



# Association for Public Transportation, Inc

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## MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING

21 May 2003

6:30 p.m.

John Hancock Conference Center, Boston, MA

**Members present:** Fred R. Moore (presiding), Alice Webb, Robert D. Sullivan, Siriwut Buranapin, Franklyn P. Salimbene, Carolyn Whiting, Ken Krause, Cana McCoy, Dan Alden, Barry M. Steinberg, John Hostage, Suzanne Heywood, Astrid Dodds, Carolyn Mieth, George Kelso, Allen Winecour, Carol Blair, Sam Remley, Alfred Maleson, David Marston, Jeff Perk, Charles Fineman, Ernest Loewenstein, Mike Pattberg, Barry D. Andelman and Fredrick Maloney.

**Non-members:** Thomas Lenthall, Greg Hill, Karen Roman, Bette Davis, Edith Ruhman, Larry Fabian and Doug Carrier.

1. President Moore welcomed the membership. He solicited help of everyone working on local transit projects at their own home town.
2. **The Making of *Car-Free® in Boston*:** Andy Rubel, Rubel BikeMaps, with Madeleine Noland and Jeff Perk.

We re-drew all maps. Anything in the book is in the index. We extended and expanded the book and reorganized it. Jeff Perk was the editor, Madeleine Noland did the maps, and Steve Novick did the design of the book.

Ten years ago I started doing bicycle maps. My mission is about balanced transportation. Transit and cycling are extremely synergistic. I want to see people combining these means of transportation.

Your effort giving time to APT gets dividends.

My thanks to the APT Board for entrusting Car-Free® to me.

Questions and answers

- We are working on extended distribution of Car-Free within a couple of weeks; Logan Airport and South Station are among the sites. It is already in bookstores.
- Library copies? We are going to send them to some local libraries.
- What plan is there for an eleventh edition? It is practically on the drawing board. Probably a couple of years. We want to condense some material so we can look at new items. Ideas from everyone are encouraged.

- Can we have an on-line version? Technologically, it is possible, but I think it would be difficult to make a go of it. It is like putting out the book over again.

3. **President's Report: State of the Organization.** Fred R. Moore

We are an information delivery group: The book. Public meetings. At hearings. With the news media.

We made comments on the Urban Ring and the North-South Rail Link. We are not going to roll over and die because the Administration does not favor it.

We are behind rail transit. A renewed vigor for light rail. A transit infrastructure is part of today's streetscape. There was a policy of converting everything to rapid transit or bus, nothing intermediate. There has been not one inch of light rail put in service since this whole process began.

4. Keynote Speaker: **Franklyn Salimbene, the Arborway Committee**, speaking on **Arborway Restoration.**

According to comments made during hearings, the MBTA's reasons for abandoning the project: The agency did a feasibility study "proving" that the proper decision was the one taken.

The Arborway Committee was able to present to the DEP (Department of Environmental Protection) that there was an agreement to restore light rail service to Arborway. This agreement was entered into between the State and the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) to prevent the State from being sued. The Arborway agreement was mode-specific, but not the Washington St. Corridor.

There are three areas where the T often attempts to prove its case in feasibility studies:

- A. Capital Costs.

Between 1999 and 2001 three studies were submitted to the federal government. The T sought a broader definition of infeasibility: "A line that wasn't desired".

They overestimated the cost of service, on the basis they would have to buy additional equipment. We know the T has a peak service need of 149 cars (Cf. *Rollsign*, Jan./Feb. 2003). If you add 16 cars required for Arborway service, the total need is 166 cars. The service requirement for the Breda cars is 83 cars, with 17 spares, providing a ratio of spares of 20%. Spares are needed to allow for maintenance [and as a backup to existing service]. We argued that no additional purchases were necessary. Yet the T said that \$46 million was required for additional cars.

- B. Yet at the same time, they underestimated the cost of buses.

This includes (1) Bus purchase cost and (2) Bus service facility cost. Sixty-foot articulated, low-floor, compressed natural gas (CNG) buses cost \$17.7 million. We saw this probably was accurate, but incomplete. These buses are not currently in use in the USA. A bus generally is good for twelve years. But a streetcar is good for twenty years. In other words, this is not an issue of a one-time bus vs. a one-time streetcar. We calculated our figures without the inflation factor.

The T did not calculate in the cost of the Northampton St. [bus maintenance] facility. That was included in the Silver Line. The Arborway fleet was going to be garaged at Northampton St., taking up one-third of the facility.

Using the T figures, we came up with \$30.8 million for Arborway restoration vs. \$65 for 65 million for CNG bus service.

- o **C. Ridership.**

The objective of the T is to increase the ridership the T had to show the bus would have more riders than the streetcar. How? They fiddled with the running times. If you can get there faster, you are going to do it. The T compared CNG Arborway to Park St. with trolley Jamaica Plain to Park St. This is comparing apples and oranges. Peak time, Arborway to Park St. When they calculated bus times, they used an *average* of peak and off-peak times. They had to use this to fiddle with the figures to make the bus look better. What is the ACTUAL peak bus time from Arborway to Park St.? We relied on good sources as 35.5 minutes (per the T). The problem was that was the time to Copley. So add the time the #55 bus takes from Park St. to Copley. The T used the unfair trip calculation for peak/off peak and added it to the scheduled time for the #55. You CAN do it in that time at 10 p.m. [but not the rush hour]. If you use the peak time, what is the figure? We used 7 or 8 members of the Committee, who rode the #55 at rush hour and averaged the trip time. We were *very* conservative in the way we calculated the times.

Copley to Park St. added 10.5 minutes to the 35.5 minutes, making a total of 46 minutes for the whole route during peak hours. I myself was part of this study. Many times I waited for the #55. It arrived as much as fifteen minutes late. Waiting for the 6:20 p.m. from Park St. and at 6:43, the bus had not yet arrived.

WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE RIDERSHIP DIFFERENCE had they used the additional 6-1/2 minutes? Vijay Mahal of the T re-ran the figures using an additional five (not 7-1/2) minutes. Light rail ridership would have exceeded the bus by 1500.

The Arborway design is at the 15% level. Barbara Boylan and Bill Lieberman are working on the design. This is a very good design team.

The T is not necessarily the enemy. One of the issues in the CIP is parking. The T study raised the parking issue to the DEP. Regulations intend to prioritize public transportation

[vs. parking]. We argued the issue of parking is not part of the regulation. The T was using it as a political issue, basically standing the regulation on its head. It maintained it would cut parking spaces.

Parking loss figures the T was proposing were absurd. It started at 200, then 120. Now it is significantly less than 85. They admitted they would lose 58 spaces with CNG buses, which is close to the streetcar parking loss.

Bicycles and commercial delivery issues are being presented just as cynically. Retailers, in the old days, would take deliveries in the rear. In addition, before 9 a.m., there is no problem about space for deliveries.

Yet there is a problem with bicycles. There are six [streetcar] stops. You have to have [a sense of] perspective, in two ways:

- (1) In a study at the 15% design level, measurements were taken of the number of bicycles on Centre St. as ten per hour combining both directions. The [assumption] had been considerably higher. The community has been very supportive for the Jamaica Plain bikeway and the Southwest Corridor bikeway, both of which are nearby.
- (2) Public Safety

A T study about when fire engines are approaching, they are able to get around streetcars. The T looked at the Arborway Yard and emerging vehicle movement on the street. They said the streetcar cannot move to the side of the road. This could cause delay to emergency vehicles. But there is no statistical data or experience of this from other cities that have light rail. "Buses CAN move out of the way." But can a sixty-foot [articulated] bus be invisible?

Questions and answers

- If people are putting together obfuscations, there must be some people who are putting together ridiculous arguments against light rail.

The T was putting together studies for Bob Durand. The T is both the judge and the jury. HERE, the T is submitting them. A small number of merchants have the city's ear. They are engaged in a fear campaign. They are convinced the shoppers come by car, not streetcar.

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## 5. Reports from advocacy groups

Carol Blair, former president of the Mass. Bicycle Coalition.

I am in the business of balanced transportation. It is so difficult for anyone to get the payback, to get the investment back on any transportation initiative. No one has the power to get anything to happen. You need new resources. We need a new work. It makes it easier to [facilitate] transit.

We have established an organization, Onwardvia ([www.onwardvia.org](http://www.onwardvia.org)). It has set up a web site. Click on "helpful links". If this works, click "contact us" and tell us. Our next project is a locator maps for individual businesses, both for within the store and to and from the store.

This is not an umbrella organization, but it does try to work between organizations.

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Thomas Lenthall for the private bus carriers.

- o (1). The proposed T fare increase is an environmental justice problem. There is a higher charge per mile for inner city residents.
  - o (2). The private carriers have a right of appeal when there is a transit project using federal new starts money, that there cannot be a reduction in existing service or negative effect on other public transportation carriers.
6. Fred Moore: We need volunteers to do more work, to go to meetings. To get more connections. Talk to more people, to start a newsletter.
  7. Motion made and passed to defer the election of the new Board of Directors to the next directors meeting.
  8. The meeting adjourned 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

BARRY M. STEINBERG

Clerk