

The



Connection!

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TransitWorks Update

Kate Driscoll, TransitWorks Program Manager

As the new Program Manager for *TransitWorks* I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. I am pleased to take over leadership of *TransitWorks* as Jessica Conaway transitions into her new position with the Artery Business Committee.

I'd also like to thank Jessica Conaway on behalf of the organization for her tremendous contribution over the past year and a half. Thanks to her hard work, *TransitWorks* has completed four major research projects, including the 2004 Ridership survey, station evaluations of the Blue and Orange lines, as well as the innovative 2005 Charlies Transit Diary project. Under her leadership, *TransitWorks* also completed two special projects in collaboration with the MBTA, including a focus group on Automated Fare collection Fareboxes on the Silver Line, and a survey designed to solicit customer feedback on Green Line stop elimination.

Perhaps Jessica's most important contribution to *TransitWorks* has been her dedication and enthusiasm for helping the MBTA increase ridership and maximize its potential through objective customer service research. I plan to continue to bring that enthusiasm and dedication to the table as *TransitWorks* moves forward, with Jessica on board as a member of the Executive Committee.

In the coming months, *TransitWorks* will be working with the MBTA to implement the recommendations from our Transit Diary project, continuing with Station Evaluations of the Green and Red Lines, as well as working with our Charlies to develop new research projects. As Program Manager, I'm always open to new ideas. Please don't hesitate to call me at (617) 557-7349. I look forward to hearing from you !

Fall signals return of students, commute changes

By Stephanie Anderberg, Transportation Demand Management Planner, City of Cambridge

In Cambridge, the end of summer is signaled not only by cooling temperatures and changing leaves, but also by the return of students. Many people feel the impact of this seasonal change on their own commutes.

In addition to the college students and university employees, others are altering their commute to drop off a grade school student on the way. Some people are not directly involved in a school commute, but are finding that highways are more crowded and parking is tougher with less people on vacation.

At this point of commute change, there is an opportunity to explore all of your options. With the added pressure of increasing gas prices, more people are also looking to ways of reducing gas use. We recommend the trip planning feature on www.mbta.com, as it provides specific schedule and route information for particular details of your trip. The feature is useful for daily trips, such as a commute, and is especially helpful in planning a less common trip, such as to a new meeting location, or to a cultural attraction.

In Cambridge, we have a strong network of buses and subways, plus a commuter rail connection. Our compact development means that people can easily walk to their neighborhood bus stop or rail station. Bicycle paths and bike lanes also connect to transit. We welcome you to come explore!

Safety and service reliability receive high marks from Charlies Transit Diary project participants rate Commuter Boat, Blue Line most satisfactory modes

By Kate Driscoll, TransitWorks Program Manager

This January, over 140 volunteers participated in the 2005 Charlies Transit Diary Project. This project was designed to collect feedback from MBTA riders on their satisfaction with their daily transit experiences. Each participant (or "Charlie") received a Transit Diary in which they logged their satisfaction with a variety of components of each link of each trip. A "link" is a single ride on an MBTA vehicle.

Participants rated their satisfaction on a scale of 5 (Highly Satisfied) to 1 (Highly Dissatisfied) with the following:

- Announcements on platforms and in stations
- Cleanliness of stations and stops
- Cleanliness of vehicles
- Wait time
- Availability of seating
- Announcements on vehicles
- Personal comfort
- Safety
- Customer Service

Participants reported from throughout the MBTA service area, from cities and towns including Cambridge, Brookline, Somerville, Sharon, Ashland, Worcester and Taunton.

Just under 80% of all trips were recorded during rush hour, and the distribution across modes was consistent with overall MBTA ridership.

The overall satisfaction expressed by participants was 3.7 or satisfied!

Participants ranked safety in stations and in vehicles as the

The Project at a Glance:

- 142 Diaries Received
- 3,738 "links" recorded
- 1.4 links recorded per trip
- Average Number of links per volunteer: 26.3

highest scoring category. Satisfaction with service reliability was a close second.

The commuter boat was by far the highest rated mode, getting an overall rating of 4.77 or nearly "Highly Satisfied." None of the modes scored lower than 3.5.

Participants indicated they had noticed improvements made by

the MBTA in station cleanliness, but indicated a desire for cleaner stations and improved announcement.

TransitWorks presented the findings from the project to a full house of MBTA personnel in early October as well as some strategies for improving customer satisfaction. We look forward to continuing to work with the MBTA to implement our recommendations.

Many thanks to all of our participants. Their feedback has provided and invaluable information about the day to day experiences of MBTA riders.

If you didn't get a chance to participate in our 2005 Transit Diary project, don't worry! TransitWorks will continue to provide opportunities for MBTA riders to provide the T with feedback. Visit our website, transitworks.org, or look for email update about how you can participate!

Quotes of Note What Transit Diary Participants Said:

"The boat commute has improved my day each day I take it. I love the boat commute from Hingham to Boston. I especially enjoy the Massachusetts crew – a nice and friendly group. More than your usual friendliness, courtesy, etc. At Christmas the boat was decorated!"

"It would be helpful if re-route announcements could be made as soon as the decision has been made and at each stop thereafter."

"(The MBTA is) doing a good job of keeping everything clean, working and running. But it is hard when so many passengers don't care, are lazy or rude. It wouldn't take a lot to keep everything clean if the passengers wouldn't dump trash, mark things up or brake things."

MBTA.com provides useful tools for riders

By Kate Driscoll, TransitWorks Program Manager

You can't get there from here...or can you?

Not sure the best way to get there on the T? Wondering if your current route is the most efficient? Want to minimize your walking distance? MBTA.com provides a number of useful tools for finding out just how to get from here to there riding the MBTA.

To use the trip planner, just enter your starting point, destination, and desired time of arrival, and the Trip Planner will do the rest. You can also "customize" your trip by indicating your desired walking distance and whether you prefer to minimize travel time, transfers or walking distance.

Other features that help you manage your travel include real time service disruption notifications, an option to search for the five closest transit stations or stops to any particular address, as well as information about MBTA services around a particular location.

Visit www.MBTA.com to use the trip planner.

The MBTA wants to hear from you!

Customer service initiatives put riders in touch with upper management at the T

Cleaning Between the Lines

In order to respond to your cleanliness concerns, the T has instituted the "Cleaning Between the Lines" program to solicit customer comments on subway station cleanliness, either on general cleanliness or specific issues, like overflowing trash cans, litter, and foul odors. This customer service tool allows them to monitor the performance of their cleaning contractors, as well as respond to directly to your concerns. Visit the website (www.mbta.com) to send your feedback.

Write to the Top

You have a right to be heard! If you have ideas about how your experience riding the MBTA could be improved, write to the top! Go to www.mbta.com and select "Write to the Top" under "Contact Us." You will find the contact information for all of the top level subway, bus, commuter boat, and commuter rail line manager. Let them know about your experience, and top level management will respond.

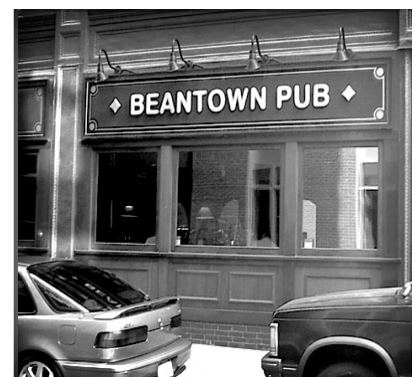


SAVE THE DATE!



TransitWorks Holiday Party
Tuesday, December 13th 5:30 pm
 at the
Beantown Pub, 100 Tremont St.

RSVP: (617) 557-7349 or kdriscoll@transitworks.org





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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.

Jackson Square Station scores high in Orange Line Station Evaluations

TransitWorks volunteers rate cleanliness, structural conditions and lighting in Orange Line Stations

By Kate Driscoll, TransitWorks Program Manager

With the help of almost 20 volunteers, TransitWorks evaluated each of the 19 stations on the Orange Line this summer. Participants rated the cleanliness, structural conditions, and lighting in each station's entrance, lobby, platform, hallways and stairs. They were also asked to make recommendations for improving signage and physical conditions.

Overall, Orange Line stations scored an average of 3.2 out of a possible 4 points, or a B+. Some stations, particularly those in the Southwest Corridor, scored above this number while others scored below. The highest scoring station overall was Jackson Square Station at 3.7 (roughly an A-) and the lowest scoring station was Ruggles Station. Ruggles received a 2.7 (B-) overall, mostly because of small structural issues, inoperable escalators and elevators,

and cleanliness issues at the time of evaluation.

Recommendations included more trash cans in stations, moving bike racks to more visible locations and improved signage. Many participants expressed they

would like to see signs more clearly directing riders to areas of interest around stations.

Overall, TransitWorks was impressed with the station cleanliness on the Orange Line, the maintenance of most stations, as well as lighting and signage. We look forward to working with the MBTA to imple-

ment the recommendations made by participants, as well as conducting similar initiatives on the Red and Green Lines. To participate, send an email to volunteer@transitworks.org or call Kate at (617) 557-7349.

Orange Line Station Evaluations

At a glance:

3.2: Average Score (out of a possible 4) of Orange Line Stations

19: Total number of Stations on the Orange Line

Jackson Square: Highest Scoring Station

Ruggles Station: Lowest Scoring Station