

*Evaluation of MBTA Paratransit and Accessible Fixed Route Transit Services*  
**MBTA ACTION PLAN**

	<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>MBTA RESPONSE / ACTION PLAN</b>
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<b>FIXED ROUTE</b>
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1.	The MBTA should establish an elevator replacement program designed to avoid operation of elevators beyond their effective life.	A Replacement program has been established in accordance with the Settlement Agreement with the Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL). Said program is funded within the MBTA's Five-year Capital Improvement Program.
2.	The MBTA should consider the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) "Heavy Duty Transportation System Elevator Design Guidelines" in development of specifications for future elevator procurements.	The MBTA's new elevator design standard incorporates these guidelines.
3.	The MBTA should consider consolidated elevator procurement for all elevators needed within a specific time frame (3-5 years) as a means of reducing the number of elevator types and suppliers.	The new elevator design standard and corresponding procurement phasing under the replacement program addresses this.
4.	The Operations Support Manager of elevator maintenance should be given responsibility for all MBTA owned and operated elevators including those under warranty.	This is currently in effect for all elevators.

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5.	The MBTA should emphasize preventive maintenance to minimize potential problems, particularly with an older complement of elevators.	Currently in effect, via the elevator/escalator maintenance contract with KONE.
6.	The Operations Support Manager should include random field inspections of the elevator repairs as they are being performed by the elevator maintenance technicians as part of the verification process.	Currently in effect in accordance with the BCIL Settlement Agreement.
7.	Consideration should be given to performing preventive maintenance during non-service hours in order to avoid disruption to customers.	Preventative maintenance activities are currently being scheduled so as to minimize customer impacts.
8.	The MBTA should develop a procedure for regular (daily) inspection of all commuter rail elevators, including those for which other entities have maintenance responsibility, and a procedure for timely reporting to MBTA public information staff and the responsible entity the status of all elevators at commuter rail stations served by the MBTA.	The Agreement with the commuter railroad operator (Mass. Bay Commuter Railroad Company, or MBCR) requires that MBCR shall inspect each station at least once per calendar quarter and results of each inspection shall be entered into the Engineering Maintenance Information System (MIS). It further requires that noted deficiencies shall be restored, repaired, or replaced within one week after the inspection.

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9.	All information on elevator status, including daily inspection reports by Station Inspectors and reports from the maintenance contractor, including scheduled maintenance, should be reported through the Maintenance Control and Reporting System (MCRS) in a timely fashion and the elevator status should be updated in the MCRS.	Subway Operations conforms to this requirement. This procedure/practice is currently in effect on behalf of KONE, the MBTA elevator contractor.  As stated in the Commuter Rail Operations response to Report Recommendation No. 8, inspection reports are entered into the Engineering MIS. In addition, as customer concerns are received, MBCR is notified for immediate response and resolution.
10.	More accurate and detailed monitoring and tracking of elevator status should be performed and recorded. Recorded information should include times and dates of each action from initial reports of inoperable elevators to restoration of operation in MCRS.	Procedure/practice is currently in place via MCRS and daily corresponding report distribution.
11.	The MBTA should consider the use of personal data assistants (PDA) by Station Inspectors to more methodically capture the inspection results and reduce the amount of communication. Such systems are currently used for facility management in other organizations, such as Harvard University. (continued on next page)	Use of PDA's is a medium to long-term goal of Subway Operations. However, we have a great deal of work to do to establish the underlying information systems that would make such devices useful and an added value. Operations Support's new management information system should be designed to allow for such inputs, as most do these days. When it is in place and in

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	<p>The Inspector would record the inspection results on a Daily Station Report in the PDA and transmit the report directly to a module in the MCRS system either with a wireless transmission or through a hard wire connection within the transit system.</p>	<p>use, and when we have created sufficient funding and controls for protection of PDA's, Subway will be happy to interface with the system. In the meantime, we have already initiated modifications to our forms and reports, as well as additional report functions in order to facilitate the next steps in our technology use.</p>
12.	<p>The MBTA should institute a <u>quality control procedure</u> to assure that information on elevator status is consistently reported on both the elevator hot line and the MBTA web site.</p>	<p>This procedure is now in place: the maintenance system sends a message to the Public Address Announcer and then updates the MBTA website. The hotline is checked by supervisory personnel for accuracy.</p>
13.	<p>Real time reports that identify elevator status through the MCRS should be developed and made readily available to MBTA public information staff.</p>	<p>Public Information Staff downloads up-to-date elevator status from the maintenance system every hour, and uses it to check the information being published to customers.</p>
14.	<p>To facilitate tracking &amp; reporting progress on the status of corrective actions, recommend that MCRS inquiry access be provided to customer service staff and the MBTA's Accessibility Specialist. Such access will provide real time information needed by customer service staff and save staff time by avoiding phone calls, e-mails, or other inter-departmental communication to obtain the needed info.</p>	<p>The MBTA has recently procured a new Customer Service Management System to better provide for the sharing of information among various groups - Customer Service, Operations and ITD in particular. This system along with information from MCRS will provide all of these groups with the ability to track and report on the status of corrective actions.</p>

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15.	The MBTA's PA Announcer should review the MCRS every half-hour during the service day to check for changes in the status of elevators.	The Public Address Announcer receives updates automatically each time an elevator is taken out of, or returned to, normal operation.
16.	The MBTA should consider installation of elevator status information on variable message signs located so a passenger can read them before entering the station. Means for obtaining alternate route information or assistance should be located near the VMS.	Where variable message signs are located in appropriate locations, and controls are accessible, we certainly could test this approach. The MBTA is scheduled to conduct a pilot test, displaying elevator/escalator alerts on existing variable message signs, later this fall at Back Bay Station.
17.	The MBTA should aggressively pursue its program to install a coordinated PAVMS system in its stations in order to better provide information to all riders.	The MBTA is scheduled to complete a demonstration project in mid-November 2007 at the following stations: Alewife, Airport, Aquarium, Back Bay, Downtown Crossing, Harvard Square, North Station, Park Street and Porter Square. The next phase will include new PA control equipment and signs at 21 stations and is scheduled for completion by July 2008. The final phase for 46 stations is anticipated to be completed by October 2008.
18.	Variable message signs on passenger platforms should be placed above and perpendicular to the platform in order to maximize visibility to waiting passengers.	Where feasible, all new LED/Variable message signs are being installed perpendicular to the platform. Feasibility is often controlled by available space and civil design constraints.

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19.	<p>The practice for providing alternate service when an elevator is unavailable should be incorporated into a formal procedure to avoid miscommunication and expedite provision of alternative transportation service when appropriate. This procedure should address how information about alternate service will be effectively communicated to riders.</p>	<p>Alternative service is provided to any customer who requests it during an elevator outage. The Control Center works with Subway Operations and Bus Operations to develop alternative service each time an elevator outage causes customers to seek an alternative route. Information is posted on the website, put on the hotline, and is broadcast by the train attendants working on the affected lines.</p>
20.	<p>Portable lifts at all accessible stations should be cycled daily by Transportation Inspectors to assure that they are in good operating order. Inoperable lifts should be recorded in daily station reports and reported to maintenance staff for repair or replacement in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Subway Operations conforms to this requirement</p>
21.	<p>Portable lifts should be stored in designated areas at stations, with the areas selected to provide ease of use and to avoid blocking pathways. Portable lifts should be accessible and usable in all weather conditions.</p>	<p>Subway Operations conforms to this requirement</p>

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22.	It is recommended that the Railroad Operations Snow Removal Plan be revised to specifically mention clearing paths of travel between platforms and the public way (streets, sidewalks, parking lots).	The MBTA directs the commuter rail operator (MBCR) through the Snow Removal Plan, developed specifically for each snowstorm, to ensure pedestrian paths are accessible within MBTA property.
23.	On commuter rail, PA systems and bridge plates should be inspected on a regular schedule.	Commuter rail stations typically do not include public address systems. Existing PA systems at South Station, North Station and Back Bay stations are inspected by the MBTA commuter rail operator (MBCR) on a periodic basis.  MBCR is also required to perform periodic inspections of platform bridge plates.
24.	The MBTA should continue its program of replacing older buses with low-floor buses equipped with ramps and PAVMS.	The Authority will begin receiving another 155 low floor buses in January 2008. Like all MBTA buses, these buses will be equipped with PA/VMS automated announcement equipment.
25.	The stop announcement “secret rider” program should be expanded to include riders who use wheelchairs and who regularly use the system to monitor appropriate use of lifts, ramps, bridge plates, kneelers and securement systems.	The MBTA will be expanding the existing OTA stop announcement program to include riders who use wheelchairs and add additional accessibility element evaluations.

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26.	PAVMS equipment and wheelchair securements should be explicitly included on daily vehicle inspection forms to reinforce the importance of their inspection to providing accessible service.	The MBTA is developing and testing an enhanced circle check checklist to explicitly require all accessibility hardware/features are onboard and in good working order. A pilot bus PA/VMS system defect card has been in used for several months and is in the process of being rolled out to all bus garages.
27.	The MBTA should develop reports that clearly identify daily use of vehicles with inoperable lifts. The reports should be used to withhold buses with inoperable lifts from service after three days and to assist in setting maintenance priorities.	This reporting system has been established. A report is sent to all Maintenance Managers daily.
28.	To improve stop announcement performance, continue the program to install simultaneous PA/VMS systems on all passenger vehicles. Explore and adopt methods of automatically adjusting message volume or timing in response to ambient noise levels.	PA/VMS systems are installed on all MBTA buses. Upgrades to existing system hardware and software continue. Automatic gain control to adjust announcement volume on buses to ambient noise level is in testing and will be phased in upon satisfactory completion of all tests. All Green Line cars will be so equipped very shortly. The new Blue Line #5 Car Fleet is equipped. Delivery will be complete mid-2009. If we can obtain funding (about \$3 million plus), a retrofit could be included in the upcoming Red Line #2 Car Overhaul. (continued on next page)

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		<p>The replacement of the Orange Line #12 Cars and the Red Line #1 Cars with new vehicles equipped for automated announcements will begin in 2014.</p>
<p>29.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the MBTA consider moving the portion of the Office of Transportation Access (OTA) that monitors fixed route accessibility issues from operations and to either the Customer Service Support Center or the Office for Systemwide Accessibility. This is proposed since customer service and service monitoring are primary functions of this part of OTA. This would permit OTA to pursue service improvements on behalf of customers with, but independently of, operating departments. The portion of OTA that manages THE RIDE should remain part of operations.</p>	<p>We are strongly considering moving this portion of OTA's responsibility to the Office of Systemwide Accessibility.</p>
<p>30.</p>	<p>The MBTA's current Design Manuals were also reviewed as part of the evaluation. Generally, the manuals were found to address most USDOT ADAAG and MAAAB design requirements. (continued on next page)</p>	<p>The MBTA Design &amp; Construction Department is working with Systemwide Accessibility, Operations, Operations Support, and the QA/QC Lab to update the MBTA's Design Manuals, and has submitted a Capitol needs request to support the effort.</p>

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	<p>A few issues were noted, though. Current standards for curb cuts do not appear to include the recent USDOT requirement that a tactile warning be provided within the area of the curb ramp. Additionally, the Design Standards don't address station name signs at depot buildings or station entrances and the associated need for raised letter and Braille signs at such locations. It was also noted that the Manuals did not include bus stop design requirements. Finally, it was noted that the Design Manuals also cite exact slope requirements, which does not allow for construction variances. The following recommendations are therefore made in this report: The design standards should be updated periodically to reflect current regulatory requirements, such as tactile warnings at curb ramps, and developments in design and construction techniques and materials.</p>	<p>An update to the manuals may be issued on an interim basis, and could be incorporated into updated manuals. The form and distribution of the new guidelines may be an addendum, a directive, or some other form, to be decided by all concerned.</p>
31.	<p>The MBTA should develop standards for bus stops and shelters for use with local communities</p>	<p>The development of updated standards for bus stops and shelters is now underway.</p>

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32.	To allow for construction variances, the MBTA Design Manuals should consider even more conservative standards than those included in regulations.	More conservative standards will be developed by the Design and Construction department in concert with Systemwide Accessibility, Operations, Operations Support, and the QA/QC Lab.
33.	All plans for construction or modification of passenger areas in facilities and on passenger equipment should be submitted to the MBTA's accessibility specialist for review.	The MBTA's Office of System-wide Accessibility will support Design and Construction as needed and will take on a more active role in the review process.

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<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>MBTA RESPONSE / ACTION PLAN</b>
<b>PARATRANSIT / THE RIDE</b>	

1.	<p>The MBTA develop an on-time drop-off performance standard for THE RIDE. To the extent possible, this standard should be applied as part of the current contracts. Incentives and penalties related to on-time drop-offs should be added to future service provider contracts.</p>	<p>The MBTA is working with RIDE Contractors to improve performance in this area.</p> <p>Specific standards will be incorporated into FY2010-14 RIDE service contracts.</p>
2.	<p>The MBTA continue to work with service providers to ensure that a stable, experienced workforce is available to carry out the service. Consideration should also be given in future contracts to placing a high premium on contractors whose proposals demonstrate the ability to provide a stable and experienced workforce, particularly drivers and dispatchers.</p>	<p>The MBTA is working with RIDE Contractors to improve performance in this area.</p> <p>Specific standards will be incorporated into FY2010-14 RIDE service contracts.</p>
3.	<p>The MBTA fully utilize information provided by riders through the comment and complaint process to document and (continued on next page) address</p>	<p>MBTA uses comments /complaints to identify trends and work on systemic change to deal with vendor and/ or policy issues.</p>

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	systematic issues in service delivery. It is important that complaint investigations not only addressing individual rider issues, but assist in identifying and correcting broader system problems.	
4.	The MBTA closely monitor the amount of same-day service provided by contracted service providers and its impact on ride times and on-time drop-offs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop tools in scheduling software (Adept) to capture accurate data on this topic in planned upgrade.</li> <li>• Specific standards and safeguards will be incorporated into FY2010-14 RIDE RFP/ Service Contracts.</li> </ul>
5.	Work with service providers to ensure that they have adequate dispatch capacity and capabilities, as well as vehicle and driver capacity to handle the number of same day changes and add-ons accepted.	<p>This is done currently when performance indicators show obvious service deficiencies.</p> <p>Specific standards will be incorporated into FY2010-14 RIDE service contracts.</p>
6.	Discuss with the community the impacts of same-day service changes and same-day trip reservations on service quality.	The MBTA will seek community input on this and other policies & procedural issues in formatting the FY2010-14 RIDE contracts.
7.	The MBTA THE RIDE staff continues to use the special reports developed in 2006 and 2007 to closely track trip scheduling and service delivery.	MBTA commissioned multiple reports to enhance service monitoring as a direct result of this study. To date these include: (continued on next page)

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		<p><u>Monitoring Trip Cancellations and re-booking</u> – Documents why trips are cancelled if rebooked same-day to prevent avoidance of penalties.</p> <p><u>Monitoring Trip Schedules Report</u> – Compares Customer requests vs. the scheduled times given.</p> <p><u>Modified AVL Vehicle Location Audit report</u> – Gives Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) location of all trips independent of the trip info, modified to allow exclusive look to no-shows.</p>
8.	<p>Increase the number of THE RIDE Contract Administrators (CAs). Currently, four CAs handle all customer complaints, review and process invoices for over \$40 million in service, and monitoring the four service providers operating a fleet of 530 vehicles. The evaluation found that eight CAs are needed to adequately carry out all of these functions.</p>	<p>Two additional CA's have been hired and additional resources/ measures are underway to strengthen the Authority's service monitoring capabilities.</p>

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9.	The MBTA consider evaluating the impacts of “real-time scheduling,” used in most other transit systems, that allows changes to requested trip times to be negotiated with riders at the time they call.	The MBTA has commissioned TranSystems to perform a Peer Survey to review this as well as other practices of service delivery by other comparable Paratransit systems. Preliminary analysis indicates this recommendation would steeply increase the cost of service while not performing any additional trips. (\$4.3 million in staff and \$1.5 million in technology annually, for a \$29 million total over the next 5-year contract period.)
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