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Metro

# MBTA promises that it will do better on removing snow

Agencies vow to communicate

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT    OCTOBER 19, 2011

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The MBTA vowed yesterday to improve snow removal at its 8,500 bus stops statewide this winter, and other state and city agencies promised to communicate better to clear roads and pedestrian paths as soon as possible.

The T and other agencies seemed eager to show they had learned lessons from last winter's storms, when residents criticized what they saw as inadequate snow removal. Boston was pummeled with 80.1 inches of snow - around double the yearly average.

At a Boston City Council hearing yesterday, a Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority representative

said the agency would deploy new equipment and assign 75 additional employees to clean around bus stops.

Around 280 other T staffers who clear snow from train lines will also help clear bus stops after track cleanup is completed, said Michael Turcotte, assistant general manager for engineering and maintenance.

Thomas J. Tinlin, Boston's transportation commissioner, praised the T's plans.

"It's never been done before," Tinlin said. "This is a huge step in the right direction."

Once the flakes start to fall this winter, the MBTA will focus first on clearing 1,122 stops, 659 of which are in Boston, along 15 key bus routes that account for 47 percent of the agency's bus ridership, Turcotte said.

Crews will then branch out to clean the rest of its stops across Massachusetts.

Turcotte said in an interview after the hearing that MBTA leadership began to focus more on clearing bus stops last winter after a photo was mailed to the agency's general manager at the time, Richard A. Davey, who is now the state's transportation secretary.

The picture showed an elderly woman sitting on a snow bank in front of a shelter at a stop in Brockton, according to Turcotte.

After he and Davey saw the photo, Turcotte said, they became determined "to do everything in our power to clear as much bus stops as we can clear."

"That [photo] is the cover of our snow plan, and that's what we use," he said. "We take it to every one of our snow meetings."

Boston's public works commissioner, Joanne Massaro, said her department plans to improve its work to clear snow from some 22,000 sidewalk entrances and pedestrian ramps across the city's 800 miles of

roadway.

“Let me assure you, we will be ready,” she said.

A representative from the state’s parks and recreation department, which has jurisdiction over a number of parkways, said the agency is reviewing requests that plows traveling along certain roads angle the snow to the opposite side to keep from piling tall banks in front of sometimes already-cleared driveways and sidewalk entrances.

Councilor Matt O’Malley called yesterday’s hearing.

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