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## **Transportation in Wellesley – What are our options?**

**By Colette Aufranc, Select Board and Mobility Committee and Marybeth Martello, Climate Action Committee**

*This guest column is the first in a series dedicated to transportation actions available in Wellesley that will support the town's [Sustainable Mobility Plan](#) and [Climate Action Plan](#) currently in development. The columns are authored by members of the Select Board, Climate Action Committee, Mobility Committee, School Committee, and Trails Committee.*

With the start of fall in New England, our community is focused on returning to new normal(ish) routines. Schools are back in session, people are going back to offices, and traffic and congestion have returned. For many of us, there's a desire to retain the best of the "COVID silver linings" - more outdoor activity and mobility for all (who didn't love seeing so many kids biking around?), less traffic, reduced pollution, and more. Also, the volatile weather we saw this summer has intensified a sense of urgency to meet our town and state climate goals: achieving net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050 and interim goals of a 50% reduction by 2030 and a 75% reduction by 2040.

These two objectives go hand in hand: Transportation contributes to 43% of our GHG emissions in Wellesley. By shifting our transportation behavior, we can all contribute to a healthier lifestyle, improve our community environment, and help reduce the impact of climate change. Where do we start? What is effective? What resources are available to use?

**The MBTA and Commuter/Regional Rail.** It's still known as the "Commuter Rail" but the MBTA transformation to a "Regional Rail" is underway. We are no longer limited to clusters of trains in traditional morning and evening commute hours with insufficient service in between rush hours. The MBTA now offers bi-directional "**Clock Face Scheduling**" where weekday trains run at the same, dependable time, hourly throughout the day – no service gaps! The planned construction of a third train track for the Framingham/Worcester line will add capacity for more frequent service and decrease travel time. We can all take advantage of these enhanced offerings!

- Trade in your downtown parking spot for a rail pass. Use the [MBTA mTicket app](#) or visit the [MBTA website](#) to learn more about commuter rail fares, passes, and purchase options.
- Take the train to work, dinner in Boston, or a baseball game without the hassle of traffic and parking headaches.
- Try out the train for leisure using the new unlimited \$10 weekend passes. The MBTA offers discounted fares for seniors, people with disabilities, students, and low-income adults. Customers who are blind or have low vision ride for free, and up to two children 11 and under ride for free with each fare-paying adult.
- Commuter rail passes are valid on the entire MBTA bus, subway, and ferry network.

**Rapid Transit – the MBTA Green Line.** Subway, Metro, Tube, or T. No matter the name, rapid transit is a great alternative to Boston traffic and pricy parking rates! Affectionately known as the "T", the Green Line (D) train serves Newton, Brookline, the Longwood medical area, and arts and

cultural destinations in Boston. There are four stations within easy reach of Wellesley – Riverside and Woodland (both ADA accessible), Waban, and Eliot. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) recently invested over \$100 million in Green Line improvements including signal and track replacements. These improvements will increase service frequency and reduce travel times.

In December 2021, the Green Line Extension will open, providing expanded service to Lechmere and Union Square in Boston.

In the coming weeks, look for more guest columns about transportation options in Wellesley. From rail bus, MWRTA Bus, and Micro Transit, to local bus shuttle services, school transportation and our extensive trails network, there are many opportunities to get all of us from here to there without starting up a car!

**Learn More.** Visit the Public Transportation pages on the Town of Wellesley website (<https://www.wellesleyma.gov/476/Public-Transportation-Parking>) for detailed information on transportation options.

And check out Wellesley's Sustainable Mobility Plan (<https://www.wellesleyma.gov/1635/Sustainable-Mobility-Plan>) and Climate Action Plan (<https://www.wellesleyma.gov/1584/Climate-Action-Plan>) to learn what community-wide initiatives the Town is targeting to enable more mobility alternatives – from sidewalk connectivity to bike racks, road crossing lights, and bike lanes.

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