

BOSTON REGION
METROPOLITAN
PLANNING
ORGANIZATION

**2023 COORDINATED
PUBLIC TRANSIT—
HUMAN SERVICES
TRANSPORTATION
PLAN**

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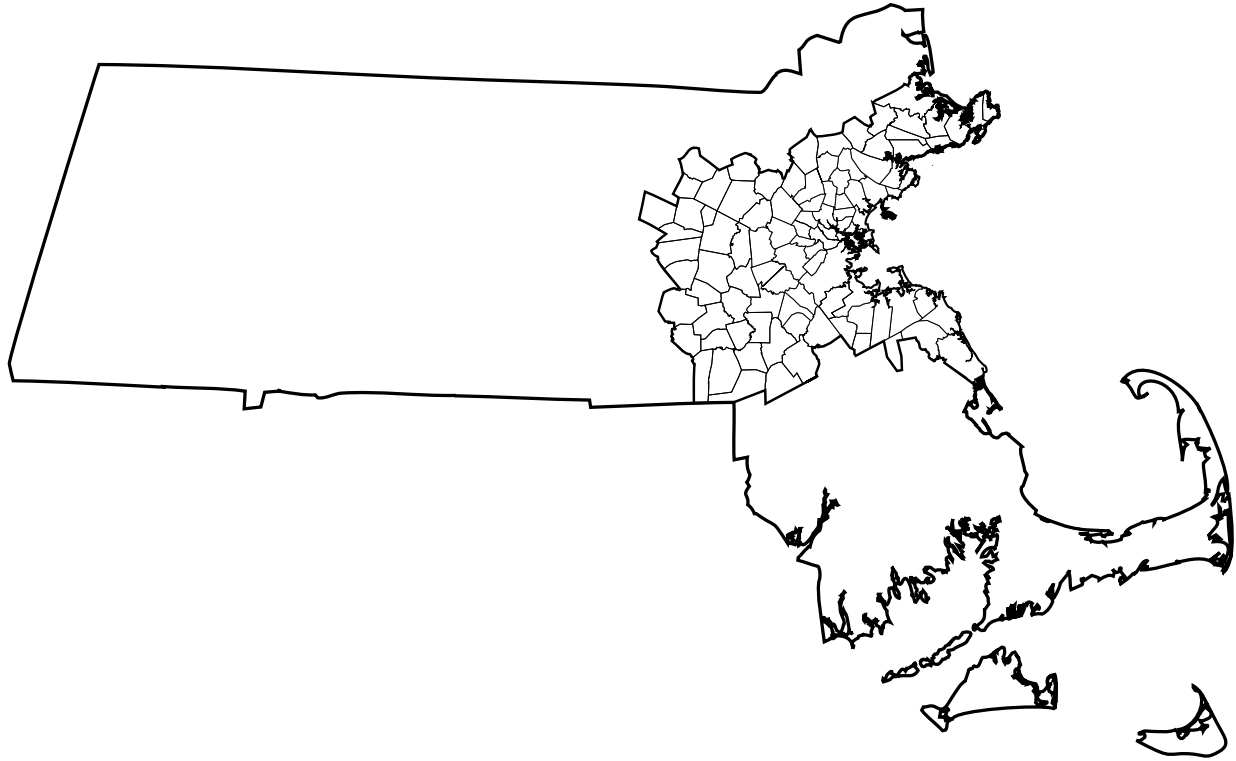
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ABSTRACT



The Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan) documents the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area’s current transportation providers; unmet transportation needs for seniors (people ages 65 years old and older) and people with disabilities; strategies and actions to meet the unmet needs; and priorities for implementation. The primary purpose of the Coordinated Plan is to improve coordination among transit agencies and other transportation providers to better serve the transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities. The Coordinated Plan accomplishes this by setting regional priorities for transportation investments and initiatives for human services and public transit coordination.

In addition, the Coordinated Plan guides organizations in the region to develop proposals that are eligible to receive funding from the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) [Section 5310 program, Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program](#). This program provides capital and operations assistance for services that improve mobility for seniors and people with disabilities. In Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation manages the application process for the Section 5310 program, under the [Community Transit Grant Program](#) (CTGP). Per FTA guidance, the MPO’s Coordinated Plan is updated every four years in concert with the Long-Range Transportation Plan. Since this 2023 update is considered in effect at the beginning of fiscal year 2024, it can be used by CTGP applicants starting in the state fiscal year 2025 application cycle.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABOUT THE COORDINATED PLAN



The primary purpose of the Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan) is to improve coordination among transportation providers to better meet the transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities. It guides applicants in the Boston region in developing their proposals for the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Section 5310, *Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program*. In Massachusetts this program is known as the *Community Transit Grant Program* (CTGP). The CTGP provides funding for projects that meet the transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities when existing transportation services are unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meet these needs.

As the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Boston area regional planning association, the Boston Region MPO develops the Coordinated Plan for the 97 municipalities within its region. Figure ES-1 shows the municipalities within the MPO region.

FIGURE ES-1
MUNICIPALITIES IN THE BOSTON REGION MPO



BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION MUNICIPALITIES

APPLYING FOR THE COMMUNITY TRANSIT GRANT PROGRAM

In Massachusetts, the state Department of Transportation manages the application process for the CTGP, which is a competitive grant program with an annual application process. Organizations eligible to apply for CTGP funding include local government, private nonprofit organizations, and public transit operators—the Massachusetts Department of Transportation may also use 5310 funding to administer and implement state-prioritized projects. This 2023 update to the Coordinated Plan replaces the MPO's 2019 Coordinated Plan and should be referred to in CTGP applications beginning with the state fiscal year 2025 application cycle.

To be considered for CTGP funding, projects located within the MPO region must address a transportation need, strategy, or action identified in chapter four of this Coordinated Plan. Table ES-2 (Table 4-2 in chapter 4 in the main document) lists the human service transit needs for the region, as well as strategies and actions to meet those needs; a proposed project that addresses the needs, strategies, or actions that would be considered “included” in the Coordinated Plan. Given the large and diverse nature of the Boston region, the transportation needs, strategies, and actions described in this Coordinated Plan are broad in order to elicit a range of project proposals that are likely to address unmet human service transportation needs.

Projects eligible for the CTGP include both traditional capital projects and nontraditional projects. Traditional capital projects include the purchase or lease of vehicles for human service transportation that are carried out to meet the special transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities when public transit is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable, as well as support facilities like benches and shelters. Nontraditional projects can include volunteer driver programs, wayfinding, and travel training, among others.

EXISTING PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICES

There are a wide variety of public transit services in the Boston region, which can be explored in more detail in this interactive [web map](#). These include

- Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority;
- regional transit authorities;
- Massachusetts Port Authority;
- transportation management associations;
- private, nonprofit services, such as those run by hospitals and universities;
- long-distance transportation providers, such as Amtrak and Peter Pan;
- municipal services; and
- volunteer driver programs.

Public transit—both human service transportation and transit that serves the general population—in the Boston region can often be disconnected, especially outside of the immediate Boston area. Services are run by many different transit providers, with their own fares, eligibility requirements, and service areas. These may or may not be coordinated with other providers with adjacent services, sometimes leading to long wait times, high fares, or simply the inability to reach a particular part of the region at all by public transit. These challenges are magnified in towns further from Boston, as the public transit network is more limited in these areas, despite the often many seniors and people with disabilities who live there. Improved coordination of services and closing the gaps in existing services, through funding such as the CTGP, is critical for addressing the unmet human service transportation needs in the Boston region.

BOSTON REGION DEMOGRAPHICS

Understanding current and future demographics of seniors and people with disabilities helps identify gaps in services and communities where transportation needs may be highest. In the Boston MPO Region, 16 percent of people are 65 or older, while 10 percent have a disability. There is significant overlap between these populations: nearly 50 percent of seniors have a disability. These populations are expected to increase in the coming decades—demographic projections from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute suggest that by 2050, about 20 percent of the population will be aged 65 or older. This is a 37 percent increase over the 2020 population, compared to a 10 percent increase for the total population in the MPO region. While demographic projections for people with disabilities are not available, it is reasonable to assume that this population will increase as the senior population does so.

IDENTIFYING UNMET TRANSPORTATION NEEDS, STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THEM, AND PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

To help identify unmet human service transportation needs, MPO staff conducted extensive public engagement to get input from seniors and people with disabilities, people who work with these populations, and human service transportation providers. Staff used this input to then develop strategies and actions that transportation providers in the region could undertake to address these needs and identified those that might be priorities for the Boston region.

Public engagement was conducted concurrently with engagement for the development of the MPO's 2023 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Destination 2050*, during which staff collected input about transportation needs and priorities in the region. Most engagement activities during the development of the LRTP and the Coordinated Plan between 2019 and 2023 were conducted virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

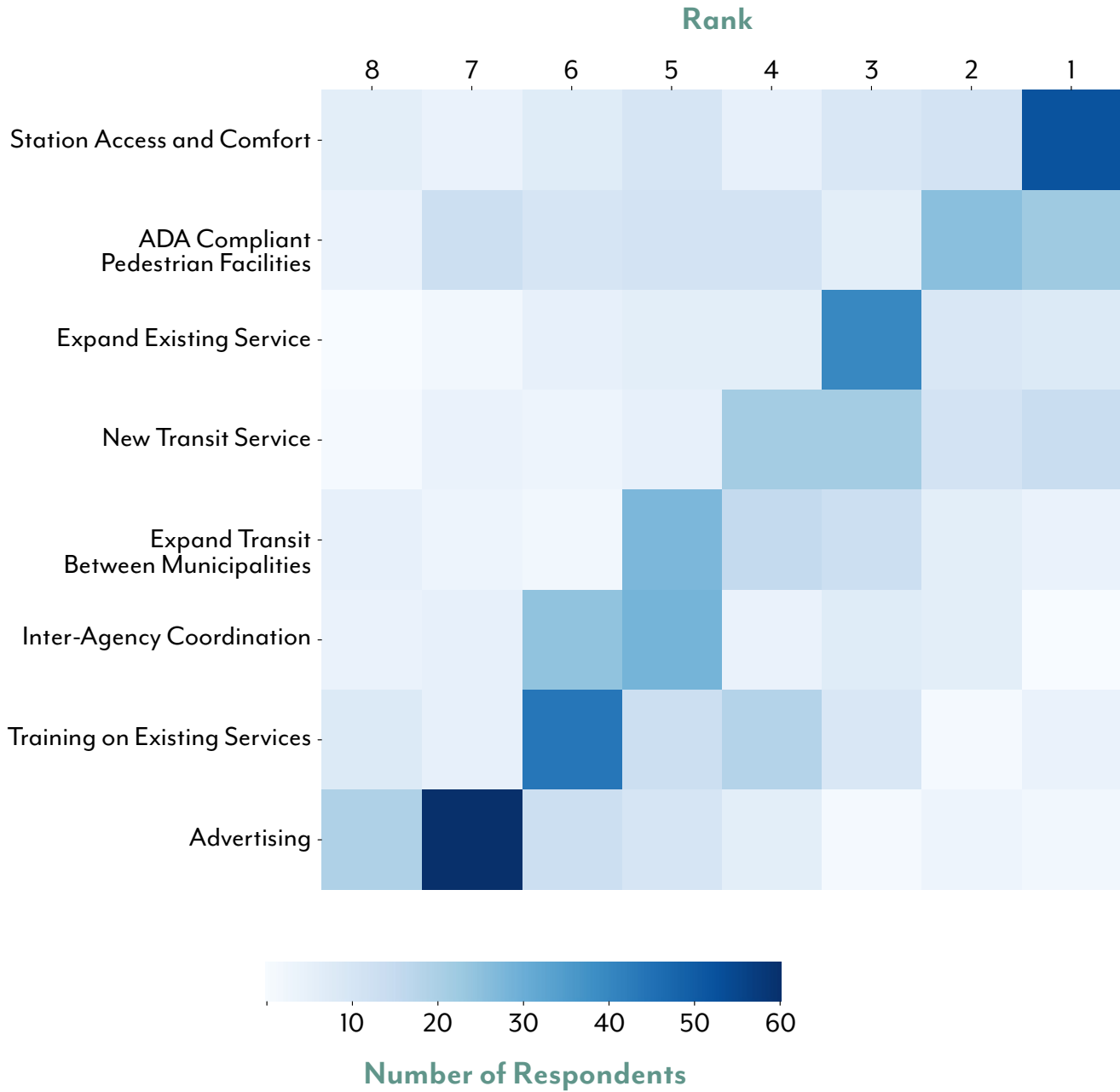
Staff also conducted several engagement activities focused directly on the Coordinated Plan to collect input. These included meetings with Regional Coordinating Councils; discussions focused on human service transportation needs with the MPO's Transit Working Group and Advisory Council; a human service transportation coordination workshop with councils on aging, disability commissions, and transit providers; and a survey about human service transportation needs.

The survey—which was distributed to organizations that work with seniors and people with disabilities, human service transportation providers, and the general public, with a focus on getting input from these populations—was conducted in spring of 2023. Respondents were asked to identify their top human service transportation needs and select the top strategies that would help meet those needs. This was asked across four categories: infrastructure, public transit, coordination, and education improvements. The four most commonly selected strategies were

- Provide training opportunities for older adults and people with disabilities to learn which transportation services are available and how to use them (32.7 percent)
- Improve accessibility and comfort at transit stations and stops (with features such as high-level platforms, elevators, escalators, benches, and bus stop shelters) (31.5 percent)
- Ensure that sidewalks and street crossings adjacent to public transit stations and stops are safe and ADA-compliant (30.0 percent)
- Develop collaborations and partnerships between transit service providers, including rideshare companies, to more efficiently meet common needs (29.0 percent)

Respondents were then asked to rank their selected strategies from highest to lowest priority. The two most frequently selected strategies from each category are shown in Figure ES-2—the darkest blue indicates when a strategy was most frequently ranked in that category.

FIGURE ES-2
RANKING OF STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE HUMAN SERVICES
TRANSPORTATION



ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act.

FINDINGS FROM PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: NEEDS AND STRATEGIES

Transportation needs and strategies and actions to address them that were identified through public engagement were grouped into the following topic areas:

- **Transportation Service Improvements:** expansion, maintenance, and overall improvements of public transit services (including new routes, increased frequency, and expanded operating hours)
- **Infrastructure Improvements:** maintaining existing or constructing new transportation infrastructure
- **Vehicle Improvements:** improving vehicle accessibility
- **Public Engagement and Education:** involvement and education of members of the public on transportation services
- **Inter-Agency Coordination:** coordination between transportation providers
- **Housing:** consideration of coordinating housing with transportation improvements to provide greater access to human service transportation
- **Operating Challenges:** improvements in the operation of human service transportation, including customer service, funding, and scheduling
- **Eligibility:** eligibility requirements for human service transportation
- **Affordability:** out-of-pocket costs of human service transportation

Table ES-1 shows the needs, strategies, actions, and resources to support them by topic area.

TABLE ES-1
UNMET HUMAN SERVICE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AND STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THEM

Topic Area	Unmet Needs	Strategies and Actions
Transportation Service Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver shortage • Service hours during evenings and weekends • Reliability and functionality of paratransit • More access to public transportation • On-demand service expansion • Services limited by geography and destinations • First- and last-mile connections to larger transportation hubs • Service availability for social and/or non-medical trips • Return trips for medical appointments • Transit service to connect municipalities without traveling Boston • Short-notice trips • Greater frequency of fixed-route services • Lack of flexibility and reliability • Regional disparities in service • Restrooms and personal care facilities at public transit stations • Services that accommodate an aging population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase capacity of paratransit system • Support first- and last-mile projects • Improve accessibility of public transit to reduce the demand for The RIDE and similar services • Merge existing services for seniors and people with disabilities • Prioritize investments in public transportation improvements over private services • Expanded COA shuttle services • Provide dedicated, non-medical transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities • Prioritize improvements that serve seniors and people with disabilities • Peer organizations build partnerships • Build transit stops near senior housing • Merge existing, redundant services • Community-based transportation service from places of residences to community centers • Add more transit stops by senior centers, senior housing, and medical centers • Pursue public-private partnerships to provide on-call transportation for same-day transportation needs • Mapping the existing regional human service transportation network to identify gaps • Offer education sessions or materials to outline resources to human service transportation users • Install electronic next bus signs for real-time service updates • Increase rolling stock for human service transportation services • Utilize COA vans for transportation services with increased eligibility • Provide regular training and check-ins with volunteer networks

(Table ES-1 cont.)

Topic Area	Unmet Needs	Strategies and Actions
Infrastructure Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected, well-maintained, ADA-accessible sidewalk network • Maintenance of sidewalks and street crossings during inclement weather events • Amenities at bus stops and transit stations, such as lighting, benches, or shelters, as well as accessibility infrastructure, such as ramps¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce gaps in sidewalk network in proximity to public transportation stops and stations • Ensure stations and stops meet ADA requirements • Remove debris on sidewalks and transit stops during inclement weather events • Design new stations and do renovations that include high-level platforms
Vehicle Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space in vehicles to allow for personal care attendant, service animal, and/or other escort • Insufficient rolling stock • Amenities on public transportation vehicles to accommodate mobility devices and accessible seating • Simple signage and information system on vehicle interior and exterior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share vehicles across municipal boundaries • Improve suspension on paratransit vehicles to reduce passenger injuries • Purchase additional paratransit vehicles • Contract with ambulances to assist with transportation • Assign more space on public transit vehicles specifically for seniors and people with disabilities
Public Engagement and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and training on existing services, including fixed-route and on-demand services • Access to services without smartphone technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate seniors and people with disabilities about available transportation options • Advertising campaigns • Maintain communications that don't rely on smart phone technology • Include human service transportation users in the transportation planning and design process • Budget to include community engagement in implementation and operation costs • Provide training to help adult drivers transition from car-use to public transit
Inter-Agency Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities, particularly outside of the Inner Core, with little to no RTA service • Long transfer times across municipal and RTA boundaries • Turnover in implementing agencies results in a need for succession planning and the retention of institutional knowledge • Difficult to coordinate longer trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate services across municipal boundaries • Expand community transit options • Build partnerships with RTAs, COAs, and other community partners • Develop regional coordination between paratransit providers • Share best practices and lessons learned with peer agencies • Merge human service transportation programs and reimburse expenses based on usage • Contract with RTAs for vans and other resources • Coordinate with school bus companies to share pool of drivers • Develop efficient transfer points between RTAs • Create a unified dispatch center to increase the options available to passengers • Integrate scheduling and fare structures

(Table ES-1 cont.)

Topic Area	Unmet Needs	Strategies and Actions
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car-dependent senior housing developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in walkable and livable communities • Construct senior housing developments near transit stations • Connect transit service to existing developments
Operating Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver shortages • Policies to protect the increased vulnerability to viral and/or airborne diseases of human service transportation passengers • Well-trained dispatch service • Door-to-door transportation • Communication with passengers with limited English proficiency • Communication of delays • Long sign-up process • Insufficient funding to meet all needs • High start-up cost to services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve driver recruitment, training, and retention efforts • Streamline TNC same-day/on-demand services • Utilize innovative financing options (for example, partnering with private companies, such as insurance companies, to pay for medical trips) • Advocate for additional funding availability to legislature and other decision-makers • Increase municipal partnerships with The RIDE and other paratransit services • Include vehicle operators in the transportation planning process • Include vehicle operators in human service transportation user forums, such as the Riders' Transportation Access Group • Translate signage into multiple languages and/or utilize visual communication methods to accommodate individuals with LEP • Expand volunteer driver programs • Coordinate with other municipalities or agencies to jointly apply for funding
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service gaps from human service transportation programs limited to certain groups of people • Expanding human service transportation qualification for people with hidden disabilities or short-term disabilities • Non-emergency medical transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate human service transportation services and remove eligibility barriers • Expand rider eligibility requirements on existing services
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost of on-demand transportation services • High cost of fixed-route rapid transit and commuter rail services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use existing municipal support channels to facilitate reduced fare distribution and education • Free, reduced fare, or voucher programs • Subsidize private, on-demand service trips for older adults and people with disabilities

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act. COA = councils on aging. LEP = limited English proficiency. RTA = regional transit agency. TNC = transportation network company.

¹ While funding of benches and shelters are allowed under federal 5310 guidelines, as a practice, it is not part of the state Community Transit Grant Program. Other funding opportunities that may support these are listed in table 4-3 or may seek support from their regional transit authority.

FINDINGS FROM PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

While this Coordinated Plan does not attempt to dictate which strategies and actions should receive funding, it does describe priorities for the Boston region based on how frequently needs were identified during the public engagement process to support the development of applications for CTGP. More than one-half of all comments received spoke of transportation service improvements, with the next most common topic areas infrastructure improvements and inter-agency coordination. Some of the key takeaways from this input include

- **Coordinating public transit services.** Human service transportation users report the challenge of long, inconvenient transfer times, especially outside of Boston and immediately surrounding communities. In addition, current services have a variety of eligibility requirements and service areas, which result in the creation of service gaps.
- **Improving and maintaining transportation accessibility.** Many respondents noted inaccessible sidewalks near transit stations, blocked pedestrian facilities during inclement weather events, and limited accessible space on vehicles. Improving the accessibility of general public transit can help to alleviate the demand of paratransit and other human service transportation-specific offerings.
- **Expanding service.** Respondents indicated a desire for human service transportation services to operate throughout the evening and weekends. In addition, respondents spoke of difficulty accessing medical services in different municipalities than the one in which they reside.
- **Improving the customer experience.** A recurring theme from engagement is the need to improve driver training and retention strategies, include human service transportation users in planning processes, and create a centralized roster of available services. Respondents spoke of the vulnerability of human service transportation users and advocated expanding driver training to best support seniors and people with disabilities.

This Coordinated Plan updates and replaces the Boston Region MPO's 2019 Coordinated Plan starting with the state fiscal year 2025 CTGP grant cycle. This document will be updated again in four years in concert with the Boston MPO's next planned LRTP update, per federal guidance.

CHAPTER 1

ABOUT THE COORDINATED PLAN



The primary purpose of the Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan) is to improve coordination among Boston region transportation providers to better meet the transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities. It guides applicants in the Boston region in developing their proposals for the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Section 5310, *Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program*. In Massachusetts this program is known as the *Community Transit Grant Program* (CTGP).

APPLYING FOR THE COMMUNITY TRANSIT GRANT PROGRAM (SECTION 5310)

The CTGP provides funding for projects that meet the transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities when existing transportation services are unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meet these needs. In Massachusetts, the Department of Transportation manages the application process for the CTGP, which is a competitive grant program with an annual application process. Organizations eligible to apply for CTGP funding include states, local government, private nonprofit organizations, and public transit operators.

COORDINATED PLAN REQUIREMENTS

For Boston area projects to be considered for CTGP funding, they must address a transportation need, strategy, or action identified in chapter four of this Coordinated Plan. Table 4-2 (in chapter 4) lists the human service transportation needs for the region, as well as strategies and actions to meet those needs; a proposed project that addresses any of the needs, strategies, and actions identified in that table would be considered to be “included” in the Coordinated Plan. Given the large and diverse nature of the Boston region, the transportation needs, strategies, and actions described in this Coordinated Plan are broad in order to elicit a range of project proposals that are likely to improve unmet human service transportation needs. This 2023 update to the Coordinated Plan replaces the MPO’s 2019 Coordinated Plan and should be referred to in CTGP applications beginning with the state fiscal year 2025 application cycle.

In Massachusetts, the MPOs are responsible for developing the Coordinated Plan for their region. The Boston Region MPO develops the Coordinated Plan for the 97 municipalities within its region. Figure 1-1 shows the municipalities within the MPO region.

FIGURE I-1
MUNICIPALITIES IN THE BOSTON REGION MPO



BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION MUNICIPALITIES

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Projects eligible for the CTGP include both traditional capital projects and nontraditional projects. The FTA defines traditional capital projects as those planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities when public transit is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable. Nontraditional projects are those that exceed transportation services required under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); improve access to fixed-route service and decrease reliance on ADA-complementary paratransit service by people with disabilities; or provide alternatives to public transit that assists seniors and people with disabilities with transportation.

FTA guidance provides some examples of eligible traditional and nontraditional projects:

- Traditional capital projects
 - Passenger vehicles
 - Passenger facilities such as the purchase and installation of benches and shelters
 - Support facilities and equipment, such as computer hardware, dispatch systems, and fare collection systems
 - Lease of equipment when a lease is more cost-effective than a purchase
 - Acquisition of transportation services under a contract, lease, or other arrangement
 - Mobility management and coordination programs among public transit providers
 - Capital activities to support ADA-complementary paratransit service, if the service is provided by an eligible recipient or subrecipient
- Nontraditional projects
 - Travel training for passengers
 - Volunteer driver programs
 - Accessibility improvements to transit stations beyond those required
 - Wayfinding improvements
 - The incremental cost of providing same-day or door-to-door service
 - Vehicles that support accessible ridesharing, taxi, and/or vanpooling programs
 - Programs that support administration and expenses related to voucher programs

2023 COORDINATED PLAN CONTENT

In keeping with FTA guidance, this Coordinated Plan includes the following components:

1. Assessment of available services and identification of current transportation providers (public, private, and nonprofit), which is shown in the accompanying [*online map*](#)
2. Identification of transportation needs for people with disabilities and seniors
3. Strategies, activities, and possible projects to address the identified needs, gaps between current services and needs, and opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery
4. Priorities for implementation based on available resources, time, and feasibility

CHAPTER 2

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SERVICES



This chapter describes the transportation services that operate in the Boston region. An online map of these services [can be found here](#).

MASSACHUSETTS BAY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (MBTA)

The MBTA is the primary transit provider in the Boston region. It directly operates or hires contractors to operate heavy rail, rapid transit, light rail, bus rapid transit, local and express bus, ferry, and paratransit services.

RAPID TRANSIT

The MBTA rapid transit system serves 125 stations on four lines: the Red Line (including the Mattapan Trolley), the Orange Line, the Blue Line, and the Green Lines.

- **Red Line** — The Red Line has 22 stations on its two branches: the Ashmont Branch between Alewife Station, in North Cambridge, and Ashmont Station in Dorchester, and the Braintree Branch between Alewife Station and Braintree Station in Braintree. All stations are accessible. The Red Line directly serves the municipalities of Cambridge, Somerville, Boston, Quincy, and Braintree.
 - The Mattapan Trolley is an extension of the Red Line and connects Ashmont Station with stations through Dorchester and a portion of the town of Milton, with the terminus in the Mattapan neighborhood of Boston. Seven of the line's eight stations are accessible.
- **Orange Line** — The Orange Line operates between Oak Grove Station, in Malden, and the Forest Hills Station in the Forest Hills neighborhood of Boston. All of its 20 stations are accessible. It directly serves the municipalities of Boston, Malden, Medford, and Somerville.
- **Blue Line** — The Blue Line operates between Wonderland Station in Revere and Bowdoin Station in downtown Boston. It serves 12 stations, 11 of which are accessible. It directly serves the municipalities of Revere and Boston.
- **Green Line** — The Green Line is a light rail line that consists of four branches, the B, C, D, and E. Combined, there are 70 stops and stations on the Green Line. Forty-one of them are accessible. The Green Line serves Cambridge, Boston, Brookline, Somerville, Medford, and Newton.

Several accessibility projects are in progress. On the Green Line, accessibility improvements are being made to Hynes, Newton Highlands, and Symphony Stations.

BUS RAPID TRANSIT

The Silver Line (SL) consists of five bus rapid transit routes. SL1 serves downtown Boston, the Seaport, and Boston Logan International Airport. SL2 connects South Station and the Seaport. SL3 connects South Station to the Airport, East Boston, and Chelsea. SL4 and SL5 both serve downtown Boston, the South End, and Roxbury. MBTA is currently exploring Silver Line extension alternatives that would extend SL3 service to Everett, Kendall Square, and North Station.

BUS

The MBTA has more than 145 bus routes and extends from Boston to just beyond Interstate 95. Three municipalities that are served by MBTA buses are not in the MPO region—Avon, Billerica, and Brockton. Forty-seven municipalities are in the MPO region but are not served by MBTA buses—many are served instead by other regional transit authorities. All MBTA buses are accessible. Close to the urban core, buses provide crosstown service and feeder service to rapid transit stations. Buses operating outside of the urban core provide local service, feeder service to rapid transit and some commuter rail branches, and express service to Boston.

The MBTA is redesigning its bus network through the [*Bus Network Redesign*](#) process. The project is currently in its planning phase, and many bus routes are expected to change as the project is implemented in the coming years.

COMMUTER RAIL

The MBTA's commuter rail system extends beyond the MPO's boundary. It consists of 12 radial lines, which serve municipalities in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. There is also seasonal service to Foxborough for special events, to Wachusett Mountain via the Fitchburg Line in the winter, and weekend service to Hyannis on the Middleborough/Lakeville Line during the summer. Forty-nine municipalities in the MPO region have a commuter rail station. There are 141 commuter rail stations, 111 of which are accessible. Several accessibility improvements are under construction, including Auburndale, West Newton, Newtonville, Lynn, Natick Center, South Attleboro, Winchester Center, and Worcester Union stations. South Coast Rail Phase 1 is currently under construction and is expected to be completed in late 2023—it will connect Fall River, Taunton, and New Bedford to Boston.

COMMUTER FERRY

Ferry services link downtown Boston to Charlestown, East Boston, Quincy, Logan Airport, Lynn, Winthrop, Hingham, and Hull. The East Boston ferry is currently a seasonal pilot service. The Lynn ferry service is seasonal as well.

PARATRANSIT

The RIDE is MBTA's door-to-door, shared-ride, paratransit service for people who have a disability that prevents them from using the agency's fixed-route services. The RIDE is an advance-request service that operates vans and sedans in 58 municipalities, generally between 5:00 AM and 1:00 AM. The MBTA also offers The RIDE Flex, which is provided by Uber and Lyft. This program provides more flexible booking options, including same-day trips.

REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITIES

CAPE ANN TRANSIT AUTHORITY (CATA)

CATA serves the towns of Gloucester and Rockport, and provides additional service to Danvers, Essex, and Ipswich. CATA's fixed-route service consists of nine routes. CATA's dial-a-ride service provides door-to-door transportation for people 60 years of age and older and adults who have a disability. This service is available in Gloucester and Rockport, and for organized trips outside of the Cape Ann region. CATA service operates entirely within the MPO region.

GREATER ATTLEBORO-TAUNTON REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY (GATRA)

GATRA operates fixed-route service in Attleboro, Taunton, Bellingham, Berkley, Carver, Dighton, Duxbury, Foxborough, Franklin, Hanover, Kingston, Lakeville, Mansfield, Marshfield, Medway, Middleborough, Norfolk, North Attleboro, Norton, Pembroke, Plainville, Plymouth, Plympton, Raynham, Rehoboth, Scituate, Seekonk, and Wrentham. Bellingham, Foxborough, Medway, Marshfield, Norfolk, Scituate, and Wrentham are in the MPO region. The agency operates 35 routes (not including route variations). GATRA provides dial-a-ride service for people with disabilities, and for seniors ages 60 years and older.

METROWEST REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY (MWRTA)

MWRTA operates 17 fixed-route services, five commuter shuttles, and CatchConnect, an on-demand micro-transit service in Wellesley, Hudson, and Framingham/Natick. It also provides demand response services for seniors and people with disabilities, which includes American with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service, in Framingham, Natick, Wellesley, and Dover. MWRTA serves the municipalities of Ashland, Dover, Framingham, Holliston, Hopedale, Hopkinton, Hudson, Marlborough, Milford, Natick, Sherborn, Southborough, Sudbury, Wayland, Wellesley, and Weston.

MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY (MART)

MART provides public transportation to 24 municipalities in north-central Massachusetts; included in those municipalities are Stow, Bolton, Boxborough, and Littleton, which are also within the MPO region. It operates 13 local bus routes, five regional bus routes, and shuttles that provide connections to Boston, Worcester, and on-demand to Devens. ADA-eligible paratransit service is available in the same area served by fixed-route service. MART also provides councils on aging (COA) services in all its member communities.

BROCKTON AREA TRANSIT (BAT)

BAT provides service to the South Shore and Greater Brockton area. Of the 11 municipalities that are served by BAT, one is in the MPO region (Rockland). BAT also runs a fixed-route bus service from Brockton to Ashmont Station on the Red Line.

LOWELL REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY (LRTA)

LRTA serves 19 routes in 14 municipalities, three of which are in the MPO region—Acton, Maynard, and Carlisle. LRTA also provides curb-to-curb ADA paratransit service to people with disabilities and to seniors within the LRTA service area who are 60 years of age or older.

MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AGENCY (MVRTA)

MVRTA serves 13 municipalities. Although none of them are in the Boston region, it does provide medical transportation from the MVRTA services area to the Lahey Clinic in Peabody and Boston medical facilities.

MASSACHUSETTS PORT AUTHORITY (MASSPORT)

Massport operates several transit services to the port and airport facilities that the agency operates. Within the Boston region, these include the following services:

- **Logan Express Bus:** Provides service between Boston Logan International Airport and five locations—Back Bay in Boston, Braintree, Framingham, Peabody, and Woburn. All buses are accessible.
- **Logan Shuttle:** Complimentary shuttle bus service between airline terminals, the Blue Line's Airport Station, the Water Transportation Dock, Rental Car Center, and parking garages. All buses are accessible.

TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATIONS (TMA)

A TMA is a membership-based coalition of businesses, universities and other institutions, and municipalities that work together to provide transportation solutions for commuters. The transit services listed below are funded by each TMA and provide transportation for employees of the TMA membership and sometimes for members of the public. Only TMAs that provide their own transit services are listed below.

ALEWIFE TMA

The Alewife TMA serves the area around Alewife Station in Cambridge. The TMA operates two shuttles—the Alewife Station Loop Shuttle, which connects area businesses and residences with Alewife Station and a shuttle between Alewife Station and The Royal Belmont and Discovery Park.

CHARLES RIVER TMA

The Charles River TMA serves Cambridge-area residents and businesses. The TMA operates the EZRide Shuttle, which connects North Station to the Cambridgeport and Kendall Square neighborhoods in Cambridge.

CROSSTOWN CONNECT (CTC)

CTC serves the municipalities of Westford, Littleton, Acton, Concord, Maynard, Sudbury, and Westford. CTC provides the following transit services:

- **Commuter Rail Shuttles:** Two services connect to the South Acton Commuter Rail Station. One service connects several employers with the South Acton Commuter Rail Stations (temporarily out of service as of summer 2023), and one service connects downtown Maynard and Acton with the South Acton Commuter Rail Station.
- **COA Vans:** CTC operates COA vans for Acton, Littleton, and Maynard. They are open to people 60 years of age and older.
- **MinuteVan Dial-A-Ride:** Serves Acton, Boxborough, Littleton, Maynard, medical facilities in Concord, and other select locations and is open to all riders ages 12 years and older. The MinuteVan may be requested for any purpose. All vehicles are accessible.
- **Road Runner:** A curb-to-curb shared van open to all people ages 60 and older and people with disabilities within Acton, Littleton, and Maynard.

LONGWOOD COLLECTIVE (FORMERLY KNOWN AS MEDICAL ACADEMIC AND SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION)

Longwood Collective serves medical and science-related businesses and their employees in the Longwood Medical Area (LMA) of Boston. Longwood Collective operates seven shuttles that serve employees who work in the LMA. Most require passengers to be employees of Longwood Collective member institutions. Two are park-and-ride shuttles (Fenway and Renaissance Garage), three connect to transit stations (JFK/UMass Station, Midday and Evening Ruggles-JFK combo, and Ruggles Station), and two operate between employers (Landmark and M2 Cambridge-Boston).

MIDDLESEX 3 TMA

Middlesex 3 TMA serves nine municipalities; Lexington, Bedford, and Burlington are within the Boston MPO region. One shuttle provides reverse-commute commuter service from Alewife and Haymarket stations with employers in Bedford and Billerica.

NEPONSET VALLEY TMA

The Neponset Valley TMA serves the municipalities of Canton, Dedham, Foxborough, Norwood, and Westwood. It operates the following services:

- **Royall Street Shuttle — Commuter Rail:** Serves the Route 128 commuter rail station and employees of Boston Mutual, Goodbaby, Point32Health, and tenant of 250 Royall Street.
- **Royall Street Shuttle — Red Line:** Serves the Red Line Stations of Quincy Adams, Mattapan, and Ashmont, and the employees of Boston Mutual, Goodbaby, Point32Health, and tenants of 250 Royall.
- **Point32Health Shuttle:** Serves the MBTA Red Line Stations of Quincy Adams, Mattapan, and Ashmont and employees of Point32Health.
- **University Avenue Shuttle:** Serves only employees of Eversource and the tenants of 690 Canton Street and 101 Station Drive, connecting them to the 128 Commuter Rail Station.

ROUTE 128 BUSINESS COUNCIL

The Route 128 Business Council provides employee shuttles for member businesses. They serve municipalities along the Route 128 corridor. Seven shuttles connect businesses with the Alewife Station on the Red Line, two shuttles connect residents with Waltham Center, and one shuttle connects Needham Crossing to the Newton Highlands Station on the Green Line.

WATERTOWN TMA

Watertown TMA operates two shuttles, the WATConnector—Arsenal Street, which connects Harvard Square Station on the Red Line to employers in Watertown, and WATConnector—Pleasant Street, which connects Watertown Square and Harvard Square.

PRIVATE NONPROFIT SERVICES

Some nonprofit organizations and local private institutions, such as universities and hospitals, also operate transit services in the region. They typically operate shuttles specifically for their employees and/or patients or students between their various campuses and/or nearby neighborhoods. Smaller services also provide local transportation for seniors or people with disabilities. Private for-profit senior care companies and taxi companies may also provide transportation around the region. While these are too numerous to list here, <http://www.massridematch.org> provides information about these and other transportation providers.

MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION FOR PATIENTS OR EMPLOYEES

- **Boston Medical Center (BMC)**
 - For its patients, BMC provides the HealthNet Shuttle, which connects the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center with BMC.
 - For faculty, staff, and students, BMC operates the following shuttles
 - Albany Street Shuttle runs between the 610 Albany Street Garage and the 710 Albany Street Garage, as well as to Crosstown Center and 801 Albany Street by request
 - Ruggles Station Shuttle connects BMC with Ruggles Station on the Orange Line
 - Andrew Station Shuttle connects BMC with Andrew Station on the Red Line and the Newmarket Commuter Rail Station on the Fairmount Line.
- **Boston University Shuttle Bus:** the 1BU route connects the BU Charles River and Medical Campuses
- **Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA):** CHA provides free shuttles between Cambridge and Somerville Hospital Campuses and several CHA primary care locations. As of September 2023, only staff were permitted to use the shuttles due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- **Lemuel Shattuck Hospital:** The Lemuel Shattuck Hospital operates a shuttle from Forest Hills Station on the Orange Line to the hospital.
- **McLean Hospital:** McLean Hospital operates a shuttle for patients between its campus in Belmont and the commuter rail station at Waverly Square in Belmont.
- **Partners Healthcare:** Partners Healthcare operates 20 shuttles for visitors, patients, and employees of its medical facilities in and around Boston. Some shuttles serve visitors and patients, while others only serve employees. The shuttles serve Brigham and Women's Hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital and affiliated community health centers, Cooley Dickinson Hospital, Massachusetts Eye and Ear, Newton-Wellesley Hospital, and Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital.

HIGHER EDUCATION SHUTTLES SERVICES

- **Babson College:** Babson operates a shuttle that runs between Babson, Wellesley, and Olin Colleges.
- **Bentley College:** Bentley operates a shuttle that runs between Bentley, Waverly Square, and Harvard Square.
- **Boston College:** Boston College operates several shuttles, connecting the main campus to Cleveland Circle Station on the Green Line, the Boston College Newton Campus, and Brighton.
- **Boston University:** Boston University operates four shuttles: IBU (connects the Charles River and Medical Campuses), Comm Ave (serves the Commonwealth Avenue Corridor on the Charles River Campus), Night (provides evening and late-night service on the Charles River and Fenway Campuses), and Fenway (connects the Fenway Campus to the Charles River Campus).
- **Brandeis University:** Brandeis University operates four shuttles connecting the university to various neighborhoods in Waltham, the Waltham Commuter Rail Station, and Harvard Square in Cambridge.
- **Bunker Hill Community College:** Bunker Hill Community College operates a shuttle connecting its Charlestown and Chelsea Campus locations.
- **Curry College:** Curry College operates two shuttles, one from campus to University Avenue in Westwood, and one from the main campus in Milton to Mattapan station.
- **Endicott College:** Endicott College operates a shuttle from the main campus to Beverly.
- **Harvard University:** Harvard University runs 11 intercampus shuttles, an on-demand evening van service, and an on-demand van service for people with disabilities.
- **Lasell University:** Lasell University operates a shuttle from the campus in Newton to Riverside station.
- **Lesley University:** Lesley University operates intercampus shuttle services.
- **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT):** MIT operates one campus shuttle; one that connects the campus to Boston; one that connects the campus to North Station and Lechmere Station on the Green Line; a shuttle to and from Boston Logan International Airport; weekend shuttles to several major grocery stores; a shuttle to MIT's Lincoln Laboratory in Lexington; a shuttle to Wellesley Colleges; and one that connects the Harvard Medical School in the LMA to Harvard Square.
- **Middlesex Community College:** Middlesex Community College operates a shuttle connecting its Lowell and Bedford campuses.
- **Regis College:** Regis College operates a shuttle from the campus to the Natick mall and Riverside Station.
- **Salem State University:** Salem State University operates an intra-campus shuttle and a shuttle to downtown Salem.
- **Tufts University:** Tufts University operates a shuttle between the Medford Campus and School of the Museum of Fine Arts, and a shuttle between the Medford Campus and Davis Square in Somerville.
- **University of Massachusetts Boston (UMass Boston):** UMass Boston operates a shuttle between the campus and the JFK/UMass Station on the Red Line.
- **Wellesley College:** Wellesley operates the Exchange Bus service to MIT; a shuttle that connects Wellesley and Cambridge; and the Natick Movie-Mall Shuttle.

LONG-DISTANCE TRANSIT PROVIDERS

Many private, for-profit transit operators serve the Boston region. The following carriers make stops in the Boston region:

- **Amtrak:** Provides daily rail service to Framingham, Springfield, and points west from Boston's South Station on its Lake Shore Limited line. The Downeaster line runs multiple times a day to Woburn, Haverhill, and points north from Boston's North Station.
- **Boston Express:** Provides commuter bus service to South Station and Boston Logan International Airport, from Concord, NH, with stops in Manchester, NH, North Londonderry, NH, and Salem, NH. It also provides service to South Station and Boston Logan International Airport from Manchester, NH, with stops in Nashua, NH, and Tyngsborough, MA.
- **C&J:** C&J offers bus service to Boston Logan International Airport from Portsmouth, NH, with stops in Seabrook, NH. It also offers bus service to Boston's South Station from Portsmouth, NH, with stops in Seabrook, NH, and Dover, NH.
- **Concord Coach Lines:** Provides bus service from Boston's Logan Airport and South Station to points in New Hampshire and Maine.
- **Dartmouth Coach:** Provides commuter bus service from Hanover, NH, to South Station and Boston Logan International Airport, with stops in Lebanon, NH, and New London, NH.
- **Greyhound Lines:** Offers long-distance bus service between Boston's South Station and Logan Airport and many points north, south, and west.
- **Peter Pan Bus Lines:** Provides long-distance bus service between Boston and many cities, including Hartford, CT, Fall River, Hyannis, New Bedford, Springfield, and Woods Hole. It also provides service to Boston Logan International Airport.
- **Plymouth & Brockton Street Railway Company:** Provides commuter bus service from Boston's Logan Airport and South Station to Hyannis, with stops in Barnstable, Sagamore, Plymouth, and Rockland. There is also service from Woods Hole with stops in Falmouth.
- **Yankee Line:** Provides commuter bus service from Acton and Concord to Copley Square in Boston.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Many municipalities offer transportation services for seniors and/or people with disabilities. Municipal COAs provide support services to seniors, families, and caregivers, and some offer transportation services for these populations. The Massachusetts COA maintains an online [COA directory](#). Some municipalities and/or RTAs also offer non-age restricted shuttle services, such as those funded through the MPO's Community Connections Program. These include

- **Newton's NewMo** is an on-demand service that serves Newton, as well as several nearby medical destinations, regardless of trip purpose.
- **Canton's Royall Street Shuttle** is a fixed-route shuttle that serves Route 138 employment centers and major transit hubs between the Ashmont MBTA station and Royall Street in Canton.
- **CATA On Demand** provides on-demand shuttle services within the CATA region, regardless of trip purpose.

- **MWTRA CATCH Connect** is a curb-to-curb microtransit shuttle that serves Wellesley, downtown Framingham, downtown Natick, the Golden Triangle retail area, and areas of Hudson and Marlborough that connect to MWRTA bus route 15, regardless of trip purpose.
- **Pleasant Street Shuttle** is a fixed-route shuttle that provides peak-hour shuttle services in Watertown to transit hubs in Watertown and Cambridge.
- **Lexpress** is a fixed-route service that operates mainly in Lexington, with service to Burlington and Arlington Heights. It serves low-income senior housing, shopping, medical services, and the community center, in addition to offering connections to other transit.

VOLUNTEER DRIVER PROGRAMS

Some COAs and nonprofit human service organizations also operate volunteer driver programs, such as those listed below.

- **Municipal Volunteer Programs:** Some municipalities coordinate programs for volunteers to provide transportation for seniors and people with disabilities. Find your [local COA](#) for more information.
- **Mystic Valley Elder Services:** Operates TRIP Metro North, a free passenger-controlled program for seniors and people with disabilities. Passengers make driving arrangements with whomever they choose; those drivers are reimbursed monthly for mileage. The program serves residents of Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, Melrose, North Reading, Reading, Revere, Stoneham, Wakefield, and Winthrop.
- **RSVP Rides for Veterans:** Volunteers provide rides for veterans to medical appointments and other trips. In the MPO region, it serves Suffolk, Norfolk, and Middlesex, among other counties in Massachusetts.
- **SeniorCare:** volunteer medical transportation for people ages 60 and older within Beverly, Essex, Gloucester, Hamilton, Ipswich, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Rockport, Topsfield, and Wenham.

Public transit in the Boston region—both human service transportation and transit that serves the general population—is run by many different providers and because of that can often be fragmented, especially outside of the immediate Boston area. Each transit provider has its own fares, eligibility requirements, and service areas. These may or may not be coordinated with other providers with adjacent services, sometimes leading to long wait times, high fares, or simply the inability to reach a particular part of the region at all by public transit. These challenges are magnified in towns further from Boston, as the public transit network is more limited in these areas, despite the many seniors and people with disabilities who live in these areas.

Meanwhile, since the 2019 Coordinated Plan, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected transit services throughout the region. Some services, such as volunteer programs, were suspended, while others, such as some fixed-route services, were reduced. Ridership on many services has yet to bounce back to pre-pandemic levels, and many transit providers are struggling to make up for the lost income.

Improved coordination of services between providers and closing the gaps in existing services, through funding such as the CTGP, is a critical strategy for both reducing costs by resource sharing between providers and reducing route duplication, and for addressing the many challenges riders face due to a fragmented transit network. This will be increasingly important as the population ages over the coming years, which is described in the next chapter. The CTGP is one resource to help transit providers improve coordination; chapter four describes strategies to meet these and other human service transportation challenges, as well as other resources to support human service transportation in the Boston region.

CHAPTER 3

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSES



This chapter provides demographic data about seniors and people with disabilities in the Boston region using data from the US Census Bureau, as well demographic projections developed by the University of Massachusetts (UMass) Donahue Institute and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC).

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidance for the 5310 Program defines a senior as an individual who is 65 years old or older. In the Boston region, 546,334 people are seniors, about 16 percent of the population. Figure 3-1 shows the population ages 65 years and older, by municipality. Essex has the fewest number of seniors, while Boston has the most. Figure 3-2 shows the percent of the population in each municipality who are seniors. Rockport has the most with 35.2 percent and Somerville has the least with 9.9 percent.

FIGURE 3-1
POPULATION AGES 65 AND OLDER, BY MUNICIPALITY

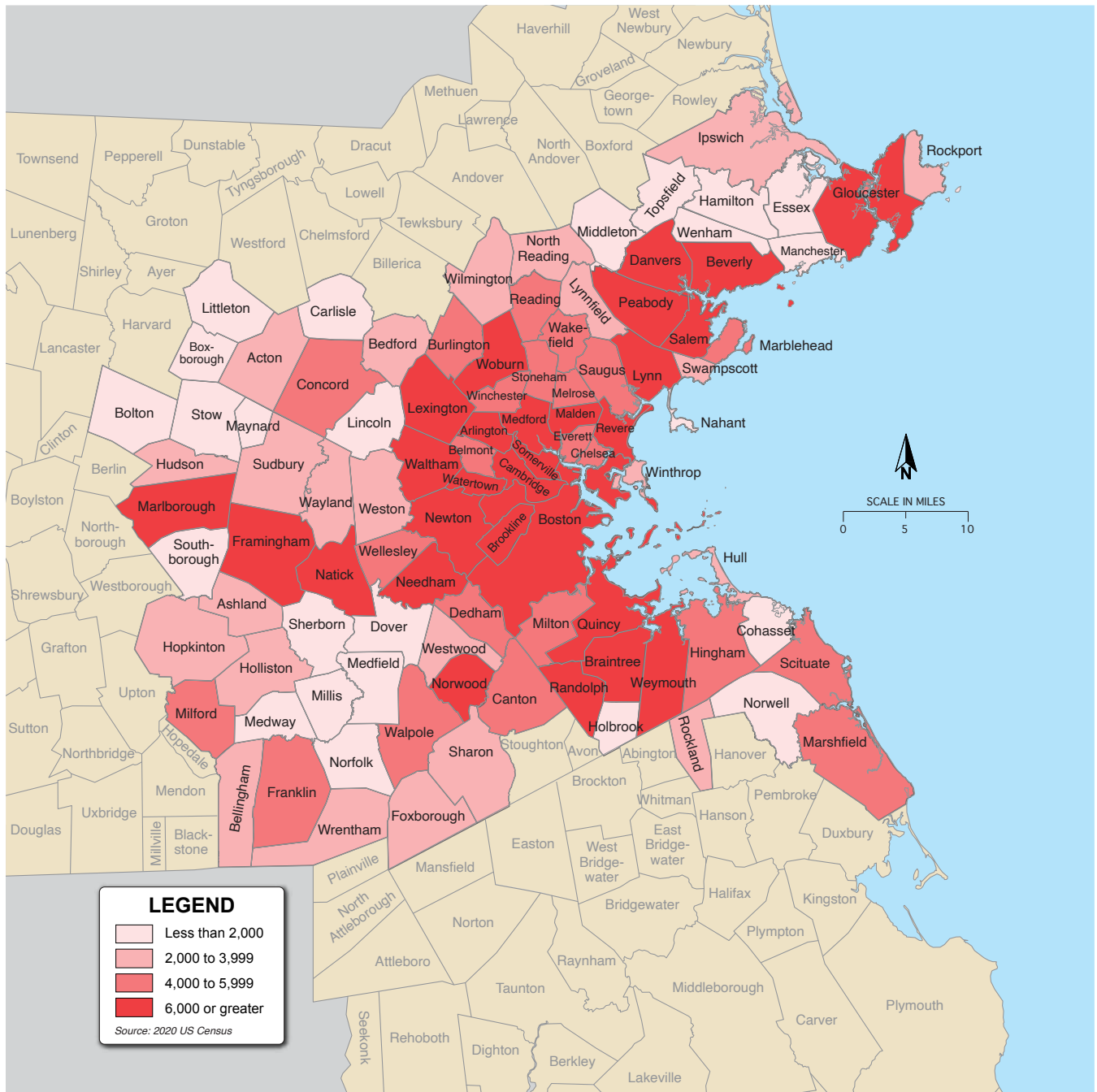
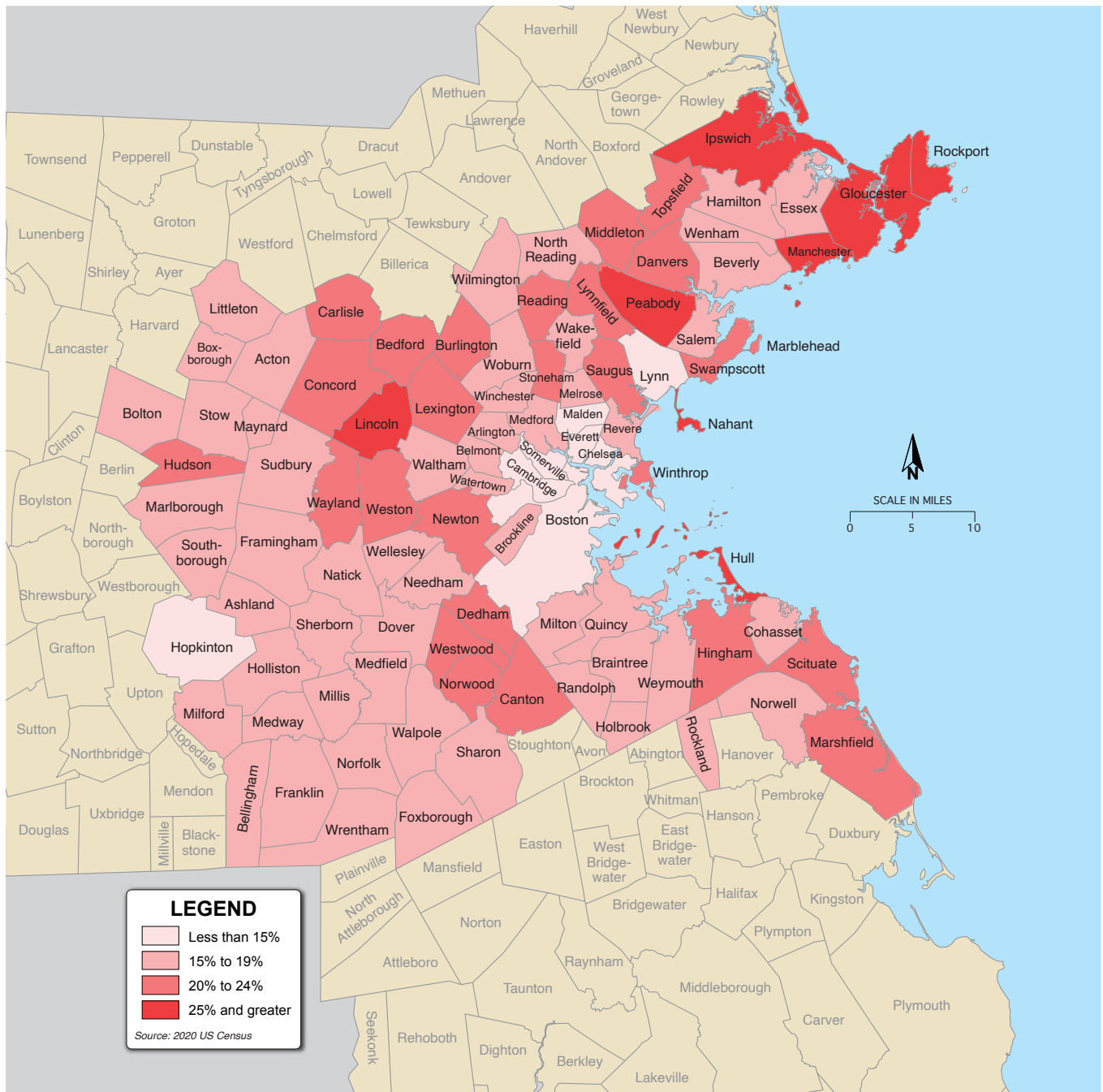
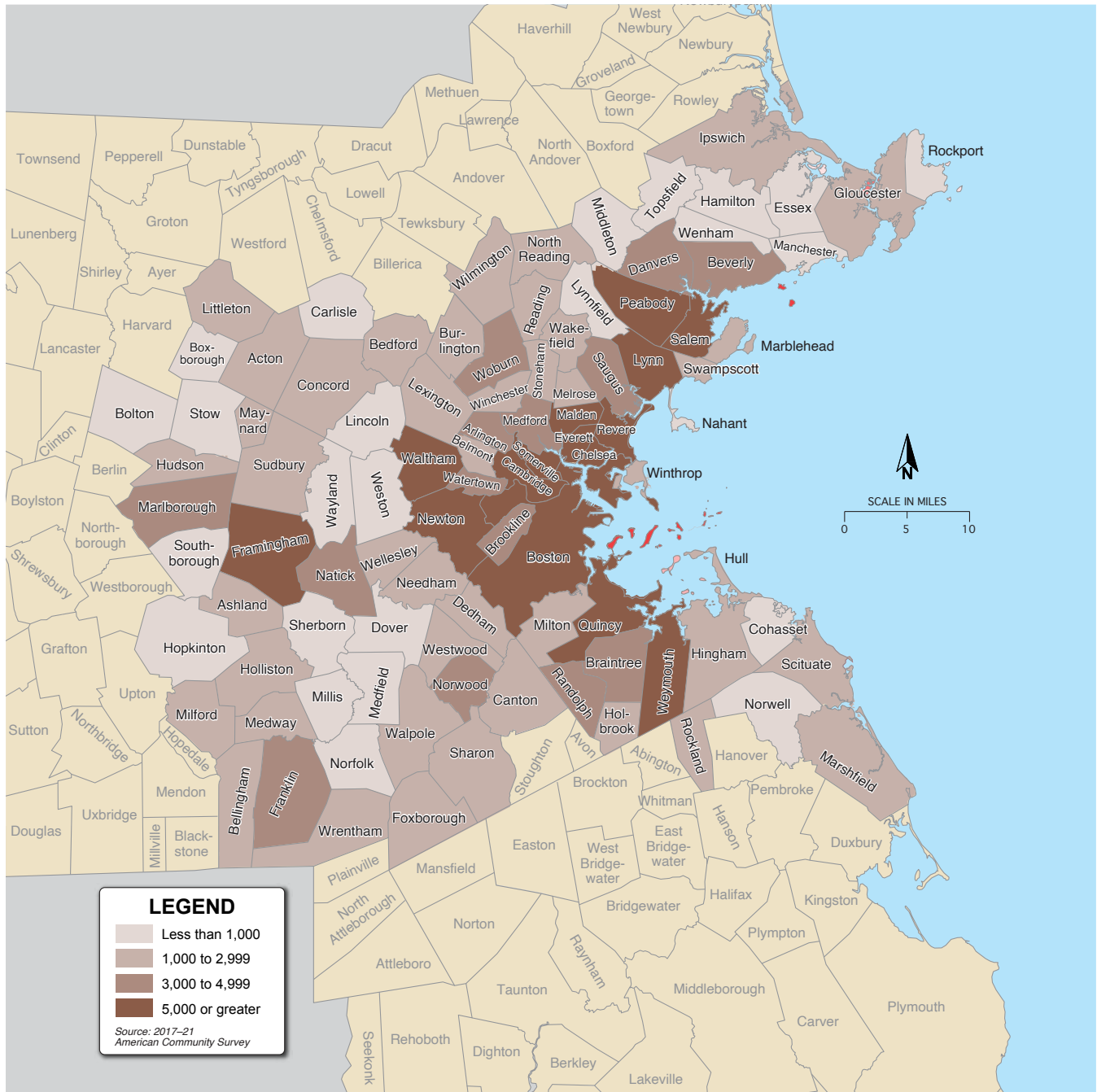


FIGURE 3-2
PERCENT OF THE POPULATION AGES 65 AND OLDER



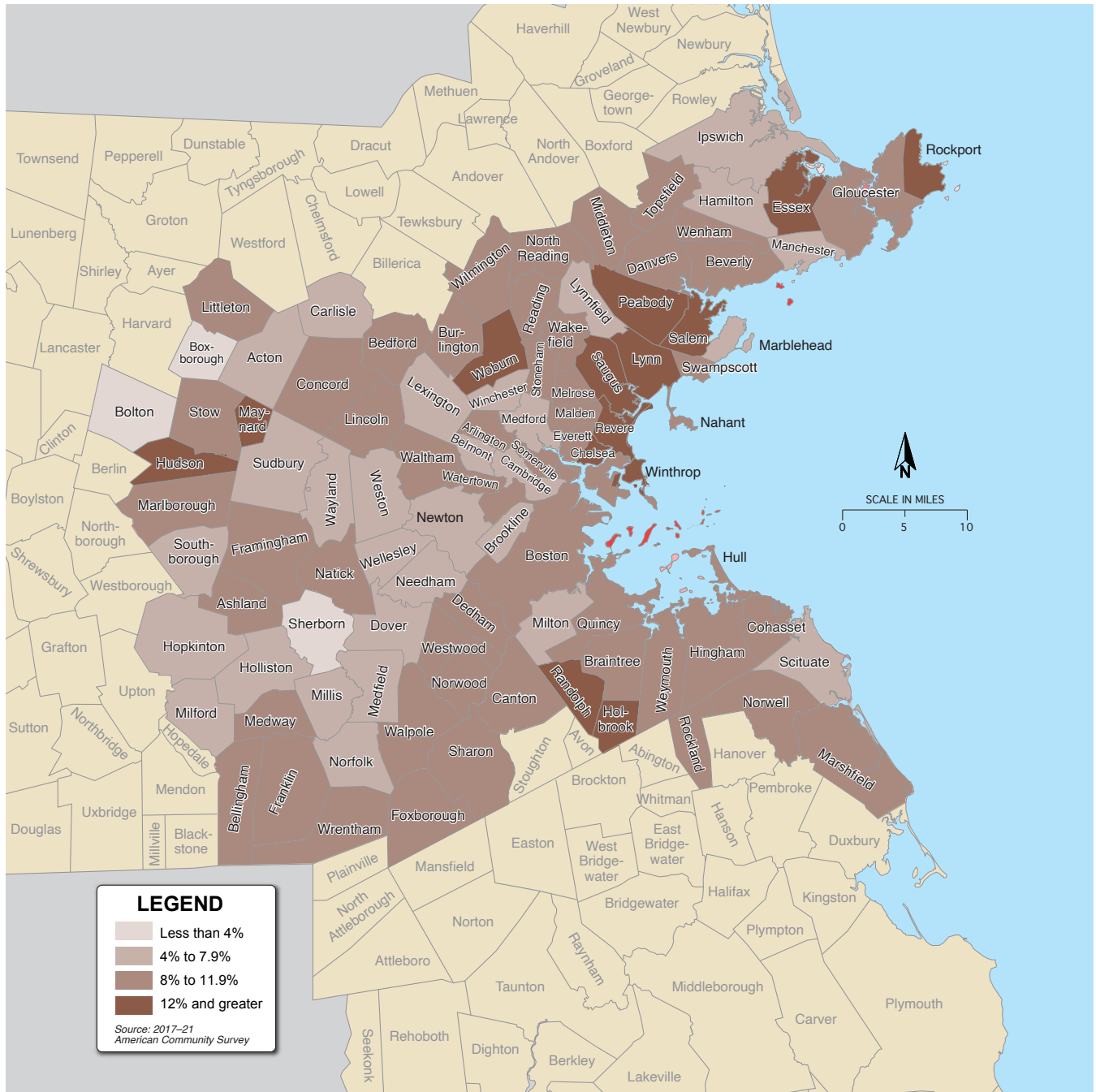
In the Boston Region, about 337,688 people, or 10 percent of the population, reported having a disability on the 2017–21 American Community Survey.¹ Figure 3-3 shows the estimated number of people in each municipality who report having a disability. Sherborn has the fewest number of people with disabilities and Boston has the most. Sherborn also has the lowest percentage, with three percent, while Lynn and Peabody have the highest, with 15 percent. Figure 3-4 shows the percent of the population in each municipality that has a disability.

FIGURE 3-3
POPULATION WITH DISABILITIES, BY MUNICIPALITY



¹ People with disabilities are those who self-identify as having one or more of the following physical and/or mental disabilities: hearing difficulty, vision difficulty, cognitive difficulty, ambulatory difficulty, self-care difficulty, or independent living difficulty.

FIGURE 3-4
PERCENT OF THE POPULATION WITH DISABILITIES, BY MUNICIPALITY



Seniors in the Boston region are more likely than the rest of the population to have a disability. About 45 percent of seniors have a disability, the highest of any age cohort. Table 3-1 shows the MPO population with disabilities broken out by age cohort.

TABLE 3-1
BOSTON REGION MPO POPULATION WITH DISABILITIES BY
AGE COHORT

	Under 5 Years	Ages 5 to 17	Ages 18 to 34	Ages 35 to 64	Ages 65 and Older	Boston Region
Percent	0.5%	7.7%	13.8%	32.6%	45.4%	10.1%
Population Estimate	1,592	25,882	46,706	110,012	153,496	337,688

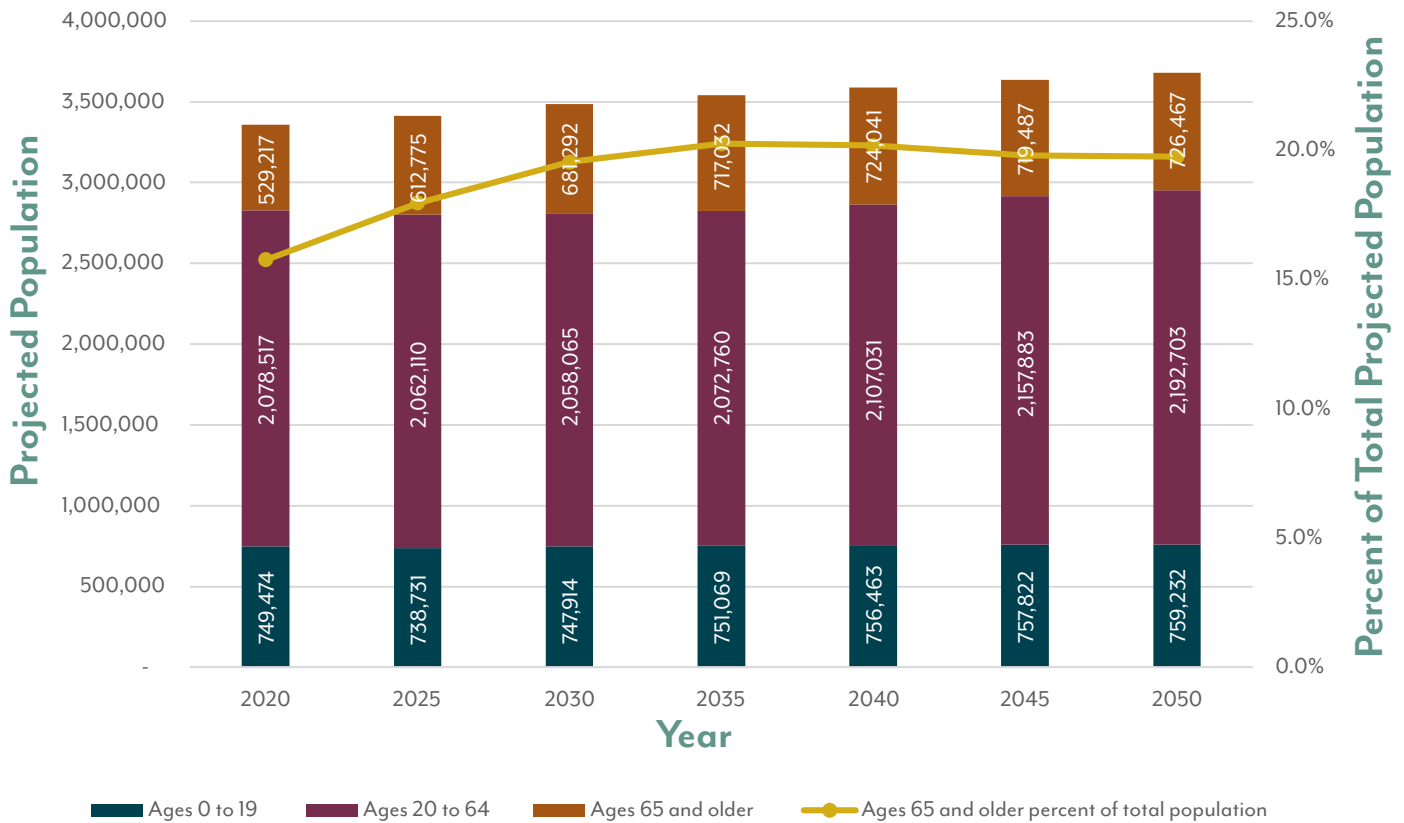
Disability status is determined for the noninstitutionalized population.

MPO = metropolitan planning organization.

Source: 2017–21 American Community Survey and 2020 Decennial Census.

Demographic projections completed for *Destination 2050*, the MPO’s Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) by the UMass Donahue Institute and MAPC, show that the percentage of the population 65 years and older is projected to increase about 37 percent between 2020 and 2050. That compares with about nine percent for the population overall. Figure 3-5 shows the projected change in population for each age cohort.

FIGURE 3-5
POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE COHORT, 2020 THROUGH 2050



Source: University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council.

Demographic projections are not available for people with disabilities. However, as shown in Table 3-1, nearly one-half of seniors have a disability. With a projected increase in the percent of the population in this age cohort, the share of the population with disabilities will likely increase as well. These data suggest that human service transportation must continue to expand in the Boston region and address existing gaps and needs to meet the demand of the region’s aging population.

CHAPTER 4

IDENTIFYING UNMET TRANSPORTATION NEEDS, STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THEM, AND PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION



Throughout the development of the Coordinated Plan, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) staff engaged stakeholders and members of the public, including seniors and people with disabilities, nonprofit human service organizations, and transportation providers, to gather feedback about the transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities and discuss potential strategies to address those needs. This chapter describes the public engagement activities conducted and the key findings that led to the identification of unmet needs, strategies, and priorities for mobility improvements for seniors and people with disabilities in the Boston region.

PURPOSE AND APPROACH TO PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public engagement was conducted concurrently with engagement for the development of the MPO's 2023 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Destination 2050*, during which staff collected input about transportation needs and priorities in the region. Most engagement activities during the development of the LRTP and the Coordinated Plan between 2019 and 2023 were conducted virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.² This included meetings with subregional councils that are coordinated by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) that bring interested parties together to discuss planning issues in their subregion;³ meetings of the MPO's Transit Working Group⁴ and Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Advisory Council),⁵ independent forums that bring together varied perspectives on transportation from throughout the region to inform the MPO's work; and scenario planning focus groups with stakeholders representing advocacy and community-based organizations

² Collectively, this input was gathered into a [Needs Assessment](#). The Needs Assessment was used to develop goals and objectives for the MPO that help guide the prioritization of MPO investments, as well as investment programs that lay out the types of projects that the MPO will fund.

³ There are eight subregions within MAPC. A map of these subregions can be found at mapc.org/get-involved/subregions/.

⁴ The MPO convened the Transit Working Group to help improve coordination among transit providers in the region and inform MPO activities and decisions. Participants include regional transit authorities, transportation management associations, municipalities that operate transit services, and state transportation agencies. More information about the Transit Working Group can be found at bostonmpo.org/transit-working-group.

⁵ The Regional Transportation Advisory Council is an independent body that brings public viewpoints and advice on transportation planning to the MPO. Membership includes municipalities, professional organizations, and transportation advocacy groups. More information about the Advisory Council can be found at bostonmpo.org/rtac.

as well as academic and business institutions.⁶ Staff also conducted several surveys during the development of the LRTP and Coordinated Plan, including a visioning survey that assessed public priorities for the future of the region's transportation system.

Staff also conducted several engagement activities focused directly on the Coordinated Plan, seeking additional perspectives from seniors and people with disabilities, and transit providers and institutions who serve them. Staff visited several Regional Coordinating Councils' (RCC) meetings during the development of the Coordinated Plan, including meetings of the Boston North RCC, the Blue Hills RCC, and the Neponset Valley RCC.⁷ Staff also held discussions focused specifically on the Coordinated Plan and human services transportation needs with the Transit Working Group and the Advisory Council, and hosted a human services transportation coordination workshop with municipal Councils on Aging (COA), Disability Commissions, and other transit providers, with breakout sessions that focused on various coordination topics and transportation challenges specific to different geographic regions within the MPO area.

To supplement these targeted engagement activities and gather a broader range of input from members of the public, staff also deployed a survey that asked about transportation needs, and strategies to meet those needs, for seniors and people with disabilities, with several questions focused on which strategies to prioritize. The survey was distributed broadly through the MPO's email and social media channels, and partner organizations distributed it to their contacts.⁸

In addition to the survey, staff received 293 comments related to human services transportation throughout the public engagement process. Table 4-1 provides a comprehensive list of engagement activities and input sources that informed the development of the Coordinated Plan.

6 In 2021, staff held a series of focus groups involving more than 40 organizations and entities in the Boston region to identify driving forces that will shape transportation in the region and strategies to respond to future conditions. The engagement process and results are documented in the Big Ideas StoryMap: <https://arcg.is/uzKbD>.

7 RCCs are voluntary coalitions of transportation providers, human service organizations, advocates, and planners who collaborate to identify and address regional community transportation needs. Each RCC provides an open forum for the exchange of information and sets its own priorities based on member interests and regional needs. More information about RCCs can be found at mass.gov/service-details/regional-coordinating-councils-for-community-transportation.

8 These partner organizations included the RCCs, Massachusetts Councils on Aging, and MAPC.

TABLE 4-1
COORDINATED PLAN FEEDBACK SOURCES

Feedback Source	Engagement Focus	Time
Human Services Transportation survey	Coordinated Plan	Spring–Summer 2023
Human Services Transportation Coordination Workshop	Coordinated Plan	April 2023
RCC meetings	Coordinated Plan	Summer 2022 and 2023
Transit Working Group Coffee Chats	Coordinated Plan	October 2021 and November 2022
Regional Advisory Council meetings	Coordinated Plan; general human services transportation coordination	January 2023 and June 2023
MAPC subregional group meetings	LRTP Needs Assessment; TIP; and other MPO programs and projects	Fall 2020, 2021, and 2022
Other Transit Working Group meetings	General transit service issues and priorities	2021–22
Other RCC meetings	General transit service and transportation issues and priorities	2021–22
UPWP study idea surveys	UPWP	2020–23
TIP criteria update engagement	TIP	2019
Big Ideas for Scenario Planning focus groups	LRTP	2021
<i>Destination 2050</i> visioning survey	LRTP	2022–23
Community Health Needs Assessments from regional medical institutions	Coordinated Plan	2019–23

LRTP = Long-Range Transportation Plan. MAPC = Metropolitan Area Planning Council. RCC = Regional Coordinating Council. TIP = Transportation Improvement Program. UPWP = Unified Planning Work Program.

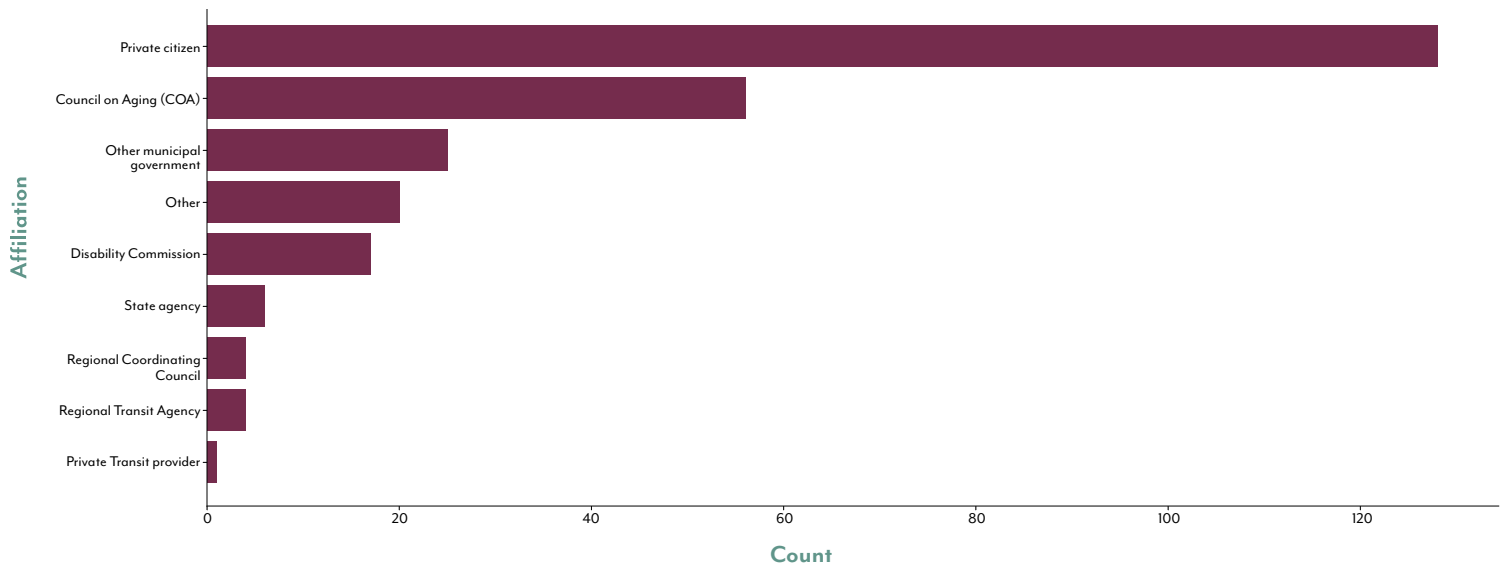
TRANSPORTATION NEEDS SURVEY

In spring of 2023, MPO staff conducted a survey to better understand the transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities and to identify strategies and actions that could address these needs. (See Appendix A for the survey questionnaire.) Staff received more than 300 responses.

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Most survey responses came from the general public. Figure 4-1 shows the affiliation of survey respondents. Approximately 47 percent of the respondents were members of the general public, followed by 17 percent affiliated with a COA, and 11 percent affiliated with another form of municipal government.

FIGURE 4-1
AFFILIATION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS



Approximately 31 percent of respondents self-identified as having a disability, while 44 percent of respondents said they are 65 years of age or older. Both response rates are greater than the MPO region population average of 10 and 16 percent, respectively.

Twenty percent of respondents said they identify as a race or ethnicity other than white. Women accounted for 63 percent of survey respondents, while men represented 25 percent, non-binary people represented one percent of respondents, and 12 percent of respondents chose not to answer. Furthermore, approximately eight percent of respondents indicated having an income level that falls below the MPO's low-income threshold.

SURVEY RESULTS

Survey respondents were asked to select two strategies that would improve mobility most effectively from four categories: infrastructure, public transit, coordination, and education improvements. Figures 4-2 through 4-5 show the distribution of respondents' selections in each of the four categories. The size of each box in the figures represents the number of times it was selected as a strategy to prioritize by survey respondents.

FIGURE 4-2
PRIORITIES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

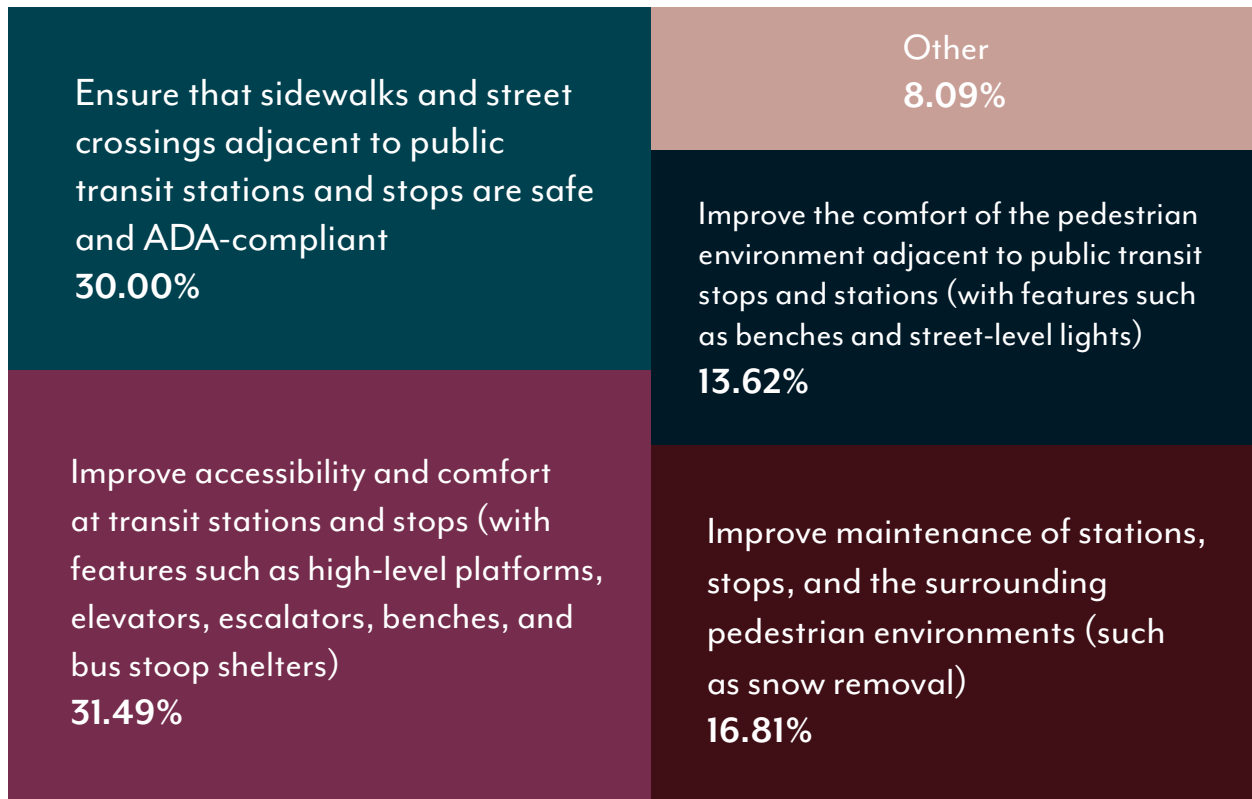


FIGURE 4-3
PRIORITIES FOR PUBLIC TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS

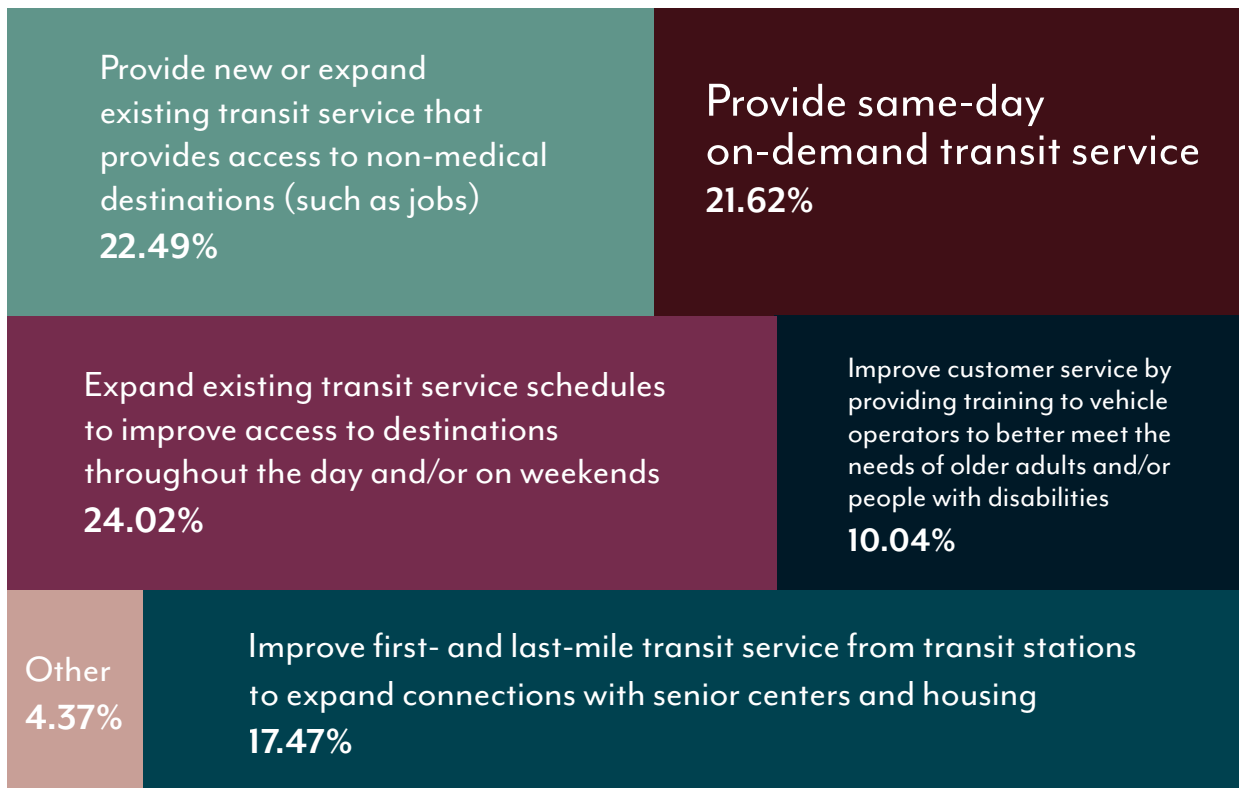


FIGURE 4-4
PRIORITIES FOR COORDINATION IMPROVEMENTS



FIGURE 4-5
PRIORITIES FOR EDUCATION IMPROVEMENTS

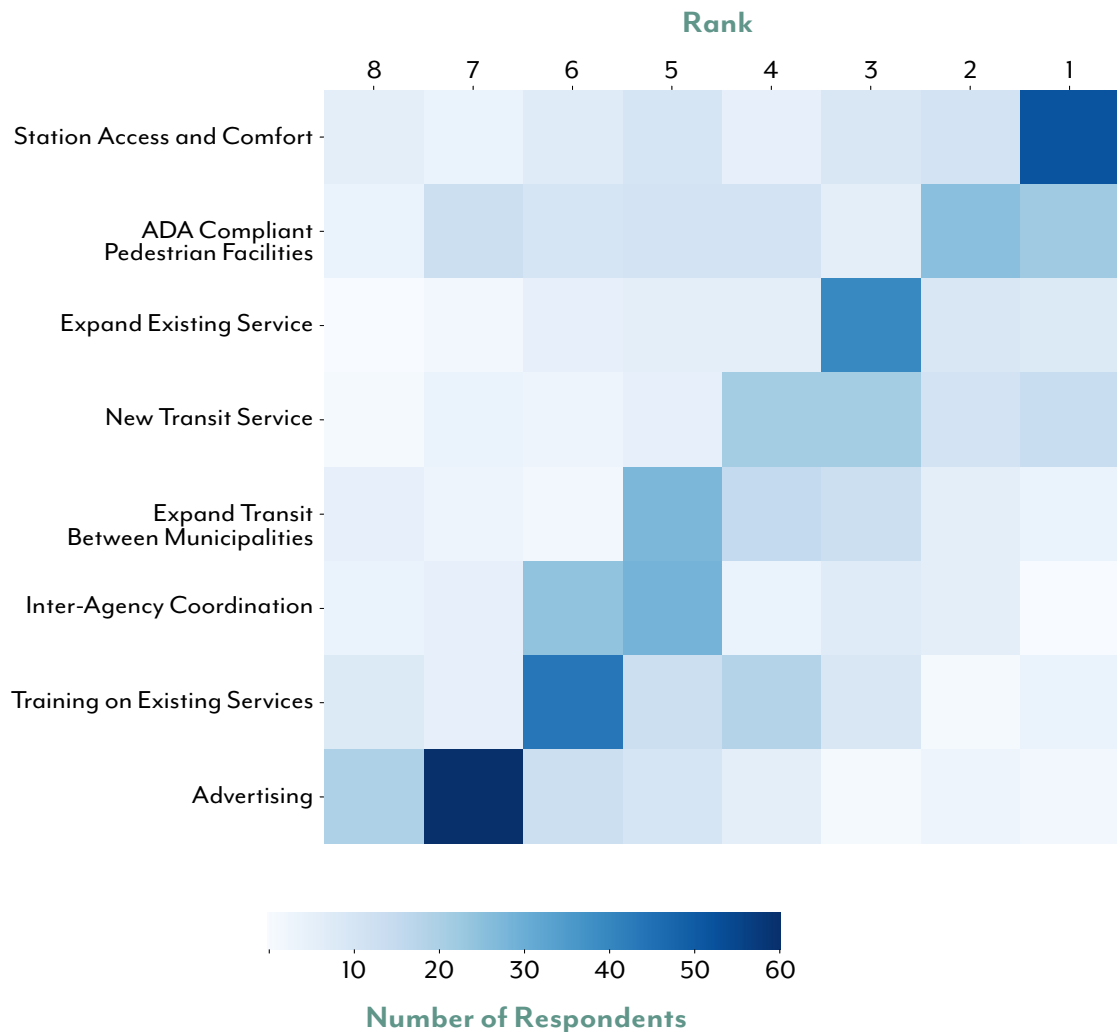


Across the four categories, the four most commonly selected strategies were

- Provide training opportunities for older adults and people with disabilities to learn which transportation services are available and how to use them (32.7 percent)
- Improve accessibility and comfort at transit stations and stops (with features such as high-level platforms, elevators, escalators, benches, and bus stop shelters) (31.5 percent)
- Ensure that sidewalks and street crossings adjacent to public transit stations and stops are safe and ADA-compliant (30.0 percent)
- Develop collaborations and partnerships between transit service providers, including rideshare companies, to more efficiently meet common needs (29.0 percent)

Respondents were asked to rank their selected strategies from highest to lowest priority. The two most frequently selected strategies from each category are shown in Figure 4-6—the darkest blue indicates when a strategy was most frequently ranked in that category.

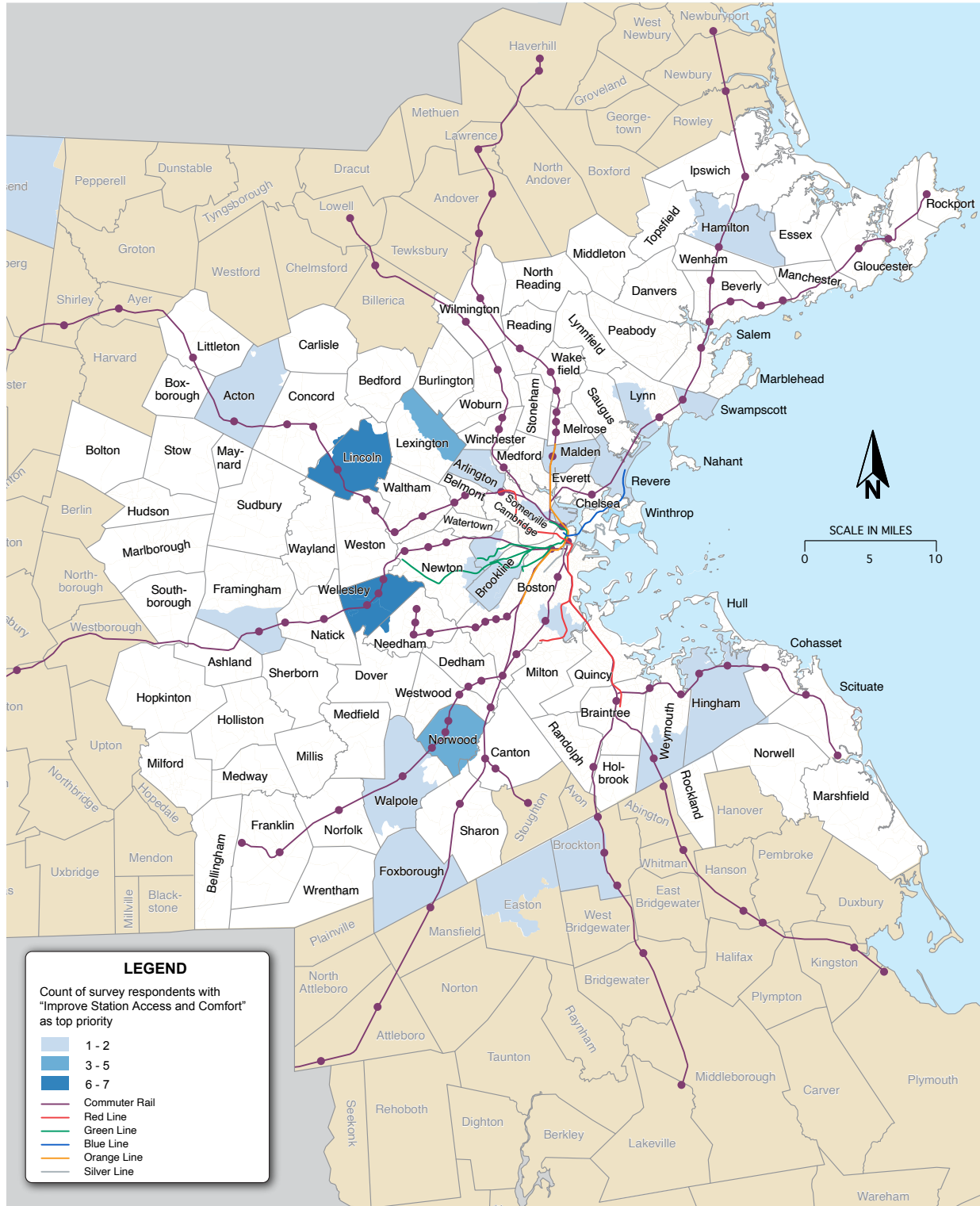
FIGURE 4-6
RANKING OF STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE HUMAN SERVICES
TRANSPORTATION



ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act.

Respondents consistently ranked improving accessibility and comfort at transit stations and stops as their top priority, with 47 percent of respondents indicating this as their top priority. Figure 4-7 shows the self-reported zip code of survey respondents who indicated access and comfort as their top priority. Trends show that access and comfort is particularly notable in municipalities near the Inner Core that are along commuter rail lines. There are minimal geographic trends that arise from the remaining priority areas. Improvements to ensure sidewalk and street crossings comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, expanding existing transit service schedules throughout the day and on weekends, and providing new services for municipalities with limited to no transit service were frequently noted as other top priorities. While some people indicated that advertising and education are important strategies, these strategies were ranked low compared to infrastructure and public transportation improvements.

FIGURE 4-7
ZIP CODE OF RESPONDENTS WITH “IMPROVE ACCESS AND COMFORT”
AS TOP PRIORITY



FINDINGS FROM PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: NEEDS AND STRATEGIES

This section summarizes the transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities identified through public engagement efforts, in addition to strategies and actions that were identified to address those needs. They were grouped into the following topic areas:

- **Transportation Service Improvements:** expansion, maintenance, and overall improvements of public transit services (including new routes, increased frequency, and expanded operating hours)
- **Infrastructure Improvements:** maintaining existing or constructing new transportation infrastructure
- **Vehicle Improvements:** improving vehicle accessibility
- **Public Engagement and Education:** engaging seniors and people with disabilities in transportation decision-making and education of members of the public on transportation services
- **Inter-Agency Coordination:** coordination between transportation providers
- **Housing:** consideration of coordinating housing with transportation improvements to provide greater access to human services transportation
- **Operating Challenges:** improvements in the operation of human service transportation, including customer service, funding, and scheduling
- **Eligibility:** eligibility requirements for human service transportation
- **Affordability:** out-of-pocket costs of human service transportation

Table 4-2 shows the needs, strategies, actions, and resources to support them by topic area.

TABLE 4-2
UNMET HUMAN SERVICE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AND STRATEGIES
TO ADDRESS THEM

Topic Area	Unmet Needs	Strategies and Actions
Transportation Service Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver shortage • Service hours during evenings and weekends • Reliability and functionality of paratransit • More access to public transportation • On-demand service expansion • Services limited by geography and destinations • First- and last-mile connections to larger transportation hubs • Service availability for social and/or non-medical trips • Return trips for medical appointments • Transit service to connect municipalities without traveling Boston • Short-notice trips • Greater frequency of fixed-route services • Lack of flexibility and reliability • Regional disparities in service • Restrooms and personal care facilities at public transit stations • Services that accommodate an aging population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase capacity of paratransit system • Support first- and last-mile projects • Improve accessibility of public transit to reduce the demand for The RIDE and similar services • Merge existing services for seniors and people with disabilities • Prioritize investments in public transportation improvements over private services • Expanded COA shuttle services • Provide dedicated, non-medical transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities • Prioritize improvements that serve seniors and people with disabilities • Peer organizations build partnerships • Build transit stops near senior housing • Merge existing, redundant services • Community-based transportation service from places of residences to community centers • Add more transit stops by senior centers, senior housing, and medical centers • Pursue public-private partnerships to provide on-call transportation for same-day transportation needs • Mapping the existing regional human service transportation network to identify gaps • Offer education sessions or materials to outline resources to human service transportation users • Install electronic next bus signs for real-time service updates • Increase rolling stock for human service transportation services • Utilize COA vans for transportation services with increased eligibility • Provide regular training and check-ins with volunteer networks

(Table 4-2 cont.)

Topic Area	Unmet Needs	Strategies and Actions
Infrastructure Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected, well-maintained, ADA-accessible sidewalk network • Maintenance of sidewalks and street crossings during inclement weather events • Amenities at bus stops and transit stations, such as lighting, benches, or shelters, as well as accessibility infrastructure, such as ramps¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce gaps in sidewalk network in proximity to public transportation stops and stations • Ensure stations and stops meet ADA requirements • Remove debris on sidewalks and transit stops during inclement weather events • Design new stations and do renovations that include high-level platforms
Vehicle Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space in vehicles to allow for personal care attendant, service animal, and/or other escort • Insufficient rolling stock • Amenities on public transportation vehicles to accommodate mobility devices and accessible seating • Simple signage and information system on vehicle interior and exterior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share vehicles across municipal boundaries • Improve suspension on paratransit vehicles to reduce passenger injuries • Purchase additional paratransit vehicles • Contract with ambulances to assist with transportation • Assign more space on public transit vehicles specifically for seniors and people with disabilities
Public Engagement and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and training on existing services, including fixed-route and on-demand services • Access to services without smartphone technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate seniors and people with disabilities about available transportation options • Advertising campaigns • Maintain communications that don't rely on smart phone technology • Include human service transportation users in the transportation planning and design process • Budget to include community engagement in implementation and operation costs • Provide training to help adult drivers transition from car-use to public transit
Inter-Agency Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities, particularly outside of the Inner Core, with little to no RTA service • Long transfer times across municipal and RTA boundaries • Turnover in implementing agencies results in a need for succession planning and the retention of institutional knowledge • Difficult to coordinate longer trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate services across municipal boundaries • Expand community transit options • Build partnerships with RTAs, COAs, and other community partners • Develop regional coordination between paratransit providers • Share best practices and lessons learned with peer agencies • Merge human service transportation programs and reimburse expenses based on usage • Contract with RTAs for vans and other resources • Coordinate with school bus companies to share pool of drivers • Develop efficient transfer points between RTAs • Create a unified dispatch center to increase the options available to passengers • Integrate scheduling and fare structures

(Table 4-2 cont.)

Topic Area	Unmet Needs	Strategies and Actions
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car-dependent senior housing developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in walkable and livable communities • Construct senior housing developments near transit stations • Connect transit service to existing developments
Operating Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver shortages • Policies to protect the increased vulnerability to viral and/or airborne diseases of human service transportation passengers • Well-trained dispatch service • Door-to-door transportation • Communication with passengers with limited English proficiency • Communication of delays • Long sign-up process • Insufficient funding to meet all needs • High start-up cost to services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve driver recruitment, training, and retention efforts • Streamline TNC same-day/on-demand services • Utilize innovative financing options (for example, partnering with private companies, such as insurance companies, to pay for medical trips) • Advocate for additional funding availability to legislature and other decision-makers • Increase municipal partnerships with The RIDE and other paratransit services • Include vehicle operators in the transportation planning process • Include vehicle operators in human service transportation user forums, such as the Riders’ Transportation Access Group • Translate signage into multiple languages and/or utilize visual communication methods to accommodate individuals with LEP • Expand volunteer driver programs • Coordinate with other municipalities or agencies to jointly apply for funding
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service gaps from human service transportation programs limited to certain groups of people • Expanding human service transportation qualification for people with hidden disabilities or short-term disabilities • Non-emergency medical transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate human service transportation services and remove eligibility barriers • Expand rider eligibility requirements on existing services
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost of on-demand transportation services • High cost of fixed-route rapid transit and commuter rail services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use existing municipal support channels to facilitate reduced fare distribution and education • Free, reduced fare, or voucher programs • Subsidize private, on-demand service trips for older adults and people with disabilities

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act. COA = councils on aging. LEP = limited English proficiency. RTA = regional transit agency. TNC = transportation network company.

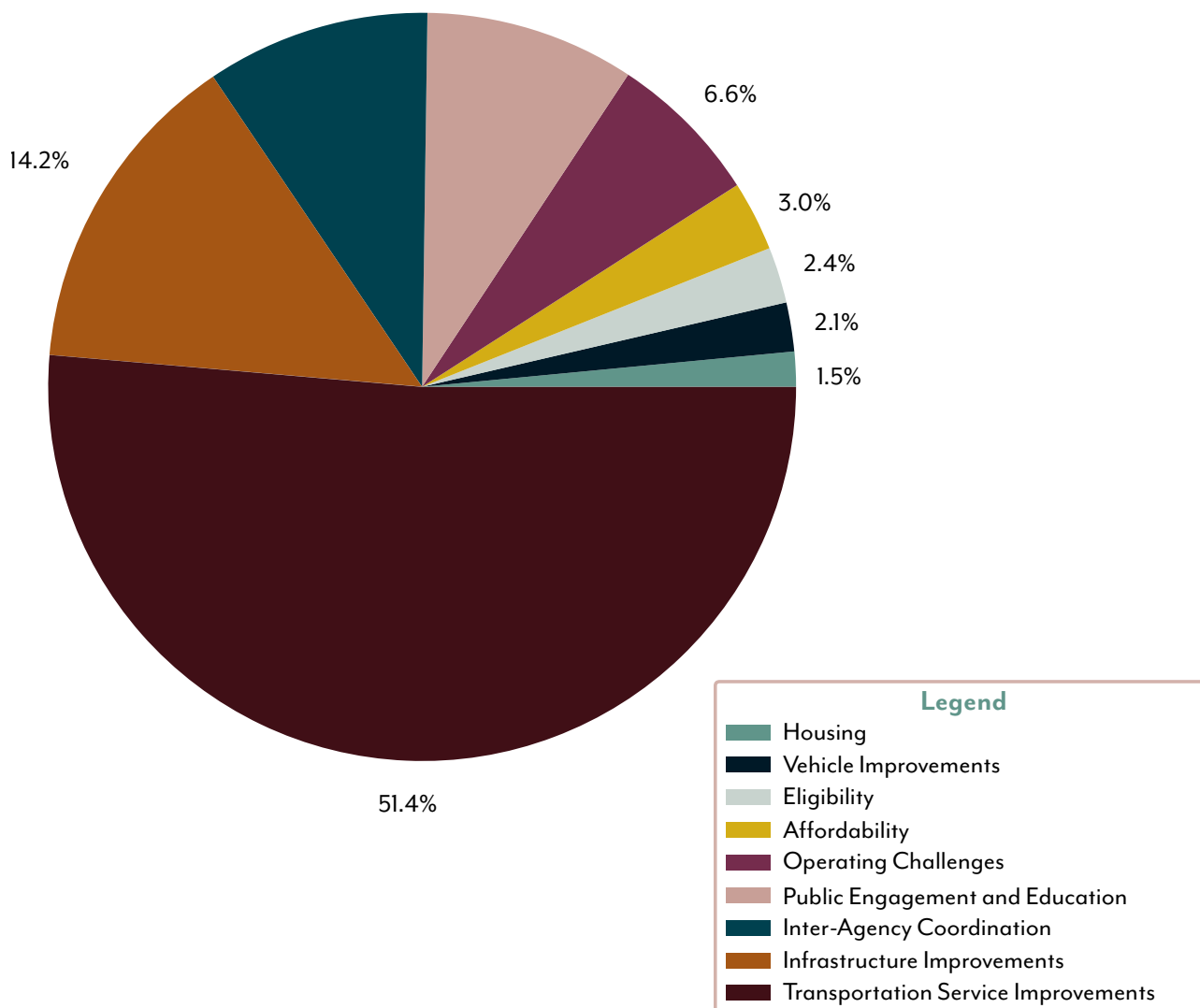
¹ While funding of benches and shelters are allowed under federal 5310 guidelines, as a practice, it is not part of the state Community Transit Grant Program. Other funding opportunities that may support these are listed in table 4-3 or may seek support from their regional transit authority.

FINDINGS FROM PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

There is a wide variety of unmet transportation needs for seniors and people with disabilities. Funding is limited, and therefore it’s necessary to prioritize investments thoughtfully. This Coordinated Plan does not attempt to dictate which strategies and actions should receive funding. Rather, it describes priorities for the Boston region based on how frequently needs were identified during the public engagement process as a way for transportation providers to develop Community Transit Grant Program (CTGP) applications. Public feedback indicated an ongoing need to improve infrastructure and general operations of human service transportation, while also improving the customer experience.

Figure 4-8 shows distribution of comment topics submitted to MPO staff. More than one-half of all comments received spoke of transportation service improvements, with the next most common topic areas being infrastructure improvements and inter-agency coordination.

FIGURE 4-8
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT COMMENT TOPIC AREA



The priorities listed below could help improve the coordination and implementation of transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities in a cost-effective manner, while expanding transportation options.

- **Coordinating public transit services.** A recurring theme was the need to coordinate available transportation services across municipal and regional transit agency boundaries. Human service transportation users report challenges of long, inconvenient transfer times. This is particularly evident in municipalities outside of the Inner Core, where public transit services are limited. In addition, current services have a variety of eligibility requirements and service areas, which result in the creation of unknown service gaps, both in who qualifies and geographically. Feedback indicated a desire for a regional approach to human service transportation to be explored, including a comprehensive mapping of transit services in the region and dispatch service.
- **Improving and maintaining transportation accessibility.** Many respondents noted inaccessible sidewalks near transit stations, blocked pedestrian facilities during inclement weather events, and limited accessible space on vehicles. Increasing the accessibility of general public transit can help to alleviate the demand for paratransit and other human service transportation-specific offerings.
- **Expanding service.** Respondents indicated a desire for human service transportation services to operate throughout the evening and weekends. In addition, respondents spoke of difficulty accessing medical services in municipalities other than the one they reside in. This indicates a need to prioritize the creation of new transit routes throughout the region.
- **Improving the customer experience.** A recurring theme from engagement is the need to improve driver training and retention strategies, include human service transportation users in the planning process, and create a centralized roster of available services. Respondents spoke of the vulnerability of human service transportation users and advocated expanding driver training to best support seniors and people with disabilities. Commenters noted that many users of human service transportation are immunocompromised and encourage the continued implementation of masking and surface disinfection policies. Other commenters shared anecdotes of moments of conflict when attempting to use the reserved priority seating on fixed-route services. One comment suggested connecting drivers with the MBTA's Riders' Transportation Access Group to begin this dialogue.

There are many resources in the Boston region that can help transportation providers implement these strategies. Table 4-3 presents a list of some of the state and federal funding sources available from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, the MPO, and MAPC that could support the implementation of the strategies and actions listed in this chapter, in addition to the CTGP. Although not a comprehensive list, it provides a resource for transportation providers, municipalities, and nonprofit organizations. Some sources provide funding directly for capital, operating, and/or mobility management costs, while others provide technical assistance for the development of project ideas.

TABLE 4-3
FUNDING RESOURCES

Agency	Funding Source	Description	Type of Resource
MassDOT	<u>Community Transit Grant Program</u>	Massachusetts' Section 5310 Program funding. Provides funding for capital and operating expenses and mobility management to improve mobility for seniors and people with disabilities.	Project implementation
MassDOT	ADA Retrofits	ADA Retrofits is an investment from MassDOT's CIP. Municipalities can initiate projects through their <u>Highway District Office</u> .	Project implementation
Boston Region MPO	<u>Transportation Improvement Program</u>	Provides funding for transportation infrastructure projects. A portion of total available funding is reserved each year for the <u>Community Connections</u> investment program. Eligible projects include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial startup operating costs for first- and last-mile connections (which may be in the form of transit, bicycle, or pedestrian connections) • Bike-supportive infrastructure • Bus lanes • Transit signal priority 	Project implementation
Boston Region MPO and MAPC	<u>Community Transportation Technical Assistance Program</u>	Provides municipal officials with technical advice on local transportation concerns, including safety, bicycle and pedestrian access, parking, and roadway redesign	Technical assistance
Boston Region MPO	<u>Regional Transit Service Planning Technical Support</u>	Provides RTAs, TMAs, and municipalities with assistance to address transit issues related to route planning, ridership, cost effectiveness, and other service characteristics	Technical assistance
MAPC	<u>Transportation Technical Assistance</u>	Provides technical assistance to address local parking management, mobility studies, procurement, and Complete Streets Prioritizations, including bike and pedestrian plans	Technical assistance
MAPC	<u>Technical Assistance Program</u>	Provides assistance with funding opportunities that enable and assist cities and towns in implementing projects that are beneficial to the community	Technical assistance

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act. CIP = Capital Investment Program. MAPC = Metropolitan Area Planning Council. MassDOT = Massachusetts Department of Transportation. MPO = metropolitan planning organization. RTA = regional transit agency. SOV = single-occupancy vehicle. TMA = transportation management association.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION



The Coordinated Plan provides information about existing transportation options in the region, transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities, and strategies to address these needs and support applications for Federal Transit Administration’s Section 5310 program, known in Massachusetts as the Community Transit Grant Program (CTGP). Overall, the public engagement undertaken to support the development of the Coordinated Plan highlighted a need for improved coordination of transit services to expand service for seniors and people with disabilities, especially as the population of the region ages, as well as reducing redundant services in the region and improving transportation infrastructure as key priorities.

This 2023 update to the Coordinated Plan replaces the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MPO) 2019 Coordinated Plan starting with the state fiscal year 2025 CTGP grant cycle. This document will be updated again in four years in concert with the Boston MPO’s next planned Long-Range Transportation Plan update, per federal guidance.

APPENDIX A

COORDINATED PLAN SURVEY INSTRUMENT



English



Default Question Block

Survey: How can transportation for older adults and people with disabilities be improved in the Boston region?

If you live in one of the [Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's \(MPO\) 97](#) cities and towns, we're looking for your input on public transit needs for older adults and people with disabilities, and ways to address those needs.

Your input will be used to update the region's Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan, which supports improved coordination of transportation for older adults and people with disabilities.

The survey should take about seven minutes to complete. All of your answers will be kept confidential.

Due to limitations of the Qualtrics software, this survey may not be completely accessible to respondents using screen readers. If you use a screen reader, please use the modified version of the survey: bit.ly/MPO-CP23-SR

Contact Stella Jordan at 857.702.3675 (phone), 617.570.9193 (TTY), or sjordan@ctps.org to learn more about the Coordinated Plan or if you have questions about this survey.

Block 1

Which best describes your affiliation?

- Regional Transit Agency
- Council on Aging (COA)
- Disability Commission or other municipal disability commission
- Other municipal government (not a COA or disability commission)
- State agency (such as Massachusetts Department of Transportation)
- Regional Coordinating Council
- Private transit provider (such as a Transportation Management Association or hospital)
- Private citizen
- Other (please specify)

If you are affiliated with an organization, please enter its

name:

Block 2

The following questions are about public transit needs and improvements in your community and/or the communities you serve. You may answer with either in mind.

Which infrastructure improvements would most effectively improve mobility for older adults and/or people with disabilities? Select top two.

- Improve accessibility and comfort at transit stations and stops (with features such as high-level platforms, elevators, escalators, benches, and bus stop shelters)
- Ensure that sidewalks and street crossings adjacent to public transit stations and stops are safe and ADA-compliant
- Improve maintenance of stations, stops, and the surrounding pedestrian environments (such as snow removal)
- Improve the comfort of the pedestrian environment adjacent to public transit stops and stations (with features such as benches and street-level lights)

Other:

Which public transit service improvements or expansions would most effectively improve mobility for older adults and/or people with disabilities? Select top two.

- Provide new or expand existing transit service that provides access to non-medical destinations (such as jobs)
- Expand existing transit service schedules to improve access to destinations throughout the day and/or on weekends
- Provide same-day, on-demand transit service
- Improve first- and last-mile transit service from transit stations to expand connections with senior centers and housing
- Improve customer service by providing training to vehicle operators to better meet the needs of older adults and/or people with disabilities
- Other:

Which improvements to the coordination of transit services would most effectively improve mobility for older adults and/or people with disabilities? Select top two.

- Provide new transit service between municipalities that have limited or no service
- Expand existing transit service between municipalities to reach more destinations

- Improve coordination between existing transit services to reduce transfers and travel times
- Develop collaborations and partnerships between transit service providers, including rideshare companies, to more efficiently meet common needs
- Other:

Which education improvements would most effectively improve mobility for older adults and/or people with disabilities? Select top two.

- Provide training opportunities for older adults and people with disabilities to learn which transportation services are available and how to use them
- Provide assistance navigating transit tracking and requesting tools such as smartphone apps
- Provide assistance for adult drivers who are giving up their cars to help them transition to using public transit
- Expand awareness of available transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities through advertising
- Other:

Please rank your selections from highest (1) to lowest (8) priority.

Improve accessibility and comfort at transit stations and stops (with features such as high-level platforms, elevators, escalators, benches, and bus stop shelters)

Ensure that sidewalks and street crossings adjacent to public transit stations and stops are safe and ADA-compliant

Improve maintenance of stations, stops, and the surrounding pedestrian environments (such as snow removal)

Improve the comfort of the pedestrian environment adjacent to public transit stops and stations (with features such as benches and street-level lights)

$\$ \{q://QID5/ChoiceTextEntryValue/5\}$

Provide new or expand existing transit service that provides access to non-medical destinations (such as jobs)

Expand existing transit service schedules to improve access to destinations throughout the day and/or on weekends

Provide same-day, on-demand transit service

Improve first- and last-mile transit service from transit stations to expand connections with senior centers and housing

Improve customer service by providing training to vehicle operators to better meet the needs of older adults and/or people with disabilities

$\$ \{q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue/6\}$

Provide new transit service between municipalities that have limited or no service

Expand existing transit service between municipalities to reach more destinations

Improve coordination between existing transit services to reduce transfers and travel times

Develop collaborations and partnerships between transit service providers, including rideshare companies, to more efficiently meet common needs

$\$ \{q://QID7/ChoiceTextEntryValue/5\}$

Provide training opportunities for older adults and people with disabilities to learn which transportation services are available and how to use them

Provide assistance navigating transit tracking and requesting tools such as smartphone apps

Provide assistance for adult drivers who are giving up their cars to help them transition to using public transit

Expand awareness of available transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities through advertising

$\$ \{q://QID8/ChoiceTextEntryValue/5\}$

What other transportation changes would you suggest to improve mobility and better address the transportation needs of older adults and/or people with disabilities?



New Demographics October 2022

Demographic Questions

The following questions help us to understand whether our surveys are reaching a diverse audience.

How do you self-identify by race and/or ethnicity? (Check all that apply.)

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic, Spanish origin or Latino/a/x
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Prefer not to answer

Other (please specify)

How many people are in your household? Include yourself.

What is your annual household income?

- Less than \$30,000
- \$30,000 or more
- Prefer not to answer

What is your annual household income?

- Less than \$35,000
- \$35,000 or more
- Prefer not to answer

What is your annual household income?

- Less than \$45,000
- \$45,000 or more

Prefer not to answer

What is your annual household income?

- Less than \$55,000
- \$55,000 or more
- Prefer not to answer

What is your annual household income?

- Less than \$65,000
- \$65,000 or more
- Prefer not to answer

What is your annual household income?

- Less than \$75,000
- \$75,000 or more
- Prefer not to answer

What is your annual household income?

- Less than \$85,000
- \$85,000 or more
- Prefer not to answer

What is your annual household income?

- Less than \$95,000
- \$95,000 or more
- Prefer not to answer

What is your annual household income?

- Less than \$110,000
- \$110,000 or more
- Prefer not to answer

Do you have a disability?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

What is your age?

- Under 18
- 18 - 21
- 22 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 64
- 65 - 74
- 75 and older
- Prefer not to answer

How do you identify by gender?

- Man
- Woman
- Non-binary
- Prefer to self-describe
- Prefer not to answer

What is your home zipcode?



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APPENDIX B

COMMENT LETTERS RECEIVED DURING PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD



Judy Shanley (@easterseals.com) sent a message via direct email to staff.

09.22.2023

Hi Betsy – Hope you are well. We have met via online meetings, I hope you remember me. I work at the National office of Easterseals and oversee our national technical projects including the National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM) and the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC). The work I do on NCMM is focused on building mobility management networks and coordination services across funding agencies, providers, modes, etc. We help FTA implement the tenets of the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM). I work closely with the FTA Region 1 office and states in this region. I actually live-in downtown Boston, so, I also have a personal interest in facilitating this work.

I hope the HST work in our region really impresses upon participants the significance of coordination – whether it be blending funding, cost sharing, sharing vehicles, removing policies that inhibit coordination, etc. When I lived in Chicago, the RTA actually gave preferential points to 5310 applicants to describe how they would coordinate services across providers. And this was talked about in their HST plan. An HST plan has such potential to bring together agencies other than DOT (such as Labor, HHS, etc.) – that this could be a great foundation for advancing coordination – perhaps building a regional mobility management network in our area. We know that every Federal/State agency has an interest in transportation and mobility – it affects the outcomes of their programs. So, why not bring them to the table through the HST plan?

I just got back from MN which has a robust statewide mobility management network and a state council on transportation access (MCOTA) that is comprised of high-level officials from across state agencies. When any transportation policy is considered all the MCOTA members can contribute to the thinking about how that policy may affect their work and program outcomes. When an HST plan has measurable outcomes – it can become a tool for continuous improvement in a region. It's a plan that connects the dots – is meaningful and doesn't sit on a shelf for another 7 years.

I have also reviewed HST plans more recently and seen connections with other Federal and/or state initiatives such as complete streets, SRTS, vision zero, healthy aging, ADA Transition plan, etc. By including content and actionable items related to these other programs, that demonstrates the “connectedness” of planning and service in a region. Its also useful to get the “buy in” from the leaders of these other programs.

Anyway – just want to share some thoughts with you based on my experiences in working with other places on HST plans. I know that Boston takes this work seriously – and I am excited about this plan being a launch for new and reinvigorated coordination in our region. Thanks for considering these comments. I look forward to seeing how this work advances.

Judy

Cole Rainey-Slavick ([redacted]@gmail.com) sent a message via direct email to staff.

Hello,

I am writing to provide feedback on the Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan.

In the section on transit service improvement I would urge you to edit the unmet need “Transit service to connect municipalities without traveling Boston” to Instead say “Circumferential transit without going downtown” because this isn’t only a problem limited to municipalities outside of Boston. It can also be extremely difficult to get across Boston without going significantly out of the way and through downtown. I would also like to see something like “develop/expand circumferential transit options” in the strategies and action section.

Additionally I am very happy to see “Restrooms and personal care facilities at public transit stations” included. As someone with IBS the lack of bathrooms can be a barrier to public transit for me during flare ups. I know there are many other kinds of disabilities that also impact the frequency and urgency of bathroom use. This is a disability justice issue and must be understood as such.

I am also very happy to see “Prioritize investments in public transportation improvements over private services.” The outsourcing of some of these services to Uber and other ride sharing companies has been extremely questionable. These companies do not have the same standards of service, or of accessibility more generally, compared to public transportation providers. They are also much harder to hold accountable. As such public money should not be going into private hands to provide an inferior service.

In the infrastructure improvement section I am happy to see everything on that list. The double standard of municipal services which clear roadways but not sidewalks needs to end and this would be a step in the right direction. High level platforms, beyond the accessibility benefits, also offer the potential to improve transit in general as level boarding reduces dwell times, allowing increased overall speed and frequency. Improvements to the sidewalks around transit stops is also crucial because all transit riders are also pedestrians at some point in their journey and making it easier for them to walk/roll to and from transit makes them more likely and more able to take it.

In the Inter-agency coordination section I am glad to see specific mention of “Long transfer times across municipal and RTA boundaries” and action items to “Coordinate services across municipal boundaries,” “Develop efficient transfer points between RTAs,” and “Integrate scheduling and fare structures.” While the RTA’s and MBTA on paper provide a compelling combined service, actually trying to use them as an integrated system really fails in practice. Poorly timed transfers add a lot of time to transit journeys, which can simply render it impractical and discourages people from taking it. This is even more the case without fare integration when you have to pay several times using different systems. While on the flip side, timed transfers and fare integration make transit easier, more functional, and more appealing.

In the housing section I am glad to see car-dependency for senior housing called out as an issue to address. This is immensely isolating, especially because aging and related impacts do affect one’s ability to drive. Improving walkability and transit accessibility to existing developments and ensuring that future developments do not conform to the car-centric mold is truly essential.

In the operating challenges section I am glad to see the issue of “Communication with passengers with limited English proficiency” explicitly mentioned. However I frankly do not think the best solution is translation. People who have limited English proficiency do not all speak the same language. Although some languages are more common in our area than others (Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Cape Verdean creole, Vietnamese, etc.) Even just including all of these common languages would take up an enormous amount of space on signage and make it difficult to quickly disseminate information. But there are at least 74 languages spoken in the Boston area. It is impossible to include all of them in signage. Instead I would urge you to take on a universal design approach, limiting the usage of text to where it is absolutely necessary and instead relying on symbology to express meaning that can be clearly understood by people from many different backgrounds.

Many other cities have followed this approach to rendering information accessible going back to Vienna and Otto Neurath. Some more recent examples to look at are Madrid and New York City. It would be great to see something like the Vienna Convention of Road Signs and Signals but for transit, walking, and biking.

In the affordability section I am glad to see “Free, reduced fare, or voucher programs” but I am concerned about “Subsidize private, on-demand service trips for older adults and people with disabilities.” As I indicated above I do not believe these have consistently provided the highest quality service disabled people deserve and have funneled public funds into public funds into private services, which could instead be going to actually providing quality service directly.

Finally I do not see any mention of biking in this plan. This is despite the fact that many seniors and disabled people do bike. In fact: “For two out of three disabled cyclists, riding a bike is easier than walking, easing joint strain, aiding balance and relieving breathing difficulties.” It is a mistake to leave this out. Safe biking infrastructure needs to be included in this plan and the needs of seniors and people with disabilities needs to be included in bike network planning, not as many NIMBYS who are neither seniors or disabled themselves cynically invoke for a defense of parking and car centrality, but in the sense of building infrastructure that is truly safe for people of all ages and abilities (sometimes referred to as 8 to 80).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cole Rainey-Slavick