



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133
ROOM 405 TEL. 722-1280

SENATOR GEORGE BACHRACH
MIDDLESEX AND SUFFOLK DISTRICT

COMMITTEES:
COUNTIES (CHAIRMAN)
TAXATION (VICE CHAIRMAN)
CRIMINAL JUSTICE
(VICE CHAIRMAN)

MEMO

To: Senator Bachrach
From: Ken Goode
Date: April 18, 1984

RE: MBTA Ridership Questionnaire Summary

Responses to Questions 2 and 3 indicate that the trip to North Cambridge, once riders are on the bus, is not a problem. The problem is an insufficient number of buses and long waits at the Cambridge Common in the evening and along the route in the morning.

Watertown riders are distressed about both the wait at the Common in the evening and the time of the trip once on the bus.

Waverley riders are focused on the trip itself, however, and not on a wait at the Common. Question 4 indicates that Waverley riders are served by well-spaced intervals as well, while North Cambridge and Watertown riders are serviced very erratically.

To Question 5, the responses are ambiguous. The question as asked does not differentiate between groups to the same destination and groups to different destinations.

Question 6 focuses on the "obvious" for disgruntled riders waiting at the Cambridge Common. Starters refuse to change bus destinations to accommodate those whose bus has not come in a long while. Again, Question 3 reinforces the fact that Watertown and North Cambridge riders are the ones waiting. Only the Waverley riders were vague and disinterested in saying how often destinations are changed, probably because they perceive their service as good, but inconvenient.

Many of the responses to Question 9 show similar patterns of concern for riders of the different trolley lines. Both Watertown and North Cambridge riders cited "More Buses" as their top priority; both groups pointed out the imbalanced number of Waverley buses (3 or 4 to 1); and both groups detected irregular scheduling on their own routes as a major problem. Signs of Distress (i.e. rudeness by drivers and starters, more shelters needed, lack of information, and suggestions focuses on finding alternatives) are the focus of Watertown and North Cambridge users. Signs of Inconvenience (put trolleys on Mount Auburn Street, let us off closer to the subway, improve shuttle connection

and weekend service) dominate Waverley riders' responses. Priorities must focus on this "Distress" pattern on the Watertown and North Cambridge trolley lines.

Question 7 clearly indicates the effectiveness of a police officer to cross people from the Common in the morning, while Question 8 indicates that more police are wanted in the evening, especially between the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Garden Street, and between Dawes Island and the Common in particular. The former location has automated "WALK" signs, but the latter has nothing but a crosswalk. Many responses noted a police officer has recently been stationed there, however. This came about, I believe, as a result of calling this problem to the attention of the Cambridge City Council, who ordered the crossing to be policed.

DEAR MBTA RIDER,

Last September, the MBTA switched to a temporary route alignment which has affected many riders on both the Red Line and the surface routes into and out of Harvard Square. I have ridden all the routes at different times and realize that this arrangement is not nearly as convenient as either the previous alignment or the permanent solution scheduled for less than a year from now.

In the time remaining under this temporary alignment, we want the least disruption possible. This questionnaire has been prepared using suggestions from riders and personal observations. If you would take a minute to fill it out and return it to my office, we will compile the responses and work with the MBTA to respond to the problems indicated.

Thank you for helping with this effort to reduce the inconveniences imposed during the temporary rerouting. When this is over, the commute will be along the fastest and most efficient routes to Harvard Square including the underground bus and trolley connections. Please take a few minutes to fill out the questionnaire so that we can try to make the additional adjustments that will make the remaining time under the temporary alignment more bearable. Thank you.

Sincerely,


George Bachrach

+++++

1. Which Route do you usually take?
Watertown____Waverley____North Cambridge____Shuttle____Other____
2. Has the trip time on this route changed since November? Yes____No____
Takes longer____shorter____same____ By how much?_____
3. Has the time you wait for a bus changed since November? Yes____No____
4. Do buses come at fairly evenly spaced intervals? Yes____No____
5. Do buses come in groups? Yes____No____
6. Have you ever seen a starter change a bus's destination when more than one bus
to that destination arrive at the same time? Yes____No____
If YES, how often? _____
7. Has the police officer stationed in front of Christ Church (across from the
Cambridge Common on Garden Street) been there each morning on a regular
basis to help people cross Garden Street? Yes____No____Irregular____
8. Is there a particular place where crossing to or from the Cambridge Common in
the evening could be improved? Yes____No____
Between where and where? _____
9. If you could change three things that would help to improve life for everyone
under this temporary arrangement, what would they be?
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Please return completed questionnaires to: Senator George Bachrach, Room 405,
State House, Boston MA 02133.

MBTA RIDER QUESTIONNAIRE---Survey Results

#1 Which Bus do you use? Watertown Waverley North Camb.

Surveys returned: 71 107 79

#2 Takes longer 54 55 44
 #of minutes (avg.) (+13) (+13) (+12)

Shorter 2 1 1

Same 11 19 27

#3 Yes 49 50 62
 No 17 50 11

#4 Yes 18 58 12
 No 46 39 61
 Sometimes 5 6 2

#5 Yes 45 52 56
 No 15 23 12
 Sometimes 9 30 8

#6 Yes 6 16 8
 Once or Twice only 21 10 19
 No 43 76 44

#7 Yes 33 56 50
 No 5 3 5
 Irregular 20 38 18

#8 Improve P.M. Crossings at:

Dawes Island to Common 13 32 22
 Garden St. @ Mass. Ave. 11 17 12
 Christ Church 2 1 8
 To Flagstaff Park 1 3 8
 Appian @ Garden St. 2 3 0
 Any One Place 2 0 5

QUESTION #9 RESULTS---Watertown Trolley

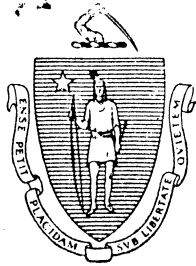
	# of
More Watertown buses in the evening	18
3 or 4 Waverley buses to 1 Watertown	16
Set regular schedules for buses	13
Rude drivers	11
Let starters change trolley destinations	9
More shelters on Common	8
Run Watertown to Harvard direct (express)	7
Buses with fewer than ten passengers (or empty) be rerouted or wait	5
Drop people off at Common Entrance, closer to subway	4
Allow passholders to enter through rear door	4
Don't loop Watertown trolleys to North Cambridge	3
Improve the Red Line	3
Subway station entrances too small and dangerous	3
Starters are not outside in bad weather	3
Drivers should not smoke in buses	2

QUESTION #9 RESULTS---Waverley Trolley

	#of
Go back to Mt. Auburn street routing	29
Improve shuttle service, less erratic	15
Drop people off at Common Entrance, closer to subway	15
More frequent service	9
Space trolleys better	9
Improve weekend service (and evenings)	9
Improve the Red Line	9
Run Waverley to Harvard on Huron route w/ no stops	7
Subway station entrances too small and dangerous	7
Better street crossing assistance	7
Announce long term plans and daily problems better	6
Use diesel buses	5
More shelters on Common	5
Buses too full	4
Let shuttle passengers stay on to Arlington St.	4
Service is very good!!	4
Rude drivers	3
Unloading at Park Street is inconvenient	3
Let passholders use rear doors	2
Run express bus from Waverley Center to Boston	2
Put a woman on the MBTA Board	1
Put more Watertown trolleys on	1

QUESTION #9 RESULTS---North Cambridge Trolley

	# of
More North Cambridge buses	33
Have 77 bus stop for 77A people, too many pass by	17
Put North Cambridge buses on regular schedules	13
Better informational services, signs, and directions	12
Reroute to 77A when groups of trolleys come to Common	11
Starters are discourteous and ineffective	8
Rude drivers	6
More police for crossings	5
Use rear doors for passholders to board buses	4
Open Porter and Davis stations	4
Drivers slam brakes and make fast starts	3
Subway exits insufficient and unsafe	2
Improve Red Line-long delays	2
Build pedestrian bridges	2
3 Waverley trolleys to each North Cambridge	1



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MEMO

To: Senator Bachrach
From: Ken Goode
Date: April 19, 1984

RE: Priorities for MBTA Meeting

- 1.) It is obvious that the Watertown and North Cambridge trolleys cannot or do not keep a schedule. The looping of the Watertown trolley to North Cambridge puts all riders at a disadvantage on both these lines. They should be separated during rush hours (at least to minimize the effects of traffic jams and natural tie-ups along the routes.
- 2.) More buses on the lines. I suspect the above-mentioned item would help give better spacing of buses and keep them closer to the schedules. More trolleys on each line during rush hours may be also be necessary.
- 3.) Ability of Starters to change bus destinations. Before this survey was taken, the largest single complaint to this office was "3 or 4 Waverley's and sometimes 6 or 7 to one Watertown." This comment was usually accompanied by, "The Starters send them out empty and they travel around in packs." This is confirmed by the survey. Starters must have autonomy especially in bad weather.
- 4.) Access from the Common to the subway entrance and vice-versa is a big priority and addressing rider/walker habits is necessary. In the morning, people cross Garden Street immediately upon getting off the buses. In the evening, walker/riders use a route to the Common via Dawes Island. This must be addressed by posting a police officer there daily.

RED LINE PRIORITIES:

Red Line delays are mentioned by many. Subway entrances are considered hazardous as well. But lack of information is mentioned most often. The Southeast Expressway project has created frequent turnarounds of trains at Park Street, requiring taking many Northbound trains out of service at Park. The inconvenience of having to get off at Park and wait again would be more bearable if A) people knew that the train was only going to Park when the boarded it; and B) the labels on the trains were dependable. Some trains say "Park", then go to Harvard. Some say "Harvard" but turn at Park.

Memo-2

1.) A comprehensive informational sheet would go a long way toward improving understanding among riders and also improve public relations.

2.) Also, many people want updates on the progress of the Alewife extension project. Is it on schedule? Will Davis and Porter open first? Keep improving announcements in subways--there were a number of references about the flow of information.

OTHER GOOD SUGGESTIONS:

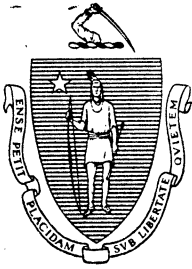
--Let bus riders with passes board through rear doors. Starters should be able to handle that.

--Drivers should not smoke in the bus while on the route.

--Shuttle bus users should be allowed to ride to Arlington Street outbound and be picked up from Arlington Street inbound.

--Point out to drivers of the shuttle buses that a new "stop" has been installed on John F. Kennedy Street, opposite Eliot Street.

--Don't let another winter go by under this arrangement.



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10 May 1984

The Cambridge City Council
c/o Cambridge City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Members of the City Council:

I am writing to respond to the City Council Order of 30 April 1984 sent to my office relative to trackless trolley service problems along the North Cambridge MBTA line.

As you may know, I recently conducted a ridership survey of trackless trolley users on the Waverley, Watertown, and North Cambridge lines. The results of the North Cambridge portion of that survey clearly indicate that either more buses are needed or access to the other buses that use Massachusetts Avenue (Arlington Heights in particular) must be explored.

I have delivered the results of the survey to General Manager O'Leary at the MBTA and indicated to him the need to correct the service on the North Cambridge line. I expect a response soon.

I am enclosing a copy of the survey, the results, and the recommendations made to the MBTA. Although the survey is not a scientific analysis of the problems, I feel it provides solid data for the MBTA to act on.

I thank you for your concern, and I look forward to working with the Cambridge City Council to resolve this matter as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "George Bachrach".

George Bachrach
State Senator

GB:KGP

Enclosure

S/332

Comm. from Sen. George Bachrach in acknowledgment of resolutions adopted by the Council Re: trackless trolley service problems along the North Cambridge MBTA line & transmitting a copy of ridership survey results with trackless trolley users of the Waverley, Watertown & North Cambridge lines.

In City Council,

May 14, 1984

- 5/14/84 -

Placed on File