



MBTA to test new way to help blind find bus stops

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By [Matt Rocheleau](#)

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The MBTA plans to test technology to make it easier for visually impaired riders to find where to stand when waiting for one of its buses.

The agency will install Bluetooth beacons on bus stop signs that can communicate via a smartphone app to tell users how close they are to the stop.

David Block-Schachter, chief technology officer at the T, said GPS software, such as Google Maps, is typically accurate at marking bus stops only within about 20 to 30 feet of the stop.

“The problem we’re trying to solve is heartbreaking,” Block-Schachter said.



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“Someone could end up waiting 20 feet away, and if they’re waiting 20 feet away, that bus probably doesn’t stop for them.”

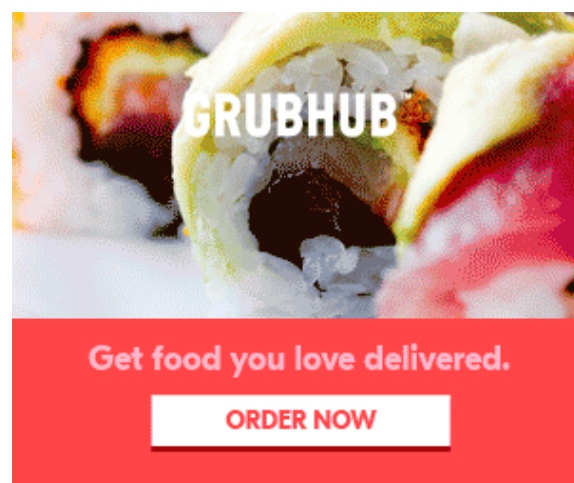
He said the technology will be tested on two routes, 70 and 71, which a sizable number of visually impaired passengers ride because the routes travel by the Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown.

The Perkins School worked with Boston software developer [Raizlabs](#) to build the app technology.

The app, called BlindWays, [had its debut last fall](#), and so far has relied on crowdsourcing by sighted volunteers to provide more precise information about bus stops.

The T said that if the pilot project goes well, it hopes to roll out the technology to all 8,000 bus stops systemwide.

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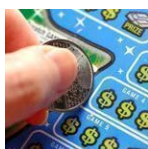
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Read the texts Michelle Carter exchanged with Conrad Roy before his suicide

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