



MEMORANDUM

To: Shayne Trimbell, Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA)
From: Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, Inc.
Date: February 9, 2023
Subject: SRTA New Bedford Comprehensive Operational Analysis Phase 1 Engagement Summary

KEY ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

Phase 1 of public engagement conducted as part of the New Bedford Comprehensive Operational Analysis (NBCOA) occurred in January 2023 with a focus on determining what service improvements are most important to riders. The key findings from the first phase of engagement are:

- Most survey respondents and pop-up participants noted that they would like to see bus service spans increased.
- There is a desire amongst survey respondents and pop-up participants to have shorter walks to bus stops. Riders are willing to have longer and slower trips if their bus stop is easy to reach and accessible.
- Most survey respondents identified the New Bedford Market Basket as one of the most important destinations in New Bedford.
- 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 New Bedford Comprehensive Operational Analysis (NBCOA) 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 New Bedford 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 SRTA network and this study includes an analysis of the New Bedford bus 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 New Bedford 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 late January 2023; this round of engagement included outreach pop-ups in New Bedford, Fairhaven, and Dartmouth. 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 and service changes. The second round of engagement will be held in March 2023 and will focus on gathering input on draft route and service changes 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 New Bedford 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. New Bedford pop-up locations included:

- New Bedford Bus Terminal (8AM - 10AM)
- New Bedford Market Basket (10:30AM – 11:30AM)
- Fairhaven Walmart (1PM - 2PM)
- UMass Dartmouth (2:30PM – 3:30PM)
- Dartmouth Mall (4PM – 5PM)

The outreach activity was intended to further engage community members and allow them to answer two 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 two preferred service improvements (shown in Appendix B).


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Figure 1 NBCOA Public Engagement Board



NEW BEDFORD BUS SERVICE EVALUATION

EVALUACIÓN DEL SERVICIO DE AUTOBÚS EN NEW BEDFORD



Help plan the future of bus service in New Bedford

SRTA is evaluating the New Bedford 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 New Bedford network.

Ayuda a mejorar las paradas de autobús de SRTA

SRTA está evaluando la red de autobuses de New Bedford a fin de ajustar las rutas para satisfacer mejor las necesidades de los pasajeros de autobuses. Con este estudio es la primera vez, desde 2014, que SRTA completa una evaluación integral de toda la red de autobuses de New Bedford.

Given SRTA's limited funding, would you rather...







Tomando en consideración las limitaciones de fondos de SRTA, usted preferiría...

Place a sticker next to your preference. Coloque una etiqueta en su opción más preferida.

<p>Have more frequent bus service Que los autobuses pasen con más frecuencia</p>	<p>Have service start earlier and end later in the day Hacer que el servicio comience más temprano y termine más tarde en el día</p>
OR	
<p>Have a shorter, faster bus trip with a longer walk to the bus stop Caminar una distancia más corta para un viaje en autobús más largo y lento</p>	<p>Have a longer, slower bus trip with a shorter walk to the bus stop Caminar una distancia más larga para un viaje en autobús más corto y rápido</p>
OR	
<p>Run every other trip on the New Bedford Route 9 as a non-stop express service to Fall River (express service hourly and local service hourly) Realice cada dos viajes en la ruta 9 de New Bedford como un servicio expreso sin escalas a Fall River (servicio expreso cada hora y servicio local cada hora)</p>	<p>Maintain local service every 30 minutes to Fall River with no express service Mantenga el servicio local cada 30 minutos a Fall River sin servicio expreso</p>
OR	

What is most important to you as a current or potential bus rider?
¿Qué es lo más importante para usted como pasajero actual o usuario potencial del autobús?

Place a sticker next to your top 2 preferences.
Coloque esta etiqueta en sus dos opciones preferidas.

<p>Buses that run late at night Autobuses que pasen tarde en la noche</p> 	<p>Buses that run early in the morning Autobuses que pasen temprano en la mañana</p> 
<p>Bus trips that are as fast as driving Viajes en autobús que sean tan rápidos como ir en vehículo</p> 	<p>Buses that are on schedule Autobuses que lleguen puntuales en su horario</p> 
<p>Buses that run frequently Autobuses que circulan con frecuencia</p> 	<p>Bus routes that don't require me to transfer Rutas de autobuses que no requieren que haga transbordo</p> 
<p>Other Otra</p>	

Key feedback received during the pop-ups included:

During the pop-up events, approximately 22 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 22 responses, most participants preferred increased service spans over more frequent bus service, walking a shorter distance to a slower bus trip, and having Route 9 run express service every other trip. Additional feedback received during conversations with community members and SRTA bus riders included:

- Most riders would like to be more comfortable and would like additional amenities at bus stops (e.g., shelters, benches, trash cans).
- There is a desire amongst riders for all New Bedford routes to start and end at the same time. Some routes start later and end later than others. Riders would like service to be easy to understand and simplified.
- There is a desire amongst intercity bus riders to have timed transfers to local service at the New Bedford Bus Terminal.
- There is a strong desire amongst SRTA riders for bus service on Sundays, even if service is very limited with few routes operating service.

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

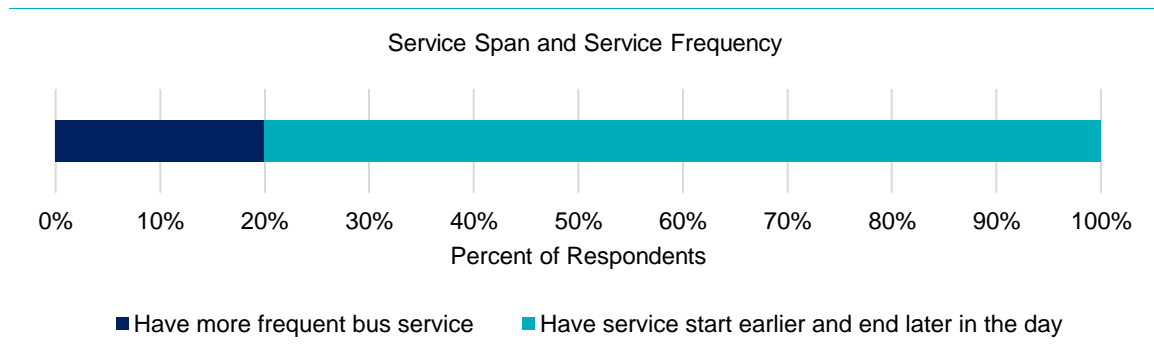


Figure 3 NBCOA Public Engagement Board – Service Improvement Tradeoff #2

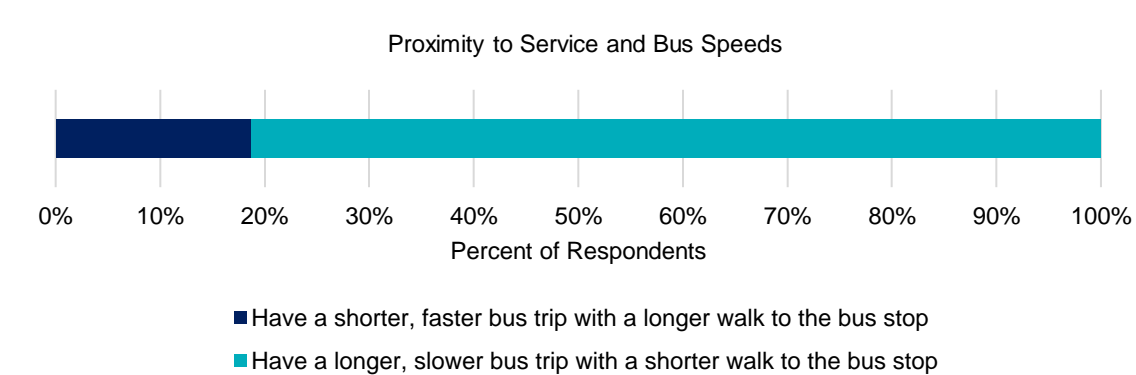


Figure 4 NBCOA Public Engagement Board – Service Improvement Tradeoff #3

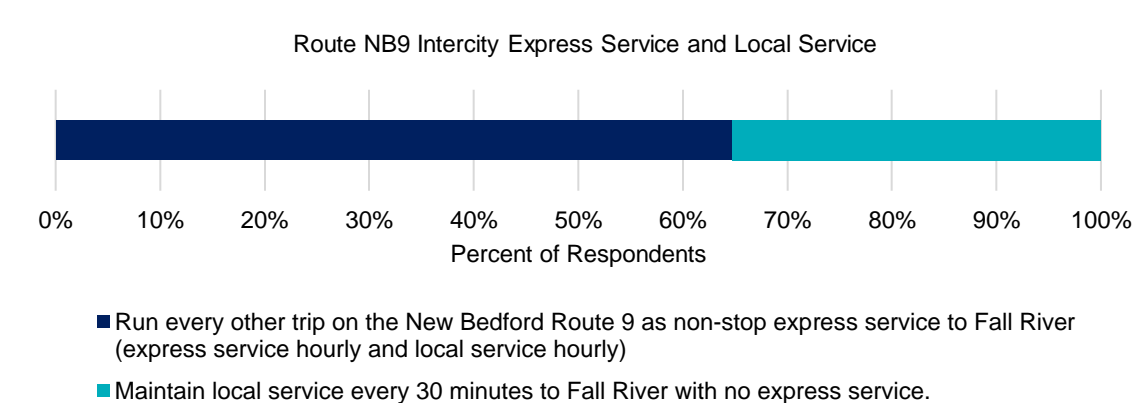
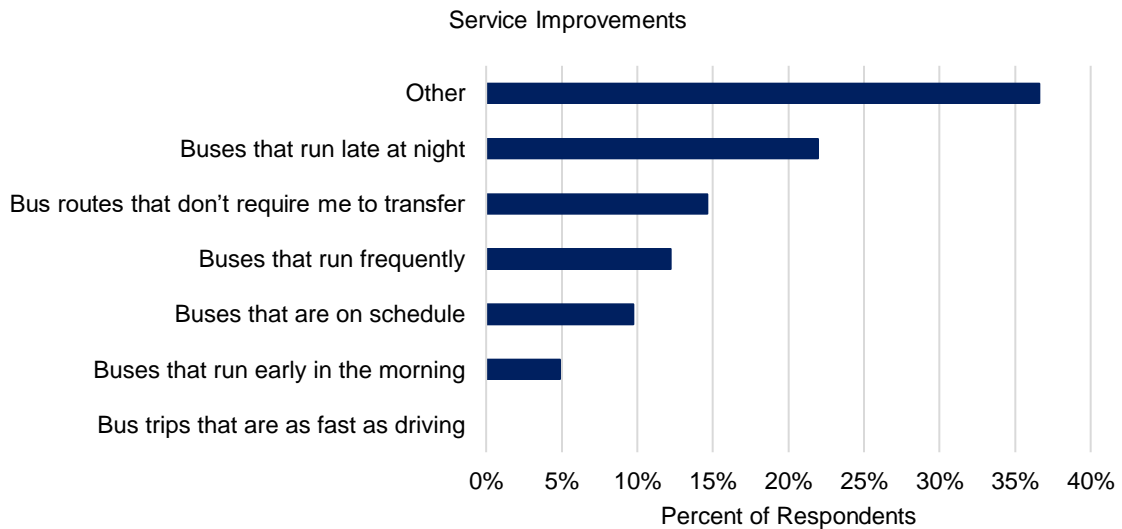


Figure 5 shows the results of participants selecting their top three service improvements. These improvements included buses running late at night, buses that don't require riders to transfer, and other service improvements that were not included on the public engagement board. Some of the other service improvements voiced by participants during the pop-ups included adding Sunday bus service, re-instating the express intercity bus service from New Bedford to Fall River, and increasing the number of shelters at stops.

Figure 5 NBCOA Public Engagement Board - Service Improvement



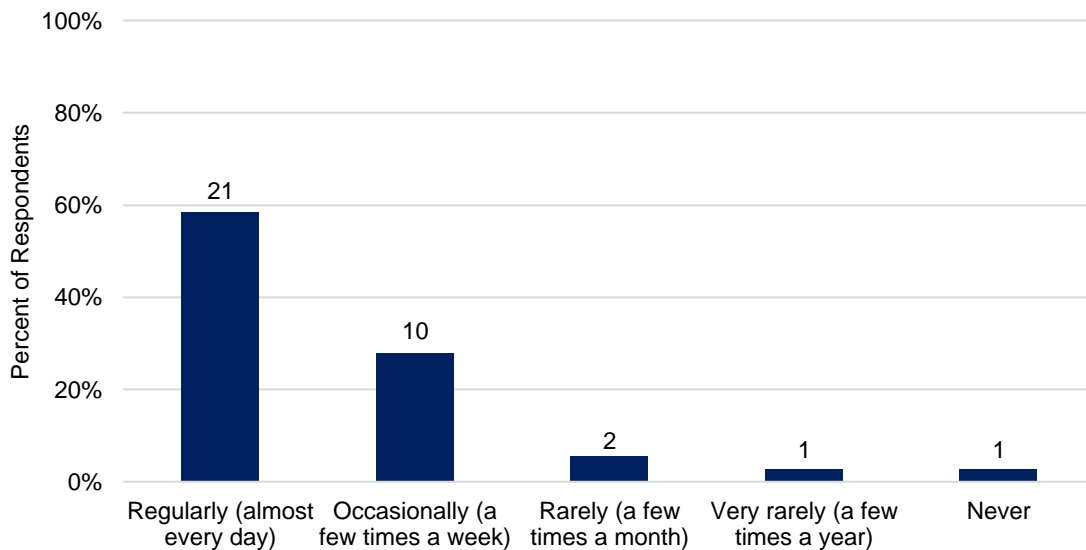
Survey Overview

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 January 10, 2023 through January 31, 2023. 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 36 total responses; most surveys were taken in English.

Survey Results

Out of 35 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 and would be impacted the most if any service changes were to take place.

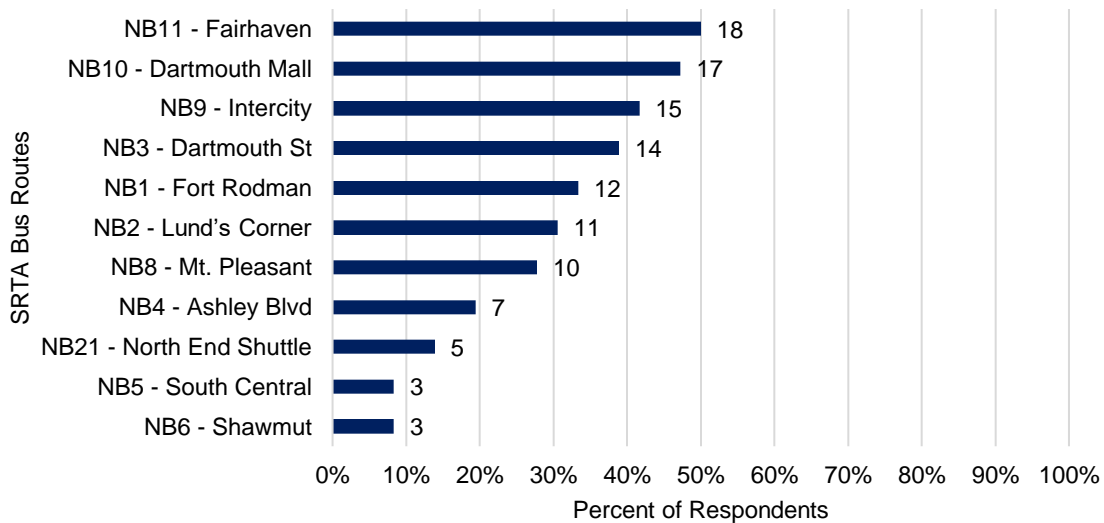
Figure 6 NBOA Survey #1 – Rider Frequency (n=35)



Most survey respondents indicated they typically ride Route NB11, and Route NB10, the intercity route between New Bedford and Fall River, and Route NB3 (**Error! Reference source not found.**). The routes that most survey respondents don't typically ride included Route NB5 and NB6.

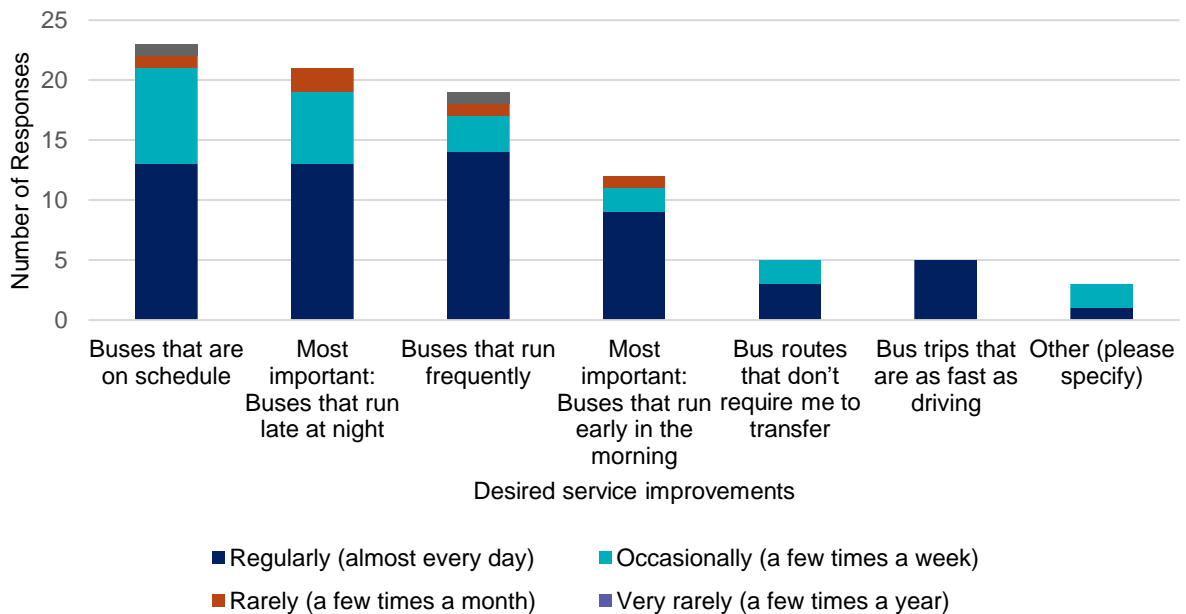
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Figure 7 NBCOA Survey #1 – SRTA Routes Typically Used (n= 36)



When survey respondents' desired service improvements were compared with how often they ride, responses indicated that most riders desired on-time buses, service late at night, and increased frequencies (Figure 8). Those who responded "Other" noted that they would like to Sunday service and increased service on weekends.

Figure 8 NBCOA Survey #1 – Desired Service Improvements and Rider Frequency (n=36)

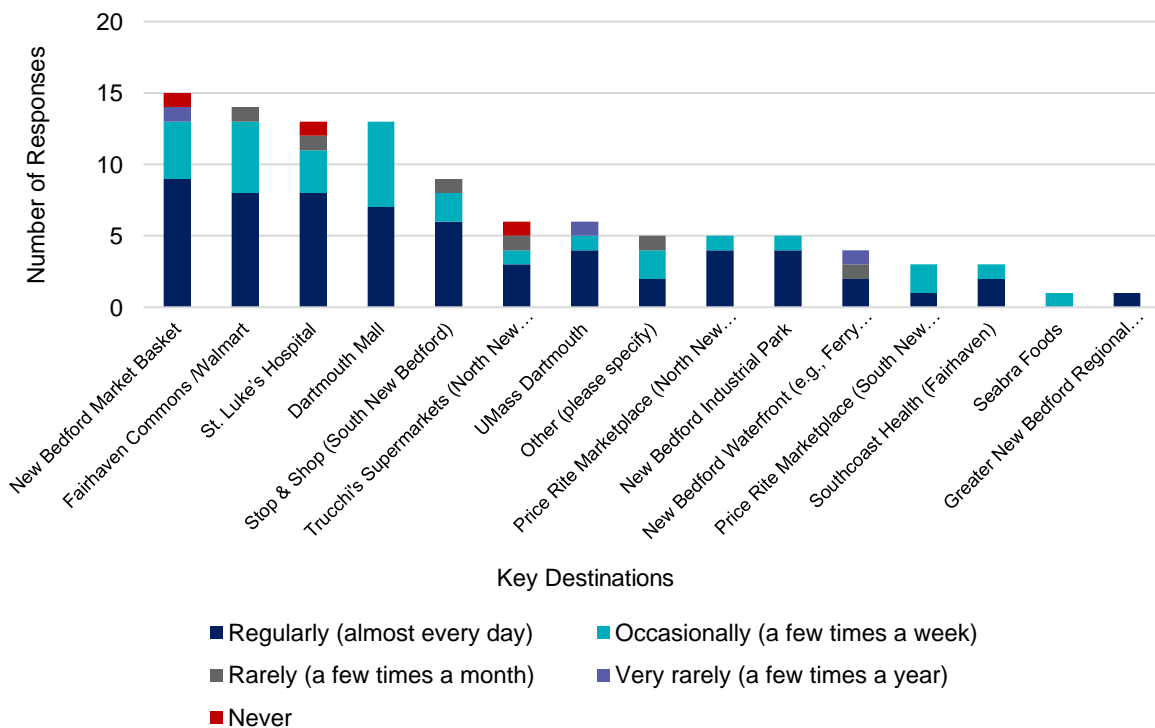


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Most survey respondents indicated that their most important destinations were the New Bedford Market Basket, Fairhaven Commons/Walmart, and St. Luke's Hospital. When respondents' important destinations were compared with how often they ride, most regular riders indicated that their most important destination was the New Bedford Market Basket followed by Fairhaven Commons/Walmart. "Other" service important destinations were mostly listed by respondents that regularly ride or occasionally. These destinations included:

- Ocean State Job Lot (Fairhaven)
- Stop & Shop (North End)
- Rockdale West
- Savers Thrift Store

Figure 9 NBCOA Survey #1 – Key Destinations (n=36)

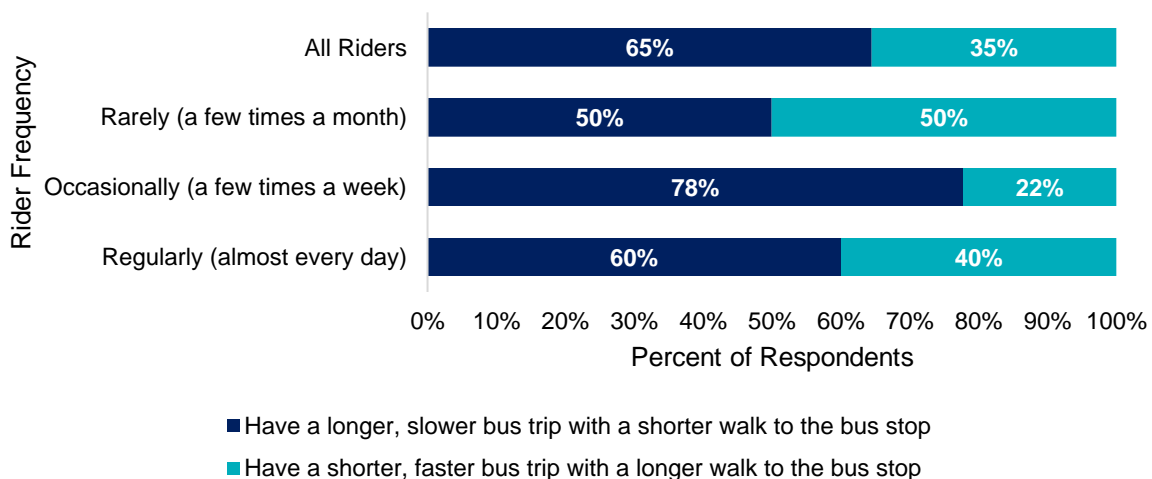


Tradeoff Questions

The New Bedford 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 can 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, 65% of respondents that ride almost every day would rather walk a shorter distance to a longer, slower bus trip (Figure 10). Respondents that noted they ride occasionally felt even stronger about this, with 78% opting for the shorter walk to the bus.

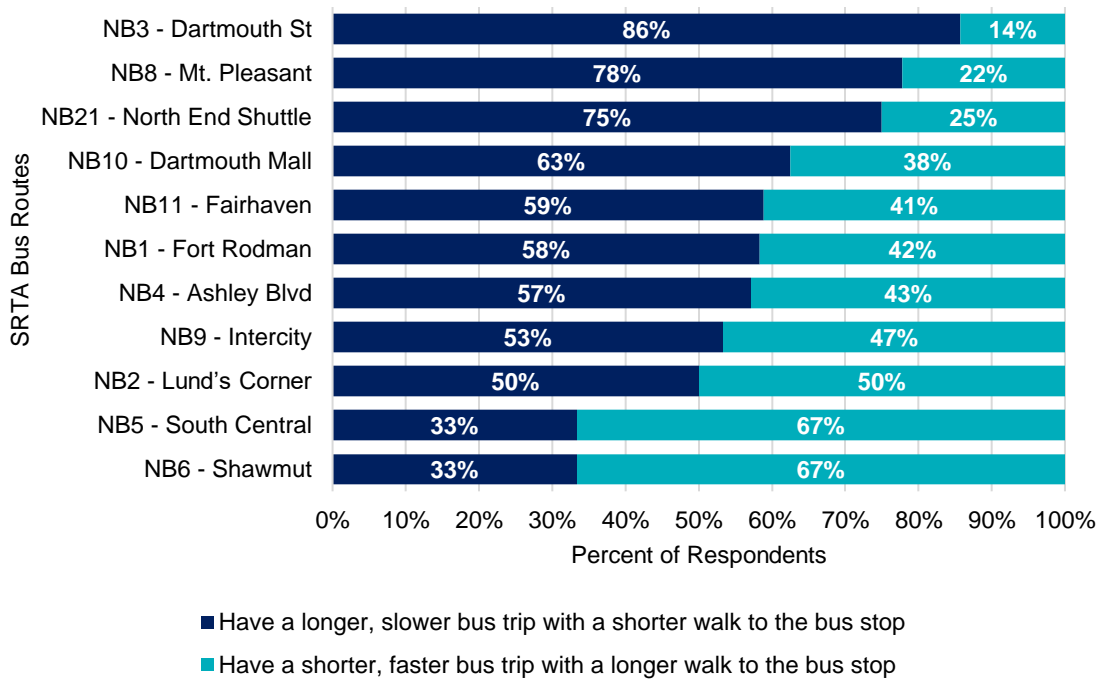
Figure 10 NBCOA Survey #1 – Rider Frequency and Proximity to Service/Trip Times (n=34)



Out of all responses, over 50% of respondents that typically ride NB2, NB5, and NB6 would rather walk farther to the bus for a faster bus trip, whereas riders of other routes would rather walk a shorter distance for a longer bus trip (Figure 11).

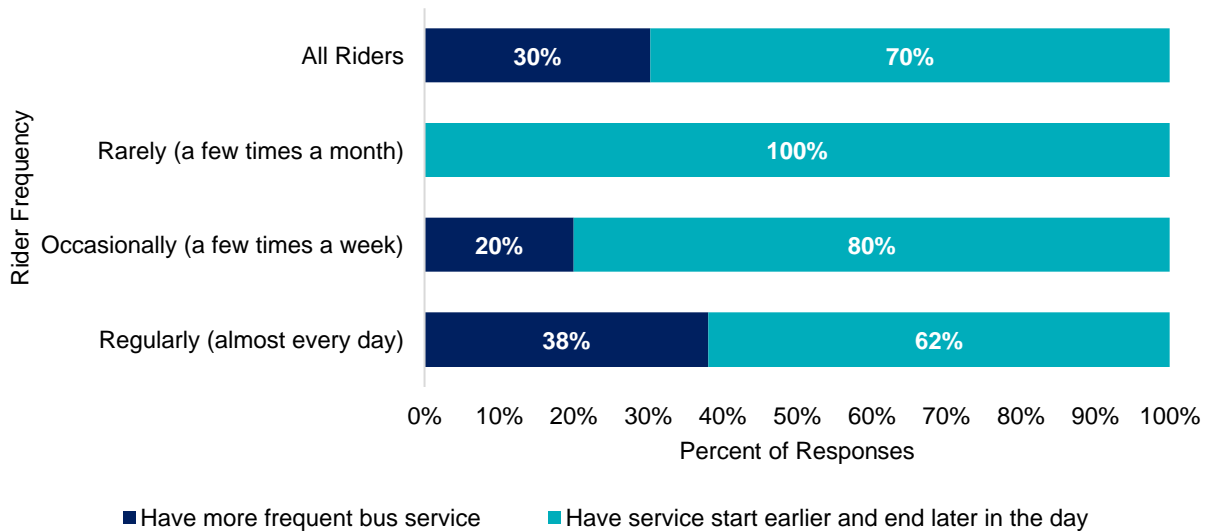
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Figure 11 NBCOA Survey #1 – Proximity to Service and Trip Times



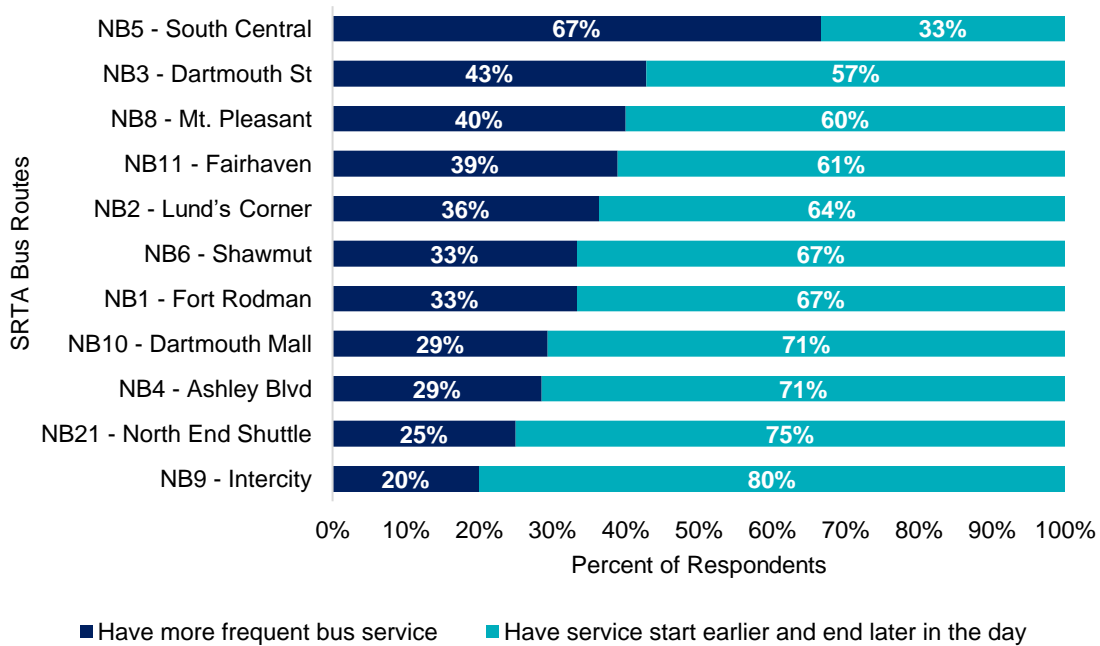
Out of all responses, 70% of respondents would rather have bus service start earlier and end later in the day (Figure 12). Regardless of rider frequency, responses were resoundingly in favor of service starting earlier and ending later in the day. Respondents that ride regularly had the highest percent of responses in favor of more frequent service, at 38%.

Figure 12 NBCOA Survey #1 – Rider Frequency and Service Frequency/Spans (n=32)



Out of all responses, only riders of route NB5 favored more frequent service. Respondents that ride all other routes preferred expanded service hours. Riders of routes NB9 and NB21 were most in favor of service starting earlier and ending later in the day, at 75%-80% (Figure 13).

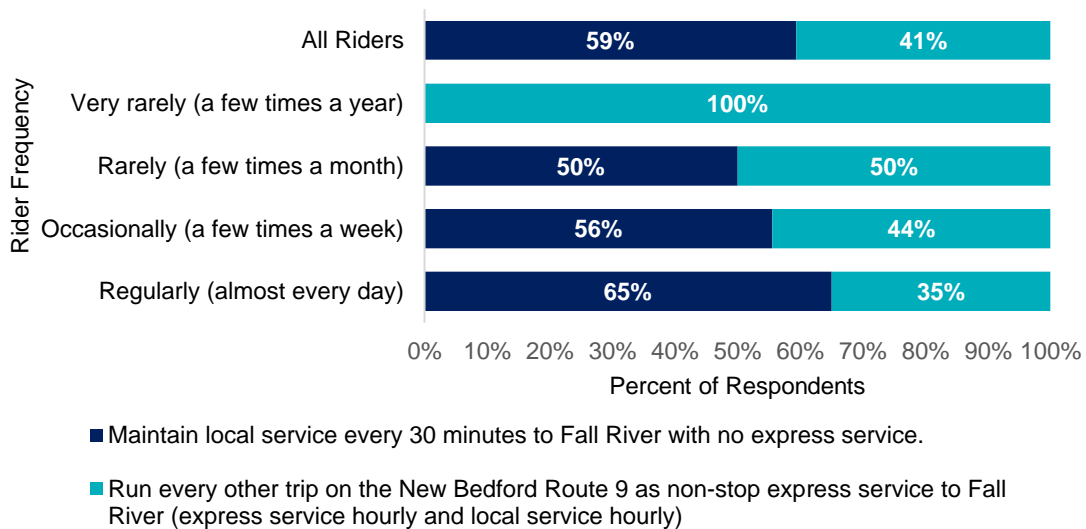
Figure 13 NBCOA Survey #1 – Bus Routes and Service Frequency/Spans



Out of all responses, a slight majority of respondents noted that they would rather have local service every 30 minutes to Fall River with none of it being express service than having every other trip on the NB9 as non-stop express service to Fall River. There was correlation between rider frequency and preference, respondents that rode regularly (more than a few times a month) felt stronger about 30-minute service to Fall River at 65% favoring this choice (Figure 14). Based on these results, more respondents who ride regularly may currently be commuting to Fall River from New Bedford and would like to stop at destinations in between the two terminals along Route 6 (e.g., Dartmouth Mall, Walmart).

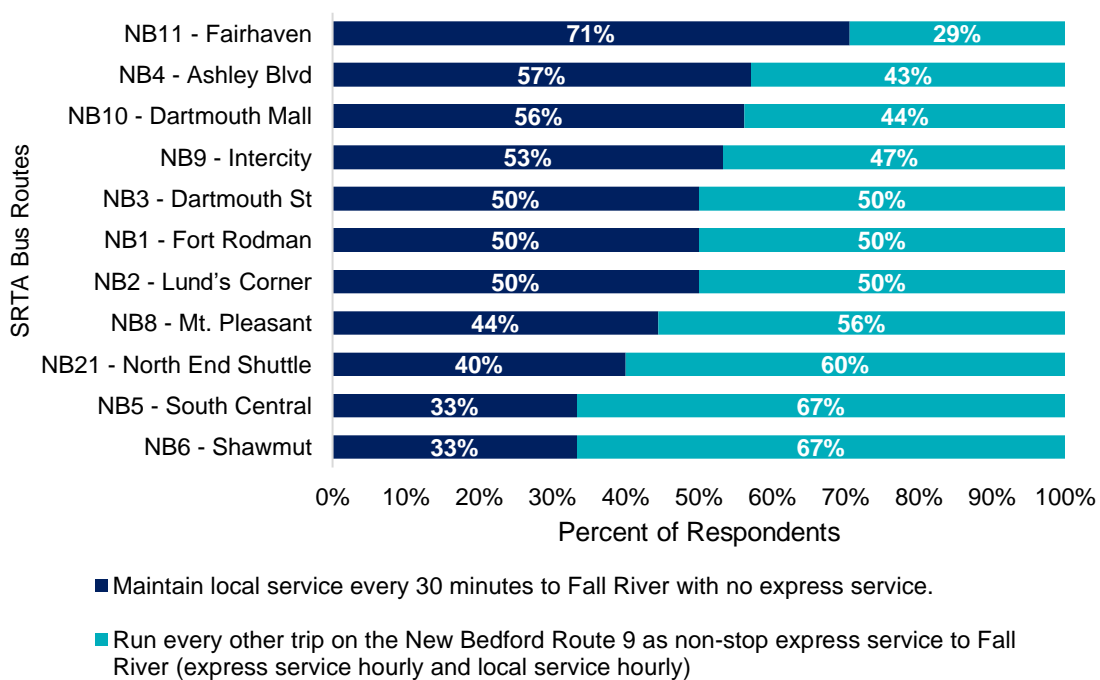
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Figure 14 NBCOA Survey #1 – Rider Frequency and Existing Service/Service Expansion (n=33)



Out of all responses, there is not a strong correlation between route, rider frequency, and preference between service every 30-minutes to Fall River with no express service or every other trip on the NB9 going to Fall River (Figure 15). Respondents that typically ride the NB9 Intercity route were almost split with increasing service to Fall River, though most respondents favored maintaining local service every 30 minutes. Respondents that typically ride the NB9 are most likely stopping at key destinations between New Bedford and Fall River.

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



APPENDIX A: PUBLIC MEETING FLYERS

Help plan the future of New Bedford bus service!

Ede planifye avni sèvis otobis Fall River!

SRTA wants to hear from you about how to improve the New Bedford bus routes to work better for riders. Fill out the online survey by **January 31st** and let us know what types of service improvements are most important.

SRTA vle tande ou sou fason pou amelyore wout otobis New Bedford yo pou travay pi byen pou pasaje yo. Ranpli sondaj sou Entènèt la anvan **31 janvye** epi fè nou konnen ki kalite amelyorasyon sèvis ki pi enpòtan.



Stop by a pop-up event or go online and make your voice heard!

Kanpe nan yon evènman pop-up oswaale entènèt epi fè tande vwa ou!

**Tuesday, January 24
Madi 24 janvye**

New Bedford Bus Terminal 8 AM - 10 AM

134 Elm St, New Bedford

New Bedford Market Basket 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM

122 Sawyer St, New Bedford

Fairhaven Walmart 1 PM - 2 PM

42 Fairhaven Commons Way, Fairhaven

UMass Dartmouth 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM

285 Old Westport Rd, Dartmouth

Dartmouth Mall 4 PM - 5 PM

200 N Dartmouth Mall, Dartmouth



SCAN ME!



Complete our online survey to share your thoughts:

Ranpli sondaj sou entènèt nou an pou pataje panse ou:

surveymonkey.com/r/NBCOA1

Help plan the future of New Bedford bus service!

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

Fill out the online survey by January 31st and let us know what types of service improvements are most important.



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

Complete la encuesta en línea antes del 31 de Enero y háganos saber qué tipos de mejoras consideras que son de mayor importancia.

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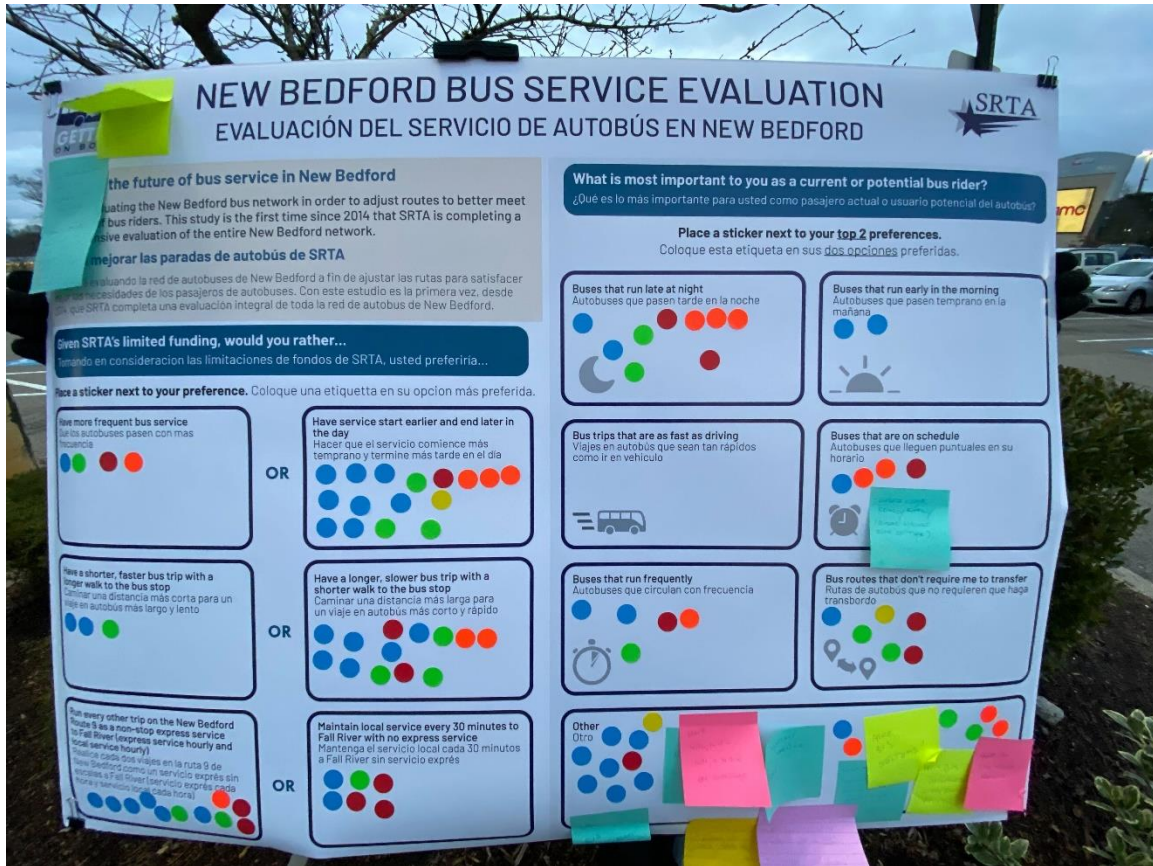
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APPENDIX B: PUBLIC MEETING BOARDS AFTER POP-UP EVENTS



APPENDIX C: SRTA NEW BEDFORD BUS SERVICE EVALUATION SURVEY

SRTA NEW BEDFORD BUS SERVICE EVALUATION SURVEY



About This Survey

SRTA is evaluating the New Bedford 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 New Bedford network. We want to hear from our riders on how SRTA can redesign the bus network to be more efficient and reliable for New Bedford residents.

1. How often do you ride SRTA?

- ☐ Regularly (almost every day)
- ☐ Occasionally (a few times a week)
- ☐ Rarely (a few times a month)
- ☐ Very rarely (a few times a year)
- ☐ Never

2. Which route(s) do you typically ride? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ NB1 - Fort Rodman
- ☐ NB2 - Lund's Corner
- ☐ NB3 - Dartmouth St
- ☐ NB4 - Ashley Blvd
- ☐ NB5 - South Central
- ☐ NB6 - Shawmut
- ☐ NB8 - Mt. Pleasant
- ☐ NB10 - Dartmouth Mall
- ☐ NB11 - Fairhaven
- ☐ NB21 - North End Shuttle
- ☐ NB9 - Intercity

3. What is most important to you as a current or potential bus rider? (Select top 2)

- ☐ Buses that run late at night
- ☐ Buses that run early in the morning
- ☐ Buses that run frequently
- ☐ Bus routes that don't require me to transfer
- ☐ Bus trips that are as fast as driving
- ☐ Buses that are on schedule
- ☐ Other: _____

4. Which destinations are most important to you? (Select top 3)

- ☐ New Bedford High School
- ☐ Whaling City Middle and High School
- ☐ Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School
- ☐ Trucchi's Supermarkets (North New Bedford)
- ☐ New Bedford Market Basket
- ☐ Seabra Foods
- ☐ Stop & Shop (South New Bedford)
- ☐ Price Rite Marketplace (South New Bedford)
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Price Rite Marketplace (North New Bedford)
- ☐ St. Luke's Hospital
- ☐ New Bedford Waterfront (e.g., Ferry Terminal, State Pier Maritime Terminal)
- ☐ Dartmouth Mall
- ☐ UMass Dartmouth
- ☐ Fairhaven Commons/Walmart
- ☐ Southcoast Health (Fairhaven)
- ☐ New Bedford Industrial Park

5. Given SRTA's limited funding, would you rather... (Check ONE box per row)

- ☐ Have more frequent bus service
- ☐ Have a shorter, faster bus trip with a longer walk to the bus stop
- ☐ Run every other trip on the New Bedford Route 9 as a non-stop express service to Fall River (express service hourly and local service hourly)
- ☐ Have service start earlier and end later in the day?
- ☐ Have a longer, slower bus trip with a shorter walk to the bus stop?
- ☐ Maintain local service every 30 minutes to Fall River with no express service?

6. Do you have any other feedback about how SRTA could improve transit service in Fall River?

7. If you would like to stay up-to-date with this project, please provide your email here:

If you are not able to return your completed survey to SRTA staff, please send a picture of your completed survey to info@srtabus.com or please complete the full survey online at www.srtabus.com/new-bedford-bus-service-evaluation/.

APPENDIX D: SRTA NEW BEDFORD BUS SERVICE EVALUATION SURVEY OPEN-RESPONSES

NBCOA Survey #1 – Other Feedback
The current schedules are fine but I would really like later service on Saturdays.
Travel farther out to possibly Wareham dr. offices-Rosebrook Way?
More security at terminal, it is creepy.
pretty good service
Drivers sometimes are unnecessarily rude. I wish there were later bus times, due to work. Also more frequent buses so that if one's running late another is close by.
No
Yes i do today January 23rd i was riding the #9 and it turns into the 4 bus number 2102 its 5:10 when this happens i been ignored in stops and sometimes drivers are too early more than 10 minutes early and sometimes late more than 10 minutes.. thank you
No
I remember seeing the map that has all the stops with their times on the paper. Better drivers with better attitude and really attentive at people's request stops. There are few drivers I recognized that has done this few times time and time again. I understand the beep are annoying but I've noticed passengers including myself rely on hearing the ding and I know drivers have turn them off... Please keep them on so the yellow wiring wouldn't break on passengers behalf. Thank you!
Better the smartphone app
Bring back the 5 and 6 to stop and shop Dartmouth street
The New Bedford Rockdale Ave bus route needs to come back. I have to take 2 buses and have a wait in order to reach the hospital and it's inconvenient. It also used to go thru Buttonwood Park which was a great quicker way to get the kids to the park.
no
ABILITY TO PUT MORE MONEY ON MY CHARLIE CARD VIA COMPUTER/ONLINE/APP W/O GOING TO TERMINAL!!
Flexible schedule for the workers riders to New Bedford Industrial.
.put the bus tracker api public so i can add it to third party apps. The bus drivers should NOT race through the routes because then they're off schedule for going too fast and you miss it. If they went the speed limit that would be fantastic. Right now many of them go too fast.
we really need Sunday buses again.
Everyone have a charlie card instead of putti.g in cash
Renovation of the New Bedford terminal with benches facing the windows to see which busses are coming if seated.
Put shelters at the bus stops

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It would be get to see SRTA make a change to the Dartmouth ST Route 3 instead of turning on to Roach Street have it go straight up Union Street to Rockdale Ave to add Service to Button wood Park it already has to do this after 6 PM so just change to go up there during the day instead turning on to Roach Street

Later services and Sunday services.