



# Report on the FY 2025 Regional Transit Authority Connectivity Grant Program

Submitted Pursuant to the Massachusetts  
Budget Act of 2025 – Section 4 of Chapter 6C of  
the General Laws

Prepared By:

MassDOT Rail & Transit Division  
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## Background

The FY25 state budget included \$10,000,000 for grants to Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) to advance connectivity between existing public transportation routes: “...that not less than \$10,000,000 shall be expended on grants to regional transit authorities for the creation or altering of routes that advance connectivity between existing public transportation routes including, but not limited to: (A) regional transit authority bus routes; and (B) Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority routes; provided further, that the Massachusetts Department of Transportation shall oversee the distribution of said grants to the authorities and shall establish grant criteria including, but not limited to, the prioritization of: (I) opportunities for increased ridership; (II) opportunities for increased total mileage covered in a single trip; (III) opportunities to reach low-income individuals; and (IV) geographic equity.”

## Grant Criteria and Review

MassDOT received 10 applications. A review committee comprised of MassDOT staff reviewed each of the 10 applications and evaluated whether these potential projects aligned with the legislative intent, using the following scoring criteria:

- Service Plan (15 Points) - Evaluates whether the proposed service promotes connectivity between transit authorities, the likelihood of effectiveness, and the thoroughness and potential success of the proposed implementation timelines.
- Budget (5 points) - Evaluates whether expenses are reasonable, eligible, and likely to lead to a successful project.
- Project Need (10 points) - Evaluates the strength of evidence supporting local or regional need, with higher scores for proposals citing multiple sources like studies, rider requests, and data.
- Prioritization (15 points) - Evaluates potential impacts on ridership increases, coverage expansion, and service to low-income individuals, with special consideration for equity and accessibility.
- Evaluation (5 points) - Checks for concrete plans to track ridership data and evaluate service effectiveness.
- Bonus Points (10 points) - Evaluated collaboration and awarded additional credit for collaborative proposals involving multiple transit authorities, with maximum points given when all impacted authorities are partners.

In addition to these criteria, the review committee also considered geographic equity to ensure funding was distributed throughout the Commonwealth.



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## **Awards**

MassDOT awarded funding for all 10 projects, including full funding for 6 projects and partial funding for 4 projects.

## **Mechanisms for Data Collection**

MassDOT requests that grantees submit quarterly reports that include data on ridership, other relevant metrics, and updates on progress.



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**Applications, Project Summaries, Status, and Ridership Data**

FY25 Awards in alphabetical order according to the lead RTA.

Project Name	Project Summary	Progress	Total One-Way Trips in Q1 FY26 (July-September 2025)
<b>413 LINK</b> (original name: 413 CRIB) *Berkshire Regional Transit Authority in partnership with Franklin Regional Transit Authority, and Pioneer Valley Transit Authority	Commuter service connecting the BRTA, PVTA, and FRTA service areas. Continuing funding for a pilot initially funded through an FY24 Regional Transit Innovation Grant. For \$1,577,607	413 Link service scheduled to launch in early 2026, after a series of delays mostly due to difficulties repairing the over-the-road coach vehicles they planned to use. The service will launch on January 28, 2026.	N/A
<b>Cape Ann Transit Connections</b> *Cape Ann Transportation Authority	Extended evening hours on the existing Eastern Ave Route connecting the Gloucester and Rockport MBTA stations with intermediate neighborhoods and destinations For \$406,624	Project start is delayed due to difficulty hiring drivers.	N/A
<b>Brockton - Taunton - Fall River Connection</b> *Greater Attleboro-Taunton Regional Transit Authority in partnership with Brockton Area Transit Authority, and Southeastern Regional Transit Authority	Fixed-route service connecting Brockton, Taunton, and Fall River (connecting BAT, GATRA, and SRTA service areas). Continuing funding for a pilot initially funded through an FY24 Regional Transit Innovation Grant. For \$1,575,160	Launched August 4, 2025.	2,264
<b>MART Emerson Hospital Shuttle</b> *Montachusett Regional Transit Authority	6 loops a day connecting Fitchburg, Devens, and Emerson Hospital, including on-demand feeder service to the shuttle stops in Fitchburg, Leominster, Shirley, and Ayer For \$278,250	Due to low ridership, in November 2025, MART ended this pilot early and instead dedicated the funds to on-demand service in the same area that was more flexible and more popular among riders.	17
<b>Frequency is Freedom - Gateway City High Frequency Connector</b> *Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority in partnership with Lowell Regional Transit Authority	Increasing frequency on the existing route connecting Lowell and Lawrence For \$1,156,164	MeVa used these grant funds to increase frequency on their Routes 1 and 24, connecting Haverhill, Lawrence, and Lowell. As a result, ridership is up 15%, and riders have access to 3,500 additional jobs within a one-hour commute of Lawrence, according to a study by the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission.	240,498



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Project Name	Project Summary	Progress	Total One-Way Trips in Q1 FY26 (July-September 2025)
<b>The 495 Connector</b> *MetroWest Regional Transit Authority in partnership with Worcester Regional Transit Authority	Peak-hours commuter service along Route 85 from South Acton to Franklin, connecting to 3 commuter rail lines plus MWRTA and GATRA services, and extending MWRTA microtransit to Berlin (a WRTA town) For \$1,092,529	495 Connector service launched May 27, 2025. Berlin microtransit launched on February 17, 2025.	3,989 4,859
<b>WAVE On-Demand</b> *Nantucket Regional Transit Authority	Off-season microtransit to parts of Nantucket that do not get fixed-route service, with a focus on serving low-income riders For \$341,000	This new service was launched on December 1, 2025.	N/A
<b>Pioneer Valley Connectors</b> *Pioneer Valley Transit Authority in partnership with Franklin Regional Transit Authority	2 new north-south fixed-routes in PVTA's service area, one of which includes 2 FRTA towns plus microtransit in the 2 FRTA towns (Southampton & Southwick) For \$1,764,922	The Parker Street Crosstown launched in March of 2025. The Northampton Southwick and the companion MicroTransit program through FRTA will launch in late March of 2026.	4,089 N/A
<b>Micro-transit: South Coast Rail Connector</b> *Southeastern Regional Transit Authority	Piloting microtransit for local connections to South Coast Rail For \$694,944	The program originally launched on March 24, 2025.	718
<b>Intercity Express - 9x</b> *Southeastern Regional Transit Authority	Express service between New Bedford and Fall River, connecting 2 cities within SRTA's service area for a faster ride than the regular route For \$1,112,800	The program originally launched on December 15, 2024. Note, the total one-way trip count includes full Intercity Express – 9x ridership.	114,204