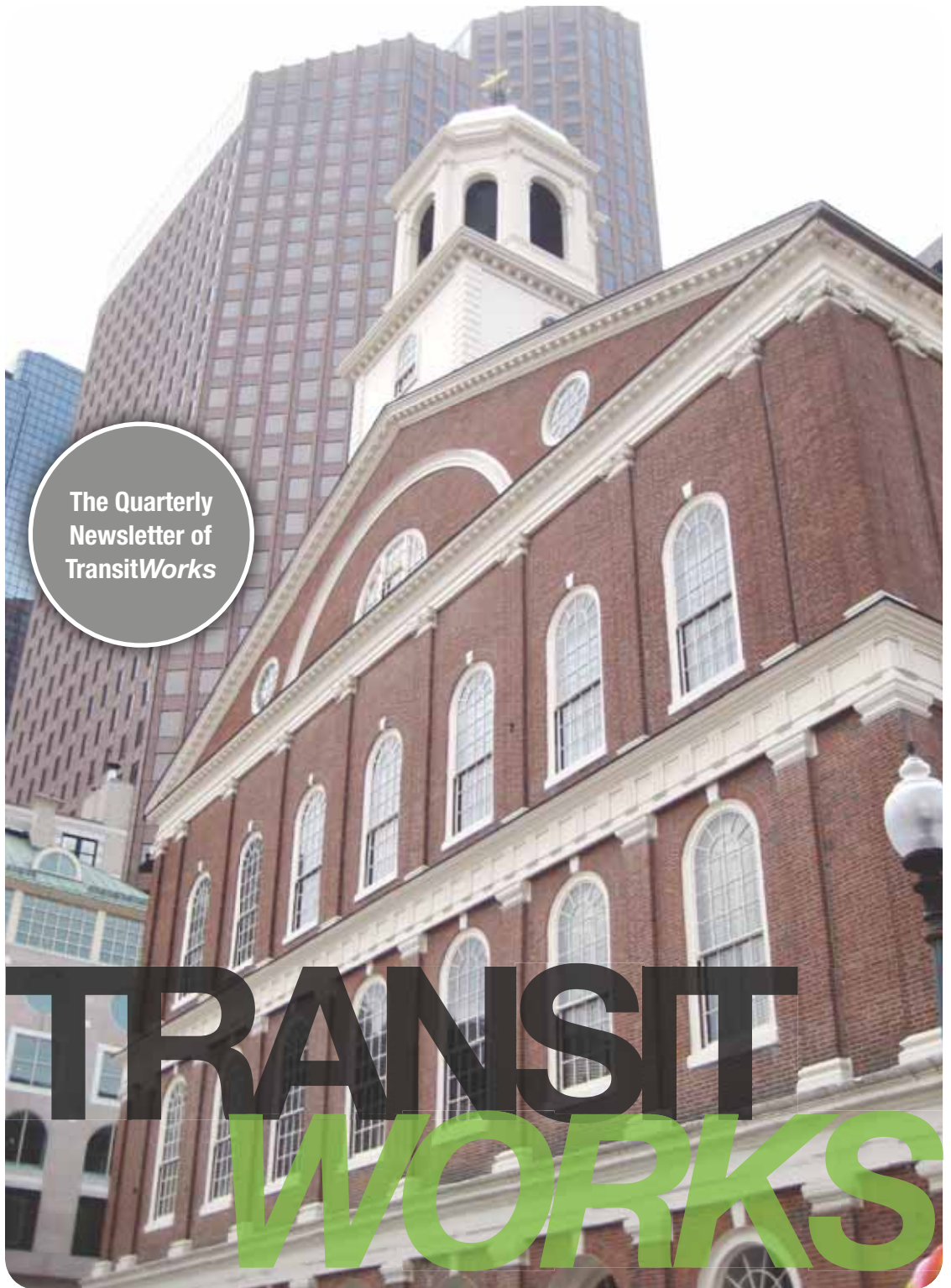


CONNECTION



The Quarterly  
Newsletter of  
TransitWorks

TRANSIT  
WORKS

<p><b>SILVER LINE SURVEY</b></p> <p>Riders report a high degree of satisfaction along the Washington Corridor. (4)</p>	<p><b>TRANSIT DIARY STUDY</b></p> <p>Riders give detailed reports of transit usage during two-week study. (5)</p>	<p><b>BOOST IN RIDERSHIP</b></p> <p>With ever increasing gas prices, public transit ridership is hitting record highs all across the country. (2-3)</p>
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# CONNECTION



## MASS EXODUS FROM CARS

**With the price of gas ever continuing to rise, commuters in Massachusetts and the rest of the country are taking to public transit in droves.**

By: Andrea L. Hill

While much of America continues to reel from the sticker shock of four-dollar a gallon gas, people in metro areas are beginning to take to mass transit in record numbers. According to a recent *New York Times* article, mass transit usage rates have jumped significantly in recent months. Transit authorities around the country have reported that they are beginning to see standing-room only buses, trains, and streetcars. This is true even in places that have strong car cultures and have traditionally eschewed mass transit. Cities like Houston, Nashville, and Salt Lake City have seen their public transportation ridership jump by as much as fifteen percent last year.

Closer to home, Boston transit authorities note that transit ridership

has increased by at least five percent this year. Boston-area residents have noted that rising gas prices are their primary reason for choosing to leave the car at home and board the train. Though some find riding the train inconvenient, many others have noted that increasing their transit usage is one of the most important ways they are dealing with increasing gas prices. Boston has a very strong mass transit culture, and some note that they feel lucky to be able to make the choice to ride the train. Despite the many inconveniences and annoyances of transit usage, they feel pleased to have the option to take advantage of the system.

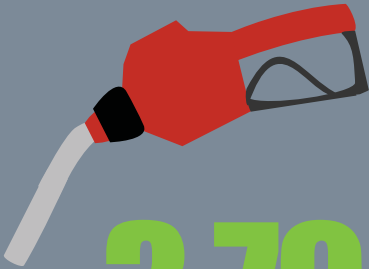


### **Crowded Vehicles**

Daily riders have noticed that their daily commutes are a little less roomy.

CONTINUED PAGE 3

# BREAKDOWN



3.79

Average Price of Regular gas for June

1 DOLLAR

70 CENTS

ONE TRIP ON MBTA SUBWAY

51.29

PER DAY FOR ZIPCAR USAGE

51574006

Price of Downtown Boston Parking Space

What is driving really costing us?

## MASS EXODUS CONTINUED

In addition to saving money on gasoline, commuters have begun to realize that mass transit has some other, unforeseen, advantages. Riders in Colorado report that they are now able to use their commute time as productive time, doing work on the train. They note that although riding mass transit means that they are giving up their independence, they feel that money-saving and productive-time creating opportunities are a reasonable trade-off. And, of course, environmental groups across the country are praising the increase of public transportation usage. They note that the reduced emissions are one important step towards combating the ever-increasing problem of global warming. They feel that increased reliance on mass transit is especially surprising and promising because it is taking off in areas that nobody would have expected. The fact that people in the South and West are abandoning

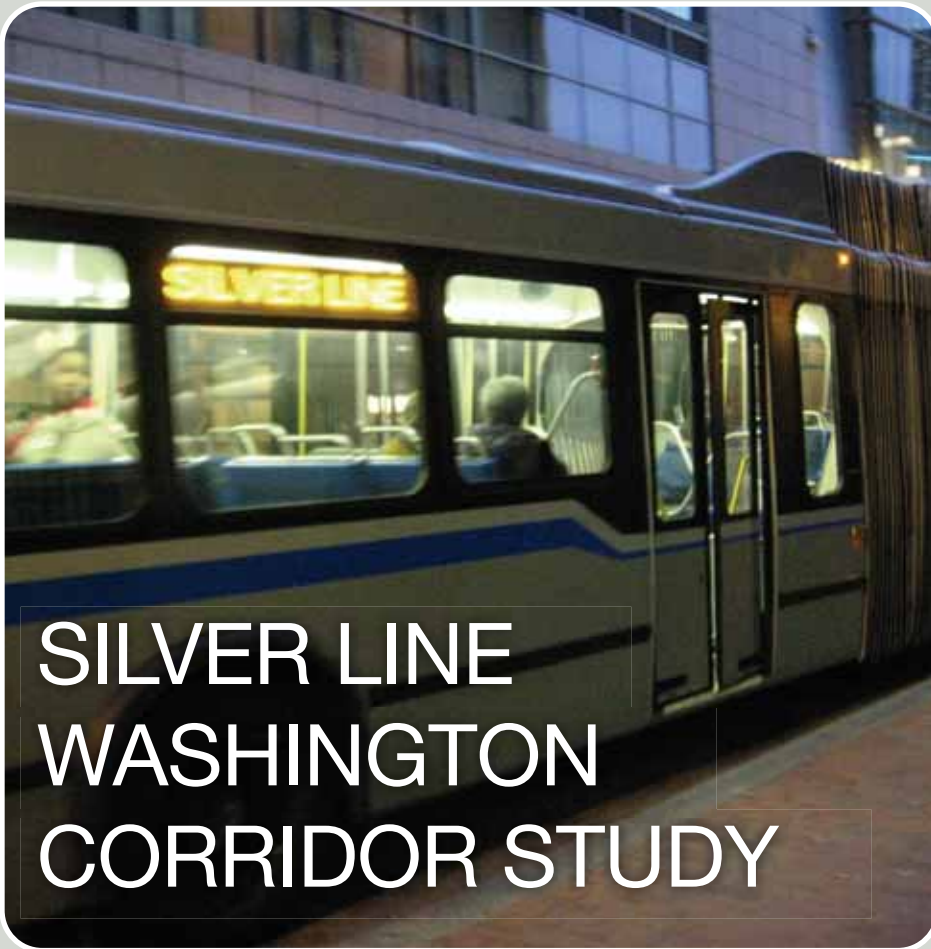
their cars is a dramatic illustration of exactly how transportation in the U.S. is changing.

As we look toward a future in which it is likely that gas prices will remain at current or even higher levels, and the environmental threat of global warming will continue to loom large, cities across the U.S. are beginning to seriously consider expanding and improving transit lines. In New York, senator Charles Schumer is proposing a plan that will double the mass transit benefit that New York riders receive. Others are lobbying Congress for providing more tax benefits for those who take mass transit, and still others are advocating increased tolls for those who choose to drive. It is clear that mass transit is set to become an increasingly central component of the American way of life.

Article contributed by Andrea L. Hill  
Northeastern University  
Sociology Department.



Morning Commuters Flood Platforms



# SILVER LINE WASHINGTON CORRIDOR STUDY

## Silver Line Phase I

Silver Line Washington is the first phase of the MBTA's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line. Running since July 2002, the Washington Street service runs between Dudley Square in Roxbury and downtown Boston along Washington Street.



## High Degree of Rider Satisfaction

The Silver Line Washington Corridor Study, conducted over a three day period in October 2007, surveyed 937 Silver Line riders along the Washington Street corridor throughout the service day. The study found that:

- In 45% of the responses, riders were satisfied with the overall service, with only 4% rating the service as poor.
- The CharlieCard is the preferred method of payment; 72% of riders using it to pay for their ride.

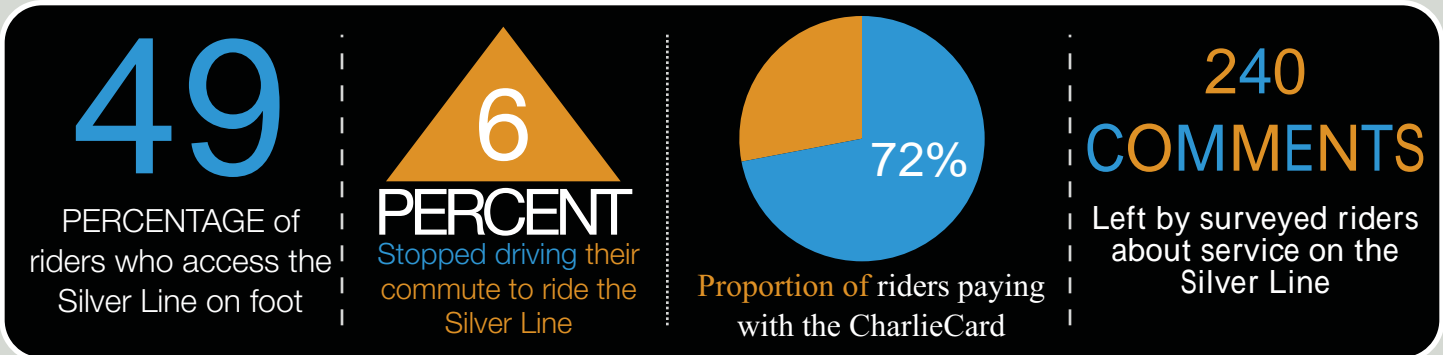
Only 4% state overall poor service

- Riders indicated the three most important variables to them are announcements, schedules and route information, and promptness of service.
- 43% of riders utilize the service five days a week, with an additional 24% riding six days or more a week.

Copies of the full report may be accessed through the *TransitWorks* website:

[www.transitworks.org](http://www.transitworks.org)

By: Monica G. Tibbits



# 2007 TRANSIT DIARY STUDY

## An Innovative Look at the Everyday Rider

By: **Monica G. Tibbits**

The 2007 Transit Diary Study utilized a rider centered research approach. Using a pool of 107 volunteer riders, transit journals measured a series of variables with the inclusion of extensive rider observation. Using this information *TransitWorks* has been afforded the opportunity to not only understand the impression of current transit conditions, but also the interactions between riders and their environments. Using these insights it is possible for the MBTA to alter the rider experience not only through improvements of the system, but also through improvements of the *experience* of the system.

### What Riders Experienced

The data gathered from the diaries illustrates that this group of riders were satisfied in nearly all of the categories measured. While this shows a clear satisfaction with services there is always room for improvement and *TransitWorks* continues to stress the need for constant enhancement of services and facilities.

While the statistics show positive results, many of the comments illustrated some of the issues riders experience on a day to day basis. While some of the comments were about specific service delays and issues, the overwhelming majority centered around the issues and interactions with other riders. From passengers occupying more than one seat, to refusal to allow others to depart the vehicle, many of the surveyed riders found their commute disrupted by fellow passengers.

From these rider observations *TransitWorks* is working on constructing a “User’s Guide” to serve as messaging campaign to remind passengers of the responsibility to “use” the system properly to improve the service quality for all users.

Copies of the full report may be obtained from Monica G. Tibbits at [mtibbits@transitworks.org](mailto:mtibbits@transitworks.org).



**Riders Surprisingly Satisfied**

A great deal of thanks and appreciation must be given to all of those who so graciously volunteered their time to keep the journals for the two week period. Without these selfless volunteers, understanding of the transit experience would be impossible.

**To thank these volunteers *TransitWorks* has raffled two sets of Boston Red Sox tickets for the September 24th Game against the Cleveland Indians at Fenway.**

**The winners of two tickets each are:**

**Bill Hlott  
Amy Stirman**

**THIRTY-TWO PERCENT**

Proportion of riders who rode the **commuter rail**

**5**

Average number of minutes rider **waited** for their vehicle.

**71**

Percentage of riders satisfied **with their overall commute time**

Visit our website at  
[www.transitworks.org](http://www.transitworks.org)

### Questions or Comments

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact the Executive Director  
Monica G. Tibbits at  
[mtibbits@transitworks.org](mailto:mtibbits@transitworks.org)

## TRANSITWORKS MISSION

TransitWorks is a non-profit consulting organization dedicated to improving the quality and increasing the use of public transit through sound research, design, and marketing. Through collaboration with other professionals in varying fields, TransitWorks strives to improve public transit in all areas.



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