

After a careful review of the MBTA's Better Bus Plan, the Board of The Arborway Committee for Public Transit, Inc. (ACPT), gives the T a mixed grade. We agree with the T that a revised bus network should be equitable and provide a quality service, especially to communities most reliant on the bus. We also agree that the current mainly "hub and spoke" MBTA system does not serve well those commuting cross-town. And we also agree that the T should not wait to resolve all potential problems with the new system before proceeding to its partial implementation in spring 2023. However, it is clear from responses we've received from the T to our questions that the proposed plan has been developed in isolation and is, therefore, not likely to provide the level of service promised. For instance, when we questioned T planners if they had consulted with the T's Bus Operations to assure the timely dispatch of a bus from its starting point in order to maintain the promised 15-minute headway, the response was that they had not. When we asked planners if they were talking now with cities about establishing bus lanes and signal priority along the proposed new routes, the response was that they were not. When we asked the T planners if they had consulted with Green Line Operations to coordinate the #39 bus and the E-branch, the response was that they had not. This last omission by planners is especially significant to Jamaica Plain riders who ride the #39 because the proposed redirection of the #39 to Porter Square will cause those riders heading to Boston Latin School, Northeastern University, the MFA, the Fenway, and Back Bay to change from the bus to a Green Line streetcar to reach their destination. As a result, ACPT cannot support a change in the destination of the #39 without at least an extension of the current Green Line from Heath Street to Hyde/Canary Square so as to provide riders who board along South Huntington with a one-seat ride into town. Simply drawing lines on a map connecting desired origins and destinations does not automatically translate into efficient on-time service. While ACPT understands the difficulties that confront T planners in their planning, any change in the bus system must result in better service, not just rearranged service.