



Maura Healey, Governor
Kimberley Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor
Gina Fiandaca, Secretary & CEO



Joint Committee on Transportation Oversight Hearing
Monday, June 26, 2023, 1PM – 5PM

Good Afternoon- Chair Crighton, Chair Straus and members of the Joint Committee on Transportation. Thank you for inviting us to speak here today.

My name is Gina Fiandaca, and I am the Secretary of Transportation. On behalf of Governor Healey and Lt. Governor Driscoll – I am pleased to be before you today to provide you with key updates on the work we've been doing at the MBTA.

It can not be overstated that there is a sense of urgency to improve safety and reliability at the MBTA, and Governor Healey has said it repeatedly – that we will work together with the legislature, local officials, our workforce and our customers to achieve new levels of transparency and trust at the MBTA, with the goal of providing reliable, safe and resilient public transportation – and also to meet the needs of the public state-wide.

This is a transformative time in transportation & we are doubling down with our workforce to improve on-time performance, core infrastructure, and customer communication.

We are laser-focused on running MBTA service that can be counted on, that will meet our equity and resiliency goals, and launch capital projects which will be in place for generations.

All of us on the senior management team are committed to working with all of you and collaborating with our municipal officials and advocacy groups to increase the safety and reliability of our transportation network and we are committed to “getting things right.”

The Healey-Driscoll Administration has already taken two important steps to putting us on a path forward to improve the MBTA:

- We announced new leadership at the MBTA with the appointment of General Manager Phillip Eng
- And we created and filled the first ever role of Chief Safety Officer, and hired Patrick Lavin.

The General Manager comes to us from top leadership jobs in New York.

When he took over as President of the Long Island Rail Road – the system was experiencing its worst on-time performance in decades.

He jumped right in and ultimately brought the railroad up to having the most consistent on-time performance in its history.

He did this by prioritizing communication and not shying away from innovative solutions.

He hit the ground running when he started at the MBTA in March, and he hasn't stopped since.

The General Manager's thinks like a customer.

He recognizes the need for constant communication with clear timelines and plans of action.

We've been together and on the phone with each other at all hours of the day because he "gets it" – service needs to run well.

And when there is an incident, Phil has been fully committed, to being transparent, and telling our riders as soon as possible what's going on.

Our customers want information, and they are rooting for us to succeed.

We get asked, how can we increase ridership on public transportation?

The answer: communicate with our customers, be transparent, and fix the issues.

We have been putting the building blocks in place and our eyes are wide open to the challenges we face at the MBTA.

We are starting to make progress with corridors where there have been speed restrictions and other infrastructure issues.

Public transportation must run smoothly because transportation systems which work well mean opportunity. It means getting people where they need to go, when they need to go, safely and affordably. We're committed to those goals.

As Governor Healey often says, we can't have a functioning economy without a functioning transportation system, and it will take all of us, working together, and giving the MBTA resources, to advance our critical capital investments and improve service.

I know that we are up to the challenge.

And one of the most important challenges is what we are focusing on at this hearing: addressing the FTA directives.

We have been working steadfast with our partners at the Federal Transit Authority and providing updates to the public and our MBTA Board regularly on the progress being made on specific directives.

We are working collaboratively on responding and addressing challenges like the system-wide slow-downs, workforce, and instilling a culture of safety here at MassDOT and the MBTA.

During this hearing, you will be presented with information in detail on all the great work and progress we are making.

General Manager Eng, Katie Choe, and their teams are focused on making improvements and letting the public know where things stand.

This past February, the MBTA launched an online safety dashboard that allows the public to see the status of the T's progress in responding to the Special Directives.

The new dashboard includes a description of each Corrective Action Plan, what it is intended to correct, the MBTA's analysis, recommendations, and the status of steps being taken. (To view the dashboard, visit www.mbta.com/FTAResponse.)

MBTA management recognizes the important role the T plays in the daily lives of the communities served, that service is critical, and with this dashboard, the MBTA is being transparent about efforts underway to address the FTA findings.

All members of the Legislature, the public, and our valued MBTA customers can look at the dashboard to see the safety steps being taken.

Our goal is to ensure that each rider across the Commonwealth, and all of you, get regular updates on the progress we are making.

We use the system too. Our families use the system.

We are committed to improving the MBTA system.

And now, I'll ask General Manager Eng say a few words and to walk you through how exactly he is taking on the challenges at the MBTA.

Thank you.