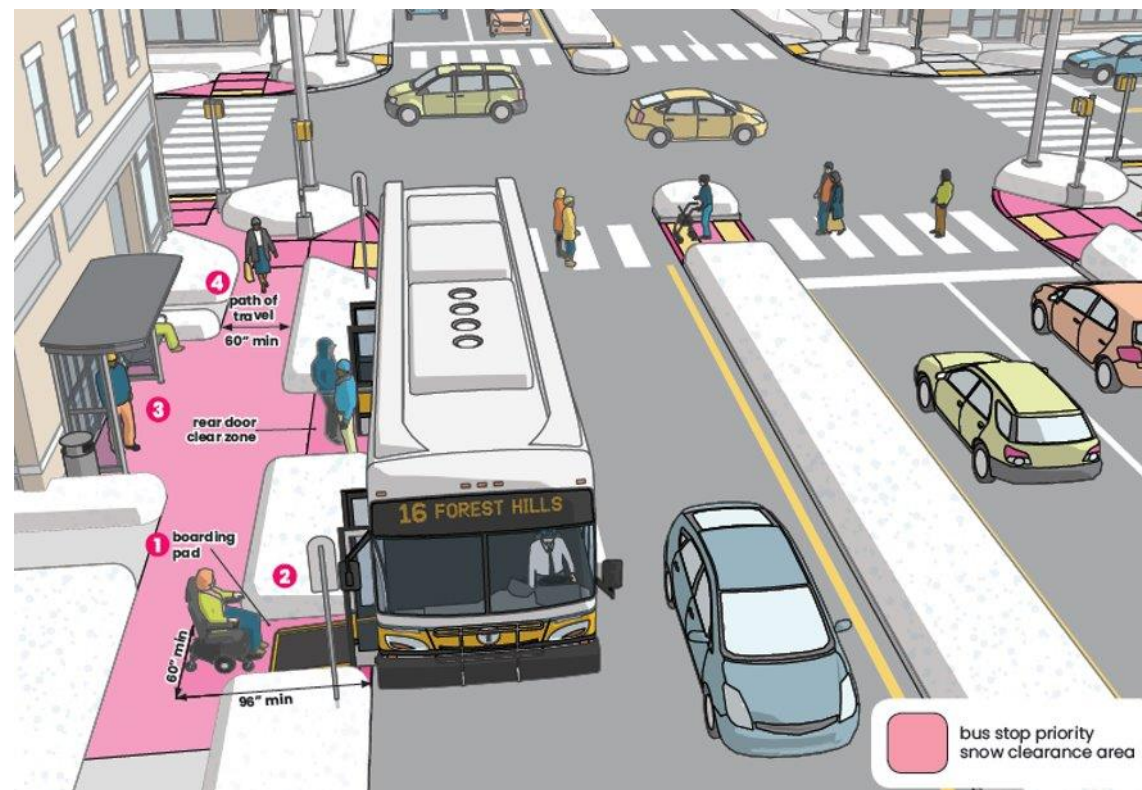
- Creating and maintaining a centralized database of key municipal contacts throughout our service area
- Creating and disseminating regular and consistent messaging to municipalities regarding our expectations and opportunities for collaboration
 - Developing a webpage specific to municipal partners
- Fostering interdepartmental working group made up of those who interact with municipalities to ensure our work is coordinated



Key Provisions within the Plan (cont'd)

Specific focus on the following areas:

- Snow/ice removal at bus stops
 - Hosted a meeting with municipal DPWs on 11/29
- Notifying the MBTA when work is planned at/near a bus stop (including bike lanes)
- How to request a shelter at a bus stop
- Enforcement of the Bus Stop Law
- Opportunities to reduce illicit activity in MBTA elevators



Questions?

- To indicate that you have a question, please use Zoom's "Raise Hand" feature located at the bottom of the screen.
 - When you raise your hand, it alerts the moderator that you'd like to speak. The moderator will unmute attendees to ask questions in the order that they raised their hands.



To speak, click
"Reactions"
then "Raise hand"



Alt + Y



***9 Raise Hand**

Thank You For Attending

The next Update on the MBTA's path toward compliance with the *Daniels-Finegold v. MBTA* settlement agreement will be held on:

Wednesday, June 26, 2024
5:30 P.M. to 7:30 P.M.

