



Lillian Hartman, MPA
Council on Aging Director
978.674.4131(P)
978.970.4134(F)

MEMORANDUM

TO: Eileen M. Donoghue, City Manager *EMD*

FROM: Lillian Hartman, Council on Aging Director

DATE: October 16, 2019

SUBJECT: 8/27/2019 – Motion by C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Talk To City Of Newton About Their Recent Launch Of On-Demand-Subsidized Ride Service For Seniors And Consider A Similar Service For Lowell

NewMo is a subsidized ride share service for people over 60 in the City of Newton. It provides 25,000 trips per year at a cost of \$489,000 to the City. NewMo is operated by Via with 4 dedicated vehicles, independent contractor drivers, and Via-managed dispatch. This is the primary public transportation available for seniors to get around Newton, with MBTA routes focused on trips to downtown Boston, and no Council on Aging vehicles or drivers. NewMo offers rides to medical appointments within Newton and a small number of locations in neighboring towns, to village centers, to shopping, and to the senior center.

Lowell seniors can reach these destinations with existing services:

- RoadRunner Senior Dial-a-Ride offers rides to medical appointments (2,068 rides in FY2019)
- CareRide program through Elder Services of Merrimack Valley, pilot funded by Lowell General, offers subsidized ride-shares for senior medical appointments. (34 rides in FY2019)
- LRTA routes serve Lowell neighborhoods with a transportation hub locally (see map, attached)
- Lowell Council on Aging buses provides daily rides to the senior center and every other week to shopping destinations. (442 senior center rides and 44 shopping rides last quarter, plus 450 rides for recreational trips out-of-town).
- Many seniors are eligible for RoadRunner ADA rides (26,397 rides in FY19)

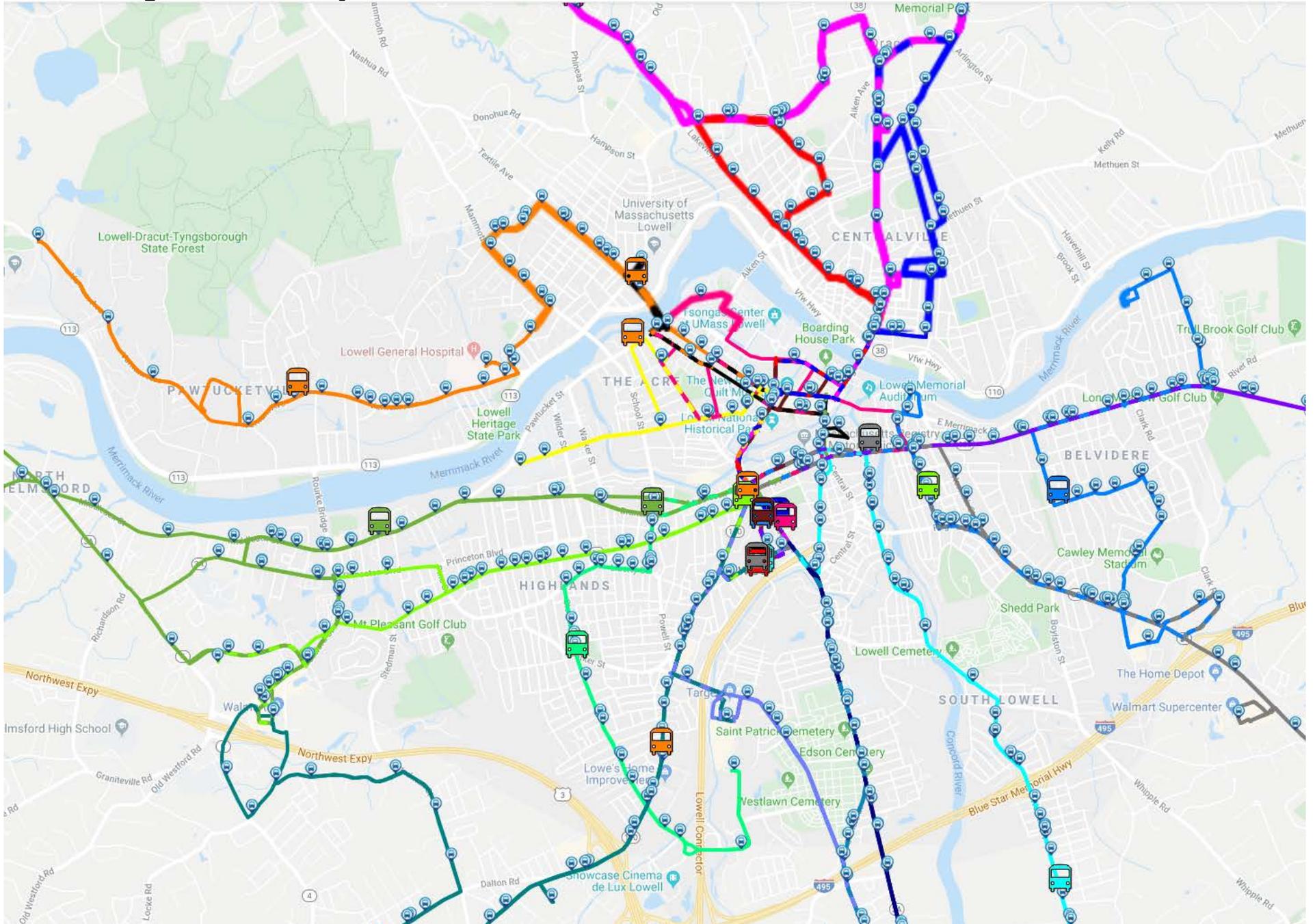
The senior center is working to expand participation in existing ride options. New neighborhood shopping routes were announced in the October Senior Center newsletter. We are taking care to schedule drivers to avoid interruptions to daily Senior Center rides, and hiring per diem driver(s) to fill in when one or both regularly scheduled drivers are out. The Senior Center will also host a RoadRunner ADA registration day Nov. 18 for seniors to learn about ADA eligibility for all-purpose, curb-to-curb rides.

To effectively expand transportation access, increasing capacity of existing programs may be more cost-effective than adding a new subsidized ride-share service. RoadRunner Senior Dial-A-Ride until

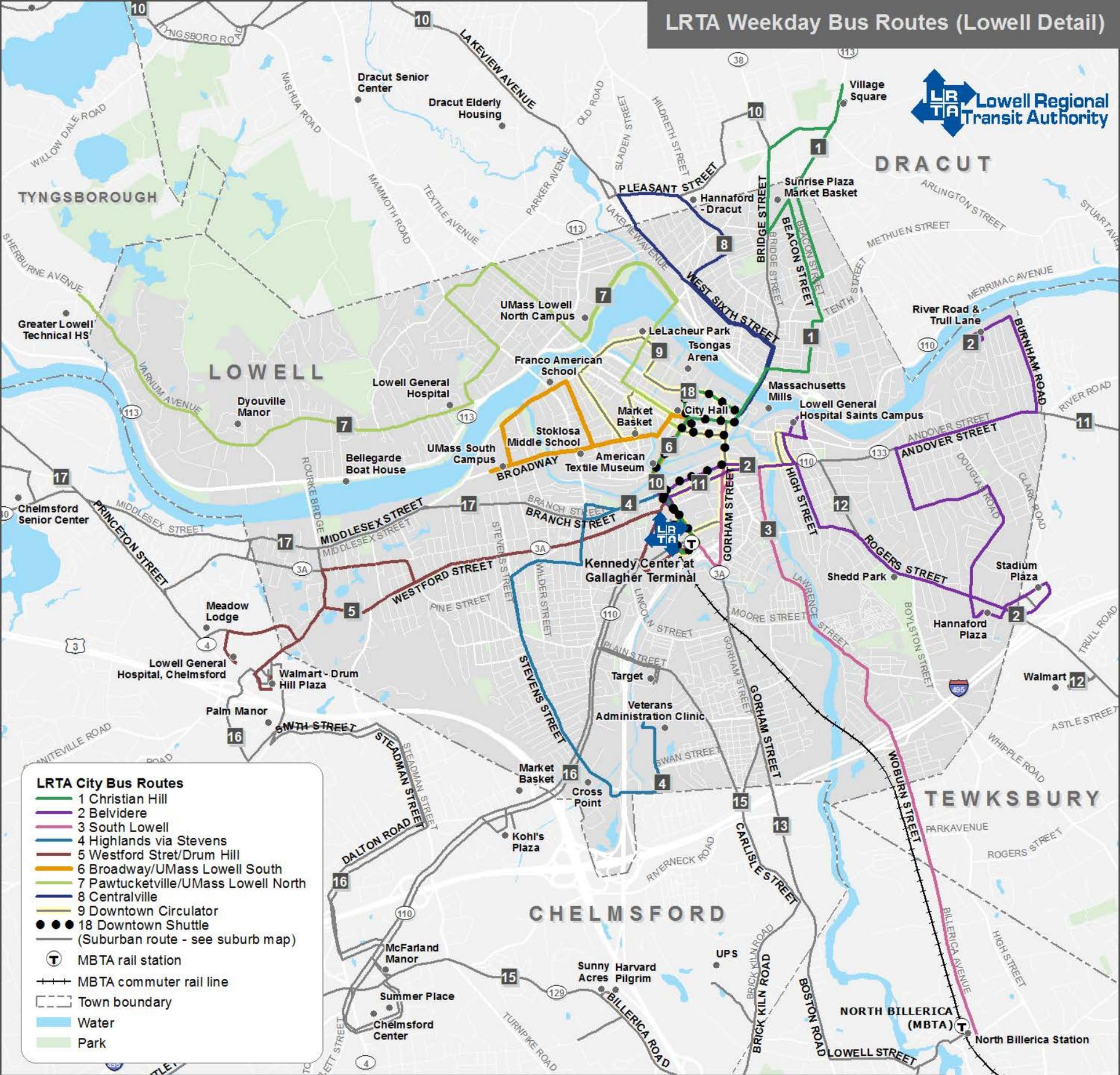
recently offered non-medical rides to Lowell seniors and might consider restarting the service with City funding. The Senior Center has 3 buses and only 1-2 drivers on duty each day. As ride requests increase, we may seek City funding for additional part-time drivers.

UMass Lowell is in the process of applying for *Age Friendly Lowell* funding through the Tufts Health Foundation. This project would fund a detailed assessment of how well Lowell's infrastructure and programs meet senior needs in areas including transportation, housing, and community services. Research efforts can help inform City investments to ensure we make investments where it matters most for seniors' ability to stay and thrive in Lowell.

LRTA System Map



LRTA Weekday Bus Routes (Lowell Detail)



LRTA City Bus Routes

- 1 Christian Hill
- 2 Belvidere
- 3 South Lowell
- 4 Highlands via Stevens
- 5 Westford Stret/Drum Hill
- 6 Broadway/UMass Lowell South
- 7 Pawtucketville/UMass Lowell North
- 8 Centralville
- 9 Downtown Circulator
- 18 Downtown Shuttle
- (Suburban route - see suburb map)
- T MBTA rail station
- MBTA commuter rail line
- Town boundary
- Water
- Park