FOCUS 40

The 2040 Investment Plan for the MBTA

STATE OF THE SYSTEM REPORT: THE RIDE

December 2015

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ABOUT THE STATE OF THE SYSTEM REPORTS

These State of the System reports lay the foundation for the development of *Focus40*, a financially responsible 25-year capital plan for the MBTA, to be released in 2016. Planning for the future requires a clear understanding of the present. These reports describe that present: the condition, use, and performance of the MBTA bus, rapid transit, commuter rail, ferry, and paratransit systems. In addition, these reports describe how asset condition and age influence service performance and customer experience.

The next phase of *Focus40* will consider how a range of factors – including technological innovation, demographic shifts, and climate change – will require the MBTA to operate differently in 2040 than it does today. With the benefit of the information provided in these State of the Systems reports, the *Focus40* team will work with the general public and transportation stakeholders to develop and evaluate various strategies for investing in and improving the MBTA system in order to prepare it for the future.

SUMMARY OF STATE OF THE SYSTEM: The RIDE

The RIDE demands relatively little capital investment compared to the other MBTA modes. However, the needs of an aging population could require additional investment by the MBTA to expand the fleet.

THE RIDE OVERVIEW

The RIDE fulfills and exceeds the MBTA's federal mandate to provide ADA complementary paratransit service for customers unable to access the fixed route system due to a disability.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the MBTA is obligated to provide paratransit service – within three quarters of a mile of fixed-route service, at all times when that service is provided – to customers who cannot access or use its fixed-route system because of their disabilities. The RIDE is the MBTA's ADA complementary paratransit service.

Since it began operation in 1977, the service has grown from a relatively small operation serving a 12-square mile area in Brookline, Cambridge and parts of Boston to one of the largest paratransit operations in the nation, serving a 712-square mile area with a population of 2.5 million. In FY15, The RIDE provided approximately 1.8 million trips to 30,000 registered customers and 2.1 million total trips, including personal care assistants and companions.

The RIDE's FY 2013 total ridership (2.1m) was 4th highest in the US - after NYC, Chicago and Los Angeles, and slightly greater than Washington DC.

MBTA Annual Metrics by Mode - 2013

	Operating Expenses (%)	Fare Revenues (%)	Passenger Miles (%)	Passenger Trips (%)
Bus	29.8	17.8	15.4	29.8
Commuter Rail	26.4	29.9	40.4	8.9
Rapid Transit	35.1	49.9	42.8	60.4
Ferry	0.8	1.1	0.6	0.3
Paratransit	**7.9**	**1.3**	**0.8**	**0.5**

Source: 2013 NTD Transit Profile

The RIDE oversees a significantly smaller portfolio of capital assets than the MBTA's bus, rapid transit or commuter rail systems as the maintenance and repair facilities are the responsibility of The RIDE's contractor. This legally mandated service does, however, represent an outsized portion of the MBTA's operating budget considering the relatively few number of persons served.

THE RIDE OVERVIEW – SERVICE DELIVERY

Three contractors provide The RIDE service in three over-lapping areas. Each has a 5-year base contract that started July 1, 2014, with a two-year option that can be exercised by the MBTA.

The RIDE contractors provide "turnkey" operations, and are responsible for:

- Reservations/scheduling
- Dispatching
- Service operations
- Vehicle inspection
- Vehicle maintenance
- Repair and storage

The RIDE contractors operate the service with a dedicated fleet of lift-equipped vehicles and sedans, about 80% of which are supplied by the MBTA. Contractors are required to acquire and operate additional dedicated vehicles as needed to accommodate the demand.

THE RIDE SERVICE AREA

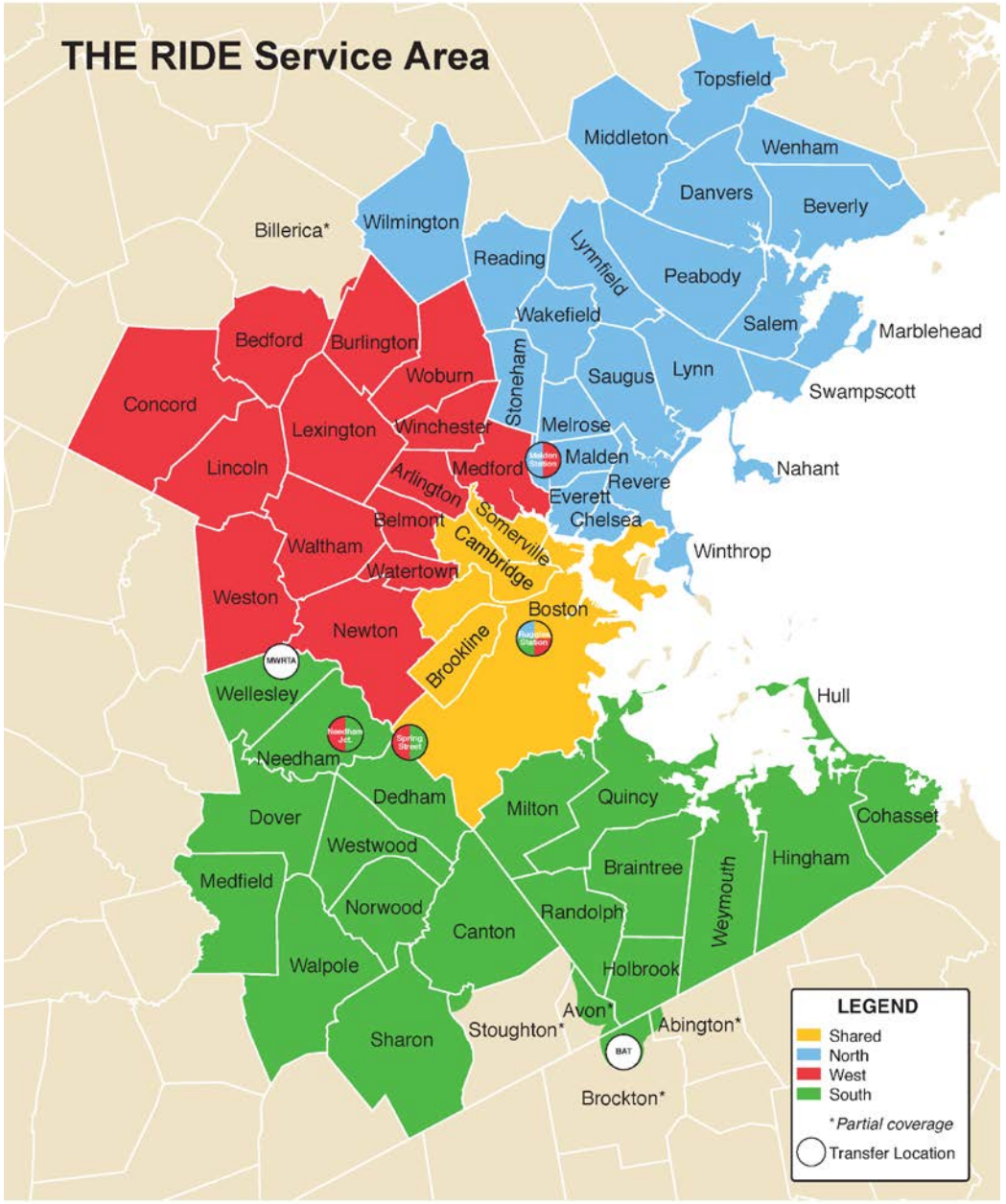
The RIDE goes beyond the required three-quarter mile radius of fixed route corridors to provide "premium service" trips to RIDE eligible customers.

The core area was expanded in July 2014 to reduce the number of inter-zone transfers required.

FY 15 Ridership* by area (including core):

- North (Blue) 730,208
- West (Red) 734,566
- South (Green) 631,642

2,096,416



*Number of one-way trips

RIDERSHIP

After years of consistent increases, ridership has stabilized due to a combination of a more accurate eligibility process, improved fixed route accessibility, the promotion of alternative services, and increased fares.

Year	North	West	South	Total
FY 2011	766,723	896,017	697,226	**2,359,966**
FY 2012	860,592	984,796	764,059	**2,609,447**
FY 2013	686,493	821,142	610,235	**2,108,870**
FY 2014	693,008	824,067	606,738	**2,123,813**
FY 2015	730,208	734,566	631,642	**2,096,416**

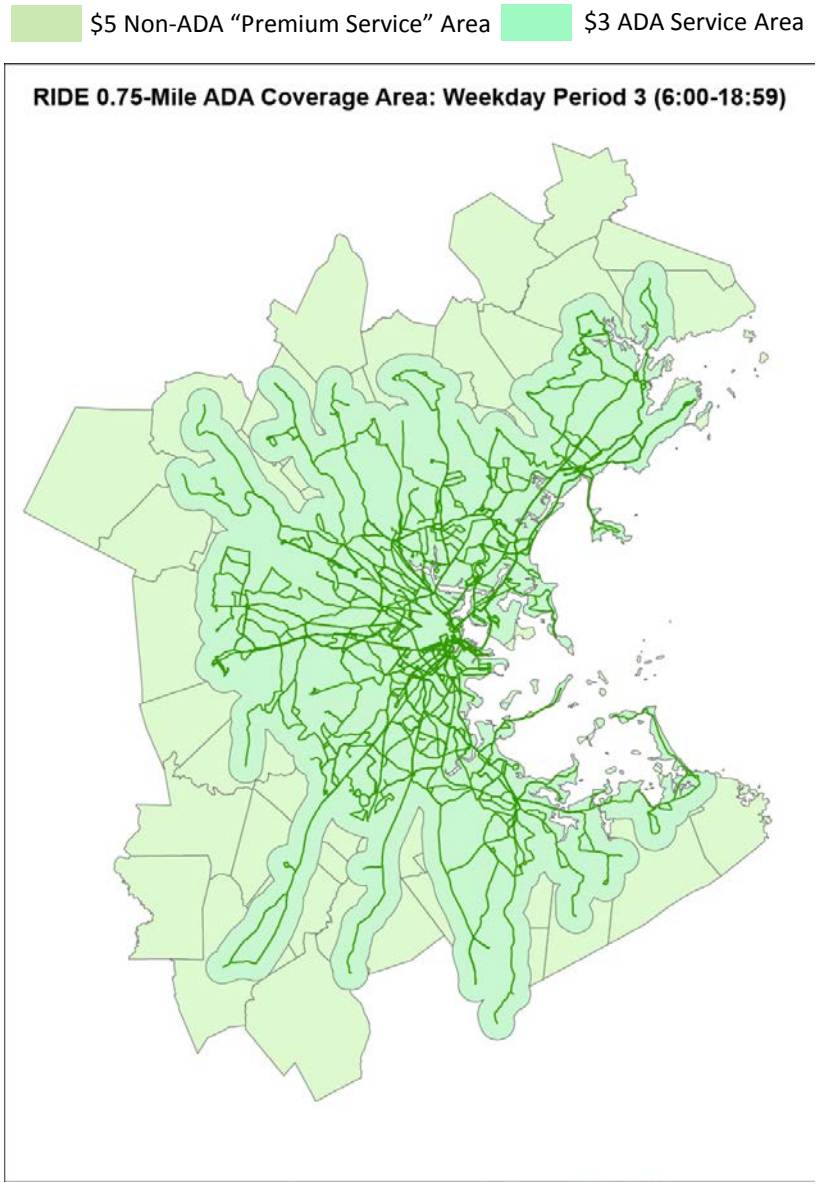
FARES

Fares increased in July 2012 from $2.00 to $4.00, the maximum (twice the regular bus fare) as allowed by the ADA.

Fares were reduced to $3.00 in January 2014.

A centralized fare account was established for each registered customer, enabling a cashless system.

In October 2012, the introduction of a non-ADA "premium service" trip fare of $5.00 was established for trips to and/or from light green areas and trips scheduled for the same-day.



THE RIDE FLEET (AUGUST 2015)

The relatively small number of trips served by The RIDE and the contracting out of most functions result in a much smaller capital asset portfolio, mainly vehicles (and only a subset of those).

Zone	Contractor Lift-Equipped Vans	Contractor Sedans	Contractor Taxi	MBTA Sedans	MBTA Lift-Equipped Vans	Total
North	64	11	0	87	130	292
West	1	64	91	87	151	394
South	0	26	0	87	150	263
Total	65	101	91	261	431*	949

** Includes 64 vans (26 – West and 38 – North) that were scheduled for retirement in March 2015.*

SERVICE PERFORMANCE

The RIDE is not currently subject to the MBTA's service standards, but is held to other standards including ADA compliance standards that the service often exceeds.

ADA COMPLIANCE

The RIDE meets and in some cases exceeds ADA compliance standards.

Not only is service provided in all areas within three quarters of a mile of fixed route MBTA service, but…

- **"Premium service" is provided for trips outside of required ADA area.**
- While fares for most RIDE trips can be as much as $4, **the MBTA charges only $3** ($5 fares for "premium service).
- Federal standards require curb-to-curb service. However, **the RIDE provides all customers with door-to-door service.**

SERVICE QUALITY

The RIDE's on-time performance (OTP) and rate of missed trips, while still meeting internal standards, suffered as a result of the historic snowfall during Winter 2015.

Year	OTP	Missed Trips
FY 2011	93%	0.07%
FY 2012	93%	0.04%
FY 2013	93%	0.05%
FY 2014	92%	0.08%
FY 2015	90%	0.18%

On-Time Performance – The RIDE contractual standard = 90%; 90% also industry norm for 20 pick-up window
A completed trip will be defined as on-time if:

1. *(1) the vehicle arrives at origin within the 20 minute pick-up window, and*
2. *(2) the vehicle arrives at destination no later than the scheduled drop-off time.*

Missed Trips – The RIDE contractual goal = 0%; no more than 0.5% is industry norm
MBTA penalizes contractors for all missed trips

ASSET PERFORMANCE

The RIDE fleet is able to meet the needs of today's customers, but the potential for significant growth in demand exists.

FLEET

Vehicle supply

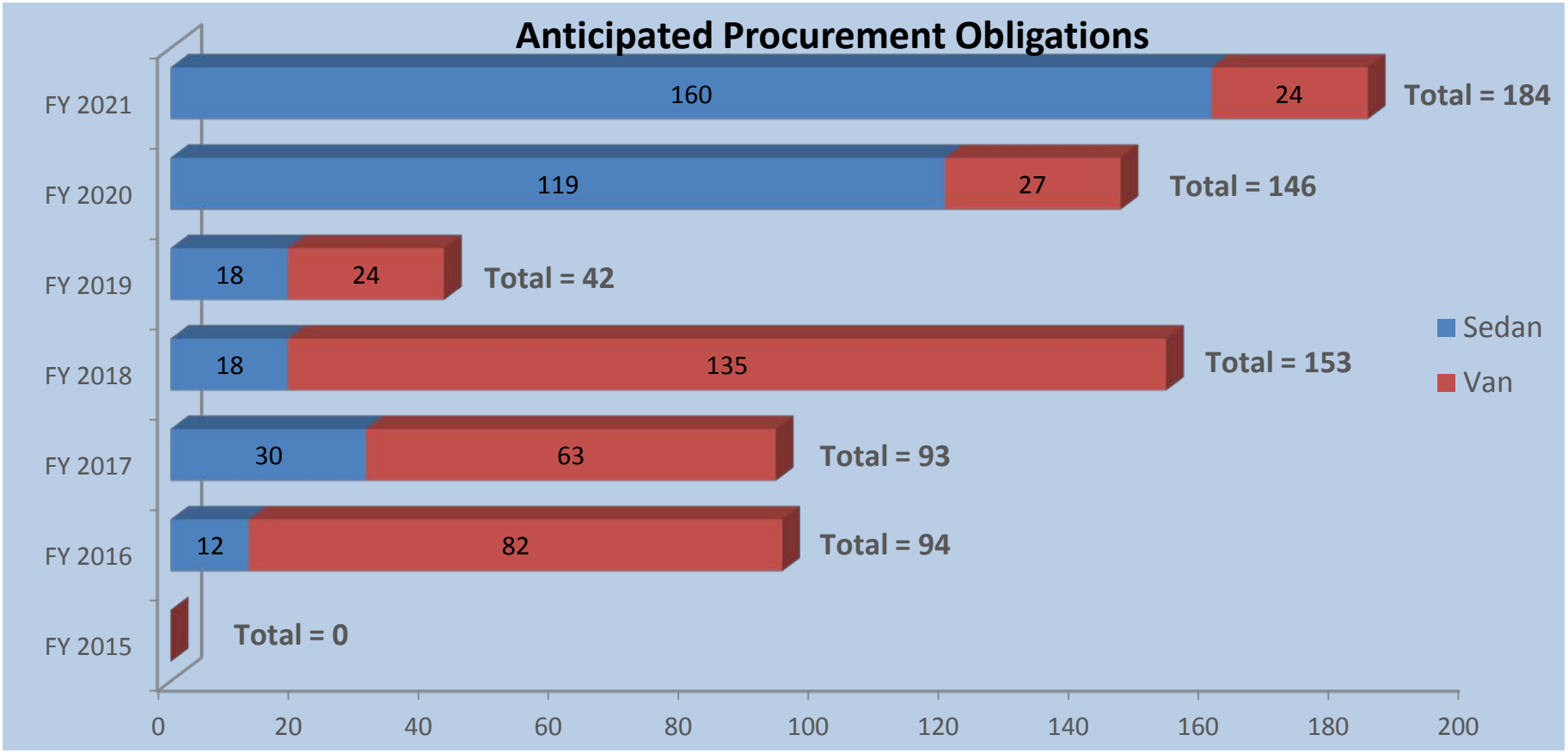
- Under the former contract (FY 09 – FY 14), contractors purchased additional vehicles to account for delays in MBTA procurement.
- Although the MBTA has completed its procurement, the current share of RIDE vehicles supplied by the MBTA is only 81%. This falls short of the 90% target because of the additional contractor-owned vehicles purchased during the last contract.

Procurement

- Vehicles are currently procured (via a mix of lease or purchase) with state operating funds. Using state operating funds allows for joint purchases with the RTAs or use of the state procurement list, resulting in a lower cost to the state than conducting a federal procurement.

FLEET

Based on projected growth and the retirement schedule of vehicles as they reach the end of their useful life, the MBTA will need to procure additional vehicles to meet contractual obligations.*



** Fleet numbers appear in service provider contracts and were based on (1) projected 5% annual increases in registered trips and (2) the provision of 90% of dedicated vehicles needed. Actual number of vehicles provided annually may be within +/- 5% of the fleet numbers in this table.*

RECENT CHANGES THAT COULD REDUCE VEHICLE DEMAND

In-person functional assessments to determine ADA paratransit eligibility was launched with the establishment of The RIDE Eligibility Center (TREC) in December 2012.

Procurement process underway to retain a centralized call and control center (CCCC) management firm:

- Reservations, scheduling and dispatching functions would be transferred to the CCCC contractor.
- Service provider zones would cease to exist.
- Phased transition to new model expected to begin in FY2017

THE RIDE is looking to partner with taxi and ride share companies to reduce costs. A pilot program to subsidize private taxi use for eligible riders began in November 2015.

SUMMARY

Although paratransit services are generally costly to operate, the capital assets are limited.

Summary

Although the population is aging, the need for additional vehicles purchases will depend on demographic changes and the ability or inability of the population to access fixed route systems.

Because the significant costs of paratransit services are generally in the operating budget, the major capital expense is vehicle purchases.

Operations and maintenance are contracted, thus there is no need for larger capital expenditures or maintenance facilities.