

Public Transit

FARE-FREE STUDY
PRESENTATION

APRIL 2021





Fare-Free or Zero Fare Services

- Reviewed multiple times in the last 15 years.
- Studied in recent Legislative Study
- COVID Relief funds allow for more Federal dollars to be used for operations.
- Rural and Urban Fares need to be looked at separately (funding, fare revenue % of ops, levels of service, etc.).
- Fare-Free assessment planned with the CCRPC

REPORT TO THE
LEGISLATURE PURSUANT
TO ACT 59 OF 2019,
SECTION 20 Report on
Methods to Increase the
Use of Public Transit in
Vermont



Fare Free Recommendation:

4. Explore Fare Free policy Fare free transit is an option that **could make transit more attractive**, but it would not have a large impact on rural transit ridership because much of the rural transit service in Vermont is already free or low fare.

However, in Chittenden County, eliminating fares could increase ridership by up to 40% based on the experience of similar areas, but it would leave a budget hole of more than \$2 million and would not result in a significant decrease in automobile travel. Rather, most new trips would be made by existing riders taking more trips on the bus, and by people who currently walk or don't take trips at all taking advantage of the free service.

A more moderate approach may be found in employer subsidized transit-pass programs such as the Capital Commuters program. **Next steps: Consider State budget implications of Fare Free transit for all rural systems in Vermont; evaluate the cost and benefit of expansion of the Capital Commuters program to all state employees.**