



New Hampshire's resistance is spearheaded by transportation commissioner Charles P. O'Leary, who favors a state-owned fleet of buses run by private operators. He commented on the Amtrak Maine initiative: "In New Hampshire, we like to live free or die. You're asking for our money. We'd rather die."

Quipped the BANGOR DAILY NEWS, "Perhaps the New Hampshire motto should read: Live Free or Freeload."

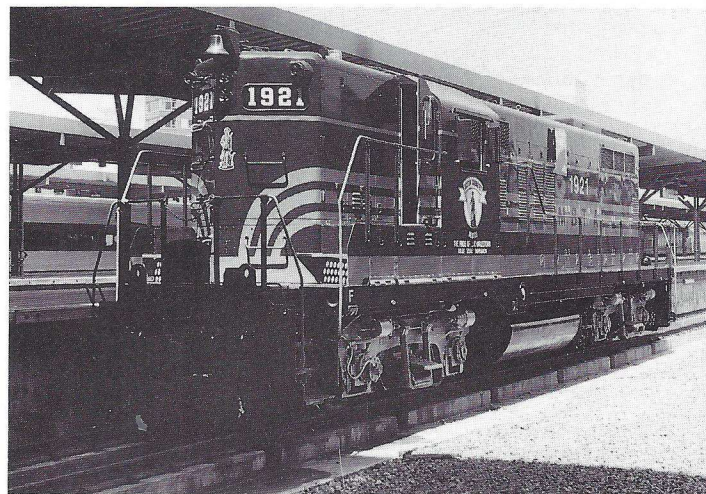
Private bus service connecting with Amtrak at Portland is expected to do well. If rail ridership meets expectations, extensions to Augusta, Waterville, and Bangor are possible. Amtrak might also experiment with summer service on the Rockland Branch, similar to its summer Cape Cod service.

Trains to New Hampshire

If Amtrak's trains to Maine are a big success, look for a populist movement to reestablish Boston-Montreal service via White River Junction, Vt. Although Guilford has removed a lot of track on the old Northern Railroad (Concord-White River Junction), it would all have needed complete rebuilding anyway, so this is not a strategic loss. The right-of-way is protected by the State of New Hampshire. This is at least a decade away, and will happen only with the state's full cooperation.

Central Artery Rail Link

The national press has devoted a lot of attention to the possibility that Boston might finally realize its long flirtation with a rail connection between North and South stations. Primarily it would allow Amtrak to have through service between Portland, Maine, and New York City.



There could be significant benefits to having run-through commuter service; a comparable project in Philadelphia achieved dramatic shifts in ridership patterns. Though MBTA officials do not see this as a significant factor in Boston, they *would* like to have the tunnel to facilitate easy movement of commuter rail locomotives and rolling stock between terminals and storage facilities, the latter being in short supply. Design for the "Artery" is moving ahead without rail, and although the Federal Railroad Administration is conducting a \$250,000 study to examine the issues, its findings are expected before May.



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OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP: Inbound train No. 1304 from Lowell picks up passengers at Wilmington in January 1988. The track angling off to the right is the Wildcat Branch leading to the Haverhill line. George A. Forero Jr. **OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM:** MBTA No. 1921, painted in Boston & Maine colors and named *The Pride of Charlestown Billy "Zeke" Marsden*, is seen on June 20, 1991. Russell F. Munroe **AT LEFT:** Inbound train No. 116 is framed in the timbers of Draw 7 on Aug. 23, 1989, only two days before the old wooden drawbridge was retired. Trains now cross the Mystic River on the new bridge at left. George A. Forero Jr.

Supporting the idea is a ground swell of public sentiment, naive about the sizable engineering difficulties, yet not a force to be discounted. Against it are some practicalities. There isn't a professional engineer in Boston or Washington who thinks that, from the standpoint of design, the link is a good idea. Ideally, what is needed is an independent, double-track tunnel that would follow its own, efficiently designed route between the two stations. Current thinking calls for a double-iron entry into South Station trackage to the west of the present interlocking, followed by a 3 percent descent on Atlantic Avenue to the station. Platform access at the station would be below ground (at the level of the Red Line

mezzanine). The tunnel would then run north, through bedrock under Congress Street directly to North Station, where again platform access would be below ground (probably as deep as 50 feet because of the new Green Line tunnel there). The tunnel would go further north under the Charles River and emerge near Prison Point Bridge and rejoin the north side trackage.

Even moving ahead on the schedule now in place, without a rail provision, Central Artery completion is several years away. An entire political flank in Massachusetts has wanted the work on a roadway-only version to begin as soon as possible, for the laudable reason that it will create many, many

move in mid-January, Governor Weld declared his backing of a Central Artery rail link. He was spurred by the influential Massachusetts Legislative Central Rail Artery Caucus, chaired by Rep. John Businger and boasting 135 out of 200 state legislators. The inclusion of rail would mean eligibility for federal funding under ISTEA, an advantage surely perceived by the governor.

Boston's light rail and rapid transit comprise the inner city matrix of rail providing some half-million daily riders with clean, modern, and dependable transportation. The "T" functions in all kinds of extreme weather, from humid, sticky summer days to the bone-chilling cold of February's north winds. Bostonians depend on its running when everything else stops. When, rarely, it does stop, there is hell to pay. Heads roll. The forward-looking "T" management has some ideas for the future.

Green Line

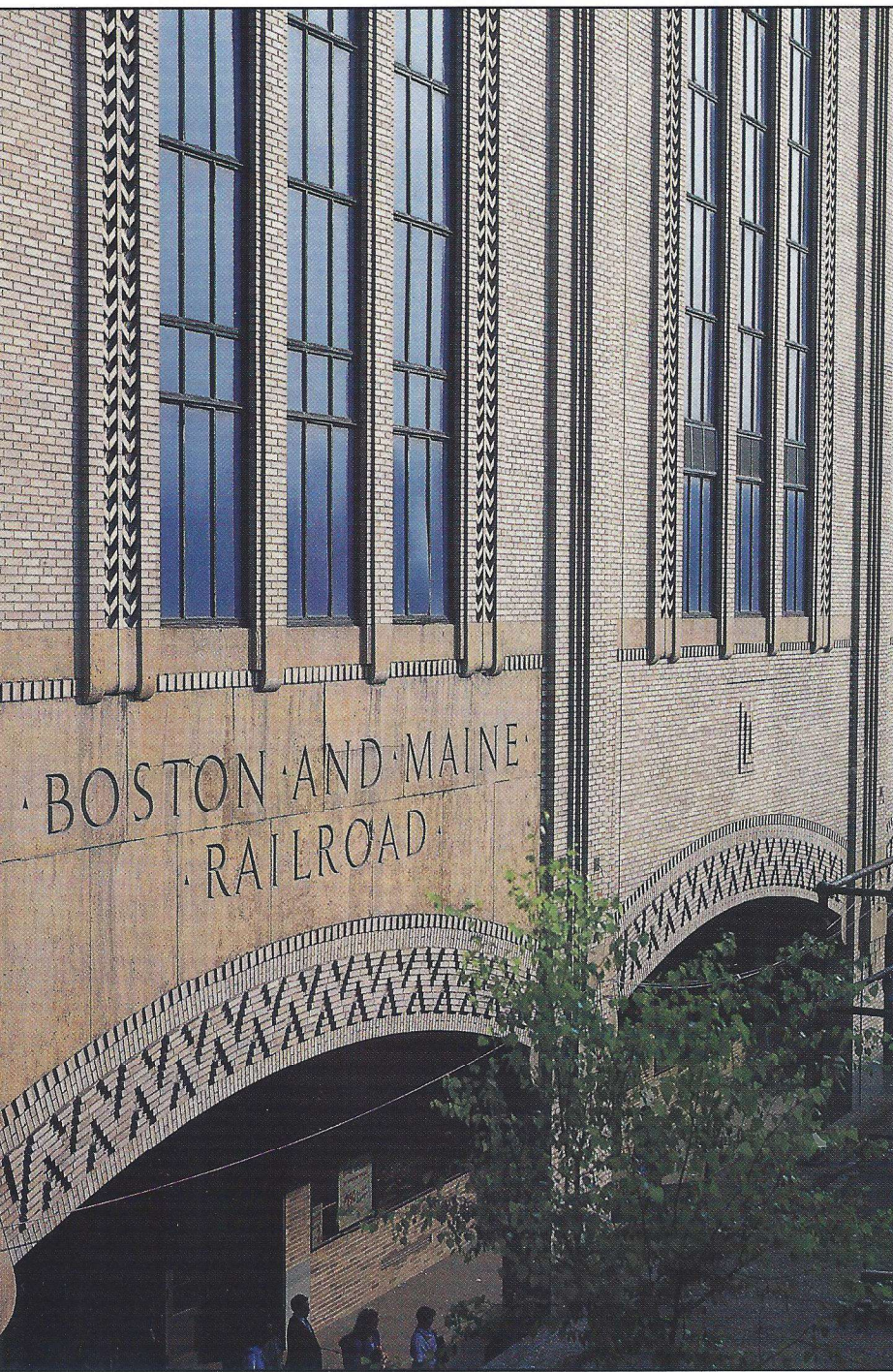
The Green Line is the name for Boston's four main light rail segments that join near downtown Boston in a double-track corridor, the common stations being Copley, Arlington, Boylston, Park Street and Government Center. These lines are B-Boston College, C-Cleveland Circle, D-Riverside, and E-Arborway. The A-Watertown line was taken out of service in 1969, soon after these designations were painted on thousands of signs.

Of the various segments of the Green Line, the A-Watertown line was always the weakest; preponderant street running made it slow. An interchange with the then-new Massachusetts Turnpike resulted in a dangerous against-the-flow traffic hazard, which may have caused the "T" to take action, although a shortage of PCC cars was given as the primary reason. Rails and overhead wire have remained in place to accommodate work runs to and from a car house needed for heavy maintenance. Now the "T" believes it can bring in cars for repair on large, flat-bed trucks, and that it can begin the process of ripping up the line. A ceremonial "cutting of the wires" was planned last spring, to include Car 5734, a Type-5 streetcar from the 1920s on loan from the Seashore Trolley Museum, and Car 3259, the first revenue car over the Riverside Line in 1959, painted in that era's colors. The ceremony was canceled when someone reminded the MBTA that current law requires an environmental approval process before such action can be taken. Meanwhile, vandals got at the cars where they were stored in the tunnel between Boylston and Arlington streets, though fortunately the damage wasn't extensive.

There are three reasons why the segment will never be reinstated. Watertown residents don't want it; MBTA operations people think it's a dumb idea, and soon the rails will be gone. Restoration as far as Newton Corner might have been feasible since there is indeed ridership interest along the route. Short of a miracle, this line is probably gone forever.

A several-year-old plan to extend the Green Line north from Lechmere as far as Tufts University is beginning to see some action. As welded rail is in place on the B&M New Hampshire main line north of Boston, these tracks are being moved to the east several feet to make way for eventual laying of parallel Green Line tracks. Current work includes new drainage along the right-of-way, and the State Highway Department will be rebuilding a number of overhead bridges. Both Green Line station locations at North Station will be demolished in favor of a new joint Green Line-Orange

Line station below ground level (at the site of the present Orange Line station) where inbound connections between Green and Orange Lines can be made across the platform. The Green Line will then continue under North Station (through the new garage), turning west before emerging on a new ramp to the historic Charles River Viaduct, now a historic landmark. A new Lechmere station, across the street from the present, will enable trains to head easily toward the Lowell Line.



Whether or not a rail tunnel is ever built, Amtrak will eventually explore New York-Maine service, with sleeping car service, because the market is there, whether Boston is included on the route or not. Trains such as the *Bar Harbor Express*, the *East Wind*, the *State of Maine* did this very successfully for decades, traveling on an inland alignment via Worcester. Sometimes these trains had coach connections for Boston from Haverhill, and this would still be possible.



Blue Line

The Blue Line is the only rapid transit line terminating downtown. Some discussion has taken place about extending it from its current terminus at Bowdoin Square (an isolated station with no rail connections) to the Charles Street station on the Red Line, thereby providing much additional flexibility for riders. However, one of the key ideas behind this scheme—to make it easier for Harvard students to get to the airport—would probably be realized by the completion of the third harbor tunnel (from the Massachusetts Turnpike at South Station to Logan Airport). South Station-Logan shuttle buses are thought by some to solve this need.

On its north side, there has been speculation for decades that an extension might be made to Lynn. Indeed, within the last two years the "T" has completed a new commuter rail station and 5,000-space parking garage at Lynn. Thanks to New Haven Railroad ownership of Boston & Maine in the 1910s, under empire-building president Charles S. Mellon, a two-mile section from West Lynn Junction to East Lynn was four-tracked in anticipation of making B&M's eastern route the main line to Portland. Under this scheme, trains from South Station would pass under Boston Harbor in a tunnel, follow the right-of-way of the narrow-gauged Boston, Revere Beach & Lynn (the present Blue Line uses this alignment), across the Point of Pines to join B&M in West Lynn. The four-track main was proposed to go as far as Beverly, though how they planned to get through Salem and its single-track tunnel is a mystery. Because of this still-intact, wide right-of-way, the Blue Line would have an easy time extending to Lynn. The new station and garage were built with this expansion in mind.

While Lynn and nearby communities would like this to happen, it is unclear whether the MBTA considers it a useful plan. Though it would provide convenient airport access to commuter rail patrons from the Ipswich and Rockport lines, there

OPPOSITE PAGE: The facade of Boston's North Station is partially blocked by the elevated Green Line, so the simple beauty of the station is infrequently seen. **ABOVE:** Passengers detrain at the new Salem station from a north-bound commuter train in July 1988. A discrepancy in the platform and track designs required some extra flooring for the handicapped access ramp. Both photos, INTERURBAN PRESS; Robert Willoughby Jones

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might not be sufficient ridership gain to justify the cost. The new parking lot has not yet attracted many new riders.

Orange Line

In 1987 the Orange Line was moved from its former elevated structure into the new southwest corridor. Only 10 years earlier, its north side underwent a similar transformation when the elevated through Charlestown was removed and a new tunnel under North Station took the trains to a newly-placed Sullivan Square station. At the same time the Orange Line was extended on B&M right-of-way five miles to Oak Grove. Because this project was once planned to supplant the then-deteriorating B&M Budd Car commuter trains, planners were allowed to build a two-mile, triple-track section to Wellington. Commuter rail was allocated only single iron from Reading Junction, just

beyond Sullivan Square Station, to Oak Grove, resulting in frequent congestion during rush hours.

Last fall there was some excitement around Saugus when its leaders concluded that a branch of the Orange Line could be built on the old B&M Saugus Branch all the way to Lynn. The population is dense; ridership would doubtless be good. Unfortunately, there are dozens of grade crossings that could never be bridged because of the extremely tight clearances between the right-of-way and adjacent buildings. The former B&M commuter trains, which plied the branch until 1958, were always victims of slow running.

Red Line

Like Kansas City, the Red Line has gone about as far as it can go. It began when the New Haven sold its Mattapan Branch to Boston's transit system in the late 1920s. It was converted to third-rail electric as far as Ashmont, five miles from South Station, with the remaining 2 1/2 miles to Mattapan made into a trolley line, more suitable for the many grade crossings and less dense population. For the first two decades, local trolleys entered at Mattapan and continued to Ashmont. PCCs arrived in the late 1940s; by about 1950 only Mattapan-Ashmont feeder service was left.

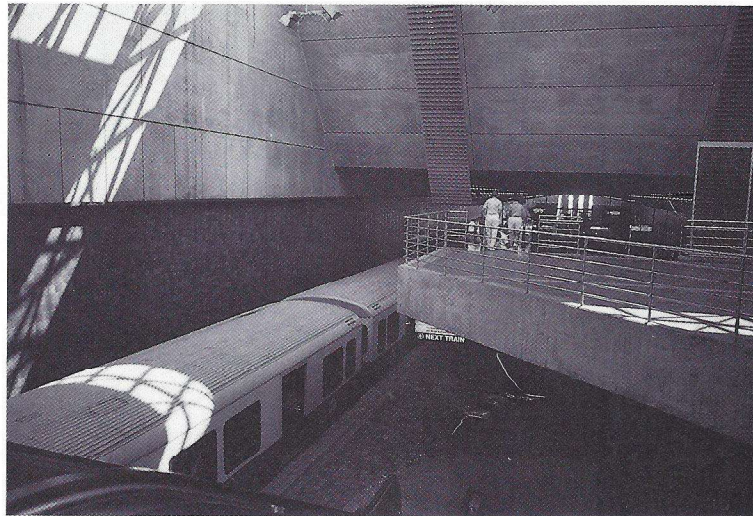
Although you can still ride a fleet of 10 PCCs here, they are showing their age. Green Line LRVs are in short supply, but as new ones are added, they could be used here, provided the overhead wiring is reconfigured to accept pantographs. A long

contemplated conversion to accommodate Red Line trains to Mattapan could happen only if sufficient capital were available to eliminate the many grade crossings, and this is not a likely scenario soon.

The Red Line was extended from its Columbia Junction some six miles to Quincy in 1971, and another three miles to Braintree in 1980 over the Old Colony right-of-way. On the northern side, an ambitious 2.5-mile extension was completed in 1985 to a station called Alewife, located near the junction of B&M's Fitchburg line and its former Lexington Branch (converted to a bike path in the spring of 1992). Alewife, with a beautiful, airy concourse, is also a bus station and parking lot, and includes retail and restaurant space.

Amtrak

Amtrak long-distance trains serve Boston on the former New Haven route to New York, and the former Boston & Albany-New York Central line to Chicago. Fifteen daily (mostly) departures comprise Amtrak's Boston roster: two New York trains, one Philadelphia, seven Washingtons, one Chicago, two inland trains via Hartford, which link at New Haven with Boston-Washington shoreline trains, and the *Fast Mail* to Springfield. All use South Station, which is comfortable, functional, and easy to get to via rapid transit, if not so easy by car. The under-construction parking garage will make auto access far more pleasant. It will also provide a roof over the tracks that present-





ly have no protection from the elements. A separate lounge for first class passengers would be a terrific bonus, but Amtrak, not owning the building, has no immediate plans to build one. Also, there is no logical place for it in this highly utilized space.

Some 50 percent of Amtrak's mainline ridership is generated at the new Back Bay Station, completed concurrently with the new Southwest corridor. There is a generous parking garage at Back Bay and the configuration of surface streets here is less congested than at South Station, making it a popular point of embarkation. According to John Baesch, the exhaust fans at Back Bay still don't work properly, in spite of an architectural award for the building, and the "T" is looking to ameliorate this difficulty. The ambiance at the station, however, is very nice.

The most exciting development is that the long-awaited electrification project north of New Haven is finally underway. Congressional allocations for 1991, 1992, and 1993 are \$125 million, \$150.1 million, and \$168.6 million respectively. These funds are providing engineering studies, catenary, signal work, high speed turnouts, a flyover at New Rochelle and new electric engines and passenger cars. Proposed is twice-hourly service with a three-hour running time. Amtrak is now testing the Swedish X2000 and will later test the German ICE trains as possible prototypes for this service.

Amtrak electrification into Boston would provide the impetus for similar conversion on Boston Commuter Rail, especially if a cross-Boston rail tunnel is built.

Boston's transit renaissance seems like a dream, so unlike its sad, dirty 1970s state of seemingly unstoppable decline. It would be unfair to ignore that the rapid transit division of the MBTA has been kept running through thick and thin by a solid and dedicated operating department. Yet the real miracle in this city and its environs is the rescuing of its vital commuter rail network from oblivion, starting with those concerned, energetic, and persuasive citizens from Melrose, Needham, and Wayland who heard in 1969 that the "T" was planning to truncate their through Budd Car rides to Boston. Governor Francis Sargent's BOSTON TRANSPORTATION POLICY REVIEW looked questioningly at the proposed completion of I-95, and subsequently

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP: Alewife station is the northern terminus of Boston's Red Line. This end of the line was built on an old Boston & Maine freight alignment. The station is clean and functional. INTERURBAN PRESS: Robert Willoughby Jones **OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM: Morning rush hour commuters pour out of Boston's South Station. When built in 1899, the proud building had 28 tracks. Today, gutted and restored with shops and restaurants, the station hosts Amtrak and commuter rail.** Rick Welles **ABOVE: Trainsets await departure from South Station on an August morning in 1992.** INTERURBAN PRESS: Robert Willoughby Jones

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Needham Selectman Henry Hersey actively aligned himself with the region-wide Citizens for Rail Transportation group. From these actions came the beginnings of the Boston rail revival, still growing and prospering today.

The feisty shipping capital, which hosted the Big Tea Party in 1773, is still a dynamic, influential force in transportation. Boston's leadership in transportation can be a strong guiding hand to Los Angeles, Montreal, Houston, Seattle, Oakland and Atlanta—cities blossoming with commuter rail openings and plans.

Commuters have always appreciated a well-run train service; never has this been more true than in the last decade as Massachusetts reeled under the weight of a major economic downturn. When new jobs are scarce, and wage increases a rare luxury, a safe, clean, punctual ride to work can make a tremendous difference in a citizen's resolve to tough it through the hard times. Good public transportation is a needed sign that our leaders care.

Bravo Boston! PTJ