

# Santa Rosa CityBus COVID-19 Response and Recovery Strategy

City Council Study Session

August 25, 2020 – (Continued  
from August 18, 2020, Regular  
Meeting)



# Study Session Topics

- CityBus and Santa Rosa Paratransit COVID-19 response to date
- Current operational status (service levels, fares, health and safety practices, ridership)
- Coordinated regional efforts for transit response and recovery
- Short-term financial outlook
- Service restoration planning framework

*Future meeting: COVID-19 fare policy implications and options*



# Current Operational Overview

# Current Operational Status—CityBus

- 32% of regular weekday ridership
- 58% of regular weekday service hours
- Fare collection suspended March 18; rear-door boarding only
- Face coverings required
- Adding frequency/dispatching vehicles to maintain physical distancing



# Current Status—Santa Rosa Paratransit

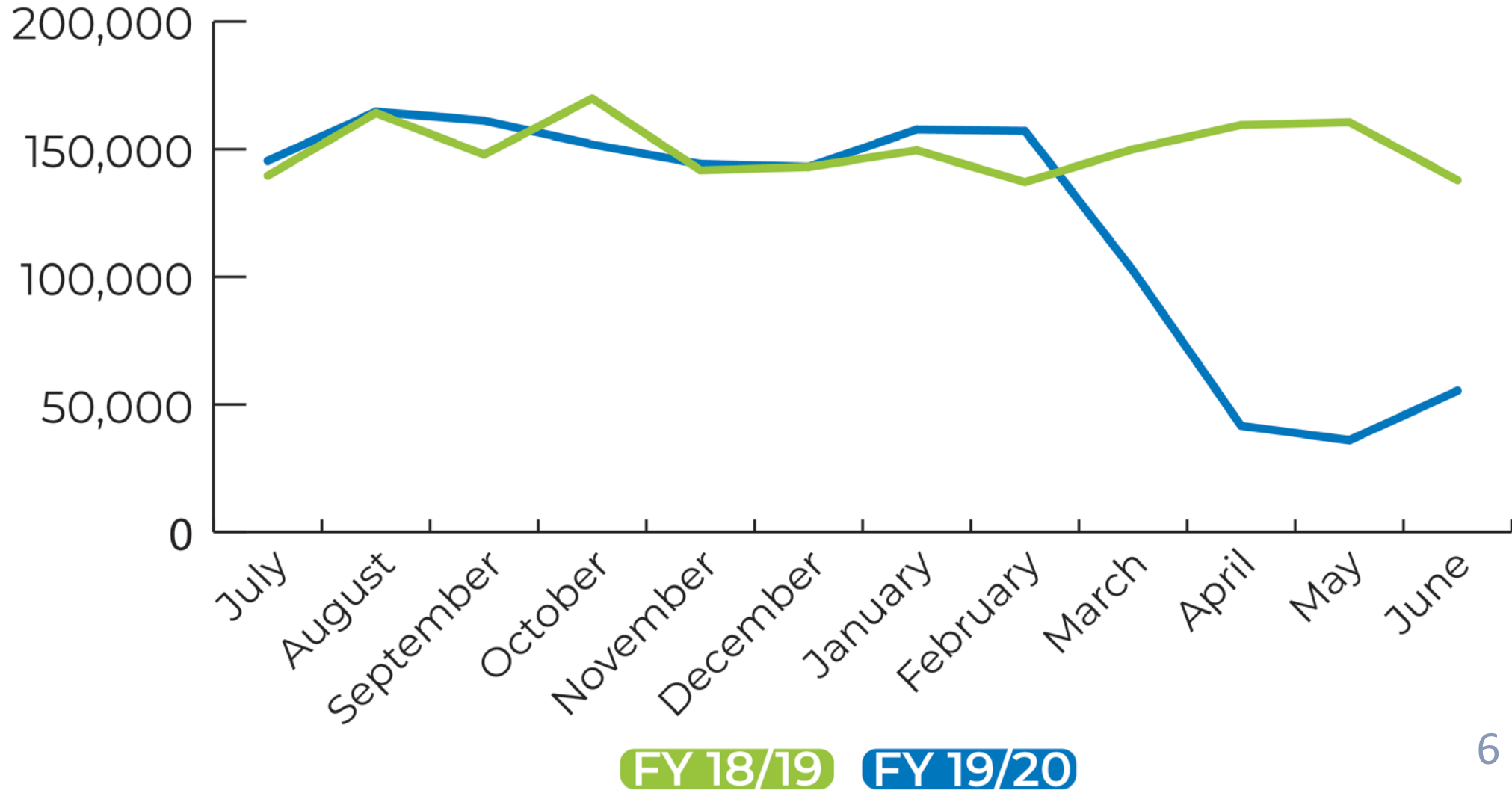
- 40% of regular ridership
- Fare collection suspended March 18
- 1-2 riders per vehicle max.
- Face coverings required
- Operating supplemental services to fill gaps in fixed-route network and assist with community needs



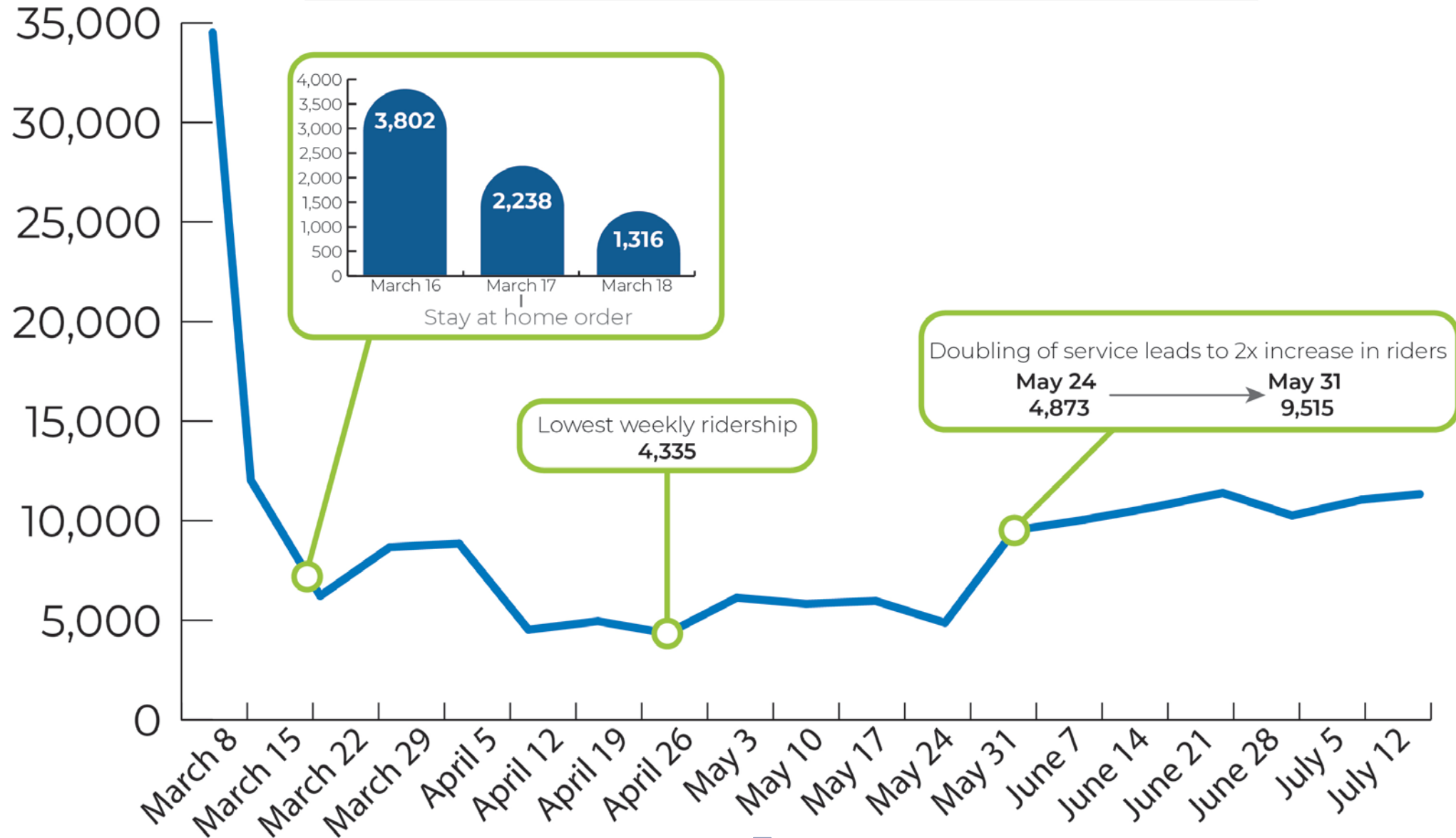


# CityBus Ridership, FY 18-19 and FY 19-20

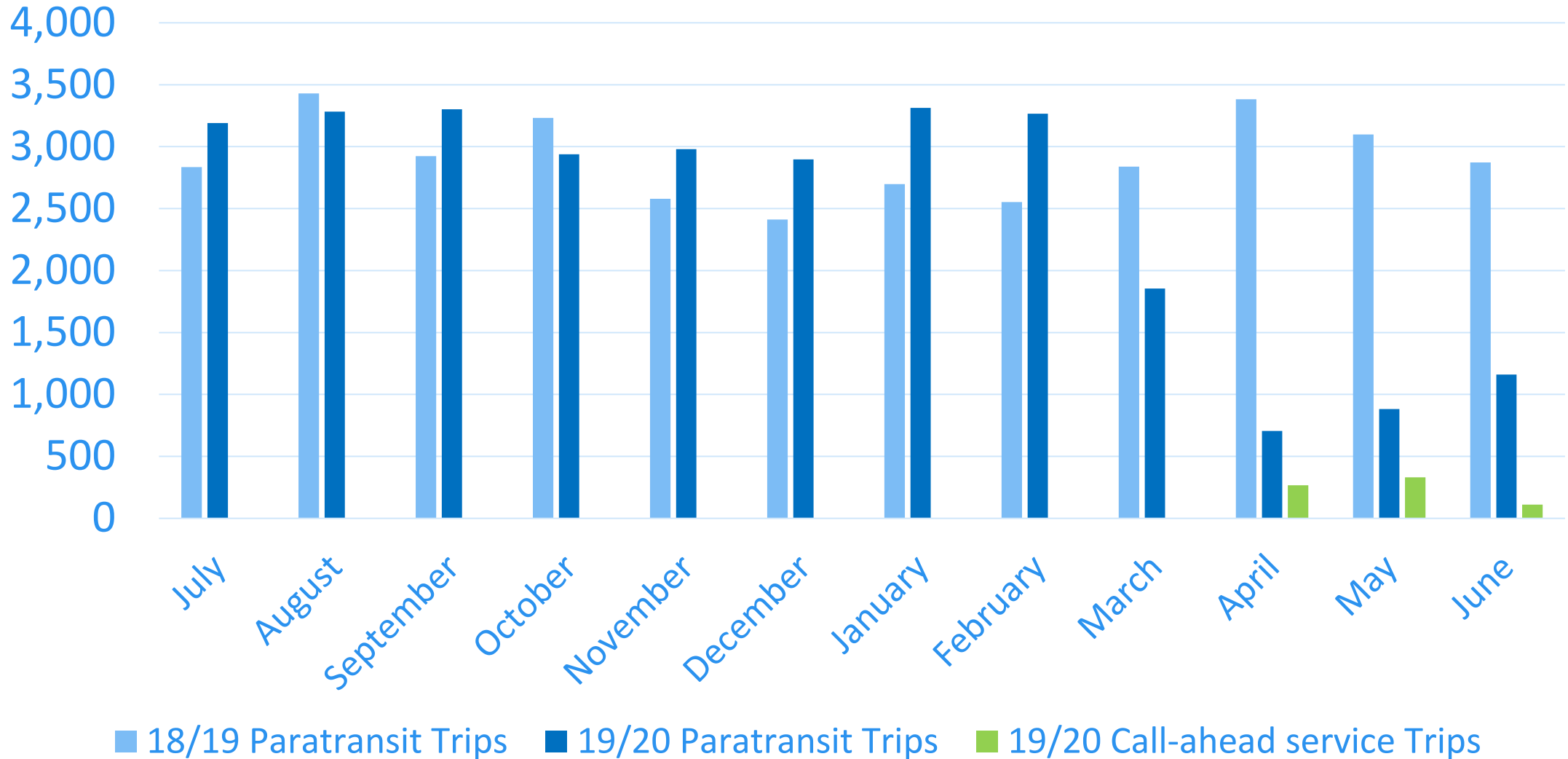
## Year-Over-Year Ridership Trends



# Week-to-Week Ridership Trend



# Paratransit Ridership, FY 18-19 and FY 19-20





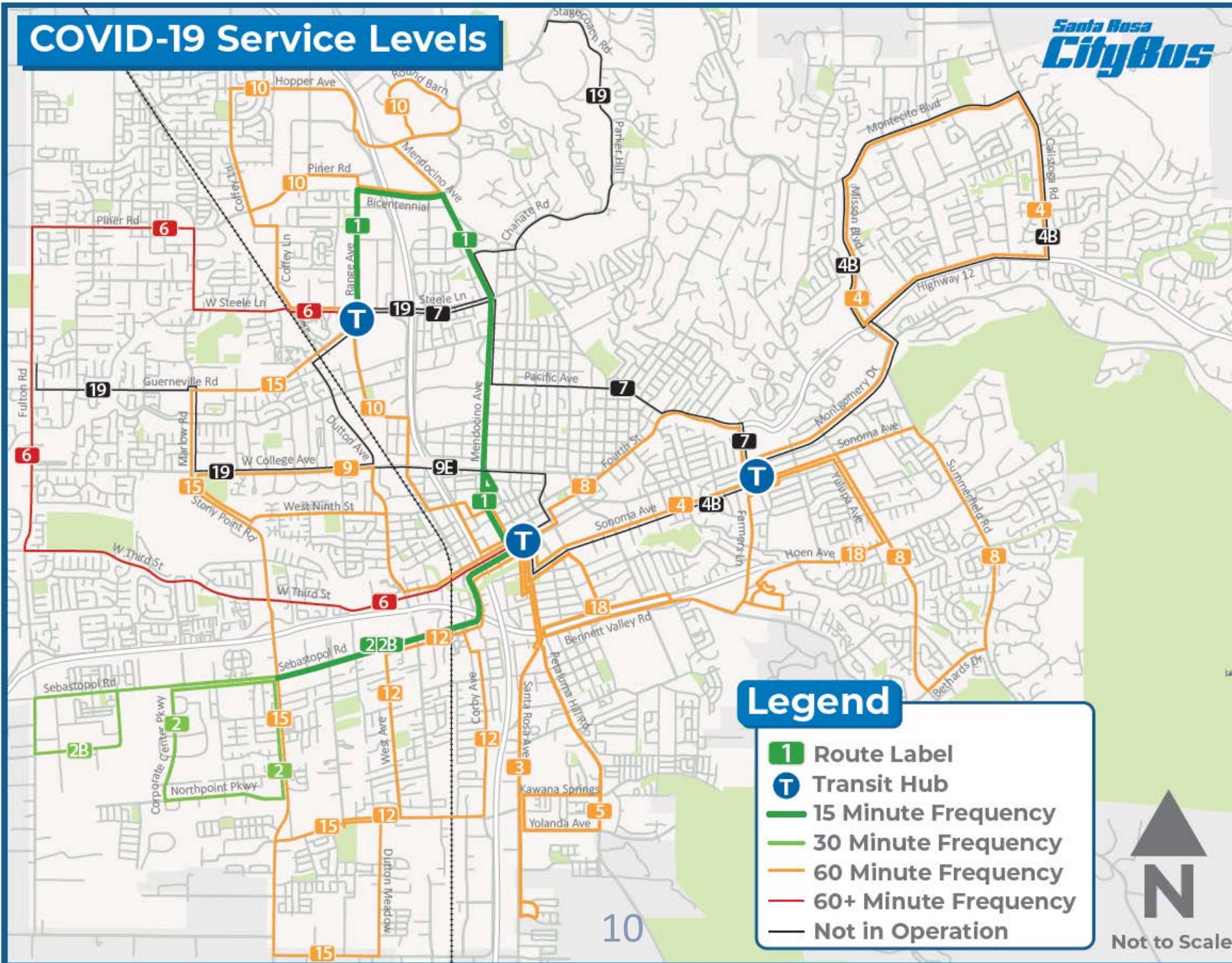
# Current CityBus Weekday Frequencies

#	Route	Pre-COVID	Current	#	Route	Pre-COVID	Current
1	Mendocino Ave.	15	15	8	Bennett Valley	30	60
2/2B	Sebastopol Road	30/15	30/15	9	West Ninth St.	30	60
3	Santa Rosa Ave.	30	60	10	Coddingtontown	30	60
4	Rincon Valley	60	60	12	Roseland	30	60
4B	Rincon Valley	60	- *	15	Stony Point Road	60	60
5	Petaluma Hill Rd.	30	60	16	Oakmont Circ.	60	60
6	Fulton Road	30	75	18	East Circulator	60	60
7	Montgomery Vlg.	60	- **	19	North Circulator	75	- **

\* Route 4 covers same alignment in opposite direction

\*\* Call-ahead service available for areas of lost coverage

# COVID-19 Service Levels



# COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols

- ✓ Personal protective equipment
  - Sanitizer, gloves, face coverings, face shields
- ✓ Cleaning and disinfection protocols
  - Vehicles and facilities
- ✓ Physical distancing
  - Rear-door boarding/fare suspension
  - Reduced maximum onboard capacity
- ✓ Face coverings required
  - Employees and riders

**What Transit Workers Need to Know about COVID-19**  
**BUS TRANSIT OPERATORS**

As a bus transit operator, how can I protect myself?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness caused by SARS-CoV-2. Symptoms often include fever, cough, or shortness of breath. Understanding how the virus is evolving as we learn more about it is important. Check the CDC website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-covid-spreads.html>) for the latest information.

The virus is thought to spread mainly person-to-person:

- Between people who are within 6 feet of each other (with or without a face covering).
- Through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

Recent studies indicate that transmission can occur before people develop symptoms or never develop symptoms. It is also possible that a person can get the virus by touching a surface or object that has been touched by an infected person and then touching their own eyes, nose, or mouth. However, this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Older adults and people with serious underlying medical conditions are at higher risk for more serious complications. CDC recommends wearing a cloth face covering in public places, especially in areas of high transmission. Cloth face coverings do not protect you from others who do not know they are infected. These face coverings are not respirators and are not required in workplaces where they are required.

**Cal/OSHA COVID-19 General Checklist for Public and Private Passenger Carriers, Transit, and Intercity Passenger Rail**  
July 2, 2020

This checklist is intended to help public and private passenger carriers, transit and intercity passenger rail employers implement their plan to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace and is supplemental to the [Guidance for Public and Private Passenger Carriers, Transit, and Intercity Passenger Rail Employers](#). This checklist is a summary and contains shorthand for some parts of the guidance; familiarize yourself with the guidance before using this checklist.

**Contents of Written Workplace Specific Plan**

- The person(s) responsible for implementing the plan.
- A risk assessment and the measures that will be taken to prevent spread of the virus.
- Use of face coverings, in accordance with the [CDPH guidance](#).
- Training and communication with workers and worker representatives on the plan.
- A process to check for compliance and to document and correct deficiencies.
- A process to investigate COVID-19 cases, alert the local health department, and identify and isolate close workplace contacts and infected workers.
- Protocols for when the workplace has an outbreak, in accordance with [CDPH guidance](#).
- Update the plan as necessary to prevent further cases.

**Topics for Worker Training**

- Information on [COVID-19](#), preventing spread, and who is especially vulnerable.
- Self-screening at home, including temperature and/or symptom checks using [CDC guidelines](#).
- The importance of not coming to work if workers have a cough, fever, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, recent loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea, or if they or someone they had contact with has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- To return to work after a COVID-19 diagnosis only after 10 days since symptom onset and 72 hours of no fever.
- When to seek medical attention.
- The importance of hand washing.



# COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols (cont.)

- ✓ Daily employee symptom screening and temperature checks
- ✓ Information on preventing the spread
  - Employee-oriented and public-facing
- ✓ Weekly Labor-Management meetings



# Ridership Outlook—Rider/Stakeholder Survey

- 62% of frequent riders stated they are currently riding less primarily due to lower transit service levels
  - Less frequent riders cited safety as primary reason for riding less often
- 84% of frequent riders stated they plan to use transit at their previous level once schools and businesses reopen
  - 62% of less frequent riders stated they would ride at previous level, and 24% stated they would ride *more often* than in the past
- Most frequent riders did not rely on personal automobiles prior to the pandemic, but 50% are now using them
- Stakeholders noted that most clients are still using transit and would benefit from expanded schedules but many aren't using the bus at all

# Ridership Outlook—Rider/Stakeholder Survey

*“The in-person classes, activities, and events I used the bus for have been cancelled or postponed. I am trying to make fewer grocery store trips for COVID-19 safety reasons. I am not getting together with friends right now for safety reasons.”*

*“If schools open before a realistic plan to contain the pandemic/flatten the curve, I will still take online classes and stay at home.”*

*“Just [using CityBus] to get essentials done along with laundry.”*

*“The places she used to go have been closed due to COVID.”*

*“Please tell me exactly how you will provide distance between passengers, clean surfaces, enforce masks (at all times!)”*





# Regional Context: Transit Response and Recovery Initiatives

# Bay Area Transit Health and Safety Plan

- Partnership between transit operators and MTC to identify, adopt, and communicate a standard set of COVID-19 health and safety practices for all Bay Area transit operators
- Monthly data collection and reporting required for public dashboard of performance metrics
- To be adopted by all transit agencies

***Riding Together:***  
**Bay Area Healthy Transit Plan**



# MTC Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force

- 30 member task force made up of elected officials, MTC Commissioners, transit managers, labor representatives, business community representatives and advocates
  - ✓ Identify method for distributing \$1.3B in CARES Act emergency relief
  - ✓ Support development of the Transit Health and Safety Plan
    - Develop “Public Transit Transformation Action Plan” by mid-2021
- Transformation Action Plan anticipated to focus on achieving more connected, efficient, and user-focused network
  - Transit integration activities, inter-operator connectivity, and governance likely to be priorities



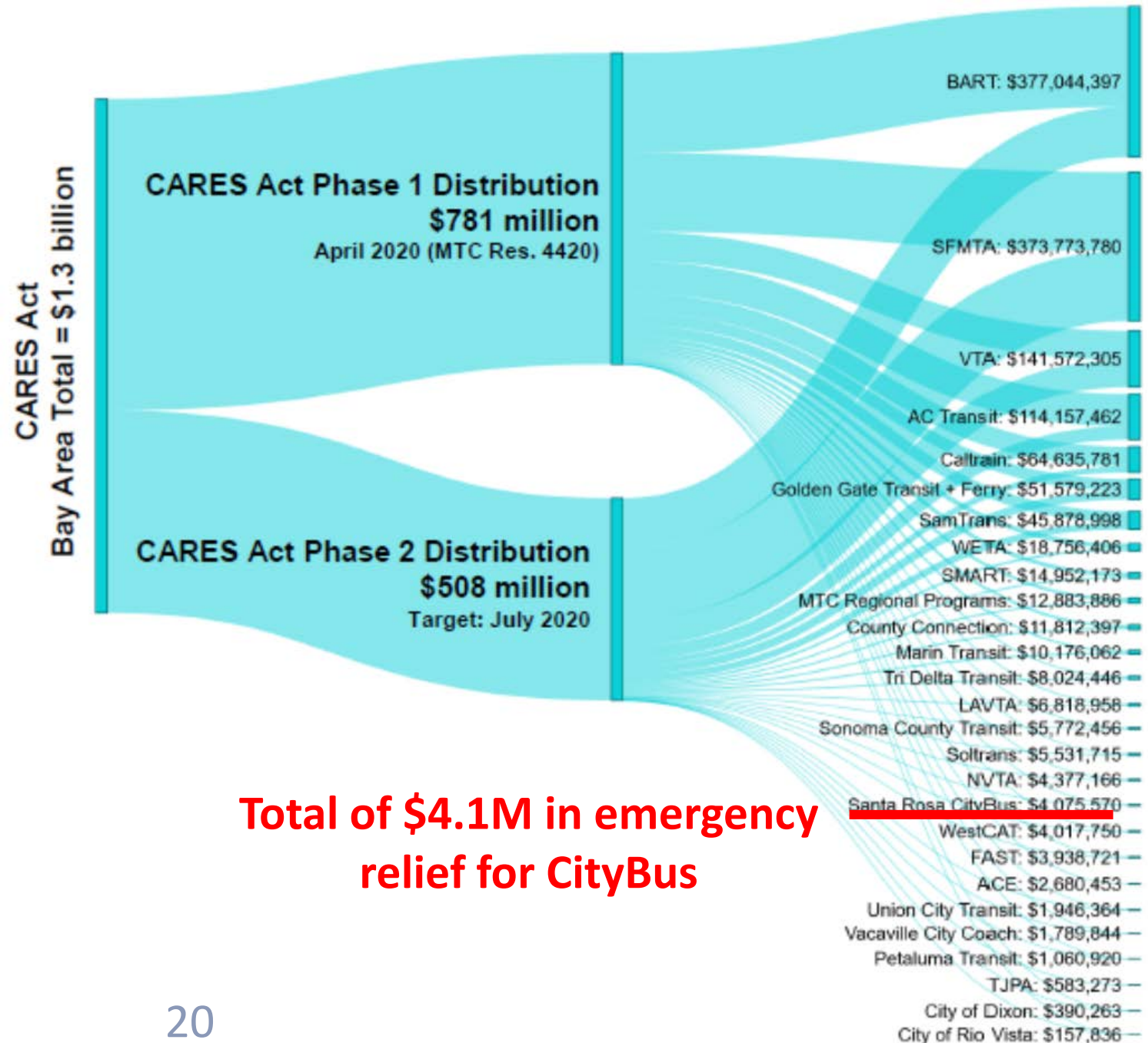
# COVID-19 Recovery Strategy

# COVID-19 Financial Impacts

- Significant ongoing decrease in transit operating revenues due to pandemic's impacts on sales tax, fuel tax, and fare revenue
- Anticipate multi-year recovery
- Transit Division finished FY 19-20 with operating reserve intact thanks to CARES Act allocation
  - \$2.25M operating reserve (15% of operating budget)

# CARES Act

- Federal CARES Act emergency transit relief yielded \$2.5M for CityBus in FY 19-20 and \$1.6M for FY 20-21
- No further emergency relief on the horizon at this time





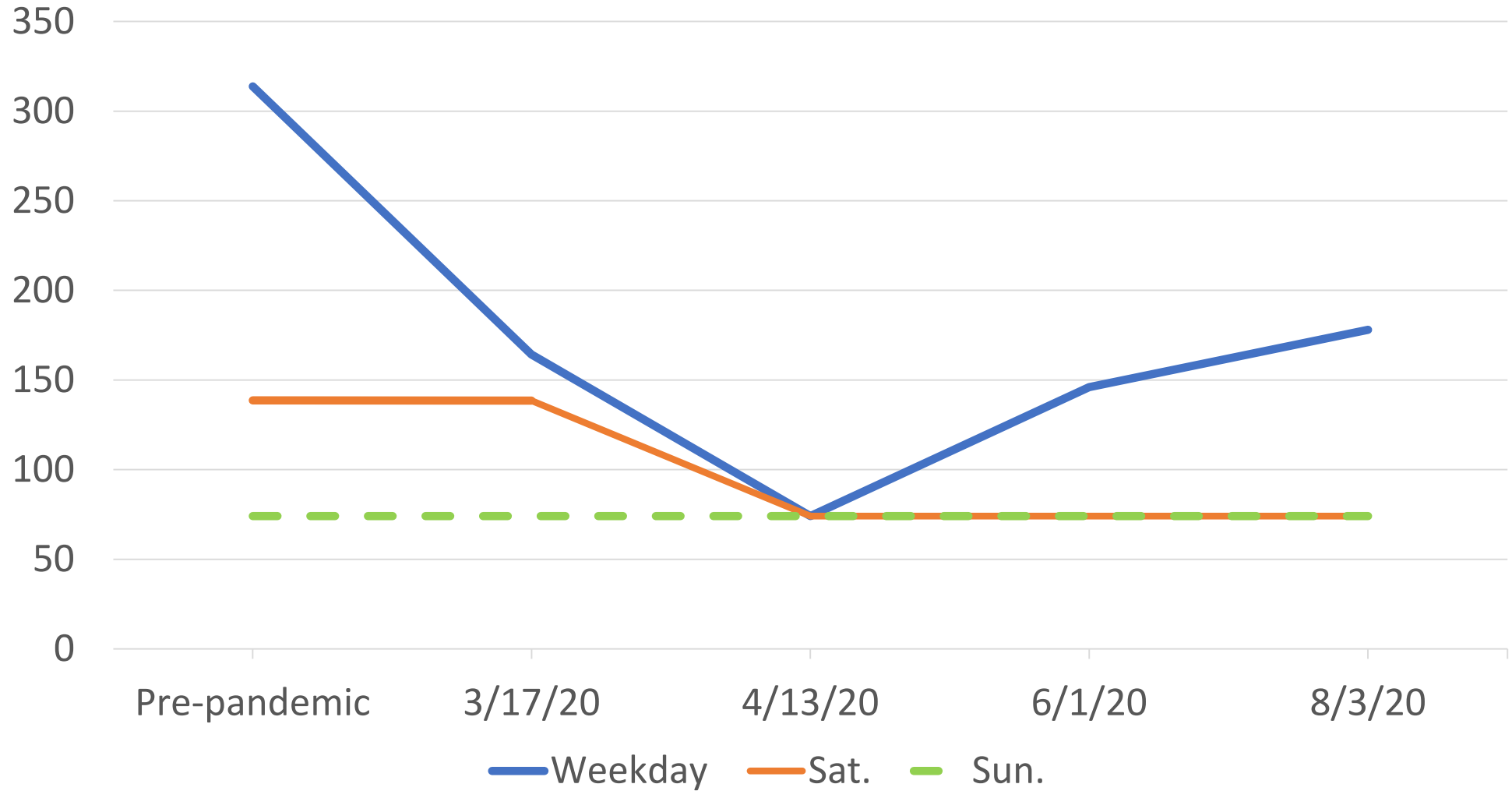
# Financial Outlook for FY 20-21

- Projecting 25% decrease in operating funds for FY 20-21, equating to \$4.2M deficit
- CARES Act allocation reduces deficit to \$2.6M
- Savings anticipated from hiring freeze, reduced operating costs due to lower service levels (e.g., for fuel, maintenance, overtime, and paratransit service)
- Service restoration must still be limited to 65-75% of pre-pandemic service hours to ensure ongoing financial sustainability

# Service reductions and restorations to date

Date	Service Level	Weekly Revenue Hours	% of Pre-pandemic Hours	Notes
<b>March 17</b>	Saturday with added routes	<b>1,034</b>	<b>58%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to SIP, reduction in available operators</li> </ul>
<b>April 13</b>	Sunday	<b>519</b>	<b>29%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added call-ahead service</li> </ul>
<b>June 1</b>	Saturday	<b>878</b>	<b>49%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintained call-ahead service</li> </ul>
<b>August 3</b>	Saturday with limited weekday frequency	<b>1,038</b>	<b>58%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 minute service on Route 1</li> <li>• Route 2 restored (combined 15 minute service with 2B)</li> <li>• Maintained call-ahead service</li> </ul>

# Daily Revenue Service Hours, March-August 2020



# Proposed Service Restoration Framework



Identify and build towards sustainable ceiling of revenue hours



Prioritize service restoration taking into account the following factors:

- Safety
- Ridership patterns
- Council goals
- Public input
- Key milestones
- Equity lens



Consider new service models for low ridership areas



Coordinate closely with partner transit operators serving Santa Rosa

# Prioritizing Service Restoration

## Safety

- Ensure system continues to operate within PHO, CPHD, and CDC guidelines
- Physical distancing is a major planning and resource allocation factor: more frequency must be added as buses exceed onboard capacity (e.g., ~10 riders rather than 40)
- In short-term most service restoration likely to be driven by maintaining physical distancing

# Prioritizing Service Restoration



## Council Goals

- Support City's vision for residential development, downtown density, affordable housing, climate action
- Service restoration to date well-aligned with these goals



## Key Milestones

- Return to on-site learning at middle/high schools
- Return to on-site learning at SRJC



# Prioritizing Service Restoration



## Ridership patterns

- Monitor shifts in travel needs/behavior
- Make targeted frequency investments to match ridership peaks
- Consider route realignments to match current needs



## Public input

- Ongoing public engagement to reflect iterative service planning process
- Partner with stakeholders to understand changing rider needs

# Prioritizing Service Restoration



## Equity

- Given economic impacts of the pandemic, ensure that travel needs of residents with limited means and travel options are prioritized and met to the greatest extent possible
  - 86% of CityBus riders are low-income
  - 53% do not have access to working vehicle
  - 28% of riders are K-12 or college students
  - 76% of riders report using CityBus at least four days/week
- Fare policy implications and options to be discussed in future Council item

# Proposed Service Restoration Framework



## Consider new service models for low ridership areas

- Evaluate opportunities to provide service coverage using new mobility options
- Current call-ahead service is a step in this direction



## Coordinate closely with partner transit operators

- Ensure consistent and unified response to COVID-19
- Pursue integration activities recommended in the *Sonoma County Transit Integration and Efficiency Study*

# Upcoming Council Items

- Bay Area Transit Health and Safety Plan (September 2020)
- Fare Policy Options (September 2020)
- Service Restoration Plan (Fall/Winter 2020)



Questions and Feedback