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Winter 1992

Citizens Advisory Committee Pushes for Long-Range Fare Policy

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) for the MBTA 1991 Fare Increase Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been meeting monthly for six months with the MBTA during the preparation of the EIR. Stephan Chait, president of APT, chairs the committee which was established by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) to help guide the MBTA in the EIR process.

After the MBTA raised bus and rapid transit fares in September 1991, it was required file an EIR that not only studied the impacts of the increase, but also came up with the long-awaited long-range fare policy.

The three major components of the EIR are a comprehensive fare policy, an analysis of MBTA funding alternatives, and an analysis of the impacts of the 1991 fare increase. The EIR is scheduled to be completed and

approved by EOEA by July 1992; if the EIR is not approved, fares will be rolled back to 1991 levels.

Specific issues discussed by the CAC have included an analysis of the existing fare structure; making passes more widely available; and a clear, well-defined fare policy the aim of which is to increase ridership on the MBTA. Also being addressed is the use of alternative revenue sources.

Members of the committee include Ed Bates, Metropolitan Area Planning Council; Susan Bregman, Boston Transportation Department; John Deacon, Sierra Club; Anne Larner, MBTA Advisory Board; Andrew Hamilton, Conservation Law Foundation; APT's former business manager and editor, Charles Bahne, who is active in public transit advocacy.

Old Colony: Is it Really on Track?

The MBTA has released the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (FEIS/FEIR) for the Old Colony Rehabilitation Project. However, questions, problems and unresolved issues continue to dog the project.

The Old Colony project has been in the planning stages since 1984 when the Massachusetts Legislature directed the MBTA to study the feasibility of restoring service to the South Shore. Service was discontinued completely in 1959.

Questions:

- What to do about the Greenbush line, controversial because of the section through Hingham. The MBTA has all but given up on a rail line here and is investigating "non-rail" solutions.
- Are the two lines cost-effective?

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Intercity Buses Given Boost in Park Plaza/Back Bay

Park Plaza, formerly called Park Square, is a major bus terminal, but one would never know it. At least six major bus lines service the area at Columbus Avenue, Charles Street South and Providence Street near the Four Seasons Hotel, but the street and traffic patterns lack coherence. Consequently, Park Plaza does not project an image of a major transportation node.

A committee of the New England Bus Transportation Association has been meeting with the Boston Transportation Department (BTD), the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction, Park Plaza abutters and APT to work on strategies to strengthen the image and functioning of the area for intercity buses.

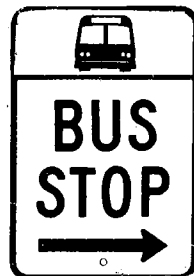
The first action has been to provide a layover site in the South End for the buses to wait inbetween trips, reducing the congestion and visual clutter of waiting buses. The layover site on Traveler Street in the South

End was put into operation in February. Each carrier has been assigned a drop-off/pick-up stop at Park Plaza and must follow a designated route from the layover area. The BTD will begin enforcing the five-minute limit on engine idling, collecting \$100 fines from offenders.

The committee is also looking at simple, inexpensive ways to let people know that Park Plaza is an active bus terminal in a convenient location for commuters. Park Plaza has been called a "station without walls," and the committee is looking at

improved signage, an information area, or central ticket-purchase area as ways to improve passenger services.

Along with the changes to Back Bay Station for Bonanza buses, these improvements to Park Square will help ensure that Back Bay stays in the picture as a destination for intercity bus service.



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Congestion Pricing For Safer Breathing

Headline: "In ozone-pollution fight, Mexico City extends limits on cars." Officials ordered a cutback in industrial activity and banned 40 percent of private cars from the city .

Can't happen in Boston? A result of the recession is fewer people driving into Boston; air quality should be better. But it is not and we need to address air pollution before the Mexico City scenario is not far away.

One way to reduce air pollution is to reduce the use of the single-passenger auto for commuting. This is viable when an alternative transportation mode is available. The MBTA is that alternative mode in the Boston area. The issue is how to get more people on the MBTA and out of their cars. It is time to explore how to refine this idea and implement it for a test run.

APT proposes congestion pricing to reduce air pollution and provide funds for public transportation.

Richard Taylor, Secretary of Transportation and Construction, has suggested congestion pricing—increasing tolls on the Mass. Turnpike, Sumner Tunnel and Tobin Bridge—as a way to reduce vehicle miles traveled. For years increasing charges for auto users has not been “politically viable” and never made it out of the offices of the city or state planners. With the topic on the Commonwealth’s transportation agenda, a productive debate may finally ensue.

Finding solutions to reduce air pollution will require the business community, auto advocates, transit advocates and providers, retail associations, construction groups and towns and cities to come together. In order to make a solution such as congestion pricing acceptable, the environmental and economic aspects of air pollution must be addressed simultaneously.

The APT proposes that congestion pricing be used to reduce air pollution and provide funds for public transportation throughout the Commonwealth. We invite the above-mentioned parties to enter the debate and work toward a solution.

Transit Coverage Disappears from Dailies

The Boston Herald has discontinued its “Charlie on the T” column, leaving the Boston dailies with virtually no regular coverage of transit issues. Public transportation will be increasingly important during some of the early-construction contracts for the Central Artery including major utility relocations scheduled to begin this summer. In addition to short-term planning for the early contracts, decisions are being made on how to attract more people to the system during major tunnel construction.

But the Globe and Herald are paying less attention, not more, to transit issues. Most of the worthwhile MBTA press releases go unreported. If planning is actually happening, it is even more important for people to know what’s happening.

MBTA to Air-Condition Buses

Reverses Policy Established in 1970s

Ahh, air conditioning. A welcome relief for the summertime blues in Boston. As part of its program to improve passenger comfort, the MBTA will commit \$4 million to equip buses with air conditioners, reversing a policy eliminating air conditioning on buses. Reasons cited for removing the air conditioning units were high maintenance costs of equipment considered prone to failure.

New, reliable environmentally friendly air conditioning units will be installed in 200 RTS II series 8000, 8800 and 8900 buses by June 1. The MBTA says the maintenance staff is better prepared now to keep them running, and that the new air conditioning should eliminate sauna-like conditions on buses.

But critics argue that \$4 million is too much for the cash-strapped MBTA to be spending on amenities like air conditioning and that the money would be better spent maintaining service levels by keeping buses on the street. Other arguments for not spending the money on the air conditioning units include the claim that the air conditioners won’t be effective, because passengers will continue to open windows for air or to talk to people in the station. According to the MBTA, however, drivers will close each window using a special key so they can’t slide open; great when the air conditioning is on the blink. The units will also reduce the fuel efficiency of the buses.

Given that most northeast cities don’t air-condition buses, the MBTA is being innovative. But is this innovative action at the expense of purchasing new buses?

Old Colony...

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- How much is the Federal government really likely to pay?
- Is this project—to serve 9,000 daily riders, fewer than the bus from Watertown to Kenmore Square carries—worth \$500 million, half to come from the State?
- Will the MBTA Advisory Board go along with it?
- Can it be running in time to relieve congestion during Central Artery construction when it is three years behind schedule??

This Year in Boston Transit History

Year: 1977. MBTA to Study Alternatives to Replace Elevated Orange Line.

Fifteen years have past since the MBTA began its study of alternatives to replace the Orange Line and improve transit in Roxbury and North Dorchester. The study was to have been completed before the Orange Line was moved to the Southwest Corridor, but but no decision has been made.

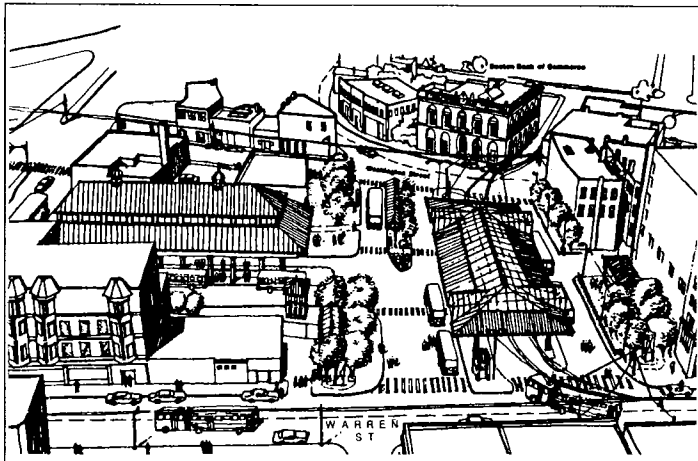
Alternatives included bus, trackless trolley, dual-propulsion bus, and light rail. The MBTA officially proposed trackless trolley terminating at Downtown Crossing in November 1991, but the proposal was criticized by some community leaders, the City of Boston and APT, among others.

MBTA Projects Update

Park Street Station Renovations

The Park Street Green Line station, which serves 36,000 riders daily, is undergoing a renovation that will improve the station's looks and access to the Lechmere-bound platform. Major changes include changing the existing exit-only headhouse on the Boston Common to an entrance and exit. New turnstiles and fare-collection booths will be added to both the inbound and outbound platforms. The new lobby will almost double the number of people who can enter the station and greatly improve access to the Lechmere platform.

New lighting, paint, signage, information booth, and speaker system are also part of the renovations designed by Boston architects Leers, Weinzapfel Associates, Architects. The renovations are expected to be done fall 1992.



Dudley Square: Construction of the new station for buses and trackless trolleys continues and is expected to be done in 1993. View shows station rebuilt and the inbound platform canopy, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, lowered and used a shelter.

What is APT?

The Association for Public Transportation is a non-profit organization founded in 1973 to promote the use and improvement of public transportation in and around Boston. APT supports transit because it is ecologically sound, does not tend to devastate neighborhoods, and is a cost-effective way of moving people. APT also publishes *Car-Free in Boston*, the guidebook to public transit in Greater Boston and New England.

APT is a transit-advocacy group that depends on its members for information on how to improve transit. Becoming a member of APT gives you a voice in improving transit services. Questions or comments? Call 482-0282.

Membership benefits include:

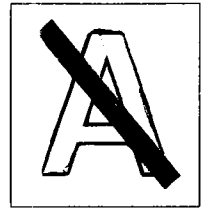
- Copy of *Car-Free in Boston*
- Quarterly newsletter, "mass. transit"
- Meetings with guest "transit" speakers...and more!

Donations in excess of \$5.00 per year are tax deductible.

You can't take the "A" train...

After a hiatus the MBTA is back on the warpath against the Watertown "A" Line. The MBTA attempted to dismantle the line, apparently on the recommendation of area state representatives. A January wire cutting was halted when community leaders and transit advocates protested.

Trolley service was "temporarily" discontinued in 1969 and was replaced with the Route #57 bus. Although a study comparing bus and streetcar supported buses, advocates claim that the MBTA will need the rail line to meet requirements of the Clean Air Act. In response, the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs stopped the MBTA and issued a requirement that the MBTA follow the state's environmental procedures and meet with the public.



CALENDAR

Old Colony Hearing on Final EIS/EIR (Braintree Town Hall)	April 29, 1992
National Transportation Week, 10 Park Plaza	May 11-May 15
Women's Transportation Seminar Conference	May 20-May 22
APT ANNUAL MEETING (95 Berkeley St.)	May 13, 5:30 p.m.

Join APT!

I want to support transit by joining APT.

- \$15 Regular \$25 Friend
 \$10 Seniors, students \$50 Sponsor
 \$100 Friend of Charlie on the MTA

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (h) _____ (w) _____

Occupation _____

What public transportation do you use regularly?

Mail to: Association for Public Transportation
95 Berkeley St., #633
Boston, MA 02116

Short Stops...

T Logo Licensing

New York's transit authority has been licensing its logo for years, and the logo appears on a range of items from tie tacks to mugs. The London Transport Executive's famous logo is plastered on everything imaginable, from T-shirts to tea towels, and the products sell well.

Why isn't the MBTA generating some revenue through the sale of T-shirts, mugs, tote bags, tieltacks, and caps? Over one year ago, the MBTA announced that a licensing agreement had been approved. The agreement would give the MBTA an 8 percent royalty on each item sold.

However, the program has fallen far short of expectations and the MBTA is finally in the process of reevaluating its contract with Bull and Finch Enterprises to try to kick-start the program. Although there have been mugs and T-shirts bearing the MBTA logo produced, distribution has been almost non-existent. The MBTA hopes to have an aggressive campaign in the works soon.

Station Renovations

The MBTA recently completed renovations to six Commuter Rail stations. As part of the "Revive and Guide" program initiated by General Manager John J. Haley, the stations were painted, had improved lighting,

signage and public address systems installed.

The stations selected for the renovations—which cost up to \$150,000 each—were those riders complained most about. Renovations to Kenmore, Prudential, Symphony, Charles/ MGH, Airport, and Aquarium have been completed and now display the self-congratulatory "MBTA Seal of Approval," the logo for which shows a stethoscope and hospital-like chart of vital signs. Is this how the MBTA sees itself—almost dead?

Airport Station Made Easier

As a result of the Central Artery/Tunnel project, the Blue Line Airport station is going to have to be moved and completely rebuilt. Ramps to the proposed Third Harbor Tunnel are to be built where Airport station's mezzanine level is now, necessitating re-

placing the station.

When rebuilt, Airport station will be one level, making transferring to and from shuttle buses much easier than with the current configuration that requires climbing stairs, often a chore when carrying luggage. The bus loop around the new station will require new, special, lefthand-loading shuttle buses to allow alighting on the inbound side of the station. The new station is expected to built in the late 1990s.

New **T** Map Due Soon

The MBTA will be printing a new, color MBTA system map in the next few months. The maps will be available at more places than in the past and will have small, detail maps of various transit hubs along the outside edges. The last map was produced in 1988.

APT Annual Meeting

Guest Speaker: Jim Rooney,
MBTA Deputy General Manager
Topic: "How the MBTA Will Get You There:
Dealing with the Central Artery/Tunnel Project"

Wednesday, May 13, 5:30 p.m.—7:30 p.m.
95 Berkeley St., first floor conference room

Refreshments. Wheelchair accessible.



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