





MEMORANDUM

To: Shayne Trimbell, Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA)

From: Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, Inc.

Date: November 15, 2022

Subject: SRTA Fall River Comprehensive Operational Analysis Phase 1 Engagement

Summary

KEY ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

Phase 1 of public engagement conducted as part of the Fall River Comprehensive Operational Analysis (FRCOA) occurred in October 2022, with a focus on determining what service improvements are most important to riders. The key findings from engagement are:

- Most survey respondents and pop-up participants noted that they would like to see improvements to bus service in Downtown and other Fall River Neighborhoods.
- There is a desire to have service start earlier and end later in the day.
- Most survey respondents identified the Southcoast Marketplace as one of the most important destinations in Fall River.
- Most survey respondents identified more frequent bus service, on-time buses, and later bus service as their top three desired service improvements.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

The Fall River Comprehensive Operational Analysis (FRCOA) project is a transit-planning study that will make recommendations to match Southeastern Regional Transit Authority's (SRTA's) fixed-route service with the changing demand for service. Additionally, this project is intended to evaluate the Fall River bus network in order to adjust routes to better meet the needs of bus riders. This study is the first time since 2014 that SRTA is completing a comprehensive evaluation of the entire Fall River network.

During this project, the project team will complete two rounds of public engagement. The purpose of the first round of engagement is to collect feedback regarding how SRTA riders currently use current fixed bus routes, determine which Fall River destinations are most important to riders, and determine what service improvements riders would like SRTA to prioritize.

The first round of engagement was held in early October 2022; this round of engagement included several pop-ups in Fall River. These pop-ups allowed community members to provide feedback directly to the consultant team and SRTA staff and participate in an outreach activity. An online survey was also made available to community members and SRTA bus riders to provide feedback regarding SRTA's current service and choose their most important service improvements with SRTA's limited funding. The feedback received from the first round of engagement will inform draft route scenarios. The second round of engagement will be held in December 2022 and will focus on gathering input on draft scenarios and understanding how riders may be impacted with each scenario.

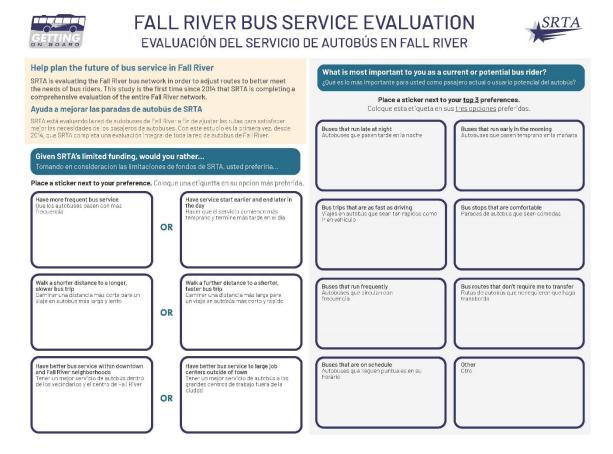
Pop-Up Overview

During the first round of public engagement, pop-ups were held at different high ridership bus stops in Fall River to engage riders while waiting for the bus. During the pop-ups, riders had the opportunity to discuss general feedback about SRTA and participate in the outreach activity. Fall River pop-up locations included:

- Fall River Bus Terminal (8AM 10AM)
- Bristol Community College (11AM 1PM)
- Southcoast Marketplace (1:30PM 3:30PM)
- Fall River Walmart (4PM 6PM)

The outreach activity was intended to further engage community members and allow them to answer two of the survey questions regarding bus service improvements by placing stickers and/or providing additional feedback on sticky notes (Figure 1). On the left-hand side of the engagement board, participants were asked to place stickers next to their preferred service improvement tradeoff. On the right-hand side of the engagement board, participants were asked to place stickers on their top three preferred service improvements (shown in Appendix B).

Figure 1 FRCOA Public Engagement Board



Key feedback received during the pop-ups included:

During the pop-up events, approximately 23 community members and riders participated in the public engagement board activity. Figure 2 through Figure 5 show the results of the activity. Figure 2 through Figure 4 show the results of the trade-off questions, asking participants if they'd prefer certain improvements over others given SRTA's limited funding. Out of the 18 responses, most participants preferred increased service spans over more frequent bus service, walking a farther distance to a faster bus trip, and having better bus service within Downtown and Fall River than having better bus service at large job centers outside of Fall River. Additional feedback received during conversations with community members and SRTA bus riders included:

- Most SRTA riders and community members would like the Intercity express bus service to be re-instated.
- There is a desire amongst SRTA riders and community members for increased bus service to and from surrounding areas (e.g., Somerset, Freetown, Westport).
- There are many concerns regarding school trips and bus capacities during AM trips and PM trips.
- There is a desire for routes that do not serve the Fall River terminal, and direct routes that do not require transfers.

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- There is a strong desire amongst SRTA riders for bus service on Sunday's.
- Riders expressed concerns over bus stop conditions and lack of stop amenities.

Figure 2 FRCOA Public Engagement Board – Service Improvement Tradeoff #1

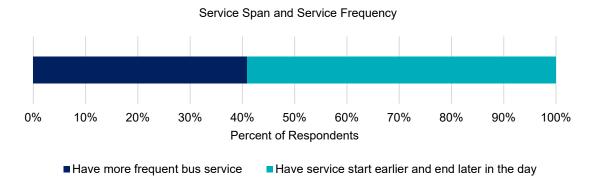


Figure 3 FRCOA Public Engagement Board – Service Improvement Tradeoff #2

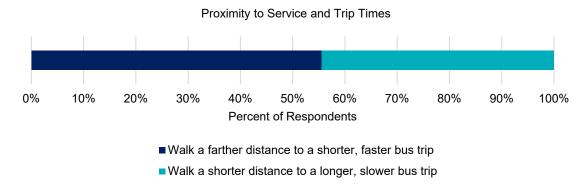


Figure 4 FRCOA Public Engagement Board – Service Improvement Tradeoff #3

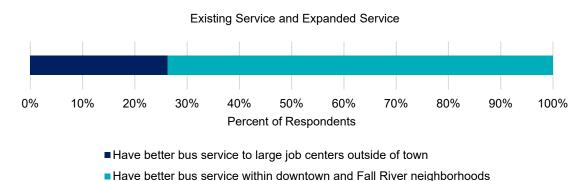


Figure 5 shows the results of participants selecting their top three service improvements. These improvements included buses running late at night, buses running more frequently, and other service improvements that were not included on the public engagement board. Some of the other service improvements voiced by participants

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during the pop ups included adding Sunday bus service, re-instating the express intercity bus service from New Bedford to Fall River, and allowing mobile payment on-board buses.

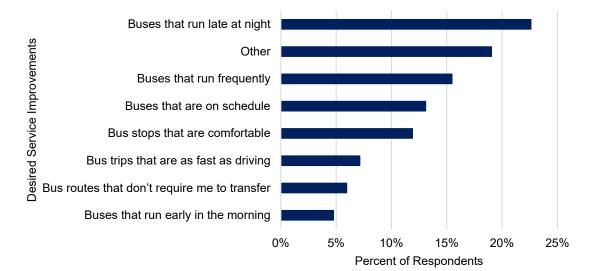


Figure 5 FRCOA Public Engagement Board - Service Improvement

Survey Overview

To obtain feedback from a larger group of riders and community members, an online survey was produced. The survey was built in SurveyMonkey and open to the public from October 3, 2022 through November 1, 2022. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix C. The survey was promoted via social media, a public meeting, posters and flyers, and SRTA's website. Respondents could take the survey in English, Haitian Creole, Spanish, or Portuguese. The survey received 39 total responses; most surveys were taken in English.

Survey Results

Out of 30 responses, most of the survey respondents indicated they ride SRTA almost every day, while only one respondent said they never ride SRTA (Figure 6). These results show that most survey respondents ride SRTA regularly.

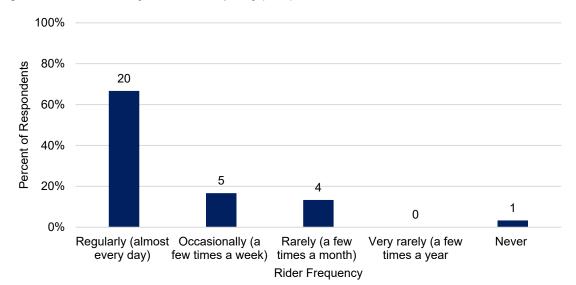


Figure 6 FRCOA Survey #1 – Rider Frequency (n=30)

Most survey respondents indicated they typically ride the intercity route between New Bedford and Fall River, Route FR5, and Route FR3 (Figure 7). The routes that most survey respondents don't typically ride included Route FR9 and Route FR7. These results show that most survey respondents desire a strong connection between New Bedford and Fall River, and that respondents are primarily using South End routes. Route FR5 and FR3 connect riders to large grocery stores and other key destinations in the South End (e.g., SouthCoast Marketplace, Seabra, Stop & Shop).

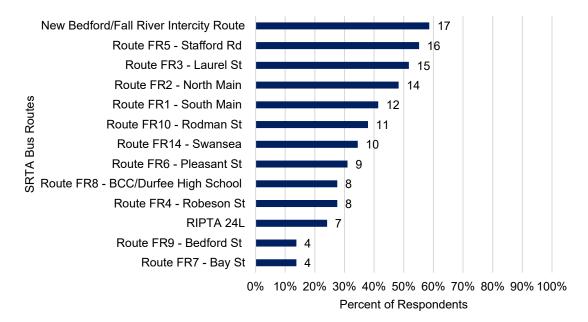


Figure 7 FRCOA Survey #1 – Routes Typically Used (n=29)

When survey respondents' desired service improvements were compared with how often they ride, responses indicated that most riders desired increased frequencies, on-time buses, and service late at night (Figure 8). Survey respondents that only ride a few times a month or never ride desired service improvements were evenly split amongst most of the improvements listed. Those who responded "Other" noted that they would like to see multi-modal connections to Park & Ride lots, decreased waiting times, and increased service in surrounding areas.

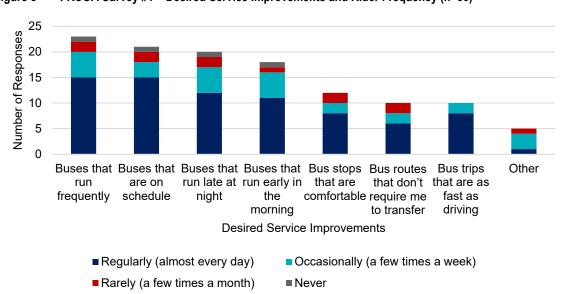


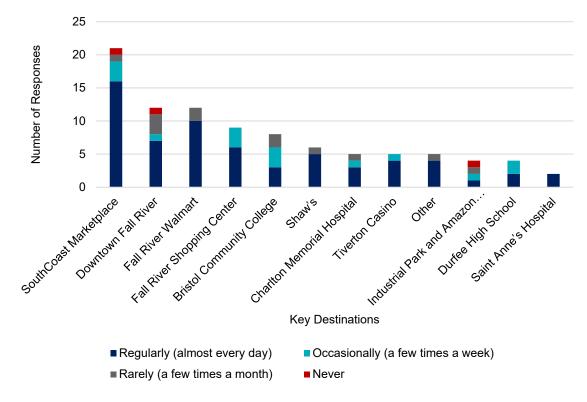
Figure 8 FRCOA Survey #1 – Desired Service Improvements and Rider Frequency (n=30)

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Most survey respondents indicated that their most important destinations were the SouthCoast Marketplace, Downtown Fall River, and the Fall River Walmart. When respondents' important destinations were compared with how often they ride, most regular riders indicated that there most important destination was the SouthCoast Marketplace, followed by Walmart. Amongst respondents that only ride a few times a month or never, these groups indicated that Downtown Fall River was their most important destination. "Other" service important destinations were mostly listed by respondents that regularly ride. These destinations included:

- Jobs and UMass-D and Bristol Community College classes in Dartmouth and New Bedford
- Stop and shop
- Somerset, MA
- Bristol Community College in New Bedford
- Matouk

Figure 9 FRCOA Survey #1 – Key Destinations (n=30)

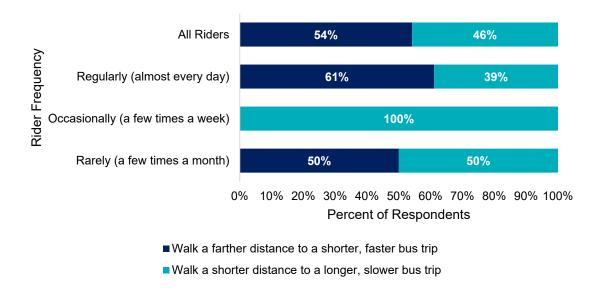


Tradeoff Questions

The Fall River Bus Service Evaluation Survey included three tradeoff questions regarding trip times, frequency, service spans, and service expansion. These tradeoff questions allowed survey respondents to choose their most desired service improvements over others in lieu of SRTA's limited funding. These decisions would help SRTA staff and the consultant team inform draft service scenarios and determine what service improvements should be prioritized. Figure 10 through Figure 15 show the three tradeoff questions cross-tabulated with respondents' rider frequency and bus routes that they typically ride (though it is important to take into consideration that some routes only had a few respondents).

Out of all responses, 61% of respondents that ride almost every day would rather walk a farther distance to a shorter, and faster bus trip (Figure 10). All respondents that noted they ride occasionally would rather walk shorter distances to the bus.

Figure 10 FRCOA Survey #1 – Proximity to Service and Trip Times (n=23)



Out of all responses, over 50% of respondents that typically ride routes FR7, FR2, and FR8, would rather walk farther to the bus for a faster bus trip than respondents that ride routes FR4, FR5, and FR6 (Figure 11). Survey respondents that typically rider the intercity bus route was evenly split between walking farther distances and walking shorter distances to the bus.

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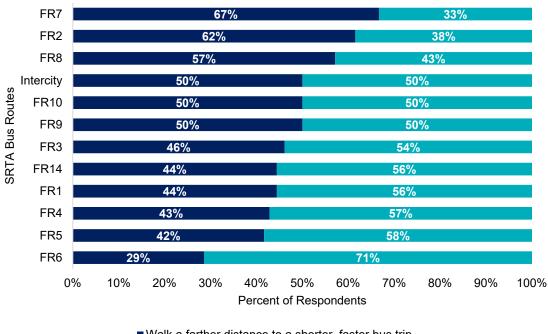


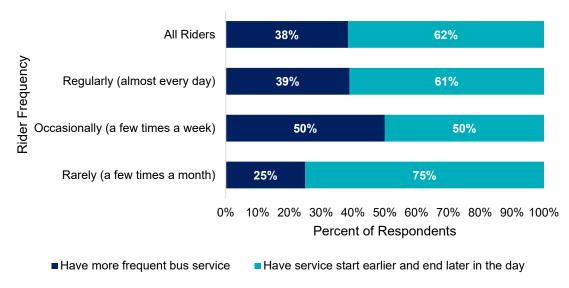
Figure 11 FRCOA Survey #1 – Proximity to Service and Trip Times

Walk a farther distance to a shorter, faster bus tripWalk a shorter distance to a longer, slower bus trip

Out of all responses, 50%-75% of respondents would rather have bus service start earlier and end later in the day (Figure 12). There was no correlation between rider frequency and service spans or bus frequencies. Respondents that ride occasionally were evenly split between having more frequent bus service and having service start earlier and end later in the day.

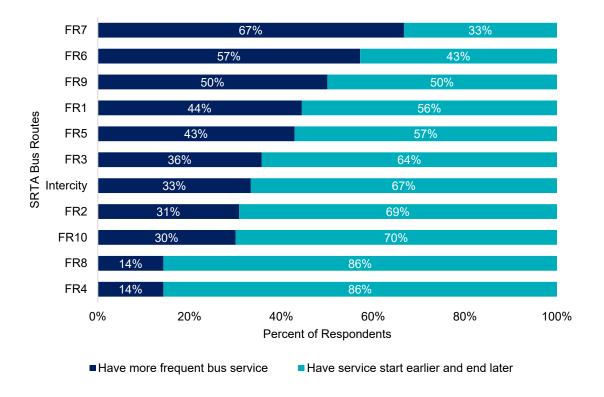
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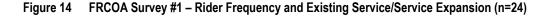
Out of all responses, between 50%-67% of respondents that typically ride routes FR7 and FR6 would rather have increased bus frequencies. Most respondents that ride most other routes would rather have extended service spans, especially respondents that typically ride routes FR8 and FR4 (Figure 13).

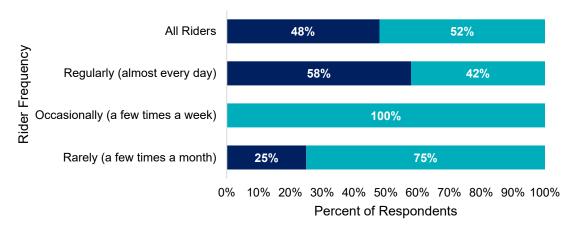
Figure 13 FRCOA Survey #1 – Bus Routes and Service Frequency/Spans



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Out of all responses, a slight majority of respondents noted that they would rather have improved bus service to large job centers outside of town, while riders that ride only a few times a week or a few times a month prefer to have better bus service in downtown and throughout Fall River (Figure 14). Based on these results, many respondents who ride regularly may currently be commuting and riding SRTA routes to and from large job centers for work.



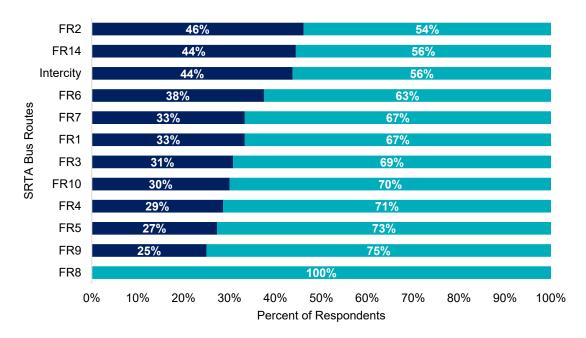


- Have better bus service to large job centers outside of town
- Have better bus service within downtown and Fall River neighborhoods

Out of all responses, most respondents noted that they would rather have improved bus service within Downtown Fall River and Fall River neighborhoods (Figure 15). FR2, which currently serves the Industrial Park, has the greatest percentage of people who would prefer better bus service to large job centers outside of town (46%).

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Figure 15 FRCOA Survey # 1 – Bus Routes and Existing Service/Service Expansion



- Have better bus service to large job centers outside of town
- Have better bus service within downtown and Fall River neighborhoods

APPENDIX A: PUBLIC MEETING FLYERS

Ajude a planejar o futuro do serviço de autocarros de Fall River!



i Ayude a planificar el futuro delservicio de autobús de Fall River!

A SRTA quer ouvir de você como melhorar as rotas de autocarros de Fall River para que funcionem melhor para os passageiros. Preencha a pesquisa on-line até **25 de outubro** e nos informe quais tipos de melhorias de serviço são mais importantes.

SRTA quiere escuchar tu opinion acerca de como mejorar las rutas de autobús de Fall River de manera que funcionen mejor para los pasajeros. Complete la encuesta en línea antes del **25 de Octubre** y háganos saber qué tipos de mejoras consideras que son de mayor importancia.

Pare em um evento pop-up ou fique online e faça sua voz ser ouvida!

iPase por un evento emergente o conéctese en línea y haga oír su voz!

Tuesday, October 18:

Fall River Bus Terminal 8 AM – 10 AM
118 4th St, Fall River
Bristol Community College Bus Stop 11 AM – 1 PM
777 Elsbree St, Fall River
Southcoast Marketplace Bus Stop 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM
450 William S Canning Blvd, Fall River
Fall River Walmart Bus Stop 4 PM – 6 PM
638 Quequechan St, Fall River







Preencha nossa pesquisa on-line para compartilhar seus pensamentos

Complete nuestra encuesta en línea para compartir sus opiniones:

surveymonkey.com/r/FRCOA1

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Help plan the future of Fall River bus service!



SRTA is evaluating the Fall River bus network in order to adjust routes to better meet the needs of bus riders.

Fill out the online survey by October 25th and let us know what types of service improvements are most important.



SRTA está evaluando la red de autobuses de Fall River a fin de ajustar las rutas para satisfacer mejor las necesidades de los pasajeros de autobuses.

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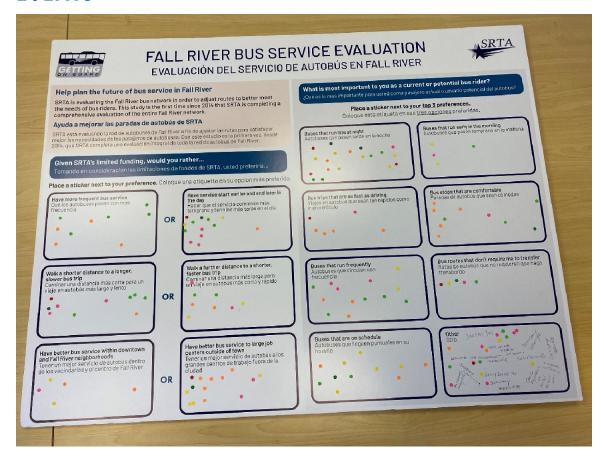
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Complete la encuesta en línea antes del 25 de Octubre y háganos saber qué tipos de mejoras consideras que son de mayor importancia.

APPENDIX B: PUBLIC MEETING BOARDS AFTER POP-UP EVENTS



APPENDIX C: SRTA FALL RIVER BUS SERVICE EVALUATION SURVEY

SRTA FALL RIVER BUS SERVICE EVALUATION SURVEY



About This Survey

SRTA is evaluating the Fall River bus network in order to adjust routes to better meet the needs of bus riders. This study is the first time since 2014 that SRTA is completing a comprehensive evaluation of the entire Fall River network. We want to hear from our riders on how SRTA can redesign the bus network to be more efficient and reliable for Fall River residents.

1. How often do you ride SKIA?				Given SKIA'S limited funding, would you rather	
	☐ Regularly (almost every da	ay)		(Check ONE box per row)	
	Occasionally (a few times a week)			a. ☐ Have more frequent bus service? - OR -	
	Rarely (a few times a mon	Rarely (a few times a month)		Have service start earlier and end later in the day?	
	☐ Very rarely (a few times a year)				
	□ Never	,		b. Walk a shorter distance to a longer, slower bus trip?	
				 OR - Walk a farther distance to a shorter, faster bus trip? 	
2	Which route(s) do you typically ride?			_ runta and ansatz as a shorter, ruster sus an pr	
	(Select all that apply)			c. 🔲 Have better bus service within downtown and Fall Rive	
	FR1- South Main FR8 - BCC/Durfee High School			neighborhoods? - OR -	
		11 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 1		☐ Have better bus service to large job centers outside of	
		FR9 - Bedford St		town (Industrial Park, Amazon, Stop & Shop Distributio	
		FR10 - Rodman St		Center, Gold Medal Bakery, etc.)?	
	☐ FR4 - Robeson St ☐	FR14 - Swansea	6	Do you have any other feedback shout how SDTA	
	☐ FR5 -Stafford St ☐	New Bedford/Fall River Intercity Route		Do you have any other feedback about how SRTA could improve transit service in Fall River?	
	☐ FR6 - Pleasant St ☐	RIPTA 24L	-		
	☐ FR7 - Bay St				
			9		
3.	What is most important t	to you as a current or	5		
	potential bus rider? (Sele	ect top 3)			
	☐ Buses that run late at night			If you would like to stay up-to-date with this project	
	☐ Buses that run early in the morning			please provide your email here:	
	☐ Buses that run frequently				
	Bus routes that don't require me to transfer				
	☐ Bus trips that are as fast as driving			If you are not able to return your completed survey	
	Bus stops that are comfortable (e.g., with benches and			to SRTA staff, please send a picture of your completed	
	shelters)			survey to info@srtabus.com or please complete the full survey online at www.srtabus.com/fall-river-	
	☐ Buses that are on schedule			comprehensive-operations-analysis/.	
	Other:				
1	Which destinations are m	aget important to you?			
т.	(Select top 3)	lost important to you:			
	☐ Durfee High School	☐ Industrial Park and Amazon			
	☐ Bristol Community	Distribution Center			
	College	■ Downtown Fall River			
	Fall River Shopping Center	☐ Saint Anne's Hospital			
	☐ South Coast Marketplace	Charlton Memorial Hospital			
	☐ Fall River Walmart	☐ Tiverton Casino			
	☐ Shaw's	☐ Other:			

APPENDIX D: SRTA FALL RIVER BUS SERVICE EVALUATION SURVEY OPEN-RESPONSES

FRCOA Survey #1 - Other Feedback

1. Help our young working families get to nearby jobs when they have only one family vehicle by providing one early morning and late night commuter service to all neighborhoods, but especially the poorest neighborhoods (e.g. South Main) where families are more likely to have only one vehicle (or none). 2. Help low income families get to grocery supermarkets on Rte 81 by providing later service on FR3. 3. All residential routes (Laurel, Robeson, Swansea Mall) should be scheduled to transfer quickly to FR8 to BCC, FR2 to the Industrial Park, and FR-NB intercity (with less concern for quick transfers on the return trip homeward). Economically active riders generally travel from their homes to school or work and do not need quick transfers from one residential neighborhood to another. 4. When two routes run parallel and close to each other (e.g., North Main and Robeson; South Main and Bay St) designate one as the more "express" route for riders who are in a hurry and can walk a longer distance. 5. Help working college students transfer quickly from classes to jobs with a cross-town express bus along the eastern side of the City from Tiverton Casino, UMass-D Innovation Ctr, Bristol Community College, and ending at the North Fall River Industrial Park, using the limited access highways where possible and NOT providing residential service with its frequent stops. Later services for laurel would be helpful. Not only do I work late at the stop and shop and can walk across to take bus 5 if I have to, I always see elderly and families waiting after 6 thinking the bus runs later on a daily basis.

No

sunday and commuter rail

more eco friendly transportation

Give more options to Ride the bus and online payment

In order to be employed in Fall River, having bus service 7 days a week will be helpful.

1) Change the number of the New Bedford route (#9 Bedford St, PLUS #9 New Bedford) Why are there two #9 buses? That confuses EVERYONE. 2) Update the SRTA website whenever there are route detours. The public needs to be aware to prepare accordingly. 3) Eliminate special stops at Tiverton Casino. We shouldn't provide economy to Rhode Island. 4) Provide bus transportation on Sundays. 5) Designate EXTRA buses for the school children, so the public/ workers don't suffer or run late. 6) Don't occasionally eliminate the Brayton Ave leg of the Stafford Rd route. There are plenty of people in need throughout the city. 7) Make it mandatory to lower the ramps for all disabled people and/or people using carts. 8) Make it mandatory that ALL bus windows are functioning. 9) Penalize bad bus drivers. Removal if necessary. 10) Update the complaints department. The website is unreliable & the customer service representative is rude and incompetent. 11) Protect the public at the bus terminal from STABBINGS. 12) Enforce bus rules and regulations, for example no VAPING, loud music, disruptive conversations. 13) Have buses announce real-time locations for the visually impaired/ disabled. 14) Bus stop benches and/or huts help the public. 15) Later run times for buses. For example, Laurel Street route ends at 5pm which is UNREASONABLE.

No

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I think that if it was possible to have bus service on Sunday maybe run a Saturday service people work on Sunday and it would be great to be able to take the bus to and from work instead of taking cabs at a much higher price but overall I think that the fall river drivers are very nice and good at their jobs and I have been taking the busses for over 15 years

no

Not at the moment

I could write a book about changes I would like to see, but fewer bus stops is probably the most important. Too many stops is probably the single biggest cause of buses running behind schedule. Taking the bus is supposed to be a community get together type thing, it wouldn't hurt to have fewer stops, and more people getting on at the same time

buses could be less full

Do not change bus service. I like the bus stops where they are.

A lot of times the bus stops aren't near I need them to be.

Run later at night and on Sundays

All buses should be available after 6 pm. Difficult for the people who work along the routes that end at 530 pm

Bring back the 9X New Bedford for morning and late afternoon services

Stop bushing masks. Get rid of mask recommended