

RTA COMMUNITIES DESERVE THEIR FAIR SHARE

MassINC poll shows that more than three quarters of MA residents support increased funding for RTAs

Fact Sheet

September 2023

A recent 2023 poll conducted by the MassINC Polling Group (MPG) in collaboration with the Regional Transit Authority Advocates Coalition (RTAAC), finds that 79% of residents support increasing funding for the state's 15 Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs). New state revenue raised through the Fair Share surtax provides a transformational opportunity for long-term, sustainable investments in transportation statewide, particularly for the RTAs.

WHO USES RTA SERVICES?

RTAs are a lifeline to residents beyond the reach of the MBTA bus and subway services. Transit riders are more likely to be Black, young, and low-income, and rely on bus or paratransit for day-to-day activities.

Transit Ridership



Percent of those surveyed who report riding buses or paratransit

16%

VS



Massachusetts Population

Percent of statewide population by demographic

Black residents

7%

34%

18-29 years of age

22%

53%

< \$50,000 annual income

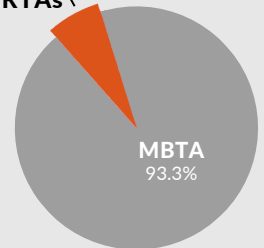
33%



Did you know?

<7%

RTAs \



MBTA
93.3%

RTAs receive <7% of state transit operating funds, while providing service for



55% of the Commonwealth's population*

*Data from an MPHA analysis of MA transit operating dollars and MASSPIRG report, "Increasing Regional Transit Across the Commonwealth"

RTAS CONNECT RESIDENTS TO EVERYDAY NECESSITIES THAT DRIVE GOOD HEALTH OUTCOMES

RTA services connect residents to medical care, food, jobs, education, social networks, and other necessities.



74%

shopping & errands



62%

health care appointments



61%

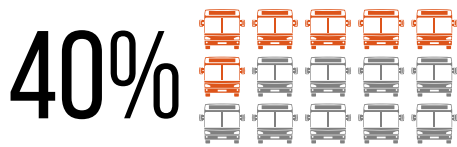
work



57%

visiting friends & family

Despite their essential function, RTAs are unable to expand, and sometimes even maintain, service due to years of chronic underfunding.

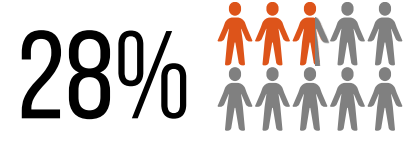


of the RTAs are unable to provide 7 day a week service*

**Data from an MPHA Analysis of RTA Schedules*



of RTAs do not provide service after 9:00 PM*



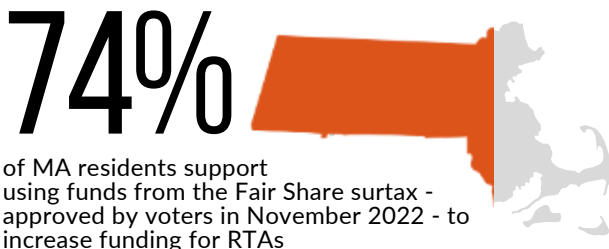
of residents in RTA communities think bus service is good enough to rely on it to get to where they need to go

INVESTING IN RTA SERVICE WILL HELP IMPROVE RIDERSHIP

Residents - both riders and non-riders alike - report being more willing to ride the bus if it were free, faster, more reliable, and had more routes to in-demand destinations.



VOTERS HAVE SENT A CLEAR MESSAGE - IT'S TIME TO INVEST IN OUR STATEWIDE PUBLIC TRANSIT SYSTEM.



Using this new revenue to expand RTA services is critical to meet community needs outside of Greater Boston and set the state on a path to realizing its climate goals. And residents agree! 79% support increasing funding for RTAs, while nearly three quarters support using Fair Share dollars to do so. State leaders also agree! The FY24 state budget includes a historic investment of \$90M in Fair Share funds to improve service across the state's 15 RTAs.

ABOUT THE POLL & AUTHORS

These results are of the poll based on a survey of 1,401 Massachusetts residents, including 967 who live in communities served by the state's 15 Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs). Responses were collected via online survey, text messages, and live interviews via landline and cells phones between February 23 and March 7, 2023.

MPG is committed to elevating the public's voice in discussions of politics and policy, in Massachusetts and beyond. RTAAC is a coalition of community groups, human services providers, transportation advocates, and local leaders who advocate for transit that meets the needs of communities served by the 15 RTAs across the Commonwealth. The poll was sponsored by the Barr Foundation.

To read the full report, please visit: www.massincpolling.com/the-topline/barr-rta-poll