



SOMERVILLE PEDESTRIAN AND TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PTAC) JANUARY 2023 MEETING MINUTES

MAYOR KATJANA BALLANTYNE

Thursday, January 19, 2023, 6:30 – 8:00 PM

Virtual GoToMeeting <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/539724445>

You can also dial in using your phone.

United States: +1 (872) 240-3212 **Access Code:** 539-724-445

Community Representatives:

*Ted Alexander
*Ginny Alverson
Caroline Bodager
*Meredith Brown
Thomas Coen
*Laura Evans
*Christopher Ferry
Vitor Pamplona, *Vice-Chair*
*Zach Rosenberg
*Alessandra Seiter, *Chair*
*Carole Voulgaris, *Secretary*
*Kirsten Walters

Ex Officio:

*Beatriz Gómez Mouakad, *City Council - Ward 5*
*Lauren Craik, *OSPCD Mobility*
*Justin Schreiber, *OSPCD Mobility*

*= present

Guests:

Robert Burnham, *Kleinfelder Project Architect*
Sofia Eva Clark, *City Point Partners - Public Outreach Consultant*
Andre Martecchini, *Kleinfelder Design Project Manager*
Max Meinhold, *Somerville community member*
Eitan Normand, *MBTA Project Manager*
Jake Wilson, *City Council - At Large*

Acting Secretary: Carole Voulgaris

Call to order: 6:32pm

Agenda Item 1: Vote to approve December minutes

1. Motion: Meredith
2. Second: Ted
3. Unanimous vote to approve

Agenda Item 2: Subcommittee Updates

1. Policy & Enforcement

- a. Meredith: Subcommittee has been discussing lighting and safe infrastructure around new T stations. Also discussion around traffic enforcement.
 - b. Ginny: At T stations, sidewalks should be clear of snow, ramps should have railings, elevators should be in good condition.
 - c. Alessandra: Pedestrian safety around GLX stations is something multiple committee members have brought up as a priority for this year.
2. Engineering & Evaluation
- a. Zach: Met to discuss MBTA Davis Square Station Accessibility Improvements Project. Questions about design and elevator placement around headhouse. Will save specific comments for next agenda item.
3. Education & Engagement
- a. Ted: No update this month.

Agenda Item 3: Presentation and Discussion on MBTA Davis Square Station Accessibility Improvements Project (45 Minutes)

- 1. Project team presentation



Design Presentation to the City of Somerville Pedestrian and Transit Advisory Committee

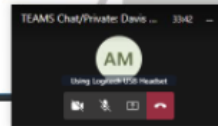
January 19, 2023

Eitan Normand, MBTA Sr. Project Manager

- a. Agenda
 - i. Program Overview
 - ii. Existing Station Condition
 - iii. Proposed Improvements
 - iv. Program Contact
 - v. Questions and Answers

Agenda

- A. Program Overview
- B. Existing Station Condition
- C. Proposed Improvements
- D. Program Contact
- E. Questions and Answers



- b. Elevator Program Overview
 - i. The need for elevator replacements and renovations for 9 stations throughout the area to make the stations fully accessible
 - ii. Project awarded to Kleinfelder, Inc. for Davis and Broadway Stations
 - 1. Design Start: Fall 2020
 - 2. Total Current Design Contract Value: \$6.6 million
 - 3. Status: 75% Design complete
 - iii. Objectives:
 - 1. Improve station accessibility with more reliable elevator services, as well as improvements to pedestrian circulation, station lighting and wayfindings
 - 2. Improved safety, reliability, and customer experience
 - iv. This is phase 2 of the program. The goal is to improve elevator access and address other accessibility issues in each of the stations.
 - v. Other than Davis, the other 8 stations are located in Boston. Project information is on the website. [This presentation is online and can be viewed there.](#)

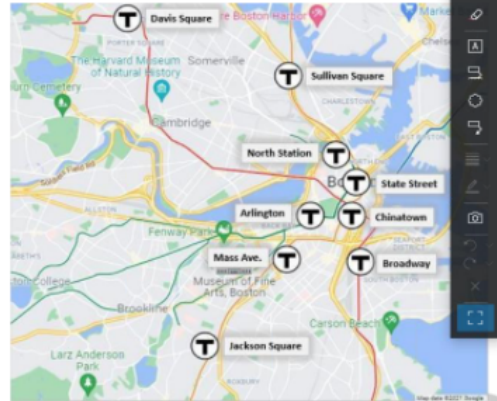
Elevator Program Overview

Overview:

- The need for elevator replacements and renovations for 9 stations throughout the area to make the stations fully accessible
- Project awarded to Kleinfelder, Inc. for Davis and Broadway Stations
 - **Design Start:** Fall 2020
 - **Total Current Design Contract Value:** \$6.6 million
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Objectives:

- Improve station accessibility with more reliable elevator service, as well as improvements to pedestrian circulation, station lighting and wayfinding
- Improved safety, reliability, and customer experience



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c. Existing Conditions - Station Location

- Pictures College Ave entrance and Holland Street entrance to Davis Square T station

Existing Conditions – Station Location



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d. Existing Conditions - College Avenue Entrance

- Elevator 1 (top left) is substandard based on MBTA guidelines.

- ii. Slide pictures existing College Avenue entrance elevator (substandard), College Avenue entrance and bus waiting area, and Lobby looking out to bus waiting area

Existing Conditions – College Avenue Entrance



Existing College Avenue Entrance Elevator



College Avenue Entrance and Bus Waiting Area



Lobby Looking Out to Bus Waiting Area

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- e. Existing Conditions - Holland Street Entrance
 - i. Slide pictures Holland Street looking along Somerville Community Path, and rear plaza at Holland Street entrance

EXISTING CONDITIONS – HOLLAND STREET ENTRANCE



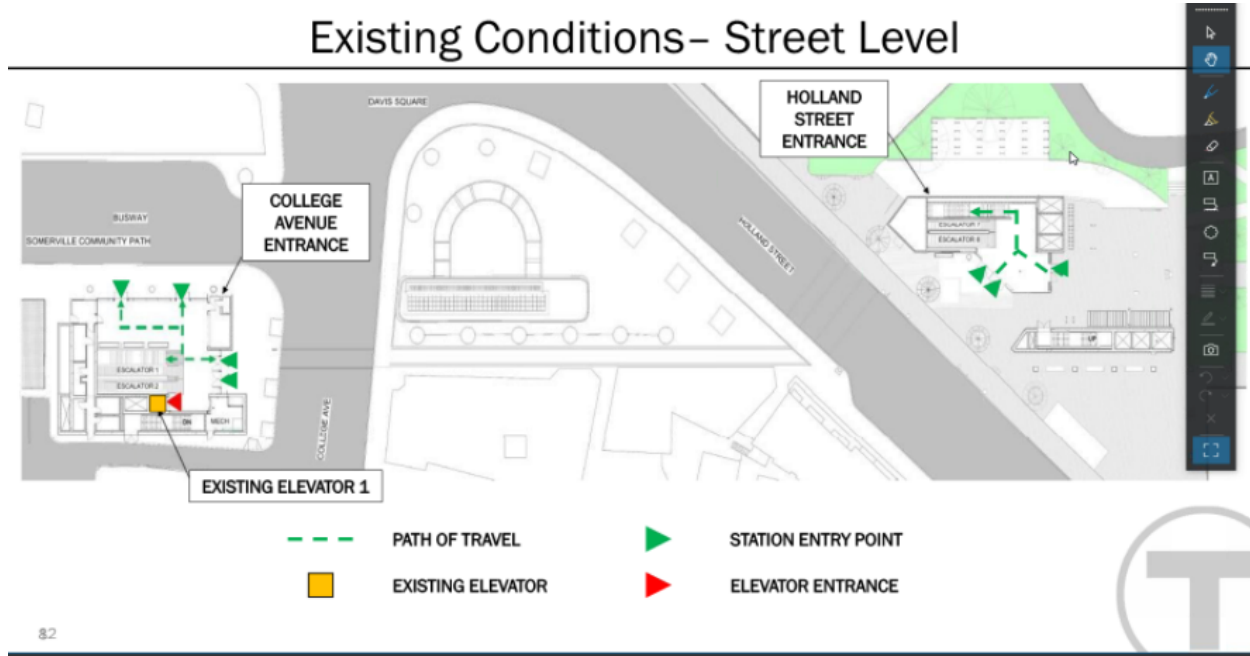
Holland Street looking along
Somerville Community Path



Rear Plaza at
Holland Street Entrance

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- f. Existing Conditions - Street Level
 - i. Main issue: There are two headhouses but only one elevator. If Elevator 1 breaks, the station isn't accessible. No redundancy.



- g. Existing Conditions - Mezzanine Level
 - i. Slide pictures green route for people walking, and red route for people using wheelchairs, other mobility devices, or strollers. There is no accessible route on the right side of the station now.

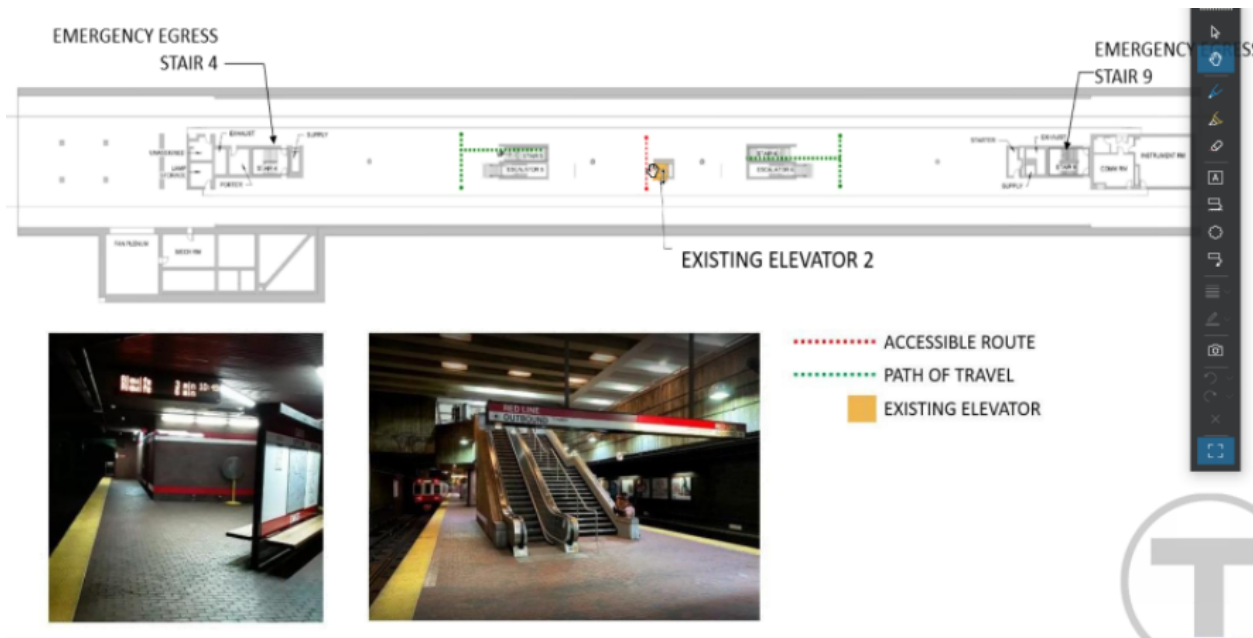
Existing Conditions – Mezzanine Level



Existing Conditions – Platform Level

h. Existing Conditions - Platform Level

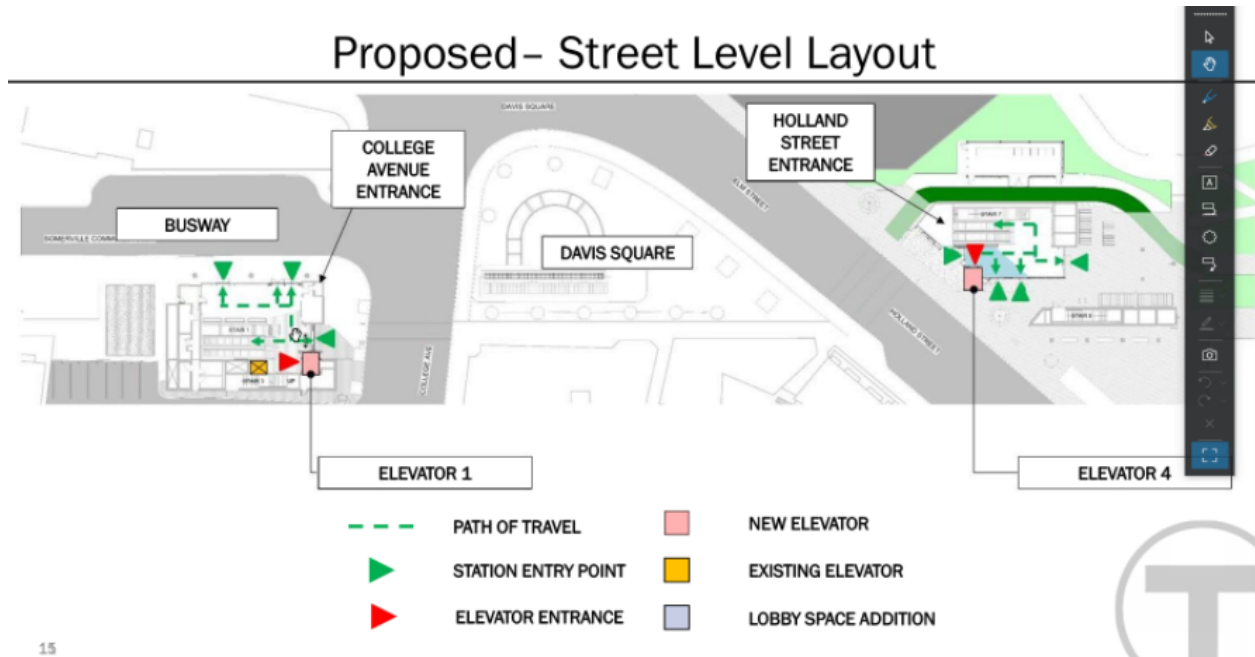
- i. There are already emergency stairs at the end of the platform, which is not true at all T stations.



i. Proposed - Street Level Layout

- i. Existing elevator will be decommissioned.

- ii. Two elevators will be added, big enough to accommodate a stretcher. One will replace the existing elevator at College Ave headhouse, the other will be a new elevator at Holland Street headhouse.
- iii. New weather protection lobby will be added to Holland Street headhouse.



- j. Design Rendering - College Avenue Street Level
 - i. Additional visibility into station and elevator cab will be achieved with glass cutouts.

Design Rendering–College Avenue Street Level

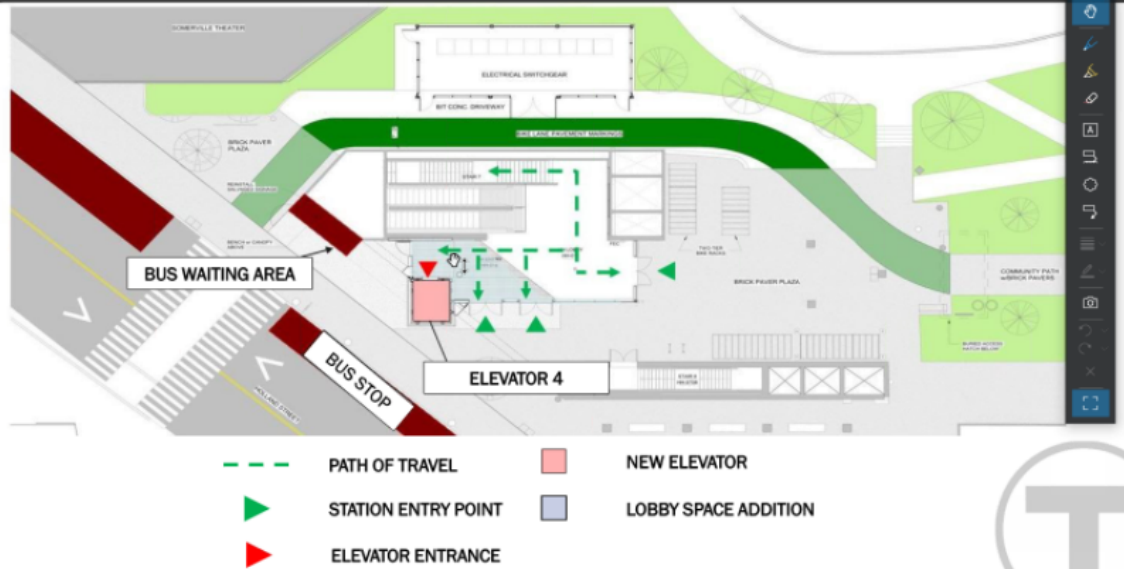


Elevator 1 at College Avenue Entrance – Street Level

10

- k. Proposed - Holland Street Station Entrance
 - i. Elevator is in this location because of the structure beneath it. There are very large beams to cut through. This location is the least invasive while still providing mezzanine access. We looked at other spots, but this is the only place we can put it.
 - ii. The green path is to show the bike route being separated from the pedestrian route. Currently peds and bikes both pass underneath the headhouse, making the area really congested. We'd like to send bikes around the back of the building. We need this area of the bike pad to put electrical equipment. The equipment that's on the mezzanine level today needs to be upsized/replaced. It needs a lot of space around it. ~30 of the bike racks will need to be relocated.

Proposed - Holland Street Station Entrance



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1. Design Rendering - Holland Street Entrance



Views of Holland Street Entrance with New Elevator

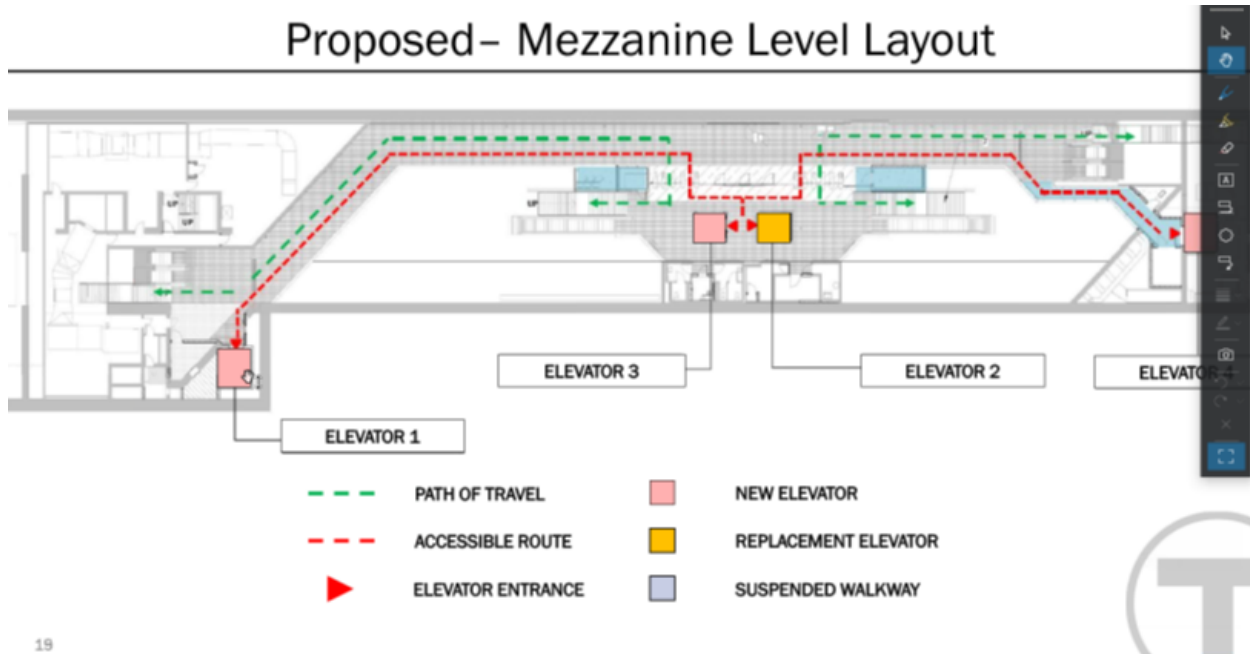
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m. Proposed - Mezzanine Level Layout

- i. Added Elevator 3 next to Elevator 2. Elevator 3 will be refurbished. Elevator 2 will be new, and stretcher compliant. They will be connected so you can push one button and call whichever elevator is closest.
- ii. Blue rectangles are slab infill to separate the fare gates and help with ped movement. Ticket machines will be on the left slab. Blue box to the right is a closet with computer equipment for the fare gate.

- iii. Elevator 4 is close as we could get it to the pedestrian route without creeping out onto the sidewalk upstairs.

Proposed – Mezzanine Level Layout



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n. Design Rendering - Mezzanine Level

- i. Elevator 3 is in the foreground, Elevator 2 is in the background. There will be glass on the doors. Elevator 3 is all glass.

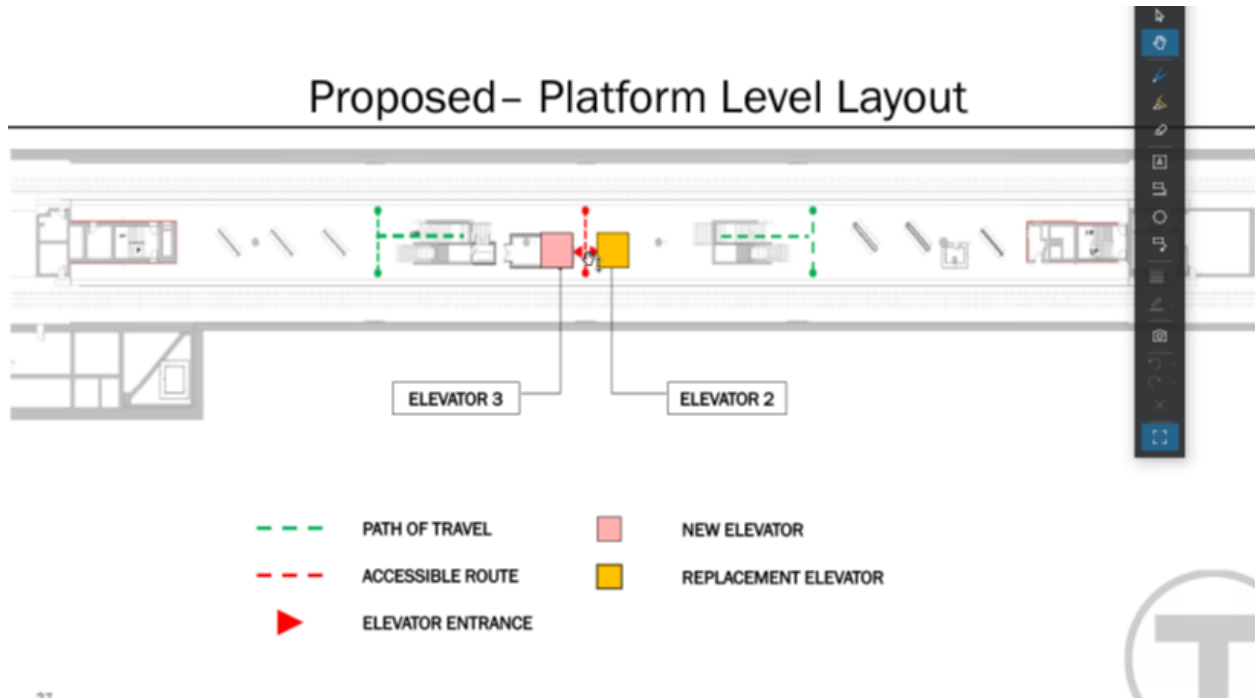
Design Rendering – Mezzanine Level



Elevator 2 and Elevator 3 at Mezzanine Level

20

o. Proposed - Platform Level Layout



p. Program Contact


- i. The bulk of the project is the elevators. Also improving lighting.
- ii. Visit the program website: mbta.com/elevatorprogram
 1. Public and stakeholders can sign up for email updates on website
- iii. Program email: elevatorprogram@mbta.com

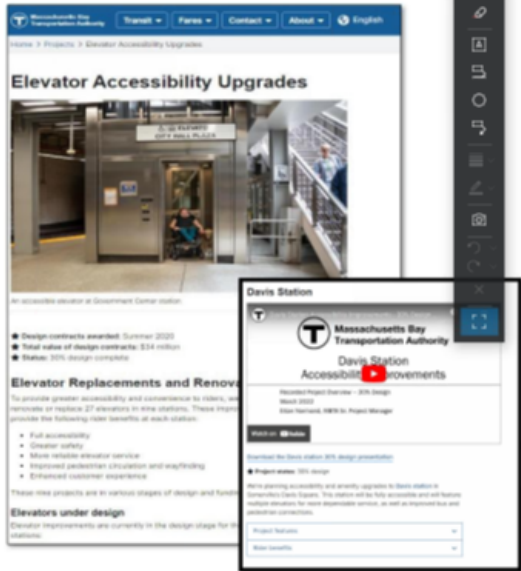
Program Contact

Visit the Program Website
www.mbta.com/ElevatorProgram

Public and Stakeholders can sign up for email updates from program on website

Program Email
ElevatorProgram@mbta.com





2. Discussion

- a. Zach: Position of the elevator at Holland. It does provide a hard corner in the pedestrian space and takes away a covered, outdoor waiting area for buses. Someone waiting inside might not see their bus coming on Holland street.
 - i. Bob: It is different. If you can't wait under the main canopy, do we bring a canopy out to the bench? There could be a combination of some people waiting in the lobby and some on the bench. The bench does have a canopy over it.
 - ii. Eitan: We have another rendering that shows the canopy better.
- b. Zach: We noticed that on the mezzanine, the suspended walkway seemed narrow at a certain point. Is there a way to expand it? Is there a rendering that shows what it would look like?
 - i. Bob: Don't have a rendering right now. There are ducts that constrain the available width. We're trying to play with the column positions so they fit with the benches below. We could play with it some more and gain some width
 - ii. Justin: What is the width there?
 - 1. Bob: It's 7 or 8 feet? Not five feet.
- c. Zach: If we wanted to reroute the bike path, could we rebuild the crosswalk across Holland to make it wider?
 - i. Eitan: We've met with the city to talk about that. The question is who would be doing the work. It's a city street, and this work is MBTA property.
 - ii. Andre: There may also be some alignment issues there.
- d. Ted (in chat): On Holland, is there a door into the station between the bus bench and the elevator?
 - i. Bob: Yes, there is.
- e. Christopher (in chat): Could the concern about sightlines for those waiting for the bus be addressed with countdown clocks? Would be a good upgrade anyway.
 - i. Eitan: There is a different program that is adding informational screens at many stations - Government Center is one where you can see these screens at the entrance. Not sure what the plans are for Davis, but that is an improvement that might be done separately from this project.
 - ii. Bob: I saw one of these nice screens in Medford Square with real-time bus information. It was really impressive. I don't know where and how fast it's being rolled out.
 - iii. Christopher: Wonder if there's any cost savings with doing that together with this project.
 - iv. Andre: We could look into at least setting up some of the infrastructure for that now.
- f. Christopher (in chat): I am concerned about the sight-lines for the elevator causeway on the mezzanine. I think it could be a safety issue to have portions of the station be almost entirely out of sight from most pedestrian traffic.
 - i.

- g. Christopher (in chat): I'd like to see some serious consideration of sight-lines on the relocated bike path route. Currently that corridor is out of view from the street and attracts garbage and public urination. I'm not sure how to mitigate this aside from better lighting.
- h. Christopher: The College Ave entrance - the concession space there seems to have been abandoned for a decade or so now. Is there any plan to renovate that - either to be a business again or use it as an additional waiting area?
 - i. Someone was operating that space before the pandemic. We are aware of it, and we're looking at trying to work with the person who was supposed to operate that space to renovate it or adjust it so they can operate it again.
- i. Zach: Where are you looking for input? Where do you have design flexibility?
 - i. Andre: There are 30 single racks that the electrical substation is displacing. We're planning to relocate them to the back plaza, with a few along Holland Street. We'd have to go to a double-rack system. You do have double-racks along the wall. We don't see a lot of bikes in the upper racks. Will the upper racks be used? We assume there will be some kind of hydraulic assist.
 - 1. Laura: These are less used because they are less out in the open. I would like if we could do bike cages because they feel more secure.
 - a. Eitan: The issue with bike cages is that they create an enclosed area in the plaza, and the city would like to see this area more open.
 - 2. Max (in chat): Having used the GLX assisted ones, the upper level is fine IMO, but pedal and park is much preferred, or at least a covered rack.
 - 3. Beatrix (in chat): What is MBTA standard for providing parking spaces for Cargo Bikes which are very popular with families here in Somerville?
 - a. Eitan: MBTA has a bike parking directive that is available online. It refers to two types of approved racks. It doesn't specifically reference cargo bikes. There is no requirement for a particular amount of bike parking. We know that the U racks can accommodate cargo bikes, and that the lift ones can't.
 - b. Christopher: Keep in mind that for events like Honk, people will climb on any structures you put in. This could be an advantage of U racks.
 - 4. Andre: If we're removing 30 spots, do we need to put in 30 spots?
 - 5. Alessandra: These could be good questions for the Bike Committee.
- j. Alessandra: Great to make T stations as accessible as possible. Happy to see more elevators. Concerns around Holland Street entrance. Could create a more challenging ped situation than we already have. Challenging crossing. Concerns about lack of sight lines.

- k. Alessandra: The bike path going behind the building. Great that there will be some effort to send bikes that way, but it seems pretty narrow, and if it isn't ideal, cyclists will cut-through the way they go now, but that will be a narrower passage than it is now. Will vehicles need to access the electrical substation behind the headhouse? If so, will there be a barrier between the vehicle access and the bike path?
 - i. Bob: The bike path would be wider than it looks in the plans - when the electrical equipment isn't in use, there will be a lot of space, which is most of the time.
 - ii. Christopher: Could the electrical substation be oriented toward Meacham Road so it's accessed away from the bike path?
 - 1. Project Team: Maybe - could be an issue with the grade.
- l. Alessandra: Mirrors to help with sightlines on the bike path?
 - i. Bob: There needs to be lighting, signage, wayfinding - more than just a marked path.
- m. Zach: What kind of enclosure is planned for the electrical substation?
 - i. Bob: A knee-wall and some architectural screening.
 - ii. Zach: On the station wall, could there be a mural or other community artwork?
 - 1. Eitan: Good question.
- n. Max (in chat): Note that any time there's a truck on that path, all bikes will go through the pedestrian tunnel.
 - i. Alessandra: Some marking in the tunnel would be good.
- o. Bob: Can the engineering committee send written comments?
 - i. Alessandra: Zach and Alessandra will compile comments from this meeting and the E&E subcommittee meeting.
- p. Sofia: We can't meet with the Bike Committee because they aren't an official city group.
 - i. Max (in chat) and Alessandra: The Bike Committee is a Mayor-appointed committee.
- q. Andre: Do you have data on some of the ped/bike movements in the project area?
 - i. Justin: We have counts in the area; not sure if there's one right there.
 - ii. Andre: Any data on the community path would be great.

Agenda Item 4: Discussion on 2021-2022 Annual Report Draft (15 Minutes)

- 1. Link to report:
https://s3.amazonaws.com/somervillema.gov/ptac-us-east-1/s3fs-public/PTAC_AnnualReport_2021-2022.pdf
- 2. This report covers two years, because we didn't do one last year.
 - a. Covers key activities and accomplishments
 - i. Section on Bus Network Redesign
 - b. Reports on subcommittee activities
 - c. Looking ahead, collective goals for next year.
 - i. Focusing on ped safety around GLX stations
 - ii. Children and Safe Routes to School

- iii. More community walks
 - 1. Maybe a shop local walk around Holland for goodwill among business owners
 - iv. A rubric for project evaluation
 - v. Upcoming projects
 - 1. Silver line extension
 - 2. Red line service changes
 - 3. GLX to Route 16
 - 4. Citywide low-income fare programs
 - vi. Diversifying committee membership
- 3. Zach: Great work!
- 4. Meredith: What is the goal for the size of the committee? On the topic of diversifying the committee, when do we need more members?
 - a. Alessandra: Based on bylaws, we need at least 2 more members (we have 12, we need 14).
- 5. Beatriz: When you try to get diversity, the time and place of meetings can make a big difference. If we had a specific theme (safety of kids walking to school, for instance) that could engage parents from the Latino community.
- 6. Beatriz: Feel free to reach out to Beatriz with concerns and comments (e.g., Magoun square station needs a crosswalk).
- 7. Alessandra: Email the officers any time you want to see something added to the agenda.
- 8. Christopher: Continue work on Neighborways - where can they connect to the new GLX stations. Wayfinding signs are great. Neighborways can connect to community walks, children's travel, GLX.
- 9. Meredith: Capuano has a recurring influx of new students. There is a neighborway through Gilman Square that Cap families keep discovering. Could be good to connect with the Capuano PTA.
- 10. Alessandra: There are a bunch of neighborways in the Bike Network Plan. We can leverage that for community engagement.
- 11. Beatriz: I urge everyone to look at the Bike Network Plan, and the way Neighborways are incorporated there.

Meeting ended: 8:04