



GREEN LINE D BRANCH STATION ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS WABAN, ELIOT, CHESTNUT HILL, BEACONSFIELD VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING

DATE: April 29, 2021 at 6:00 PM via Zoom

GLT Program Team Senior Leadership

Angel Peña | *Chief of Green Line Transformation*

Desiree Patrice | *Deputy Chief of Green Line Transformation*

Tamieka Thibodeaux | *Sr. Director*

Benjamin Frison | *Sr. Director*

Zahra Moghaddam | *Sr. Director*

Leo Murphy | *Project Manager*

Kimberly Woollard | *Sr. Director*

Mark Shamon | *Design Lead*

Sheri Warrington | *Outreach and Engagement Lead*

Nancy Farrell | *Community Engagement Lead*

Public Attendees

See Appendix A: Public Attendance

Purpose/Subject

The purpose of the public meeting was to introduce the preliminary design for the D Branch Station Accessibility Improvements Project, which is scheduled to start final design in summer 2021.

Format and Process

The virtual meeting included a **presentation**, and a **question and answer** session, where attendees could ask questions or make comments either by typing them in or “raising a hand” to speak verbally.

PRESENTATION¹

Nancy Farrell, Moderator, opened the meeting and provided an overview of how to participate in the virtual meeting, including how to access closed captions and ask questions. She noted that participants

¹ The presentation and a recording of this meeting can be viewed on the website at <https://www.mbta.com/projects/d-branch-station-accessibility-improvements>



can always email the project team at GLT@mbta.com. Ms. Farrell introduced Angel Peña, Chief of Green Line Transformation (GLT).

Mr. Peña thanked participants for joining the meeting. He reviewed the meeting agenda. He shared a safety moment, encouraging attendees to get vaccinated and continue following COVID-19 safety procedures.

Mr. Peña presented the goal of the Green Line Transformation.

He highlighted GLT's Levels of Transformation, and how the D Branch Station Accessibility Improvements Project advances GLT's goals. This project will improve accessibility and safety for all riders, as well as the overall quality of service for the Green Line. He noted that this project will make the D Branch the first fully accessible branch of the Green Line, giving all riders a consistent experience.

Mr. Peña presented GLT's accomplishments under his direction. GLT worked closely with municipal partners and colleagues across the MBTA to deliver important safety and reliability upgrades on all Green Line branches, including:

- Replaced approximately **57,000 feet of track** systemwide
- Replaced **10 units of special trackwork** on the D and C Branches
- Installation of **flood protection doors** and gates at Fenway portal on the D Branch

Mr. Peña noted that many current projects in design and construction are focused on Level 1: Accessibility improvements to stations over the next several years. By addressing accessibility, the MBTA hopes to improve the rider experience for everyone.

Project Overview

Mr. Peña presented a fleet overview of existing trains (type 7, 8, and 9) and their respective accessibility limitations. He introduced an animation about the interface of each of the train types and the platforms and introduced the Type 10 Supercar and the anticipated accessibility advantages that the Type 10 will bring.

Mr. Peña presented the short-term station accessibility improvements and long-term station and vehicle accessibility improvements projects.

Mr. Peña presented another animation about the existing platform environment and planned improvements to elevate everyone's experience when boarding and decrease dwell times. Mr. Peña emphasized the goal of making the entire Green Line accessible to all riders now and for the future.

Mr. Peña introduced project team leaders, Senior Director, Benjamin Frison, and Project Manager, Zahra Moghaddam, and other members of the GLT team to talk about GLT's accessibility and design goals.

Accessibility and Design Goals

Mr. Frison presented the accessibility and design goals for the project. He emphasized the holistic vision for accessibility and inclusivity for all riders.

Mr. Frison summarized improvements to every part of the rider's journey, from access/exit, to waiting, to boarding/alighting. He presented the customer centric design of the project based on real feedback from customers.

Existing Conditions

Mr. Frison outlined the plan for accessibility on the D Branch, noting that with recent improvements at Newton Highlands, and the approaching completion of Brookline Hills, the only remaining inaccessible D-Branch stations will be Waban, Eliot, Chestnut Hill and Beaconsfield. He summarized the existing conditions that the project will rectify or mitigate at Beaconsfield, Chestnut Hill, Eliot and Waban stations, as well as opportunities for improvements.

Mr. Frison introduced Zahra Moghaddam to present the preliminary design plans for the four stations.

Preliminary Design

Ms. Moghaddam described the preliminary designs for station improvements, accessible pathways, parking, and amenities at Chestnut Hill, Waban, Eliot, and Beaconsfield Stations. She also noted specific design considerations unique to Waban and Eliot stations, respectively.

After completing the overview of planned station improvements, Ms. Moghaddam turned the presentation back over to Ben Frison.

Construction Phasing

Mr. Frison presented a possible phased approach to construction that could sustain station use throughout most of the construction period. Train service may remain operational during construction with the exception of the potential need for a handful of weekend diversions. Construction could occur on one half of the platform while train service operates on the other side.

When the first phase is completed, the setup would be flipped to allow the other half of the station to be built while operations continue on the newly constructed platform areas. This plan would permit ticketing and heated shelters to remain available throughout construction.

Project Timeline

Mr. Frison presented the project timeline. The Final Design phase of the project is expected to last nine months and be completed in early 2022. The construction phase of the project is expected to last 11 months and be completed mid-2023. Stations are expected to be constructed in a sequence rather than all at once, and construction is targeted to take place from mid-2022 to mid-2023.

Mr. Frison re-introduced Angel Peña to close the presentation section of the meeting.

Closing/Engagements

Mr. Peña outlined the previous and future efforts for customer and community engagement, including community information sessions, the program website, and the program email address. He then thanked attendees for listening and introduced Nancy Farrell to begin the Question + Answer section of the meeting.



Stay Connected

Ms. Farrell shared how the public can receive the latest updates on the project, encouraging them to sign up for the GLT email list on the website, www.mbtta.com/GLT.

Ms. Farrell said the project team realizes that construction causes inconvenience to riders and neighbours of the Green Line, and GLT appreciates their patience while important upgrades to the Green Line are implemented. She reviewed the noise mitigation procedures that will be in place and noted there is a construction hotline number for abutters to alert GLT to any noise issues: **508-646-4691**

Ms. Farrell opened the meeting to questions and comments (see pages 5-7).

She thanked participants for joining the meeting and thanked the MBTA's municipal partners, as well as others for working with GLT to advance this important project and improve the quality of service for all Green Line riders.

In closing the meeting, Angel Peña thanked everyone and expressed that the provided feedback and input would be carefully considered. He encouraged the participants to participate in future meetings scheduled as the project advances and to reach out to GLT@mbta.com with any questions.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SUMMARY

Verbal Question and Answer Summary

Representative Tommy Vitolo, MA House of Representatives, thanked Mr. Pena for his leadership and commended his hard work in difficult circumstances. Rep. Vitolo reiterated a previous concern about desired pedestrian access from parking lots to platforms, and he urged the team to consider how to meet desired paths of travel that take people from the parking lot to the platform in a straight line. Rep. Vitolo noted the unique concerns of the Beaconsfield community, particularly pertaining to noise. He urged the project team to communicate and listen to the neighborhood, then offered his help and thanked Mr. Pena. Ms. Farrell thanked Rep. Vitolo and emphasized that the team is aware of and pays close attention to the noise issues at Beaconsfield. She asked Ben Frison to talk about platform access and other stations. Ben Frison thanked Rep. Vitolo for his comments and noted that there is a tradeoff for the platform height—you can't park right at the station and get on the platform directly in the middle. Goal number one is making the platform safe. He emphasized that as the design approaches 100% the team will consider Rep. Vitolo's feedback and factor in foot traffic, and particularly a potential pathway under the overpass to connect to Waldstein park.

Rep. Vitolo followed up by sharing that he had taken measurements of Beaconsfield and encouraged the team to consider a similar design to Longwood Station's double reveal, to eliminate the need for a wall or fence. B. Frison deferred to Mark Shamon who said that the project team can look into that option and noted how a double curve would affect parking but might be doable.

Representative Ruth Balser, MA House of Representatives, expressed her appreciation to the MBTA and applauded its initiative. She gave her support for the idea that making public transit easier to use for people with challenges makes it easier for everyone. She encouraged the project team to be sensitive to neighbors and actively listen to people in community, as she knows there is lots of desire for more accessibility and stated that she looked forward to hearing her constituents' questions and comments.

Bill Humphrey from Newton City Council added to the Representatives' statements, saying that this project is hugely important. He expressed appreciation for the outreach and urged the team to take community feedback into consideration.

Alla Margolina, a Beaconsfield area resident, said that the abutters have suffered much from construction in the last three years. She noted that the community was horrified at the prospect of more extended construction and further use of the nearby truck pad, noting instances of contractors gathering inappropriately and adding noise. She said community members have spent lots of time engaging with police and MBTA but that the attention given to abutters is severely lacking. Ms. Farrell responded that the team is very aware of the noise issues. Noisy events are reported and alerts are provided to the best of the team's ability. Ms. Farrell encouraged further communication and said that certain activities may be unavoidable during the work to improve accessibility, such as truck pad use.

Lisle Baker, Newton Ward Councilor, noted that the new walkway up to Hammond Street and the existing post office side access at Chestnut Hill Station will face drainage issues. He urged the team to consider the drainage problem in the design, especially for inclement weather and the wintertime.

Srdjan Nedeljkovic, a Newton Highlands resident, said he bought a house abutting Eliot Station in 1994 because it was close to the Green Line. He echoed comments about desired lines of travel and access to

the platform and recommended the use of safety parapets over chain link fences, like at Waban Station. Mr. Nedeljkovic also recommended providing middle of fence entry shortcuts. He noted that a lot of people will not go on Type 8's or 9's because they're uncomfortable, with small seats, and that many prefer Type 7's with seating front facing. He recommended that future Type 10 cars should have front-facing or multi-directional seats. Finally, Mr. Nedeljkovic recommended that instead of operating new longer trains with more cars, trains with fewer cars should be run more frequently, which could increase ridership. Ms. Farrell thanked Mr. Nedeljkovic for his ideas and noted an understanding for rider preferences.

Adam Peller noted that the project was long overdue and thanked the team. He expressed concern over the Newton Highlands design having a lot of unwanted elements that escalated the cost. He also noted inconsistency between the two egress points standard. He expressed concern for accessibility and safety at Eliot Station where the stub sidewalk isn't plowed. He urged the team to keep the closeness to the neighborhood in mind.

Elie Litvin, Beaconsfield resident, asked whether the project timeline means Beaconsfield construction would last three months. Mark Shamon noted that the work could be done in three months, but it would depend on the workflow when a contractor gets selected. Mr. Litvin expressed gratitude that Representative Vitolo and Alla Margolina were recognized. He seconded frustration with the contractor and level of attention/responses given to abutters. Finally, he expressed frustration at the shifting timelines of MBTA projects, such as the D Branch Track and Signal Project, and noted that the team needs to be accountable to abutters. Senior Director Tamiaka Thibodeaux responded, noting that the team is aware of Beaconsfield construction noise. She listed current accommodations and outreach efforts including newsletters, update emails, and a staff member monitoring the contractor, who calls Tamiaka late at night to respond. She emphasized that complaints aren't going unheard, but there are a lot of different constructions projects currently using that truck pad. Tamiaka stated that the Track and Signal project should be done by September 2021.

Srdjan Nedeljkovic pointed out that the steps featured in the Eliot Station design plans don't exist, and that the steps are located on the other side of Route 9. He noted that the steps being implemented at Eliot Station per the design plan would be totally new. Ms. Farrell responded that the project team will be sure to track down the verify location of the existing steps.

Elizabeth Sockwell thanked the outreach team for its ongoing communication with her. She introduced herself as a community organizer building productive and innovative partnerships and expressed her desire for the Green Line to be long-standing and climate resilient. She asked if the team is building any partnerships with cities for improving the green infrastructure. Ms. Farrell responded, noting that a meeting with Elizabeth was scheduled in a couple of weeks and thanked her for bringing up climate resiliency and the need for strong partnership. Angel Peña seconded Elizabeth's statement that climate resiliency is everyone's responsibility, going beyond the GLT program, as everyone should be planning all together.

Written Question and Answer Summary (Submitted in the Q+A Feature)²

Elizabeth Sockwell asked, *"Will the new cars no longer have stairs within the trains? The red and orange lines do not have stairs within the trains and that is truly accessible."* Kimberly Woollard answered that since the Type 10 is a concept in active procurement for bid, the MBTA can't talk about specifics, but the goal is for Type 10's to be completely accessible vehicles.

Abby Swain asked *"How do the "automatic deploying" ramps activate—does the user press a button?"* Mark Shamon said they are automatic but do require a motorperson. Tamioka Thibodeaux explained that for safety reasons riders must go to the operator to request use of the automatic bridge plate which extends from the car. The plates are "automatic" compared to the heavy rail detached bridge plates that must be manually moved into place by an operator.

Robert Soloman asked *"I want to know what happened to Newton Highlands. I began envisioning the ADA design of this station - the busiest in Newton - since 2012, working closely with former director of light and heavy rail, Billy McLellen and interacting with System Wide Accessibility, coordinating with the City of Newton. Two years ago this station was near 100% design and construction was planned to be completed by 2022. When Mayor Fuller came into office, I was asked to step down from my role as the city would see it through. That was a mistake. What have you done with the 100% station design and planned construction of Newton Highlands Station?"* Ben Frison said that the team understands Robert's frustration and it can take a long time between a municipality deciding on a vision and getting on the ground. GLT has focused on interim accessibility improvements for the past two years. Newton is a full buildout, which requires talking to abutters, finalizing design, going through procurement, and starting construction next year. These projects are basically simultaneous, and GLT is seeking opportunities to limit disruptions by fitting in trackwork. Desiree Patrice said Newton Highlands can't be addressed at the same time as it is a diversion point to transfer riders between the Green Line and the substitute busing needed for the D Branch Track and Signal project. The station will have to be closed for some time when it is later rebuilt. With the D branch work still going, it would not be a good idea to stop Newton too. There will be significant changes to the station once D Branch is done and input is gathered.

Elizabeth Sockwell asked, *"Why not focus on getting to full accessibility faster? Is a super car not just a normal car on the Red or Orange line?"* Ben Frison explained that the strategy is to do things that are possible now to improve the customers' experiences. Improvements are being made in preparation for the Supercar, and once the cars are procured, the final vision for accessible 14" platforms systemwide can be achieved.

Emma A asked, *"Any anticipated service disruptions (i.e., station closures, bus replacements, limited service) for Green Line riders between June 2021 and August 2022? Thank you."* Ms. Farrell responded, noting that service disruptions are actually part of the progress. She recommended signing up for updates and the weekly eblast to learn about service changes. She encouraged people to reach out to the project team if

² The comments are transcribed and only fixed for typos and grammar.

they have a special issue or concern about service disruptions. Ben Frison responded that the Green Line in general has three major priorities: the Lechmere Viaduct, which ties into GLX, the B Branch Consolidation, and D Branch Track and Signal improvements. Work on these projects and their associated service disruptions will be generally completed by the end of the year. Work/disruptions taper down in winter, and resume in spring, so work and service disruptions are likely to continue in the summer months.

Adam Peller asked *"How about visually impaired? What about requirements for announcements, without being a nuisance to abutters?"* Ben Frison said that accessibility is both a vehicle and platform issue, noting existing auditory problems with the announcements. Mark Shamon noted current improvements including PA system replacements with new audio, while keeping volume in mind for neighborhoods. Besides the auditory improvements there were no visual impairment specific measures. [Note: the call boxes in the proposed customer assistance areas will be lettered using Braille. Also, there will be detectable warning panels at the platform edges and curb ramps.]

Nathanial Lichtin asked *"What steps are you taking to prevent light pollution on abutting property, especially at Eliot and Waban Stations?"* Mr. Shamon responded that the project team is mindful of that, since the MBTA has put out new lighting standards that brighten stations considerably. The team is trying to make sure the intense lighting is pointed down. Lighting is a safety concern, with tradeoffs that the team is mindful of during design.

Andreae Downs said *"I am a City Councilor for the wards near Eliot and Waban and I agree with Rep. Vitolo on mid-platform access."*

Bill Humphrey said *"Regarding Waban Station and Rep. Vitolo's point - the platform is below the level of the parking lot and has a retaining wall, which some people just climb over. Might make sense to have a small set of steps in the middle of the platform to reduce that clambering over the wall."* Ms. Farrell thanked him for the idea.

Robin and Josh provided their email address and asked *"I'd love for someone from the 'T' to reach out to me and my Harrison street neighbors. I am not holding my breath. We have been at this for years now."* Ms. Farrell noted their request and the team will reach out to them.

Robert Solomon's multiple Q+A messages were noted and Nancy requested that he send an email to the team summarizing his concerns.

Andreae Downs asked *"Can we restore the stairs at the Boylston Bridge Eliot Station on the eastbound side of Boylston? It is quicker for those without mobility issues."* Mark Shamon noted the stairs are on the westbound side of Boylston, going to eastbound platform, and that repairing steps and improving walkways is major part of the project.

Abby Swain said *"Brookline residents have asked our Public Transportation Advisory Committee in past years to create a level right-of-way leading from the westbound Beaconsfield platform, under the Dean Road Bridge, into Waldstein Playground. This might have accessibility benefits, because crossing Dean Rd to get to Beaconsfield involves some significant slopes, and the sight lines for oncoming vehicle traffic are poor."* Ms. Farrell agreed with the sight lines issues based on personal experience and noted that the team has to look into the technical feasibility of this path. Ms. Farrell also recognized the resources for fine-tuning



lighting that Ms. Swain provided: *"One resource for fine-tuning the lighting: <https://www.darksky.org/our-work/lighting/>"*

Adam Peller said, *"In case I am not given an opportunity to speak, to briefly elaborate on Lincoln Street access, there is no accessible crossing shown from the stub sidewalk. My father fell there and broke both of his wrists, so this is very upsetting. Please make sure this Q is part of the public record."*

Abby Swain said, *"It will be important to carefully select the surface materials for the sloped transitions, to prevent them being slippery in winter--need texture that's also easy to shovel."* Ms. Farrell thanked her for pointing that out.

Robert Solomon said, *"What you've done at Newton Highlands was temporary."* Ms. Farrell noted that this was addressed.

Matt Crawford asked, *"With regard to the "scissor gate" at Eliot, which this project plans to remove, can anyone from the MBTA share the historical context of why that gate was initially built?"* Tamiaka Thibodeaux noted that she looked into that. The gate was built as a safety measure so that bike riders don't ride across the Boylston tracks. She noted that other safety features will be built to replace the scissor gate.

Lew Zackin said, *"You have the structure of the steps on the east side of Route 9 as being completely dismantled."* Ms. Farrell noted that the team will take a close look at the steps. Mr. Shamon noted that he misspoke about the stairs earlier, and that remnant of steps on the eastbound side will be demolished, and the westbound side will be improved.

APPENDIX A: PUBLIC ATTENDANCE

A total of **58** people attended: **57** signed in and **1** called in.

First Name	Last Name
Emma	A
Natalie	Allman
Ruth B	Balser
Lisle	Baker
Alicia	Bowman
Manuel	Cabello de Alba
Matt	Crawford
Vicki	Danberg
John	Dempsey
Ann	Dolbear
Andreae	Downs
Rena	Getz
Michael	Goldman
Dmitriy	Gridnev
Robin	Henzer
Josh	Henzer
Tom	Humphrey
Bill	Humphrey, Newton City Council
David S	Kantrowitz
Sarah	L
Nathaniel	Lichtin
Sandra	Lingley
Elie	Litvin
Alla	Margolina
Vince	McKay
Andrea	Mercado
Tali	Moreshet
Elizabeth	Navisky
Srdjan	Nedeljkovic
Brenda	Noel
Adam	Peller
David	Perry
T P	Reilly
Julia	Remick



First Name	Last Name
Nicole	Singleton
Robert	Solomon
Abby	Swaine
Carlos	Valderrama
Tommy	Vitolo
David	W
James F	White
Pam	Wright
Stefan	Wuensch
Jonathan	Yeo
Joan	Zackin
Lew	Zackin
Casey	[no last name provided]
Jeff	[no last name provided]
Emily	[no last name provided]
Elizabeth	[no last name provided]
Yes	[no last name provided]
DM	[no last name provided]
LVA	[no last name provided]
Carroll	[no last name provided]
Robin	[no last name provided]



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