



Lobby Renovation

Advisory Board Meeting

June 20, 2024



Lobby Changes Since 2013

- **Removal of Retail Coffee Shop** from lobby area in 2020.
- **Closure of Public Restrooms:** The restrooms have been closed since March 2020.
- **Technology/Real Time Signs:** The real-time signs installed during the construction are beginning to fail due to their age and the contractor's inability to maintain the equipment. In addition to the real-time signs, WRTA began using Rise Vision in April 2024. This digital signage software displays customer information, WRTA service announcements, and weather on television screens in the lobby. WRTA is also piloting an advertising/public service announcement program on these monitors
- **Sundays:** WRTA decided to open the lobby on Sundays. While no Customer Service is scheduled on Sundays, Security Staff is available to open and close the lobby, providing customers refuge from the weather. This ensures the lobby is accessible seven days a week, enhancing the value of investment.
- **COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts:** WRTA removed some of the seating within the lobby to accommodate social distancing measures. A decision was later made to close the lobby where it remained closed until December 2023.
- **Ridership Increase:** WRTA had over 4 million passengers in FY23 and is likely to surpass that number in FY24. While not all passengers use the interior waiting area, activity in the lobby has increased in correlation with the surge in ridership.



Goals & Directives of Lobby Concept Development

WRTA has initiated the redesign of the Central Hub Lobby in collaboration with our On-Call Architectural and Engineering Firm, STV, Inc.



Increase Seating Capacity:

The current lobby accommodates 18 seats without dedicated space for individuals using mobility devices. The increase in ridership necessitates additional seating accommodations.



Improve Customer Service Access

Enhance access to customer service by establishing two service windows—one accessible from the lobby and the other from the platform. The platform-facing window will allow for expedited customer service without requiring entry into the lobby.



Enhance Technology

As WRTA prepares for technology transitions in the upcoming years, the Central Hub must accommodate new tech investments. Designated areas within the space will host trip planning kiosks and real-time signs.



Facilitate Easier Access and Lower Maintenance: Removing the vestibule on the north side of the building will improve flow within the space. Sliding doors at the north entrance will increase accessibility for customers.



Directives Provided to STV for Re-Design Considerations

ADA Coordinators/In-Take Space: Considerations to reducing the size of the ADA In-Take space and the ADA Coordinator's office, as they are currently overconstructed from the 2013 design and do not require the current space allocation.

Restrooms:

While not mandatory per building code, STV has been directed to explore at least one proposal including public restrooms in the lobby area. Further discussions on this aspect can be found below.

Security Office:

Construct a separate Security office with wired CCTV access, enabling real-time recording and storage of video footage to monitor and mitigate incidents.

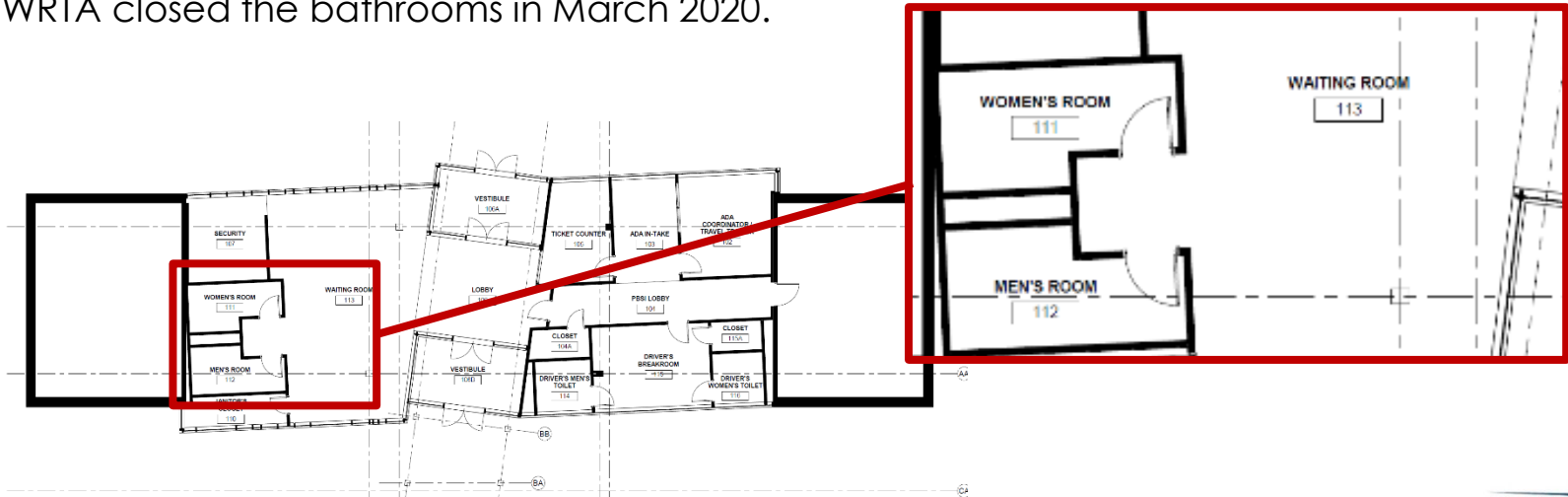
Preserve Drivers' Breakroom and Bathrooms:

Ensure that the drivers' breakroom and bathrooms remain available throughout the renovation process, with no renovation planned for that space during this effort.



Restrooms Overview

When the Central Hub opened in 2013, it featured two single-stall restrooms located in the lobby. These bathrooms are situated on the northern side of the lobby, adjacent to the former Dunkin Donuts, janitor closet, and seating area. Each bathroom is equipped with one toilet, one sink, and a baby changing area. The door can be opened and locked without key access by the public. Due to the misuse of the facilities and the operational maintenance costs, WRTA closed the bathrooms in March 2020.



Restrooms Overview

Capital Investments:

The original restrooms were equipped with commercial ceramic toilets, which were frequently vandalized and misused, resulting in costly replacements. To mitigate this issue, WRTA invested in stainless steel toilets, known for their vandal-resistant properties.

Operational Investments:

- WRTA hired an on-call cleaning contractor to address routine cleaning and promptly handle biohazard incidents caused by maltreatment.
- While the restrooms remained open, baby changing stations were locked due to misuse. Trash and drug paraphernalia were often found within the compartments of the changing tables causing contamination.
- Although restroom cleaning was included in the scope of work for the hub's cleaning contractor, frequent biohazard incidents required additional cleaning services at increased rates and rendered the restrooms unusable.



Guidance for Lobby Concept with Bathrooms Design

Open Entry to Restroom Area:

The entryway to the restrooms will remain open without a lockable door, similar to the design of other public restrooms at transportation centers

Number of Stalls:

Each restroom will feature two stalls with doors for privacy.

Exclusion of Baby Changing Stations:

Baby changing stations will not be included due to past issues with maltreatment.

Access and Positioning:

The bathrooms will be relocated away from the seating area and positioned in close proximity to security personnel to deter illicit activities.



Other Related Investment Required for Restrooms



Hiring cleaning services to mirror lobby hours to ensure the sanitary conditions of restrooms. Estimated cost: \$160,000 annually against the operation budget (cost based on current hourly rate for cleaning services).



WRTA will consider including police details from the Worcester Police Department to further deter illicit behavior. Cost for WPD to be determined.



Given the history of vandalism of the former restrooms, WRTA will need to develop an annual capital plan to ensure the facility stays in a state of good repair.



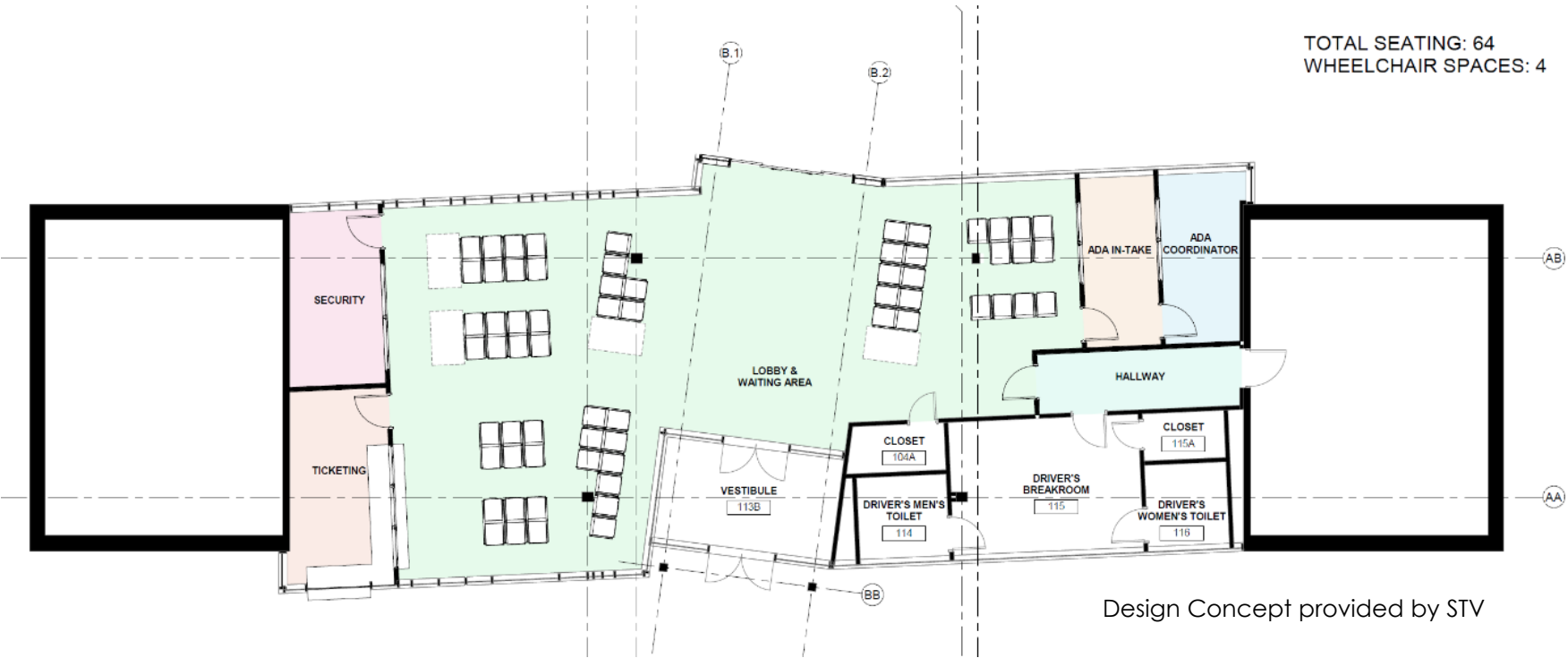
Implementing operations where restrooms are regularly inspected at random time intervals to maintain cleanliness and security.



Developing public-facing information about the proper use of restrooms facilities to promote responsible behavior and reduce misuse.

Lobby Re-Design Concept – Option #1

TOTAL SEATING: 64
WHEELCHAIR SPACES: 4



Design Concept provided by STV



Highlights of Option #1

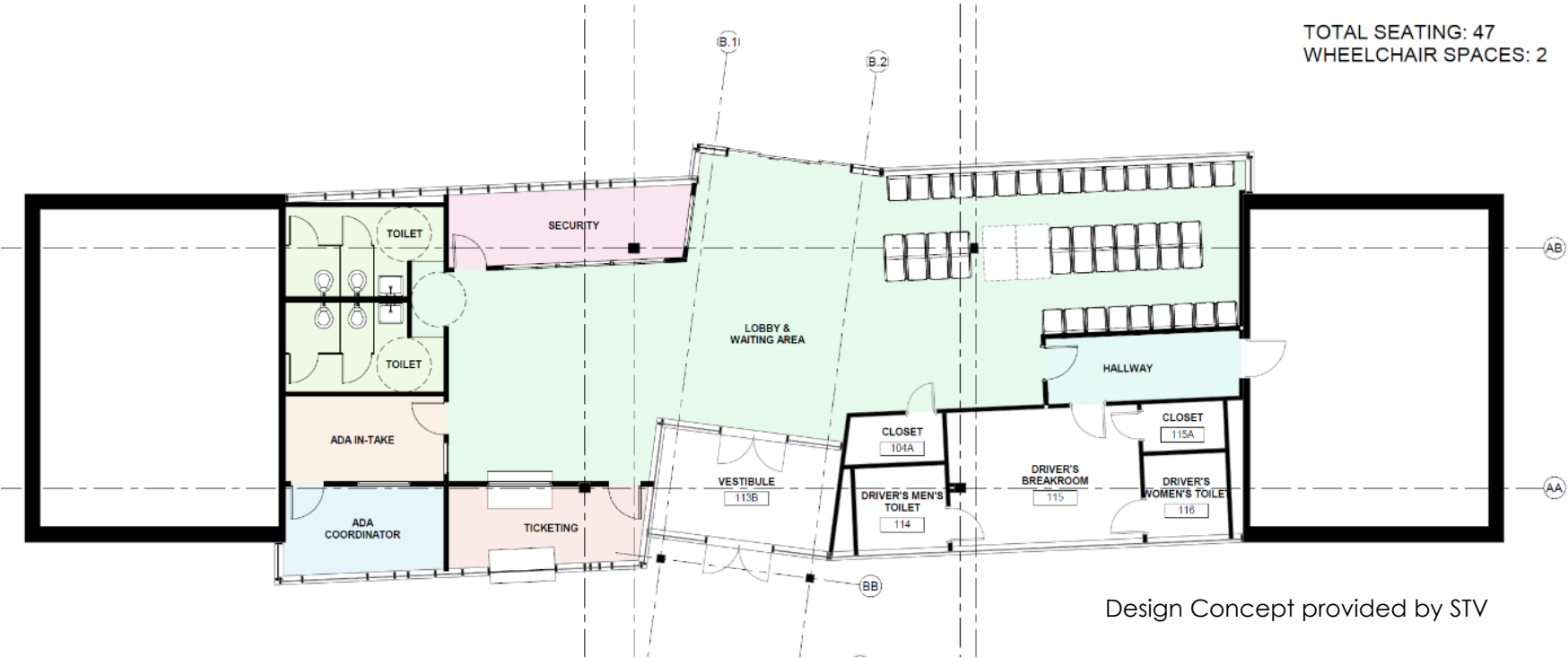
Option #1 **does not** include restrooms as part of the renovation. The exclusion of restrooms creates additional square footage for the lobby and seating area, resulting in 64 total seats with 4 dedicated wheelchair spaces.

As directed by WRTA, customers would have access to both an interior and exterior window for Customer Service. The relocation of this office from one side of the building to the other is the largest construction effort made in this concept. Additionally, the vestibule on the north side of the building will be removed and that entrance will include sliding doors.



Lobby Re-Design Concept – Option #2

TOTAL SEATING: 47
WHEELCHAIR SPACES: 2



Design Concept provided by STV



Highlights of Option #2

Option #2 **includes** restrooms and requires a larger construction effort to support it. The restrooms would be slightly reconfigured to accommodate the open-door concept. Alterations to the existing plumbing will also be required. The restrooms have been separated from the passenger seating area, and are placed on the administrative side of the lobby space. Having the restrooms in close proximity to the security office may deter illicit activities.

Seating is conceptually placed on the north east side of the building, causing the ADA Coordinator and ADA In-Take offices to be relocated to the west side of the building.

With the inclusion of restrooms, there is less seating and wheelchair space compared to Option 1.



Comparing Options

Operational Cost:

Option #2 is significantly higher long term with a required a cleaning company roughly \$200k in 2024 dollars.

Capital Cost:

Option #1 is likely more affordable in terms of capital cost compared to the renovations required for Option #2.

Security:

Option #2 provides slightly more space with an additional 14 square feet.

Lobby and Waiting Area:

Option #1: 1739 square feet

Option #2: 1490 square feet.

Both options significantly increase the lobby space compared to the current setup.

Ticketing/Customer Service:

Option #1: 171 square feet (larger than existing space)

Option #2: 138 square feet (smaller than existing space)

Number of Seats:

Option #1: 64 seats

Option #2: 47 seats

Wheelchair Spaces:

Option #1: 4 spaces

Option #2: 2 spaces

Restrooms:

Option #2: public restrooms

Option #1: no public restrooms



Comparing Options

Category	Option 1	Option 2
Cost (more affordable)	✓	
Lobby Space and Seating	✓	
Customer Service Space	✓	
Bathrooms		✓