



The Bus Fleet

This section describes the existing bus fleet utilized by private, Massachusetts-based regional carriers on regional intercity and commuter routes operated within the state or of which a significant portion is operated within the state.

5.1 Fleet Make-Up and Vehicle Requirements

Each weekday, a total of 79 buses are required to operate all the private regional carrier routes, intercity and commuter, operating primarily within Massachusetts. An industry-standard 20% spare ratio implies that there are an additional 17 buses among the regional carriers undergoing some level of maintenance. This gives a total of 95 buses serving the current regional bus network in Massachusetts.

Assuming a useful life of 12 years for coach-type buses, the fleet should be replaced at an average rate of eight buses per year. Bus acquisitions would need to exceed this in order to provide enough vehicles to improve frequencies on existing routes or to initiate new routes.

A database compiled by the American Public Transit Association (APTA) in 2011 shows that over-the-road coaches purchased that year by public sector agencies cost approximately \$550,000 each, on average. In 2012 dollars, it would require an annual investment of \$4.4 million to replace eight buses per year.

The Commonwealth has received a grant from the FTA to purchase 30 over-the-road coaches for lease to private carriers operating regional bus service in the state. At current levels of service, this represents 3.75 years of coach purchases in a normal replacement cycle.

Table 31 lists the vehicle requirements for the regional intercity and commuter bus routes operating in Massachusetts that make multiple stops within Massachusetts. All of these services utilize full-size, over-the-road coaches, primarily 45 feet long, but some older, 40-foot models are still in service. None

Massachusetts Regional Bus Study

of these services utilizes vans, small-truck-chassis school-type buses, or two-axle transit buses. The majority of these buses are built by Motor Coach Industries (MCI), although some fleets also include buses built by Prevost, Van Hool, or Setra. All coaches include baggage compartments, individual reclining seats, and restrooms—all standard amenities on over-the-road coaches. Several carriers have now installed Wi-Fi equipment in their fleets. At least a portion of each carrier’s fleet is wheelchair-lift equipped, but a large number of non-lift-equipped buses remain in the fixed-route network fleet. The carriers’ fleets are described below. Not included in the table are routes on which the majority of passengers are traveling to locations outside of Massachusetts or routes that make only one stop in Massachusetts. The table does include carriers that are not based in Massachusetts.

Table 28
Present Peak Vehicle Requirement for Regional Intercity and Commuter Routes
with Multiple Stops in Massachusetts

Carrier/Route(s)	Buses Required
Bloom Taunton–Raynham–West Bridgewater–Boston	4
C & J Dover–Portsmouth, NH–Newburyport–Boston	14
Coach Company Plaistow, NH–Newburyport–Boston	2
Haverhill–Georgetown–Boxford–Topsfield–Peabody–Boston	5
DATTCO Fairhaven–New Bedford–Taunton–Boston	5
P&B Hyannis–Bourne–Plymouth–Rockland–Boston	16
Plymouth–Kingston–Rockland–Boston	5
Duxbury–Marshfield–Rockland–Boston	2
Hyannis–Provincetown Local	2 (1 off-season)

(Cont.)

**Table 31 (Cont.)
Present Peak Vehicle Requirement for Regional Intercity and Commuter Routes
with Multiple Stops in Massachusetts**

Carrier/Route(s)	Buses Required
Peter Pan (Prov. Div.)	
Woods Hole–Falmouth–Bourne–Wareham–Boston	4
Newport, RI–Fall River–Boston	3
Hyannis–New Bedford–Fall River–Providence	3
Albany, NY–Pittsfield–Lenox–Lee–Springfield–Worcester–Providence	2
New York City, NY–Lee–Lenox–Pittsfield–Williamstown	2
Peter Pan	
Springfield–Worcester–Framingham–Boston	5
Amherst–Boston (seasonal)	N/A
Springfield–Holyoke–Northampton–South Hadley–Amherst– Deerfield–Greenfield	3
Concord–Manchester–Nashua, NH–Lowell–Leominster–Worcester	1
Springfield–Agawam Six Flags (seasonal)	N/A
Yankee Line	
Acton–Concord–Boston	1
Total	79

5.1.1 Fleet Descriptions of Carriers Based in Massachusetts

Bloom

At the end of 2011, Bloom had five buses available for commuter service. Companies affiliated with Bloom own additional vehicles for charter and school contract work; these are not considered part of the commuter bus fleet. All five commuter buses are restroom and Wi-Fi equipped, but only one is wheelchair-lift equipped. Three were built in 1995 and are 45 feet long, and two were built in 1997 and are 40 feet long. The average fleet age was 15.2 years, and average miles per bus was just over 1 million.

Massachusetts Regional Bus Study

Coach Company

At the end of 2011, the Coach Company had 20 coaches. All are 45 feet long and are restroom equipped, but only two have wheelchair lifts. One is owned by MassDOT. The average fleet age was 10.2 years, and average miles per bus was 611,000.

DATTCO

DATTCO owns a large fleet of vehicles based in Massachusetts and Connecticut. The New Bedford–Boston service currently uses five 45-foot buses plus one spare. All buses are restroom and Wi-Fi equipped, and two have wheelchair lifts. One of these buses was built in 2001, two in 2002, and three in 2004; the average fleet age at the end of 2011 was 8.2 years, and the average miles per bus was 696,000.

Peter Pan

Peter Pan operates a large fleet throughout the Northeast. Bus assignments change often enough that a specific vehicle pool dedicated to Massachusetts or New England cannot be identified. In September 2011, there were 222 buses in the Peter Pan fleet for all of its divisions combined. Two-thirds of the fleet (149 buses) have wheelchair lifts. The fleet has 65 buses (29%) built before 2000; the oldest bus was built in 1994. Seven 1998 buses are owned by and leased from MassDOT, another three 1998 buses are leased from PVRTA, and one 2006 bus is leased from GATRA. The average fleet age was 8.8 years, and average miles per bus was 811,009.

Plymouth & Brockton

At the end of 2011, P&B had 46 coaches in its fleet. Fifteen are 40-foot coaches, 8 of which were built before 1994 and have two-stroke engines, which pollute more than modern diesel engines. The remainder are 45 feet long and have modern diesel engines. All 46 coaches are equipped for, but none currently support, Wi-Fi. Only 27 of these coaches have wheelchair lifts. Fifteen of these coaches are owned by an RTA or MassDOT, and 2 additional buses are co-owned by P&B and MassDOT. The average fleet age was 10.1 years, and average miles per bus was 599,777.

Yankee Line

Yankee Line has one 1998 MassDOT-owned vehicle in its fleet that is used on its commuter run. The vehicle has operated close to 350,000 miles since entering service.