

= Porter (MBTA station) =

Porter is an MBTA transfer station serving the rapid transit Red Line and the commuter rail Fitchburg Line , located at Porter Square in Cambridge , Massachusetts . Positioned at the intersection of Massachusetts and Somerville Avenues , the station provides rapid transit access to northern Cambridge and the western portions of Somerville . Porter is 14 minutes from Park Street on the Red Line , and about 10 minutes from North Station on commuter rail trains . Several local MBTA Bus routes also stop at the station .

A series of commuter rail depots have been located at Porter Square under various names since the 1840s . The modern station with both subway and commuter rail levels was designed by Cambridge Seven Associates and opened on December 8 , 1984 . At 105 feet (32 m) below ground , the subway section is the deepest station on the MBTA system . The station originally had six artworks installed as part of the Arts on the Line program ; five remain , including Gift of the Wind and Glove Cycle .

= = History = =

= = = Early history = = =

There has been a railroad station at Porter Square since the Fitchburg Railroad began operations in the early 1840s . The first station , built in 1843 ? 45 , was called Porter 's Station . Later stations at the site were known as North Cambridge , then later simply as Cambridge . In 1869 , the original station was moved to the North Avenue (now Massachusetts Avenue) bridge over the tracks .

= = = B & M era = = =

A new station was built in 1897 , slightly to the southeast , behind the Lovell Block . In 1927 , the Fitchburg Cutoff became freight @-@ only between the Alewife area and Somerville Junction . Passenger trains from the Lexington Branch and the Central Massachusetts Railroad were diverted to the Fitchburg mainline and began to stop at Cambridge station . In 1937 , the Boston and Maine Railroad built a two @-@ story brick depot by the bridge , with the ticket office at street level and the waiting room and platforms below .

= = = MBTA era = = =

By the time the newly formed Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority began subsidizing northside commuter rail operations in the late 1960s , both the Lexington Branch and the Central Mass Branch had been reduced to single rush hour round trips on poorly maintained track . The South Sudbury run on the Central Mass was terminated on November 26 , 1971 . The Bedford round trip on the Lexington Branch ended after a major snowstorm on January 10 , 1977 , leaving the Fitchburg Line (with multiple daily round trips) as the only rail service at Cambridge station .

= = = Adding the Red Line = = =

In the late 1970s , Cambridge station was renamed to Porter when it became certain that the Red Line Northwest Extension would include a stop there . (" Cambridge " , while sufficient for a commuter @-@ rail station , would have been confusing for a rapid @-@ transit station , because the Red Line has multiple stations ? six in total ? in the City of Cambridge .) The Red Line platforms were built in a deep @-@ bore tunnel , while the commuter platform was rebuilt with an accessible mini @-@ high platform . During construction , commuter trains were accessed via a still @-@ extant staircase from Somerville Avenue .

A new glass and concrete headhouse was built around 1982 , and the complete new transfer

station opened on December 8 , 1984 along with the renovated Harvard station and the new Davis station . The new station , designed by Cambridge Seven Associates , won awards from the American Institute of Architects and the American Consulting Engineering Council of New England .

Because of its Red Line connection , Porter Square can serve as a temporary inbound terminus for the Fitchburg Line service when commuter rail service is disrupted between Porter and Boston 's North Station . It served this role during the 2004 Democratic National Convention , when North Station was closed for a week for security purposes , and during Green Line Extension construction in 2015 .

= = Station layout = =

The subway station at Porter is , at 105 feet below ground level , the deepest in the MBTA system . Porter 's unusual depth is due to the MBTA 's decision to build the station in bedrock rather than soft clay , saving time and money in the construction process . Passengers reach Red Line platforms via a series of escalators , stairs totalling 199 steps , or a set of elevators . The longest single span of the escalators is 143 feet , the longest in the MBTA system . In 2005 , a man was killed when his sweatshirt tangled in the bottom of the escalator .

The subway tracks and platforms are enclosed in a single cylindrical concrete shell , similar to most underground stations of the Washington Metro . The two platforms are at different levels , with portions of the inbound platform projecting over the outbound platform . Both tracks are on the outer side of their platforms . On the MBTA subway network , only State , North Station , and Harvard have similar split platforms . (Several downtown transfer stations have multiple platform levels , but these are the only four with multiple @-@ level platforms for a single line .)

Porter has five levels : the street @-@ level entrances , the below @-@ grade commuter platforms , the fare mezzanine , and two subway platform levels underground .

Porter has a refreshment vendor outside the fare gates on the mezzanine level , and , unlike most MBTA stations , public restrooms .

= = Arts on the Line = =

As a part of the Red Line Northwest Extension , Porter was included as one of the stations involved in the Arts on the Line program , devised to bring art into the MBTA 's subway stations in the late 1970s and early 1980s . It was the first program of its kind in the United States and became the model for similar drives for art across the country .

Six works , five of which remain , were placed at Porter :

Gift of the Wind by Susumu Shingu , a 46 @-@ foot tall kinetic sculpture with three large red " wings " that rotate the structure in response to the wind

Ondas by Carlos Dorrien , a 24 @-@ foot tall piece of undulating granite affixed to the station wall both inside the station and outside

Glove Cycle by Mags Harries , a large number of bronze gloves of varying types and sizes scattered inside the station , including alongside one of the escalators

Untitled by William Reimann , six granite bollards with various ethnic designs carved into them

Porter Square Megaliths by David Phillips , four boulders with large " slices " removed and replaced with bronze casts of the missing pieces

The Lights at the End of the Tunnel by William Wainwright , a large reflective mobile in the station 's mezzanine . It was removed in 1986 after a lead weight fell off .

= = Accessibility = =

Porter is fully handicapped accessible ; elevators lead from street level to the mezzanine with its accessible bathroom , to the commuter rail platform , and to both Red Line platform levels . Although most of the commuter platform is low , there is a " mini @-@ high platform " - a one car @-@ length high section - that allows level boarding .

As a result of a 2006 settlement of a lawsuit filed by the Boston Center for Independent Living and a group of individuals , the MBTA installed additional elevators at Porter and four other busy MBTA subway stations . The elevator to the Red Line was out of service for 15 months beginning in March 2011 for car replacement and the installation of a second , redundant , elevator . An accessible shuttle bus ran between Porter and Davis .

The elevator to the commuter rail platform was also temporarily out of service for maintenance during the same period ; a shuttle bus ran between Harvard , Porter and Waltham . The Red Line elevator was returned to service on June 22 , 2012 , and the commuter rail elevator returned to service on July 30 , 2012 .

= = Bus connections = =

Porter serves several MBTA Bus local routes via shelters on Massachusetts Avenue and Somerville Avenue :

77 Arlington Heights - Harvard Station via Massachusetts Avenue

83 Rindge Ave . - Central Square , Cambridge via Porter Square Station

96 Medford Square - Harvard Station via George Street & Davis Square Station

The 77 and 96 run on Massachusetts Avenue , while the 83 turns from Somerville Avenue to Massachusetts Avenue at Porter Square . Additionally , the 87 Arlington Center or Clarendon Hill - Lechmere Station via Somerville Avenue bus stops on Elm Street at the Porter Square Shopping Center , one block northeast of Porter station .

The 77A short turn of the 77 operates as a trolleybus on a limited number of runs , as trolleybuses on other routes are brought to and from the North Cambridge Carhouse .