Rider Insights

Although we use the T every day, we needed to get outside our own experience in order to understand the values and behaviors of riders throughout the system. Through a series of ride-alongs, intercepts, and behind-the-scenes interviews, we sought to understand riders' experiences across all T transit services, including subway, bus, commuter rail, ferry, and the Ride.

LEARNING APPROACH

In-depth Rider Interviews

2-hour interviews with riders across the system. Each interview followed the rider from their origin to their destination, allowing us to ask questions in context, while also exploring their expectations of and desires for transit in Boston. We sought to understand not only how they use the MBTA system but also why as a method for creating rider profiles to inform our future scenarios.

Rider Intercepts

To ensure a broad view of the system and it's users, we've also approached riders for shorter interviews focusing specifically on moments of extreme difficulty and delight during their use of the system. Additionally, we've observed rider behavior at key points such as entering the system, waiting for their vehicle to arrive, and transferring between modes/lines.
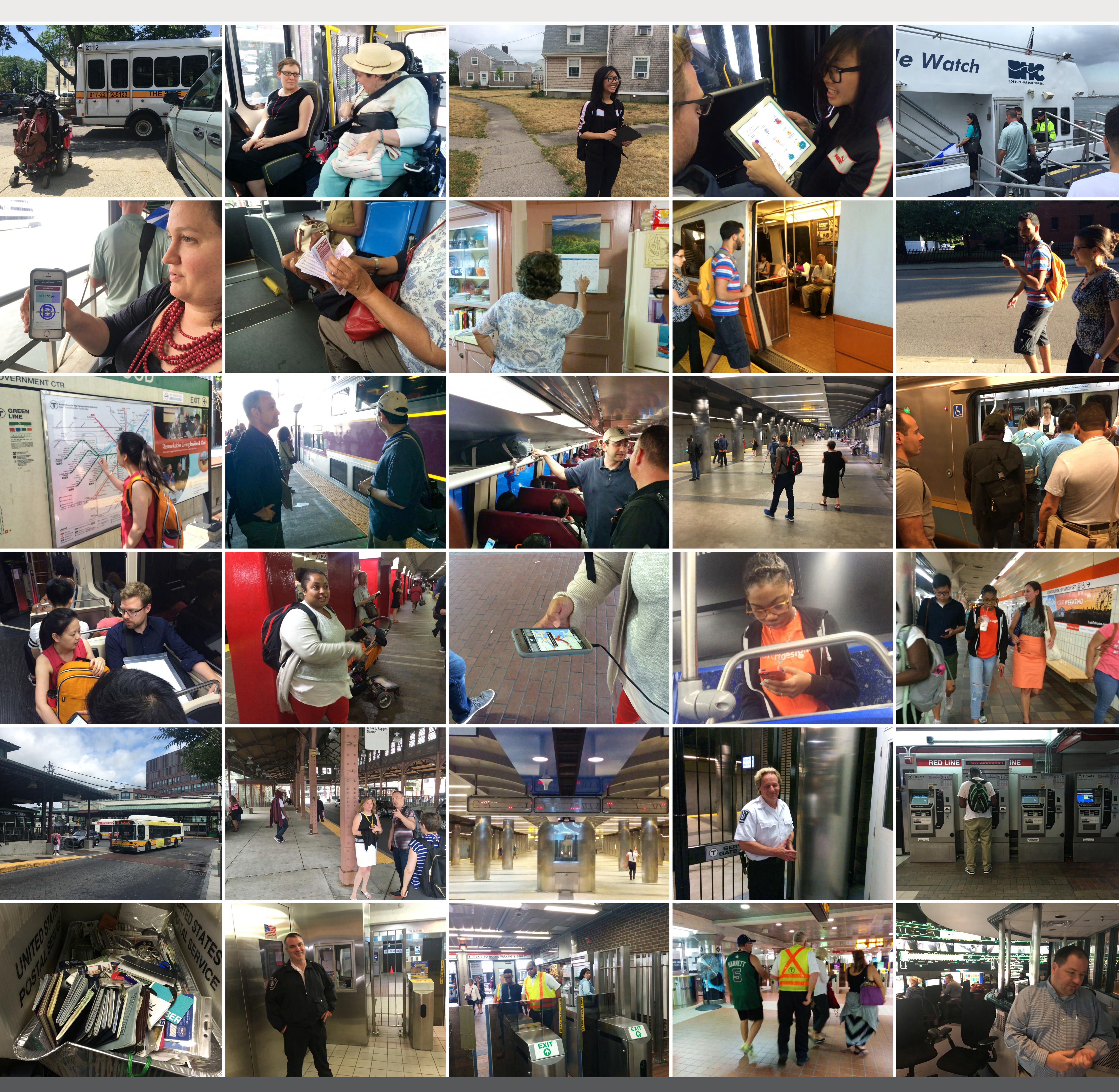

Station Visits

In order to help contextualize the rider experience, we've performed a number of staff interviews and behind the scenes tours of MassDOT facilities, including control centers and station agent facilities. In doing so, we have begun to understand how back of house operations effects rider experience.

Subject Matter Experts

In addition to rider and staff interviews, we are meeting with experts throughout the transportation world to understand current initiatives and to harvest themes and perspectives on the future of Boston. Subject Matter Experts included MBTA operations staff, members of the Boston regional planning agency - MAPC, the MassDOT capital planning team, and planning and transportation staff at the City of Boston.