

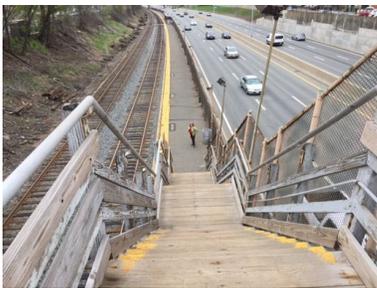


September 27, 2022

Administrator Nuria Fernandez
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Fernandez:

The MBTA seeks funding to support planned upgrades at all three Commuter Rail stations in Newton on the Framingham/Worcester Line that are inaccessible and in a state of disrepair with steep, uneven staircases leading to low-level platforms. Below is a picture of the President of the Council at the bottom of the Washington St, Newtonville Station. We are sure you can appreciate the inaccessibility to folks with a disability as well as many seniors and scores of others including parents with strollers or folks with temporary injuries such as broken legs or ankles or other temporary impediments. Each of the stations have similar issues.



The Newton Commuter Rail Accessibility Improvements Project will reconstruct the three Newton stations in Auburndale, West Newton, and Newtonville to make them fully accessible:

- Providing step-free access to the stations;
- Constructing new high-level platforms on the north side of the line;
- Reconstructing and raising the south-side platforms to allow for level boarding;
- Reconfiguring customer amenities including parking lots and pedestrian bridges; and
- Installing new stairs, signage, benches, and wayfinding features to support passengers with disabilities.

Upon its completion, this Project will affirm the right of all people with disabilities to be fully participating members of our community. Fundamental to this opportunity is the right and ability to use public transportation in an equal, effective, and dignified manner. This work will support riders with disabilities by providing them with public transit options to job, recreational, and cultural opportunities from Worcester to Boston and beyond via connections on the MBTA network. Newton is an all-age friendly community and these improvements will also help our older residents, young parents with strollers, and residents with luggage on their way to Boston's Logan Airport.

Since 2015 we have approved housing along the corridor served by the three train stations; both market rate and affordable (over 500 units are in place or planned). This new housing must be accessible to all Newton residents. We hope that your agency will help us achieve this goal.

While the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) initiated a great deal of progress on making our transit systems accessible to all our riders, we have much work ahead to ensure equity across transit systems nationwide. As the oldest transit system in North America, the MBTA's legacy stations are woven into some of our nation's most culturally vibrant and economically diverse neighborhoods. Retrofitting these stations to be accessible will provide a significant benefit to the City of Newton and its many residents, as well as those who work and visit here.

We are excited to support this project and its grant application, and we are grateful for your careful consideration of this matter. Please know that our President will be happy to answer any questions you may have. Susan's email is salbright@newtonma.gov.

Thanks for your help with this important matter.

Susan Albright, President
Rick Lipof, Vice President
R. Lisle Baker, President Emeritus
Maria Scibelli Greenberg, Ward Councilor, Ward 1
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