

# Connection!

The quarterly newsletter of TransitWorks - [www.TransitWorks.org](http://www.TransitWorks.org)

Spring has  
(almost) sprung!



## TransitWorks Update

Jessica Conaway, TransitWorks Executive Director

TransitWorks has made major progress over the past several months in our effort to collect and report MBTA customer feedback, and anticipates further progress in the coming months with great enthusiasm.

Roughly 160 TransitWorks Charlies Project volunteers logged their transit use over a two-week period, from January 31 through February 11, in order to report what transit users experience on a day-to-day basis. Thank you to all our volunteers for your hard work and dedication! This invaluable feedback will allow TransitWorks to develop some suggestions for MBTA improvement - or provide kudos to the MBTA for a job well done. We extend our apologies to those volunteers that were unable to attend a Charlies Project training session and participate in the project.

Over the next few months, TransitWorks will establish the next steps for the Charlies Project, compile and report the results of the 2005 Transit Diary effort, and will conduct a "Station Evaluation" of Orange Line facilities. We will continue to keep our volunteers and partners updated about our activities through the TransitWorks Connection and our website, [www.transitworks.org](http://www.transitworks.org). Enjoy the Spring season!

### Special Stops of Interest:

- The MBTA provides an update on the new Automated Fare Collection system
- Andrea Leary shares information about Mass Commute

## Next Generation Transit Projects...

Vineet Gupta, Boston Transportation Department

The Boston Transportation Department works closely with the MBTA to prioritize improvements to existing transit service. For example, the department has supported the implementation of automated fare collection and increased frequency on key bus routes. In tandem with emphasis on "fix-it-first" actions, Boston has also proposed long-term strategies to expand the transit system: centered around three systems outlined below. This framework is presented as a menu of options, for decision-makers and the community to consider while debating the future of transit in the Boston area.

- **Expanded Silver Line:** Using the currently proposed Silver Line alignment as a backbone, Boston proposes expansions to Mattapan Square along Warren Street and Blue Hill Avenue, to Allston Brighton and the Fenway using the Turnpike, and to residential South Boston. Future light-rail tunnel connections are key to the proposal.
- **Fast Track Rapid Rail:** This concept combines currently proposed projects that utilize commuter rail right-of-ways like the Indigo Line through Dorchester, the Yawkey - South Station shuttle (East-West connector) and the Allston Landing inter-modal center into a proposed rapid rail system.
- **Urban Ring:** A proposed circumferential transit service connecting Boston to surrounding communities, it will link the Longwood Medical Area to Crosstown and Dudley Square and further east to the JFK Station area in Dorchester, the South Boston Waterfront and Logan Airport. An environmental impact study for a busway based Phase II is currently underway for this system. A tunnel based Phase III is also envisioned.

### Inside this issue:

Select Comments from Transit Diary Participants	2
Easy Way Update	2
TransitWorks' Mission and Goals	3
MassCommute and the MBTA - Partners in Transportation	3

## Select Comments from Transit Diary Participants

*As part of diary effort, TransitWorks received many comments about the MBTA. We thought we would share a few with you.*

The majority of personnel do a good job, but bad service is really remembered. A bus that never came lowered my rating of service for that whole week.

This exercise has achieved a double purpose. It has provided you with informa-

tion for making improvements to the transportation system, and has opened my eyes to the responsibilities of riders. Litter is a problem because riders constantly litter. It is unreasonable to expect "T" personnel to clean cars and buses at the end of every run. And even if they could, that's not how I want my tax dollars used. Overall, I have a lot more respect for the efforts of the "T" personnel since participating in this study.

Charles Station is extremely hazardous. The metal stairs have a slippery coating of icy stuff, and the danger of falling is great. The elevated walkway is crowded and I worry about being mugged there.

I have been riding the bus for over 9 years - it is one of the best ways to get into the city, even with its frustrations.

## Easy Way Update

Automated Fare Collection Project Office, MBTA

Test versions of new fareboxes, the first part of Easy Way to be presented to the public, will be used by customers and bus operators on the Silver Line Washington Street through the end of May 2005. Easy Way is the name given to the new automated fare collection system, and fully captures the many benefits of the MBTA's upcoming service enhancements including fare vending machines, new cards and tickets, new fareboxes, customer service personnel, new gates and state-of-the-art safety systems.



*Test version of the New MBTA Fareboxes - Courtesy of the MBTA*

Several hundred participants are currently using a test CharlieCard as their monthly pass or stored value card in order to help test and implement this new system.

The test version of the new fareboxes look considerably different from the current ones, and also provide many added features. Some important information about the new fareboxes used on the Silver Line Washington Street follows.

1. These boxes still take tokens, coins and current passes.

2. A built-in display will tell the customer how much the fare is as well as how much value remains on his/her CharlieCard or CharlieTicket.

3. The farebox validates \$1, \$5, \$10, and \$20 dollar bills, as well as all coins.

4. If a farebox detects non-valid bills or coins, it returns them to the customer.

5. If a customer puts in more money than the \$0.90 fare, they will receive a CharlieTicket good for the

difference. For example, if a customer puts in \$5.00, they will receive a \$4.10 CharlieTicket as change, valid on the Silver Line Washington Street branch. On the next ride, insert the CharlieTicket into the ticket slot, and the appropriate fare will be deducted. If there is not enough value on the CharlieTicket to pay the total amount of the fare, then you can pay the remaining amount in cash.

*"This spring, the MBTA will begin installation of the new fare collection equipment on the Blue Line, and later in the year to the Red, Orange and Green subway lines."*

6. Existing MBTA passes will no longer be swiped from right to left. Customers insert their monthly passes into the ticket slot where they are checked for validity and then returned to the customer. This also means that monthly passes should be removed from key chains prior to boarding.

7. Customers who use CharlieCards simply touch the card near the orange target. The farebox checks for a valid monthly pass or a sufficient cash amount for the ride. The farebox also issues transfers if a customer requests one from the operator.

The MBTA will evaluate these test fareboxes and introduce a final version on buses and Green Line vehicles beginning in Winter 2005-06. For your own experience, take a ride on the Silver Line Washington Street. Let us know what you think by picking up a comment card from your bus operator or emailing us at [feedback@mbta.com](mailto:feedback@mbta.com).

This spring, the MBTA will begin installation of the new fare collection

equipment on the Blue Line, and later in the year to the Red, Orange and Green subway lines. The successful completion of these improvements will not be possible without

the help of all MBTA employees and customers. Thank you all for your continued support as we revolutionize how the MBTA does business, interacts with its customers, supervises its employees and manages its stations. For more information on Easy Way and the CharlieCard, visit [mbta.com](http://mbta.com) and click on the CharlieCard icon.



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In Collaboration With:



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.

## **MassCommute and the MBTA – Partners in Transportation**

Andrea Leary, MassCommute Managing Director

MassCommute is a coalition of Massachusetts Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) that leverage public and private funds to increase participation in ridesharing and other commuting alternatives - such as public transportation, telecommuting, and non-motorized options - to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality across the state.

TMAs themselves are membership organizations that work to facilitate communication between their corporate members (and member employees) and municipal, state, and federal officials. On behalf of their members, TMAs advocate for:

- improvements in transportation infrastructure,
- more funding for transit initiatives, and
- the adoption of land use patterns that promote the use of existing infrastructure while reducing the dependence by commuters on sin-

gle-occupant vehicle commute modes.

TMAs also work tirelessly to promote alternative commute modes to their member employees through on-site transportation events, newsletters, incentive programs, and other means, and provide important shuttle services that complement MBTA services.

In 2004, Massachusetts TMAs worked closely with the MBTA to distribute literature and to hold DNC transportation-related business forums for TMA member companies and their employees in various TMA areas. MassCommute TMAs also worked with the MBTA to include TMA shuttle routes on the new MBTA System Maps that were printed in June, and the Artery Business Committee TMA along with TranSComm are assisting the MBTA with testing the new automated fare collection prototype. In addition to these activities, MassCommute TMAs sent out more than 100 blast e-mail announcements regarding

MBTA events, transit advisories, or meetings and distributed over 8,000 "Transit Watch" brochures to more than 150 businesses - PDF versions of the brochure were also sent to TMA members and employees.

MassCommute TMAs are looking forward to 2005 – a year that will continue to foster communication and information sharing between the MBTA, TMAs, and TMA members. In the spring, the TMAs will learn more about upcoming MBTA services such as the rollout of the new Automated Fare Collection (AFC) system, the new WiFi technology initiative, and updates about MBTA projects including the Silver Line, Blue Line platform expansion, and the Lechmere Station construction project on the Green Line. Planning meetings are also underway for two major promotional events for Water Transportation Week in June and Communities in Motion Week in October.

For more information on MassCommute, please visit our website at [www.masscommute.com](http://www.masscommute.com).