



mass.transit

NUMBER 16

AUTUMN 1990

Orange Line Is Voted Best Line; Red Line-Blue Line Connector Is Most Desired Improvement

The MBTA Orange Line is the winner of the "Car-Free" award as Boston's best alternative to the auto for 1990. The award was voted by A.P.T. members and by readers of "Car-Free in Boston," based on their experiences over the last two years.

A connection between the T's Blue and Red Lines was the transit improvement that voters would most like to see, while the MBTA Green Line was voted "Most in Need of Improvement."

The Orange Line was cited by voters as reliable, fast, clean, frequent, convenient, and attractive.

In second place for best line was MBTA Commuter Rail, which was noted for courteous personnel, on-time service, and attractive facilities at South Station and Back Bay Station, although some voters felt additional weekend service was needed.

While the Green Line in general was voted Boston's worst transit line, its Riverside

(D) branch placed third in the voting for the best line, on account of its speed.

Other runners-up for the best award were the Blue Line, cited as reliable, and T-Bus 77 (Arlington Heights-Harvard), which was described as frequent.

The Green Line overall was described as overcrowded, slow, erratic, and confusing; its Boston College (B) and Arborway/Heath St. (E) branches were given special criticism. Also noted as problems were incorrect or inadequate signage and trains that don't go all the way to the posted station.

Other lines in need of improvement are MBTA buses in general, criticized for not running often enough, especially at off peak hours; and the Red Line, cited for delays,

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Old Colony Rail Advances

Mass. Environmental Affairs Secy. John DeVillars has approved the draft Environmental Impact Report for the Old Colony commuter rail restoration, permitting planning for the project to continue.

The Old Colony project would include a single commuter rail line from South Station to Braintree, where it would split into three branches: Greenbush (Scituate) via Hingham; Plymouth via Whitman; and Middleboro via Brockton. The Greenbush Line is more controversial than the others, because it is near houses and stores in Hingham Sq., and because it is no longer used by freight trains.

Since Hingham Sq. is a historic district, Secy. DeVillars asked the T to explore all "prudent and feasible alternatives" to the Greenbush route. Several other alternatives have already been examined, but none of them would attract as many riders.

Commuter rail service on the Old Colony lines ended in 1959, a few months after the Southeast Expressway opened.

New Car-Free Is Available

"Car-Free in Boston" -- A.P.T.'s 160-page guide to public transit in greater Boston and New England -- has just been published in a 7th edition for 1991-92.

Besides updated transit service and fare listings, the new edition of "Car-Free" also features increased coverage of day trips and transit services in Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Maine.

Like its predecessors, the new "Car-Free" includes directions to colleges, theatres, museums, shopping areas, hospitals, parks and recreation areas, and historic areas, plus information on every Boston-area train, bus, and ferry route -- over 80 carriers in all.

For just \$1.00, readers may subscribe to **Car-Free Updates**, listing major transit service changes soon after they occur. Updates are issued at least twice a year; the \$1.00 subscription includes all Updates until the next edition of "Car-Free in Boston." A.P.T. members receive free Car-Free Updates.

The new "Car-Free in Boston" is \$4.95 at stores around greater Boston, or use the mail order coupon on page 3 of this newsletter.

Time for a New Look at Massachusetts' Transportation Plans

Nationwide auto use is the largest single source of air pollution and greenhouse effect emissions, and it accounts for over half of America's petroleum use -- more than all of our annual oil imports. Rising gasoline prices, resulting from the current crisis in the Middle East, make commuting to work by car more expensive.

In greater Boston, we do better than most cities. A recent study showed that Massachusetts residents use 30% less energy per capita than the U.S. average, partly because of high transit ridership. But there is considerable room for improvement: According to

the EPA, Boston is one of the 18 worst cities in the nation for air pollution.

With the inauguration of a new governor and a new legislature, it is appropriate to review all of Massachusetts' transportation services. The last comprehensive transportation plan for greater Boston was 18 years ago, after Gov. Francis Sargent shelved plans for the Inner Belt and the Southwest Expressway. At that time the Boston Transportation Planning Review (BTPR) recommended a shift in emphasis from new highways to new transit lines. But while some BTPR proposals have become reality, many of its ideas are no longer being considered and other plans have been developed instead.

A.P.T. suggests that now is the time to reexamine our state's transportation plans, and to develop and implement a transportation systems approach for moving people and goods in and around Boston. In times of expensive, uncertain energy supplies and worsening air pollution, public transit offers opportunities both to reduce our dependence on imported oil and to improve air quality.

Name Change Confuses Riders

The Green Line station name change from Auditorium to Hynes Convention Ctr./I.C.A., as described in the last Mass. Transit, continues to confuse MBTA riders.

The problem is one of transition: Users who are unfamiliar with the T system aren't aware of the name change, and don't realize that "Auditorium" and "Hynes Convention Center" are the same station. For example, we have been told about visitors to Boston, who were somewhere in Brookline, riding outbound on the Green Line, when they asked "How far is it to Auditorium?"

A recent inspection of the Green Line revealed nothing that would enable a person who is looking for "Auditorium" station to know about the name change. Old maps show the old name, while new maps show just the new name. At the station itself, the old name is on a few maps, but not on any identifying signs. The two names appear together only in half-inch letters that can't be read from a train.

Although the MBTA is installing new signs on its own property, it will take years for guidebooks and maps to reflect the change. Even the T's own Boston Passport visitor pass still shows the "Auditorium" name. Other publications still using the old name include ones issued by the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau and the National Park Service; the international directory of Youth Hostels; and numerous guidebooks sold at bookstores across the country.

In other MBTA station name changes, the old name was kept as a secondary name and is still shown on station signs. In this case, temporary signs reading "formerly Auditorium" would be a great benefit to all users, and especially to visitors, until the new name becomes general knowledge.

Intercity Rail News

High speed trains from Boston to New York are a few years away, but the trip is already 45 minutes faster. As of Oct. 28, Amtrak's twice-daily "New England Express" makes the run in less than 4 hours. Shorter trainsets allow faster acceleration, and trains stop only at South Station, Back Bay Station, Rte. 128 Station, Providence RI, and New Haven CT. All seats are reserved, at no extra fare.

Regular Northeast Corridor trains between Boston and New York have also had 19 minutes trimmed off their schedules. As the result of several minor improvements along the line, most runs now take about 4-1/2 hours.

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Congress has funded \$139 million in other improvements for the Boston-New York route, including \$125 million for rail and signal improvements and design of an electrification system, and \$14 million for four dual-mode (electric/diesel) locomotives. The goal is to reduce the trip time to 3 hours.

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Train Riders Northeast, a new group in Maine and New Hampshire, has generated substantial support for rail service from Boston to Portland ME, and the U.S. Senate has asked Amtrak to do a formal route study by next summer. Write to Train Riders Northeast at P.O. Box 4869, Downtown Sta., Portland ME 04112; or call 207/TRY-RAIL.

A.P.T. News

A.P.T.'s comments on the Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel project, submitted to state and federal officials as part of this summer's environmental review, stated that we are unable to find any clear transit policy related to the Artery/Tunnel project, either in its construction phase or in the completed project. We believe that an active, imaginative transit plan would mean less traffic on the roads both during and after construction, thus enhancing the project's overall value.

Vote Results ...continued from page 1

poor equipment, and stops between stations. Persons who ride north of downtown Boston tended to be happier with Red Line service than those who go to Ashmont or Braintree.

Among desired transit improvements, better circumferential (crosstown) bus service placed second, followed by later or all-night subway service, restored streetcar service to Watertown and Arborway, more frequent service on MBTA commuter rail and bus routes, and restored rail service to New Hampshire, Maine, and the South Shore.

Inadequate bus service in the Metro West area (Wellesley-Framingham) was often cited as a problem. Only one local bus route, on Route 9, now serves that area. One private bus company which formerly served Metro West but has since gone out of business, Marathon Line, received several negative votes.

Over 180 persons responded to the questionnaire which was mailed to A.P.T. members and inserted in "Car-Free in Boston". Almost two-thirds of the voters do not own a car.

Join Us!

Mass. Transit is published 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 and Car-Free Updates, as well as a copy of the next edition of "Car-Free" when it is published. Contributions in excess of \$5 per person per year 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.

MBTA Service Notes

Due to construction, Andrew station (Red Line) now closes nightly at 9:00 PM. After 9:00, Red Line trains continue through the station without stopping; free shuttle buses leave from Broadway and JFK/UMass stations.

Aboveground, Andrew station's busway has been closed while a new one is built; buses now load on nearby streets. MBTA bus routes serving Andrew have been changed as follows:

- 5 City Pt.-McCormack Housing: No change except that Andrew busway is closed.
- 10 City Pt.-Copley: No change except that Andrew busway is closed.
- 16 now operates Forest Hills-JFK/UMass, via Andrew Sq., at all times; rush hour buses are extended to UMass/Boston campus.
- 17 now operates Fields Corner-JFK/UMass, via Edward Everett Sq. and Columbia Rd., omitting Andrew Sq.
- 18 now operates Ashmont-Broadway, via Andrew Sq., Dorchester St., and Old Colony Ave.

Construction should last until 1993.

Weekend MBTA commuter rail service was cut by 19% on Nov. 3, as a cost cutting move. North Station lines generally have changes in early morning and late evening trains; most South Station lines have midday cuts.

Ipswich Line commuter rail riders take note: A connecting bus -- not shown on MBTA timetables -- leaves Ipswich at 6:58 AM Saturdays, stopping at Hamilton/Wenham and North Beverly, and meeting the 7:46 train to Boston at Beverly Depot. The bus replaces the 7:20 AM Ipswich train which was eliminated Nov. 3. For information call CATA at 508-283-7916.

Association for Public Transportation, Inc.

P.O. Box 192, Cambridge, MA 02238

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)..\$

Please send copies of "Car-Free in Boston" @ \$4.95 ea. (\$4.00 for members); plus \$1.25 postage per order.....\$

Enclosed is an additional contribution of.....\$

TOTAL ENCLOSED.....\$

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone (home) _____ (work) _____

Greyhound, Other Bus Lines Offer New Services

Last spring's Greyhound strike, and the bus company's ensuing bankruptcy, has had an unpredicted effect in New England: There is now **more** intercity bus service than before.

Unlike other parts of the nation, where Greyhound has a monopoly, several other bus companies operate in New England. These competing firms have responded to the strike by increasing their services, and Greyhound has responded in turn:

In the Boston-New York market, **Peter Pan** has increased its service to 16 daily trips, while **Bonanza** has entered the market with 5 daily trips. **Greyhound** itself runs 12 daily trips via Hartford -- 1 more than before the strike -- plus 4 new trips via Providence RI.

North of Boston, **C & J Trailways** has begun service to Portland ME with 7 daily trips -- 2 more than Greyhound.

The strike has also spawned creative new service patterns to meet local market needs. For example, **C & J** buses stop at Logan Airport, and **Peter Pan** offers connections to New York from cities such as Amherst, Fitchburg, and Concord NH. **Greyhound's** buses via Providence also stop at Quincy Adams (Red Line).

Lower fares have been offered by several lines, including **Peter Pan's** student fares.

And four regional lines have moved out of Boston's Greyhound Terminal -- **Bonanza** and **Englander** to Back Bay Station (Dartmouth St. side); and **Plymouth & Brockton** and **Brush Hill** to Park Plaza (by the Four Seasons Hotel). Only **Greyhound** and **Vermont Transit** still use the Greyhound Terminal on St. James Ave.

Short Items...

Planning is underway to restore streetcar service on the **Arborway Line** (Green Line-E) by the middle of the 1990s. At an October 24 community meeting, MBTA officials said that design work for South Street reconstruction would start in November, with construction to begin next summer. New "Type 8" low-floor, accessible streetcars, which will be ordered to replace the existing Boeing LRVs, will be used on the line.

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Congratulations to the developers of the new **Cambridgeside Galleria** in East Cambridge for offering free transit service to that shopping mall. The mall's daily shuttle bus leaves Lechmere (Green Line) and Kendall (Red Line), every 15 minutes, from one hour before stores open until an hour after they close. The lift-equipped bus stops on Cambridge St. near the Lechmere station inbound platform, and on Main St. by Kendall station. For more information call 621-8666.

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While Route 128 Station's parking lot, at \$1.00 a day, is full, the free lot at nearby **Dedham Corporate Center** station has hundreds of empty spaces. To encourage use of the new Dedham station, the MBTA has waived parking fees indefinitely. The station is at Allied Drive, off I-95/Rt. 128 exit 14; it is served by Franklin Line commuter trains.

A.P.T. commends the regional lines and Greyhound for their aggressive response to changing market conditions. In New England, at least, intercity travelers have emerged from the strike as winners, with new and improved services to choose from.

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