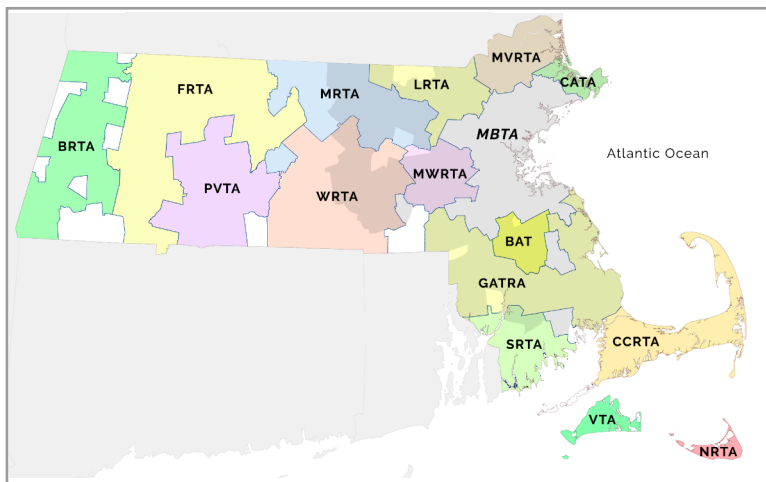


# Fact Sheet: Regional Transit Authorities

## Connecting Municipalities in Massachusetts

### RTAs Provide Public Transportation Throughout Massachusetts

- Massachusetts' 15 Regional Transit Authorities, or RTAs, provide fixed-route buses, dial-a-ride, and paratransit services in communities across the Commonwealth.
- The RTAs were created by state law (MGL Chapter 161B) in 1973 to provide public transit services to communities outside Greater Boston and to make up for the reduction of private bus services
- The MBTA ("the T") provides similar services as RTAs, as well as subways, commuter rail, trolleys, and ferries in Greater Boston.
- Most - but not all - municipalities in Massachusetts are served by an RTA and/or the MBTA.



### Types of Service

- Fixed-route bus service** - regular scheduled buses with set routes and times
- Paratransit or dial-a-ride service** - shared, origin-to-destination rides for people with disabilities and/or seniors



### How do RTAs Decide what Services to Offer? What Fares to Charge?

- Each RTA must periodically survey its region and adapt their routes, times, and fares to meet the communities' changing transportation needs with the revenue available.
- Each RTA has an advisory board that includes representatives of each municipality in that region; these RTA advisory boards usually meet monthly, are public meetings, and make decisions by a majority vote.
- The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) oversees the RTAs.
- The RTA Council, chaired by the gubernatorial-appointed MassDOT Secretary, exists to provide information and share best practices regarding public safety, security, cost savings, and general administrative management among the RTAs and the MBTA.

	Fixed-Route Bus Trips in 2016	Paratransit and Dial-a-Ride Trips in 2016
Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs)	32 million	2.4 million
MA Bay Transit Authority (MBTA)	113 million	2.2 million

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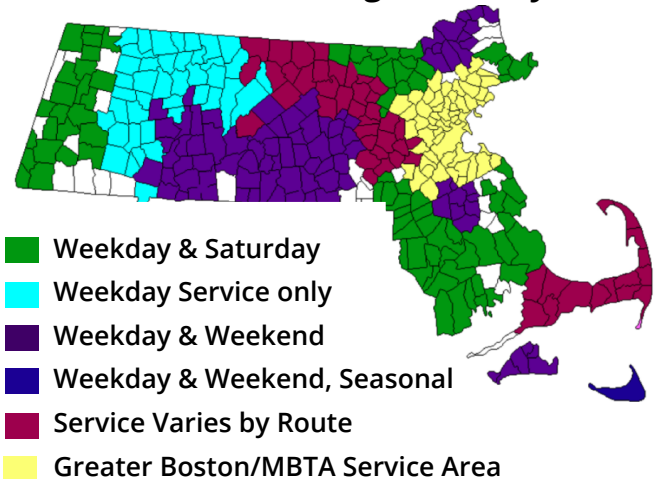
## Connecting Municipalities in Massachusetts

### How are RTAs funded?

- RTAs rely on a mix of state and federal dollars, fares, and local municipal assessments for its operating funds and for capital investments such as new buses and buildings.
- The state portion - much of which comes from the gas tax - is appropriated annually by the legislature in the operating budget as well as the capital budget.
- MA's Transportation Finance Act of 2013 envisioned an annual increase of 2.5% for RTAs - a rate that would provide at least \$88 million for RTAs in fiscal year 2019.
- The MA Association of RTAs (MARTA) represents the RTAs to lawmakers and public officials, and advocates for adequate funding and other policies.
- Beginning in 2018, T4MA and the MA Public Health Association convened the RTA Advocates Coalition to collaborate with MARTA to prevent significant service cuts and fare hikes.

### Current Challenges for RTAs: Amount of Funding, Timing of Funding

- RTAs do not have a dedicated funding source like the MBTA, therefore **state funding for each year's service is uncertain** until the final state budget is passed.
- Annual uncertainty and inadequate funding has begun to erode the service levels of RTAs
- Currently, **none of the 15 RTAs can afford to provide late-night service**; many end service by 6:30pm and/or do not provide service on Sundays or on weekends.
- The **geographic boundaries of the 15 RTAs are challenging** for both staff and riders.
- The people who rely most on RTA services can least afford to pay higher fares.



### How to Get Involved

1. Attend meetings of your RTA's advisory board; volunteer to serve on the board; assist with the next service assessment
2. Encourage your state legislators and Governor Baker to better invest in RTAs.
3. Contact Angela Johnson ([ajohnson@t4ma.org](mailto:ajohnson@t4ma.org)) or Andrea Freeman ([afreeman@mapublichealth.org](mailto:afreeman@mapublichealth.org)) if you'd like to be a part of the RTA Advocates Coalition

### More Information:

- List of RTA's by region and town: <https://tinyurl.com/RTAsinMA>
- Chapter 161B, the law creating RTAs: <https://tinyurl.com/Chapter161B>
- The 2013 Transportation Finance Act: <https://tinyurl.com/TransportationFinanceMA>
- Check out [www.t4ma.org/keepingontrack](http://www.t4ma.org/keepingontrack), T4MA's report on funding for transportation in MA

