



















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Metro

End of road for Jamaica Plain's Route 48 bus loop

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT JULY 02, 2012

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On Saturday, June 30, 2012, at 4:57 p.m., the Route 48 bus of the MBTA, commonly known as the JP Loop, was discontinued after 39 years on the job. The bus was a fixture in the neighborhood, beloved to its riders, who were, alas, too few and far between.

Like clockwork, the bus would start its route at 9 a.m. and make about a dozen laps around the neighborhood before calling it quits at about 5 p.m. Among its 30 stops were senior housing developments, some of whose residents relied on the bus to run errands and do shopping.

But the 48 served only a select few. In 2010, the MBTA recognized it for standing out as one of the least-ridden bus routes. It ranked 175th out of all 196 routes in ridership.

The route also earned notoriety for achieving a markedly above-average cost per passenger. It cost the T about \$6.34 per weekday passenger to operate the route, which was 4.5 times the systemwide average of \$1.42 per weekday passenger.

That translated to about 85 weekday and about 50 Saturday passengers who rode the loop from Monument Square and back via Centre, Paul Gore, Lamartine, Amory, Boylston, and Minton streets, Columbus Avenue, and the Jackson Square station of the Orange Line.

For months, the route had bravely battled a common but chronic case of the budget blues. In a statement, acting MBTA general manager Jonathan Davis said the agency is desperate for a permanent, long-term cure.

Jamaica Plain resident Lanandra Russell, 27, carried her calm, smiling 6-month-old daughter, Lana, near the front of the bus on Friday. She said the Route 48 has helped to foster connectivity in the neighborhood.

“I feel like losing it is going to cut a lot of the neighborhood off from each other,” she said.

Russell recalled how the 48 braved wintry weather and dicey road conditions to help her get to the grocery store.

During her recent pregnancy and the first several months of motherhood, she said, she had taken the route more frequently than at any other point in her seven years living in Jamaica Plain.

Once the bus line is gone, “I’ll just have to tough it out,” Russell said. “But what about the people who can’t? What are they going to do?”

Over the past two summers, 14-year-old Amber Carvajal had made the 48 part of her weekday commute. She journeys for 45 minutes to and from her Dorchester home and her job as a teaching aide at the Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts in Jamaica Plain.

One day before the demise of the 48, she rode the route home one last time. About 10 minutes after Carvajal stepped off the bus, it earned three new fans.

A woman and two young children hurried down Centre Street on the sweltering, maddeningly humid

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‘I feel like losing it is going to cut a lot of the neighborhood off from each other.’

Friday afternoon. From the opposite sidewalk, they frantically waved to the bus. The 48's driver — who declined a request for comment — spotted them and made an unplanned stop. Sweating and panting heavily, the trio boarded and expressed their gratitude.

About 24 hours later, with a final gasp of air from its pressurized brakes, the 48 made its final stop: 775 Centre St. The bus was rolled back to the Arborway Yard garage, where it will probably be assigned a new route.

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