Forging Ahead: Scenario and Service Planning

Cambridge Transit Advisory Committee
October 7, 2020
Melissa Dullea
Agenda

• Introduction: Forging Ahead

• Essential services analysis and trade-offs by mode

• Public engagement plan
Forging Ahead: Introduction

- MBTA is facing a financial crisis from pandemic, low ridership, lost fare revenues.
- FY22 budget is projecting a $300 million budget deficit. Response to this may involve some combination of the following:
  - **Capital reallocation**: slow, stop, or scale down projects and reallocate to preventative maintenance on the operating budget
  - **Cost controls**: tighten controls, reduce expenditures
  - **Service changes**: Preserve essential service for high-ridership modes, routes, and lines and transit-critical populations when making any targeted reductions
Defining Our Essential Services

Based on two analyses:
- Where are the trips made by transit critical populations
- Where we have high ridership now or are likely to in the next year or two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Higher ridership (current or propensity)</th>
<th>Serving high transit critical population</th>
<th>Serving low transit critical population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preserve service / access at SDP standards (though individual trips may still be affected)</td>
<td>Consider trade-offs depending on budget availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower ridership (current or propensity)</td>
<td>Consider trade-offs depending on budget availability</td>
<td>Most likely to reduce service levels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This process is designed to create an equitable network that preserves access and quality of service available to transit critical populations (low-income, people of color, seniors, people with disabilities, and no to low vehicle households).
Overview of Essential Service analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Highly Transit Critical</th>
<th>Less Transit Critical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Ridership Potential FY22</td>
<td>Blue Line, Orange Line, Red Line, Green Line (trunk), Mattapan line, most bus routes, Fairmount CR line, Charlestown ferry*</td>
<td>Some bus routes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Ridership Potential FY22</td>
<td>Some bus routes, some Commuter Rail lines</td>
<td>Hingham/Hull ferry, some bus routes, some Commuter Rail lines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Incomplete data

- Most of the variation is in commuter rail and bus; trade-off decisions will be based on characteristics of routes/lines/corridors
- Analysis included evaluation for transit propensity based on pre-COVID rider demographics; the routes that retained a high proportion of ridership were overwhelmingly those with above system-average of low-income riders, riders of color, or riders from zero- or low-vehicle households
All lines fall into essential services, but service levels within Service Delivery Policy standards will vary based on demand on each line.

Green Line branches data are incomplete, service levels will vary based on demand by branch.

Possible Levers:
- Reduce headways to Service Delivery Policy
- End service at 12 AM

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Delivery Policy</th>
<th>Rapid Transit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AM &amp; PM Peak</td>
<td>Every 10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other weekday periods</td>
<td>Every 15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Every 15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Every 15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekday</td>
<td>6:00 AM - midnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>6:00 AM – midnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>7:00 AM – midnight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Heavy rail and GL trunk: ~120,000 gate entries on weekdays, 24% pre-COVID (weekdays September 2020 vs September 2019)
Ferry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ferry</th>
<th>Highly Transit Critical</th>
<th>Less Transit Critical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Ridership Potential FY22</td>
<td>Charlestown* (30% of 2019 Ferry service hours)</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Ridership Potential FY22</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Hingham/Hull (70% of 2019 Ferry service hours)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Incomplete data for the Charlestown ferry, analysis will continue

Possible Levers:

- Eliminate routes
- Reduce frequency

Ferry: ~775 trips on weekdays, 11% of Pre-COVID (weekdays September 2020 vs September 2019)
## Commuter Rail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Highly Transit Critical</th>
<th>Less Transit Critical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Ridership</strong></td>
<td>Fairmount Line (4% of 2019 CR service hours)</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potential FY22</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Ridership</strong></td>
<td>Newburyport/Rockport, Middleborough/Lakeville, Providence/Stoughton (34% of 2019 CR service hours)</td>
<td>All others (62% of 2019 CR service hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potential FY22</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Next step is additional analysis at the corridor and station level

Commuter Rail: ~14,500 trips on weekdays, 12% pre-COVID (weekdays September 2020 vs manual counts Spring 2018)

**Possible levers:**
- Eliminate weekend service on some or all lines
- End weekday service after 9 PM
- Reduce or eliminate midday frequency
- Reduce peak frequency
- Station closures
**Bus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Less Transit Critical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Ridership Potential FY22</strong></td>
<td>Majority of routes (65% of 2019 Bus service hours)</td>
<td>e.g. 350, 225, 77, 73 (20% of 2019 Bus service hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Ridership Potential FY22</strong></td>
<td>e.g. 4, 7, 18, 43, 55 (8% of 2019 Bus service hours)</td>
<td>e.g. 553, 554, 351, 52 (7% of 2019 Bus service hours)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Possible Levers:**

- Reduce frequency & span to Service Delivery Policy for essential routes (top left box)
- Reduce frequency & span below Service Delivery Policy for non-essential routes
- Route eliminations & consolidations for non-essential routes

**Bus:** 171,000 trips on weekdays, 41% pre-COVID (weekdays September 2020 vs September 2019)

- Bus at the route level has the most variation
- Route level changes in all quadrants will consider usage data by people with disabilities and senior cardholders
- Bus routes suspended during COVID or with significant changes during COVID will be evaluated outside of this framework
Service Packages for November 2nd

Service Packages

- **Commuter Rail** span, weekend service, and line-specific changes
- **Ferry** lines operating
- **Heavy Rail** headways & span
- **Light Rail** headways & span
- **Major Bus** changes
- **Any RIDE** implications

Will include detail as possible about any fare or accessibility implications for riders

Scenario A
- Service Target (based on budget projections)
  - $60M

Scenario B
- Service Target (based on budget projections)
  - $150M

Scenario C
- Service Target (based on budget projections)
  - $255M

Service Packages for 11/2
(vote in December)
Timeline for Service, Budget, and Capital Decisions

October 19 (Joint Board)
- **Budget**: Revenue re-projections and FY22 update
- **Scenarios**: FY 22 scenarios

November 2 (FMCB)
- **Budget**: Return to the board to detail September results (monthly recurrence) - FY21/FY22 target progress
- **Service Planning**: Detailed service packages
- **Capital Planning**: Present recommended reprioritization to accommodate shift of 5307 funds to operating and other reductions

November 16 (Joint)
- Additional updates as needed

December 7
- **Service Planning**: Board decision on service level packages

May 15, 2021
- **Budget**: Preliminary itemized budget May 15, 2021 and final itemized budget on June 15, 2021

July 1, 2021
- **Budget**: FY22 begins and three-pronged approach implemented
Forging Ahead External Engagement

• We will be launching a public engagement process for the weeks following today’s presentation to engage and seek input from riders and community members on service scenarios.

• The engagement process for Forging Ahead will be:
  • **Transparent** – we will share all information needed to provide input
  • **Proactive** – we will reach out to impacted communities
  • **Iterative** – we will return to communities when we have more information
  • **Accessible** – we will ensure language access and access to persons with disabilities

• Engagement Strategy:
  • Virtual public meetings
  • Proactive, non-virtual engagement with communities
  • Online feedback tools at [www.mbta.com/forgingahead](http://www.mbta.com/forgingahead)

All engagement will be in accordance with the MBTA Public Engagement Plan.
Forging Ahead Engagement Audiences

Multipronged coordinated strategy for external and internal audiences

• Internal
  • MBTA workforce and unions

• External
  • Riders
  • Advocates
  • Business community
  • Elected officials
  • Municipal partners
Two Phases of Engagement

Phase 1 Essential Services: October 5- October 30
• Focus on explaining our process to prioritize essential services
• Reaching out to advocates, business community, elected officials to provide briefings and get feedback
• Feedback report back to the FMCB on November 2nd

Phase 2 Service Packages: November 2- December 4
• Virtual public meetings, including an official public hearing
• Outreach directly to community organizations and the public
• Online feedback tools
• Feedback report back to the FMCB on December 6th
Forging Ahead Online Feedback + Public Outreach

**Online Feedback**
- Online tools will also be made available for riders to give the MBTA direct feedback on Forging Ahead service scenarios.
- Feedback from these online tools will be provided directly to MBTA leadership and decision-makers.

**Public Outreach**
- We will use various tools at our disposal to notify riders of these opportunities to provide feedback:
  - Digital station screens
  - On-vehicle and in-station print media
  - Newspaper ads
  - Website and social media
  - Community partners (community groups, transportation advocates, accessibility organizations, municipal partners)