

Washington State Transit's

COVID-19: Response

Impacts

Moving Forward

Washington State Transportation Commission
July 15, 2020

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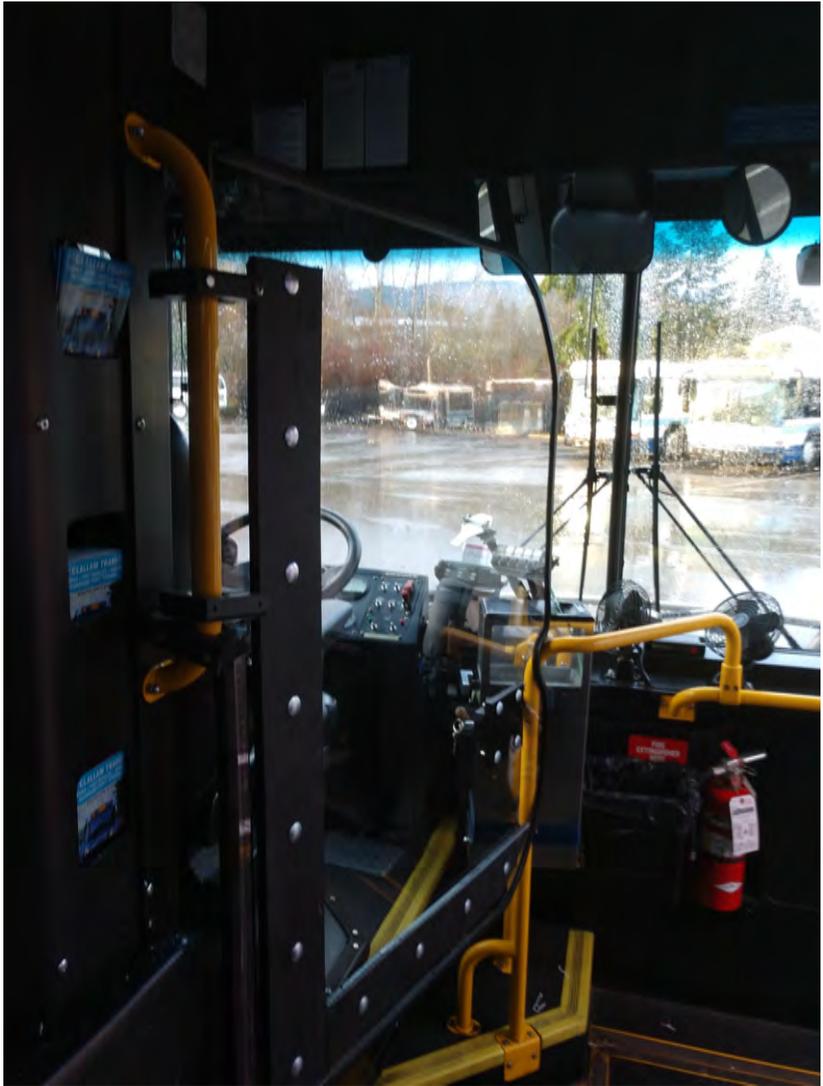
Mission: WSTA advances the value of public transit through **public education and outreach, advocacy of positive and effective public policy** and fostering the **collaboration and professional development** of public transit employees.

- Formed in 1981
- 31 Members from our largest member; King County Metro to our smallest member; Garfield County Public Transportation
- Combined WSTA members provided over 240 million annual boarding and have a combined service areas covering 86% of the state's population.

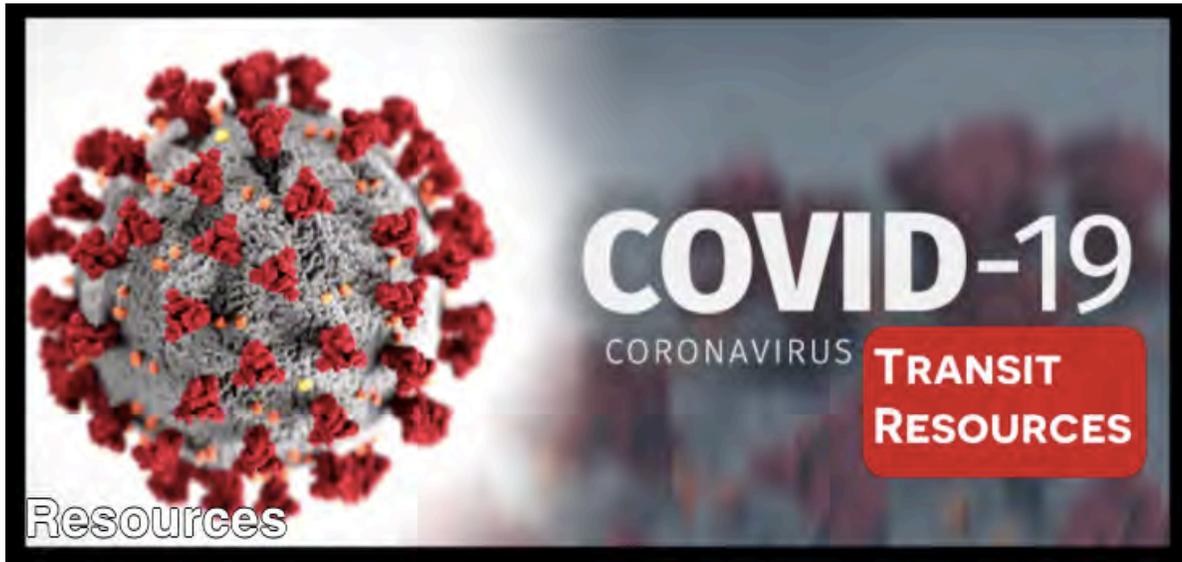
COVID-19: Response

- It is important to remember the COVID-19 Pandemic is not over and we are still responding - we are NOT in the recovery yet.
 - Measures taken to protect drivers & passengers
 - Daily & spot cleaning
 - Fare free
 - Rear door boarding
 - Driver barriers
 - Reduced service levels
 - Balancing between essential & non-essential riders
 - Pandemic leave
 - Food and medicine delivery

COVID-19: Response



COVID-19: Response - Helping Our Members



[CDC Guidelines for Reopening Mass Transit](#)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released coronavirus guidance for when agencies should increase or open service.

[CDC Reopening Mass Transit Guidelines](#)

[CDC Transit Cleaning Guidelines](#)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a series of coronavirus guidance documents for transit agencies. The agency provided tailored resources for:

[Bus Transit Operators](#)

[Rail Transit Operators](#)

[MRSC - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Resources for Local Governments](#) [CLICK HERE](#)

[WSDOT Update: 3.16.2020](#)

- **How does the Governor's ban on gatherings of more than 50 people affect transit?**

While we don't know yet, we've asked for the Governor's Office to clarify what the ban means for transit. We will share that response as soon as possible.

- **Is there extra flexibility in FTA federal funds to respond to COVID-19?**

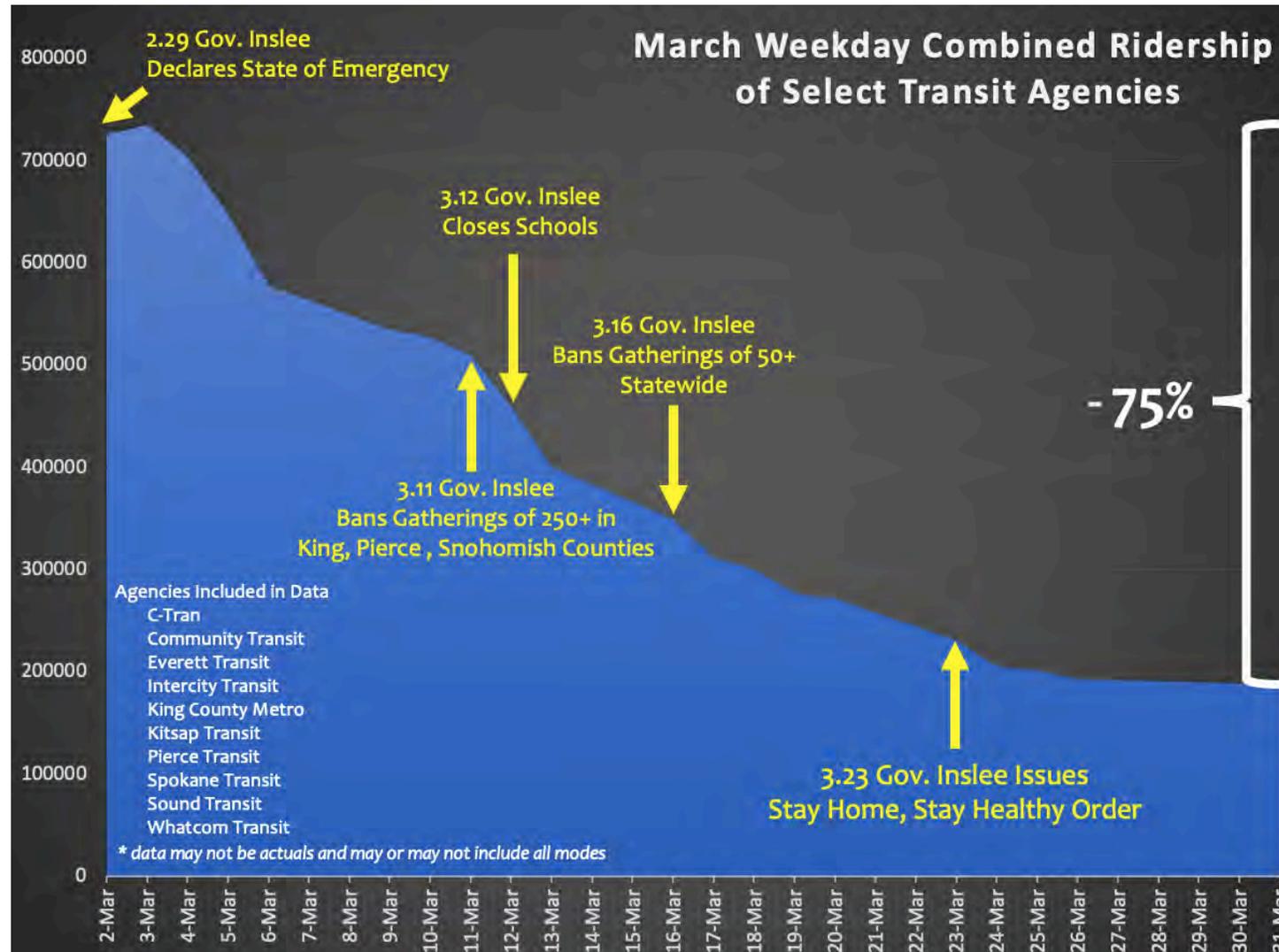
- WSTA delivered 130,000 face masks to 40 transits in 3 states
- WSTA Weekly Calls with Small/Midsize Agencies
- WSTA frequent meetings with the dept. managers of:
 - HR, Finance, Operations, Maintenance, Marketing/Comms, and the General Managers
- WSTA serving as a clearinghouse of resources



COVID-19: Impacts

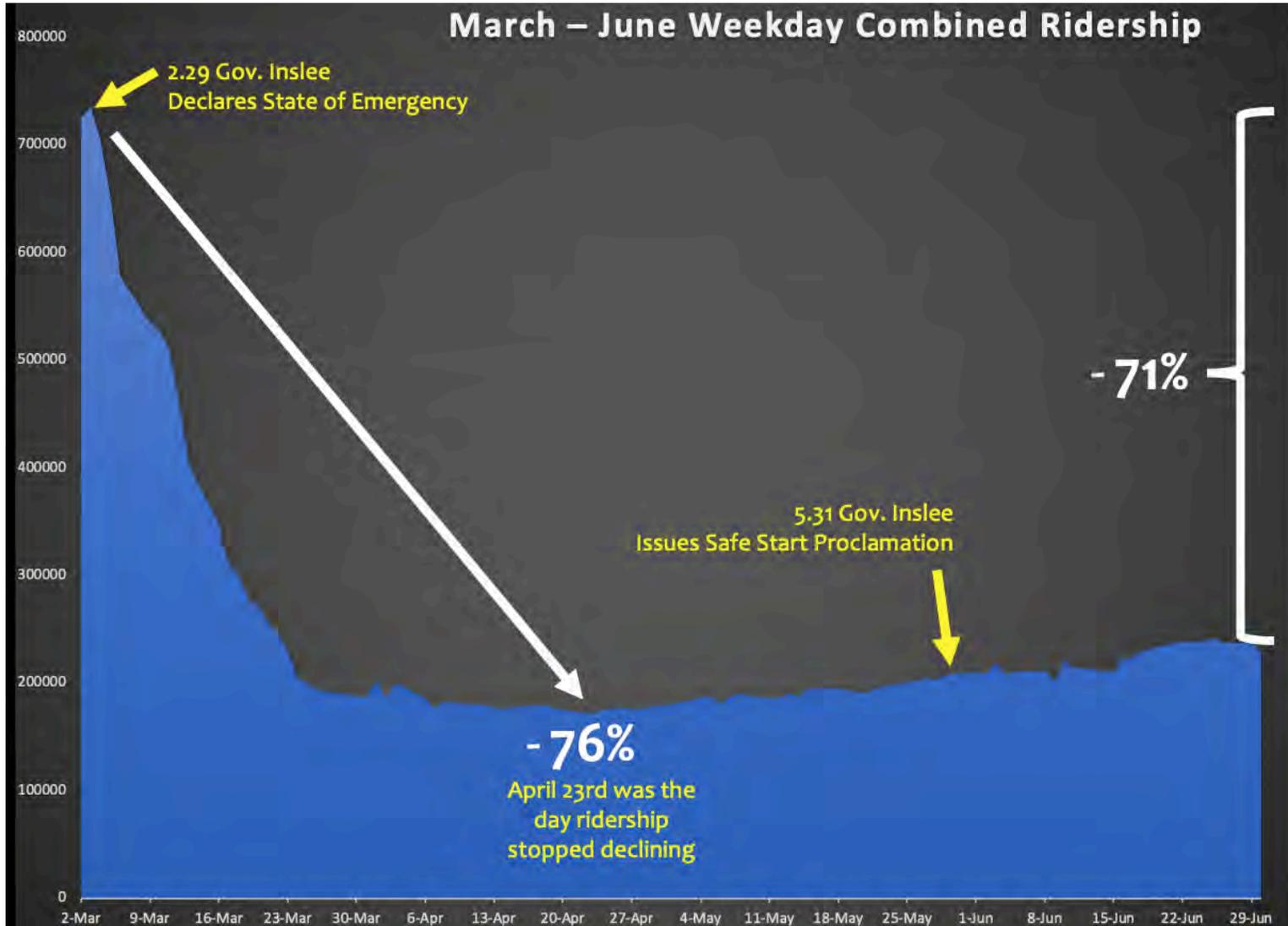
- The impacts are deep and long lasting.
- Recovery in ridership & lost revenue could take years.
 - Ridership
 - Farebox Revenue
 - Sales tax (economy)
 - Rider Psyche

COVID-19: Impacts - Ridership



- March:
 - Ridership decline was swift and deep

COVID-19: Impacts- Ridership



- While ridership is coming back, it remains anemic.
- What about the "2nd COVID-19 Wave?"

COVID-19: Impacts- Farebox

- As part of keeping drivers and passengers safe, nearly all agencies went Fare Free in April
- Statewide Farebox Recovery Decline:
 - March -15%
 - April -80%
 - May -81%
 - June -60%

Farebox revenue makes up only a fraction of revenue for transits

COVID-19: Impacts - Sales Tax

- Local Sales Tax makes up 70-80% of public transits revenue.
- A prolonged recession will cause long term impacts.

Month	Puget Sound	Statewide
March	-24.68%	-17%
April	-18%	-11%

We must remember that two data points a trend does not make.

Just because a metric is “better” than last time does not mean the system is improving.

COVID-19: Impacts - Federal Relief

- Federal Government acted quickly with relief funding
 - CARES Act: \$800 Million for WA State Transits
 - \$500 Million to Central Puget Sound Transits
 - \$100 Million to other Urban Transits
 - \$44 Million to Small/Midsize Transits
 - Flexible Funding
 - No match needed
 - Use for any expense starting Jan 20th
 - No Deadline for Use

COVID-19: Moving Forward

- Conflicting Needs: Service Levels vs. Social Distancing
 - Social Distancing = less capacity = need for more services = increased cost of service and depriving resources.
- Response vs. Recovery - Caution
 - The pandemic is not over. With recent cases on the rise, we should caution ourselves to begin “re-defining” what transit or transportation looks like in the “new normal”.
 - *You don't clean up the front yard in the eye of the hurricane.*
- Relief and Recovery Funding
 - Funding still needed to continue providing relief
 - Transit can and will be critical to economic recovery
 - Both Federal and State funding will be needed

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