



Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

MEPA Consultation Session for MBTA's Environmental Notification Form (EEA# 16324)

February 23rd, 2021

What is Forging Ahead?

- Forging Ahead is the process the MBTA is using to focus our operating and capital resources on the riders who depend most on the MBTA for frequent and reliable service.
- In order to do this we are:
 - Evaluating all internal spending to reduce expenditures
 - Assessing our capital program and reallocating a limited amount of funds from our capital budget to support our operating budget
 - Defining a core of **essential** transit services to prioritize and determining the costs needed to run them
- Out of this difficult situation, we are **forging** a more equitable and efficient transit system to move **ahead** economic recovery for Massachusetts.

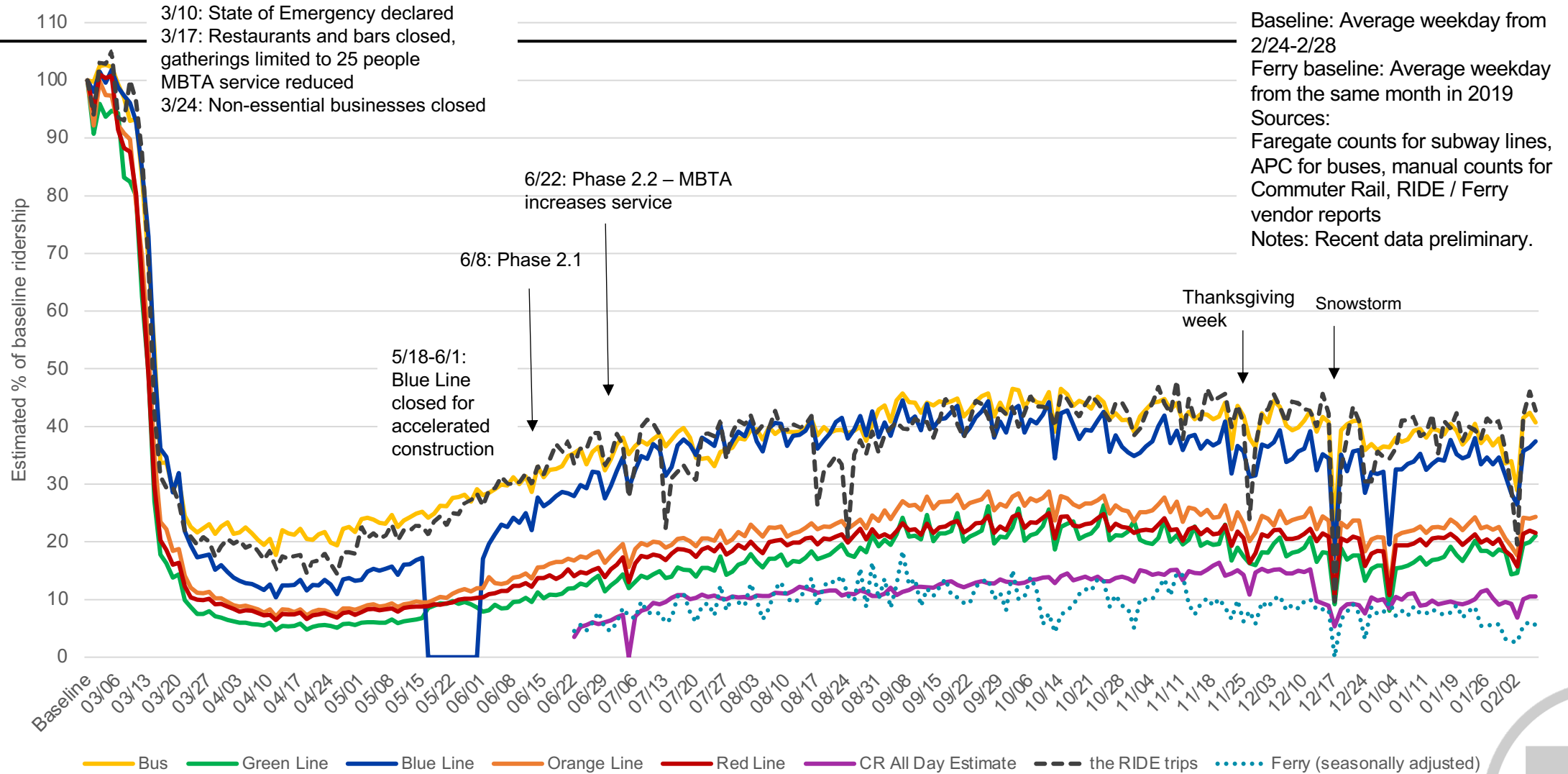


Forging Ahead is an Iterative Process

- The ENF encompasses all of the service changes envisioned in the Forging Ahead program; These changes will be made over a series of dates, with some starting in January, but the majority going into effect in March and April
- Funding received from the Federal government is being used to **offset some of the changes** approved in December 2020.
- We will review the impact of these changes and adjust service based on **crowding and demand**
 - The MBTA revisits its service levels on a regular basis and will continue to do so
 - Bus and Commuter Rail are already undergoing **transformation processes**, and service will be added based on ridership and **in line with the redesign plans**



Our ridership fell significantly and is slowly recovering

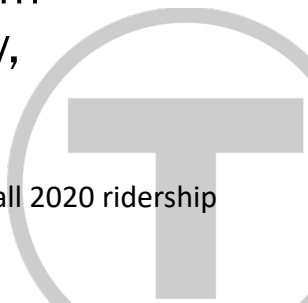


Preserving Essential Services

Mode	Highly Transit Critical	Less Transit Critical
High Ridership Potential FY22	Blue Line, Orange Line, Red Line, Green Line (trunk), Mattapan line, many bus routes, Fairmount CR line	Some bus routes
Low Ridership Potential FY22	Some bus routes, some Commuter Rail service, Charlestown ferry*	Hingham/Hull ferry, some bus routes, some Commuter Rail service

- Goal of this framework is to preserve service at or above Service Delivery Policy levels for all services in the High Ridership and High Transit Critical quadrant
- Service Delivery Policy was approved by FMCB in 2017 and quantifies MBTA's target minimum acceptable service level by mode across multiple metrics (incl. hours of operation, frequency, crowding)

*Charlestown Ferry was initially considered as part of essential service, but after further examination, has been moved to low ridership based on further review of Fall 2020 ridership

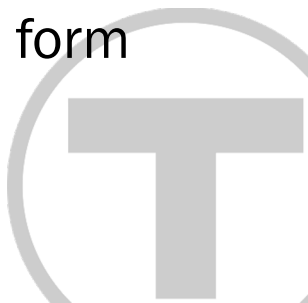


Service Change Implementation Timeline

Mode	Presentation of proposed service changes	Public engagement	Contingent vote on service changes	Implementation start	Ability to adjust service as part of Service Planning (new schedules)
Commuter Rail	November 9 th FMCB meeting	November & December 2020	December 14 th FMCB meeting <i>(Contingent on acceptance of Title VI analysis and Environmental Review)</i>	January & April	Twice a year (Oct / May)
Ferry				January	Twice a year
Rapid Transit				March	Four times a year (Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec)
Bus				March	Four times a year (Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec)
The RIDE				As impacted by other changes	As impacted by other changes

We contacted and heard from many stakeholders

- 10 public meetings and 1 public hearing: 2,010 attendees
- Community liaison outreach
 - 266 community organizations contacted
 - 39 organizations informed us that they shared information with their members
 - 30 organized supplemental community meetings; 3 held in Chinese and 2 in Spanish
- Public comments 6,723+
 - 3,839 comments from online forms
 - 407 comments from official public meetings
 - 179 comments from community meetings
 - 1,463+ emails via public engagement email, representing 834 individuals, 569 form emails and 60 delegation letters



Summary of Public Feedback

- We received feedback about specific changes, on the prioritization, and on the process
- Feedback on the proposals varied by channel
 - Commenters at public meetings prioritized span and access
 - In the online comment tool prioritization of service packages frequency on essential bus and rapid transit rank highest
- General Comments
 - Perception that changes are occurring as people return to work
 - Concern that future schedules with reduced frequency will align with essential workers schedules as well as school schedules especially for reverse commuting and weekend essential workers
 - Concerns about the MBTA's commitment to the environment and mitigating climate change
 - Concerns over the MBTA's commitment to transit oriented development

Full report available at mbta.com/forging-ahead-comments



Proposed Service Changes



Framework for Proposing Modifications

Type	Proposed Changes to original proposal
Lack of Access	Some bus route elimination, Hingham/Hull ferry elimination, suburban subsidies, commuter rail stop closures
Lack of Span	Late night bus, Late night rapid transit, evening commuter rail, weekend commuter rail
Divert to alternative route	Charlestown ferry, E Line stopping at Brigham Circle, some bus route eliminations
Less Frequency	Commuter rail weekdays, rapid transit, bus



- Based on feedback and analysis, believe priority for modifying base service is focusing on **access & span**, specifically for transit critical riders,
- Thus using public feedback to identify **behaviors and travel trends of transit critical riders that would lose access and span**
- **Examples include:**
 - Bus Routes with higher stranding based on current ridership (number and durability vs. pre-COVID)
 - Municipalities losing all MBTA modal options
 - Need for 2nd and 3rd shift medical workers to have access to some transit, especially across Boston harbor
 - Services where large number of current users may represent a larger portion of 0-1 car households than pre-COVID ridership

Bus – Proposed FY21 Base Service

Fall 2020 ridership (vs. pre-COVID)	Projected ridership for July 2021 (vs. pre-COVID)		FY21 Scheduled service hours	
	Scenario 3	Scenario 2	Modified Proposal for 12/14	Original proposal (11/9)
41%	51%	55%	85-90% est.	85%

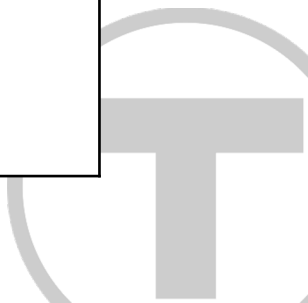
Type of Service Change	Modified proposal for 12/14	What changed vs. 11/9
Hours of operation (span)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change to hours of operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service after midnight will continue
Route elimination/consolidation (access)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suspend 20 routes, consolidate 16, shorten 4, and a few routes will operate peak only (many of changes already in effect as part of COVID schedules) Continue suburban subsidies to 5 communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 Bus Routes (43, 131, 136, 714, 716) proposed to remain included in base service 1 bus route (230) proposed to continue to run to Quincy Center
Frequency <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content;">Revision: Some additional frequency being preserved due to CARES II funding</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20% frequency reduction system-wide non-essential routes 5% frequency reduction system-wide essential routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No proposed changes



Rapid Transit – Proposed FY21 Base Service

Fall 2020 ridership (vs. pre-COVID)	Projected ridership for July 2021 (vs. pre-COVID)		FY21 Scheduled service hours	
	Scenario 3	Scenario 2	Modified Proposal for 12/14	Original proposal (11/9)
24%	28%	46%	75-80% (est.)	70%

Type of Service Change	Modified proposal for 12/14	What changed vs. 11/9
Hours of operation (span)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change to hours of operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service after midnight will continue
Route elimination/consolidation (access)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change to operating footprint 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue E Line to Heath Street
Frequency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20% frequency reduction to Green, Orange, and Red Line Up to 5% reduction to Blue Line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue 95% of Blue Line service



Commuter Rail – Proposed FY21 Base Service

Fall 2020 ridership (vs. pre-COVID)	Projected ridership for July 2021 (vs. pre-COVID)		FY21 Scheduled service hours	
	Scenario 3	Scenario 2	Modified Proposal for 12/14	Original proposal (11/9)
13%	16%	29%	70% (est.)	65%

Type of Service Change	Modified proposal for 12/14	What changed vs. 11/9
Hours of operation (span)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End weekday service at 9 PM <div style="background-color: #cccccc; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;">Revision: Weekday service operating later due to CARES II funding</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Change
Route elimination/consolidation (access)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain partial weekend service Worcester, Providence, Newbury/Rockport, Middleboro and Fairmount; suspend on low ridership lines Close 5 stations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partial weekend service on high ridership and transit critical lines Continue to serve Cedar Park stop
Frequency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce peak and offpeak service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Change



Ferry – Proposed FY21 Base Service

Fall 2020 ridership (vs. pre-COVID)	Projected ridership for July 2021 (vs. pre-COVID)		FY21 Scheduled service hours	
	Scenario 3	Scenario 2	Modified Proposal for 12/14	Original proposal (11/9)
12%	16%	29%	>0%, exact service TBD	0%

Type of Service Change	Modified proposal for 12/14	What changed vs. 11/9
Route elimination/consolidation (access)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suspend Charlestown and Hingham direct service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Change
Frequency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce weekday Hingham/Hull ferry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain partial Hingham/Hull weekday service (<i>also qualifies as access change</i>)



The Approach to Adding Back Service

- Because most FY21 service changes involve frequency (rather than access or span), we can **monitor ridership and know if ridership is increasing to the point where additional service is needed**
 - FY21 service levels assume the need for social distancing and therefore can accommodate growing ridership after social distancing is no longer required based on public health guidance
 - The proposed FY21 base service level provides 90% of pre-COVID bus service for 41% of pre-COVID bus ridership, 75-80% of rapid transit service for 22% of pre-COVID ridership, and 70% of commuter rail service for 13% of pre-COVID ridership, accommodating ridership growth



Process: Adding Back Service

- The timing of service restoration will depend on public health guidance (including guidance on the continued need for social distancing) and the timing of the Commonwealth's post-vaccination re-opening plan
- In addition to ridership, staff will monitor other data sources including passenger surveys, employer surveys, roadway data, general travel data (LBS), economic recovery planning. Planning programs, such as the **Bus Network Redesign** and **Rail Transformation**, will provide further opportunity to public input, in addition to Quarterly Service Planning Changes outreach processes.
 - Planning scenarios will be refined and revised as necessary and ridership will be compared to scenario projections to understand which scenario most accurately predicts future ridership
- In addition, the public's input on how we prioritize and bring back service will be based on the extensive prioritization comments heard during the Forging Ahead process
 - FY22 service levels will be planned beginning in February/March as part of FY22 budget process



Forging Ahead ENF

- ENF can be found on the MBTA website
 - mbta.com/forging-ahead
- ENF comprised of five parts
 1. Environmental Notification Form and an overview document
 2. Original Forging Ahead proposal
 3. Revised Forging Ahead proposal
 4. Summary of Stakeholder Engagement
 5. Air Quality Analysis and EJ Impact Analysis prepared by CTPS

