

Connection!

The quarterly newsletter of TransitWorks - www.TransitWorks.org

Special points of interest:

- Read about increased commuter rail service on page 3.
- Heard about T fare increases? Find out more on the proposed increases and what's next on page 2.



Inside this issue:

<i>Riders Help Redesign the MBTA Website</i>	2
<i>2006 TransitWorks Ridership Survey</i>	2
<i>Update on Proposed Fare Increase</i>	2
<i>Feedback from E Line Riders</i>	3
<i>Increased Service to Woburn/Anderson</i>	3
<i>More Service Updates</i>	4

CharlieCards around the Corner

By now, you've probably already used the new CharlieTickets as well as the new fare gates and fare boxes. But, there's more to come with the new AFC (automated fare collection) system. Next, riders will start using CharlieCards. These smart cards will be faster and more convenient. CharlieCards are designed for tap and go access. Instead of inserting them, you'll simply place your card near the target on the fare box or gate. CharlieCards will be available before the end of the year.

Riders will still be able to use CharlieTickets, but



CharlieCards can hold a pass and/or cash value. One example of when it's useful to store both is for a bus rider who occasionally takes the subway—she/he would save money and time by storing a bus pass AND cash value for the occasional subway trip. Plus, you will be able to add value online. Riders who use CharlieCards will receive free subway to bus transfers. On the other hand, Char-

lieTickets can store only a pass OR stored value, and CharlieCards will offer a better value for storing cash values. Remember, even though CharlieCards are more durable, you can also reuse CharlieTickets by adding cash value at any fare vending machine.

All subway stations and bus fare boxes are scheduled to be converted by the end of December. Converted buses will be able to make change by issuing CharlieTickets with stored value for amounts greater than 11 cents. They will accept cash, passes, tokens and even 1, 5, 10 and 20 dollar bills!

MBTA Rolls Out Refurbished Coaches

TransitWorks research has shown seating is a top priority for many riders. Riders have voiced concerns about ripped or graffiti covered seats. To



improve the riding experience, the MBTA is testing makeover coaches. These coaches have seating designed to withstand cutting and discourage graffiti. Also, the coaches have maps that show the entire subway system to make trip planning easier and grab handles for

shorter riders.

The MBTA wants riders to tell them if they like the new amenities. This customer feedback will help them decide whether to makeover more coaches. You can submit comments on the 'Contact Us' page at mbta.com.

Riders Help Redesign the MBTA Website

The MBTA assembled a team to work on its website redesign this summer. Many Charlies (TransitWorks' volunteers) and other T riders shared their ideas through an online survey conducted by TransitWorks and the redesign team. MBTA customers had some great ideas for improving the site to better meet their needs. Some of these ideas were:

- Make the new site easier to use and have easier access to information
- Improve the site's mapping features with better maps that are easy to use and easy to read
- Make it easy for riders to contact the MBTA and receive customer service
- Add features that let users find MBTA services nearby different locations
- Make it easy to download maps and schedules to mobile devices

Using those and other ideas, the website team worked hard to develop some new features and designs. In September, TransitWorks facilitated workshops in which riders suggested how to improve the features and designs. There will be more rider workshops in November, and the new website will launch later this year.



2006 TransitWorks System-wide Ridership Survey

Because, rider satisfaction and feedback are important for the attraction and retention of transit riders, every two years TransitWorks conducts a system-wide ridership survey to understand current satisfaction levels and priorities of MBTA

riders. This year, TransitWorks is working with private vendors who will administer the survey via telephone using a 'random' sample. This means that the results should most accurately represent the ridership as a whole. TransitWorks will then be able to track trends in rider satisfaction more confidently. Some of the categories that riders will give their feedback on will include station cleanliness, parking availability, service reliability and seating.

In the 2004 Ridership Survey, T riders identified service reliability, personal comfort, safety and seating as their top priorities.

Update on Proposed Fare Increase

As many riders know, the MBTA has proposed increased fares for January 2007. The MBTA held public workshops and hearings during the spring and early summer on the fare increases. The proposal would raise the base subway fare to \$1.70 per trip (on a CharlieCard) and \$62 for a monthly pass. This LinkPass allows cardholders to also use local bus service. The base bus

fare (on a CharlieCard) would go to \$1.25 per trip or \$40 for a monthly pass. The proposed surcharges for riders who do not use CharlieCards would be 25 cents each bus trip and 30 cents per subway trip. These surcharges are lower than the original proposal and were announced in October. The MBTA Board of Directors will vote on the proposed fare increase at their meeting on No-

vember 9th. For details on the proposed increase, go to www.mbta.com and click on 'Fare Increase Information' which is on the left hand side under the heading 'Hot Spots.' TransitWorks will send out information after the board votes, so make sure you're on our email list. Sign-up on our website, www.transitworks.org.

E Line Riders Give their Opinions on T Service

In addition to the broad rider satisfaction data *TransitWorks* collects, we also do projects on specific parts of the MBTA system. Because of recent and planned improvements on the E Line, we started an analysis of E Line service. The first part was to survey E Line riders. We'll follow-up with a Transit Diary pro-

ject and a second survey to see if rider satisfaction changes after the E Line segment from Brigham Circle to Heath Street reopens. The survey asked riders to rate their satisfaction in a variety of categories like vehicle announcements, seating availability, service reliability and station cleanliness. Average scores in most of these categories were better than neutral. The survey also asked riders which categories are their priorities. The most common priorities were service frequency, service reliability, personal comfort and seating availability, in that order. Riders also specified what ways they'd like the T to communicate service information. The most preferred methods were vehi-

cle and in station postings. One question asked if riders had noticed any improvements at E Line stations and stops, and many riders reported they had. If you're an E Line rider interested in participating, email *TransitWorks* at klowe@transitworks.org or call 617-557-7349.

Riders noticed improvements along the E Line like

- *New paint and improved lighting at Symphony and Prudential Stations*
- *New platforms at Northeastern, Longwood and Brigham Circle*
- *Improved accessibility*



Improved travel between Woburn and North Station T adds trips and express service to Anderson RTC station where there's plenty of parking

Starting on October 30th, riders north of Boston can take advantage of more frequent service and available parking at Anderson Regional Transportation Center (RTC) in Woburn. The MBTA and MBCR are adding four additional trips in the morning peak and two trips during the evening rush hour. Some trains will be express-cutting down the travel time between Anderson and Boston's North

Station. With this increased level of service, riders will have more travel options and less crowded trains.

Anderson RTC station has around 1,500 parking spots for commuter rail riders, but approximately two thirds of them go unused each day. MBTA General Manager Daniel Grabauskas commented "One of the things that would enhance its use is to make [Anderson] literally a shuttle service."

identify ways to increase its use. This should help divert more commuters from I-93 onto public transportation.

The MBTA will add four trips between Anderson and North Station in the morning and two in the afternoon. Some trips will go express between Anderson and North Station.



To promote parking at Anderson, *TransitWorks*, the MBTA, transportation management associations and municipal agencies worked together to

Some of the solutions this group suggested were to add express trains from Anderson, add way finding signs (signs that help direct drivers to the station) and electronic signs with changing messages such as the next train departure from Anderson. The MBTA is moving forward on these ideas.



www.TransitWorks.org

75 State Street, 2nd Floor
Boston, MA 02109-1814

Phone: (617) 557-7349
Fax: (617) 227-7505
Email: transitworks@transitworks.org



MBTA Advisory Board

The TransitWorks Mission

The mission of TransitWorks is to improve the quality and increase the use of all modes of transit in the Boston metropolitan region. Using valuable customer feedback, TransitWorks seeks to work collaboratively with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) in order to improve the riding experience for all transit users.

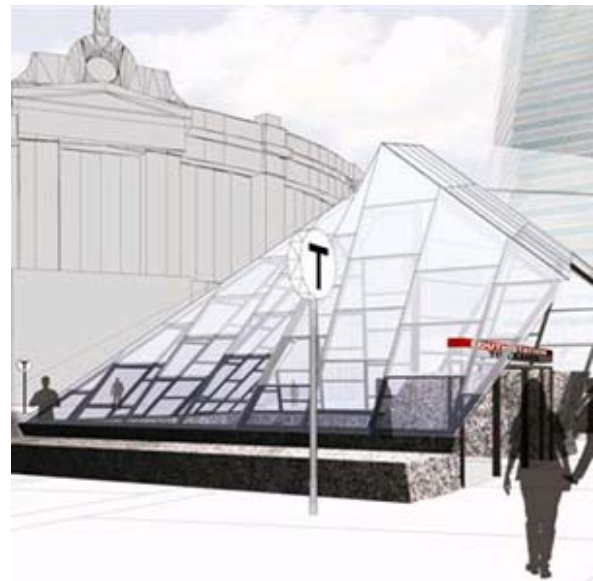
Our Goals

TransitWorks has four main goals that guide our activities:

- 1. Enable effective, proactive communication between transit users and transit providers in order to improve the riding experience.*
- 2. Use customer outreach activities to increase the sense of public ownership of the transit system.*
- 3. Retain current riders and attract new riders to the transit system.*
- 4. Promote the entire transit system and increase region-wide transit awareness and pride.*

More Service News

This fall the MBTA has a few new service options to consider. In September, the MBTA announced that service between Back Bay and South Station on the Commuter Rail will now be free. Visitors and residents can hop on to one of the 85 weekday departures from Back Bay to South Station. This will efficiently connect them to the Financial District, attractions near the Waterfront or to the Silver Line to Logan Airport. Secondly, football fans can take advantage of the football train to Gillette Stadium for Patriots' home games. Trains begin at South Station and Providence with additional stops along the way. For information on either of these services, go to mbta.com.



Direct, free service from Back Bay to South Station



Take the train to a Patriots Game