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May 24, 2021

Dear Riders,

It goes without saying that the past year has been like none other. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have experienced many unexpected challenges –a statewide lockdown, dramatic declines in ridership, renewed financial concerns, and more. Over the past 15 months, the MBTA's collective focus has been on responding to these challenges while keeping riders and employees safe. As we move into the summer with a sense of optimism, we look forward to welcoming many of you back to the T.

While some things will be different, our commitment to improving and expanding accessibility remains. Since our last initiatives report six months ago, a number of accessibility upgrades have been completed and many more are well underway. Highlights within include:

- New and improved priority seating decals have been installed on all buses and subway cars
- The reopening of new, modernized elevators at Alewife, Quincy Adams, Ruggles and Oak Grove stations
- Updates on 25 Green Line stations/stops currently under design or in construction to be made accessible
- The launch of a fully refreshed 8-hour training for new Bus Operators focused exclusively on providing best in class accessible service

The set of projects within were identified as priorities based largely on feedback from you, our riders. If you would like to suggest an additional area of focus or if you would like any more information regarding an ongoing project, please contact us at [SWA@mbta.com](mailto:SWA@mbta.com). In the meantime, thank you for your continued interest in, and support of, a fully accessible MBTA.

Sincerely,

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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: While progress on this project was delayed by constraints related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the new elevator at the Washington St. entrance went into service on January 31. Construction of the additional upgrades, including the modernization of three of the station escalators, which were added to the scope, is expected to be complete by the end of 2021.

#### 2. 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: Construction is currently underway and is expected to be complete in Fall of 2022.

#### 3. Newton Highlands Station

Scope: This project aims to make Newton Highlands Station fully accessible and involves 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 (both sides have a portion of the platform raised 8" above top of rail to provide accessible boarding). Design for the full station upgrade is approaching 100% and is expected to be complete in Fall 2021. Construction is scheduled for Summer 2022 (Note: any construction must follow Green Line D Branch Track and Signal Replacement Project, which is scheduled to be substantially complete by the end of 2021).

#### 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 is tentatively scheduled to be complete by fall 2021.

## 5. Beaconsfield, Chestnut Hill, Eliot, & 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 and designs are expected to reach 100% in early 2022, with construction to follow.

## 6. Symphony Station

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

Update: The design is expected to be complete by end of 2021, with construction projected to begin in Spring 2022.

## 7. 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 MBTA is meeting with the developer on a biweekly basis to define the station's external dimensions, structural constraints, and utility upgrades. A design consultant began working in March 2020 and the 30% design is expected to be complete by Summer 2021. Full design is expected to be complete in June 2022 (contingent on the developer also completing its design). Pending funding availability, construction would begin shortly thereafter and is projected to take approximately 3 years.

## 8. 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 inches and adjusting nearby infrastructure as needed in order to provide accessibility. Project scopes vary stop to stop but each requires meaningful coordination with Boston and/or Brookline.

Update: Throughout 2018-2019, the MBTA conducted track replacement along parts of the Green Line's B and C branches. As part of that work, portions of the platforms were removed and replaced – motivating the need to make them accessible. Conceptual designs are underway for each, and early timelines project that, depending on the stop, construction will begin between 2023 – 2024.

## 9. 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 on this project began at Park Street in April 2019 and is scheduled to be complete by the summer of 2021. Work at North Station, Haymarket, State Street, Chinatown, and Downtown Crossing began in summer 2019. The work at these stations has been accelerated and the project is expected to be substantially complete in June 2021. The designs for wayfinding, lighting, and station improvements at South Station, Back Bay, Malden, Chinatown, and Harvard are complete.

## 10. 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: Engineering and Maintenance (E&M), in partnership with SWA, has identified accessible station entrance locations for automatic door opener hardware to be installed throughout the subway system. E&M has procured the automated door hardware materials needed for installation and has begun the installation process. The plan for all identified locations is to complete installation by the end of 2021 and for the openers to be active in early 2022.

## 11. Path of Travel Improvements

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

Update: SWA has worked to identify the highest-priority path of travel upgrades that are required throughout the system. These priorities have been provided to the design firm selected in coordination with the Office of the Chief Engineer. Notice to proceed on design work has been granted and design work has begun. Path of travel construction work is expected to begin in fall 2021.

## 12. “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 vendor responsible for overseeing the implementation of the new fare collection system has completed a design study to evaluate four different “hands-free” technologies. One of these has been identified as the preferred solution based on user experience and approach for integration into existing gates. The MBTA will be further evaluating the feasibility of incorporating this potential solution at existing gates. The MBTA is working with the vendor to formally define the technical requirements, plan for user testing with MBTA users, and finalize the cost.

## Commuter Rail Stations:

### 1. Mansfield Station

Scope: This project includes constructing new compliant mini-highs, new accessible routes to cross under the tracks via MA Route 114, storm-water retention, and new accessible parking.

Update: The new ramps, stairs, and mini-high platforms were completed in early May 2020. Full project completion is expected in summer 2021.

### 2. 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: Construction continues to progress. The new platform panels have been installed as well as the accessible rampways to the platforms. Platform canopies, benches, and lighting installation is underway. Other work for the station electrical and communications systems is ongoing. New railroad grade crossings have been installed, and railroad crossing infrastructure is being fabricated and installed. The station is expected to open in fall 2022.

### 3. Natick Center Station

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

Update: Construction continues on both platforms. Temporary low-level platforms have been constructed on both sides of the station. To improve station resiliency, communication systems have been placed in a duct bank and drainage improvements are underway. Work is proceeding to install piles and foundations for the new high-level platforms and accessible access routes. Construction is expected to be complete in spring 2023.

### 4. Newtonville, Auburndale, and West Newton Stations—Design

Scope: This project will produce a design to make all three stations accessible via a high-level platform at each station on the northern embankment. Each station will have ramps to access the high-level platform.

Update: The 30% design was submitted in November 2020 and is being reviewed by the MBTA. The final design is expected by spring 2022.

## 5. Winchester Station

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

Update: Design is complete and a construction contractor will be selected later this year. Construction is expected to take approximately 30 months.

## 6. 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 design consultant has begun the preliminary station design phase. Following a structural and systems assessment, a detailed project schedule will be developed. Funding for construction has not yet been secured.

## 7. South Attleboro Station

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

Update: South Attleboro Station is currently closed as of February 2021 due to the structural condition of the pedestrian bridge and will remain closed until the station is fully renovated. The design is progressing to 75% and final design is expected in Winter 2021. Funding for construction has not yet been secured.

## 8. 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 trains along with some path of travel upgrades.

Update: Design is underway and construction is expected to be complete by the end of this year.

## 9. 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 do 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 North Beverly and Beverly Depot stations are currently under design.

## 10. 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.

## 11. Commuter Rail Bridge Plates

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

Update: As a first step toward identifying the most appropriate bridge plate 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 design will be developed and tested. The MBTA is in the process of issuing a contract 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: A design contract was recently executed and design work began in April 2021. The design is scheduled to be complete in August 2022. Construction is not currently fully funded.

#### 2. 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: All elevators have been replaced and are back in service. Construction began in summer 2018 and has been 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 opened for service in September 2020.

#### 3. 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, 849, 850 and 851 will also be replaced.

Update: Construction of the new Commuter Rail platform, elevator 728 (lower busway), elevator 851 (Forsyth Street) and elevator 850 (Orange Line) are complete and opened to the public. Rebuilding of the lower busway is also complete. Elevators 848 (lower busway) and 849



(commuter rail) have been taken out of service and are expected to be completed and re-opened in August 2021.

#### 4. 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 underway and is anticipated to be fully complete in November 2021. Elevators will be opened as they are completed. The first elevator completed was the replacement of existing garage/lobby elevator 806, which reopened on December 4, 2020. Elevator 807 is scheduled to be open for use summer of 2021. Elevator 805 is scheduled to be open for use in fall of 2021.

#### 5. Central Square 860 & Redundant Elevators

Scope: This project includes the construction of an additional (redundant) elevator on both the inbound and outbound sides of Central Square Station as well as the replacement and modernization of the existing elevator on the outbound platform.

Update: The design is expected to be complete in summer of 2021. Construction funding has not yet been identified.

#### 6. 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 MBTA has procured a design consultant for final design and construction phase services. The design contract was awarded in March 2020 and design work began in October 2020. The design is currently at the 30% phase. The design is expected to be complete in fall 2022. Construction funding has not yet been identified.

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

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

- 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 at + 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 each of the stations' elevators have been divided between four design firms and 30% designs have recently been completed for each. Funding to advance every project is not yet available and discussions are underway to identify which units will move forward first.

## 8. 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: The MBTA has procured the engineering consultant firm WSP and Lerch Bates, who are leading the effort to assess all current conditions of elevators and escalators, in addition to developing a long-term plan for the maintenance and modernization of systems. To date, evaluations of all vertical transportation assets on the Blue Line, Green Line, Orange Line, and the majority of the Red Line have been completed. Evaluations of the Silver Line and various MBTA facilities such as garages and maintenance facilities will be completed next. Upon completing their review, the consultant will begin development of the Vertical Transportation Plan, as well as evaluations of elevator and escalator replacement delivery methods and the existing maintenance contract with KONE.

## 9. 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: 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. Several efforts have already been implemented, and a documented plan for a holistic approach to elevator cleanliness has been finalized. The following related activities are underway:

- 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. Thirty two of the highest priority floors were replaced between 2019 and 2020.
- 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.
- A subcommittee has been formed 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.

- Elevator cleanliness reports are shared with TPD on a monthly basis to alert them of potential areas of concern.
- A prototype of a urine detection device has been developed and is ready for a pilot. The testing will take place in an MBTA elevator with the goal of successfully detecting the presence of urine and alerting the Maintenance Control Center of the need to deploy a cleaner.

## 10. Real-time Elevator Outage Information on Digital Displays

Scope: The MBTA is working on two pilot projects that will provide riders with additional real-time information about elevator outages. The first is an effort to install digital screens at elevator entrances which would include details about that specific elevator as well as elevators system-wide.

The second is an effort to install large digital displays in unpaid station lobbies, near the fare gates, with information about elevator outages across the system. The screens would provide information about current and upcoming outages, as well as relevant information regarding alternate access during outages.

Update: Hardware for both projects has been selected and will be on hand shortly. For the pilot involving digital screens at elevator entrances, two stations (Chinatown and North Quincy) have been identified and screens are scheduled to be installed in fall 2021.

With respect to the digital display screens in unpaid lobbies, 13 locations in 8 stations have been identified and installation will begin this summer.

### Bus Stops:

#### 1. Critical Stops

Scope: In 2015, the MBTA identified 50 of its highest ridership stops that had significant accessibility barriers and warranted reconstruction. Following that effort, in 2017, the MBTA surveyed all 7,690 bus stops as part of the Plan for Accessible Transit Infrastructure (PATI) and determined that an additional 274 were "critical"—meaning the stop is so inaccessible, customers using wheeled mobility must board/exit in the street. Out of these 324 stops, a number of these stops will be fully reconstructed while others that experience extremely low ridership will be closed.

Update: To date, 64 of these highest priority stops have been fully reconstructed, 47 are either under construction or in design, and 111 have been eliminated due to extremely low ridership. The remaining 102 will be renovated as part of upcoming municipal projects or other near-term work. In addition to this set of stops, a number of other bus stops that had asked some accessibility barriers were also upgraded due to their proximity to the critical stops.

#### 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 658 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: As work on the critical stops advanced, planning and design work began for stops categorized as high priority. To date, 3 have been reconstructed and 223 are either in design or construction. The remaining high priority stops will be addressed as funding becomes available.

### 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: The MBTA released a Request for Proposals in 2020 and awarded the Street Furniture Program concession to Intersection Media starting in February 2021. In the coming years the MBTA will continue to work with municipalities and communities to update and expand the MBTA's network of bus shelters and amenities. The technical specifications provided for the RFP were developed in close coordination with SWA.

## 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 six-car consist went into service in summer 2019. 30 cars have been conditionally accepted with deliveries expected to increase to two married pairs per month by the end of 2021.

Due to a derailment on the Orange Line with the new cars, the MBTA has taken precautionary measures by removing both the new Orange Line and Red Line cars from revenue service until a complete and thorough evaluation can determine the factors leading to the incident. The Vehicle Engineering team, along with other internal and external stakeholders, is managing the evaluation process of both cars and infrastructure.

### 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 PA/VMS system, and other accessibility improvements.

Update: Six pilot cars arrived in Boston in early October 2019 for testing. This first six-car consist went into service in December 2020. Production of the remaining Red Line cars is underway with the first production cars due by the end of summer 2021.

As described above, due to a derailment on the Orange Line with the new cars, the MBTA has taken precautionary measures by removing both the new Orange Line and Red Line cars until a complete and thorough evaluation can determine the factors leading to the incident. The Vehicle Engineering team, along with other internal and external stakeholders, is managing the evaluation process of both cars and infrastructure.

### 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 ensure all key accessibility considerations were captured. The RFP was released in December 2019, with Notice to Proceed expected in 2022.

### 4. Priority Seating Decals on Subway

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

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

### 5. 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 and innovative securement system called Q-POD has been installed on 10 of the MBTA's newest buses. These buses went into service on the Route 111 in February of 2021. A customer survey to obtain user feedback on the system, which will help inform decisions regarding its use in future bus procurements, is live and information regarding how to take the survey by phone or online is available on all new buses. Future events to allow customers to view and test the system, and provide feedback, in a central location will be held in late summer or early fall of 2021.

## 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 have collaborated to create an entirely new 8-hour Accessibility Certification training course. This course has been used to recertify supervisory personnel and

select bus operators since February 2021, and starting May 2021 has been utilized to train new hires.

The R-TAG customer engagement group was actively engaged throughout the process of developing the materials. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the production of videos for the training, featuring customers with disabilities, was underway. However, for the safety of all participants, the video shoots were postponed and alternate content that presents the customer perspective was developed and is being used in the interim. SWA is hopeful that video content may be safely produced later in 2021 and once complete it will be added to the certification materials.

## 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 have been collaborating on an entirely new accessibility training for all new hires, modelled off the Bus 8-hour Certification. Customer feedback via an online survey and several meetings with the RTAG and BCIL Plaintiffs Groups, has helped inform both specific content and thematic direction of the new training. Once the training for new hires is complete, SWA and Subway Operations will shift their focus to paring down this content to be used in the various yearly recertification programs which all Subway employees must take.

Video production for both this training and the new bus training are expected to be combined once it is safe to do so. In the meantime, similarly to the bus training, alternate first person perspective content will be included.

## 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 will begin working with the Customer Experience Department on opportunities to enhance training provided to Transit Ambassadors.

## 4. Transit Police

Scope: The MASS Collaboration (comprising 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 have been postponed until 2021.

## 5. Senior Leadership

Scope: SWA will develop an access-related training module for Senior Leadership to undergo upon hire/promotion. (Senior Leadership constitutes staff at Director level and above.)

Update: SWA has begun outlining the key objectives for this training and development of contents will occur throughout the Summer and Fall.

## **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 seniors and people with disabilities.

Update: The MBTA has issued a new Public Engagement Plan that addresses how the MBTA notifies and engages with customers. A companion to the policy document will be developed later this year, detailing ways for employees to ensure that outreach is conducted in a successful and inclusive manner.

### 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 reimagined and rescheduled—likely for spring 2022.

### 3. Audio & Visual Equivalency Policy

Scope: The Customer Technology Department (CTD) 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: CTD and SWA have worked to develop an audio/visual equivalency policy as well as identify best practices and practical solutions for a variety of scenarios.

One of the key takeaways in talking to blind and low-vision riders, digital signage manufacturers, and out-of-home advertising companies is that there is no magic bullet—no universal solution—for audio-equivalence for digital signage. We expect that, for now, audio-equivalence will have to be

provided on a project-by-project basis, depending on a variety of contextual factors (screen hardware, screen location, informational context, etc.) and that guidelines will evolve over time.

#### 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 and the Service Planning Department have worked together to identify a draft set of updated keys stops for each bus route that will be required to be announced manually by Bus Operators if the Transit Master automated system is not working. A plan to finalize and distribute these lists is underway with completion expected fall 2021.

#### 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 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.

Currently, SWA, Service Planning and others are working to develop guidelines to formalize processes for messaging to municipalities and collaborating with municipalities around issues affecting accessibility. For example, accessibility leading to stops and stations (e.g. sidewalks, curb ramps, floating bus stop design, installation of street furniture), proper snow removal, enforcement of no-parking in bus stops ordinance, bus lane design to conform to T guidelines, and reporting defects at bus stops.

#### 6. 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: 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>.



## 7. Transit Education—Local Hospitals

Scope: SWA will partner with staff from Boston Children’s Hospital, Boston Medical Center’s Pediatric Unit, and Massachusetts General Hospital to provide information on fixed-route accessibility and other community transportation services available in the T’s coverage area

Update: Throughout 2019, SWA worked to develop a customized travel training program for parents of children receiving regular care at Boston Children’s and/or Boston Medical Center’s Pediatric Unit. The program also equips hospital staff with fixed-route and community-mobility service resources. Training sessions were provided in late 2019 and early 2020.

In March 2021, SWA established a connection with Mass General Hospital and provided information about travel instruction and mobility information services that SWA can provide to hospital staff and patients on demand. The goal is to provide training to front-line care coordinators and patient navigators at MGH in 2021.

## 8. Transit Education - UMMS

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: 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 are continuing about how best to educate future doctors about evolving mobility resources and a need to improve digital literacy in the communities they serve.

## 9. 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: In late 2020 SWA began collaborating with the Customer Experience Department to design decals to adhere to all Green Line trains to advertise the rear door boarding policy and draw attention to the ISA button that customers may push as one option to request access to the rear doors. Installation of decals began in early May 2021 and will continue through the summer with expected completion across the entire Green Line fleet in September 2021. Additionally, audio and visual (both paper and digital) messaging will be deployed in Green Line stations and stops to educate customers about the rear door boarding policy. This marketing material will be rolled out starting in early summer of 2021 and will include policy and practical information regarding use of the rear doors for accessible boarding.

## 10. Creation of online reduced-fare application

Scope: The MBTA will develop an online application for eligible seniors and people with disabilities to allow riders to apply for one of the MBTA's reduced fare programs (Senior CharlieCard, Transportation Access Pass, and Blind Access CharlieCard) remotely.. This will provide applicants with an alternative to the current paper-based or in-person application process.

Update: Earlier this year, the Reduced Fares Tech team launched an online application pilot for first-time senior applicants (65 and older). The development of an online application for eligible riders with disabilities as well as a free fare application for eligible Blind/low vision riders are currently underway and is expected to be available by the end of this year.

## SYSTEM-WIDE OVERSIGHT

### 1. System-Wide Accessibility

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

Update: 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.

### 2. 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 the new maintenance database (Trapeze). This programming process is estimated to be completed in summer/fall 2021. Once complete, SWA will begin receiving new station maintenance reports on a monthly basis. In the meantime, SWA plans to continue coordinating with Engineering and Maintenance as the department works to refine the prioritization of individual station assets/defects.

### 3. The Design Guide to Access

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

Update: Last fall, SWA established the Design Guide Working Group, composed of internal MBTA stakeholders, to review the first draft of the guide. The working group has been meeting bi-weekly to review, comment, and offer feedback on completed guide content. Completed Design Guide sections will be posted online over the course of the next year.

#### 4. 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 throughout the winter of 2020-21, as weather allowed. Pilots included 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 pilots were beneficial in determining a set of methods of snow removal monitoring that is effective, safe, and efficient. These methods will be utilized in the winter of 2021-22 and refined as needed. Furthermore, SWA and maintenance agreed upon, and utilized, an appropriate protocol for reporting snow clearing deficiencies as they were discovered.

## **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. A 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: 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: 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.