

TRANSIT SERVICES AND NEEDS IN WESTERN FRANKLIN COUNTY

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West County Public Forum Flyer



FRANKLIN REGIONAL
TRANSIT AUTHORITY



FRANKLIN REGIONAL
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

**INTERESTED IN EXPANDED
BUS SERVICE IN
WESTERN FRANKLIN COUNTY ?**

A PUBLIC FORUM

**to gather ideas for future
Bus Service Improvements**

will be held on

→ **Wednesday, August 15, 2007** ←
5:30 - 7:00 P.M.

→ **Shelburne-Buckland Community Center** ←
53 Main Street, Shelburne Falls

Pizza will be provided.

ALL ARE WELCOME !

For more information, please contact the Franklin Regional
Council of Governments (774-1194, ext. 108) or the Franklin
Regional Transit Authority (774-2262, ext. 104).

Transit Issues and Service Improvement Ideas from Public Forum Participants

Public Forum Held August 15, 2007
at the Shelburne-Buckland Community Center

Approximately forty people were in attendance.

Including West County residents, staff of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA), members of the FRTA Board, and other interested parties.

Participant Comments

Current West Route/Ideas for Improvements

- Important to get off Academy at Charlemont schedule.
- Because bus runs on Academy at Charlemont schedule, it may not work for Greenfield Community College (GCC) students and other commuters.
 - For spring break, Academy has two week break; GCC only has one week.
 - If Academy has a late opening due to snow, bus runs late; GCC doesn't necessarily have a snow delay too.
 - Would be helpful to have a consistent afternoon schedule during the school year.
- Have year-round service.
- Expand hours of service (a.m. and p.m.) so that the bus would work with more people's schedules.
- Have more bus runs each day so that riders do not have to spend all day in Greenfield.
- Have more runs to GCC.
- Have weekend bus service.
- Have more bus stops along Route 2.
- Need for more publicity and information about the bus schedule.
 - A lot of people don't know about the bus service in West County at all.
 - Suggested locations for posting schedules, Big Y, Coffee Roasters, Recorder, West County News. The schedule is already posted at the town offices, libraries, visitor center, and FRTA web sites.
 - Have a PR campaign (with signs along Route 2, etc.) to encourage transit usage.
 - Drivers need to be more knowledgeable about the schedule; they do not always seem very sure about route times since the schedule changes, and have sometimes provided confusing information.

Transit Issues and Service Improvement Ideas from Public Forum Participants

Participant Comments (continued)

Current Services for Seniors and Disabled/Ideas for Improvements

- Conway resident: Shelburne Council on Aging provides some services, but they are limited. She'd like to be able to take GCC classes or go to the Y in Greenfield.
- Colrain resident: Wishes elderly had better access to transit services/van services.
- Idea: Have senior van service in each town one day per week for transportation to medical appointments.
- Idea: Can West County have an expanded dial-a-ride service such as PVRTA has? (FRTA comment: PVRTA's bus system is much larger; FRTA demand response service (similar to dial-a-ride) relies more on volunteers.)

Ideas for Other Transit Service Improvements/Changes

- Service from Conway to/from Ashfield.
- More service within West County.
- Better service connections to cities in Hampshire and Hampden Counties (Amherst, Northampton, Springfield); many West County residents commute to these destinations.
- Better connections to the University of Massachusetts.
- Better connections to Brattleboro and Boston.
- Run buses on biodiesel or other alternative fuel.

Ideas for Funding for Service Improvements

(suggested by FRTA staff and board, FRCOG staff, and present local officials)

- Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Funding, funding could be available by 2008-2010; CMAQ provides start up funding; would need to find permanent funding after this.
- Support from local officials/communities
 - It's important for residents to contact local officials (FRTA Board members; Select Board) and tell them that funding bus services is a priority and that they would be willing to support it:
 - Bedrock of FRTA is local control; it's up for the towns to decide what services they want and what they are willing to pay for.

Other Transportation Ideas

- Taxi service – currently limited, a few Greenfield taxi companies serve West County.
 - One person mentioned that he is considering starting up a taxi company to serve West County.
- Coordinated carpool services/ trip sharing/ ridesharing board (internet or other)
- Emergency medical transportation, including way for people to get home if they are taken to hospital via ambulance.

**West County Transit Survey
July 2007**



FRANKLIN REGIONAL
TRANSIT AUTHORITY



FRANKLIN REGIONAL
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

July 2007

Dear West County resident:

The Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) are currently researching the possibility of expanding bus services in the western part of Franklin County. This survey is designed to help evaluate West County residents' interest in and need for increased bus services. The results of the survey will be used to consider future bus service changes.

Resident participation in this survey is crucial, and we ask that you please complete and return the survey by Monday, August 20, 2007. Surveys can be returned in the enclosed pre-paid envelope. The survey is also available online at the FRCOG web site, www.frcog.org, from which the survey can be printed out and returned in the mail.

There will be a public meeting to discuss current transit bus services in the West County area and to gather ideas for future service changes on Wednesday, August 15, 2007, at Shelburne-Buckland Community Center in Shelburne Falls, at 5:30 p.m. We encourage you to attend and share your ideas. All are welcome!

If you have any questions or comments about the survey or the meeting on August 15th, please contact Maureen Mullaney, FRCOG Transportation Program Manager, at 774-1194, ext. 108, or Tina Cote, FRTA Administrator, at 774-2262, ext. 104. Thank you for your participation in this important project.

Leo Parent, Jr., Chair
FRTA Board

Tom Miner, Chair
Franklin Regional Planning Board

WEST COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSIT SURVEY

JULY 2007

The Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) are currently researching the possibility of expanding bus services in western Franklin County. Input from West County residents is crucial. Please fill out this survey and return it no later than Monday, August 20, 2007. Surveys can be returned by mail in the enclosed pre-paid envelope. Thank you!

1. Which town do you live in? _____
2. How many adults live in your household? 1 2 3 4 or more
3. How many children under age 18 live in your household? None 1 2 3 or more
4. How often have you or someone else in your household used the following services in the past year? For each service, please mark an X in the appropriate column. For bus services that are not available year-round, indicate how often the service has been used during the period(s) when it is in operation.

	Not at All	A Few Times	Monthly	Weekly	2-3 Times Per Week	Daily
a. FRTA West Bus Route that runs between Charlemont & Greenfield						
b. Other FRTA buses (if other buses have been ridden, please specify which routes)						
.....						
.....						
c. Park & Ride Lot in Charlemont on Route 2						
d. Dial-A-Ride or Paratransit Van Transit Service for Seniors and Residents with Disabilities						

5. How many cars does your household have: None 1 2 3 4 or more

6. For each potential bus service change listed, please indicate how often you expect that you or someone else in your household might ride the bus as a result of the change. *Please mark an X in the appropriate columns, and briefly describe below under Question #7.*

Change in Bus Service	Would Not Take the Bus/Van More than Now	A Few Times per Year	Monthly	Weekly	More than Weekly	Not Sure
a. Expansion of bus service along Route 2 west (Greenfield-Charlemont) from school-year service to year-round						
b. Longer weekday hours for bus service along Route 2 west from Greenfield to Charlemont						
c. More frequent weekday bus service along Route 2 west from Greenfield to Charlemont						
d. Weekend bus service along Route 2 west from Greenfield						
e. Regular bus stop at the Park & Ride Lot in Charlemont						
f. Regular bus stop at the Mohawk Trail Regional School						
g. Other additional bus stops						
h. Bus service to areas off of Route 2 and to other parts of Franklin County						
i. Better connection between the FRTA's Route 2 West Route and other FRTA bus routes						
j. Increased van transit services for seniors and residents with disabilities						

7. Please briefly describe the specific changes in bus service that would lead your household to take the bus more often. *(For example, what hours of bus service; which additional stops; bus routes to which additional areas, etc.)*

8. What is your estimated household income per year? (Prefer not to answer)
- Under \$10,000 \$10,000 - \$24,999 \$25,000 - \$39,999
- \$40,000 - \$54,999 \$55,000 - \$74,999 \$75,000 or over

If you have any other comments or suggestions regarding bus services in western Franklin County, please write them here.

PLEASE FOLD THE SURVEY & RETURN BY MAIL IN THE ENCLOSED PRE-PAID ENVELOPE.

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

PLEASE JOIN US!

A PUBLIC MEETING

To discuss
CURRENT BUS SERVICES
IN THE WEST COUNTY AREA

and to gather ideas for
SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

will be held on
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2007
5:30 – 7:00 P.M.

at the
SHELBURNE-BUCKLAND COMMUNITY CENTER
53 Main Street, Shelburne Falls

Refreshments will be served.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

For more information, please contact the FRCOG or FRTA.

Newspaper Articles about the Public Forum and Transit Survey

The Republican.

Better regional transit sought

Thursday, August 02, 2007

By **DAVID A. VALLETTE**
dvallette@repub.com

SHELBURNE - The only public bus that plies the road in Western Franklin County makes only two runs each day and stays in the garage when school is not in session.

The Franklin Regional Transit Authority and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments are looking to improve the service.

Surveys and other feedback show people in the 10 West County towns want more bus service, Tina Cote, director of the transit authority, said yesterday.

The 10 western towns are Ashfield, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Conway, Hawley, Heath, Monroe, Rowe and Shelburne.

"People are looking to cut down on the cost of gas and to cut pollution," she said.

A new round of surveying has begun. Short-form surveys have been mailed to households in all 10 towns, with a requested return by Aug. 20. The survey is to determine what new services residents would use.

Also, a forum has been scheduled for Aug. 15, at 5:30 p.m., at the Shelburne-Buckland Community Center here at 53 Main St. A discussion of present and possible future transit services will be on the agenda.

The current schedule has two bus runs each weekday along Route 2 between Court Square in front of Town Hall in Greenfield and Avery's Store on Main Street in the center of Charlemont.

The primary stop for the bus is the Academy at Charlemont to serve its students. During the summer and during school breaks, the bus doesn't run.

While the bus can be used by Charlemont residents to get to Greenfield for shopping at the Big Y Plaza or downtown, its schedule does not promote that. Cote said that if demand exists, additional runs could be added.

"We definitely would add more times," she said.

Envisioned is a schedule that would better accommodate western residents getting to Greenfield Community College, Greenfield residents heading west to Mohawk Trail Regional School in Buckland under school choice, shoppers and commuting workers.

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Public forum will set for better bus services

SHELBURNE FALLS — The Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) will be holding a public forum on Wednesday, Aug. 15, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Shelburne-Buckland Community Center to discuss current public bus services in western Franklin County, and to gather ideas for future service improvements.

In conjunction with the forum, and as an additional way to encourage public input, a short survey is being mailed out to all households in the towns of Ashfield, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Conway, Hawley, Heath, Monroe, Rowe and Shelburne — more than 5,500 households in total. Residents receiving the survey are kindly requested to fill it out and return it no later than Monday, Aug. 20. Surveys can be returned by mail in the provided pre-paid envelope.

The information collected through the public forum and the survey will be used to consider future bus service changes in the western Franklin

County area. Western Franklin County currently has very limited bus service. The FRTA runs one bus route along the Mohawk Trail between Greenfield and Charlemont, and that route operates only during the school year — not over the summer and school breaks.

Improved bus service along Route 2 west of Greenfield is listed as a priority in the 2007 Franklin Region Transportation Plan, as well as in other regional studies, and is seen as particularly crucial for increasing residents' access to jobs and job-related training. The need for expanded bus service for senior citizens and residents with disabilities in western Franklin County has also been expressed.

All area residents are welcome to attend this meeting. Pizza will be provided. For more information on the forum or the transit survey, please contact Maureen Mullaney, FRCOG Transportation Program Manager, (413) 774-1194, ext. 108, or Tina Cote, FRTA Administrator, (413) 774-2262, ext. 104.

Want public transport in West County? Meeting set to discuss expanding bus service.

By Jeremy Dirac,
Recorder Staff

It's hard to survive in West County without a car. That's especially true if you work outside the hilltowns, in places like Greenfield or Turners Falls. But, perhaps as soon as 2009, that could change. Recently, some 5,500 households -- in Shelburne, Buckland, Ashfield, Charlemont, Conway, Hawley, Rowe and Monroe - got surveys in their mailboxes asking questions like: "How many cars do you have?" and "How often would you use the bus if ...?"

To buttress information obtained from the surveys, the Franklin Regional Transit Authority and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments are holding a public forum (with pizza) on Aug. 15 at 5:30 p.m. in the Shelburne-Buckland Community Center for everyone interested in discussing additional bus service for West County, as well as sharing other ideas for the future of transportation in the area.

Although many West County residents don't know it, there is a bus service that runs part of the year between Greenfield and Charlemont, which stops by the Arms Library, FRTA Administrator Tina Cote said.

But it only runs during The Academy at Charlemont's school year. Although non-students may ride it -- for about \$1.50 each way -- the bus routes are tailored to taking students to and from school and generally won't work for people headed to work, Cote said.

Cote said that bringing more buses into West County is something that the FRTA has been looking into for years. Shared transportation can also cut down on fuel use and minimize pollution, she said.

Better public transportation along Route 2 is a priority in the countywide transportation plan, not only for increasing residents' access to jobs and job-related training, but expanding bus services for senior citizens and for residents with disabilities, said a press release.

But the expansion of bus services in West County isn't a given. If it doesn't look like enough people will use the service, then the expansion won't happen.

Cote said that in related news, a bus stop is planned on Ashfield Street in Buckland, near the Salmon Falls Artisans Showroom, this September.

Bus might be just the ticket

Chance for West County to have a say

Hey, you in West County who work in Greenfield: Take the bus with me! Well, at least think about it, anyway.

I followed the bus rolling out of Avery's Store's parking lot in the morning this past school year and felt guilty for months. I thought: "I gotta write to the newspaper about this." Then, I just got a letter from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) asking my opinion on increasing West County bus service. Boy, they're good at reading minds! Then, yesterday I see a front-page article in *The Recorder* on this. Wow!

As it's set up now, the bus is associated with the Charlemont Academy's schedule — I believe they support the route. Nothing in the summer and a very short day when there are no sports for the kids.

Even when the bus left Charlemont at around 8 a.m. and returned to pick up the kids at 5-ish (post soccer), I could not do it as there'd be half-hour walk each way to and from Court Square from where I work, not leaving enough time for my day. Too bad, I thought.

Here's the opportunity! So what's so great about the bus? You've thought about car-pooling and you feel too constricted, too guilty when you need to stay late, go out to dinner or whatever. Heck, your poolers are depending on you! Or maybe you'll have a falling out with the other pooler(s) — then what? Here's the answer. Hop on the bus!

**Henry
Leutchman
My Turn**



Why? It currently costs \$1.50 one-way and there seems to be a "pass" you can buy to reduce the price (or if you admit to being one of those ancients over 60). My Subaru burns about one gallon of gas each way between my home and my work. Do the math for your situation!

Do you gotta socialize? Sing old, racy Girl-Scout tunes? Hobnob with the masses? Heck, no! Sit there with your book. Plug in those I-buds. Sleep. Watch the river flow by. Or chat, if you dare. Miss the bus when your better half drives to the big city and you two go out to dinner! No problem. It's the answer!

So what does FRCOG need to hear from you on this? They've mailed out a survey. Where do you want the bus to stop, both in the West County and in Greenfield? Let's assume you can get to the bus at Avery's or the Arms Library, then it goes to GCC, Big Y, Court Square and Cherry Rum Plaza. Where would it be best (or second best) for it to stop for you?

I said at Dunkin' Donuts or the Mohawk Mall at Conway and Main streets for me — I can use the exercise walking out Elm Street. For you, it might be out Federal Street as it heads to or from Cherry Rum Plaza or elsewhere on Main Street. Maybe another stop on the trail would help. Let 'em

■ The Council of Governments is soliciting comments about bus service from West County to Greenfield.

know!

What times can you handle (including getting to and from the bus at both ends)? I need eight hours at work and 20 minutes each way to and from. How about you? Let 'em know! How often do you think you might use the service? Weekly? Daily? Occasionally? Let 'em know!

This can actually happen if enough folks chime in. Who knows, maybe you could even, eventually, get rid of that second gas-guzzler. I'm so tired of (almost exclusively) seeing singly occupied 1,500-pound tin boxes cruising across the trail when I go to work. There's got to be a better way.

If you didn't get one of the surveys — go to the meeting today, Aug. 15, at 5:30 at the Shelburne-Buckland Community Center. If, like me, you can't go, send them an e-mail or call them up at the FRCOG: (774-1194 Ext. 108). Heck! Send me an e-mail at patandhenry@gmail.com and I'll pass your thoughts on.

Do it! We'll all be on the same bus together if you do, at least from-time-to-time. But don't let that scare you.

Henry Leutchman is a commuter who lives in Heath.

West County residents discuss bus service

By JEREMY DIRAC
Recorder Staff

SHELBURNE FALLS — "If you build it, they will come," someone in the crowd said Wednesday night.

She said it at a meeting, attended by approximately 30 residents, that was geared toward gathering opinions about bringing bus service to West County.

Depending on public feedback, the Franklin

Regional Council of Governments and the Franklin Regional Transit Authority may bring buses to West County as soon as 2009.

Although many West County residents don't know it, there is a bus route that runs part of the year between Greenfield and Charlemont, but it's useless for most people.

It only runs during The Academy at Charlemont's school year and is tailored toward

See WEST BUS Page 12

From Page 1

taking kids to and from school.

According to the 2000 census, 19 percent of West County's labor force commutes to Greenfield for work. In Shelburne, it's 26 percent.

Out of all commuters, 77 percent drive to work alone.

A big impetus for expanded public transportation is the high cost of gasoline.

But FRCOG Transportation Program Manager Maureen Mullaney — also a West County commuter — said that beyond that, West County is a socially conscious region, and many people who now drive would likely take up bus riding for other reasons, like reducing pollution from emissions or curbing reliance on foreign oil.

Marian Tomes, 87, of Buckland, said that she drives now but doesn't know that she'll be driving forever and would like to be able to enjoy an active life

in the future.

One senior citizen at the meeting said that although she's able to get transportation for medical visits and shopping excursions, she'd like to use the bus to take classes in Northampton, or to exercise at the YMCA in Greenfield.

Tracey Cormier, a 24-year-old from Buckland, said that her epilepsy prevents her from driving so she relies on the academy-scheduled buses to get to and from Greenfield Community College. Consequently, she sometimes can't get to school when the two schools have different vacation times and can't take classes if they're too early in the morning.

Cormier said that she'd like to further her education by attending the University of Massachusetts, but she can't afford tuition and to live on campus at the same time.

FRTA Administrator Tina Cote said that there are other GCC students from West County, or potential ones, who might take advantage of a West County bus service and the same goes for

UMass ones.

Buckland resident Bill Brewer, 71, said that he's considering starting up a taxi service and that if there were a bus service it would likely help his business because more people would recognize not taking their own cars as a viable option for West County.

Colrain's FRTA representative and Finance Committee Chairman Robert Rottenberg said that the only way that towns will get buses is if residents start telling their selectmen now that they want them, because towns would have to pick up a percentage of the cost of having their own bus service, about 25 percent, Cote said.

"For every \$1 that we have, there's \$5 of requests," Rottenberg said.

So far, about 600 surveys, or 10 percent of the 5,650 ones that went out, have been returned, Mullaney said.

If you would like to share your feelings on expanding bus service to West County, call Mullaney at 774-1994 Ext. 108 or Cote at 774-2262 Ext. 104.

Need seen for public transportation

West County News, August 23 - August 29, 2007

BY GREGORY G. LEWIS
WCN Correspondent

SHELBURNE FALLS - It is all talk at this point, but last Wednesday's transportation forum at the Shelburne-Buckland Community Center was intended to take a new transportation-needs study to the next level.

The Aug. 15 assembly was well attended by people from as far away as Montague and Northampton, according to Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) Administrator Tina Cote. It

was also a concerned crowd, composed of some elderly, children of the elderly, people who don't drive for medical reasons, and some others looking for environmentally conscientious transportation that doesn't involve having to buy a car.

The FRTA, which handles buses and routes, hosted the forum in cooperation with the Franklin County Regional Council of Governments, which conducts surveys and provides staffing to compile and analyze needs-survey data.

According to FRCOG Transportation Program Manager Maureen Mullaney, expecting new transportation routes as soon as 2008 isn't realistic.

"The money for the coming fiscal year is already allocated," she said. The Transportation fiscal year begins Oct. 1.

In compliance with a state mandate, the FRCOG conducts a needs study every four years. Thousands responded to a recent mail survey (also available online at www.frcog.org). Each needs-study cycle focuses on some contemporary issue, said Mullaney, and this year's was the cost of energy.

Cote said the only fixed-route at the present time is scheduled around the Academy at Charlemont sports schedule, with a stop at the Arms Library in Shelburne Falls, and the buses don't run in the summer months. The reason for that, said Cote, is that the Academy picks up the greater portion of the assessment tab, not the town.

Cote is currently working on a fall schedule, which will include a Buckland stop at Salmon Falls Market on the return leg from the Academy.

"That doesn't really work for standard nine-to-five

jobs," said Buckland resident Cote. She would like to see increased routes, "other than early-morning [and] early-afternoon runs."

The Shelburne Council on Aging provides Rowe with a demand-response bus service to Greenfield, but that is really a shopping run for the elderly and the disabled. It is neither a fixed-route nor service for the general public. For attendees Ronald and Rosemary Gordon, that's a problem. Ron Gordon can use the demand-response service, but his wife, Rose, can't.

"There's going to be a point in time when you're going to need to concentrate on pushing your elected officials," said FRTA Vice Chairman Rick Kwiatkowski.

Kwiatkowski was reinforcing what others saw as a grassroots effort to get public transportation on the radar at select board and town meetings.

Robert Rottenberg of Colrain said it's a critical service.

"I'm willing to put my tax dollars behind it," said Rottenberg, who is the chairman of the finance committee in that town.

**West County Transit Survey
Distribution and Results**

Survey Mailing Distribution

The West County transit survey was mailed to households in the towns of Ashfield, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Conway, Hawley, Heath, Monroe, Rowe, and Shelburne. The survey was mailed during the last week of July 2007.

The survey was developed by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and was reviewed by the Franklin Regional Transit Authority before being finalized. A copy of the survey was provided earlier in the report appendix.

A company in Greenfield, Adams Direct Mail Service, prepared the survey's mailing list and the mailing. The mailing list was based on commercially available address data and the mailing was designed to reach all households in the ten West County towns. The address list included both street addresses and post office boxes. Address data for Monroe residents were not commercially available so the FRCOG mailed the survey to Monroe residents separately. In total, the survey was sent to approximately 5,625 households. This number of households is equivalent to 97 percent of the number of West County households reported in the 2000 U.S. Census.

Survey Response Rate

Each mailed survey included a return envelope with paid postage to increase the response rate. Recipients were asked to send back the survey by August 20, 2007. Many surveys were returned by that date, and more trickled in later. As of October 1, 2007, a total of 777 surveys had been returned, for a response rate of 14 percent. The response rate varied by community, as shown in Table A-1. The table groups the responses by towns and zipcodes, as needed for accuracy. Some of the zipcodes include multiple towns (for example, zipcode 01339 includes Hawley and part of Charlemont, and zipcode 01346 includes Heath and the rest of Charlemont) and some towns have multiple zipcodes. Also a number of respondents identified themselves as living in the village of Shelburne Falls without indicating whether they lived on the Buckland or Shelburne side of Shelburne Falls.

Table A-1: Survey Response Rate by Community and Zipcode

Town(s)	Zipcode(s)	Surveys Returned	Surveys Sent	Response Rate
Ashfield	01330	103	715	14.4%
Buckland, Shelburne, Shelburne Falls	01338, 01370	277	2,052	13.5%
Charlemont, Hawley, Heath	01339, 01346	151	974	15.5%
Colrain	01340	93	852	10.9%
Conway	01341	102	725	14.1%
Monroe	01350	3	46	6.7%
Rowe	01367	31	261	11.9%
Other (Greenfield, Amherst)		3		
Not Indicated on Survey		14		
Total		777	5,625	13.8%

Respondent Answers to Survey Questions

The tables on this page and the following pages summarize the survey responses by question. The percentages given in the tables are based on the number of households answering the question being referenced, unless noted otherwise. For multi-part questions, such as survey question #4 (“How often has you or someone else in your household used the following services in the past year”), a question is considered to have been answered if any of its subparts were answered.

Question 1: What town do you live in?

Indicated Town of Residence	Count	Percentage
Ashfield	103	13.5%
Buckland	99	13.0%
Charlemont	74	9.7%
Charlemont/Hawley	1	0.1%
Colrain	93	12.2%
Conway	102	13.4%
Hawley	28	3.7%
Heath	48	6.3%
Monroe	3	0.4%
Rowe	31	4.1%
Shelburne	85	11.1%
Shelburne Falls	72	9.4%
Shelburne Falls (Buckland)	19	2.5%
Shelburne Falls (Shelburne)	2	0.3%
Other (Greenfield, Amherst)	3	0.4%
Total	763	100.0%

Number of non-responses: 14.

Question 2: How many adults live in your household?

Adults	Count	Percentage
1	192	25.1%
2	471	61.6%
3	70	9.2%
4 or more	31	4.1%
Total	764	100.0%

Number of non-responses: 13.

Question 3: How many children live in your household?

Children	Count	Percentage
None	558	75.5%
1	91	12.3%
2	76	10.3%
3 or more	14	1.9%
Total	739	100.0%

Number of non-responses: 38.

Question 4: How often have you or someone else in your household used the following services in the past year?

	Daily	2-3 Times Per Week	Weekly	Monthly	A Few Times	Not at All/Blank*
FRTA West Route (when in operation)	5	6	6	12	38	678
Other FRTA Buses	0	4	5	7	14	715
Charlemont Park & Ride Lot	1	3	5	4	55	677
Paratransit Van Service	0	2	6	4	11	722

**Blank responses were counted only for those surveys where another part of the question was answered.*

Percentages for each Route

	Daily	2-3 Times Per Week	Weekly	Monthly	A Few Times	Not at All/Blank	Total
FRTA West Route (when in operation)	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%	1.6%	5.1%	91.0%	100.0%
Other FRTA Buses	0.0%	0.5%	0.7%	0.9%	1.9%	96.0%	100.0%
Charlemont Park & Ride Lot	0.1%	0.4%	0.7%	0.5%	7.4%	90.9%	100.0%
Paratransit Van Service	0.0%	0.3%	0.8%	0.5%	1.5%	96.9%	100.0%

Number of non-responses: 32.

Other Bus Routes taken in the Past Year

Subquestion: If other buses have been ridden, please specify which routes

Nine responses to this question:

PVTA Buses: 4

Valley Route: 2

Athol: 2

Greenfield, in town: 1

Question 5: How many cars does your household have?

Cars	Count	Percentage
None	16	2.4%
1	216	32.2%
2	325	48.4%
3	89	13.3%
4 or more	25	3.7%
Total	671	100.0%

Number of non-responses: 106.

Question 6: For each potential bus service change listed, please indicate how often you expect that you or someone else in your household might ride the bus as a result of the change.

Potential Service Change	More than Weekly	Weekly	Monthly	A Few Times Per Year	Would Not Take the Bus/ Van More than Now	Not Sure	Blank
Expansion of bus service along Route 2 west (Greenfield-Charlemont) from school-year service to year-round	51	42	27	73	410	69	58
Longer weekday hours for bus service along Route 2 west from Greenfield to Charlemont	55	39	27	64	399	77	69
More frequent weekday bus service along Route 2 west from Greenfield to Charlemont	55	50	30	63	394	74	64
Weekend bus service along Route 2 west from Greenfield	25	31	32	59	410	81	92
Regular bus stop at the Park & Ride Lot in Charlemont	25	21	17	42	449	79	97
Regular bus stop at Mohawk Trail Regional School	25	24	19	43	441	84	94
Other additional bus stops	36	33	20	58	341	134	108
Bus service to areas off of Route 2 and to other parts of Franklin County	42	50	37	84	317	129	71
Better connection between the FRTA's Route 2 West Route and other FRTA bus routes	34	40	33	65	346	123	89
Increased van services for seniors and residents with disabilities	32	35	14	56	408	93	92

*Blank responses were counted only for those surveys where another part of of the question was answered.

Number of non-responses: 47.

Question 6: For each potential bus service change listed, please indicate how often you expect that you or someone else in your household might ride the bus as a result of the change.

Percentages for each Potential Service Change

Potential Service Change	More than Weekly	Weekly	Monthly	A Few Times Per Year	Would Not Take the Bus/ Van More than Now	Not Sure	Blank	Total
Expansion of bus service along Route 2 west (Greenfield-Charlemont) from school-year service to year-round	7.0%	5.8%	3.6%	10.0%	56.2%	9.5%	7.9%	100.0%
Longer weekday hours for bus service along Route 2 west from Greenfield to Charlemont	7.5%	5.3%	3.7%	8.8%	54.7%	10.5%	9.5%	100.0%
More frequent weekday bus service along Route 2 west from Greenfield to Charlemont	7.5%	6.8%	4.1%	8.6%	54.0%	10.2%	8.8%	100.0%
Weekend bus service along Route 2 west from Greenfield	3.4%	4.2%	4.4%	8.1%	56.2%	11.1%	12.6%	100.0%
Regular bus stop at the Park & Ride Lot in Charlemont	3.4%	2.9%	2.3%	5.8%	61.5%	10.8%	13.3%	100.0%
Regular bus stop at Mohawk Trail Regional School	3.4%	3.3%	2.6%	5.9%	60.4%	11.5%	12.9%	100.0%
Other additional bus stops	4.9%	4.5%	2.8%	7.9%	46.7%	18.4%	14.8%	100.0%
Bus service to areas off of Route 2 and to other parts of Franklin County	5.8%	6.8%	5.1%	11.5%	43.4%	17.7%	9.7%	100.0%
Better connection between the FRTA's Route 2 West Route and other FRTA bus routes	4.7%	5.5%	4.5%	8.9%	47.4%	16.8%	12.2%	100.0%
Increased van services for seniors and residents with disabilities	4.4%	4.8%	1.9%	7.7%	55.9%	12.7%	12.6%	100.0%

Number of non-responses: 47

Question 7: Please briefly describe the specific changes in bus service that would lead your household to take the bus more often.

Of the 777 households who returned the survey, 318 (40.9%) provided comments regarding the specific changes that would lead them to take the bus more often.

A summary of these comments is provided here. The full comments are provided in Volume II of this report. Some of the comments had multiple components and were accordingly counted in each of the appropriate categories.

Ideas for Changes Relating to the West Route and Service to Towns on the Current Route

<u>General category</u>	<u>Number of responses</u>
More service (more hours, more runs, year-round)	88
More stops on route	31
Service to Mohawk Trail High School	18
Service to Shelburne Falls	10
Service to GCC	10
Weekend service	8
Service to Charlemont	7
Service to Buckland	6
Service to Academy at Charlemont	3
Service to Shelburne Center	3
Bike racks on buses	2
Low-cost service	2
ADA access	1

Desired Destinations/Service beyond the West Route

<u>General destination/category</u>	<u>Number of responses</u>
Northampton	44
Greenfield	38
Deerfield/South Deerfield	19
Amherst	15
Springfield	6
Vermont (Brattleboro and other destinations)	6
Boston	5
Turners Falls	4
Bradley Airport	3
Sunderland	2
Florida, Massachusetts	1
North Adams	1
Rail service	2
<u>For West County towns without a bus route now</u>	
Service to their town	45
Service to Shelburne Falls	14

Question 7: Please briefly describe the specific changes in bus service that would lead your household to take the bus more often.

Desired Destinations/Service beyond the West Route

Park and Ride Lot suggestions

Greenfield (at Interstate 91/Route 2 intersection), South Deerfield, Goshen,
Conway/Williamsburg

Desired Services for Seniors/Disabled

<u>General category</u>	<u>Number of responses</u>
More transportation for medical appointments	10
Longer hours of service/more frequent service	6
More transportation for shopping trips	5
Transportation to the Shelburne Senior Center (from Ashfield & Conway)	4
Transportation to jobs	1

Question 8: What is your estimated household income per year?

Household Income	Count	Percentage
Under \$10,000	13	2.5%
\$10,000 - \$24,999	114	21.6%
\$25,000 - \$39,999	75	14.2%
\$40,000 - \$54,999	95	18.0%
\$55,000 - \$74,999	110	20.9%
\$75,000 or Over	120	22.8%
Total	527	100.0%

Number of non-responses: 250 (32% of all surveys).

Cross Tabulation of Current Bus Usage (Q4) and Household Income (Q8)
for Respondents who Use the FRTA West Route or Paratransit Van Service at least Weekly

Household Income	Use the West Route At least Weekly	Percentage*	Use Paratransit Service At least Weekly	Percentage*
Under \$10,000	1	7.7%	1	14.3%
\$10,000 - \$24,999	5	38.5%	4	57.1%
\$25,000 - \$39,999	2	15.4%	1	14.3%
\$40,000 - \$54,999	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
\$55,000 - \$74,999	4	30.8%	1	14.3%
\$75,000 or Over	1	7.7%	0	0.0%
Income Not Indicated	4	---	1	---
Total	17	100.0%	8	100.0%

**Percentages are based on the number of responses with household income data.*

Cross Tabulation of Current Bus Usage (Q4) and Number of Cars (Q5) Per Adult (Q2)
for Respondents who Use the FRTA West Route or Paratransit Van Service at least Weekly

Number of Cars In Household	Use the West Route At least Weekly	Percentage*	Use Paratransit Service At least Weekly	Percentage*
None	4	28.6%	2	28.6%
1	3	21.4%	3	42.8%
2	4	28.6%	2	28.6%
3 or more	3	21.4%	0	0.0%
No Answer	3	---	1	---
Total	17	100.0%	8	100.0%
Fewer Cars than Adults**				
Yes	6	42.9%	4	57.2%
No	8	57.1%	3	42.8%
Not Known	3	---	1	---
Total	17	100.0%	8	100.0%

**Percentages are based on the number of responses with household car data.*

***It is assumed that in households with 4 or more cars and 4 or more adults, that each adult has adequate access to a car.*

Cross Tabulation of Number of Cars (Q5) and Household Income (Q8)

Income Category	No car	1 car	2 cars	3 or more cars	Total
Under \$10,000	3	6	1	0	10
\$10,000 - \$24,999	7	58	31	6	102
\$25,000 - \$39,999	1	31	30	7	69
\$40,000 - \$54,999	0	29	42	13	84
\$55,000 - \$74,999	1	14	57	25	97
\$75,000 or Over	0	9	67	26	102
Income Not Indicated	4	69	97	37	207
Total	16	216	325	114	671

Number of surveys without household car data: 106.

Percentages for each Income Category

Income Category	No car	1 car	2 cars	3 or more cars	Total
Under \$10,000	30.0%	60.0%	10.0%	0.0%	100.0%
\$10,000 - \$24,999	6.9%	56.9%	30.4%	5.9%	100.0%
\$25,000 - \$39,999	1.4%	44.9%	43.5%	10.1%	100.0%
\$40,000 - \$54,999	0.0%	34.5%	50.0%	15.5%	100.0%
\$55,000 - \$74,999	1.0%	14.4%	58.8%	25.8%	100.0%
\$75,000 or Over	0.0%	8.8%	65.7%	25.5%	100.0%
Income Not Indicated	1.9%	33.3%	46.9%	17.9%	100.0%
Total	2.4%	32.2%	48.4%	17.0%	100.0%

Cross Tabulation of Future Bus Usage Based on Certain Service Changes (Q6) and Household Income (Q8)
for Respondents who Might Ride the Bus/Van at Least Weekly as a Result of a Service Change

Potential Service Change	Might Take the Bus at Least Weekly (Count)	Number With Household Income Data	Household Income Category, Percentage in Each Category, for each Service Change (based on Households with Income Data)			
			Very Low Income (Under \$10,000)	Low Income (\$10,000-\$24,999)	Moderate Income (\$25,000 - \$39,999)	Higher Income (\$40,000 and Over)
Expansion of bus service along Route 2 west (Greenfield-Charlemont) from school-year service to year-round	93	70	1.4%	22.9%	22.9%	52.8%
Longer weekday hours for bus service along Route 2 west from Greenfield to Charlemont	94	71	2.8%	28.2%	23.9%	45.1%
More frequent weekday bus service along Route 2 west from Greenfield to Charlemont	105	76	2.6%	23.7%	22.4%	51.3%
Weekend bus service along Route 2 west from Greenfield	56	40	5.0%	32.5%	27.5%	35.0%
Regular bus stop at the Park & Ride Lot in Charlemont	46	30	3.3%	30.0%	20.0%	46.7%
Regular bus stop at Mohawk Trail Regional School	49	38	2.6%	23.7%	28.9%	44.8%
Other additional bus stops	69	52	1.9%	25.0%	25.0%	48.1%
Bus service to areas off of Route 2 and to other parts of Franklin County	92	72	2.8%	22.2%	25.0%	50.0%
Better connection between the FRTA's Route 2 West Route and other FRTA bus routes	74	54	3.7%	29.6%	22.2%	44.5%
Increased van services for seniors and residents with disabilities	67	49	4.1%	32.7%	20.4%	42.8%

Cross Tabulation of Future Bus Usage Based on Certain Service Changes (Q6) and Number of Cars (Q5) and Number of Adults (Q2)
for Respondents who Might Ride the Bus/Van at Least Weekly as a Result of a Service Change

Potential Service Change	Might Take the Bus at Least Weekly (Count)	Number With Data on Number of Cars and Adults	Number of Cars for Household, Percentage in Each Category, for each Service Change (based on Households with Data Available)		
			No Car	Have Car(s), but Fewer than 1 Car per Adult*	Have Car(s), and at Least 1 Car per Adult*
Expansion of bus service along Route 2 west (Greenfield-Charlemont) from school-year service to year-round	93	85	2.4%	29.4%	68.2%
Longer weekday hours for bus service along Route 2 west from Greenfield to Charlemont	94	82	4.9%	20.7%	74.4%
More frequent weekday bus service along Route 2 west from Greenfield to Charlemont	105	92	4.3%	20.7%	75.0%
Weekend bus service along Route 2 west from Greenfield	56	40	8.0%	24.0%	68.0%
Regular bus stop at the Park & Ride Lot in Charlemont	46	40	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%
Regular bus stop at Mohawk Trail Regional School	49	42	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%
Other additional bus stops	69	62	1.6%	22.6%	75.8%
Bus service to areas off of Route 2 and to other parts of Franklin County	92	82	3.7%	19.5%	76.8%
Better connection between the FRTA's Route 2 West Route and other FRTA bus routes	74	63	3.0%	29.2%	70.8%
Increased van services for seniors and residents with disabilities	67	60	6.7%	21.7%	71.6%

**It is assumed that in households with 4 or more cars and 4 or more adults, that each adult has adequate access to a car.*

Other Submitted Survey Comments

Question: If you have any other comments or suggestions regarding bus services in western Franklin County, please write them here.

Of the 777 households who returned the survey, 317 (40.8%) provided other comments.

A summary of the comments is provided here. The full comments are provided in Volume II of this report. Some of the comments had multiple components and were accordingly counted in each of the appropriate categories.

General Categories of Comments

The other comments written by survey respondents generally fell into eight main categories.

<u>General category</u>	<u>Number of comments</u>
<u>Group 1:</u> Think more bus service is important, including	82
Subgroup 1A: Think more bus services for seniors and people with disabilities are important	5
Subgroup 1B: Think more bus service is important, but don't/wouldn't personally use the bus themselves	20
<u>Group 2:</u> Might/would use the bus depending on its availability	26
<u>Group 3:</u> Don't use the bus now, but might/would use bus services in the future (such as when no longer able to drive)	57
<u>Group 4:</u> Question whether (more) bus service is useful/needed in West County area	20
<u>Group 5:</u> Wouldn't use bus services, even if expanded (<i>count doesn't include Subgroup 1B</i>)	49
<u>Group 6:</u> Have questions about current service/need more information/ thinks the current system needs more publicity	40
<u>Group 7:</u> Have suggestions for scheduling/service changes, and/or comments about the current services, including:	51
comments on current services	4
ideas for service/scheduling changes	27
services for seniors and people with disabilities	6
rail service	10
long-distance transportation (rail/bus)	4

Other Submitted Survey Comments

Question: If you have any other comments or suggestions regarding bus services in western Franklin County, please write them here.

<u>General category</u>	<u>Number of comments</u>
<u>Group 8: Other comments</u>	76
regarding:	
Living far from bus service	19
Previous bus/rail services in West County	8
Current or previous travel/commute patterns	12
Costs of bus services/taxes	8
Biodiesel use in buses	5
Carpooling	4
Bicycles	2
Transit Survey/study	9
Other	9
