

Old Colony Railroad Prepares to Resume Service on Sept. 29

By RICHARD PRONE

After a hiatus of 38 years, the Plymouth/Kingston branch of the Old Colony Railroad will resume passenger service to South Station, Boston on Monday, Sept. 29.

Initial schedules will see 4 inbound trips and 4 outbound Monday through Friday during peak rush hours, with weekend and midday service being added around early December as signal systems are completed from Braintree south.

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The tentative schedule will read as follows:

<u>Depart Kingston</u>	<u>Arrive Boston</u>
5:45 am	6:50 am
6:25 am	7:30 am
7:05 am	8:10 am
7:45 am	8:50 am

Returning from Boston to Kingston, the tentative schedule is:

<u>Depart Boston</u>	<u>Arrive Kingston</u>
4:20 pm	5:25 pm
5:00 pm	6:05 pm
5:40 pm	6:45 pm
6:30 pm	7:35 pm

Keep in mind, MBTA and Federal Railroad Administration officials are still conducting tests of all grade crossing apparatus and, depending on the outcome of those tests, travel time could take up to 10 minutes longer until all grade crossings are certified by the FRA. The MBTA will know more in a couple weeks as to how that certification process is proceeding for each individual crossing. The eventual goal is to schedule trains in one hour or slightly less from Kingston to South Station when cab signal system work is completed in December and off-peak and weekend service is added.

Duxbury residents, depending on where you live in town, will have access to 2 commuter stations. The Kingston station, situated 2 minutes off Exit 8 near the Independence Mall, will be the main commuter terminal. Complete with its 1,100 car parking lot, this station will serve surrounding towns and even Cape Cod commuters who wish to bid adieu to the Rockland to Boston traffic back-ups which are prevalent from September to June on Rte. 3. The MBTA has advertised bids recently to improve access to the Kingston station, which presently involves a few lefts and rights on the back roads behind the mall near the car dealerships. Commuter parking is presently \$1 per day at commuter rail stations.

The Halifax station, located on Rte. 36 will be a realistic option for those residents who live in north or west Duxbury. This station has a 450 car parking lot and can be reached from Bongi's in about 10 minutes, going out Winter St., taking a right on Rte. 27 and, after a few miles, taking a left on Rte. 36 and proceeding 2 miles to Halifax station. The rail travel time from Kingston to Halifax is 10 minutes, so if you board in Halifax the train will pick you up 10 minutes later in the morning and drop you off 10 minutes earlier in the evening.

The Plymouth station, located behind Wal-Mart in Cordage Park, will only be used for off-peak hours, and will eventually see trains every 2 hours during the day. The station has the potential for a "reverse market" for tourism, as travelers will be able to board a train in South Station and spend a day in Plymouth. Ideally, if the Kingston station had been built near the site of the L Knife beer distributorship, both Plymouth and Kingston would have had equal levels of peak and off-peak service, as they would have been situated on the same railroad line. Since this was not accomplishable, a junction was built between the Jones River Bridge and the Rte. 3 overpass and, after tunneling under the highway twice, a spur was constructed to the Independence Mall area where the main commuter station is presently being landscaped with finishing touches.

The cost of commuter rail tickets is cheaper the more one uses the service. The most economical purchase for a 5-day-a-week commuter is a MBTA monthly pass.

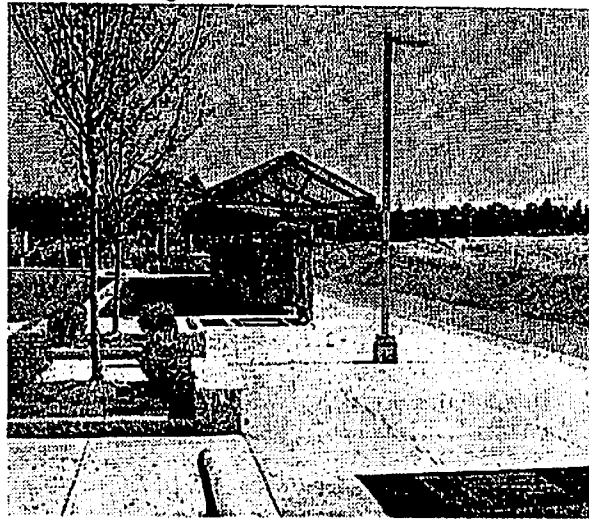
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good on all modes of transportation. This costs \$128 per month from Kingston and averaged out to a \$6 round-trip to Boston. A 12-ride ticket is also a popular purchase, with this option costing \$40 for a "Zone 8" station such as Kingston. The MBTA's fare structure on commuter rail ranges from Zones one through 8, with the lower-numbered zoned stations closest to Boston.

Halifax, a "Zone 7" station, will cost commuters \$37.50 for a 12-ride ticket and \$120 for a monthly pass (\$5.71 per round trip). Tickets purchased on a daily basis are about a dollar more expensive each way, so the multi-ride and monthly passes are the most economical decisions, depending on how often you ride the train.

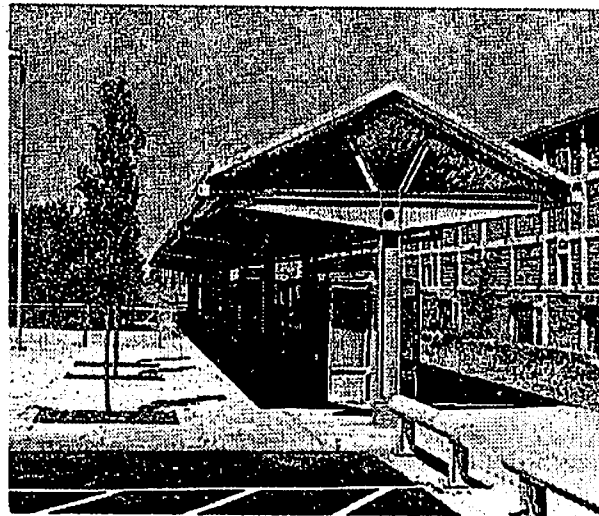
The resumption of Old Colony commuter rail service on Sept. 29 will truly be a historic day. Many will argue the politics of its original demise, but the bottom line is that this valuable transportation artery will once again be active after decades of studies and mountains of paperwork. Realtors are already reporting property values on the rise as transferring executives and others will no longer view the South Shore as a weak sister because of transportation deficiencies when searching for a home.

The Old Colony Railroad—long overdue, but here again at last.



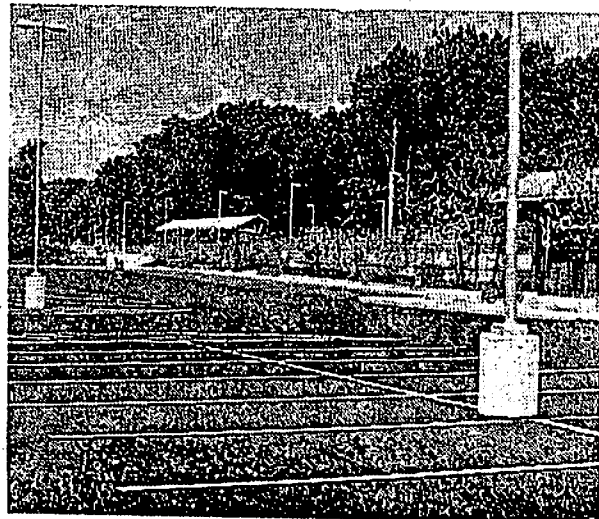
A view of the new Kingston station, about 2 minutes off Exit 8 (Independence Mall exit).

Photo by Richard Prone



The Old Colony commuter rail Plymouth station located behind Wal-Mart in Cordage Park.

Photo by Richard Prone



The 450-car parking lot at the new Halifax station on Rte. 36.

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