

**Massachusetts Bay
Transportation Authority**

Accessibility at the MBTA

Update on the MBTA's path towards compliance with the
Daniels-Finegold v. MBTA settlement agreement.

June 26, 2024

Language Accessibility

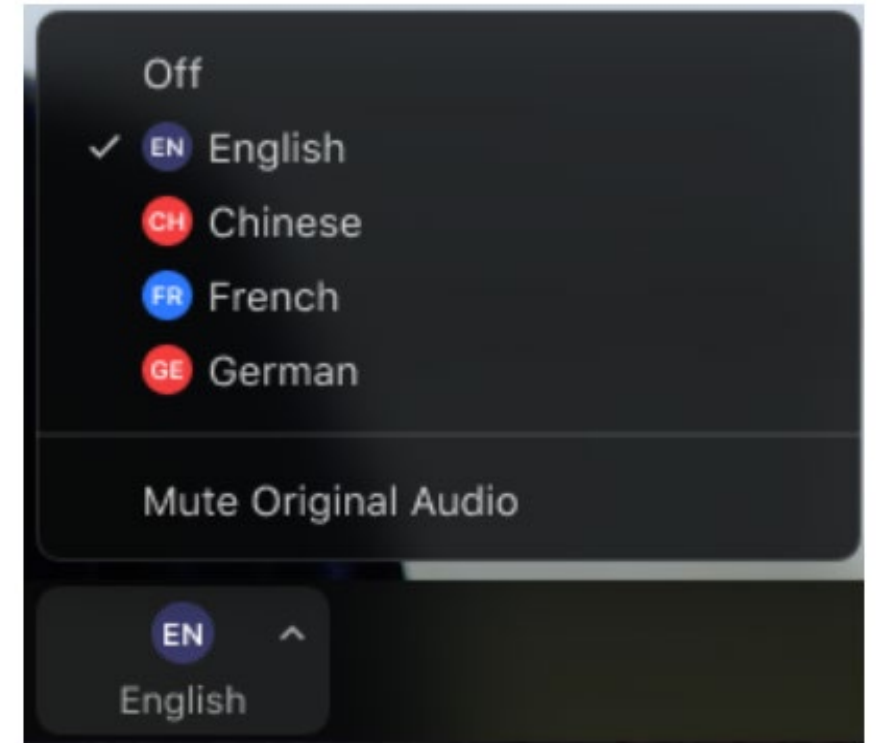
Our Spanish Interpreters for the meeting today are **Tracy Pichardo** and **Jordan Marks**.

English

- We offer interpretation during this meeting. In your meeting controls, click Interpretation (the small globe icon) and click the language that you would like to hear.

Spanish

- Ofrecemos interpretación en español durante esta junta. Para escoger el audio en Inglés o en Español tendrá que escoger el botón de interpretación, el cual tiene un imagen de un mundo. Después por favor de escoger el idioma que le gustaría oír.



Notification of Recording

- This virtual public meeting will be recorded. The MBTA may choose to retain and distribute the video, still images, audio, and/or transcript. By continuing attendance with this virtual public meeting, you consent to participate in a recorded event.
- If you are not comfortable being recorded, please turn off your camera, and keep your microphone muted, or you may choose to excuse yourself from the meeting.

Other Important Notes –

Keyboard shortcuts:

- Alt + Y is raised hand
- Alt + H takes you to the chat box
- Alt + A toggles audio off/on
- Alt + V toggles video off/on
- **Your microphone and webcam are automatically disabled upon entering this meeting.**
- The meeting will be open to questions and answers at the end of the formal presentation.



ASL Interpreters

Our ASL interpreters are **Denise Martinez** and **Tom Lauterborn**.

To view their videos:

- Find the interpreter's video in the gallery.
- In the top right corner of the interpreter's video, click the ellipses
- Then, click the "Pin Video" option. This will keep the interpreter's video on your screen.
- When the interpreters switch, follow the same steps to pin the other's video.



CART Captioning

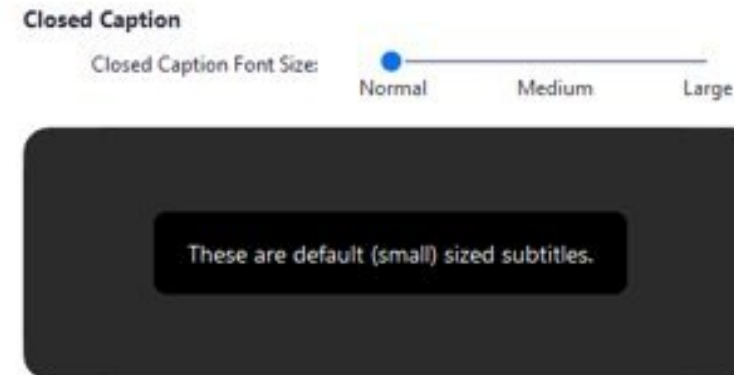
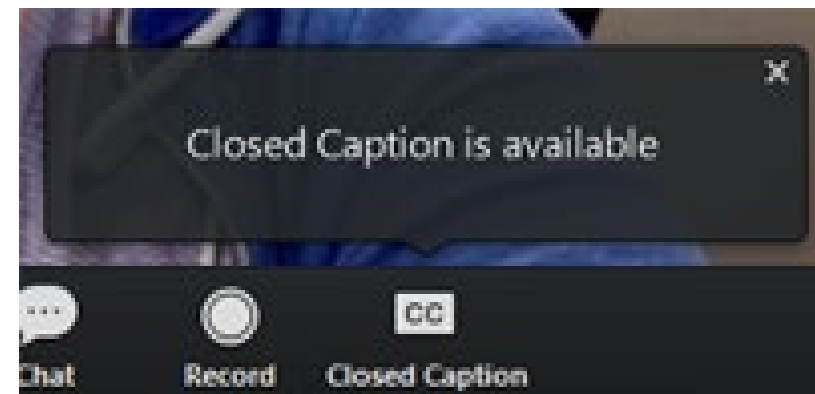
Our CART Captioner is **Denise Gracia**

To start viewing closed captioning click **Closed Caption** with the **CC** icon

Tip: Click and drag the closed captioning to move its positioning in the meeting window.

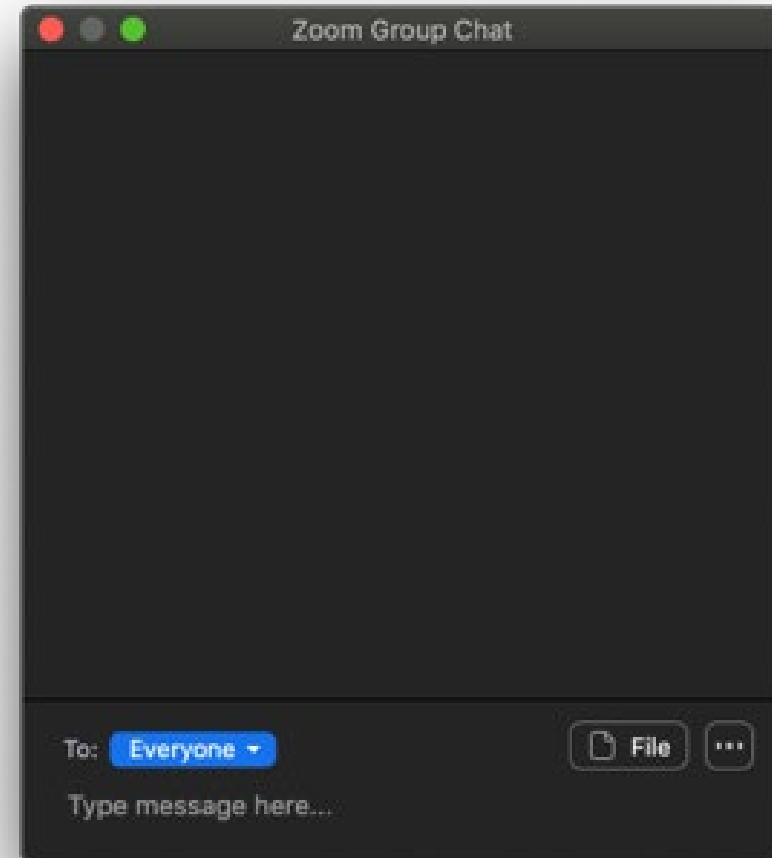
To adjust the caption size:

- Click the upward arrow next to **Start Video / Stop Video**
- Click **Video Settings** then **Accessibility**
- Move the slider to adjust the caption size



Use Chat For Technical Questions

- If you have a technical question about Zoom or the features of the meeting, please use the chat function.
- Our technical assistant will attempt to troubleshoot your problem and get back to you.



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All MBTA activities, including public meetings, are free of discrimination. The MBTA complies with all federal and state civil rights requirements preventing discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, limited English proficiency, and additional protected characteristics. We welcome the diversity from across our entire service area. If you have any questions or concerns, please visit www.mbta.com/titlevi to reach the Office of Diversity and Civil Rights.



Agenda

- **Welcome and Noteworthy Updates** – Phillip Eng - General Manager
- **Status of Settlement Agreement** – Hon. Judge Patrick King
- **Statements from Plaintiffs and Riders' Transportation Access Group**
- **Updates on Key Accessibility Initiatives**
 - **Major Station Upgrades in the Pipeline**
 - **Transition of Customer Call Center**
 - **Update on Orange Line Platform Gaps**
 - **Bus Operator Training Program**
- **Feedback and Q&A**



Plaintiffs' Statement: Joanne Daniels-Finegold



RTAG Statement – Nora Nagle, Co-Chair



Updates on Key Accessibility Initiatives

Laura Brelsford,
AGM System-Wide Accessibility



Plaintiffs Honored with Thomas P. Hopkins Disability Access Award



- On April 10, 2024, the Massachusetts Office on Disability honored the Daniels-Finegold plaintiffs with the Thomas P. Hopkins Disability Access Award
- Recognition for their ongoing efforts to improve public transportation across the Commonwealth



To Learn More

- **Accessibility at the MBTA:** [MBTA.com/accessibility](https://www.mbta.com/accessibility)
- **Complete Initiatives Report:** [MBTA.com/accessibility-initiatives](https://www.mbta.com/accessibility-initiatives)
- **Questions, Complaints & Commendations?**
 - 617-222-3200
 - [MBTA.com](https://www.mbta.com), click on "Support"
 - Tweet @MBTA
- **Upcoming RTAG Meeting:** Thursday, July 25th, from 5:30 P.M. to 7:30 P.M.
- **Judge King Semi-Annual Settlement Update Meeting:** Wednesday, December 11, 2024, from 5:30 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.



Major Station Upgrades in the Pipeline

Sam Zhou

Chief Engineer, Engineering & Capital Division



Overview of FY25-29 Capital Investment Plan

- On June 11th, MBTA Board approved the FY25-29 CIP
- Includes 640 distinct projects and programs valued at \$9.6B
- Roughly \$1 billion worth of projects that include significant accessibility component



Green Line Accessibility – Big Picture

- **Phase I (ongoing):**

- 30 out of 70 Green Line stations are inaccessible today
- Expand accessibility by raising platforms to 8” above top of rail.
 - Provides access to existing fleet as well as future Type 10 cars

- **Phase II (2027-2030):**

- Roll out new Type 10 cars
 - Will be 100% low-floor
 - Mockup of new train car expected by Fall 2024

- **Phase III (Timing TBD):**

- Raise platforms to 14” above top of rail to provide level boarding
 - Cannot occur until the majority of the new cars are deployed and existing fleet retired



Green Line – Upcoming Improvements

Symphony Station

- Full station upgrade with redundant elevators
- Valued at \$120M+
- Construction bids recently received far exceeded cost estimate (68%+)

D Branch stations (4)

- Portion of platforms to be raised along with improvements to select entrances by end of 2024
- Comprehensive upgrades targeted for 2026
- Valued at \$33M

Newton Highlands

- Partially accessible today
- Comprehensive upgrades targeted for 2026
- Valued at \$67M



Green Line – Upcoming Improvements

B & C Branch Street-level stations (18)

- Platforms to be raised and widened
- Leveraging design-build delivery approach to accelerate schedule
- Construction targeted for 2025 and 2026
- Valued at \$160million; recently received \$67 million ASAP grant

E Branch street-level stations (4)

- Currently in discussions with City of Boston regarding basic design concepts
- Valued at \$171M

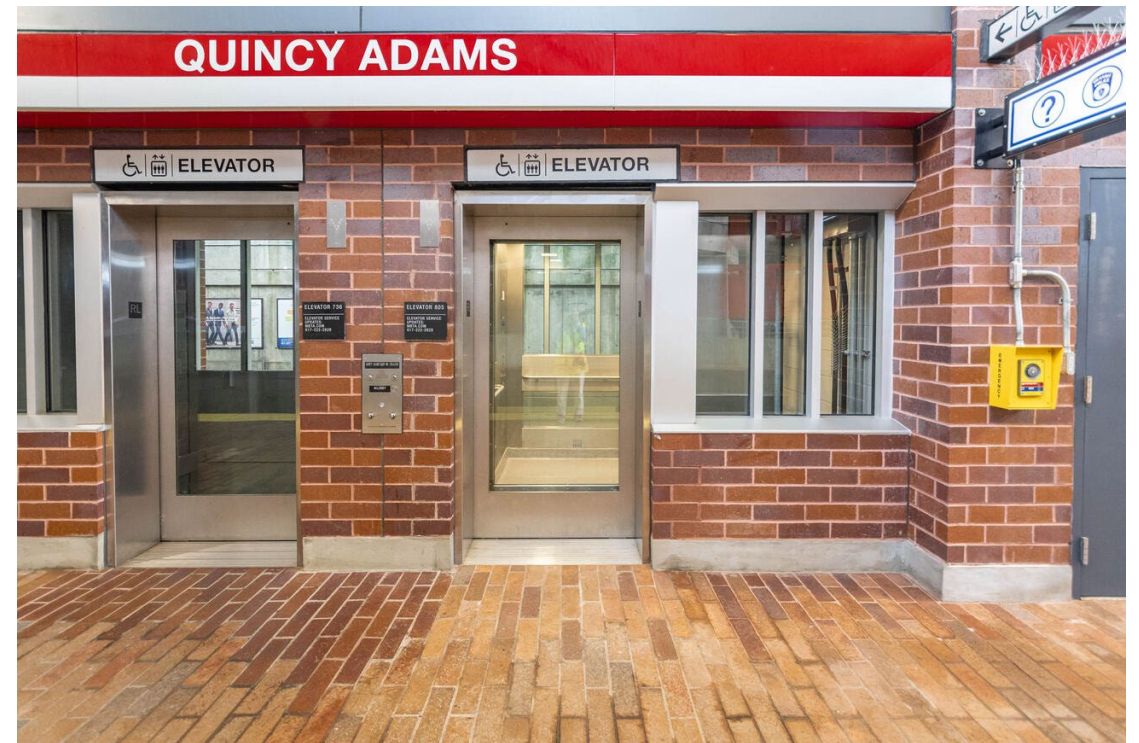
Hynes & Boylston

- Construction Valued at \$200+ million each
- Design activities on hold until funding strategy established



Heavy Rail Accessibility – The Big Picture

- All Red, Orange & Blue Lines stations, except for Bowdoin, are generally accessible today
- However, a number of accessibility barriers exist stemming from designs that predated the ADA, including small and outdated elevators and pathways that do not coincide with the primary path
- Goal is to address major barriers followed by building in redundancy system-wide



Heavy Rail – Upcoming Improvements

Ruggles

- New accessible entrance on Columbus Avenue, and major SGR upgrades
 - Potentially new elevator to Orange Line platform providing redundancy,
- Currently valued at \$134m

Central Square

- 1 elevator replacement
- 2 new redundant elevator
- Valued at \$54m

Jackson Square

- 1 elevator replacement
- 1 new redundant elevator
- Valued at \$35.5m



Downtown Crossing



- Last major capital item within the *Daniels-Finegold* settlement
- Will establish first ever inaccessible connection between the Red and Orange Lines
- 2 new units + relocation and enlargement of Park Street elevator 808
- Valued at \$96m



Commuter Rail Accessibility –The Big Picture

Phase 1: Address 26 stations that are currently completely inaccessible

- Complete permanent upgrades at the 3 stations fully funded through construction
 - Natick, Winchester, North Wilmington
- Construct interim freestanding mini-high platforms at 12-16 stations that do not require complex solutions
- Advance designs and construction of permanent upgrades at the 7 stations that require complex solutions
 - Waverley, Auburndale/Newtonville/West Newton (under design), Ayer, Wellesley Farms, Windsor Gardens

Phase II: Rebuild stations with mini highs to provide full-high platforms and appropriate vertical circulation

- With focus on stations at which accessibility upgrades have been or will soon be triggered by other essential station work (e.g. stair and/or platform repairs)



Commuter Rail – Upcoming Improvements

Natick Center

- Full high platforms with redundant accessible paths
- Construction to be completed in December
- Valued at \$57m

Winchester

- Full high platforms with redundant accessible paths
- Partial station opening in September
- Valued at \$66.4m

North Wilmington

- Short full high platform
- Construction to be completed in October
- Valued at \$2.5m



Commuter Rail– Upcoming Improvements

Wellesley Sq., West Medford, Franklin & Walpole

- Interim freestanding mini- highs
- Will be completed by beginning of 2025
- Valued at \$12m

Lincoln, Wakefield, Endicott, Concord & Wyoming Hill

- Interim freestanding mini- highs
- Targeting completion by summer 2025
- Valued at \$15m



Significant Challenges Facing Project Delivery

- **Construction Cost Escalation** – Projects that have been in development over the last 3 years have experienced significant cost escalation rates
- **Labor Resource Constraints** – Small number of major construction contractors bidding on large projects. Increases challenge of advancing multiple projects.
- **ROW Access** – There is a high demand for ROW access and limited blocks available. Projects are delayed when access is denied.
- For these reasons, difficult decisions regarding how to prioritize and scope our pipeline of accessibility projects lie ahead
 - Feedback from community, will be a key factor in decision-making



Transition of Customer Call Center

Carla Howze

Director, Customer Communications



MBTA Call Center

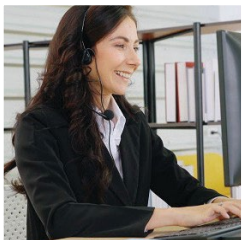
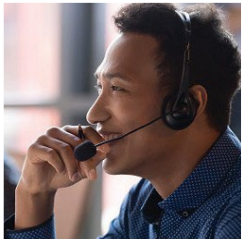
MBTA Call Center was outsourced in May 2017. Our contract ended with the vendor as of May 31st and was transitioned back under the MBTA control as of June 1, 2024.

Highlights:

- 17 Representatives
- 2 Supervisors
- 1 Quality Assurance Manager
- New Quality Monitoring Program
- Enhanced Training (Accessibility/Safety)
- 54% increase in accessibility complaints assigned to SWA from May to June 2024



Benefits of In-House Call Center



- Provide a consistent voice of the MBTA.
- Flexibility to scale operations for future demands (Call Center will be able to meet demand peaks during service disruptions, emergencies, and weather disruptions).
- Reduced technology risks utilizing in house experts.
- Better quality of complaint intake resulting in better complaint investigation, reporting and resolution.
- Direct contact and collaboration with System-wide Accessibility, Operations staff, Social Media team, and other MBTA departments.
- Better retention of staff resulting in less turnover, better quality.
- Access to resident experts to resolve complex issues.
- All training conducted by MBTA experts (**Accessibility/ODCR**)



Addressing Orange Line Platform Gaps

Dan Carroll and Jack Durkin

Senior Manager of Facilities and Project Manager

Engineering



What are platform gaps?

Horizontal Gap: The horizontal distance between edge of platform and the edge of train car. The MAAB requirement is no more than 3" (inches).

Vertical Gap: The vertical distance between top of platform and car floor (can result in a step up or step down). The MAAB requirement is no more than +/- 0.5" (inches).



Background

- Throughout 2023, observed increase in gaps on the Orange Line – particularly with new cars at certain platforms
- Increase in rider concerns
- September 2023– conducted comprehensive audit
- Horizontal and vertical gaps were measured at every Orange Line platform and at each door of 10 trainsets over the course of one week



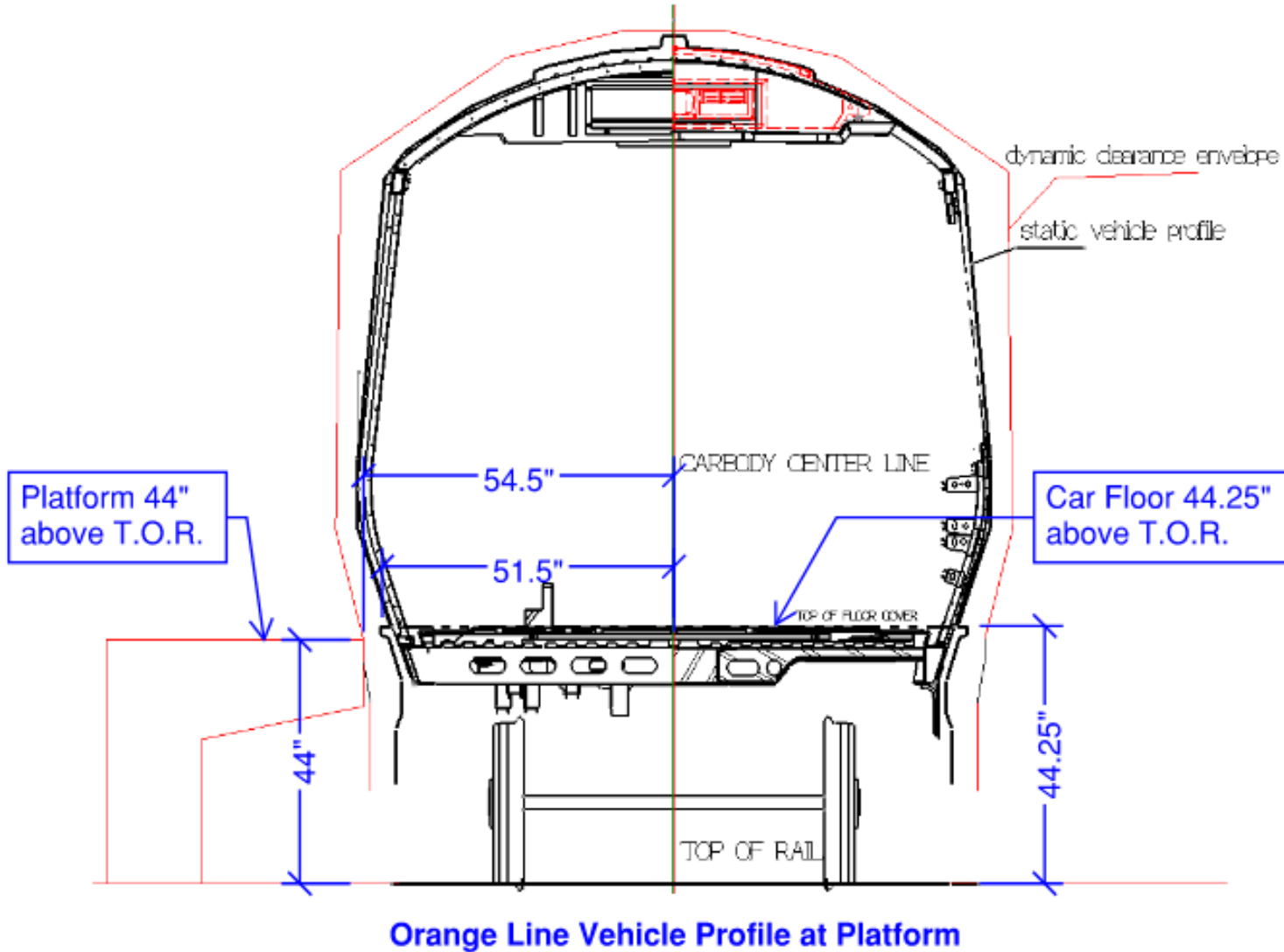
Findings & Development of Corrective Action Plan

Findings from the 2023 audit revealed:

- 48% of platforms on average exceed the 3 inches horizontal gap requirement
- 59% of platforms on average exceed the 0.5 inches vertical gap requirement
 - Most significant gaps were found on the Southwest Corridor
- For both horizontal and vertical gaps, huge variability between stations, cars, and location on platform
- Horizontal gaps averaged 2.99” but ranged between 0” and 8” (in one extreme example);
Vertical gaps average 0.46” but ranged between -2.95” and 4.8”
- Based on these results the MBTA is in the process of developing a Corrective Action Plan



Step 1: Updating Internal Standards



Verify that the design standards for the relationship between tracks and platforms resulted in compliant gaps when paired with vehicle specification

Revised Design Criteria

44" - Platform height above Top of Rail (T.O.R)

44.25" - Vehicle floor Above T.O.R.



Step 2: Modify tracks and platforms where feasible

Track beds that are secured through ties and ballasts can generally be raised or lowered as needed to conform to standards and reduce gaps

- Oak Grove to Chinatown is served by traditional tie and ballast track.
- Since September 2023, six platforms have benefited from full depth track reconstruction through the Track Improvement Plan, while others have been reset through tamping.
- The TIP Team is presently evaluating future repair/replacement opportunities.

Rub rail can be installed at the edge of platforms to reduce horizontal gaps

- Currently installing as part of the ongoing track outage. Also developing a schedule for installation across remainder of the Orange Line.



Step 3: Identify solutions for locations where track adjustments are not feasible in short-term

- At stations where track beds are secured through direct fixation, raising and lowering the tracks is largely infeasible
 - Tufts to Forest Hills – Northbound and Southbound
- Long-term solution is to do full-depth reconstruction as part of future Southwest Corridor Modernization Project
- Interim solutions are currently being investigated, including the feasibility of platform modifications

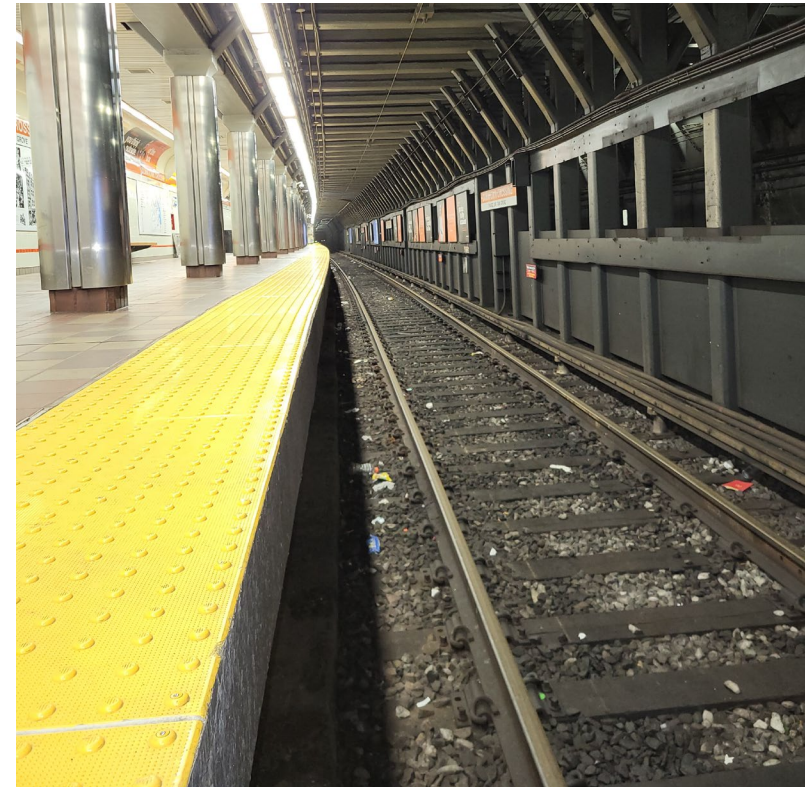


Direct Fixation VS Ties and Ballast

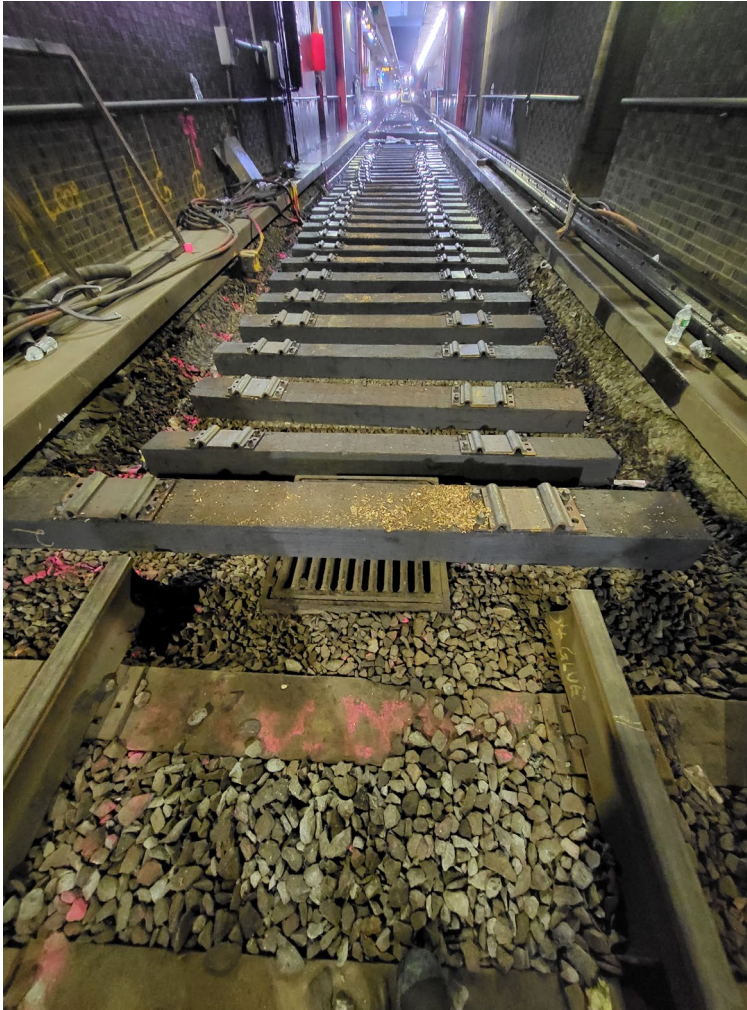
Direct Fixation



Ties and Ballast



Step 4: Institute protocols for monitoring gaps on regular basis



- Inter-departmental working group to plan regular field inspections on track and platform measurements.
- Reviewing plan for ongoing gap measurements.
- Expand this effort to other to Red and Blue Line Infrastructure.



Recent Orange Line Track Improvement Work

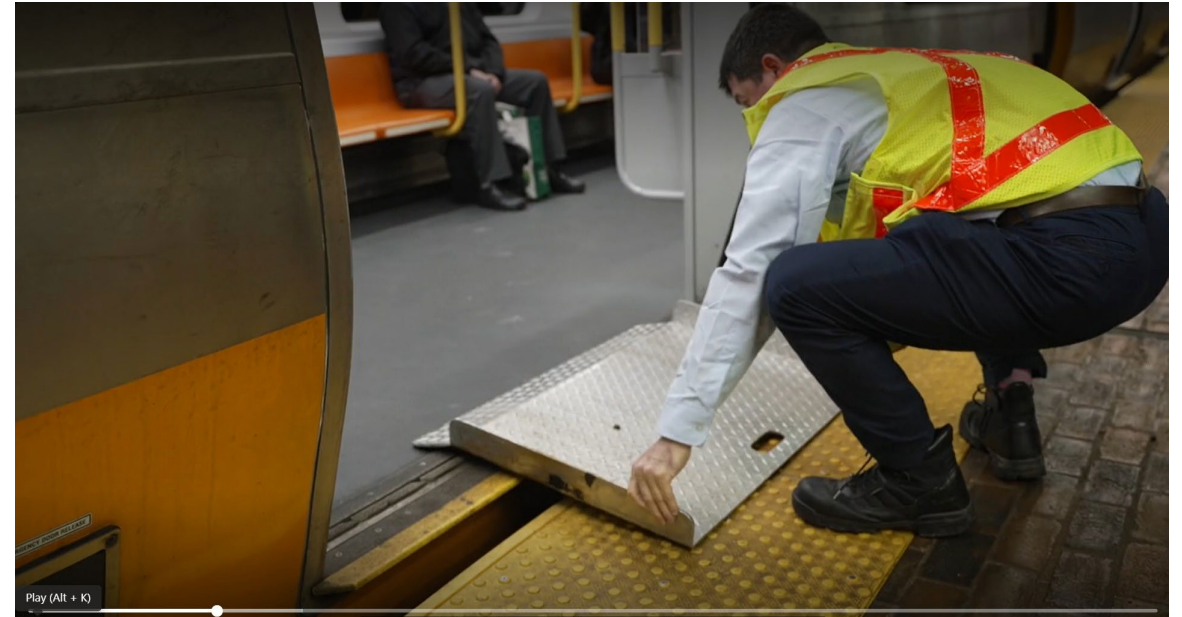
After data was collected, the Track Improvement Plan was implemented, where some track has been repaired or replaced.

- The findings of the latest data collection showed the vertical gap at these six locations fall within compliance with the horizontal gap close to the threshold.
- Rub Rail is also being installed at several locations to address horizontal gap issues.



Mobile Bridgeplates Available at All Stations

- Located at all Heavy Rail Stations (Red, Orange & Blue)
- Available to any rider upon request
- **Requests can be made to:**
 - Station Agent (Transit Ambassador, CSA, Station Official)
 - Motorperson
 - Call Box – on a platform or on train
- When you make a request, employee will notify OCC and they will coordinate to ensure someone meets you at destination with bridgeplate as well



Bus Operations Training Relief

A New Approach to Bus Operator Training

Dane LaiFook

Division Chief – Bus Operations



Program Overview

- A one-week training program designed to allow all operators to attend specific training courses on a consistent basis.
- A formalized method of keeping operators up to date on required trainings and certifications.
- A way to invest in our employees and boost morale.
- Operators will attend the program every two years, providing them the opportunity to refresh their knowledge of operating rules and procedures and develop new skills and tools they need to excel at their job.
- Also gives them a chance to sharpen their technique in securing wheeled mobility devices and performing other critical duties.



Courses

Operators attend a variety of courses including, but not limited to:

- General Bus Operator Recertification
- Security Awareness and Emergency Preparedness
- De-escalation
- Fare Transformation
- Accessibility in Motion



Accessibility in Motion

- A comprehensive 8-hour program consisting of classroom and hands-on instruction
- Course teaches operators:
 - The importance of accessibility and its impact on our riders
 - The prevalence of non-apparent disabilities
 - Their role and responsibilities in ensuring a rider's entire bus trip is safe and accessible
 - How to properly assist riders when requested
 - How to effectively and respectfully communicate with riders with various types of disabilities
 - How to correctly secure wheeled mobility devices
 - How to communicate with and assist riders during an emergency
- Also includes the perspectives of riders with disabilities

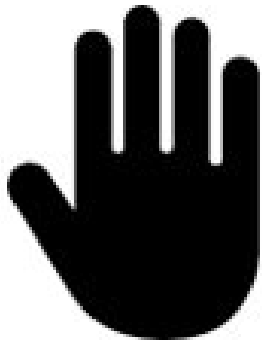


First-Person Perspectives



Questions?

- To indicate that you have a question, please use Zoom's "Raise Hand" feature located at the bottom of the screen.
 - When you raise your hand, it alerts the moderator that you'd like to speak. The moderator will unmute attendees to ask questions in the order that they raised their hands.



To speak, click
"Reactions"
then "Raise hand"



Alt + Y



***9 Raise Hand**

Thank You!

The next Update on the MBTA's path toward compliance with the *Daniels-Finegold v. MBTA* settlement agreement will be held on:

Wednesday, December 11, 2024
5:30 P.M. to 7:30 P.M.

