

# Route 206 - Shawmut: Service Change Proposal

July 2023

---

## I. Description

Route 206 Shawmut is a local route that originates at SRTA New Bedford Terminal and serves the area northwest of downtown below I-195, including the Westview Park and Rockdale neighborhoods. The route operates with 60-minute frequency from 6:10 AM to 5:45 PM on weekdays and from 7:20 AM to 4:55 PM on Saturdays. The north-south portion of Route 206 runs primarily on Park Street and Shawmut Avenue. Outbound service travels west on Potter Street, crosses highway 140 and loops through a low-density neighborhood. The inbound route jogs south of Potter Street to Parker Street and back up to Potter Street via Hathaway Blvd and follows the same route as outbound service back to downtown New Bedford. Route 206 Shawmut serves New Bedford High School and Keith Middle school.

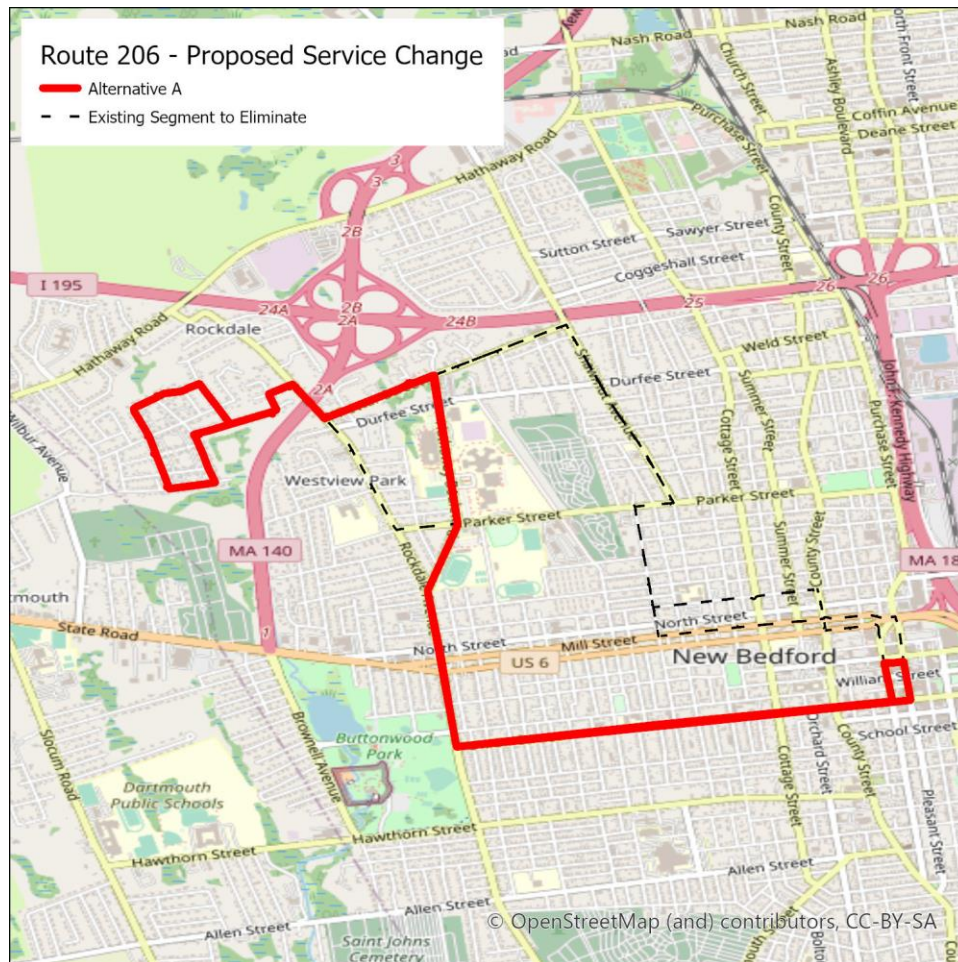
Route 206 was changed substantially in August 2021 from the historic alignment that served Rockdale Ave and terminated at the Dartmouth St Stop & Shop to the route described above. The 2021 change was made in response to low stop utilization along Rockdale Ave that suggested few people rode to or from those locations; the route was also confusing and was an overly lengthy trip for the destinations served. The realignment shortened travel times and retained service where it was most utilized.

As time has progressed, route ridership at individual stops and along the route corridors was monitored and analyzed. The data suggests that further realignment may be appropriate to improve the service and mitigate changes on other routes.

## II. Proposed Changes

The Route 206 realignment proposal significantly realigns the route away from its historic alignment. Very little of the current alignment is retained with this proposal; only the route segment west of Hathaway Blvd is retained including the route terminus and service to Hidden Brook Apartments. The proposed outbound pattern travels south on Sixth St to Union, west on Union to Rockdale Ave, north on Rockdale Ave to Hathaway Blvd, north on Hathaway Blvd where it returns to the current alignment. The inbound pattern follows the current alignment to Rockdale Ave, turns east on Potter St, south on Hathaway Blvd and follows the outbound pattern to the New Bedford Terminal.

This change eliminates service on Mill St, Park St, Parker St, Shawmut Ave, Potter St (between Shawmut Ave and Hathaway Blvd), Rockdale Ave (between Granite Ave and Parker St, and Hillman St.



### III. Title VI Equity Analysis

A Title VI Equity Analysis is required by the SRTA Title VI Program whenever a service change will result in a change of more than 25% of the revenue mileage for the route. Both alternatives exceed the 25% threshold and warrant an equity analysis. The parameters for a Title VI equity analysis is described in Chapter 8 to the 2022 SRTA Title VI Program and evaluates two factors: the effects of the change on racial minority groups and the effects of the change on low-income populations. In both measures, the effects are measured against the current conditions by establishing a baseline for racial minorities and low-income populations. If the affected population is more than 60% of the total, the change is determined to have an adverse impact.

The proposal reduces weekday revenue miles from 95.6 to 89.3, a 7% reduction; the Saturday revenue miles go from 79.7 to 74.4, a 7% reduction. The reduction in revenue miles suggests the major service threshold has not been exceeded, however approximately 75% of the current revenue miles are being eliminated from the route which warrants a Title VI Equity Analysis.

#### Disparate Impact Analysis

A disparate impact is one that affects a racial minority population that is more than 60% of the total population for the affected area. The United State Census most recent data for race and population was from the 2020 census; data at the census block level is the smallest geographic

representation for the data and is the dataset used to determine disparate impact. The table below shows the results of the analysis.

	<b>Current Condition</b>	<b>% Racial Minority</b>	<b>Alternative A</b>	<b>% Racial Minority</b>	<b>% Affected</b>
Racial Minority	8,395		6,265		-34%
Racial Majority	10,698		9,568		-12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,093</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>15,833</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>-21%</b>

The results indicate a 21% reduction in racial minorities served by this change; however the total racial minority population does not exceed the 60% threshold. Four blocks affected by this change do exceed 60% racial minority residents. Two of the blocks will remain served with the proposal and two will not. The two blocks that will no longer be served by Route 206 will continue to be served by Route 208, a mitigation for the elimination.

There is no finding of a disparate impact resulting from this change.

### **Disproportionate Burden Analysis**

A disparate burden is one that affects low-income populations more so than non-low-income populations. Low income is defined by the US Department of Health and Human Services as any household with annual income less than \$26,500. Data on low-income is provided by the American Community Survey in table B17001; data for the 2021 5-year estimates. The smallest geographic area for the data is a Census tract, a much larger area than a Census block, and why the population numbers in the table below are larger than in the table for Disparate Impact Analysis.

	<b>Current Condition</b>	<b>% Low Income</b>	<b>Alternative A</b>	<b>% Low Income</b>	<b>% Affected</b>
Low-income	7,422		5,719		-30%
Non-low-income	30,785		6,265		-391%
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,207</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>11,984</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>-219%</b>

The results indicate a significant reduction in the population served by the route, however this is deceiving because of the geographic size of the census tract and the segments of the route subject to the change. Two fewer tracts are served by the proposed change and no new tracts are served. The two being eliminated have service along their boundaries or in small sections of the tract. This explains the substantial reduction in the population served.

None of the tracts currently served, proposed for elimination, or will continue being served exceed 60% low-income residents. Based on these results, there is no finding of disproportionate burden.

## **IV. Discussion**

The proposal for Route 206 is part of a larger service change initiative to improve the quality of transit in New Bedford. The realignment proposed for Route 203 eliminates service on Union St, a corridor that is frequently used by customers. Route 206 service along the Shawmut Ave corridor is duplicated by Route 208 service along Cottage St, parallel corridors separated by

less than a  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile. Realigning Route 206 to serve Union St maintains service coverage and presents a minor inconvenience to customers along Shawmut Ave who now will use Route 208. The major destination along the route, Hidden Brook Apartments, maintains service.

The realignment presents a new opportunity to improve transit connections for customers. The proposed alignment of Route 206 will intersect the Route 9 at Rockdale Ave and Mill St/Kempton St. This intersection is important because there is a large population of UMass Dartmouth students that live in Hidden Brook Apartments and could benefit from a timed transfer instead of having to ride all the way to the New Bedford Terminal to connect with the bus to the campus. The transfer could be timed in such a way that the inbound Route 206 meets the outbound Route 9 and that the inbound Route 9 meets the outbound Route 206. This could save customers a significant amount of time and make transit a more convenient mode of travel.

The proposed alignment addresses broader issues in the New Bedford transit system and better aligns service to where customers have shared a need for service. This change should be considered contingent on the proposal for Route 203, specifically, the proposal to eliminate service on Union St and Rotch St. This change primarily supports that change and loses the value of the benefit if Route 203 goes unchanged.

## V. Public Input

## VI. Recommendation

