

SHARE:



[Join Our Email List](#)



Welcome to the March 2021 issue of the MassMobility newsletter! Read on to learn about upcoming public listening sessions on PT-1 and other human service transportation, new shuttles and microtransit services, and more news related to mobility for older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals in Massachusetts. We also highlight upcoming events, new reports, and job postings related to community mobility.

The newsletter is compiled by [MassMobility](#), an initiative of the Massachusetts [Executive Office of Health and Human Services](#).

[Click here to view this email as a webpage.](#)

In this month's issue

- HST Office hosts public listening sessions
- MassHealth offers vaccine transportation
- Upcoming events
- MassDEV, MAPC announce second round of taxi grantees
- New commuter shuttle serves Clinton
- RMV extends senior hours
- Microtransit updates
- MBTA updates
- Thank you to Meg Robertson
- New reports
- Job postings
- COVID-19 and community transportation

Attend a Public Listening Session on HST Transportation

The Human Service Transportation (HST) Office, MassHealth, and Brokers invite MassHealth members, consumers of Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) agencies, families, advocates, and others to join a virtual Public Listening Session on the HST Brokerage in April 2021. The [HST Office](#) oversees non-emergency medical transportation for MassHealth members through the PT-1 program as well as transportation for five EOHHS agencies. In December 2020, HST completed a competitive procurement for the HST Brokerage Services and announced contractor selection in January 2021. Attend a Public Listening Session to hear about upcoming changes and improvements coming to the Brokerage in response to feedback received from members and stakeholders. Attendees will meet HST and Broker staff and have the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback.

For the schedule and information on how to join, visit www.mass.gov/hstnews. Meetings will be held virtually through Zoom webinar, with call-in access for those connecting by phone. CART and ASL and CDI interpreters will be provided at all meetings. Please spread the word to anyone in your networks who may be interested in attending.

MassHealth vaccine transportation

On February 17, MassHealth announced that [transportation services to and from vaccine appointments](#) are available for any MassHealth member or individual receiving services through the Health Safety Net. If you are enrolled in a Senior Care Options or One Care plan or in a Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), you should contact your health plan or PACE provider to request help with transportation. All other MassHealth members and Health Safety Net patients need to get approval from MassHealth in the form of a PT-1 request either through your provider or by calling the MassHealth Customer Service Center at (800) 841-2900, and then you will book your ride with a local transportation broker, who will send a driver to pick you up for your appointment and return you home. Even though people with MassHealth Limited, MassHealth Family Assistance, the Children's Medical Security Plan, or the Health Safety Net usually aren't able to get

transportation to medical appointments through MassHealth, they CAN get transportation to COVID-19 vaccine appointments through MassHealth. [Learn more.](#)

Upcoming events

National webinars on vaccine transportation

The National Center for Mobility Management is offering a series of webinars highlighting examples from around the country of how public health and transit stakeholders are partnering. [Register for upcoming sessions and view recordings of archived webinars.](#)

On-demand community transportation webinar

Join the [Moving Maine Network](#) and [MassMobility](#) on April 13 from 10-11:30am for a webinar featuring a healthcare provider, a Senior Center, and a transit authority that have each developed a different way to provide on-demand mobility. [Learn more and register.](#)

MassDOT Innovation Conference

Scheduled for late May, MassDOT's annual Innovation Conference will be virtual this year and will feature a track on Mobility, Accessibility, and Transportation Equity. [Learn more and register.](#) Check the website regularly as additional details will be added in the coming weeks.

MassDEV, MAPC announce second round of taxi grantees

On March 11, MassDEV and MAPC [announced awards](#) of over \$2.5 million to 47 municipalities, Regional Transit Authorities, health and human service agencies, and nonprofits to partner with taxi and livery companies. The selected grantees span the state from the Berkshires to Cape Ann and New Bedford. Some will use the taxi and livery trips to facilitate delivery of groceries or essential supplies, while others will offer rides to key populations such as older adults, people with disabilities, East African immigrants, second and third-shift workers, or people recently released from prison.

Funded through the statewide fee on Transportation Network Company rides, the grants are intended to complement – not duplicate – existing transportation services. An [earlier round](#) distributed \$1 million for urgent trips related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Pending availability of funding, MAPC hopes to open another round this coming fall.

New commuter shuttle serves Clinton

In February, the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART) began piloting a new employment shuttle connecting Fitchburg, Leominster, Clinton, and Worcester. The [Clinton-Worcester shuttle](#) expands mobility for Clinton residents while also enabling Fitchburg and Worcester residents to access employer sites in Clinton. In addition, MART designed the schedule so that it would complement the schedule of its existing [Worcester shuttle](#), which runs three round trips a day from Fitchburg to Worcester but does not stop in Clinton. Originally designed as a hospital shuttle, the Worcester shuttle does not start early enough or run late enough to accommodate an entire workday, so riders sometimes requested earlier and later runs from MART. The new Clinton-Worcester shuttle does one round trip each morning, starting before the Worcester shuttle, and two round-trips each evening, which end later than the Worcester shuttle.

The pilot represents a partnership between two Regional Transit Authorities, as Fitchburg and Leominster are in MART's service area, while Clinton and Worcester are served by the Worcester Regional Transit Authority. Funded through a MassDOT [Workforce Transportation](#) grant, the pilot is currently scheduled to run through the end of 2021. MART is promoting the new service through running social media and radio ads, posting signs on their other Worcester shuttle, conducting outreach to partner agencies, and offering a promotional fare through the summer.

RMV extends senior hours

The RMV has [extended](#) its Wednesday senior hours through April and is now welcoming all older adults age 65 and up to make reservations for these appointments. The RMV first launched Senior Wednesdays in [September](#) at six Registry locations, with the goal of helping older adults age 75 and older feel safer about conducting in-person transactions during the pandemic. Over time, the RMV expanded the program, and

senior Wednesdays are currently available at 17 Registry locations. Older adults can make a reservation online, by emailing MassDOTRMVSeniors@dot.state.ma, or by calling the RMV at (857) 368-8005.

Microtransit updates

On March 8, [GATRA GO Explore](#) launched in Pembroke, offering on-demand microtransit service anywhere within Pembroke, to select destinations in Hanover, and to the Hanson commuter rail station. Riders can summon a ride through an app or with a phone call, and all GATRA GO vehicles are wheelchair-accessible. This launch restores transit service to Pembroke, whose commuter service had been suspended since the start of the pandemic. GATRA GO Explore is the [fourth microtransit service](#) offered by the Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA).

A [WGBH radio spot](#) aired March 1 on microtransit pilots underway at the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority and other regional transit authorities.

MBTA updates

DTA, MBTA partner to allow EBT cards for fare payment

Through a partnership between the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) and the MBTA, riders who have cash value on an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card can use their EBT card to load value onto a CharlieCard or CharlieTicket or purchase weekly or monthly passes at MBTA fare vending machines, the CharlieCard Store, or certain MBTA retail sales locations. Only cash benefits – not SNAP – can be used to pay for fares, and because EBT cardholders must enter their PIN during payment transactions, they cannot use their cards on a bus or trolley to purchase fares as there is no PIN pad onboard. [Learn more](#) about how to use EBT cash benefits to purchase MBTA rides, or [contact DTA](#) with questions about program benefits and eligibility.

MBTA seeks input on fare sales locations

This month, the MBTA launched a public outreach process to gather community input on where they should locate fare vending machines and retail sales locations in the future. Through the MBTA's [Fare Transformation Project](#), the MBTA is planning for a future in which riders will be able to purchase their MBTA fares and passes online, via smartphones, or with contactless credit and debit cards – but not using cash onboard a bus or trolley. To accommodate riders who currently use cash, the MBTA is developing a plan to expand access to places to reload by partnering with retailers and adding new machines at bus stops around the region. [Learn more](#), share your suggestions via a [survey](#), attend an upcoming virtual [public meeting](#), or [contact the MBTA](#) directly.

Spring 2021 Service Changes

On March 14, the MBTA implemented most of its spring 2021 services changes. [Learn more](#) about the service changes, and [submit your questions and comments](#).

Thank you to Meg Robertson

Please join us in thanking Meg Robertson for all her efforts in support of safe, independent mobility for blind and low-vision individuals in Massachusetts! Robertson is retiring on March 26 after 34 years of service as a Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist with the Mass Commission for the Blind, including 29 years as the Director of the Orientation and Mobility Department. Thank you, Meg!

New reports

[Dangerous by Design 2021](#)

Released in March 2021, this report found that “older adults, people of color, and people walking in low-income communities are disproportionately represented in fatal crashes involving people walking - even after controlling for differences in population size and walking rates.”

[Older Adults, New Mobility, and Automated Vehicles](#)

In this February 2021 report, researchers developed a framework of factors that will influence the extent to which older adults will be able to benefit from automated vehicles (driverless cars).

[Does It Make Sense to Collect Bus Fares?](#)

A new series of research briefs from the Massachusetts Budget & Policy Center explores potential benefits of providing free bus service. For more on this topic, check out this [2019 report](#) from the Worcester Regional Research Bureau or a November 2020 [forum](#) convened by advocates.

Job postings

The Town of Lexington requests proposals for a [Mobility Management Project](#) from qualified professionals. Bids are due March 31.

The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) is hiring a [Transit Planner](#).

COVID-19 and community transportation

We want to thank all our readers who are on the front lines helping older adults, people with disabilities, and essential workers. We also wish to send a special thank you to all drivers!

For up-to-date information about a particular transportation service, please contact the transportation provider directly.

General information from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health:

- [COVID-19 information](#)
- [Vaccine information](#)
- [Vaccine education and outreach materials](#)

Information from other Massachusetts agencies:

- [MassHealth information](#)
- [DDS information](#)
- [MRC updates](#)
- [MCB resources](#)
- [DMH updates](#)
- [MCDHH COVID-19 card](#)
- [Reopening Health and Human Services in Massachusetts](#) (includes transportation guidance)

National resources related to transportation and COVID-19:

- [FTA COVID-19 Resource Tool](#)
- [Community Transportation Association of America \(CTAA\)](#)
- [National Center for Mobility Management \(NCMM\)](#)
- [American Public Transit Association \(APTA\)](#)

Keep in touch!

Did someone forward this to you? [Subscribe here](#)

You can read all past issues of the MassMobility newsletter in our [archive](#)

Are you on Twitter? Follow us at [@MassMobility](#)

[Contact us anytime](#) if you have a suggestion for something we could cover in a future article, or if you would like to submit a guest article!

Visit our website