



**Massachusetts Bay
Transportation Authority**

Forging Ahead: Service Proposal

Fiscal and Management Control Board

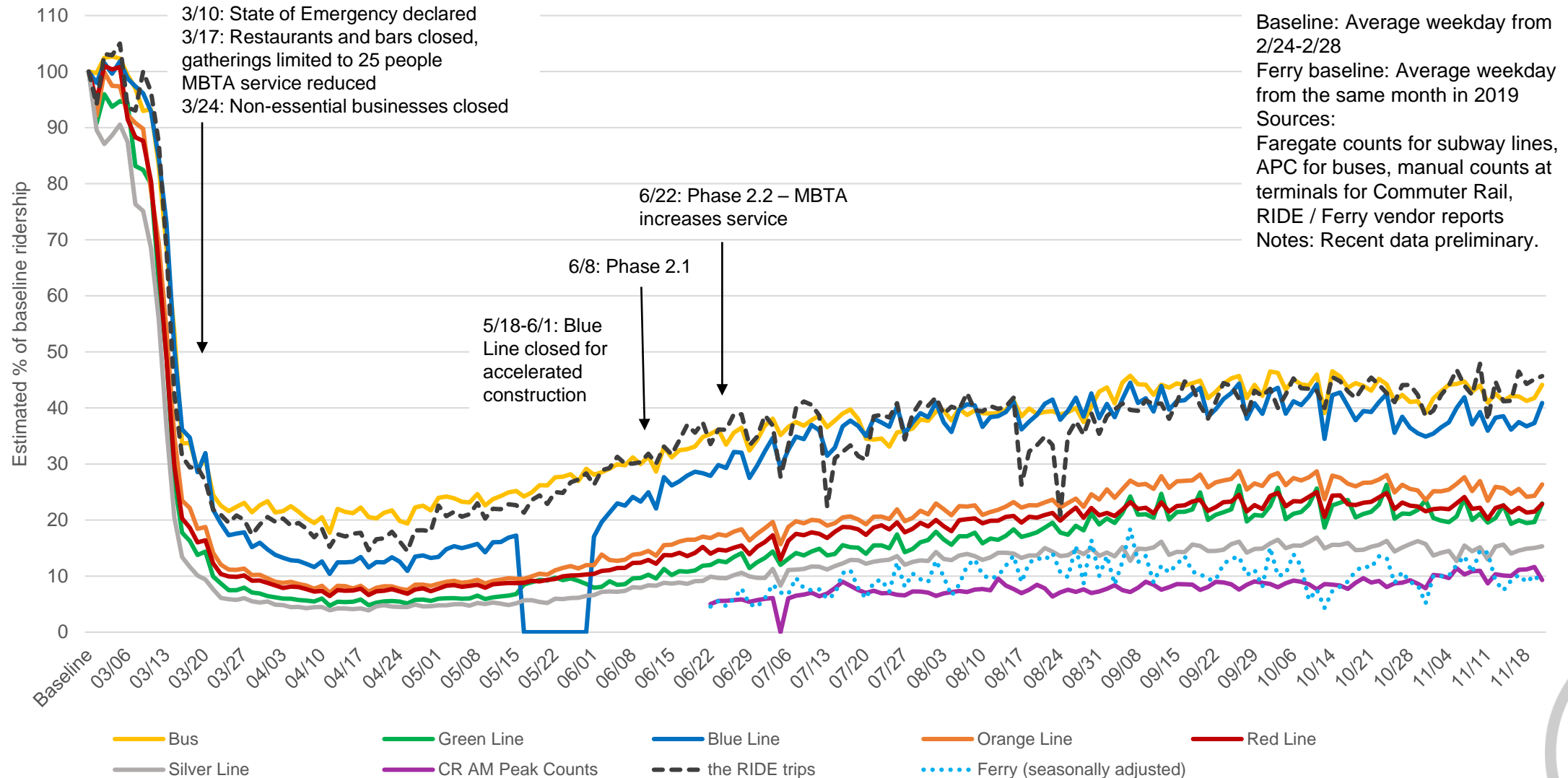
December 7, 2020

Agenda

- Update on ridership
- Initial summary of public feedback
- Framework for considering changes
- Implementation considerations
- Plan for December 14th

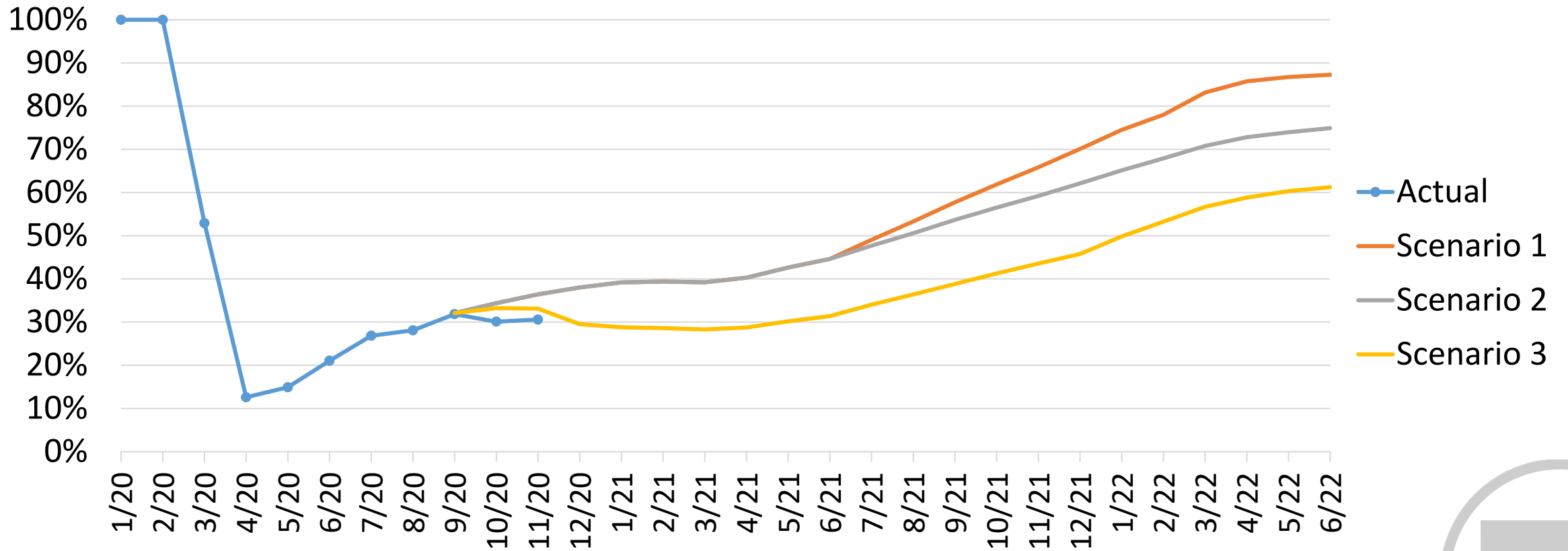


Weekday Ridership by Line and Mode - Indexed to Week of 2/24



Ridership Scenarios

Total MBTA Ridership as % of Pre-COVID



Sources for Actual: Monthly ridership (UPT) as reported to NTD plus estimates for November 2020. All modes including The RIDE.



Recap of 11/9/20 Base Service Proposal

- **All essential services at or above Service Delivery Policy (SDP) for frequency, span and crowding**
 - Fairmount Line
 - All Rapid Transit
 - Bus Routes (~80 routes)
 - RIDE with policy changes (e.g. scheduling window)
- **Reduced level of non-essential services based on demand and alternatives**
 - Reduced peak service on all other Commuter Rail lines (no weekend or evening service, reduced midday service, six closed stops)
 - Reduced frequency on remaining Bus Routes, including smaller service area and consolidated routes
 - All ferry suspended



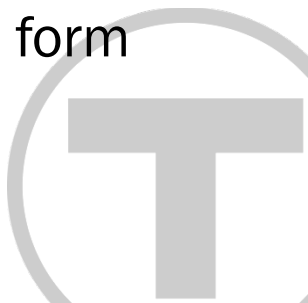
Types of Impacts on Riders

- Lack of Access/Span: most severe impact, but impacts fewer riders
 - Due to elimination of all service within 1/2 mile
 - Due to changes so that service is not available at the hour a passenger wishes to travel or on that day of the week
- Divert to Alternative Service: Impact greatest on seniors/people with disabilities
 - Need to use alternative service within 1/2 mile
- Less Frequent service: Less severe, but impacts more riders
 - Less frequent service still within Service Delivery Policy
 - Less frequent service that could be below Service Delivery Policy



We contacted and heard from many stakeholders

- 10 public meetings and 1 public hearing: 2,010 attendees
- Community liaison outreach
 - 266 community organizations contacted
 - 39 organizations informed us that they shared information with their members
 - 30 organized supplemental community meetings; 3 held in Chinese and 2 in Spanish
- Public comments 6,973+
 - 3,839 comments from online forms
 - 407 comments from official public meetings
 - 172 comments from community meetings
 - 1,398+ emails via public engagement email, representing 829 individuals, 569 form emails and 50 delegation letters



Summary of Public Feedback

- We received feedback about specific changes, on the prioritization, and on the process
- Feedback on the proposals varied by channel
 - Commenters at public meetings prioritized span and access
 - In the online comment tool prioritization of service packages frequency on essential bus and rapid transit rank highest
- General Comments
 - Perception that changes are occurring as people return to work
 - Concern that future schedules with reduced frequency will align with essential workers schedules as well as school schedules especially for reverse commuting and weekend essential workers
 - Concerns about the MBTA's commitment to the environment and mitigating climate change
 - Concerns over the MBTA's commitment to transit oriented development



Comments on Access and Span

“For many riders, the only alternative to the 131 is a 1 to 1.5 mile walk down to Main Street Melrose to catch the 137. In addition, the 131 services a fairly hilly route that can be difficult to navigate on foot especially during the icy winter months. Eliminating the 131 will leave these riders stranded...”

“I am not able to drive due to a medical condition. The only way for me to get to Boston for my full-time job is to take bus 714 to the ferry... The MBTA trains stop very far from the area where I work in Boston. There is also no bus that connects Hull to the MBTA trains.”

“Eliminating all weekend service is cutting off essential workers who commute on a rotating schedule. For example, hospital staff like nurses have rotating schedules outside of a standard M-F 9-5... Providence is a significant commuting hub and it would be doing healthcare workers a disservice to make their commute significantly harder as long as the pandemic continues.”



Comments on Diverting to Alternative Service

“Not continuing to provide E Branch service beyond Brigham Circle is a mistake for a multitude of reasons. First, it is an essential form of transportation to provide service to the VA Hospital. Second, there are more than 600 new units of housing built within the last 5 years on that stretch of South Huntington Ave which rely on the E Branch not only for service into the Longwood Medical area, but to connect to other lines at Park Street, a route which is not serviced by the regularly full 39 bus.”

“I would ride to and from Heath. The need to switch at Brigham to the 39 bus is a significant inconvenience and delay. One must cross two streets at an extremely busy intersection and then board a generally busy (pre-covid) bus. Particularly in Winter. I would invite those proposing this change to actually ride this route in the morning or evening to experience the change for themselves and what it entails...particularly what it entails for elderly or disabled riders.”

“In the area of houses along the streets of Kilmarnock, Peterborough, Jersey, where we live, bus # 55 is the only transport that connects us to the center of Boston, as there are no trams or other buses nearby... Given our age and state of health, we cannot go to the Fenway or Kenmore tram stations.”



Comments on Frequency

“Because of COVID, my workplace is encouraging people to shift their at-work hours to earlier or later in the day so there are fewer people in the building at a time. But I'm not able to do that because I rely on the T to get to work and the low frequency of the bus service outside of peak times greatly increases the length of my commute.”

“I am also frustrated to see that the MBTA is considering running orange line trains every 8 min 30 seconds. In my opinion, the outbound Orange Line trains are some of the most crowded trains—even with the current pandemic. It's not uncommon to get on one and find it difficult to social distance—and with less trains, that will become even more difficult.”

“Adding 2 more minutes to peak arrival times on the Blue Line will be bad. The trains are already crowded enough.”



Comments by Themes

Theme (each comment assigned up to two)	Primary Comment Numbers	Secondary Comment Numbers
Forging Ahead methodology	353	162
Impacts on accessibility for people with disabilities	48	27
Fare impacts of transfers or alternative transport	33	16
Route elimination, consolidation or shortened	1197	130
Impacts on personal travel patterns	61	43
Lack of access to destinations	137	151
Concerns about frequency changes	172	88
Increase in travel time	79	61
Decrease of span on bus/subway and commuter rail, including weekend service	284	76
COVID concerns	93	92
Equity concerns	164	158
Environmental concerns and climate change	54	63

Public Comments by Mode/Route

❖ Commuter Rail: 1176

- Haverhill Line (including Cedar Park Station): 221
- Fitchburg Line: 103
- Framingham / Worcester Line: 98
- Newburyport / Rockport Line: 85
- Providence / Stoughton Line: 76
- Greenbush Line: 53
- Plymouth Station: 73

❖ Bus: 1046

- 214/216 Bus Route: 166
- 131 Bus Route: 141
- 136 Bus Route: 89
- 55 Bus Route: 37

❖ Ferry: 920

- Hingham / Hull Ferry: 479
- Charlestown Ferry: 290

❖ Rapid Transit: 662

- E Line: 300
- Red Line: 200

❖ The Ride: 20

Out of 6,973+ comments, most common routes mentioned



Original proposed service packages

Exact service patterns may change as part of normal service planning cycles to reflect changing ridership patterns

Service Package		Daily Riders impacted (Sept. 2020)	Annual cost (Gross)	Additional details
A1	Restore frequency to Rapid Transit	~120,000 Frequency	\$14M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rapid Transit to 90% of pre-COVID frequency
A2	Restore evening service on Rapid Transit	733 Lack of Access	\$3M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rapid Transit operates past midnight
A3	Restore E Line to Heath Street	~1,000 Divert	\$2M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restore 5 stops to E line, terminate at Heath Street vs. Brigham Circle
B1	Restore weekend service on Commuter Rail	~14,000 (weekend) Lack of Access	\$7-15M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partial (\$7M) on some lines or full weekend service on all lines (\$15M)
B2	Restore evening service on Commuter Rail	939 Lack of Access	\$7M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commuter Rail operates past 9 PM
B3	Invest in new connections & service based on RailVision for Commuter Rail	N/A	\$10-15+M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Commuter Rail Service patterns (e.g. midday service)
C1	Restore frequency to essential Bus routes	~130,000 Frequency	\$7M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essential bus frequency to 100% of pre-COVID, and potentially restore RIDE scheduling window to 30 minutes <i>(bus service may still be adjusted based on crowding)</i>
C2	Restore frequency on non-essential Bus routes	~31,000 Frequency	\$7M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-Essential bus frequency to 90% of pre-COVID <i>(service may still be adjusted based on crowding)</i>
C3	Restore evening service on Bus	1,748 Lack of Access	\$3M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bus routes operate past midnight <i>(not all routes, but those that operate past midnight pre-COVID)</i>
C4	Invest in new connections & service based on Bus Network Redesign	N/A	\$10-15+M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New bus routes to provide better access and/or service for transit critical riders. May partially address eliminated or consolidated routes <i>(may need to be paired with bus priority investments)</i>
D1	Restore partial Ferry to Charlestown/Boston	210 Divert	\$1.5M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restore partial Ferry service to Charlestown/Boston (no weekend service)
D2	Restore partial Ferry to Hingham/Hull	593 Lack of Access	\$2M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restore partial Ferry service to Hingham/Hull (local only, may not serve all Boston stops, no weekend service)

Prioritizing Service Packages

- Online comment tool priorities for service packages based on importance to the region
- Riders consistently prioritize the restoration of the services that they personally used
- Common Priorities
 - High Priority: **Essential Services** - Most riders across modes rate the restoration of **Rapid Transit** and **Essential Bus** service as extremely important
 - Low Priority: **Suspended Modes** - Few riders who didn't use **Ferries** or the **E Line** believe their restoration is extremely important

Percent of Respondents Who Believe Restoring Service is "Extremely Important" to the Region by MBTA Modes

	Rapid Transit			Commuter Rail			Bus				Ferry	
	Frequency	Evening Service	E Line Service to Heath Street	Weekend Service	Evening Service	RailVision	Essential Bus Frequency	Non-Essential Bus Frequency	Evening Service	Bus Network Redesign	Hingham/Hull	Charlestown/Boston
Rapid Transit Riders (n = 539)	64%	55%	30%	43%	44%	35%	61%	36%	49%	31%	19%	19%
E-Line Riders (n = 50)	56%	53%	75%	51%	51%	27%	49%	24%	39%	22%	18%	16%
Essential Bus Riders (n = 264)	69%	58%	28%	46%	46%	36%	72%	46%	58%	35%	21%	22%
Non-Essential Bus Riders (n = 227)	53%	41%	21%	27%	31%	22%	72%	55%	49%	25%	12%	12%
Commuter Rail Riders (n = 474)	51%	46%	30%	62%	64%	31%	46%	31%	38%	26%	21%	22%
Ferry Riders (n = 182)	35%	31%	25%	20%	28%	22%	29%	18%	23%	16%	51%	75%
Average Across Modes	64%	54%	30%	45%	47%	34%	64%	41%	51%	31%	20%	20%

Forging Ahead Online Feedback Form 1,500 responses as of 11/29/20

Plan for Proposing Modifications

Using public feedback and more recent data we are proposing to bring two proposals for December 14th:

- Modifications to Base Service based on customer feedback and additional analysis
- Prioritization of the service packages to revisit as part of the FY22 budget in the spring of 2021



Framework for Proposing Modifications

Type	Proposed Changes
Lack of Access	Some bus route elimination, Hingham/Hull ferry elimination, suburban subsidies, commuter rail stop closures
Lack of Span	Late night bus, Late night rapid transit, evening commuter rail, weekend commuter rail
Divert to alternative route	Charlestown ferry, E-Line shortening, some bus route eliminations
Less Frequency	Commuter rail weekdays, rapid transit, bus



- Based on feedback and analysis, believe priority for modifying base service is focusing on **access & span**, specifically for transit critical riders,
- Thus using public feedback to identify **behaviors and travel trends of transit critical riders that would lose access and span**
- **Examples include:**
 - Bus Routes with higher stranding based on current ridership (number and durability vs. pre-COVID)
 - Municipalities losing all MBTA modal options
 - Need for 2nd and 3rd shift medical workers to have access to some transit, especially across Boston harbor
 - Services where large number of current users may represent a larger portion of 0-1 car households than pre-COVID ridership



Implementation considerations

- **Goal of Forging Ahead is to save resources by adjusting service frequency to more closely match current and near-term ridership and use savings to increase service later in 2021 when needed**
 - Ridership will not come back instantly or evenly even after the vaccine is available: all three planning scenarios show ridership remaining well below pre-pandemic levels throughout FY22
 - Savings from service cuts will be used to increase service frequency later, consistent with the pace of post-vaccine economic reopening, the return of ridership and availability of revenue to pay for additional service
- **The implementation timeline needs to be accelerated based on both what we heard (we need to take as much advantage of lower ridership as possible now) and revised base service proposals:**
 - May be able to implement some bus frequency changes as soon as **March** (would not impact high ridership durable bus routes like Route 111)
 - May be able to reduce ferry schedule as soon as **end of January**
- **Service planning for FY22 and beyond needs to reflect the post-pandemic “new normal”**
 - It may not make sense to return to service exactly as it was provided in 2019 if travel patterns have indeed changed due to things like increased telework for some of the people who were T riders in 2019
- **Service adjustment strategies should emphasize flexibility to ramp up service when justified**
 - MBTA will work with unions/employees to achieve savings while minimizing longer-term loss of trained workforce



What we will share on December 14th

- Complete summary of public comment
- Service proposal for approval (adjusted to align with updated FY22 budget projections as necessary)
- Plan for Title VI Equity Analysis and Environmental Review
- Plan for customer outreach on implementation
- Discussion on how the MBTA will re-add service and rebuild



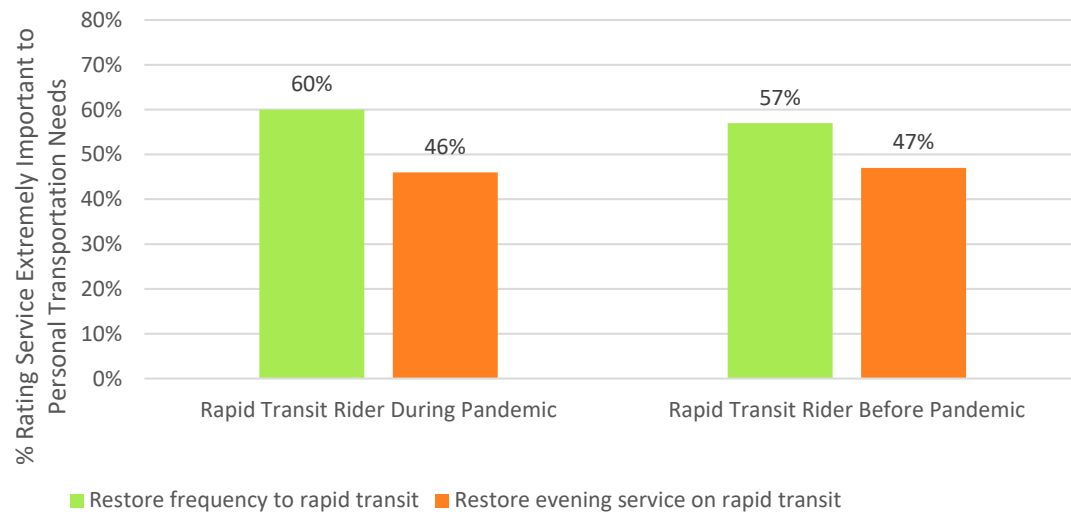
Appendix



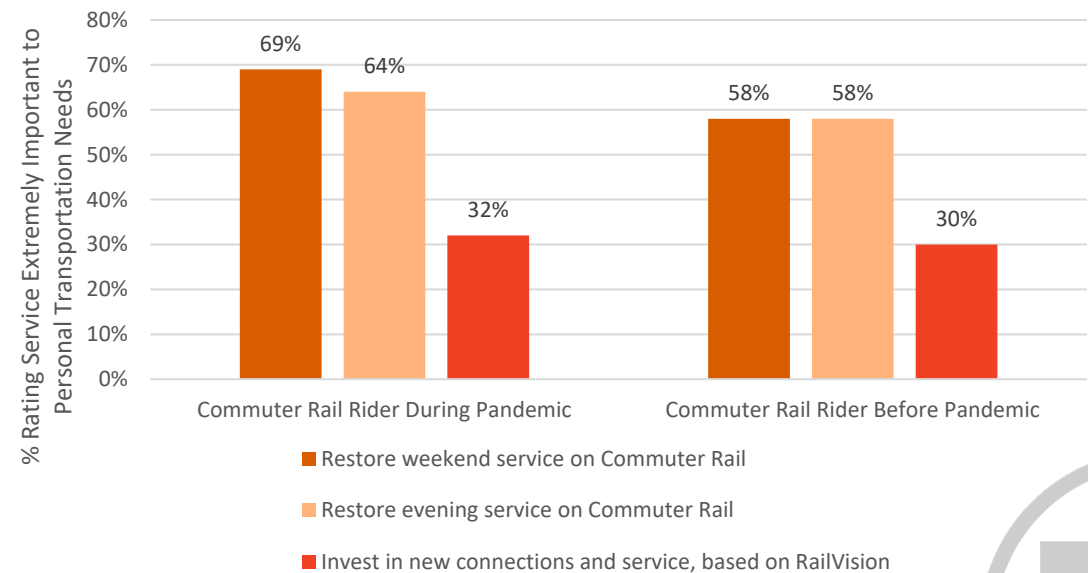
Service Packages: Priorities within Modes

- Riders tend to prioritize restoration of **frequency** above the restoration of **span** and all service restoration over **investments in new connections and service**

Rapid Transit Service Packages



Commuter Rail Service Packages



Service Packages: Priorities within Modes (Cont.)

- Riders tend to prioritize restoration of **frequency** above the restoration of **span** and all service restoration over **investments in new connections and service**

