



# Accessibility Projects at the MBTA

## Introduction

The federal Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) guarantees the wide-ranging right of all citizens to enjoy equal access to all public services, buildings, accommodations, and social life. When the law was passed, it had broad and profound implications for existing public infrastructure. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), as the owner and operator of hundreds of transit stations, trains, and buses across Eastern Massachusetts, and as the oldest subway system in the nation, faced the enormous logistical and financial challenge of updating its infrastructure and fleets to comply with the law.

## The Key Station Plan

Along with other transit agencies throughout the country, the MBTA submitted a Key Station Plan to the federal government to make key subway and commuter rail stations accessible. Stations with above-average ridership, those at the end of a line, intermodal stations, and those located near business and retail centers, and others, were included. The Key Station Plan established an aggressive plan to make all key stations accessible by certain dates, from 1993 to 2011.



The Key Station Plan posed unique challenges to the Green Line, in particular, since boarding these light rail vehicles required several steps up. Since the circumstances of many surface stations on the Green Line rendered the installation of ramps and raised platforms impossible, the MBTA decided to introduce new low-floor vehicles with on-board ramps to the line and raise existing platforms by several inches only to provide access to the Green Line.

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## Past Successes, Current Progress

The MBTA has made significant progress in implementing the Key Station Plan, and the two-decade effort is entering its final stages. As of the spring of 2005, 73 of the 80 key stations are accessible, 5 stations are under construction, and the remaining 2 stations are in design phases.

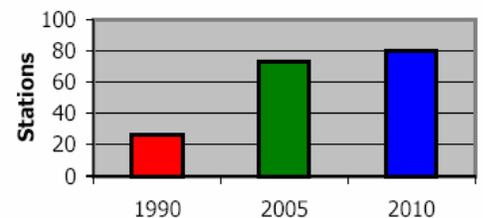
In addition, the MBTA is making accessibility improvements above and beyond the Key Station Plan as it continues to upgrade, rehabilitate, and expand its infrastructure. For example, as part of the effort to modernize and increase the Blue Line to six-car trains, the entire line will be made accessible. Part and parcel with the replacement of two-thirds of the MBTA's bus fleet is the purchase of new low-floor buses with wheelchair ramps and audio/visual announcements. And finally, all new construction since the passage of ADA, including the Plymouth, Middleboro, Worcester, Newburyport, and Greenbush commuter rail lines, and the Silver Line, has been built to be accessible from their inception.

## Planned Future Projects

As the MBTA is completing its Key Station commitments and moves to improvements at other locations, 27 major station renovation and reconstruction projects are in design and construction phases. 7 stations on the Red Line, 7 on the Green Line, 2 on the Orange Line, 3 on the Blue Line, 5 on the commuter rail, and 3 intermodal stations are or will be significantly overhauled, renovated, or totally rebuilt in the coming years to offer complete ADA accessibility. Altogether, these station reconstruction projects will provide new accessibility benefits to over 300,000 MBTA passengers every day, or roughly 25% of all current riders.

Beyond improvements at stations, the MBTA continues to aggressively pursue projects to increase accessibility in other ways. Additional vehicle fleet purchases, elevator improvements, and information technology efforts are also underway which will dramatically improve accessibility. The MBTA's current total program for projects with accessibility benefits tops \$1.8 billion.

**Key Stations Made Accessible (of 80 Total)**



# Ongoing MBTA Accessibility Projects

The MBTA is constantly undertaking new projects to expand accessibility to all passengers, improve service, and maintain its system in a state of good repair. The following is a list of all the ways the Authority is spending capital funds to bring you a safer, more accessible, and better transit system.

## Intermodal Stations

### North Station Superstation (\$262m)

This large and complex project will create a new station with cross-platform transfers with the Orange and Green lines, and easy access to the commuter rail terminal through a passageway under Causeway Street, and the entire station will be accessible.

### Government Center (\$62m)

Over the coming years, the entire existing Government Center station will be renovated and modernized. The station will be outfitted with new elevators, escalators, stairs, lights, and communication systems. The platforms on the Green Line level will be raised to be compatible with the new low-floor vehicles, and the platforms on the Blue Line level will be extended to accommodate six-car trains. Finally, a new glass and steel headhouse will be constructed on City Hall Plaza.

### State Street (\$75m)

This effort will substantially remodel State Street, the Blue Line portion in particular. Two new fully accessible entrances will be built on each side of the surface of State Street, and the Blue Line tunnels will be modified to permit six-car trains. This project began in the summer of 2004.

## Red Line

The reconstruction of Charles/MGH, the final Key Station commitment on the Red Line, and the modernization of five Dorchester branch stations demonstrate the MBTA's commitment to expanding accessibility as it maintains and upgrades its infrastructure.

*As of the spring of 2005, 67 of the 80 Key Stations are accessible, and 27 major station reconstruction projects are in design or construction phases.*

### Charles/MGH (\$40m)

This project, currently under construction, will completely rebuild the Charles/MGH station. A new station building encased in glass will be constructed and new elevators added, so that passengers can enjoy an accessible path of travel between the hospitals and neighborhoods in the region.

### Ashmont (\$44m)

The large multimodal station at Ashmont will receive major renovations, including new platforms, entrances, roofs, new busways and trolleyways, and an improved traffic pattern as part of transit-oriented development. The new station will be accessible to all and will offer easy transfers between the Red Line, the Mattapan Line, and bus connections.

### Savin Hill (\$17m)

This station will be completely demolished and modernized, with new platforms, two new elevators, and a new station headhouse allowing for complete accessibility.

### Fields Corner (\$39m)

The existing headhouse at this station will be demolished and rebuilt with two new elevators, and the busways will be lowered to allow for easy bus to subway transfers. This will make this non-key station accessible.

### Shawmut (\$11m)

This effort involves the historic restoration of the station, the addition of one new elevator and other accessibility improvements, and the installation of an additional exit to the street.



Charles/MGH Station is designed by the Joint Venture of HDR Engineering, Inc./Elkus-Manfredi Associates, Inc. Rendering is by Neoscape.

### **Mattapan (\$10m)**

Scope for this project will include new canopies, lighting, raised platforms, accessible ramps, and a new station building with a customer service center.

### **South Station (\$13m)**

The MBTA's Silver Line Phase II project has added new underground Silver Line service at South Station between the lobby and Red Line levels. This project is renovating the Red Line area of the station, including platforms, stairs, elevators, and escalators. Upon completion, South Station will be a thoroughly modernized inter-modal station.

## **Green Line**

All accessibility improvements on the Green Line in the coming years, in addition to new elevators and escalators, will involve raising the platforms at each station to be compatible with the new low-floor vehicles currently being introduced to the line.



Government Center Station is designed by City Builders Joint Venture of SYSTRA Engineering, Inc. and Thomson Design Associates. Rendering is by Neoscape.

### **Arlington (\$28m)**

A new headhouse will be constructed near the Arlington Street Church, and three new elevators will be installed on either side of Boylston Street so that both platforms will be accessible. In addition, the grills on the sidewalks near the station will be modified to meet ADA regulations.

### **Copley (\$21m)**

The reconstruction efforts at Copley station will be part of a joint project with Arlington. Here, two new elevators on either side of the street will allow access to the platforms, the platforms will be raised, and the headhouses near the Boston Public Library and the New Old South Church will be remodeled.

### **Kenmore (\$31m)**

This station will receive a substantial overhaul in the coming years: new elevators and escalators will be installed, the platforms raised, a second exit to the street added, and the bus canopy and station will be completely remodeled.

### **Park Street and Haymarket (\$25m)**

This project, now substantially complete, involved the renovation and modification of all platforms at both stations to be compatible with the new Green Line No. 8 Low-Floor vehicles.

*Altogether, current station reconstruction projects will provide new accessibility benefits to over 300,000 MBTA passengers every day.*



### **Brookline Village (\$2m)**

Scope for this project will include the reconstruction of both platforms at the station for ADA compliance, the installation of shelters, tactile edging, and pedestrian crossings.

### **Boston College (\$3m)**

This project will make accessibility modifications and improvements to conform to ADA guidelines and will include relocating the station to the median of Commonwealth Avenue, constructing two new raised platforms, shelters, lighting, tactile edging, and installing pedestrian crossings.

### **New No. 8 Low-Floor Cars (\$224m)**

This newest fleet of Green Line vehicles, currently being introduced incrementally to the line, is designed with a low floor to permit passengers to board the trains without stepping up or down. The doors in the middle of the cars will come flush to the edge of newly-raised platforms, with an on-board ramp deployed, allowing complete accessibility.

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## Orange Line

Along with the project at State Street (see preceding page) and Community College (undertaken by the Central Artery) the two projects currently underway will make the entire Orange Line completely accessible.

### Chinatown (\$5m)

This project, now mostly completed, involved the installation of a new elevator from the street to the southbound platform of the station.

### Malden Center (\$10m)

The construction efforts at this station will renovate the existing station, add two new elevators to access both the Orange Line and the commuter rail, and create a new plaza in front of the station.

## Blue Line

While the multiple projects currently underway and planned for the Blue Line are largely driven by the goal of platform lengthening for six-car trains, the projects will also make the entire Blue Line completely ADA accessible.

### Airport (\$32m)

The new Airport station, outfitted with two entrances with elevators and escalators for accessibility and travelers with heavy luggage, will permit easy transfer to shuttle buses, and opened in the summer of 2004.

### Maverick (\$63m)

This project will modernize Maverick station by installing new elevators and escalators, constructing a new headhouse with access to the street, and upgrades to the busway and plaza on the surface.

*Planned projects, some already underway, will make every station on both the Blue and Orange Lines completely accessible.*

### Orient Heights (\$30m)

To meet ADA compliance, this station will be outfitted with new elevators and escalators, the plaza and busway will be upgraded, and platforms lengthened to accommodate expanded Blue Line trains.

### New Blue Line Cars (\$205m)

In 2005, the Blue Line will begin operating with a completely new fleet of vehicles. This purchase will increase fleet size from 70 to 94 cars, and will permit the line to run six-car trains. The interior of the vehicles will be ADA compliant.

## Commuter Rail

### Gloucester (\$4m)

As the MBTA constructs a new parking facility at this station, it will also construct new pedestrian access ramps, crosswalks, accessible parking spaces, and rehabilitate the platforms.

### Fairmount (\$7m)

This project will build new mini high-level platforms at the station, improve pedestrian access near the bridge and parking lot, and add ramps and other upgrades for complete accessibility.

### Walpole (\$2m)

This parking expansion project will also involve the construction of mini high-level platforms and other modifications for ADA compliance.

### Malden Center (see budget above)

In conjunction with the Orange Line project (see above), this effort will bring Malden Center station into full ADA compliance. This project is nearing completion.

### Morton Street and Uphams Corner (part of \$37m Fairmount Corridor Project)

The MBTA is embarking on a new project to revitalize and improve the Fairmount branch of the commuter rail network to better serve the communities of Dorchester, Mattapan, and Hyde Park. As part of this effort, Morton Street and Uphams Corner stations will be substantially renovated and made accessible through full-length high-level platforms, improved lighting and signage, ramps, and accessible parking spaces.



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## Bus Service

New accessibility benefits won't just come to train riders through station reconstructions. Soon bus riders, the RIDE patrons, and many others will be enjoying an easier, more accessible transit system on new buses with lifts and "smart" signs and other improvements.

### 814 New Low-Floor Vehicles (\$386m)

As part of the MBTA's number one priority of revitalizing its bus operations, it is currently purchasing over 800 vehicles to replace over two-thirds of the existing fleet. All new buses will be equipped with a low floor and wheelchair ramps for easy accessibility, as well as automatic audio and visual stop announcements. External announcements will tell boarding passengers which route the bus is serving as well as its destination. The new buses include 28 low-floor electric trolley buses, the first of their kind in the United States.



## Other Improvements

In addition to the many new station construction and vehicle purchase projects, a number of other ongoing efforts will result in substantial accessibility benefits.

### Automated Fare Collection (\$204m)

This highly visible project will begin eliminating the token and turnstile fare collection system in 2005, replacing the equipment with new glass gates and "smart card" tickets. As the project replaces turnstiles in subway stations, it will add new ADA-accessible gates as well.

*The MBTA is currently purchasing over 800 buses, all of which will be equipped with a low floor, wheelchair ramps, and automatic stop announcements.*

### LED Signs in Subway Stations (\$3m)

This project will install new LED information signs on the platforms and lobbies of busy subway stations. These signs will provide visual equivalent of audio information on train arrival times and destination information.



### RIDE Computer Upgrade and Fleet Replacement (\$17m)

These two efforts will revitalize the RIDE program in the coming years: a new central customer database and dispatch system will be created to better manage service calls and on-time performance, and an entirely new fleet of vehicles will be purchased over the next five years.

### Systemwide Elevator Upgrade (\$1m)

The MBTA operates and maintains hundreds of elevators and escalators in the metropolitan region. This program provides funds to ensure that this equipment continues to function reliably and safely by replacing control boxes, upgrading doors, and other improvements.

For more information about traveling on the MBTA, the RIDE, or to contact our Office of Transportation Access, please visit us online at [www.mbta.com](http://www.mbta.com), or call (617) 222-1542 or (617) 222-5970 (voice) or (617) 222-5854 (TTY).

*"The MBTA's mission is to make transportation easy and accessible for all travelers."*