



**Massachusetts Bay
Transportation Authority**

Forging Ahead: Commuter Rail

November 9, 2020

Overview of Service Changes

- The MBTA is providing more service than its revenues can support and its ridership justifies so today staff will propose adjusting service levels to a new, temporary “Base Service” that will gradually be implemented in CY 2021. This Base Service realigns service to match current ridership patterns while also preserving and protecting service for those who depend most critically on the MBTA for frequent and reliable service by reducing primarily non-essential services.
- The vast majority of MBTA service will continue and the service changes are not permanent. The MBTA will periodically realign service to match current and future ridership patterns, when durable revenue is available for pay for such service.
- No increases in fares are being proposed.
- The proposed service adjustments are not final and an extensive public engagement process begins today. On Tuesday the MBTA will hold the first of 11 virtual public meetings, which will continue through December 3, to accept public feedback on the proposed service changes. Online feedback is also being accepted, allowing riders to comment on proposed changes to the services that they use.
- The FMCB is scheduled to vote on the changes on December 7, so that planning can begin for gradually making the changes in 2021.
- While some service changes on Commuter Rail and Ferry could take place as early as January, the changes to Rapid Transit would be made in the spring and to Bus in the summer. This will allow the MBTA to adjust the proposed basic service if warranted by changes in ridership and if additional, durable revenue becomes available.



Most Service Is Preserved

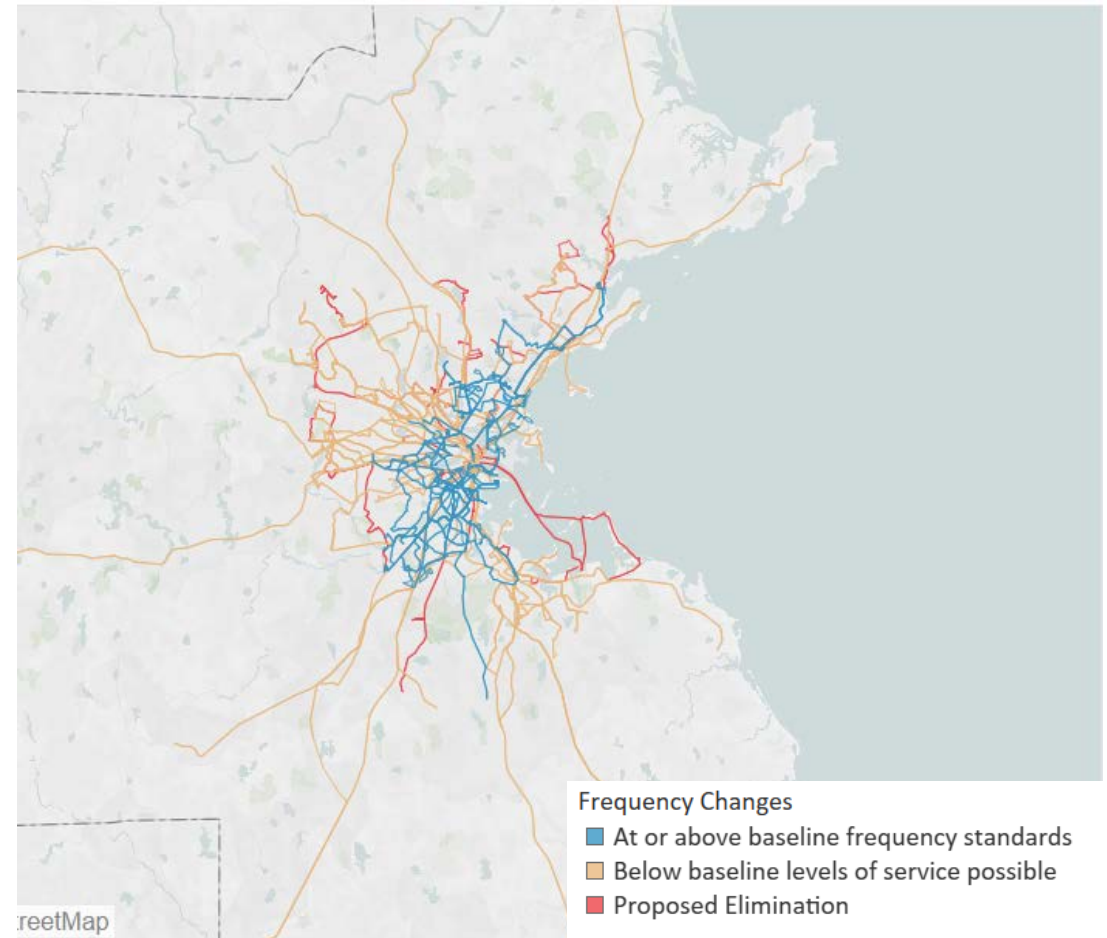
Current Weekday trips (Sept. 2020):

- 82% of weekday trips on essential services
- 18% of weekday trips on non-essential services
- 3% of current weekday trips will lack access or have to divert due to proposed changes (span, eliminations, station closures, short-turns)

Base service represents (weekly service hours vs. pre-COVID):

- 85% of Bus
- 70% of Rapid Transit
- 65% of Commuter Rail
- 0% of Ferry

Under this proposal 78.5% of households in the MBTA service area have MBTA service within ½ mile compared to 82% previously

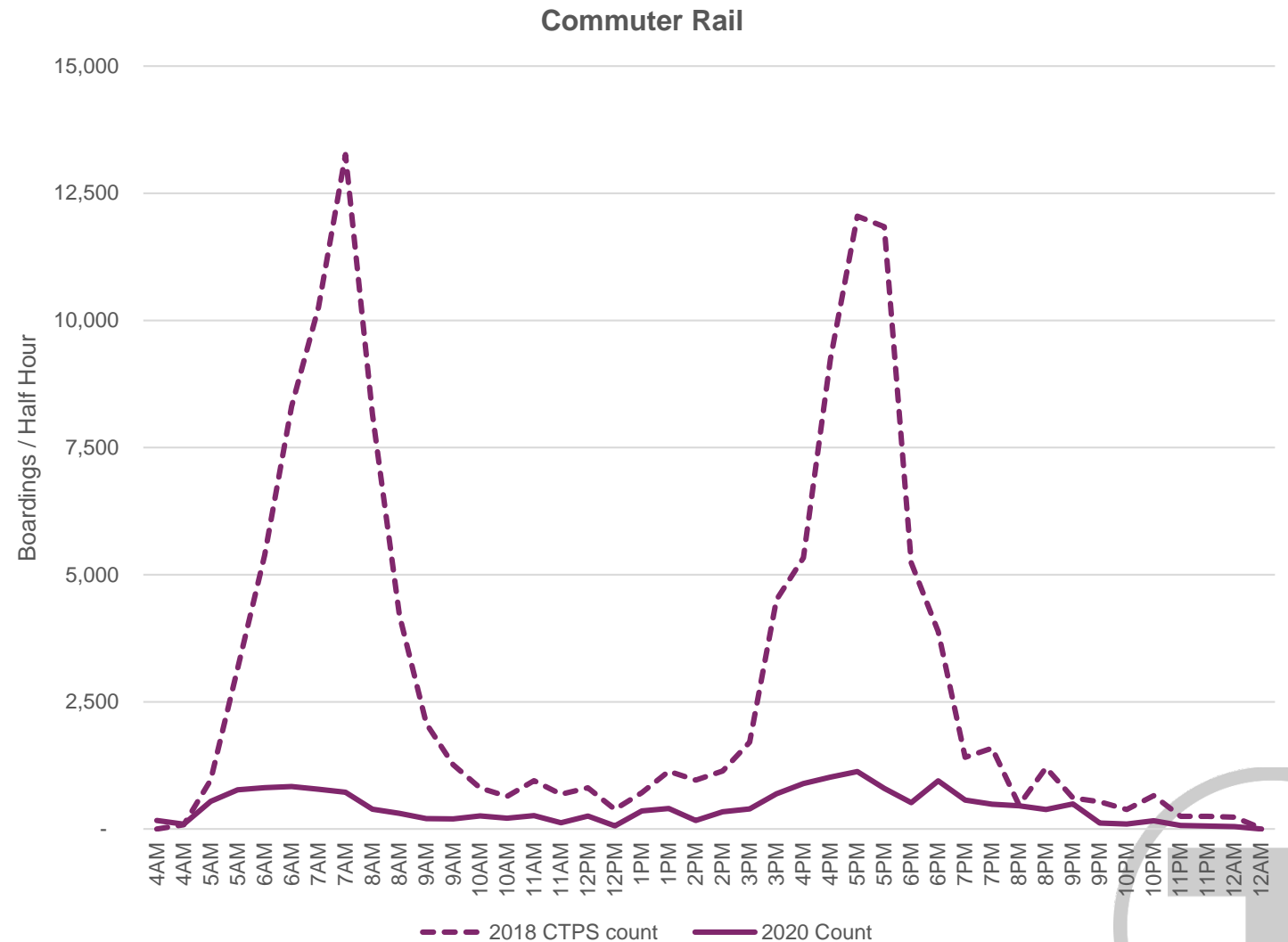


Commuter Rail Ridership

- Approximately 13% of normal ridership, or ~16,000 daily riders (but during AM Peak, ridership is only 8.5% of normal)
 - Running ~85% of regular service in Sept/Oct 2020 (435 trains vs. 505)
 - Starting Nov 2, 2020, “smoothing” service throughout day and running 544 trains
- Weekend Boardings:**
~14K (vs. 31K in 2019)

Weekday Boardings after 9pm

	2019	2020
Boardings	2929	939
Percent	2.3%	5.9%



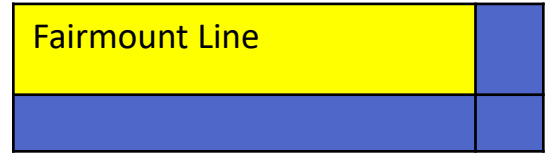
Changes at a glance – Commuter Rail

- Stop all service after 9 PM (Fairmount closer to 10 PM)
- Stop all weekend service (Fairmount replaced by bus)
- Decrease weekday peak service and some midday service, reducing from 505 trains (Fall 2019) to 430 trains
- Close 6 (out of 141) stops based on low ridership, operational impacts, and availability of alternatives
- Specific service levels by line to take into account ridership patterns from adjusted Fall 2020 schedules (more balanced service throughout day)



Base service at a glance:

Sept. 2020 ridership: 12% of pre-COVID rider.
 65% of pre-COVID service hours
 \$45M annual savings vs. FY21 budget



Commuter Rail Base Service

	FY21 Budgeted service	FY22 Base Service	2017 Service Delivery Policy <small>(only applicable for essential service)</small>
Hours of operations <small>(varies by line)</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5/6:00 AM until 1:00 AM (weekdays) – all lines in operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5/6:00 AM until 9:00 PM (weekdays only) – all lines in operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 AM – 10:00 PM (weekdays) 8:00 AM – 6:30 PM (Saturdays)
Frequency of trains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 505 trains (Fall 2019); 544 trains (Fall 2020) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 430 trains, rebalanced across lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-4 trips in peak direction Every 3 hours in each direction all other times
Weekend service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saturday & Sunday service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No weekend service (Fairmount Line replaced by bus) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saturday service only
Additional customer impacts		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~6 station closures (low foot traffic, operational time savings) Shorter trainsets 	

Commuter Rail details

Ridership impacts (based Sept. 2020 ridership):

- Lack of Access (loss of weekend and post-9PM service): ~15,000 weekend riders
- Divert/Lack of Access: <50 riders
- Less frequency service: ~16,000 daily riders

Consequences/impacts from reducing service to base service level:

- Will take at least 1-2 years to re-hire and re-train workforce when returning service, potentially longer to expand locomotive and coach fleet size
- Savings do not include additional cost to mothball assets (up to 100 coaches and 8 locomotives)
- Closure of Needham Facility

Total gross savings:

- Up to \$8M in FY21
- \$45M in FY22



Potential Station Closures

Station	Line	City/Town	2018 Boardings (inbound)	2020 Boardings (inbound)	Reason	Closest alternative (all the same Commuter Rail zone)
Plimptonville	Franklin	Walpole	12	<5	Low ridership, not accessible	Walpole, 1.8mi – 345 parking spaces (only ~15 cars/day)
Prides Crossing	Rockport	Beverly	12	<5	Low ridership, not accessible	Beverly Farms, 1mi – 25 parking spaces*
Silver Hill	Fitchburg	Weston	11	<5	Low ridership, not accessible	Kendal Green, 2.1mi – 57 parking spaces*
Hastings	Fitchburg	Weston	18	<5	Low ridership, not accessible	Kendal Green, .8mi - 57 parking spaces*
Plymouth	Plymouth	Plymouth	21	<10	Operational improvements	Kingston, 2.4 mi – 1,030 parking spaces (very low utilization)
Cedar Park	Haverhill	Melrose	98	~20	Low ridership, not accessible	Wyoming Hills, .6 mi – ~30 parking spaces*

Stations selected due to low ridership, operational impacts, and availability of alternatives

* Parking lots operated by non-MBTA affiliates or local authorities, so utilization data unavailable

