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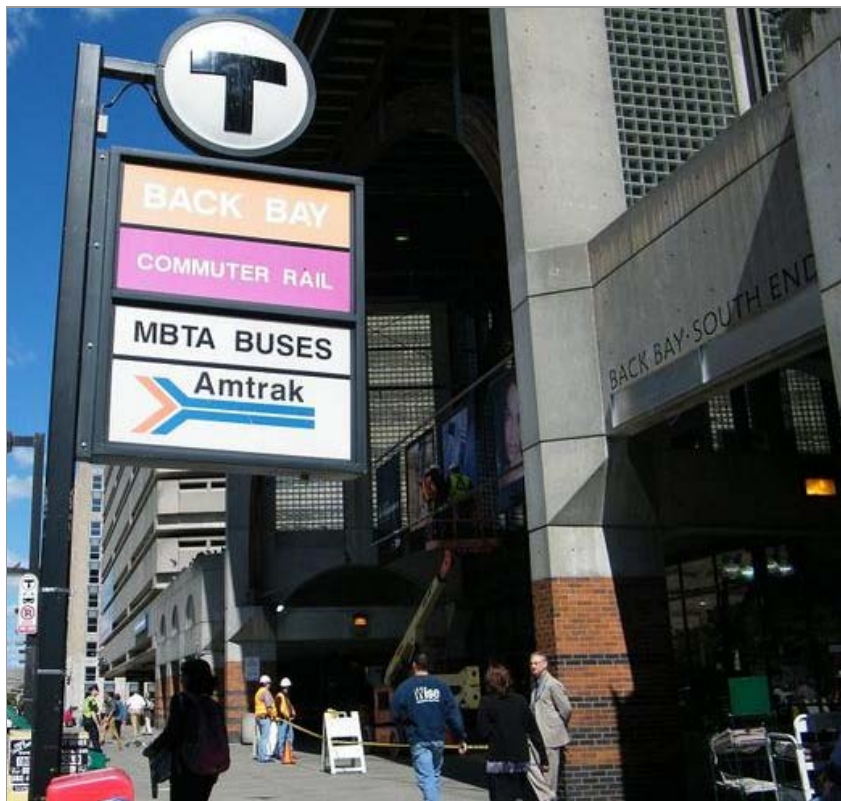
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BACK BAY

\$1.4 million replacement of Back Bay station's leaky roof to begin

Posted September 20, 2010 03:58 PM

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(Matt Rocheleau for Boston.com)

Crews were at the Back Bay station Monday to prepare for an eight-week project to replace the 23-year-old leaky roof.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

After a several years of chronic leaking, the roof of the Back Bay subway station will be replaced in a \$1.4-million, stimulus-funded project scheduled to begin next week.

The existing roof above the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's sixth-busiest subway station was installed with a 20-year life expectancy in May 1987. But because of a lack of funding, the MBTA has not been able to replace the roof until now.

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"We're very excited," the authority's General Manager Richard Davey said in a phone interview Monday. "Being a Back Bay resident myself, I can say firsthand this project is very much needed ... It's a project that's overdue, but we're glad we have the funds to do it now."

The entire 60,000 square-foot of roof will be replaced over about eight weeks with a modified built-up roof system that has a service life of 30 years, according to MBTA officials. Construction, especially in high-volume areas, will be done mostly during non-service hours to minimize impacts to commuters, said T spokesman Joe Pesaturo.

The station will remain open throughout the project, which is scheduled to be complete by the end of November.

The roof's structural integrity is not an issue, and the leaks did not cause any damage to the building or equipment inside, Davey said.

However, to cope with the problem in the meantime, employees of the station have had to scatter tarps and buckets to collect the drips. In some cases, before a leak had been noticed, or if it had not been covered up properly, "water was pooling up on the floor and dripping on some folks," Davey said.

The wet floors created a potential safety hazard, he said, though he was not aware of any injuries related to people slipping on roof-leaked water.

Particular problem spots were somewhat spread out and include the main entrance for Orange Line passengers and the ceiling of a security camera booth office, he said.

Suzanne Roeder of Jamaica Plain, who has gone through the Back Bay station about three or four times each week for the past 10 years, said she has seen buckets spread out on the station's floor, but otherwise never noticed a major leaking problem.

But Adel Essahli of Revere, who has worked as a supervisor of a convenience store in the station for the past five years, said he has seen the leaks become a nuisance for commuters.

"In some places it's worse than others," said Essahli pointing from his store toward where a Bank of America ATM near the station's Dartmouth Street entrance. "You got to use your umbrella while taking cash out of there sometimes."

The station, located on Dartmouth Street between Stuart Street and Columbus Avenue, sees around 16,000 people enter its Orange Line platforms on a typical weekday, according to figures provided by the MBTA that do not include the hundreds of people who enter the station to board the four commuter rail lines and buses.

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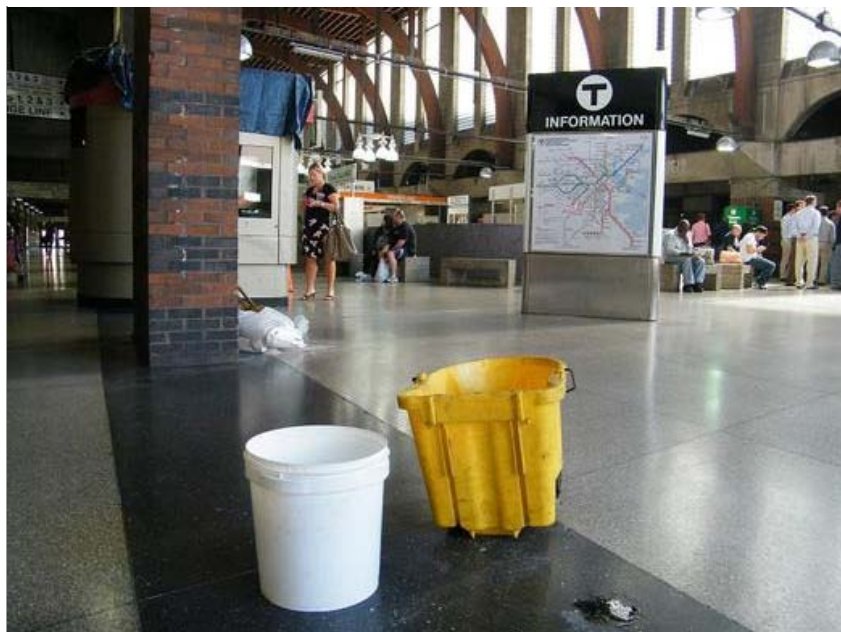
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Boston Harbor Islands national park area - today (9/18)



(Matt Rocheleau for Boston.com)

Even on a clear, sunny afternoon, buckets remain ready near the station's Dartmouth Street entrance and a tarp covers the top of an ATM.

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