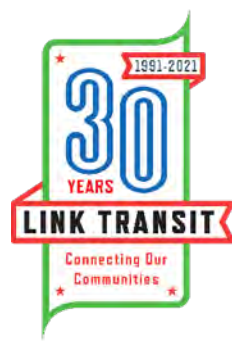




# Link Transit's Strategy Regarding Human Services Transportation

Washington State Transportation  
Commission June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021



# Setting the Stage

- 2002 – Link Transit
  - 18% budget deficit
  - paratransit consuming 49% of budget
  - fixed route shrinking (down 63%)
  - entire full sized fleet over useful life
- A new paradigm was necessary

# Old View of Paratransit Demand



- Paratransit is a premium service
- Demand unlimited unless controlled
- Demand control was necessary
  - Eligibility
  - Service Quality
  - Service Design
  - Fares

# Most Peoples View of Paratransit





# Typical paratransit attributes

- No Spontaneity – next day to two week advance reservations
- Negotiating (+/- 60 minutes) pick-up times
- Large on-time windows (+/- 30 minutes)
- Convoluted routes, long ride times
- Limited predictability
- Uncomfortable vehicles



# The New Paradigm

- When paratransit is good, it is still “bad”
- Consider our riders real alternatives?
- If routed service really meets their needs, they will voluntarily choose it.
- If routed services are not appropriate, we should make other community resources available.

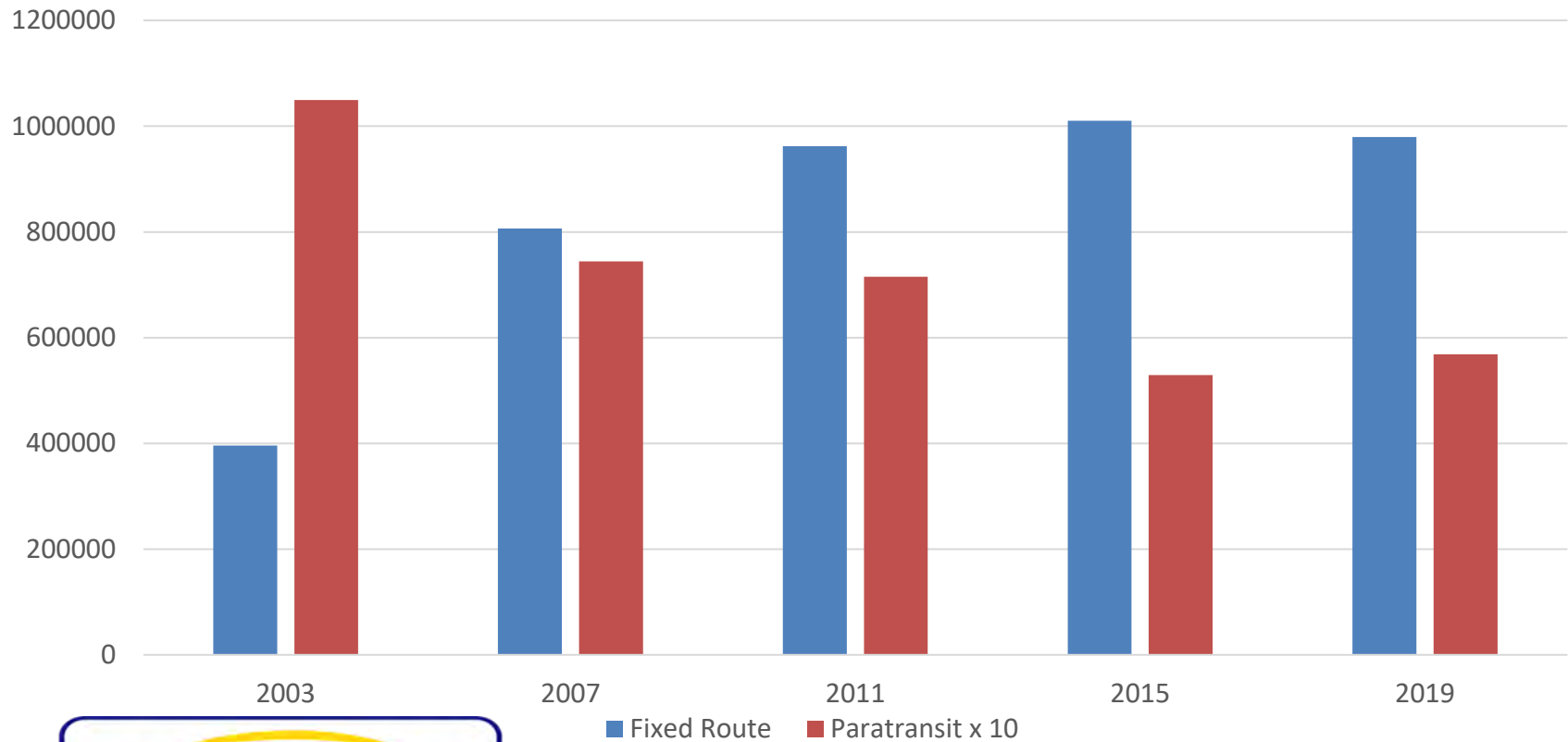
# What Did We Do?

- Acquired low-floor buses (first in State)
- Eliminated transfers to Senior meals
- Made fixed route free for paratransit eligible
- Invested in focused travel training
- Communicated message of independence
- Increased frequency of buses serving major destinations of paratransit riders

# Fixed Route vs Paratransit (x 10)

(Paratransit adjusted to show relationship)

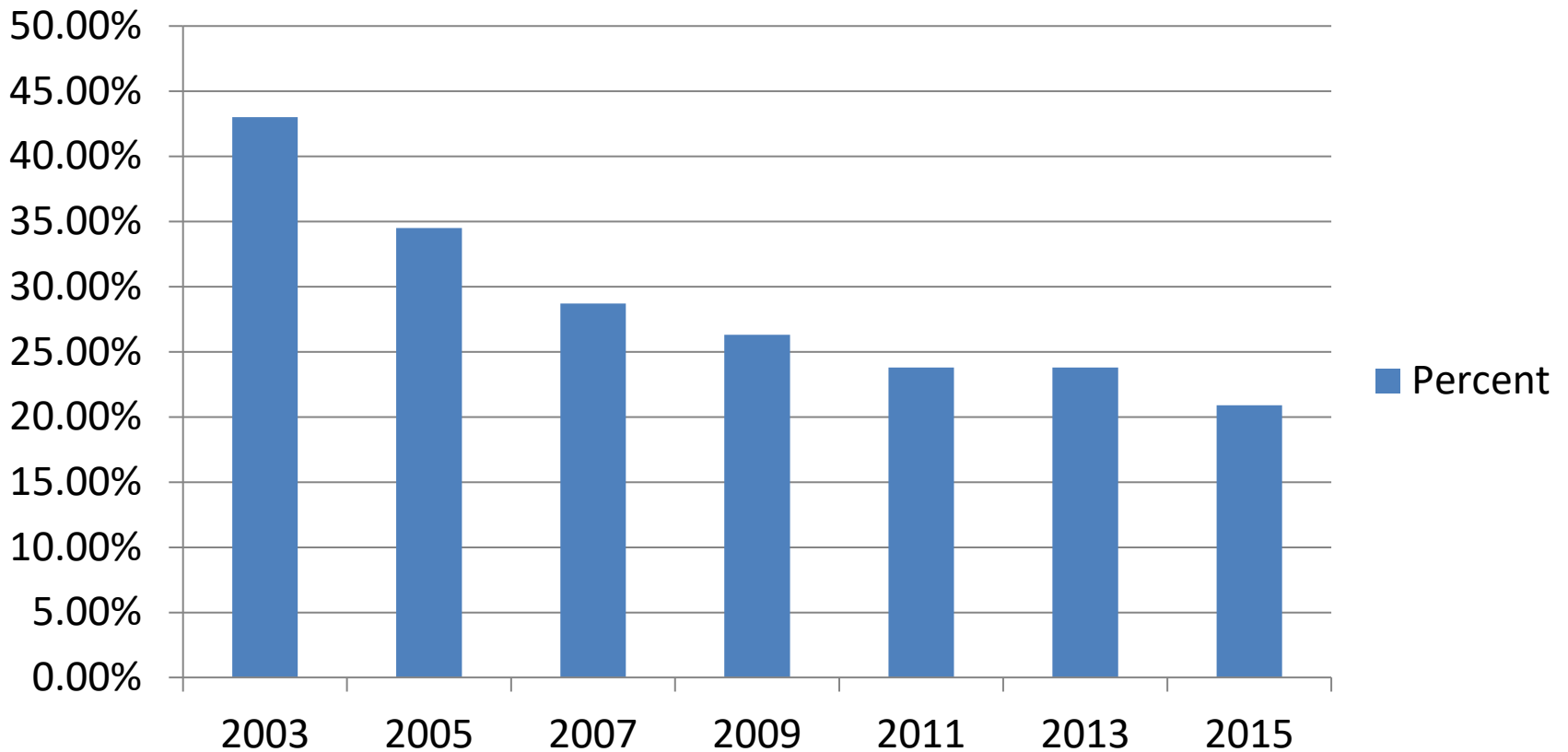
Fixed Route vs Paratransit X 10





# Percent of Link Budget for Paratransit

Percent



# Travel Training



- Most individuals don't use transit
- When become disabled, want paratransit
- With travel training, most can use transit for regular trips
- Each individual travel trained, saves \$40 per trip or \$7,680 annually for an average paratransit user

# Human Services Gaps

- ADA Paratransit is required to be provided to all origins and destinations within  $\frac{3}{4}$  of mile of our fixed routes during the hours and days of service.
- Taxing district is 3,500 square miles.
- $\frac{3}{4}$  mile corridor around routes is about 450 square miles.
- A lot of people with special needs live outside the ADA boundaries but within the taxing district

# Volunteer Driver Program

- Link contracts w/ Community Organizations
- Individuals apply for eligibility
- Issued mileage vouchers based on distance to nearest frequent fixed route
- Eligible users will find their own driver and “pay” driver with the mileage vouchers.

# Volunteer Driver (cont.)

- Vouchers will initially be distributed at a rate of 4 round trips per month
- Annual budget is estimated to not exceed \$150,000
- The volunteer drivers can be reimbursed at IRS rate (\$0.52 per mile)