

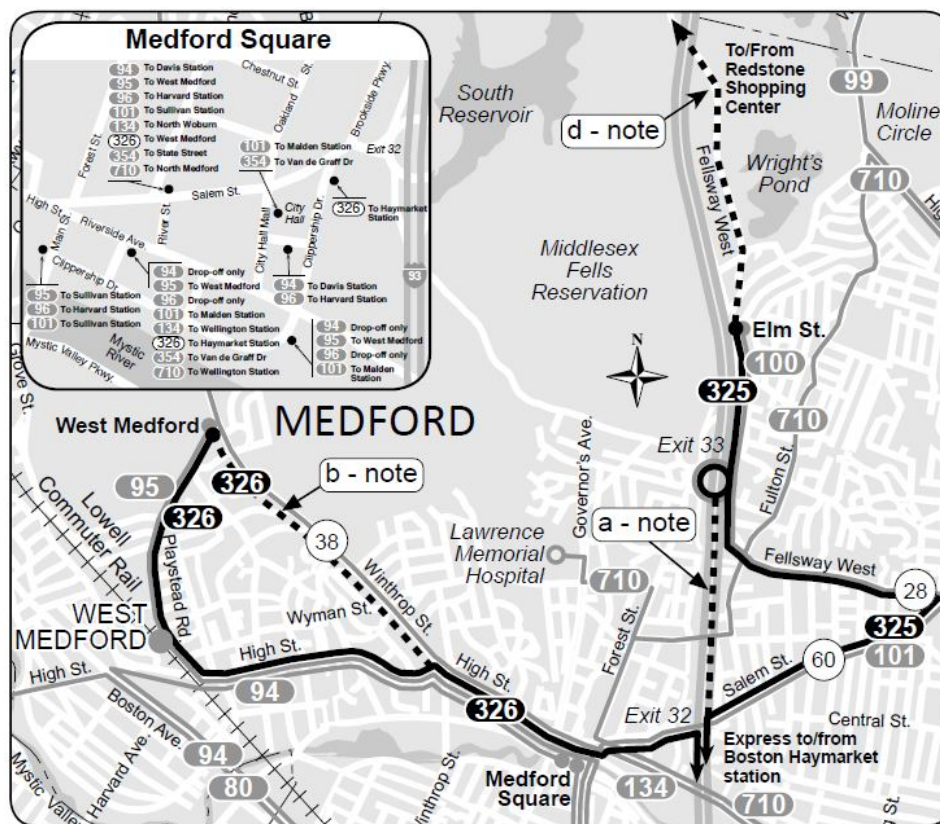
# Route 326

## West Medford – Haymarket Station

### Route Overview

Route 326 West Medford – Haymarket Station is a Commuter bus route serving West Medford, connecting passengers to Downtown Boston’s Haymarket Station via I-93 and Rutherford Avenue.

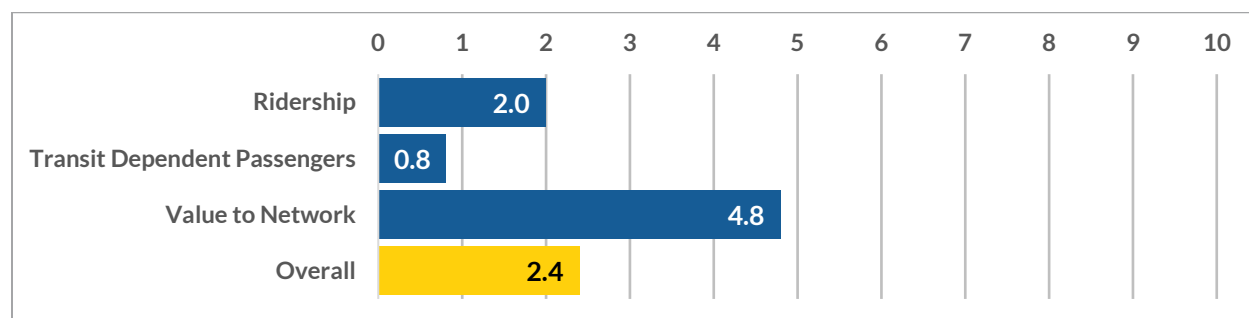
Figure 1 | Service Map



### Network Importance

Route 326 has relatively low importance in the MBTA bus network (see Figure 2). On a relative scale of 0 to 10, the route rates 2.0 in terms of ridership, 0.8 in terms of transit dependent ridership, and 4.8 in terms of its value to the network (which reflects the number of people who are uniquely served, the number of jobs and other important destinations, and the number of transferring passengers). Its overall score, which gives a 70% weighting to overall ridership and a 15% weight to both other measures, is 2.4.

**Figure 2 | Relative Importance within MBTA Bus Network (on a scale of 0 to 10)**



## Service Patterns

### Schedule

Route 326 operates predominately with moderately frequent service during weekday mornings and evenings, serving people traveling to and from work. The route does not operate during the weekend.

- Weekday AM service operates from 6:25 AM until 9:47 AM with most headways of 12 to 20 minutes, although headways can be as short as 10 minutes and as long as 30 minutes.
- Weekday PM service is provided from 3:42 PM until 7:05 PM with headways of 15 to 30 minutes.

Route 326 meets the MBTA’s expected Span of Service and Frequency standards.

**Table 1 | Schedule Statistics**

| SERVICE DAY          | SPAN OF SERVICE  | FREQUENCY (RANGE) | FREQUENCY (AVERAGE) | DAILY TRIPS (INBOUND/OUTBOUND) |
|----------------------|--|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Monday-Friday</b> | <b>6:25 AM to 9:47 AM</b><br><b>3:42 PM to 7:05 PM</b> |                   |                     | <b>18/17</b>                   |
| Sunrise              | -  | -                 | -                   | -                              |
| Early AM             | 6:25 AM to 6:59 AM                                     | 20                | 20                  | 2/0                            |
| AM Peak              | 7:00 AM to 8:59 AM                                     | 10 – 25           | 15                  | 9/5                            |
| Midday Base          | 9:00 AM to 9:47 AM                                     | 1 trip            | -                   | 1/1                            |
| Midday School        | 3:42 PM to 3:59 PM                                     | 1 trip            | -                   | 0/1                            |
| PM Peak              | 4:00 PM to 6:29 PM                                     | 15 – 30           | 20                  | 6/8                            |
| Evening              | 6:30 PM to 7:05 PM                                     | 30                | 30                  | 0/2                            |
| Late Evening         | -  | -                 | -                   | -                              |
| Night                | -  | -                 | -                   | -                              |
| <b>Saturday</b>      | -  | -                 | -                   | -                              |
| <b>Sunday</b>        | -  | -                 | -                   | -                              |

*Note: Span of service reflects the time the first bus begins service until the time the last bus finishes service.*

## Service Patterns

Route 326 primarily operates between Playstead Road at Winthrop Street and Haymarket Station (Pattern 326.1 inbound, Pattern 326.0 outbound). All trips on the primary service pattern serve the West Medford Commuter Rail Station. Trips operating in the off-peak direction run north along Winthrop Street rather than along Playstead Road (Pattern 326.0 inbound, Pattern 326.1 outbound). This “deadhead in service” puts buses in place to begin the next trip in the peak direction.

Pattern 326.2 makes the first outbound morning trip at 7:08 AM, operating “deadhead in service” between Haymarket Station and Medford Square and only making two stops. This quickly brings the bus to Medford where peak direction trips originate from weekday mornings.

Table 2 | Service Patterns

| PATTERN         | ORIGIN                               | DESTINATION                          | UNIQUE FEATURE   | TRIPS per WKD | TRIPS per SAT | TRIPS per SUN |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>INBOUND</b>  |                                      |                                      |  | <b>18</b>     | -             | -             |
| 326.0           | Playstead Road at Winthrop Street    | Congress Street at Haymarket Station | Outer Edge Branch Operates Along Winthrop Street, north of High Street | 6             | -             | -             |
| 326.1           | Playstead Road at Winthrop Street    | Congress Street at Haymarket Station | Primary pattern  | 12            | -             | -             |
| <b>OUTBOUND</b> |                                      |                                      |  | <b>17</b>     | -             | -             |
| 326.0           | Congress Street at Haymarket Station | Playstead Road at Winthrop Street    | Primary pattern  | 11            | -             | -             |
| 326.1           | Congress Street at Haymarket Station | Winthrop Street at Playstead Road    | Outer Edge Branch Operates Along Winthrop Street, north of High Street | 5             | -             | -             |
| 326.2           | Congress Street at Haymarket Station | Salem Street opposite River Street   | Short pattern, two stops.  | 1             | -             | -             |

## Ridership

Route 326 has 512 daily boardings, performing better than most MBTA Commuter bus routes.

### Ridership by Stop

Most inbound riders board Route 326 in West Medford and alight in Downtown Boston.

- 126 passengers board and two passengers alight Route 326 at the 12 stops between the Playstead Road at Winthrop Street and 238 High Street opposite Essex Street stops (about one and a half miles). Most of these stops have fewer than 10 riders per day. A few stops along this segment have 15 – 20 riders.
- At the remaining five stops in Medford 141 passengers board and eight passengers alight. This segment has higher ridership, with stops serving between 20 and 40 riders.
- Six passengers board and zero alight at the six stops along Winthrop Street. Most stops serve no passengers.
- On inbound trips, the majority of passengers (188) alight at Congress Street at North Street, adjacent to City Hall, and the rest (79) alight at Haymarket Station.

During outbound trips, ridership by stop is the reverse of ridership by stop of inbound trips although with lower overall numbers of riders. On outbound trips, Route 326 only serves Haymarket Station in Downtown Boston, where nearly all riders board (215).

### Ridership by Trip

The ridership patterns for Route 326 follow traditional commuter patterns, with ridership highest during peak-direction trips. The maximum passenger loads do not exceed 35 passengers, well within the MTA’s standard for comfort.

On inbound trips:

- The first two AM inbound trips carry 15 and 12 passengers respectively, reality few boarding compared to other trips on the route.
- Ridership is highest during inbound trips made between 7:05 AM and 8:20 AM. These trips serve between 20 and 37 passengers. The two highest utilized trips are at 7:05 AM with 33 passengers and 7:44 AM with 37 passengers.
- Inbound trips in the afternoon have very low ridership, carrying five passengers or fewer. Afternoon inbound trips run between 4:00 PM and 6:00 PM

On outbound trips:

- Trips made in the morning carry three passengers or fewer. Morning outbound trips operate between 7:00 AM and 9:05 AM.
- The first three PM outbound trips serve less than 18 passengers each.
- Trips between 4:52 PM and 5:53 PM carry the most passengers in the outbound direction (20 to 29).
- The last three PM outbound trips serve less than 18 passengers each.

Figure 3 | Weekday Inbound Ridership by Stop Map

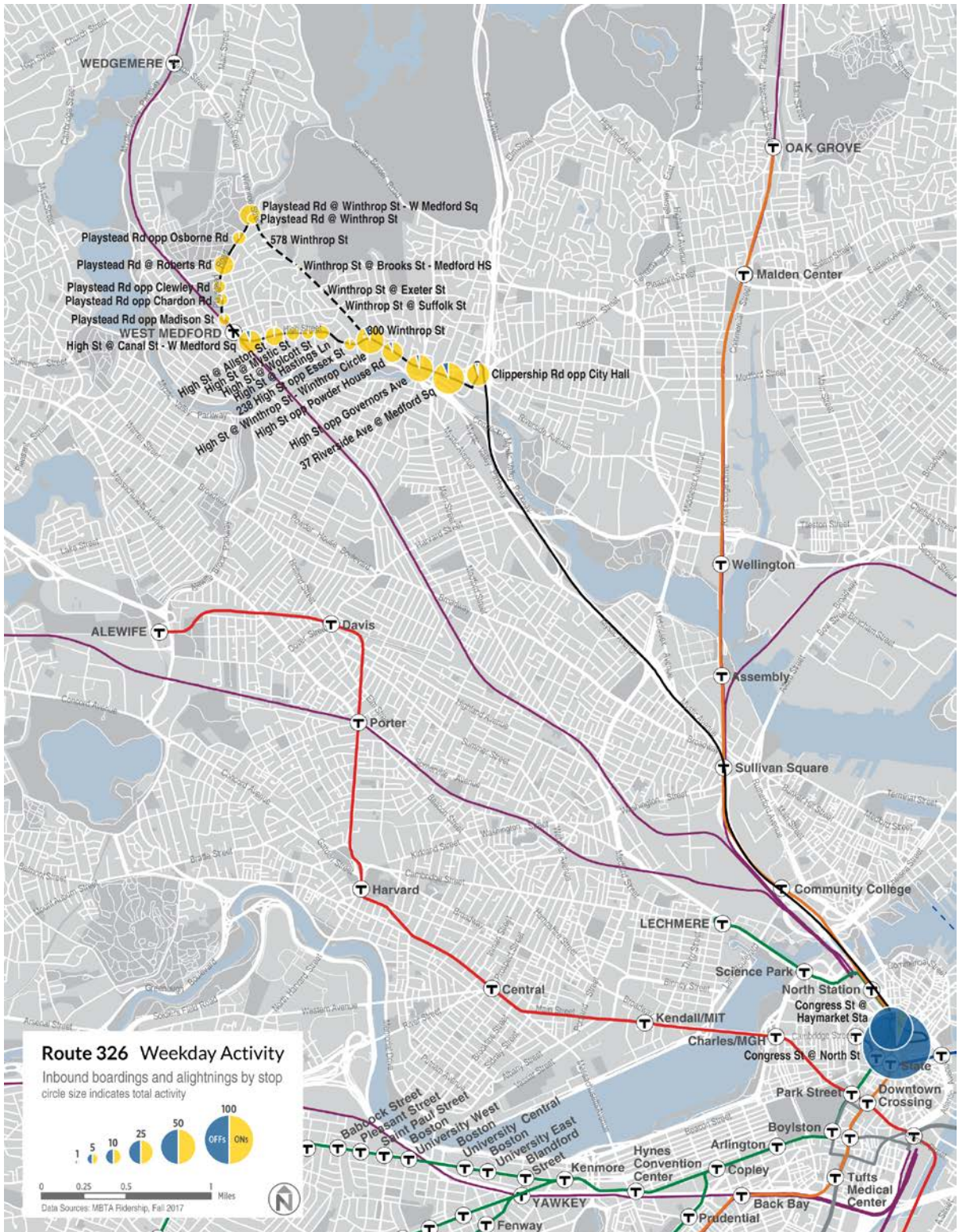


Figure 4 | Weekday Ridership by Trip: Inbound

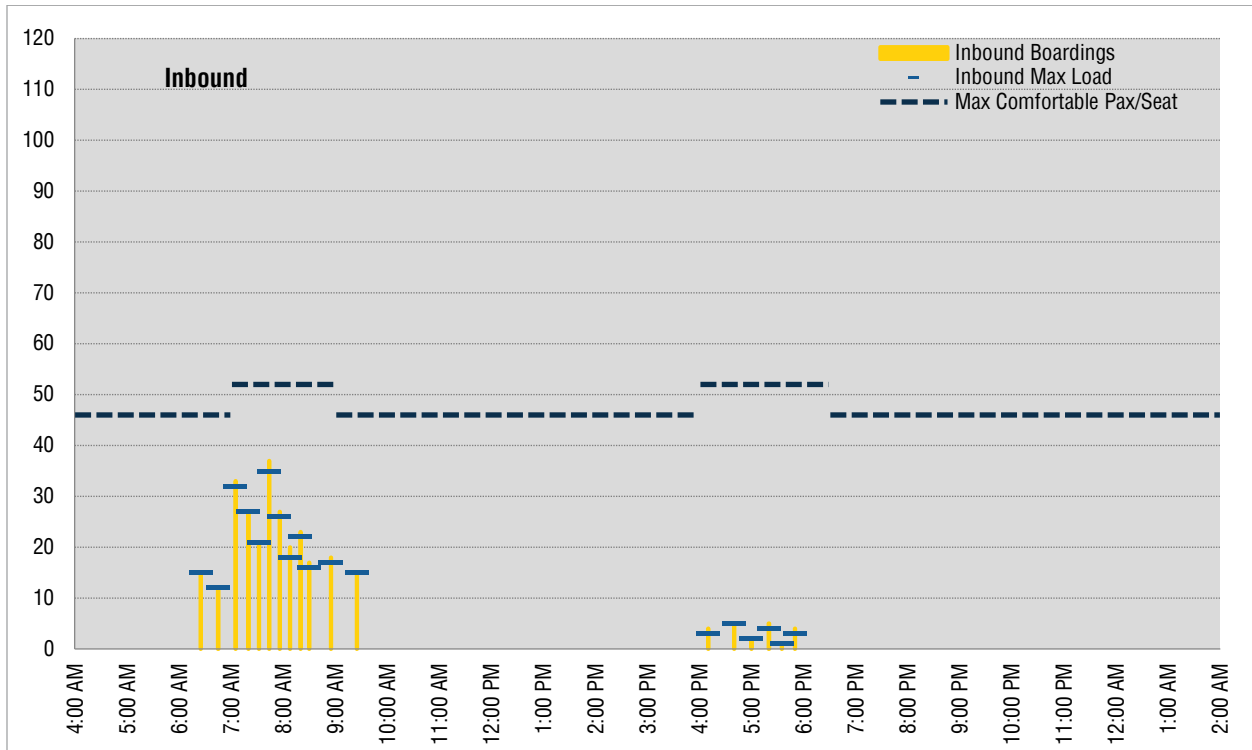
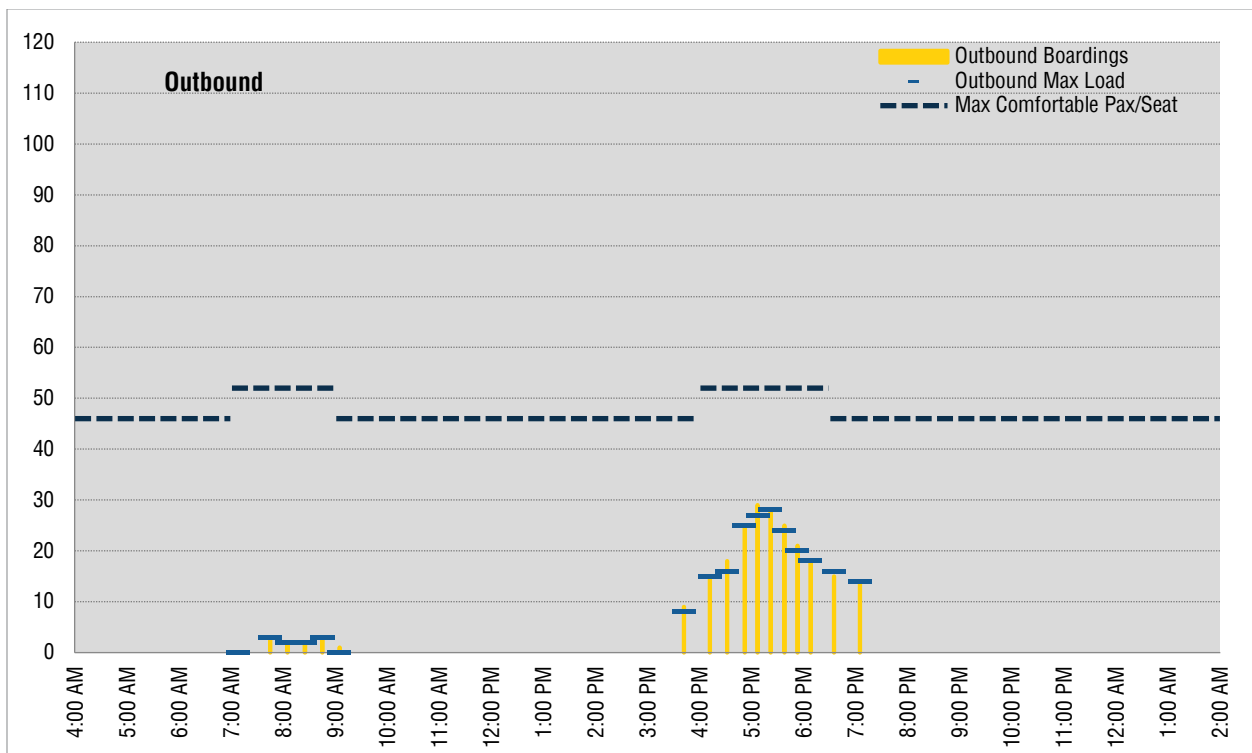


Figure 5 | Weekday Ridership by Trip: Outbound



## Passenger Comfort

The MBTA desires that passengers travel in relatively comfortable conditions. At the same time, the MBTA's definition of comfort reflects the very high volume environment in which the MBTA operates, and that some passengers may have to stand for a portion of their trip. More specifically, at least 92% of passengers' travel times should be in comfortable conditions, and ideally, at least 96% of travel times should be in comfortable conditions. Comfortable conditions are considered to be 140% or less of seated capacity during high volume periods and 125% or less during other periods.

On Route 326, 98% of passenger minutes are in comfortable conditions, which meets the minimum and targeted standards (see Table 3).

Table 3 | Passenger Time Spent Traveling in Comfortable Conditions

|                         | WEEKDAYS | SATURDAYS | SUNDAYS |
|-------------------------|----------|-----------|---------|
| <b>Minimum Standard</b> | 92%      | 92%       | 92%     |
| <b>Target</b>           | 96%      | 96%       | 96%     |
| <b>Actual</b>           | 98%      | -         | -       |

## Reliability and Speed

### Reliability

Route 326 rates very low in terms of reliability, with destination on-time performance of 43% and overall reliability of 54%, well below the MBTA's minimum standard of 70%.

Table 4 | Reliability

| SERVICE DAY          | ORIGIN/MID-ROUTE ON-TIME PERFORMANCE | DESTINATION ON-TIME PERFORMANCE | OVERALL RELIABILITY | DROPPED TRIPS |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| <b>Monday-Friday</b> | 57%                                  | 43%                             | 54%                 | 0.2%          |
| <b>Saturday</b>      | -                                    | -                               | -                   | -             |
| <b>Sunday</b>        | -                                    | -                               | -                   | -             |

### Running Times

The poor reliability of Route 326 is also apparent in actual travel times that are consistently longer than scheduled travel times. Peak-direction trips made in the morning are typically a few minutes longer than scheduled. Peak-direction trips made in the afternoon see larger differences in scheduled and actual travel times. These differences can exceed 10 minutes (see Figure 6 and Figure 7).

Figure 6 | Scheduled & Median Travel Time by Trip: Route 326 Inbound

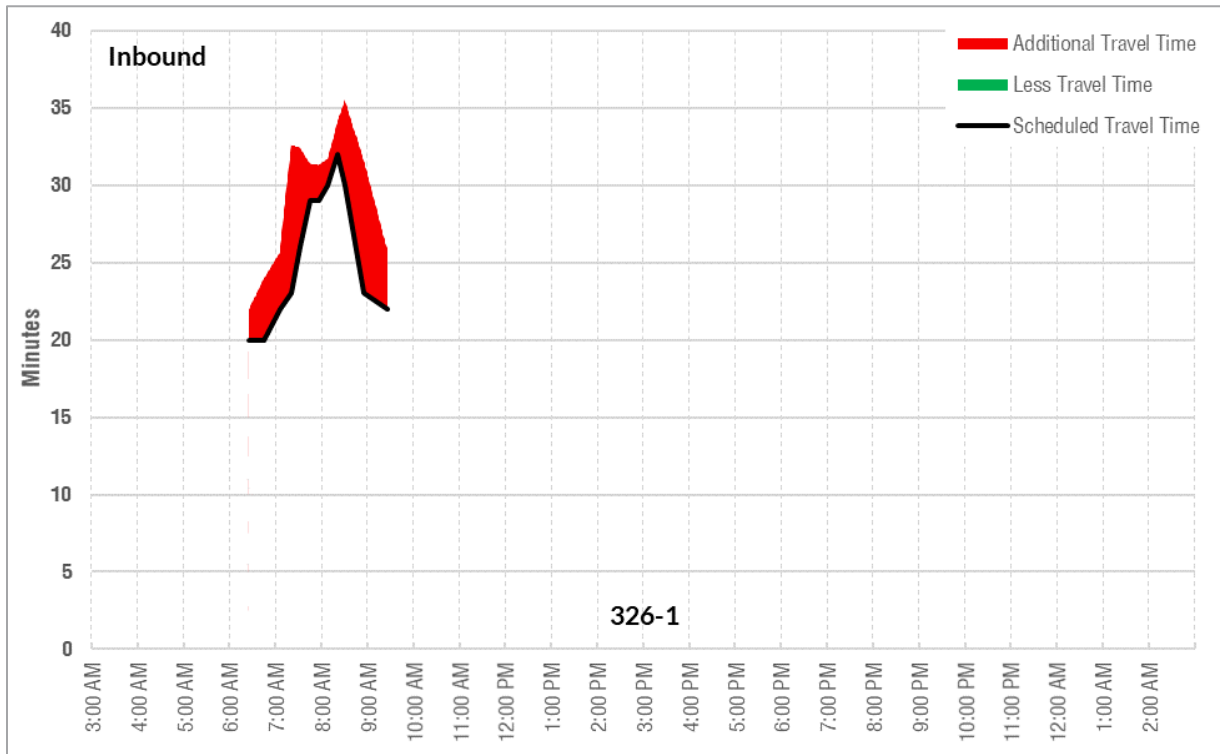
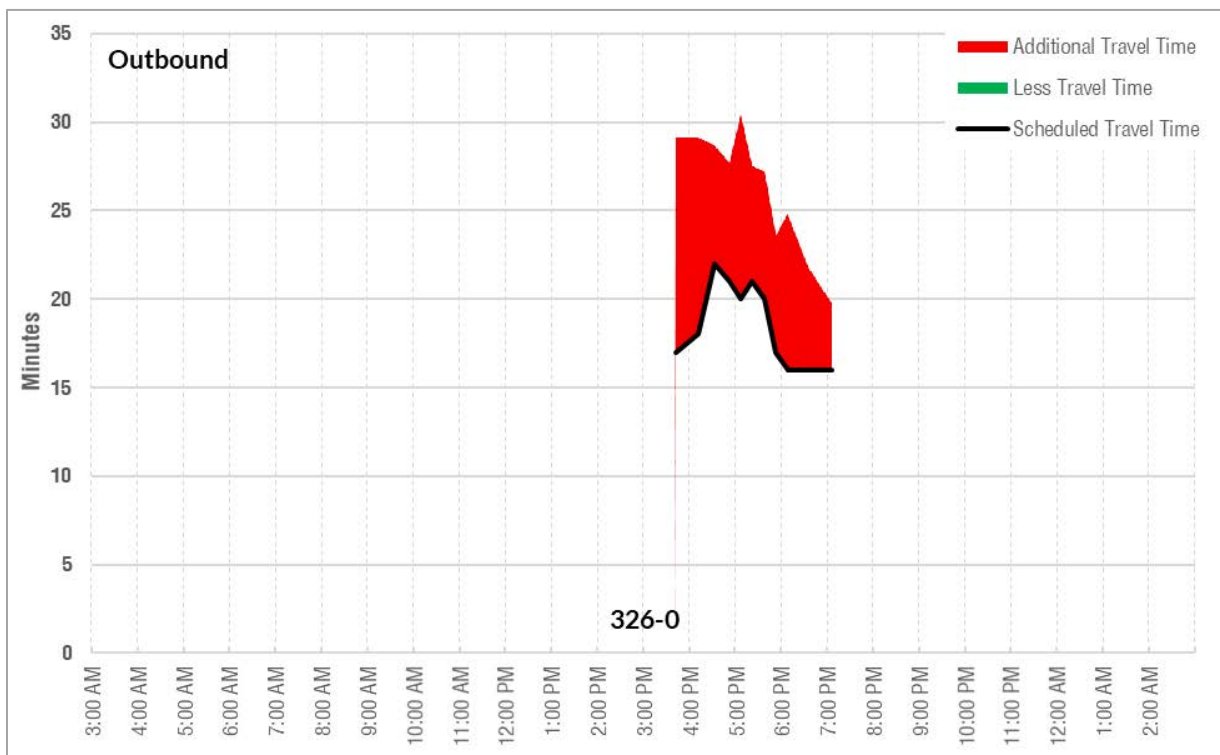


Figure 7 | Scheduled & Median Travel Time by Trip: Route 326 Outbound





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## Stop Spacing

Route 326 serves 17 stops along its approximately two-mile alignment in West Medford, the average number of stops per mile in their Stop Spacing Guidelines. Several stops have fewer than 200 feet between them. For example, the stops at Clewley Road and Chardon Road along Playstead Road are just 124 feet apart. The MBTA should consider consolidating these stops, selecting stops that already attract a larger number of riders, in order to improve travel time and reliability.

## Summary

Route 326 serves as a traditional Commuter route bring passengers to Downtown Boston in the AM and taking passengers to back to West Medford in the PM. The route is relatively productive when compared to other MBTA Commuter routes.