

Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority Administrator



Position Profile





Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority

The Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority serves as the single most important provider of fixed-route and paratransit services in the region. It serves the northeast corner of Massachusetts with over 1 million miles of scheduled bus routes, paratransit service for seniors and persons with disabilities, a seasonal bus route to Salisbury and Hampton Beach, and commuter service to Boston.

The population of the region totals approximately 340,000, ranging from 4,900 in the smallest town to 80,000 in the largest city. Communities in the Merrimack Valley include affluent



suburbs and former industrial cities, charming seaside towns, and small, picturesque communities and villages. Because of its location, history, natural beauty, and diversity, the northeast region of Massachusetts offers a high quality of life, vast economic opportunities, and a natural landscape that make it an attractive place to live, work and visit.

The regional foundation of the MVRTA has allowed member communities to work together to provide both the public transportation services and infrastructure that are needed to support the economic, educational, recreational, social development of the Merrimack Valley.

Public transportation in Massachusetts is provided by a network of 15 Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) as well as the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) which provides public transportation to the Greater Boston area.

MVRTA Background

The [MVRTA](#) was established in October 1974. It was one of the original transit authorities created by [Chapter 161B](#) of the Massachusetts General Laws. MVRTA began service in Fiscal Year 1976 in the City of Haverhill and expanded over the next three years to include the City of Lawrence and the Towns of North Andover, Methuen, and Andover. Ten neighboring communities (Boxford, Groveland, Merrimac, Newbury, Rowley, Amesbury, Newburyport, West Newbury, Salisbury, and Georgetown) have since joined the Authority. Presently, the communities of Haverhill, Lawrence, Andover, North Andover, Methuen,

Merrimac, Amesbury, Newburyport, Boxford, Groveland, Salisbury, Georgetown, Newbury and West Newbury receive service. In May 2017, the Town of North Reading joined the MVRTA and now receives Ring & Ride service. In addition the MVRTA owns four transportation centers The McGovern Center (with 895 parking spaces) the Gateway Surface Parking facility (with 865 spaces)



both in Lawrence, Intermodal Parking Facility (with 315 spaces) in Haverhill and the Costello Transportation Center in Amesbury (includes three municipal offices).

The MVRTA is committed to providing excellent service and to that end has developed a performance-based measurement program for fixed route and paratransit services in which it monitors the following categories:

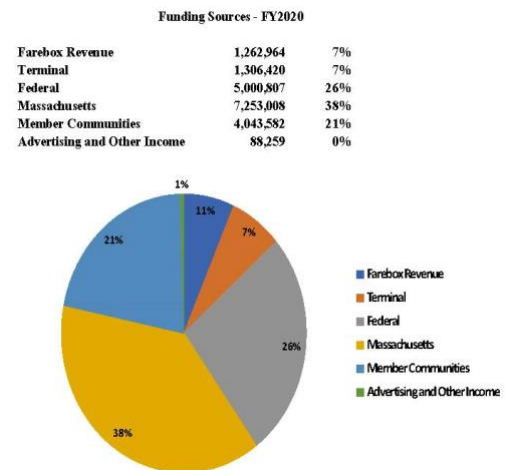
- On-time performance
- Valid complaints
- Preventable accidents per 100,000 miles
- Miles between road calls
- Passenger per revenue mile
- Passenger per revenue hour
- Maintenance cost per revenue mile
- Maintenance cost per revenue hour

Key performance indicators for [Fixed Routes and Paratransit](#) can be reviewed on the website www.mvrta.com.

A fuller understanding of MVRTA's finances is available through the online [Open Government](#) page. [Annual reports](#) for the past seven years as well as [financial statements](#) and [payroll information](#) can be found on the website.

The Organization

A sixteen-member Advisory Board consisting of one representative from each community governs the MVRTA. By statute the chief executive official of each community (Mayor, Town Manager and Chair of the Select Board) are members on the Advisory Board. Each community representative can choose to assign a designee to serve in their stead. The Advisory Board must adopt an annual budget, approve any changes in fares and approve substantial changes in service. The MVRTA administrative staff consists of the Administrator, Assistant Administrator, Director of Finance, and Administrative Assistant. The Administrator, who is appointed by the Advisory Board, is the Chief Executive Officer, and manages the staff. As required by Chapter 161B, the MVRTA cannot directly operate transit services and must contract out for the operation of transit services. First Transit is under contract to MVRTA and manages both fixed route and paratransit services through two operating subsidiaries.



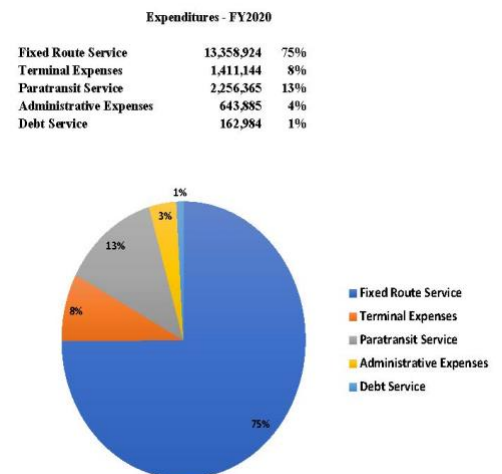
Finances

MVRTA's budget for FY2021 is approximately \$18.5 million. Approximately 40% of the budget comes from the Commonwealth, with 27% from the federal government, 24% from local assessments to member communities, and 9% each from farebox revenue and terminal revenue.

Accomplishments

The many accomplishments of FY20 include:

- Adopted the FY2021 budget, prepared the FY20 annual audit, which was accepted by the Advisory Board, completed borrowings, and prepared the five-year FY2021-FY2025 Capital Improvement Plan.
- Adopted 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan for FY2021-FY2025, including purchase of replacement buses and vans, planning support, and replacement of support vehicles.
- Implemented a number of capital improvement projects, including continuing the design of riverbank stabilization project, which should begin construction in FY2022, and completed the purchase of three diesel/electric hybrid buses and placed an order for the replacement of nine model year 2009 transit buses due for delivery in June 2022 and the replacement of 16 type E2 vehicles for the Office of Special Services with delivery June 2021.
- Addressed the coronavirus pandemic with numerous actions, including sanitizing protocols, face covering requirements, purchase of PPE, installation of protective barriers, and implemented rear boarding on buses.
- Enhanced traditional and digital marketing efforts.



Challenges

Beginning in March 2020, due to the unprecedented coronavirus pandemic, the MVRTA developed and implemented an action plan to help protect both customers and employees. Ridership fell 85% in bus and van services. The availability of federal CARES Act funds will continue to stabilize agency finances, full service returned in September 2020, and all PPE purchases and related activities will continue throughout FY2021.

A challenge for the next Administrator will be to ensure continued customer and employee safety through established protocols as well as to increase ridership to pre-pandemic levels and beyond.

The Position

The Administrator of the MVRTA, as the Chief Executive Officer, is responsible for providing effective oversight of all Authority operations. This includes operational planning, strategic planning, staff direction and oversight, budgeting and financial management, as well as external relations with public entities, the media, and the public.

The Administrator provides a leadership role in coordinating all Advisory Board activities and providing professional advice to the Advisory Board in the development, implementation, and administration of the policies, goals, regulations, and statutory requirements.

The Administrator is responsible for developing and achieving the MVRTA's goals and objectives, the MVRTA annual budget and other financial reports, and the development of future projects and programs that are necessary to the future of the organization and its membership. Specific duties include but are not limited to:

- Provide administrative leadership and support for the management of the Authority and oversee and support all activities of the Authority including transit operations, contract administration, grant preparation and administration, marketing and service development, financial management, community relations, and policy development.
- Ensure that the Authority is in compliance with all local, state, and federal laws, rules, and regulations and respond to oversight investigations and other state and federal agency reviews.
- Develop and implement long- and short-term plans for the management of operations and resources and develop, direct and monitor systems performance standards for operations.
- Develop, obtain approval for, and administer annual budgets, ensuring that sufficient funds will be available to sustain an effective and efficient operation.
- Oversee the application for state and/or federal grants for capital and operating projects. Oversee grant programs, ensuring efficient and effective grant administration and adherence to all pertinent rules and regulations for grant programs.
- Monitor the protection and maintenance of all property, facilities, buildings, and equipment purchased by the Authority. Assure that the maintenance and replacement of such property complies with all rules and regulations.
- Develop and oversee procurement policies and operational contracts. Oversee the communication of policies, plans, and procedures to contractors.

- Identify and direct marketing strategies. Develop and maintain communications with all member communities through Advisory Board members, local officials, the Regional Planning Agency, business organizations and other local organizations.
- Assure MVRTA's awareness of current and upcoming local, state, and federal legislation that affect public transit through participation in the Massachusetts Association of Regional Transit Authorities.
- As required by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 161B Section 4, the Administrator shall not hold any elective office, except that of town meeting member, in any city or town within the jurisdiction of the Authority.



The Ideal Candidate

The MVRTA seeks to hire an Administrator with significant managerial experience and strong organizational skills. The candidate should be competent in all areas of management and operations, but especially the areas of financial management, planning, contract and grant administration, and inter-governmental relations.

The ideal candidate:

- Will have a bachelor's degree in business or public administration, planning, management, or a closely related field or the equivalent in RTA management experience.
- Will have a minimum of five (5) years of management experience, preferably in the transit industry, with demonstrated history of increasing responsibility.
- Will be an experienced transportation professional at the local, state, and/or federal level with a minimum of five (5) years of experience in the transit industry.
- Must be well versed in business processes, contract and grant administration, and information systems.
- Will have a comprehensive understanding of public transit issues and familiarity with MassDOT and FTA regulations and other related regulations. This is strongly preferred.
- Will have strong organization skills and verbal/written communication skills.
- Must have the ability to analyze organizational issues and translate complex concepts into action plans.
- Must have the ability to effectively prioritize and multitask, including problem solving and interpersonal skills.
- Must have strong accounting and budgeting knowledge.
- Will have computer skills in PC applications.
- Will be self-motivated and visionary with the ability to sustain the organization, maintain its relevance, and provide needed services to member communities in an ever-changing environment.
- Will possess the skills and experience to work with Board members, staff, and external entities to identify and address the long-term strategic needs of the organization and develop short-term tactical steps to advance the mission of the organization.

Compensation

The MVRTA will offer a compensation package that is competitive with similar organizations with an annual salary of \$130K +/-, based on experience and qualifications. Attractive benefits, including health and retirement plans, are included within the total compensation package.



To Apply

Interested applicants should provide résumés, in confidence, by 3:00 p.m. EST on May 19, 2021, via email to:

Apply@communityparadigm.com

Subject: MVRTA Administrator

Submit a **single PDF** with a cover letter and résumé.

Following the closing date, résumés will be reviewed according to the outlined qualifications. The Advisory Board has appointed a Screening Committee to review applications and interview the most qualified candidates in confidence. Based upon these interviews, a selection of finalists will be chosen for further evaluation and reference checks before a final selection is made by the Advisory Board. Finalists will be contacted for references and approval of background reviews before candidate names are publicly advanced to the Advisory Board.

Questions regarding the position should be directed to Bernard Lynch, Principal, Community Paradigm Associates at blynch@communityparadigm.com or 978-621-6733.

The Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority is an EEO/AA employer and complies with ADA requirements.