

Did COVID kill transit... or save it from itself?

Herbert Higginbotham
National Director, Transit + Shared Mobility
Cambridge Systematics

Transportation Research Forum
Washington DC Chapter

December 9, 2020



We had very strong trends before the pandemic that transit was becoming, outside of New York City, increasingly insignificant and irrelevant in America. What the pandemic has done is just underscored that and accelerated that and maybe in some places brought it to a final conclusion.

Randal O'Toole, The Cato Institute

Three Crises of 2020

Health



*How do we
provide safe rides?*

Economy



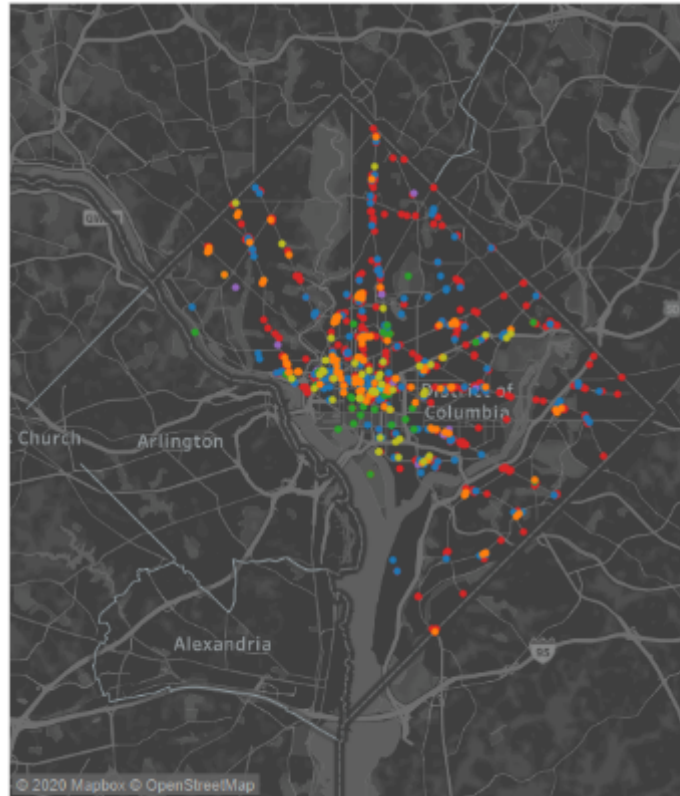
*How do we
maintain solvency?*

Social Equity



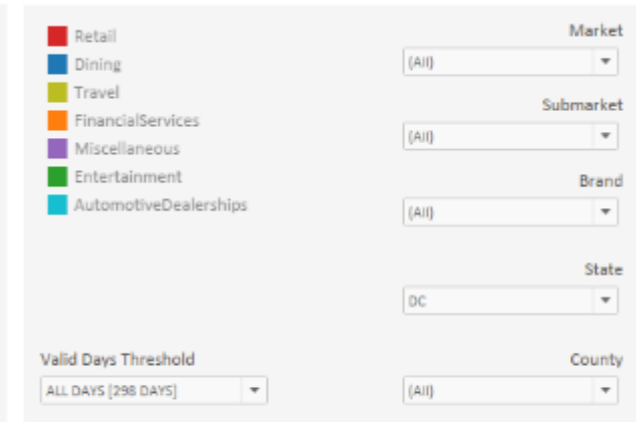
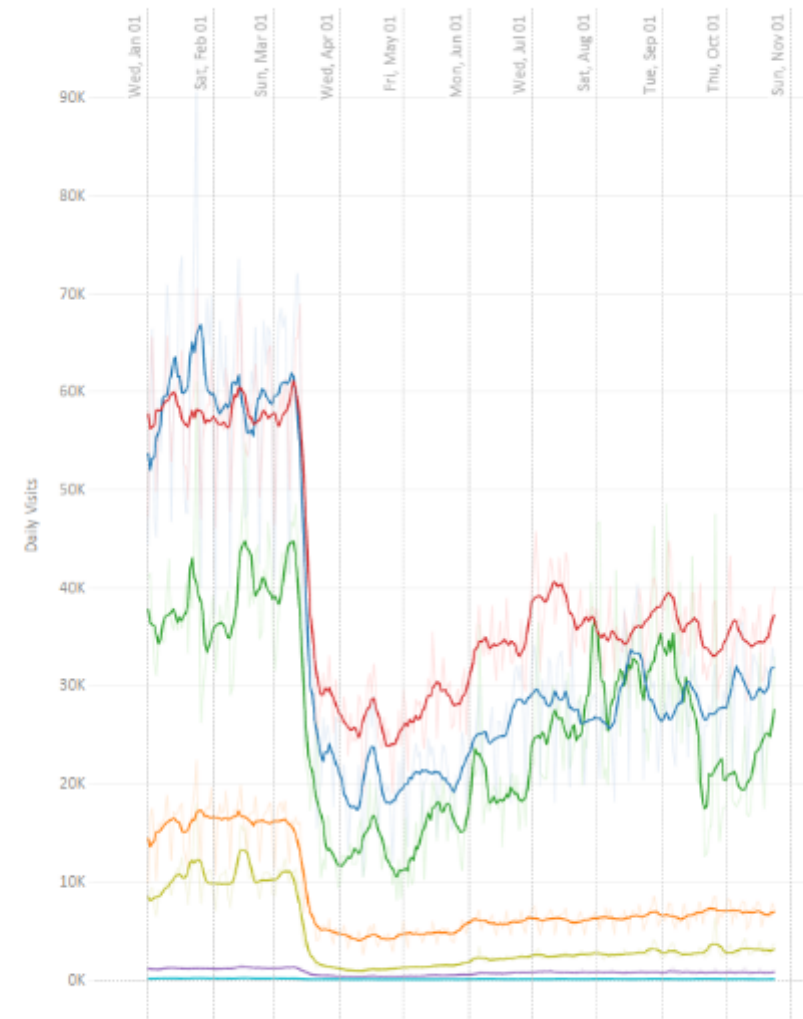
*How do we
equitably serve our
communities?*

Washington, DC Weekly Traffic Footfall, 2020

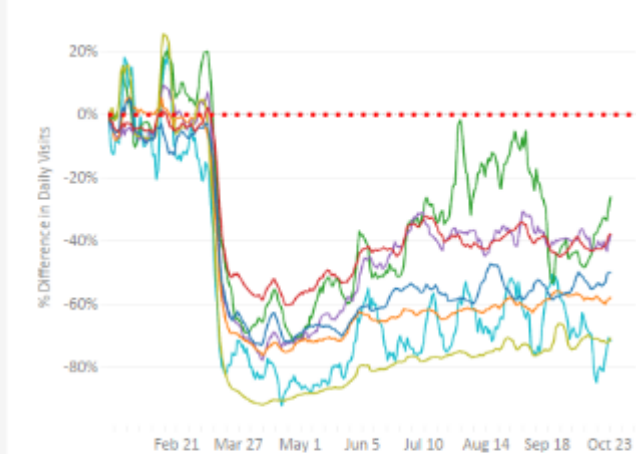


Retail	71 brands in 359 locations
Dining	36 brands in 197 locations
Travel	24 brands in 43 locations
FinancialServices	10 brands in 110 locations
Miscellaneous	6 brands in 15 locations
Entertainment	12 brands in 34 locations
AutomotiveDealerships	1 brands in 1 locations

7-day Moving Average of Daily Visits by Market Type



Percent Difference in 7-day Moving Average From Jan 14, 2020



[Go to Disaggregate Summaries](#)

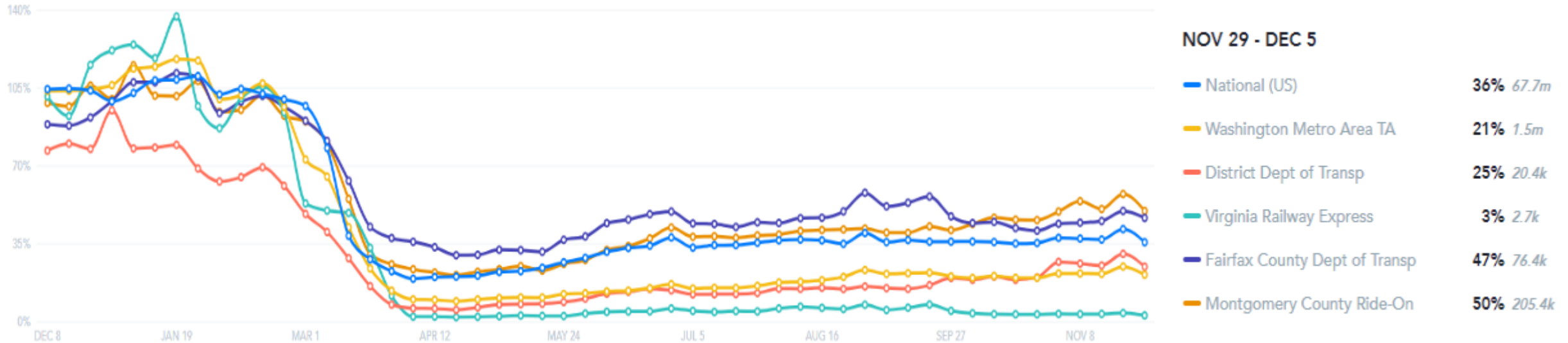
PlaceIQ

LOCUS

CAMBRIDGE SYSTEMATICS



Transit Ridership Percent Change, 2020



<https://transitapp.com/APTA>



Three Corrosions Pre-2020

TNCs



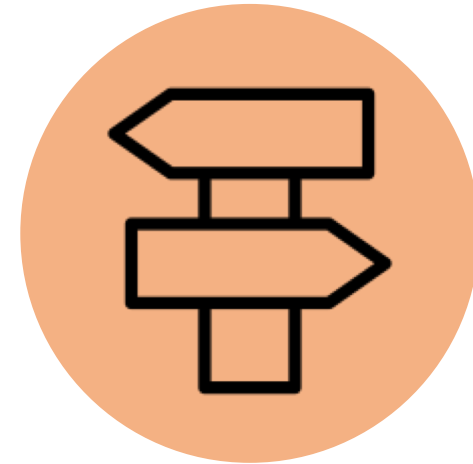
How do we compete with venture-funded on-demand services?

Autos



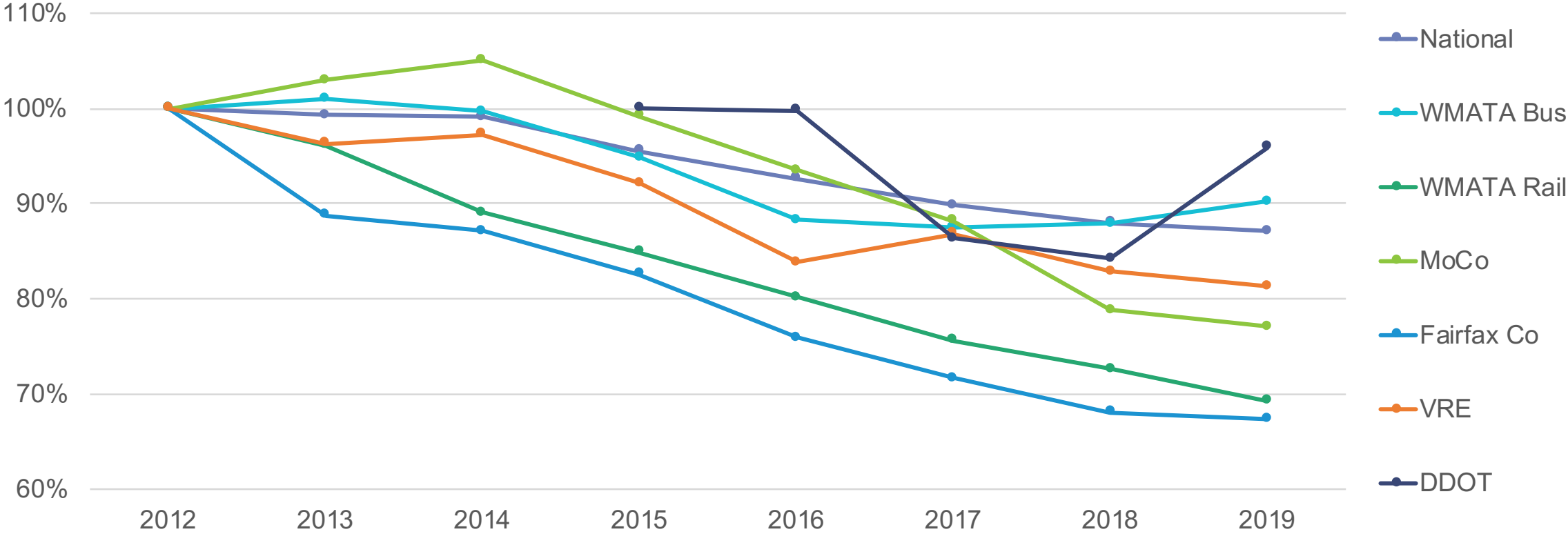
How do we compete with cheap cars and cheap gas?

Travel Patterns



How do we serve new trip patterns and displaced communities?

Annual Trips Per Mile, Percent Change 2012-2019



National Transit Database, USDOT



Do We Need to Save Transit?

Do We Want To?

How Do We Do It?

Will people change how they travel?

SEPTEMBER 17, 2020



About half of Americans say their lives will remain changed in major ways when the pandemic is over

BY AMANDA BARROSO

Pew Research, September 2020

UP FRONT

Telecommuting will likely continue long after the pandemic

Katherine Guyot and Isabel V. Sawhill - Monday, April 6, 2020

Brookings, April 2020

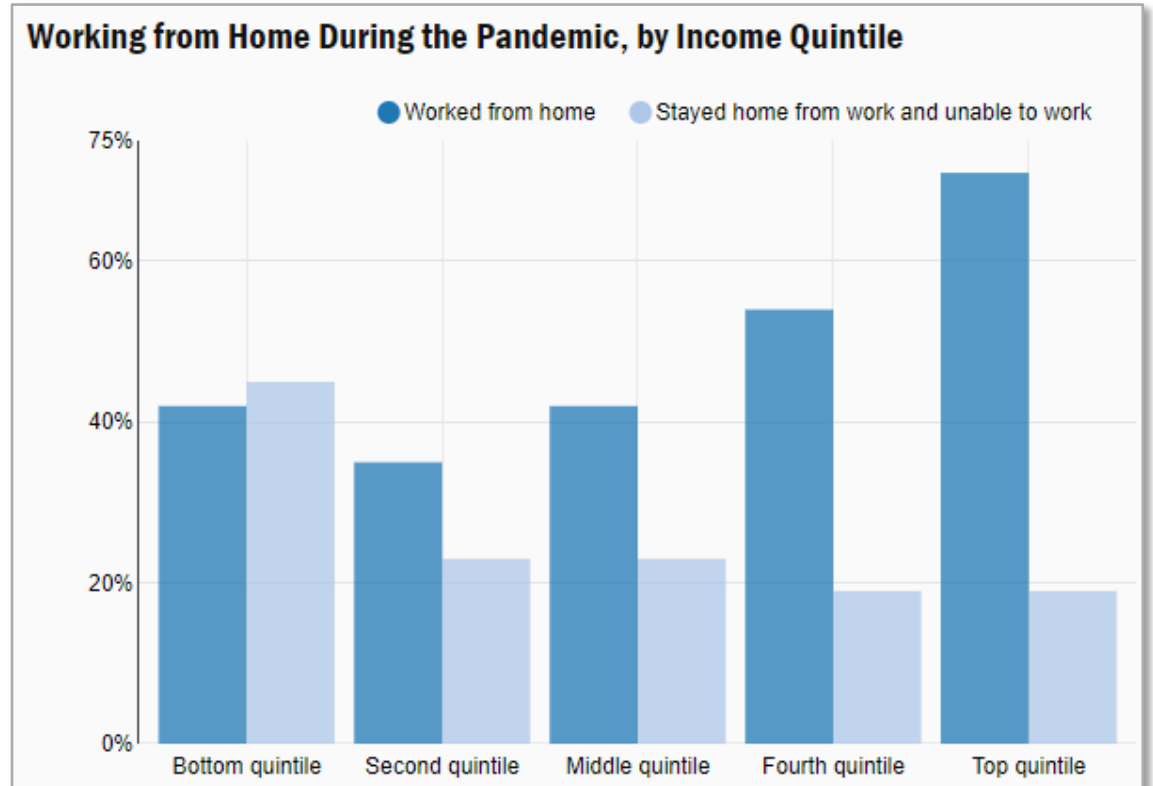
Hybrid models of remote work are likely to persist in the wake of the pandemic, mostly for a highly educated, well-paid minority of the workforce.

Currently, only a small share of the workforce in advanced economies—typically between 5 and 7 percent—regularly works from home. A shift to 15 to 20 percent of workers spending more time at home and less in the office could have profound impacts on urban economies. More people working remotely means fewer people commuting between home and work every day or traveling to different locations for work. This could have significant economic consequences, including on transportation, gasoline and auto sales, restaurants and retail in urban centers, demand for office real estate, and other consumption patterns.

McKinsey, November 2020



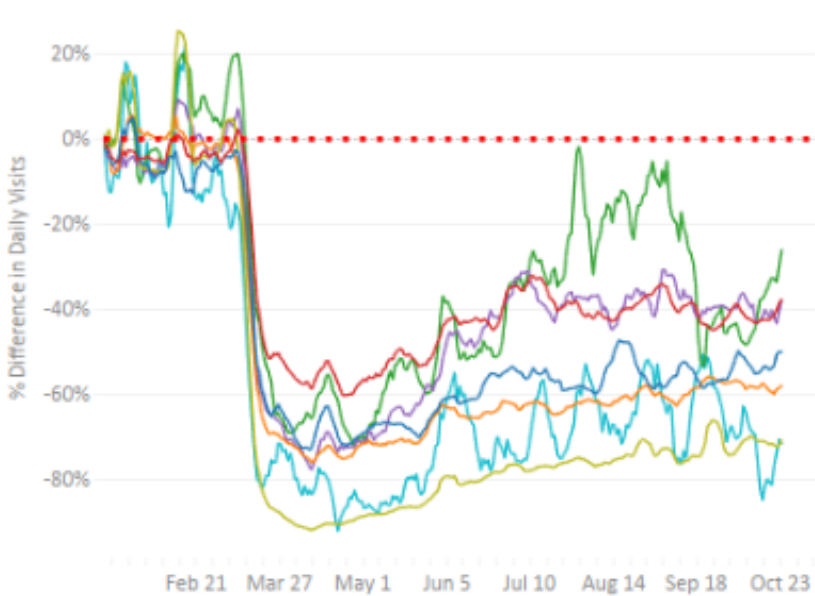
Will people change how they travel?



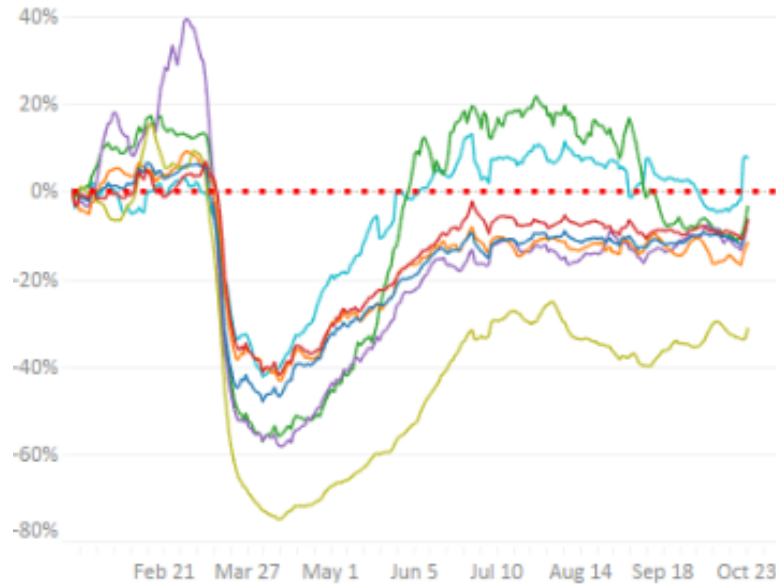
Gallup, March 2020

Traffic Footfall Percent Change, 2020

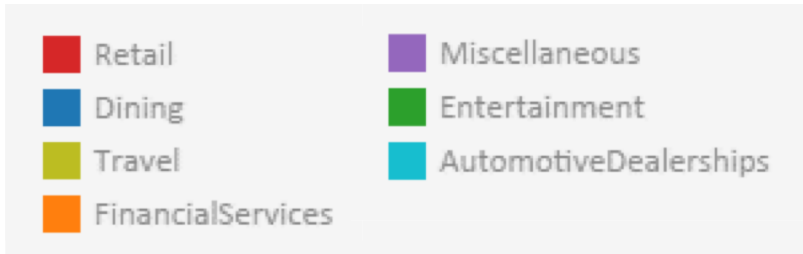
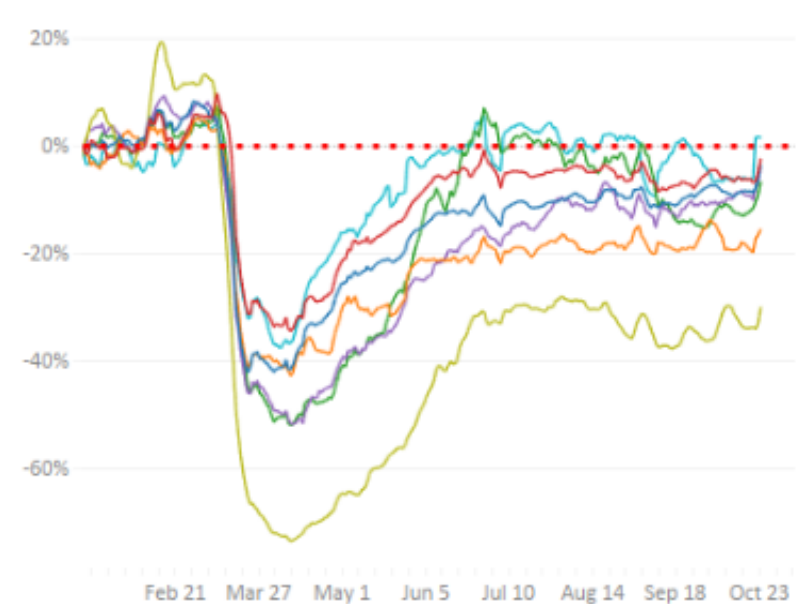
District of Columbia



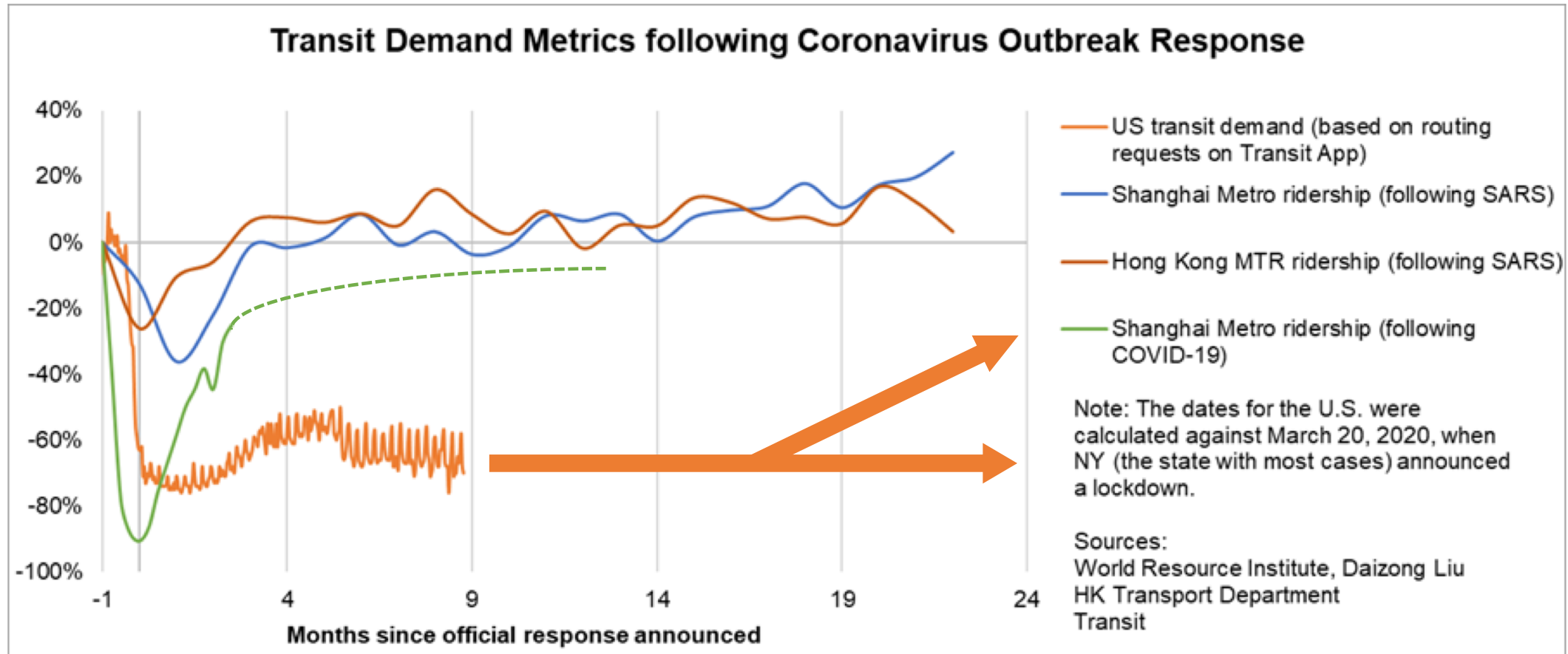
Maryland



Virginia



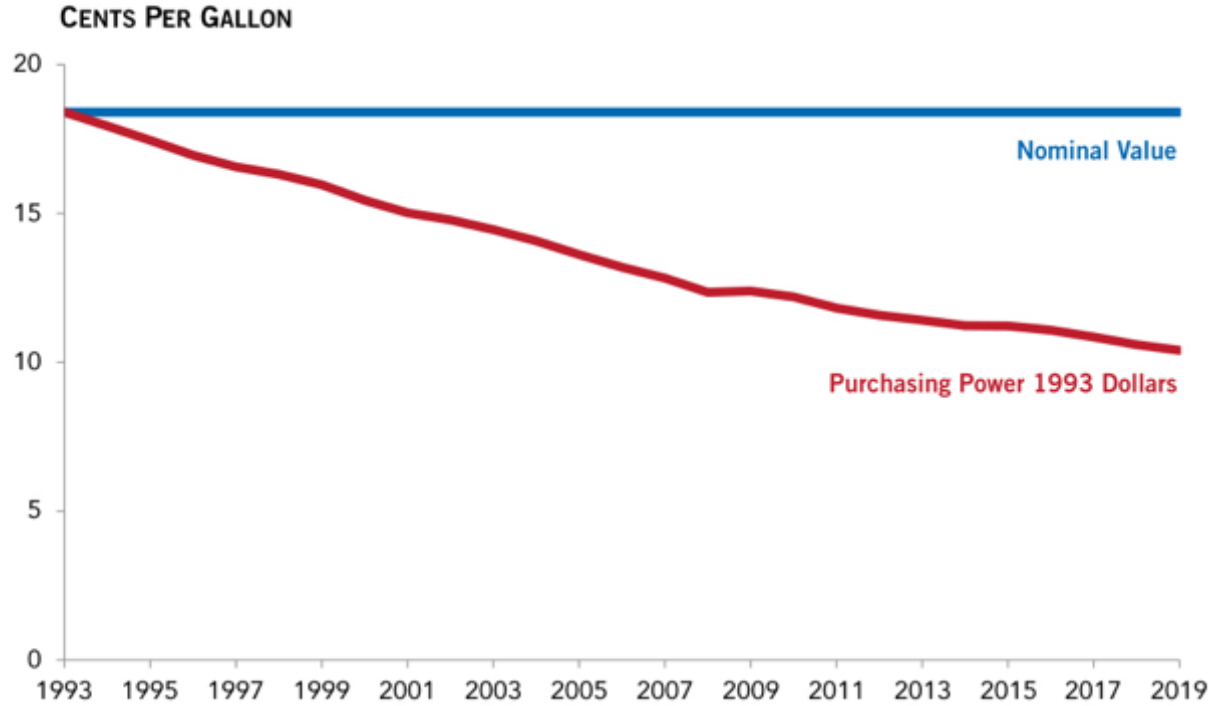
Transit Recovery from a Coronavirus, 2003 and 2020



How Transit Agencies Recovered from the Last Coronavirus and What It Means for Urban Sustainability, Chang 2020.



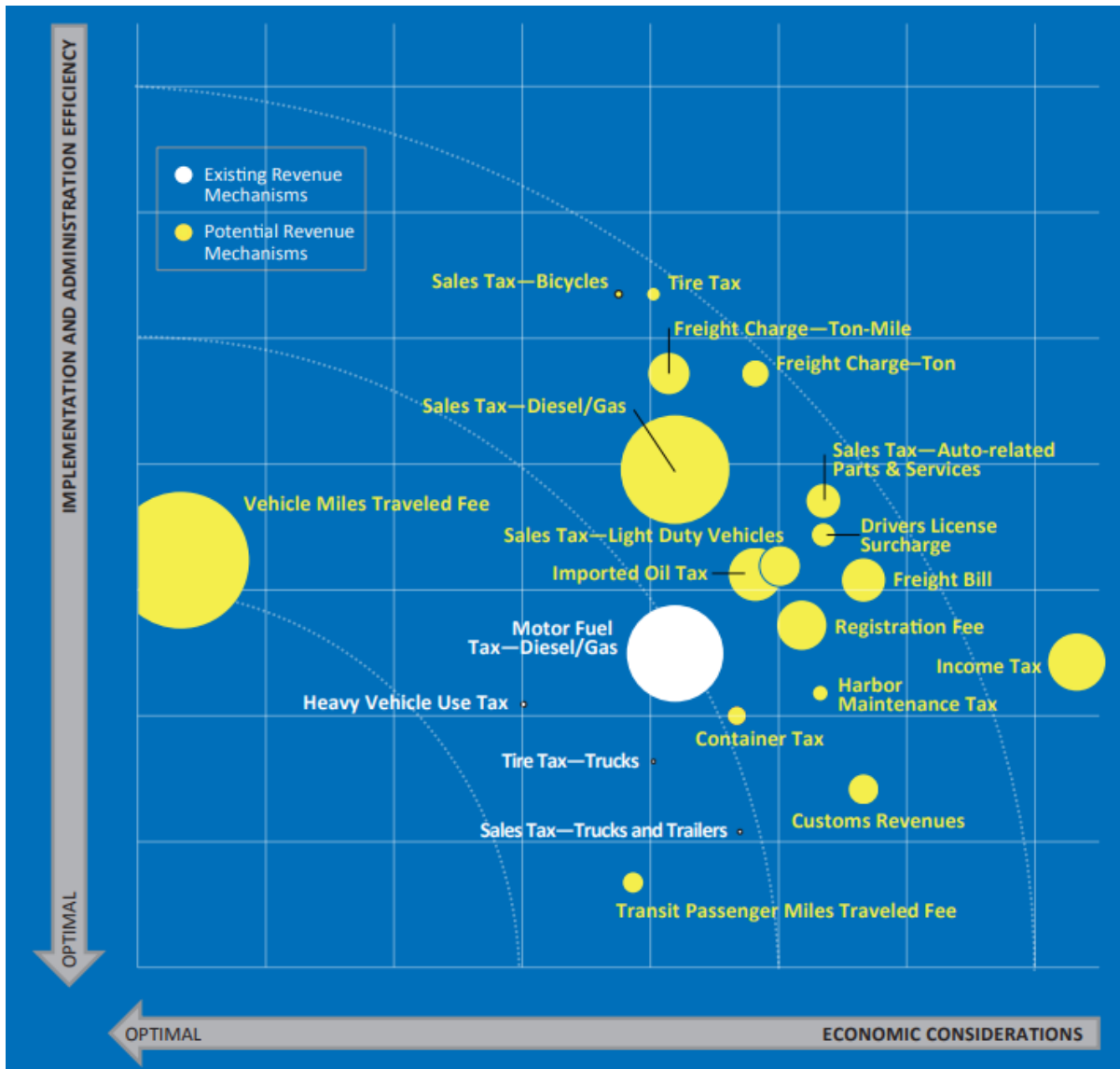
The real purchasing power of the federal gas tax has declined by 43% since 1993, the last time it was increased



Congressional Budget Office and Peter G. Peterson Foundation, 2020

Will governments change how they fund?





Will governments change how they fund?

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), 2015



Old Stories

- The 80/20 Rule
- Capital/Operating Rules
- “Guaranteed Funding”

New Stories

- Third-party operations
- Autonomous and labor
- Transit’s other benefits

**Will
governments
change how
they fund?**

Will agencies change how they operate?

- Metrics and Data Driven
- Equity vs Choice Rider
- Tactical Solutions
- Rethinking Fares

A Metrics-Based Recovery

Bus Recovery Plan Phasing

(Draft)

	BASE COVID-19 Enhanced Sunday Service	PHASE 1 "Orders Begin Lifting"	PHASE 2 "Schools Back in Session"	PHASE 3 "Emerging Markets"	PHASE 4 "NextGen's New Normal"
Objective	Provide for essential travel only	Proactively establish frequent core network for first wave of non-essential workers/students returning		React to patterns of emerging econ. growth	Begin full buildout of sustainable NextGen Plan after PH and approval
Timing	April 2020	May - June 2020	July - Aug 2020	Sept - Nov 2020	Dec 2020 - Jan 2021 start
Est. Service Levels	5.0M	5.4M	5.8M	6.1M	6.5-7.0M
Service Adjustments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sunday Base - Add weekday Locals, Rapids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce underutilized peak service - Rightsize added weekday Rapids - Add extra temp service - Tier 1,2 – mod. increase in freq. (midday focus) - Tier 3,4 & Weekends – maintain Sun service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tier 1,2 – Addt'l freq. (focus on off peak) - Tier 3,4 – mod. increase in freq. (midday focus) - School trippers - Weekends – maintain Sun service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement market specific service packages where & when data shows emerging markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement routing changes - Consolidate Rapids / Locals - Enhance Tier 1,2 & weekend freq. to NextGen levels adjusted to "New Normal" - Eliminate underutilized service & implement MicroTransit



Regional Travel Patterns

Economic Indicators

Ridership Trends

Rider/Non-Rider Needs



COVID-19 Muni Core Service Plan

14R	5 Minutes or Less 5 minutos o menos 5分鐘之內 5 minuto o mas kaunti	9R	Every 6-10 minutes Cada 6-10 minutos 每 6-10 分鐘 Twice 6-10 minuto	5	Every 11-15 minutes Cada 11-15 minutos 每 11-15 分鐘 Twice 11-15 minuto	19	Every 16-20 minutes Cada 16-20 minutos 每 16-20 分鐘 Twice 16-20 minuto
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High-frequency corridors / Corredores de alta frecuencia / 高頻率的班次 / Mas madallas na serbisjo

Other Transit Services

BART		
Caltrain		
Golden Gate Transit		
SamTrans Route 122		



Effective 10/5/2020

An Equity-Based Recovery

Muni Core Service Plan and Metro Service
Muni service is temporarily reduced in order to focus limited resources on our most-used routes and serve critical connections like medical facilities. When bringing back Muni routes, we are prioritizing capacity for physical distancing, high-ridership routes and communities most dependent on Muni service.



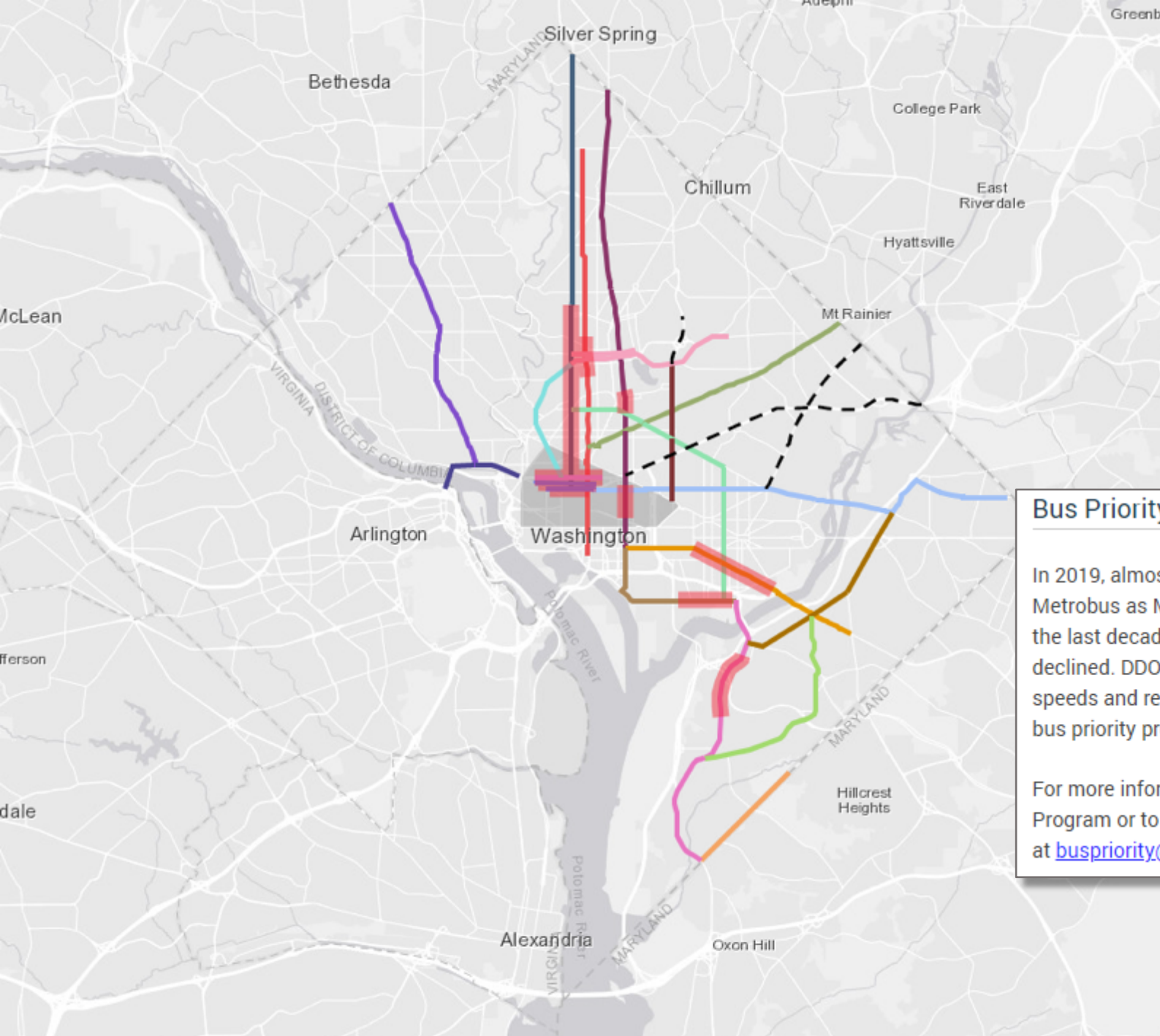


Seattle Department of Transportation

A Tactical-Based Recovery



DDOT Bus Priority Program



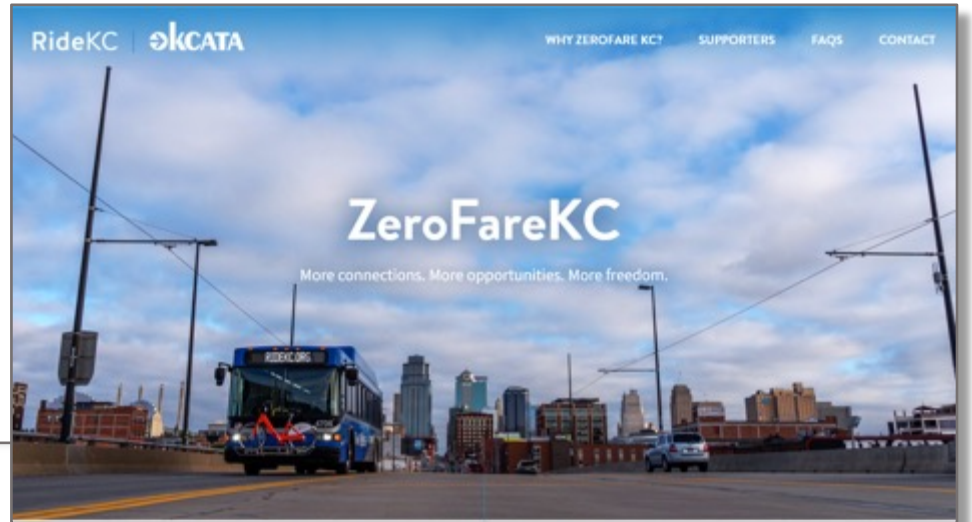
Bus Priority

In 2019, almost as many District residents rode Metrobus as Metrorail each day. However, over the last decade, average bus speeds have declined. DDOT is working to improve bus travel speeds and reliability across the District through bus priority projects and program areas.

For more information about DDOT's Bus Priority Program or to submit feedback please contact us at buspriority@dc.gov.



Will agencies change how they operate?



116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION **H. R. 7389**

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to carry out a grant program to support efforts to provide fare-free transit service, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 26, 2020

Ms. PRESSLEY introduced the following bill, which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to carry out a grant program to support efforts to provide fare-free transit service, and for other purposes.

6 The purposes of this Act are—
7 (1) to invest in State, county, and local municipi-
8 palities efforts to provide fare-free public transpor-
9 tation; and

Metro to study and consider eliminating bus and rail fares

BY STEVE HYMON , AUGUST 27, 2020

Freedom to Move Act would increase mobility, connect communities, assist economic recovery



What Have We Learned So Far?

Old Rules

- ➔ Design statically – connect population & employment dots
- ➔ New major capital investments
- ➔ Prioritize choice riders
- ➔ Stick to my lane and my data
- ➔ Don't rely on Federal funding

New Rules

- ➔ Design dynamically – competitively target demand
- ➔ Lightweight and tactical solutions
- ➔ Prioritize equity riders
- ➔ Collaborate quickly, share broadly
- ➔ Don't rely on Federal funding

Transit and COVID: A Postmortem

COVID-19 hastened a model for transit that was in danger of failure at worst, and stagnancy at best. In doing so, it gives us an opportunity to reimagine transit and mobility to be more **flexible, equitable, and sustainable.**

Will we accept the challenge?



www.camsys.com/mobilityforward

Any Questions?

Herbert Higginbotham

National Director, Transit + Shared Mobility
Cambridge Systematics

hhigginbotham@camsys.com

818-515-0770