

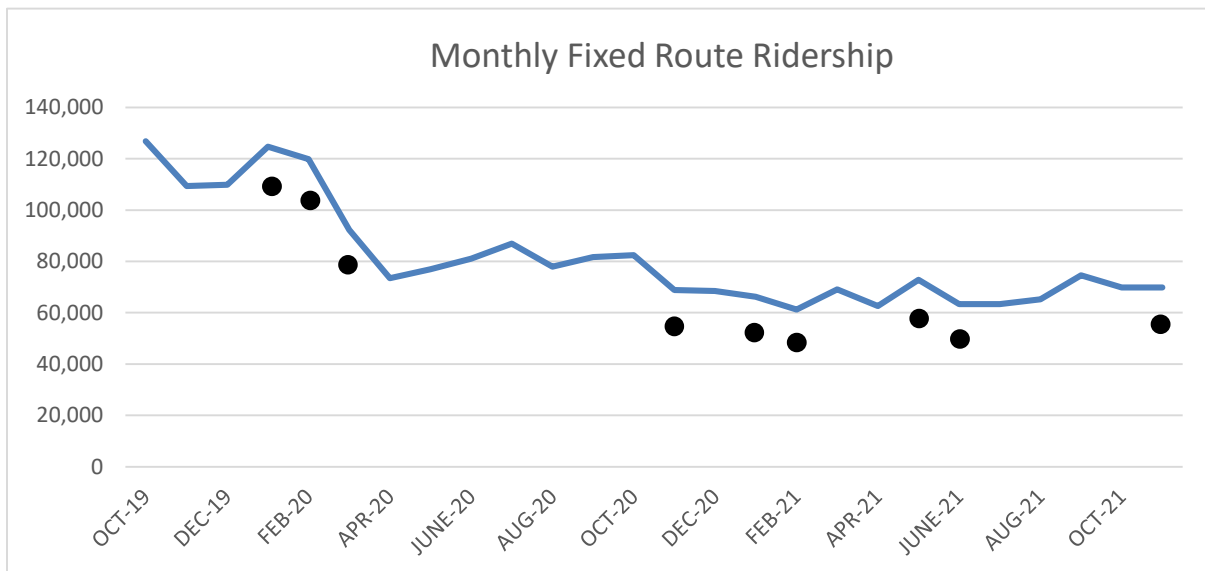
<b>TOPIC</b>	COVID-19 Ridership and Connected Meridian
<b>DATE</b>	January 3, 2021
<b>STAFF MEMBER</b>	Alissa Taysom

### Highlights

- Ridership is trending up
- Ridership reached its lowest in February 2021
- Connected Meridian project is seeking public input on services in Meridian

### Summary

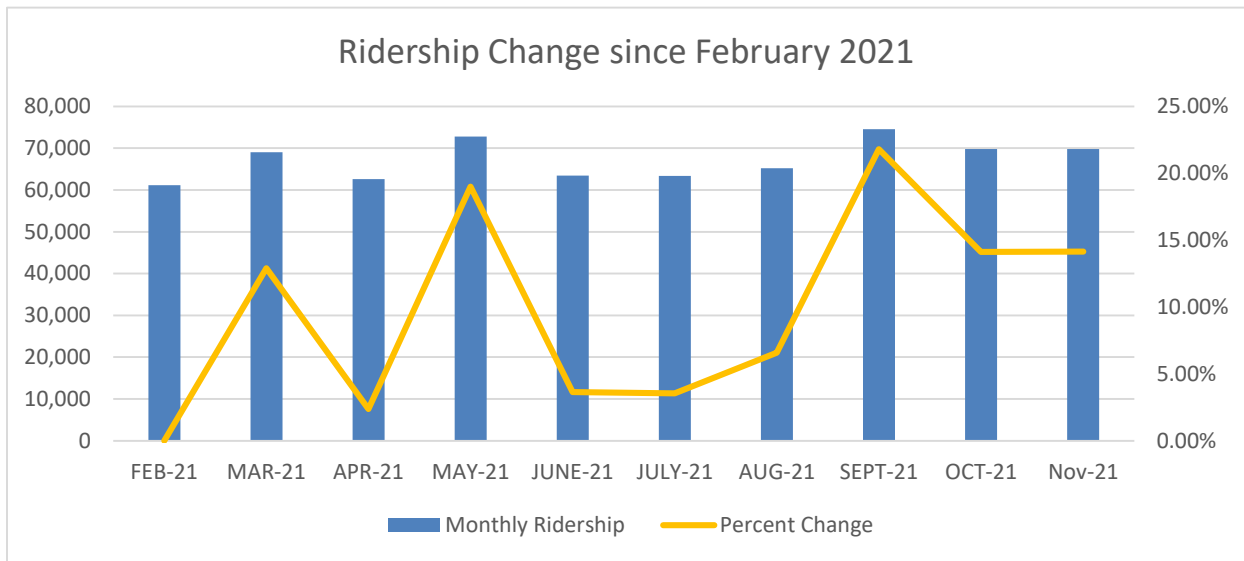
The COVID-19 pandemic caused a significant drop in ridership from pre-pandemic levels. Nationwide, monthly transit ridership is down 46% from December 2019. Overall fixed route ridership for Valley Regional Transit closely mirrors the nationwide reduction since the start of the pandemic. Before the pandemic began, monthly fixed route ridership was between 100,000 and 130,000 riders. Ridership dropped in March 2020, and has been slowly recovering. In November 2021, total monthly ridership was 69,834. The table below shows the changes in ridership since October 2019 and key dates since the start of the pandemic.



- January 2020 – Ridership exceeded January 2019 ridership
- February 2020 – COVID-19 crisis begins
- March 2020 – VRT suspends fare collection
- November 2020 – VRT resumes fare collection
- February 2021 – Lowest combined recorded monthly ridership since the beginning of the pandemic
- May 2021 – VRT goes fare free as part of the May in Motion campaign
- June 2021 – The Delta variant of COVID-19 begins to spread

- November 2021 – Ridership exceeds previous November’s ridership, first time since the start of the pandemic that ridership is higher than the same month the previous year.

In February 2021 fixed route ridership as a whole reached its lowest point of 61,180. As shown in the table below, ridership has grown over the months since. Ridership for November 2021 was up 14% over February 2021.



The local and intercounty services each reached their lowest point at separate times. At their lowest, the different services ranged between 50 and 65 percent below the ridership from January 2020. Similar to the lows, the highest ridership months for each service are happening at separate times. These highs range from 31 to 45 percent below the ridership from January 2020.

Service Type	Pre-Pandemic Ridership	Lowest Pandemic Ridership Month	Percent Change	Highest Pandemic Ridership Month	Percent Change
Ada County Local	116,664 (Jan 2020)	58,077 (Feb 2021)	-50%	70,112 (Sept. 2021)	-40%
Intercounty	8,080 (Jan 2020)	2,793 (May 2020)	-65%	4,407 (Sept. 2021)	-45%
Canyon County Local	4,062 (Jan 2020)	1,838 (Nov 2020)	-55%	2,819 (Nov 2021)	-31%

### Connected Meridian

Valley Regional Transit launched the Connected Meridian project on [engagevalleyregionaltransit.org](http://engagevalleyregionaltransit.org). The intent behind the project is to collect public input on a wide variety of public transportation options for the City of Meridian, some that already serve the City. The project areas that VRT is seeking input on are:

- Vanpool
- Fixed Route
- On-Demand, and
- Specialized Transportation

The feedback gained from the public will be used to inform the Transportation Development Plan for future service expansions to the City of Meridian.

### **More Information**

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