



The quarterly newsletter of TransitWorks - www.TransitWorks.org

Special Stops of Interest:

- TransitWorks shares findings of the 2004 "MBTA Ridership Survey"
- Barbara Boylan from the MBTA gives us an update and description of the new Government Center Station
- Jane Lindsay, a TransitWorks Charlies, describes how her neighbors work together to make a difference in their community

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TransitWorks Update!

Jessica Conaway, TransitWorks Executive Director

TransitWorks has been busy over the past several months in our efforts to collect and report MBTA customer feedback. Our primary focus has been processing the information reported via the almost 150 "Charlies Project" Transit Diaries received. The Charlies Project was a two week diary effort in which volunteers logged detailed information about their transit use including MBTA on-time performance, cleanliness, etc. We spent almost 6 weeks entering the information gathered via the "link report sheets" in our database, and have also entered all of the comments received. We will now spend the next several months analyzing the data and will report the results of the effort to the MBTA some time this summer. Thank you to all Transit Diary participants for your extraordinary efforts in January and February. 3,738 "links", or rides on an individual MBTA vehicle, were logged!

TransitWorks has also been working with the Automated Fare Collection (AFC) project office at the MBTA and conducted a focus group of AFC preview program participants from the lower South End Transportation Management Association (TMA), TransComm. This focus group was successful in communicating important customer feedback to the MBTA and TransitWorks looks forward to conducting additional focus groups in the future.

In addition to analyzing the Transit Diary feedback, TransitWorks will now turn our attention to the Orange Line Station Evaluation we are leading the week of June 13th, an evaluation of Red Line Stations, and our yearly MBTA Ridership Survey to be conducted next fall. Thank you for your continued support, and enjoy the summer!

Water Transportation Awareness Week

David Straus, Executive Director, Artery Business Committee TMA

It is hard to imagine the city without its harbor, piers, and docks that for centuries have welcomed millions of immigrants, cargo ships, tourists, and commuters. Yes commuters. Every day thousands of residents from the South Shore to Charlestown hop on board one of the four commuter boats offered by the MBTA. These services, from Charlestown, Hingham, Hull, and Quincy, provide commuters an escape from the crowded roadways and stress of driving in congestion along Route 3 and the Central Artery.

After three years of driving alone into Boston from Marshfield, Kevin MacKinnon finally decided to make the switch to the commuter boat. "I use to dread the Monday morning commute and the Friday drive home during the summer. Now, I look forward to the Friday commute home on the boat. Now, I only drive into the city when I absolutely have to."

You can make that switch too. **June 20-24, 2005** is Water Transportation Awareness Week, a time to celebrate one of the oldest forms of public transportation, the boat. To celebrate, the MBTA, Artery Business Committee Transportation Management Association (ABC TMA), MassCommute, and private boat carriers are planning a week of activities to encourage commuters to hop on board a commuter boat during the week. And to make it even easier for you to try out the MBTA's water transportation the ABC TMA will be raffling off free one-week passes to potential new riders. For more information about Water Transportation Awareness Week activities visit the ABC TMA at www.abctma.com. For more information about the MBTA's water transportation services visit the MBTA online at: www.massferryroutes.com.

Results: 2004 MBTA Ridership Survey

Jessica Conaway, TransitWorks Executive Director

As you may recall, TransitWorks conducted a survey of MBTA users in September and October of 2004. Our partners and the members of the TransitWorks Steering Committee were absolutely essential in helping TransitWorks distribute an estimated 75,000 surveys, and as a result of this effort, TransitWorks received 2,671 responses.

Respondents received this survey via e-mail and clicked through to take it on the TransitWorks website, or mailed in a bright green paper copy they received on a platform or in a station.

Thank you to all those who completed and returned a survey.

“After averaging the satisfaction expressed by all 2,671 respondents, we are happy to report that respondents scored their satisfaction as “neutral”.

The survey was designed to determine MBTA customer satisfaction with 15 “quality categories”, as illustrated to the right. We asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with these categories by scoring their satisfaction from 5 to 1 - 5 being highly satisfied, and 1 highly dissatisfied.

We also asked respondents to select which of these categories were of greatest importance to them.

Findings

After averaging the satisfaction expressed by all 2,671 respondents, we are happy to report that respondents scored their satisfaction as “neutral”. No category scored lower than a “2” or dissatisfied - that is a great sign for overall MBTA satisfaction. It is equally important to note, however, that no

categories scored over “4” or satisfied. This leads us to believe that although respondents are not generally dissatisfied with the service they receive, there is definitely room for improvement.

Respondents were most satisfied with the categories pertaining to information, safety, signage and the ability to get to stations and stops via foot or bicycle. Respondents were less satisfied with the categories pertaining to personal comfort, announcements on platforms and seating.

Respondents also indicated that MBTA service reliability was by far the most important category to them. The categories

pertaining to personal comfort and safety were also important, followed by cleanliness, announcements, and customer service.

Recommendations and Next Steps

TransitWorks used these findings to develop over 55 recommendations for improvement. The bulk of these recommendations are targeted towards those categories that respondents selected as important, and those categories that respondents expressed lower levels of satisfaction about.

These recommendations are a menu of ideas that the MBTA can pursue to improve overall MBTA customer satisfaction.

TransitWorks has presented these results to the MBTA, and we look forward to working with them in

the coming months as they implement several of the recommendations suggested.

We will conduct a second survey this fall, in September and October 2005, and look forward to analyzing and reporting the feedback received via that effort. It is our hope that this critical customer feedback will help the MBTA make improvements to existing transit infrastructure, and that the resulting improvements will improve MBTA customer satisfaction, keep people using the MBTA’s services, and encourage more to get on-board.

Quality Categories

Availability of general information about MBTA services

Signage that helps you find your way to and around stations

MBTA announcements and messages on platforms and in stations

MBTA announcements in vehicles

Customer service of MBTA personnel

Cleanliness of MBTA stations and stops

Cleanliness of MBTA vehicles

Attractiveness of MBTA stations and stops

Availability of seating on MBTA vehicles

Personal comfort on MBTA vehicles (temperature, crowding)

MBTA service reliability

Personal safety when using MBTA services

Accessibility of system for persons who rely on lifts, ramps, elevators or escalators

Ability to get to stations and stops on foot or bicycle

Availability of parking at or near stations

The NEW Government Center Station

Barbara J. Boylan AIA, Director of Design, MBTA

The NEW Government Center station will be a catalyst for change on City Hall Plaza. The contemporary station architecture will provide the necessary junction and natural terminus to the Community Arcade (which redefine the urban edge of the plaza along Cambridge Street) built a few years ago by the City of Boston.

The entire existing Government Center station will be renovated

and modernized, with the demolition of the bunker type headhouse which was built in 1964.

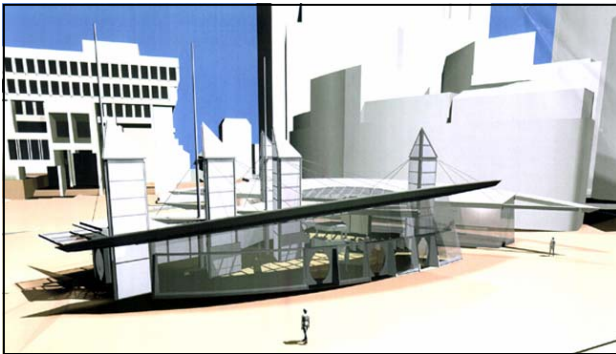
"The entire existing Government Center station will be renovated and modernized, with the demolition of the bunker type headhouse which was built in 1964."

Green Line level will be raised to be compatible with the new low-floor vehicles, and the platforms on the Blue Line level will be extended to accommodate six-car trains. These improvements will bring the station complex into

The station will be outfitted with new elevators, escalators, stairs, lights, and communication systems. The platforms on the

ADA compliancy. Above ground, a new glass and steel headhouse will be constructed on City Hall Plaza, bringing natural light into the Green Line level. Additionally, a second head house with elevator and escalator will be constructed adjacent to the JFK building, leading directly to a new subsurface Blue Line mezzanine and fare-collection line. The design work was completed by CityBuilders: A joint venture of SYSTRA and Thomson Design Associates. Jacobs, Inc, are the Construction Phase engineers. The project is due to be advertised for construction later this summer. For more information, visit:

www.mbta.com/projects_underway/pid.asp



Rendering of Proposed Headhouse Design Looking East from Cambridge Street. - Courtesy of the MBTA



Nighttime Rendering of Proposed Headhouse Design at Government Center Station. - Courtesy of the MBTA

Neighbors Who Make a Difference

Jane Lindsay, TransitWorks Charlie

Anyone who has ever tried to reconcile their bank statement knows it takes a little discipline to do anything on a monthly basis. That's why it's even more remarkable that a dedicated group of neighbors gathers on a monthly basis at our local Red Line station, Shawmut in Dorchester, to caretake the station and surrounding tunnelcap area. The activities of the group include monthly clean-ups, where volunteers spend

Saturday mornings picking up litter, sweeping, clearing weeds and brush, planting, weeding, mulching, shoveling, or whatever the season requires. For several years I have watched their care for the station bring out the best in riders and the neighborhood.

Their dedication to transit doesn't end with the physical maintenance of the station. Several members of this group have spent the last several

years attending meetings with T officials around the planning of the renovation of Shawmut station.

These volunteers understand the value of cooperation and steadfastness in working with T officials to improve the quality of transit in Dorchester. They are an inspiration to those of us still struggling with that bank reconciliation issue!



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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.

Automated Fare Collection (AFC) Update - Questions and Answers

The MBTA will roll out components of its new service enhancements (including new fare vending machines, new cards and tickets, new fareboxes, customer service personnel, new gates and state-of-the-art safety systems) in the coming months. These Questions and Answers provide some information about what you can expect. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact TransitWorks at 617-557-7349.

Q: What is the order of conversion for the stations and how long will this take?

A: Airport and Aquarium Stations were converted to the MBTA's new fare collection equipment on May 17, 2005. Installation of new equipment is planned for 6 additional Blue Line stations throughout this summer.

The conversion of Orange, Red, and Green lines begins later in 2005 and is projected to continue through 2006. The bus and Green Line fleet will be converted in 2006.

Q: When will CharlieTickets and CharlieCards be available, and what is the difference?

A: CharlieTickets will be available right away, and the CharlieCards will be available in 2007. When they become available, CharlieCards will last longer, hold more products (both passes and stored

value) and allow for additional optional features such as loss protection.

Q: Is the CharlieTicket a monthly pass?

A: You can store a pass on it, and it can act just like a monthly pass, or it can contain stored value – but not both at the same time.

Q: How do I know how much value is left on my card or ticket?

A: When you tap your card or insert your ticket to pay your fare, the farebox or fare gate display will show the remaining value. Nothing about the value is actually printed on the ticket or card, but you can check the value of the ticket and the card at the fare vending machines. If your CharlieTicket is a monthly pass, the pass is valid for the purchased month; just like it is today.

Q: What happens if you lose your CharlieTicket or CharlieCard? Can someone else use it?

A: If you lose your ticket, it is not replaceable or refundable. More information on the process for lost CharlieCards will be available closer to their debut in 2007.

Q: What do people do with tokens they already bought?

A: Tokens will continue to be accepted at stations with the existing fare equipment. Customers can convert tokens to stored value tickets at the fare vending machines at converted stations.

Q: Currently, I receive my monthly pass through my workplace. How will this change?

A: During this transition period, nothing will change. You will continue to receive a monthly pass through your employer. Changes to the corporate pass program will be announced in advance of any implementation.

Q: I ride the Commuter Rail and/or Boat. How will I be affected?

A: New fare vending machines and ticket office equipment will be installed at Back Bay, North Station and South Station, and fare vending machines throughout the system will sell commuter rail monthly passes and multi-ride tickets, and commuter boat passes. Monthly commuter rail and boat passes will continue to allow customers to ride on the bus and subway system, just as they do today.