

# GCRTA Fare Analysis

## Final Report Summary of Project and Final Recommendations

December 3, 2019

Presentation to the  
External and Stakeholder Relations & Advocacy Committee  
GCRTA Board of Trustees

# PURPOSE AND GOALS OF STUDY



One of five studies that supports the Strategic Plan

Enable GCRTA to better understand its ridership, and the relationships between changes in fares, fare structure, fare collection, ridership and revenue

Based on research, suggest changes to GCRTA fares and fare collection to better support GCRTA's goals and strategic vision, as well as reflect best practices in the US

Based on research, provide GCRTA with improved tools to analyze impacts of fare changes and meet FTA requirements

# RESEARCH EFFORTS



- Onboard Rider Survey
  - Improve GCRTA's understanding of how riders used transit
  - Obtain statistical information to meet Federal Transit Administration requirements, including Title VI anti-discrimination analyses
  - 3,719 surveys collected Nov. 9 – Dec. 3, 2018, all day, weekdays and weekends.
- Public Outreach with Opinion Survey and Online Survey
  - Questions rephrased & additional questions on policies and effectiveness
  - 546 surveys collected – Spring 2019
  - 1,066 surveys collected – Fall 2019
- Peer Review
  - Major Ohio Agencies
  - Similar size, operations and climate

# FARE POLICY GOALS



- Related to value provided to customer
- Related to cost of providing the service
- Related to whether riders provide tax support to RTA
- Related to whether riders pay a fair share of costs (farebox recovery)
- Related to riders' ability to pay
- Promote seamless intermodal travel
- Promote prepayment of fares
- Simple to communicate to riders and operators
- Promotes fare payment and easy to enforce
- Easy to cooperate with third parties
- Maximizes ridership
- Maximizes revenue

## KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED



- Cleveland's transit network design requires about half of all riders to transfer, but some riders, especially low-income and minorities, pay excessively for transferring
- Over half of trips are taken by riders who are best served by a monthly or weekly pass, but about half of these, especially low-income and minorities, are paying more than they could because they do not purchase a pass or purchase a weekly instead of a monthly pass
- The Park & Ride surcharges adds complexity to fares without raising significant revenue
- Most transit agencies charge the maximum allowable for Paratransit (twice the base fare) and do not provide passes
- Aging fare equipment will be increasingly expensive to maintain and does not meet the needs of GCRTA's future

# ADDITIONAL RESEARCH EFFORT



- Public Outreach with Opinion Survey and Online Survey
  - Additional questions on policies and effectiveness
  - 1,066 surveys collected – Fall 2019
- Analysis of Impacts of Possible Changes

Household Income			
	Onboard Survey	Public Outreach	
		Actual	Weighted
Less than \$25,000	47.4%	22.6%	47.4%
\$25,000 - \$29,999	13.7%	10.0%	13.7%
\$30,000 – \$34,999	10.9%	5.6%	10.9%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	11.2%	10.3%	11.2%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	8.2%	17.7%	8.2%
\$75,000+	8.6%	33.8%	8.6%

Race / Ethnicity			
	Onboard Survey	Public Outreach	
		Actual	Weighted
American Indian or Alaska Native	2.0%	0.7%	2.0%
Asian or Asian American	2.2%	3.4%	2.2%
Black or African American	59.3%	20.8%	59.5%
Hispanic or Latino	4.3%	3.6%	4.3%
Multiracial or another race	3.0%	3.1%	3.0%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%
White or Caucasian	21.6%	66.7%	21.5%
Other	7.2%	1.4%	7.1%

# ADDITIONAL RESEARCH RESULTS (WEIGHTED)



## Riders Who Stated Why They Don't Use A Monthly Pass

Don't Use Transit Enough	36%
Can't Afford It	31%
Can't Predict Transit Use	26%
Don't Know Where to Get It	5%
Hard to Get It	3%

## Riders Who Stated Why They Don't Use A 7-Day Pass

Can't Predict Transit Use	31%
Don't Use Transit Enough	26%
I Use a Monthly Pass	25%
Can't Afford It	5%
Don't Know Where to Get It	3%
Hard to Get It	0%

## Riders Who Stated Why They Don't Use A 5-Trip Card

Another Product is Better For Me	55%
Didn't Know It Included Free Transfers	14%
Can't Afford It	14%
Hard to Get It	6%
Don't Know Where to Get It	5%

# ADDITIONAL RESEARCH RESULTS (WEIGHTED)



Riders Were Asked: Which of These Should GCRTA Implement?				
	All Riders		Income < \$25,000	
	Should Implement	Most Important	Should Implement	Most Important
Reduce the cost of the All Day Pass.	44%	26%	52%	35%
Offer reduced price transfers with cash payments.	34%	10%	37%	15%
Make Monthly and 7-Day Passes available at more locations.	33%	10%	32%	9%
Improve our communications about our fare products and how to buy them.	32%	13%	31%	9%
Implement Smartcards that store Passes and/or trips with free transfers.	32%	12%	28%	7%
Make 5-Trip Farecards available at more locations.	28%	11%	22%	13%



# RECOMMENDATIONS



- **Immediate Low Cost Changes:**
  - Improve communications about fare products and how to buy them
  - Make 5-Trip Farecards available at more locations
  - Revise 5-Trip Farecards to be fewer trips at the same price per trip
- **Important Changes with Greater Financial Impact:**
  - Reduce the cost of Adult & Senior/Disabled Day Passes to two boardings (\$5 & \$2.50)
    - Approximate Revenue Loss: -\$1,300,000; Approximate Ridership Gain: 270,000
  - Raise Park & Ride Surcharge
  - Adjust Paratransit Fares, especially passes, to reflect higher cost of providing service

# RECOMMENDATIONS



- Long-term Improvements with a new fare collection system
  - Implement reduced price transfers with smartcard stored value
  - Regional Multi-modal Accounts
  - Fare Capping / Best Fare
  - Cloud-Based with Open Architecture