



# Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan

September 2019

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Old Colony Planning Council  
Title VI/ Nondiscrimination Coordinator  
Pat Ciaramella  
70 School Street  
Brockton, MA 02301  
508-583-1833 Extension 202  
pciaramella@ocpcrpa.org

Title VI Specialist  
MassDOT, Office of Diversity and Civil Rights  
10 Park Plaza  
Boston, MA 02116  
857-368-8580  
TTY: 857-368-0603  
[MASSDOT.CivilRights@state.ma.us](mailto:MASSDOT.CivilRights@state.ma.us)

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Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)  
One Ashburton Place, 6th Floor  
Boston, MA 02109  
617-994-6000  
TTY: 617-994-6196

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**Mon-Khmer, Cambodian**

ប្រសិនបើលោក-អ្នកត្រូវការបកប្រែពីភាសានេះ សូមទាក់ទងអ្នកសម្របសម្រួលជំពូកទី6 របស់ **MPO** តាមរយៈលេខទូរស័ព្ទ **508-583-1833** រួចភ្ជាប់ទៅលេខ **202**។

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إذا كنت بحاجة إلى هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، يُرجى الاتصال بمنسق الفقرة السادسة لمنظمة التخطيط الحضري على الهاتف: 508- 583-1833 و ثم اضغط الأرقام 202.

*Updated April 2015*

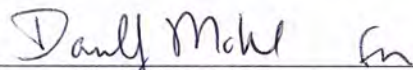
*Old Colony Planning Council*

OLD COLONY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)

2019

OLD COLONY COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT  
HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN (HST)  
ENDORSEMENT

This is to certify that the Signatories of the Old Colony Metropolitan Planning Organization, at their Old Colony MPO Meeting on November 19, 2019, hereby approve and endorse the 2019 Old Colony Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan (HST) , in accordance with the certified 3C Transportation Planning Process.



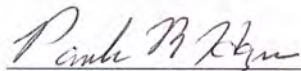
Stephanie Pollack, Secretary and CEO  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

11/19/19

Date

The Honorable Moises Rodrigues, Mayor  
City of Brockton

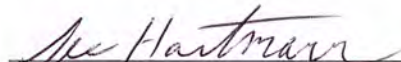
Date



Jonathan Gulliver, Highway Administrator  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

11/19/19

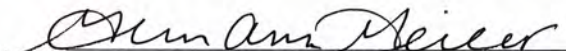
Date



Kenneth Tavares, Chairman  
Plymouth, Board of Selectmen

11/19/19

Date



Michael Lambert, Administrator  
Brockton Area Transit

11/19/19

Date



Eldon Moreira, Chairman  
West Bridgewater, Board of Selectmen

11/19/19

Date



Christine Joy, President  
Old Colony Planning Council

11/19/19

Date



Daniel Salvucci, Vice-Chairman  
Whitman, Board of Selectmen

11/19/19

Date

Ex-Officio Non-Voting Members

Noreen O'Toole, Chairperson  
Old Colony Joint Transportation Committee (JTC)

Jeff McEwen, Massachusetts Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Peter Butler, Region 1 Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)



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# 1.0 Introduction & Background

## Introduction

MAP-21 ended on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015 and the U.S. Congress and the Obama Administration enacted its replacement, the “Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act” (FAST Act). Fast Act funds surface transportation programs until the year 2020. As was a part of MAP-21 requirements, which have been carried through into FACT Act, any local project seeking to use 5310 funding must be part of a Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan; this Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan has been developed to guide those seeking to use 5310 funding. This plan addresses needs of the communities and service providers located in the Old Colony Region and focuses specifically on the needs of elderly, disabled, school-aged, persons with limited English skills and low-income populations, and their transportation needs and services.

## Serving the Transportation Disadvantaged

People may mistakenly assume that individuals with special transportation needs are only those with disabilities or those using wheelchairs. The term “transportation disadvantaged” covers a much larger population spectrum. Transportation disadvantaged people, otherwise known as individuals with special transportation needs, are those unable to transport themselves due to age, income, or health condition. The transportation disadvantaged have different types of transportation requirements as they travel to health centers, school, work, internships, shopping and social activities.

## What is Special Needs Transportation?

The most popular mode of transportation for the people in the Old Colony Region is the private automobile; however, by the very definition of special transportation needs, this is not always an available or viable transportation option.

Special needs transportation is defined as any mode of transportation used by those defined as transportation disadvantaged or with a special transportation need. This includes buses that have regular stops (i.e., fixed-route transit for the general public and schools), specialized services such as vans, cabulances which are vehicles driven by medically train individuals, and taxis that pick up people at the curb or door (i.e., demand response or dial-a-ride), rideshare programs, volunteer driver services, ferries, trains, or any federal, state or local funded transportation mode.

The agencies providing these special transportation services largely fit into three categories: human service transportation, public mass transportation, and student transportation services. However, these designations do not adequately describe the variety of providers or the diversity of people they serve.

In this planning effort, the intent is to use the widest possible interpretation of special needs transportation. This includes transportation services funded and provided by the following:

- Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Local human service departments including programs for children, the elderly, low-income, and disability populations
- Public transportation
- School districts
- For-profit and non-profit contractors
- Privately funded employer transportation

### **What is Coordinated Special Needs Transportation?**

Coordinated special needs transportation occurs when multiple organizations work together to their mutual benefit, taking advantage of existing infrastructure and systems, gaining economies of scale, eliminating duplication, enhancing efficiency, expanding, and/or improving the quality of service to better address the transportation needs of the special needs population.

Coordination among different transportation service-providers and local governments makes the most efficient use of limited transportation resources by avoiding duplication caused by overlapping individual program efforts and encouraging the use and sharing of existing community resources.

There are many levels of coordination ranging from the basic sharing of training resources to the full integration of services. Examples of coordinated transportation include:

- Building on the existing transportation broker infrastructure to expand ride brokering to programs other than Medicaid
- Establishing feeder services to connect to fixed transit routes
- Identifying obstacles to coordination in the regulatory environment and advocating for change
- Making greater use of technology to find providers and schedule trips
- Finding ways to group riders on the same vehicle when they are sponsored by different funding agencies
- Leveraging purchasing power for vehicles, fuel, maintenance or training
- Improving communication capabilities
- Utilizing school buses for community transportation
- Coordination with other transit providers, both public and private, to address gaps in service coverage
- Utilization of Ride Hail Applications (i.e. Uber, Lyft, etc...) to fill gaps in transportation coverage

Regardless of the type of coordination, it can involve the cooperation of:

- Transportation providers: public transit agencies, school districts, social service agencies, transportation brokers, private providers, and non-profit transportation programs
- Service providers: doctors scheduling medical appointments based on transportation availability, land use planners including mobility options as part of zoning decisions, developers building “walkable” communities
- People with special transportation needs

As such, this plan brings together services providers, funding sources, riders, and the community at large to improve special needs transportation throughout the Old Colony Region.

## **Public Participation**

This plan was developed through a cooperative effort utilizing an outreach process that was developed by the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC), which included a survey that engaged multiple organizations in the medical community, non-profits and private transportation fields, organizations whose mission it is to provide social service, public transportation authorities, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The plan was then presented to the Old Colony MPO, Old Colony JTC, and then released for 21 day public review.

Goals of the Human Services Coordination Plan:

- Update inventory of current transportation resources in the region
- Identify gaps and needs of current services available
- Identify ways to address the identified gaps and needs
- Prioritize the needs and services to be addressed

## **Funding Programs Overview**

There are numerous programs in the “Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act” (FAST Act) legislation that address many specific transportation needs. The Coordinated Human Services Coordination Plan focuses on the following available programs:

### **5310 Formula Grants For The Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals With Disabilities**

5310 (Formula Grants For The Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals With Disabilities) is funding allocated for urbanized and rural areas based on the number of seniors and individuals with disabilities within these areas.

What does 5310 funding allow?

- 55% of program funds must be used on capital projects that are:
  - Public transportation projects developed to meet the needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable.
  
- 45% of remaining funding can be used for:
  - Public transportation projects that exceed the requirements of ADA.
  - Public transportation projects that improve access to fixed-route service, decreasing the reliance by those individuals with disabilities on complementary paratransit services.
  - Develop alternatives to public transportation that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities.
  - Incremental cost of providing same day service or door-to-door service.
  - Incremental cost of purchasing vehicles to support new accessible taxi, ride sharing and/or vanpooling programs; and mobility management.

### **Urbanized Area Formula Grants 5307**

The Urbanized Area Formula Funding program (49 U.S.C. 5307) provides Federal resources available to urbanized areas and Governors for transit capital expenditures, operating assistance and for transportation related planning in urbanized areas. Eligible activities include: planning, engineering, design and evaluation of transit projects, other technical transportation-related studies; capital investments in bus and bus-related activities such as replacement, bus overhaul, crime prevention and security equipment and construction of maintenance and passenger facilities; and capital investments in new and existing fixed guideway systems including rolling stock, vehicle overhaul, track, signals, communications, and computer hardware and software. All preventive maintenance and some Americans with Disabilities Act complementary paratransit service costs are considered capital costs. For urbanized areas with populations less than 200,000, operating assistance is an eligible expense. For urbanized areas with 200,000 in population and over, funds are apportioned and flow directly to a designated recipient selected locally to apply for and receive Federal funds. For urbanized areas under 200,000 in population, the funds are apportioned to the Governor of each state for distribution.

What does 5307 funding allow?

- Planning
- Limited Operating Expenses
- Engineering, Design, and Project Evaluation
- Capital
- Vehicle Rehabilitation & Maintenance
- Safety & Security

### Formula Grants for Rural Areas 5311

This program provides capital, planning, and operating assistance to support public transportation in rural areas, defined as areas with fewer than 50,000 residents. Funding is based on a formula that uses land area, population, and transit service. As with 5307 program, 5311 has had program elements from the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program consolidated into it. Activities eligible under the former JARC program, which provided services to low-income individuals to access jobs, are now eligible under the 5311 program. The formula now includes the number of low-income individuals as a factor. There is no minimum or maximum on the amount of funds that can be spent on job access and reverse commute activities.

What does 5311 funding allow?

- Planning
- Capital
- Operating
- Job access and reverse commute projects
- Acquisition of public transportation services

Table 1 displays a summary of the aforementioned funding programs.

**Table 1: Summary of Funding Programs**

Program	Description	Funding Breakdown	Action/Steps
5310 Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program	Provides funding through a formula program to increase mobility for the elderly, people with disabilities and special needs.	~ 80% federal funding ~ 20% local matching	Yearly application process through Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation
5307 Large Urban Cities and 5311 Rural and Small Urban Areas	Provides capital and operating assistance for public transit systems.	~ 80% federal funding ~ 20% local matching	Yearly application process through Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation

## Demographics of the Region

The Old Colony Region consists of the City of Brockton and the Towns of: Abington, Avon, Bridgewater, Duxbury, East Bridgewater, Easton, Halifax, Hanover, Hanson, Kingston, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Stoughton, West Bridgewater, and Whitman. Figure 1 is a map of communities in the region.

According to the American Community Survey (ACS) 2013-2017 5-year estimates, the Old Colony region has a population of 373,205. This is a 2.98 percent increase over the 2010 U.S. Decennial Census regional population figure of 362,406. All towns in the region have shown growth in population, with no one town experiencing a large growth spurt. The town with the largest rate of growth in population would be the Town of Stoughton, with a 5.10 percent growth rate when comparing recent ACS population data to that of the 2010 U.S. Decennial Census.

Elderly, disabled, low-income, and youth populations are of the specific interests of the Human Services Coordinated Plan. The following summary breaks down those specific population groups in the region.

A summary of the Old Colony Region:

- 10.8 percent of the population has a disability. A disability is defined by the US Census as “long-lasting physical, mental, or emotional conditions or limitations that affect the ability to perform major life activities”. This population includes both transportation dependent and independent persons.
- 21.8 percent of the population is over age 60. The age of 60 is when many services become available to seniors. They may or may not be transportation dependent at this age.
- 8.5 percent of the population is low-income as defined by the US Census.
- 25.1 percent of the population is between 5-20 years of age. School aged children and many young adults are transportation dependent.

Table 2 shows youth, elderly, low-income, and disabled populations in the region based on the 2017 US Census American Community Survey data. Additionally, the table includes two comparative measures. The first is a comparison of each of the four population segments to the total population of each community. The second comparative measure, of all four-population segments by community, displays each of the four population segments on a regional level.

Using the 2017 US Census American Community Survey data, the region had 31,666 people living below the poverty level. The City of Brockton alone accounts for 4.2 percent of the region's population living under the poverty level with 15,703 residents. Those residents make up 16.5

percent of Brockton's overall population. Brockton's youth population makes up 7.1 percent of the regional total, the elderly population is 4.7 percent of the regional total and the disabled population is 3.52 percent of the regional total. Being the largest city in the region, it is reasonable to expect that Brockton would make up the largest share of the regional populations for the youth, elderly, disabled and low-income populations.

Table 2 also displays other interesting figures, one of which is the youth population in the Town of West Bridgewater. West Bridgewater accounts for 0.5 percent of the total youth population in the region, yet the youth account for 23.7 percent, almost a quarter of the town's total population. The communities where the 60+ populations are over the regional average of 21.8 percent are Avon, Hanover, Hanson, Kingston, Plymouth, Stoughton, and West Bridgewater.

The City of Brockton has the largest disabled population and therefore the largest share of that population regional at 4.7 percent. An interesting figure involves the town of Avon, which makes up 1.2 percent of the regions' total population, but has a disabled population that is 15.4 percent of the total town population.

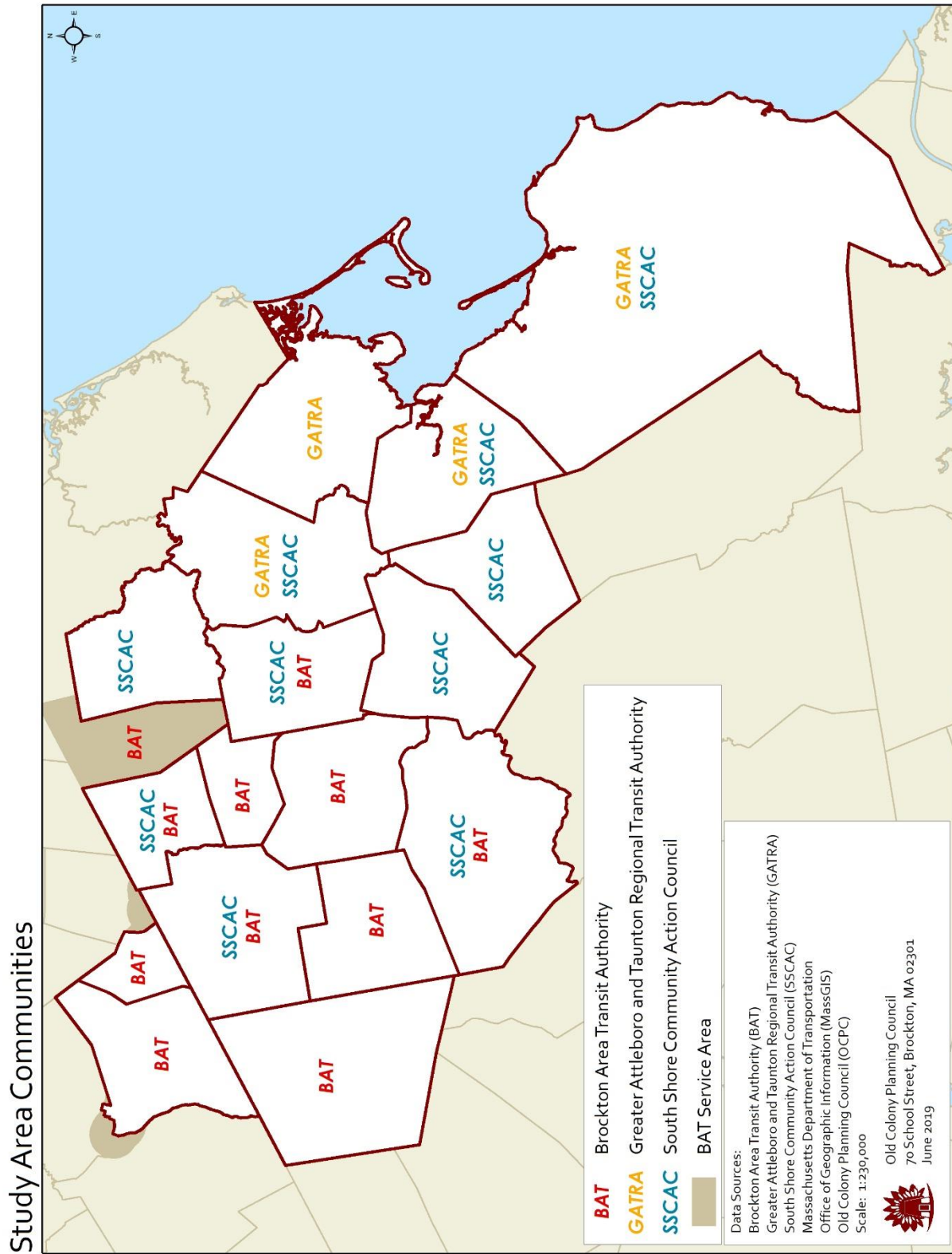
The following twelve maps show the current availability of services and the potential needs for services in the region. The maps are a tool to help visualize the presented information and how it affects the region. By looking at both where potential transit users may live and where transit users want to go we can start to put the pieces together in identifying the gaps in the region's transportation infrastructure.

**Table 2: Regional Demographics based on the American Community Survey (ACS) 2017 5 Year Estimate**

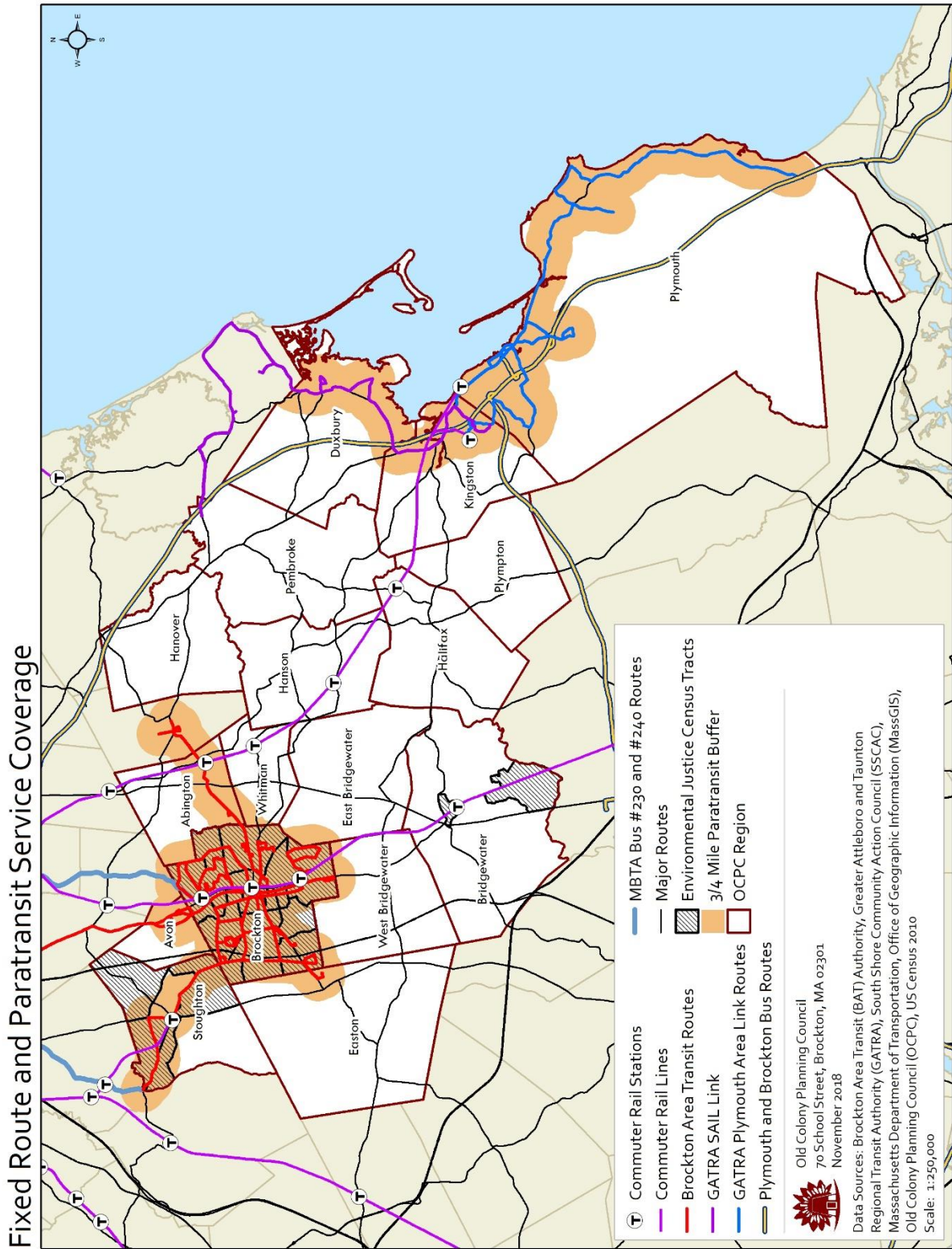
	% of Total Town/City Population										% of Total Region Population				
	Total Population	Youth (5-20)	Senior (60+)	People with Disabilities	Low-Income	Youth (5-20)	Senior (60+)	People with Disabilities	Low-Income	Youth (5-20)	Senior (60+)	People with Disabilities	Low-Income	Total Population	
Abington	16,275	3,587	3,377	1,808	579	22.0%	20.7%	11.1%	3.6%	1.0%	0.9%	0.48%	0.2%	4.4%	
Avon	4,468	821	1,072	688	379	18.4%	24.0%	15.4%	8.5%	0.2%	0.3%	0.18%	0.1%	1.2%	
Bridgewater	27,434	6,852	5,100	2,216	2,159	25.0%	18.6%	8.1%	7.9%	1.8%	1.4%	0.59%	0.6%	7.4%	
Brockton	95,161	26,676	17,606	13,154	15,703	28.0%	18.5%	13.8%	16.5%	7.1%	4.7%	3.52%	4.2%	25.5%	
Duxbury	15,572	4,330	4,073	1,179	617	27.8%	26.2%	7.6%	4.0%	1.2%	1.1%	0.32%	0.2%	4.2%	
East Bridgewater	14,301	3,869	2,967	1,515	942	27.1%	20.7%	10.6%	6.6%	1.0%	0.8%	0.41%	0.3%	3.8%	
Easton	24,001	6,522	4,739	1,921	1,047	27.2%	19.7%	8.0%	4.4%	1.7%	1.3%	0.51%	0.3%	6.4%	
Halifax	7,739	1,748	1,637	544	356	22.6%	21.2%	7.0%	4.6%	0.5%	0.4%	0.15%	0.1%	2.1%	
Hanover	14,328	4,074	3,221	1,252	552	28.4%	22.5%	8.7%	3.9%	1.1%	0.9%	0.34%	0.1%	3.8%	
Hanson	10,560	2,450	2,497	1,126	362	23.2%	23.6%	10.7%	3.4%	0.7%	0.7%	0.30%	0.1%	2.8%	
Kingston	13,210	3,447	2,897	1,339	852	26.1%	21.9%	10.1%	6.4%	0.9%	0.8%	0.36%	0.2%	3.5%	
Pembroke	18,230	4,635	3,780	2,093	788	25.4%	20.7%	11.5%	4.2%	1.2%	1.0%	0.56%	0.2%	4.9%	
Plymouth	58,695	12,334	16,102	5,400	3,629	21.0%	27.4%	9.2%	6.2%	3.3%	4.3%	1.45%	1.0%	15.7%	
Plymouth	2,912	619	697	364	127	21.3%	23.9%	12.5%	4.4%	0.2%	0.2%	0.10%	0.0%	0.8%	
Stoughton	28,338	6,277	7,230	3,495	2,325	22.2%	25.5%	12.3%	8.2%	1.7%	1.9%	0.94%	0.6%	7.6%	
West Bridgewater	7,117	1,684	1,851	621	250	23.7%	26.0%	8.7%	3.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.17%	0.1%	1.9%	
Whitman	14,864	3,830	2,697	1,654	1,019	25.8%	18.1%	11.1%	6.9%	1.0%	0.7%	0.44%	0.3%	4.0%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>373,205</b>	<b>93,755</b>	<b>81,543</b>	<b>40,369</b>	<b>31,666</b>										
<b>% of Regional Population</b>		<b>25.1%</b>	<b>21.8%</b>	<b>10.8%</b>	<b>8.5%</b>										



**Study Area Communities**  
Figure 1

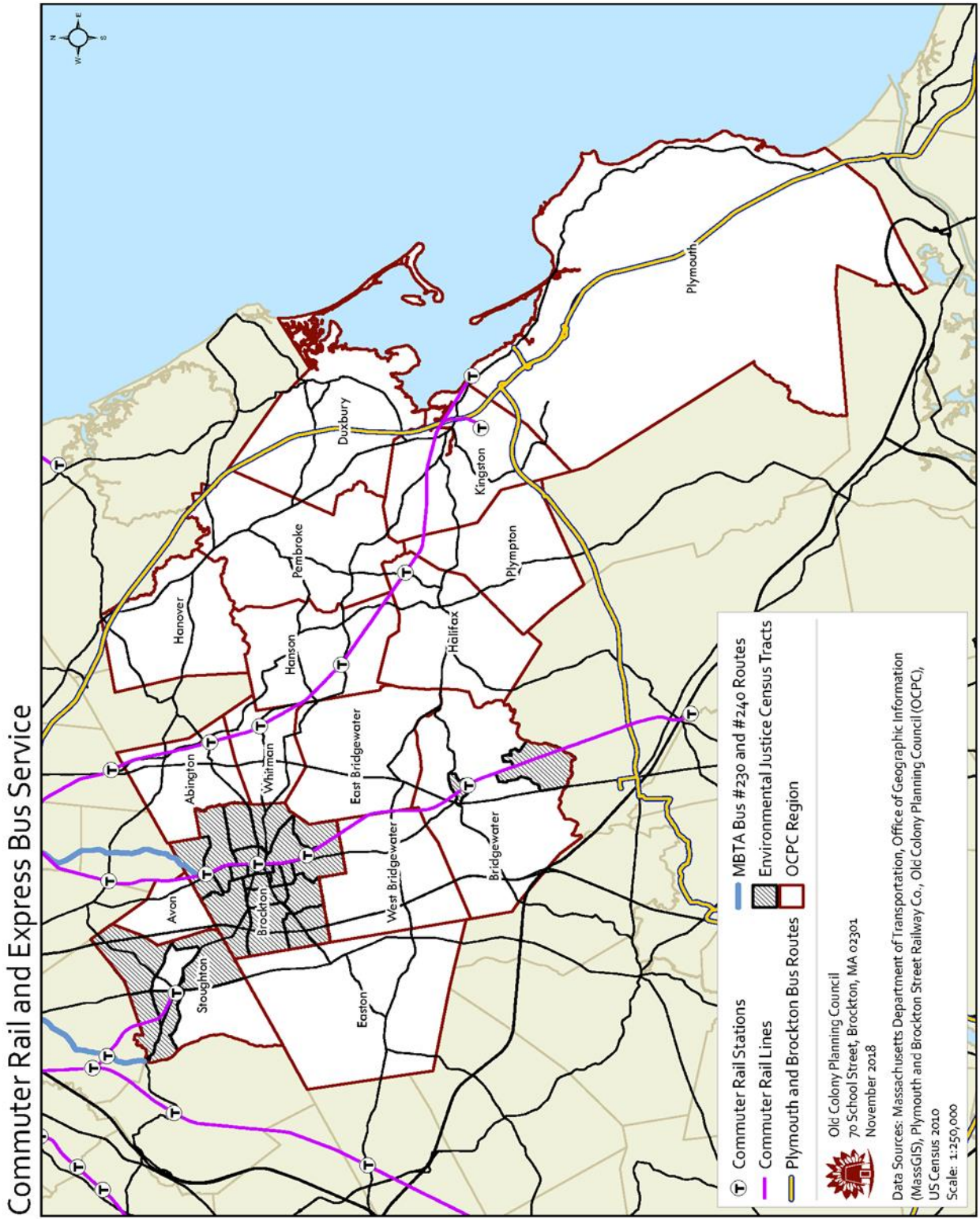


**Fixed Route and Paratransit Service Coverage**  
 Figure 2

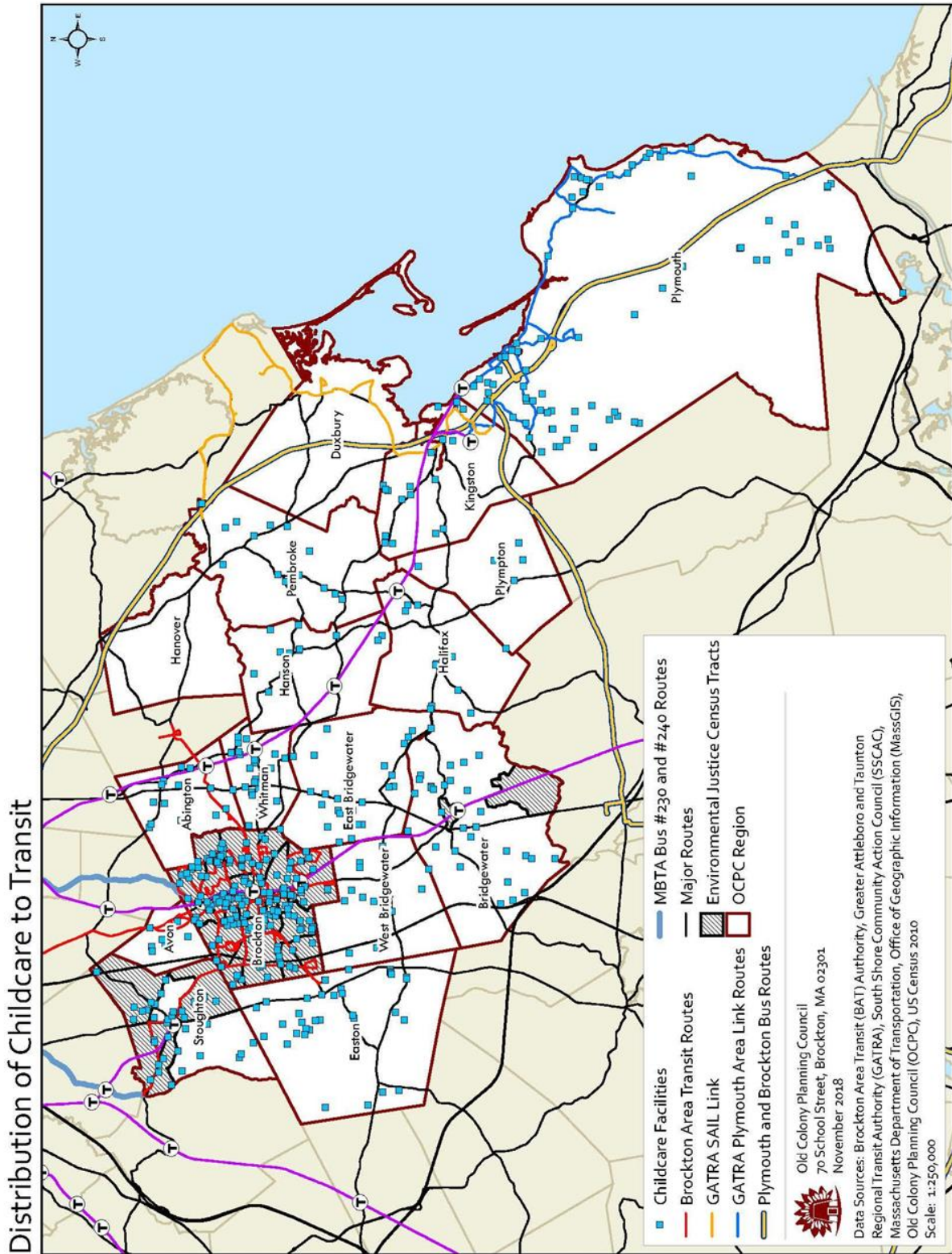




**Commuter Rail and Express Bus Service**  
 Figure 3

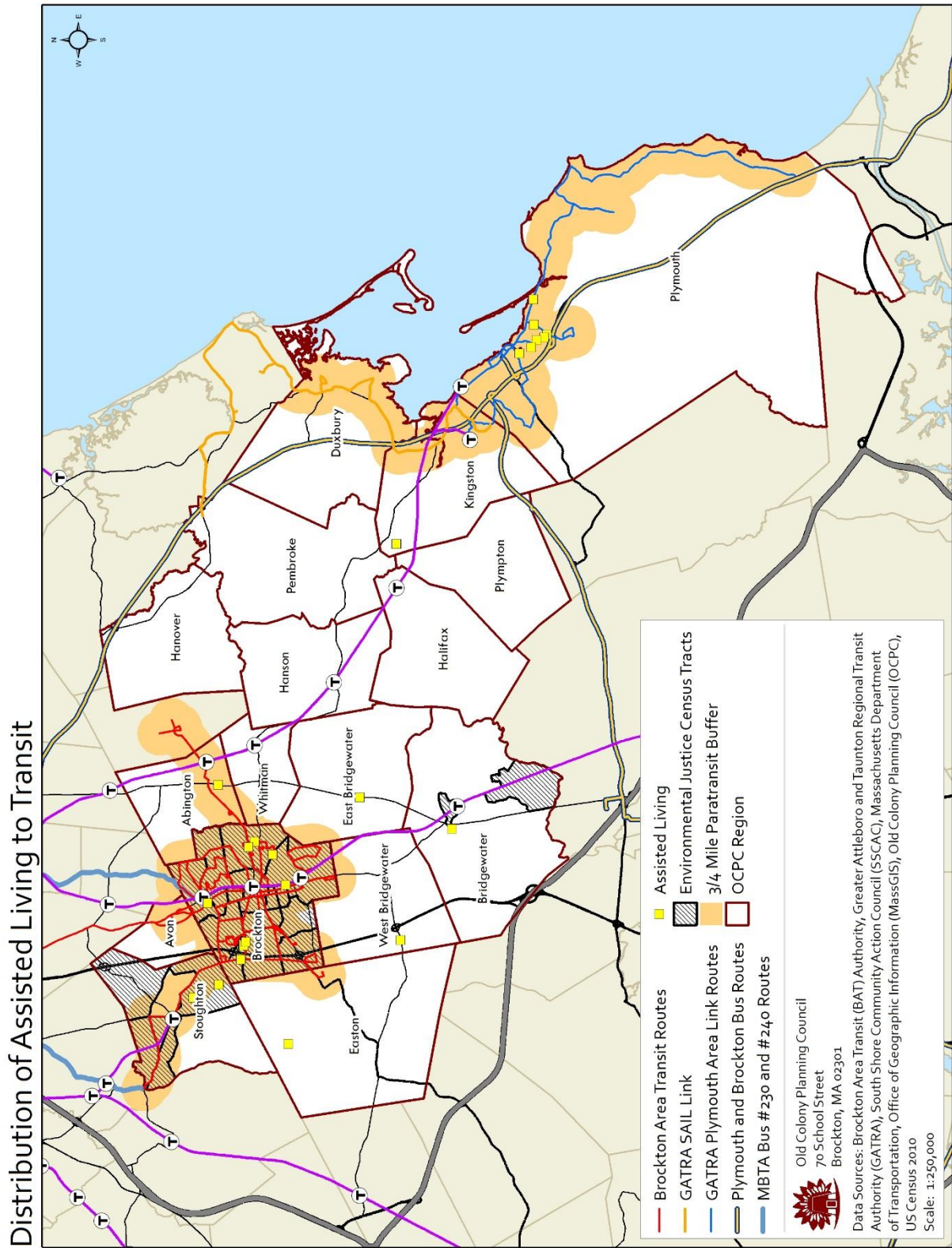


**Distribution of Childcare to Transit**  
 Figure 4

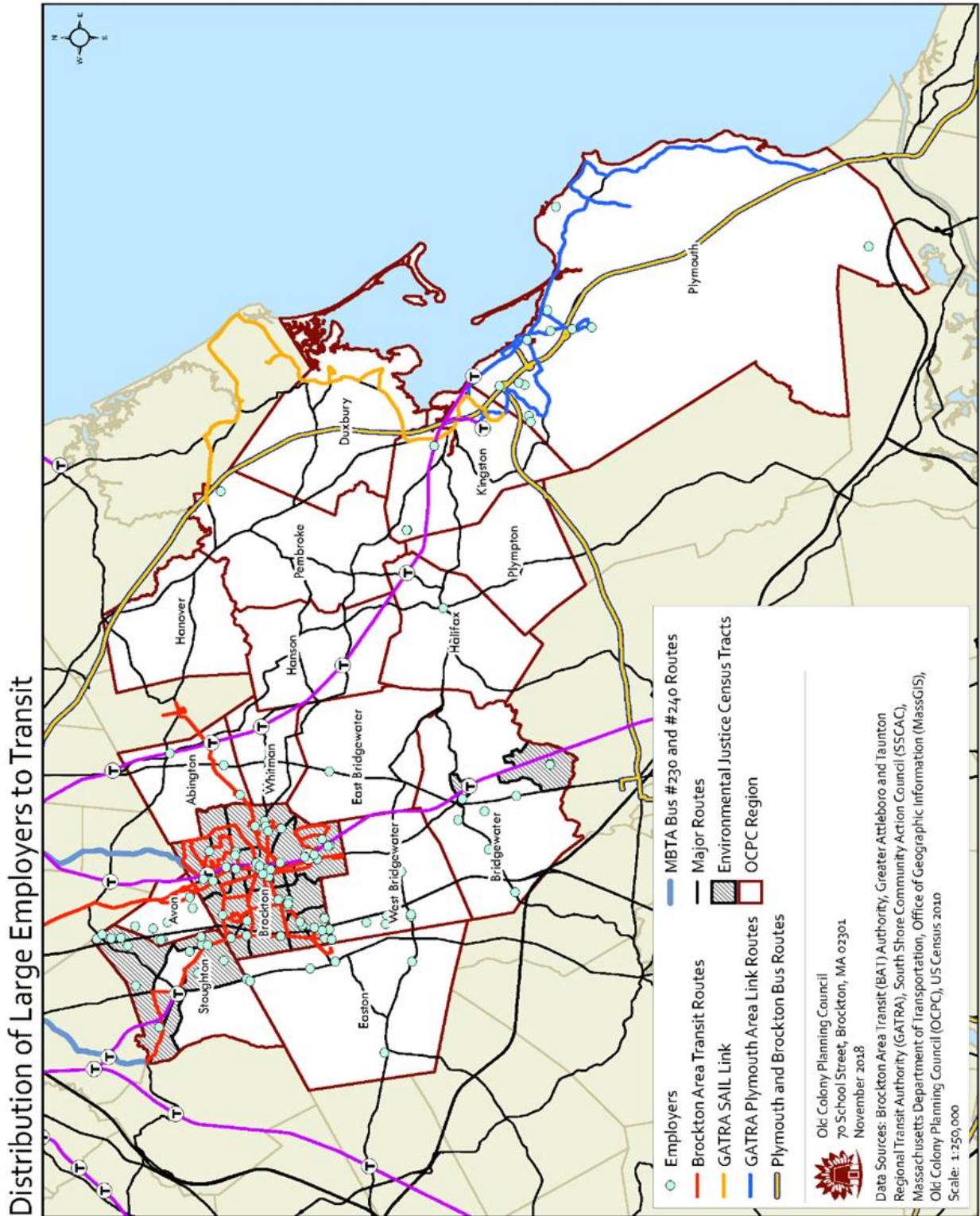




**Distribution of Assisted Living Facilities to Paratransit**  
 Figure 5

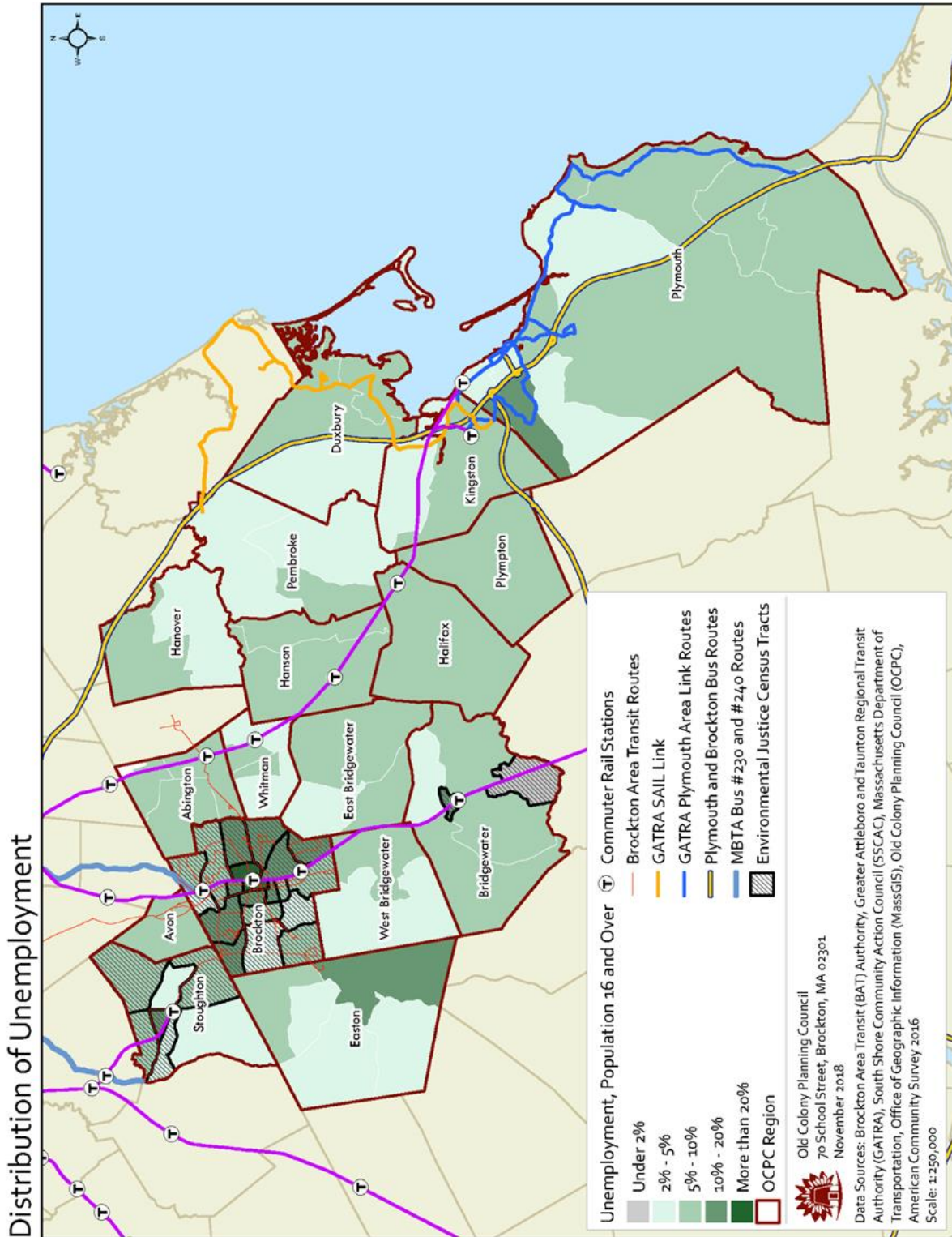


**Distribution of Employers with 50+ Employees to Transit**  
 Figure 6

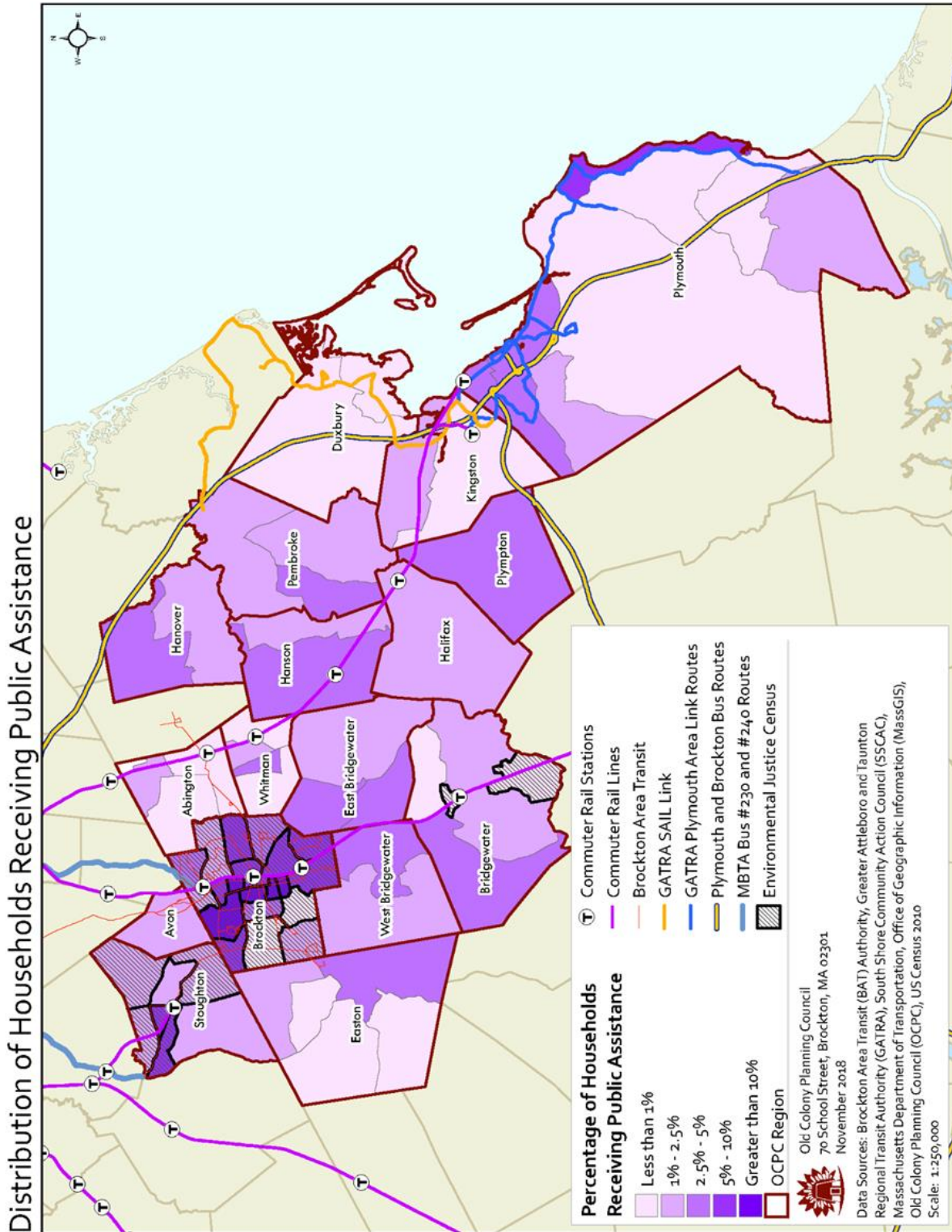




**Distribution of Unemployment**  
Figure 7

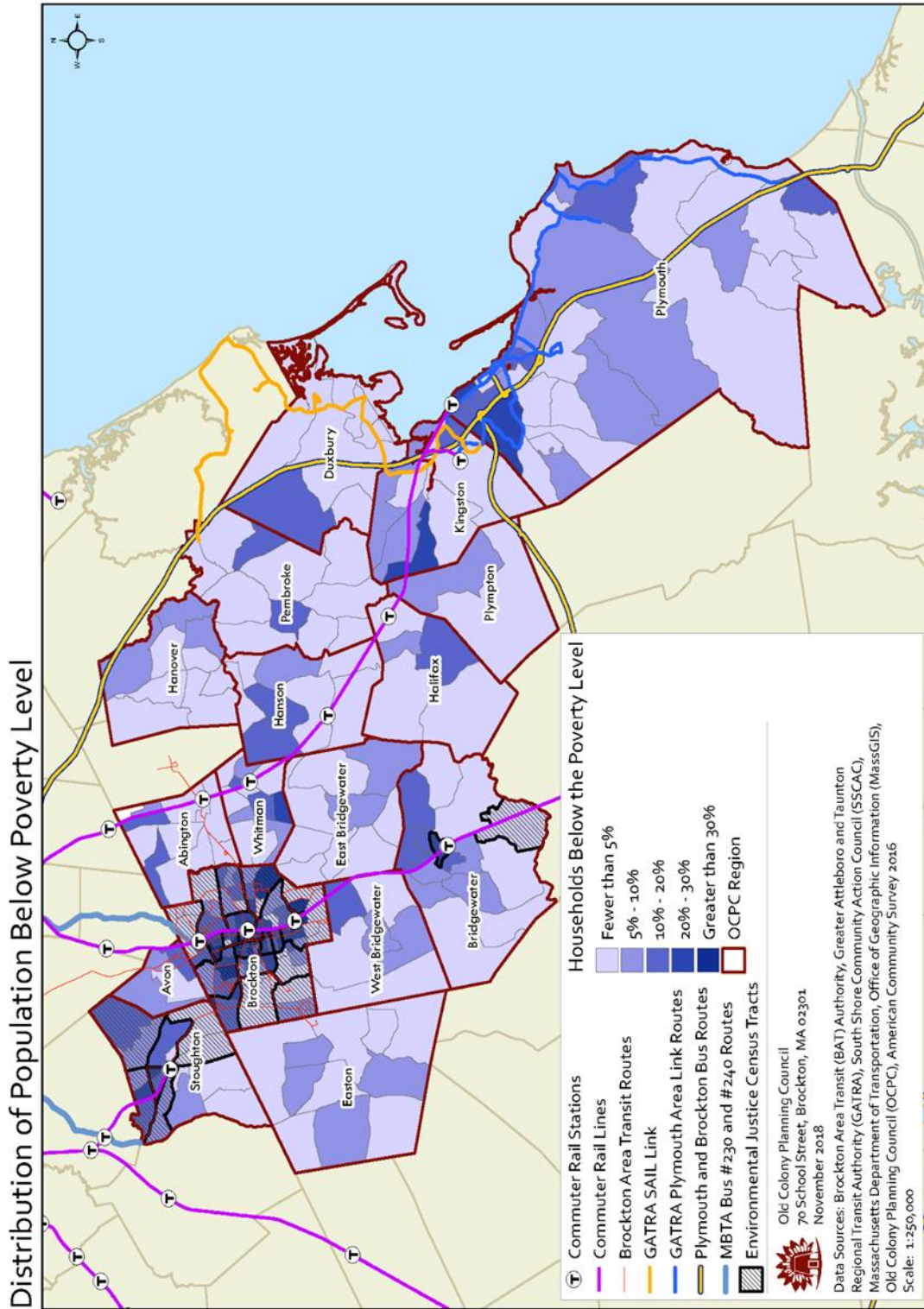


**Distribution of Households on Public Assistance**  
 Figure 8

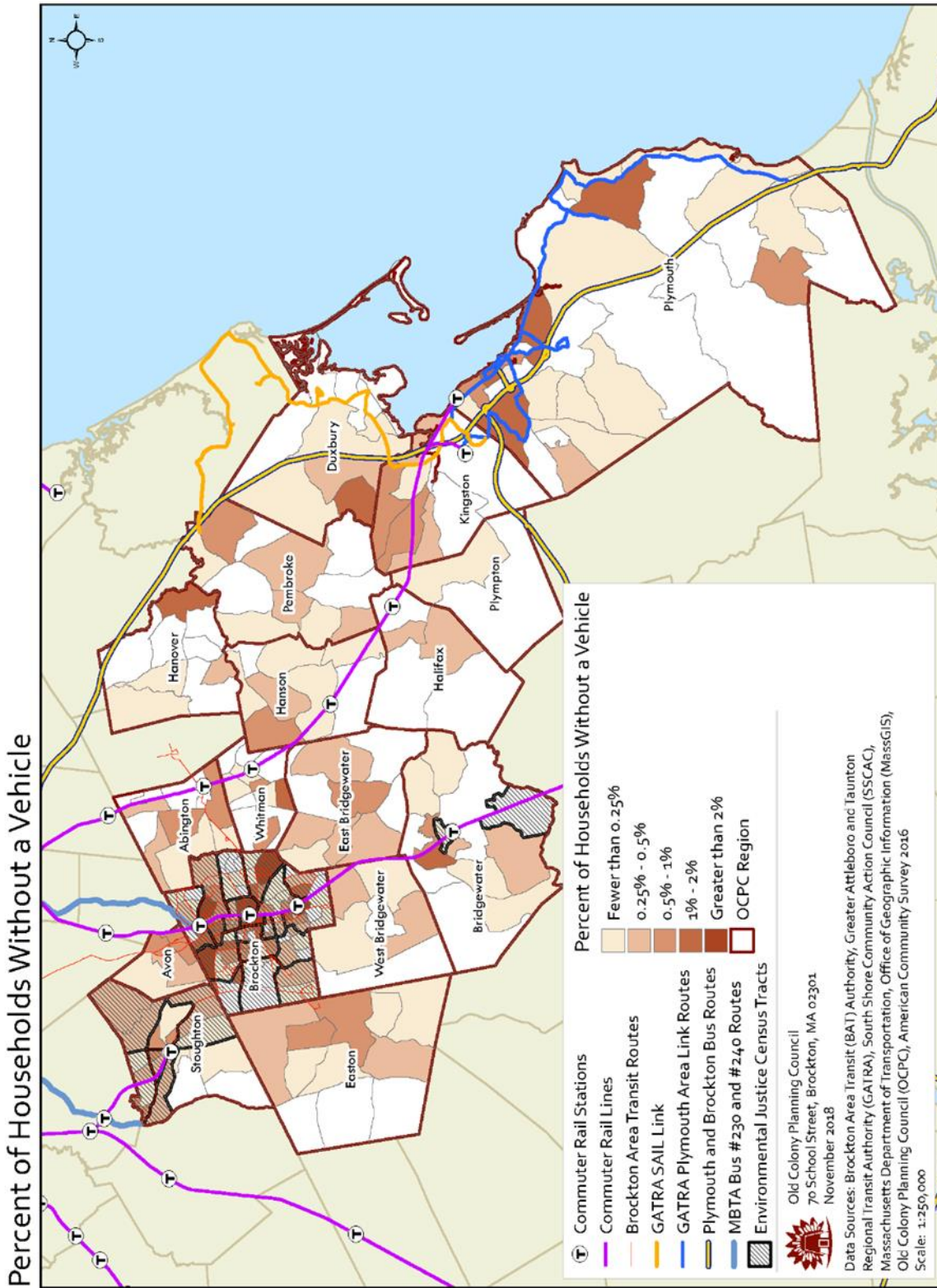




**Distribution of Population Below Poverty Level**  
Figure 9

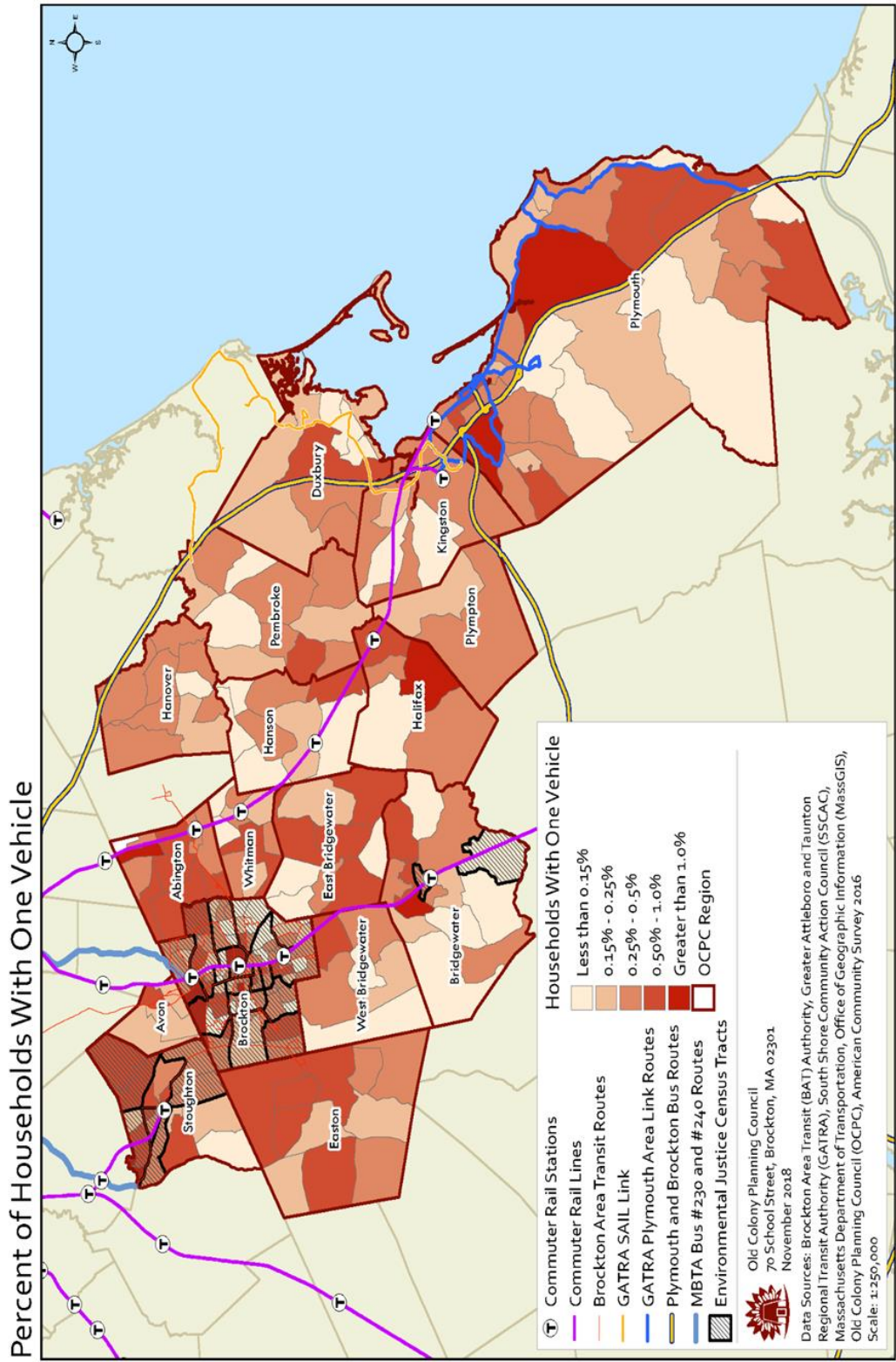


**Census 2010 ~ Percent of Households Without a Car**  
 Figure 10

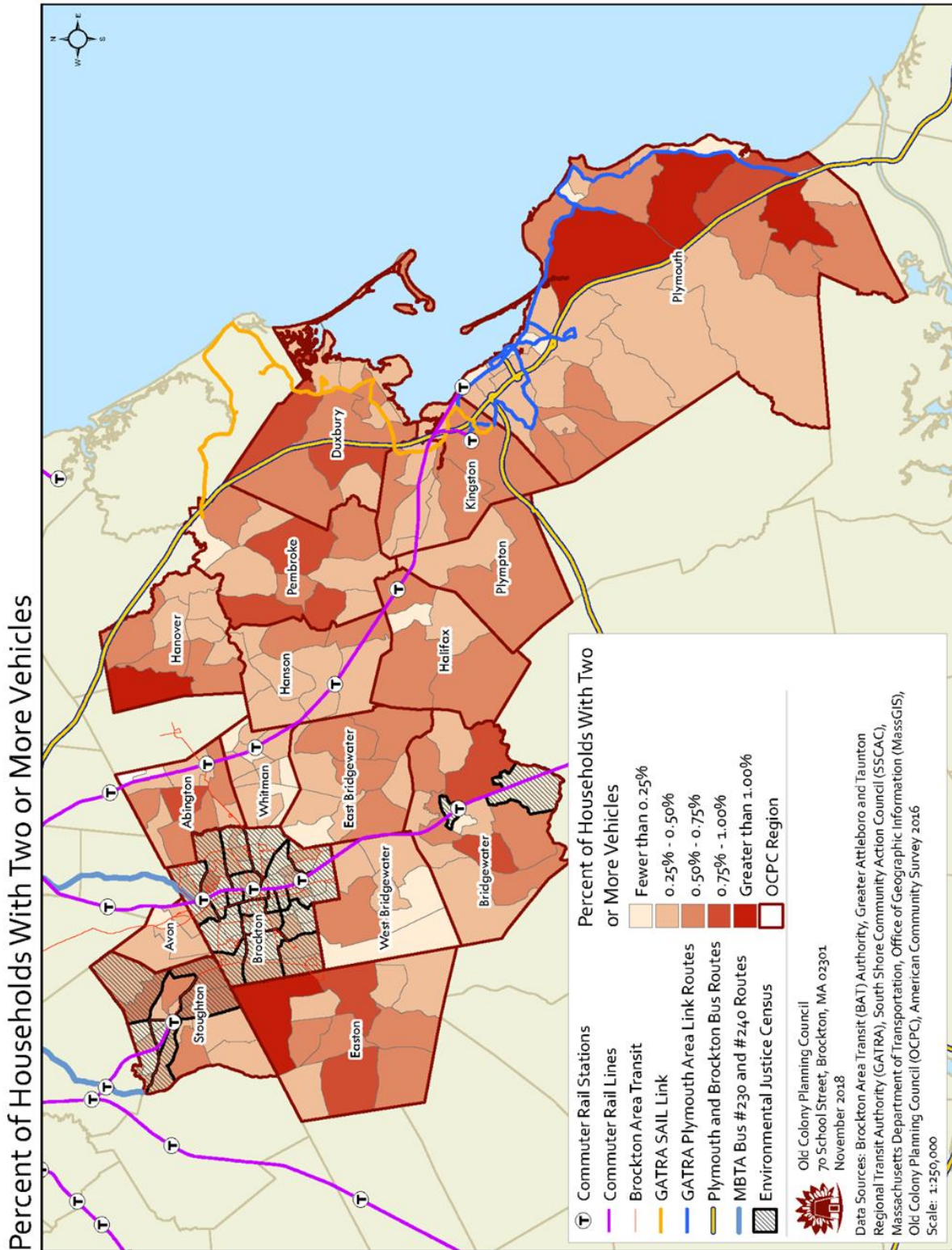




**Census 2010 ~ Percent of Households With One Vehicle**  
 Figure 11



**Census 2010 ~ Percent of Households With Two or More Vehicles**  
 Figure 12



## **2.0 Assessment of Current Transportation Providers and Needs**

Both public and private carriers provide human service transportation in the Region. Some agencies focus their services on certain demographics of the population where others offer services to a less defined population, need, or service area. Transportation can be in multiple forms from fixed-route bus services to door-to-door van service and even partnership with ride hailing smartphone app providers.

Fixed-route service operates in many communities in the Old Colony Region. The Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT) services the City of Brockton and the adjacent communities of Abington, Avon, Bridgewater, Easton, and Stoughton with fixed-route service. BAT services the Town of Rockland with Flex-route service. Eleven different communities receive some form of paratransit service through a particular program or requirement such as ADA paratransit service from BAT. The fixed-route service is radial, operating on what is called a “Pulse” style transfer system, with most routes beginning and ending at the BAT Intermodal Centre located in Downtown Brockton. Only two fixed-route services in the BAT system do not operate on the pulse style system, those two routes are the 13-Mini Maller and the Rockland Flex Route. The Rockland Flex Route service is unique among BAT’s other fixed-route service because it deviates from its designated route to pick up passengers by request and services the Town of Rockland, which is outside the Old Colony Region. The Old Colony Planning Council has identified the Rockland Flex Route service as “lifeline service”, as it is the only public transportation service in the Town of Rockland and serves the most transit-dependent population in this community.

BAT offers paratransit service through both its DIAL-A-BAT and required American with Disability Act (ADA) service, which complements its fixed-route service. BAT works with member communities’ Councils on Aging in its service area and with various private operators to coordinate transportation services. The other public transportation services operating in the region are the Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA) and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA).

In the Old Colony region, GATRA operates the Plymouth Area Link (PAL), which in actuality is a constitution of four different routes that operate within the Town of Plymouth. The four routes that make up the PAL service are the Mayflower Link, Freedom Link, Liberty Link and the Manomet/Cedarville Deviated Link. The Mayflower Link provides service within the Town of Plymouth between Plymouth Center and the Manomet neighborhood. The Freedom Link, which is a circular route operating out of Plymouth Center, services the West Plymouth Plaza, the Kingston MBTA Station, and other industrial parks and commercial retail locations. The last two lines that makeup PAL are the Liberty Link and the Manomet/Cedarville Deviated Link that operates between Manomet Stop and Shop and Cedarville Brunos Corner. GATRA operates the PAL service on a hub and spoke configuration via a pulse style transfer system, which facilitates the ease of transferring between the different routes. TransDev is GATRA’s private operator of the PAL fixed route and its accompanying paratransit service in the PAL service area and for the Plymouth Council on Aging. In addition to PAL service, GATRA also operates the Pembroke Shuttle, which provides service from the Town of Pembroke to the Hanson MBTA Commuter Rail

Station, and the Boston Hospital Bus, which provides transportation service from Duxbury, Kingston, Pembroke, and North Plymouth to Boston Hospitals and the Greater South Shore Hospital Area.

The MBTA operates three local bus routes along with Commuter Rail and ADA paratransit service in the Old Colony region. The three bus routes operating in the region are the 240 Avon Square – Ashmont, which has limited service between the Town of Avon and the Ashmont Red Line Station in Boston. Then there is the MBTA 238 Holbrook/Randolph Commuter Rail Station - Quincy Center bus, and the 230 Montello Commuter Rail Station - Quincy Center fixed-route service. The MBTA Commuter Rail services eleven railway station in the region and paratransit ADA service operated along the corridors it's bus service operates.

BAT and GATRA services are not interlined and a gap does exist between the two fixed-route services. Examples of the gaps in service have been identified in previous studies and have been investigated through surveys and interactions with the public. These studies focused on connecting transit services through medical centers, schools, shopping areas, and commuter rail station, utilizing trip generators to make the service cost-effective.

Beyond public transportation services, there is a mixture of availability and frequency of other service providers utilizing vans, town cars, and other small vehicles. For example, many of the region's Councils on Aging (COA) have their own vehicles with which they provide service to their communities. These vehicles may be driven by a volunteer or a paid driver from the COA staff, and the vehicles may be a minibus, a van that is lift-equipped or a non-lift equipped vehicle. The available transportation service depends on the community. Some communities can provide services to their seniors and people with disabilities; others struggle to provide basic transportation services to their residents.

In addition to the Councils on Aging, there are private companies that offer a mixture of services. Two of the larger private carriers in the region are Bill's Taxi/A&A Metro and Habilitation. Both companies offer a mixture of services from contract work with local agencies, such as public schools, and Councils On Aging. These private carriers also make available their services to private citizens as well. Both companies have vans that are lift-equipped and are the only taxi services in the region with the ability to service wheelchair dependent customers.

To facilitate understanding, the following section provides a brief description of some of the major transportation services available in the region. The companies and services described are by no means an exhaustive list of the services available in the region.

## **Brockton Area Transit (BAT)**

### Summary of services

BAT offers fixed-route and paratransit services. The fixed-route service radially covers Brockton along with portions of Abington, Avon, Bridgewater, Easton, Rockland, and Stoughton. BAT provides the required ADA service within the ¾-mile area of the fixed-route corridors via its paratransit service known as DIAL-A-BAT within those communities serviced with fixed-route service. BAT provides demand response and contract services to 11 communities in the transit authority's service area as well.

### Examples of gaps in services

The DIAL-A-BAT covers the entire city of Brockton, as well as limited service to the Towns of Abington, Avon, Bridgewater, Easton, East Bridgewater, West Bridgewater, Whitman, and Stoughton. There continues to be a need for public transit beyond the current service area, specifically in regards to DIAL-A-BAT service. BAT continuously looks for ways it can increase service to underserved populations, through extended hours of operation, and development of new routes while continuing running service that is financially responsible. Capital purchases, including technology, and partnerships with ride-hailing services can help increase BAT's ability to be efficient with resources and provide better transportation service as well. Communities, where there are residents looking for the establishment of public transit service or see an expansion of service, can join the Authority and pay the assessment to receive BAT service and those looking for more service might want to consider increasing their service assessment.

Additional gaps in service identified in reports such as the Potential Impacts of Ride-Hailing on the Brockton Area Transit Authority, including the Avon Industrial Park and a cluster of businesses in Rockland along Route 3, which has transit service potential via an extension of the Rockland Flex Route for workforce transportation purposes. Besides gaps in service to specific destinations, service needs mentioned in the report were for expanded service hours and expansion of Dial-A-BAT service.

A report released by the Commonwealth, A Vision for the Future of Massachusetts' Regional Transit Authorities, calls for some improvements to be implemented, policy developments or changes, and other recommendations to enhance the user experience of those utilizing RTAs like BAT. One such recommendation is that RTAs like BAT should seek to improve coordination between partner transit agencies that share the same operating area to provide a seamless transit riding experience. Additionally, the document suggests the RTAs to look towards solutions such as bicycle share, bicycle transportation infrastructure, the use of paratransit vehicles, and working with Ride Hail App services to address the last mile gap some transit user's experience.



## **Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Authority (GATRA)**

### Summary of service

GATRA is a regional transit authority that oversees a number of fixed-route bus service and its accompanying ADA paratransit service in the Old Colony region. Towns benefiting from GATRA service in the Old Colony region are the Towns of Duxbury, Hanover, Hanson, Kington, Pembroke, and the Town of Plymouth. GATRA provides service to these communities via four transit services; those would be Seaside Area Inter-Link (SAIL), the Plymouth Area Link (PAL), the Pembroke shuttle, and the Wareham-Plymouth Link. The SAIL operates between the communities of Marshfield and Kingston. The PAL route, which is actually four-routes: Freedom Link, Liberty Link, Manomet/Cedarville Deviated Link, and the Mayflower Link, provides fixed-route service within the Town of Plymouth. The Wareham-Plymouth Link provides service between the communities of Wareham and Plymouth Monday through Friday. GATRA contracts with TransDev to operate both their fixed route and paratransit services. GATRA also offers other services such as a travel-training program to help acclimate new riders to the transportation service.

### Examples of gaps in service

The PAL service in Plymouth and Kingston covers a large area, with limited frequency, making it challenging for riders to utilize public transportation for commuting to work, running errands, and medical appointments. Due to a large amount of area covered by the fixed-route service, paratransit service is challenged with covering the service area in the manner deemed required by ADA. Plymouth is, in terms of land area, the largest municipality in the Commonwealth, meaning that transportation service in this community, in particular, is a challenge because of the extensive distance just for trips in town. The southern portions of the Town of Plymouth continue to be more challenging than the northern part to service due to the low density of residents, the vastness of area to serve, and the lack of funding to meet the growing demand for transportation services in this area due to housing growth.

## **South Shore Community Action Council (SSCAC)**

### Summary of services

South Shore Community Action Council is a private non-profit agency that provides essential services to the area, one of which is transportation service to communities in and out of the Old Colony Region. SSCAC provides transportation to the elderly, disabled, and low-income participants in SSCAC programs and other state and federal programs. SSCAC fills in the gaps in service for people that often have no other mode of available transportation. SSCAC takes people to adult day health programs, dialysis, doctor and dental visits, non-emergency hospital trips, shopping trips, social/recreational events, employment/welfare to work programs, educational facilities, and service to Metro Boston hospitals. SSCAC has the ability as a private company to service individuals beyond the community boundaries that often are found with other forms of public transportation. SSCAC completes approximately 65,000 trips annually.



## Examples of gaps in services

SSCAC serves a variety of clients that often have no other means of transportation. SSCAC struggles with escalating operating costs like other transportation companies. There are more citizens in need of transportation services than SSCAC can service. If additional operational support for the service could be found, this might change this paradigm.

## **Plymouth & Brockton Street Railway Company**

### Summary of services

Plymouth and Brockton (P&B) is a private company offering fixed route long-distance service. The routes generally run north-south with trips leaving from Plymouth and Kingston in the Old Colony region with terminus locations in Downtown Boston and Logan Airport. The service predominantly provides commuter trips and transport to Logan Airport. P&B also runs trips south through Cape Cod. Trips from Plymouth heading north towards Boston begin as early as 3:40 AM, and the last trip leaving Boston traveling south towards Plymouth is at 11:40 PM. Plymouth and Brockton coaches are wheelchair accessible, however, the organization asks passengers using a wheelchair to call the day before they ride for smoother passenger experience. On average, Plymouth & Brockton carries about 24,000 people from the region to points in Boston.

### Examples of gaps in service

Plymouth and Brockton are currently at capacity on their peak rush hour service trips. Additional trips to Boston would improve service for the people commuting to Boston and would ease the crush on vehicle trips. P&B continues to express interest in filling an intercity need, with a possibility of connecting the different RTAs. For example, intercity bus service could be established between Plymouth and Brockton, or Brockton and Taunton, Taunton and Plymouth, and then the passenger would either end their destination or connect to a local transportation service. Much like many transportation providers in the Commonwealth, P&B is having trouble recruiting and retaining bus operators, which sometimes results in missed runs or the ability to put additional buses on the road to accommodate ridership demand.

## **Habilitation Assistance Corporation**

### Summary of services

Habilitation transportation branch, Access Express, is a private company that provides a variety of services. Services include transportation to adult day care programs, medical appointments, either local or Boston, shopping trips, day habilitation programs, charter trips, paratransit contract for portions of the GATRA and Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority area, and privately scheduled trips.

Services are provided by contracted agreement or by individual arrangement for transportation. The company also offers charter trips with mini-buses; open to anyone who can pay for the services. Access Express provides approximately 2,000 rides a week across its spectrum of transportation programs and needs. The company utilizes a mixture of vehicles consisting mostly of wheelchair lift-equipped vans but is complemented with 15 passenger vans, sedans, and minibuses. The company is licensed both as a taxi service and as a charter service.

#### Examples of gaps in service

Habilitation Assistance Corporation is at an advantage of being a private company. They receive no operational or capital assistance from the federal or state government. The advantage is that they can choose the services they provide and the contracts that they accept, without concerns of state and federal regulations that are associated with financial assistance. This enables Habilitation to efficiently manage their operational costs because they can modify their services quickly without waiting for a grant opportunity or conducting public hearings to discuss the changes.

### **Taxi Companies**

#### Summary of services

There are many taxi companies in the region with services open to anyone with the ability to pay with no trip restriction. Some of the taxi companies also do contract work with different services in the region.

Only one taxi company in the region, Bills Taxi/A&A Metro Transportation in Bridgewater, is equipped to provide service to individuals in wheelchairs or needing a lift-assisted entry van. Bill's Taxi is unique in that it provides service through contracts to local universities for special needs transportation and paratransit bus service to the Brockton Area Transit Authority in the Old Colony region.

#### Examples of gaps in service

Similar to other private companies, taxi companies do not receive operational assistance that requires them to run service under prescribed parameters. As a private business, they can adjust swiftly to market conditions, such as higher vehicle fuel costs or increased health care for employees and pass those costs on to their customers. The challenge is that many of these companies do not purchase wheelchair accessible vans because of the additional expense and the lack of demand. Ride-Hailing Apps like Uber and Lyft have also been placing considerable pressure on Taxicab companies in recent years, due to these Ride-Hailing Apps subsidizing passenger trips to capture market share and the loss of drivers who have decided to become Ride Hail Apps drivers themselves. Because of the rise of Ride Hail Apps services, many Taxicab companies have gone out of business in the Old Colony Region.

## **Commuter Shuttles**

### Summary of services

Besides Plymouth and Brockton, there is another commuter shuttle service in the region. Bloom Bus Lines, Inc. provides commuter bus service to Boston, with pickups starting in Fall River and at regional pick up locations beginning at the park and ride parking lot at Route 106 and Route 24 in West Bridgewater.

### Examples of gaps in service

Commuter services are great opportunities to connect urban centers. The challenge is that there are often no other public transportation services available to the park and ride lots that the carriers serve, making intermodal connections difficult. Most commuter bus services, similar to many commuter rail services, pick up from a park and ride lot, limiting the availability of the transportation services to those with a car. Commuter shuttle fares can also be cost-prohibitive for some potential riders as fares tend to be far greater than local public transit fares. Investigating ways to increase intermodal connections and fare cost offsets for those with modest means would increase the availability and need for this type of service.

## **Councils on Aging**

### Summary of services

The local Councils on Aging (COA) offer a variety of services depending on the need and the financial support of that particular community. Many COAs receive vehicles through the Mobility Assistance Program (MAP) and BAT often assists COAs in the region with vehicle procurement and other transportation-related issues. COAs also receive 5310 funds to provide senior transportation services, support volunteer driver programs, allow for the purchase of technology to support senior transportation services, and operation of mobility management programs and travel training. A summary of services offered by the local COAs and other public transportation services can be found in Table 3.

### Example of gaps in services

The Councils on Aging have some of the most direct access to the elderly and disabled population in a community. They promote a variety of programs to enhance the quality of life, but the challenge usually comes down to money for the purchase, operation, and maintenance of vehicles. This, in turn, limits the more localized connection and puts more pressure on other transportation resources to provide the services for those in need. Additionally, with continued economic pressures, many COA's transportation programs are the first to receive a reduction in funding when communities' have to reconcile their annual budgets. Finding ways to maintain transportation to these senior populations should be a consideration in any transportation program.

## **Old Colony Area Agency on Aging**

### Summary of services

The Old Colony Area Agency on Aging is responsible for the establishment of a comprehensive, coordinated system of community-based supportive services and nutrition services for the elders in our region. To achieve this goal, the Old Colony – AAA's administers grant funding authorized under the Older Americans Act of 1965. This funding is allocated through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs. One of the many services that the Area Agency on Aging provides is transportation for seniors with volunteer drivers.

### Example of gaps in services

The Area Agency on Aging serves 23 communities in southeastern Massachusetts. By serving such a large area, the Agency can provide transportation services beyond community and regional boundaries. According to Old Colony – AAA most recent elder's, 2016 Elder Needs Assessment Report, transportation continues to be the second greatest need mentioned in a survey field by the study. In particular, according to study findings, Elders stated they need more door to door transportation service.

Table 3

Councils on Aging	Public Transit Services Providers	Private Transportation Providers	Bliss Taxi/ABA Metro	SSCAC	Robbins Taxi	American Cancer Society	Community Access	Habitatation Assistance (Access Express)	First Class Care Transit Solution	Bloom Bus	Plymouth & Brockton	Whaling City Transit	Classic Limo	Loyal Transportation	Weymouth Town Taxi/Brantree Blue Cab
Abington															
Avon															
Bridgewater															
Brockton															
Duxbury															
East Bridgewater															
Easton															
Halifax															
Hanover															
Hanson															
Kingston															
Pembroke															
Plymouth															
Plymouth															
Stoughton															
West Bridgewater															
Whitman															

### **3.0 Unmet Service Needs**

Despite the national trend of falling public transit ridership in the Commonwealth and the nation overall, there is still a growing need for transportation service among those that are transit-dependent. As Baby Boomers continue to retire, it is expected their demand for more transportation services will increase as well. The challenge is providing this service at a reasonable cost to the community. Door-to-door service tends to be expensive, which is why other transit solutions, such as fixed-route or flex-route services along with public-private partnerships are solutions that should be explored.

#### **Service Gaps and Regional Needs**

Through the utilization of in person interviews with human service organizations, municipal governments, and Commonwealth entities, coupled with an online survey fielded to members of the community, a number of service gaps and regional needs have been identified.

##### *Expanded public transportation service area*

Public transportation coverage can be robust in some areas of the Old Colony region and other parts have limited service or none at all. The lack of public transportation service can make it hard for those without automobiles or access to one to take care of personal needs, seek or maintain gainful employment, travel to medical appointment, and participate in social activities. Establishing public transportation service in communities without it can have a meaningful impact for those without or limited transportation options.

##### *Expanded public transportation service hours*

Public transportation service hours can be a determining factor if a person will be able to utilize public transportation for their transportation needs. Service hours that do not start early enough or end too early, can make it challenging for an individual to use the public transit system for trips outside the usual workday and in some cases impossible for non-traditional work schedule or social activities that do not fall within the service schedule. Expanding service hours or making adjustments to the existing service day could enable individuals to take non-traditional work schedule employment or participate in social activities they might not otherwise be able to.

##### *More transportation options to areas with a concentration of employers*

Currently there are areas, such as the Avon Industrial Park, that have large concentrations of employers but do not have public transportation access. The establishment of transportation to these locations can open up employment opportunities and additional shopping and dining destinations.

### *Connect regional transit authorities to facilitate regional mobility*

Currently traveling throughout the Old Colony region can be challenging depending on your location and final destination. While there is a regional connection between the BAT and the MBTA, currently there is no regional connections between GATRA, which operates public transportation service in Plymouth and portions of the South Shore south of the City of Brockton. Making connections between those regional transit authorities not currently connected could facilitate access to jobs, medical trips, travel for social activities and a number of different trip purposes that might not be currently met.

### *More outreach needed on the availability of travel training in the region and on transportation services offered*

Information can be a critical piece in helping an individual decided if they should travel by one mode of transportation or another and for some, an introduction to the public transportation system and other transportation providers could make reluctant riders willing to try public transportation or alternative modes of transport.

### Examples of Service Gaps

Reaching out to segments of the population currently being underserved or maybe unaware of public transportation services available can be a challenge. Many of these groups have various needs and limited resources to achieve their organization's goals. The following organizations are a small example of the type of services needed in the area, but is by no means an exhaustive list.

#### Brockton Area ARC Inc.

Brockton Area ARC is an organization that provides a variety of services to individuals with disabilities. Examples of these services are job training, job placement, and traveling training. One challenge for the organization is getting people to their jobs. Many of the individuals they service cannot drive and are public transportation dependent, but often jobs are not where public transportation is available.

#### Councils on Aging

The Councils on Aging have some of the most direct access to the elderly and disabled population in a community. They promote a variety of programs to enhance the quality of life but the challenge usually comes down to available funding to purchase vehicles, to operate these vehicles, and to maintain them in a good state of repair. This limits the more localized connections and puts more pressure on other transportation resources to provide the service needed. Communities in the region that are members of BAT have expressed continued interest in expanding the paratransit service that already exists in their communities. Additionally, communities in the region that are not members of BAT could be eligible for paratransit services if they were to join the authority.

## MassHire

MassHire serves job seekers and employers in Abington, Avon, Bridgewater, Brockton, East Bridgewater, Easton, Hanson, Stoughton, West Bridgewater, and Whitman through its Greater Brockton Career Center and in the Town of Plymouth via its Plymouth Career Center location. MassHire offers a host of services for the job seeker, providing workshops, counseling, and resources to help clients find jobs. They also work with other similar agencies in the unemployment office, transition assistance, and the YouthWorks program. One cited challenge for those looking for employment is transportation to areas of concentrated employment areas and to other large employers that are not along or close to a public transit route.

## Veterans

Veterans are in need of transportation to Veteran's Affairs (VA) Hospitals and Clinics. The combination of continued military efforts and the reduction in overall death rates has increased the number of veterans returning home and utilizing VA services. Many of these former soldiers are transportation dependent and have trouble sometimes finding transportation to access the services available to them at the VA medical facilities and social activities.

Currently, shuttles run by the VA travel from Jamaica Plain and West Roxbury to the VA Hospital in Brockton. The VA Hospital is also serviced by BAT. Even with this service, a gap in services exists for the transportation dependent veterans who struggle to find transportation to the services they need. Veterans that are transportation dependent need to use the same services as the rest of the transportation dependent population, but some Veterans do not have access to public transportation in any form or have very limited access to public transportation or private forms of transportation services. Veterans need to be able to get to services, work, and social activities.

## **Strategies to Address Unmet Service Needs**

1. Protect and strengthen existing transportation services
  - a) Support, strengthen, and maintain the existing network of public and private transportation service providers (protecting the assets communities have invested in)
  - b) Continue to pursue funding strategies that leverages local, state, federal and private resources
  - c) Allocate available public and private resources to implement plan goals
  - d) Continue to provide vehicles to serve the transportation disadvantaged of the Old Colony Region



2. Improve intra-community transportation services

- a) Continue to seek and support the establishment of a system of intra-“community” transportation services that connect population centers with shuttles, vanpools, or ride hail app services that are not currently connected
- b) Continue to support and coordinate participation in ride sharing programs
- c) Continue to provide improved services to human services populations, the elderly and persons with disabilities, and those with low incomes
- d) Focus public transportation on access to social and medical services, jobs, shopping, education and recreation
- e) Encourage and support multi-modal options including pedestrian and bicycle usage
- f) Provide expanded fixed route service to employment centers, educational and residential developments, such as the Union Point/South Weymouth Naval Air Station Redevelopment, South Shore Health Hospital, Massasoit Community College, Bridgewater State University, the Avon industrial Park, and other large-scale job centers and housing developments

3. Increase accessibility to transportation services

- a) Continue to identify “underserved” areas (geography) and population (demographics)
- b) Continue to identify transportation-dependent populations geographically, such as those groups in South Plymouth
- c) Evaluate the effectiveness of existing transportation services
- d) Reengage in developing an ongoing public education program focused on commuting and transportation services
- e) Provide transportation options that are sustainable and environmentally sensitive
- f) Maintain public transportation services that are fast, fair, flexible and frequent
- g) Work with ride hail app services to provide transportation options in communities without or limited public transportation service

4. Coordinate Transportation Services

- a) Continue to seek to coordinate transportation services with surrounding communities outside of the region

- b) Continue to work with regional partners through the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) to connect and interline transportation services to increase regional mobility options

There are many ways to address the four strategies to provide services identified, as unmet service needs. The following are examples of the types of services that would facilitate achieving this strategy.

#### System Preservation

With ever-increasing budget constraints, it is key to keep the system in a good state of repair to avoid costly maintenance corrections later, which could result in transportation service issues. It is paramount to keep seeking funding for transit system preservation to make sure it can meet current and future demand.

#### Increased Fixed Route Service Hours

The region has varied frequency of fixed-route service hours. Increasing service hours makes fixed-route transportation a viable choice in transporting people to jobs, medical appointments, and social engagements.

#### Continue Accessibility Enhancement

Continue to invest in accessibility enhancements such as curb cuts, sidewalks, information kiosks, travel training, signage, and shelters.

#### Increased Fixed Route Service Area

The region also has a varying degree of fixed-route coverage. Some communities are well served by fixed-route service and other areas are not at all. Addressing these concerns based on the population's needs will help transport people to medical appointments; places of employment, education facilities, and to areas for social engagement.

#### Same Day Service

Same day transportation services, especially those for individuals with disabilities, are available in the region, but limited in their availability and sometimes not at all on certain days, for certain individuals, and in some locations. The ability to provide same day service gives users that need the accessible service increased flexibility in planning their transportation to work, medical appointments, and spur of the moment trips. These type of trips are prime candidates for the use of ride-hail app partnerships and could be the means in which they are met.

#### Increased Paratransit Services Hours

There is always a need for more and longer service hours. As such, it is a challenge to develop a schedule around limited hours of service. Partnerships with private transportation providers and ride-hail app services could fill gaps in service hours for Paratransit services.

### Increased Paratransit Service Area

Much like increasing services hours, increasing the service area gives patrons of Paratransit service a greater ability to access the services they need.

### Expanding of Volunteer Driver Programs

The continued expansion of the volunteer driver programs can be a low-cost way to meet the transportation needs of community members. Coordination of volunteers is still the biggest challenge.

### Continuation of Rider Education Programs

Many individuals new to transit often do not take advantage of programs simply because they are unaware of the services. The continued education of riders about public transportation services can help them become more comfortable with the service and to understand what is expected of them in the role of a customer. An expanded public outreach effort can help keep the public aware of the transportation options available.

### Increase the availability of lift accessible vehicles to the disabled population

One problem, in particular, is the availability of lift accessible vehicles within the private carrier sector. Most taxi companies do not have lift-equipped vans for services because the difference in the cost to purchase a lift vehicle versus a non-lift equipped sedans is more than what the company can expect to receive as a return on investment. With the shrinking availability of private transportation providers, such as taxicab companies, it is expected that this situation will stay the same or become worse as more taxicab companies go out of business due to ride-hailing services. Additionally, lift accessible ride-hail app rides are dependent on there being a lift-enabled vehicle in the area and some ride-hail apps do not offer a lift enabled vehicle option.

### Expand Paratransit buffer beyond ¾ of a mile

Expanding the Paratransit buffer offers more flexibility in destination choices to the individual dependent upon the service.

### Sunday Service

Expanding Sunday service offers more flexibility to those individuals' dependent on the service.

### Promote the use of transit by workers with non-traditional work schedules

Increasing the hours of availability of transit on late nights and weekends increases the accessibility to jobs for workers who work the non-traditional work shifts.

### Promotion of the use of transportation vouchers

Promotion of transit or travel utilizing ride-hail apps and taxis by appropriate agencies utilizing transportation vouchers for welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals can assist getting people to jobs and eventually out of these programs

### Employer Sponsored Transportation Solutions

Promote the use of employer-provided transportation including the transit pass benefit program. Transportation benefit programs can benefit both employers and employees.

### Expand Reverse Commute Options

Promotion of the use of bus, train, carpool, vans and other transfer services for reverse commute by which workers are transported to suburban job sites.

### Promote increased transit connections

Increased transit connections provide more flexibility and options, specifically to transit-dependent populations. It increases accessibility to jobs, medical, and social needs.

### Promote the use of new and developing transportation technology

The use of new and emerging transportation technology that increase the available of service to underserved or unserved areas should be encourage and pursued. Technology that increase the efficiency of current service and or gives them operational flexibility like Transportation Network Company (TNC) services should be reviewed to see if their implementation would result in improved customer experience and service availability.

## **4.0 Prioritization of Strategies & Evaluation**

### ***Prioritization***

1. Maintain current services, system preservation and transportation programs
2. Invest in programs for projects that improve community access and increase ridership
3. Provide incentives for projects that emphasize coordination, collaboration, and transit connectivity
4. Assure access, safety, and security for the individuals, groups, and stakeholders served.
5. Ensure vehicle provision to serve the transportation disadvantaged populations of the Old Colony Region

### ***Evaluation***

Projects are evaluated with the following quantitative methods in mind:

- **Maintain Existing Transportation Structure**

The addition of services may cause new services to struggle if the current transportation infrastructure is struggling to maintain a base level of service.

- **Increase Access to Jobs**

What is the potential or actual jobs accessed by transit services, including the auxiliary benefits to service? Would the individuals using the service have been able to access the job in another way?

- **Increase Quality of Services**

Does the proposal increase the quality of services, expanded hours, same day service, and passenger enhancements? Evaluate how and why the services are enhanced. What is the service target population and the expected use?

- **Increase Riders**

How many customers use the service? If the service is an additional offering to complement existing service, how many new riders will be added to the system, in addition to transit riders already utilizing the system?

- **Increase Connectivity to Communities with Improved Access**

Is the service improving intra-regional and inter-regional connectivity?