



Chapter 8

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8. CONCLUSION

The Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) provides transit service to approximately a half million people in a service area spanning 37 communities; WRTA provides fixed-route service to 17 of those communities with a fleet of 52 buses, including six electric, 17 diesel-electric hybrid buses, and 29 clean diesel buses. WRTA operates 34 routes Monday through Friday: 25 local fixed-route, 4 community services, 4 community shuttles, and 1 elder shopper service. Twenty-two (22) routes operate on Saturday and 13 on Sunday. Service hours vary by route and day but during the weekdays run 4:50 AM to 12:05 AM, Saturdays 5:45 AM to 9:57 PM and Sunday 9:35 AM to 8:30 PM. In FY 2014 WRTA carried over 3.7 million riders, this is up slightly from FY 2013 with 3.52 million riders. Average daily weekday system ridership is 13,132 passengers with four routes (11, 26, 27, 19) carrying over 1,000 passengers a day.

Recommendations were developed using a cumulative process that incorporated public outreach meetings and neighborhood visits, a diverse steering committee, operational input from WRTA, an analysis of existing transit service and the Greater Worcester regional market. Strategies to improve the system were developed based on the goals and objectives outlined in Chapter 2. WRTA then presented the recommendations at a series of public outreach meetings in April and administered a survey so that riders could rank their preferences for modifications. This feedback will assist WRTA in allocating funding to the recommendations desired most by the public.

A three phase approach was used in designing recommendations. The three phase approach allows WRTA to plan for future service and seek the necessary funding and equipment that would be needed. Phase 1 recommendations could be implemented using existing equipment and with a minimal increase in overall service cost. It is possible to begin implementing Phase 1 within one year. Phase 1 would require a 7.6% increase in funding, while Phases 2 and 3 would require significantly more funding (Table 26). Phase 2 would require additional equipment which could take up to two years from the time procurement begins to when the vehicles are delivered; it is most likely that Phase 2 recommendations will not be implemented for 2-3 years. Phase 3 recommendations require not only additional equipment but relationships be formed with the universities to leverage funding, this could take up to 5 years to form.

In Phase 1 frequencies have been adjusted to improve on time performance, provide consistent all day service with clock face schedules on both weekdays and the weekend and additional service on highly productive routes. Alignments have been adjusted and new routes added to provide cross town service. In Phase 2 service has been added to outreaching areas that exhibit demand, and service hours have been extended on Sundays. In Phase 3 service has been expanded to improve connections among the colleges and between WRTA and adjoining PVTA and MWRTA service areas. These improvements would help WRTA achieve their goal of providing timely, quality, clean, and convenient public transportation



service within the limits of its financial resources. The proposed recommendations will help improve mobility in the region through expanding service to new areas, extending service hours, and improving frequency. Standardizing headways and implementing clock face frequencies would create a simpler, user-friendly system for WRTA riders. Implementing alignment changes would allow WRTA to provide service to areas that demonstrate demand for transit service. These recommendations will help WRTA match demand with service levels and develop corridors for growth such as Main Street.

Table 26. Phase Requirements

Phase	Additional funding needed	New cost of service	Percent increase from previous
Phase 1	\$1,314,000	\$18,614,000	7.6%
Phase 2	\$2,253,000	\$20,867,000	12.1%
Phase 3	\$4,291,000	\$25,158,000	20.56%
Total	\$7,858,000	N/A	45.4%

WRTA currently has service guidelines that they use to evaluate a route’s health; the following describes proposed modifications to their existing performance measures.

- **Passengers/Hour:** Set performance measures for each route type as opposed to a system wide goal
- **Subsidy/Passenger** – Instead of comparing a route to the average, establishing a concrete value with thresholds for evaluation. This will allow WRTA to monitor the system as well as each route.
- **Farebox Recovery** – If a route drops below 15% it should be evaluated.
- **Cost/Revenue-Hour** – this is a new indicator for WRTA and an excellent indicator of efficiency. Costs per hour of revenue service should be analyzed by route and compared to overall system averages.
- **Late Trips** - Use major timepoints and not 100% count of all stops to monitor on-time performance due to the precise measuring of real-time technology.
- **Service/Road Calls**- no changes to the current evaluation method.
- **Accidents/100,000 miles**- WRTA should seek to exceed their current standard and have a minimum of no more than three (3) accidents per 100,000 miles

The performance measures can be used to create benchmarks for service operation. The benchmarks will help WRTA track progress and set goals for the performance of the route. They will also assist WRTA in measuring the impact of the proposed recommendations on service. The recommendations include modifying the alignment of eight of the routes in order to provide better connections, eliminating redundancy and servicing developing areas as well as creating three new routes (Table 27).



Table 27. Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation	Phase	Routes Impacted
Adjust alignment	Phase 1	8, 14, 16, 25, 27, 30, 31, 33
Improve weekend frequency	Phase 1	1, 2, 5, 7, 11, 25
Expand Saturday service hours	Phase 1	1, 2, 25
Improve Saturday frequency	Phase 1	19, 23, 25, 26, 27, 30, 42
Crosstown service	Phase 1	8, 31
Adjust route timing	Phase 1	5, 19, 27, 29, 33, 42
Expand Weekday service hours	Phase 1	9, 31, 42
Improve weekday frequency	Phase 1	14, 25, 30, 31
Add Sunday service	Phase 1	16, 24, 25
Discontinue Route	Phase 1	18, 34
Rebrand route/corridor	Phase 1	19, 27, 33
Expand Saturday service hours	Phase 2	5, 14, 15, 22
Improve Saturday frequency	Phase 2	5, 14, 30
Improve weekday frequency	Phase 2	8, 11
Improve Sunday frequency	Phase 2	19, 23, 26, 27
New Route	Phase 2	32, 43
Expand Sunday service hours	Phase 2	1, 2, 4, 5, 11, 19, 23, 26, 27, 30
BRT study	Phase 3	19, 27, 33
Adjust alignment	Phase 3	15, 33,
New Route	Phase 3	17, 44