

Mass. Transit News

Number 28

Newsletter of the Association for Public Transportation, A Non-Profit Advocacy Group

Feb. 1996

Central Artery Project Promises More Downtown Traffic When Completed

The Central Artery/Tunnel project is part of an overall transportation effort by state officials to provide for future growth in the Boston area. While recent transit projections show a future with 25 percent more transit riders and 67 percent more commuter rail riders, the highway traffic is also projected to grow significantly, according to the Central Artery/Tunnel project's own traffic numbers. A vibrant economy relies on continued growth, and in a downtown with superior transit access like Boston, encouraging downtown growth should mean relying heavily on the transit system for the primary means of access, not the highway system.

The future design year is 2010, less than 15 years away. A comparison of existing traffic counts with the projected traffic for 2010 shows a doubling of traffic on I-93 in the morning peak, both for the inbound South-east Expressway near Albany Street and inbound I-93 at the Charles River crossing. Indeed, the figures for the river crossing show hourly traffic more than doubling, from 5,200 vehicles per hour to about 11,400 vehicles per hour in 2010.

It would be nice if all this added traffic were through-traffic only, staying in the depressed Central Artery to go through the city. However many surface-street intersections in downtown Boston are projected to see a doubling of traffic, so the additional traffic on the expressway system is reflected in added traffic on downtown streets as well.

The best way to imagine such increases is to think about those intersections which physically will not change much after Artery construction is complete. If you go out and count all the cars today coming into the intersection of Purchase Street and Summer Street near South Station during the morning peak hour, it would be about 2,100. The Central Artery/

Tunnel project predicts 3,200 in 2010, an increase of over 50 percent. For the future afternoon peak hour, the traffic would actually double—in a corridor crossed by 10,000 pedestrians, many of whom are transit riders trying to get to South Station or the Red Line.

Some intersections would not grow as much; others would grow more. At five intersections along Congress Street, traffic would more than double: at Purchase, High, Franklin, State and New Sudbury streets. If the traffic can't make it through one of these intersections, drivers would have to wait in a long queue or find another route, which may also be.

Intersections in AM Peak Hour: Existing 2010

Dewey Sq. (Summer/Atlantic)	2,800	2,900
Dewey Sq. (Purchase & Summer)	2,100	3,200
Purchase and Congress	1,900	4,100
Congress and High	1,200	2,500
Congress and State	1,900	4,100
Congress/New Sudbury	1,800	4,500
Congress and Franklin	900	2,200

The obvious question for our transportation planning future is: how many of these new trips should be kept on the new Artery and not released onto already overloaded corridors, such as Congress and Summer streets? how many of these trips should be served by commuter rail, rapid transit and pedestrians and not by added car traffic on local streets? It is not too late to begin planning for a more efficient downtown transportation circulation system that stresses transit and pedestrians, not a large influx of cars. *Research by Steven Kaiser*

Transportation Bond Bill Moves Along

The Joint Committee on Transportation reported out a Transportation Bond Bill authorizing \$2.2 billion in state funds for transportation. The Joint Committee added 26 amendments to the original bill.

Included in the Bond Bill, House No. 5743, were highway, transit, airport, commuter boat and bicycle projects, among others. This Bond Bill is seen as much less controversial than the 1994 bill and more likely to pass in a timely manner.

One controversial item included in the original bill was \$136 million for commuter rail to New Bedford and Fall River. Although the project has heavy support in the two terminal cities, cities and towns along the proposed route, including Attleboro and Norton, have asked the MBTA to seek another route. The Joint Committee included an amendment restricting use of the \$136 million to a route using the Middleborough branch and required a six-month study of all viable alternatives. If this amendment is retained in the bill's final version, the 1997 date for service to begin will be affected.

Other transit items in the Bond Bill:

- \$20 m for regional transit authorities for rolling stock and facilities
- \$6 m for prototype development and research for mass-producing non-polluting buses, including solar
- \$30 m for transit infrastructure
- \$99.5 m for commuter rail rolling stock
- \$100 m for Blue Line station (Aquarium)
- \$100,000 for feasibility study to establish commuter rail to Millis
- \$50 m for commuter boat services/facilities
- Requires MBTA to have one person present at all stations with token machines

Green Line Accessibility?

Wheelchair access to the Green Line light rail system is inching along. The MBTA, after years of delay and lawsuits, recently removed seats from Green Line cars for wheelchairs, built two mini-high platforms for wheelchairs to board, and emblazoned the Green Line vehicles with stickers declaring them wheelchair accessible.

Persons in wheelchairs can now board the Riverside branch of the Green Line at Riverside and Brookline Village using the platforms. But there is no information about where passengers can get off the train after they have entered the subway. Currently, only Green Line stations that also serve the Orange, Blue and Red lines have elevators, because those rapid transit vehicles are already accessible.

Although the MBTA is finally beginning to redesign the Green Line to add raised platforms, elevators, mini-high platforms and has ordered low-floor vehicles, most of these improvements are years away. It is a cruel jest to call the Green Line vehicles accessible if most stations are not accessible.

APT Presses for Action on Arborway Service

In a letter to Boston Mayor Thomas Menino, APT has asked the city to take the lead in resolving the future of Arborway transit service.

APT called on the mayor to insist that the MBTA start taking Arborway improvements seriously—and to do so soon. A thorough comparison of the relative merits of the light rail, trackless trolley (electric bus) and diesel bus alternatives needs to be undertaken, with the goal of having a decision in the near future.

APT did not state a preference on mode other than to insist that Arborway service must be an integral part of the rapid transit system not merely a feeder. This means a one-vehicle ride to the downtown core, seamless transfers (free and easy to do) at all transit stations, surface stops with shelters and seats, and provisions for mitigating the effects of traffic on service, and other mea-

asures to ensure high-quality transit service.

Since streetcar service on the E-Arborway line beyond Heath Street was temporarily suspended in the mid-1980s, more than a decade of inaction and neglect has passed. The temporary bus Route 39 is looking more and more permanent and very little has been done to improve the quality of this service. After all, it's only a temporary service.

This is not the transit needed in this corridor, nor does it satisfy commitments made to the community and the legislature. APT believes that the mode that can achieve the quality of service outlined above, meets the requirements of ADA, and minimize local pollutants in the most cost-effective manner is the one to choose. The City of Boston and the MBTA should make that decision and get on with it, ASAP.

ADVOCATE'S NOTEBOOK

How to get involved and stay informed...

MBTA MEETINGS:

MBTA Board of Directors Second or third Wednesday of the month, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, 3d fl. Call 222-5000.

MBTA Advisory Board— February 6, 10:30 am
Special Mtg. on Commuter Rail 120 Boylston St. Call 426-6054.

North/South Rail Link Citizens Advisory Comm. February 26, 6:00 pm. 10 Park Plaza, 2d fl. conf. rm. Call 222-4478.

Access Advisory Committee Third Thurs. of the month, 1:00 pm 10 Park Plaza, 2d fl. conf. rm. Call 222-5123.

Arborway Advisory Committee 10 Park Plaza Call MBTA Planning, 222-5750.

Circumferential Transit Working Committee February 21, 1:00 pm 10 Park Plaza, 2d fl. conf. rm. Call 222-3366.

OTHER MEETINGS:

Move Massachusetts 2000 Last Fri. of the month, 8:00 am Palmer & Dodge, One Beacon St. Call 695-0644.

Joint Regional Transportation Committee Second Wed. of the month, 3:00 pm 10 Park Plaza, 2d fl. conf. rm. Call 973-7100.

MAPC Metropolitan Plng. Organization Liaison Committee Feb. 2 and March 1, 10:00 am 60 Temple Pl., 5th fl. conf. rm. Call 451-2770.

Boston Transportation Dept. Bicycle Advisory kickoff Thurs., February 29, 6:00 pm Boston City Hall Call 635-2756.

Short Stops...

MBTA Studies Circumferential Transit...Again

The MBTA is preparing to hire its third consultant in eight years to study possible circumferential transit projects. With a \$1.1 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration, the MBTA will undertake a Major Investment Study to study a range of transit alternatives to select one to create a transit belt outside the downtown area, which would intersect existing radial lines.

Expected to begin in June, the study will look at transit, environmental, fiscal, community development and many other criteria. Six contiguous cities and towns have already created a "compact" to work on the study, and the MBTA has formed a working committee and subcommittees of residents, institutions, municipalities, and interest groups to work with the selected consultant. For more information, call MBTA Project Manager Peter C. Calcaterra at (617) 222-3366.

First Subway Facts Corrected!

The last issue of Mass. Transit News erroneously claimed that Boston's Tremont Street subway, soon to celebrate its 100th year, was the world's second subway built after that in Budapest, Hungary.

In fact, England holds claim to the world's first subway. Steam cars ran in a tunnel in London in 1863. Budapest's subway began in 1894 and was followed that year by one in Glasgow, Scotland. Boston's, America's first in 1897, was the fourth subway in the world.

Fun Transit Factoids

Spotlight on...

Everett, Mass.

Population (1990) 35,900
Distance to Boston 2 mi.

Direct transit services to Boston (1995):

Express and/or local buses none
Rapid transit lines none
Commuter rail lines none
Commuter boat lines none

Send your "Factoid" suggestions to:
Mass. Transit News, c/o APT, PO Box 1029,
Boston, MA 02205

What is APT?

The Association for Public Transportation is a non-profit organization founded in 1973 to promote public transportation in and around Boston and advocate for improvements. 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 (617) 482-0282.

Membership benefits include:

- Copy of *Car-Free in Boston*
- APT newsletter, "Mass. Transit News"
- Meetings with guest "transit" speakers...and more!

Donations in excess of \$7.00 per year are tax deductible.

Join APT!

I want to support transit by joining APT.

___ \$20 Regular ___ \$35 Friend
___ \$12.50 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
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