



Pioneer Valley Transit Authority



Public Participation Plan



Adopted 11/15/2017

2808 Main Street, Springfield Massachusetts 01107

(413) 781-7882 Customer Service • (413) 732-6248 Administration • www.pvta.com

www.facebook.com/PioneerValleyTransitAuthority • twitter.com/pvta

Translation/Tradução/Traducción/翻译/ Перевод/ Dịch

English: If this information is needed in another language, please contact the PVTA Title VI Specialist at 413-732-6248 x230.

Portuguese: Caso esta informação seja necessária em outro idioma, favor contar o Especialista em Título VI do PVTA pelo telefone 413-732-6248 x230.

Spanish: Si necesita esta información en otro idioma, por favor contacte al especialista de PVTA del Título VI al 413-732-6248 x230.

Chinese Simplified: (mainland & Singapore): 如果需要使用其它语言了解信息，请联系麻纱湾区交通局（PVTA）《民权法案》第六章专员，电话413-732-6248 x230。

Chinese Traditional: (Hong Kong & Taiwan): 如果需要使用其它語言了解信息，請聯繫麻省灣區交通局（PVTA）《民權法案》第六章專員，電話413-732-6248 x230。

Russian: Если Вам необходима данная информация на любом другом языке, пожалуйста, свяжитесь со специалистом по Титулу VI PVTA по тел: 413-732-6248 x230.

Haitian Creole: Si yon moun vle genyen enfòmasyon sa yo nan yon lòt lang, tanpri kontakte Espesyalis PVTA Title VI la nan nimewo 413-732-6248 x230.

Vietnamese: Nếu quý vị cần thông tin này bằng tiếng khác, vui lòng liên hệ Chuyên viên Luật VI của PVTA theo số điện thoại 413-732-6248 x230.

French: Si vous avez besoin d'obtenir une copie de la présente dans une autre langue, veuillez contacter le spécialiste du Titre VI de PVTA en composant le 413-732-6248 x230.

Italian: Se ha bisogno di ricevere queste informazioni in un'altra lingua si prega di contattare lo Specialista PVTA del Titolo VI al numero 413-732-6248 x230.

Khmer: ប្រសិនបើលោក-អ្នកត្រូវការបកប្រែពីភាសានេះសូមទាក់ទងអ្នកឯកទេសលើជំពូកទី6 របស់ PVTA តាមរយៈលេខទូរស័ព្ទ 413-732-6248 x230

Arabic: إن كنت بحاجة إلى هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، يُرجى الاتصال بأخصائي الفقرة السادسة على الهاتف 413-732-6248 x230

Contents

1.	PURPOSE AND NEED FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN	5
1.1	Purpose and Need for this Plan	5
1.1.1	Federal Protections	5
1.1.2	State Protections	6
1.2	Process to Develop and Adopt This Plan	6
1.3	Outreach to People Often Underrepresented in Planning Processes	7
2.	TYPES OF ACTIVITIES THAT INVOLVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	8
2.1	Activities that Require Formal Public Hearings	8
2.2	Activities that Involve the PVTA Advisory Board and Subcommittees	8
2.3	Activities that Involve Public Processes of Other Agencies	8
2.4	PVTA Customer Service and Marketing	9
3.	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGIES AND METHODS	10
3.1	Internet Communication	10
3.2	Notices on Vehicles	10
3.3	Media	11
3.4	Public Meetings	11
3.5	Individual Consultations	12
3.6	Participating in Meetings Held by Others	12
3.7	Surveys	13
3.8	Methods for Engaging People Often Underrepresented in Planning	13
3.9	Assuring Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	13
4.	OBJECTIVES, PERFORMANCE MEASURES, AND DESIRED OUTCOMES	14
	REFERENCES	16
	Appendix 1: Pioneer Valley Transit Authority Public Hearing Policy	17
1.	Public hearing requirements for major service change	17
2.	Initiation of the public hearing process for fare or service changes	17
3.	Public hearing locations, accommodations, and language access	18
4.	Public notification requirements	19
5.	Additional methods for submitting public hearing comments	20
6.	Documentation of the public hearing process	20
7.	Proposed changes that do not require public hearings	20
8.	Disparate impacts and disproportionate burdens analysis	21

9. Waivers and amendments.....	21
Appendix 2: PVTA Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burdens Policies.....	22
Disparate Impact Policy (racial discrimination).....	22
Disproportionate Impact Policy (low-income discrimination)	22
Appendix 3: Pioneer Valley Transit Authority Fares and Passes	23
Appendix 4: Example Public Hearing Notice.....	24
Appendix 5: Public Meeting or Hearing Check List.....	25
Appendix 6: Example Public Meeting Sign-in Sheet	26
Appendix 7: Title VI Map Tools for Pioneer Valley Region	27
Appendix 8: PVTA Services, Ridership, and Customers	28
PVTA Services.....	28
PVTA Ridership and Customer Demographics.....	30
Bus Riders	31
Income of Bus Riders	31
Race of Bus Riders	32
Language and English Proficiency of Bus Riders.....	33
Paratransit Van Customers.....	33
Income of Paratransit Van Customers.....	33
Race of Paratransit Van Customers	34
Languages and English Proficiency of Paratransit Customers.....	34
Appendix 10: Customer Surveys and Public Participation.....	36
Appendix 11: Rider Survey on Meeting Time and Location Preferences	38

1. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

As a public agency, the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) is obligated to proactively communicate information about its services, fares, and projects to its riders, member communities, and the general public. PVTA must also provide convenient ways for the public to participate in transit planning processes. The purpose of this Public Participation Plan is to explain how PVTA will do that. This section describes PVTA's services and communities served; explains the purpose and need for this plan; and describes the process of developing and adopting it.

1.1 Purpose and Need for this Plan

The purpose of this plan is to describe the information and public participation processes involved in the planning and delivery PVTA's services and projects.

The need for this plan stems from PVTA's role as a public agency and recipient of state and federal transportation funds. PVTA must ensure that the benefits of its services are available as fairly as possible to all residents of member communities—and in a manner that reflects the values of these communities. Also, PVTA needs to make sure its services are available equitably to all persons who are members of classes of individuals protected by federal and state laws.

To assure the stability and maximization of federal and institutional funding, PVTA must fulfill all relevant legal obligations for public participation for transit agencies that receive federal transportation funds, including 49 USC Sections 5307(b) and 5307(c)(1)(I), which require that there be locally developed processes to solicit and consider public comments before making any changes in fares, significant changes in service, and/or capital project development.

1.1.1 Federal Protections

To fulfill the purpose and needs described above, PVTA has prepared this plan consistent with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations. Title VI prohibits discrimination in federally assisted programs and requires that "No person in the United States shall on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." The key objectives of Title VI that are relevant to this plan are to:

- Ensure that the level and quality of public transportation service is provided in a nondiscriminatory manner.
- Promote full and fair participation in public transportation decision-making without regard to race, color, or national origin.
- Ensure meaningful access to transit-related programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency.

Related federal nondiscrimination laws administered by the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, or both prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, sex, and

disability. Additionally, PVTA provides meaningful access to its programs, services, and activities to individuals with limited English proficiency, in compliance with US Department of Transportation policy and guidance on federal Executive Order 13166.

1.1.2 State Protections

PVTA also complies with the Massachusetts Public Accommodation Law, M.G.L. c 272 §§ 92a, 98, 98a, which prohibits making any distinction, discrimination, or restriction in admission to or treatment in a place of public accommodation based on race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or ancestry.

Prior to the adoption of this plan, PVTA's public involvement procedures and practices were, with the approval of the Federal Transit Administration and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, drawn from the approved public participation plan of the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (PVMPO), of which PVTA is a member.

However, in 2016 the PVMPO significantly modified its public participation plan to comply with new requirements for MPOs contained in the federal Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act adopted December 4, 2015. The PVMPO's new 2016 public participation plan includes provisions geared to facilitate regional planning in the PVMPO's 43-municipality service area that are not relevant to PVTA, which serves 24 communities, two of which are not in the PVMPO region. Complying with the additional requirements of the PVMPO's new public participation plan proved time-consuming and inefficient for PVTA. Therefore, PVTA has produced this plan, which focuses on fulfilling the public participation needs and requirements of PVTA and its customers, communities, and federal partners.

1.2 Process to Develop and Adopt This Plan

This public participation plan was developed and adopted through the following process.

- PVTA's prior public hearing policy (adopted September 23, 2015) was reviewed for consistency with peer agency policies, best practices, and lessons learned from prior iterations of the policy. A revised version of the PVTA public hearing policy was developed and presented to the Advisory Board with this plan. The proposed revised policy is included as Appendix 1. Consistent with best practices, the disparate impacts and disproportionate burdens policies were established as separate documents; however, the policy threshold variance of 20% established in the September 23, 2015 policy was not altered.
- The Public Participation Plan of the Pioneer Valley MPO, which has functioned as PVTA's public participation plan, was reviewed to determine which elements were relevant and applicable to PVTA's service area and legal obligations. These sections were retained for inclusion in this plan.
- PVTA consulted with the following local agencies and community based organizations to review a draft of this plan so that their comments could be incorporated:

- Pioneer Valley Regional Coordinating Council (6/16/17 consultation with chair)
 - Joint Transportation Committee of the Pioneer Valley MPO (8/9/17)
 - Arise for Social Justice (10/25/17)
- PVTA posted the full copy of the draft of this plan on the PVTA website (www.pvta.com) along with a summary from September 1, 2017 through adoption.
 - Email notifications of the availability of the draft PPP for review were sent to all PVTA Advisory Board members, Town Clerks, relevant agencies, and others.
 - A telephone comment line was set up to receive recorded messages of up to 3 minutes about the plan.
 - A dedicated email address was set up to receive comments about the draft PPP.
 - Four public meetings and listening sessions were held to offer additional opportunities for in-person feedback.
 - A rider survey was conducted in October which received 161 responses (see App. 3).
 - A summary of public comments received and revisions made to the draft PPP in response to comments was presented to PVTA Advisory Board.

1.3 Outreach to People Often Underrepresented in Planning Processes

PVTA understand that participation in community and government planning processes, including those for transportation planning, requires residents to give up some of their personal time—while planners and transportation planning officials are typically paid to do this work and attend meetings.

Consequently, many residents do not have time or the ability to participate in planning. They may work second shift or have multiple jobs; they may have primary childcare responsibilities; they may use a mobility assistance device that limits the locations where they can safely or conveniently meet; they may already volunteer for other organizations; or they may need to attend to any number of important life tasks.

And so the needs and concerns of many people are often underrepresented in plans that may have an impact on their lives and communities.

PVTA is sensitive to this fact. This plan and is committed to reaching out to people who are often left out of planning processes.

2. TYPES OF ACTIVITIES THAT INVOLVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

From the smile that a bus driver gives riders as they board each morning, to the construction of multi-million-dollar facilities, PVTA engages with the public and its customers everyday and in many ways.

PVTA recognizes there are many different types of activities that require public participation. PVTA strives to use the strategies and procedures that are best-suited to each situation and type of information that need to be communicated to customers and the public.

This section describes five general types of activities in which PVTA engages that involve public participation.

2.1 Activities that Require Formal Public Hearings

There are four types of activities for which PVTA is required to conduct formal public participation (see Attachment 1 PVTA Public Hearing Policy). In summary, these are:

- Proposals for changes to the cost of fares or the way that they are paid.
- Proposals for a major change in bus or paratransit van service (typically when 25% or more of a bus route or paratransit van service area is affected).
- A new transit service is proposed.
- A new capital project is planned.

2.2 Activities that Involve the PVTA Advisory Board and Subcommittees

The meetings of the PVTA Advisory Board are a regular venue for public participation. There are regularly scheduled 10 meetings per year, and time for public comment is reserved at each meeting. For participation in capital, financial, and service planning, PVTA encourages public attendance at these meetings, as well as those of the Advisory Board's Financial, Paratransit, and Route Planning subcommittees. The dates, times and locations of all these meetings are posted on www.pvta.com.

Also, PVTA Advisory Board members function as liaisons to their respective communities, sharing information with residents, local officials, and municipal agencies; board members also share comments from the PVTA customers, officials, businesses, and other constituents of their communities.

2.3 Activities that Involve Public Processes of Other Agencies

PVTA also participates in the public participation processes held by other agencies that pertain to plans and projects of the PVTA, thereby offering additional opportunities for public participation of people who wish to learn about and comment on PVTA services and projects. These are described below.

- As a recipient of FTA Section 5307 program funds, PVTA integrates its compliance with the public participation requirements of that program with the locally adopted public involvement process of the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization,

particularly for the development of the annual Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), as well as the MPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). For projects that are included on the PVMPO's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), PVTA meets the program-of-projects requirements of the federal Urbanized Area Formula Program. The Chair of the PVTA Advisory Board is a voting member of the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (PVMPO), and the PVTA Administrator is an ex-officio member. All PVTA capital projects, as well as bus replacements and maintenance expenditures, are included on the TIP. The TIP development process involves additional public involvement activities and timeframes for public review and comment.

- PVTA staff work directly with the PVMPO, its Joint Committee on Transportation, the PVMPO's support staff at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, the PVTA Advisory Board, and its Finance subcommittee to develop the PVTA-sponsored projects that are included and evaluated as part of the regional transportation improvement plan (TIP) process. PVTA staff attend JTC meetings, where information and comments on transit projects in the region are exchanged.
- PVTA also participates in the PVMPO's development of the Regional Transportation Plan, which involves extensive public participation and comment on transit-related elements of that plan.
- PVTA also participates in the annual update process of Massachusetts Department of Transportation's annual Capital Investment Plan, which involves public comment sessions throughout the Commonwealth.
- In addition, any projects that require an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement will involve additional public involvement, as presented in joint FHWA/FTA environmental regulations, "Environmental Impact and Related Procedures," 23 C.F.R. Part 771, as well as those of the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA).

2.4 PVTA Customer Service and Marketing

PVTA performs many activities that involve sharing information with the public about the wide range of services and programs that PVTA provides. This involves ongoing daily engagement with riders and the public through many different channels, which are summarized below.

- Customer service offices at Union Station and Holyoke Transportation Center, including walk-in assistance, telephone assistance, and email correspondence.
- Public events to introduce new services, support existing services, vehicles, facilities, customer conveniences, organizational milestones.
- Paid advertising with local media outlets to air public service announcements and messages to make customers aware of PVTA services and ways to contact the authority.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGIES AND METHODS

PVTA recognizes that different types of decisions have different impact for customers and the public. Therefore, PVTA attempts to scale its public participation activities relative to the potential impact of changes that are being considered. Criteria include: the scale of a proposal (typically regional, municipal, or neighborhood); the level or frequency of the potential impact; and the short- and long-term financial impacts for customers, taxpayers, and PVTA itself.

This section describes the public participation strategies and methods that are available to PVTA. These are selected and implemented on the best judgment of PVTA staff and Advisory Board members with respect to the criteria above. PVTA also recognizes that public participation can be a fluid process, and that outreach measures may be added or altered, depending on the scale of a proposal's impact and changes in the level of public interest.

3.1 Internet Communication

The PVTA's website (www.pvta.com) is the agency's primary channel for public information and participation. All relevant news and information about bus schedules, van services, planning projects, agency governance, compliance with regulations, employment opportunities, vital documents related to service benefits, and many other topics are posted on this website. Importantly, the "News" and "Upcoming Meetings" pages are updated whenever a new meeting or event is scheduled.

PVTA also operates a real-time bus tracker website (bustracker.pvta.com) that provides bus schedule and arrival information based on actual bus locations.

PVTA also provides bus schedule information to the "My Stop" web-based application for iPhone and Android to provide users of those devices to access bus schedule information.

PVTA also uses these social media services to communicate with bus riders:

- [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/pg/Pioneer-Valley-Transit-Authority) (www.facebook.com/pg/Pioneer-Valley-Transit-Authority)
- [Twitter](https://twitter.com/pvta) (<https://twitter.com/pvta>)
- YouTube (www.youtube.com)

3.2 Notices on Vehicles

Posting of special printed notices in English and Spanish on PVTA buses and vans is one of the most effective and inexpensive methods available to PVTA for communicating information to customers. Notices are typically for meetings and are posted at least 14 days before any event or change is scheduled to occur, and phone numbers to call for more information are included on every notice.

On buses, PVTA also posts printed "car cards," which are advertisement-sized notices, in the areas above customer seating. Car cards are typically used for policy information, rather than to promote meetings or changes. Car cards are also produced in English and Spanish.

3.3 Media

Media relations involve an increasing number of outlets and audiences. PVTA strives to target information to the people who will likely be most interested in it, and to use the media channels that they are most likely to watch, read, or listen to. As such, PVTA media relations involves a menu of items, which include:

- Press releases
- Paid advertising.
- Community calendar listings in newspapers, community newsletters, email lists, websites, and other media.
- Reciprocal sponsorships with radio, TV and internet media outlets.
- Making public information available in easy-to-understand formats.
- Public media (including local minority and non-English newspapers, radio stations, and television stations)
- Posters, display boards, and flyers
- Fact sheets
- Brochures
- Annual Report
- Public service announcements
- Mailing and email lists
- Information stands at local events

3.4 Public Meetings

Public meetings are critical to public participation. PVTA holds many types of public meetings, including:

- Bus rider forums, which are held quarterly at terminals and major bus route hubs
- Paratransit van rider meetings, which are held quarterly at accessible locations used by significant numbers of van riders.
- Formal meetings with specific agendas.
- Informal workshops.
- Customer listening sessions on service and planning topics proposed by PVTA, typically held at terminals or near major bus route hubs.
- Open houses where members of the public may speak individually or in groups with PVTA staff.

- Settings where PVRTA representatives are available to speak directly with members of the public, such as media events.
- Public hearings that are required by the PVRTA Public Hearing Policy (Appendix 1).
- Public comment time at all PVRTA Advisory Board meetings.

PVRTA holds all its public gatherings in facilities that are accessible for people with disabilities and, wherever possible, near a bus route. PVRTA typically reviews demographic information about area where the meeting is to be held to decide when notices should be translated into languages other than English.

The availability of meeting handouts alternative formats—Braille, large print, and/or audio cassette, and languages other than English—as well as other accommodations (language interpreters, sign language interpreters, CART translators, etc.) is explained in the meeting notices along with specific information on how to request these accommodations.

PVRTA strives to make meetings welcoming to all members of the public. To develop this plan, PVRTA surveyed riders to better understand what times of day and in places are convenient for customers and community residents (see Appendix 3). Staff arranging these meetings are proactive in asking what languages are likely to be spoken by all potential participants.

3.5 Individual Consultations

PVRTA arranges individual one-on-one consultations with customers in cases where people may wish to speak privately. These consultations are usually arranged in conjunction with a regularly scheduled public meeting, and instructions for scheduling one are provided in the meeting notice. Staff are proactive in asking what languages should be available for these consultations.

3.6 Participating in Meetings Held by Others

PVRTA representatives frequently attend meetings held by stakeholder and constituent groups, either at their invitation, or when requested by PVRTA. Attending regular meetings of other organizations is a very efficient and effective means of public participation, as it significantly reduces logistical costs to PVRTA. These types of meetings include:

- Municipal transportation committees
- Community based organizations
- Business associations
- Gatherings of elected and municipal officials
- Hearings or public meetings for development of projects that may affect PVRTA service
- Neighborhood councils and associations
- Project planning meetings held by municipal departments of public works, MassDOT, and the PVMPO

3.7 Surveys

PVTA actively solicits public participation through regular surveys of customers and the regional travel market. These include:

- Bus rider customer satisfaction surveys
- Bus rider route-specific surveys
- Paratransit van riders satisfaction surveys
- Paratransit van riders service-specific surveys
- Non-transit rider market surveys

3.8 Methods for Engaging People Often Underrepresented in Planning

When deemed appropriate and reasonable, PVTA may also conduct other activities to solicit public comment, including but not limited to:

- Public workshops in accessible locations, in addition to traditional meeting places.
- Combining meeting outreach efforts with ongoing marketing and promotions efforts.
- Providing notices to radio and television stations in English and Spanish.
- Taking proactive steps to ascertain in what languages written materials and public meetings should be available.
- Posting meeting presentations on www.pvta.com and emailing presentations to community groups for posting on their social media pages. This allows the public to review proceedings and comment through emails and letters.

3.9 Assuring Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 encourages the involvement of people with disabilities in the development and improvement of transportation and paratransit services.

PVTA strives to meet all ADA guidelines through the following steps and strategies:

- All meetings are accessible to persons with mobility limitations.
- When necessary, auxiliary aids and services are furnished when reasonably feasible to allow a person with a disability to participate at public meetings. These include such services or devices as sign language interpreters, assistive listening headsets for simultaneous language translation, telecommunication devices for deaf persons (TDDs), pre-taped narrative descriptions, brailled materials, and larger print materials.
- Public meeting notices specify that such accommodations will be provided upon request within a reasonable window prior to the meeting date.
- Information posted on www.pvta.com is compatible with voice-to-text screen readers.

4. OBJECTIVES, PERFORMANCE MEASURES, AND DESIRED OUTCOMES

PVTA measures the performance of its services by identifying relevant data, collecting it, and evaluating it.

For public participation, PVTA focuses on the information that will be most helpful to Advisory Board members, administrative staff, and contract transit service operators in understanding how well PVTA is doing in achieving its desired public participation outcomes.

The matrix below summarizes PVTA's public participation objectives; the performance measure(s) that are monitored related to the objective; and the desired public participation outcome for each objective.

Objective	Performance Measures	Desired Outcomes
1 Make all useful information about PVTA services and plans easily available.	# of website visits # of document downloads # of social media posts # of public meeting attendees	Increased public accessing of information.
2 Respond to, and proactively address, customers' information needs.	# of visits/inquiries to Customer Service offices # of calls answered by telephone representatives # of media postings and comments	Maintain and increase PVTA's responsiveness to customer information requests.
3 Encourage customer feedback	# of complaints (phone, email, web) # of compliments (phone, email, web interface) # of persons contacted/engaged at face-to-face meetings	Increase the number of customers who provide feedback. Improve the use of feedback obtained through review with staff and transit operators.
4 Be responsive and accountable to customers and the public	# of bus rider forums held and attendance # of van rider meetings held and attendance # of individual consultations held # of meetings held by others attended	Maintain and increase the availability of PVTA staff to customers.
5 Ensure that the benefits of PVTA services are available to all	All vital documents are posted on www.pvta.com All vital documents are translated to Spanish and available in other languages on request At meetings, Spanish translation is always available and translation to other languages is available on request Accommodation for people visual and hearing disabilities is always available when anticipated and	Assure that all vital documents relevant to the availability of the benefits of PVTA services are easily available in all languages and formats that may be requested or reasonably anticipated.

	<p>available on request in other instances.</p> <p>In-person translation at meetings</p> <p>Surveys are available in Spanish</p> <p>Surveys are available to be taken by phone for people with visual impairment</p>	
6 Provide formal public participation opportunities whenever fare changes, service reductions, or capital project plans are considered	PVTA Public Hearing Policy is updated regularly and complies with federal requirements	<p>PVTA meets and exceeds requirements for formal public participation for fare changes, service reductions, and project development.</p> <p>PVTA always gives its best effort to inform the public about important changes in fares and service.</p>
7 Inform the general public (including non-riders) of PVTA's services and plans	<p># of press releases issued</p> <p># of interviews performed</p> <p># of website updates</p>	PVTA uses all media and internet channels available to provide update-to-date information to people who need it.
8 Provide customers with accurate and helpful service information	<p>Printed schedules are current and available on all buses and terminals</p> <p>Website schedules are current and available</p> <p># Bus rider forums held</p> <p># Bus riders contacted</p> <p># Van rider meetings held</p> <p># Van riders contacted</p>	<p>PVTA service information is always easily available in formats that are convenient for customers and the public.</p> <p>PVTA staff is available regularly to meet face-to-face with transit customers.</p>
9 Survey customers and the public to identify successful services and programs and opportunities for improvement	<p>All PVTA bus routes are surveyed every three years</p> <p>Paratransit van riders are surveyed at least every three years</p> <p>Non-transit rider market information is compiled every three years</p>	PVTA obtains reliable, relevant, and timely customer satisfaction and demographic information.
10 Community relations	<p># of community meetings attended</p> <p># of meetings with business associations and individual businesses</p> <p># meetings with local property owners and developers</p> <p># meetings with municipal elected officials and agency staff</p>	<p>PVTA is well-known and accessible to stakeholders in its service region.</p> <p>PVTA participates in municipal and local development processes that could affect transit riders.</p>

REFERENCES

- Federal Transit Administration. Circular 4702.1B “Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients.” 2012. <www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/fta-circulars/title-vi-requirements-and-guidelines-federal-transit>
- Federal Transit Administration. Title VI Public Outreach and Board Approval. <www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/Title_VI_PublicBoardoutreach_11.12_ER.pdf> 11/5/12
- Federal Highway Administration. “Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-Making.” 2015. <www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/public_involvement/publications/techniques>
- Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization. Public Participation Plan. 2016. www.pvpc.org/file/pioneer-valley-mpo-public-participation-plan-endorsement-signatures.pdf
- Pioneer Valley Transit Authority. Southern System Customer Survey 2015. <<http://www.pvta.com/media/pdfs/PVTA%202015%20Southern%20System%20Survey%2004-20-16%20FINAL.pdf>>
- Pioneer Valley Transit Authority. Northern System Customer Survey 2016. <http://www.pvta.com/media/pdfs/PVTA%202016%20Northern%20System%20Survey%2008-12-16%20FINAL.pdf>
- Pioneer Valley Transit Authority. Limited English Proficiency Language Assistance Plan (LEP LAP). September 23, 2015.

Appendix 1: Pioneer Valley Transit Authority Public Hearing Policy

(As amended and adopted 11/15/2017)

PVTA establishes and updates this Public Hearing Policy to fulfill federal requirements and guidelines for public involvement; encourage the participation of residents and stakeholders in its member communities in PVTA's planning processes; and engage PVTA riders and the general public in providing input on proposed service reductions or alterations, fare and media changes, and new capital projects.

1. Public hearing requirements for major service change

PVTA will hold public hearings and fulfill the requirements of this Public Hearing Policy when:

- Any change in PVTA fare policies, rates, or media is being considered by the Advisory Board; or
- A reduction or alteration of service to one or more existing PVTA bus routes or paratransit services is proposed that would result in a major service change, which is considered to be one or more of the following:
 1. Reduces the number of revenue service hours per day that a fixed bus route and/or a paratransit van service operates by 25% or more, or;
 2. Reduces the frequency that a fixed bus route and/or paratransit van service operates by 25% or more (where "frequency" is defined as number of bus or van trips per day), or;
 3. Alters the structure of a fixed bus route and/or paratransit service by 25% or more (where "structure" is defined as the locations of the bus stops that a bus route services and/or the geographic area in which a paratransit van service operates), or;
 4. Reduces the number of hours per day of operation of Senior Service (non-ADA) paratransit van transportation by 25% or more; or
- A new bus route or paratransit service or other transit service is proposed, or;
- A major new capital construction or planning project that involves Federal or State funding participation is proposed.

2. Initiation of the public hearing process for fare or service changes

The public hearing process will be initiated by the Advisory Board for proposals of the type and meeting one or more of the threshold criteria in Section 1 above.

If such a proposal or proposals are considered by the Route, Finance, and/or Paratransit Committee(s) of the Advisory Board, then relevant recommendations or actions by these committees and relevant supporting information will be presented to the members of the Advisory Board for their consideration prior to board action(s) and/or vote(s) on these proposal(s).

3. Public hearing locations, accommodations, and language access

The following conditions apply to PVRTA public hearings:

- For proposals that are system-wide in nature (i.e., fare-related), a minimum of four public hearings will be held (one in Springfield; one in Holyoke, Chicopee or Westfield; one in Northampton; and one in Amherst).
- For proposals that apply to individual bus routes or communities served by paratransit, at least one public hearing will be held in each transit corridor or community that would be affected by the proposed change.
- Public hearings will be held at locations that are accessible to PVRTA fixed bus routes, such as public libraries, municipal buildings, and similar facilities that are convenient to PVRTA bus riders or are served by paratransit if no fixed route bus stop is within walking distance. Hearing locations must be ADA accessible.
- Public hearings will be held at times of day that are likely to be convenient to the greatest number of PVRTA customers and the public, and when PVRTA service is available for people who are likely to be affected by the proposal(s).
- A meeting moderator who is not a PVRTA employee will be provided if numerous attendees are expected at a public hearing. Fair and reasonable limits on speaking time for public hearing attendees may be imposed so that all who wish to speak may do so.
- Complete audio recordings of the hearing will be made.
- At least one member of PVRTA senior staff (Administrator, Manager of Planning and Operations, or Chief Financial Officer) will attend each hearing.
- Translators for languages other than English will be provided upon request at least 7 calendar days before the hearing date. Spanish language translation will be provided at all hearings where any Spanish speaking customers and residents can reasonably be expected to attend. Requests for language translation received less than 7 calendar days prior to the hearing date or at the hearing itself will be accommodated to the best availability of staff. Staff will be proactive in determining potential needs to present written materials and meeting content in languages other than English and Spanish by proactively consulting riders, community organizations, local officials, board members and available demographic tools and information.
- Sign language interpretation and verbal descriptive assistance for people with visual impairments will be provided upon request at least 7 calendar days prior to the hearing. Requests for assistance received less than 7 calendar days prior to the hearing date or at the hearing itself will be accommodated to the best availability of staff.

4. Public notification requirements

Public notifications of public hearings will include at a minimum the following:

- Preparation of a public hearing notice in English and Spanish that states: the purpose, date, time, and location of the hearing(s); the PVTA website address and phone number; and contact information to request language translation, sign interpretation and/or other accommodation.
- Preparation of a public hearing notice in a language or languages other than English or Spanish if requested by the public or suggested by a member of the PVTA Advisory Board or the public, or upon staff recommendation. Staff will be proactive in determining potential participant language needs for public hearings.
- Preparation and distribution of a press release or calendar announcement stating the hearing purpose and date(s) of the public hearing(s). The press release will be submitted at least 14 calendar days prior to the hearing date to the Daily Hampshire Gazette, Springfield Republican, and other relevant local and regional newspapers and websites, including a Spanish version to at least one Spanish language paper (El Pueblo Latino or La Voz Hispana satisfy this requirement).
- PVTA Advisory Board members will receive a copy of the hearing notice via email in a timely manner so they may advise interested constituents and local officials.
- The public hearing notice will be posted on the PVTA website at least 14 days before the hearing date.
- Public hearing notices for proposals that would affect fixed bus route service will be posted on PVTA buses that operate in the geographic area affected by the proposal at least 14 days before the hearing date.
- Public hearing notices for proposals that would affect paratransit van services will be posted on all paratransit vans that operate in the geographic area affected by the proposal at least 14 days before the hearing date.
- All public hearing notices will be posted at the PVTA Customer Service Offices at Springfield Union Station, the Holyoke Transportation Center, and other major hubs and transfer points that riders who are potentially affected by the proposed change(s) are likely to use at least 14 days before the hearing date.
- The public hearing notice will be provided to the clerk of PVTA member municipalities that are likely to be affected by the proposal(s) at least 14 days before the hearing date.
- The public hearing notice will be provided to municipal Councils on Aging in the community or communities that would likely be affected by the proposed change at least 14 days before the hearing date.

5. Additional methods for submitting public hearing comments

Public hearings will include the following additional methods for submitting comments. These will be available for a reasonable period prior to the hearing and up to 7 calendar days before the scheduled date of any Advisory Board action on the subject of the hearing and include:

- An email address to which written comments may be sent.
- A designated telephone voicemail box to receive comments up to 3 minutes in length.
- Letters via U.S. mail.

6. Documentation of the public hearing process

The following public hearing documentation will be provided to the members of the Advisory Board for their consideration prior to any action or vote on the subject of those hearings:

- Sign-in sheets and comment forms filled out by hearing attendees.
- Copies of presentations and/or handouts provided to public hearings attendees.
- Transcripts of audio recordings of the hearing(s).
- Written summaries of voicemail messages received on the subject of the hearing.
- Copies of email messages and written letters received on the subject of the hearing.

7. Proposed changes that do not require public hearings

- Fixed bus route schedule adjustments of 15 minutes or less.
- Typical variations in fixed route bus service between college/university academic and non-academic periods. (Proposed changes to academic “in session” fixed bus route service that would trigger the thresholds of Section 1 are not exempt.)
- Emergency situations. Proposals to hold public hearings on emergency-related changes will be presented to the Advisory Board if such a change is expected to be in effect for more than 180 days, and if the change would meet the threshold requirements of Section 1.
- Reduced or free promotional fares that are offered on a daily basis or periodically within a period of 180 days.
- Experimental or pilot service changes that meet the threshold requirements of Section 1 may be instituted for 180 days or less without a public hearing. Such services lasting longer than 180 days and that meet the threshold requirements of Section 1 require that a proposal for public hearing(s) be presented to the Advisory Board at the first regularly scheduled Board meeting after the initial 180-day period ends, during which time the service or policy may continue to operate or be in effect.

8. Disparate impacts and disproportionate burdens analysis

The information provided to the Advisory Board, Route, Finance, and/or Paratransit Subcommittees for consideration prior to any votes(s) on fare or service change proposals will include an analysis of potential disparate impacts and disproportionate burdens of the proposal(s) in accordance with PVTA's Disparate Impacts and Disproportionate Burdens Policies (Appendix 2).

If applicable, the information considered will include any Title VI Equity Analysis(ses) prepared according to the Federal Transit Administration's Title VI Fare Equity Analysis Ridership Data Circular 4702.1B, of October 24, 2012. The Equity Analysis(ses) will include: 1) an evaluation of the proposal's potential disparate impacts on people of color (termed "minority" in the federal circular) as compared to white persons (termed "non-minority populations" in the federal circular); 2) an evaluation of the proposal's potential disproportionate impacts on low-income persons as compared to non-low income persons; 3) recommended feasible alternatives or modifications to mitigate potential adverse impacts or documentation of why the legitimate business purpose of the proposal cannot otherwise be accomplished.

9. Waivers and amendments

The Advisory Board may vote to waive any of the requirements in Sections 1 through 7 of this Public Hearing Policy for specific public hearings or proposals.

The Advisory Board has the authority to amend this Public Hearing Policy.

Appendix 2: PVRTA Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burdens Policies

Presented to Advisory Board 11/15/17 for approval of format only. No change to policy variance threshold from DI/DB policy effective 9/23/15.

Disparate Impact Policy (racial discrimination)

PVRTA defines a disparate impact as a situation in which a proposal for a fare change or fare media change or service reduction or alteration or new construction project would have an adverse impact or impacts that would likely be experienced by a proportion of PVRTA customers of color that is 20% or more larger than the proportion of white PVRTA customers who could also be expected to experience the same adverse impact or impacts.

Disproportionate Burden Policy (low-income discrimination)

PVRTA defines a disproportionate burden as a situation in which a proposal for a fare change or fare media change or service reduction or alteration or new construction project would have an adverse impact or impacts that would likely be experienced by a proportion of PVRTA customers considered to have low-incomes* that is 20% or more larger than the proportion of non-low-income PVRTA customers who could also be expected to experience the same adverse impact or impacts. (*“Low-income” is defined in this policy as recommended by FTA Circular 4702.1B as people who report on PVRTA customer surveys or are estimated by best available demographic data to have individual annual incomes less than the federal poverty level as established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the year the analysis is performed. In 2017, the poverty threshold was \$12,060 for an individual.)

If a Title VI Equity Analysis finds that a proposal would likely have adverse an impact that would be experienced by 20% or more of PVRTA customers of color and/or customers considered to have low incomes, as compared to the local or regional averages, then PVRTA must evaluate whether there are features of the proposal, or alternatives or modifications to it, that would likely achieve outcomes that are more fair and equitable for all.

If no feasible alternatives or modifications to mitigate a proposal’s anticipated adverse impacts on customers of color or with low incomes, PVRTA will:

- Demonstrate that a legitimate business purpose of the proposal cannot otherwise be accomplished, and;
- Identify measures that will mitigate to the greatest extent possible the anticipated adverse impacts of the proposal on customers of color and/or with low incomes, and;
- Demonstrate that the proposal with mitigation is the least discriminatory approach available.

Appendix 3: Pioneer Valley Transit Authority Fares and Passes

As of Nov. 15, 2017. Last modified 2008.

<u>Bus Fares</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Discounts</u>
Adult Basic Cash Fare	\$1.25	
Adult Cash Transfer	\$0.25	
31-day Pass	\$45.00	\$43.00
31-day E&D Pass	\$22.00	\$20.00
1-day Pass	\$3.00	
7-day Pass	\$12.50	
Child Fare (6-12)	\$0.75	
Child Transfer	\$0.25	
Child Under 5	<i>free</i>	
Elderly & Disabled Cash Fare	\$0.60	
Elderly & Disabled Cash Transfer	\$0.10	
1-ride ticket	\$1.25	\$1.15
<u>ADA and Senior Service Van Fares</u>		
Zone 1	\$2.50	
Zone 2	\$3.00	
Zone 3	\$3.50	
Outside ¾-mi required ADA service areas	<i>Same as above</i>	
Pack of 20 Tickets valued at \$2.50 ea.	\$47.50	<i>(1 ride free)</i>
Pack of 10 Tickets valued at \$0.50 ea.	\$4.75	<i>(25¢ off)</i>

Appendix 4: Example Public Hearing Notice



Public Hearing Audiencia pública

Northampton Senior Van Service (Dial-a-Ride)

The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority is proposing a change to its Senior Van Service (Dial-a-Ride) in the City of Northampton in which Northampton Senior Services will provide van rides to destinations within the city limits.

The cost will be \$1 per ride (instead of \$2.50 per ride currently charged by PVTA). This service will be available Mon-Fri from 8:00AM to 4:30PM excluding holidays.

PVTA will continue to provide Senior Service van trips for Northampton residents who wish to travel to destinations outside the city at the existing fare rates.

A public hearing for this proposal will be held:

Servicio para Personas de Edad Avanzada en Northampton

La Autoridad de Tránsito Pioneer Valley está proponiendo un cambio en su Servicio para Personas de Edad Avanzada (Dial-a-Ride) en la ciudad de Northampton, los Servicios para Personas Mayores de Northampton operará tal servicio dentro de los límites de la ciudad.

El costo será de \$1 por viaje (en lugar de los \$2.50 por viaje que actualmente es cobrado por PVTA). Este servicio será disponible de lunes a viernes de 8:00 AM a 4:30 PM excepto los días feriados.

PVTA continuará operando el Servicio de Personas de Edad Avanzada para los residentes que desean viajar a destinos fuera de Northampton a la tarifa vigente.

Una audiencia pública para este cambio propuesto se llevará a cabo:

**WED., OCT 12, 2016
NORTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
210 MAIN STREET (BEHIND CITY HALL)
Session 1 from 3:30 to 4:30 PM; Session 2 from 6:00 to 7:00PM**

TRADUCCIÓN EN ESPAÑOL PROPORCIONADA. SPANISH language translation provided. Signing and interpretation for people with hearing and visual disabilities is available. Call 413-285-1179 or email delvin@pvpc.org by Oct 5 to make arrangements.

For more info: pvta.com or (413) 781-7882

Notice date: rev 09/26/16

Appendix 5: Public Meeting or Hearing Check List

- ✓ Meeting notice posted on buses, vans, and/or terminals in English and Spanish at least 14 days prior to meeting date.
- ✓ Press release in English and Spanish sent to Springfield Republican, Daily Hampshire Gazette, and at least 1 Spanish language newspaper at least 14 days before meeting date.
- ✓ Demographic inventory of community and consultation with Advisory Board representative in which meeting will take place to determine if additional language translations of meeting notice are needed, if language translation is needed.
- ✓ Audio recording
- ✓ Moderator, if large numbers of attendees are expected.
- ✓ Sign-in sheets
- ✓ Handouts of relevant materials (if any)
- ✓ "How to comment" sheet

Appendix 6: Example Public Meeting Sign-in Sheet



Public Hearing Sign-in Sheet				
Date:				
Location:				
Please let us know your contact information if you wish to be notified of future meetings.				
Name	Affiliation	Address	Phone	E-Mail

Page ____ of ____

Appendix 7: Title VI Map Tools for Pioneer Valley Region

Low Income and Minority Maps

<http://pvpc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/StorytellingTextLegend/index.html?appid=f54bf3b6dfd04033980dcd9a898b85a3>

Demographic Data

<http://pvpc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/OnePane/basicviewer/index.html?appid=72e06c61d02b4ad386157f24168c8542#>

Neighborhood Specific Data

<http://pvpc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/OnePane/basicviewer/index.html?appid=b6239cfb2f494476b1c0dde986055286>

Means to Work Data

http://pvpc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Compare/storytelling_compare/index.html?appid=eaa13c0539b444f984de5b7777cebf98

MassDOT Limited English Proficiency Maps

http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/Portals/0/docs/CivilRights/TitleVI/fta_lap/FTA_LAP_AppendixB.pdf

MassDOT Minority Populations Map

<http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/Civil Rights>

US Census Bureau Language Mapper

http://www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/language/data/language_map.html?eml=gd

MassDOT Public Engagement Online Tool

<http://gis.massdot.state.ma.us/maptemplate/languagetracts>

Appendix 8: PVTA Services, Ridership, and Customers

PVTA Services

The PVTA is the largest regional transit authority in Massachusetts, serving 24 member communities in Western Massachusetts with a combined population of 580,230 (ACS 2015 five-year estimates).

PVTA is a designated recipient of funds from the Federal Transit Administration for the purpose of public transportation in a geographic area measuring approximately 600 square miles.

PVTA's service area includes the Cities of Springfield, Chicopee, and Holyoke; the Five Colleges area of Northampton and Amherst, including more than 30,000 students and employees at the University of Massachusetts Amherst; and outlying suburban and rural communities.

PVTA provides fixed route (scheduled) bus service and demand response public transportation to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). PVTA owns and maintains a fleet of 186 heavy duty transit buses, 144 paratransit vans, and five 18-passenger vans to provide these services.



186 low-floor buses



144 paratransit vans



5 shuttle vans (18-passenger)

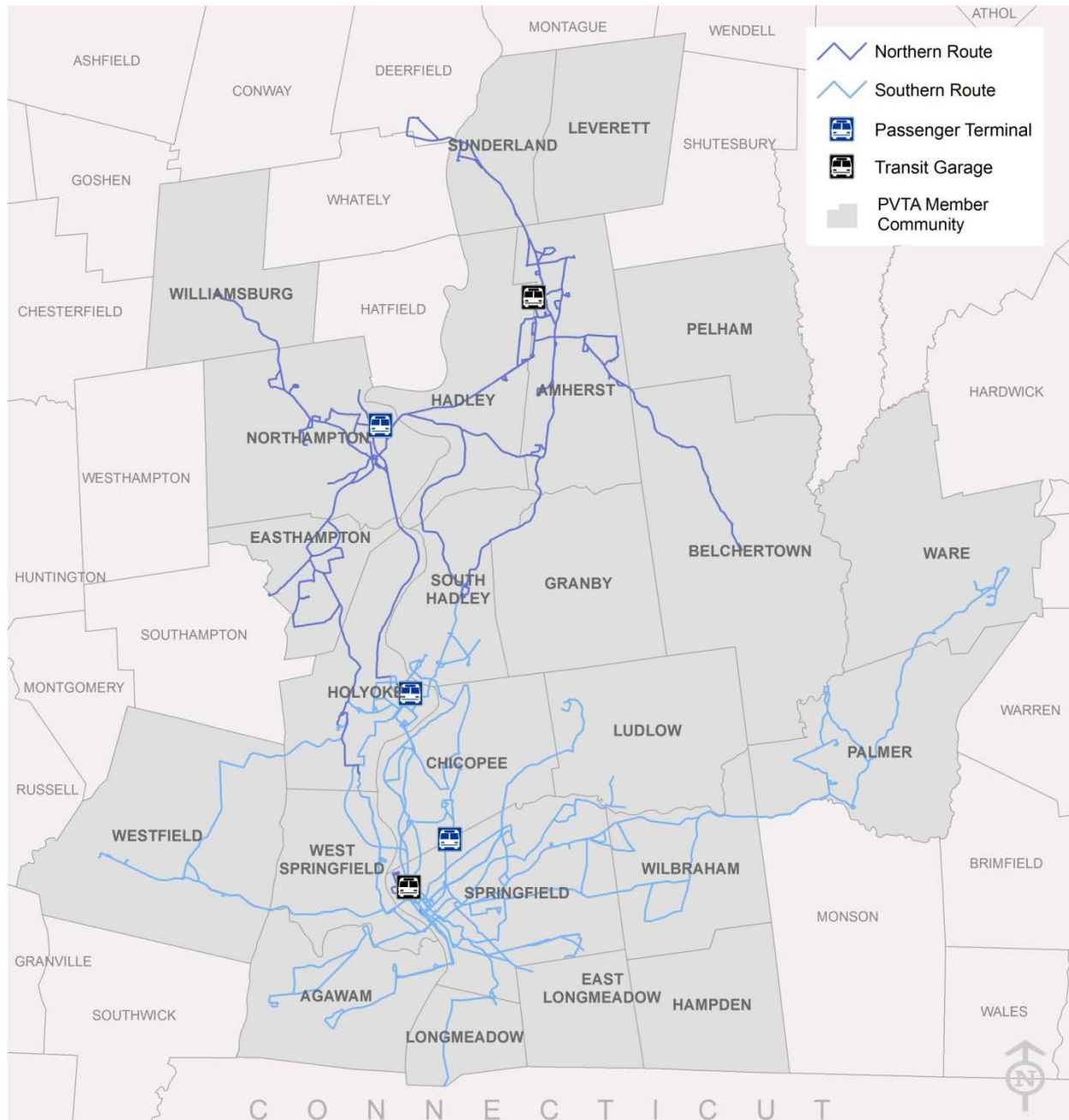
All PVTA vehicles are accessible, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All buses have low floors and a ramp at the front door so that persons using a wheelchair, scooter, walker, cane, or other mobility assistance device can board easily. All vans are lift equipped. All customers are encouraged to ask for ramps to be extended or lifts deployed so they can feel safe when boarding. Additional ADA features of PVTA buses include safety lighting, audio stop announcements, electronic stop announcement signs, priority seating, and designated areas with equipment to safely secure wheelchairs and scooters.

Created in 1974, PVTA had an operating budget of \$45 million in FY2015. Under Massachusetts law, PVTA and the Commonwealth's 13 other regional transit authorities may not directly operate transit services. Therefore, PVTA competitively contracts with private companies to operate its fixed routes bus routes and paratransit van services. Currently, these contract operators are UMass Transit Services, First Transit, and Hulmes Transportation Services.

Funding for PVTA operations and capital improvements comes from several sources: federal grant programs; state and local governments; institutions; advertising; and passenger fares, which accounted for 18% of the total cost of services in FY2015. A schedule of current PVTA fares is included as Attachment 4.

There are 46 scheduled bus routes (fixed routes—see Fig 1.1-1). Paratransit van service to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is provided at all locations in PVTA member communities and within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile in municipalities that are not members (South Deerfield, Enfield CT).

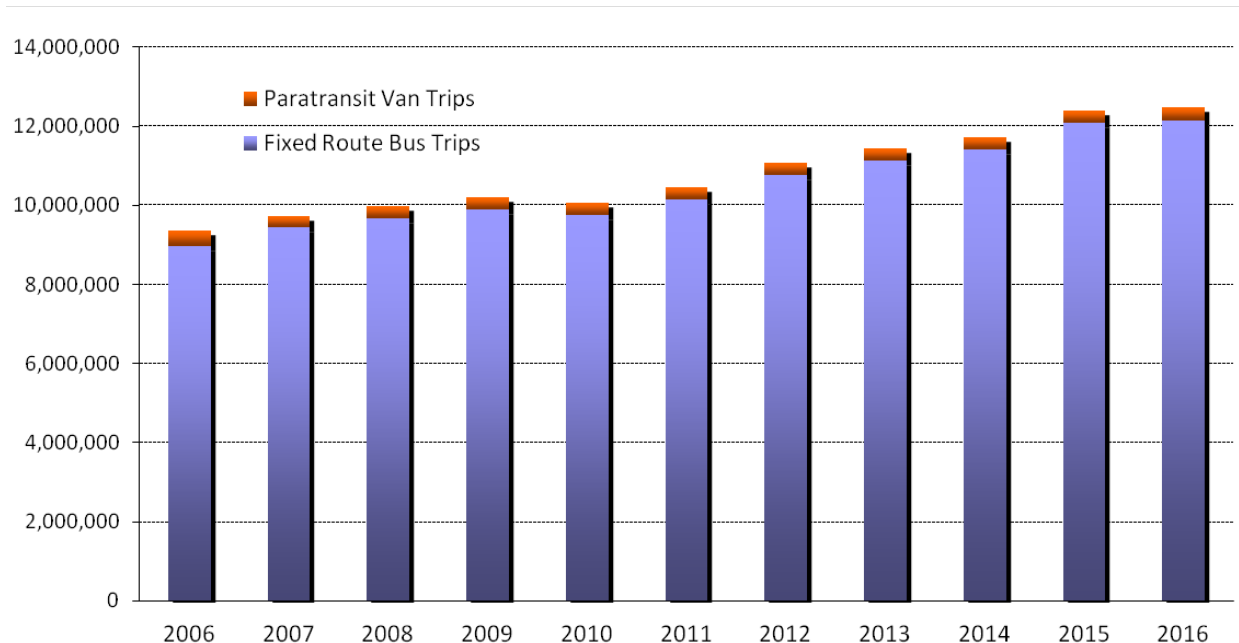
PVTA Service Area



PVTA Ridership and Customer Demographics

PVTA provided 12.3 million passenger trips for the most recently concluded fiscal year (FY2016 from July 1, 2016 to June 30 2015), which is an 18.1% increase since FY2010. PVTA's ridership includes bus riders, ADA clients for paratransit vans, and customers of its Senior Service van transportation (aka "Dial a Ride). After a loss of more than 20% in operating funds in 2002-2003, PVTA has steadily won back the 21% ridership loss that occurred, topping 12 million total rides in 2015 for the first time since 2002.

PVTA Ridership FY2006 to FY2016



Source: PVTA

Based on ridership, fare payment patterns, and trip frequencies reported on rider surveys, there are an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 people who use PVTA at least once a week.

In general, PVTA customers are highly dependent on public transit. "Transit dependent" is generally defined as having no means other than public transit to make a typical trip. Approximately 68% of PVTA riders said they have "No other way to make my trip" (PVTA 2015-2016 onboard rider surveys, n=2,798).

FTA defines transit dependency as: 1) people without private transportation or private car; 2) elderly age 65 and older; 3) youths under age 18; and 4) persons below poverty or median income. With respect to these characteristics, PVTA's most recent customer surveys found:

- 52.1% of PVTA customers do not own or have access to a private auto.
- 3.7% are age 65 or older.
- Approximately one-fifth are 18 or younger.
- More than half (55.2%) of PVTA riders have incomes at or below the federal poverty level.

Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that at least 2 of every 3 PVTA riders (10,000 to 13,400 individuals) meet at least one of the criteria for being transit dependent.

Bus Riders

Demographic information presented in this section was compiled from surveys of 2,799 bus riders performed in 2015 (Hampden County PVTA routes) and 2016 (Hampshire and Franklin County routes). Additional information is presented from 2014 American Community Survey five-year estimates.

Income of Bus Riders

PVTA customers on average have personal incomes that are significantly less than the regional average. In fact, the majority of PVTA customers report personal income that is at or below the federal poverty level, which is shown below for 2015.

Federal Poverty Thresholds 2016

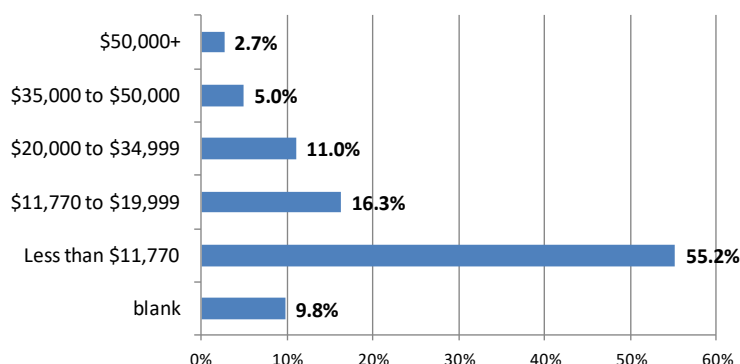
Household Size	Annual Income
1 person	\$11,770
2 people	\$15,930
3 people	\$20,090
4 people	\$24,250
5 people	\$28,410
6 people	\$32,730

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Results from the 2015 and 2016 PVTA Customer Survey presented below show that more than 55% of PVTA customers are at or below the federal poverty level.

PVTA Customers' Annual Income

Q11: What is your income level?



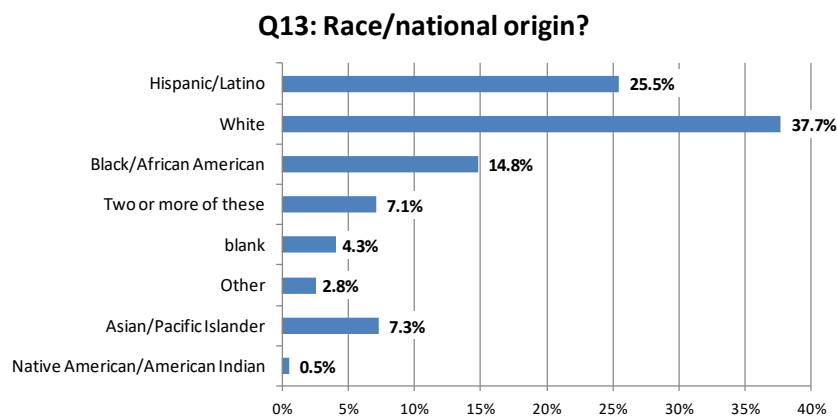
PVTA On Board Customer Surveys 2015 and 2016. N=2,798

This finding is generally consistent with American Community Survey 2014 five-year estimates, which show 55% of commuters who take transit to work make less than \$10,000/year. Another 29% make between \$10,000-14,999, of which approximately 6% can reasonably be estimated to be below the \$11,700 federal poverty threshold shown below. Therefore, the estimated proportion of transit commuters only in the region below the poverty level is at least **61%**.

Race of Bus Riders

People of color are the majority of PVTA bus riders, totaling approximately 62% of customers surveyed in 2015 and 2016.

Racial Characteristics of PVTA Customers



PVTA On Board Customer Surveys 2015 and 2016. N=2,798

The proportion of transit commuters of color in the PVTA region is approximately four times the proportion of persons of color in the region as a whole, as seen below.

Regional Commuting by Public Transportation by Race

Race	Proportion of Commuters Who Take Public Transportation to Commute to Work		
	Hampden County	Hampshire County	PVTA Riders Who Are Commuting to Work (25% of all trips)
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.4%	0.0%	0.6%
Asian	1.4%	24.4%	3.1%
Black/African American	27.5%	3.1%	19.8%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Hispanic/Latino	41.8%	9.5%	33.8%
White	45.5%	70.1%	29.8%
Another Race	20.2%	0.6%	3.3%
Two or more races	5.1%	1.7%	9.7%

Source: American Community Survey 2014 five-year estimates; PVTA Customer Surveys 2015 and 2016

Language and English Proficiency of Bus Riders

A significant and growing number of PVRTA customers primarily speak a language other than English. The most prevalent among these other languages is Spanish. The proportion of PVRTA customers surveyed in 2015-2016 who said they speak only Spanish was 1.1%. This is significantly lower than the regional average of 6.3%. However, about 6% of PVRTA riders who took the survey chose the Spanish language form, which suggests the actual proportion of PVRTA customers who speak only Spanish is greater than 1.1% and probably closer to the regional average of 6.3%.

Also, in Hampden County (where two-thirds of PVRTA riders live) the proportion of PVRTA customers who speak both Spanish and English is nearly double (31.5%) the countywide average (16.8%). While the PVRTA survey was not able to ask how well bilingual customers speak English, the ACS 2014 five-year estimates for Hampden County suggests that approximately one-third of Spanish/English bilingual persons “Do Not Speak English Well or At All.” Therefore, it is likely that at least one-third of PVRTA customers in Hampden County (approximately 10%) also do not speak English well or at all. It is for this critical reason that PVRTA provides all rider information in Spanish, as well as English.

Paratransit Van Customers

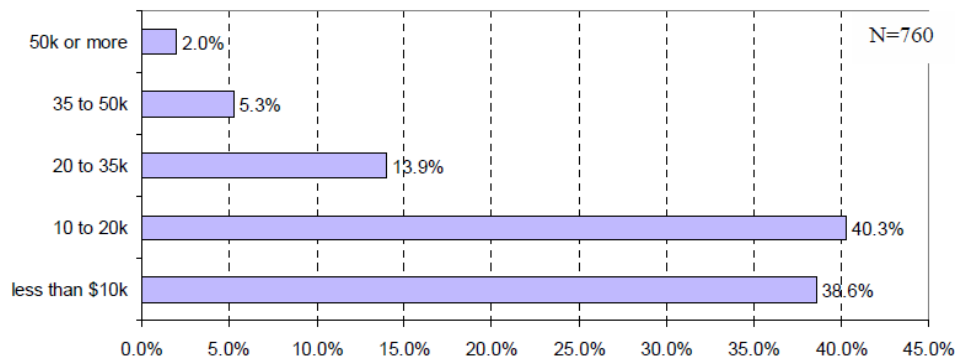
PVRTA operates two paratransit demand response van transportation services: the complementary paratransit services for persons with doctor-verified disabilities as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which operates in the same geographic areas and hours as PVRTA’s fixed routes; and the Senior Service van transportation program, which is available to any resident of PVRTA’s service area age 60 and older Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM (except holidays) at the same fares as ADA service.

There are approximately 3,000 paratransit customers. Of these, about 1,400 use the ADA van service, and 1,600 use Senior Service van transportation. Rides provided by PVRTA’s ADA and Senior Service van transportation programs comprised 2.7% of all trips in FY2016. Senior Service rides were approximately 60% of all van rides, and 1.6% of all PVRTA rides.

Income of Paratransit Van Customers

PVRTA ADA and Senior Service van riders on average have personal incomes that are significantly less than the regional average. (PVRTA does not collect or require Senior Service customers to provide income information to use the service.) In 2011, when the federal poverty threshold was \$10,890 for single person households, approximately 40% of all PVRTA van riders (ADA and Senior Service) had incomes below the poverty line (see below). Therefore roughly 2 in every 5 of all van riders are living in poverty, and approximately 4 of every 5 riders have incomes less than \$20,000 per year (the approximate poverty threshold for a typical three-person household). Another 13.9% had incomes between \$20,000 and \$35,000, and 5.3% had incomes between \$35,000 and \$50,000. Only 2% of van riders had an income greater than \$50,000 a year.

PVTA Van Riders “What is Your Typical Income?” 2011 Survey Results

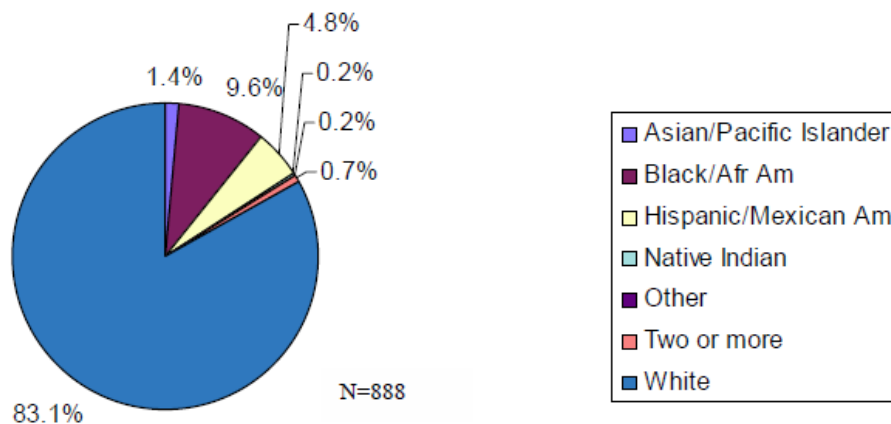


Source: PVTA Paratransit Customer Survey 2011

Race of Paratransit Van Customers

The 2011 survey of PVTA ADA and Senior Service van riders (see chart below) found that 83% of riders were white and 16% were people of color. Of these people, 9.6% were black, 4.8% were Hispanic, 1.4% Asian, and 0.2% Native Indian. ACS 2010-2014 five-year estimates show the proportion of Northampton white residents was 86% for all residents, and approximately 95% for residents age 60 and older (ACS 2010-2014 five-year estimates; results for age 54-65 age bracket estimated using mid-point method).

Racial Characteristics of PVTA Paratransit Customers from 2011 Survey



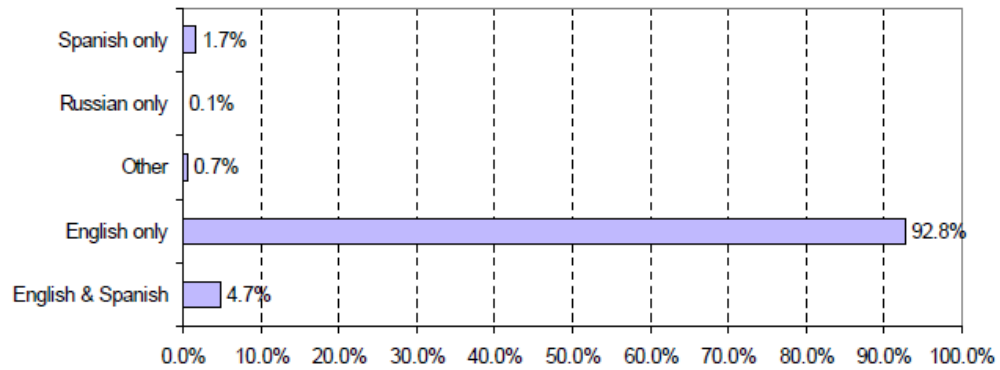
Source: PVTA Paratransit Customer Survey 2011

Languages and English Proficiency of Paratransit Customers

The 2011 survey of ADA and Senior Service van riders found a small percentage (2.5%) of customers did not speak English at home, and the majority of those are Spanish speakers. Another 4.7% spoke both English and Spanish at home. The majority of customers, 92.8%,

spoke only English at home.

Primary Languages Spoken by All PVTA Van Service Customers 2011



Source: PVTA Paratransit Customer Survey 2011

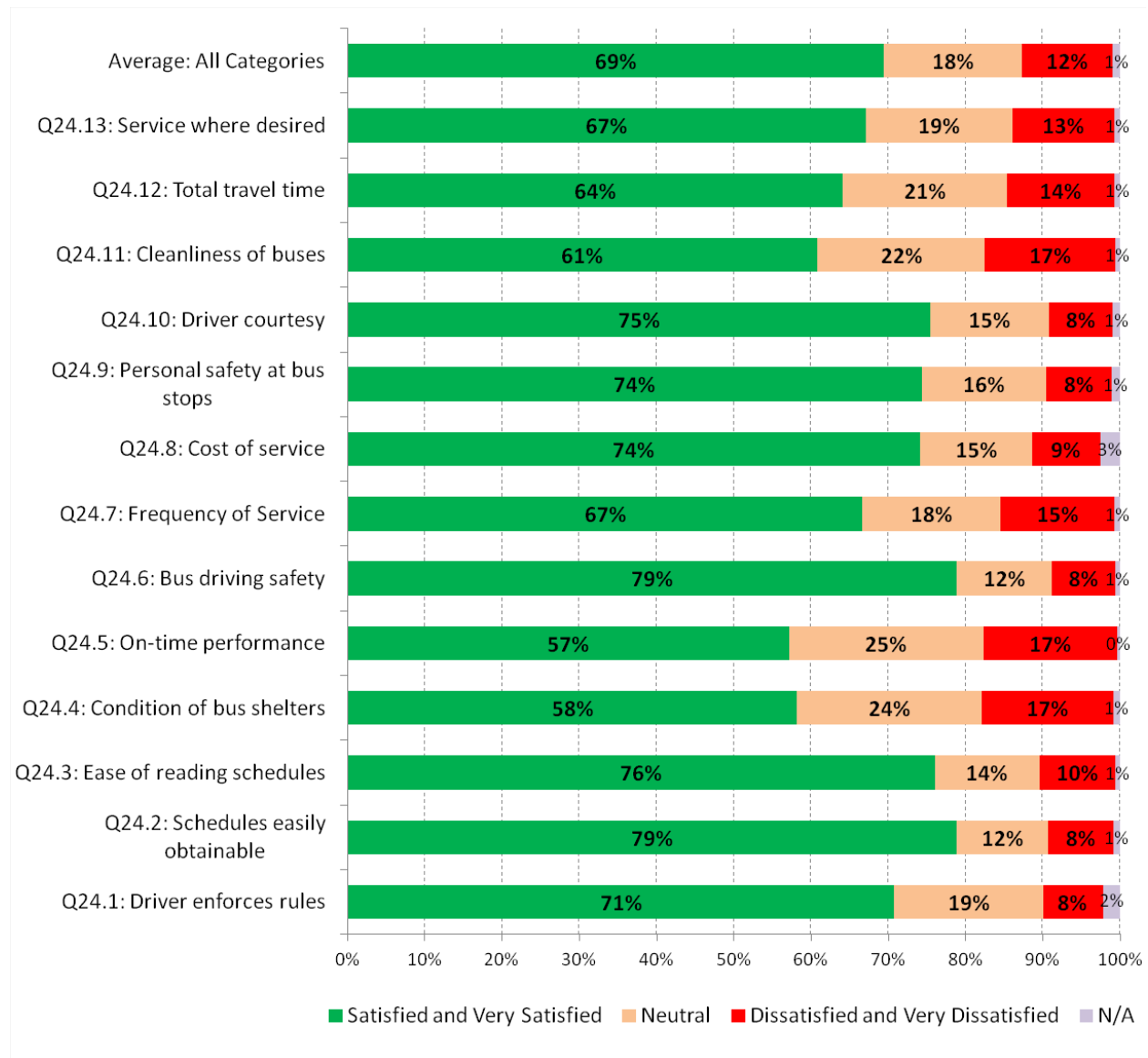
Appendix 10: Customer Surveys and Public Participation

PVTA regularly surveys riders to identify opportunities for improvement. Surveys are a central and ongoing feature of PVTA's efforts to engage the public on transit service-related topics.

The most recently completed surveys of bus riders were completed in 2015 for PVTA's Hampden County routes, and in 2016 for routes serving Hampshire and Franklin Counties.

A total of 2,798 bus riders were interviewed as they traveled aboard PVTA buses. Bus riders' perceptions of PVTA service in 13 categories are shown below.

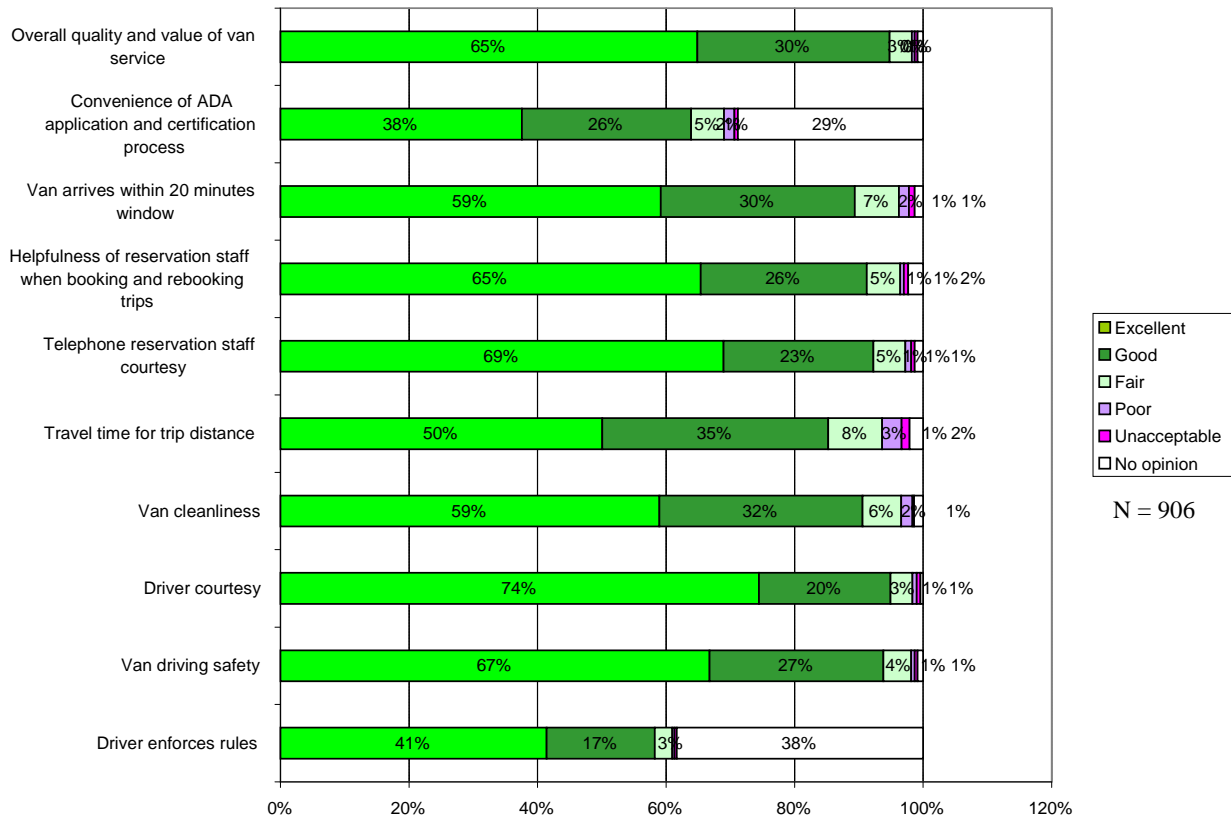
Figure 1.4-1: PVTA Bus Rider Customer Satisfaction Survey 2015 and 2016



PVTA Customer Surveys 2015 and 2016 n=2,798

PVTA also surveys its paratransit van customers. The most recently completed surveys of van riders was completed in 2011, with a total 906 customers surveyed by mail. Van riders' perceptions of PVTA service in 13 categories are shown below.

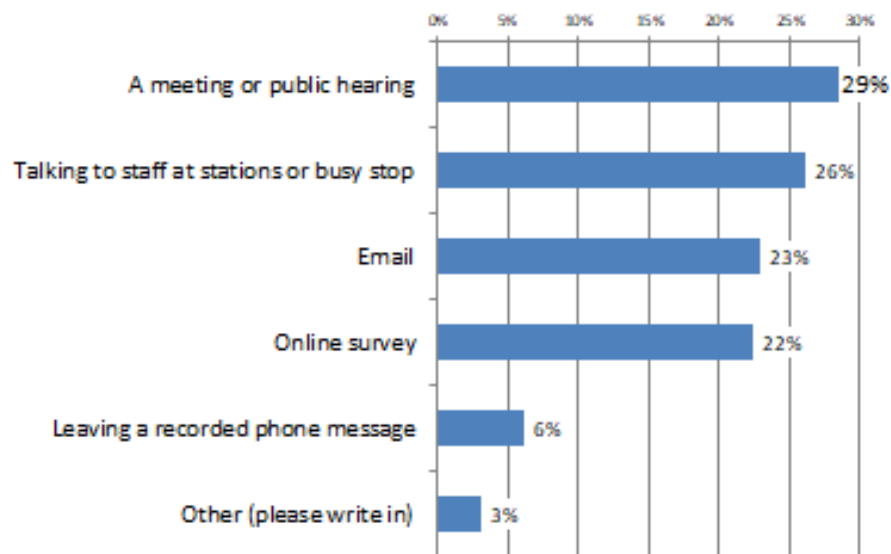
Figure 1.4-2: PVTA Paratransit Van Rider Customer Satisfaction Survey 2011



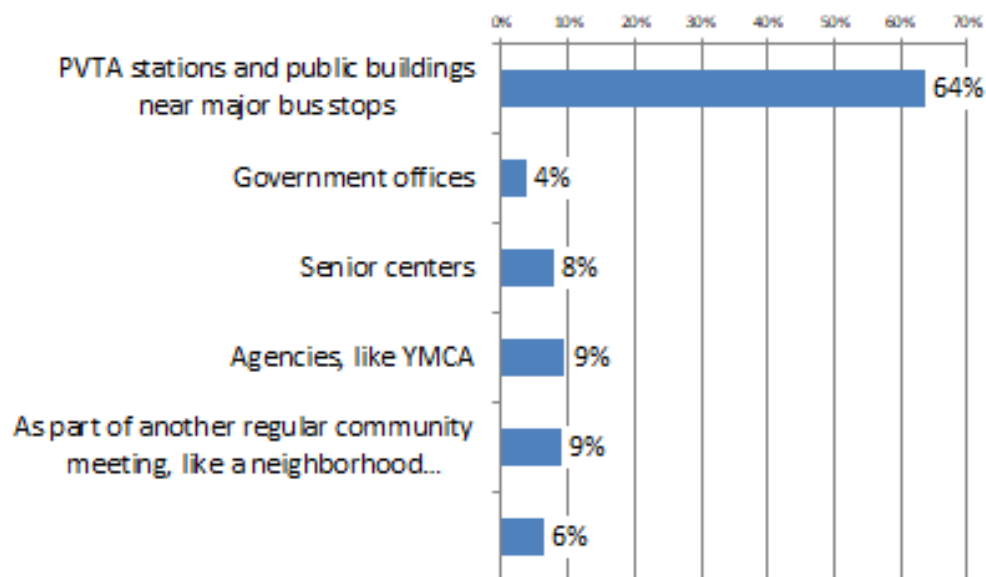
Appendix 11: Rider Survey on Meeting Preferences

As part of the development of this plan, PVRTA surveyed 161 riders via in-person intercept interviews at major transit hubs (Union Station and Holyoke Transportation Center) in October 2017 and an online survey promoted on the PVRTA website. Results are shown below.

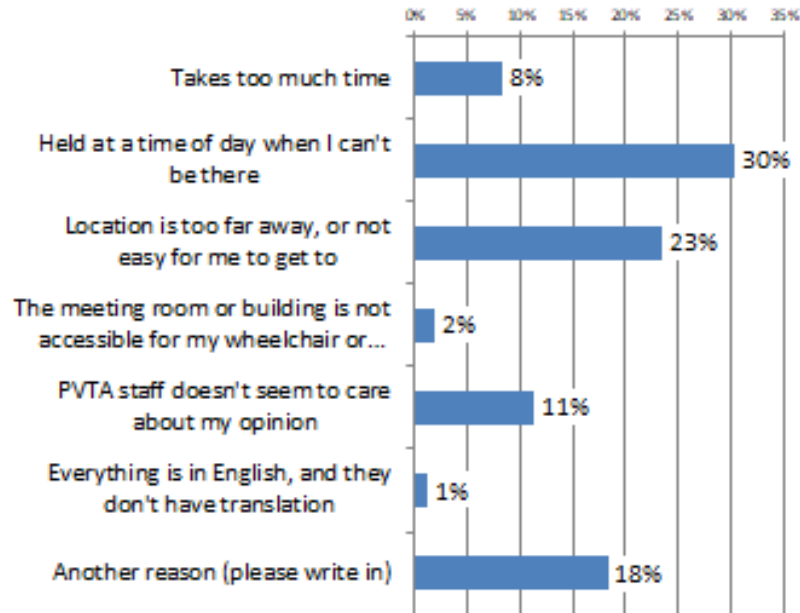
What's the easiest way for you to participate?



Best places for public meetings?



Why haven't you attended a meeting or hearing?



Best time of day for meeting?

