

Wayfinding by Design



Wayfinding refers to information systems that guide people through a physical environment and enhance their understanding and experience of the space.

---SEGD

Designer Roles & Process

The MBTA signage process involves both MBTA Design and Design Consultants, and requires careful coordination in order to successfully implement the signage system at every station.

MBTA Design

The MBTA is responsible for:

1. Layout of signage based on pathway diagrams.
2. Design of sign graphics using custom software.
3. Creation of full scale sign files used for fabrication.

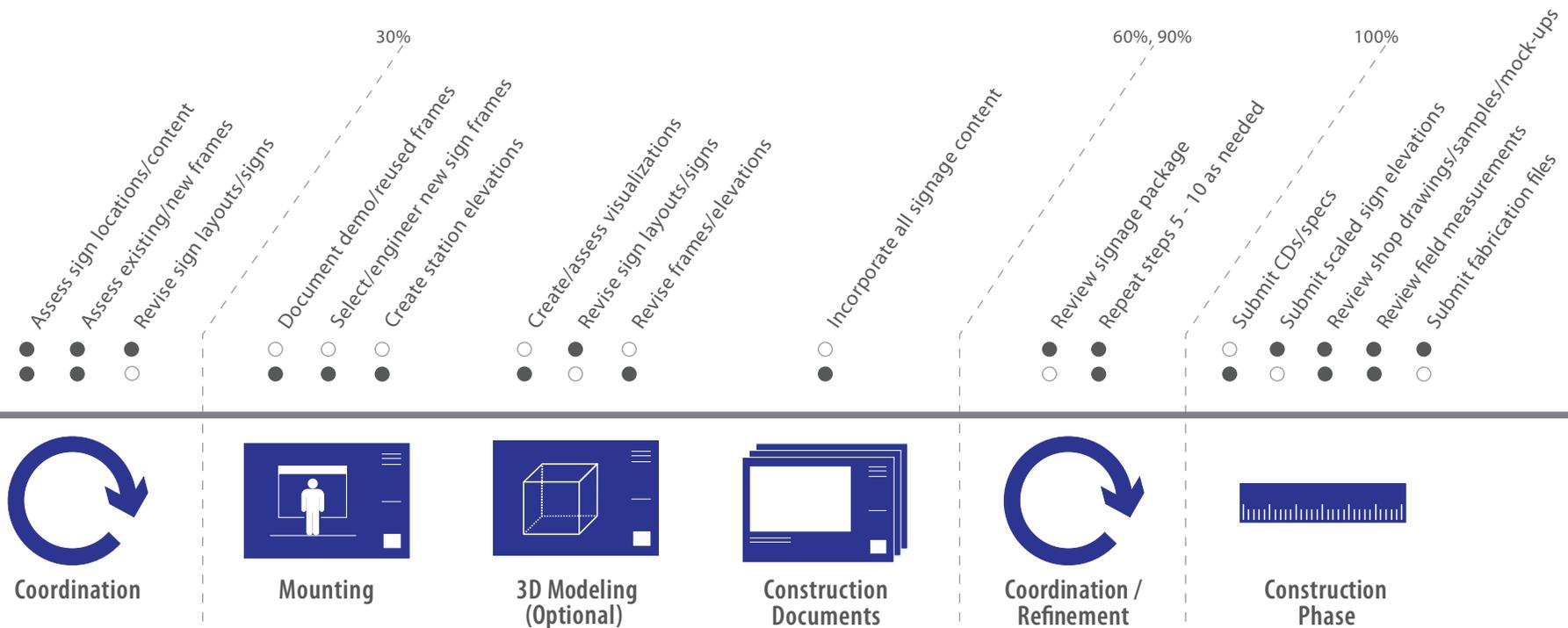
The MBTA provides all sign plans, sign schedules and sign elevations to the Design Consultant for inclusion into the construction documents.

Design Consultant

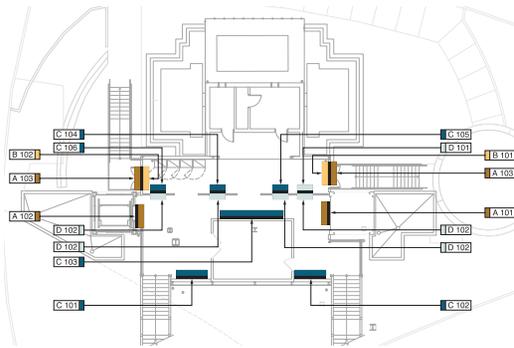
The Design Consultant is responsible for:

1. Evaluation of existing sign frames (at existing stations).
2. Selection and engineering of sign frames and details
3. Coordination and integration of signage with station architecture.

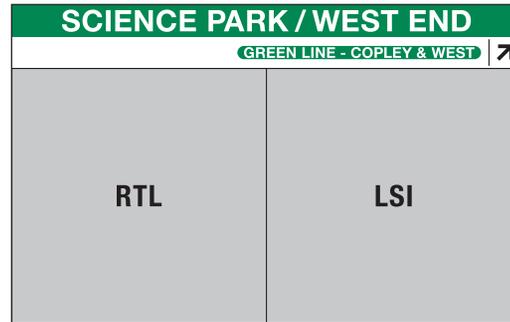
The Design Consultant is also responsible for incorporating all signage content into the construction documents.



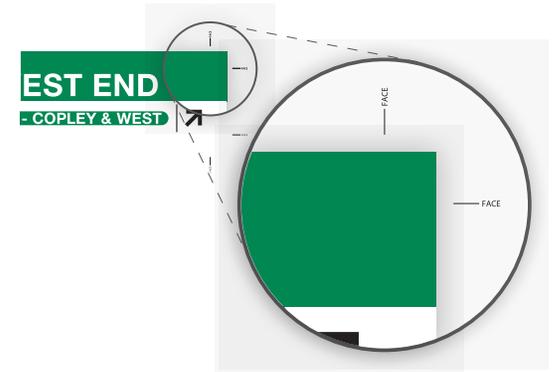
MBTA Signage System Overview



Sign Layouts



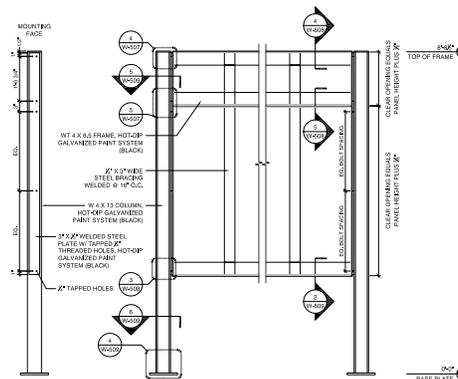
Sign Graphics



Full Scale Fabrication Files



Existing Sign Frames



Frames/Details



Coordination

MBTA Signage System Overview

Supporting a Diverse Community of Riders

While the majority of MBTA transit stations are accessible, the accessible paths connecting entrances to trains are frequently different than the ambulatory paths. The new wayfinding system is based on a pathway diagram system that identifies every path split and decision point within a station. Accurate signing of accessible, ambulatory and combined paths is determined by each station's unique set of pathways.

Rider Community



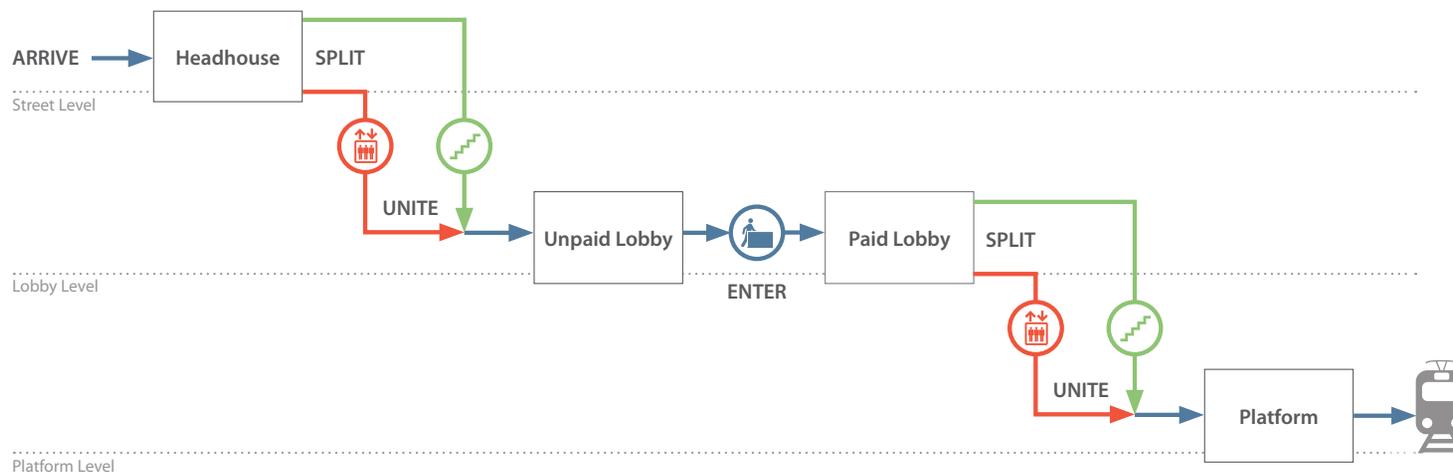
Accessible Path



Ambulatory Path



Combined Path



Station Journey section diagram: illustrates how the combined path (accessible/ambulatory) splits at vertical circulation points into separate accessible and ambulatory paths, and then rejoins on the next level.

MBTA Signage System Overview

SINGLE-LINE STATIONS



Red Line



Orange Line



Blue Line



Green Line



Silver Line



Commuter Rail



Ferry

MULTILINE STATIONS



BUS



Busway



Bus Street

TACTILE/BRAILLE



Directional



Entry

MBTA Signage System Overview

Identity

COLOR BANDS

- Red Line
- Orange Line
- Green Line
- Blue Line
- Silver Line
- Commuter Rail
- Ferry
- Bus

T-LOGO



Icons

PATHS

- Ambulatory (Left arrow)
- Accessible (Left arrow, wheelchair, and people with luggage)

SYMBOLS

- Parking (P in a circle)
- Airplane
- Ferry
- Commuter Rail
- Bus
- Escalator
- Stairs
- Person with luggage

Maps

ENTERING

- System
- Line
- Busway

EXITING

- Neighborhood
- Neighborhood Bus

Destinations

Custom-kerned fonts create consistent, ADA-compliant text:

HELVETICA NEUE MBTA BOLD

Helvetica NeueADA Bus

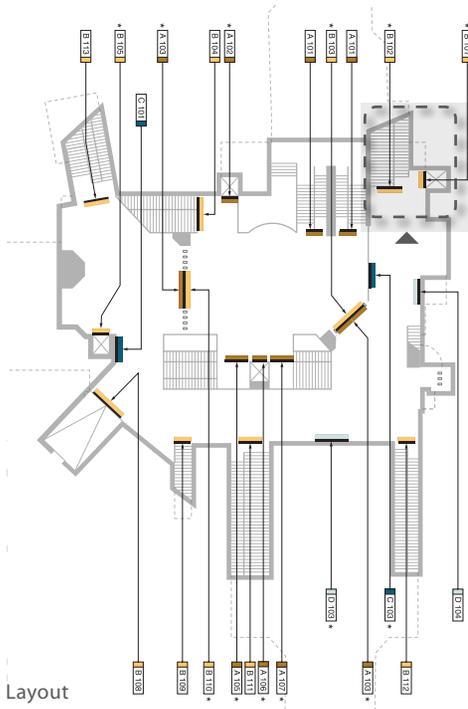
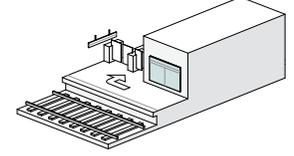
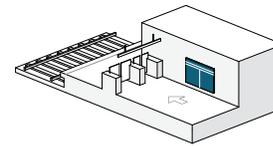
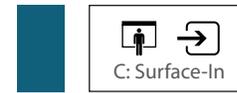
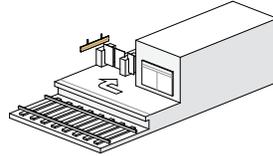
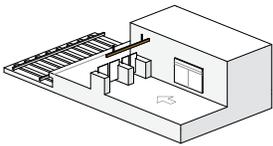
ENTERING

LINE - DESTINATION

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MBTA Signage System Overview

Sign Layout - 4 Sign Types

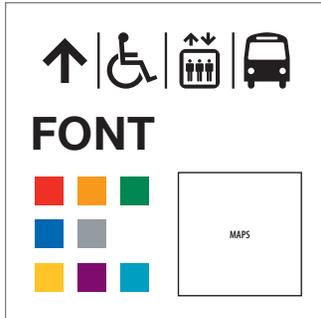


Sign Layout



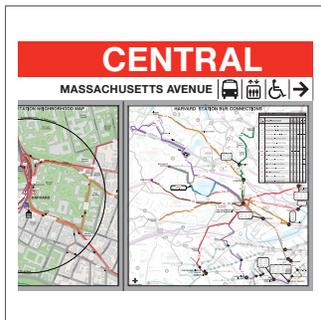
Signed decision point:
ambulatory & accessible paths split

Signage Types



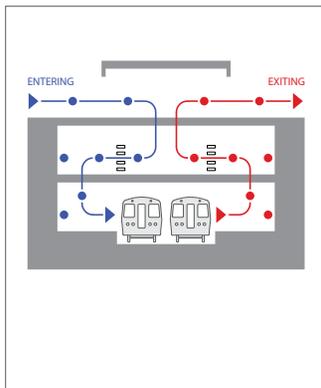
Correct

The foundation of the new signage system is a standardized, code-compliant vocabulary of symbols, fonts, colors and maps, along with the an accurate master database of destinations, modes and terms that may appear on signage.



Clear

Clarity is achieved through a comprehensive set of rules for organizing the placement of graphics and content on sign panels. Clarity is the judicious display of wayfinding information, arranged and presented to maximize the customer's ability to easily scan for information and navigate stations.



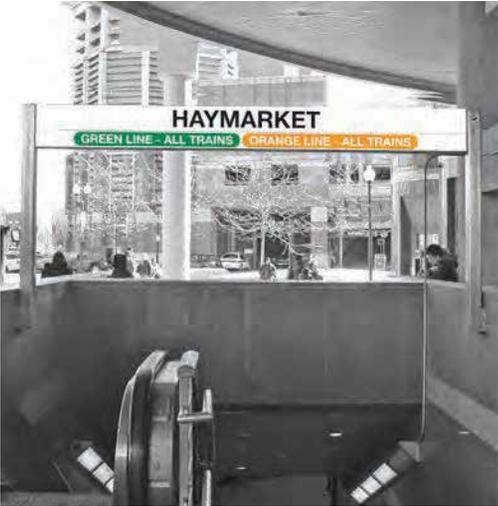
Consistent

The purpose of consistency is to instill trust in the users of the overall MBTA system – this is the sense that each station uses the same methods and conventions of communication. In turn, customers develop confidence that the signage everywhere is reliable, clear and correct.

MBTA Signage System Overview

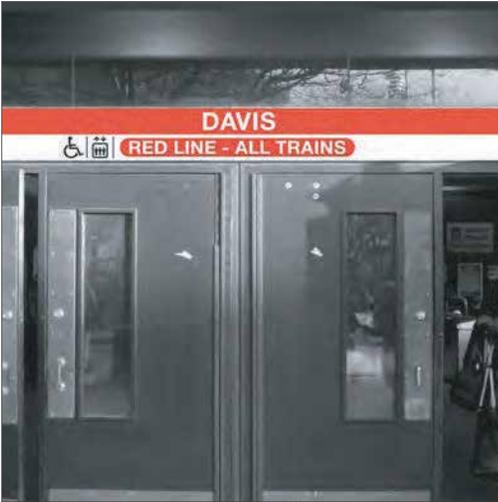
Subway

multiline stations



Subway

single-line stations



Commuter Rail



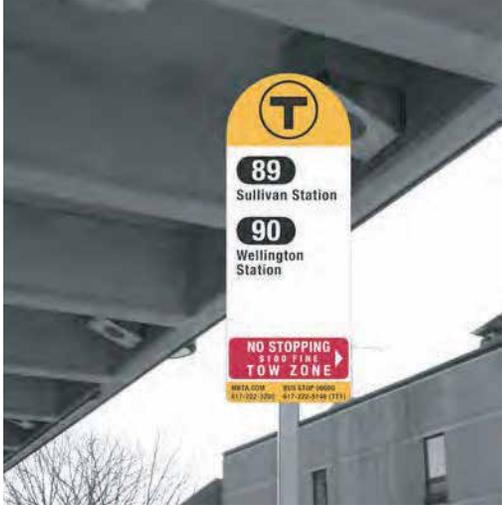
Ferry



Tactile/Braille



Bus



Signage Types

4 Sign Types

entering



exiting



overhead



surface



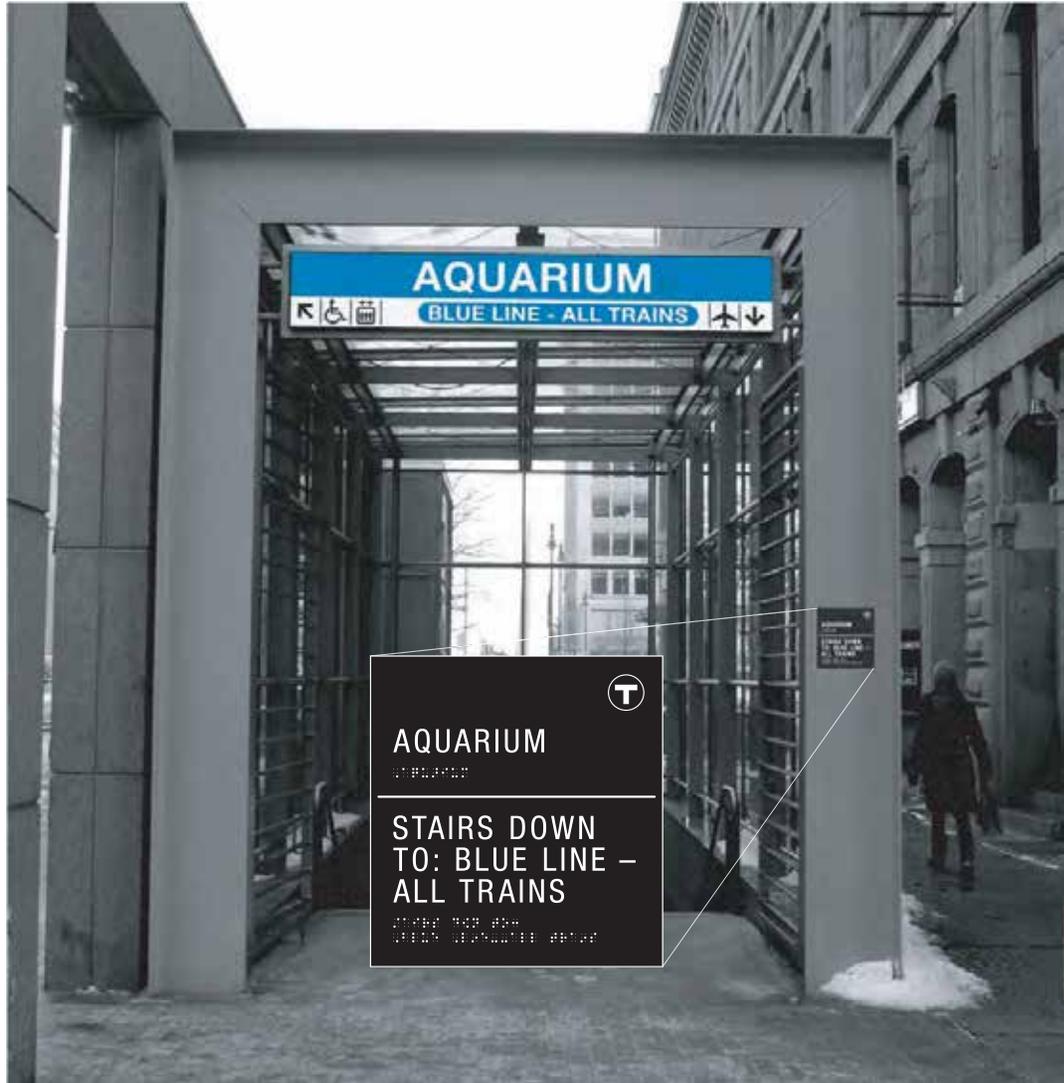
Application of the four sign types at a multiline subway station

Signage Types

Tactile/Braille

The Tactile/Braille signage system is comprised of three sign types: Directional, Informational and Room IDs. Directional signs are located at specific ADA-required points within a station, including station entries and platforms.

Custom Software automates the creation of ADA-compliant signs, with all dimensional metrics pre-defined within the software. The mounting location is also highly defined by ADA: signs must be mounted at the correct height in uniform locations, with an 18" square clear space in front of them, so that visually impaired customers may readily locate and make use of them. Without consistent placement relative to paths and architectural elements, Tactile/Braille signs are like finding a needle in a haystack for the customers who need them.



Bus

There are over 8,100 bus stops and 27 busways on the MBTA system. Over the years, there has been inconsistency in the appearance of bus berth and street signage. The new bus signage system creates a unified identity for buses - both on the street and at stations - that integrates visually and functionally with the overall graphic wayfinding program of the new signage system.

Bus street sign design is completely automated by a custom software. Bus signs have many design variables than including mounting, orientation, identity type and sign size. Busway signs are included in construction documents for station signage, while bus street signs are handled completely separately from station signage.

