



# MASS. TRANSIT NEWS

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Richard J. Arena, President

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## Save the Date-APT Annual Meeting: June 25

The Officers and Board of APT are pleased to announce that Mr. Robert Yaro, President of the NY-NJ-CT Regional Plan Association (RPA) will be the keynote speaker at the Annual Meeting this year.



Mr. Robert Yaro The NY RPA, dating back to 1922, is one of the oldest and most respected independent research and planning advisory groups in the country. RPA has taken a vital role on the reconstruction of lower Manhattan after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. While Massachusetts is reeling after the fallout from the Big Dig and the gloomy report of the Transportation Finance Commission, New York continues its prominence as center of a Megaregion. Is there a prospective example here for Boston? The meeting will be held at the Downtown Harvard Club on Monday, June 25 at 6:30 PM. Further details in the upcoming weeks.

## Greenbush Tour

On Sunday October 29, APT and Massachusetts Bay Railroad Enthusiasts sponsored a tour of the nearly completed Greenbush Line. The tour guide was Eric Fleming, Deputy Program Manager for the project office of the contractor, Cashman/Balfour Beatty. Victor Campbell and David Brown of the Railroad Enthusiasts accompanied the tour, and provided encyclopedic commentary.



Early work on Hingham Tunnel (RJA)

The Greenbush line is one of three branches of the historic Old Colony line that was abandoned in 1959 with the completion of the Southeast Expressway (Rt 3). The other two

branches have been restored to service in the last few years. The Greenbush branch is expected to be in service by late summer of 2007.

The line will be a single track with four passing sidings. Parking will be available at all stations with the largest number (1000 spaces) at the Greenbush terminus, and the smallest lot will be in Hingham. The Hingham segment was most expensive to construct because of that town's successful insistence on a tunnel beneath the town center..

The schedule time for the trip from Greenbush to Boston is one hour, and the fare is projected to be \$5.25 one way. There will be twelve round trips daily during the week. The MBTA estimates that by 2010, there will be about 900 one way, peak hour, weekday boardings at Greenbush, and a total of 3300 on the entire branch. There are seven stops along the approximately eighteen mile stretch from Greenbush to Weymouth Landing from which it joins the main line to Boston's South Station. Unfortunately, space limitations at South Station will translate into insufficient platform availability during rush hour. This is another reason to expedite the construction of the North-South Rail Link.

## Charlie Card, Charlie Ticket, Cash

The automated fare collection system was more or less completed in January, but there still remains considerable confusion about payment. The T has installed vending machines at all underground and many surface stops. Many passengers have bought CharlieCard cards or tickets or monthly passes which are still available. But some passengers continue to pay cash, which greatly slows down boardings. One aspect of the Charlie Card that seems to work well is the transfer. It is automatically given (or withheld) when the card is tapped on the second bus or other vehicle



(continued pg. 3)

## President's Letter

Dear Members and Friends of APT—

As the price of gasoline continues its upward trend, consumers, legislators, and industry experts once again talk about energy conservation, alternative fuels, and additional mass transportation.

All of these items are fine, but with the limited exception of conservation by trip avoidance, all gasoline minimization strategies require significant time to implement. Auto manufacturers cannot turn out fuel-efficient cars overnight, and neither can additional mass transportation capacity be added quickly. This is where APT comes in. We keep advocating for transportation choices – even when gas is “cheap” and our thoughts are elsewhere.

In my January letter, I had indicated that APT would be reaching out to other planning organizations in the Northeast region. APT has taken an active role in several meetings of the I-95 Corridor Coalition and the NY-NJ-CT Regional Plan Association. Transportation experts at those meetings concurred that most transportation issues are regional, not local. Virginia estimates that over 70% of the traffic on its highways is simply passing through the state. Clearly, regional cooperation, innovative federal-state programs, and private-public partnerships will be required to solve problems of the Megaregions, (rapidly emerging, multi-state, economic entities.) Interesting solutions are being floated, including incentives for freight railways, the development of a sea “highway” to offload some freight onto the waterways, and the use of HOT (high occupancy toll) and TOT (truck only toll) specialty lanes.

The North-South Rail Link (NSRL) is an important part of the Boston Megaregion picture. APT is, for the second consecutive year, a co-signatory on a bill to preserve the NSRL right-of-way (ROW). We will be meeting with Transportation Secretary, Bernard Cohen, to take our argument directly to him.

APT is a public transportation advocacy organization, but freight is of equal concern. There are several ominous signs that CSX may be tempted to scale back its operations inside Route 128. Harvard has recently purchased large tracts in Allston for its new Boston campus. This includes the Beacon Yard, an important multi-modal facility, adjacent to Storrow Drive and the Mass Turnpike. It does not appear that maintaining a freight yard is of

any interest to Harvard. Also, Massachusetts is currently negotiating with CSX for usage rights on existing freight tracks: This authorization will be required to bring commuter rail to the South Coast (New Bedford & Fall River), improve on-time performance on the Worcester line, and build Phases II and III of the Urban Ring. CSX was already given a serious rebuff by the State when a promised program to upgrade critical freight lines to accommodate double container height was killed. And, frankly CSX is not in the best of financial health. At what price do they simply throw in the towel with respect to serving Greater Boston?

So why does APT care? It's simple. If rail freight is significantly curtailed, there will be thousands of additional trucks inundating our highways and secondary roads. This will lead to more congestion as well as significant additional wear and tear on the Commonwealth's infrastructure. APT will be talking to legislative and local political leaders to emphasize the importance of preserving and expanding rail freight service in Massachusetts.

We will keep you apprised of the situation.



Richard J. Arena  
APT President

## Silver Line Bus Tunnel

Speaking of the Silver Line, the MBTA is still proceeding on the design of a \$750 million downtown bus tunnel that no one really wants. The existing Silver Line is a bus line with two separate segments. One segment goes from South Station to the Airport; the other segment traverses the Washington Street corridor from Dudley Square to Chinatown. This expensive tunnel would connect the two segments at Boylston St. and South Station. Unfortunately, the alleged beneficiaries of the project, the Washington St. corridor residents, are less than pleased. What they have requested is light



D. Cramer

rail service from Dudley Square into the existing Green Line portal on Boylston St. Light rail is an appropriate substitute for the Orange Line L that was torn down in the 1980's. Make no mistake - the Silver Line is a BUS, not rapid transit service.



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### Urban Ring Status

The goal of the Urban Ring is to knit together disparate areas including Boston's Longwood Medical area, Kenmore Square, East Cambridge (e.g. Galleria Mall), Chelsea, and Everett. Consultants and Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) are currently working on Phase II of the project. This Phase will put into service Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in a circumferential corridor with connections to radial bus and rail lines. The consultants made a presentation to the APT Board in March. At that meeting, the Board noted that any surface bus service is doomed to be mired in heavy traffic in the Longwood medical area at least, and that the heart of the route would be gridlocked on Red Sox game days. BRT is inadequate as a transportation alternative for the Boston Megaregion. This has been demonstrated by the sorry



Urban Ring DEIR

experience of the Silver Line bus service in the Washington Street corridor. The buses are mired in traffic, the lanes are not kept clear, and buses often don't pull up at the curb for stops. APT takes the position that this important circumferential route must be constructed in a grade separated right-of-way (preferably a tunnel which will be unaffected by the region's traffic woes), using electrically powered rail vehicles.

### Arborway Update

The Arborway Committee has filed suit to reinstate trolley service to Forest Hills along the E Branch of the Green Line. The T argues that it is impossible as the Americans with Disabilities Act requires a safety island at each stop and Centre Street is too narrow. Nevertheless APT will be entering an *amicus* brief in favor of restoration. A promise is a promise.



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