



METROWEST REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Public Transportation System

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Expanded MicroTransit Service to Framingham and Natick on Weekends

On Saturday, August 7, 2021, MWRTA will expand its app based, Catch Connect service to operate on Saturdays and Sundays in areas within Downtown Framingham and Natick, and the Golden Triangle shopping area (Natick Mall, Shoppers World, Walmart, and other nearby locations).

MWRTA has been operating a pilot MicroTransit service, called Catch Connect, in Wellesley since February 2021. The service was launched to replace the traditional Fixed Route service that was offered in Wellesley, with the intention of providing a wider service area and added flexibility to riders. It has grown in popularity as ridership has begun to increase as pandemic restrictions were lifted.

MWRTA has also opened this Catch Connect service to its Demand Response riders on Sundays in Framingham and Natick for any purpose, as well as on weekdays for medical trips, which has been well received by riders for the increased service coverage and flexibility.

By operating Catch Connect service in Framingham and Natick on the weekends, MWRTA will be able to gather data and information on how MicroTransit services interact with traditional Fixed Route services. The pilot will also provide insight on what and where the demand is for Sunday service, implementing the recommendations of a Sunday Feasibility Study, conducted by the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), and funded through MassDOT Discretionary Grants.

Sunday service has been highly requested by passengers for years, and MWRTA is excited to launch a new service to be able to accommodate this. Riders will be able to book their trips on-demand and data gathered will allow MWRTA to see the peak times of travel and high demand areas. As the ridership expands, MWRTA's goal is to eventually launch a shuttle or Fixed Route in the most popular areas, or continue running Catch Connect if that is the preferred method for riders, or a combination of both services.

Catch Connect will operate as a first-come-first-serve shared ride service. Meaning, that while it is on-demand, riders may need to wait for a driver to be available depending on the levels of service. The accessible vehicles used will accommodate between 4 – 8 passengers at a time.

This expanded service is funded through MassDOT Discretionary Funding and is set to operate for 1 year, with intention to continue, based on ridership levels and service demand. Rider feedback is strongly encouraged and will be helpful in determining future service revisions as necessary.

Please submit feedback through the app under the “Contact” tab, call us at (508) 283-5083, or email us at info@mwrta.com. For additional information on the Catch Connect services, visit www.mwrta.com/catch.

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**Framingham ♦ Ashland ♦ Holliston ♦ Natick ♦ Wayland ♦ Hopkinton ♦ Weston ♦ Sherborn ♦ Sudbury ♦
Marlborough ♦ Southborough ♦ Wellesley ♦ Dover ♦ Hudson ♦ Milford ♦ Hopedale**