

Your Town

[Weather](#) | [traffic](#) | [transit](#)

search

GO

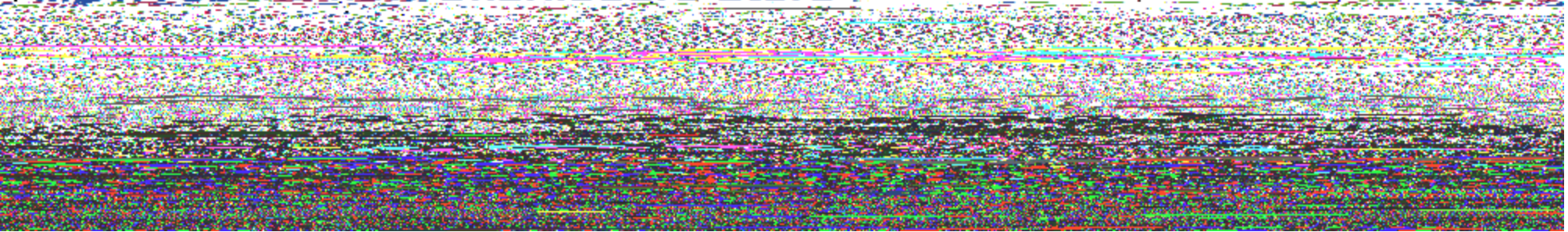
[< Back to front page](#)

Text size [-](#) [+](#)

BACK BAY, DOWNTOWN

MBTA opens new CharlieCard Store

ADVERTISEMENT



Print | Comments ()

BostonShops »



Let the shopping begin. Get exclusive promotions and sales from your favorite retailers. And never miss a great deal again.

[SEE A SAMPLE](#)

[SIGN UP NOW](#)

Posted by Matt Rocheleau August 13, 2012 07:00 PM



STATE »

1
Open
uses this
week

0
New listings
this week

For every kid!

arts, theater, music, arts or
and the perfect camp for
boston.com/campguide.



(Matt Rocheleau for Boston.com)

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

The MBTA on Monday opened a new customer service center to handle transactions for users of its fare pass, the CharlieCard.

The \$1.3-million, 1,800 square-foot facility inside the concourse of Downtown Crossing Station will serve as the system-wide hub of all T fare pass transactions.

DOWNTOWN REAL ESTATE

28
Homes
for sale

288
Rentals
available

hou

SPECIAL ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

CAMP GUIDE »

A camp for
Adventure, sports
technology—fit
your child at bo



ADVI

d in the latest..



Waiting for Twitter to feec

It consolidates the operations of two service centers that are now closed – one was located inside Back Bay Station and handled transactions for discounted passes given to seniors and people with disabilities, the other space, located next door to the new center, handled all other CharlieCard transactions.

Officially called the CharlieCard Store, the new center was designed and built over the past 18 months to be a streamlined, one-stop location that can assist riders with all fare pass related needs, said Barbara Moulton, assistant general manager of customer communications and marketing for the T.

The public transit agency hopes its customers will find the new center emits a cleaner, cooler and friendlier vibe than its predecessors, including by abandoning the use of thick, bullet-proof glass that separated customers and the staff that helped them at the old location next door.

“We’re no longer behind a wall,” Moulton said.

The old locations could each only handle two patrons at a time and left those in line susceptible to the elements of being in a subway station and without a place to sit.

The new center is housed in its own climate-controlled, ADA-accessible room with a 110-person capacity. As many as six customers can be helped simultaneously, Moulton said. Some seating is available inside and more is planned to be added just outside the center.

The center is lined with green colored floors and walls to match the look of CharlieCards. Even employee chairs are green.

“We’re invoking the spirit of Charlie,” Moulton said. “But, more than the look is the heightened customer service.”

The center resembles and operates much like a registry of motor vehicles service branch. Customers walk in, say generally what they are there for and are assigned a number, she said. When their number is called and displayed on screens on either end of the lobby, they can go to the corresponding counter spot.

For those needing passes with a picture of their face on it, their photo is taken at

the front counter.

Customers should not have to wait more than about 15 minutes, according to Moulton. But, waits can be longer during peak hours: just before the workday begins, at lunch hours and at the end of the workday.

Just after lunchtime on the center's first day, some customers said they experienced much longer waits.

Joseph Johnson, 43, of South Boston, said he waited for nearly three hours to get a replacement Transportation Access Pass card, which is issued to people with disabilities.

"At the other one I was in and out. This is ridiculous," he said. "I know it's their first day, but they've had months to prepare."

However, he noted: "It's not the people behind the counter's fault – they're polite."

In February, the T hired full-time workers to run their CharlieCard service centers. Previously, the locations were staffed by temp workers, resulting in frequent headaches for customers forced to deal with staff that rarely had much on-the-job experience, Moulton said.

Peter McVay, 67, said he had been waiting in line for more than one hour to get a discounted senior pass. But, the Atkinson, N.H. resident was more forgiving of the unexpected delay.

"As anyone familiar with startups knows, there will be some initial glitches. I'm sure it will get better," he said. "All in all, Boston has a good rail transportation system."

The T hopes to generate revenue by renting out the Back Bay Station customer service location that closed permanently last Friday, spokesman Joe Pesaturo said.

The CharlieCard Store is located near Arch Street exit of the Downtown Crossing Station which serves the Red and Orange lines, officials said. It is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and can help those who speak English and four other languages: Spanish, French-Creole, Mandarin and

Cantanese.

The store allows customers to conduct all CharlieCard transactions, including for reduced-fare customers with Senior Pass, Transportation Access Pass or TAP, Visually Impaired Pass, or RIDE accounts, according to the MBTA. The location also lets customers purchase other T pass types, transfer value from paper CharlieTickets to the plastic cards and to replace damaged tickets or cards.

For more information, contact the T's customer communications department at 617-222-3200, TTY: 617-222-5146.

E-mail Matt Rocheleau at mjrochele@gmail.com.

--

For the latest updates about your community, follow some of our local neighborhood, city and town Twitter accounts, [here](#).

[◀ Previous entry](#)

[Next entry ▶](#)