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## Streetcars Return to Heath St.; Rest of Arborway Line in 1993?

State, city, and MBTA officials have signed an interim agreement which may mean the eventual return of streetcars to the T's Arborway Line (Green Line-E). But the agreement, announced September 18, still contains several issues which must be resolved.

As of November 4, streetcar service has been extended 0.6 mile from Brigham Circle to Heath St.; however, restoration of service on the remaining 2.0 miles to Forest Hills must wait at least 3 more years.

The issues still in question -- handicap access and the state's funding crisis -- may be difficult to resolve. Although accessible streetcars now operate elsewhere, the Boston system is more complex than those in other cities. Still, the MBTA is under increasing pressure to make all its services accessible. And wheelchair-accessible cars, combined with station modifications, would be a benefit to the entire Green Line, not just the Arborway branch. An evaluation of access technologies is now underway and should be completed soon.

Fiscal issues also need further examination. The 1987 Arborway Transit Study predicted that most riders would use the new Orange Line instead. But this has not been the case; ridership on the Brigham Circle streetcar and on T-Bus 39 is now nearly 3 times what the study predicted. Since the study analyzed costs on a per-rider basis, the higher ridership means that this part of the analysis ought to be redone.

According to the agreement, MBTA and state officials -- who had opposed restoring the streetcars -- now say they "are committed to restoring trolley service to the Arborway, pending favorable outcome of these 2 issues." A.P.T. trusts that the T will be sincere in seeking solutions to these problems before the agreement is reviewed again next March.

Congratulations go to the Jamaica Plain legislators -- Reps. John McDonough and Kevin Fitzgerald, and Sen. Paul White -- and to Boston Transportation Commissioner Richard Dimino for their success in negotiating the agreement with the MBTA and with Transportation Secretary Frederick Salvucci.

## Revenue Shortfall Results in MBTA Service Cuts, Fee Hikes

Since July, when T employees were awarded higher wages and benefits by a labor arbitrator, MBTA management has been trying to cover an unanticipated \$30 million in costs.

Among the ideas which were proposed to cover this budget shortfall are:

\*\* service cuts, including elimination of all or part of 17 regular T-Bus routes plus 12 contracted private-carrier routes;

\*\* a commuter boat fare increase from \$3 to \$4 per trip;

\*\* a rapid transit parking fee increase, which became effective Oct. 30;

\*\* and new fees at commuter rail parking lots, which have been free until now.

Unfortunately, the T offered these propo-

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## Bus Improvements Announced

Lost among the service cuts announced by the T this fall were a handful of significant **improvements** in crosstown bus service:

\*\* Direct service between Cambridge and Brookline, with buses to Harvard from Cleveland Circle, Coolidge Corner, and Brookline Village;

\*\* direct buses between Mattapan and Forest Hills; and

\*\* a route connecting JFK/UMass, the Longwood Medical Area, and Kenmore Square.

These changes will come at little or no additional cost, and in some cases they will be cheaper to operate than existing routes, because they use buses more efficiently.

As a result of these improvements, three T-Buses will be discontinued: 63 (Cleveland Circle-Central), 29 (Mattapan-Ruggles via Jackson Sq.), and the Southampton St. part of 47 (Central-Andrew). Riders on these routes will be served either by the new routes or by other, unchanged routes, but some people may have to transfer enroute.

The changes are effective December 30.

## Shortfall

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sals in a manner that appeared disjointed and incremental; overall planning was not obvious to outside observers. They were announced one after another, making transit advocates wonder what next week would bring, and no explanation was given of their impact on ridership, revenue, or the community as a whole.

For example, the proposed service cuts were described only in the language of a legal notice, leaving many persons uncertain exactly what the T was proposing. Newspaper reporters and even some government officials found themselves relying, not on MBTA information, but on a description of the proposed cuts which A.P.T. drafted and circulated.

Inconsistent ridership data was issued by the T, and some of the T's plans conflicted with goals of other state transportation agencies. For example, the T wanted to cut buses to Alewife, even though Transportation Secretary Salvucci has promised to increase bus service there. And elimination of the Nahant express bus would have increased auto traffic on the Lynnway, Tobin Bridge, and Sumner Tunnel, at a time when these routes are all undergoing major reconstruction.

Public hearings on the service cuts were attended by hundreds of people -- among them many elderly and handicapped persons -- whose lives would be disrupted. Without transit, some people would have to quit their jobs and go on welfare, costing state government more in the end than the bus cuts would save.

Although parking fee hikes were discussed briefly in the press, the T did not announce the amount of the increase until just 2 days before it was to go into effect. Strong political opposition to the proposed tripling of some fees forced the MBTA to delay the increase until after public hearings were held.

The most ironic proposal is the commuter rail parking fee, which was first suggested a year ago, in fall 1988. It was rejected then because, the T said, collecting the money would cost more than the amount collected. Last winter's commuter rail fare increase was supposedly adopted "instead of" parking fees.

To its credit, the T did respond to public comments about its proposals. Service cuts were revised, for example, so that only a part of 1 route was completely eliminated. Subway parking fee increases were reduced to just \$1, and a monthly commuter boat pass will be sold beginning in January.

While we can appreciate the MBTA's need to increase revenues and/or cut costs, A.P.T. is disappointed with the manner in which the T's proposals were offered. As Rep. David

## New Bus Stop Signs Coming

Speaking at an A.P.T. meeting Sept. 13, MBTA Marketing & Ridership Director Howard Waddell said that new bus stop signs will be tested this winter, and that major improvements in printed schedules will follow.

The new signs will feature route maps and detailed schedules, which can be replaced when new schedules are issued. They will be tested first on a few routes; Mr. Waddell then hopes to install them throughout the T system over a 2-year period.

Similar signs have been erected in the Longwood area by MASCO, a private company.

Once the signs are in place, Mr. Waddell plans to revise printed schedule formats to be more readable and to include more information. New maps will be easier to follow and more accurate than those now on schedule cards. Also, the MBTA may copy other cities, whose transit schedules list times at several places along the route. Most T schedules now show times only at route endpoints; thus many routes require confusing footnotes to show service variations.

Pamphlets will be issued with schedules for every route serving a city or region, so that riders will no longer need to carry several different schedule cards.

The new emphasis on bus route marketing is welcome. By making its buses easier to use, the MBTA will likely improve both its ridership and its revenues.

Since he started at the T in April, Mr. Waddell has changed its marketing approach from sterile and institutional to friendly and upbeat. His ideas for the future include a "culture loop" bus, greater collaboration with businesses, museums, and tourist attractions, and efforts to draw night and weekend riders. Other proposals include an improved telephone information line, bus stop shelters financed by advertising, and perhaps token vending machines on the Green Line.

A.P.T. applauds his work to date, and we wish him success in his future efforts.

Cohen (D-Newton) pointed out, it was reminiscent of the MBTA's downward spiral in the early 1980s -- a spiral of service cuts, ridership losses, and fare increases from which it took 8 years to recover.

If the T has a coherent planning process, then it needs to communicate that fact to its riders. If it doesn't have a coherent planning process, then it needs one. Both effective communication and adequate planning are essential parts of a good marketing program.

## Short Items...

At hearings on MBTA bus service cuts in October, there was surprising sentiment in favor of a fare increase on buses. Many riders said that a 5- or 10-cent increase would be preferable to the proposed cuts.

\*\*\*\*\*

Although the MBTA has cut its operating budget, it is proceeding with new equipment purchases. It has ordered 86 Red Line cars for delivery in 1992-93, plus 126 commuter rail cars -- including Boston's first double-decker coaches, which will arrive next year.

\*\*\*\*\*

Congratulations go to the MBTA and its private-sector partners for restoring historic South Station, which was rededicated in November. After years of neglect and decay, the building looks beautiful again.

The T has decided to add 2 new tracks at the station, for a total of 13 tracks. This is the last chance to enlarge the station's capacity, before a bus terminal and garage are built above it.

\*\*\*\*\*

At North Station, construction has begun on a new Green Line subway and an underground garage. The tunnel and garage will be the foundation for a new commuter rail station and a new sports arena, to be built over the tracks behind the present station. The arena is expected to open in fall 1992.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Old Colony commuter rail project has been delayed two years, with additional time needed for planning, design, and environmental studies. Partial service is now expected to begin in 1993, with full service by 1995.

## A.P.T. News

Work has begun on the 7th edition of A.P.T.'s guidebook "Car-Free in Boston," which will be published next year. Readers are encouraged to send us their comments and suggestions about "Car-Free" now, so that they can be considered for the next edition.

\*\*\*\*\*

A.P.T. members, and others who are interested in public transit, are encouraged to attend our monthly board meetings, which are usually held in Kendall Sq., Cambridge, on a Wednesday at 5:30. Please call 547-3332 or write to us for dates and location.

Elsewhere on commuter rail, consultants have been hired to study extensions to Fall River and New Bedford (via Taunton), and to Worcester. Planning is also underway for extensions from Ipswich to Newburyport and from Franklin to Milford; but a plan to extend the Needham Line to Millis has been dropped.

\*\*\*\*\*

Would the MBTA save money if it could buy its electric power wholesale instead of from Boston Edison? The T says it could save \$3.5 million a year; but utilities officials question this figure. The T is promoting legislation which would allow it to shop for electricity, and Gen. Mgr. Thomas Glynn says he would use the resulting savings to make future service cuts unnecessary.

\*\*\*\*\*

The T's Bikes on Trains program has been extended to include virtually all non-rush hour commuter rail trains, plus expanded night and weekend hours on Red, Orange, and Blue Line trains. For information about obtaining a bicycle permit, call 722-5975.

## Join Us!

Mass. Transit is published quarterly by the Association for Public Transportation, Inc. (A.P.T.), a non-profit tax-exempt organization founded in 1973 to encourage the use and improvement of public transit in Boston. We support transit because it is ecologically sound, because it is less disruptive of neighborhoods, and because it is the only transportation available for many people.

We also publish "Car-Free in Boston," the guidebook to public transit in greater Boston and New England.

A.P.T. depends on donations from its members and friends to continue its activities. Membership is \$15 a year, or \$5 for students and persons on fixed incomes. Members receive Mass. Transit, as well as a copy of the next edition of "Car-Free" when it is published. All contributions are tax-deductible.

We welcome your ideas, comments, letters, and articles on transit issues. Please send them to Mass. Transit, c/o A.P.T., P. O. Box 192, Cambridge, MA 02238.

### Association for Public Transportation, Inc.

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\_\_\_ I'd like to join A.P.T. Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation of \$15.00 (\$5.00 for students and persons on fixed income)..\$ \_\_\_\_\_

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A.P.T.'s guidebook "Car-Free in Boston" contains complete listings of all Boston-area transit services. "Car-Free" is sold at bookstores and newsstands, or use the mail order coupon in this newsletter. Below are transit service changes since Update #12 in July.

- Green Line-E Streetcars now operate from Lechmere to Heath St. & S. Huntington Ave.
- T-Bus 39 (Forest Hills-Copley) now connects with the Green Line at Copley and the Orange Line at Back Bay Sta. Outbound pickup stops are on St. James Ave. at Copley Sq., and on Clarendon St. behind Back Bay Sta.
  - The local bus fare is now 50c each way, instead of 75c inbound only.
  - Bus-subway transfers are now valid at both Copley and Back Bay Sta. Inbound riders get subway transfers by paying a 75c fare on the bus; outbound riders can get free bus transfers at Copley and Back Bay Sta.
- T-Bus 252 (S. Weymouth-Braintree). Now operated by Weybus.
- T-Buses 441, 442 (Marblehead-Haymarket). Swampscott commuter rail connection discontinued.
- Patriots Train To Patriots home games, from South Sta., Back Bay Sta., Hyde Park, Rte. 128 Sta., Canton Jct., Sharon, & Mansfield; call 227-5070 or 722-3200.
- Andre Coachlines (Newton Corner-Frammingham). Service discontinued.
  - (Quincy Ctr.-Hull). Now operates (Hingham-Hull) with connecting service Quincy Ctr.-Hingham via T-Bus 220; night service discontinued.
- BAT Brockton Area Transit. All Sunday service discontinued.
- BAT 12 (Ashmont-Brockton). Sunday service, some late night trips discontinued.
- C & J Trailways (Boston-Durham NH). Hourly service (via Logan Airport) to Newburyport, Portsmouth NH, Dover NH; every 2 hours to Seabrook NH, Durham NH.
- Gulbankian Bus (Hudson-Boston). Now operates 3 trips Mon.-Fri.
- Hudson Bus (Fulton St., Medford-Meadow Glen Mall). Some midday trips discontinued.
  - (Mattapan-Canton). Some midday trips discontinued.
- LIFT #5 (Frammingham-Hopkinton). Service discontinued.
- Michaud Bus (All Salem & Peabody local routes). Midday service now every 2 hours.

**LOGAN AIRPORT TERMINAL CHANGES:**

Terminal A..Continental Express.....569-8400	Terminal C..Skymaster.....603-524-7784
Terminal A..Trump Shuttle.....800-247-8786	Terminal C..TW Express.....800-221-2000
Terminal A..Northeast Express...800-323-0030	Terminal E..Air Alliance.....800-422-6232
Terminal B..Mohawk.....800-252-2144	Terminal E..Air Atlantic.....800-426-7000
Terminal B..PAC Air.....800-359-7221	Terminal E..Enterprise.....800-343-7300
	Terminal E..Precision.....800-225-2525

**\*\* NOTICE:** Car-Free Updates #8-12 have been compiled into one listing of all major transit service changes since the 6th edition of Car-Free in Boston in summer 1988. For a copy of this list, or for a list of MBTA bus changes effective Dec. 30, 1989, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to "Car-Free Update", c/o A.P.T., P. O. Box 192, Cambridge, MA 02238.

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