
**MINUTES OF PVTA'S
ROUTE COMMITTEE MEETING
March 18, 2024**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Route Sub-Committee of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority Advisory Board met on Monday, March 18, 2024 at 11:00 AM remotely in accordance with the Governor's State of Emergency Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, Section 20, relieving from the requirement of section 20 of chapter 30A that it conduct its meetings in a public place that is open and physically accessible to the public, permitting a public body to allow remote participation by all members.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Members: Peter Miller, Westfield; J.M. Sorrell, Williamsburg; Benjamin Hood, Palmer;

NOT PRESENT: Tim Sheehan, Springfield;

A quorum being present, Chairman of the Route Committee, Peter Miller, called the remote meeting of the Route Committee to order at 11:06 A.M.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were made.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 13, 2023

Chairman Miller asked for a motion from the Route Committee to approve the meeting minutes of November 13, 2023.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Sorrell/Hood) to approve the meeting minutes of November 13, 2023.

Chairman Miller asked if there was any discussion, hearing none, asked for a roll call vote.

J.M. Sorrell: Yes

Benjamin Hood: Yes

Peter Miller: Yes

Motion passed, 3-0 vote.

4. PUBLIC HEARING & TITLE VI APPROVAL FOR NORTHAMPTON MICROTRANSIT PILOT

PVTA is seeking approval to implement a micro-transit pilot program in Northampton using existing assets that are often underutilized as currently dedicated. PVTA currently uses demand response vehicles to provide service to seniors in the community and to provide regular access to the Northampton Survival Center. While the senior center service is well received, this was originally grant funded and that funding is no longer available. The Survival Center trips are significantly underutilized with extremely low ridership.

The proposed service would allow us to reassign vehicle assets in Northampton and provide an effective first mile, last mile transit solution in Northampton, potentially providing a model for other communities in our service area. The pilot program would provide;

1. Door to door service for riders to access shopping, medical appointments, employment, and buses to points outside Northampton.
2. Same day service with 2-hour notice subject to availability.
3. Door to door service throughout Northampton.
4. Fares matching fixed route service, \$1.50 for adults, \$0.75 for those with valid PVTA ID.
5. All Northampton residents may use the service regardless of age or disability status.

We are requesting that the Route Committee recommend approval of a Title VI Analysis and public hearings for this service.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Sorrell/Hood) to recommend to the Board approving holding public hearings on the Northampton Micro-transit Pilot and Title VI Analysis.

Chairman Miller asked if there was any discussion, hearing none, asked for a roll call vote.

J.M. Sorrell: Yes

Benjamin Hood: Yes

Peter Miller: Yes

Motion passed, 3-0 vote.

5. SPRING SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS

Sandra Sheehan reported that with the increase in funding in this year's budget, we are continuing our commitment to add service where possible in both the short and long term. While we continue to take an incremental approach to adjusting service on our routes, we are also able to add service on several new routes. Ultimately our goal is to expand weekend service throughout the region, restore service that was reduced in response to staffing shortages, and increase frequency on all routes to 30 minutes or less across the system.

The spring service enhancements are as follows:

<i>Route</i>	<i>Proposed Change</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<u>B7:</u>	Improve frequency from 20 minutes to 15 minutes between 9 am and 4 pm Monday through Friday. Effective March 24, 2024.	Restores much of the frequency lost due to labor related staffing reductions.
<u>X90:</u>	Service on the X90 from Chicopee Big Y to East Longmeadow will continue unchanged.	This change would greatly alleviate rider confusion especially where

The routing itself for the Holyoke to Chicopee section of the route will be unchanged but the routes will be renumbered as follows:

G19, Holyoke-Chicopee (currently called the X90A) Serves Montgomery St, Granby Rd and Memorial Dr to New Ludlow Rd, and Montcalm St, then travel to HTC via Memorial and James St to South Hadley Falls, then Bridge, Lyman Dwight and High Sts.

R22, Holyoke -Chicopee (f currently called the X90B) Serves Montgomery, Grattan and Chicopee Sts and travel to HTC via the Willimansett Bridge, Cabot and High Sts.

routes meet at Chicopee Big Y. No changes to trips or departure times proposed.

<u>P21E:</u>	Frequency improved from 45 minutes to every 30 minutes.	Continues the frequency improvements on this route that began in December.
<u>G73E:</u>	Frequency improved from 45 minutes to every 30 minutes.	Continues the frequency improvements on this route that began in December.
<u>X92:</u>	Improve frequency from every 60 minutes to every 45 minutes on weekdays.	
<u>R10:</u>	Service will start earlier and end later, with the first departure from Union Station at 6am and the last departure from Westfield State University at 9:50pm.	Additional runs added on Saturdays
<u>B6:</u>	On Sundays, trips will alternate between the Pasco Rd variation and the regular variation.	Provides service where it doesn't exist on Berkshire Ave north of Page Blvd.
<u>G1:</u>	On Saturdays and Sundays, trips will alternate between Bicentennial Hwy and Canon Circle, like on weekdays. The southern end-of-line and layover location will be moved to Five Town Plaza to match weekdays.	Provides consistent routing across all days.
<u>34</u>	Add an additional vehicle to this route weekdays between 12:00 PM and 7:00 PM which will add 8 additional afternoon runs. Leaving lot 11 at 12:33, 1:23, 2:13, 3:03, 3:53, 4:43, 5:33 and 6:23.	Restores much of the service lost to labor related staffing reductions
<u>30 and 31 Afternoon</u>	New supplemental weekday "trippers" will add capacity to existing scheduled services between	Restores service lost to labor related staffing reductions

Trippers 2PM and 6PM with a focus on increasing capacity during class change times.

6. NORTHERN TIER SURVEY RESULTS

The PVTA regularly surveys its customers to better understand their travel needs, satisfaction with service, and priorities for improvements. Customer surveys also provide important information that help PVTA comply with laws and regulations to assure that bus service in our region is fair, equitable, and accessible.

In March and April 2022, a total of 1,571 PVTA customers completed surveys on the 19 PVTA routes that primarily serve Hampshire County, PVTA's Northern Service Region. These routes provide 42% of all PVTA rides in the Pioneer Valley.

PVTA 2022 Northern Region Passenger Satisfaction Overview: The findings suggest that the PVTA is doing well with respect to the cleanliness of buses, and reasonably well concerning driver enforcement of PVTA policies. On the other hand, PVTA is poorly rated on its schedule adherence, total travel times, and service to desired destinations.

PVTA is very poorly rated on its frequency of service, with only 36% of riders giving a favorable rating, and 26% an unfavorable rating. "Neutral" and empty responses to all satisfaction questions correlated with unfavorable responses, thus, the most neutral/blank responses were regarding frequency of service, and the fewest neutral/blank responses were regarding cleanliness. We must note that at the time of the survey, service frequency for some routes had been affected by workforce availability.

Key highlights about PVTA Northern Region customers' travel and characteristics include:

- 47% of customers ride the bus 5 or more days per week, and another 37% do so at least once a week.
- The most common trip purpose is traveling to college or university (56% of all trips).
- The second most common trip purpose is commuting to work (23% of trips).
- 19% of customers said they could not make trips to places without PVTA service.
- Riders who identify as white are the largest racial and ethnic group of PVTA customers in the Northern Service area (47% of riders surveyed).
- 10.1% of riders reported annual household incomes at or below the Federal Poverty Level for their respective family sizes. This is slightly higher than the 9.3% countywide average of people in Hampshire County who are in this income range.

These results suggest that PVTA must address its frequency of service in the Northern Service area, with schedule adherence, travel time, and better network connections as the other high priorities.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Miller reported that there is no other business to discuss.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Miller asked for a motion from the Route Committee to adjourn.

MOTION: Moved and seconded (Sorrell/Hood) to adjourn.

Chairman Miller asked for a roll call vote.

J.M. Sorrell: Yes

Benjamin Hood: Yes

Peter Miller: Yes

Motion passed, 3-0 vote.

The meeting of the PVTA Route Committee adjourned at 11:32 A.M.

A TRUE RECORD

ATTEST: _____
BRANDY PELLETIER

Documents filed with Route Committee meeting packet:

- November 13, 2023 Route Committee Minutes
- Northern Tier Survey Results

Minutes Approved on: March 12, 2025