



**Massachusetts Bay
Transportation Authority**

Fall 2020 Commuter Rail Schedule Changes

Fiscal and Management Control Board

September 14, 2020

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Overview

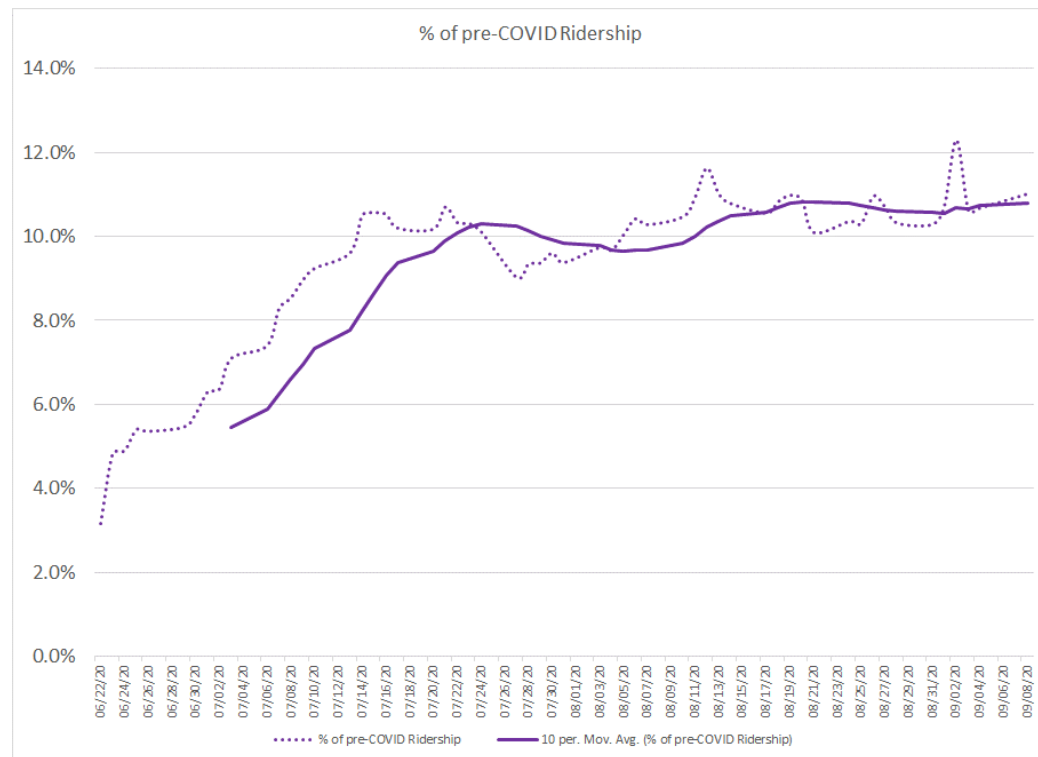


- Ridership
- Fall Schedule Changes
- Update on Pilots



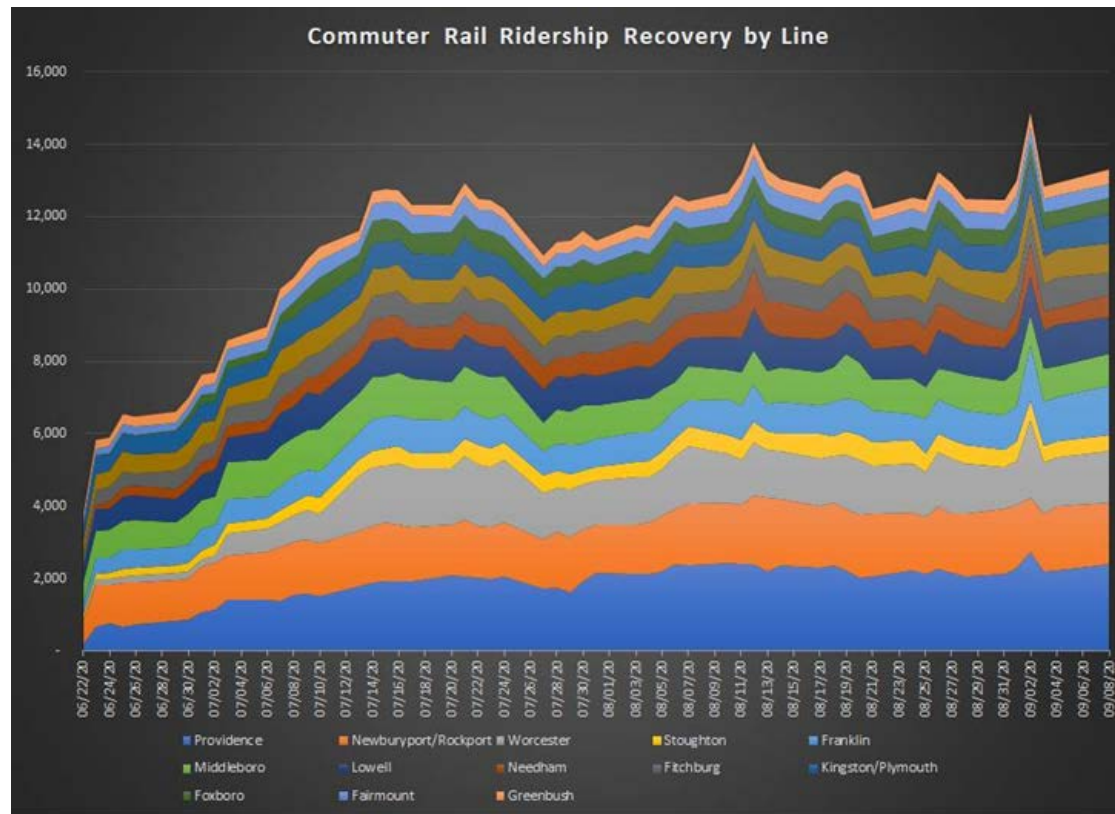
Introduction

- Around 7% of AM peak ridership has returned while all day ridership has trended at about 11%
- Reduced service implemented in March 2020; Increased service in June 2020 to roughly 85% of normal service
- Schedules have historically been focused on peak period ridership patterns
- Most downtown Boston work locations remain closed



Ridership Trends

- Fairmount and Middleboro Lines have the strongest % recovery
- Providence and Newburyport/Rockport lines are carrying the highest volumes



Fall Schedule Change Goals

- Cost Neutral proposal
- Accommodate traditional ridership and encourage ridership where commutes have changed (e.g., staggered starts) or become a new option for some customers



Fall Schedule Strategies

- Level out service consistently over the course of the day to eliminate gaps in mid-day service to provide more options to riders to promote social distancing.
- Increase service on two pilot lines (Middleboro and Eastern Route) where bus ridership is high (Brockton and Lynn), testing whether there is demand for more frequent and off-peak service in communities with many essential workers and residents who are already transit users.
- While fuel costs are estimated to increase by \$500k, not operating the late-night Old Colony and Foxboro pilots adequately offsets the increase



Fall Schedule Key Concepts

- More evenly distributed service throughout the day (e.g. Providence Line)
 - Previous schedules have service ranging from 20 min to 120 min headways throughout the day
 - Fall proposal offers consistent all-day service with 60-minute headways
- Better commute options (e.g. Worcester Line)
 - New service sees Express trains re-introduced, the Heart to Hub trains brought back and operates at more convenient times and also serve Framingham.

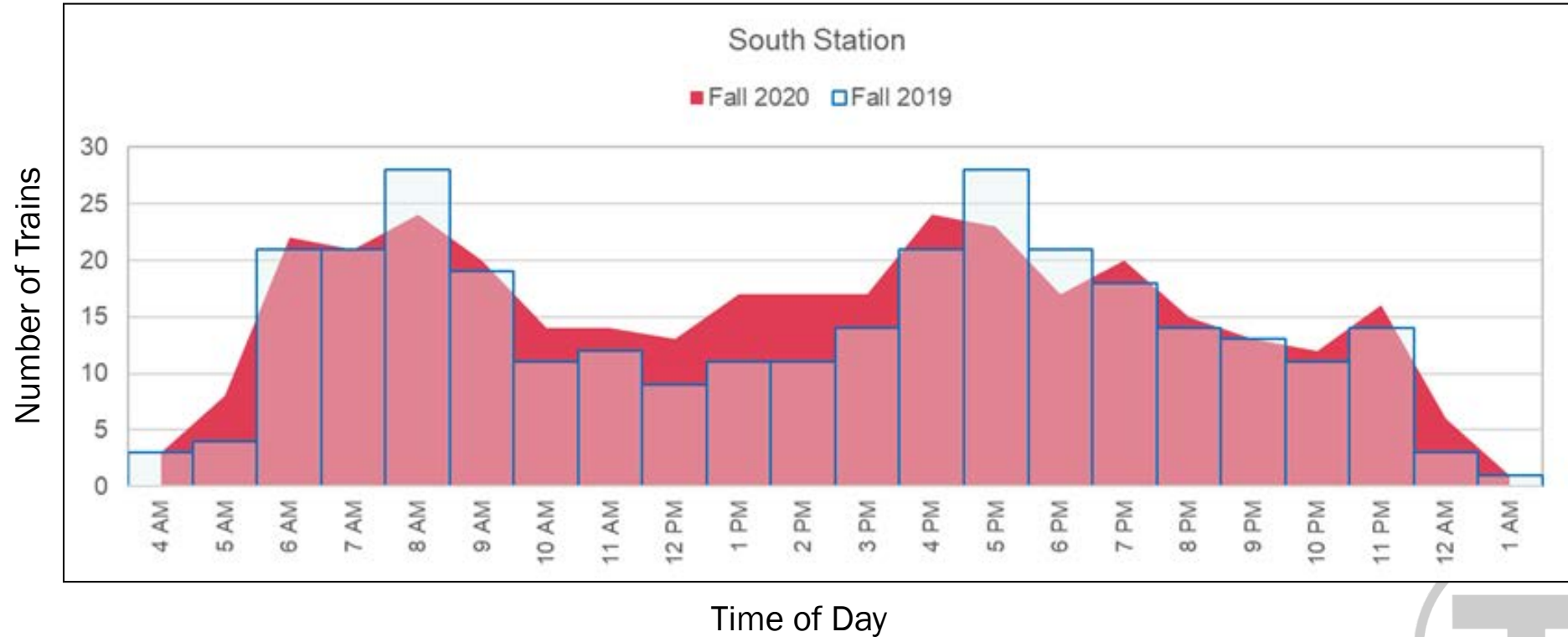


Fall Schedule Examples

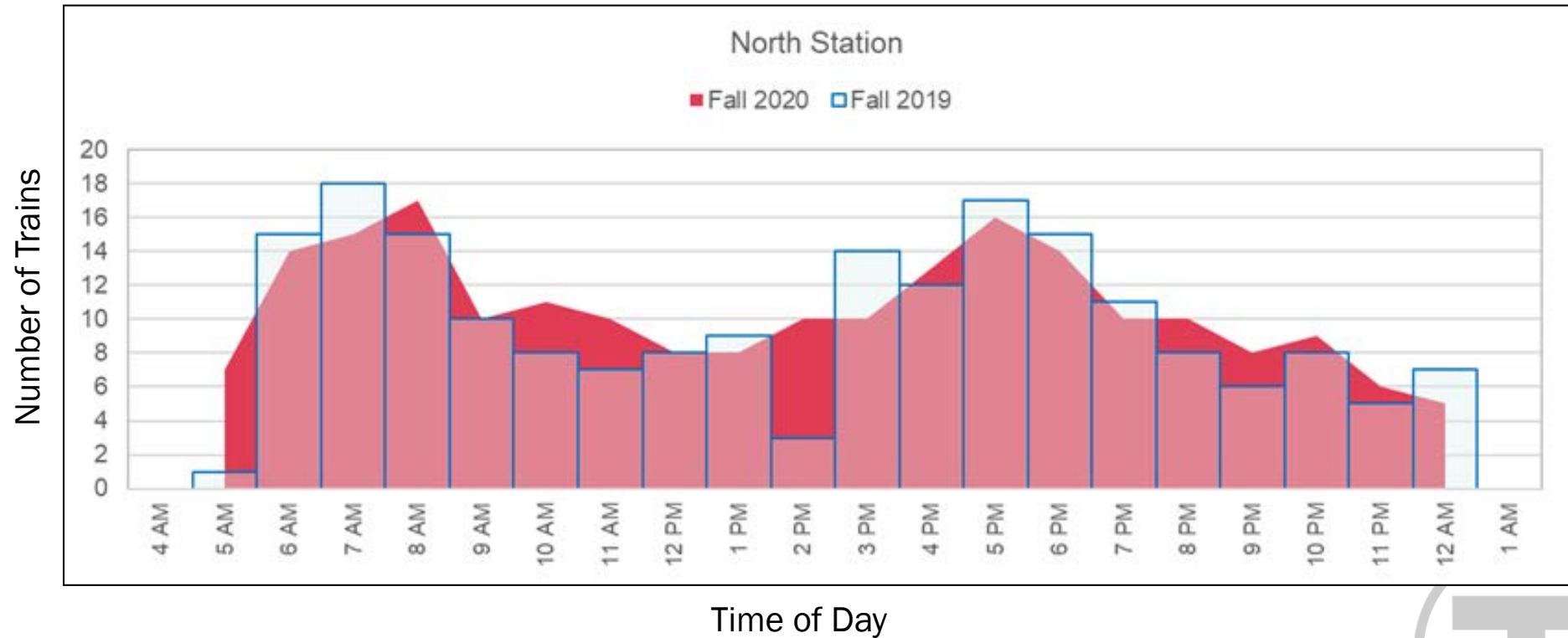
- Increased weekday train count from 505 in Fall 2019 to 544 in Fall 2020
 - 32 of the 39 new trains (82%) serve either Fairmount, Brockton or Lynn
 - Utilizes same number of train sets and crews as October 2019
- Lynn Service:
 - Fall 2019 mid-day service ranged 30-90 minutes
 - Fall 2020 mid-day service every 30 minutes
- Brockton Service:
 - Fall 2019 mid-day service ranged 90-120 minutes
 - Fall 2020 mid-day service every 60-70 minutes
- Fairmont Service:
 - Fall 2019 mid-day service every 60 minutes
 - Fall 2020 mid-day service every 45 minutes



Fall Schedule Illustration - South



Fall Schedule Illustration - North



Fall Schedule Next Steps

- Finalize schedules by end of September, taking into account:
 - Reviewing schedules with partner railroads
 - Incorporating Slippery Rail Season mitigation
 - Identifying conflicts with current capital project work windows (all-day service concepts reduce work windows, which may require implementing construction schedules when necessary)
- Print and distribute fall schedules and implement information campaign to promote the service change
- **Go-Live Monday, November 2**



Updates on Service Pilots

- Late-night South Shore monitored schedule change (started Fall 2019): will end with Fall 2020 Schedules, will be considered in the future when ridership and large events in Boston return
- Foxboro pilot (started Fall 2019): Suspended with new Fall 2020 Schedule, Scheduled Restart in Spring 2021
- Fairmount Line (started June 2020): Continued and expanded in Fall 2020 schedules
- Evaluation criteria will have to change to account for lower ridership and new budget realities



Update on Fairmount Line Pilot

- 8 additional trips added to Fairmount Line service on June 22, 2020
 - 2 further trips added with Fall 2020 schedule to provide trains at regular 45-minute intervals
- Platform validators at Zone 1A stations
- Fairmount Line ridership has highest percent (19%) of AM peak ridership compared to pre-COVID of any line
- Average weekday ridership to South Station of 166 (August 24-28th)
- As of September 4, there were 755 taps on the platform validators since the pilot started



Updates on Fare Pilots

- Lynn Zone 1A pilot extended to December 31, 2020
- 5 Day Flex Pass extended to December 31, 2020
- Youth Pass valid on all Commuter Rail Zones extended to December 31, 2020
- Foxboro reverse commuter pilot pauses October 30, 2020



Lynn Pilot Takeaways

- Extended until December 31, 2020
- ~74 daily AM peak inbound boardings at Lynn (26 AM peak outbound boardings) at last counts in late July
- No clear shift to parking at Lynn (from Salem/Beverly)
- No clear increase in total ridership on *Newburyport/Rockport Line* due to Lynn pilot, Lynn share of line ridership has increased
- Increase at Lynn could be new trips due to pilot, shifts from other stations on the line or changing demand due to COVID
- No evidence that bus crowding has decreased on alternative bus routes
- Team will continue monitoring the pilot



Appendix



Lynn Pilot Communication Efforts



- A-frame signs
- Digital billboard at Wonderland
- Local newspaper ads
- Radio ads
- Social media
- Tobin Bridge email
- Elected official outreach



Comparison of Schedules: Oct. 2019 vs. Jun. 2020 COVID vs. Proposed Oct. 2020

Newburyport/Rockport

	Inbound			Outbound		
	Proposed	Current	Oct '19	Proposed	Current	Oct '19
Peak	13	8	12	11	7	11
Off-Peak	27	20	22	30	20	22
Total	40	28	34	41	27	33

Lowell

	Inbound			Outbound		
	Proposed	Current	Oct '19	Proposed	Current	Oct '19
Peak	7	5	8	7	5	7
Off-Peak	20	16	17	20	16	18
Total	27	21	25	27	21	25

Haverhill

	Inbound			Outbound		
	Proposed	Current	Oct '19	Proposed	Current	Oct '19
Peak	7	5	8	6	5	8
Off-Peak	12	11	13	13	11	13
Total	19	16	21	19	16	21

Fitchburg

	Inbound			Outbound		
	Proposed	Current	Oct '19	Proposed	Current	Oct '19
Peak	6	5	7	6	5	7
Off-Peak	13	11	12	13	11	12
Total	19	16	19	19	16	19

Comparison of Schedules: Oct. 2019 vs. Jun. 2020 COVID vs. Proposed Oct. 2020

Worcester

	Inbound			Outbound		
	Proposed	Current	Oct '19	Proposed	Current	Oct '19
Peak	10	7	12	8	6	9
Off-Peak	18	12	16	20	13	17
Total	28	19	28	28	19	26

Franklin/Foxboro

	Inbound			Outbound		
	Proposed	Current	Oct '19	Proposed	Current	Oct '19
Peak	8	7	8	7	7	8
Off-Peak	18	19	19	18	18	18
Total	26	26	27	25	25	26

Needham

	Inbound			Outbound		
	Proposed	Current	Oct '19	Proposed	Current	Oct '19
Peak	5	4	5	4	4	5
Off-Peak	11	11	11	12	11	11
Total	16	15	16	16	15	16

Providence/Stoughton

	Inbound			Outbound		
	Proposed	Current	Oct '19	Proposed	Current	Oct '19
Peak	12	10	14	9	8	11
Off-Peak	24	20	22	28	23	24
Total	36	30	36	37	31	35

Comparison of Schedules: Oct. 2019 vs. Jun. 2020 COVID vs. Proposed Oct. 2020

Fairmount

	Inbound			Outbound		
	Proposed	Current	Oct '19	Proposed	Current	Oct '19
Peak	6	6	5	5	6	5
Off-Peak	19	18	15	20	18	15
Total	25	24	20	25	24	20

Kingston/Plymouth

	Inbound			Outbound		
	Proposed	Current	Oct '19	Proposed	Current	Oct '19
Peak	5	4	5	4	3	4
Off-Peak	7	7	7	8	8	8
Total	12	11	12	12	11	12

Middleborough

	Inbound			Outbound		
	Proposed	Current	Oct '19	Proposed	Current	Oct '19
Peak	6	4	5	4	4	5
Off-Peak	10	7	7	12	7	7
Total	16	11	12	16	11	12

Greenbush

	Inbound			Outbound		
	Proposed	Current	Oct '19	Proposed	Current	Oct '19
Peak	5	4	5	4	4	5
Off-Peak	7	7	7	8	7	7
Total	12	11	12	12	11	12