

Federal Transit Administration Headquarters

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE Washington, DC 20590

SENT VIA EMAIL

November 4, 2022

Mr. Matthew H. Nelson Chair Department of Public Utilities Commonwealth of Massachusetts One South Station Boston, MA 02110

Subject: Approval and Resubmittals Required for Corrective Action Plans in Response to Special Directive 22-13

Dear Mr. Nelson,

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has completed its review of the Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) submitted by the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (DPU) to address FTA's Special Directive (SD) 22-13, Required Actions to Address Findings from the Safety Management Inspection (SMI) Conducted at the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). The DPU submitted these CAPs on time as required in SD 22-13, addressing FTA's four findings and nine required action actions.

Approval of CAP for Finding 4

FTA finds that DPU's approach to addressing Finding 4 in SD 22-13 adequately addresses FTA's recommended action.

Finding 4 directs DPU to:

- adopt FTA's findings and required actions in Special Directives 22-9 through 22-12;
- require, review, and approve corrective action plans from MBTA to address FTA's findings and required actions in Special Directives 22-9, 22-10, 22-11 and 22-12, and oversee the timely implementation and close-out of these CAPs, in coordination with FTA; and
- identify the specific activities that DPU will undertake to ensure MBTA's completion of the required actions, a milestone schedule for completion of MBTA's required actions, and the parties at DPU and MBTA responsible for completing the required actions.

To complete these actions, DPU proposes that it will utilize its existing CAP review procedure for reviewing the corrective action plans that result from final SMI report. As CAPs are reviewed by DPU, DPU will enter each CAP into its tracking system and provide a list of all CAPs tracked by the DPU to the FTA. Finally, DPU proposes establishing inspection and verification plans for each MBTA CAP and submitting them to FTA.

Additionally, over the last 30 days FTA has assessed, and met with DPU to discuss, DPU's initial review and evaluation of CAPs developed by the MBTA to respond to SD 22-9, SD 22-10, SD 22-11, and SD 22-12. This discussion and assessment occurred as part of weekly meetings with DPU staff in response to Finding 4 from SD 22-13.

Based on DPU's submittals for Finding 4 and the results of discussion with DPU's staff and leadership team, FTA approves this CAP for implementation.

Resubmission Required for CAPs for Findings 1 through 3

FTA requires resubmittal of DPU's CAPs for Findings 1 through 3. Collectively, these findings require DPU to:

- enhance its technical capacity and resources;
- ensure its organizational and legal independence from MBTA; and
- validate MBTA's fatigue management approach for rail transit officials and maintenance and engineering personnel.

By no later than Tuesday, November 29, 2022, DPU must resubmit the CAPs for these three findings to FTA, responding to the comments in this letter and the attached CAP evaluation table. DPU must revise the CAPs to clearly identify specific activities with milestones and associated dates, the responsible party for implementation, and if pertinent, a verification plan for each item. These details are necessary for DPU to move toward closing findings at MBTA. FTA's indepth comments are outlined in the attached Evaluation Table and discussed below.

Finding 1: DPU Resources

Finding 1 includes four (4) required actions directing DPU to:

- update its workload assessment to reflect the results of the SMI and address FTA's SD 22-8 and SD 22-13:
- match its resources to those identified in its updated workload assessment;
- update its technical training plan, and, if bringing on new resources, develop a plan for hiring and training personnel and/or contractors to fill the identified staffing needs; and
- review and update its processes and thresholds for using its existing enforcement authority to ensure timely resolution of CAPs or other required actions for safety.

To complete these actions, DPU proposes using its consultant to update its workload assessment; working with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Human Resources Department to match resources utilizing the workload assessment; engaging a third-party consultant to update the technical training plan; and working with the DPU Legal Division to revise DPU's existing enforcement procedure in the Standard Operating Guide (SOG).

DPU must also clarify how it will engage with the consultant to develop the workload assessment including scoping activities and expected outcomes.

FTA's day-to-day interaction with DPU indicates that the lack of engagement from EEA leadership contributes to significant hiring and retention challenges for DPU SSO staff. While EEA Human Resources are available to support job posting for this CAP, there are no action items describing higher-level EEA support and engagement to enhance the attractiveness of the DPU positions and establish an effective recruitment program. DPU must explain how it will obtain resources and support from the EEA related to staffing and technical capacity within DPU. DPU must revise the CAP to include items such as briefing EEA leadership on the workload assessment and the tasks to be performed to carry out the oversight program and address SD 22-8 and SD 22-13.

In addition, DPU must develop and provide criteria to its consultant conducing the workload assessment including parameters and guidance on how to evaluate key tasks of the SSO's oversight, and how to evaluate the and assess the differing capabilities of existing and new staff. Further, the criteria must specify tasks associated with both SD 22-8 and SD 22-13. DPU review and acceptance of the consultant work should also be added as an action item.

FTA's certification of DPU's SSO program is predicated on ensuring that DPU has sufficient resources and technical capacity to implement its program standard and fulfill its responsibilities as specified in 49 CFR part 674 and 220 CMR 151.00. FTA finds that additional action items and milestones are needed to demonstrate how DPU will work with EEA human resources to ensure adequate staffing, technical capacity, and training.

Finally, beginning December 1, 2022, DPU must provide a bi-weekly staffing update to the FTA for discussion during regular meetings.

Finding 2: DPU Legal and Financial Independence

Finding 2 includes one (1) required action directing DPU to complete a legal assessment regarding its organizational independence from MBTA. This assessment must include review of organizational mechanisms, including recusals, limited reporting relationships, and other features that provide legal separation between the two agencies and ensure DPU's independence to take enforcement action against MBTA.

To complete this action, DPU proposes:

- convening a meeting to identify the discrete legal issues for analysis;
- establishing a small legal team to review the issues;
- drafting a memorandum assessing current organizational independence through changes to reporting relationships, recusal processes or otherwise for Commission review;
- presenting analysis, and any new policies or procedures under consideration at the Secretariat level and, if the options under consideration require legislation, to the Governor' Office; and
- submitting a final memorandum to FTA.

FTA's review finds that the approach specified in the proposed CAP does not include the EEA counsel or Secretariat until completion of the analysis. Since DPU is an organization under EEA, and since many potential actions that may be considered in the memorandum would have to be executed by EEA's Secretariat, FTA suggests that DPU include EEA leadership throughout the assessment process, rather than briefing them after the analysis is complete.

While DPU conducts this assessment, FTA reminds DPU that the State Safety Oversight regulation, 49 CFR part 674, specifies that the State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) "is financially and legally independent from any public transportation agency the SSOA is obliged to oversee." FTA notes that while DPU is the SSOA, it is ultimately the responsibility of the State to ensure that DPU meets this and all other relevant criteria.

FTA also finds that proposed items for this CAP end with the memorandum to FTA and do not ensure final resolution of any identified legal and organization independence issues. As noted in the attached evaluation table, FTA requires additional action items and milestones to communicate the results of the legal review and clarify the mechanisms that will be used to address any concerns identified in memorandum and the schedule for completing this work.

Finding 3: Fatigue Assessment

Finding 3 includes one (1) required action directing DPU to conduct an assessment and determine if additional action is required to address safety concerns stemming from the MBTA's hours of service requirements for rail transit officials and maintenance and engineering personnel. If DPU finds that additional action is needed to reduce service hours to ensure the safety of MBTA employees and passengers, then DPU must use its own authority to require this action.

To complete this action DPU proposes to evaluate staff availability in January 2023 to determine if it will conduct an assessment with internal resources or if a third-party consultant is needed. If a third-party consultant is needed, DPU will either issue a request for proposal to procure a third-party consultant or issue a directive to the MBTA to procure a consultant to assess the fatigue management system. DPU will monitor the progress of the assessment until completion.

As noted in the attached evaluation table, **DPU must conduct the assessment with their own resources**. It is not responsive to the required action for DPU to direct the MBTA to conduct this assessment. DPU must conduct the assessment to demonstrate the ability to fulfill its role as the oversight agency.

A major finding of FTA's SMI relates to the hours worked by MBTA personnel throughout the rail transit agency. DPU must revise the CAPs to demonstrate that it understands this safety concern and can determine how it should be addressed for employees throughout MBTA including rail transit officials, infrastructure maintenance and engineering personnel, and vehicle maintenance and engineering personnel.

Conclusion

We appreciate your efforts to enhance DPU's performance and implementation of the SSO program in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and we look forward to working with you and your team to

address FTA's findings and required actions. Please contact our SMI Coordinator, Erin Powell, by phone at (771) 200-8016 or by email at Erin.Powell@dot.gov with any questions.

Sincerely,

Joe DeLorenzo
Associate Administrator and
Chief Safety Officer
Office of Transit Safety and Oversight

cc: Peter Butler, Regional Administrator, FTA Region 1
Bethany A. Card, Secretary, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Elizabeth Cellucci, Director, Transportation Oversight Division, Massachusetts Department
of Public Utilities

Identification Number	Finding and Required Action	Proposed CAP Items	Proposed Due Dates	FTA Comments	DPU Response (if needed)
FTA-22-DPU- CAT5-1.A	Finding 1: DPU does not use its available resources as effectively as it could to support field observations, audits, and inspections of MBTA's rail transit system to identify safety deficiencies and require their immediate resolution. Required Action A: DPU must update its workload assessment to reflect the results of the SMI and address FTA's Special Directives 22-8 and 22-13.	1. DPU Consultant (Vital Assurance) will conduct a workload assessment to include the work generated by Special Directives 22-8 and 22-13 and all associated CAPs 1. DPU Consultant (Vital Assurance) will conduct a workload assessment to include the work generated by Special Directives 22-8 and 22-13 and all associated CAPs	11/20/22	FTA finds that additional action items are required to ensure creation of a comprehensive workload assessment owned by DPU. This CAP directs the contractor to conduct a workload assessment but does not explain how DPU is involved in scoping activities for the workload assessment or in clarifying expected outcomes, competencies of DPU staff, training approaches for new staff, and timeframes and priorities for the agency. DPU must explain how it will obtain resources and support from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs in developing its workload assessment and establishing associated timelines, including identifying options for staffing and resources to address the results of the SMI and FTA's Special Directives 22-8 and 22-13. Briefings with EEA also should be included. DPU must also provide the parameters provided to DPU's consultant for the workload assessment. These parameters should at least include the minimum assumptions used to create a baseline of minimum level of effort and how the DPU consultant will assess skills of those	

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				existing resources to ensure sufficient coverage in the final assessment. DPU must also update program documents to establish a regular and ad hoc process to update the workload assessment. The regular process should identify a consistent schedule on which the department will update the assessment. The ad hoc process should identify parameters under which the agency will perform an assessment outside of its regular schedule, such as in response to staff turnover.	
		DPU will submit a copy of the completed workload assessment to FTA.	12/15/22	Action Item Approved	
FTA-22-DPU- CAT5-1.B	Finding 1: DPU does not use its available resources as effectively as it could to support field observations, audits, and inspections of MBTA's rail transit system to identify safety deficiencies and require their immediate resolution. Required Action B:	DPU and EEA Human Resources will meet to identify and match resources utilizing the workload assessment.	1/13/22	Action Required DPU must clarify additional action to ensure the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of this approach for hiring new positions and retaining existing positions. Previous DPU job postings have been challenging to fill. As an action item include briefing EEA leadership on DPU's hiring progress and needs for support to attract and retain applicants.	
	DPU must match its resources to those identified			applicants. This revised CAP also must provide evidence of the department's commitment to addressing the results of the workload	

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	in its updated workload assessment.			assessment, including authority to post/hire additional persons and how this activity will occur through the short and long-term. FTA understands that the key elements related to salary ranges and benefits are not controlled by DPU or EEA Human Resources.	
				Also, DPU should indicate how it will use training and/or mentoring and contracting to address the workload assessment results and ensure effective staffing and technical capacity.	
		Human Resources will create additional job descriptions, if needed.	1/27/23	Action Required See discussion above for item #1.	
		Human Resources will post jobs to fill identified gaps in resources, if needed.	1/30/23	Action Required See discussion above for item #1.	
		4. DPU to provide monthly updates to FTA on hiring.	Ongoing until 12/31/23	Action Required DPU must develop contingency plans to implement if it is unable to hire resources sufficient to meet its updated workload assessment. DPU should include both obstacles to hiring and contingency plans in briefing for FTA.	
				DPU must also provide monthly updates to EEA leadership.	

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FTA-22-DPU-CAT5-1.C	Finding 1: DPU does not use its available resources as effectively as it could to support field observations, audits, and inspections of MBTA's rail transit system to identify safety deficiencies and require their immediate resolution. Required Action C: DPU must update its technical training plan, and, if bringing on new resources, must develop a plan for hiring and training personnel and/or contractors to fill the identified staffing needs.	1. Engage third-party consultant to update technical training plan. DPU will utilize current consultant or issue an RFP. The second s	11/30/22	Action Required Action item is vague and does not identify a single or clear approach, i.e., DPU may take multiple options. DPU must revise the action item to clarify the deliverables for this action item – either a task order for the existing consultant or an RFP. DPU also must clarify whether the agency will have a contractor confirmed by 11/30/22 or have an RFP issued by 11/30/22. DPU must also create an Action Item to complete updates to the technical training plan (TTP). If the contractor will also be conducting a gap assessment or best practices review, please include that submittal as well.	
		Consultant to draft a brief process for onboarding newly hired Rail Transit employees.	1/27/23	Action Required DPU must develop additional action items for a plan for hiring and training personnel and/or contractors. This plan should reflect or be tied to a Technical Training Plan (TTP).	

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		3. Human Resources will execute the recruitment and hiring plan referenced in FTA-22-DPU-CAT5-1.C.	10/20/22	Action Required DPU must clarify whether this deadline is a typo or explain how Human Resources will execute a plan before 10/20/22 for hiring based on a TTP that will not be revised earlier than 11/30/22.	
FTA-22-DPU- CAT5-1.D	Finding 1: DPU does not use its available resources as effectively as it could to support field observations, audits, and inspections of MBTA's rail transit system to identify safety deficiencies and require their immediate resolution.	Rail Transit in consultation with the Legal Division will revise its existing procedure in the Standard Operating Guide (SOG).	9/30/22	Action Required The enforcement procedure provided to FTA states that DPU is designated by FTA. This must be revised to reflect the fact that DPU is designated as the oversight authority for the Commonwealth and that FTA has certified the DPU's oversight program.	
	Required Action D: DPU must review and update its processes and thresholds for using its existing enforcement authority to ensure timely resolution of CAPs or other required actions for safety.			The revised enforcement procedure clarifies that DPU will use the same general process for enforcement, in every case, beginning with an informal discussion and, if necessary, escalating to a written directive and formal enforcement action resulting from an administrative hearing on the matter consistent with 220 CMR § 1.00.	
				DPU should include development of an escalation flowchart and accountabilities table as part of its SOG, to ensure DPU staff understands which level of the	

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				organization is responsible for which action.	
		2. Rail Transit will distribute the revised SOG enforcement procedure to the Commission and will submit a copy of the communication to FTA.	9/30/22	Action Required DPU must clarify if "distribution to" or "adoption by" the Commission is sufficient for the DPU to implement the procedure. If the Commission must adopt the procedure, DPU must ensure that process occurs.	
FTA-22-DPU- CAT5-2	Finding 2: DPU must examine and ensure its organizational and legal independence from the MBTA. Required Action: DPU must complete a legal assessment regarding its	The DPU General Counsel (GC) will convene an internal meeting to identify the discrete legal issues for analysis. Rail Transit will send an email to FTA to confirm the meeting occurred.	10/7/22	Action Required DPU must communicate the identified "discrete legal issues" to FTA.	
c ii T ii c ii r c le t t	assessment regarding its organizational independence from MBTA. This assessment must include review of organizational mechanisms, including recusals, limited reporting relationships, and other features that provide legal separation between the two agencies and ensure DPU's independence to take enforcement action against MBTA.	2. The GC will convene and participate in a small legal team comprised of the General Counsel, one Assistant General Counsel currently working on Rail Transit issues, one Senior Counsel not currently working on Rail Transit issues, and one Counsel from outside the DPU, to make an initial legal assessment of each discrete issue.	10/11/22	Action Required DPU must communicate the results of its "initial legal assessment of each discrete issue" to FTA.	

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		3. The legal team will present the legal analysis to the Division Director and Commission for additional input and questions. Rail Transit will provide an email to FTA confirming that Actions 1-3 have been completed	10/25/22	Action Required DPU must communicate its legal analysis to FTA.	
		4. The legal team will draft a memorandum assessing current organizational independence through changes to reporting relationships, recusal processes or otherwise for Commission review	No Later Than 11/22/22	DPU must revise this action item to clarify whether this memorandum will identify concerns, propose changes, or both.	
		5. The GC will meet with the GC at the Secretariat level (Energy and Environmental Affairs) to discuss analysis and options	No Later Than 11/22/22	Action Item Approved	
		6. The DPU Chair will present analysis, and any new policies or procedures under consideration at the Secretariat level and, if the options under consideration require legislation, to the Governor' Office.	No Later Than 11/22/22	Action Item Approved DPU must demonstrate that any legal concerns have been successfully addressed prior to closure of this CAP.	

Identification Number	Finding and Required Action	Proposed CAP Items	Proposed Due Dates	FTA Comments	DPU Response (if needed)
		7. DPU will submit a final memorandum to FTA	11/22/22	Action Item Approved DPU must demonstrate that any legal concerns have been successfully addressed prior to closure of this CAP.	
FTA-22-DPU-CAT5-3	Finding 3: DPU has not validated MBTA's fatigue management approach for rail transit officials and maintenance and engineering personnel. Required Action: DPU must conduct an assessment and determine if additional action is required. If DPU finds that additional action is needed to reduce service hours to ensure the safety of MBTA employees and passengers, then DPU must use its own authority to require this action.	1. Taking into consideration the number of Rail Transit staff in January 2023, the DPU will determine whether Rail Transit has the staff resources to conduct an assessment of the fatigue management approach at the MBTA	1/29/23	Action Required The required action necessitates that DPU will assess MBTA's fatigue management approach. In order to complete the required action, DPU staff and/or a contractor acting on behalf of a department must conduct this assessment. DPU must be able to assess the big picture safety issues at the MBTA. DPU must resubmit this CAP to more comprehensively address the required action. In this resubmission, DPU must describe how it will use its own authority to require a reduction in service hours if that is determined to be necessary by the assessment.	
		2. DPU may either determine that Rail Transit will conduct an assessment with internal resources, or that a third-party consultant is needed.	1/29/23	Action Required See response to Finding 3, Action Item 1 above.	
		If a third-party consultant is needed, DPU will either issue an RFP to procure a	2/16/23	Action Required	

Identification Number	Finding and Required Action	Proposed CAP Items	Proposed Due Dates	FTA Comments	DPU Response (if needed)
		third-party consultant or, in the alternative, issue a directive to the MBTA to procure a consultant to assess the fatigue management system.		See response to Finding 3, Action Item 1 above.	
		4. If DPU issues a directive to the MBTA, DPU will create a CAP for the MBTA for purposes of tracking the implementation of the directive.	2/16/23	Action Required See response to Finding 3, Action Item 1 above.	
		5. Upon issuing a directive to the MBTA or hiring a third-party consultant, DPU will monitor the progress of the assessment until completion.	Ongoing through completion, on or about May 1, 2023	Action Required See response to Finding 3, Action Item 1 above.	
FTA-22-DPU- CAT5-4.A	Finding 4: DPU has not demonstrated an ability to address safety issues and concerns identified during FTA's SMI. Required Action A: DPU must adopt FTA's findings and required actions in Special Directives 22-9 through 22-12.	DPU will submit a letter to FTA accepting the FTA's Final Safety Management Inspection Report and adopting all corrective actions resulting from the report and special directives.	9/30/22	Action Item Approved Submission received.	
FTA-22-DPU- CAT5-4.B	Finding 4: DPU has not demonstrated an ability to address safety	The Department will utilize its existing CAP review procedure for reviewing the corrective action plans	9/25/22	Action Item Approved Submission received.	

Identification Number	Finding and Required Action	Proposed CAP Items	Proposed Due Dates	FTA Comments	DPU Response (if needed)	
	issues and concerns identified during FTA's SMI.	that result from the special directive 22-11 and submit the CAP reviews to the FTA.				
	12, and oversee the timely implementation and close-out of these CAPs.	DPU must, in coordination with the FTA, require, review, and approve corrective action plans from MBTA to address FTA's findings and required	2. The Department will utilize its existing CAP review procedure for reviewing the corrective action plans that result from the special directive 22-9 and submit the CAP reviews to the FTA.	10/5/22	Action Item Approved Submission received.	
		3. The Department will utilize its existing CAP review procedure for reviewing the corrective action plans that result from the special directive 22-10 and submit the CAP reviews to the FTA.	10/20/22	Action Item Approved Submission received.		
		4. The Department will utilize its existing CAP review procedure for reviewing the corrective action plans that result from the special directive 22-12 and submit the CAP reviews to the FTA.	10/10/22	Action Item Approved Submission received.		
		5. Rail Transit will enter each CAP into its own tracking system as CAPs are reviewed by DPU and provide a list of all CAPs tracked by the DPU to the FTA.	10/28/22	Action Item Approved		

Identification Number	Finding and Required Action	Pro	posed CAP Items	Proposed Due Dates	FTA Comments	DPU Response (if needed)
FTA-22-DPU- CAT5-4.C	DPU has not demonstrated an ability to address safety issues and concerns identified during FTA's SMI. Required Action C: DPU must identify the specific activities that it will undertake to ensure MBTA's completion of the required actions, a milestone schedule for completion of MBTA's required actions, and the parties at DPU and MBTA responsible for	1.	Rail Transit will create an Inspection and Verification Plan for Corrective Actions resulting from SD 22-11. The Plan will include the name of the lead staff implementing the I and V Plan.	Date of CAP Approval by FTA and DPU plus 10 days	Action Item Approved Note: FTA will review and approve the inspection and verification plan for SD 22-11 and coordinate with DPU regarding its implementation.	
		undertake to ensure MBTA's completion of the required actions, a milestone schedule for completion of MBTA's required actions, and the parties at DPU and	2.	Rail Transit will create an Inspection and Verification Plan for Corrective Actions resulting from SD 22-9. The Plan will include the name of the lead staff implementing the I and V Plan.	Date of CAP Approval by FTA and DPU plus 10 days	Action Item Approved Note: FTA will review and approve the inspection and verification plan for SD 22-9 and coordinate with DPU regarding its implementation.
	actions.	3.	Rail Transit will create an Inspection and Verification Plan for Corrective Actions resulting from SD 22-10. The Plan will include the name of the lead staff implementing the I and V Plan.	Date of CAP Approval by FTA and DPU plus 10 days	Action Item Approved Note: FTA will review and approve the inspection and verification plan for SD 22-10 and coordinate with DPU regarding its implementation.	
		4.	Rail Transit will create an Inspection and Verification Plan for Corrective Actions resulting from SD 22-12. The Plan will include the name of the lead staff implementing the I and V Plan.	Date of CAP Approval by FTA and DPU plus 10 days	Action Item Approved Note: FTA will review and approve the inspection and verification plan for SD 22-12 and coordinate with DPU regarding its implementation.	