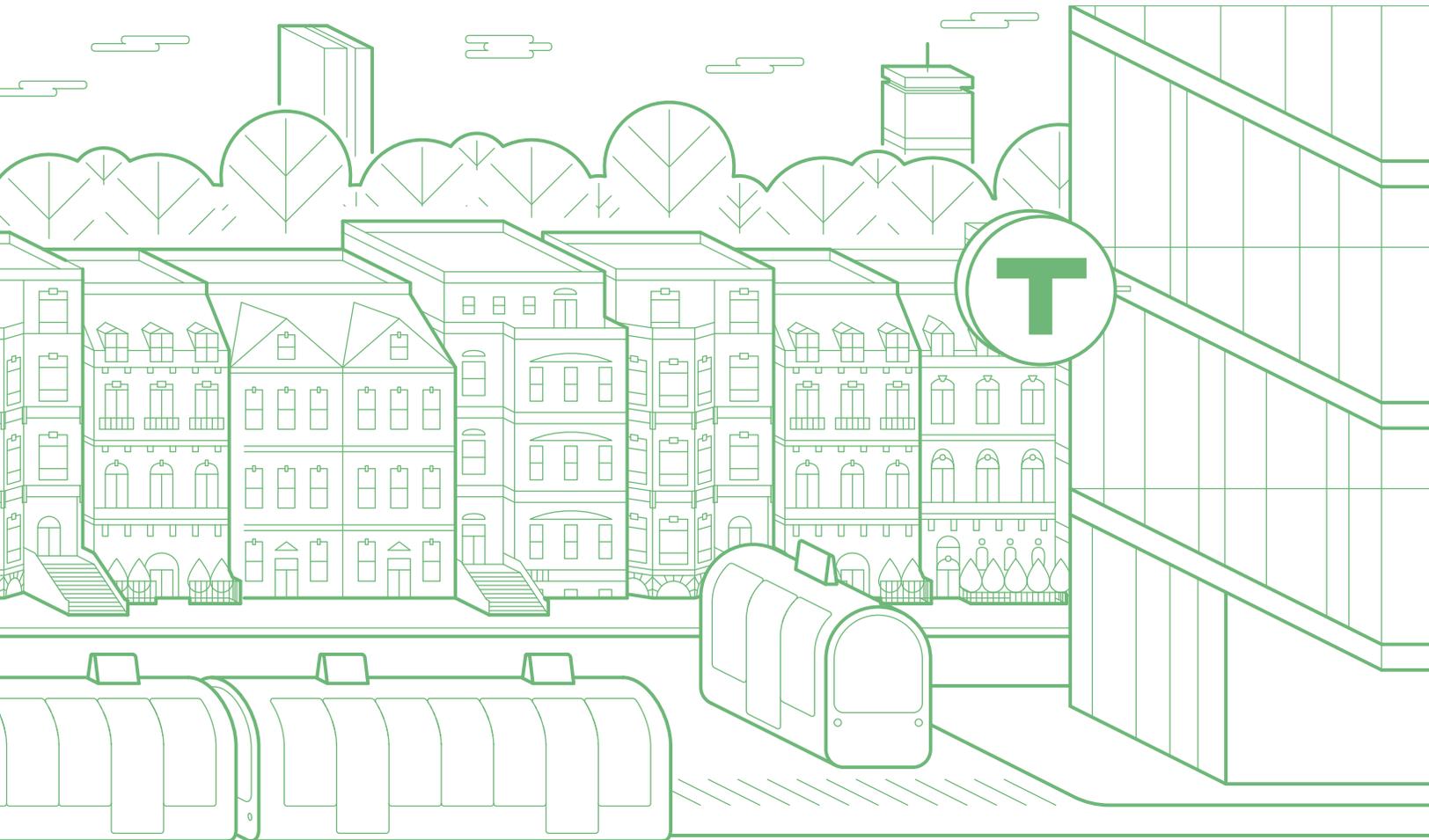


REBUILDING THE MBTA TO SERVE A CHANGING REGION

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) has been changing over the past three years – but the region it serves is changing even faster. Following the disastrous winter of 2015 and the creation of the Fiscal and Management and Control Board (FMCB), the MBTA has focused on accelerating strategic investments to eliminate its State of Good Repair backlog and modernize the system to meet the needs of current and future riders, all within a 15-year time span. While the MBTA still has much work to do before today’s riders fully experience the better and more reliable service they deserve, investments have been put in place to procure new fleets of trains and buses and implement a transformative new system for collecting fares. With total capital outlays now approaching \$1 billion annually, the MBTA is capable of addressing the system’s maintenance and modernization needs while also investing in service expansions such as the Green Line Extension and South Coast Rail.



So Focus40 comes at a critical time, the time to ask how the MBTA can continue and complete necessary investments in maintenance and modernization while also positioning itself to meet the needs of a changing region over the next several decades. Between now and 2040, the MBTA's service region will experience disruptive changes in transportation technology and business models, tectonic shifts in demography and the economy, changes in where and how people will be living and working, and a growing need to address the impacts of a changing climate.

Focus40 is a different kind of plan for what will undoubtedly be a different region and future. This draft was produced using innovative engagement processes and builds on extensive data collection and analysis. Rather than ignore the ways in which 2040 will be different from 2018—or select a single future to plan toward—Focus40 utilized a new approach called scenario planning to think strategically about how to best meet the current and anticipated needs of the region, regardless of which direction key trends take.

The focus of Focus40 is not so much on the MBTA but on the region, communities, people and businesses that it serves. Focus40 therefore reflects what the region will need to be sustainable, livable, equitable, and economically competitive. To support those needs, however, the MBTA transit system itself must change to become reliable, robust, and resilient:

- *Reliable*: Providing service that is safe, on-time, and high quality for customers of all ages and abilities
- *Robust*: Providing service that has the capacity to take people where they want to go as demand for transit increases
- *Resilient*: Providing service that is built to last through extreme weather and other disruptions

Focus40: Positioning the MBTA to Meet the Needs of the Region in 2040 is a playbook for how the MBTA can make investments that will make it the reliable, robust, and resilient transit system this region will require in the future. At the heart of this document is the identification of Priority Places that may warrant new or improved transit service and a menu of investment priorities and more transformative “Big Ideas” organized into Programs. With the publication of this draft, we look forward to getting your feedback both on the process and ideas underlying Focus40 and on the specifics of the Priority Places and Programs presented in the pages that follow and on the website at www.mbtafocus40.com.

FOCUS40 BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Recent MBTA investments have focused on immediate maintenance and modernization needs, such as purchasing new vehicles and replacing signals and track. Such critical investments in system reliability and performance remain essential and will continue—but the

Focus40: Positioning the MBTA to Meet the Needs of the Region in 2040 is a playbook for how the T can make investments that will make it the reliable, robust, and resilient transit system this region will require in the future.

MBTA also needs to ensure that the well-maintained and modernized MBTA of the future can meet the region's changing needs for service.

In order to think more strategically about positioning the MBTA to meet these needs of the region, Focus40 has two building blocks: Priority Places and Programs. The two are related, but Focus40 is trying to shift the conversation about how the MBTA addresses capital expansion projects. Instead of starting with expansion project ideas, Focus40 is about identifying places that need and can support higher quality transit—Priority Places—and then developing projects to serve those places. Projects can then be reflected in one of the dozen investment programs.

Priority Places. Focus40 identifies priority areas for new or improved service based on where investments have the greatest likelihood to deliver ridership and other benefits to the region. These are places where improved service addresses a demonstrated transportation need today that is likely to grow, places that can support higher quality transit, and places where transit and accompanying transit-oriented development could help support broader goals for the region.

Programs. Focus40 is comprised of 12 programs around MBTA services and systemwide priorities that enable the MBTA system to best serve the region over the long term.

The programs – comprised of investments that range from fully planned and designed projects to conceptual ideas that require further study – are organized into three tiers:

- **We're Doing (Commitments through 2023):** Investments that are programmed in the five-year Capital Investment Plan. Impacts of these investments will be felt within the next five years.
- **We're Planning (Next Priorities through 2040):** Investment options that are important to meet the needs of the region in 2040. These are the core pieces of the Focus40 investment strategy. Investments in this category will be prioritized for planning/design work and phased in through the existing, rolling five-year capital planning process.
- **We're Imagining (Big Ideas):** Potentially transformative investment options the feasibility, benefits, and costs of which must be better understood before the MBTA can make a decision about how to move forward. Many of these big ideas may be important investments for the region, depending on which future we expect or want. These ideas may be considered for planning work as the MBTA makes progress on implementing the investments in “We're Doing” and “We're Planning.”



Focus40, informed by the MBTA Strategic Plan, serves as a comprehensive playbook for all MBTA capital investments for the next two decades. It connects current and future modal, project-specific, and systemwide plans to feed the rolling five-year financially constrained Capital Investment Plan.

The Programs presented in this document are, by intent, financially unconstrained and not presented in order of priority. While the programs that “We’re Planning” are intended to be financially reasonable and implementable, their costs have yet to be determined. Focus40 does not identify which programs are most important or urgent, but instead reflects a comprehensive portfolio of potential investments that will make the T reliable, robust, and resilient enough to meet the region’s needs.

FOCUS40 AND THE MBTA STRATEGIC PLAN

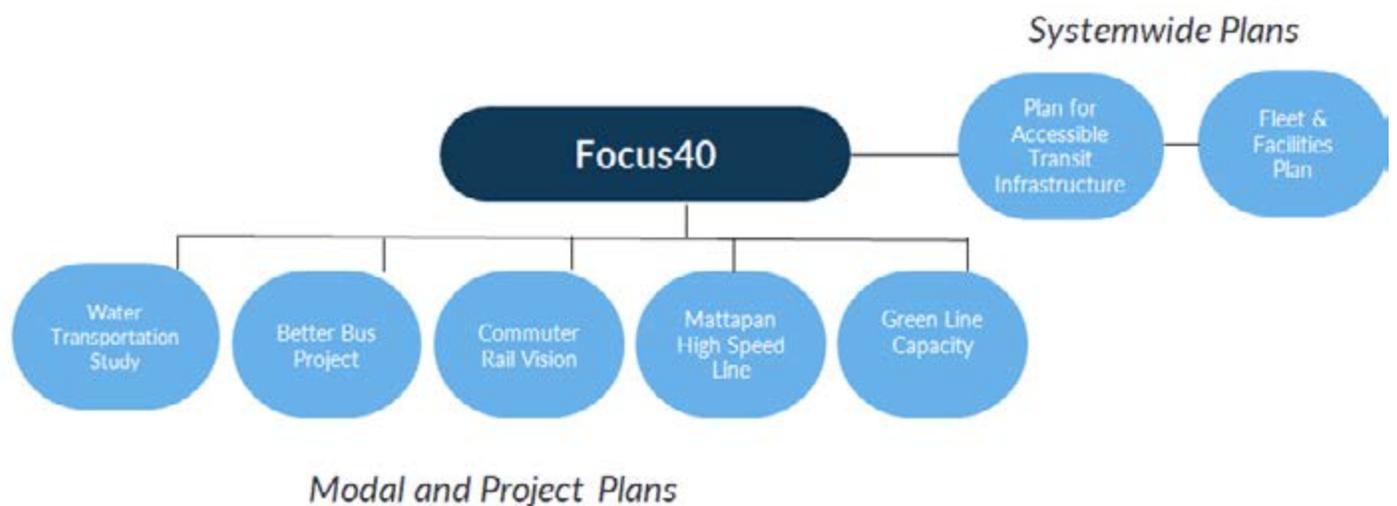
Focus40 is guided by the MBTA Strategic Plan and built upon both internal and external policy and planning efforts, like the MBTA’s *Plan for Accessible Transit Infrastructure* and the City of Boston’s *Go Boston 2030 Vision and Action Plan*. Focus40 will serve as a comprehensive playbook to guide all capital planning initiatives at the MBTA, such as the *Rail Vision* (more information at: www.mbta.com/projects/rail-vision), and will inform outside efforts like the Baker-Polito Administration’s Commission on the Future of Transportation in the Commonwealth. The Focus40 process is already influencing how work is done at the MBTA, including informing ongoing and future planning efforts, helping to prioritize capital projects, and identifying places best suited for new investment.

Focus40, which also serves as the long-range investment plan for the MBTA known officially as the Program for Mass Transportation, promotes a strategic, robust, and incremental approach to investment: prioritizing the least costly solution to address an identified need and only increasing investment when the data demonstrate it is necessary.

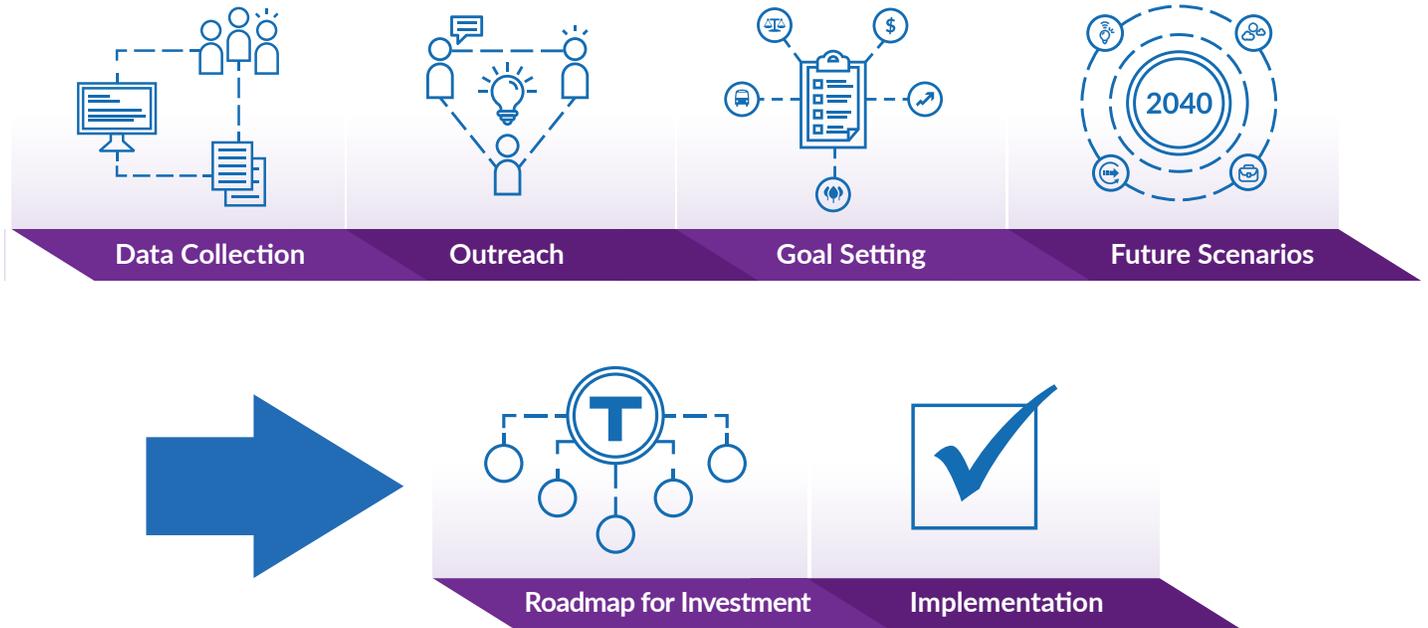
Due to the work of the Fiscal and Management Control Board, MBTA leadership, and the T’s dedicated workforce, the foundation has been laid for the kind of transit system the region needs. Building on these efforts, Focus40 will help position the T to not only maintain its current progress, but to establish a sustainable MBTA better prepared for whatever uncertainty the future might present.

Most importantly, Focus40 creates a living framework for moving the T forward. As with any proposed solutions or strategies, the assumptions and investment possibilities identified here should be regularly revisited and re-evaluated to be sure that they remain the best solutions to the region’s evolving needs.

Find additional information about these studies and others on the Additional Resources page at www.mbtafocus40.com



A DIFFERENT KIND OF PLANNING



LEVERAGING DATA

The development of Focus40 started with establishing a clear understanding of the conditions at the MBTA. The Focus40 team worked closely with dozens of staff members across numerous departments, as well as with senior leaders throughout MassDOT and the MBTA, to develop a comprehensive assessment of the existing system. This process produced the first of the Focus40 planning materials, a series of ‘State of the System’ reports, which provide a mode-by-mode snapshot of the asset condition and service performance of the MBTA bus, rapid transit, paratransit, commuter rail, and ferry systems.

While understanding existing conditions is a necessary first step, a broad awareness of the key trends shaping the region over the next several decades is essential in order to truly grasp how the MBTA needs to invest

for the long-term. The Focus40 team engaged a range of subject matter experts and data sources in order to better identify key emerging trends—including changes in population, climate, technology, and new and potentially disruptive mobility options—and consider how the MBTA could both respond to and shape them.

The Focus40 website: www.mbtafocus40.com has the State of the System Reports and a range of resources that were used in the development of the plan.

Throughout this draft, there will be call out boxes requesting feedback on different elements of the plan. You can respond to these calls for feedback at www.mbtafocus40.com

ENGAGING OUR CUSTOMERS

Just as Focus40 takes a different approach to how the T should plan for the future, it also looks beyond the “usual suspects” and methods to understand the current needs and future aspirations of our riders and stakeholders. Focus40 specifically sought out insights and expertise from customers—such as bus riders—who have often been underrepresented in MBTA planning processes, even though they can be especially dependent on the T and face some of the system’s lengthiest commutes.

In addition to direct outreach to MBTA customers on buses and at stations, staff worked with high school students from Boston, Brookline, and Chelsea, and held large public events with interactive exhibits and organized workshops with stakeholders ranging from business leaders to grassroots community groups. Members of the public contributed more than 3,000 ideas for how the MBTA could better serve the Greater Boston region in the next decades.

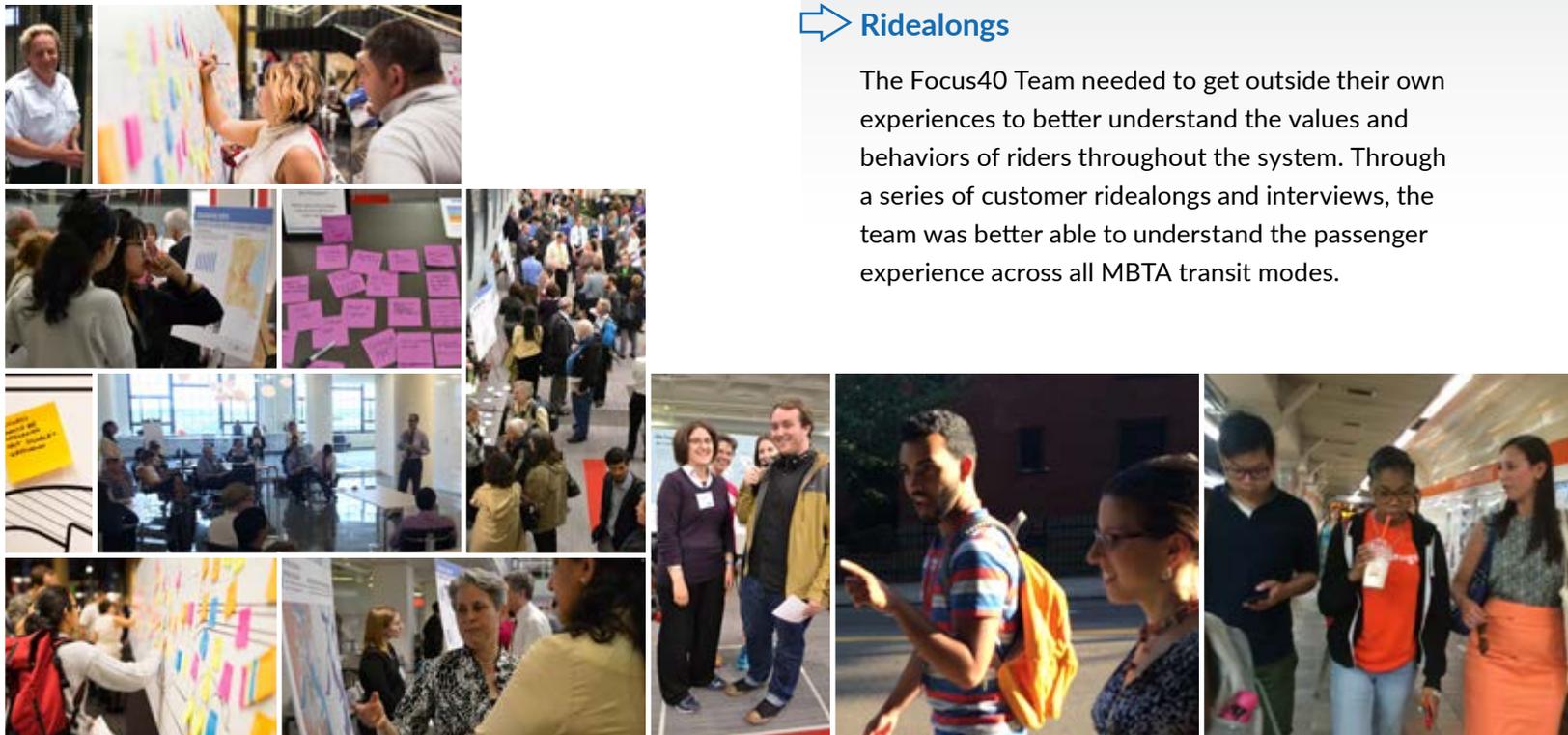


➔ Focus40 Street Team

The project team, supported by a 14-member Focus40 Street Team, spent 100 hours talking to customers at bus stops or in rapid transit and commuter rail stations as they used the system. The Street Team was a partnership with Nuestra Comunidad, Greenroots Chelsea, and Northeastern University. Outreach was designed to correspond with overall MBTA ridership by mode and to reflect the geographic diversity of the MBTA service area.

➔ Ridealongs

The Focus40 Team needed to get outside their own experiences to better understand the values and behaviors of riders throughout the system. Through a series of customer ridealongs and interviews, the team was better able to understand the passenger experience across all MBTA transit modes.



➔ Student Partnership with 826 Boston

While many Boston-area high school students and their families rely on the MBTA every day, they are typically underrepresented in planning processes. Seeking new ways to engage with area youth, Focus40 developed a partnership with 826 Boston, an afterschool writing program. This partnership involved students from the Burke High School in Dorchester and the O'Bryant High School in Roxbury. Working side-by-side with 826 Boston staff and volunteer tutors, students wrote short creative pieces related to their experiences with the MBTA. Students from the O'Bryant High School were from the engineering club and examined investment ideas such as bus rapid transit. Students from the Burke High School examined shifting demographics and surveyed members within their community about the future of transportation in Boston. The book that resulted from this creative writing process, *85 Cents Might Not Sound Like a Lot*, was presented in the summer of 2017.

