



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Transit
Administration**

Headquarters

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

SENT VIA EMAIL

October 6, 2023

Mr. Phillip Eng
General Manager
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116

**Subject: Acceptance of Proposed Modification for Work Crew Access for Upcoming “Surge”
Diversion**

Dear Mr. Eng:

I am writing to accept the modifications to work crew access limitations proposed by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) on September 25, 2023. This acceptance extends only to the work crew access limitations proposed for the “surge” diversion specified in the MBTA’s request and does not apply to other elements of MBTA’s operations.

In April, as part of an Immediate Action Letter (IAL), FTA directed the MBTA to conduct a comprehensive analysis for each rail transit line, during both revenue and non-revenue hours, to assess and recommend the safe allocation of right-of-way (ROW) access to work crews under each MBTA Level of Protection. MBTA completed this analysis, on April 23, 2023, and then established restrictions for the number of work crews on each line, which have been accepted by FTA.

To support upcoming work on the Red Line Ashmont Branch and Mattapan Line, for Saturday, October 14 through Sunday, October 29, 2023, MBTA's proposal seeks to increase the limits previously established for “surge” style diversions. Instead of being classified as a single diversion area, MBTA’s proposal divides the work area, given its size, into five distinct sections: JFK/UMass to Fields Corner, Fields Corner to Ashmont, Codman Yard, Ashmont to Central Avenue, and Central Avenue to Mattapan.

MBTA’s proposal ensures that each section has its own special order to govern work, dedicated supervision, separate safety briefings, and is separated from the other sections with physical barriers, including candy cane poles, cones, flashers, and, where applicable, derailleurs and concrete barriers. Work crews must call in/out of each section separately, and movement between sections is completed only with the permission of the Construction Logistics Supervisor.

With these protections in place, for each section, MBTA proposes no more than three total equipment-based jobs and no more than five total off-track jobs.

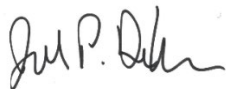
Over the last month, FTA has engaged MBTA in multiple discussions regarding this proposal, and how to ensure worker safety while MBTA completes critical track work. After careful consideration, FTA’s review finds that the MBTA’s proposal addresses the issues raised in FTA’s April IAL regarding the MBTA’s capacity to manage work crew access during “surge” diversions. FTA appreciates the MBTA’s thoughtful consideration regarding how to incorporate work crew limitations into the diversion planning process.

FTA and the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (DPU) will monitor MBTA’s “surge” diversion on the Red Line Ashmont Branch and Mattapan Line, to ensure compliance with the proposal. Any issues or concerns identified regarding either the implementation or effectiveness of the measures specified in the MBTA’s proposal will be brought to the attention of the MBTA’s Chief Safety Officer for immediate action.

Conclusion

Should you require any further information or clarification regarding this acceptance, please do not hesitate to contact our SMI Coordinator, Erin Powell, by phone at (771) 200-8016 or by email at Erin.Powell@dot.gov. We remain committed to our ongoing partnership in advancing the safety and efficiency of MBTA’s transit operations.

Sincerely,



Joe DeLorenzo
Associate Administrator and
Chief Safety Officer
Office of Transit Safety and Oversight

- cc: Peter Butler, Regional Administrator, FTA Region 1
Ryan Coholan, Chief Operating Officer, MBTA
Doug Connett, Chief of Infrastructure, MBTA
Tim Lesniak, Chief Safety Officer, MBTA
Meredith Sandberg, Chief of Quality, Compliance, and Oversight, MBTA
Natasha Vance, Deputy Chief of Quality, Compliance, and Oversight, MBTA
Sam Zhou, Chief Engineer, MBTA
Pat Lavin, Chief Safety Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Jamie Van Nostrand, Chair, Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (DPU)
Robert Hanson, Rail Safety Director, DPU