

**Massachusetts Bay
Transportation Authority**

Rail Modernization Update

Discussion with A Better City

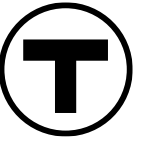
June 8, 2026

Rail Vision Background

- In 2019, the MBTA released *Rail Vision* to guide our planning for the future of the commuter rail system.
- This plan has guided our investments in enhancing the commuter rail system and transitioning to a regional rail model over the past 6 years.
- However, our continued development of the commuter rail system will depend on a series of decision points that will take us beyond the scope of rail vision.
- The MBTA is now working towards the release of an updated plan, the Rail Modernization Plan, to replace Rail Vision and to guide our next phase of implementation.



MBTA's Significant Accomplishments Based on Rail Vision



- **Service improvements:**

- Shift to clockface scheduling
- Highest ridership recovery nationwide
- Income eligible reduced fares
- Improved accessibility with mini-highs

- **Projects Funded and underway:**

- Fairmount Line BEMUS
- Worcester 30/30
- Beverly, Reading Turn Track

New Service:

- New service to Fall River and New Bedford on South Coast Rail
- Increased off-peak and weekend service
- Improved fares: \$10 weekend, 5-day flex, Income Eligible Reduced Fares

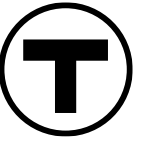




Locomotive SGR and Modernization

- Half (50+) of the MBTA's existing diesel locomotives are approaching the end of their useable life
- MBTA has recently committed to critical investments to overhaul 40 locomotives in our current fleet
- MBTA is also leading a multi-agency locomotive procurement with peer transit system, including:
 - 10 battery-electric locomotives for near term use on the Providence Line
 - 10 tier-4, low-emissions diesel locomotives for use on other lines
 - Options for up to 50 additional battery-electric or tier-4 diesel locomotives for future expansion of Regional Rail Modernization, as more funding becomes available in future years and as enabling infrastructure is expanded.

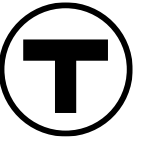




Why Update Our Plans Now?

- **Rail Vision** – The recommendations of this plan were premised on technologies which have evolved significantly in a relatively short time and the plan failed to align investments with future ridership growth, resulting in unsustainable capital costs to implement.
- **Technology** – Battery technology has advanced considerably allowing for less capital intensive decarbonization, but decisions are needed about approach
 - Fairmount Line – approved to be the first decarbonized line, with BEMUs due in 2027
- **Re-procurement** – new contract will have the flexibility to change frequency. Furthermore, looking at a separate contract specifically for decarbonizing lines.
- **Calls for clear vision** for regional rail
 - Key stakeholders have asked the MBTA to share its plans and vision for regional rail
 - In the absence of a "single source of truth", competing plans may be released.

Envisioning the Future of Regional Rail



MBTA's Rail Modernization Plan will:

- Communicate our strategic direction to stakeholders (communities, advocates, elected officials, etc.)
- Document the progress we have made.
- Consider how the T supports the Commonwealth in achieving its broader goals
- Support the T in making-term term progress and advancing longer-term transformation (including in frequency, reliability, and accessibility)
- Define how we will make decisions about investments with limited resources, a broad geographic area and uncertainty

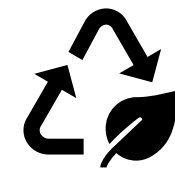
**Achieving the
Commonwealth's Goals:**



Housing



**Economic
development**



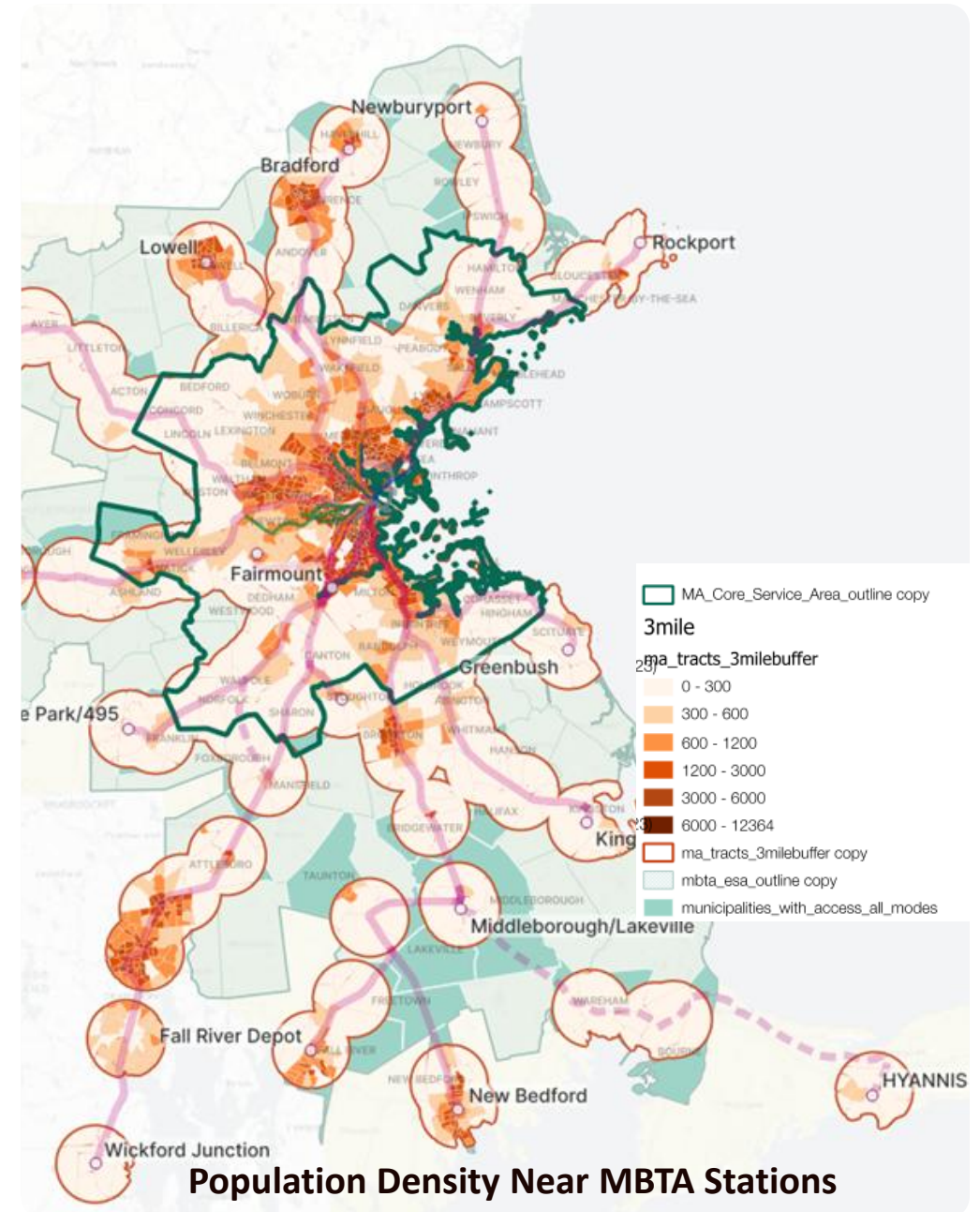
**Sustainability
& resilience**



Mobility

Regional Rail: Supporting Local Communities

- MBTA Regional Rail is a significant driver of regional mobility and economic development.
- Investments in Regional Rail support many Massachusetts and Rhode Island residents.
 - Three-quarters of Massachusetts residents live within the MBTA's service area.
 - Nearly 65 percent of Massachusetts residents live within 3 miles of an MBTA regional rail station.
 - Similarly, nearly 40 percent of Rhode Island residents live within the same distance of a regional rail station.



Rail Modernization Strategy



Planning efforts are focused on four key areas of Regional Rail service:



Frequency

- Regional Rail" model of all-day frequent service schedules
- Strategic elimination of legacy bottlenecks in our single-track, at-grade system



Reliability

- Modernized locomotive fleet
- Upgrades to key infrastructure which impact service quality today.



Accessibility

- Provide level boarding platforms to enhance accessibility.
- Minimize pedestrian grade crossings at stations



Decarbonization

- Electrification of lines can provide for quieter, faster and cleaner travel in the future.
- Significant grid infrastructure is needed for decarbonized rail

Elements of a Modernized Regional Rail System



Creating a modern regional rail system includes work on many components of infrastructure, as well as policy and governance changes. We need to assess the current condition and future needs for these elements and educate the public about the opportunities and challenges.

These elements include:

1. Tracks (turn tracks, capacity, sidings)
2. Signals
3. Safer grade crossings
4. Stations (accessibility, station access, parking)
5. Facilities (maintenance and layover)
6. Rolling stock
7. Power infrastructure
8. Workforce and modern contract structure
9. Integration with other modes
10. Policy changes to support investment (fares, resilience, permitting, etc.)

Opportunities for Input

- This plan will inform the next decade of rail modernization investments, identify ideas for longer-term investments to transform the system, and will lay out decision-making criteria and data that will inform our future investments.
- MBTA will be holding a series of events to gather feedback about our *Rail Modernization Plan*.
- Opportunities are likely to include:
 - Tabling events at MBTA stations
 - Targeted conversations with municipalities, RPAs, RTAs, and other stakeholders
 - Public meetings
 - Virtual engagement methods
 - Follow at: mbta.com/RailModernization
 - Email at: mbta_rr@mbta.com



Thank you!

Questions?



Email us

mbta_rr@mbta.com

Visit our website

<https://www.mbta.com/projects/rail-modernization-plan>

Discussion questions

- What education and background do you feel stakeholders need to have to engage in planning for the future of Regional Rail?
- How can A Better City support the MBTA with engaging a broad range of stakeholders?
- How should we structure conversations about tradeoffs?
- What boarder priorities/goals do you think should drive the MBTA's Regional Rail Investments? (for example, land use, transit-oriented development, first/last mile connections)
- How can A Better City support MBTA with Rail Modernization?