



**Massachusetts Bay  
Transportation Authority**

# Accessibility in Motion Driving Inclusion at the MBTA

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Presentation to the MBTA Board of Directors

April 25, 2024

# Key Accessibility/Transit Regulations

1968 Massachusetts Architectural  
Access Board Standards

1973 Rehabilitation Act:  
Section 504

1990 Americans with Disabilities  
Act (ADA)



# Customer Experience in 2005

## Bus Service

“...a customer with a disability has a 20.5% chance not being able to board the bus for which he/she is waiting.”—2005 Delta Services Study

## Elevator Reliability:

Station Name	Elevator #	2003	2004	2005
State Street	802/803	98.31%	95.21%	85.80%
Porter Square	818/820	93.72%	91.05%	85.41%
Downtown Crossing	892	93.45%	92.35%	45.74%
Park Street	808/804	89.00%	87.39%	44.44%
Harvard Square	821	92.94%	95.09%	28.01%



# The Daniels-Finegold Settlement

- 2002: Class-action suit filed by GBLS on behalf of 11 named plaintiffs and BCIL
  - Pointed to significant violations of Section 504 and ADA
- 2006: Settlement signed
  - Included over 200+ commitments
- 2018: Amended to clarify pathway to substantial completion
- Overseen by Federal Court-appointed Independent Monitor, Judge Patrick King (ret)

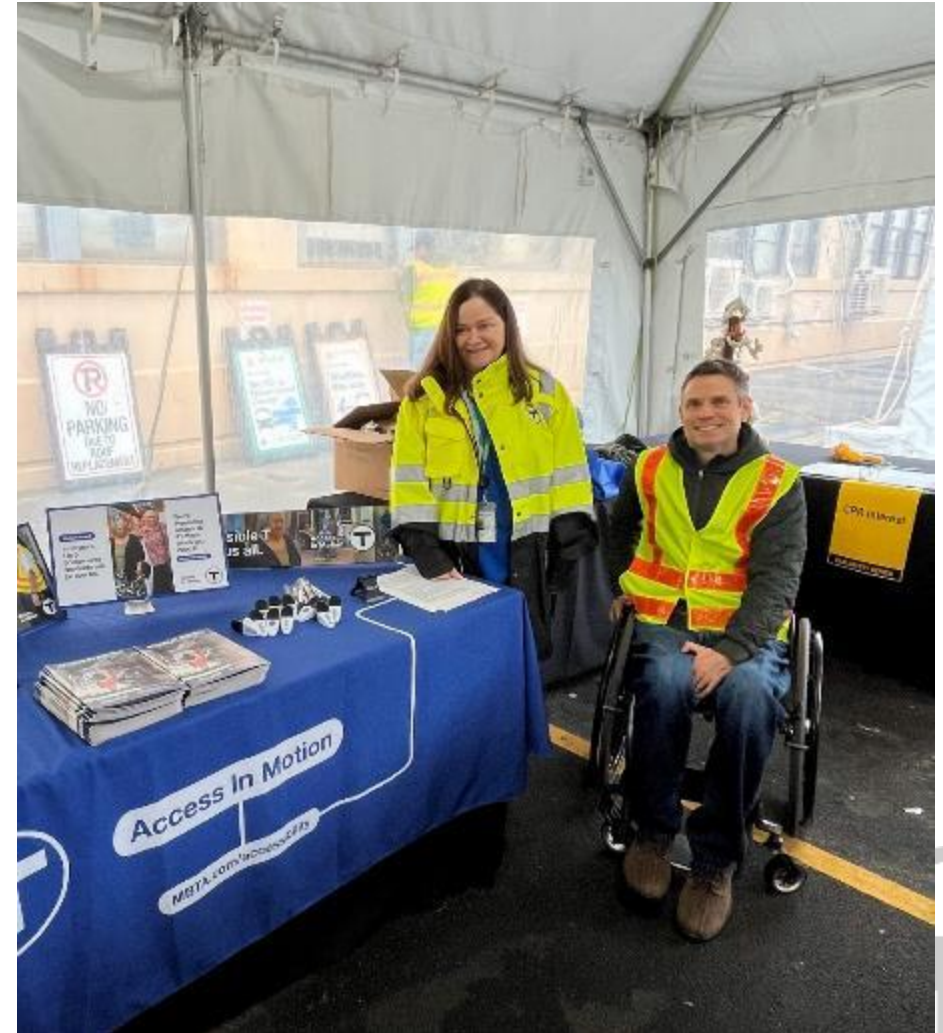


# The Impact

A group of people is walking away from the camera on a train platform. In the foreground, a woman in a blue and white striped shirt is pushing a black motorized wheelchair. A woman in a pink dress is walking alongside the wheelchair, holding its hand. To the left, a woman in a blue floral top is walking a dog. In the background, several other people are walking, including a man in a light blue shirt and a man in a pink shirt. A train with purple and yellow stripes is visible on the right side of the platform. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting daytime.

# Creation of Department of System-Wide Accessibility

- Reports to General Manager
- Focused on fixed-route system
  - Paratransit services overseen by Office for Transportation Access
- Responsible for compliance with Title II of ADA, 521 CMR and Daniels-Finegold Settlement
- Clearinghouse of Subject Matter Expertise regarding access-related regulations and best practices
  - Reviews all customer-facing policies and procedures
  - Reviews all infrastructure-related plans and projects
- Design Standards (Design Guidelines for Access)
- Long-term planning (PATI)
- Oversees Internal Access Monitoring Program
- Tracks disposition of all access-related customer complaints
- Travel Instruction Services

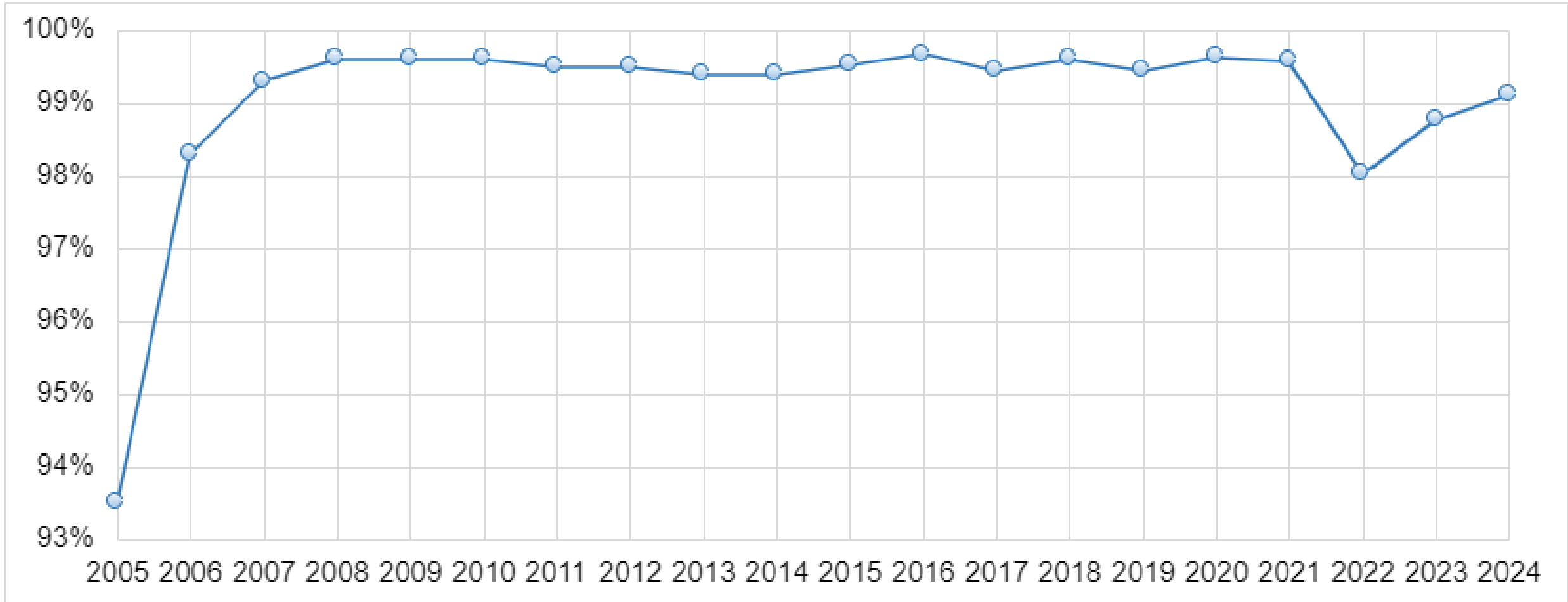


# New and More Reliable Elevators

- Over 75 units constructed over the last decade with an additional 50 in the pipeline
- Commitment to establishing redundant accessible pathways
  - Out of 200+ elevators in public use, over 60% have a redundant accessible path of travel
- Customized elevator specification to ensure maximum transparency and reliability



# Elevator Reliability (2005-2024)





# Improvements to Bus Service

- Retirement of high floor, lift-equipped buses
- Newest fleet includes new interior layout to maximize flexibility based largely on feedback from riders with disabilities
- Development of a full day trainings focused on delivering best in class accessible service
- Updated protocols and discipline guidelines for serious accessibility violations
- Creation of Internal Accessibility Monitoring Program



# Internal Access Monitoring Program

- Close collaboration with Operations
- Staffed by 20 part-time undercover monitors
- All modes monitored
- Over 1000 trips monitored/quarter
- Quarterly reports issued
- Corrective action guidelines developed for all serious access violations



# Progress to Date: Service Then & Now

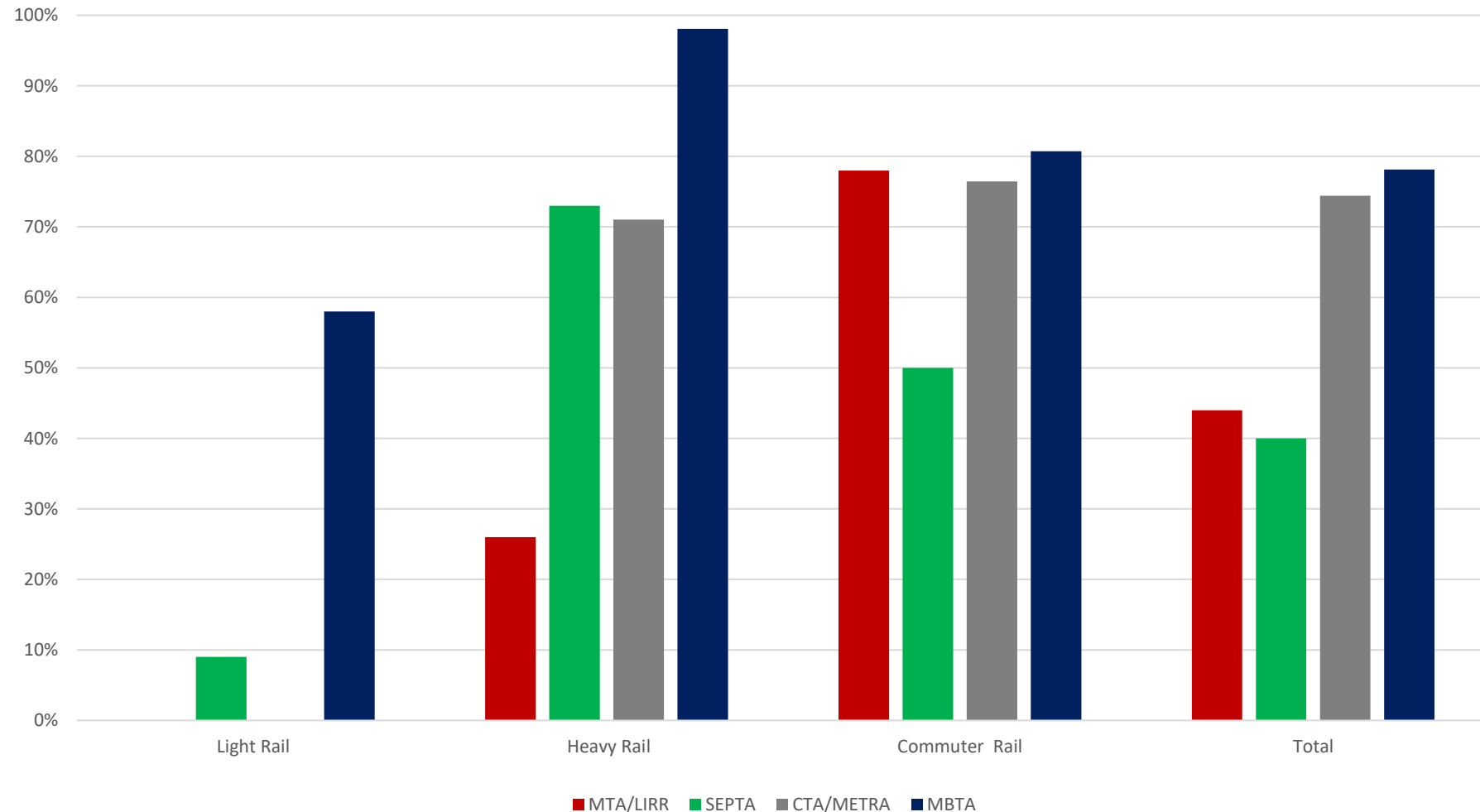
<b>Accessibility Barrier</b>	<b>2005*</b>	<b>2023^</b>
Operator denies service to customer with disability	11%	.01%
Customer with disability is unable to board due to a broken lift/ramp	19%	0%
Operator refuses to use kneeler/lower bus	11%	0%
Destination Signage Missing	15%	1.5%
Wheeled mobility device not properly secured (Using 4 straps)	91%	15%

\* = Data as reported by Delta Services Inc., August 2005

^ = Data reported by SWA's Internal Access Monitoring Program



# % Accessible Stations: Comparison of Legacy Systems



Data gathered from agencies' websites. Does not include Bus Rapid Transit stations.



# Designing for Inclusion

- Coincident/equivalent paths of travel
- Additional seating
- Sliding and/or automated doors
- Audio/Visual Equivalence

Forthcoming Design Guidelines for Inclusion

Good accessibility is not just a "check the box" exercise



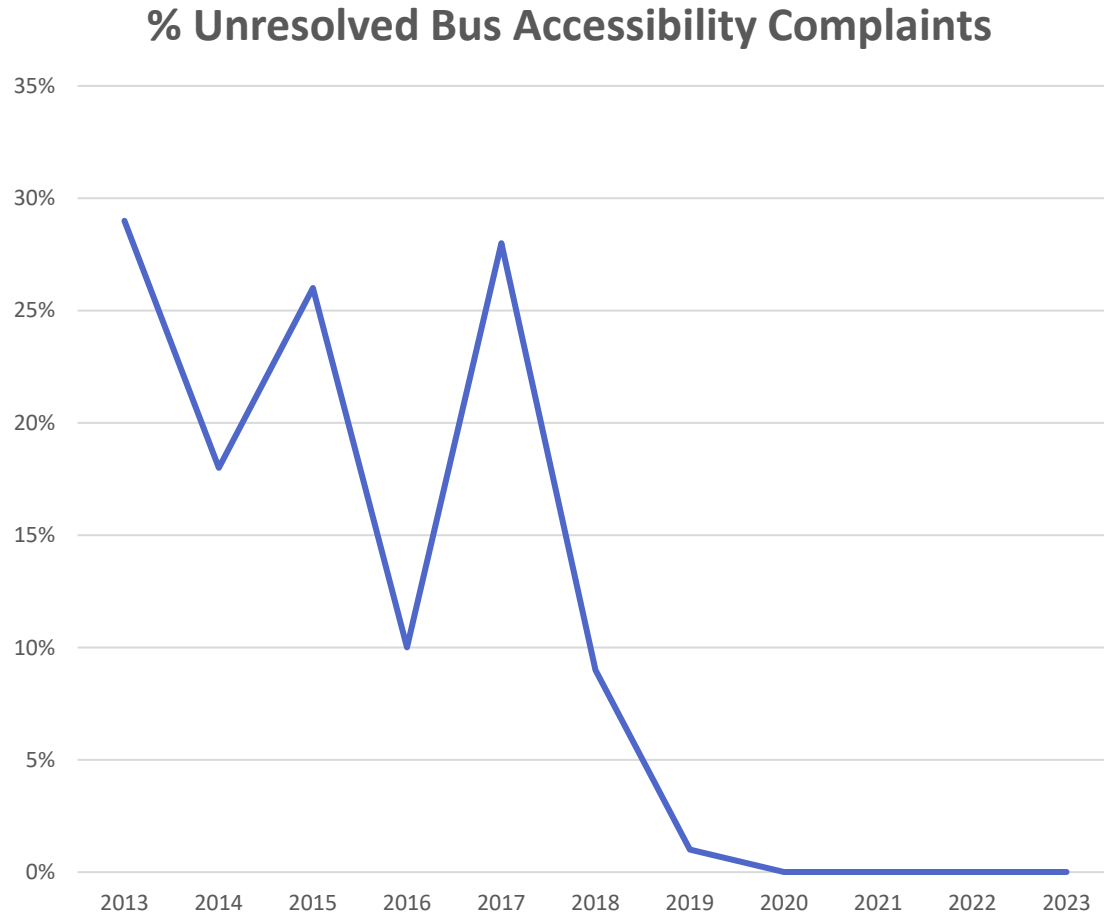
# Increase in Station Staffing



- 2021: Station staffing standard established
- 2023: New contract allows for scale-up of Transit Ambassadors
- Full-day accessibility training



# Improved Complaint Oversight & Tracking



- Investigation and resolution guidelines
- Closed loop process with follow-up to customer
- Improved database and reporting capabilities
- Oversight from SWA





# Lessons Learned

**PRIORITY SEATING - ASIENTOS**  
Customers are expected to give priority seating to people with disabilities.  
Señores y señoras con discapacidades físicas o sensoriales.  
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# Recognition that First-Person Perspectives are Essential

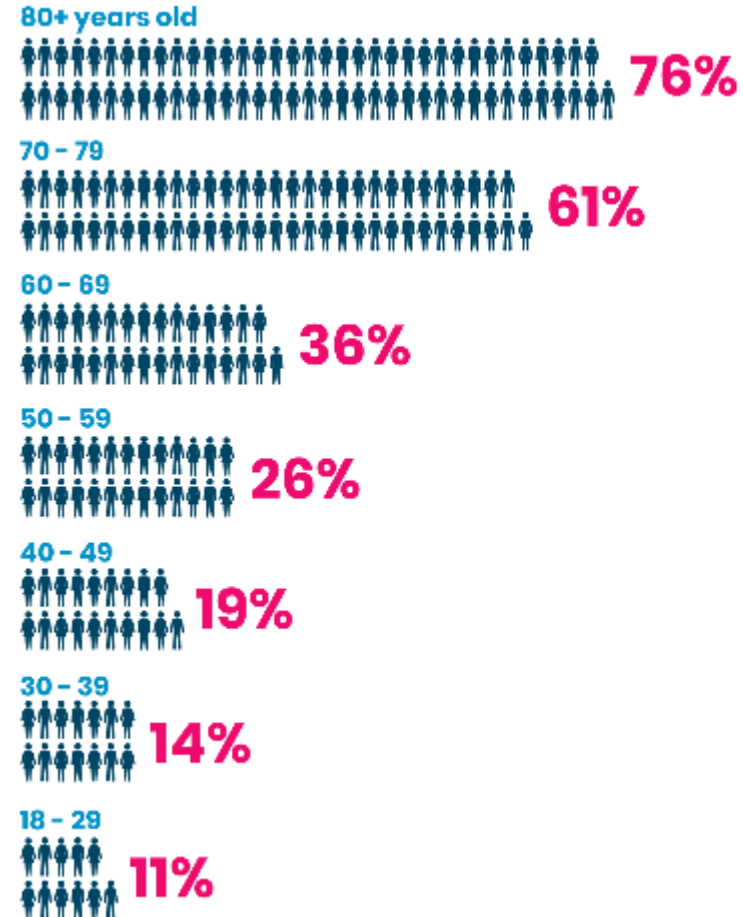



- Employees
- Monitors
- Riders
  - Riders' Transportation Access Group
- Accessibility must be considered in all stages of project/policy



# Understanding the Demographics

- 1 in 4 of us has a disability
- Most are entirely non-apparent
- Disability is natural part of life and aging





An accessible T  
benefits us all.

Access  
In Motion



# Current Priorities



# Current Priorities

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- Expanding station accessibility
  - 58 inaccessible stations remain. Over 30+ in design/construction.
- Addressing significant platform gaps on the Orange Line
- Ensuring real-time announcements on vehicles are broadcast audibly and visually
- Improving municipal coordination
  - bike lane design, snow removal, illegally parked vehicles and bus stops
- Ensuring accessibility during diversions
  - unique challenges with third-party bus contractors
- Identifying wayfinding solutions or blind/low vision riders
- Piloting motion-actuated accessible fare gates
- Building in-house expertise on digital accessibility





**Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority**  
Accessible Rapid Transit Stations as of 1990



**1990**