



Charles D. Baker, Governor
Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor
Stephanie Pollack, MassDOT Secretary & CEO



November 24, 2015

The Honorable William Straus
House Chairman
Joint Committee on Transportation
State House, Room 134
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Thomas McGee
Senate Chairman
Joint Committee on Transportation
State House, Room 109C
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Straus and Chairman McGee:

After careful consideration and consultation with our partners at Keolis Commuter Services, MassDOT and the MBTA have decided that the recently revised north side commuter rail schedules will not be implemented until spring 2016.

The revision of commuter rail schedules is a critical element of our efforts to deliver safe, reliable, on-time service to MBTA commuter rail customers. Building new schedules will help minimize cascading failures and ensure that on-time service can be delivered both safely and consistently. The coming changes will be the most substantive made in decades; when the process is complete, we are confident that the new schedules will serve the best interests of our ridership.

But the MBTA needs to do more than provide reliable commuter rail service to our customers – it needs to listen to those customers and understand their needs and concerns and incorporate them into service planning. We understand that even small changes to longstanding schedules impacts the daily lives of our riders and we need to hear and incorporate their feedback before finalizing schedule changes.

The MBTA will implement new schedules for the entire commuter rail system – north side and south side – in the spring of 2016. We will of course review the recently proposed north side schedule based on the feedback we have received from legislators, MBTA customers and the MBTA/Keolis operations team. Then, in December, the MBTA will release in draft form proposed new schedules for both north side and south side services, along with specific plans for extensive public engagement. We will provide ample opportunity and time for review, feedback and final adjustments prior to spring 2016 implementation.

We look forward to working with you and our partners in the legislature as we continue our efforts to improve MBTA commuter rail service by updating service schedules to meet the needs of our customers and of commuter rail-served communities and employers. Working together, I am confident we can develop schedules that allow the MBTA and Keolis Commuter Services to provide safe, convenient and consistently on-time service.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Pollack