

THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGE

Berkshire County: North Adams to Pittsfield

A woman in North Adams works in Pittsfield at the hospital. It's a good job, but she struggles financially due her reduced work schedule. Every day she catches the 8:10am bus, which is just a short distance from her home. This is the first bus of the day on this route. She then takes a 10 minute ride to Main Street in North Adams and hopes to catch the 8:20 bus to Pittsfield. The bus arrives at the hospital at 9:23am. The hospital has allowed her to start at 9:30am due to the buses. She would like to be able to work a full 8 hour day, but because of the bus times she can't. The last bus by her home leaves North Adams at 5:25pm, which means the latest she can work is 3:30pm, which is only a 5.5 hour work day. Since this is not full time, the hospital restricts her to part time status (4 hours/day), which means her shift end at 1:30pm. She then catches the 1:35pm bus back to North Adams. She arrives back in North Adams at 2:40pm. Unfortunately the bus that goes back to her home won't be back in North Adams until 3:25pm, so she has to wait outside for 45 minutes. She then takes the bus back towards her home, which she arrives at around 3:40pm. The woman arrives home around 4:00pm. The day was just over 8 hours, but she could only work for four of those.

Hampden County: Amherst to Springfield

Travel between Amherst and Springfield represents the furthest typical destination for the high minority and low-income travelers. These two locations are important activity centers that provide opportunities for education and employment in Amherst, as well as health, education, employment, and other state aid services in Springfield. Depending on time of day, a person seeking to travel by transit between the two locations spends an average of two hours each way using three different buses: B43, B48, and P20/21. For example, for an Amherst resident, a two-hour medical appointment at Baystate Medical Center would involve at least four hours of transit travel time (round trip). In comparison, the same trip by private auto would typically require only 40 minutes each way—almost one-third of the time it takes to travel by bus. This is mostly due to the number of stops on route and the associated wait time between bus connections. This is the only alternative available for low-income and minority groups who cannot afford to own a car, are not able to drive one, or cannot share a ride.

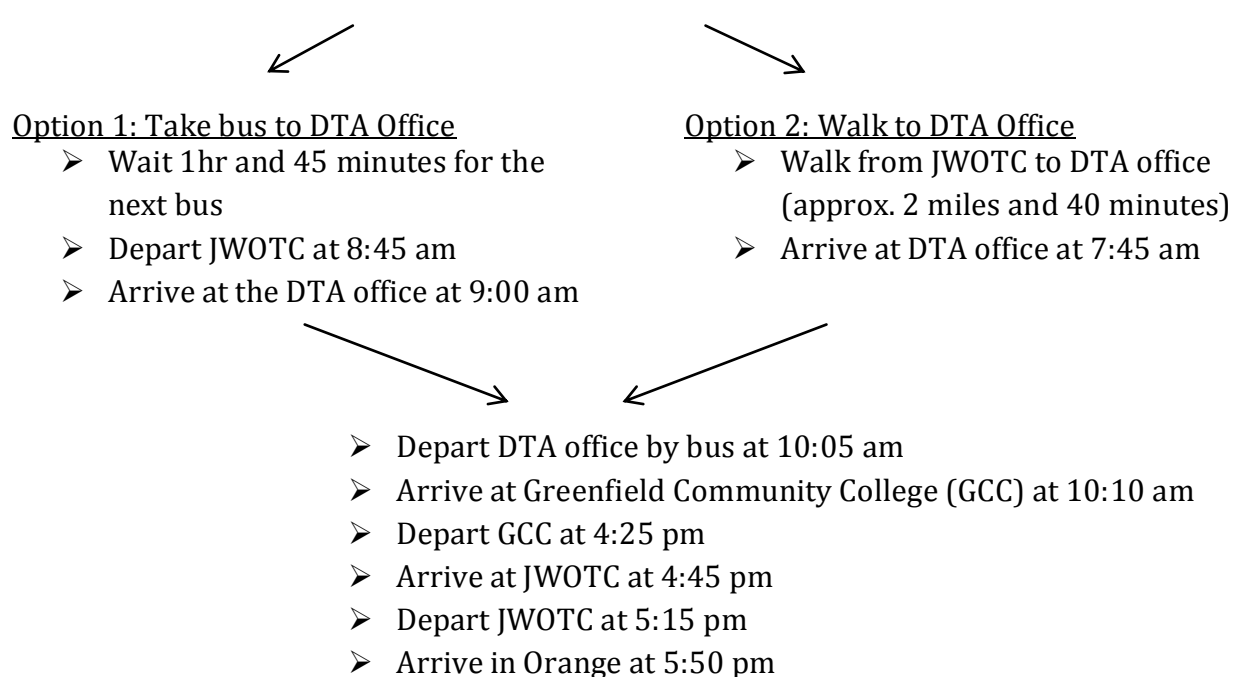
Franklin County: Orange to Greenfield

In this scenario, “Mary” lives in downtown Orange. She attends workforce training classes at the Greenfield Community College in Greenfield. On this day, she also needs to go to the Department of Transitional Office for social services before her classes. Mary does not have a vehicle and is completely reliant on public transit. The schedule of her day looks like this:

- Depart Orange on FRTA bus at 6:15 am
- Arrive in Greenfield at the John W. Olver Transit Center (JWOTC) at 7:00 am
- Depart JWOTC at 7:00 am
- Arrive at the DTA offices at 7:05 am
- Wait 30 minutes for the DTA offices to open

If Mary does not make the 7:00 am transfer, she has 2 travel options to get to the DTA offices, which are located at the Greenfield Corporate Center (not in downtown). They are:

- Take the bus to the DTA office, which requires waiting 1hr and 45 minutes for the next bus; OR
- Walking 2 miles to the DTA office, which would take approximately 40 minutes.



Option 1: Take bus to DTA Office

- Wait 1hr and 45 minutes for the next bus
- Depart JWOTC at 8:45 am
- Arrive at the DTA office at 9:00 am

Option 2: Walk to DTA Office

- Walk from JWOTC to DTA office (approx. 2 miles and 40 minutes)
- Arrive at DTA office at 7:45 am

- Depart DTA office by bus at 10:05 am
- Arrive at Greenfield Community College (GCC) at 10:10 am
- Depart GCC at 4:25 pm
- Arrive at JWOTC at 4:45 pm
- Depart JWOTC at 5:15 pm
- Arrive in Orange at 5:50 pm

Mary’s day requires a tight transfer, possible very long waits for buses or very long walks, which may be difficult in the cold winter, hot summer, or inclement weather. The walking route also has poor sidewalks and is hilly.

