



WORCESTER REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
TITLE VI REPORT
MARCH 2018



PREPARED FOR THE WORCESTER REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY BY THE
CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
CMRPC

Table of Contents

Glossary of Terms	3
Foreword	6
Executive Summary	6
Introduction	6
General Reporting Requirements	7
(FTA C 4702.1B Chapter III).....	7
Requirement to provide Title VI assurances:	7
Preparation and Submittal of a Title VI Program:	7
WRTA Subrecipient Title VI Compliance	11
Facility Equity Analysis	12
Fixed Route Transit Reporting Requirements (FTA C 4702.1B Chapter IV)	12
Requirement to Prepare and Submit a Title VI Program	12
Requirement to set system-wide service standards and policies	12
Requirement to collect and report demographic data	17
Requirement to monitor transit service.....	20
Requirement to evaluate service and fare changes	21

List of Tables

Table 1: On-Time Performance.....	14
Table 2: Maximum Loading Standards	16
Table 3: Service Area Demographics	17
Table 4: WRTA Fixed Route Analysis: Minority v. non-Minority Routes	18
Table 5: Projected Fare Increases	22
Table 6: Comparison of WRTA Fare Structure through June 2017 and FY18 Changes Effective July 2017	23

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Title VI Notice to Beneficiaries	
Appendix B: Title VI Complaint Procedure, Complaint Form, and Disclaimer	
Appendix C: Title VI Complaints, Investigations and Lawsuits Tracking Sheet	
Appendix D: 2014 POP for Fare and Service Changes and CMMPO Public Outreach Program	
Appendix E: WRTA LEP Analysis/Language Assistance Plan	
Appendix F: WRTA Non-Discrimination Survey Form	
Appendix G: WRTA Advisory Board Meeting Minutes and Title VI Program Endorsement	
Appendix H: WRTA Fixed Route Service Standards	
Appendix I: Service Data	
Appendix J: WRTA Customer Surveys	
Appendix K: Trainings and Educational Materials	

Glossary of Terms

CMMPO: *Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization.*

Responsible for preparing and updating the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the Public Outreach Program (POP) for the Central Massachusetts region that includes the City of Worcester and the surrounding 39 communities. WRTA projects utilizing federal funds are programmed in the CMMPO TIP.

CMRPC: *Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission.*

CMRPC is one of ten members of the CMMPO and its Transportation Program staff are the CMMPO staff. CMRPC's Transit staff serves as planning staff to the WRTA.

CMTM: *Central Massachusetts Transit Management Services, Inc.*

WRTA contracts with CMTM to operate its fixed-route bus services.

EJ: *Environmental Justice.* For matters involving transportation in Massachusetts, EJ analyses identify specific populations that are vulnerable to discrimination and determine whether a project (or service) would not disproportionately impact these populations. An EJ population is identified as a neighborhood containing a certain percentage of minority, low-income, foreign-born, or limited English proficiency (LEP) residents.¹

LAP: *Language Assistance Plan.* The LAP details the WRTA's actions for ensuring that its programs and services are accessible to persons with limited English proficiencies.

LEP: *Limited English Proficiency. Federal Executive Order 13166*

requires Federal agencies to analyze;

1. The services they provide;
2. Describe the language needs in the population and/or area in which the federally funded program applies;
3. Document how its existing language accommodations meet the needs of the population served, and;
4. identify unmet needs for services to those with limited English proficiency (LEP)

¹ Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Environmental Justice Policy.

Low-income Households: defined in the CMMPO region using American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates data as those earning equal to or less than 65% of the region's median income. The CMMPO region had a universe of 209,029 households meeting this criteria in 2013.

MARTA: *Massachusetts Association of Regional Transit Authorities.* MARTA advocates for the Commonwealth's thirteen Regional Transit Authorities with state-level officials and is a forum for RTA Administrators to share information, monitor transit regulations, policies and funding, and interact with transit industry peers.

MassDOT: *Massachusetts Department of Transportation:* the Commonwealth's transportation organization. Its Rail & Transit Division oversees WRTA administration and operation, and coordinates its planning and funding activities to ensure compliance with federal policies and regulations.

Minority: a person who is a citizen or lawful permanent resident of the United States and who is:

- Black: a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa;
- Hispanic: a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race;
- Asian or Pacific Islander: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, Indian Subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands, or
- American Indian or Alaskan Native: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North American, and who maintain cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

National Transit Database - FTA's *National Transit Database* (NTD) records the financial, operating and asset condition of transit systems. It supports local, state and regional planning efforts and helps governments and other decision-makers make multi-year comparisons and perform trend analyses. The NTD contains a wealth of information such as agency funding sources, inventories of vehicles and maintenance facilities, safety event reports, measures of transit service provided and consumed, and data on transit employees.

ODCR – *MassDOT Office of Diversity and Civil Rights:* oversees WRTA Title VI / Nondiscrimination activities conducted by WRTA in-house and by CMRPC Transit Unit staff.

PBSTM – Paratransit Brokerage Services Transit Management Services, Inc.: PBSTM, under contract to the WRTA, operates the WRTA’s paratransit services.

PPP – Public Participation Plan. Recipients of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding must submit a plan that details strategies to engage minority and limited English proficient (LEP) populations in its planning and programming activities. These efforts may be part of a broader framework that also includes outreach strategies for other traditionally underserved constituencies, such as people with disabilities and low-income populations.

TIP – Transportation Improvement Program. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) of the CMMPO is a federally-required planning document that lists all highway, bridge, transit, and intermodal projects in the Central Massachusetts planning region that are programmed to receive federal-aid funding.

TrAMS – FTA Transit Award Management System

USDOT – United States Department of Transportation: provides funding, technical assistance, and oversight to state Departments of Transportation for transit capital and operations activities through the Federal Transit Administration.

USDOJ – United States Department of Justice. Monitors and acts upon Title VI requirements in federally-funded transportation activities.

Foreword

This Plan was prepared by the Transit staff of the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) under contracts effective through 07/01/16 through 06/30/17, and 07/01/17 through 06/30/18 with the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA), with information provided by the WRTA. Funding for preparation and administration of this Plan is sourced from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under various contracts.

This Plan is intended to dovetail with the Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMMPO) Title VI Plan.

Executive Summary

This Report is submitted in FY18 as an overview of the WRTA's Title VI – related policies, programs and services since its last Triennial Review in FY15. The Appendices provide greater detail and specific documents that inform the development of this Plan, i.e. LEP / LAP, Service Standards, etc.

Introduction

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that “no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” All federal agencies which provide financial assistance for any program are authorized and directed by the United States Department of Justice to apply provisions of Title VI to each program by issuing applicable rules, regulations, or requirements.

This document assures that the Title VI requirements are fully met, that the WRTA is compliant with federal guidelines, and that the WRTA is responsive to the needs of Title VI for all of its beneficiaries, customers and constituencies. The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) has been a contributing partner in the development of this Title VI document and is the primary author. CMRPC is responsible for the statistical analysis of most of the necessary data, production of all graphics, and lending its planning and technical expertise to the development of the Program.

This Title VI Report contains Program Specific Requirements for the 2018 Title VI Report for the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) and is

prepared in accordance with FTA Circular 4702.1B dated October 1, 2012.

General Reporting Requirements

(FTA C 4702.1B Chapter III)

Requirement to provide Title VI assurances:

WRTA Certifications and Assurances are available in FTA's Transit Award Management System (TrAMS).

Preparation and Submittal of a Title VI Program:

Title VI Notice to Beneficiaries

The Title VI Notice to Beneficiaries ('Notice') is posted in print form in highly visible locations, including:

- the WRTA Hub Conference Room where all public meetings are held;
- in the Hub waiting room by the Customer Services Office, and
- aboard transit vehicles.

Also, the Notice is displayed in the Hub's Passenger Waiting Room on electronic monitors in both English and Spanish. It has been updated as needed. It is also posted on the WRTA website at <http://www.therta.com/title-vi/>. A copy of the sheet is included in Appendix A. To view Appendix A please visit <http://www.therta.com/title-vi/>.

Title VI Complaint Procedure, Complaint Form, and Disclaimer

The WRTA provides these documents in print form at its Customer Services Office. They are also downloadable from the [WRTA website](#) in English and Spanish, and can be translated in other languages using the website's embedded Google Translate feature. A copy of the sheet is included in Appendix B. To view Appendix B please visit <http://www.therta.com/title-vi/>.

Since the previous Title VI Plan was prepared, the WRTA has developed an improved customer information, comment, and complaint handling system. The Customer Service Feedback portal (<http://www.therta.com/feedback//>) and internal Salesforce software allows the Customer Services staff to log and track all comments, requests and complaints (including identification and forwarding of potential Title VI complaints) to the appropriate staff for prompt investigation and resolution.

Title VI-Related Investigations

There are no active complaints, investigations or lawsuits naming the WRTA that allege discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin with respect to service or other transit benefits. The WRTA maintains a tracking sheet of complaints, investigations, and lawsuits for the current year and three prior years. A copy of the sheet is included in Appendix C. To view Appendix C please visit <http://www.therta.com/title-vi/>.

Public Participation Plan

The WRTA Public Outreach Program (POP) for Fare and Service Changes was updated in July 2014 (Appendix D). To view Appendix D please visit <http://www.therta.com/title-vi/>. WRTA is continually looking for ways to expand its outreach base and to be more present in the community by participating in activities and events as well as actively reaching out to local organizations that work with diverse and/or vulnerable population in the WRTA region. In addition, the WRTA makes use of the CMMPO Public Outreach Program (POP), updated May 2017, for its fund programming activities through the CMMPO. Finally, the WRTA is currently preparing a Public Participation Plan (PPP) that will include an updated POP for Fare and Service Changes; these updated documents will be transmitted to FTA as they are adopted.

Limited English Proficiency Analysis – Language Assistance Plan (“LEP Plan”)

The LEP Plan was updated in conjunction with this report. Please see Appendix E for more details on how the WRTA is considering the needs of the LEP population throughout the region in conformity with Executive Order 13166 “Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency” of August 16, 2000. To view Appendix E please visit <http://www.therta.com/title-vi/>. Comments from previous submittals were addressed in this update and the WRTA plans to keep improving its LEP strategies to better serve our patrons’ needs.

Racial composition of the membership of various committees

Pursuant to 49 CFR Section 21.5(b)(1)(vii) and FTA Circular 4702.1B, Chapter III, Section 10 re: general requirements for all FTA recipients, FTA Recipients whose activities involve transit-related, non-elected planning boards, advisory councils or committees *for whom the Recipient selects the membership* must provide a table depicting the racial breakdown of the membership of each board, council or committee.

Committees that members of the public may become involved with at the WRTA include the WRTA Advisory Board and the Transportation Planning Advisory Group (TPAG). The following describes these committees in further detail:

WRTA Advisory Board

The WRTA Advisory Board is the creation of the WRTA's enabling legislation in 1974 under Chapter 161B of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and is comprised of 37 members. The mission is to provide public oversight of the WRTA, as well as technical assistance and information on behalf of the 37 member communities of the Advisory Board and the transit riding public. The chief elected official, or his or her designee, of the 36 towns and the City Manager, or his or her designee, from the City of Worcester that are served by the WRTA are voting members. Because the Board's membership is fixed by statute and consists exclusively of elected officials or their designees, the WRTA has no practical ability to influence its makeup.

An amendment to the Advisory Board's Bylaws (effective July 24, 2013) mandates inclusion of a representative of the rider community population as a voting member for a term of one (1) year. The amendment also includes the following: *"The mayor or city manager and the chairman, town manager or town administrator shall appoint a community rider for this purpose from a list of at least five (5) persons nominated by the Massachusetts AFL-CIO and its regional councils"*.

Transportation Planning Advisory Group (TPAG)

The Transportation Planning Advisory Group (TPAG) provides an on-going forum for presenting and discussing service issues that impact WRTA transit users, both elders and people with disabilities. This independent volunteer body of consumers formulated a set of by-laws that established an Executive Committee. The five Executive Committee members are elected annually by active TPAG members. The Executive Committee meets after the regularly scheduled TPAG meeting for more in depth discussion of service issues and to prepare meeting agendas. Working subcommittees convene, as needed, to research and discuss current issues, report back findings and make recommendations to the full membership at monthly meetings.

Representation on TPAG is broadly based and includes riders, human

service agencies representing elder and disabled clients, WRTA service providers, the WRTA Administrator (or designee) and representatives from CMRPC who act as staff to TPAG. CMRPC staff prepares and mails meeting minutes and agendas to over 125 individuals and agencies who have asked to be on the mailing list. All TPAG related documents are maintained in a series of journals that serve as a historical record, depicting the evolution of WRTA's fixed route and paratransit services for seniors age 60 and over and people with disabilities - and TPAG's role in that process.

Comprehensive Service Assessment (CSA) Steering Committee

Each Massachusetts Regional Transit Authority was required to prepare a CSA in accordance with the Massachusetts Legislature's 2013 Transportation Finance Act (Chapter 46 of the Acts of 2013). URS Corporation was procured to develop the WRTA CSA in 2014. Concurrently, the WRTA created a CSA Steering Committee to review and advise on the document. Committee members were chosen from a wide list of WRTA stakeholders, including:

- representatives from various subareas of the WRTA Service Area, and
- business, labor, and community groups representing minorities, low income, elders, and persons with disabilities.

This Committee was active during 2014 and the first half of Calendar Year 2015. Accordingly, the group's racial composition was reported upon in the WRTA 2015 Title VI Plan. The Committee disbanded in 2015 following completion of the CSA.

Elderly and Public Transportation Committee

The Elderly and Public Transportation Committee's purpose was to bring agencies working with elders together to develop solutions to meeting elders' increasing transportation needs. Representation included the City of Worcester's Executive Office of Elder Affairs, Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging, the Elder Services of the Worcester Area, Inc., and CMRPC. Committee goals included promoting fixed-route service to elders, as well as identifying and eliminating service gaps. The Committee was a WRTA working committee. It has been inactive for many years, including the time between this and the previous WRTA Title VI Plan.

The WRTA does not select the membership of its Advisory Board or any transit-related, non-elected boards, advisory councils or committees at this time. In the event that such boards, councils or committees are formed, the WRTA will survey their members and report out in a subsequent Title

VI Plan. The WRTA will use a previously prepared survey format included as Appendix F. To view Appendix F please visit <http://www.therta.com/title-vi/>.

WRTA Subrecipient Title VI Compliance

The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) is a WRTA Subrecipient. CMRPC is the designated regional planning entity for the Central Massachusetts region which includes the City of Worcester and the surrounding 39 communities. CMRPC provides municipal and regional planning for land use, homeland security and transportation, as well as transit planning for the WRTA.

The WRTA is not responsible for monitoring CMRPC's compliance in accordance with FTA C 4702.1B Chapter III §12(b) because CMRPC is a direct Federal funding recipient including FTA funding to support the Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMMPO) besides the funds from the WRTA to support transit planning activities. Accordingly, CMRPC reports directly to FTA and has submitted numerous Title VI compliance reports over the years.

The WRTA enters into agreements with third-party contractors to deliver paratransit services in its Service Area. These services are delivered by community Councils on Aging, SCM Elderbus (which serves seniors and the disabled in twenty-two communities in Central Massachusetts), and Yellow Cab in Worcester. The WRTA monitors their compliance with Title VI with technical assistance chiefly provided by PBSTM and CMRPC.

During the period covered by this Plan, CMRPC and WRTA staff met frequently to review internal Title VI training, complaint identification, and handling procedures. Much of this effort involved public information accessibility and limited English proficiency. As previously noted, staff concurrently developed improved customer information, comment, and complaint handling with its Customer Service Feedback/SalesForce software that allowed Customer Service staff to log and track all comments, requests and complaints (including identification and forwarding of potential Title VI complaints) to the appropriate staff for prompt investigation and resolution. A short training was also developed for Customer Service staff to aid in identifying potential Title VI issues and/or assist with intake.

Additional activities include posting Title VI policies at sites and other locations as appropriate. The staff expects to disseminate its Title VI

overviews to contractors individually and within specific groups such as the Councils on Aging (COA) Roundtable. Areas for monitoring:

- notifying customers of their rights under Title VI
- taking reasonable steps to ensure access to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations
- informing the WRTA of any complaints received by Subrecipient or third-party contractors (within 48 hours). The WRTA is responsible for review of complaints and identification of potential Title VI basis.

During the period covered by this Plan, no FTA Civil Rights compliance reviews have occurred. Signed copies of the WRTA's FTA Civil Rights Assurances and US DOT Assurances statements are posted on TrAMS.

Facility Equity Analysis

The WRTA completed construction and began operating currently constructing a new Maintenance and Operations Facility at 42 Quinsigamond Avenue in Worcester in 2016. The project was filed as a "Categorical Exclusion" (CE) with FTA. The CE checklist for the project was enclosed in Appendix G of the WRTA's 2015 Title VI Report. No facilities are in development, permitting or construction.

Fixed Route Transit Reporting Requirements (FTA C 4702.1B Chapter IV)

Requirement to Prepare and Submit a Title VI Program

The WRTA Advisory Board, which functions as the WRTA's Board of Directors, approved the 2018 Title VI Program at its monthly meeting on February 15, 2018. A copy of the Advisory Board resolution documenting its approval of the Title VI Program is included in Appendix G. To view Appendix G please visit <http://www.therta.com/title-vi/>. Advisory Board meeting minutes will be uploaded into TrAMS as soon as they are available.

Requirement to set system-wide service standards and policies

The *WRTA Standards of Fixed Route Bus Service and Performance* were initially developed in December 2012 and were updated in March 2015. The Standards are included in Appendix H for your reference. To view Appendix H please visit <http://www.therta.com/title-vi/>. In the document, the WRTA included quantitative standards with the intent of providing consistent quality service to all member communities.

To begin, the WRTA routinely posts quarterly fixed route bus service performance on fuel efficiency, fleet maintenance, farebox & schedule performance, and safety – in a 'report card' format on its website.

Directness of Service

Fixed-route travel time standards for express routes should be no more than 150% of auto travel time; and for non-express routes should be no more than 200% of auto travel time. For community routes, travel time should not exceed 250% of auto travel time. Note:

- at present, the WRTA operates non-express and three community routes (29, 33, and 42).
- This standard is for the individual route segments that comprise interlined routes.

2012 calculations prepared for the 2015 Title VI Report and 2017 calculations for comparison are enclosed in Appendix I. To view Appendix I please visit <http://www.therta.com/title-vi/>.

Transit Access

The WRTA's policy has been to space its fixed route services such that within approximately 90% of the *densely* populated areas of Worcester (its core city), residents shall reside within one quarter (1/4) of a mile from a bus route. The WRTA exceeds this standard in its densely populated areas, and comes close to meeting this standard on a city-wide basis:

- | | |
|---|------|
| • Total Block Groups in Worcester: | 1573 |
| • Block Groups with density > 4,000 persons/square mile within 1/4 mile of transit: | 1352 |
| • % block groups w/in ¼ mile of bus route, citywide (2017) | 86 |

Headways

While a policy-based (fixed interval) headway would be preferred such as a so called "clock headway" every 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 45 or 60 minutes⁽²⁾, budget constraints, transfers and interlining needs make this objective difficult to achieve. The WRTA will continue to refine its headways toward this goal, subject to available funding. As a rule, headways for regularly scheduled service should not exceed sixty (60) minutes and should be designed wherever possible to conform to regularly recurring intervals. The WRTA's current schedules (including headways) are posted on the WRTA website.

On-time Performance

The WRTA monitors on-time performance utilizing outside auditors known as "Secret Shoppers", street supervision, and periodic checks of each

vehicle's on-board camera surveillance system. In addition, the WRTA makes use of its Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) system to monitor this performance measure.

"On-time" has been defined as one minute early to five minutes late at designated time points. Under no circumstances should buses leave designated time points ahead of schedule. On the other hand, a trip is considered late if it arrives at a designated time point more than five minutes later than the scheduled time. The staff has evaluated the practicality of this standard, and is considering redefining "on-time" performance as one minute early to ten minutes late, system-wide. This recommendation is based upon staff review of actual performance and comparison with peer transit agencies' definitions. Currently, the WRTA measures on-time performance by route as a percentage of fixed-route vehicles that reach their assigned timepoints on-time in the system. WRTA's on-time performance goal has been 90% during peak period and 95% during off peak service, and remains so at this time.

The WRTA's 2015 Title VI report detailed on-time performance issues associated with the June 2013 opening of the new WRTA Hub passenger facility at 60 Foster Street. The WRTA worked with the City of Worcester to ameliorate traffic issues and improve signalization at major intersections. In FY14 average on-time performance using the street supervision method was 81.7%, whereas on-time performance using AVL was 61.5%. Since that time, the WRTA has continued to work with the City and within its own organization to improve on-time performance.

It must also be noted that the region has experienced an increase in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), which has impacted all roadway operations in the region, regardless of mode.

Table 1: On-Time Performance (source: WRTA)			
Fiscal Year	# time checks	# on-time	% on-time
FY15	2839	2005	70.7
FY16	2207	1624	73.6
FY17	2138	1533	71.7
FY18 (Jul-Dec 2017)	877	643	73.4

Loading Standards

Service should provide a seat for everyone in most periods except for the peak 60 minute period. During this peak period, some number of standees

are tolerable and may be considered necessary within the constraints of equipment, labor availability, and cost effectiveness.

The "maximum load factor" is calculated by dividing the total number of seats passing the maximum load point in one direction into the number of patrons passing the same point and in the same direction during the operating period considered. Since the load factor is an average, individual trips may exceed the average during a particular operating period. Table 1 on the next page shows the WRTA's current loading standards:

Table 2: Maximum Loading Standards	
Operating Period	Loading Standard
Each Peak Period (by direction)	125% average
Base (non-peak)	No Standees
Night	No Standees
Saturday/Sunday/Holidays	No Standees

The WRTA continues to do very well in meeting these standards. Analytical data for this standard is found in Appendix I. To view Appendix I please visit <http://www.therta.com/title-vi/>.

Distance between stops

In general, stop spacing in urban areas should not be closer than 550 feet. Stop spacing outside the City of Worcester in low density areas or on special limited routes is not governed by fixed criteria. In these cases, vehicles should stop when hailed by a patron as soon as safety and practicality allow. In commercial or industrial areas, the number and location of bus stops should be controlled by the concentration of patrons more than by "rule-of thumb" spacing standards. Staff did a comprehensive stop review in 2016 and made stop adjustments or eliminations as needed to improve performance while maintaining access, thus meeting this 550' stop spacing minimum. The analytical materials are included in Appendix I. To view Appendix I please visit <http://www.therta.com/title-vi/>.

Transit amenities - Facilities

The WRTA opened its Hub passenger facility in 2013. This ADA-compliant, centrally located facility is the WRTA's principal passenger facility and provides passengers with shelter, information, Customer Services, and other amenities not previously offered at/around Worcester City Hall Plaza, which served as the WRTA's de facto Hub prior to 2013.

The WRTA consulted with customers and advocacy organizations for the disabled during the Hub's development. As a result, the Hub includes:

- accessible restrooms in the passenger waiting area;
- tactile warning strips that guide individuals who are visually impaired to the TVM machines and bus platform;
- Bus Time Talking Signs (push buttons);
- dynamic information screens for notices and BusTracker information;
- large print signs and information in Braille, and
- automatic bus stop announcements.

The Hub is multimodal and provides excellent transfers between MBTA Commuter Rail, intercity bus, and taxi services through the adjacent Union Station facility. Bicycle racks are also provided, and a new seasonal dockless bikeshare program began operating in Worcester in Summer, 2017.

Outside the WRTA Hub, the placement of shelters and benches and the identification of priority locations consider two major factors: the number of boarding and transferring passengers at a specific stop, and the frequency of service at the stop. Shelters are considered at stops with the highest number of boarding and transferring riders during a typical weekday. As of 2017, there were a total of 46 bus shelters along the WRTA's fixed route network; 36 of these were owned and maintained by the WRTA.

- Stops > 50 daily boardings: 27 (59% with shelters)
- Stops > 25 daily boardings: 50 (18% with shelters)

37 of the 46 shelters are located in minority census tracts. This is consistent with the fact that population densities and transit ridership are higher in these same tracts. The remaining nine shelters, while located in non-minority census tracts, also serve minority designated bus routes with substantial ridership. The WRTA has a private contractor that cleans and performs snow removal at shelters located at major stops and transfer locations. Staff continues to field occasional shelter requests from communities and responds to each on a case-by-case basis.

Transit Amenities – Information for Passengers

WRTA schedules are easy to read and include a route map, time points, major destinations along the route and information about connections with other routes. All buses carry the schedules; they are available at all WRTA facilities and at the Customer Service Office. Also, the schedules are distributed among town libraries, major trip generators, colleges, major employers, among other locations close to heavily used stops. An online

version is available on the WRTA website.

Another amenity available to our transit riders is the application of ITS technologies. This technology helps people to connect to digital content and real-time information. The WRTA has implemented an Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) system which allows for "Next Bus" arrival times at major stops and transfer locations. Currently this information is accessible by phone, automatic message alerts by email or text, on the web (maps, Estimated Time of Arrival page, schedules page), LED kiosks in public locations (libraries, colleges), and through Quick Response codes at bus stop signs throughout the city.

In terms of fleet amenities, 100% of the buses are air-conditioned; the seats are upholstered and contoured, buses are equipped with bike racks and wheelchair ramps. Noise, exhaust emissions and odors have been minimized with WRTA's emission-reducing efforts by investing in energy efficient vehicles, hybrid buses and electric buses. The implementation of Automatic Vehicle Maintenance (AVM) systems in every bus is a proactive measure to maintain a high state of operational readiness through effective corrective and preventive maintenance. In addition, the WRTA's goal is to provide the most attractive and comfortable vehicles to our patrons. As a standard, the average age of the revenue vehicle fleet should not exceed six years, and the maximum vehicle age shall not exceed twelve years. The WRTA's average fleet age is currently 5.6 years. The WRTA is actively working with the CMMPO and MassDOT to program funds in the CMMPO TIP, which will allow it to replace the oldest fixed route buses in the fleet.

The WRTA continuously monitors its performance and will update its service standards as needed.

Requirement to collect and report demographic data

Under FTA Circular 4702.1B, the WRTA is not required to collect and report demographic data for its Service Area as it operates less than fifty (50) fixed-route buses in peak service. However, the WRTA does monitor and report upon its Service Area's demographics so as to fulfill various requirements and to monitor its fixed routes' performance, identify potential Service Area transit gaps, and plan for service modifications. These modifications are typically related to Service Area population growth, employment, and regional economic development.

First, the staff collected 2011-2015 ACS demographic data, estimating that the total population in the 37 WRTA member communities is 539,127 inhabitants, of which 23.2% are minorities. Further, of all of the 386 block

groups in the WRTA fixed-route service area, 158 or 40.9% were minority block groups. Table 3 below compares Service Area demographics from the 2010 Census and the 2011-2015 ACS:

Table 3: Service Area Demographics				
Demographic Category	2010 Census		2015 ACS Five Year Estimates	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
White	445,898	82.4%	448,360	83.2%
Black	32,235	6.0%	30,175	5.6%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	1101	0.2%	1,069	0.2%
Asian	30,376	5.6%	29,439	5.5%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	121	0.0%	109	0.0%
Other	15,791	2.9%	14,711	2.7%
Two or more Races	15,488	2.9%	15,264	2.8%
Hispanic Origin	42,048	7.8%	56,862	11%
Total Population	533,267		539,127	
Limited English Proficiency*	99,793	19.9%	105,613	20.8%
Low-Income	\$42,147		\$44,040	

*Persons aged five (5) and over

Next, staff calculated the percentage of a given fixed route's linear mileage that lies within a Census block group in which the minority population percentage exceeds the regional average. From that calculation, the staff identified a route as a minority route when one-third or more of the route mileage is located in predominantly minority Census blocks or block groups. In the WRTA 2015 Title VI Plan, 22 of the WRTA's 27 fixed routes were classified as minority routes. As shown in Table 4 on the following page, the WRTA used 2010-2015 ACS 5-year estimates to show that 21 of the 26 routes in the WRTA system were classified as minority routes, using August 2017 routes.

**Table 4: Fixed Route Analysis – Minority v. Non-Minority Routes
(Routes Effective August 2017)
Source: 2011-2015 ACS**

Bus Route	Total Length (mi)	Minority Length (mi)	Percent Minority Length	Minority Route
1	6.33	6.33	100.0%	Y
2	8.30	4.24	51.2%	Y
3	5.42	3.22	59.5%	Y
4	13.04	6.97	53.5%	Y
5	5.32	4.03	75.9%	Y
6	5.11	3.28	64.2%	Y
7	7.43	7.22	97.2%	Y
11	7.56	7.56	100.0%	Y
14	8.07	3.80	47.1%	Y
15	10.99	5.66	51.5%	Y
16	10.58	6.35	60.0%	Y
19	18.62	9.10	48.9%	Y
23	7.25	6.63	91.5%	Y
24	5.78	2.85	49.3%	Y
25	9.28	4.82	52.0%	Y
26	5.84	5.60	95.9%	Y
27	7.65	4.93	64.5%	Y
29	26.89	6.12	22.7%	
30	12.49	8.03	64.3%	Y
31	13.80	10.96	79.4%	Y
33	21.17	5.61	26.5%	
40	3.43	3.43	100.0%	Y
42	44.92	8.41	18.7%	
Route A	17.29	3.15	18.2%	
Route B	16.38	1.71	10.4%	
Westborough	16.27	13.28	81.6%	Y

Refer to Appendix E to view supporting information for this Section.

Requirement to monitor transit service

Under FTA Title VI Circular 4702.1B (October 2012), the WRTA is not required to monitor transit service *per se*, as it does not operate 50 or more vehicles in maximum service (VOMS). However, FTA and MassDOT do require the WRTA to establish system-wide performance measures and to report according to these measures. The performance measures are updated periodically and are primarily used for service planning. Refer to Appendix H to view the WRTA's Service Standards. To view Appendix H please visit <http://www.therta.com/title-vi/>.

Another method the WRTA uses to monitor transit service is direct communication with customers. This most often takes place at the Customer Service Office at the WRTA Hub, 60 Foster Street. Customer Service personnel assist thousands of customers every month. In fiscal years 2015-2017, the Customer Service Office served an average of 78,573 people. In addition, Customer Service sampling shows the importance of providing information in languages other than English. Consistent with long term trends, Spanish is the most frequently spoken language other than English at the Customer Service window. Additional detail on Customer Service language interactions is presented in the WRTA LEP Analysis/Language Assistance Plan (Appendix E). To view Appendix E please visit <http://www.therta.com/title-vi/>.

The Customer Service office continues to be an important point of contact for WRTA customers. At the office people can get information about routes, schedules, how to use the Bustracker, buy monthly passes, submit a service complaint, among other inquiries.

In addition, the WRTA has made strides to improve the customer service phone lines. With new phone software in place, the WRTA can immediately communicate any changes or disturbances on the road that may be affecting or delaying service, answer customers' questions, and provide trip planning assistance. This new feature has proven effective to reach out to customers that had placed a service complaint, plus the WRTA can easily keep track of the type and volume of calls.

Furthermore, the WRTA conducts customer satisfaction surveys. The surveys include "origin and destination" questions, and ask for information about the overall quality of the fixed route service and facilities. In addition, survey respondents are asked to answer certain demographic questions, which are totally at their discretion to complete. See Appendix G to view the most recent WRTA Customer Surveys.

The WRTA, working closely with the CMMPO, also monitors the development and implementation of transportation projects programmed in the CMMPO region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This includes identification of roadway, bridge, and other projects that may have an impact upon WRTA services – affecting schedules, on-time performance, detours, and temporary route relocations. The CMMPO staff prepares this information annually for the WRTA Administrator in accordance with its UPWP for TIP Years 1-2, and subsequent years as information is available. 2019 The WRTA also receives weekly infrastructure project reports from Departments of Public Works (notably Worcester) to keep track of projects in construction and to identify operations issues that might affect its services.

Requirement to evaluate service and fare changes

Under the new Title VI Circular 4702.1B, the WRTA is not required to perform service equity analyses *per se* when considering significant service and/or fare change as it operates less than 50 fixed-route vehicles in peak service in large urbanized areas (over 200,000 in population). However, the WRTA does consider equity when evaluating service changes (its major service change threshold is 25% of a route's revenue miles or revenue hours for existing routes). In addition, the WRTA Service Standards include specific equity criteria for route design standards (extensions, rerouting, or service cuts). Below are staff considerations prior to implementing a major fixed route service change:

1. Population Density;
2. Employment Density;
3. Route and Corridor Spacing;
4. Demographics (attract a diverse population regardless of income, ethnicity or race);
5. Service Equity;
6. Enhance Interlining and Limit Transfers;
7. Connectivity between feeder and main line routes;
8. Route Directness, and
9. Proximity to Trip Generators and Destinations.

Fare Changes

The WRTA fare structure implemented in 2009 remained in effect until FY18. Staff evaluated the fare structure every two years in accordance with the 2012 Service Standards, using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as a guideline in determining if fares should be changed. Owing to progressively lower revenues and farebox recovery ratios, WRTA staff undertook a broader analysis in preparation for FY18. In accordance with the *WRTA Public Outreach Program for Fare and Service Changes*, staff

developed a potential five-year fare projection schedule for the WRTA Advisory Board's consideration. Three scenarios were generated. Table 5 below shows one of the scenarios considered:

Fare Type	Fares, FYs 2009-2017	FY2018	FY 2019 No Base Fare Change	FY 2020 No Base Fare Change	FY2021	FY2022 No Base Fare Change
Cash Fare	\$ 1.50	\$ 1.75	\$ 1.75	\$ 1.75	\$ 2.00	\$ 2.00
Cash Fare – Reduced	\$ 0.75	\$ 0.85	\$ 0.85	\$ 0.85	\$ 1.00	\$ 1.00
One Day Pass (6 rides max)	\$ 3.50	\$ 5.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 7.00	\$ 7.00
One Day Pass – Reduced (6 ride max)	\$ 1.75	\$ 2.50	\$ 3.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 3.50	\$ 3.50
31 Day Pass	\$ 48.00	\$ 60.00	\$ 60.00	\$ 60.00	\$ 70.00	\$ 75.00
31 Day Pass – Reduced	\$ 24.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 37.50
Charlie Card	\$ 1.30	\$ 1.60	\$ 1.60	\$ 1.60	\$ 1.85	\$ 1.85
Charlie Card – Reduced	\$ 0.65	\$ 0.80	\$ 0.80	\$ 0.80	\$ 0.90	\$ 0.90
UPASS	\$ 100.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 145.00	\$ 145.00	\$ 150.00
ADA Paratransit	\$ 2.25- \$ 3.00	\$ 3.50	\$ 3.50	\$ 3.50	\$ 4.00	\$ 4.00
Non-ADA Paratransit	\$ 1.25- \$ 2.00	\$ 2.00	\$ 2.00	\$ 2.25	\$ 2.25	\$ 2.50

The above information, and service changes proposed at that time, were made available on the WRTA's website and presented in PowerPoint and print forms. See <http://www.therta.com/public-notice/2017/03/wrta-customer-bulletin-public-meeting-notice-march-and-april-2017/> to view the actual public notice.

Staff considered three fare scenarios before releasing a draft scenario for public review and Advisory Board consideration in January-April 2017 (Table 4 below). Extensive public participation efforts followed, including

ten public meetings at various locations throughout the Service Area. The result was an FY18 fare increase that balanced revenue needs with potential impacts to riders as shown in Table 5 below:

Table 6: Comparison of WRTA Fare Structure through June 2017 and FY18 Changes Effective July 2017		
	Previous Fare	FY18 (effective 7/1/17)
Full Cash	\$1.50	\$1.75
Reduced Cash	\$0.75	\$0.85
Charlie Card	Full Cash Fare less \$.20 (first transaction only)	Reduced Cash Fare less \$.10 (first transaction only)
One Day Pass ²	\$3.50	\$4.50
Reduced One Day Pass	\$1.75	\$2.25
Monthly Pass	\$48.00	\$57.00
Reduced Monthly Pass	\$24.00	\$28.50
College Semester UPass	\$100.00	\$125.00

- Children under age 5 accompanied by an adult ride free.
- Fare for children age 5 to 13 years of age accompanied by an adult is \$.85, cash fare only.
- Fare for children 9 years of age not accompanied by an adult pay full fare of \$1.75.
- Reduced Fare One Day Pass (8 rides) for children 5 to 13 years of age accompanied by an adult \$2.25.

The WRTA Advisory Board chose to adopt only the FY18 fare structure in Spring, 2017 and to monitor performance until the FY19 budget cycle, at which time it would revisit the five-year projections shown in Table 4 above. The WRTA is reviewing its fare structure annually as of this date, and may consider fare adjustments and/or increases in one or more of the next four fiscal years.

Fare Collection

The WRTA's fixed-route buses employ farebox equipment introduced in 2013. These fareboxes accept different types of fare media (i.e. MBTA Charlie Card) and feature expanded statistical reporting capabilities. Accordingly, the WRTA has been able to track changes in customer fare preferences and assess ability to pay a fare.

² Allowed unlimited trips prior to 7/1/17. Post 7/1/17, an eight (8) – trip maximum was implemented.

The new fare types (Charlie Card and One-Day Pass) were highly popular prior to FY18, especially because of discounts per trip and concurrent passenger revenue and ridership growth through May 2016. Comparing Fiscal Years 2013 with 2014, stored value on the Charlie Cards increased 12.55% and the revenue from passes increased 9.53%. Outreach events in schools and colleges also positively impacted passenger revenue with an increase of 37.51% from schools/colleges passes. Farebox revenue from cash fare only increased 1.83% in the same period.

The WRTA implemented some changes in its fare structure, effective July 2017. For example, WRTA day passes up to that time allowed unlimited numbers of rides. It was found that customers were sharing passes and/or giving out passes to other customers who did not purchase the pass. In effect, this allowed some customers to ride for free. It also constituted a loss of revenue to the WRTA. To correct this situation, the WRTA revised its day pass to a maximum limit of 8 rides, effective July 2017. The staff has been monitoring fare collection activity in the months since the FY18 changes were implemented and will be evaluating how these changes may have affected all riders, including Title VI populations, in FY19 budget cycle preparations (now underway).

During the reporting period, the WRTA implemented a youth pass program in Worcester. This pilot program was tested in Summer, 2016 and again in Summer, 2017 for the purpose of transporting the city's youth to and from city sponsored recreation programs. The program was also intended to raise awareness of the WRTA's services and to encourage the city's youth to ride the system on a permanent basis. The program was also intended to ensure that the city's youth, many of whom are from minority and/or low-income households, could take advantage of the City's summer programs.

The cost of the program (City staff trainings, pass purchases) was underwritten by several Worcester based youth organizations and the City of Worcester. The WRTA contributed staff time and other development and implementation costs as well.

The WRTA and the City will continue to explore the feasibility of instituting a permanent youth pass program, and other actions that can increase youth ridership on the WRTA.