



WRTA

WRTA ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

August 27, 2026

FY27 Administrator Goals

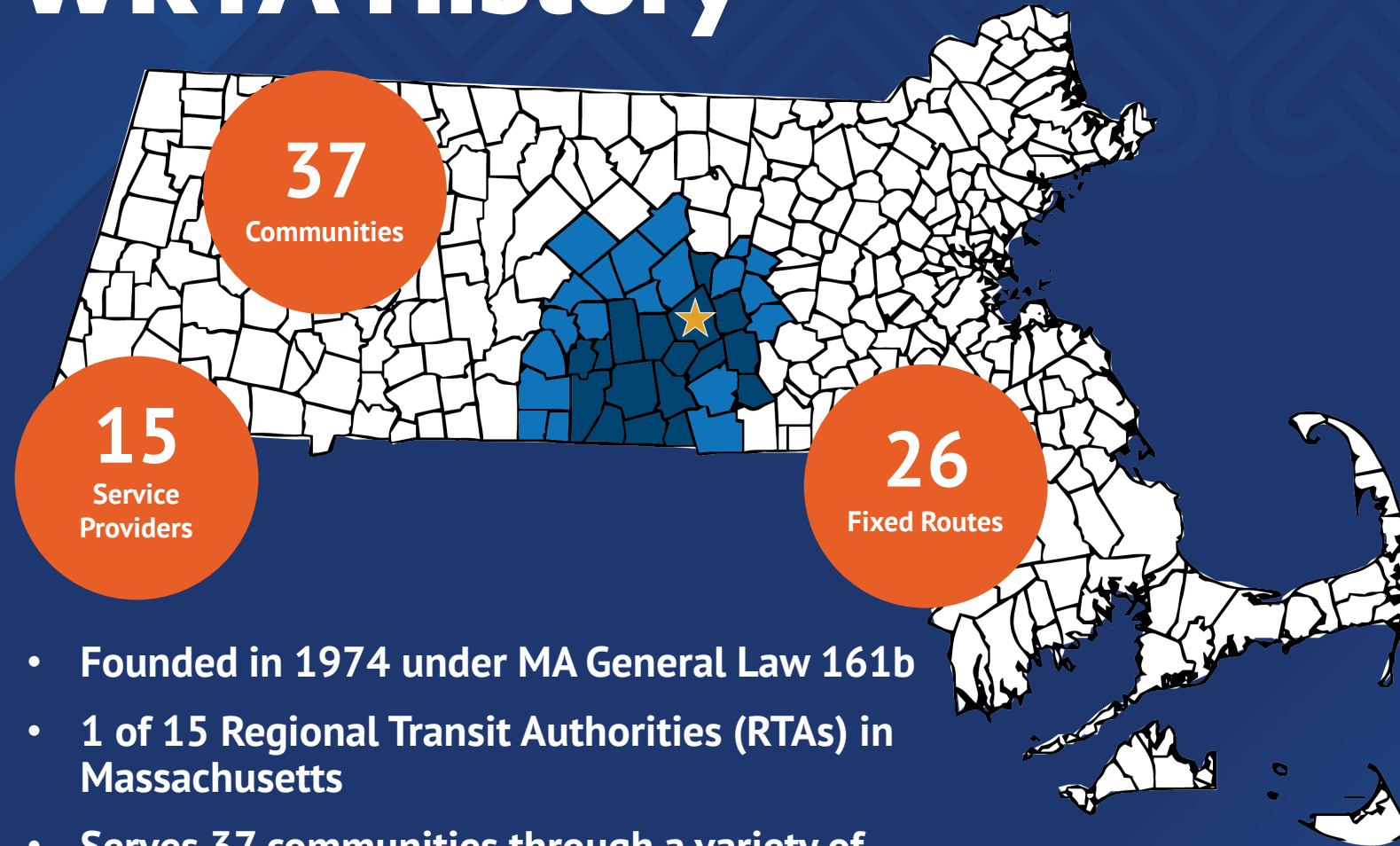
- Complete Five Year Vision Service Prioritization Study
- Complete integration of new ITS for Demand Response Service
- Develop and Award RFPs for:
 - Bus Stop Sign Installation
 - Tech RFPs:
 - Collision Avoidance Technology for Fixed Route Buses
 - Real Time Infotainment and Signs Pilot
- Develop Bi Annual Metrics Report
 - Fixed Route and Demand Response Metrics to identify successes and areas of opportunities



WRTA

WRTA Board Member Introduction

WRTA History



Communities Served by Fixed Route

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

- Founded in 1974 under MA General Law 161b
- 1 of 15 Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) in Massachusetts
- Serves 37 communities through a variety of public transportation methods:
 - Fixed-route
 - ADA and Non-ADA Demand Response
 - On-Demand Microtransit

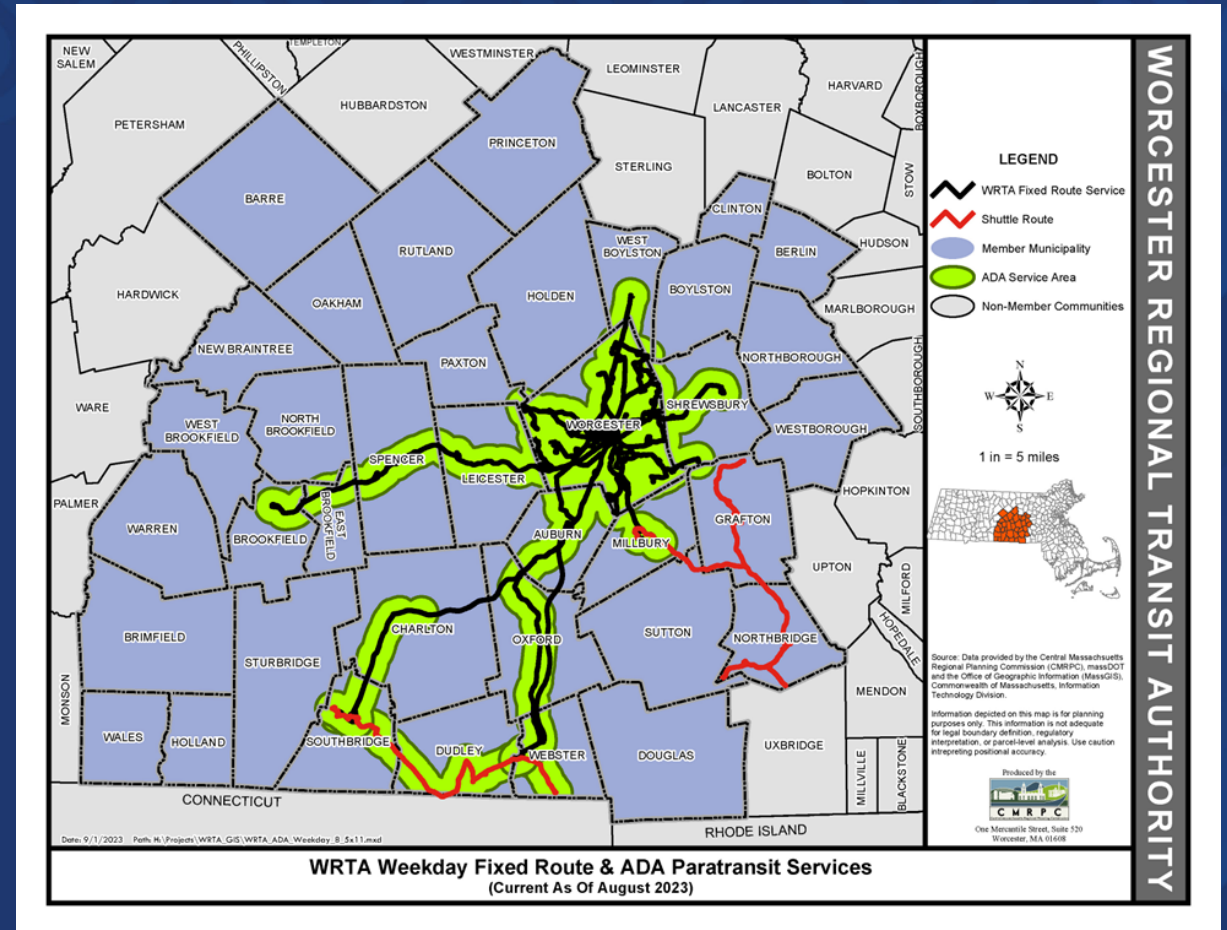
WRTA Service Providers

- **Fixed-route (Bus)**
 - Transdev
 - Sub-Corp: Central Mass Transit Management (CMTM)
- **Demand Response (Van)**
 - Central Mass Transit Management (CMTM)
 - South Central MA Elderbus (SCM Elderbus)
 - Councils on Aging (11 communities)
 - Worcester Yellow Cab, Inc.
 - Bethel Group LLC
 - Paratransit Brokerage Services, Transit Management, Inc. (PBSTM)
- **On-Demand Microtransit**
 - Via Transportation, Inc.



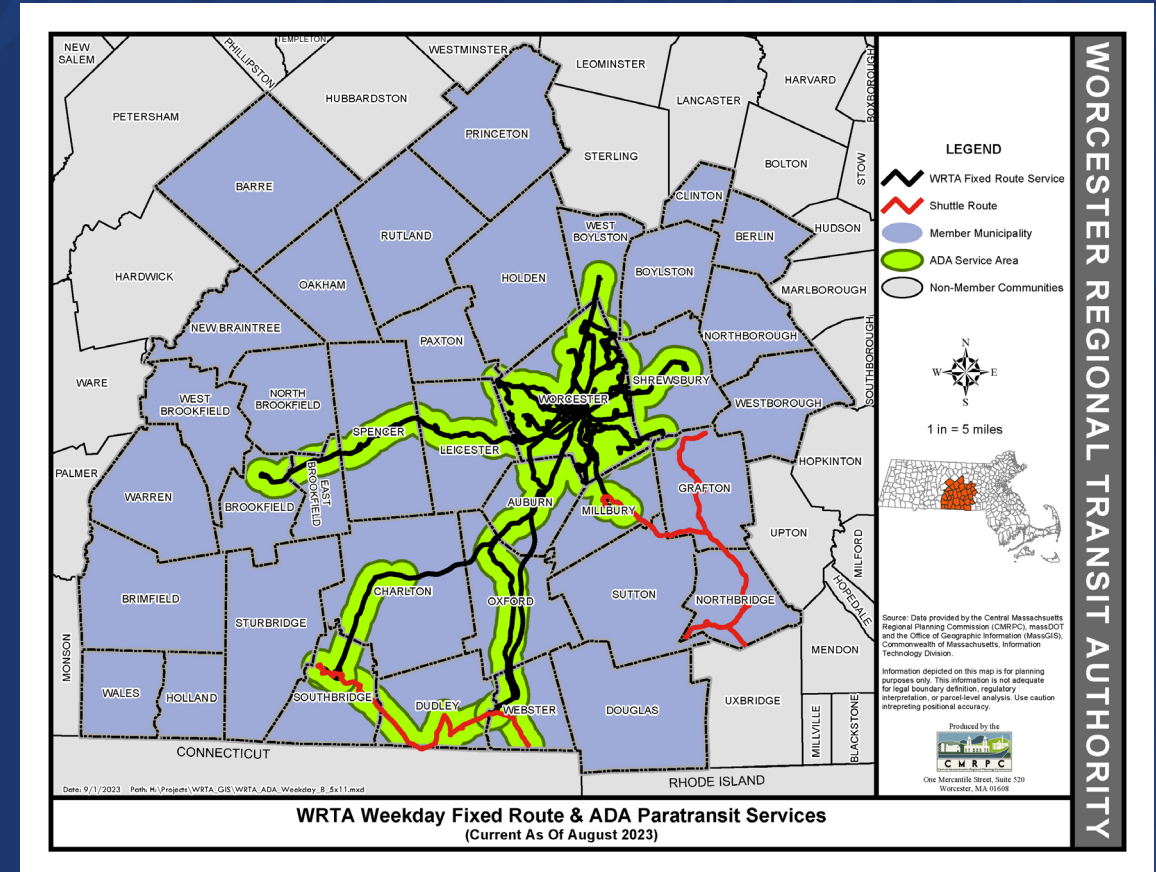
Service-WRTA Fixed Route

- WRTA operates 26 fixed routes in 16 member communities
- The majority of service operates from the Central Hub in Worcester to the surrounding communities (hub and spoke model)



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
 - Note: City of Worcester has blanket coverage which is over and above ADA service
- PBSTM oversee the operation of customer service, the reservation system for demand response, and the ADA application process. PBSTM is a sub-corp to Transdev.



Service-COA Demand Response

- WRTA contracts with COAs in Auburn, Leicester, Millbury, Northborough, Oxford, Shrewsbury, Westborough 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. Providing services to geographies beyond the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile boundary. Which is over and above ADA.
- 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.



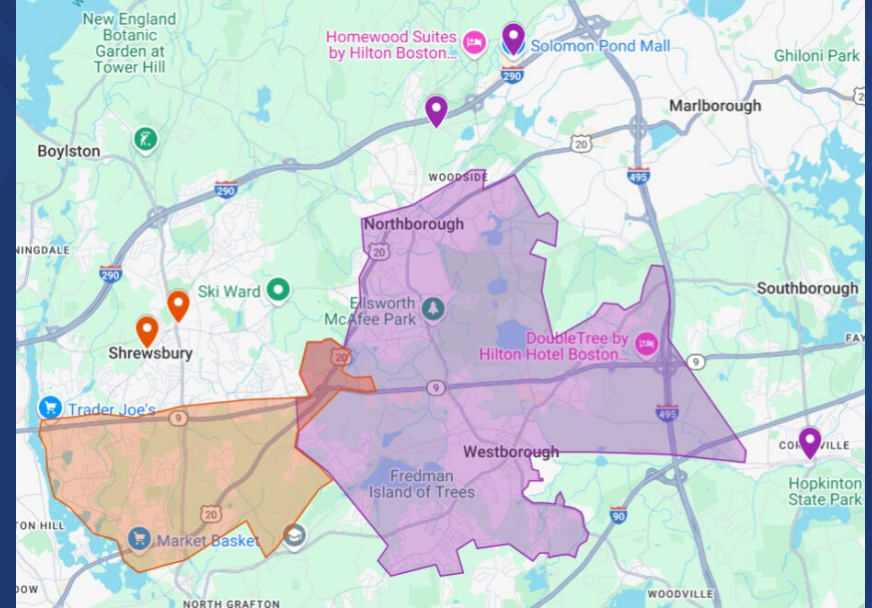
Service-SCM Elderbus

- WRTA contracts with SCM Elderbus to provide transportation services to seniors and the disabled residing in twenty-two 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.
- Vast majority of service area is beyond the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile ADA boundary and provides service over and above ADA requirements.



Service-Microtransit

- Via = Microtransit Service
- On-demand transportation service within portions of the towns of Shrewsbury, Westborough and Northborough.
- WRTA completed a study (Connecting Communities <https://therta.com/the-extra-mile-connecting-communities/>) in FY 2025 that resulted in a newer microtransit service area; expanding service in Northborough, re-aligning the Shrewsbury zone, and connecting with MWRTA in Southborough and Marlborough.
- All vehicles in operation are wheelchair accessible vehicles.



Fleet



Fixed Route Buses

- 39 - Diesel
- 15 - Hybrid
- 7 - Body on Chassis(vans)

Demand Response

- 14 CMTM
- 21 SCM Elderbus
- 17 COA



Facilities



WRTA Central Hub, 60 Foster Street

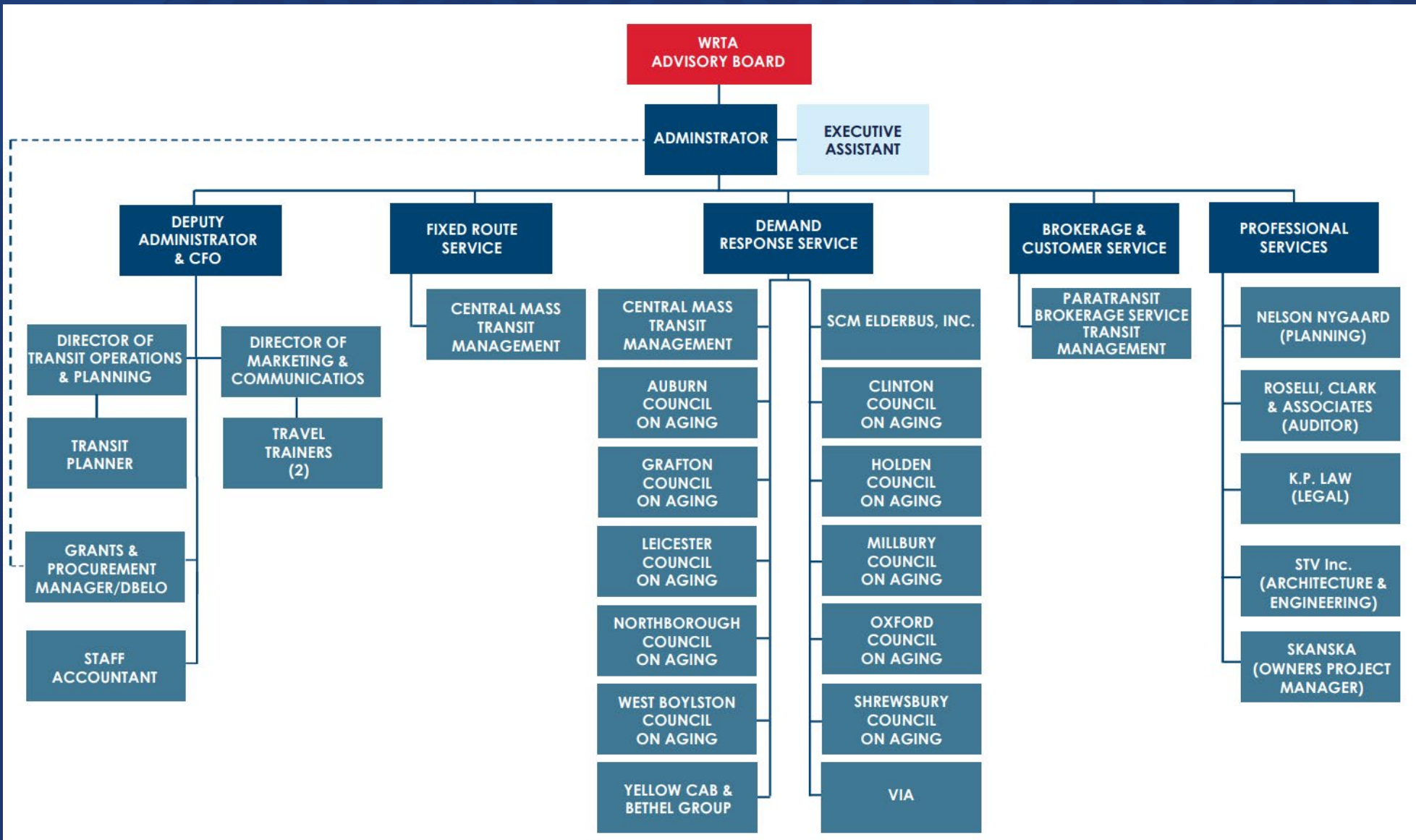
- Opened 2013
- WRTA Administrative Office 2nd & 3rd floors



WRTA Maintenance & Operations, 42 Quinsigamond Ave

- Opened 2016
- CMTM

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:

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

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 June 30, 2027



WRTA

Same Day ADA Discussion and Relationship to 5 Year Vision

Overview

- What is same day ADA?
- Background
- Industry Examples of Same Day ADA
- Cost Application of Industry Examples to WRTA
- Alternative Models and Application to WRTA
- Available Grant Opportunities
- Other Considerations
- 5 year Vision

What is Same Day ADA?

Same Day ADA Definition

Same-day ADA paratransit is a supplemental transportation option that allows eligible ADA paratransit riders to request and receive trips on the same day they wish to travel, providing greater flexibility than traditional advance-reservation paratransit service.

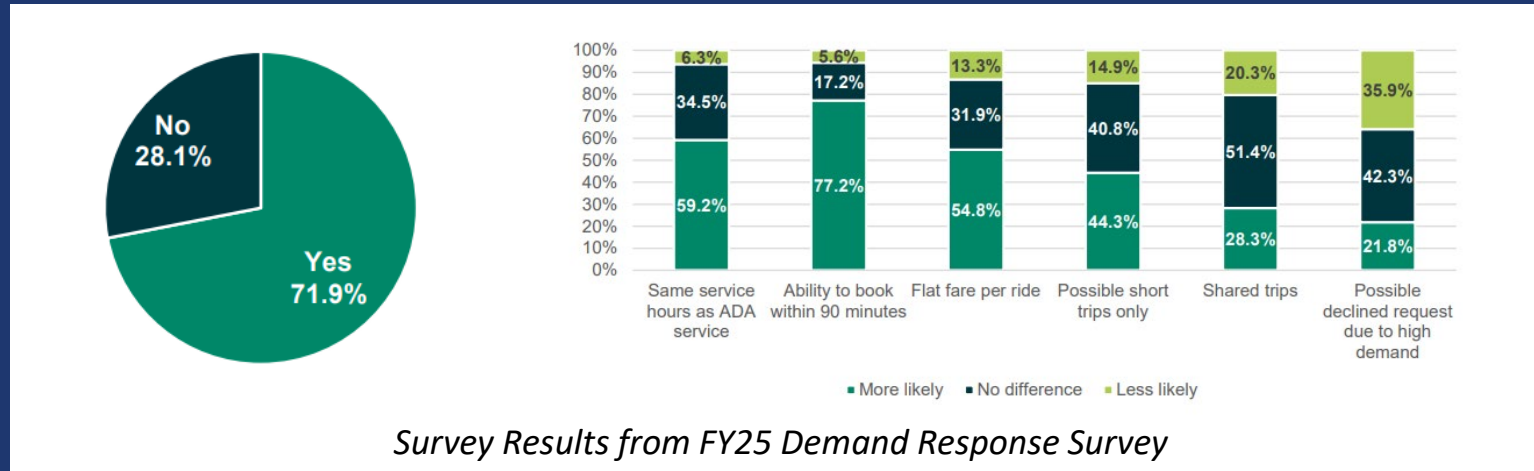
Relationship to Next Day ADA Service

Same-day service is intended to complement—not replace—traditional ADA paratransit and does not reduce an agency's existing ADA service obligations.

Background

2025 Demand Response Survey

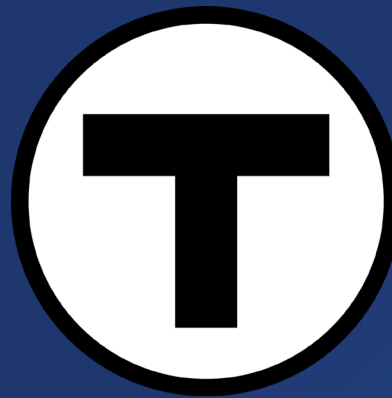
- WRTA 2025 Demand Response Survey Identified Customer Interest in Service



Engagement and Request from Advocacy Groups

- FY25 partnered with Your Access Advocates (formerly Center for Living and Wellness) to include questions on survey
- Met with Advocacy group and related groups in FY26 to discuss same day service concept
- Group provided sign on letter for True on Demand letter and was discussed at July Board meeting
- Same Day ADA has also been discussed with Board as it related to FY25 Survey, FY26 CRTP and July Update

Industry Examples of Same Day ADA



PACE Chicago – TAP & RAP



Program Overview

- Two same-day mobility programs: Taxi Access Program (TAP) & Rideshare Access Program (RAP)
 - TAP: Same-day trips using participating taxi providers
 - RAP: Same-day trips using participating rideshare providers

Eligibility and Accessibility

- Available to RTA-certified ADA paratransit riders
- Dedicated phone number for TAP Wheelchair accessible vehicles
- RAP uses a program called UZURV to provide wheelchair accessible vehicles

Fare and Subsidy

- Riders pay a \$3.25 base fare per trip
- Pace subsidizes the trip up to a maximum total trip value of \$30
- Example: For a \$25 trip, the rider pays \$3.25 and Pace covers the remaining \$21.75
- Example: For a \$40 trip, the rider pays \$3.25, Pace subsidizes up to \$26.75, and the rider pays the remaining \$10
- Riders are responsible for any costs exceeding the \$30 trip cap, plus applicable surcharges or tips

Number of Monthly Subsidized Trips

- Standard allocation of 30 subsidized one-way trips per month, with eligible riders able to apply for up to 40 trips per month



RTD Denver – Access-on-Demand



Program Overview

- Provides curb-to-curb service for same-day trips
- Trips are provided through contracted transportation providers, including taxi and TNC services
- RTD uses dedicated providers to serve WAV trips

Eligibility and Accessibility

- Eligible RTD Access-a-Ride customers

Fare and Subsidy

- Rider pays a \$4.50 base fare per trip
- RTD provides a \$20 subsidy per trip
- Rider is responsible for any trip cost above \$24.50

Number of Monthly Subsidized Trips

- Riders are allowed up to 60 trips per month



MBTA – The Ride Flex



Program Overview

- Trips are provided through third-party transportation providers, including Uber, Lyft, and taxi services

Eligibility and Accessibility

- Eligible MBTA RIDE customers

Fare and Subsidy

- Rider pays a \$3.00 base fare per trip
- MBTA provides a subsidy of up to \$40 per trip
- Riders are responsible for any cost above the combined \$43 maximum trip value

Number of Monthly Subsidized Trips

- Number of subsidized trips available each month varies based on the customer's use of traditional RIDE service





WRTA

Applying Cost of Examples to WRTA

Applying Cost Examples to WRTA

Cost Exercise

- Table below provides a comparison of each program, the passenger fare, the subsidy, the total number of trips and cost to the agency
- The table then applies that subsidy to the total number of ADA Eligible Riders in Worcester and calculates that subsidy value for a monthly and an annual basis

Program / Agency	
Rider Base Fare	
Agency Subsidy per Trip	
Subsidized Trips Allowed per Rider per Month	
Total Monthly Cost Per Passenger	
Total Eligible Worcester ADA Riders (FY26)	
Total Maximum Monthly Subsidy for all riders	
Total Annual Cost of Programs for all riders	

Budget Notes

- WRTA per trip rate for demand response service for CMTM was \$67.38 in FY25
- FY26 rate for Worcester-Worcester Taxi trip was \$16.50 (rate was for next day service). Unsure if rate would increase or decrease for same day services.
- Submitted rates in FY26 by contractor for Worcester-Worcester Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) Trip was \$50.00 (rate for next day service).

Alternative Models



samTrans

Program Overview

- Operates using existing Redi-Wheels vehicles and available capacity
- Service is provided on a space-available basis
- Same-day trips are not guaranteed
- Operates Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- Customers may be offered a pickup time up to 90 minutes before or after their requested time
- Service is a shared-ride service, rather than an exclusive or direct trip

Eligible Riders

- Eligible Redi-Wheels riders
- Wheelchair and other mobility device trips are accommodated using wheelchair-accessible Redi-Wheels vehicles

Fare & Subsidy

- Standard fare is \$10 per one-way trip
- Reduced fare assistance customers pay \$8 per one-way trip

Number of Monthly Subsidized Trips

- No cap but trips are not guaranteed



Application of samTrans

- Opportunity through new PSDS once deployed
- Procurement issued with contractor providing Microtransit module with the ability to commingle Trips

Advantages of Application

- Should be cost neutral as it uses space available
- Ability to manage and potentially grow based on Program success

Disadvantages of Application

- Operates as space available and trips are not guaranteed
- samTrams operating approximately 8 trips per day Via the same day Redi-Wheels program

Screenshot of WRTA RFP for new PSDS

Worcester Regional Transit Authority



Request for Proposals (RFP) # 2027-01

FOR

Paratransit Scheduling and Dispatching Software (PSDS)

PROPOSALS DUE:
September 02, 2026
2:00 p.m., EST

Joshua Rickman, Administrator
Worcester Regional Transit Authority
60 Foster Street
Worcester, MA 01608

CONTACT:
John Bianchi, Grants and Procurement Manager
(508) 453-3442
jbianchi@therta.com

Issued: July 15, 2026

Norwalk Transit District (Wheels2U)



Program Overview

- Same-day, on-demand microtransit service operating in Norwalk
- Available to the general public, not limited to ADA-certified riders
- Provides door-to-door pickup and drop-off within the Wheels2U service area
- Trips are shared with other passengers based on trip requests and vehicle availability
- Wheels2U provides a commingled mobility service, allowing ADA customers and the general public to use the same on-demand service

Accessibility

- Vehicles can accommodate wheelchair users; riders can indicate that they require a wheelchair space in their rider profile

Fare & Subsidy

- Current fare is \$2 per person per ride

Number of Monthly Subsidized Trips

- No cap

Application of Wheels2U

- Opportunity through new PSDS once deployed. Procurement issued with contractor providing Microtransit module with the ability to commingle trips
- Apply to specific geographies within the City of Worcester
- Consider geographies identified in the City's Mobility Action Plan

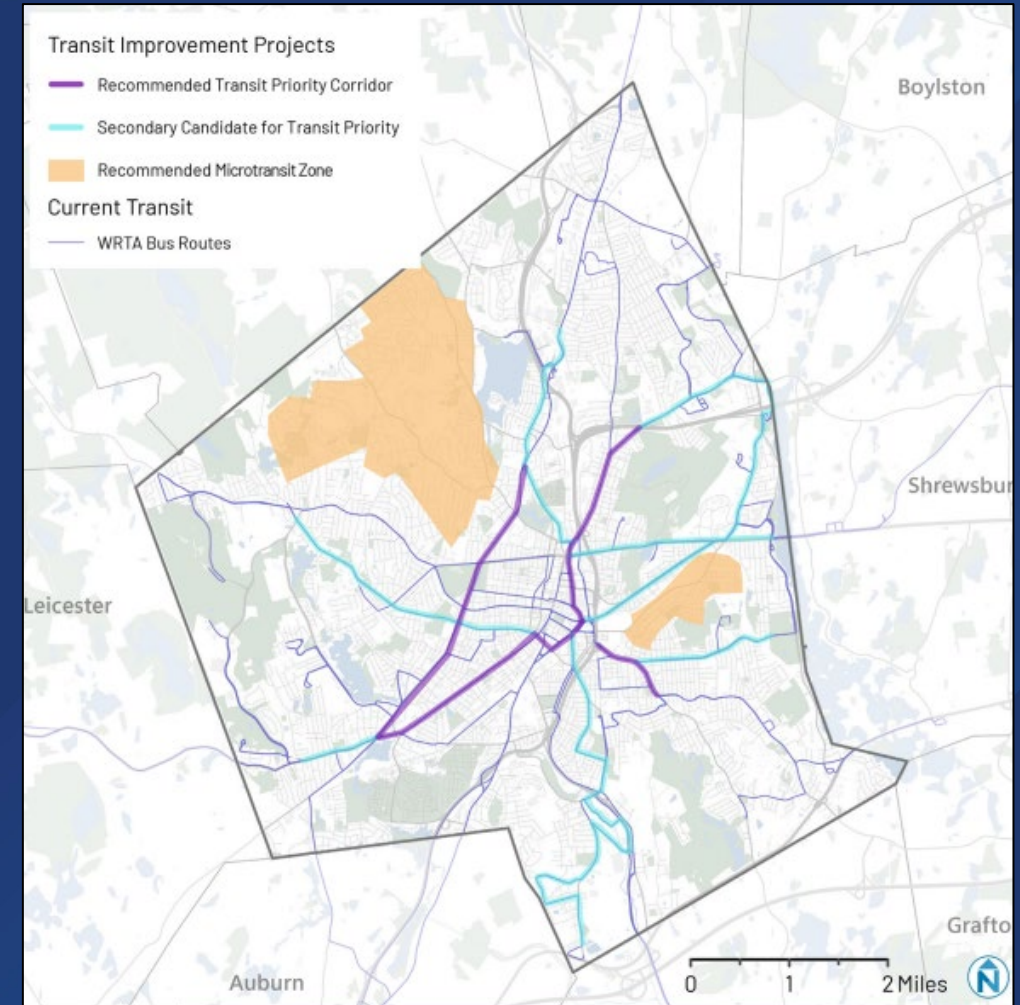
Advantages of Application

- Could be deployed as a pilot and budget is identifiable
 - Plantation Street Microtransit Grant
- Ability to manage and potentially grow based on Program success

Disadvantages of Application

- Specific service area
- Not all origins and destinations satisfied
 - Potential application could consider connections to specific points (i.e. UMass Memorial, WRTA Central Hub, Senior Center)

Figure from City of Worcester Mobility Action Plan





WRTA

Available Grants

Available Grants

Community Transit Grant

- 50/50 Operational Grant-Authority Must Match the funds
- For example, a \$4 million operations would take \$2 million in grant and \$2 million in matching funds from the WRTA
- **Microtransit & Last-Mile Grant**
 - Some microtransit awards in last round that supported commingled ADA trips. Also included bike share as a first/last mile solution.
- **Note:** Grant funds are typically provided for a defined time period and expire (i.e. June 30 or end of fiscal year). If utilization is lower, then grant would not be exhausted.



WRTA

Other Considerations

Other Considerations

Survey Data

- FY26 Demand Response Survey identified that 80% of respondents had a household income under \$30k. Identified interest in survey may not translate into actual use due to monetary considerations.

Fare Collection

- A fare collection mechanism would need to be established. Majority of programs are operated as mobile payment only. If cash is required as payment method, that would increase timeline for implementation.

Other Considerations

Long Term Funding Uncertainty for Program if Grant Funded

- Given potential cost of dedicated program there is significant start up cost as well as long term funding challenges. Both PACE and RTD Denver have had to reduce their same day ADA programs due to unsustainable growth.

Grant Funds

- If an independent Same Day ADA is approached, the funding is significant. Grant funds are typically provided for a defined time period. If utilization is lower, then grant would not be exhausted.



WRTA

Five Year Vision

Five Year Vision



Increased Fixed Route Frequency



Increased Span of Service



Introduce Cross Town Service



Limited Stop Service



Same Day ADA



Microtransit

Five Year Vision



Increased Fixed Route Frequency

- Increased Funding
 - More Buses
 - More Drivers



Increased Span of Service

- Increased Funding
 - More Drivers



Introduce Cross Town Service

- Hybrid
 - Increase service levels or Alter Existing Service



Limited Stop Service

- Hybrid
 - Introduce as new service or Alter Existing Service



Same Day ADA

- Hybrid
 - Introduce as new independent service, introduce as commingled Microtransit, or operate as space available



Microtransit

- Increased Funding
 - Introduce as new independent service, would operate with Commingled ADA Trips

WRTA must balance its budget while striving to improve service via the five year vision

Five Year Vision

- Task Order with On Call Planning Firm Nelson Nygaard
- Timeline
 - September-November: Level Set and Develop Material
 - Combine Studies into one format
 - Develop Evaluation Framework
 - Develop Public Engagement Tools
 - December-January: Engagement
 - In Person Sessions at Hub
 - Work with Ad Board, Stakeholders for other sessions
 - Virtual Session
 - February-March: Revise and Finalize
 - Take Feedback and finalize for board consideration in advance of April 2028 budget meetings
- WRTA has taken a comprehensive and public driven approach to get to this 5 year vision study.

Example of Engagement Tool



Black Rock Transit: Design Your Transit System

How would you improve Black Rock Transit?

BlinkTag wants your suggestions for improving the Black Rock Transit system.

This survey allows you to select potential improvements that you think will help improve Black Rock Transit.

Benefit Categories

Ridership
Increase transit ridership

Access to Transit
Increase the number of people who can easily access transit

Passenger Experience
Improve the experience of riding transit

Design your transit system

- Scroll down to see the strategies that could improve transit in Black Rock City.
- You have a total budget of 15 dollar signs (\$). Mix and match potential improvements to see how the costs and benefits change by clicking the check boxes below.
- Spend your budget by selecting your preferred strategies.

Completar la encuesta en español

Your Overall Benefits

Ridership Access to Transit Passenger Experience

Your Costs

Total Cost (Max \$15)

Transit Service	Ridership	Access to Transit	Passenger Experience	Cost
☐  Weekday Service Invest in existing routes so that buses come more frequently on weekdays.				\$\$\$\$\$
☐  Weekend service Invest in existing routes so that buses come more frequently on weekends.				\$\$
☐  Local Routes Increase the number of buses that make frequent stops during commute hours on weekdays.				\$\$\$\$
☐  Express Routes Increase the number of buses on express routes during commute hours on weekdays.				\$\$\$\$
☐  Technology Across All Routes Invest in capital improvements such as transit signal priority, which will make all buses faster.				\$\$\$

Five Year Vision



- The Comprehensive Plan to combine all the publicly driven feedback the WRTA has received thus far. Will provide a roadmap for the future service delivery of the WRTA.
- This result of this process will strengthen the services of WRTA and further underscore the need for these services.





WRTA

Administrator Updates

Administrator Updates

- Lobby Tour and Opening
- Demand Response RFP
- Diesel Prices
- Other Administration Items