



PANDEMIC RECOVERY OFFICE

R-Line Free Service Pilot Final Report

Submitted by State of Rhode Island Pandemic Recovery Office

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<https://pandemicrecovery.ri.gov>

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R-Line Free Service Pilot

Project Identification Number: 10028

Pandemic Recovery Office Approval Date: September 1, 2022

Project Completion Date: January 2, 2024

Funding Amount: \$3,250,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Revenue Replacement: Provision of Government Services

Problem Statement: From September 2018 through August 2019, there were 2,489,179 rides provided on the R-Line – a bus route from Pawtucket through Providence with the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority’s (RIPTA) heaviest ridership.¹ The pandemic significantly reduced ridership, with 1,227,744 rides from September 2020 through August 2021.

Project Overview: RIPTA implemented a fare-free pilot on the R-Line from September 1, 2022, through August 31, 2023.² The State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF) paid for the installation of passenger counters on buses, offset lost revenue at a rate of \$2 per ride, and paid for a consultant to complete studies required by the Federal Transit Administration and the Rhode Island General Assembly, the latter of which was due by March 1, 2024.³ The funding also supported lost revenue for paratransit services that operate within three-quarters of a mile of the R-Line.

RIPTA exhausted the initial SFRF appropriation of \$2.5 million provided in the State Fiscal Year 2023 budget in March 2023. The State Fiscal Year 2024 budget provided an additional \$750,000 from SFRF that was used for costs incurred in July and August 2023.

Financial Overview: All program payments can be found on the [Pandemic Recovery Office’s website](#) by filtering the “Project” box for “R-Line Free Service Pilot.” Of the \$3.25 million total SFRF budget, approximately \$3.1 million compensated RIPTA for lost revenue, and the remaining funds paid for the installation of passenger counters and the consultants completing its

¹ Map of the R-Line is on page 6.

² RIPTA extended the pilot through September 2023 and did not use SFRF to pay for any associated costs. Ridership data from September 2023 was not tracked for the purposes of the Pandemic Recovery Office’s reporting to U.S. Treasury, though RIPTA is tracking it for other reporting purposes.

³ The reports will explore the benefits and challenges of fare-free transit in Rhode Island. They will assess ridership impacts on the R-Line and other RIPTA routes, service reliability, financial impacts to RIPTA and riders, and environmental impacts.

reports. The table below shows planned expenditures by fiscal quarter and actual expenditures by fiscal quarter.

Fiscal Year Quarter	Planned Expenditures	Actual Expenditures
FY 2023 Q1	\$286,731	-
FY 2023 Q2	\$737,756	-
FY 2023 Q3	\$737,756	\$2,000,687
FY 2023 Q4	\$737,756	\$499,313
FY 2024 Q1	\$750,000	\$472,171
FY 2024 Q2	-	\$277,829
Total	\$3,250,000	\$3,250,000
<i>Notes: A single audit fee applies to all SFRF projects and accounts for \$975 of the funds shown in the above table. The actual expenditures are reimbursement transfers from the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) to RIPTA, meaning the costs were incurred earlier than when they are shown in the “Actual Expenditures” column.</i>		

The tables below show planned expenditures by fiscal quarter and actual expenditures by fiscal quarter broken out by subproject. Actual expenditures differed from planned expenditures for each subproject so that RIPTA could be responsive to its needs as the project progressed. For example, RIPTA used more of the SFRF appropriation for lost revenue and less of the SFRF appropriation on increased service costs and the consultant than it originally anticipated.

Lost Revenue

Fiscal Year Quarter	Planned Expenditures	Actual Expenditures
FY 2023 Q1	\$132,988	-
FY 2023 Q2	\$398,963	-
FY 2023 Q3	\$398,963	\$2,000,687
FY 2023 Q4	\$398,963	\$335,846
FY 2024 Q1	\$750,000	\$472,171
FY 2024 Q2	-	\$277,829
Total	\$2,079,877	\$3,086,533
<i>Note: The actual expenditures are reimbursement transfers from the RIDOT to RIPTA, meaning the costs were incurred earlier than when they are shown in the “Actual Expenditures” column.</i>		

Additional Service Costs and Passenger Counters

Fiscal Year Quarter	Planned Expenditures	Actual Expenditures
FY 2023 Q1	\$113,494	-
FY 2023 Q2	\$218,046	-
FY 2023 Q3	\$218,046	-
FY 2023 Q4	\$218,046	\$40,800
Total	\$767,632	\$40,800
<i>Note: The actual expenditures are reimbursement transfers from the RIDOT to RIPTA, meaning the costs were incurred earlier than when they are shown in the “Actual Expenditures” column.</i>		

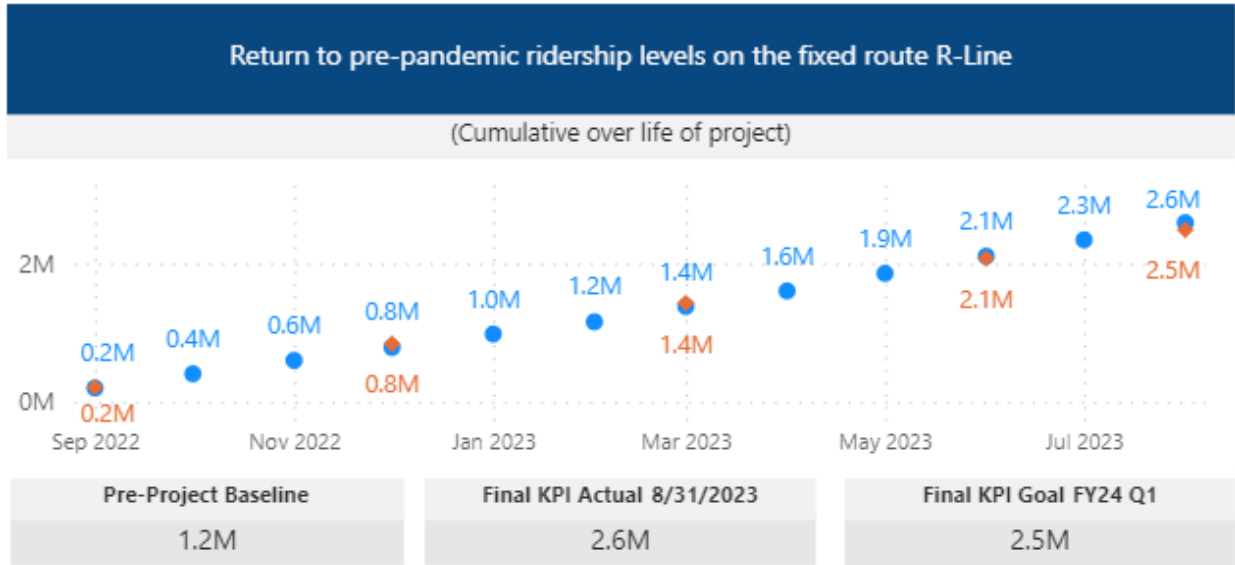
Consultant

Fiscal Year Quarter	Planned Expenditures	Actual Expenditures
FY 2023 Q1	\$40,249	-
FY 2023 Q2	\$120,747	-
FY 2023 Q3	\$120,747	-
FY 2023 Q4	\$120,747	\$122,667
Total	\$402,490	\$122,667
<i>Note: The actual expenditures are reimbursement transfers from the RIDOT to RIPTA, meaning the costs were incurred earlier than when they are shown in the “Actual Expenditures” column.</i>		

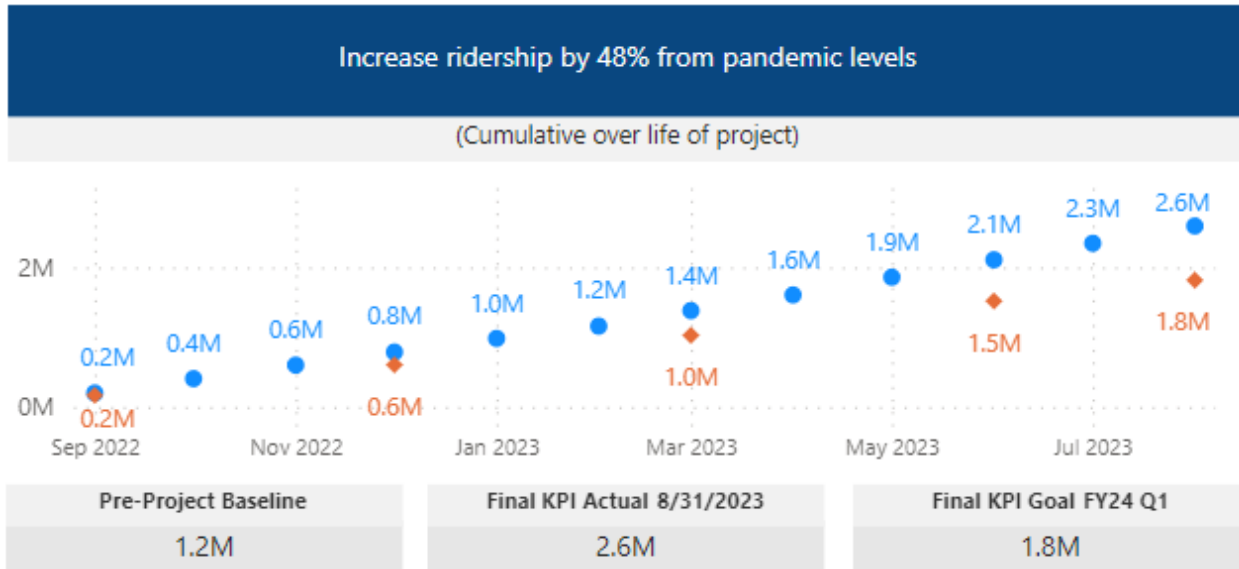
Key Performance Indicators: The following are the key performance indicators based on quarterly goals and monthly data collections.

Legend: ● Actual KPI Value Reported ◆ Quarterly Goals

1. Return to pre-pandemic ridership levels on the fixed route R-Line



2. Increase ridership by 48% from pandemic level



Map of the R-Line

