

2017 Annual Report: Worcester Regional Transit Authority



Worcester Regional Transit Authority

Letter from the Administrator

Fiscal Year 2017 was a transitional year for the WRTA. On the up side, the WRTA completed its highly anticipated capital project and opened its state-of-the-art maintenance and operations facility. The new facility is the home to bus storage and maintenance, operations, administration, and dispatch. On the down side, due to reduced state funding, Fiscal Year 2017 saw the elimination of all WRTA midnight service, as well as the reduction and elimination of various other WRTA routes.

The goal of the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) is to provide convenient, comfortable, safe, reliable, cost-effective mobility services contributing to the economic vitality of the region. In Fiscal Year 2017, the WRTA provided 3,598,654 fixed route passenger trips and 191,681 paratransit trips. The WRTA's industry-recognized Travel Training program and paratransit Mobility Management Model continued to maintain operational costs and train new customers on how to use WRTA services.

As a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the WRTA is funded by federal, state and local monies, as well as farebox and advertising revenue. Our annual operating budget is \$24.8 million. Fareboxes cover about 15-20% of the overall operating costs. The municipalities that are served by the WRTA fixed route buses pay an assessed amount, depending on the number of miles served in that city, and increases are capped at 2 1/2% per year. Communities that receive paratransit service are assessed based on the number of trips provided.

As we look ahead to the coming fiscal years, the WRTA looks forward to continued successes due in large part to its dedicated team of professionals and staff. Together we thank the members of the Advisory Board for their support and guidance. In addition, we also thank the members of the state legislature, our customers and members of the community who advocate for additional funding as well as working to improve public transportation for all of our customers.

Sincerely,

**Jonathan E. Church, AICP
Administrator
Worcester Regional Transit Authority**

Introduction:

The Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) is a regional transit system that services the City of Worcester and the surrounding 36 communities in the Central Massachusetts area with a bus fleet that includes six (6) electric, 17 diesel-electric hybrid buses, and 29 Clean Diesel buses.

The second largest regional transit authority in Massachusetts, the WRTA offers reliable, comfortable, and safe transportation for traveling to work, shopping, school, medical appointments, and leisure activities.

Its real time bus arrival information system includes the latest advancements in communication technologies with automatic vehicle announcements, an automatic vehicle locator system, dynamic message signs, traffic signal priority, and automatic vehicle monitoring.

The WRTA also provides paratransit service for the elderly and disabled, as well as a variety of special services for those groups in the entire service area.

The WRTA Transportation Hub is located at 60 Foster Street adjacent to Union Station. It provides connections between WRTA fixed route and paratransit service, as well as the various modes of transportation in the area, including commuter rail, intercity bus, taxi service, and Amtrak.

The WRTA is governed by an advisory board consisting of the City Manager of Worcester, the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen of each town having such board, or the Town Manager or Town Administrator of each town. Please note Advisory Board members may appoint designees to act on their behalf.

WRTA Service Area:

Areas served by WRTA fixed route service include:

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

The WRTA provides limited shuttle service to following 3 communities:

Grafton	Northbridge	Westborough
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Capital Project: WRTA Unveils New Maintenance Facility

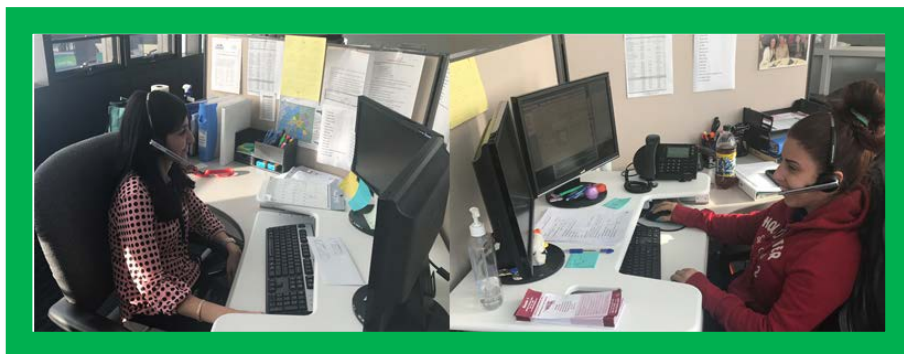
On October 4, 2016, after much anticipation, the WRTA opened its new 156,000-square-foot facility. Formally located in a converted 1920's trolley barn, the new location is now home to the WRTA's 52 buses and 28 vans, however it is large enough to hold 75 transit buses and 30 vans. The facility also houses nine maintenance bays, a refueling bay, an electric bus charging station, a number of office spaces, and a community room.

Part of the project was funded by a \$39 million Bus and Bus Facilities State of Good Repair grant in 2010, and roughly \$20 million was provided from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to clean up contamination on the property. The project also received funding through the Urbanized Area Formula Program (5307). The new facility provides the WRTA with an efficient, safe, dependable, and flexible work space for nearly 150 employees.



Over the Phone Interpretation Service Implemented:

Noting the needs of the diverse population the WRTA serves, our Customer Service Department partnered with Ascentria Community Services to offer over the phone interpretation to members of the community. Under the system, if a client calls needing language assistance, our Customer Service Representatives will conference in a certified interpreter. The Customer Service Representative will stay on the phone and work with the interpreter until all of the client's needs have been met. During fiscal year 2017 the WRTA was able to assist callers speaking Mandarin, Albanian, Vietnamese, Japanese, Spanish, Polish, Akan, Arabic, French, and Swahili for a total of 256 minutes. We look forward to expanding this service and helping even more people in the future.



Heroes Among Us:



WRTA bus driver Justin Lawson was commended for his exceptional service on December 30, 2016. Mr. Lawson was driving his regular bus route when he noticed a distraught young woman lying in the street. Mr. Lawson acted quickly and used his bus to shield the woman and block oncoming traffic. Mr. Lawson immediately exited his bus to assist the woman to the safety. When he was back on the bus he promptly called 911 and arranged for an ambulance to meet him. The WRTA is proud to employ drivers such as Justin, who are willing to go out of their way to ensure the safety and well-being of not only our passengers, but members of the community as well.

Community Outreach:

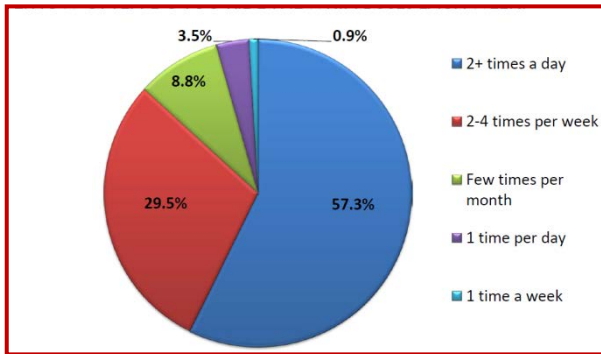
The WRTA worked with local businesses, agencies, and educational institutions to provide system orientations (overview of the WRTA) and system familiarization (hands on experience) to members of the communities the WRTA serves. Over the past year, WRTA staff attended or conducted 156 community meetings and presentations. Included in those meetings and presentations, WRTA staff has worked with local colleges and the Worcester Student Government Association (WSGA) to promote and encourage the use of the busses and sustainable transportation among students.

The WRTA also provides a Travel Training program designed to help people who would like to use the regular WRTA fixed route bus but aren't sure where to begin. Our travel trainers will teach clients how to read a schedule, understand transit terminology, pay the fare, where to purchase tickets, what to do in case of an emergency, and all things having to do with learning to use public transit. If there is a particular route or routes that clients need/prefer to use, the travel instructor will tailor the training to meet the needs of the client.



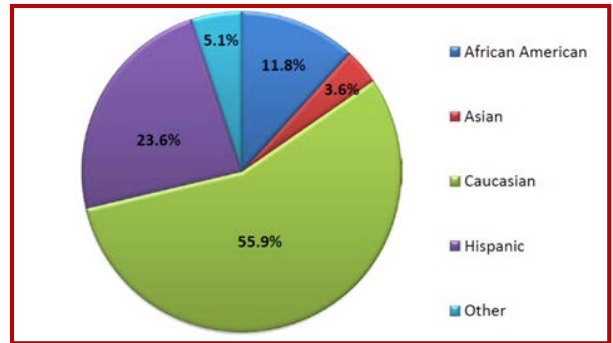
Rider Statistics

*results are based on responses from the WRTA Customer Satisfaction Survey.

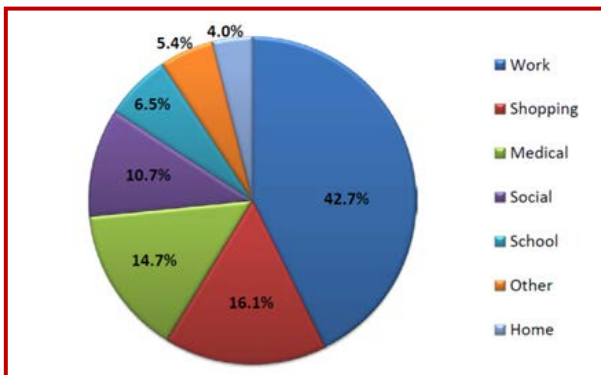


How Often Do You Ride the WRTA Busses Each Week?

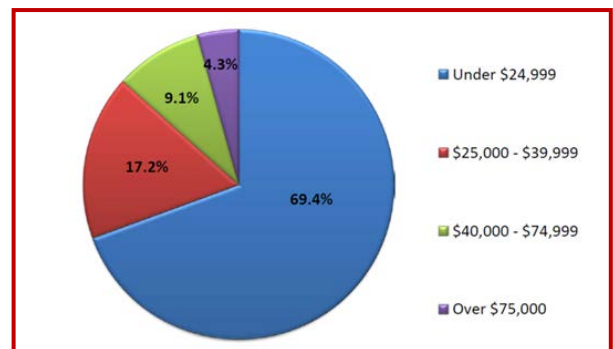
I Am...



What Is The Purpose Of Your Bus Trip Today?



What Is Your Total Household Income?



WORCESTER REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Statement of Net Assets
As of June 30, 2017

ASSETS

Current Assets:		\$4,464,857
Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Receivables:		
Federal Government	3,085,930	
Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Member Municipalities	6,819,802	
Other	30,557	
Other Current Assets	<u>11,040</u>	
Total Current Assets		<u>14,624,186</u>
Capital and intangible Assets:		
Land and Improvements	20,919,303	
Depreciable Capital and Intangible Assets, Net	<u>99,321,501</u>	
Total Capital Assets		<u>120,240,804</u>
Total Assets		<u>134,864,990</u>

Deferred Outflows of Resources		
Pension Related		<u>1,066,601</u>

LIABILITIES

Current Liabilities:		
Notes Payable		9,600,000
Accounts Payable:		
Operating	2,680,748	
Capital	889,894	
Accrued Expenses	51,638	
Unearned Revenue	33,114	
Accrued Interest	105,976	
Current Portion of Long-Term Debt	<u>3,300,000</u>	
Total Current Liabilities		<u>16,661,370</u>
Long-Term Liabilities:		
Net Pension Liability	11,978,766	
Long-term Debt, Less Portion Included in Current Liabilities	<u>9,900,000</u>	
Total Long-Term Liabilities		<u>21,878,766</u>
Total Liabilities		<u>38,540,136</u>

NET POSITION

Invested in Capital and Intangible Assets, Net of Related Debt		109,455,422
Restricted for Extraordinary Expenses		880,168
Unrestricted (deficit)		<u>(12,944,135)</u>
Total Net Position		<u>\$97,391,455</u>

WORCESTER REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets
For the Year Ended June 30, 2017

	2017	2016
Operating Revenues:		
Passenger Fares	<u>\$3,315,902</u>	<u>\$3,570,770</u>
Operating Expenses:		
Public Transportation:		
Fixed Route Transit Services	19,229,027	18,594,294
Demand Response Transit Services	4,736,804	4,639,477
Administrative Salaries and Fringe	423,911	267,792
Professional and Other Services	564,560	646,762
Travel Training Services	59,509	50,549
Other Administrative Expenses	102,289	98,316
Depreciation and Amortization	<u>5,963,973</u>	<u>5,493,488</u>
Total Operating Expenses	<u>31,080,037</u>	<u>29,745,678</u>
Operating Loss	(27,764,135)	(26,174,908)
Nonoperating Revenues (Expenses):		
Federal Government - Noncapital Assistance	5,482,152	4,659,215
Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Contract Assistance	11,483,258	11,483,258
Member Municipalities – Assessments	4,656,779	4,531,045
Interest Expense	(400,543)	(227,421)
Interest Income	17,638	3,409
Miscellaneous Income	46,374	4,033
Advertising Income	<u>89,494</u>	<u>161,169</u>
Total Net Nonoperating Revenues	<u>21,375,152</u>	<u>20,614,708</u>
Loss Before Capital Activity	(6,388,983)	(92,783)
Capital Activity:		
Capital Grants:		
Federal Government	5,832,296	31,543,401
Commonwealth of Massachusetts	1,495,105	9,008,213
Member Municipality and Other	143,431	116,058
Transfer of Union Station Project	<u>(712,917)</u>	<u>(580,260)</u>
Total Capital Activity	<u>6,757,915</u>	<u>39,994,629</u>
Change in Net Position	368,932	34,434,629
Net Position, Beginning of Year	<u>97,022,523</u>	<u>62,588,094</u>
Net Position, End of Year	<u>\$97,391,455</u>	<u>\$97,022,523</u>

Facts, Statistics, and Performance Measures

<u>FACTS:</u>	Fixed Route	Demand Response
Annual Farebox Revenue	\$3,074,308	\$329,239
Annual Cost of Operations	\$19,788,364	\$5,111,117
Percent of Fare Box Recovery of Operating Costs (Goal 20%)	15.54%	

<u>STATISTICS:</u>	Fixed Route	Demand Response
Number of Fixed Routes		
Annual Passenger Trips	3,599,241	191,681
Annual Revenue Hours	172,635	83,198
Annual Revenue Miles	2,022,697	1,232,113
Annual Vehicle Hours	177,267	66,456
Annual Vehicle Miles	2,114,949	1,017,871

<u>PERFORMANCE MEASURES:</u>	Fixed Route	Demand Response
Operating Cost Per Passenger Trip	\$5.50	\$26.66
Operating Cost Per Revenue Hour	\$114.63	\$61.43
Operating Cost Per Revenue Mile	\$9.78	\$4.15
Passenger Trips Per Revenue Hour	20.85	2.30
Passenger Trips Per Revenue Mile	1.78	0.16
Required Subsidy Per Passenger Trip	\$4.64	





Worcester Regional Transit Authority

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