



# Future of Fares at WRTA

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CMRPC ANALYSIS

# Research Conducted

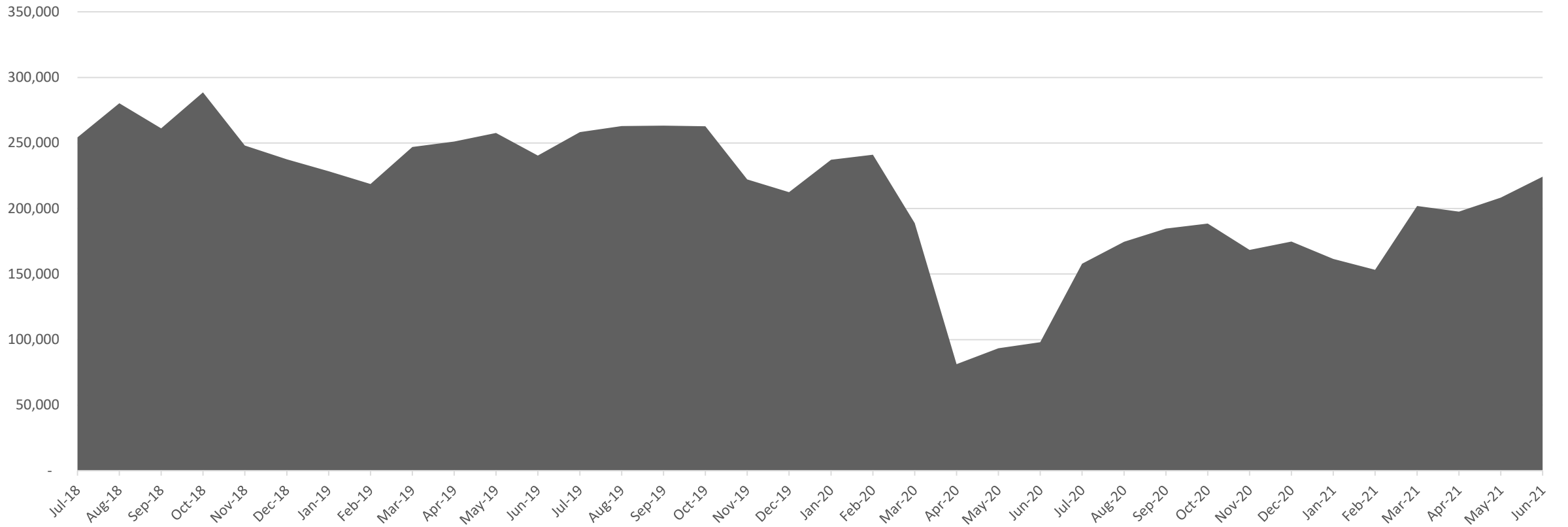
Quantitative data analysis of WRTA ridership over time, and compared to other MA regional transit agencies

Qualitative assessment of pros and cons of free fare

Technical assessment of mobile fare payment systems and income-based fare policies

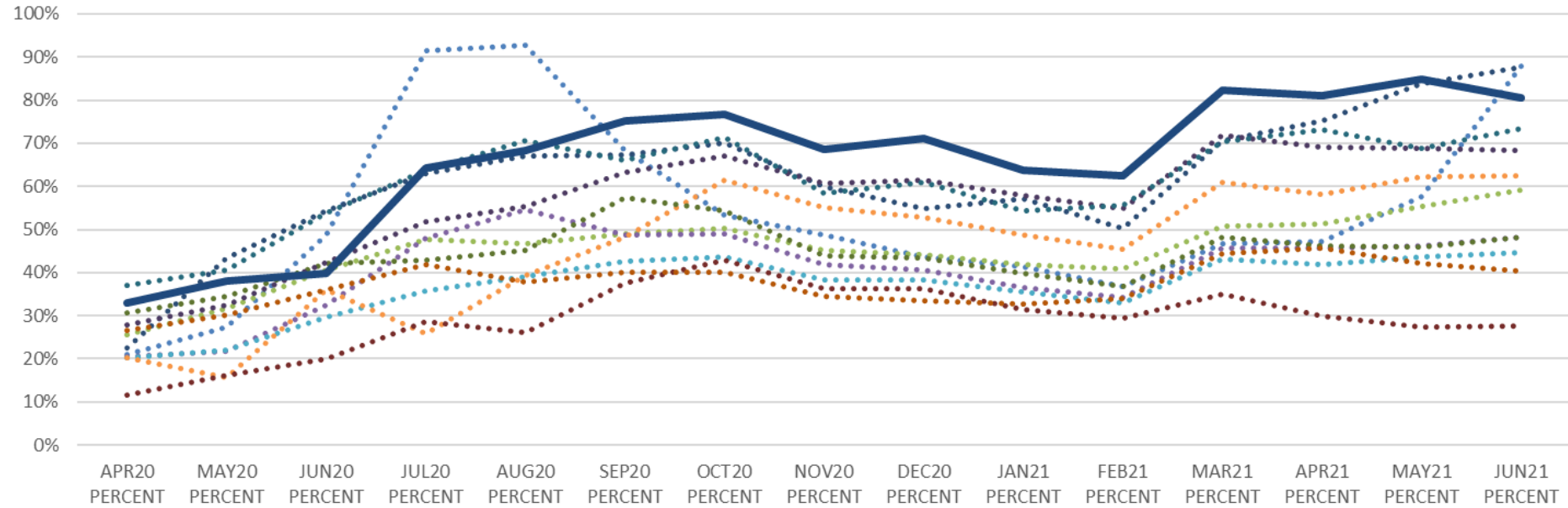
Outreach, including: feedback from WRTA public meetings; public comment from transit-related meetings; comment from MassDOT and FTA; discussions with WRTA Administration and Operations; interviews with other RTA; analysis of available reports and related information

WRTA Systemwide Fixed-Route Ridership By Month



# WRTA Ridership Chart

Systemwide Fixed-Route Ridership as a Percentage of Pre-COVID Average



- Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority
- Lowell Regional Transit Authority
- MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
- Berkshire Regional Transit Authority
- Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
- Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority
- Montachusett Regional Transit Authority
- Pioneer Valley Transit Authority
- Brockton Area Transit Authority
- Cape Ann Transportation Authority
- Southeastern Regional Transit Authority
- Worcester Regional Transit Authority

# Comparative Ridership Chart

# Qualitative Findings

<u>Pros of Free Fare</u>	<u>Cons of Free Fare</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Equitable for all users</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Perceived negative effects on onboard safety and rider/driver experience</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brings transit in line with other public services which are free at point of access</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fiscal losses can be significant, including increased service delivery costs</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Faster, more reliable boarding process</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not easy to make up fiscal losses with currently-available additional state/federal funding</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Smaller-than-expected fiscal losses due to costs associated with fare collection, and remaining fiscal losses can be made up for with state and federal funding, if current bills like SB4278 are passed to provide for this</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fiscal losses can mean reduction in service which winds up hurting everyone, can cause “death spiral” permanently crippling agency’s operability</li></ul>

# Options For Future Operations

- Permanent Systemwide Fare Abolition  
(Maintaining conditions from March 2020-present)
  
- Traditional Fare Payments & Traditional Fares  
(Conditions prior to March 2020)
  
- Mobile Fare Payments
  - Traditional Fare Policy
  - Income-Based Fare Policy
  - Pay-as-you-go fare-capping

# Factors & Impacts To Consider

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# Consideration Of Fare Options & Impacts

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Each category must be considered to fully assess the overall impact of fares and fare-collection decisions.

- Social Impact discusses how decisions about fares and fare collection systems impact low-income individuals and unbanked individuals. It also examines the 'appearance' of WRTA to the non-rider.
- Financial Impact discusses the loss of fare revenue and how the loss could influence the future of WRTA service.
- Ridership Impact is heavily influenced by the needs of the community.
- Service Impact explores the ways that frequency, reliability and availability can be influenced by different fare policies
- Reporting Impact explores the importance of collecting data to display why federal, state, local and grant funding is needed and how it will be used.



# Consideration Of Fare Options & Impacts

## DRAFT SUMMARY OF FARE OPTIONS AND IMPACTS

	The way things were	The way things are	The way things could be
	Past	Present	Future
	Fare Box	Fare Free	MFPS*
 <b>Social Impact</b>			
Service to Social Justice population	--	++	+
Perceived Impact on Onboard Safety	+	-	+
 <b>Financial Impact</b>			
State government influence on future funding	+	-	+
Farebox Recovery	+	--	++
 <b>Ridership Impact</b>			
Total Ridership Levels	-	++	+
Measure of new and distinct riders	--	-	+
 <b>Service Impact</b>			
On-Time Performance	-	+	-
Service Expansion and Enhancements	+	-	++
 <b>Reporting Impact</b>			
Data needed for monthly, quarterly and annual reporting	+	--	++
Data needed in order to request (future grant applications) additional funding for service enhancements	+	--	++
<b>Net Impact</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Positive</b>

\*Mobile Fare Payment System

## Next Steps



WRTA Advisory Board meeting on  
Oct. 21



WRTA ridership survey and  
possible focus groups



# Thank You!

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QUESTIONS?