



mass.transit

NUMBER 8

SUMMER 1988

Commuter Bus Lines Don't Market Themselves

Mary Commuter, who works in Boston and lives in the town of Southwick, recently heard of the Boston-Southwick commuter bus operated by Brown Lines Express Co., and she decided to try the new service. Her car was in the shop and she had gotten a ride to work that morning from a coworker. She called the company to confirm the schedule, and got a recording saying simply that the bus left from Park Square at 5:15.

After work that day, she walked to Park Square, where she saw plenty of buses -- none of which were marked either "Brown Lines" or "Southwick." After waiting half an hour, she finally took the subway to the end of the line, called her husband, and asked him to pick her up. Arriving home at 8:00 pm, she vowed, "Never again!"

In fact, Mary's bus had been right in front of her at 5:15. Painted on its side were the words "Club Coach Tours," and the destination sign read "No Stops."

This hypothetical example may sound far-fetched, but it is actually common among Boston's privately-operated commuter bus lines.

Continued on page 2...

Green Line Subway Planned at North Station

The MBTA has released plans to replace the existing elevated Green Line with a subway between North Station and Science Park. At North Station, a new Green Line station would be built underground, connecting with the present Orange Line station. There would be a direct entrance from the subway into the commuter rail station, allowing commuters to transfer between rapid transit and commuter rail without crossing busy Causeway St.

The new subway would come above ground behind the Registry building on Nashua St., and the existing Science Park station would continue to be used.

The MBTA plan, which grew out of plans to beautify the North Station area, has evolved into a major transportation improvement. The design will make transfers between lines much

New Edition of Car-Free is Now Available!

Car-Free in Boston: The Guide to Public Transit in Greater Boston & New England has just been published in an expanded 6th edition.

A.P.T.'s popular guidebook has been completely revised to show the new Orange Line and other transit changes in the last two years.

The new, larger Car-Free also features 30 pages of entirely new maps covering downtown Boston and the Back Bay; nearby activity centers such as Harvard Sq., the Fenway, and Logan Airport; and day trip destinations such as Falmouth, Rockport, Salem, and Providence.

Because increased transit use will be one answer to Boston's upcoming tunnel-artery construction woes, Car-Free now includes a new listing of suburban park-and-ride lots near major highways.

At 160 pages, Car-Free contains tips on using transit, plus information on every Boston-area transit route -- MBTA rapid transit, commuter rail, and buses, as well as privately-operated buses, trains, ferries, and airport limousines. Transit information is included for over 250 Massachusetts cities and towns, and directions are given to more than 400 other places of interest.

With all of these improvements, Car-Free is still just \$3.95 at stores and newsstands around greater Boston.

Look for the new 6th edition of Car-Free in Boston, with its red cover, at stores beginning the third week of August. Copies are also available by mail using the coupon on page 3 of this newsletter.

easier than they are now, and the new station will be more capable of handling large crowds from Boston Garden events.

One drawback of the T's proposal is that, during construction, there would be a 3-month disruption in Green Line service to Lechmere and Science Park, during which passengers would be bused to these two stations.

If the project is approved, construction could begin this winter and the line is hoped to open by 1992.

Commuter Buses

...continued from page 1

Recent observations by A.P.T. show that:

****** Several of the commuter bus companies serving Boston operate under 2, 3, or even 4 corporate names, and the name on the side of the bus may have nothing to do with the name under which the service is advertised.

****** Destination signs on buses frequently say "Chartered," "No Stops," "Sightseeing," "Boston," or "Have A Nice Day" — or they are blank.

****** Printed schedules, if they are available, generally say that buses leave from "Park Square" or "South Station," but do not give a specific address. In fact, different companies stop at different locations; some bus stops are actually 2 or 3 blocks away from Park Square or South Station.

****** The quality of telephone information varies greatly. The receptionist who answered the phone at one firm denied that the service existed; a persistent caller was able to speak to the manager, who confirmed that it did still operate. At another company, a caller was told to call back on another number, with a warning that "He tends to be out a lot -- you just have to keep trying." A third company answered its phone with a recording, which described just one of the company's three routes.

Many of these problems could be rectified easily and simply. A cardboard sign inside the windshield, on the dash, costs almost nothing but guarantees that potential riders

Electronic Signs Suggested

A.P.T. recently received a letter about deaf persons' access to public transit. Rebecca Hozinsky writes, "a simple suggestion might be the installation [inside stations and vehicles] of some kind of electric device, such as those on the fronts of buses ... which would flash in written form whatever announcements hearing people are getting via voice, such as a trolley being rerouted ... or turned express."

In fact, such signs would benefit many riders besides the hearing-impaired, since MBTA public address systems often present a challenge in comprehension even for commuters with normal hearing.

If MBTA bus destination signs can be programmed to say "Have A Nice Day" or "Go Red Sox," then it should be feasible to put signs inside stations, trains, and buses advising people of express trains, service diversions, and so forth. We urge the MBTA and other transit operators to look into this matter further.

will find the right bus. Photocopied, typed schedules which accurately list all stops are equally inexpensive.

A.P.T. suggests that government agencies, such as the DPU, the MBTA, and some towns, which regulate or fund commuter buses should establish minimum standards for the companies under their jurisdictions. At the same time, bus lines themselves should realize they will never attract any new riders if they keep their service secret!

Philadelphia Excels in Transit Information

How does Boston compare to other cities in making transit information available?

An A.P.T. member who was planning a trip with his family to Philadelphia recently called the information number for that city's transit system, SEPTA. The call was answered on one ring, and our friend was asked where they would be staying and what they would be doing while in town. In return for that one call, he was sent:

****** Schedules for 15 different rapid transit, streetcar, and bus routes. Unlike MBTA schedules, which are printed on index cards, a typical SEPTA schedule folds out to 6 or 8 panels on each side; included are times for each trip at at least 8 different points along the route. (MBTA schedules usually show times only at route endpoints.) Also on each schedule is a detailed, geographically correct map of the route.

****** Schedules for 4 different "Regional Rail" (commuter rail) lines, including the line to Philadelphia Airport.

****** A 6-panel foldout "SEPTA Fare Guide," plus a commuter rail "Fast Fare Ticket Vending Machine Guide."

****** A "Center City Philadelphia Transit Information" brochure, with a detailed map of downtown plus inset maps for 30 different transit routes.

****** A 20-page "History of Trolley Cars & Routes in Philadelphia."

****** A visitors guide and map from the Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau.

****** And 2 styrofoam airplanes, promoting the Airport Rail Line ("the train to the plane"), for our friend's 2 children.

Short Items...

New MBTA System Maps are finally available!! Released early in August, the new map is substantially larger than the previous (1982) map. It shows all MBTA rapid transit, commuter rail, and bus routes and gives information on some private carrier routes.

Copies of the new map are available at the MBTA information booth in Park St. station and at the State Transportation Library at 10 Park Plaza in Boston; or by writing to Map, MBTA Public Affairs, 120 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02116.

(Don't confuse the System Map with the "MBTA Map and Information" sheet, a 2-page newsprint foldout which is also given out at Park St. station. The "Map and Information" sheet is left on the counter for riders to pick up, but you must ask for a System Map.)

In a decision that is good news for transit riders, state highway officials now plan to put the depressed Central Artery under the Red Line station at South Station, instead of through the station mezzanine, as was planned earlier. MBTA officials are now proceeding with the modernization of the subway station.

Congratulations are in order to the MBTA and the private developers who have converted the historic Newton Centre station building (Green Line-D/Riverside) into a store and deli. Commuters and local shoppers can now duck into "Abruzzi Station" for coffee and pastry, a sandwich, ice cream, newspapers, magazines, and other sundries. The century-old structure, which was long boarded up, has now been beautifully restored.

A.P.T. News

A.P.T. President Stephan Chait testified at a public hearing on May 19 in favor of restoring streetcar service on the Watertown Line (formerly the Green Line-A). He urged studying transit service not by itself, but together with parking programs, parking enforcement, and traffic management programs "which would provide incentives to T riders and disincentives to auto users during peak hours."

Resumption of Watertown Line streetcar service does not appear likely, however, as several important politicians, including some who usually support improved transit service, have announced their opposition to the line.

A.P.T. is seeking places where it can distribute its quarterly newsletter, Mass. Transit, to commuters and other readers. If you know of a library, store, train station, or other location with a rack where literature can be left, please send a note to A.P.T. or call our office at 547-3332.

Robert Terrell, executive director of the Washington St. Corridor Coalition, spoke to A.P.T.'s July board meeting about his group's efforts to obtain light rail (streetcar) service in the South End and Roxbury, to replace the now-demolished Orange Line elevated.

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 or write our office for dates and location.

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.

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" @ \$3.95 ea. (\$3.00 for members); plus \$1.25 postage per order.....\$ _____

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

TOTAL ENCLOSED.....\$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone (home) _____ (work) _____

Car-Free® Update #8

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 #7 in April. Asterisks (*) indicate changes since the 6th edition of "Car-Free" went to press in June.

The following routes have minor reductions in service due to lower summer ridership: T-Buses 1, 16, 29, 57, 66, 69, 83, 93, 99, 101, 104, 106, 108, 109, 110, 111, 211, 214, 216, 300, 325, 326.

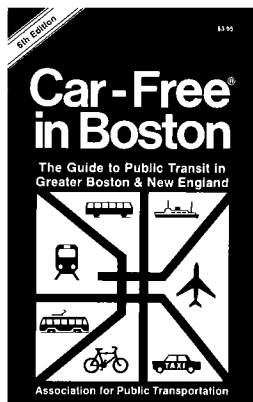
- Red Line** Substitute buses operate between South Sta. and JFK/UMass, Mon.-Fri. after 8:45 pm, until further notice.
- Green Line** Substitute buses operate between Park St. and Kenmore, Mon.-Fri. after 8:45 pm, until further notice.
- *Red Sox Train** Special T-Commuter Rail train to all weekend home games from Attleboro, Mansfield, Sharon, Canton Jct., Rte. 128 Sta., Fairmount, Morton St., and Uphams Corner. New service.
- *Rockport/Ipswich Line** Some substitute busing in effect between North Sta. and Lynn on middays and weekends; call to confirm schedule.
- Franklin Line** Service now extended to Forge Park/495.
- T-Bus 39** (Forest Hills-Copley). After 8:45 pm Mon.-Fri., operates Forest Hills-Park St. while Green Line is closed for construction.
- *T-Bus 113** (Wonderland-Malden Ctr.). This summer-only route has been discontinued.
- *Cape Cod & Hyannis RR** Braintree-Hyannis; Braintree-Falmouth with connections to Woods Hole & Vineyard Haven. Summer: 2-4 trains daily, through Sept. 5. Fall: 2 trains/day to Hyannis; 1 train/day to Falmouth & Martha's Vineyard; no service on either route on Mon. or Fri.; service ends Oct. 23.
- *AC Cruises** (Boston-Gloucester). Now operates daily through Labor Day.
- *Boston Harbor Commuter & Mass. Bay Lines** (Boston-Hingham). Every 15 min. at rush hour.
- Concord Trailways** (Boston-Concord NH). Now stops at Londonderry NH (I-93, Exit 4) instead of Nashua NH.
- *Greyhound** (Boston-Albany). Now 5 trips daily, 3 via Springfield, Lee, Lenox, Pittsfield.
- *Peter Pan** (Boston-Albany) via Lee, Lenox, Pittsfield. Now 5 trips daily. (Springfield-Hyannis). Riverside to Hyannis service discontinued.
- *Vermont Transit** (Boston-Nashua NH). New service. 3 rush hour trips; park-and-ride at US 3, exit 5W.

Car-Free^(R) is a registered trademark of the Association for Public Transportation, Inc.



Association for
Public Transportation, Inc.
P. O. Box 192
Cambridge, MA 02238

#8



FIRST CLASS