



BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 22, 2015
TO: Michelle Ciccolo, Town of Hudson
FROM: Thomas J. Humphrey
RE: Town of Hudson Transit Technical Assistance Project

This memorandum summarizes the results of an analysis of potential new mass transit service for the town of Hudson, Massachusetts conducted by the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) staff. The study was performed as part of the Regional Transit Service Planning Technical Support Project, under which MPO staff provides technical assistance for planning small transportation projects in the Boston MPO region in response to requests from local officials or other parties.

1 BACKGROUND

In April 2011, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) completed a suburban mobility transit study for the Minuteman Advisory Group on Inter-local Coordination (MAGIC), a subregion of the 101 cities and towns in the MAPC region. In that study, MAPC examined the potential of each city and town in the MAGIC subregion to support new transit service for each of four different categories of trips:

1. Reverse commuting to the MAGIC city or town from the Boston area
2. Traditional commuting to the Boston area from the MAGIC city or town
3. Suburb-to-suburb commuting between points in the MAGIC subregion
4. Non-work travel within the MAGIC subregion

The study found very few locations within the MAGIC subregion where the screening criteria used by MAPC indicated that new transit service might be justified. However, census tracts on the west side of the town of Hudson (tracts 322200, 322300, and 322400) scored high on the potential for both suburb-to-suburb commuting and non-work travel. (Figure 1 shows the locations of all census tracts in Hudson and the boundaries of the block groups within those tracts.) Because of these findings, Hudson town planners requested assistance from MPO staff in examining the potential for new local transit service.

2 DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA AND MAJOR TRIP GENERATORS

Downtown Hudson is located 28 miles west of downtown Boston. There are no direct limited-access highway routes between Hudson and Boston. The fastest driving route from downtown Hudson to downtown Boston requires driving southwest on local roads to Route I-495 in Marlborough, south on that highway to the Massachusetts Turnpike in Hopkinton, and east on the Turnpike to Boston, resulting in a total travel distance of approximately 39 miles. At present, there is no fixed-route transit service in Hudson, for travel either within the town or to other cities and towns. The nearest commuter rail service is at Southborough Station on the MBTA Framingham/Worcester Line, which is approximately 9 miles from downtown Hudson on the shortest driving route and approximately 13 miles on the fastest route.

The study area consists of the three census tracts in Hudson that scored high on the potential for new transit service in the MAPC study. They include the entire town west of a line starting at the northern border of the city of Marlborough on Marlboro Street and running generally north on that street to Forest Street, west on Forest Street to the Assabet River, and northeast along the river to the border of Hudson with the town of Stow. This is a relatively small geographical area, but it includes the entire downtown Hudson business district. From the town center at Broad and Main Streets, roads radiate in several directions, but because of the irregular shape of the study area, the distances along these roads to the borders of the area vary. These distances are approximately 1.3 miles to the north, 1.8 miles to the northeast, 0.9 miles to the east, 1.8 miles to the southeast, 1.4 miles to the south, 2.4 miles to the southwest, 0.7 miles to the west, and 2.0 miles to the northwest.

Downtown Hudson is fairly compact; most of the businesses there are located along Main Street from approximately 0.3 miles west to 0.2 miles east of Broad Street. Three other major retail centers are located in the study area. Highland Commons on Coolidge Street (state Route 62) near the border of Berlin is a mall with several “big box” stores, including some still under construction in 2014. Numerous retail establishments are located along a 0.6-mile segment of Washington Street (state Route 85) between Glasson Street and Technology Drive. A Walmart Supercenter is located on Route 85 near the border of Marlborough.

Most of the non-retail employment in the study area is provided by small businesses, each with relatively few employees. The largest manufacturing concerns are Hudson Lock, producer of a large variety of locks and keys, on

Apsley Street, and Res Tech, a plastic injection molding company, on Tower Street.

Housing stock in Hudson consists mostly of single-family homes. These include condominium and mobile home developments, along with more typical suburban owner-occupied houses. There are only a few apartment complexes in the study area, and buildings in these complexes generally have no more than three stories.

3 HUDSON WORK-TRIP ORIGINS AND DESTINATIONS

Transit feasibility studies typically rely heavily on work-trip data from the US Census American Community Survey (ACS) or journey-to-work surveys that preceded the ACS. Much less information is available about non-work travel. However, past MPO staff surveys of passengers on suburban local bus systems funded by the MBTA show that the share of total trips accounted for by travel to or from work ranges from a minimum of about 25 percent to a maximum of about 60 percent, but that values between 35 and 50 percent are more typical.

For purposes of analysis, total travel on a system such as that being considered for Hudson can be divided into work and non-work trips. After estimating work-trip demand directly from journey-to-work data, non-work-trip demand can be estimated by applying a range of typical ratios to the work-trip estimates.

The ACS collects data each year from households in every US census tract. For transportation planning, ACS results from several years must be combined to get statistically significant town- or tract-level results. MAPC currently uses figures based on combined ACS samples from 2006 through 2010. These show that, despite the lack of heavy concentrations of employment in Hudson, the largest share of the 9,956 work trips originating in the town (23.3 percent) consisted of trips to locations also in Hudson. The second-largest share (13.8 percent) consisted of trips to Marlborough, which adjoins Hudson to the south. The only other city or town accounting for at least 5 percent of work trips from Hudson was Framingham, at 6.0 percent. None of the five other municipalities directly adjoining Hudson accounted for a substantial share of destinations of work trips from Hudson. In descending order of percentages, these were Sudbury 3.7, Maynard 1.2, Stow 0.9, Bolton 0.5, and Berlin 0.4.

Only 2.6 percent of Hudson residents were employed in Boston or Cambridge. For comparison, in a sample of 14 other communities at similar distances from Boston, an average of 6.5% of residents were employed in Boston or Cambridge. This difference is at least partly attributable to the lack of direct highway or rail service between Hudson and Boston.

Of 8,372 jobs in Hudson, 27.7 percent were filled by Hudson residents, 10.8 percent by Marlborough residents, and 7.8 percent by Worcester residents. Except for Leominster, at 3.2 percent, all other cities and towns each accounted for less than 2.5 percent of work trips to Hudson, including 1.9 percent from Framingham.

None of the five other municipalities directly adjoining Hudson accounted for a substantial share of origins of work trips to Hudson. In descending order of percentages, these were Berlin 1.5, Sudbury 1.4, Stow 1.3, Bolton 1.1, and Maynard 0.8 percent. Only 1.1 percent of work trips to Hudson originated in Boston and Cambridge combined. Origins of the other 41.4 percent of work trips to Hudson were divided among 112 Massachusetts or southern New Hampshire cities and towns.

4 HUDSON DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Several factors contribute to the need for transit service in a given area, and to the ability of such service to meet those needs in a cost-effective manner. These include the total population of the area, distribution of that population within the area, and the percentage of residents whose travel needs are not being met adequately by other alternatives. Residents with the highest probability of using transit service include those who do not own private vehicles either by choice or economic necessity, those who are too young to drive, and those who are unable to drive for other reasons. Information on minority populations is necessary to avoid discrimination when allocating transportation funds between minority and non-minority areas.

When considering whether it would be reasonable to establish transit service in Hudson, it can be useful to compare Hudson's characteristics with those of other cities and towns in the region that currently have local transit service.

Hudson became a member of the Metrowest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) in 2014. Hudson is the only one of the 14 MWRTA member cities and towns that is not also in the MBTA service area (referred to in the rest of this memorandum as the MBTA area). This area consists of 175 cities and towns, mostly in eastern and central Massachusetts, specified by Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 161A Section 1. Each of them either is served directly by MBTA rail rapid transit, light rail, or commuter rail, or adjoins a city or town with such service. Hudson is in a cluster of five towns (along with Bolton, Berlin, Boylston, and Clinton) that are not in the MBTA area, but which are surrounded by others that are. Consequently, it is reasonable to use figures from the MBTA and MWRTA areas as a basis of comparison for Hudson demographic data.

Figures from the 2010 US census show a total population of 19,063 in the town of Hudson. Of this total, the three census tracts in the study area accounted for 14,392 (75.5 percent).

4.1 Population Comparisons

In the 2010 census totals, the median population of MWRTA cities and towns was 15,759. Hudson's population of 19,063 exceeded that of all but four other MWRTA communities (Framingham, Marlborough, Natick, and Wellesley). For these communities, the median population density per square mile was 796. Hudson's population density of 1,654 per square mile exceeded that of all but the same four communities that outranked it in total population.

The 2010 median population of the 175 cities and towns in the MBTA area was 16,865. Hudson is not one of the 175, but its population was greater than their median, placing it ahead of 100 of them but behind 75. The median population density for MBTA communities was 985 per square mile. Hudson's population density exceeded that of 117 MBTA communities but was less than that of 58.

Inclusion of cities and towns in the MWRTA or MBTA areas is not based on population or density, so these comparisons alone do not indicate that Hudson should have transit service. However, the top four MWRTA communities in population and population density all have MWRTA fixed-route bus service, and all of these except Marlborough also have MBTA commuter rail service. Of the nine MWRTA communities with total populations and population densities lower than that of Hudson, five have MWRTA fixed-route bus service, including three that also have commuter rail service; one has only commuter rail service; and three have no transit service.

The 75 most populous MBTA-area cities and towns all have at least some bus service provided by the MBTA, other RTAs, or private carriers; 53 of them also have rail rapid transit or commuter rail service or both. Of the other 100 MBTA-area communities, 11 have both bus and rail service; 31 have only bus service; 19 have only rail service; and 39 have no fixed-route transit service. All but two of the municipalities with no transit service had fewer than 15,000 residents in 2010.

4.2 Low-Income Households

In 2010, the median annual household income for MWRTA communities was \$92,324. Defining low-income households as those with incomes less than 60 percent of the median, for the MWRTA area this threshold was \$55,394, and 31 percent of households in the area had incomes less than that level. The median incomes in all three Hudson study area tracts were significantly lower than the overall MWRTA median, at \$81,545 in tract 322200, \$65,125 in tract 322300,

and \$71,799 in tract 322400. The proportions with median incomes less than 60 percent of the MWRTA median were greater than in the MWRTA area overall, at 40 percent in tract 322200, 44 percent in tract 322300, and 40 percent in tract 322400. (In Hudson tract 323100, which is not part of the study area, median household income in 2010 was \$94,039, and only 23 percent of households had annual income less than 60 percent of the MWRTA-area median.)

The MWRTA member area overall is much more affluent than the MBTA area, where the median household income in 2010 was \$69,393; the low-income threshold for the MBTA area was \$41,636; and approximately 33% of households had incomes below that threshold.

Of the three census tracts in the Hudson study area, tracts 322200 and 322400 both had median household incomes greater than the MBTA-area median. However, the percentages of households in these tracts with incomes less than 60 percent of the MBTA-area median were slightly greater than that in the MBTA area itself, at 37 percent and 35 percent.

In Hudson tract 322300, the median income was lower than the MBTA-area median, and the percent of households with incomes less than 60 percent of the MBTA area median was higher than that of the service area, at 38 percent.

4.3 Households without Motor Vehicles

In 2010, 6.1 percent of MWRTA-area households did not own any motor vehicles. Hudson tracts 322200 and 322300 had slightly higher zero-vehicle household rates, at 8.9 and 7.2 percent; but tract 322400 had a lower rate, at 4.5 percent. These rates all were lower than the 13.5 percent in the overall MBTA area.

4.4 Population by Age Range

Census figures show the ages of residents of each city and town in 5-year increments, from less than age five to age 74 and a final category of age 75 and older. Residents too young to drive and those age 70 or older would be expected to account for disproportionately high shares of transit service demand.

Residents in the three age groups younger than age 15 would be too young to drive, but those younger than age five would not be traveling unaccompanied on general-purpose transit service. The 15-to-19 year age group would include some drivers. Therefore, for purposes of analysis, population in age groups 5-to-14 years was used as a measure of residents too young to drive.

In 2010, 14.3 percent of residents in the MWRTA area and 12.2 percent of residents of the MBTA area were between ages 5 and 14. In the tracts in the

Hudson study area, the percentages of residents in this age range differed little from the MWRTA and MBTA area averages, at 12.1 percent in tract 322200, 12.9 percent in tract 322300, and 12.7 percent in tract 32400. At the block level, the largest percentages of residents between ages 5 and 14 were 13.6 percent in block group 322200-2, 15.1 percent in block group 322300-2, and 13.7 percent in block group 322400-1. In absolute numbers, these represented 447, 131, and 154 individuals.

In 2010, 9.3 percent of residents in the MWRTA area and 9.2 percent of residents in the MBTA area were age 70 or older. Tract 322400 had a slightly lower percentage in this age range, at 9.0 percent; the other two tracts had higher percentages, at 12.0 percent in tract 322200 and 10.7 percent in tract 322300. The averages in each of these tracts included even higher averages in some individual block groups. In block group 322300-3, 17.6 percent of residents were age 70 or older. This was 249 individuals. The Meadowbrook Mobile Park, a mobile home community, accounts for a large share of residences in this block group. In block group 322200-1, 14.8 percent of residents were age 70 or older. This was 193 individuals. WestRidge, a condominium community for residents age 55 and older, is located in this block group.

4.5 Minority Population

In 2010, the MWRTA area had a 16.1 percent minority population, and the MBTA area had a 26.2 percent minority population, defined as non-white or Hispanic residents. The census tracts in the Hudson study area all had lower percentages of minority residents than the MWRTA and MBTA-area averages, at 11.3 percent in tract 322200, 14.0 percent in tract 322300, and 11.1 percent in tract 322400. Including the rest of Hudson outside the study area, the overall minority population of the town was 11.1 percent.

4.6 Conclusions from Demographic Information

The demographic comparisons above give mixed indications as to whether the town of Hudson should place a high priority on implementing new local transit service. In terms of total population and population density, Hudson is within the lower end of the range for cities and towns in the MBTA area that have some form of fixed-route bus service. However, population and population density in Hudson both are higher than the medians for these measures within the MWRTA area.

The percentage of Hudson residents with household incomes less than 60 percent of the median in the MBTA area is slightly greater than the percent in the MBTA area overall. The percent of Hudson residents with household incomes

less than 60 percent of the median in the MWRTA member area is also greater than the percentage in the MWRTA area overall.

The percentage of Hudson households with no motor vehicles is smaller than the percentage in the MBTA area overall, but somewhat greater than the percentage in the MWRTA area.

The percentage of Hudson residents between ages 5 and 15 is slightly greater than the MBTA area average but slightly smaller than the MWRTA area average. Hudson has a greater percentage of residents older than age 70 than the averages for the MBTA area and for the MWRTA area. Hudson has a smaller percentage of minority residents than the averages for the MBTA area and for the MWRTA area.

5 TRANSIT SERVICE CONCEPTS FOR HUDSON

At present, there is no fixed-route transit service in Hudson. In the past, Hudson had commuter rail and bus service. Most of the bus service originated in the 1920s, replacing abandoned street railway service. All of these past services were intended more for transportation between Hudson and points outside the town than for travel within the town. They were gradually discontinued because revenue from fares alone was insufficient to support them, and other funding sources were not available. This does not necessarily mean that fixed-route transit service to Hudson never could be successful.

5.1 Potential Future Transit Service for Hudson

Comparisons of the total population of Hudson with populations of cities and towns in the MBTA area and the MWRTA area that currently have some form of transit service indicate that it is reasonable to consider providing transit service in Hudson. Based on past experience and on existing conditions, the highest ridership potential would be on a route that provides transportation within Hudson, as well as connection to downtown Marlborough. Framingham is also an important source of trips to and from Hudson.

The Metrowest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) already runs bus service between downtown Marlborough and Framingham, so the most efficient means of serving Hudson probably would be either as an extension of that service or as a coordinated service with a close connection in Marlborough.

Within Hudson, the most direct routing that would serve a large number of trip generators would begin at the Highland Commons mall and proceed from there on state Routes 62 and 85 to Marlborough (see Figure 2). A slightly less direct routing that would serve more of the downtown Hudson business district would

follow Route 62 as far east as Main and Broad Streets. It then would turn south for one block on Broad Street and west on South Street to Route 85. Return trips would follow the same routing in the opposite direction.

In addition to Highland Commons and the Hudson business district, this route would provide direct service to the commercial area along Route 85 between Glasson Street and Technology Drive, and to the Walmart Supercenter. A stop on Route 62 would be within walking distance of the Hudson Lock factory, which employs 70 town residents. A stop on Route 85 at Technology Drive would be within walking distance of several office buildings. The Intel Corporation complex is located on Reed Road off Technology Drive, 0.8 miles from Route 85. Despite recent layoffs, Intel is still one of the largest employers in Hudson, with a workforce of 750 there. Providing direct service to Intel without eliminating service to other important destinations would require adding a side-diversion on a route from Hudson to Marlborough.

Although the routing described above would serve many of the largest work-trip and shopping trip destinations, to be useful it would also have to serve significant numbers of the residences where trips to these destinations would originate. At Route 62 and Highland Park Avenue, the bus route would be within walking distance of the Meadowbrook Mobile Home Park, but access from many other residences would be needed to support bus service.

Bus routes typically attract most of their ridership from locations within one-quarter-mile of a stop, but many residences in the Hudson study area are farther than that from the direct route suggested above. From some homes, the nearest stops within walking distance would be in the downtown business district, so the route could not serve trips from these homes to downtown destinations.

Revising the route to bring it closer to more homes would necessarily put it farther from some other homes or destinations. One potential change to bring the route closer to more homes without sacrificing access to destinations would be to divert it from Route 62 at Central Street and follow Central, Packard, Cox, and Tower Streets to Main Street. From there, it would run west on Main Street to Route 85. In addition to serving more residences, this routing would provide direct access to the industries on Tower Street and to the section of Main Street between Tower Street and Broad Street. The segment on South Street would be omitted; however, it is only one block south of Main Street and contains only non-residential development, so no residences would be affected. Other potential routings from Route 62 to Packard Street instead of via Central Street would be via Cottage Street, or via Rice and Lincoln Streets.

South of downtown Hudson, it does not appear that use of roads other than Route 85 would result in a net gain in the number of residents served. One possible exception would consist of a short loop from Tower Road at Main Street via Vila do Porto Boulevard and Grove, Water, and Broad Streets back to Main Street. In the opposite direction, Summer Street would have to be used instead of Water Street, which is one-way from Grove Street to Broad Street. This alternative would improve access to a small residential neighborhood. It also would provide direct service to the Hudson Mill Business Center in a former mill building on Broad Street, and it would bring service to within walking distance of the Wheeler Road entrance of the WestRidge community. (Wheeler Road itself does not appear to be suitable for bus operation.)

5.2 Transportation for People with Disabilities

The town of Hudson is concerned about meeting the mobility needs of its residents with disabilities. Some individuals with disabilities can use fixed-route transit service; others require door-to-door service. Information on locations and numbers of people with disabilities by home city or town is not compiled analogously to census demographic data. Within the limits of this project, it would not have been possible to differentiate between individuals with disabilities that require door-to-door service and those who could use fixed-route transit service.

If the MWRTA extended its fixed-route transit service to Hudson, it also would be required to provide paratransit service. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) paratransit service must be “sufficient to provide to such individuals a level of service (1) which is comparable to the level of designated public transportation services provided to individuals without disabilities using such system; or (2) in the case of response time, which is comparable, to the extent practicable, to the level of designated public transportation services provided to individuals without disabilities using such system.”¹ MW RIDE service is provided in accordance with the ADA requirements for “comparable” service and operates during the same times and in the same core areas as MWRTA fixed-route service (i.e., within the three-quarter-mile “corridor” along fixed routes). All trips require a reservation, and must be requested through the MW Call Center (open seven days a week from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, including holidays).

¹ The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 223, Paratransit as a Complement to Fixed Route Service.

Currently, the Hudson Council on Aging provides a door-to-door, pre-scheduled van service for seniors. Town officials could consider coordinating this service with new transportation service for people with disabilities, with the objective of improving operations from the standpoints of users and providers.

5.3 Previous Transit Service in Hudson

Hudson, like many other towns in Eastern Massachusetts, previously had a variety of fixed-route transit services that were discontinued when they were no longer financially viable. Subsequent changes in population and land use, and availability of new funding mechanisms might now make such service more sustainable.

A review of past transit routes in the town may be useful in identifying optimal alignments for new routes. Past ridership data for routes that were discontinued relatively recently may indicate the level of ridership that could be expected if service were restored. Information about the alignments of routes discontinued longer ago can help identify roads on which bus service is most operationally feasible.

Most Recently Operated Bus Service

The most recent past bus service to Hudson was operated by a private company, Gulbankian Bus Lines, under contract with the MBTA; it was discontinued in 2005. This service was part of a route from Hudson to Boston via Marlborough, Southborough, western Framingham, and the Massachusetts Turnpike. In its final years, the route had one trip leaving Hudson at 6:40 AM and two trips leaving Boston at 4:30 and 6:00 PM. The outer terminal of the route was cut back from Hudson to Marlborough in July 2005. Gulbankian Bus Lines went out of business in July 2006. In October 2006, another private company, Cavalier Coach Corporation, reinstated one weekday round trip on the former Gulbankian Marlborough-Boston route, but did not restore service to Hudson; this service ended in 2011. The total population of Hudson increased by only 5.2 percent between the years 2000 and 2010, so it is unlikely that through bus service between Hudson and Boston would be much more successful now than it was when last operated.

The discontinued Gulbankian route followed state Route 85 from downtown Hudson to state Route 9 in Southborough. Gulbankian first began providing through service from Hudson to Boston in January 1988, by extending a route between Southborough and Boston that the same company had started in 1981. The MBTA provided some funding for this route from 1997 to 2006.

Gulbankian first began serving Hudson in 1984 by taking over a Saturday-only route with one round trip between Hudson and Shopper's World in Framingham via Marlborough and Southborough. In Hudson, this route used Park and Brigham Streets and Chapin Road rather than Route 85. This route had been started in 1963 by Hughes Brothers Bus Company of Marlborough. It replaced a local route between Hudson and Southborough that had been operated by other carriers since 1925, when it replaced a street railway line. Weekday service was included until 1973, when Ritchie Bus Lines took over the route from Hughes Brothers. The Shopper's World route was extended to the Natick Mall in the early 1990s. In September 1998, it was replaced with a Saturday route from the Solomon Pond Mall in Marlborough to the Framingham commuter rail station, ending Saturday service to Hudson. However, an experimental weekday service providing two round trips a day from Hudson to the Framingham commuter rail station was run by Gulbankian under an MBTA contract from September 1998 to August 1999.

The Framingham LIFT local bus system, began running a weekday route from the Solomon Pond Mall to downtown Framingham in February 2000, but did not extend service to Hudson. The LIFT system was taken over by the MWRTA in 2007.

Earlier Past Bus Service

Other than the Gulbankian services discussed above, past bus service in Hudson ended so long ago that information about it is useful mostly as an indication of the feasibility of operating buses on certain roads. In early 1963, the town of Hudson and the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities granted operating rights to Hughes Brothers Bus Company of Marlborough, for a network of bus routes centered on downtown Hudson. These rights were probably intended mostly for school service. If any service for the general public was provided, it was short-lived. These rights covered all or part of Washington, Hudson, Broad, Main, Central, Apsley, Manning, River, Park, Brigham, Loring, Water, and Grove Streets and Chapin Road. From 1963 to 1973, Hughes Brothers also operated the local bus service from Hudson to Shopper's World.

Another fixed-route bus service operated for the general public once ran from Hudson to Stow and Maynard via state Route 62. That route was operated last in 1958, when it was discontinued because of low ridership. The route originally had been started as a replacement for street railway line abandoned in 1923. In the 2006-2010 figures, Stow and Maynard combined accounted for 2.1 percent of the work-trip destinations of Hudson residents, and for 2.0 percent of the origins trips to work locations in Hudson.

Another bus route that once served Hudson ran to Leominster through Berlin, Clinton, and Lancaster, mostly via the present state routes 62, 70, and 117. This route was discontinued in 1953, when the company that ran it went out of business and no other operator was interested in taking it over. The route started in 1924 as a replacement for an abandoned street railway line. In the 2006-2010 figures, Leominster, Berlin, Clinton, and Lancaster accounted for a combined total of 2.2 percent of the work-trip destinations of Hudson residents, and for 7.6 percent of the origins trips to work locations in Hudson.

Past Commuter Rail Service

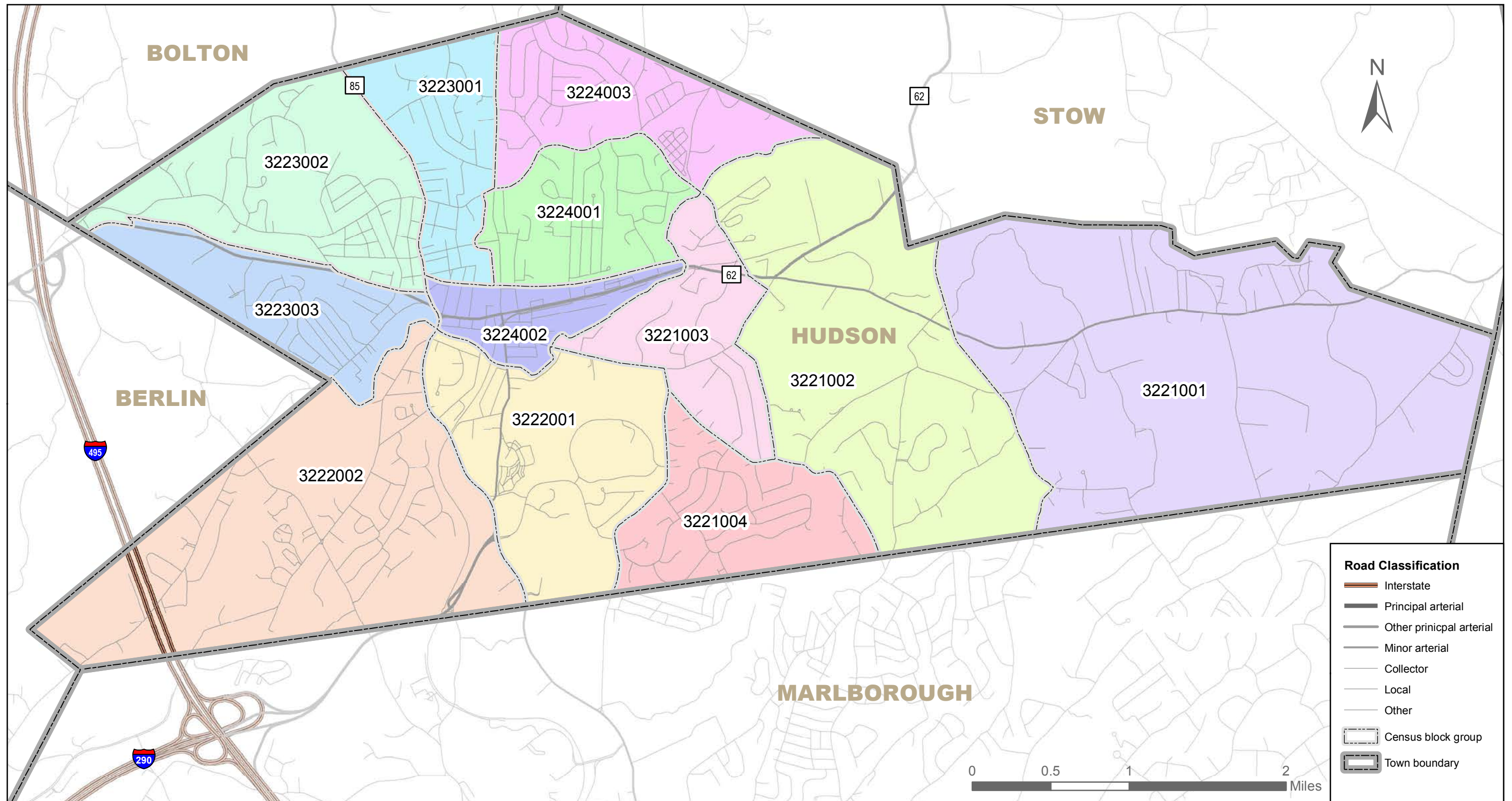
The MBTA commuter rail system is used predominantly for trips to the City of Boston from outlying cities and towns, with only small percentages of trips on each route being intra-suburban. Hudson was formerly an intermediate stop on rail passenger routes to Boston from more distant points. Past studies by the Boston Region MPO staff have investigated restoring such service, or converting the unused railroad right-of-way to an exclusive bus road, but have concluded that such service would have very limited benefits relative to costs. Therefore, rail service was not considered as an option in the present study.

Hudson has never had very strong ties to Boston as a work-trip destination. According to results of the 1963 Home Interview Survey conducted by the Eastern Massachusetts Regional Planning Project (EMRPP), 85 work trips a day were made from Hudson to Boston Proper alone by all modes combined. This was 0.6 percent of the population of Hudson at that time. From 1970 to 2010, the number of Hudson residents traveling to work in all of Boston and Cambridge according to US census figures ranged from 1.1 percent to 2.6 percent of the total population and from 2.1 percent to 4.9 percent of all work trips originating in the town. These percentages fluctuated rather than increasing or decreasing steadily. This pattern resulted from a combination of general economic conditions and variation in employment opportunities in other locations.

Commuter rail service from Hudson to Boston and intermediate points, including Cambridge, ended in January 1965, when the outer end of service on the Central Massachusetts Branch of the Boston & Maine (B&M) Railroad was cut back from Hudson to South Sudbury. The MBTA began subsidizing B&M commuter service then, but only could provide service to communities outside the district if they contributed to funding it. The Town of Hudson would have had to pay \$20,000 in the first year, but chose not to. A combined total of 19 passengers had been boarding the only inbound train at the three stations in the town on an average weekday. At present, converting the Central Massachusetts Branch right-of-way to a rail trail is more probable than restoring commuter rail service.

Passenger service to points west of Hudson on the Central Massachusetts Branch ended in 1958. The B&M Railroad Marlborough Branch between South Acton and Marlborough crossed the Central Massachusetts Branch at Gleason Junction in tract 322100. Passenger service from Hudson to Marlborough on this branch ended in 1939. The former right-of-way is now the Assabet Rail Trail. Passenger service between Hudson and Maynard on the Marlborough Branch ended in 1932, and that line also is being converted to a rail trail.

TJH/tjh



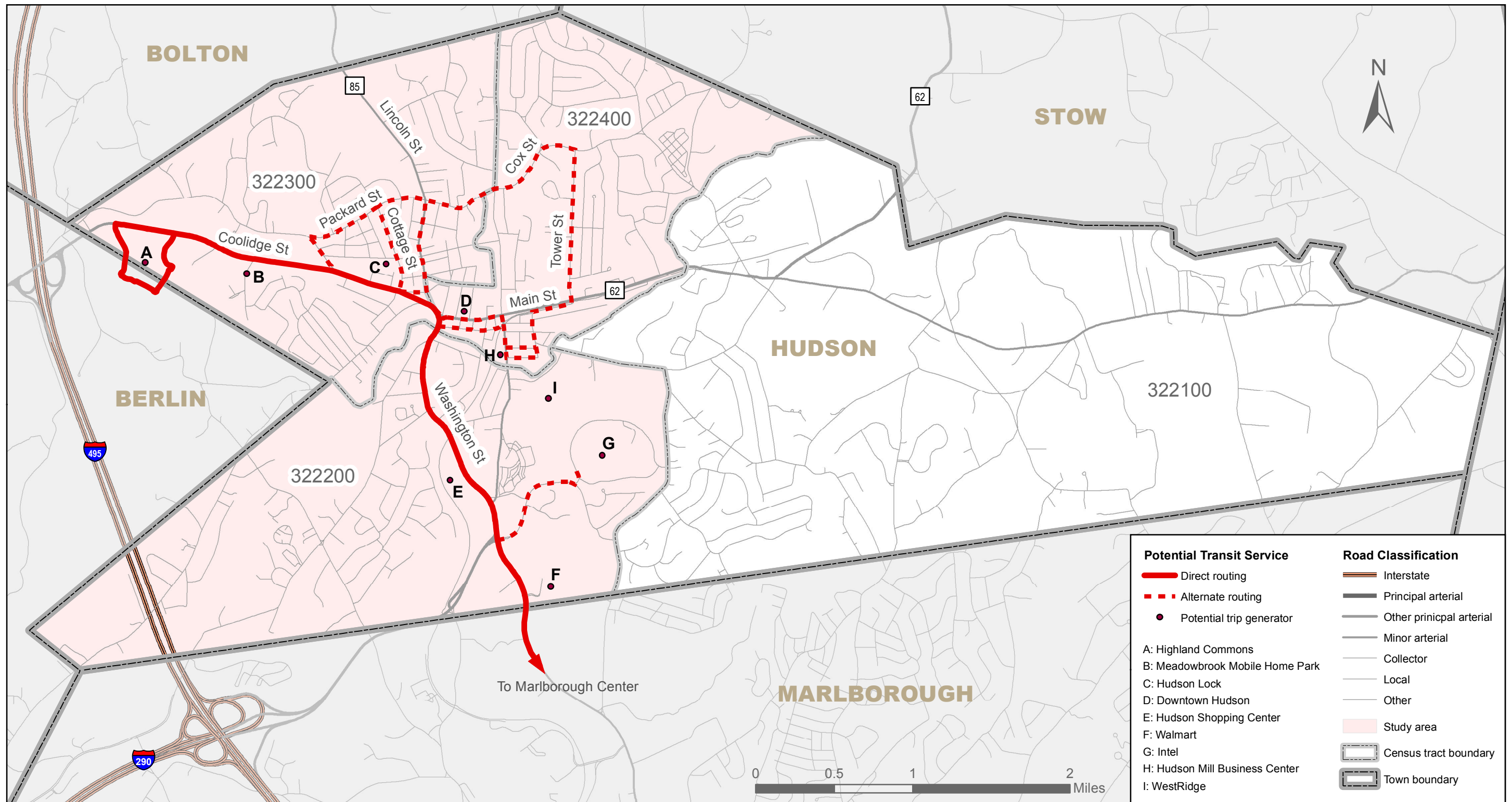


FIGURE 2
Potential Transit Routes