



Taking the **PVTA**: An Insider's Guide

Adopted from an original article in the
The Amherst Student by Neil Kapur '25

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Where does the PVTA go?



**Pioneer Valley
Transit Authority**



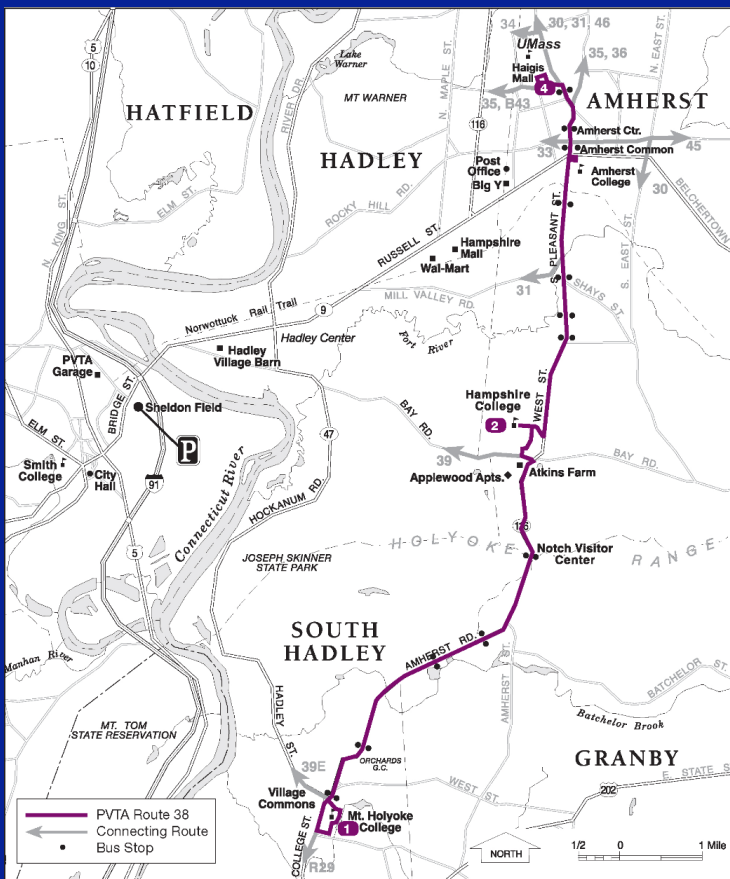
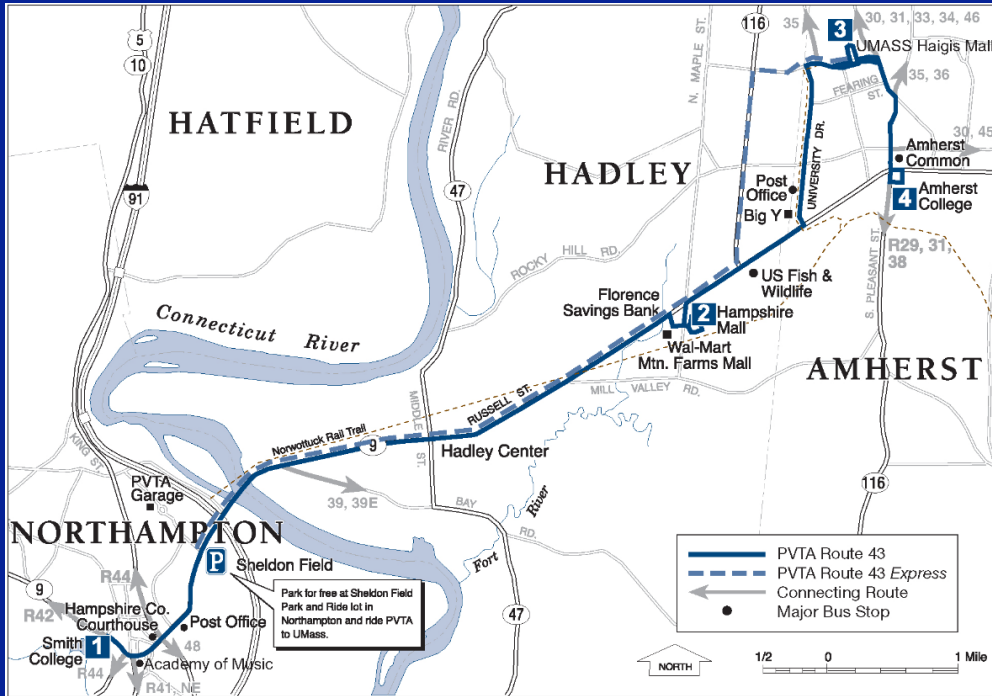
The PVTA serves large parts of Western Massachusetts, including Springfield, Holyoke, Chicopee, Northampton, and of course, Amherst. Whether you need to get to class at one of the other five colleges, catch a train in Northampton or Springfield, or run an errand at Hadley or Holyoke Mall, there should be a bus that can get you there. The PVTA operates over 40 routes, with about a dozen serving the Amherst area. On the next page, we highlight the main routes that you might find useful.



Routes:

B43

The B43 travels between Northampton and the college. From Amherst, it first heads north to UMass Amherst, and then west towards Smith and Northampton, stopping at various points along the way in Hadley, including Hampshire Mall.

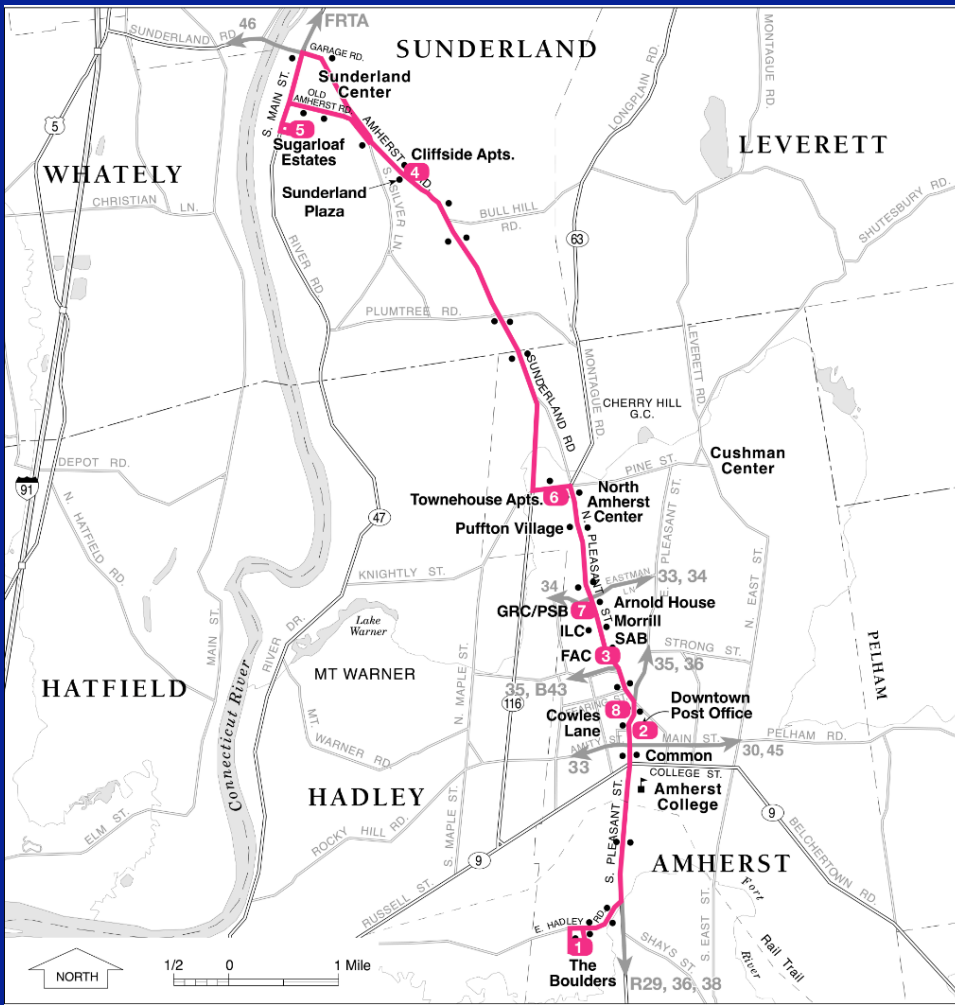


38

The 38 bus travels between Mount Holyoke and UMass. From the college, you can take it north to UMass or south to Hampshire, Atkins Farm, and Mount Holyoke.

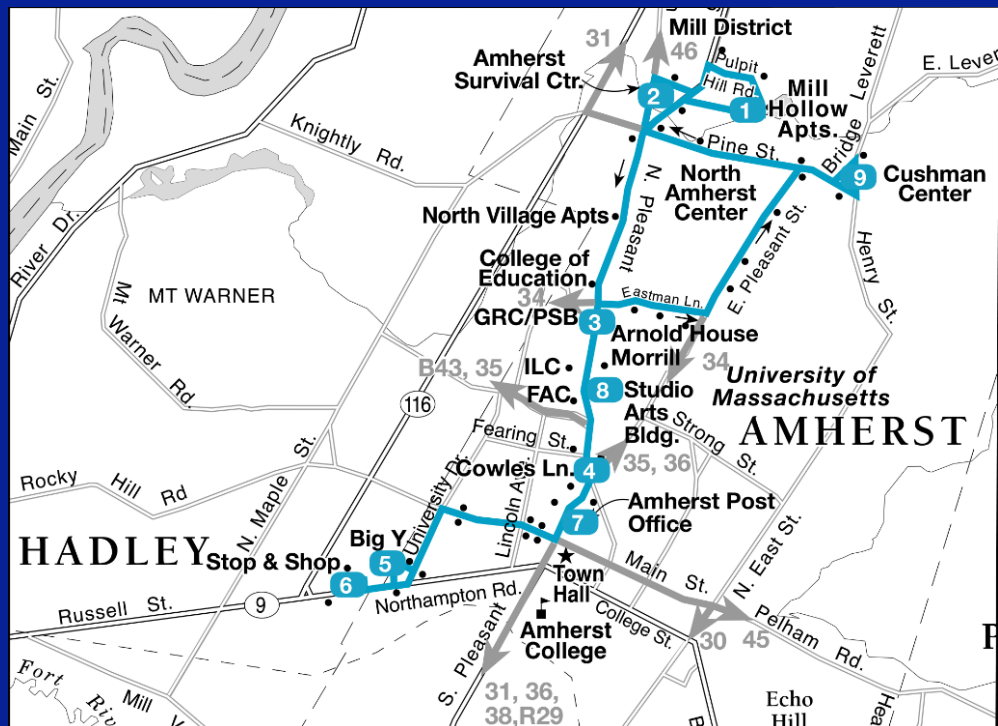
31

The 31 bus travels between South Amherst and Sunderland. From the Amherst Common stop, you can take it north to UMass and North Amherst or south towards The Boulders apartments.



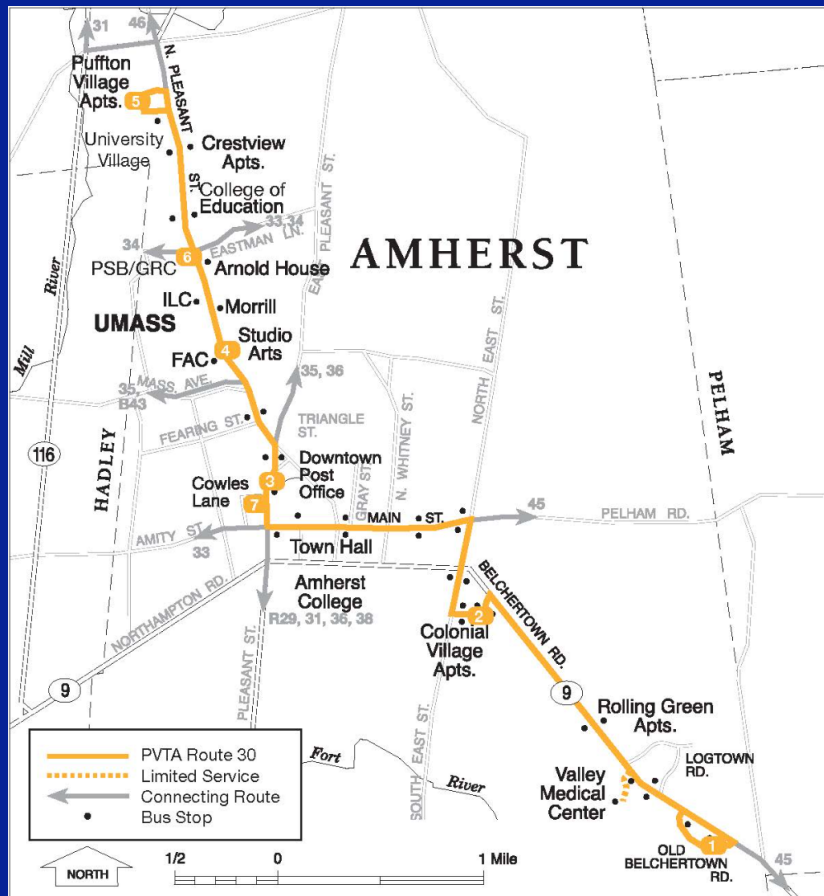
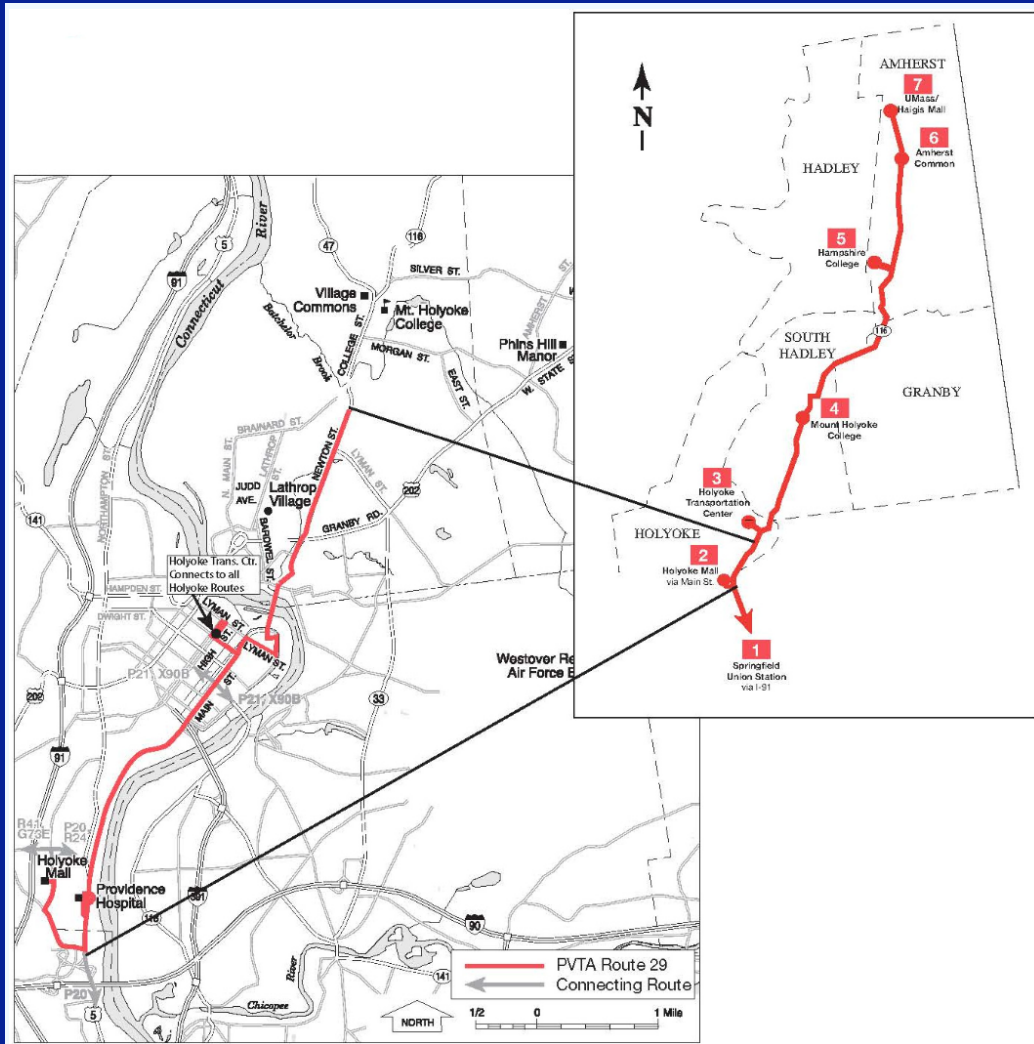
33

The 33 bus travels between Stop and Shop and Puffer's Pond. From the Jones Library stop, you can take it north to UMass, North Amherst, and Puffer's Pond or west to Big Y and Stop and Shop.



R29

The R29 bus travels between Springfield Union Station and UMass. From the Amherst Common stop, you can take it north to UMass Amherst or South to Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, Holyoke Mall, and Springfield Union Station.

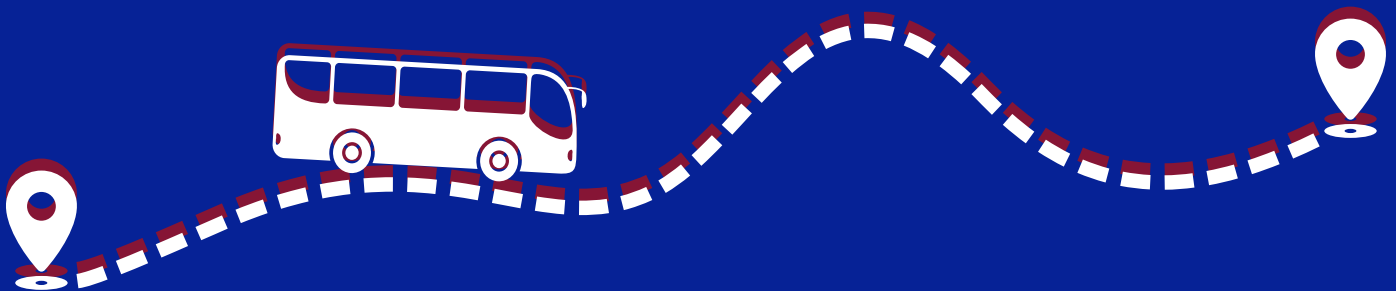


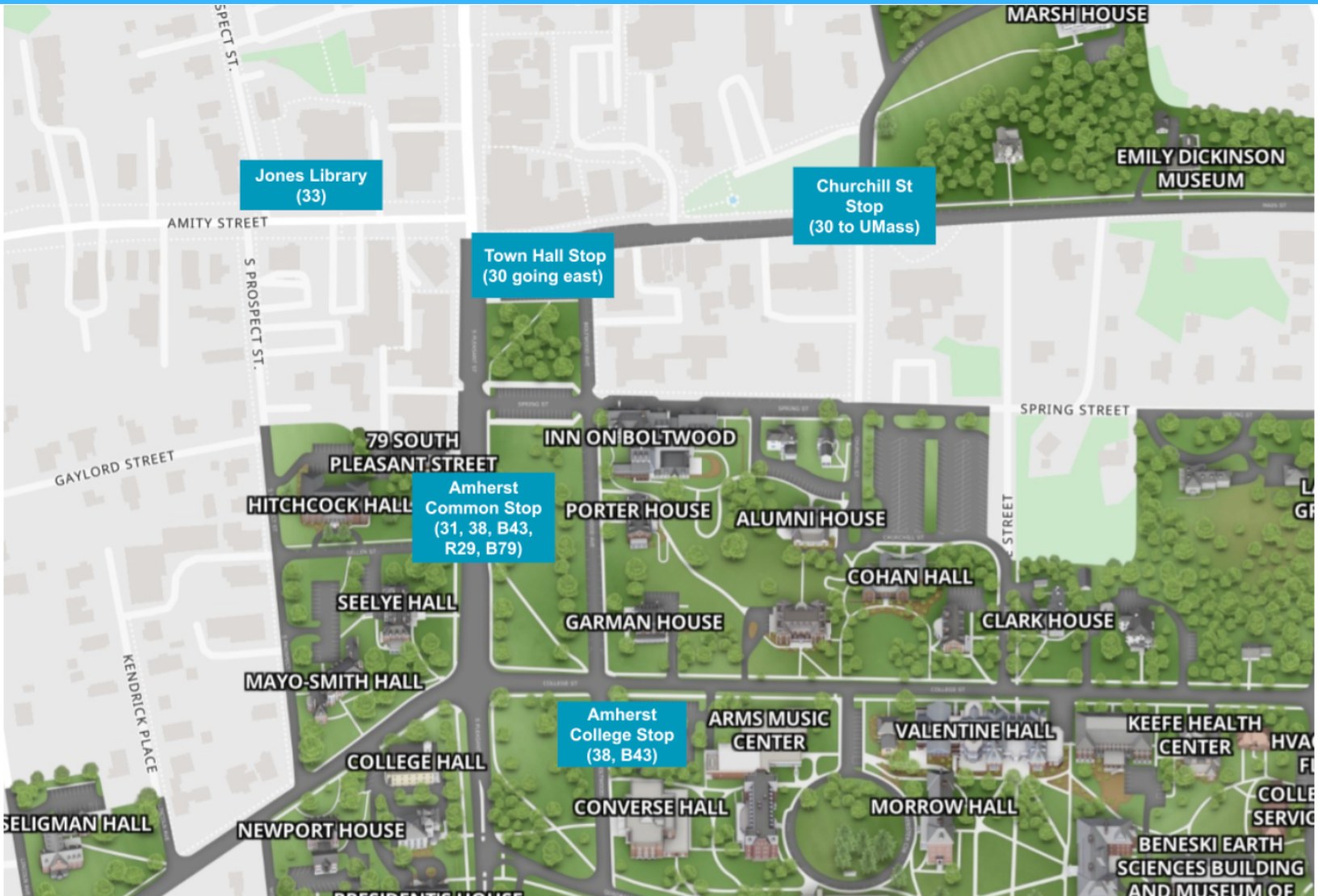
30

The 30 bus travels between UMass and the eastern side of Amherst. From the Churchill St. stop (near Plimpton, Tyler, and Marsh), you can take it north to UMass. From the Town Hall stop, you can take it eastward along Main St. and Belchertown Road up to Old Belchertown Road.

Every bus can travel in two directions, so it is important to not only know which bus route you are taking, but also in what direction you are heading.

On the front of the bus, you will find the route number and the final destination, which indicates the direction. For example, if you are at the college's stop, buses heading north towards UMass will say "38 UMass Haigis Mall" while buses heading south towards Hampshire and Mount Holyoke will say "38 Mount Holyoke College." If you are unsure if a bus is heading to your destination, you can always confirm with the driver as you board.



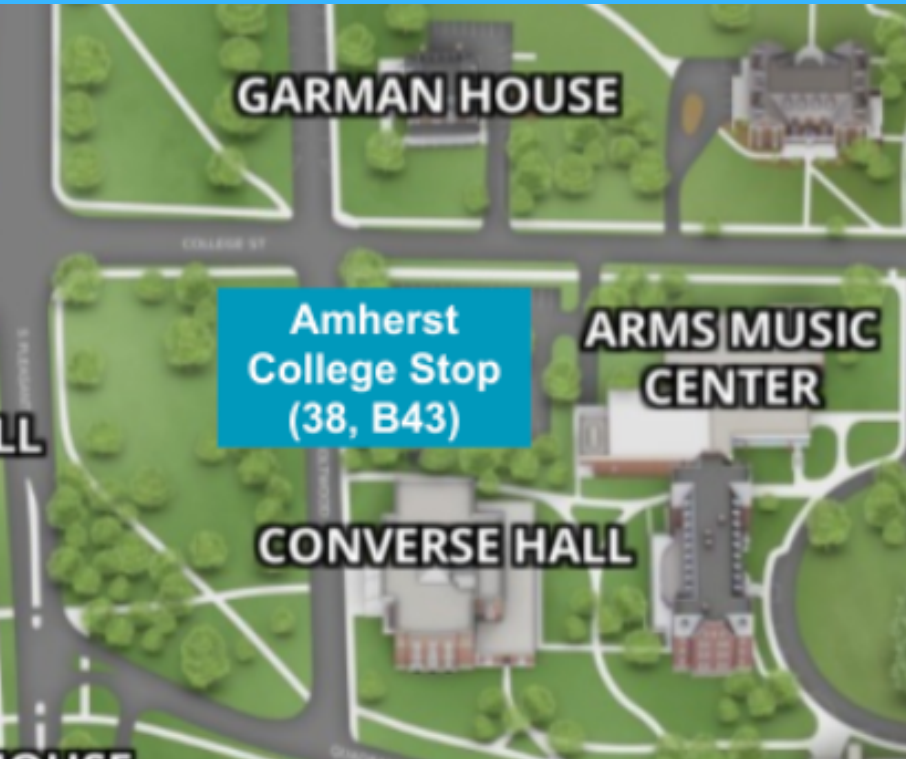


Where and When Can I Catch the Bus?

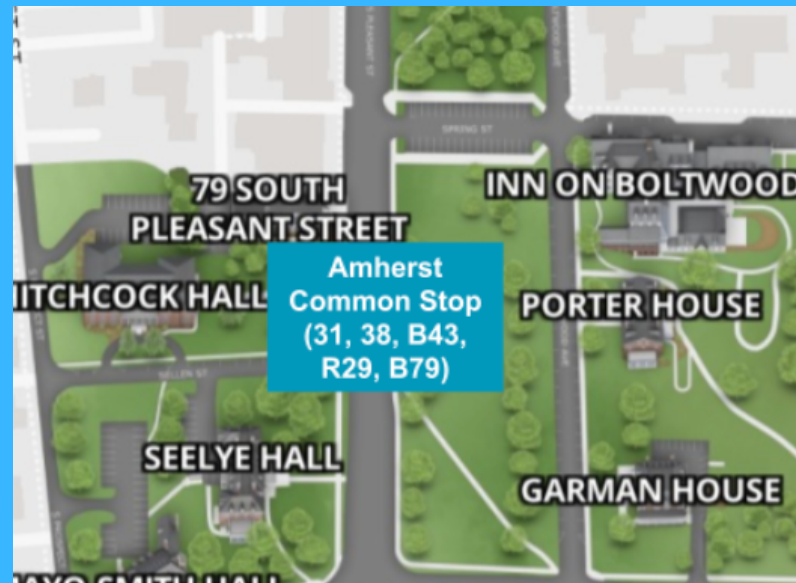
After you know which bus you would like to take, you should determine where you will catch that bus.

There are a number of stops by the college where you can board a bus. All are marked with a PVTA sign and/or bus stop shelter.

The closest stop to the college is near Converse Hall, and is on the corner of College Street and Boltwood Avenue. From there, you can catch the **B43** and **38** buses.



The next closest is the Amherst Common stop, located near Hitchcock Residence Hall. This is the same stop where you can catch the Peter Pan bus. From there, you can take the **B43**, **R29**, **31**, **38**, and **B79** buses.

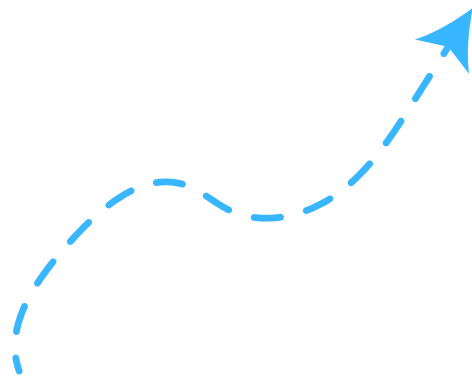


If you head into town,
near Jones Library you
can catch the **33** bus.



Finally, near Tyler, Plimpton, and Marsh,
on the intersection between Churchill
Street and Main Street, you can catch the
30 bus heading north to UMass. In the
alternate direction, going towards eastern
Amherst from UMass, the **30** bus stops
near Amherst Town Hall.

**What is the bus
fare, and how
can I pay it?**



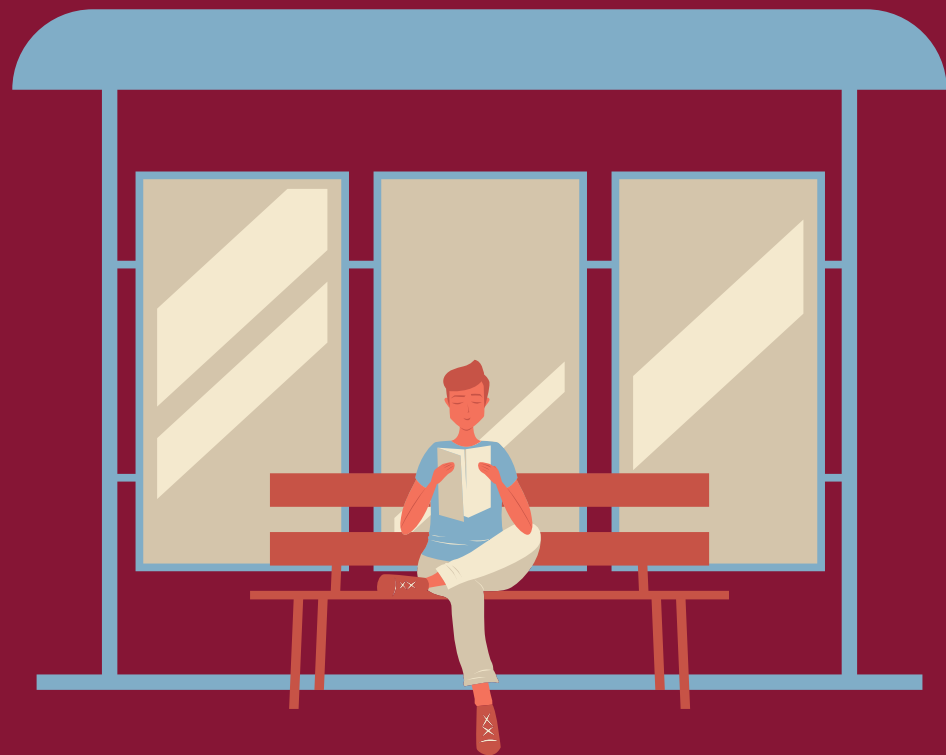
For the most part, you will not need to pay a fare when riding the PVTa during the academic year. A large number of routes are subsidized by the Five Colleges, with some being fare-free year round.

The B79 uses a different fare system, with the amount you pay dependent on your destination. The specific fares are listed on the PVTa website and on the MassDOT BusPlus app.

Routes 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 45, and 46 will never have a fare. While these routes are part of the PVTa system and use PVTa buses, they are operated by UMass Transit Services and are free for all five college students and employees year-round, including the summer.

The B43 and R29 are also free for five college students and employees during the academic school year. To board these buses, you must show your student ID to the driver. If you do not have your ID with you, are taking the B43 or R29 during spring or summer break, or are taking any other PVTa bus (e.g. G73E, B48, P21, etc.), you will need to pay \$1.50, which is the current adult fare as of October 2023.

**What Time Can I
Catch The Bus?
Where Should I Get
off the Bus? What
Tools Can Help?**



There's an app for that!



One of the ways you can find what buses to take and when is through the app **Transit**. When you open the app, it displays which bus routes are closest to you, which stop they depart from, and when the next bus will arrive. You also have the ability to plan a trip by entering an origin and destination. The app will then tell you which bus(es) you need to take to get there, what time you can catch them, and where to get on and off.

Likewise, you can also use **Google Maps**, and select the transit feature when searching for directions. If you are using your computer, it might be worth exploring the surroundings of your departure and arrival stops with the street view feature.



On the **PVTA website**, you can find alerts about any schedule changes or delays, and timetables and route maps for each bus route.

How to catch a ride:

1 Use an app or a website to find which bus you need to take and when it departs

Arrive at least **five** minutes early to your bus, and be sure to check the front of the bus to ensure it is traveling in the desired direction

2

3 Once boarded, ride for the desired number of stops. Be sure to keep track either on a map or pay attention around you

When coming up on your stop, make sure to signal to the driver that you need to stop; public buses do not stop at every stop. You can do so by pulling the yellow cord by the window, or pressing the stop button.

4

5 When the bus stops, get up and exit the bus, **be sure to thank the driver as you leave!**



Thanks for Reading!

Want to learn more?



pvta.com

The Amherst Student

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