

The Rise of PRESTO Positively Impacts the Usage of the TTC for the Residents of Toronto*

Rachit Srivastava

April 23rd, 2021

Abstract

With the rapid increase in digital commodities and on-the-go customer experiences for TTC (Toronto Transit Commission) Transit riders, a study was conducted to see the shift in transit fare sales in the past decade between physical fares (i.e. cash, tokens, or passes) and digital fares from PRESTO cards. When looking at the TTC sales matrix from year to year, there is an increase in usage of the TTC where most of the sales derive directly from the PRESTO sales rather than physical fares regardless of the type of fare; whether the fare pertains to a single-fare ticket or monthly passes. Similarly, the relationship between PRESTO sales and the sales for rail transits, like subway and SRT, perceived a positive increase in usage in the past decade, alluding to the riders being more interested in using the TTC for a more faster and efficient ride experience around Toronto. It is quite evident that Torontonians value the explicit interaction of being efficient and quick when it comes to using the TTC, by using this insight the TTC can slowly transition into using PRESTO as their main source of selling fares while increasing the development of subways to cater to the needs of Toronto's TTC riders.

Introduction

There has been a rise of TTC fares and the usage of the TTC transit by Torontonians in the past decade, giving rise to contactless smart cards encrypted with NFC called the PRESTO card which allows riders to use the TTC without the need for any physical fares. PRESTO is a payment system that works across the city of Toronto for all transit systems to make the experience of a rider more secure and convenient to help them commute from one place to another. While TTC is one of the main ways for people to commute and travel across the city, it will be great to see what aspects of TTC are more prevalent in Torontonian's riding experience. This will help hone onto a specific sector of TTC and help improve the experience further to lessen the pain for the TTC riders.

The study focused on assessing the total number of sales for PRESTO, a digital payment system for quick fares, and total number of sales for physical fares, like cash, tokens, passes, or tickets, for Torontonians from 2009 - 2019. This study was conducted by looking at a TTC dataset obtained from the Toronto Open Data Portal, that focused on illustrating the information about the sales of the fares for both digital and physical assets as well as distinguishing the amount of fares for the types of transits that TTC offers. Since the study aimed to look into the trajectory of the sales from a large period of time, looking at the characteristics of the total number of sales per year seemed to be the most appropriate data to analyze for this study. By visualizing this data over a period of time, it gives us a great sense of how the ticket sales increased or decreased in a specific portion of the TTC ecosystem while identifying the main reasoning for that relationship. When comparing these variables, it shows that there is an increase in the usage of the TTC from 2009 - 2019, where the majority of those sales came from PRESTO sales and Rail transit sales. This further elaborates on the behaviour of Torontonians while using the TTC service and its products as they are more inclined to take a type of transit that is convenient, fast, efficient, and gets them to their destination

*Code and data are available at: https://github.com/levi24/PRESTO_VS_TTC

without any hiccups. The TTC can use this knowledge to further push their agenda in strengthening that specific sector in their roadmap to improve the experience further so TTC riders continue to utilize their services according to their liking.

Data

The data discussed in this paper is extracted from the opendatatoronto portal and has been captured from 1985 to 2019. The matrix encompasses the total number of TTC rides that a Torontonian has made in all of those years, where the numbers detailed in each column is the total number of rides for that year under that specific “ride” category. The dataset has a wide variety of data like:

- type of fare(PRESTO, cash, tokens, tickets, passes, etc.),
- type of transit(subway, bus, and rail),
- age group (adult, senior, and youth),
- and the time of the ride (weekday or weekends).

For the purpose of this study, the data that is being manipulated in this study is to look at the trajectory of the type of fares that Torontonians have used in the past/recent decade (2009 - 2019). As well as look at the total amount of rides per category based on the age group as the total numbers for the types of fares have been divided up by the age group specifically. Hence, in order to learn the true trajectory of all Torontonians and the data provided around the usage of the TTC, we will need to look at the total usage of the transit system for every single age group.

Moreover, the dataset has many other breakdowns when the variable for the types of fares is concerned. The dataset is filled with numbers around the wide variety of services that TTC offers to their customers as there are a lot of ways a person can use the TTC. To further elaborate, the dataset contains data on:

- single ride fare,
- two-time fare (back and forth rides),
- monthly passes,
- weekly passes,
- post-secondary passes,
- two hour rides,
- free rides,
- and many others

The paper will ignore the data around most of these types of fares except for the single fare ticket sales for the TTC in general. This accounts for both PRESTO fares and physical TTC fares like: cash, tokens, and tickets, where the physical fares like the two-time fares and the different types of passes will be ignored for this study. Also, another thing to note is that the total number of fares listed in the dataset is listed in the thousandths value. In other words, some data in the csv file is listed in single or double digits but that does not mean that there were less than 10 types of sales for that specific category of fares for the year. Instead, it means that there were less than 10,000 sales for that specific type of sale for that year. This could be the case due to a new service being adopted by the city or a late adoption of that service in the year which could have caused such an outlier in the data.

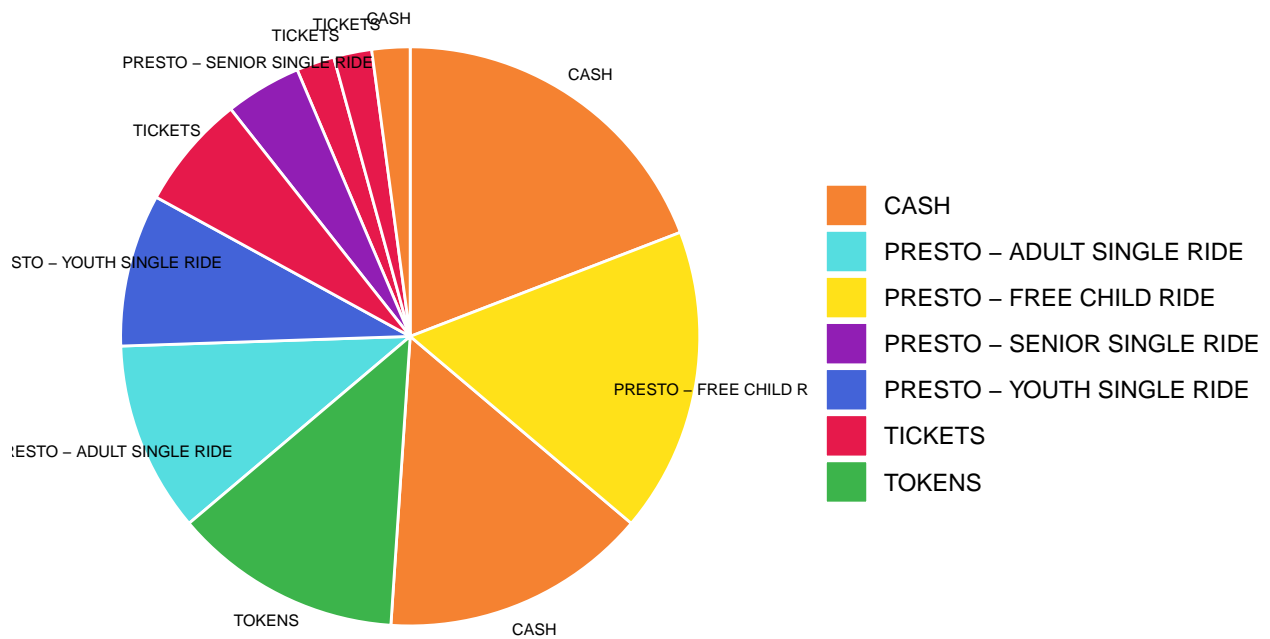
Lastly, the data that is presented in the dataset separates the different types of fares by age group (adult, senior, and youth). In order to see the full trajectory and comparison between the digital and physical fares of TTC in the past/recent decade, the data will need to be aggregated at the end to see a more visually accurate comparison of the types of fares.

Table 1: Total Number of People Using PRESTO and TTC

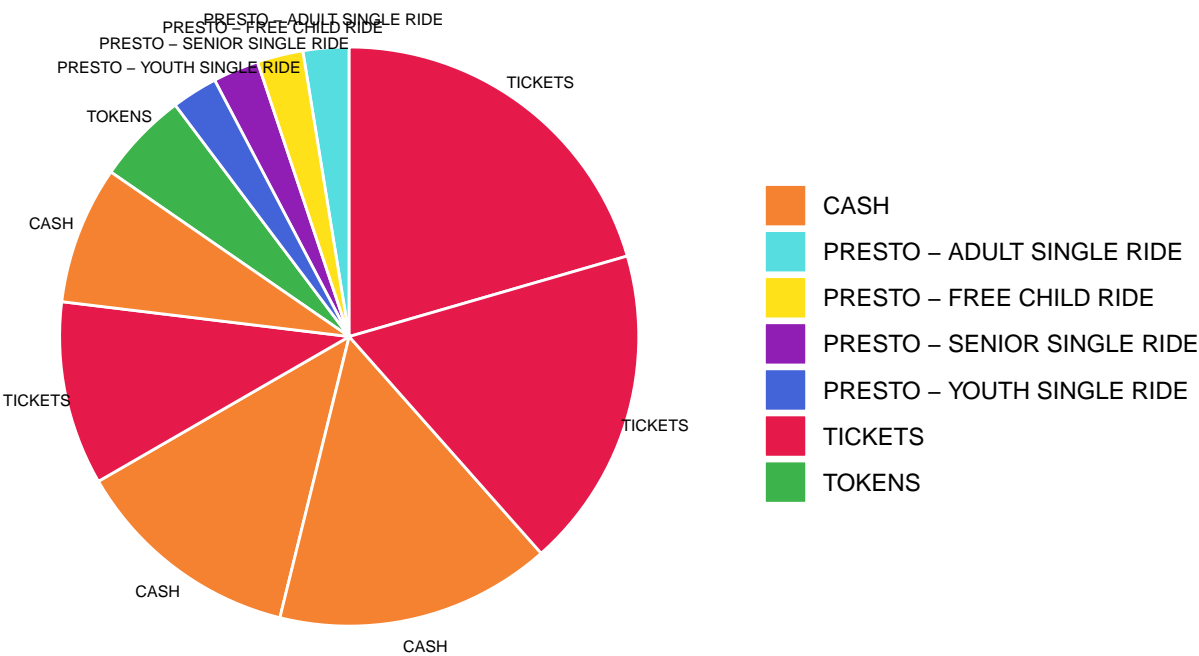
Type of Fare	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
PRESTO - ADULT SINGLE RIDE	166,871	110,950	67,829	27,397	13,323	9,862	8,194	4,399	1,139	0	0
CASH	26,287	32,251	36,045	41,536	48,873	49,120	48,623	46,467	43,795	43,149	41,445
TOKENS	21,669	46,974	76,106	102,073	110,945	111,157	112,360	117,962	124,748	120,366	114,686
TICKETS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,298	8,807
PRESTO - SENIOR SINGLE RIDE	11,203	5,587	2,728	680	210	6	0	0	0	0	0
PRESTO - YOUTH SINGLE RIDE	16,975	8,429	2,975	741	228	6	0	0	0	0	0
CASH	9,363	11,476	12,532	10,440	12,170	12,037	8,538	8,164	7,609	5,856	5,526
TICKETS	15,876	25,772	31,195	32,997	32,595	33,408	35,472	37,039	38,299	38,674	38,615
TICKETS	0	0	0	0	1,066	7,097	7,563	7,929	8,304	8,287	8,562
PRESTO - FREE CHILD RIDE	6,168	1,384	163	36	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
CASH	0	0	0	0	526	3,705	2,708	2,589	2,433	2,539	2,410

Results

TTC Fare Breakdown – 2019



TTC Fare Breakdown – 2009



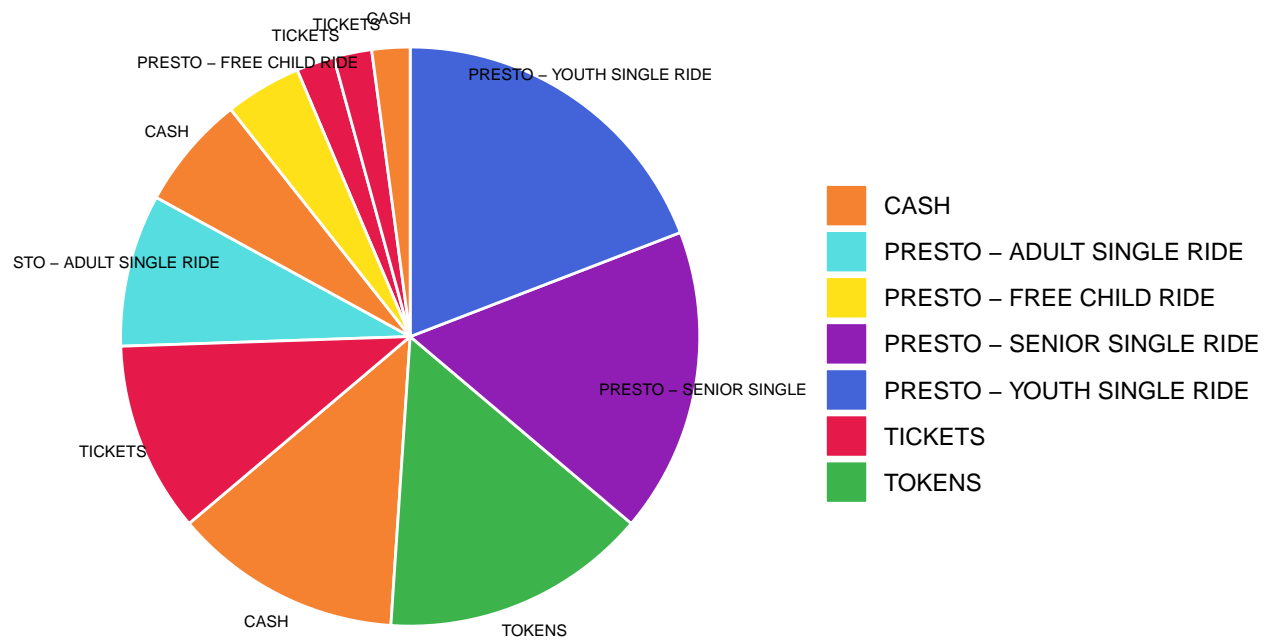
Discussion

References

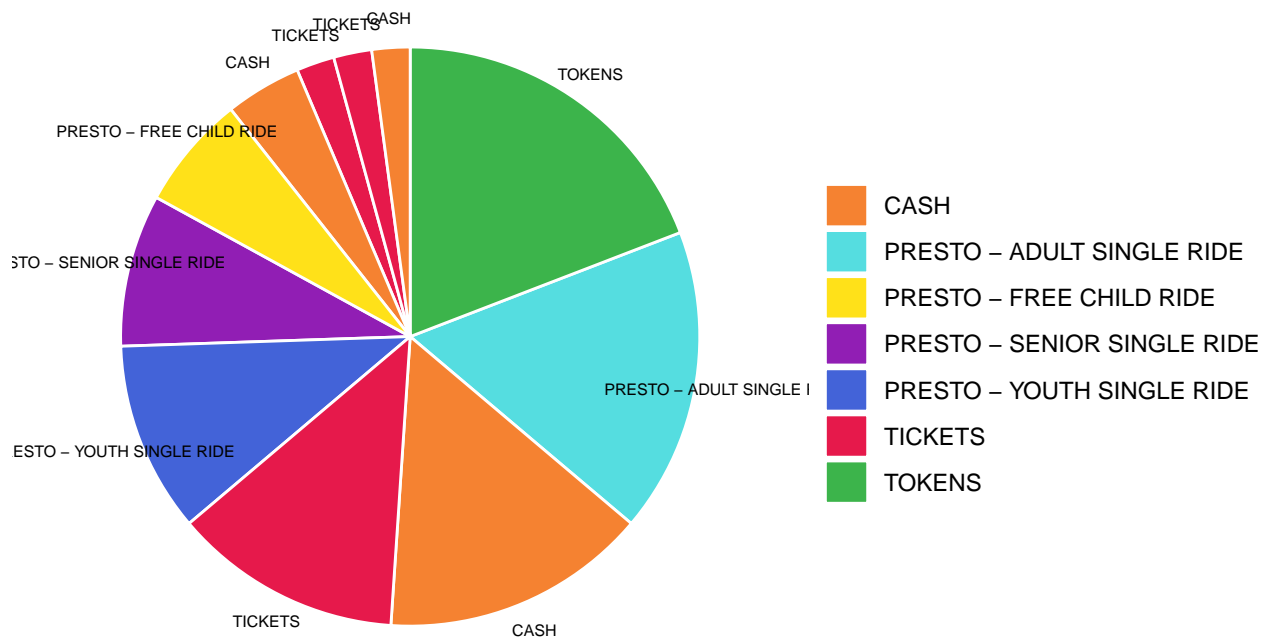
Appendix

Below is a list of pie charts for the other years if you want to see a more detailed view on all the years in between.

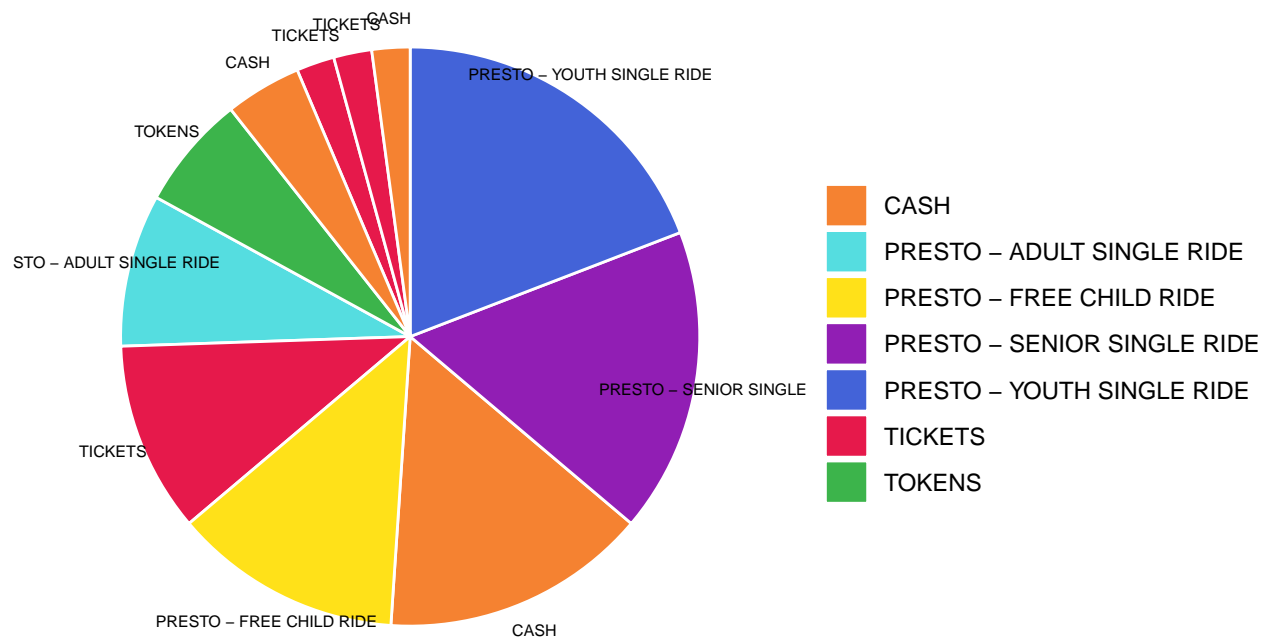
TTC Fare Breakdown – 2018



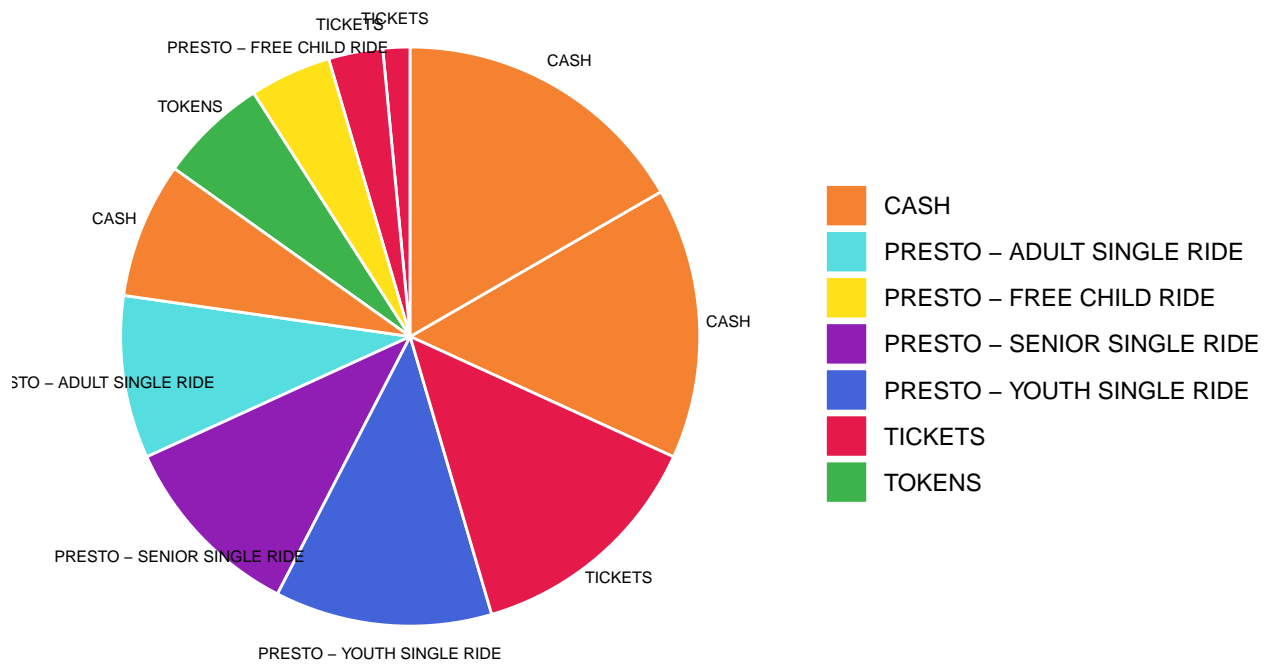
TTC Fare Breakdown – 2017



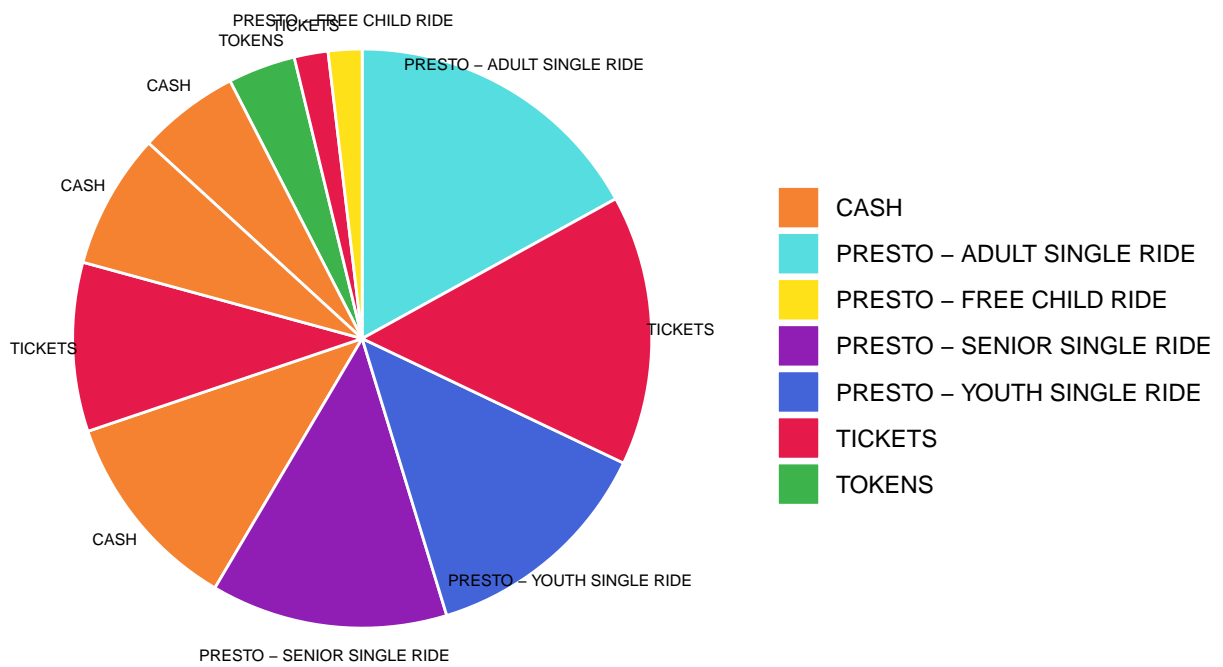
TTC Fare Breakdown – 2016



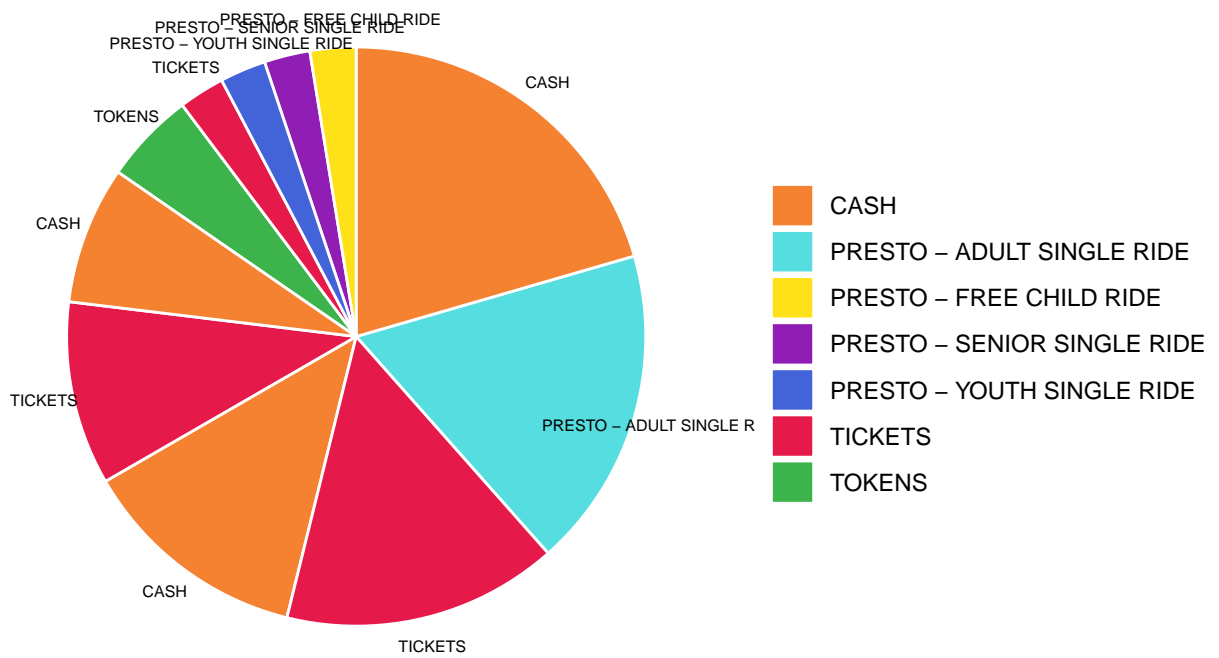
TTC Fare Breakdown – 2015



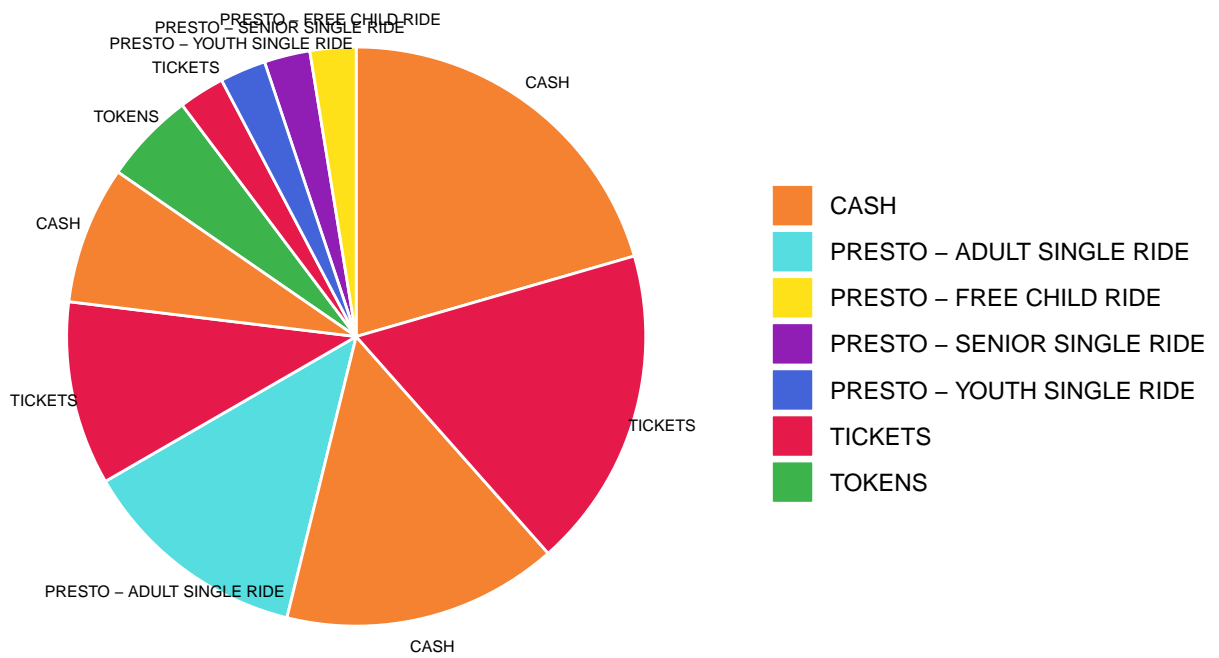
TTC Fare Breakdown – 2014



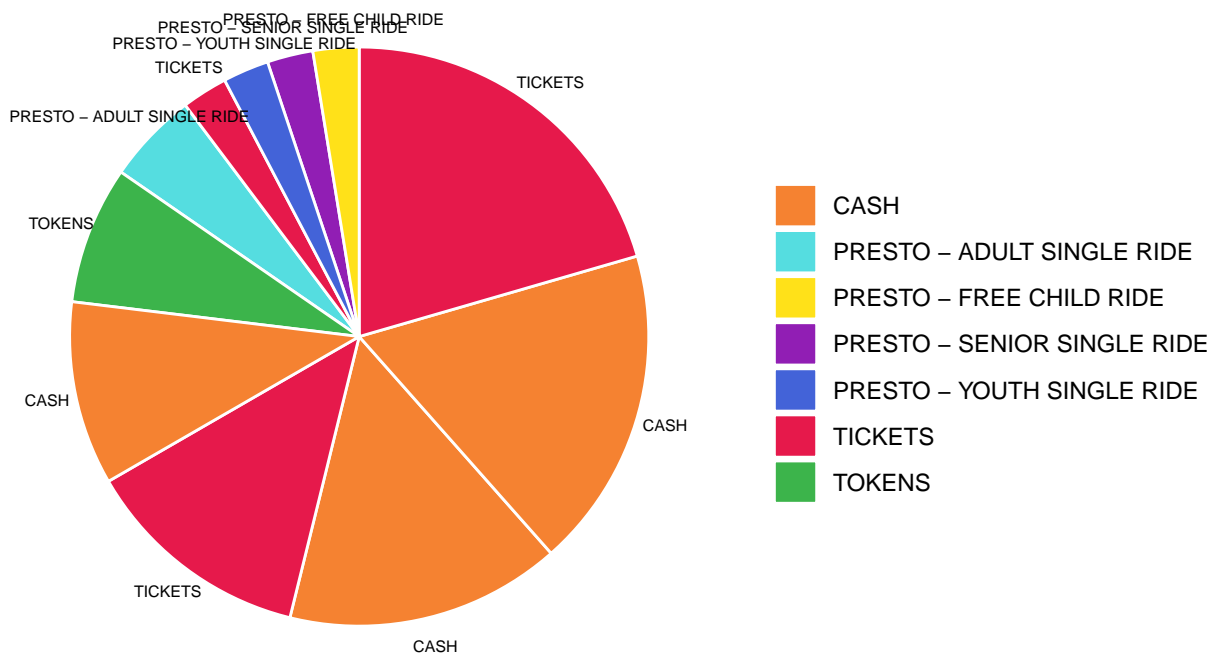
TTC Fare Breakdown – 2013



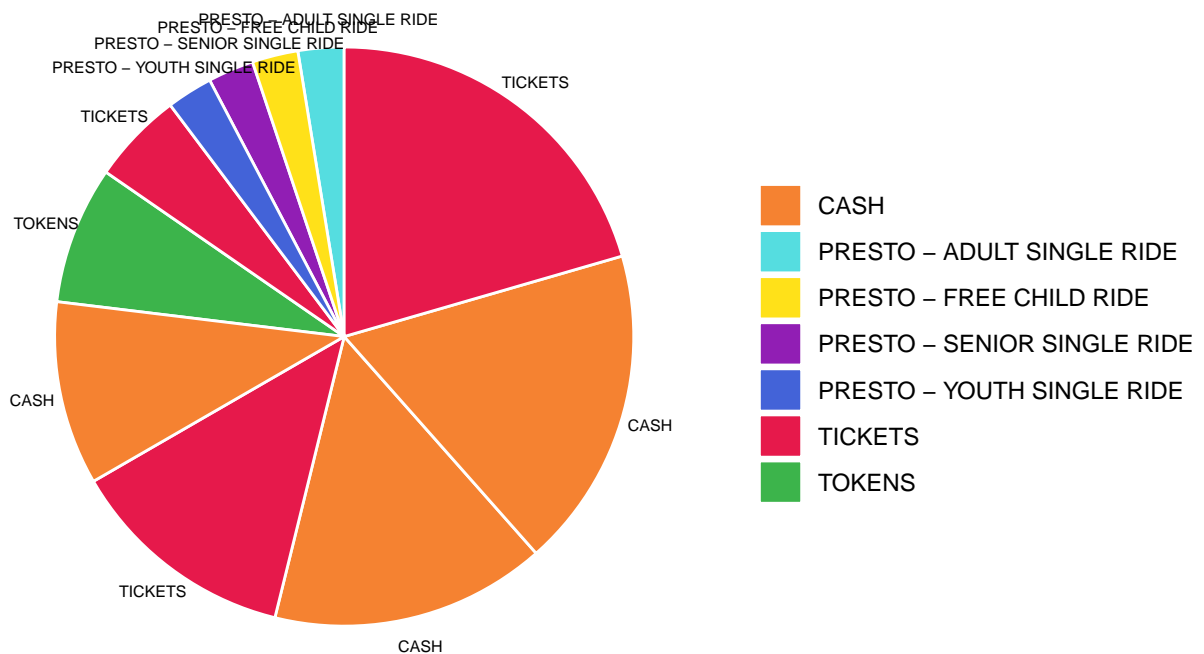
TTC Fare Breakdown – 2012



TTC Fare Breakdown – 2011



TTC Fare Breakdown – 2010



Code that did not work

Below is all of the code that I tried but did not work or failed to comply in any shape or form. Also, these codes were not the only ones that did not work but wanted to show you that I tried. There were others I forgot to document...

```
#I combined all pie charts to show the most drastic change in the decade from the most recent year to t
#grid.arrange(pie2019, pie2018, pie2017, pie2016, pie2015, pie2014, pie2013, pie2012, pie2011, pie2010,
#Combining did not work.
```

```
#I GIVE UP! I spent days in combining the data for cash, tickets, and tokens together and I just cannot
#df fare <- data.frame(
  #fare = presto_vs_ttc$fare_media,
  #twenty_nineteen = strtoi(c(presto_vs_ttc$`x2019`)),
  #twenty_eighteen = strtoi(presto_vs_ttc$`x2018`),
  #twenty_seventeen = strtoi(presto_vs_ttc$`x2017`),
  #twenty_sixteen = strtoi(presto_vs_ttc$`x2016`),
  #twenty_fifteen = strtoi(presto_vs_ttc$`x2015`),
  #twenty_fourteen = strtoi(presto_vs_ttc$`x2014`),
  #twenty_thirteen = strtoi(presto_vs_ttc$`x2013`),
  #twenty_twelve = strtoi(presto_vs_ttc$`x2012`),
  #twenty_eleven = strtoi(presto_vs_ttc$`x2011`),
  #twenty_ten = strtoi(presto_vs_ttc$`x2010`),
  #two_thousand_nine = strtoi(presto_vs_ttc$`x2009`)
#)
```

```
#ddply(dffare,"fare",numcolwise(sum))
#new_dffare <-
#dffare %>%
#group_by(fare) %>%
#summarise(twenty_nineteen = sum(twenty_nineteen))

#ttc_vs_presto_model <-
# lm(x2019 ~ x1 + fare_media, data = ttc_clean_data)
#summary(ttc_vs_presto_model)
```