



# *Stay* CONNECTED.



BRTA ANNUAL  
REPORT FY2025

# 2025



## **increasing ridership**

In its 51st year, the transit system experienced enormous growth in ridership! In large part, the increase can be attributed to funding from the Commonwealth. This allowed BRTA to offer fare-free rides which yielded a 16% increase. Paid ridership was up, too. In August of 2025, there were 65,000 riders compared with the previous year's 50,000 – an increase of 15,000.



## **getting people where they need and want to go**

These numbers all exceeded ridership, both pre- and post-Covid, by nearly 20,000. In a region like the Berkshires, public transit makes such a difference in so many peoples lives. With a service area of this size, BRTA provides the connective infrastructure that enables people who prefer not to drive or those who have no other means of transportation to get where they want and need to go.



### **reducing emissions**

Thanks to BRTA's securing of two Federal Transit Authority grants, BRTA has replaced five diesel powered large buses with hybrids, offering improved fuel economy and reduced emissions. Some studies suggest fuel efficiency gains of up to 37%. While it's true that all electric vehicles are available, they aren't practical for the long runs required in this region. Hybrids have longer range and require less infrastructure investment, e.g., charging facilities.



### **supporting public transit**

With the new administration in Washington, public transit had some concerns about ongoing funding priorities. BRTA had submitted grant applications to purchase four new 40' hybrid buses and a bus simulator in FY2024. We remain optimistic that we will receive this funding in early FY2026. We are hopeful that public transit will continue to receive the resources necessary to continue to grow our fleet of clean energy vehicles.

# *Certified* **TRAVEL TRAINER AT THE READY**

BRTA employee, Julie Davine has been teaching individuals, groups, people with disabilities, and older adults how to ride the bus for years. Julie's training includes all the basics: learning the bus routes, how to plan a trip, and understanding the fare structure.

Her training is self-paced, with an emphasis on safety. People are often surprised to learn that Julie will travel with trainees while they get the hang of bus travel. They are also surprised that there is no charge for the travel training service.

Public transit helps keep people connected and functioning independently. Many Berkshire residents don't have cars or no longer drive. Julie gets a great deal of satisfaction from helping grow ridership with confident, knowledgeable customers.



# *Fare-Free* RIDING

For most of this fiscal year, customers have been able to ride fare-free, thanks to Governor Healey's FY2025 budget. According to Berkshire Transit Management, **ridership surpassed 600,000** for the first time since the 1970s.

Berkshire County families that rely on public transit have had a little extra breathing room in their household budgets. That means extra dollars for food, utilities, rent, or childcare. All BRTA's 15-fixed route and paratransit services are available at no charge.

There are some challenges to meeting increased demand. Driver shortages have been an ongoing issue. BRTA has been addressing the shortage, offering free training and a \$1,000 sign on bonus for new employees. We're hoping to attract and retain qualified drivers to meet our system's needs.



# BOB MALNATI'S *Achievements*

If you've met Bob Malnati, you know he's not the kind of guy who'll talk about his successes. Given his recent decision to retire, it's fitting to do some talking for him. Who better to provide some insights into his achievements than Deputy Administrator Sarah Vallieres?



## **Customer-focused**

When Sarah first joined BRTA, she told Bob she couldn't make any sense out of the bus schedules. She figured if she had difficulty, so did other passengers. Bob and his team started researching bus schedules in other regions as well as ADA considerations and developed customer-friendly bus schedules. Since that time, even more improvements have been made.

It used to be that the ITC was the only transfer spot in Pittsfield, an inconvenience for many customers. Bob reconfigured the transfer map to include multiple spots along the system. BRTA buses no longer "deadhead" to the start of the bus routes as was past practice. Now, BRTA buses pick up customers as soon as the buses are on the road. Just one more example of system improvements with customers in mind.

In 2016, Bob initiated a travel training program. He figured there were Berkshire residents who had never taken the bus and who might feel intimidated to try. This program continues to this day. BRTA's travel trainer has created 100s of newly minted customers.



### **Cyber secure**

According to Sarah, Bob is very concerned with cyber security. He instituted micro training sessions with BRTA's computer consultant that include regular random testing. The BRTA team has greater confidence identifying links that "should never be clicked on." Most recently, BRTA has moved from .com to .gov, yet another security measure.

### **Collaborative**

Bob has played an important role in several of the region's key initiatives including Downtown Pittsfield, Soldier On, and the United Way. He was instrumental in helping make the Berkshire Flyer a reality. Most recently, he has been hard at work bringing Link 413 to life.

### **Greener transit system**

Bob has worked hard to secure funding to update the fleet to hybrids. Five large hybrid buses are currently on the road. Grant funding for three more was approved during the previous administration. If Bob had his way, the entire fleet would either be hybrid or hydrogen powered.

### **Closing thought**

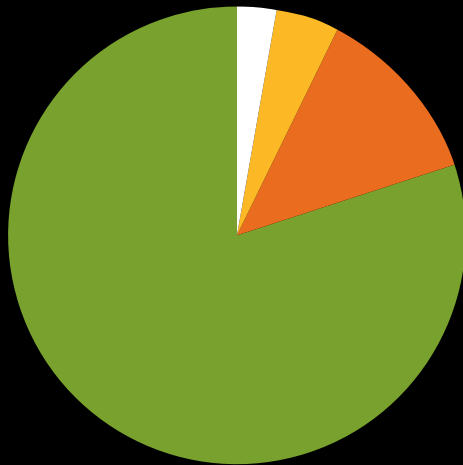
Bob has accomplished a lot during his 11-year tenure as BRTA Administrator. While he's retiring, he's planning to remain in the area. Our guess is, he'll continue to contribute to the quality of life in the Berkshires.



# BY THE *Numbers*

## REVENUES

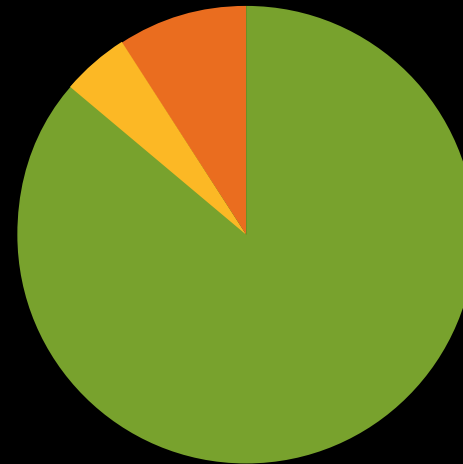
Total operating and non-operating  
\$10,576,713 by Source



- Federal & state operating grants 85%
- Local community assessments 10%
- Fixed route & demand response 3%
- Other 2%

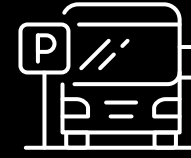
## EXPENSES

Total operating and non-operating  
\$12,005,723 by Source



- Transportation services 81%
- Depreciation 12%
- Administration 7%





## TOTAL RIDERSHIP

Fixed Route  
**613,408**

**2,011** Average  
customers  
per day

Paratransit  
**32,363**

**12** Average customers  
per hour

## TRIP HISTORY

	FY25	FY24	FY23
Bikes	6,856	6,549	5,266
Mobility Devices	3,663	2,877	1,998
Total	10,519	9,426	7,264

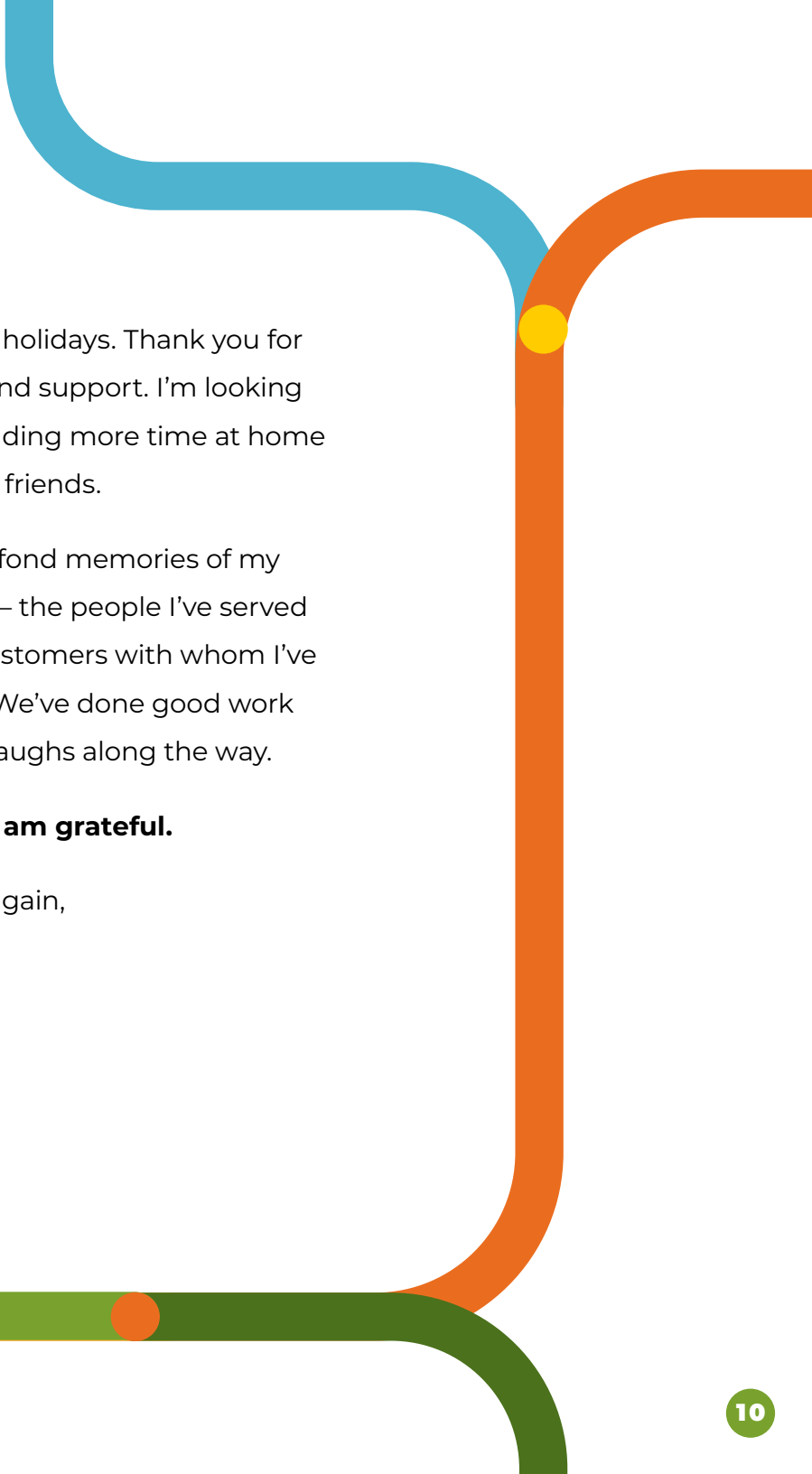
# BOB HAS THE *Last Word*

As of April 2025, I informed the Advisory Board that I would retire at the end of the contract year or when a new administrator was in place. That said, this is my final annual report message—one of **gratitude**.

**Thank you to all the BRTA customers**, fixed route and paratransit. The BRTA depends on your trust and ridership. You have seen us through countless service changes, endured operator shortages resulting in cancellations. You joined us in celebrating fifty years of service, and responded with record ridership for both fixed route and paratransit.

Many thanks to the **BRTA Advisory Board** for your support throughout my years of service. You've stood by the BRTA during many challenges including the impact of Covid, a transit strike (or two), program cuts, and new pilot programs.

**Thank you to the BRTA staff.** You keep the fleet running, the grants flowing, the customers



riding. You teach new riders how to make public transit part of their daily lives. You generate new ideas and embrace new technologies.

To the **operating company with the operators, mechanics, utility staff, supervisors, dispatchers, schedulers and call takers**, I thank you all. You do your very best to serve our customers and we notice. Your commitment to excellence makes a world of difference.

Finally, I want to thank **my family**. Being a public transit administrator is not a 9-5 job. There are many early morning road trips to Boston, late evening paperwork, regular cellphone interruptions and my ever present

laptop, even on holidays. Thank you for your patience and support. I'm looking forward to spending more time at home with family and friends.

I have so many fond memories of my tenure at BRTA – the people I've served with and the customers with whom I've crossed paths. We've done good work and had a few laughs along the way.

**For all of you, I am grateful.**

Until we meet again,  
*Bob Malnati*

The background is a dark navy blue. It is filled with a complex, abstract pattern of thick, rounded lines in four colors: green, orange, yellow, and light blue. These lines meander, curve, and intersect across the frame. Small circles in the same four colors are scattered throughout, some acting as endpoints or junctions for the lines. In the upper right quadrant, there is a circular logo with a green background, containing a stylized white and black graphic that resembles a knot or a stylized letter 'S'.

*Thank* YOU