



## **T trains slated to get back on track**

By Richard Weir

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MBTA trains will resume operation on a normal schedule today after being grounded for the duration of yesterday's marathon blizzard — a move that Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh hailed, but one critic suggested was complete overkill.

"Closing down the MBTA was 100 percent the right call," Walsh said, noting it kept people home when sidewalks were blocked. "I don't want people walking down the middle of the street."

But Randal O'Toole, a transportation expert with the Cato Institute, knocked the move as "a political decision to shut down the whole public transit system rather than be criticized for not shutting it down and getting some people stranded somewhere."

"This is a bad storm but I doubt it's the worst snowstorm Boston's ever seen. Closing down the subways does not make sense ... If it's underground, there will not be any snow. But even the above-ground trains, they need to run trains over those tracks to essentially plow the snow. If you let the snow build up, you will have a real hard time clearing it."

T spokesman Joe Pesaturo said shutting down public transit — it was also closed for two days during the blizzard of 2013 and one day for Superstorm Sandy in 2012 and Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 — was done with the "safety and well-being of customers and employees as the primary factors."

"Also, these brutal conditions would take a terrible toll on the T's aging equipment," he added. "There would be a lengthy recovery period for 30- and 40-year-old subway trains exposed to such heavy snow and bitterly cold temperatures... Any attempt to operate service in a raging blizzard would have a detrimental impact on all services for days to come."

Pesaturo said plow-equipped trains would run throughout last night to clear the tracks.

New York's MTA was slow to react in the fierce 2013 blizzard, and subway cars got stuck on snow-covered elevated tracks while buses were abandoned in the streets. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo shut down the city's subways and commuter trains Monday.

Joe Giglio, a Northeastern University management expert, called the T shutdown "eminently sensible."

Transportation Secretary Stephanie Pollack said she expects the T's commuter trains and subways to resume on a normal schedule this morning, with some possible delays, while street conditions are assessed for bus routes and ferry service will depend on weather conditions.

"We are going to run as much service as we can possibly run," Pollack said.