

# MPHA's 2023-2024 Policy Priority Areas

Facilitators: MPHA Policy & Campaign Staff



Oami Amarasingham  
Deputy Director

Partners in our work



Noah S. Berger, Administrator  
MeVa, Merrimack Valley Transit



Public Health Infrastructure



Transit Justice



Housing Justice



Environmental Justice



Sustainable Food Systems



In solidarity

MPHA  
2023-24  
POLICY  
PRIORITY  
AREAS

# Priority Bill Updates

- SAPHE 2.0: at the finish line (again!)
- RTA Advancement bill: waiting for a hearing
- Lifting the statewide ban on rent control: opportunity to submit testimony

# Hearings, hearings, hearings!



- Housing
- Environmental justice
- Food systems + access
- Overdose prevention
- Health Equity
- Safe drinking water



\$150M for RTAs



\$15M for Local and Regional  
Boards of Health



Funding for Mass Food Trust,  
Mass in Motion, rental  
assistance, and more

## FY24 STATE BUDGET UPDATE



## MeVa Transit: Action for Transportation Equity

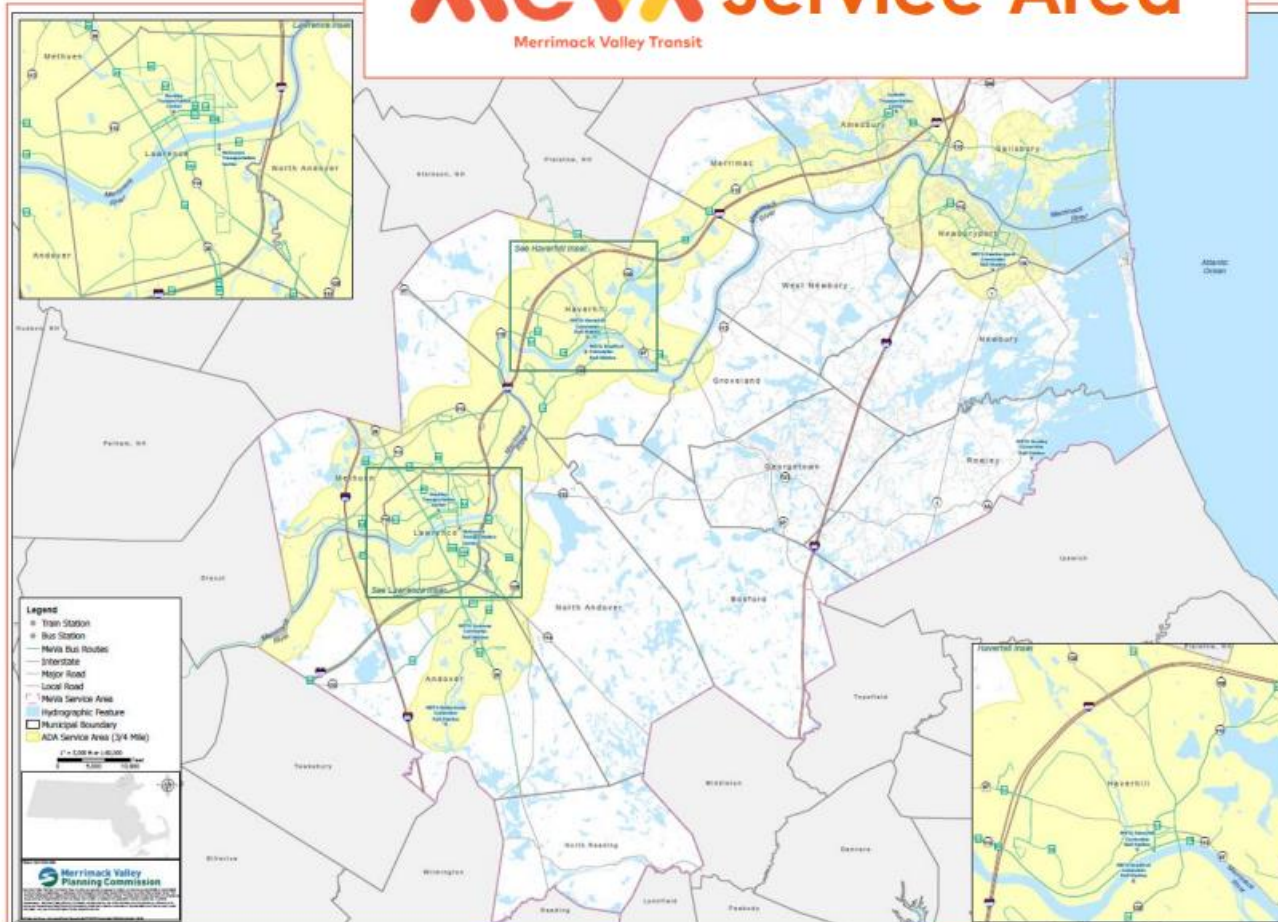
**Noah S. Berger**  
Administrator, MeVa Transit

**2023 MPHA Conference & Meeting**  
November 16, 2023



# MeVA Service Area

Merrimack Valley Transit

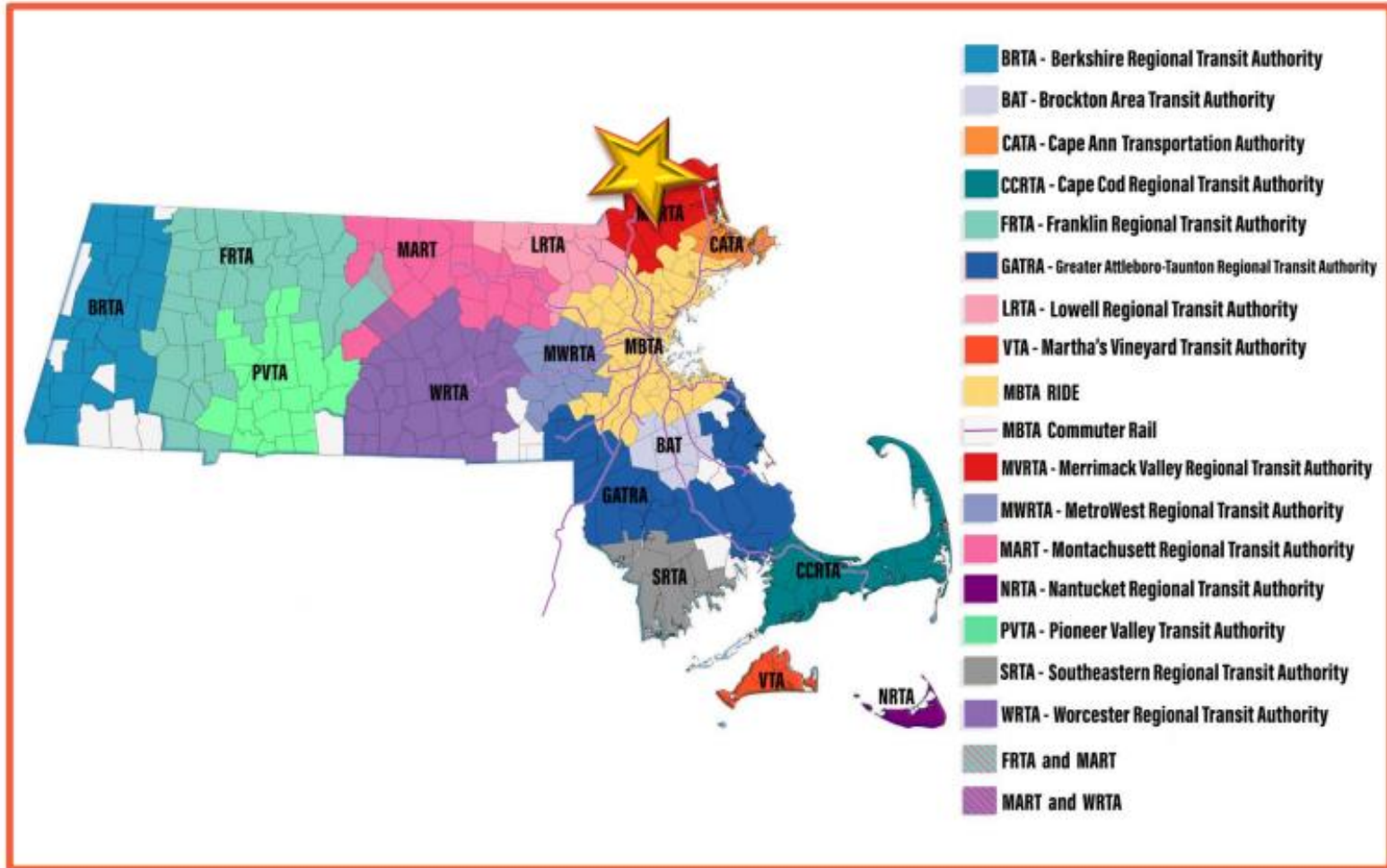


MeVaTransit.com

Let's go ¡Vamos! 2



# MeVa is 1 of 15 RTAs



RTAs service 267 cities and towns, representing over 55% of Massachusetts residents.





**RTA ADVOCATES COALITION**  
*Join the fight for better regional bus and paratransit services.*

**What is the RTAAC?**  
The Regional Transit Authority Advocates Coalition (RTAAC) is a coalition of over 80 community groups, human services providers, transportation advocates, and local leaders who provide a strong, unified voice for transit users in RTA service areas across Massachusetts. The RTAAC advocates for funding and policies that aim to strengthen regional transit services to better meet the needs of communities.

**Transit justice for the majority.**  
55% of MA residents live within an RTA service area, yet inadequate state funding and limited technical support have made it challenging for RTAs to maintain service levels and expand to meet the needs of riders.

**Did you know?**  
In 2018, the MA Public Health Association and Transportation for Massachusetts joined forces with community-based organizations to launch RTAAC in response to the Governor Administration's proposed cuts to the RTA budget.

- ▲ Weekday Service only**
- ★ Weekday and Saturday Service only**

- Most RTAs cannot afford a late-night service
- Some RTAs do not run on Sundays or even on weekends
- Geographic boundaries of the RTAs limit rider mobility
- Many rural communities are unserved or marginally served by the RTAs

**Why join RTAAC?**  
RTAAC members mobilize their community and legislators to take action to support policies that benefit RTA transit users, share the latest happenings across RTA service areas and uplift the needs of transit users in their community.

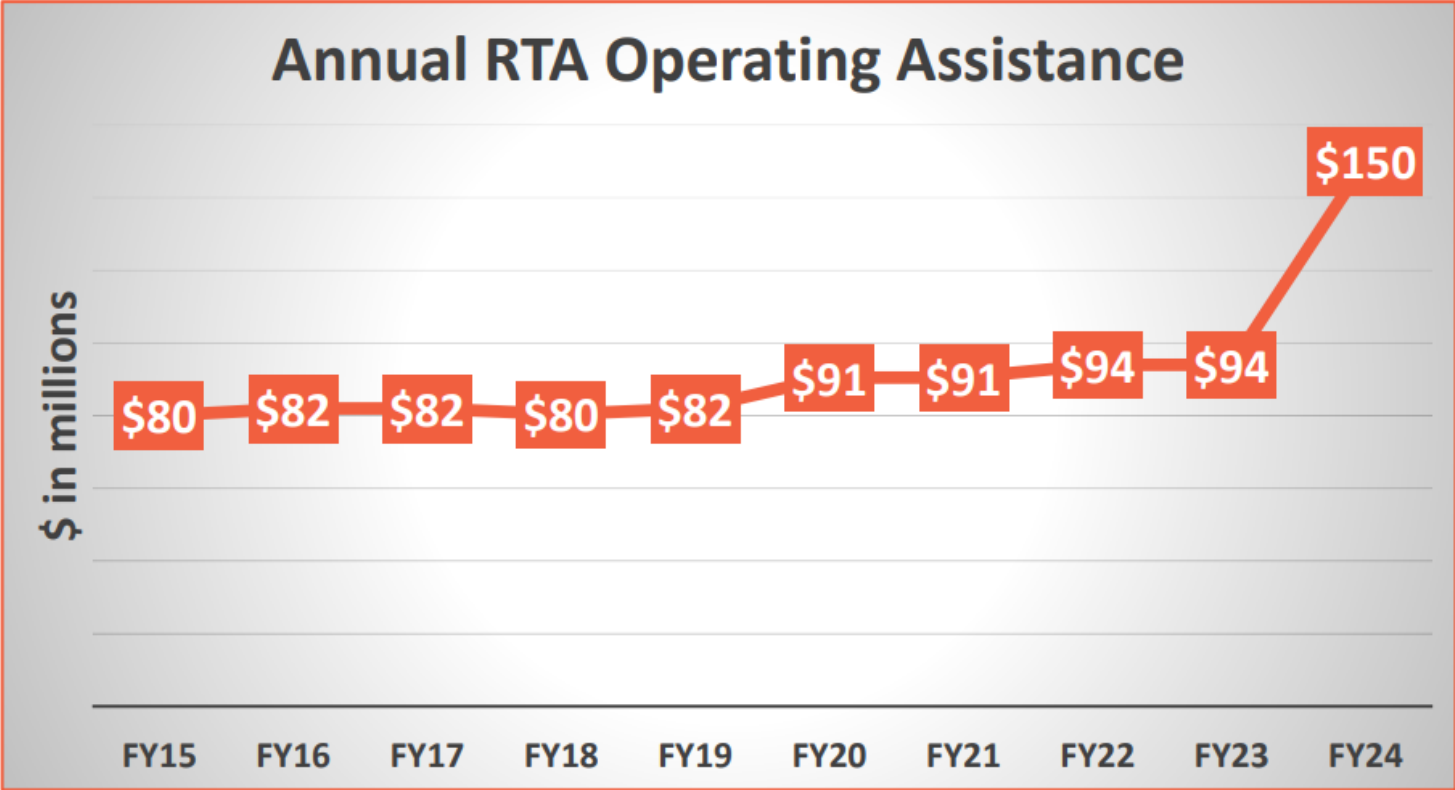
**MPHA**  
Alice Wada, MA Public Health Assn  
Enrique Hernandez, MA Public Health Assn

For questions or to join the coalition, contact us at [info@rtaac.org](mailto:info@rtaac.org)

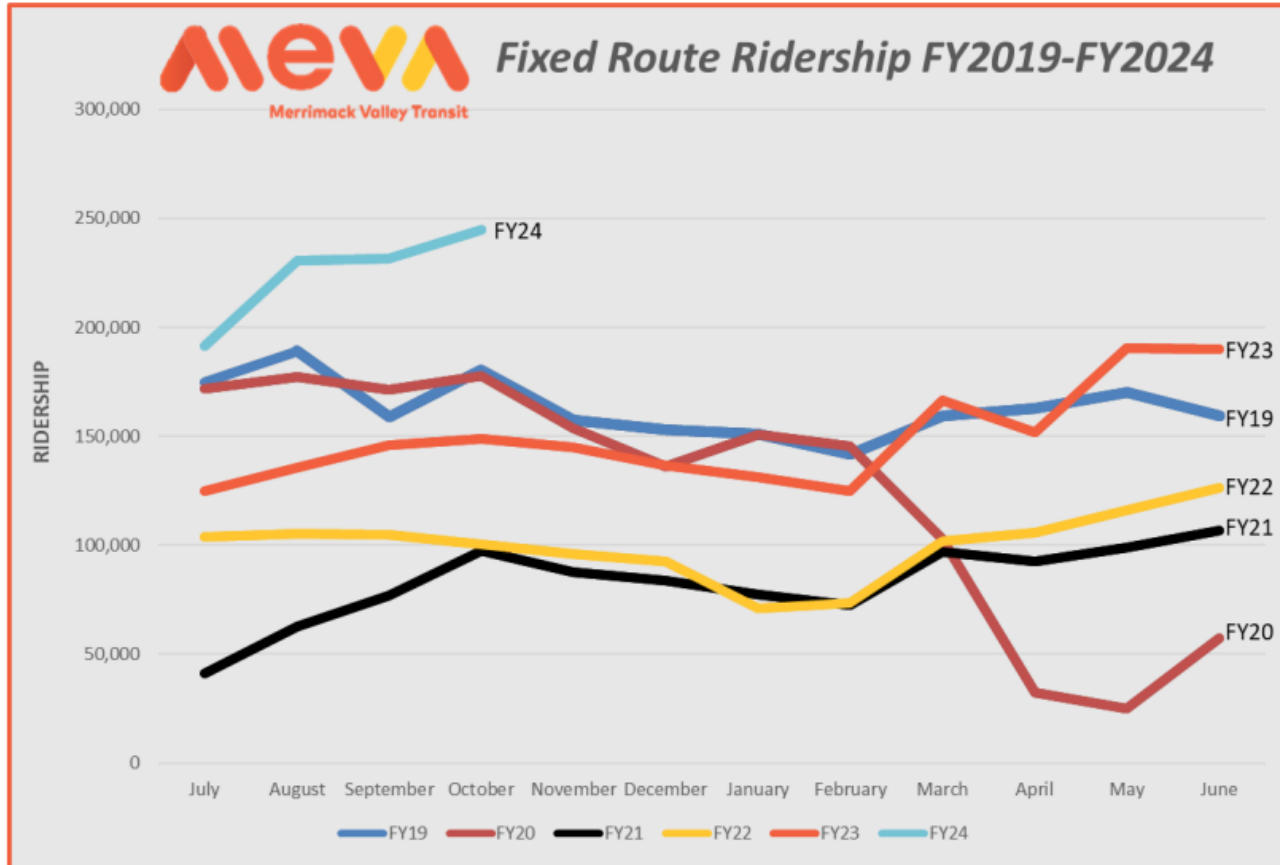




# State Funding FY15 – FY24



# Trending Up...Way Up



# How'd we get here?





# Starting March 2022 Free Fares Systemwide



- Ridership has more than tripled since going fare free
- Ridership is above our pre-COVID ridership (2019) by 37.9 percentage points
- Complaints are down 31.4% since going fare free!!!!

Starting October 2022



# Being Present in the Community: New Name & Colors



Merrimack Valley Transit



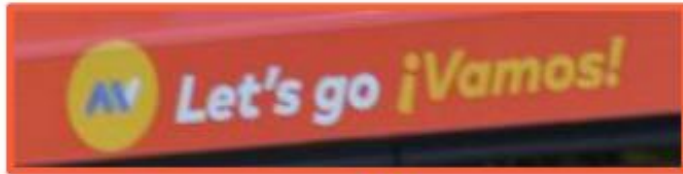
[MeVaTransit.com](http://MeVaTransit.com)

Let's go ¡Vamos! 9



Starting October 2022

# Visibility: Colorful, Vibrant Buses



[MeVaTransit.com](http://MeVaTransit.com)

Let's go ¡Vamos! 10



# Starting January 2023 Better Seating





Starting October 2022

# ...and mini MeVa Vans



[MeVaTransit.com](http://MeVaTransit.com)

Let's go ¡Vamos! 11

Starting October 2022

# Embraced by Local Arts Scene



Starting July 2023



# Simplified Route Numbers

## Merrimack Valley

### Regional Transit Authority

#### BUS ROUTES

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 01 NECC-Haverhill-Methuen-Lawrence | 34 Prospect Hill                        |
| 13 Main St./ North Ave.            | 35 Water St.                            |
| 14 Bradford / Ward Hill            | 36 Lawrence St. / Holy Family Hospital  |
| 15 Hilldale Ave. / Westgate        | 37 Beacon St.                           |
| 16 Washington St./ Westgate        | 38 Hampshire St.                        |
| 18 Riverside                       | 39A Colonial Heights / N. Andover Mall  |
| 19 Summer St. / Westgate           | 39B Phillips St. / N. Andover Mall      |
| 21 Andover Shuttle                 | 40 Methuen Square                       |
| 22 Ballardvale                     | 41 Lawrence-Lowell                      |
| 29 Lawrence Intown                 | 42 Methuen Mall / Town Farm             |
| 32 Andover                         | 51 Haverhill-Amesbury-Newburyport       |
| 33 North Andover                   | 83 Salisbury Beach / July - August Only |



Merrimack Valley Transit

### Lawrence

#### BUCKLEY TRANSPORTATION CENTER

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Lawrence-Methuen-Haverhill           | 9 North Andover Mall/Phillips Street |
| 2 Andover                              | 10 Methuen Square                    |
| 3 North Andover                        | 12 Lawrence Crosstown                |
| 4 Prospect Hill                        | 21 Andover Shuttle                   |
| 5 Water Street                         | 23 Beach Express                     |
| 6 Holy Family Hospital/Lawrence Street | 24 Lawrence-Lowell                   |
| 7 Beacon Street                        | 26 IRS/Raytheon                      |
| 8 Colonial Heights/North Andover Mall  | 27 Beacon Street Special             |

### Haverhill

#### WASHINGTON SQUARE

- 13 Main Street/North Avenue
- 14 Bradford/Ward Hill
- 15 Hilldale Avenue/Haverhill Commons
- 16 Washington Street/Westgate Plaza
- 17 Haverhill-Salisbury Beach via Amesbury
- 18 Riverside/Groveland
- 22 Buttonwoods Express

### Amesbury

#### COSTELLO CENTER

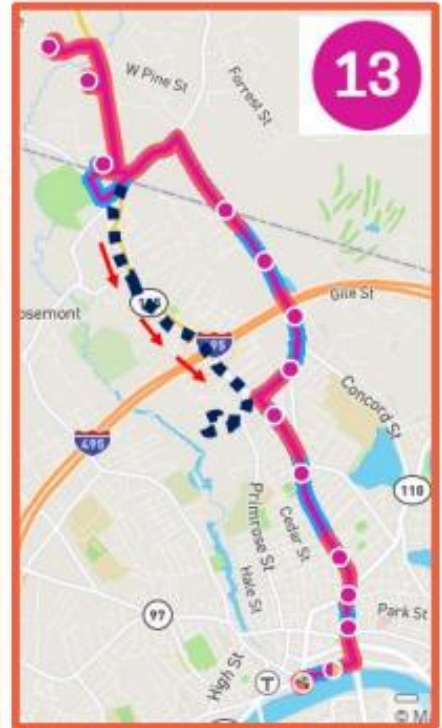
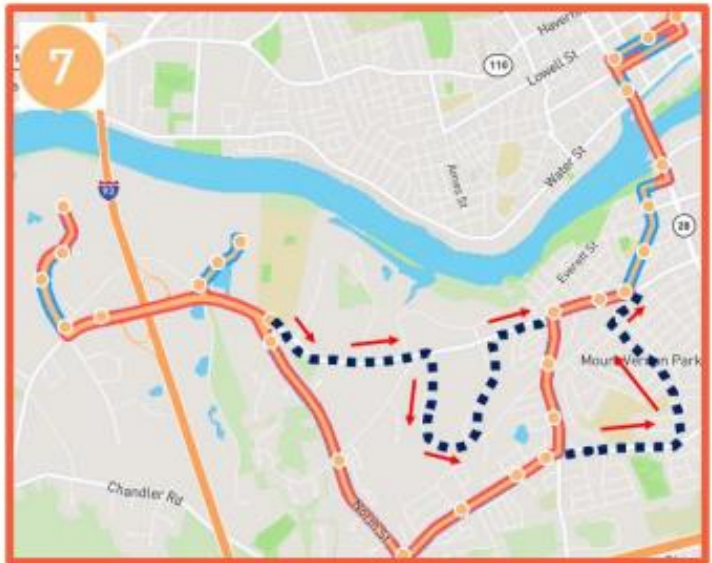
- 19 Newburyport CR-Amesbury
- 20 Newburyport CR-Salisbury Beach



Starting July 2022



# Faster, More Direct Service



Starting September 2022  
**More Frequent  
Lawrence Service**



[MeVaTransit.com](http://MeVaTransit.com)

Let's go **iVamos!** 16



# Starting September 2023

## Extended Service Hours

**¡Excelente noticia!**

**¡MEVA SE QUEDA DESPIERTA HASTA TARDE!  
SERVICIO EXTENDIDO HASTA LAS 9:00PM**

Las siguientes rutas brindarán servicio extendido, con salidas adicionales desde Buckley a las 8:00PM y 9:00PM y Haverhill Transit a las 7:00PM, 8:00PM y 9:00PM:

- 1 Lawrence-Haverhill via The Loop/Pleasant Valley Street
- 2 Andover via South Broadway
- 9 North Andover Mall via Phillips Street
- 13 Hallow via Main Street/North Ave.
- 10 Methuen Square via Broadway
- 14 Lawrence-Lowell

*Estos cambios serán implementados en septiembre 5, 2023.*



It is with great pleasure that MeVa invites you to attend our ribbon cutting ceremony to mark the start of our extended hours of service.

**Tuesday, September 5th at Buckley Transportation Center in Lawrence starting at 7:30pm.**

**We look forward to seeing you!**






Coming January 2024

- Sunday Service
- More Frequent Saturday service
- Holiday Service
- *medi MeVa* to Bedford VA Hospital



The Eagle-Tribune - 11/10/2023 Page : A13

## A ride for vets

By TOMMY DAVIS  
tdavis@eagletribune.com

**HAVERHILL.** — New free transportation for veterans meets a long sought health care need.

Starting Jan. 3, Merrimack Valley Transit will give veterans in 16 towns and cities free door-to-door rides to and from the Bedford veterans hospital and its associated health services.

The MeVa mini-bus will transport these veterans (and family members) on Wednesdays and Fridays. Reservations must be made seven days in advance and no further out than 14 days.

"It absolutely fills a need," says Jaime Melendez, director of veterans' services in Lawrence, home to 1,100 veterans, according to the latest U.S. Census.

"I have guys without a vehicle that struggle a ride from a buddy then feel bad about it."

The transportation idea arose in September at a MeVa transit advisory board meeting. Bob Snow, of Rowley, a para-transit subcommittee member and U.S. Marine Corps veteran, suggested it.

That same month MeVa brought the thought to the Merrimack Valley Veterans Collaborative, says Noah Berger, MeVa's administrator.

It got a thumbs up. MeVa will fund the rides through its '24 budget.

This is possible, Berger said, due to the increase in funding for regional transit authorities voted by the state Legislature.

MeVa receives federal, state and local funds, and is fare free at least through April.

The transit authority has existing medi-MeVa buses for transportation to Peabody and Boston hospitals including the veterans' hospital in Jamaica Plain.

But there are Merrimack Valley veterans who would prefer to receive health and medical services in Bedford, which is closer to home and would take less of their day.

Riders can start reserving rides in mid-December.

The 16 towns and cities served by MeVa are Lawrence, Haverhill, Methuen, Andover, North Andover, Boxford, North Reading, Rowley, West Newbury, Newburyport, Merrimac, Georgetown, Amesbury, Groveland and Salisbury.

**ABOVE:** Merrimack Valley veterans will have a way to get to health-related appointments at the Bedford veterans hospital campus starting in January on MeVa's mini-buses. Here is a MeVa mini-bus at Shawshen Plaza on Thursday.

**LEFT:** Bus driver Jose Korte is at Shawshen Plaza in Andover on Thursday.




# Starting June 2023 - Ongoing Shelters and Stops





Starting July 2023

# Express Beach Bus Between Lawrence & Salisbury Beach



**RUTA 23  
BEACH EXPRESS**  
DESDE LAWRENCE  
HASTA LA PLAYA SALISBURY

Parqueo **GRATIS** en McGovern

SALE DE LAWRENCE @ 9:15 AM & 11:15 AM  
SALE DE LA PLAYA @ 3PM & 5PM



# MeVa is a Great Place to Work!!!



**MeVa**  
Merrimack Valley Transit

**FEBRUARY 6**  
10AM - 3PM

Stop by our main office located at  
85 Railroad Avenue, Haverhill, MA 01830

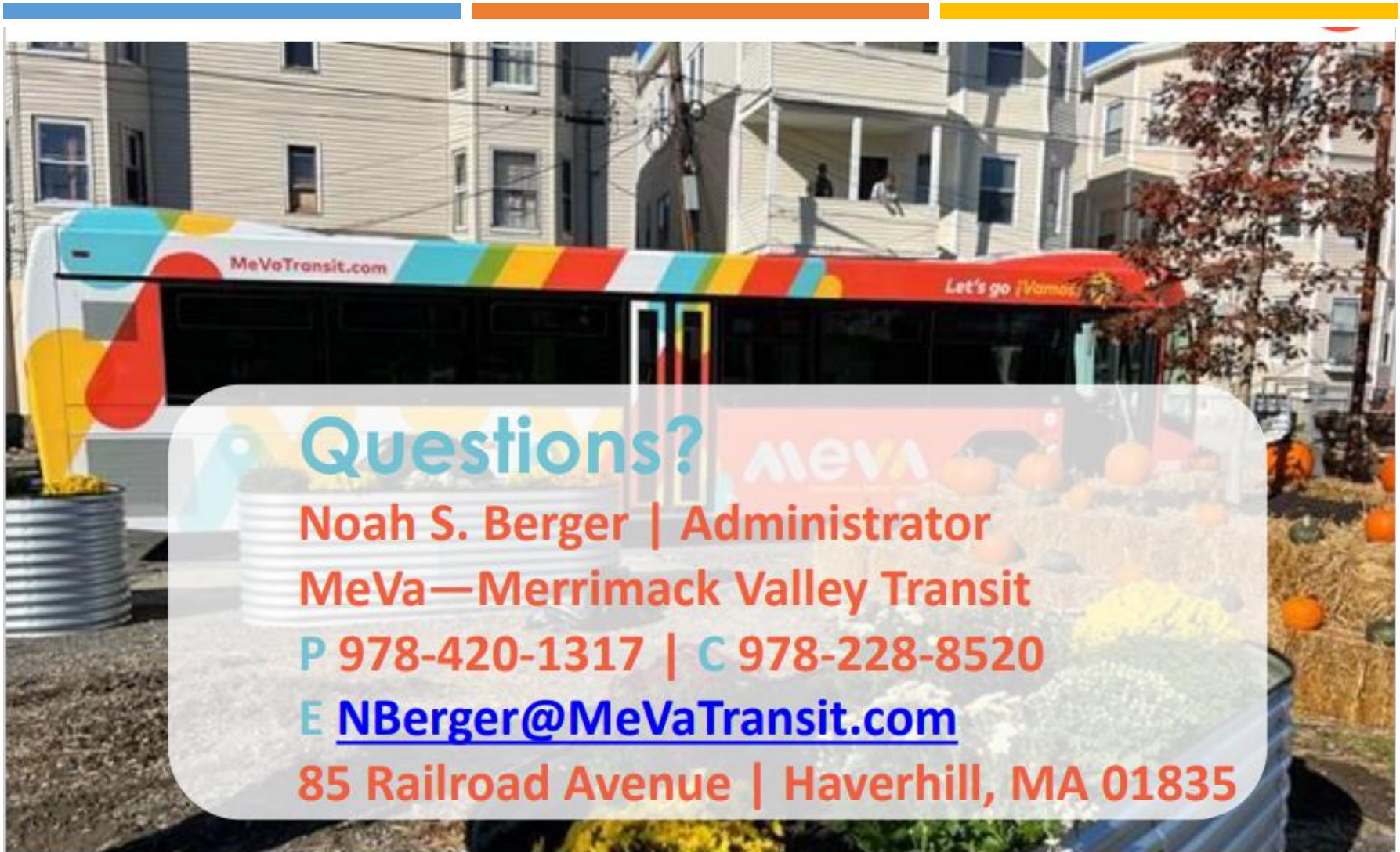
**UP TO \$27.61 HR / \$1,000 SIGN UP BONUS**

**OPEN POSITIONS**

- Bus Operator: Class A or Class B CDL drivers. Will train for endorsements. 100% COVERAGE MEDICAL AND DENTAL INSURANCE
- Van Operator: License



➤ MeVa has been able to grow its driver workforce by 39.1% since August 2021 DURING A NATIONAL DRIVER SHORTAGE!!!



## Questions?

Noah S. Berger | Administrator

MeVa—Merrimack Valley Transit

P 978-420-1317 | C 978-228-8520

E [NBerger@MeVaTransit.com](mailto:NBerger@MeVaTransit.com)

85 Railroad Avenue | Haverhill, MA 01835



# MPHA Staff

Oami Amarasingham  
Deputy Director



Veronica Cañas  
Operations Coordinator



Kate Forrest  
Coalition Coordinator  
& Policy Analyst



Ana Hidalgo  
Development Manager



Carlene Pavlos  
Executive Director



Jeneczka Roman  
Assistant Director of Advocacy  
& Communication



Alexis Walls  
Assistant Campaign Director



# Support MPHA's Work

## Donate now by clicking the link in the chat!



# MPHA Members of Executive Committee



**Steve Ridini**  
President



**Neil Maniar**  
Immediate Past President  
Nominating Committee Chair



**Roeshana Moore-Evans**  
President-Elect and  
Co-chair of our Racial  
Equity and Health  
Committee



**Dolores Thibault-Muñoz**  
Vice President



**Clara Chan Farnsworth**  
Treasurer



**Chrismery Gonzalez**  
Co-Chair of Racial Equity & Health Committee



**Cheryl Barlett**  
Co-Chair of the  
Development Committee



**Jodie Silverman**  
Co-Chair of the Development Committee

# VOTE #1: NEW BOARD MEMBERS SLATE

**A vote “yes” will accept the slate.**

**A vote “no” will reject the slate.**



**Danielle Kim**

Executive Director of the Asian  
Community Fund at The Boston  
Foundation



**Rodrigo Monterrey**

Sr. Director, DEI and Health  
Equity at Tufts Medicine

## VOTE #2: ELECTION OF ARGC to APHA

**A vote “yes” will reappoint Mr. Landers.  
A vote “no” will reject his appointment.**



**Stewart Landers**  
Affiliate Representative to  
the Governing  
Committee of APHA



# MPHA PROUDLY HONORS AND THANKS



## **Guiding Light Award**

For recognition of her dedication, commitment and transformative leadership of the Massachusetts Public Health Association



**Jodie Silverman**

MPHA Board of Directors  
2011-2023

MPHA Board President  
2018-2020

Chair of the Development  
Committee, 2021-2023



# ANNUAL CONFERENCE & MEETING 2023

*Thank you for  
coming together with us!*