

Community Connector Fare Structure Assessment

INTRODUCTION

The Community Connector Fare Study is a joint effort by the City of Bangor and Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System to take a fresh look at how fares work for bus and paratransit services. The study aims to find ways to make the fare system more efficient and sustainable while keeping it fair and easy for riders. The study goals are:

GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3
Increase Fare Revenue	Decrease Fare Collection Burden and Inefficiencies	Consider the Impact on Riders

BACKGROUND

Community Connector has made major investments to support growth and improve service, including a new transit center, new buses, fixed bus stops, onboard technology, and a mobile app with real-time bus information. These system improvements have helped ridership recover since the pandemic-related lows of 2021.

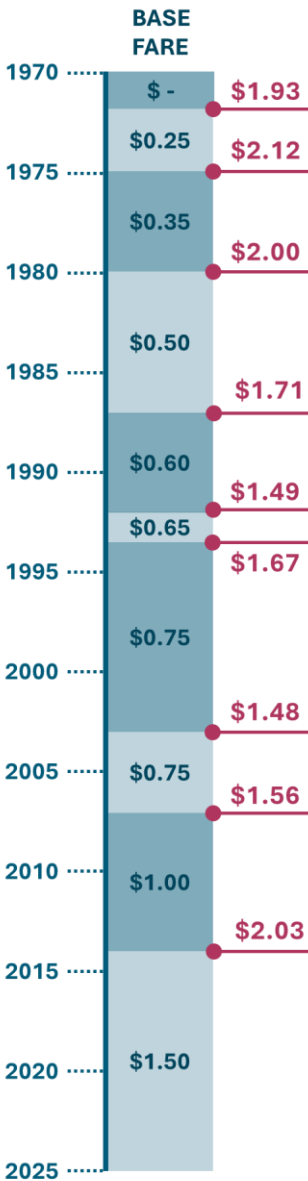
At the same time, operating costs have increased, meaning fares now cover a smaller share of those expenses. With today's base fare of \$1.50 among the lowest in the agency's history when adjusted for inflation (**Figure 1** shows each fare increase in the last 50 years), this study provides an opportunity to assess how fare policies and technology can best support the long-term sustainability and accessibility of the system.

STUDY FINDINGS

- Compared to similar transit systems, Community Connector had the **largest drop in share of expenses covered by fare revenue** since before the pandemic.
- **Most riders use the bus often**, and monthly passes make up about 30 percent of all rides.
- A new "fare capping" system could **help riders save money automatically**. After they pay enough single fares, the **rest of their rides that month are free**.
- Riders who qualify for half fares can't currently buy half-fare passes, which limits how much they benefit from discounts.
- In previous studies and surveys, riders share that they thought fares are fair, with **86 percent saying fares are reasonable or a good value**.
- Over half (57 percent) of riders already use debit/credit cards or Apple Pay/Google Pay to purchase passes or tickets.

Community Connector is modernizing how you pay your fare! New options make paying your fare faster and easier, and you can still pay in cash if that's what works best for you.

Figure 1: Community Connector Base Fare History (Blue) and Value in 2025 Dollars (Red)



A MODERNIZED FARE PAYMENT SYSTEM

Community Connector is planning to introduce mobile tickets and smart cards so riders can buy and use fares more easily. These new technologies will replace paper passes, tickets, and transfer slips to make things easier for riders, drivers, and staff. Cash payment will remain an option for riders.



Mobile Ticketing App

The mobile app allows you to pay your fare right from your phone. You can buy tickets or passes anytime, then just show or scan your phone when boarding the bus.



Smart Card

A smart card is a reloadable plastic card that you can tap on the fare reader when boarding. The system automatically takes the fare from the card.

You can add more money to mobile apps or smart cards online, at the transit center, or at convenient locations around the region.

Fare Capping

Fare capping means you never pay more than a set value in a month. You pay for one trip at a time, and once you reach the price cap, the rest of their rides during that period are free.

Take **30** paid trips in a month and ride **FREE** for the rest of the month!

Transfers

With the elimination of paper fare media, **free transfers will only be available for mobile app and smart card payments.**

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

NOVEMBER 2025

Join us at **pop-up events** or the **public hearing** (in-person or virtual) to share your thoughts.

DECEMBER 2025

Proposed fares and payment system will go to **City Council** for approval.

2026-2027

Mobile ticketing app and smart card will roll out in phases. **Paper passes, tickets, and transfer slips** will still be **accepted during a transition period**, so you have time to adjust.