



Worcester Regional Transit Authority

FY25 Administrator Goals

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1. **Capital:** Re-design of Central Hub Lobby with Constructability in or before FY26
2. **Customer Experience:** Create and Propose Recommendations from Customer Satisfaction Survey
3. **Operations:** Propose Fixed Route Service Change Concept to Enhance Reliability
4. **Technology/Procurement:** Successful Procurement and Award of ITS Contract
5. **Vision:** Develop a Five Year Strategic Plan for WRTA



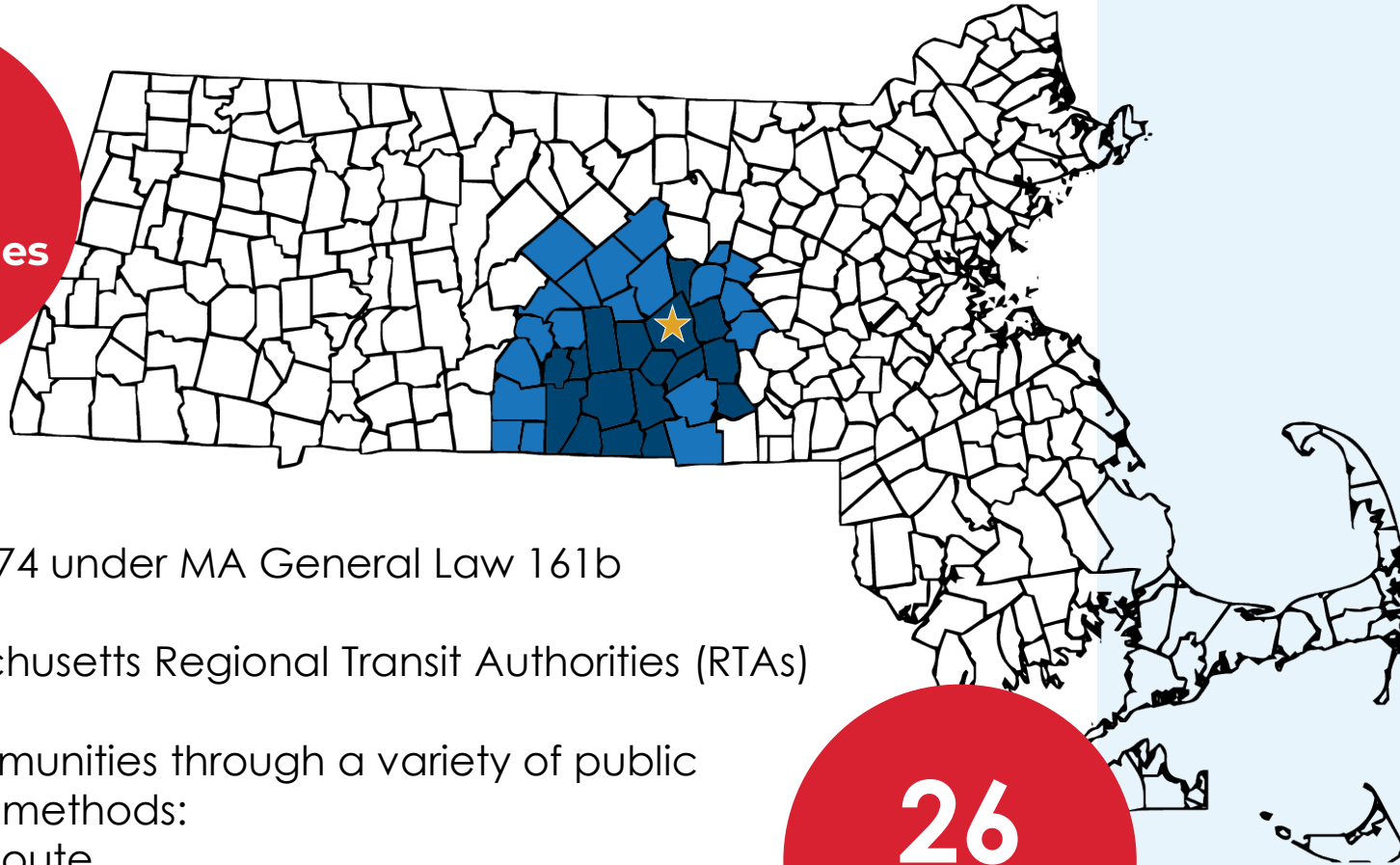


Worcester Regional Transit Authority

WRTA Board Member Introduction

WRTA History

37
Communities



Founded in 1974 under MA General Law 161b

1 of 15 Massachusetts Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs)

Serves 37 communities through a variety of public transportation methods:

- Fixed Route
- Demand Response
- Microtransit

26
Fixed Routes

Communities Served by Fixed Route

- Auburn
- Brookfield
- Charlton
- Dudley
- East Brookfield
- Grafton
- Leicester
- Millbury
- Northbridge
- Oxford
- Shrewsbury
- Southbridge
- Spencer
- Webster
- West Boylston
- Worcester

WRTA Service Providers



Bus

- Central Mass Transit Management (CMTM)



Demand Response

- Central Mass Transit Management (CMTM)
- SCM Elderbus
- Paratransit Brokerage Services, Transit Management, Inc. (PBSTM)
- Council on Aging (10 communities)



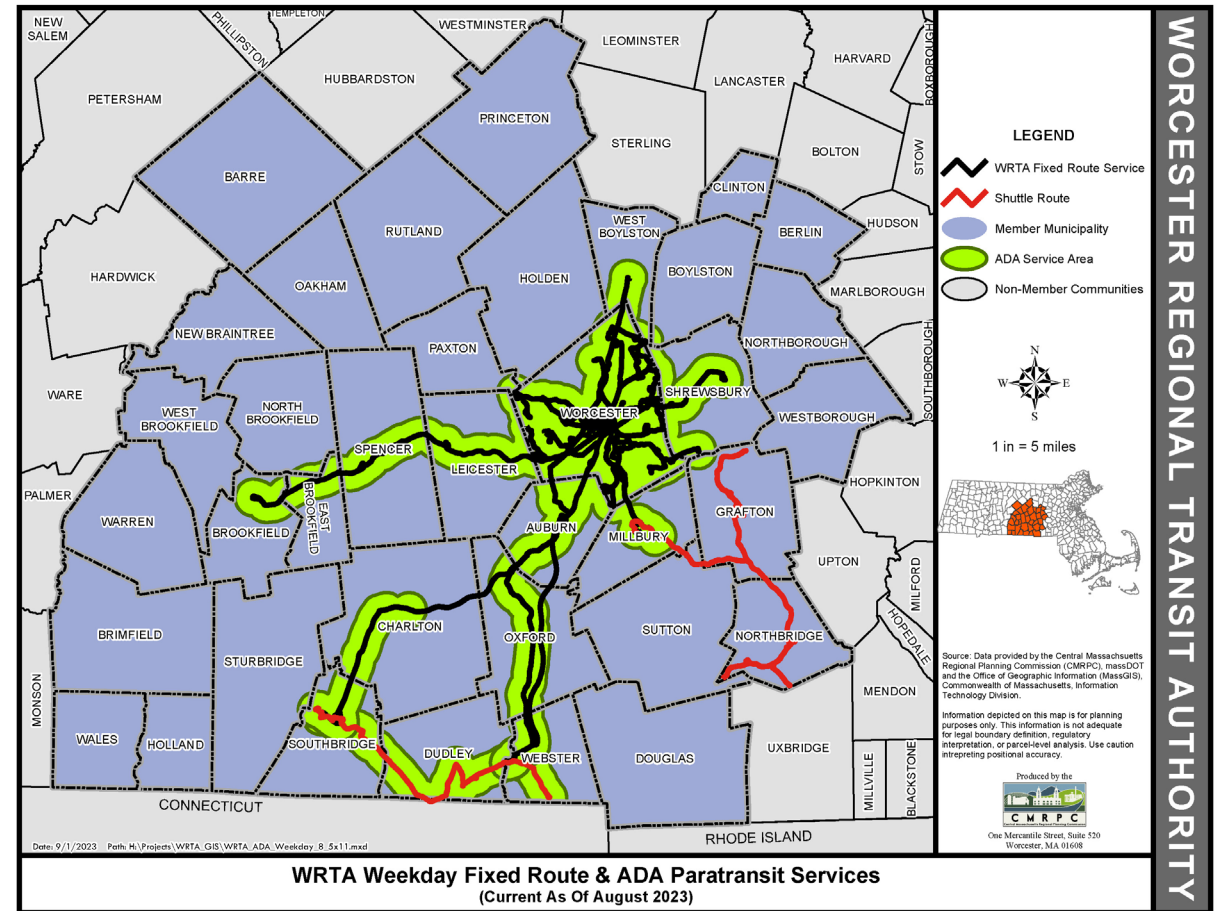
Microtransit

- Via



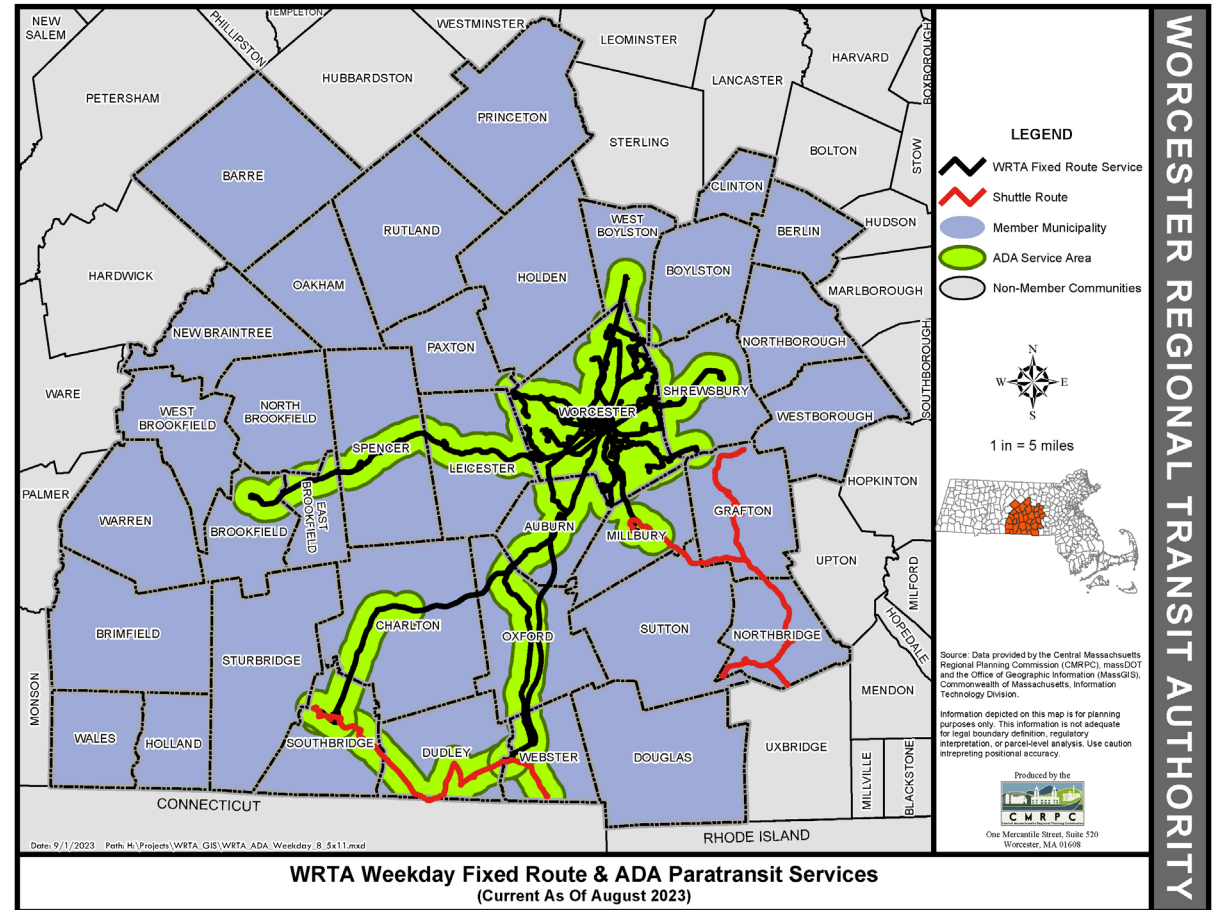
Service-WRTA Fixed Route

- WRTA operates 26 fixed routes in 16 member communities
- The majority of service operates from the Central Hub in Worcester to the surrounding communities (spoke and hub model)
- The WRTA contracts out the operation of this service per Chapter 161b.
- Currently Transdev, holds the contract for transit management. CMTM is a sub-corp to Transdev.
- Fixed route ridership in FY23 was 33% higher than pre-covid levels, with just under 4 million passenger trips



Service-WRTA Demand Response

- ADA transportation is for people whose disabilities prevent them from using the regular accessible WRTA fixed route bus for some or all of their trips
- Service area is a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile area surrounding each of the WRTA's fixed routes
- This service is part of the Transdev contract. PBSTM is managed via that contract, and they manage the day to day operation of the demand response service.
- PBSTM oversee the operation of customer service, the reservation system for demand response, and the ADA application process.



Service-COA Demand Response

- WRTA contracts with COAs in Auburn, Leicester, Millbury, Northborough, Oxford, Shrewsbury and West Boylston. This program is called the Mobility Management Model (MMM).
- These COAs provide service to those 60+ and those with disabilities of all ages
- Individuals from these communities call PBSTM to book their trips or ask questions regarding the service. PBSTM will then schedule the trips for the communities in the MMM for the next service day.
- CMTM maintains all vehicles.



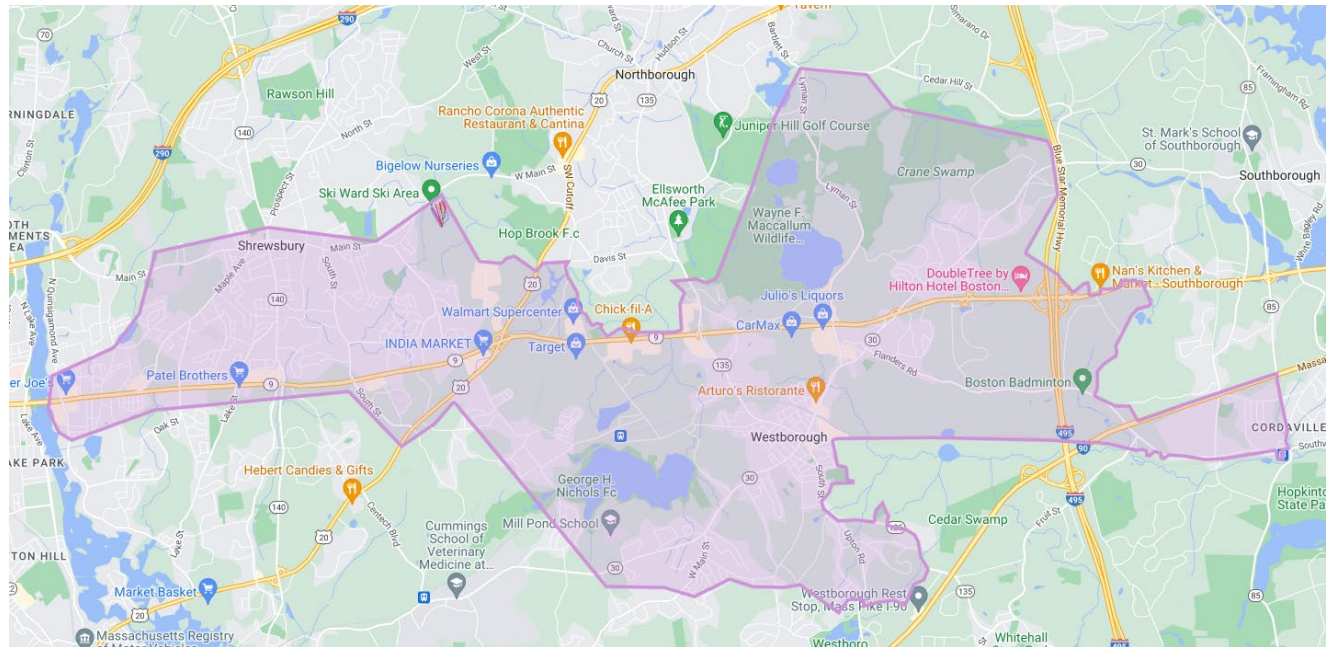
Service-SCM Elderbus

- WRTA contracts with SCM Elderbus to provide transportation services to seniors and the disabled residing in twenty-one communities
- Service is provided on 5 weekdays in each community with out-of-town medical transportation is provided 3 days a week, which will vary based on the community.



Services-Microtransit

- VIA=Microtransit Service
- On-demand transportation service within portions of the towns of Shrewsbury, Westborough and Northborough.
- WRTA plans on conducting a Microtransit Study in late FY24 or FY25 for this service area.



Vehicles



- Fixed Route Buses
 - 41 - Diesel
 - 13 - Hybrid
 - 5 - Body on Chassis(vans)
 - Procuring 7 BEBs



- Demand Response
 - 14 CMTM
 - 21 SCM Elderbus
 - 16 COA



Facilities



WRTA Central Hub, 60 Foster Street

- Opened 2013
- WRTA Administrative Office 3rd floor
- PBSTM (1st and 2nd floors)



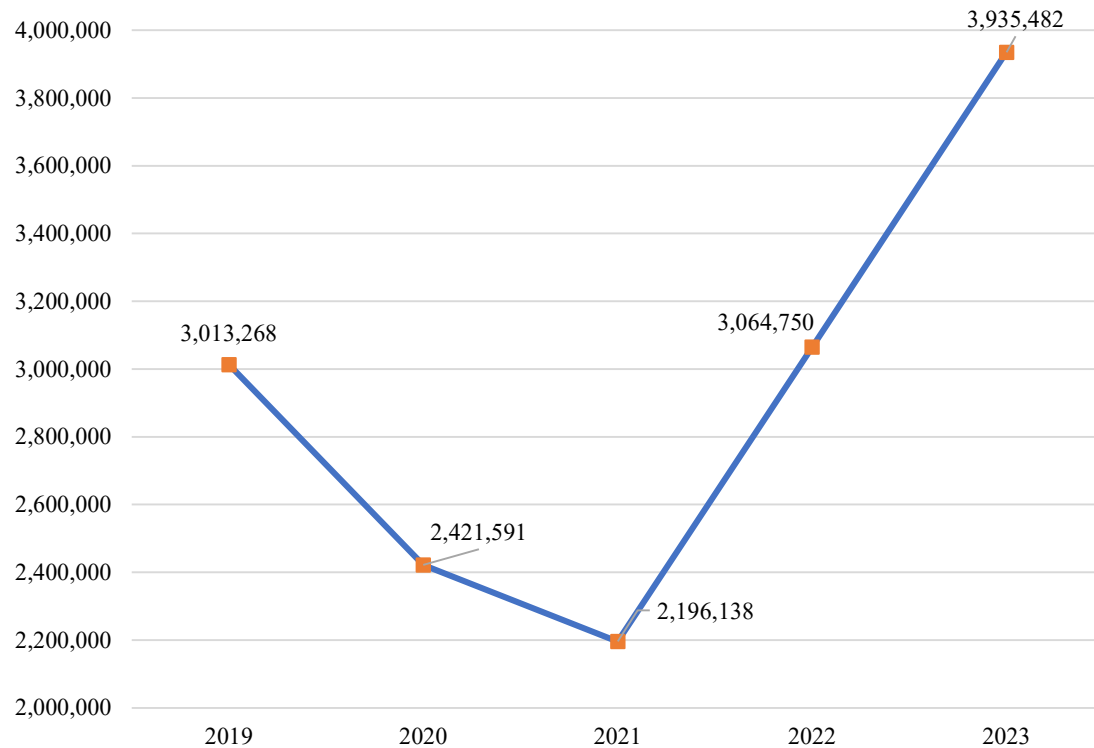
WRTA Maintenance & Operations, 42 Quinsigamond Ave

- Opened 2016
- CMTM

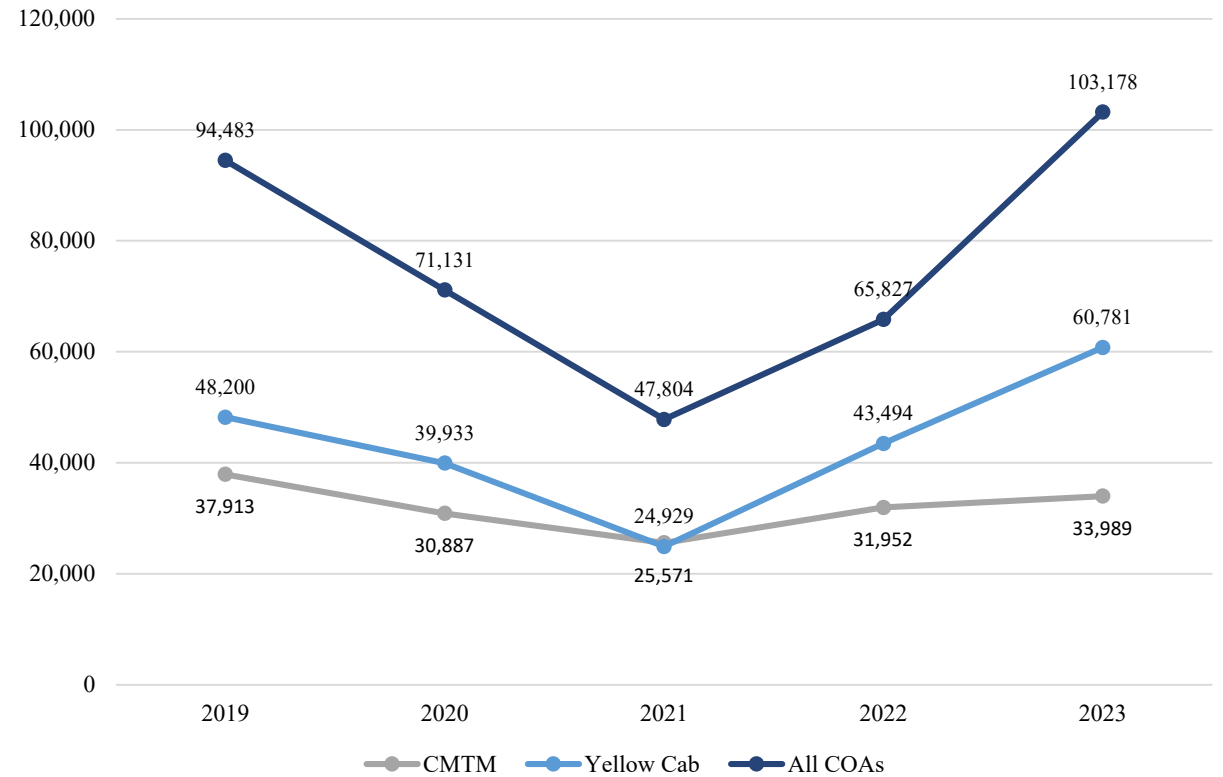


Ridership

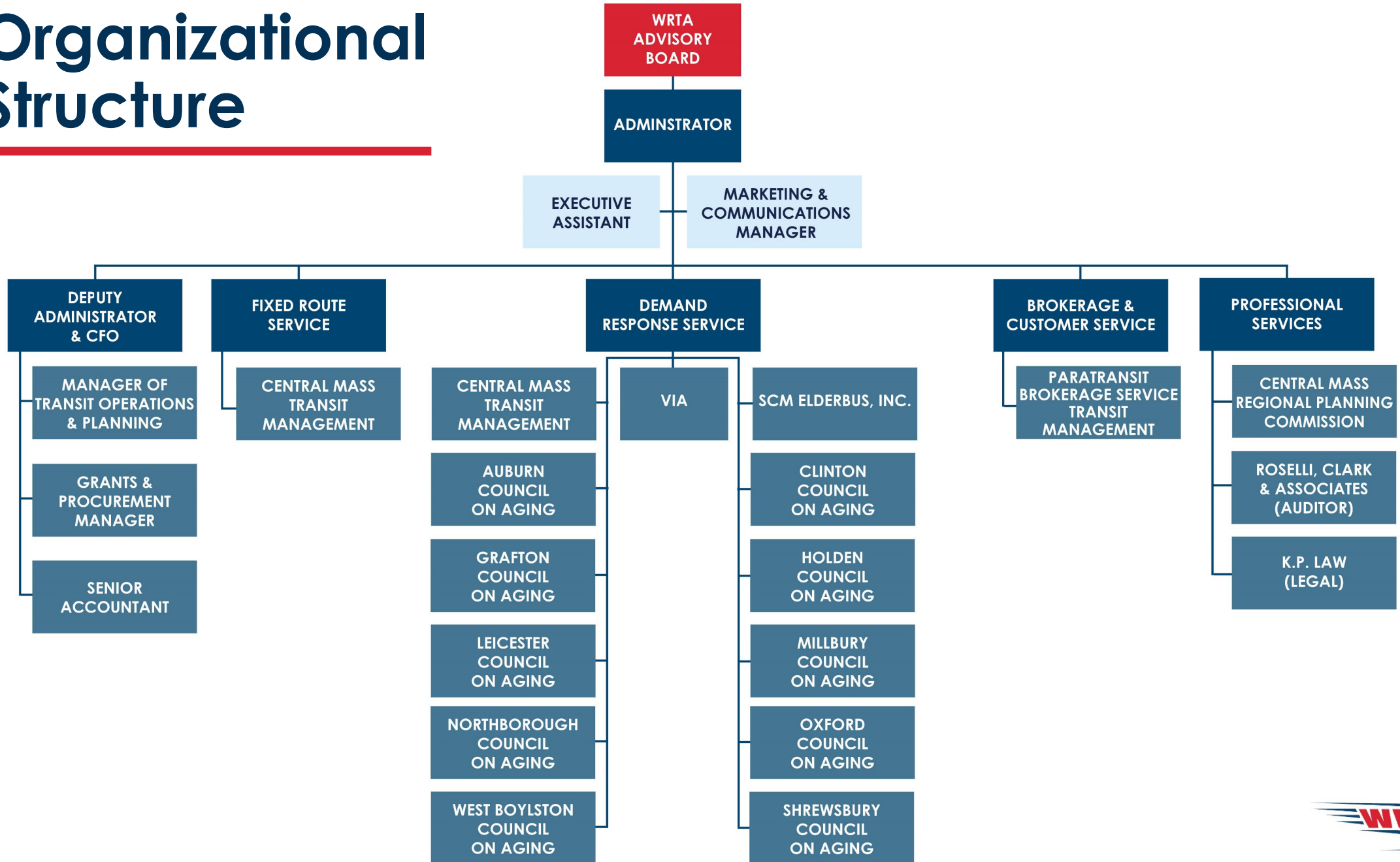
Fixed Route Ridership - SFYs 2019 to 2023



Paratransit Ridership - SFYs 2019 to 2023



Organizational Structure



Role of Advisory Board Members

Overview

- Ensure WRTA by-laws and applicable governmental laws are being followed
- Oversee finances and protect financial interests
- Hires Administrator to manage day-to-day operations
- Educate community/stakeholder groups on WRTA's goals, services, activities, etc.

Board Activities

- Approve Substantial Changes in Service
- Approve Fare Changes
- Approve property acquisitions of more than 1 year
- Receive notice of sale of real estate
- Approve extension, construction, modifications or improvements of facilities



By-Laws & Committees

By-laws:

- Reviewed and amended by a majority vote of Advisory Board members
- Outlines the selection of members and officers, voting and quorums, meetings, and Administrator role

Committees:

- Several sub-committees including:
 - Audit & Finance
 - Personnel
- Committees meet as needed, depending on subject matter
- Committees can be created subject to need



Quorum & Weighted Vote

- Advisory Board meetings must have a quorum in order for the group to meet (based on weighted vote)
- All votes are weighted by community, based on local assessment numbers from the prior fiscal year
- All votes or motions must have a majority weighted vote to pass



Open Meeting Law

WRTA is a public entity and must follow MA Open Meeting Law guidelines, including:

- Posting meeting agenda in advance
- Sharing approved Open Session minutes publicly
- Allowing public to attend in Open Session

Advisory Board Members/Designees should keep in mind the following:

- When joining remotely, turn camera on
- Speak aloud motions, votes, or questions
- All votes must be taken via roll call vote
- Hybrid meetings currently permitted until March 2025





Worcester Regional Transit Authority

Administrator's Update

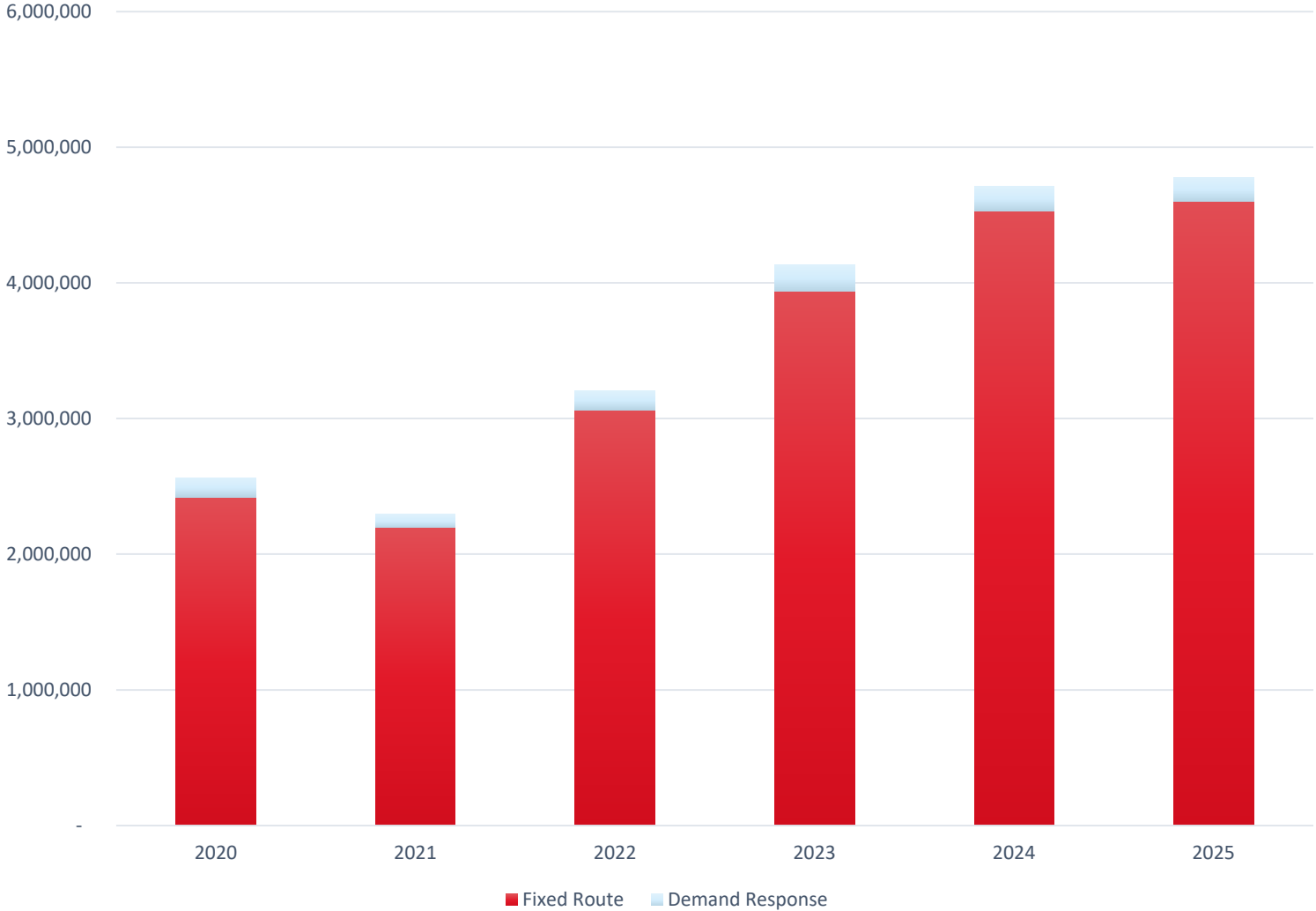


Worcester Regional Transit Authority

FY25 Budget Presentation

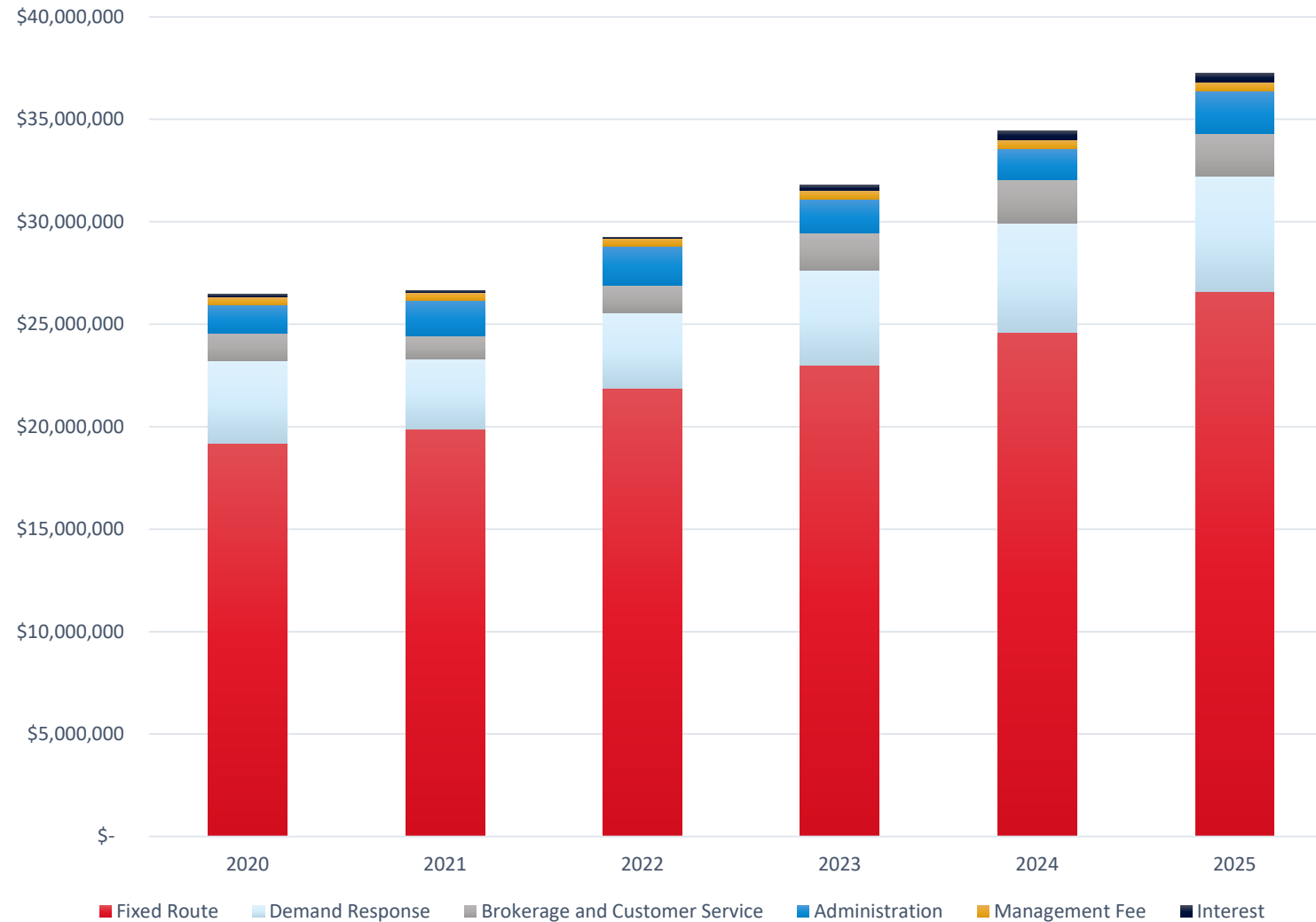
Ridership Trends

Unlinked Passenger Trips



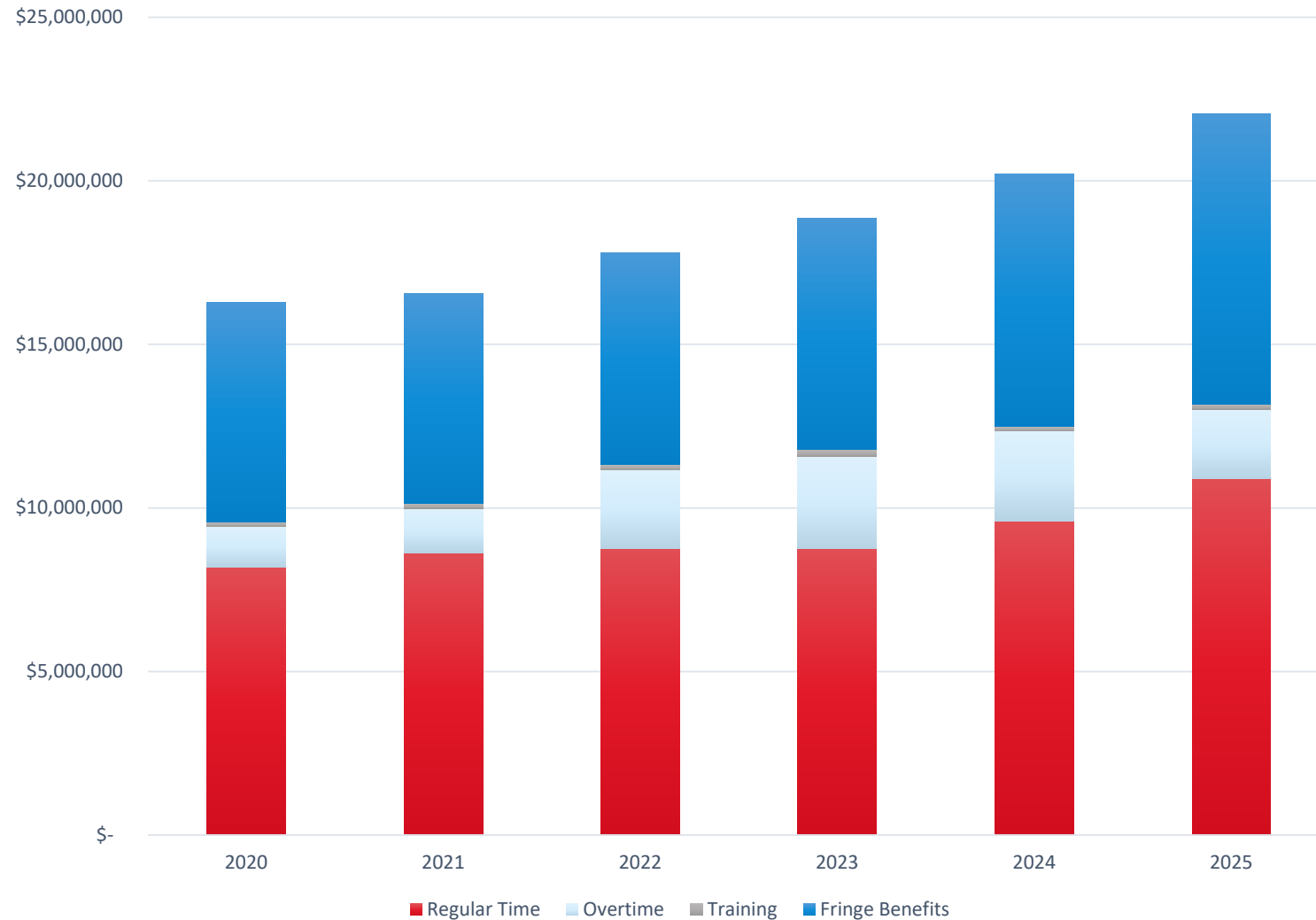
Cost Trends

Operating Costs



CMTM Wage and Fringe Trends

Wages and Fringe Benefits



Cost Drivers

Central Mass Transit Management

Wages	+\$691k	+5.5%
Pension	+121k	+6.2%
Medical Insurance	+\$813k	+28.3%
Liability Insurance	+423k	+28.1%
Workers' Comp	+101k	+27.5%

Administration

Wages	+\$51,042	+8.3%
Medical Insurance	+\$31,368	+30.9%
Pension	+131,844	
Planning	+\$300,000	+92.3%
Professional Services	+24,280	+34.7%



Revenue Sources

Initial Budget Proposes Resumption of Fare Collection

- Passenger Revenue +\$4.53m
- Federal Assistance +\$226k +3.7%

If Advisory Board votes to continue the suspension of fare collection,
Federal Assistance will have a net increase of: \$4.76m +78.2%

- State Assistance Project Level Funding
- Local Assessments +147k +2.5%
- WRTA Administration is actively pursuing other grant opportunities to fund fare free service including:
 - US EPA – 5 year \$15m
 - MassDOT – Annual Fare Share Amount TBD



Fiscal Year 2025 Consolidated Budget

	<u>FY 2025 Budget</u>	<u>FY2024 Budget</u>	<u>\$ Increase / (Decrease)</u>	<u>% Increase / (Decrease)</u>
Expenses:				
Transit Services				
Fixed Route	\$ 26,605,451	\$ 24,601,117	\$ 2,004,334	8.1%
Demand Response	5,615,586	5,348,463	267,123	5.0%
Brokerage / Customer Service	2,062,311	2,083,553	-21,243	-1.0%
Administration	2,082,278	1,521,388	560,890	36.9%
Debt Service	457,728	465,622	-7,894	-1.7%
Management Fee	<u>426,780</u>	<u>415,368</u>	<u>11,412</u>	2.7%
Total Expenses	<u>37,250,134</u>	<u>34,435,512</u>	<u>2,814,612</u>	8.2%



Fiscal Year 2025 Consolidated Budget

	<u>FY 2025 Budget</u>	<u>FY2024 Budget</u>	<u>\$ Increase / (Decrease)</u>	<u>% Increase / (Decrease)</u>
Revenues:				
Passenger Revenue	4,533,426	-	4,533,426	-
MassDOT Community Transit Grants	72,000	72,000	-	0.0%
MassDOT Discretionary Grant	-	1,944,623	(1,944,623)	-100.0%
Administration Revenues	237,140	387,908	(150,768)	-38.9%
Other - Non Transportation	23,088	22,769	319	1.4%
Total Revenues	4,865,654	2,427,300	2,438,354	100.5%
Federal Operating Assistance:				
Operating Assistance Special Rule	4,417,891	2,425,285	1,992,606	82.2%
CARES Act	-	1,944,623	(1,944,623)	-100.0%
American Rescue Plan	871,841	1,056,061	(184,220)	-17.4%
CMAQ - Westborough/VIA	521,127	500,705	20,422	4.1%
Preventive Maintenance - Security	283,448	142,085	141,363	99.5%
Short Range Transportation Planning	200,000	-	200,000	-
Project Administration	21,859	20,818	1,041	5.0%
Total Federal Operating Assistance	6,316,166	6,089,577	226,589	3.7%



Fiscal Year 2025 Consolidated Budget

	<u>FY 2025 Budget</u>	<u>FY2024 Budget</u>	<u>\$ Increase / (Decrease)</u>	<u>% Increase / (Decrease)</u>
Net Cost of Service	<u>26,068,314</u>	<u>25,918,635</u>	<u>149,679</u>	<u>0.6%</u>
Net Cost of Service Funding				
A. State Contract Assistance	19,931,480	19,931,480	-	0.0%
B. Local Assessments	6,136,834	5,987,155	149,679	2.5%
Deficit	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	



Status of Pandemic Era Federal Funding

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES)

Original Apportionment	\$36,048,200
Fiscal Year 2020 use	\$373,647
Fiscal Year 2021 use	\$4,626,360
Fiscal Year 2022 use	\$3,426,381
Fiscal Year 2023 use	\$5,126,705
Fiscal Year 2024 budgeted	<u>\$1,944,623</u>
Balance	\$20,550,484

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Original Apportionment	\$5,992,829
Fiscal Year 2022 use	\$619,440
Fiscal Year 2023 use	\$633,402
Fiscal Year 2024 budgeted	\$1,056,061
Fiscal Year 2025 budgeted	<u>\$871,841</u>
Balance	\$2,812,085





Worcester Regional Transit Authority

Title VI Update/Public Hearings Request

WRTA Title VI Program

FTA requirement - Civil Rights document that has been prepared to assure that the level and quality of WRTA's services are provided;

- In a nondiscriminatory manner;
- That the opportunity for full and fair participation is offered to WRTA's riders, and other community members, and;
- To people for whom English is not their primary language and who have limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English
- Program is comprised of three distinct parts
 - Title VI Requirements
 - Public Participation Plan
 - Language Assistance Plan
 - In 2021, WRTA combined all three plans under one document to streamline related efforts. The 2024 Program follows similar format.

“No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964



Title VI Requirements

Title VI assures that requirements of Title VI or the Civil Rights Act of 1964 are fully met and WRTA is compliant with Federal guidelines, and is responsive to the needs of Title VI for all its beneficiaries, customers, and constituencies.



WRTA has made available:

- Notice of Beneficiaries
 - Makes WRTA riders aware of its commitment to Title VI compliance
- The right to file a Complaint, and;
- The Complaint process and Complaint form



Public Participation Plan

Plan ensures that no one is precluded from participating in WRTA service planning and development process.

- Provides that the public has early, continuous, and meaningful opportunity to participate in decisions about a proposed activity through an open public process
- Plan consists of;
 - Outreach Efforts – Alerting Riders and Encouraging Engagement
 - WRTA Mediums (Social Media, Website, etc.)
 - Addressing Comments
 - Identification of Stakeholders



Language Assistance Plan

Plan ensures meaningful access to people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) with regard to WRTA programs and activities.

- WRTA uses a Four-Factor Analysis which considers;
 - The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served
 - The frequency with which LEP persons come into contact with the WRTA
 - The importance of WRTA in people's lives
 - The resources available for LEP outreach

Other Information/Tools Used

- Outcomes – New Tools and Alerting Riders of Language Assistance
- Decision Making Bodies
- Service Standards and Policies
- Program Specific Requirements
- Grants, Triennial Reviews, and Certifications and Assurances



Action Requested Today



WRTA Advisory Board approval to release draft 2024 Title VI Program for public review and comment (motion required)

WRTA Administration to conduct virtual public meeting in early April 2024

Incorporate any public comments into 'final' document

Present 'final' document and public review/comments received at April Advisory Board meeting

WRTA Advisory Board to endorse 2024 Title VI Program at April Advisory Board meeting

WRTA Administration to submit to FTA for approval

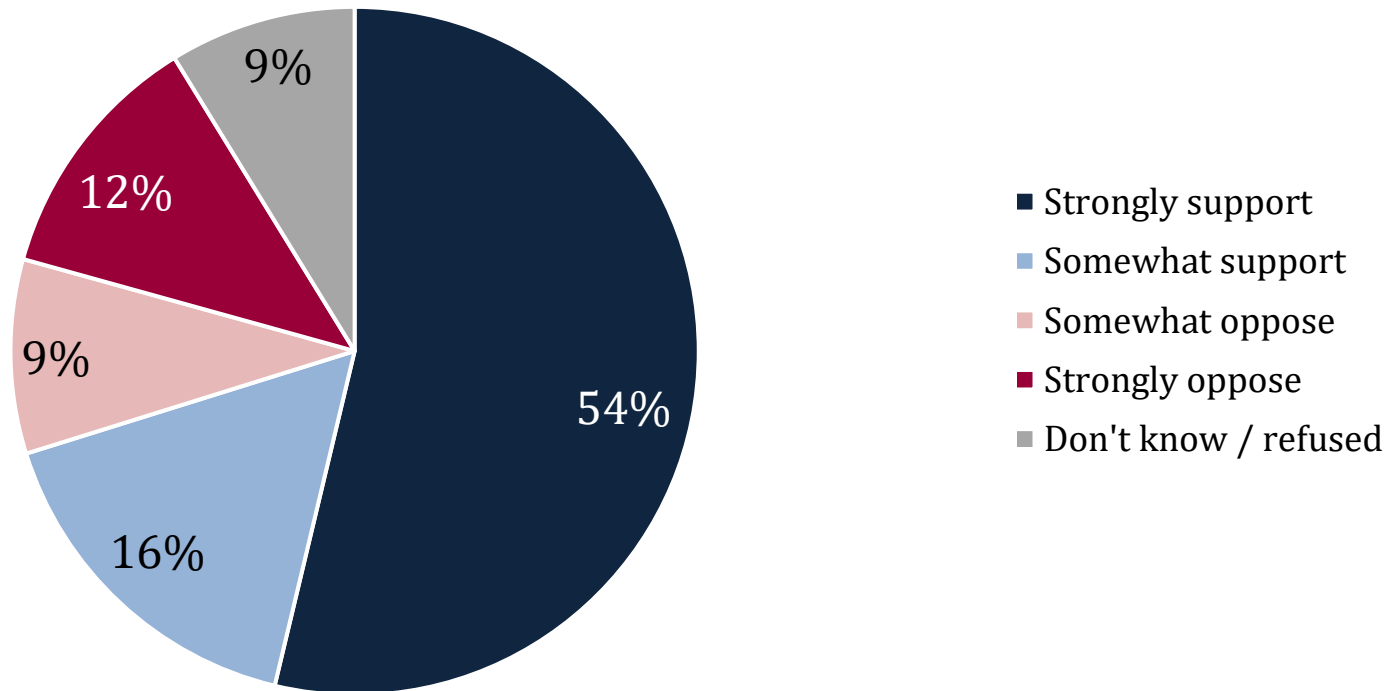


Support for fare free buses

- Seven-in-ten support continuing fare free service.
- A majority (54%) *strongly* support zero fare transit.

WRTA residents strongly support continuing fare-free transit service

% who strongly/somewhat support/oppose the policy

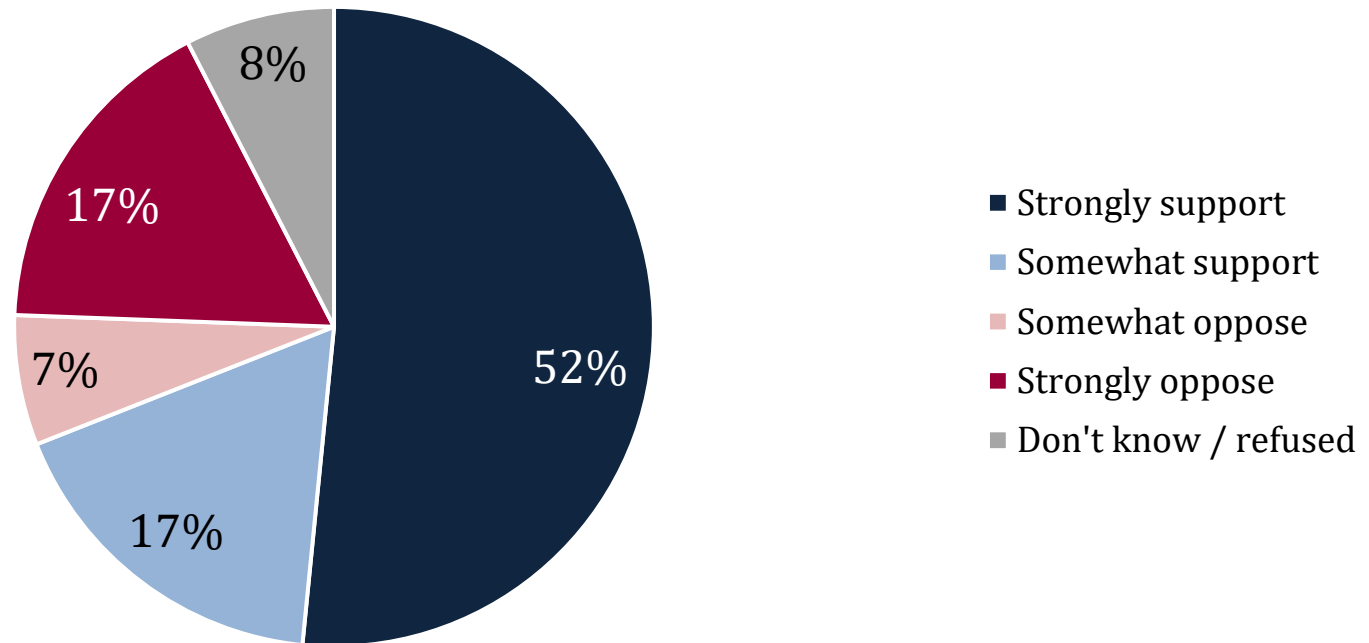


Fare Share Funding for RTAs

- Over two-thirds (69%) support using revenue from the newly created surtax on income over \$1 million.
- The idea is most popular with Democrats (89%), but 53% of Republicans also support this funding source.

Broad support for using income surtax revenue for RTA funding

% who strongly/somewhat support/oppose policy



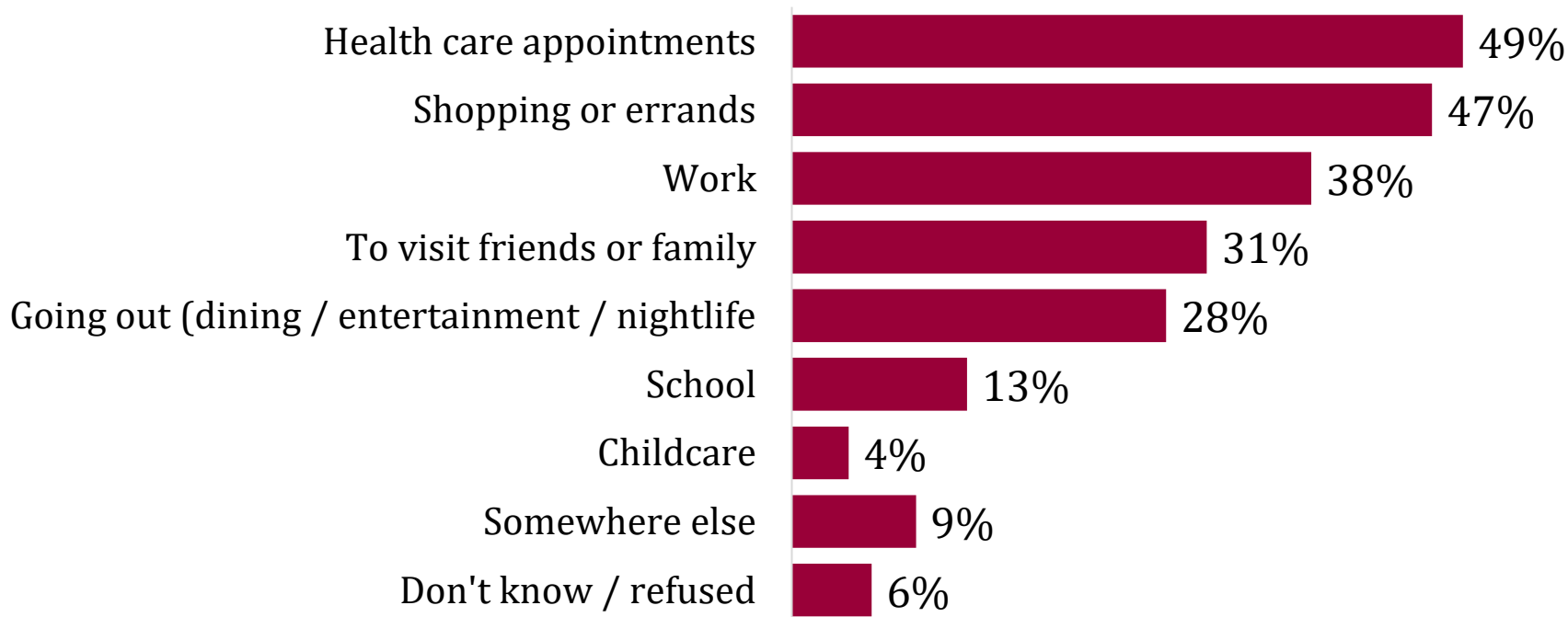
Q: In 2022, voters approved an additional 4 percent tax on income over \$1 million, to be dedicated to education and transportation. Some people call this the Millionaire's Tax, or the Fair Share tax. Currently some of the money from that tax is being used to fund the WRTA and the other RTAs that provide bus and paratransit service across the state. How much would you support or oppose continuing to fund the RTAs from this tax in this year's state budget?

Top bus destinations

- Nearly half of bus riders report taking bus to health care appointments (49%) and other errands (47%); 38% use it to commute to work.
- Transit access is intrinsically tied to health care access.

Health care, shopping and work top bus destinations

% of bus riders who use bus for each type of trip



In their own words

When my car broke down it helped me travel back and forth until I could fix my car.

It's a cheaper and healthier alternative to driving and parking around the city.

I ran a child care center for 71 children and took them on field trips.

I never rode the bus until it was free. Knowing it's free makes it a no-brainer. If the bus schedule fits into my plans, I try to take the bus.

I like to go out and have a few beers and not have to worry.

Saves on the stress of worrying about finding a few dollars or coins, and to worry about transfers is a pain in the neck too.

Not having to pay for the bus saves hundreds of dollars for my family a month and makes it [possible] for me to be able to put food on the table

Riders say they will ride less if fares return

- Nearly half (45%) of riders say they will ride less (26%) or stop riding (19%) if WRTA resumes charging fares.

Nearly half of riders say they will ride less if fares return

% of riders who would do each if WRTA resumes charging fares

