



Existing Public Transportation in the Region

9.1

Public Transportation in the Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMMPO) region consists of:

1. Public fixed route bus and demand response services provided by the Greater Attleboro - Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA) in the northern part of the SMMPO, and the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA) in the southern part of the region. Fixed route service refers to regularly scheduled bus routes, which are generally found in urban areas where population or employment density exists. In demand response services, driver's routes are scheduled daily based upon the day's trip requests. Figure 9-1 (on page 9-3) identifies the boundaries of the GATRA and SRTA service areas, as well as the SMMPO region. Two SMMPO communities, Rochester and Marion, do not belong to either Regional Transit Authority (RTA).
2. Commuter rail provided by the MBTA along the Providence line with stops at Mansfield, Downtown Attleboro and South Attleboro; and along the New Old Colony line with the terminus stop at Middleborough/Lakeville. (For more information, see Chapter 10 – Commuter Rail.)
3. Commuter bus provided by the private companies of Peter Pan Bus Lines, with service from Cape Cod to Providence and points west along I-195, and service from Fall River to Boston; Bloom Bus with service from Taunton to Boston; and Dattco Bus, with service from New Bedford to Boston with a stop at Silver City Galleria in Taunton. (For more information, see Chapter 11 – Commuter and Intercity Bus.)

GATRA and SRTA Characteristics and Capital Needs

9.2

Table 9-1 (on page 9-2) lists the communities belonging to GATRA and SRTA, along with total population, population density for each community and the percentage of population over 65 years of age. SRTA has a larger senior population and it is more densely populated than GATRA, primarily within the cities of Fall River and New Bedford. GATRA has two small cities, Attleboro and

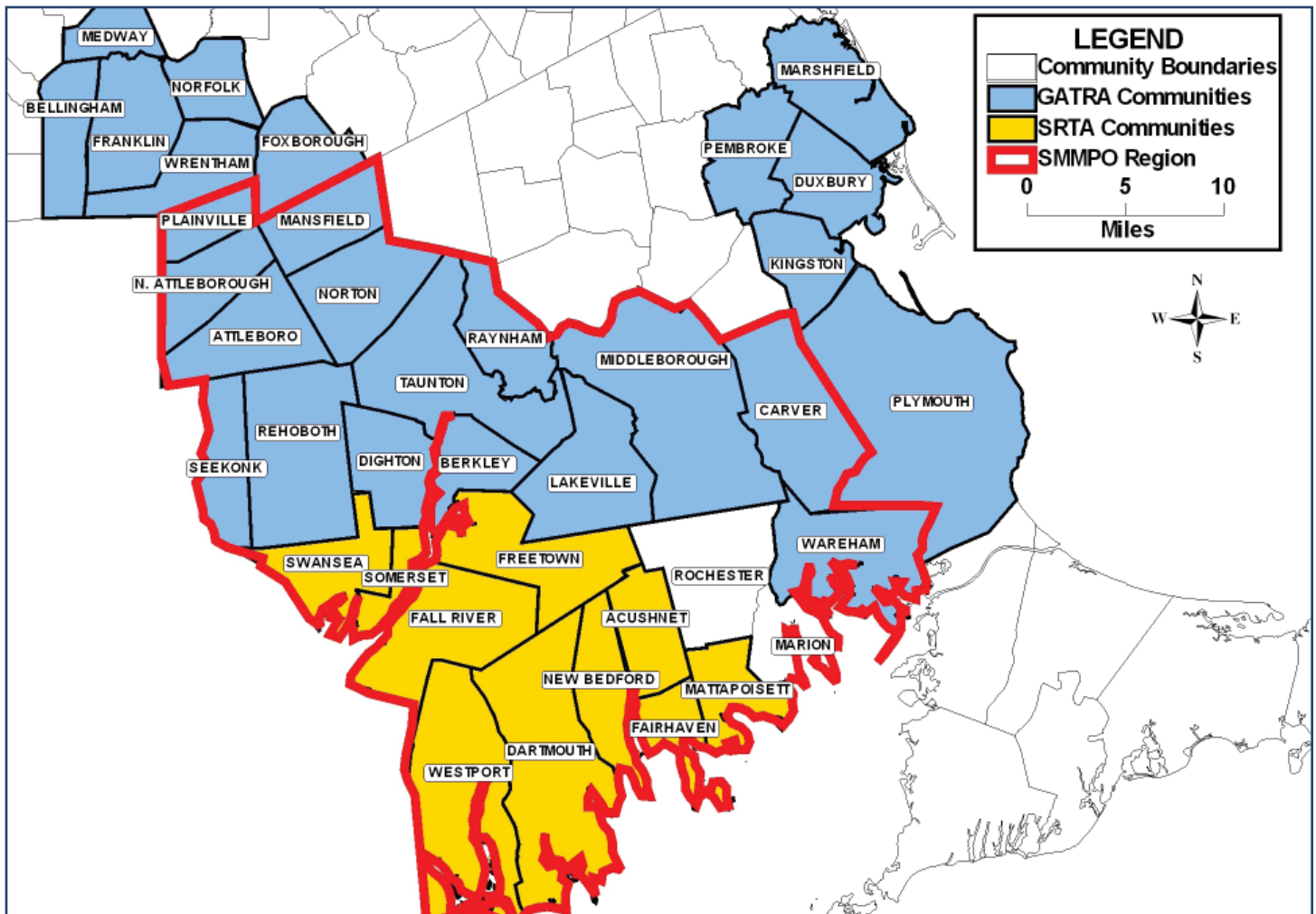
Table 9-1: SMMPO Community Population Density and 65+ Population (2000)

Table 9-1 lists the communities belonging to GATRA and SRTA, along with total population, population density for each community and the percentage of population over 65 years of age.

| GATRA | | | |
|--------------------|------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Community | Total Population | Pop. Density (pop/sq.mi.) | % 65+ Population |
| Attleboro | 42,068 | 1,529 | 12.89% |
| Bellingham | 14,877 | 783 | 9.97% |
| Berkley | 5,749 | 348 | 6.49% |
| Carver | 11,163 | 297 | 14.78% |
| Dighton | 6,175 | 276 | 12.83% |
| Duxbury | 13,895 | 369 | 12.28% |
| Foxboro | 14,637 | 701 | 13.21% |
| Franklin | 22,095 | 818 | 10.94% |
| Kingston | 11,780 | 636 | 13.59% |
| Lakeville | 9,821 | 328 | 11.30% |
| Mansfield | 22,414 | 1,096 | 6.36% |
| Medway | 9,931 | 861 | 11.45% |
| Middleborough | 19,941 | 287 | 10.30% |
| Norfolk | 9,270 | 610 | 7.30% |
| North Attleborough | 27,143 | 1,455 | 9.66% |
| Norton | 18,036 | 628 | 7.76% |
| Plainville | 7,683 | 695 | 12.08% |
| Plymouth | 51,701 | 536 | 11.24% |
| Raynham | 11,739 | 573 | 12.96% |
| Rehoboth | 10,172 | 219 | 9.96% |
| Seekonk | 13,425 | 733 | 13.48% |
| Taunton | 55,976 | 1,201 | 12.89% |
| Wareham | 20,335 | 568 | 16.18% |
| Wrentham | 9,006 | 393 | 13.64% |
| Marshfield | 24,306 | 766 | 12.52% |
| Pembroke | 16,927 | 720 | 8.34% |
| GATRA Total | 480,265 | Average 620 | 11.47% |
| SRTA | | | |
| Community | Total Population | Pop. Density (pop/sq.mi.) | % 65+ Population |
| Acushnet | 10,161 | 550 | 14.90% |
| Dartmouth | 30,666 | 498 | 15.53% |
| Fairhaven | 16,159 | 1,302 | 19.49% |
| Fall River | 91,938 | 2,964 | 16.94% |
| Freetown | 8,472 | 231 | 9.05% |
| Mattapoisett | 6,268 | 380 | 16.64% |
| New Bedford | 93,768 | 4,656 | 16.69% |
| Somerset | 18,234 | 2,248 | 21.03% |
| Swansea | 15,901 | 689 | 15.72% |
| Westport | 14,183 | 283 | 14.62% |
| SRTA Total | 305,750 | Average 1,100 | 16.64% |

Taunton, and growing suburban towns. Both RTAs have rural areas. Population density and other characteristics vary considerably between, and even within, communities. These are broad characteristics that are presented only as a general indication of each RTA service area. Smaller area Census data is used in determining transit needs and service plans.

Figure 9-1. SMMPO Region, GATRA and SRTA Boundaries



GATRA Service

GATRA has grown from 17 to 26 communities in the last three years. Nine new communities opted to transfer their State assessment from the MBTA to GATRA, in an amount that covers the cost of local services provided by GATRA. As a result, GATRA's service area has grown by nearly 40% in land area and population in the last three years. GATRA is now 775 square miles with a population of 480,265 (according to the 2000 U.S. Census). Fifteen of GATRA's communities are within the SMMPO region and eleven towns are located outside of the SMMPO, in either the Old Colony Planning Council or the Metropolitan Area Planning Council regions. Remaining informed and involved with land use and policy planning, issues that directly affect transit, will be a challenge to GATRA as it deals with three MPOs.

GATRA fixed routes serve the cities of Taunton and Attleboro, as well as the towns of North Attleborough, Norton, Mansfield, Raynham, Middleborough, Wareham, Plymouth, Kingston, Marshfield, Duxbury and Franklin. An intercity route runs between Taunton and Attleboro. GATRA also runs inter-community shuttles to serve connections to commuter rail and commuter bus. (See Figure 9-2, next page.) Most GATRA bus routes operate with one hour headways. Generally, bus routes operate Monday through Saturday, from approximately 6:00AM to 6:00PM. Saturday service hours usually start later and end earlier than during weekdays. Between 2007 and 2009, GATRA fixed route ridership increased by 9%.

Figure 9-1 identifies the boundaries of the GATRA and SRTA service areas, as well as the SMMPO region. Two SMMPO communities, Rochester and Marion, do not belong to either Regional Transit Authority (RTA).

Figure 9-2: GATRA Fixed Routes

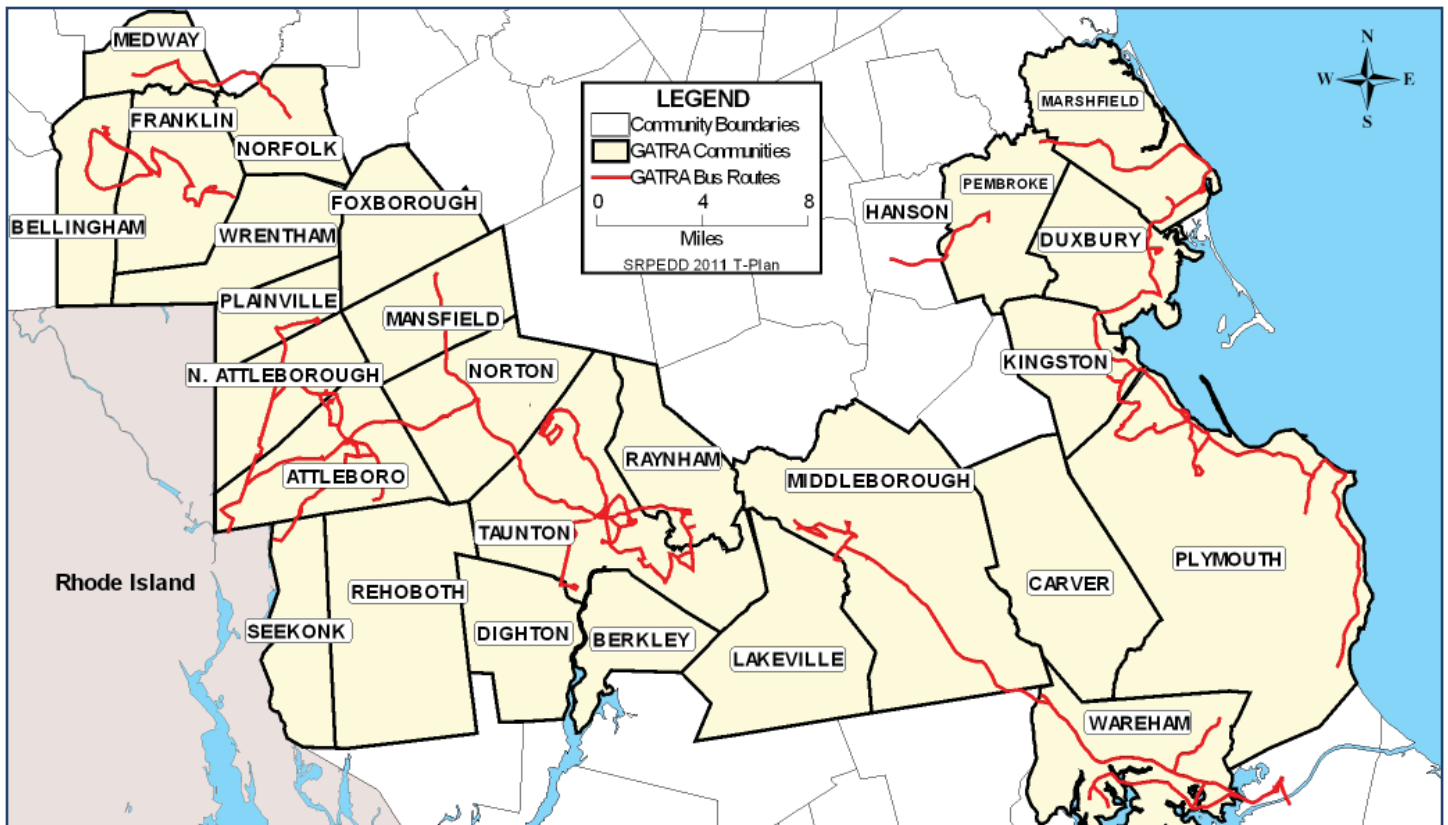


Figure 9-2: GATRA fixed routes serve the cities of Taunton and Attleboro, as well as the towns of North Attleborough, Norton, Mansfield, Raynham, Middleborough, Wareham, Plymouth, Kingston, Marshfield, Duxbury and Franklin. An intercity route runs between Taunton and Attleboro.

GATRA has changed its service since the last update of this plan, and added service in its new member communities. New services have been added through local assessments for transit, through federal Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedoms programs and through a Suburban Mobility grant from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. The Franklin Area Bus (FAB) fixed route service began in March of 2008. FAB provides service Monday through Saturday, traveling to Bellingham shops on Saturdays only. The Medway MBTA Shuttle began in October of 2007 and provides service from two locations in Medway to the Norfolk MBTA station. This service operates Monday through Friday. The Wareham/ Middleborough/Lakeville MBTA Shuttle began in September of 2008 and it provides service from Wareham to Lakeville Monday through Friday. The Seaside Area InterTown Line (SAIL) fixed route began operating in December of 2008. SAIL provides service from Kingston to Marshfield via Duxbury and ends at the Stop and Shop in Pembroke. SAIL operates Monday through Saturday. In October, 2010, the Town of Bellingham opted to start an MBTA shuttle starting from the Plaza at Bellingham Commons to the Forge Park station in Franklin, serving two morning and two afternoon trains.

GATRA's demand response service exists in each of its member communities for people who are 60 years and older, and for people with disabilities. This service is provided by either the local Council on Aging or a private operator. In communities where GATRA offers fixed route services, they also offer complementary paratransit services, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), for eligible riders. Between 2007 and 2009, GATRA demand response ridership increased by 16%.

GATRA is also the Massachusetts Human Service Transportation broker in the southeastern Massachusetts region, which covers 43 communities including those served by SRTA and Brockton Area Transit. Six of the State's fifteen

RTAs provide daily brokerage transportation services for consumers of the Massachusetts Department of Medical Assistance, Department of Public Health, Department of Developmental Services, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind and Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. As the broker, GATRA contracts with approximately 40 transportation vendors to provide contracted trips with the State departments.

GATRA’s brokerage service is significant. Figure 9-3 indicates that the GATRA brokerage provides nearly as many trips as the fixed route and demand response services combined. The number of GATRA’s human service transportation trips is growing faster than fixed route or demand response services. That number grew by 21% between 2007 and 2009.

Figure 9-3: GATRA Annual Ridership, 2007-2009

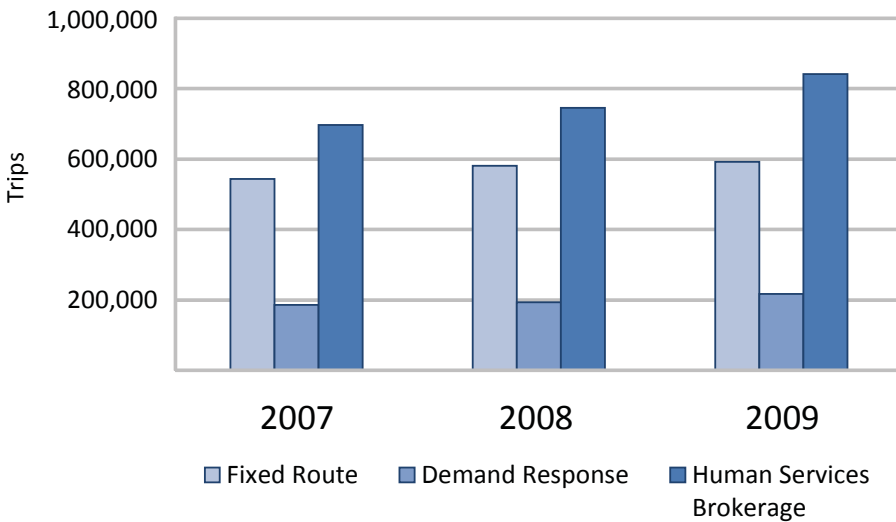


Figure 9-3 indicates that the GATRA brokerage provides nearly as many trips as the fixed route and demand response services combined.

GATRA fixed route fares are \$1.00 with half-price fares for students, elders, people with disabilities and Medicare card holders. Demand response fares are \$1.25 per trip. GATRA’s last fare increase was in 2005 when all fares were raised by \$0.25. Some of the new communities have maintained their policy of collecting donations in lieu of fares from seniors using demand response service. Due to the relatively low density of population and development of the GATRA service area outside of its urban centers, GATRA is challenged with providing access to vital resources and employment for its communities, and doing so at an affordable rate.

GATRA’s 2009 Title VI Program update indicates that 5.2% of the population in GATRA’s service area is considered to be minority population, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, and 5.1% of the population is below poverty level. Surveys from the 2009 Title VI Program update indicate that the largest age group for GATRA riders on the fixed routes is between 46 and 65 years old (38%), and that more men (62%) than women ride the bus. The second highest age group using the bus is 65 years old and older (25%). Working and shopping (27% and 26%, respectively) are the top trip purposes served by the bus.

GATRA monitors its service to ensure equal quality of service for minority areas and non-minority areas, based on census data. Up to this point, GATRA

North Attleborough

The town is including a transit hub or intermodal center in its Master Plan, adjacent to Downtown. A transfer center here would improve GATRA operations along the Route 1 corridor and the entire Attleboro route system. A light maintenance and storage facility may also be needed in the North Attleborough area as GATRA has grown by six communities in its northwestern service area and may expand further.

Plymouth

GATRA is beginning a planning study for the siting of a Plymouth intermodal center. This study will examine the demand and need for an Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC) to be located in downtown Plymouth. GATRA will review 6 - 8 potential sites in the Downtown Plymouth and waterfront district. The ITC would include GATRA's local buses and Plymouth & Brockton intercity buses that offer commuter service between Cape Cod and Boston. It would also include tourist buses traveling to the town. In addition, the study will identify the overall size of the facility and identify potential funding sources.

Taunton

The Taunton maintenance garage received a new roof in 2010. The Taunton Terminal building also had improvements in 2010 including new flooring, and upgrades to the bathrooms and the heating, venting and air conditioning systems. GATRA has plans to renovate and continue upgrading the Terminal building, making an attractive customer waiting area and adding office space on the second floor.

The City has identified as one of its Priority Development Areas, Parcel 6A, which is a seven acre, vacant lot, formerly used as a rail maintenance facility located adjacent to the GATRA bus terminal and the Taunton Housing Authority. The site is fenced and has been identified as a brownfield (land previously used for industrial purposes or certain commercial uses that was once contaminated.) The City has identified 6A for potential Transit Oriented Development (TOD) offering mixed-use redevelopment including housing, economic development, open space and recreation, and pedestrian linkages to downtown centered on transportation services. The City has adopted a TOD Overlay District around the GATRA Terminal and Parcel 6A. The Taunton Housing Authority wants to create 100 housing units on Parcel 6A. GATRA needs to increase its parking at the maintenance facility. There is a potential for redevelopment in the front of the Terminal building, where parking currently exists.

From the City of Taunton Zoning Ordinance, adopted as amended through January 25, 2010:

The intent of the Transit Oriented Development Overlay District is to promote a lively, prosperous neighborhood center that serves as an attractive place to live, work, shop and recreate with less reliance on the automobile. Specifically, the purposes of the TOD are:

- 1. To encourage a mix of moderate and high density development within walking distance of transit stations to increase transit ridership;*

2. *To create a pedestrian-friendly environment to encourage walking, bicycling and transit use;*
3. *To provide an alternative to traditional development by emphasizing mixed-use, pedestrian oriented development;*
4. *To create a neighborhood identity that promotes pedestrian activity, human interactions, safety and livability;*
5. *To encourage building reuse and infill to create higher densities;*
6. *Reduce auto dependency and roadway congestion by locating multiple destinations and trip purposes within walking distance of one another; and*
7. *To provide a range of housing options for people of different income levels and at different stages of life.*

Wareham

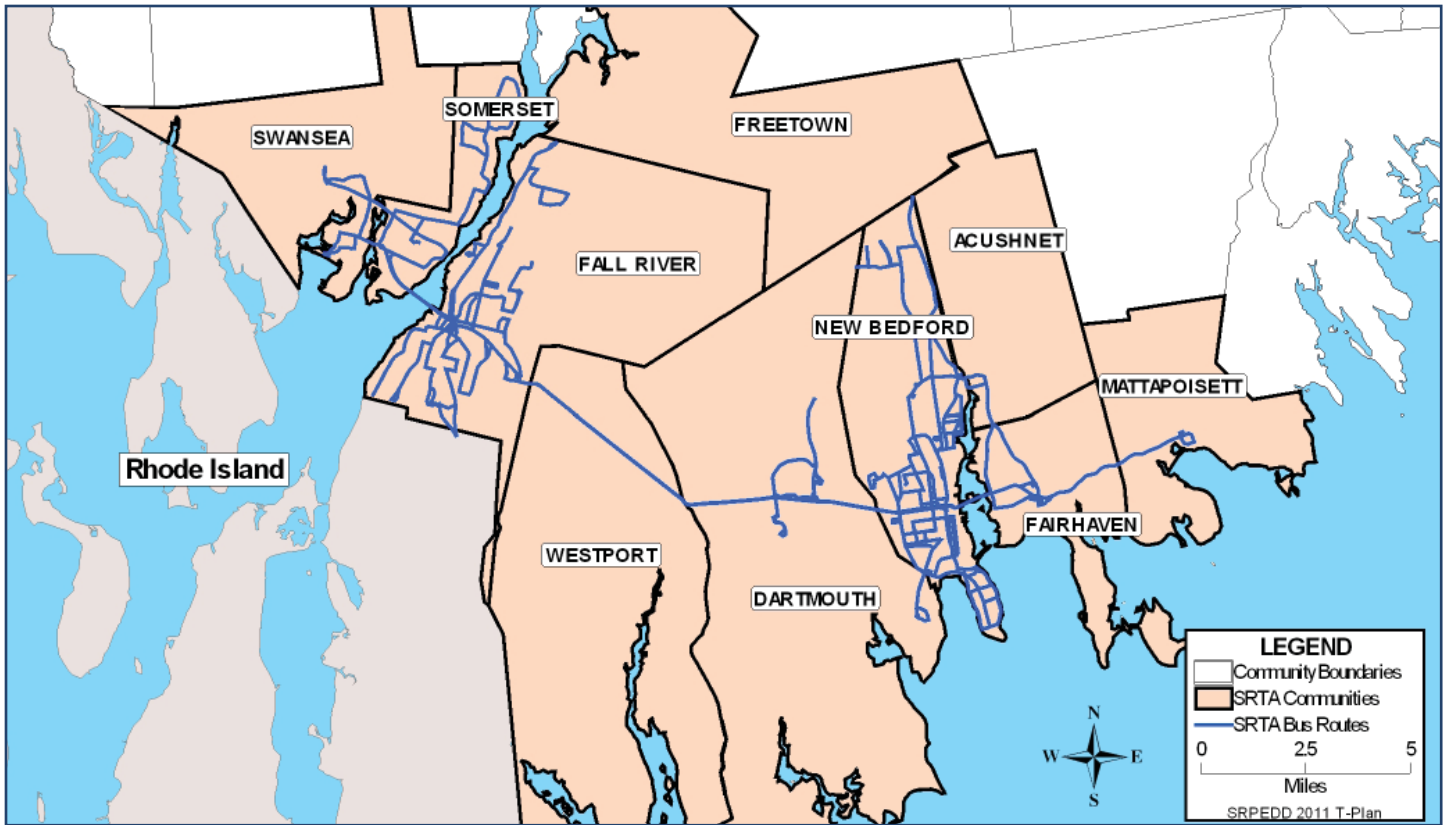
A preliminary study from 2005 identified a preferred site for an Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC) near the Mill Pond and Tremont Nail factory, but the recommendation met opposition by historic preservation advocates before it could be explored further. The ITC would have allowed a transfer center for GATRA local buses and Peter Pan intercity buses as well as a village station for future passenger rail services. GATRA was interested in finding a suitable transportation center to allow safe transfers between its local routes and to improve other transportation connections in the town. The ITC was also seen as an opportunity to spur economic development and make needed improvements to a historic property that is currently vacant and a liability to the town.

The construction of Wareham Crossing and Rosebrook Place--two large development projects along Route 28 in the western area of town, is shifting the travel patterns for employment, shopping and services. Three GATRA routes currently meet on the hour at an older shopping plaza, which serves as a transfer hub (although it was not designed for this purpose). This plaza has lost many tenants and may soon lose a major anchor store, Walmart, which plans to relocate to the western area of town, near the newer development. In addition, Coastal Rail, a private rail operator, has discussed plans with MassDOT and the MBTA to provide passenger rail service from Cape Cod to the Lakeville MBTA station with at least one stop in Wareham. The Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority is also studying the feasibility of providing seasonal passenger rail service through Wareham to Cape Cod. There continues to be an opportunity to create an intermodal transportation center in conjunction with changing conditions. At a minimum, GATRA will need to site a safe transfer center for its passengers if Walmart does move and if it is necessary to redesign the local transit system.

SRTA Service

SRTA's service area is 280 square miles with a total 2000 U.S. population of 305,750. SRTA has retained its original service area of ten communities: the cities of New Bedford and Fall River and the towns of Acushnet, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Freetown, Mattapoisett, Somerset, Swansea, and Westport. Fixed route service is concentrated in the cities of New Bedford and Fall River, with individual routes extending into parts of Fairhaven, Acushnet, Mattapoisett, Dartmouth, Somerset, and Swansea. (See Figure 9-6 on page 9-9.) An intercity route travels along Highway Route 6 between Fall River and New Bedford,

Figure 9-6: SRTA Fixed Routes



passing through the towns of Dartmouth and Westport. Only Freetown receives no fixed route services. Headways (the length of time that elapses between buses) vary from 20 minutes to 60 minutes. In 2009, SRTA provided 1,750,000 passenger trips.

SRTA demand response service is more generous than the “within ¾ mile of a fixed route” guideline required by ADA transportation regulations. Rather, SRTA offers the demand response service anywhere in its service area to anyone who is eligible under the ADA guidelines. In addition, service is provided by Councils on Aging in all member communities. Figure 9-7 shows annual SRTA ridership for fixed route and demand services over the past three years. There is substantially more ridership on the fixed route buses than on the demand

Figure 9-7: SRTA Ridership, 2007-2009

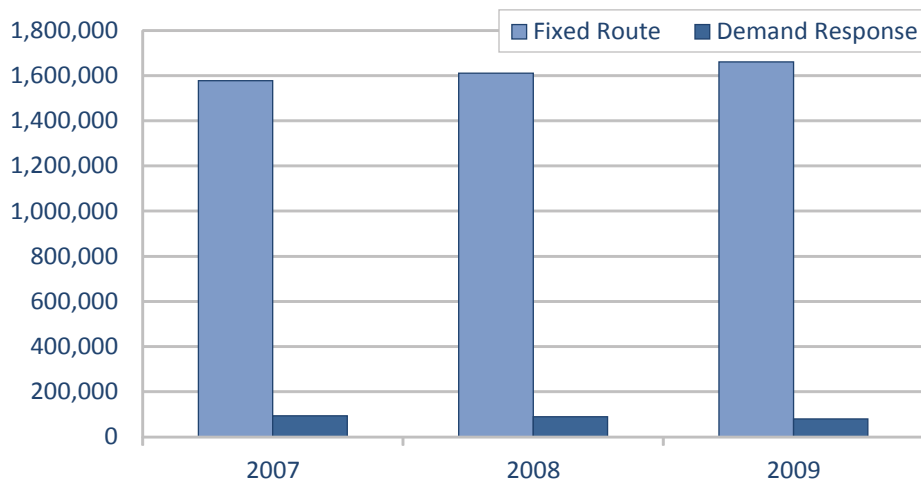
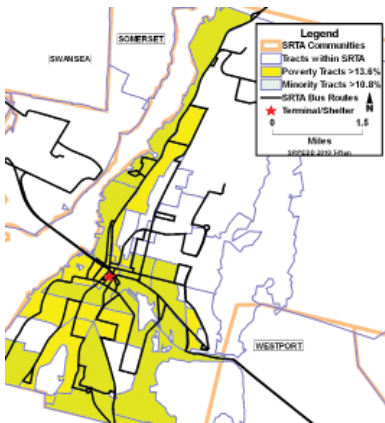


Figure 9-7 shows annual SRTA ridership for fixed route and demand services over the past three years. There is substantially more ridership on the fixed route buses than on the demand response service in SRTA.

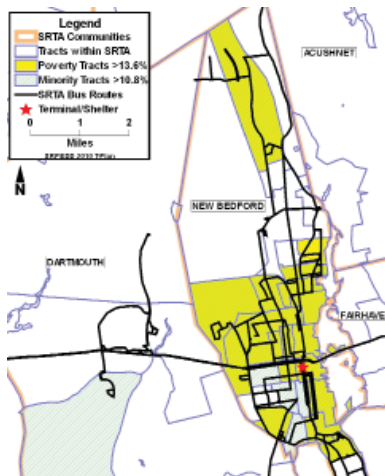
response service in SRTA. Fixed route ridership increased 3% from 2008 to 2009, while demand response ridership decreased by 11% in the same time period. SRTA fares have remained constant at \$1.25 per zone and \$.60 for the elderly, people with disabilities, and students. Demand response has also remained the same at \$1.25 per zone. A zone is generally defined as a town line or a stop at the terminal and the trip continues on to another route. Some trips can cost as much as \$3.75 one way. A recent SRPEDD study revealed that approximately 27% of the riders needed to pay two or more zones for a one way trip.

Figure 9-8: New Bedford and Fall River Minority and Poverty Census Tracts with SRTA Fixed Routes

FALL RIVER



NEW BEDFORD



In the SRTA service area, the 2000 U. S. Census indicates that 10.8% of the population is a minority population and 4.5% is Hispanic. Population with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) is 6% in SRTA and 13.6% of the population is low income. Figure 9-8 highlights minority and poverty census tracts within SRTA in relation to existing fixed route services.

In 2009, Title VI Program surveys indicated the largest number of riders were in the 30-45 year age group (35%), followed by the 19-29 year age group (26%). Shopping and work (30% and 26%, respectively) were the top trip purposes served by the bus.

SRTA fixed routes serve the areas with the greatest population density and need within the cities of Fall River and New Bedford, but the service falls short in serving employment centers in surrounding towns and in the Industrial Parks located at the far north end of each city. SRTA has not been able to address the jobs-population geographic mismatch that has occurred in so many cities across the United States.

There have been a few changes to SRTA bus routes over the years. In New Bedford, SRTA increased frequency of service to the King's Highway area and initiated a North End Shuttle that connects with three other bus routes along its route, allowing residents of the north end to access shopping in that area without having to travel to the terminal and transfer to a different route. Most recently, SRTA changed a route to serve the new Market Basket grocery store in New Bedford.

In September 2010, SRTA added two new shuttle routes using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding. These are considered pilot programs and will run until June 30, 2011 to assess the need for the added service by measuring ridership and revenue. One shuttle has a circular route to and from Acushnet, Fairhaven and Mattapoisett. The second shuttle has a similar circular route to and from Swansea and Somerset. There is a connection from Fairhaven into New Bedford as well as a connection between Somerset and Fall River. These services operate between 9:00AM and 4:00 PM with frequencies of over an hour. While these pilot routes allow access to destinations in neighboring suburbs, this schedule is not helpful for most work trip purposes. A pilot program was also initiated for the town of Freetown to provide demand response service. The commitment was made to provide this service specifically to Freetown; however, the service will be made available to the other towns in the service area if demand is minimal from Freetown residents.

SRTA Capital Facilities and Capital Needs

Table 9-3 shows the composition of the SRTA fleet. SRTA used federal stimulus funds to purchase nine new buses in 2008, including two hybrids.

New Bedford

In 2010 the New Bedford terminal underwent significant renovations using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 funding. These renovations included improved and increased lighting in the loading bays and in the parking decks. An upgrade of security cameras in both the loading and waiting areas of the terminal was accomplished. The brickwork and sidewalks outside of the terminal were completely refurbished. The New Bedford maintenance facility was recently upgraded with a new hot water and air conditioning unit.

The South Coast Rail project to bring commuter rail service to New Bedford and Fall River proposes intermodal centers at a site known as Whale's Tooth in New Bedford and Davol Street, Fall River. Both of these stations would incorporate SRTA bus service, as well as intercity bus and other transportation connections. It remains to be seen if the Whale's Tooth station would replace the Downtown bus terminal in the long-term, as redevelopment occurs around the rail station. In the short-term, SRTA would maintain a presence in or near the Downtown Terminal and at the rail station. A Transit Development Plan is currently underway to address the best way to serve all passengers and provide a connection between Whale's Tooth and Downtown. For details on New Bedford's ITS project, see Chapter 15.

Fall River

In the fall of 2006 the state took by eminent domain the South Main Place building that housed, among other businesses, the Fall River SRTA bus terminal. The land taking was for the construction of the Fall River Justice Center, opened in June 2010, where all criminal cases for Fall River District Court and Bristol County Superior Court will be held. Since Fall 2006, the Fall River terminal has resided in a leased tandem trailer as a temporary terminal in a city-owned parking lot on Borden Street between Second and Third Streets and ridership has been negatively affected due to this temporary situation. In June 2010 SRTA purchased the former site of the National Grid Company. This location is between Fourth and Fifth Streets, approximately one block away from the existing temporary site. The city has to designate Fourth and Fifth Streets as one-way streets in opposite directions to accommodate the bus traffic patterns. As in New Bedford, the potential reinstatement of commuter rail to Fall River will require an intermodal facility that allows easy, safe and convenient transfers from rail service at the proposed Davol Street Station to local bus service. A second rail station with limited parking and limited stops is also planned at Battleship Cove and may be served with a local bus connection.

Fall River has never had a full service maintenance facility; most routine maintenance services are completed at the New Bedford maintenance facility.

Table 9-3: SRTA Fleet Composition

| Vehicle Type | # Vehicles |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Transit Buses | 61 |
| Demand Response Vehicles | 22 |
| Intercity Buses | 0 |
| General Use Vehicles | 20 |
| Total | 103 |

New Vehicles

GATRA and SRTA purchased two hybrid buses each in FY 2008. At this time, hybrid buses cost nearly \$550,000—approximately \$200,000 more than a regular bus. All future planned bus acquisitions will be clean diesel, unless there is future funding available to purchase alternative fuel vehicles. See Chapter 19 - Financial for more details on vehicle replacement plans.

Mobility Management

GATRA is developing a one-call resource center that contains all transportation resources in an eleven-community subregion that matches the United Way of Greater Attleboro - Taunton service area. The resource center will be web-based and designed to identify all travel options, based on criteria entered about the trip - such as trip type, area, time of day and passenger eligibility. Initially, it will be accessed through the Taunton office. A representative will research all options for the client requesting the information and provide the proper options for their transportation needs. Eventually, this resource will be accessible through GATRA's web site and it will include the entire GATRA service area. SRPEDD and its partners in the Southeastern Massachusetts Transportation Alliance support GATRA's efforts and seek to expand on them to include the entire region, including all of SRTA's member communities.

Bicycle Facilities

GATRA maintains bicycle racks on all of its fixed route buses. Indoor bicycle storage space was created at the Attleboro and Mansfield train stations. The same could be provided at the Taunton bus terminal, if warranted. SRTA has bicycle racks on approximately 25% of its fixed route buses. Standing bicycle racks at key bus stops and transit stations are needed.

Fare Collection

GATRA is part of a pilot program to test the use of the CharlieCard (MBTA's reusable and rechargeable fare card) in joint ticketing between the MBTA and regional transit services. There continue to be challenges due to accounting incompatibilities and allocating costs to the correct transportation provider. Because the CharlieCard is only available for MBTA bus and subway at this time, and not yet for commuter rail, there are few GATRA passengers who could benefit from the one farecard for both MBTA and GATRA systems. When commuter rail is included on the CharlieCard, it will be more important for there to be one farecard that allows joint ticketing between the MBTA and GATRA because of the commuter shuttle services provided to the rail stations in several of GATRA's communities. The availability of a CharlieCard that can be used on GATRA vehicles as well as commuter trains would be a benefit to passengers. GATRA will purchase new farebox equipment to read the CharlieCards once these issues are resolved. MassDOT is planning for the eventual use of a regional electronic fare payment system as part of the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture for the region.

GPS/AVL and ITS

The use of global positioning systems (GPS) and automatic vehicle location (AVL) systems can make transit much more convenient to potential riders by providing real-time information about when the next bus is coming. These tools can also improve efficient use of vehicles, and they can improve coordination between modes--allowing better connections for passengers. GATRA is currently in the queue to have its transit routes on Google transit, which has a trip planning function online. Electronic payment systems will make using transit more convenient by the use of one farecard or other media for all transportation costs, creating a more coordinated and seamless transit trip. GATRA continues to update equipment to enhance public safety, increase mobility and promote sustainability of its transportation system. Signal priority for buses and signal preemption for emergency vehicles will also be pursued in congested traffic corridors in order to improve on - time performance and convenience of using the bus. Table 9-4 highlights the corridors with the greatest delay.

Table 9-4: Bus Corridor Delays in seconds

| GATRA | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------|-------------|
| Community | Bus Routes | Roadway | Limits | Total Delay* | Miles | Delay/Miles |
| Attleboro, N. Attleboro | 11, 12, 24 | Route 1 | RI to Emerald Square | 372.4 | 3.7 | 100.6 |
| Taunton | 8 | Route 140 | Summer to Galleria | 163.3 | 3.4 | 47.5 |
| Attleboro, N Attleboro | 14 | Toner Blvd | N Main to North Ave | 112.1 | 0.7 | 169.8 |
| SRTA | | | | | | |
| Community | Bus Routes | Roadway | Limits | Total Delay | Miles | Delay/Miles |
| New Bedford, Dartmouth | 9, 10 | Route 6 | Cornell St to Cross Rd | 381.5 | 2.7 | 139.7 |
| Dartmouth | 10 | Faunce Corner Rd | Route 6 to Hawthorn | 184.0 | 2.3 | 80.7 |
| Fairhaven | 11 | Route 6 | NB to Stop and Shop | 140.5 | 1.7 | 82.6 |
| Somerset, Swansea | 14 | Route 6 | FR Line to Swansea Mall | 215.7 | 4.1 | 52.6 |

* "Total Delay" is the sum of the average delay per vehicle at each signalized intersection along the corridor

Transit Enhancements

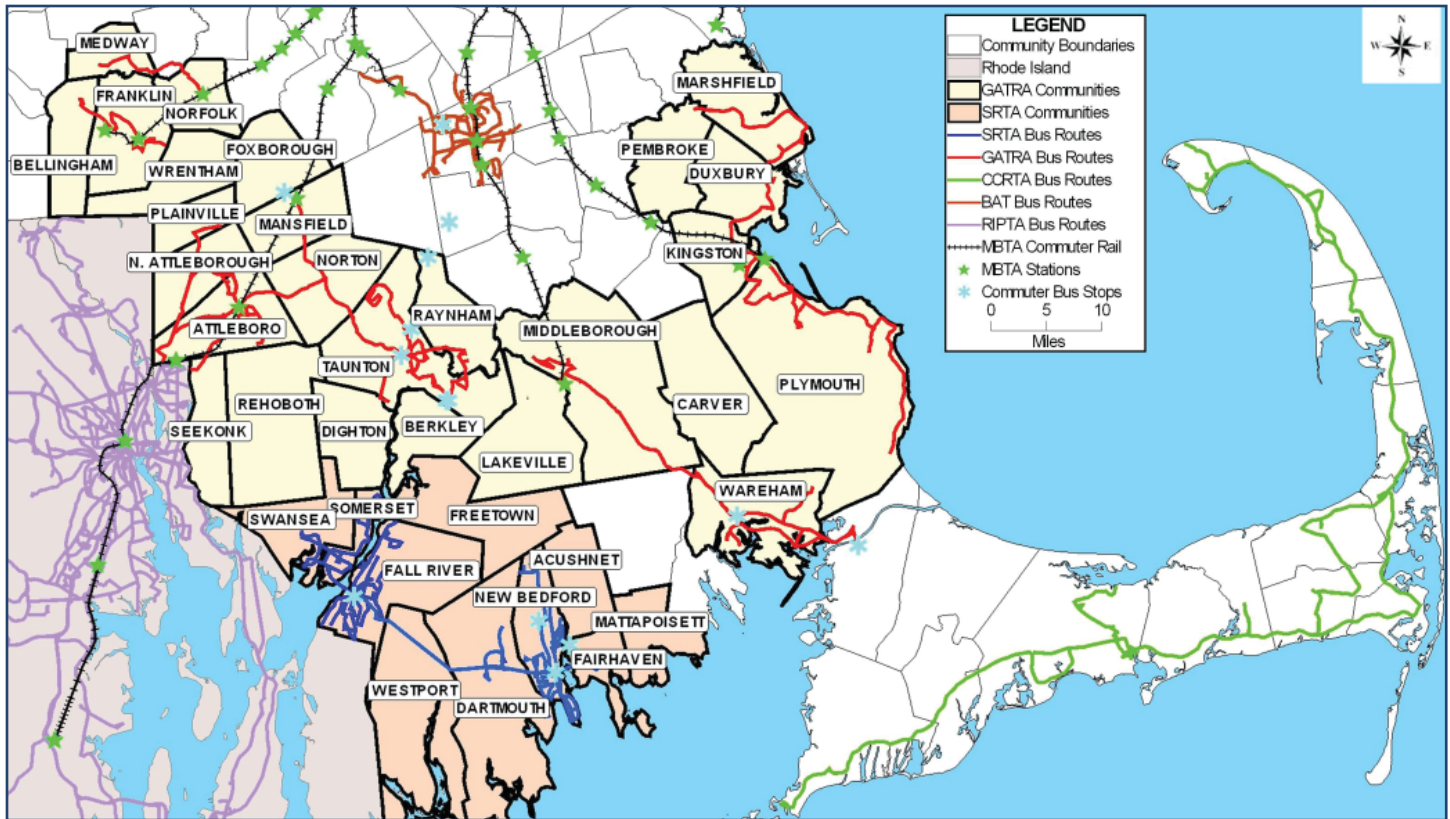
Public input repeatedly requests more and better passenger information about transit services. Putting customer information at bus stops, including maps and schedules would make it easier for passengers to access transit. Real-time information alerting passengers about the time of the next vehicle arrival reduces anxiety and allows passengers to plan when they should be waiting at the bus stop. Benches, lighting and maintenance of bus shelters, stops and terminals should be located and designed to increase their use.

The Transit Deficiency

9.4

Figure 9-9 (page 9-14) shows the GATRA and SRTA fixed bus routes along with commuter rail and commuter bus stops. Lack of transit connectivity is

Figure 9-9. Existing Public Transportation System



one of the greatest problems for the SMMPO region. Gaps in intra-regional connections are evident, such as between the cities of Fall River (SRTA) and Attleboro (GATRA). Dattco provides the only intercity connection between SRTA and GATRA communities, with a stop at a commuter lot at the Silver City Galleria in Taunton on its New Bedford to Boston route.

Gaps within the SMMPO region exist between urban areas and job centers, which are frequently in suburbs and outlying areas of the cities. In addition, several rural or suburban communities are isolated from the transit network. Generally, these towns provide community transportation on weekdays only, which provides lifeline service for people who are either 60 years old and above, or who have disabilities. This service is often limited to destinations within town boundaries.

The MBTA commuter rail and private intercity bus companies provide links from their designated stops in SMMPO communities to Providence and Boston, but not all passengers can access these stops. GATRA and SRTA service is currently under used as a feeder service from SMMPO communities to existing MBTA and commuter bus stops due to inadequate operating funds to allow convenient and timely connections. RTA service does not operate early enough or late enough or frequently enough for commuter bus or rail passengers to leave their cars at home. Also needed are safe intermodal facilities and/or satellite parking lots where passengers can wait in safety and make transfers between modes. The availability of a universal farecard, joint ticketing or “CharlieCard” that can be used to pay for all transportation services, would also increase ease of transit use. A regional transit system that gives a real choice beyond the automobile requires the ability to make connections across the region, between cities and between transportation modes, with convenient schedules and safe places to transfer.

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In addition to a lack of connectivity, is a problem that is not visible on a map: there is no transit service available in the region at night, on Sundays or on most holidays. Given that the top employment sectors are retail and health care (see Table 2-5 in Chapter Two), and that many entry level jobs in manufacturing are for second or third shift, it is clear that the current regional transit system does not work effectively in getting people to and from work.

Needs Identified in 2010 Focus Groups

The Southeastern Massachusetts Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan lists existing transportation needs, gaps and barriers identified through ongoing public participation in the form of surveys, public meetings and discussions throughout the region. A targeted effort to identify specific needs took place in February 2010 with a series of five focus groups held across the SMMPO region. Representatives from the following population groups participated in the discussions: seniors, people with disabilities, youths, low income persons, employment programs, community action programs, housing, veterans, higher education and transit users not represented in the other groups.

The lack of evening transportation is a primary concern among various population groups. People who are trying to advance economically and educationally are limited by the lack of opportunity to access jobs and higher education due to no evening transit service and inadequate connections to employment centers and higher education facilities. The lack of evening transportation also has social impacts because it prevents citizens from participating in recreational, cultural and civic activities. At the focus group discussions, the lack of evening transportation was identified as a need for:

- Mass Rehab Commission (MRC) clients and all people with disabilities to employment;
- people with disabilities to attend functions in the evening;
- UMass Dartmouth (UMassD) students to work or volunteer;
- UMassD Workers' Education Program evening students;
- families who can't enjoy free community events for families (especially in summer), such as AHA arts and culture nights in New Bedford;
- seniors who cannot drive at night;
- consumers to go shopping and do errands;
- ESL classes at the New Bedford Community Health Center;
- workers of 2nd or 3rd shifts at Industrial Parks and for jobs at shopping malls and retail areas;
- youth programs (e.g., YWCA, Boys & Girls Club), sports programs and after school activities, including evening rides to take kids home from programs;
- college courses--even at downtown campus, or evening educational programs (e.g., Middleborough classes for unemployed at Library); and,
- civic participation, since most board and committee meetings, as well as Town Meetings are held in the evenings.

In addition to evening hours of transportation service, region-wide transportation needs and gaps identified by the focus groups include:

- Expanded service to meet employment needs, including employment locations (Industrial Parks, large commercial areas, and medical facilities in

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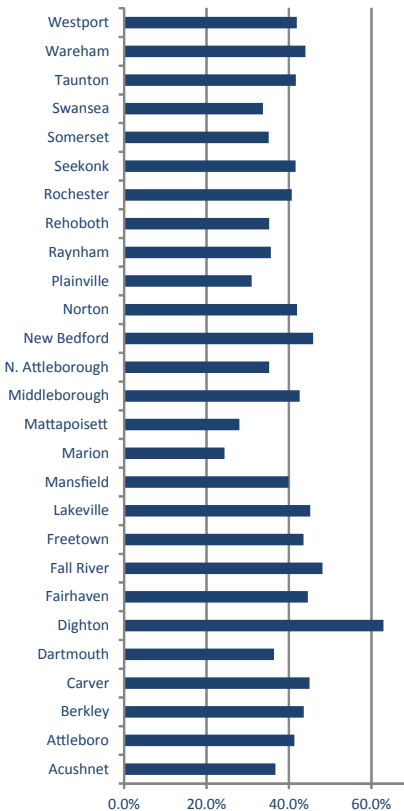
- suburbs), and lack of transit service on weekends and holidays;
- Long-distance medical transportation;
- Connections across the region, between cities and between transportation modes;
- Improved information about transportation services;
- Demand response system improvements; and,
- Connections to Providence and Boston.

9.5

Changing Conditions and Issues

As seniors age in place and lose their ability to drive, the demand for more alternative transportation services will increase throughout the region, including areas that are far removed from existing public transit.

Figure 9-10: SMMPO Population 65 Years and Older with a Disability by Community



An Aging Population and an Increase in Population With Disabilities

As the number of frail elders has increased, public transportation providers have noted an increasing need for more individualized, special services such as door-to-door or even door-through-door assistance. An increase in outpatient radiation and dialysis treatment also adds to the need for extra assistance for people traveling home from these appointments.

Dialysis, in particular, has critical transportation concerns because it is a matter of life and death and because it requires a reliable ride three days per week. Making the return trip home for patients after their 4-hour dialysis appointment is also sometimes problematic for public transportation services when the patient is not stable enough to return home or medical problems arise enroute. Current funding levels for public transportation are straining the ability of transit authorities to provide dialysis/trips - and the demand is growing.

Figure 9-10 shows that in the 2000 U.S. Census, 42% of the total population 65 years and older in the SMMPO had a disability. The Town of Dighton, which remained more than half rural according to the 2000 U.S. Census, stands out in that 63% of its senior population had a disability. As seniors age in place and lose their ability to drive, the demand for more alternative transportation services will increase throughout the region, including areas that are far removed from existing public transit.

Young people with disabilities live in the region and their numbers could increase due to returning veterans from the wars of Iraq and Afghanistan. Transportation is one of the top barriers to employment for people with disabilities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act mandates complementary ADA demand response services for people who are unable to access the fixed route bus wherever fixed route services exist, within a minimum corridor of $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile on either side of the fixed route. Demand response service is more flexible, does not follow a regular route, and is more practical in low density development areas. It is not financially feasible for public transportation to serve all populations in need, in all places. Figure 9-11 (page 9-17) indicates the higher cost implications of regional transit authorities providing demand response services in areas beyond those required by the ADA.

Development and Employment Characteristics of the Region

Between the 1990 and the 2000 U. S. Census, the number of residents who live and work within the region stayed the same but the places where they

work in the region followed a trend of jobs redistribution from the cities to the towns. While the number of jobs in three of the region's four cities continued to decline (Taunton was the exception), the number of jobs increased in Dartmouth, Mansfield, Middleborough, North Attleborough, Raynham, Seekonk and Wareham. (For more information see Chapter 2 – Socioeconomic Trends.) In addition, jobs within the cities have been increasingly located in large suburban style office parks on the city outskirts. Both of these trends have been challenging for providing transit connections between employment and populations searching for jobs.

In the future, the pattern of employment growth in the suburbs is expected to follow more sustainable patterns of smart growth, Transit Oriented Development (TOD), and mixed use development in areas with existing infrastructure such as cities and built-up town centers. Some suburban employment areas that are currently underserved by transit will remain strong employment areas. Some new development is expected to occur at new rail stations that are part of the proposed South Coast Rail project and in undeveloped areas due to excellent access to existing or proposed highway interchanges (e.g., new exit 8B on Route 24 and the Wareham Business Development Overlay District (BDOD) at I-195).

Fixed routes in the cities serve population densities of low income, elderly and minority populations but they are less able to provide frequent service to jobs that have increasingly located at the edges of urban areas or in neighboring suburbs. Shopping malls, business parks and new medical facilities are located in undeveloped land. If the transit authority serves the demands of its customers, it means that bus routes must extend to the new development, adding miles and minutes to existing routes, without any mechanism that gives added compensation to the transit authority; this lack of coordination between land use and transit is financially unsustainable.

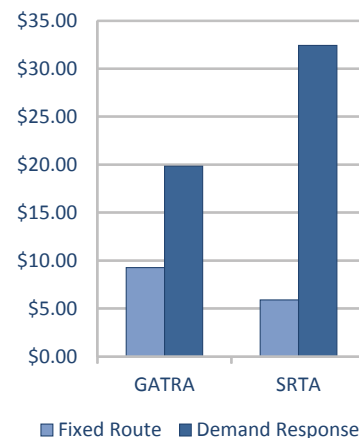
While urban bus routes have become less effective due to the pattern of development, traditional transit schedules are also less effective due to the types of jobs leading the regional economy: health care and retail. These jobs frequently involve evening or weekend hours, as well as rotating schedules that change every week. Yet, fixed route services have retained their traditional schedules of approximately 6:00AM to 6:00PM, with less frequent service on Saturdays, no service on Sundays or holidays and no service in the evenings.

In order to expand hours and days of operation, transit authorities would have to reduce service during the days and hours of current operation. GATRA bus routes now operate with one hour frequency; to run any less frequently would negate the value of having a fixed route service. SRTA service currently operates with frequencies varying from 20 minutes to one hour. Reducing frequency of service and increasing wait times between buses during the current hours of operation in order to extend hours of service is an option, but it would make the bus a less attractive choice at all times and may result in less ridership.

Increasing Demand for Alternatives to Driving

2001 was the first year in the automobile's existence that the relative cost of vehicle ownership as a percentage of the average household income increased, and that trend has continued as wages level off but the cost of insurance, fuel, and taxes on the automobile continue to rise.¹ The American Automobile

Figure 9-11: Average Cost of Fixed Route and Demand Response Trips



If the transit authority serves the demands of its customers, it means that bus routes must extend to the new development, adding miles and minutes to existing routes, without any mechanism that gives added compensation to the transit authority; this lack of coordination between land use and transit is financially unsustainable.

Association estimates the 2010 annual cost of driving a medium sedan 15,000 miles per year is \$9,519.² In 2009, U. S. car ownership declined for the first time ever, from 250 million to 246 million. Some factors contributing to this trend include the economic recession, congestion, increased costs of driving, more alternatives to driving available and volatile gas prices. With the present economic uncertainty, households are less likely to maintain one car for every driver.

Housing costs that are lower than in the Boston metropolitan area, are offset by higher transportation costs. An Urban Land Institute study calculated a three-year average of annual housing and transportation costs (2006-2008) as a percentage of annual household income for various sub-regions of Massachusetts.³ According to this study, Taunton area average annual transportation costs were 21% of average annual income for a combined housing and transportation cost equal to 54% of income. In the South Coast sub-region, transportation costs were 26% of income, for a combined housing plus transportation cost equal to 62% of income. In comparison, combined housing and transportation costs were 51% of income in the Route 128 sub-region and 48% of income in the Metro West subregion. Most households in the region that can access commuter rail or bus must do so by driving, requiring households that commute by transit to maintain a car that sits in a commuter lot five days a week. By planning for local transit connections to commuter services and creating neighborhoods within walking distance of transit stations, households may be able to own one less automobile, saving money while reducing VMT and carbon emissions. (See Chapter 16 - Environmental Coordination and Climate Change for more details.)

Addressing climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions are key goals of transportation policy at both the federal and state government levels. The transportation sector is the source of nearly 30% of all greenhouse gas emissions (GHGE). The federal DOT's livability initiative aims to reduce GHGE by reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Addressing climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions are key goals of transportation policy at both the federal and state government levels. The transportation sector is the source of nearly 30% of all greenhouse gas emissions (GHGE). The federal DOT's livability initiative aims to reduce GHGE by reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Federal grant programs and technical assistance support livability and sustainability principles, including GHGE reductions. Massachusetts has adopted the 2008 Climate Protection and Green Economy Act, known as the Global Warming Solutions Act. This law sets required targets for Massachusetts to reduce its GHGE.

Tangential to creating more transit alternatives is an effort to making transit more "green" in terms of fuel emissions and efficiency. MassDOT is working with the Regional Transit Authorities to implement a program to retrofit RTA transit buses with emission control devices, as part of the GreenDOT policy initiative. MassDOT's GreenDOT sustainability initiative has three goals: reduce greenhouse gas emissions; promote the healthy transportation modes of walking, bicycling, and public transit; and, support smart growth development.

MassDOT's Project Development and Design Guidelines for roadway projects adopts a "Complete Streets" design philosophy. Complete Streets are streets that are designed and operated not just for the safe passage of cars and trucks—but for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets design is a requirement for recipients of state discretionary funds (e.g., Public Works Economic Development or Transit Oriented Development Bond Programs) and access permits. Building roads as complete transportation corridors improves the ability to walk, bicycle and use

transit, with the benefits of improving public health, lowering transportation costs, reducing use of fossil fuels, increasing capacity, making mobility more equitable and reversing the negative effects of climate change.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recognizes the link between how people get around and health. Supporting healthy communities and active living is a key in reducing chronic diseases. For that reason, the CDC supports strategies that:

- encourage healthy community design;
- support active transportation infrastructure to allow safe and convenient opportunities for walking and bicycling;
- reduce exposure to air pollution and associated adverse health impacts;
- reduce injuries associated with motor vehicle crashes; and,
- provide alternatives to automobile travel so that vulnerable populations have equitable access to jobs, health care, social interaction, and healthy foods.⁴

These same recommendations are offered by a variety of constituencies for the following reasons:

- they help to remove transportation as a barrier to employment for people with disabilities;
- they result in more sustainable practices, thereby reducing environmental impacts;
- they provide an alternative for seniors impacted by the new senior driving law; and,
- they reduce the economic burden of low and middle-income households.

Inadequate Funding System for Transit

Current service levels of transit are inadequate to serve most jobs in the region, and they are certainly inadequate to attract people who have the choice to drive or use transit. If someone misses the bus to work, they may have to wait a whole hour for the next one; and trying to catch the train by using the bus is improbable. There are needs for transit to serve more locations and to expand the hours of operation. Also, some areas experience summer tourism seasons, during which it would be beneficial to provide transportation services as part of an economic development strategy. Current funding levels do not allow such increases without erosion of existing services and/or fare increases—both of which cause a downward cycle of loss in ridership and decreased fare revenues, which further erode levels of service.

If transit is to be part of the solution for reducing GHGE, as well as creating livable communities and equitable mobility, there must be a greater policy priority to provide minimum levels of transit service, based on geographic characteristics. In June 2005, the Massachusetts Association of Regional Transit Authorities (MARTA) prepared a Five-Year Transit Service and Capital Plan for regional transit in the State. The MARTA Plan identified policy levels of transit service for urban, suburban, rural, seasonal and paratransit characteristics, including hours and days of operation and peak hour levels of service. It also recommended that RTAs become forward funded to avoid incurring interest costs from borrowing that could be better spent on service on the street. In

Building roads as complete transportation corridors improves the ability to walk, bicycle and use transit, with the benefits of improving public health, lowering transportation costs, reducing use of fossil fuels, increasing capacity, making mobility more equitable and reversing the negative effects of climate change.

addition, it called for a stable source of revenue so that RTAs can provide stable levels of service rather than making changes to adjust to actual funding levels, as occurs with the current practice of retroactive reimbursement.

Technology Improvements

The increased availability and use of technology is having an impact on travel choices. Google Transit and trip planning, smart phones with their applications, and real-time vehicle information for passengers increases the convenience and awareness of transit services. The ability to work and communicate with others while using transit, as opposed to driving, is attractive and convenient for some people. The ability to know when the next transit vehicle is arriving removes the user's anxiety and reduces wait time. The increased law enforcement against texting and distracted driving may be a way to market the use of transit. (See Figure 9-12)

Figure 9-12: GATRA Marketing



Technological advances also have improved transit operations by sometimes allowing more efficient scheduling and dispatching and the implementation of more flexible services. Conversely, the cost and complexity of a technological function may not justify its use in a transit system serving small urban and suburban areas.

Technology can also provide better information to travelers and increase options through ride matching. Currently, MassRides provides ride matching for carpools and van pools, primarily for commuters to Boston.

9.6

Recommendations

- 9-1: The Commonwealth's Transportation reforms of 2009 have provided some relief to how Regional Transit Authorities operate; however, what is still needed is a dedicated source of funding and/or a longer term funding guarantee. RTAs need to plan for and sustain stable operations, rather than reacting to annual budgets as they become known. An increase in funding may not be realistic at this date due to economic conditions, but a dedicated funding source would provide a steady flow of funds to help ensure that existing levels of transit would not be further eroded. A dedicated funding source for transit would support the GreenDOT Policy Directive and goal of reducing GHGE, and it would recognize that transit benefits are realized not only by riders, but also by drivers and society at large.
- 9-2: In order to adequately meet the needs of the labor force, transit levels of service must increase, both in hours of operation and frequency. In the Smart Growth scenario, there will be increased development around transit stations, in Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and along transit corridors that will help to support and justify increased levels of transit in these areas. Service frequency in GATRA is one hour, which is not adequate to serve as employment transportation for most people. Service in both GATRA and SRTA effectively stops operating at 6:00PM and there is no service on Sundays or on holidays, yet, that is when many people work at retail, service and healthcare jobs. Operating hours for urban fixed

routes should be increased to allow them to work as feeder shuttles to commuter bus and rail stops; these services should run frequently at peak commuting times to allow convenient connections and to accommodate periodic changes to the commuter service schedules. In some areas, feeder shuttles would be implemented exclusively as commuter services with schedules coordinated to make connections. Current transit service levels in the region (hours and days of operation, frequency) are inadequate to meet most employment and other needs. Minimum transit levels of service, as discussed in the MARTA 2005 report should be a policy priority as part of the effort to reduce GHGE.

- 9-3: With or without rail service, new intermodal transfer centers are needed in order to increase the effectiveness and connectivity of existing transit. Currently, local and intercity buses pick up and drop off passengers on the side of roads, in desolate parking lots and in front of stores. There are no passenger amenities and safety is a concern. There is limited opportunity to make connections between transit routes because these locations are not designed to accommodate multiple transit vehicles. Current identified needs for transfer facilities exist in Wareham, Plymouth, North Attleborough, and Dartmouth. The South Coast Rail project will require rail and bus intermodal centers in Fall River, New Bedford and Taunton.
- 9-4: Plans for transit service improvements around existing and proposed transit oriented development and growth in PDAs and along transit corridors should start now in order to encourage more efficient use of transit and land use resources. Indeed, areas for TODs and PDAs are now being identified and zoned by some local communities. Supporting the recommendations of the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan regarding Priority Protection and Priority Development Areas will support regional transit and make it more effective. Transit services must be prepared to accommodate these areas in the future.
- 9-5: Pursue cooperative arrangements between RTAs and other institutions, employers and agencies that produce “win-win” results. One example of this is through an arrangement of “unlimited access” (such as that currently provided to Wheaton College students, faculty and staff), which exists between public transit agencies and many colleges and universities in the United States. The school typically pays the transit agency an annual lump sum based on expected student ridership. University students, faculty and staff board the bus for free by showing their university identification and are allowed unlimited rides. Benefits to a university include: reduced parking demand, increased access to campus, improved recruitment and retention of students, and reduced cost of attending college. Transit agency benefits include: increased ridership, operating revenues and reduced operating cost per rider. Other partnerships could involve bulk purchase of passes for clients, joint promotional campaigns and use of the commuter tax benefit.
- 9-6: As a means of improving connectivity, seek opportunities to secure unused or under used parking spaces, or opportunities for shared use parking. Identify and secure satellite parking lots, where transit vehicles can provide peak hour shuttle connections to commuter transit services for employment shuttle services and ridesharing. Satellite parking areas with

frequent shuttle connections to the public transportation system could also be used in the future by people who want to keep a car, but who don't need it for daily travel, (e.g., college students, urban center residents, commuters and tourists). MassDOT is considering lease agreements for shared use Park & Rides at retail centers or locations with large parking capacities. Property owners would be responsible for maintenance including lighting, plowing and pavement markings. MassDOT would provide signage. Estimated annual lease costs for a minimum of fifty spaces is \$10,000. See Chapter 4, Travel Patterns, for more information.

- 9-7: Plan for and acquire new or updated intelligent transportation system (ITS) technologies including GIS; AVL; traveler information in public places; Google Transit; trip planning; real-time scheduling; smart customer payment systems; automatic passenger counters; and technologies that improve travel options. Pursue signal pre-emption technology for transit vehicles in conjunction with emergency departments on congested corridors in order to improve schedule performance.
- 9-8: Continue to work on interoperability issues between the MBTA and other transportation providers to allow one farecard for all transportation services, including parking and shared vehicle rentals.
- 9-9: Purchase and retrofit facilities, vehicles and equipment to run cleaner and more fuel efficiently. Develop an intern program with colleges, universities and high schools to retrofit existing fleets/vehicles to use biodiesel or other clean fuel; retrofit fleets with filters to reduce air pollution. Purchase vehicles that use less fuel and cleaner fuel that produces fewer emissions.
- 9-10: Encourage the movement of demand-response riders to fixed route buses, where practical, for transportation cost savings. Moving passengers from demand response to fixed route is a more efficient use of RTA transportation resources. Demand response vehicles are freed up to do more trips that require more specialized attention. State and local agencies should provide incentives to support travel training and peer training for their clients.
- 9-11: Implement and upgrade security features including transit facility design, lighting, cameras, communication equipment, security personnel, and onboard equipment.
- 9-12: Identify best practices for passenger amenities including bus shelters, landscaping, signage and accessibility improvements. Identify sites and plan implementation of these enhancements.
- 9-13: Develop a coordinated Mobility Management Plan for the region. GATRA's plan includes the creation of a one-stop transportation information online resource and call center to provide customer information on all modes and how to make connections. GATRA will also provide travel training and education, marketing and promotion about available services. A similar effort, coordinated with GATRA, should be planned in the SRTA service area. SRPEDD supports a coordinated approach to mobility management that includes ITS, enhanced customer information,

planning and implementation of coordinated services between agencies, land use planning that supports transit and pedestrian uses, support for coordination policy committees, planning and implementation of ridesharing and flexible transit service models, and other activities that support increasing the efficiency of transportation services in order to meet more needs for more people. SRPEDD should continue to work with the Southeastern Massachusetts Transportation Alliance to implement low-cost coordination solutions to address identified needs and seek funding to support a regional Transportation Coordinator for all mobility management efforts.

- 9-14: Improve pedestrian and bicycle access to transit stations and key bus stops. Promote bikes on buses, including secure parking and other facilities for bicycles and cyclists at public transportation stops or stations. The FTA's proposed policy statement on the eligibility of pedestrian and bicycle improvements applies a one-half mile catchment area for pedestrians and a three mile catchment area for bicyclists for projects that are functionally related from public transportation stops and stations.⁵ Bicycle access and parking should be provided at major employment centers, colleges, schools, parks, shopping centers and recreational facilities.
- 9-15: At the municipal level, cities and towns should adopt and enforce a "Complete Streets" policy with design standards for roads, new developments and parking. Maintain the State's design standards on state roads that accommodate different users, including transit, bicycles and pedestrians. Study parking needs and seek shared parking opportunities. Where transit exists, reduce parking requirements and improve pedestrian networks to transit and key destinations. The goal is to plan for access by more than just automobiles. Incorporate direct path access roads that are designed for transit vehicles to go between development projects. This should be a required element for commercial areas as they develop and re-develop. Encourage more intense development around transit nodes and along corridors.
- 9-16: Incorporate travel training, taxi vouchers, and bus passes for income-eligible persons into Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs in those communities that receive CDBG funding.
- 9-17: Consideration of all transportation modes must become part of all planning and development decisions, and not an afterthought, once the site plan is drawn. Encourage developers to incorporate walkable, accessible, transit-friendly design and amenities in their projects. The Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) should require developers to consult regional transit authorities and regional planners prior to drawing site plans. There should also be stronger enforcement of Section 61 findings (M.G.L., Chapter 30, section 61 of MEPA regulations). Current travel demand management strategies promised by project proponents are seldom implemented. Add tangible mitigation requirements such as providing operating funds to transit, purchasing transit passes for employees or customers, or other supportive actions when a transit system is asked to serve the development.

- 9-18: Support federal transportation changes that allow flexible and adequate funding for RTAs based on their needs for capital or operating assistance. The current law requires RTAs located in urbanized areas of more than 200,000 population, based on U.S. Census designations, to spend federal formula funding for transit on capital expenses only. In the 2000 U. S. Census, GATRA lost all federal operating funding when Taunton became part of the Boston urbanized area. In 2010, SRTA will also lose flexibility to spend federal dollars on operating costs as New Bedford becomes part of the Providence urbanized area. While capital funding is needed to provide an adequate vehicle fleet, transit authorities in small urban areas struggle to find operating funds for drivers for those vehicles.
- 9-19: Reduce the burden of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) requirements upon public transit authorities, which are already highly regulated by the Federal Transit Administration. FMCSA requirements present a regulatory and financial barrier for Rhode Island Public Transit Authority vehicles crossing the Massachusetts State line. The 2000 U.S. Census journey-to-work data is an indication of the amount of cross-border travel, although residents on either side also frequently travel back and forth for shopping, medical and other purposes. Half of the labor force in Seekonk works in Rhode Island, along with 32% of Rehoboth, 14% of Attleboro, and 10% of North Attleborough workers. Also, 10% of Fall River, 12% of Somerset, 23% of Swansea, and 11% of Westport workers work in Providence.

9.7

Study Needs

1. Develop local criteria for transit service to evaluate service performance and to prioritize needs. Identify access to jobs projects that have the most potential benefit. Review fixed routes with low performance measures and determine if hours of operation can be used more productively.
2. Analyze the costs and benefits of additional light maintenance and storage facilities for GATRA. GATRA currently performs all major maintenance at one facility in Taunton. As GATRA's geography has grown, it is necessary to analyze the costs and benefits of a second facility as well as other options in vehicle maintenance and storage.
3. Inventory existing vehicle fleets and transportation expenditures in the region (public, private and non-profit) in order to coordinate the use of existing transportation resources through cooperative agreements. Study opportunities for coordinating efforts and sharing existing resources in order to save costs and/or improve availability of services for a greater number of people.
4. Study locations for bike and pedestrian improvements relative to transit stations and key stops.
5. Create an inventory of bus stop needs including accessibility, passenger information, security and other enhancements. Prioritize locations needing improvements.

6. Identify potential Transportation Management Areas and investigate interest and available funding for their establishment.
7. Collect data and draft a plan for emergency evacuation of vulnerable populations using public and private transportation vehicles.
8. Look for areas where capacity may exist in the long-term future for alternative modes for passenger and freight transport, i.e. highway medians, roadway ROWs, utility lines, inland rivers and their former ports.
9. Identify where fixed routes can be modified to serve frequent demand response trips.
10. Study the ways in which local transit can best make connections to proposed TOD sites and intermodal centers.

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