



MINUTES

Meeting of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Board of Directors

April 25, 2024, AT 9:00 A.M.

10 Park Plaza, 2nd Floor Board Room, Suite 2890
Boston, MA 02116

Public participation and comment occurred via written communication, voice message and in-person public comment.

This meeting was broadcast virtually.

**BOARD MEMBERS
PARTICIPATING IN-
PERSON:**

Chair Tom Glynn, Director Thomas Koch, Director Tom McGee, Director Charlie Sisitsky, Director Mary Skelton Roberts, Director Chanda Smart

**BOARD MEMBER
PARTICIPATING
REMOTELY:**

Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt

**BOARD MEMBERS
ABSENT:**

Director Robert Butler, Director Eric Goodwine

**Others Presenting
and/or Participating for
Various Portions of the
Meeting:**

General Manager Phillip Eng, Deputy Chief of Staff Darrin McAuliffe, Chief Safety Officer Tim Lesniak, Executive Director of Commuter Rail Mike Muller, Chief Operating Officer Ryan Coholan, Chief of Paratransit Services Michele Stiehler, Deputy Director of Innovation and Analysis Elizabeth Wiesner, Mike Widmer, Chief of Quality, Compliance and Oversight Meredith Sandberg, Assistant General Manager of System-Wide Accessibility Laura Brelsford, Acting Chief Administrative Officer Jeff Cook, Senior Director of Bus Transformation Justin Antos, Assistant General Manager of Service Development Wes Edwards, Chief of Policy and Strategic Planning Lynsey Heffernan, Senior Director Climate Policy and Planning Kat Eshel, Senior Director of Strategic Transit Planning Laura Gilmore

Others Present:

General Counsel Douglas McGarrah, Chief Counsel Kevin Scanlon, Counsel- Corporate Governance Noah Potash

1. Safety Briefing

Deputy Chief of Staff Darrin McAuliffe began with a safety briefing, pointing out the board room's safety features and noting that it was distracted driving awareness month.

OPEN OF MEETING/Call to order by the Chair

Chair Tom Glynn called the meeting of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority ("MBTA") Board to order at 9:00 a.m. Noah Potash called the roll of the MBTA Board of Directors participating, being a quorum of the MBTA Board:

Chair Glynn	Yes
Director McGee	Yes
Director Sisitsky	Yes
Director Skelton Roberts	Yes
Director Smart	Yes

Public Comment Period #1

Katie Calandriello of TransitMatters addressed the importance of improving bus service. Makayla Comas of LivableStreets Alliance suggested making Bus Route 1 fare free during the Red Line rail diversion.

Tom Ryan of A Better City thanked staff for their focus on track work and discussed the need for improvement of alternative service options and communications with riders. He said that the Capital Investment Plan ("CIP") showed a need for more funding for capital infrastructure for modernization, accessibility, and climate. He also expressed urgency regarding applications for federal funds.

Note: Secretary Tibbits-Nutt joined the meeting at 9:05 a.m. Director Koch joined the meeting at 9:07 a.m.

Jackson Moore-Otto of TransitMatters expressed support for proposed improvements to the Fairmount Line, including improved service and electrification.

2. Safety Program Update

Chief Safety Officer Tim Lesniak presented the Safety Program Update, beginning by reviewing the DPU Triennial Audit, noting that the MBTA has 60 days to respond and has been in continuous dialogue with the DPU on the findings. He added that a backlog of overdue incident reports had been closed. Mr. Lesniak discussed the mitigation measures implemented by the contractor on the South Station air rights project following a fire incident. He recapped a discussion of safety process issues that was held with workers on the Blue Line surge. Mr. Lesniak then reviewed safety performance indicators by mode, noting that bus showed improvement on system reliability, commuter rail showed improvement in the accident frequency ratio, and light rail showed improvement in fire/smoke events.

3. Commuter Rail Contract Extension

Executive Director of Commuter Rail Mike Muller presented a proposed extension of the Commuter Rail contract with Keolis, beginning with an overview of the current contract and the option to extend it for one year to procure and mobilize a successor. He said that the re-procurement was underway and discussed the timeline, under which mobilization would occur in early 2027. Chair Glynn noted the historic progression from Amtrak to MassBay to Keolis and stated that it was not always the case that the MBTA went with the incumbent commuter rail operator. Mr. Muller agreed and said that dating back to the initial operator, Boston & Maine, the MBTA had never selected the incumbent. He addressed the contract structure, currently a cost and arrangement model where the MBTA owns the assets and directs the schedule, while the contractor handles operations and maintenance. Mr. Muller said that given the need for capital investment to advance

modernization, it might make more sense for the new contract to have a different duration or unbundle different functions. Director McGee asked about the level of interest in the RFI and Mr. Muller said that staff would be arranging in-person interviews with about 20 respondents. He explained that the contract was a mutual option and that the MBTA was proposing to increase payment to Keolis by \$5 million per year, subject to annual escalation rates, which would cover operating and maintenance costs. Director Koch asked whether the additional funds would address issues raised by the unions of Keolis workers. Mr. Muller said he believed that the final agreement between Keolis and the union would satisfy the concerns. Director Smart, Chair Glynn, and Mr. Muller discussed how the funds would address the concerns. General Manager Eng said that the MBTA was facilitating the ability to address the issues and that he believed the extension would assist with the situation.

On motion duly made and seconded, it was by roll call:

To authorize the General Manager, or his designee, to exercise an Extension of Term option in the Commuter Rail Operating Agreement, Contract No. 159-12, between the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority and Keolis Commuter Services, LLC., for a one (1) year period, and to increase the annual fee paid to Keolis by \$5 million per year, for four years, subject to the annual escalation rates in the contract; and to execute any necessary or ancillary documents in the name and on behalf of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority to effectuate this Agreement.

Chair Glynn	Yes
Director Koch	Yes
Director McGee	Yes
Director Skelton Roberts	Yes
Director Sisitsky	Yes
Director Smart	Yes
Secretary Tibbitts-Nutt	Yes

4. Low Income Fares & RIDE Flex contracts

Chief Operating Officer Ryan Coholan began the presentation by providing background on the RIDE service and discussing work with service providers to address expected demand. He said that the recent driver wage increase had improved the volume of applications, and that the organization was trending towards meeting the driver staffing goal. He explained that the low-income fare option was projected to induce 178,000 additional trips, a 34% increase in service hours. Mr. Coholan said that the additional RIDE Premium trips would cost about \$3.4 million and discussed the preparation work being conducted. Director McGee asked how the driver experience was being improved and Mr. Coholan discussed the training process and said staff were soliciting feedback from drivers. Chair Glynn noted that the contracts for Ride Flex service were being brought to the board because of the importance of service for people with disabilities. Chief of Paratransit Services Michele Stiehler summarized the history of the RIDE Flex program, noting that trips are shifted to Flex providers as needed. She described how the program's subsidies work and noted that a competitive procurement process was conducted. She noted that while trip costs are lower for RIDE Flex, Flex users take more trips. Ms. Stiehler said that the program was exceeding the usage and contract value and that costs have exceeded projections. She reviewed the amendment history for the contracts with Lyft and Uber and said that the one-year extension was fully funded in the budget. Director Skelton Roberts and Ms. Stiehler discussed trip capping. Director Smart and Ms. Stiehler discussed the size of the desired increase in drivers. Director Smart, Ms. Stiehler, and Mr. Coholan discussed the vetting of drivers by Lyft and Uber compared to the MBTA's vetting of its own drivers. Director Smart requested information on how much money from each trip goes to the driver. Director Skelton Roberts and Ms. Stiehler

discussed how the program handles seniors with cognitive impairment. Director McGee asked whether Uber and Lyft's surge pricing is reflected in the average trip cost and who would be liable in case of issues with a trip. Deputy Director of Innovation and Analysis Elizabeth Wiesner said that the per trip average reflects the cost of surge pricing and that under the waiver signed by Flex users, liability would be on the customer and Lyft or Uber. Ms. Smart requested age demographic information on Flex drivers and Ms. Wiesner said that she could provide that data.

On motion duly made and seconded, it was by roll call:

VOTED:

To authorize the General Manager/CEO of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority to execute a contract amendment with Lyft, Inc. in the amount of not-to exceed \$9,843,269 to provide Non-Dedicated Paratransit Services and to execute any necessary or ancillary documents in the name and on behalf of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority to effectuate this Agreement.

Chair Glynn	Yes
Director Koch	Yes
Director McGee	Yes
Director Skelton Roberts	Yes
Director Sisitsky	Yes
Director Smart	Yes
Secretary Tibbitts-Nutt	Yes

On motion duly made and seconded, it was by roll call:

VOTED:

To authorize the General Manager/CEO of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority to execute a contract amendment with Uber, Inc. in the amount of not-to exceed \$7,729,002 to provide Non-Dedicated Paratransit Services and to execute any necessary or ancillary documents in the name and on behalf of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority to effectuate this Agreement.

Chair Glynn	Yes
Director Koch	Yes

Director McGee	Yes
Director Skelton Roberts	Yes
Director Sisitsky	Yes
Director Smart	Yes
Secretary Tibbitts-Nutt	Yes

5. The History of the Fiscal Cliff

Chair Glynn introduced Mike Widmer to discuss the history of the fiscal cliff and discussed his extensive background in public service. Mr. Widmer explained that in the 1990s, the MBTA was funded in arrears, meaning annual shortfall resulted in the MBTA bringing unpaid bills to the legislature every year. With the budget increasing significantly by the late 1990s, the House proposed Forward Funding, that is, putting the organization on the same budget basis as any other. He said that the idea was to put the MBTA on a sound financial footing via one cent of the sales tax and to instill fiscal discipline. He noted that legacy debt responsibility was also assigned to the MBTA. Mr. Widmer said that sales tax revenue underperformed assumptions, partly due to recession, with 2.3% growth instead of the 6.5% projected. He noted that fare revenues also failed to grow and declined due to Covid. He also discussed the tension between system maintenance and expansion, stating that the MBTA was made responsible for expansions over recommendations that the state handle expansions so the MBTA could focus on maintenance. He said that the surpluses envisioned under Forward Funding failed to materialize. Mr. Widmer said there have been 35 or 40 reports on transportation funding highlighting that revenues are falling short of necessary expenses. He said that while the Transportation Finance Commission made recommendations on reforms and revenue, attention has focused on reforms like putting MBTA employees into the Group Insurance Commission and little has been done on revenue other than modest increases in the gas

and sales tax. He concluded that it is hard to drive change for increased funding and there is a need for a finance plan for sustainable transportation funding. Mr. Widmer said that it would be necessary to build a political coalition to drive the form and discussed the example of the broad coalition of groups committed to universal access to healthcare that were able to deliver healthcare reform in 2006. He said that the General Manager has created goodwill, the Board is experienced, and the Governor has convened the Transportation Funding Task Force, putting the pieces in place to mount a major effort. He said that the state must move to the common goal of putting the MBTA on sound financial footing. Director McGee commented on the importance of the historical perspective and said a 2007 report showed the cost of doing nothing. He also stated that the gas tax increase was compensating for inflation and discussed the importance of considering the return on investment ("ROI"). Mr. Widmer noted that the gas tax increase has already been wiped out by further inflation. Director McGee said that the report sought a 29-cent tax and that a 9-cent tax would have gotten the tax back to 1991 levels. Director Skelton Roberts discussed the concept of healthcare as a right and said there was not a unified vision of transportation as a right yet. She suggested rolling back failed measures and capturing the ROI for transit and noted the prioritization of private vehicles. Mr. Widmer agreed that the goal was not as focused as the healthcare reform had been and agreed that the love of automobiles was a factor. Director McGee commented on the importance of transportation, noting that the state is losing young people due to congestion and a lack of housing.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

6. Chair Glynn said that the next item on the agenda was an executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining. He said that he had determined that an open meeting could have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the MBTA. He noted that the Board would return to open session following the discussion.

On motion duly made and seconded, it was by roll call:

VOTED:

To enter executive session to discuss strategy with regard to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body.

Chair Glynn	Yes
Director Koch	Yes
Director McGee	Yes
Director Skelton Roberts	Yes
Director Sisitsky	Yes
Director Smart	Yes
Secretary Tibbitts-Nutt	Yes

Note: The Board entered executive session at 10:25 a.m. and returned to open session at 10:40 a.m.

OPEN SESSION/ACTION ITEMS

7. Consent Agenda

Chair Glynn explained that a vote to adopt the consent agenda would approve the March meeting minutes, authorize the General Manager to enter into Collective Bargaining Agreements with Local 717 and Local 9501, and approve the East St. Bridge Replacement contract.

On motion duly made and seconded, it was by roll call:

VOTED:

To adopt the consent agenda.

Chair Glynn	Yes
Director Koch	Yes

Director McGee	Yes
Director Sisitsky	Yes
Director Skelton Roberts	Yes
Director Smart	Yes
Secretary Tibbits-Nutt	Yes

8. Report from the General Manager

General Manager Phillip Eng delivered a report on his first year at the MBTA, thanking outgoing Deputy General Manager Jeff Gonnevillle and reviewing the record hiring that has been conducted to rebuild the workforce. He discussed improvements to bus operator training, including de-escalation training. Mr. Eng reviewed the restructured Safety Department and the work of the Quality, Compliance and Oversight Office. He discussed the ongoing Track Improvement Program, with a focus on work on the Blue Line. The General Manager also addressed station work and the ATC/PTC update carried out under the Track Improvement Program. He provided an update on the Dorchester Avenue Bridge work. Mr. Eng discussed new double-deck commuter rail coaches from Hyundai-Rotem and the addition of Worcester express service, which should enable mode shift.

Note: Secretary Tibbits-Nutt left the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

The General Manager announced the restoration of limited service to South Attleboro and discussed the expansion of the Lynn/Winthrop ferry service. He noted that a full-time director of ferry service had been appointed. Mr. Eng discussed work to improve project management and discussed how the Lynn and Ashland stations were reopened ahead of schedule. He reviewed work to advance accessibility upgrades and said that eight miles of bus priority lanes had been added in 2023. He reviewed work with communities on Transit-Oriented Development and discussed how transit supported the

Boston Marathon. Mr. Eng shared some positive feedback from riders and spoke about MBTA participation in Autism Awareness Month. Chair Glynn said that the General Manager was owed a great debt of gratitude for the progress. Director Smart said that she appreciated the General Manager's care and concern but wanted to receive her board book earlier. Director Koch discussed increased public confidence in the MBTA. Director Skelton Roberts said that everyone asks here whether the General Manager is as good as he seems. General Manager Eng recognized the contributions of his team and the board. Chair Glynn acknowledged that Mr. Eng's leadership had impacted increased funding for the MBTA.

9. Update on Safety Management Inspection

Chief of Quality, Compliance and Oversight Meredith Sandberg provided an update on the Safety Management Inspection, noting that overall progress is up to 76% with 151 actionable items to go. She said over 52% of submissions had been accepted and that her office had requested the closure of 6 additional CAPs since the previous update. Ms. Sandberg highlighted progress on the workforce, SMS, safety communications, and policies, procedures, and training. She then recapped her Spring 2024 updates to the Safety, Health and Environment subcommittee. Director Smart and Ms. Sandberg discussed details of the SMI progress.

Public Comment Period #2

Andy Forman of the Boston Center for Independent Living ("BCIL") said that confidence in riding the MBTA has improved and that he was proud of the culture change at the MBTA. He also raised concerns with blocked bus stops and lanes and advocated for automated enforcement.

Jim Wice of BCIL said that he had seen major changes in accessibility over the past 30 years but raised concerns about gaps between trains and platforms and the difficulty of using bridge plates. He also said that more work was needed to ensure bus diversions were ADA-compliant.

Kat Torres Radisic of BCIL and the Riders' Transportation Access Group ("RTAG") said that the MBTA needed to remain accountable and that MassDOT's guidelines for floating bus stops needed to be updated with the perspective of disabled riders considered.

City of Bost Disability Commissioner Kristen McCosh discussed working closely with the System-Wide Accessibility department, the importance of accessible bus stops, and continuous improvement to the RIDE service.

Mary Napolitano of the Mass Senior Action Council thanked the MBTA for making the low-income fare available on all modes and discussed progress on accessibility. She said that more work was needed on elevators, snow removal, curb ramps, accessible buses in diversions, and benches at bus stops.

10. System-Wide Accessibility Update

Assistant General Manager of System-Wide Accessibility Laura Brelsford provided an update on system-wide accessibility, beginning by reviewing the regulatory and statutory basis for accessibility requirements. She noted that advocacy had been necessary to hold agencies accountable to the law. Ms. Brelsford noted the inadequate customer experience in the early 2000s and discussed how the Daniels-Feingold settlement addressed violations of accessibility regulations and the ADA. She reviewed the creation and role of the System-Wide Accountability department. Ms. Brelsford discussed vastly improved elevator reliability, noting that supply chain issues had caused

setbacks. She reviewed bus service improvements and discussed the Internal Accessibility Monitoring Program. Ms. Brelsford reviewed progress on various areas of bus accessibility and compared station accessibility at the MBTA to other agencies. She discussed designing for inclusion and increasing station staffing. Ms. Brelsford reviewed improvements to complaint oversight and tracking. She said that lessons learned included the importance of having first person perspectives, considering accessibility in all stages, the importance of understanding the demographics of disability, and that accessibility benefits everyone. Ms. Brelsford said that ongoing priorities included expanding station accessibility, improving municipal coordination, and leveraging technology to solve accessibility issues.

Note: Director Koch left the meeting at 12:13 p.m.

Chair Glynn asked when the last full report to the board on accessibility had been presented and Ms. Brelsford said it was about eight years ago. Chief Administrative Officer Jeff Cook applauded the team for the progress made. Director Smart asked why there had not been more progress on wheelchair securement and Ms. Brelsford cited the drop of disabled riders during Covid limiting some operators experience and the proliferation of complicated types of wheelchairs.

11. Spring Service Changes

Chief Operating Officer Ryan Coholan presented an update on Spring Service Changes, noting that the changes were impacted by seasonality, more operators, and the track improvement program. He highlighted an increase in rail service and shorter peaks. Mr. Coholan said that frequency on multiple bus routes would be increased and dropped trips would be reduced. He turned to commuter rail changes, which included South

Attleboro peak service, increasing frequency on the Fairmount Line, Heart to Hub express service, resumption of Cape Flyer service, and reopening the lower Readville platform. He announced that seasonal ferry service was resuming and adding additional service. Mr. Coholan discussed headway improvements and additional trips on the rail system and increasing bus frequency and reliability. He outlined adjustments to commuter rail and ferry service. Director Skelton Roberts and Mr. Coholan discussed coordination with municipalities and public communications. Director Skelton Roberts asked about improving headways and Mr. Coholan discussed relevant operational constraints. Director Smart commented that only one bus route with increased frequency serves Roxbury and Mr. Coholan said that he was happy to look into other routes that could potentially increase in frequency.

12. Bus Network Redesign Update and Phase 1

Senior Director of Bus Transformation Justin Antos provided an update on the Bus Network Redesign, discussing preparations and noted that bus riders account for 40% of the MBTA's passengers. He said that Phase 1 was scheduled for December 2024, with five new bus routes. He cited support from municipal leaders and noted that bus operator headcount is trending positively. Mr. Antos discussed a pilot program for new bus signs and said staff were surveying bus stops and fixing signs. Chair Glynn asked about the total number of bus stops and Mr. Antos said it was about 6800. Mr. Antos outlined municipal collaboration for Phase 1 and discussed the Bus Priority Program. He said that the communications playbook was complete, preparations for Phase 1 were underway, and the schedule for Phase 2 was in the works. Director Skelton Roberts said the work was amazing and asked about enforcement. Assistant General Manager of Service

Development Wes Edwards addressed the challenges of conducting enforcement across multiple jurisdictions and said that staff also want to roll out awareness. Director Smart and Mr. Antos discussed the accessibility of the new signs, which are in English.

13. Climate Assessment

Chief of Policy and Strategic Planning Lynsey Heffernan introduced the newly appointed Senior Director Climate Policy and Planning Kat Eshel, who spoke briefly on her professional background. Ms. Heffernan discussed the climate assessment and its key theme of sustainability. She said that it is a goal to increase the percentage of transit trips. She reviewed planned steps to protect the transit system and embed resilience. She noted that the work supports the Commonwealth's climate plans and said that sustainability responds to external drivers such as climate drive impacts, the renewable energy transition, funding opportunities, and electrification. Senior Director of Strategic Transit Planning Laura Gilmore reviewed the assessment outcomes, stating that a sustainable system helps with the state's net zero emissions goal. She discussed progress on energy efficiency, decarbonization, and resilience, then reviewed in-progress initiatives. Ms. Gilmore reviewed the recommendations of the assessment and discussed the support needed to carry out the recommendations.

14. Capital Investment Plan Update

Ms. Hefferan provided an update on the FY25-29 Capital Investment Plan ("CIP"), stating that all projects were reviewed to ensure efficient spending. She discussed objectives including improving right-of-way access, building workforce capacity to support state-of-good-repair work, and enhancing competitiveness and supplier diversity. Ms. Heffernan addressed work to balance safety, reliability and modernization and discussed

examples of resequencing work to support the Track Improvement Program and repurposing funding for Red and Orange Line vehicles. Ms. Heffernan summarized the CIP and the sources of its \$9.6 billion, \$843 million of which is new funding. She then reviewed ridership and investment levels by mode.

Note: Director Sisitsky left the meeting at 1:10 p.m. As the meeting no longer had a quorum, the presentation continued as an informal briefing and no deliberation occurred.

Ms. Heffernan reviewed the spend by program and presented CIP highlights in various categories. She discussed how various investments support equity, diversity, and employee morale, then reviewed bus and rail modernization. She discussed major Safety, Reliability and Modernization initiatives, including the North Station Draw 1 Bridge Replacement and the Green Line Type 10 Vehicle Procurement. Ms. Heffernan reviewed accessibility improvements across various modes and discussed how the CIP impacts sustainability and resilience. She said that historic levels of capital spend are continuing, although funding sources for capital projects are declining. She reviewed some unfunded and partially funded project requests, then summarized the structure of the Proposed FY25-29 CIP Book. She concluded the presentation with the CIP engagement plan and timeline. Chair Glynn said that the Board would discuss the CIP in May. Ms. Heffernan noted that the CIP timeline was somewhat delayed by the decision to review every project. Director Skelton Roberts agreed that more time was needed before discussion. Director McGee commented on the difficulties of the process and Ms. Heffernan agreed that prioritizing projects is difficult.

Adjournment

Chair Glynn requested a motion to adjourn the MBTA Board meeting.

On motion duly made and seconded, it was by roll call:

VOTED: to adjourn at 12:43 p.m.

Chair Glynn	Yes
Director McGee	Yes
Director Skelton Roberts	Yes
Director Smart	Yes

Documents relied upon for this meeting:

- April 25, 2024 Agenda
- Minutes of March 28, 2024 Board Meeting
- MBTA April Safety Briefing
- 2. DRAFT_Safety Deck April 25 2024 11AM TPL
- 3. DRAFT 2 and FINAL_CR Contract Extension_4.25.24 Board Meeting v3
- 4. DRAFT 2_RIDE LIF and Flex Amendments 4.25.24
- 5. Michael Widmer Intro v2
- Local 717 - Collective Bargaining Authorization_v3
- STW - Collective Bargaining Authorization_v2
- B91CN15- East St. Bridge Replacement Project (Dedham)_FINAL
- Staff Summary Review - B91CN15 East St. Bridge Replacement_FINAL
- TIP Update Full Board 04.25.2024b
- GM Report to the Board 04.25.2024 v7a
- 9. DRAFT 2 and FINAL_QCO Update Apr Board 2024-refreshed
- 10. DRAFT 2 and FINAL_Accessibility at the MBTA_4.22.24
- 11. Draft 2_Spring 2024 Schedule Changes_Board Meeting Slides_April 2024
- 12. DRAFT 2 and FINAL_BNR Board Update April 2024 - 20240422
- 13. MBTA Board Presentation_Climate Assessment_FINAL
- FINAL_Proposed FY25-29 CIP - April Full Board as of 2024-04-23