transit together

Greater Portland Council of Governments

Final Report

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GPCOG
GREATER PORTLAND COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

NELSON NYGAARD

ASG PLANNING

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PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

The Transit Together study brings together key transit partners in the Greater Portland region to help move towards a more seamless regional transit system. It includes recommendations for bus service improvements and strengthens multimodal connections. The plan also advances regional initiatives to bring local partners together to improve the transit experience for current riders, attract new riders, and make the transit system more effective and efficient.

A better, more seamless regional system includes:

MORE FREQUENT SERVICE

The Greater Portland region's existing transit network includes six routes that operate less often than every 60 minutes, a level of frequency that is unusable for most people.

Under the Transit Together Recommended Service Plan, 10 routes will offer service every 30 minutes or better on weekdays. Frequency is increased on bus routes in places where there is high demand for transit, such as the Congress Street, Washington Avenue, and Brighton Avenue corridors in Portland; eastern South Portland; and the Alfred Street corridor in Biddeford. Route 21 in South Portland will provide 20-minute peak-period weekday service and a new Route 51 in Saco will provide bursts of 15-minute weekday service all day.

The Recommended Service Plan also increases frequency on other routes so that all but one arrives at least every hour.

BETTER CONNECTIONS

For many years, transportation plans have called for improved connections to and among the Greater Portland region's transportation hubs—especially the Portland International Jetport, Portland Transportation Center (PTC), METRO PULSE bus hub, and Casco Bay Ferry Terminal. The Recommended Service Plan calls for many of these improved connections, including:

- A **new bus connection among the Jetport, PTC, and PULSE**, meaning local bus, intercity bus, Downeaster train, and air travelers can transfer services using only one bus route.
- **Three new bus connections to the Casco Bay Ferry Terminal**, for a total of four bus routes that serve the terminal. This greatly increases the number of mainlanders with access to ferry service, and the number of destinations islanders can access without transferring buses.
- **Three bus routes serving the PTC**, providing one-seat ride connections to train and intercity bus service for people traveling to and from Brunswick, Freeport, Yarmouth, Falmouth, East Deering, and downtown Portland.
- **Improved Connections to the Saco Transportation Center (STC)**, including hourly bus service connecting Sanford, Saco, Old Orchard Beach, Scarborough, and UNE to the station, and bus service every 30 minutes connecting the US Route 111/Alfred Street corridor to the station.
- **Buses connecting the Mill Creek Transit Hub in South Portland with the PULSE** every 20 minutes during weekday peak periods.

ENHANCED RIDER EXPERIENCE

Over the course of the Transit Together study, transit operators were brought together to discuss the potential for working together to more efficiently use resources, attract new riders, and implement new technologies and customer-facing enhancements.

The study proposes varying levels of coordination within each initiative area based on a spectrum of cooperation as shown in Figure 1. These initiatives include:

- **Improving Bus Stops and Transit Hubs**
- **Enhancing Regional Information and Brand**
- **Making Fares and Trip Planning Easier**
- **Making Transit Faster, More Reliable, and More Sustainable**

Stop enhancements, technology investments and fleet upgrades will ensure a consistent, high-quality rider experience, and help agencies provide cost-effective and high-performance services.

Figure 1 Graphic of Regional Coordination Levels

Regional Communication
Acting Independently
But sharing information and establishing a regular forum for communication as opportunities or issues arise

Regional Coordination
Guiding Policy
Acting independently but adhering to established regional policies and/or standards

Regional Partnerships
Acting Jointly
Working together on selected functions

Regional Delivery
Integration
Coordinated delivery of service or administration function by interlocal agreement, MOU, contract, etc.

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

The Transit Together recommendations in this report were developed through a year-long process of interagency and stakeholder coordination. Most critically, the seven Greater Portland transit providers participated in three group workshops and numerous one-on-one meetings to identify areas of consensus and actions that will move the region towards a more cohesive regional network.

This forward momentum must be continued. Implementing Transit Together recommendations will depend on a continued commitment and dedication to working together. Regional coordination is also needed to identify and pursue additional funding to further increase bus service frequency and span, introduce new microtransit zones, and enhance the rider experience.

1 STUDY OVERVIEW

Transit Together is a comprehensive planning effort to evaluate and redesign the Greater Portland region's transit services. It is also an opportunity to advance regional initiatives to improve the transit experience for current riders, attract new riders, and make the overall system more effective and efficient.

This report identifies opportunities for improved bus service and increased coordination and integration among the Greater Portland region's seven public transit providers.

This study was conducted on behalf of the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) which houses the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS), the region's metropolitan planning organization. The study was funded by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act through the Federal Transit Administration.

REGIONAL GOALS

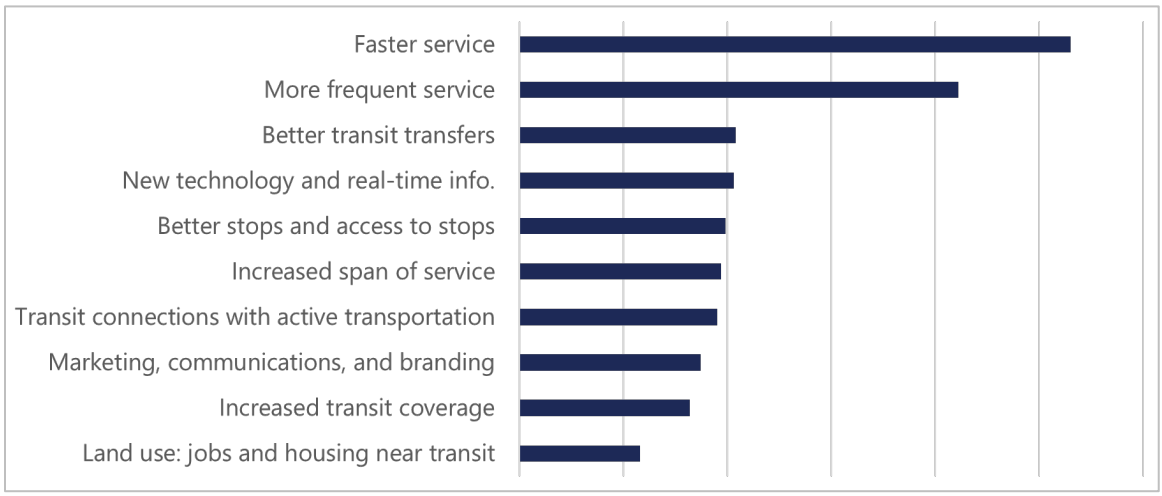
This study was rooted in the context of *Transit Tomorrow*, an ambitious 30-year strategic plan for enhancing public transportation in the Greater Portland region. Adopted in spring of 2021, *Transit Tomorrow* outlines a four-part strategy to achieve its vision:

- **Make transit easier for riders**
- **Create frequent connections**
- **Invest in rapid transit**
- **Create transit-friendly places**

Transit Together builds upon the vision and goals of *Transit Tomorrow* by focusing on the first two goals. It recommends improvements to transit frequency in areas with high demand to create better connections and to work together to make the network more easily understood and used by riders.

Transit Together's recommendations are also based on years of public feedback that GPCOG has received during various transit-related studies. The public's priorities for transit, which are shown in Figure 2, are primarily for faster and more frequent service.

Figure 2 Greater Portland Region Public Priorities for Transit



Sources: Transit Tomorrow, Transit Stop Access Project, Route 1 North Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Moving Southern Maine Forward, Destination 2040, Regional Passenger Survey, North Windham Downtown Plan, Congress Street Bus Priority Plan, Gorham East-West Connector Plan, Destination Tomorrow 2006 and 2010, Portland Peninsula Transit Plan, Regional Transit Coordination Study.

PLAN TIMELINE

The Transit Together study began in the summer of 2021 and consisted of three phases:

- **Phase 1: State of the Region —** The study team conducted a comprehensive discovery and analysis process to determine how efficiently and effectively the Greater Portland region's transit providers serve the region's mobility and access needs. This work also identified opportunities for service improvement, including new service models, policies, and programs. During this phase, the study team held a virtual public meeting to hear directly from riders, and published route profiles on the project website for comment.
- **Phase 2: Recommendations Development —** The study team designed two service scenarios to improve the region's fixed-route bus network and proposed regional initiatives to improve coordination among providers and provide a seamless, consistent rider experience. The study team held two agency workshops to work together on the improvement scenarios. At the conclusion of this phase, the study team conducted rider and stakeholder outreach to collect feedback on draft scenarios and initiatives.

- **Phase 3: Implementation Plan and Final Report Development —** The study team refined the draft service recommendations based on community and agency input. The team also identified multiple regional initiatives to advance, and identified unfunded but priority service improvements, including the development of a regional microtransit program. One final round of public and stakeholder input informed the final recommendations.

HOW DID WE ENGAGE THE PUBLIC?

A project website, www.transittogether.org, kept the public and project partners informed throughout the project. Additional outreach was conducted in three phases:

- **Phase 1: Outreach (Winter 2021/2022) —** The study team presented findings from the State of Regional Transit report at a virtual public meeting and guided the public on how to find, review, and comment on the route profiles prepared for each transit route in the region. The team also presented to GPCOG's Community Transportation Leaders program and collected feedback from that group. Public comments were shared with the respective agencies and used to develop two potential service improvement scenarios.
- **Phase 2: Outreach (Summer 2022) —** GPCOG and regional transit agencies conducted an extensive social media and general marketing campaign to solicit feedback on two transit service improvement scenarios. As part of this campaign, the study team held 10 informational 'pop-up' events held around the region, many in conjunction with the Gorham-Westbrook-Portland Rapid Transit Study. About 230 people engaged with the study team during these pop-ups.

Above: images of staff conducting public outreach pop-up events in the Greater Portland Region.
Source: GPCOG and Nelson\Nygaard.

Gorham-Westbrook-Portland Rapid Transit Study

The Gorham-Westbrook-Portland Rapid Transit Study examines the need for and benefits of various potential alignments and modes of rapid transit linking the municipalities of Gorham, Westbrook, and Portland. The study area can generally be defined as the area from University of Southern Maine (USM) Gorham in the west to the Portland Peninsula in the east, including several potential east-west road and rail alignments connecting these areas.

During this phase, the study team provided a second presentation to the Community Transportation Leaders program. These in-person and online marketing efforts garnered over 375 survey responses. After outreach was complete, public feedback was organized by route or topic and used to develop recommendations.

- **Phase 3: Outreach (Winter 2022/2023) —** An online StoryMap of proposed Transit Together recommendations was shared with the public prior to review and adoption by PACTS. The StoryMap included detailed information on recommendations, as well as a public comment form.

WHO INFORMED THE STUDY TEAM?

A Transit Together Project Advisory Group (PAG) guided the project team throughout the study. The PAG ensured our analysis and resulting recommendations were technically sound and considered diverse regional interests. In addition to several representatives from each transit agency, the group included key leaders and stakeholders from throughout the region, including:

- Maine Department of Transportation
- Maine Turnpike Authority
- MaineHealth
- Move to ME
- Portland Housing Authority
- Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Southern Maine Community College
- Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission
- United Way of Southern Maine
- University of Southern Maine

The group met five times to provide input and guidance at key project milestones:

1. **Project Kickoff (October 2022)**
   - The PAG provided input on transit priorities, as well as suggestions for engaging the public over the course of the project.
2. **Existing Conditions/Market Demand/Microtransit Overview** (December 2021)
   - The PAG highlighted new developments, areas with changing populations, key corridors, and unique markets such as the Casco Bay islands and tourism

in general. The group also provided a checkpoint on data assumptions, particularly given the impacts of COVID.

3. **State of Regional Transit and Potential Opportunities** (April 2022)
   - Key findings were discussed in small (virtual) groups. PAG priorities included higher service frequencies, improved service reliability, improved bus stops and regional information, and continuing to work together to develop regional and equitable standards for service delivery.
   - The concept of service scenarios was introduced as a means of testing service ideas with the public. The PAG highlighted that different types of service should be used to meet demand in higher and lower density areas.
4. **Service Improvement Scenarios/Regional Initiatives** (August 2022)
   - Details emerging from agency workshops on service improvement scenarios and initiatives to enhance the rider experience were shared. The PAG provided comments and suggestions for Fall 2022 public outreach.
5. **Draft Recommendations** (November 2022)
   - Draft recommendations were shared in the form of an online StoryMap. PAG members provided comments to facilitate public review and to clarify which recommendations are cost-neutral and which require more funding due to regional funding limitations.

The project team also met twice with **GPCOG's Community Transportation Leaders**. This group provided important feedback and guidance, including:

- **State of Regional Transit and Opportunities** (March 2022)
  - CTL members discussed transit priorities, highlighting a need to improve service frequency, enhance accessibility, and add more weekday service. The group expressed interest in a better rider experience, including better information (maps, real time information, schedules, and signage), regional fare payment and the potential for microtransit.
- **Bus Service Improvement Scenarios** (September 2022)
  - Two draft service improvement scenarios were shared for CTL comment. The group expressed a need for more weekday service and great interest in the idea of an on-demand service model such as microtransit.
  - CTL priorities for enhancing the rider experience included more bus shelters and transit stop amenities, accessibility improvements and better information (e.g., in other languages). Other suggestions included offering more special event service, building more hubs with local circulators, and better serving the tourism market.

2 STATE OF REGIONAL TRANSIT

Transit Together recommends specific improvements to the Greater Portland region's transit system. To arrive at these recommendations, the study team conducted in-depth background research on the market and demand for transit, current service, and current ridership.

The complete State of Regional Transit is included as Appendix D of this report.

Density and Transit

Understanding where there is demand for transit is important for making sure investments in high-quality transit will be successful and benefit the most people possible. The study team analyzed where the highest density of current and potential transit riders live, work, and travel, including regional tourist destinations. Demographic and environmental data were used to highlight where transit service could be most effectively deployed in the Greater Portland region.

A METRO bus on the high-density Congress Street corridor. Source: Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, Inc.

Matching Land Use and Transit

Figure 3 shows what types of transit are likely to be most successful in different parts of the region. Places with more people and jobs support more frequent fixed-route transit, while on-demand services and less-frequent fixed-route transit are more successful in lower-density and rural areas. Ferry and long-distance train service are special modes that don't always serve markets in the same way that local buses do.

Figure 3 Table Matching Land Use with Transit Demand

Land Use			Transit		
Land Use Types	Residents per Acre	Jobs per Acre	Appropriate Types of Transit	Frequency of Service	Other Modes
Urban Core	>30	>15	Commuter Rail, Light Rail /Streetcar, BRT, Express Bus, Local Bus	15 mins. or less	Other Passenger Rail; Land Use and Frequency Varies; Passenger Ferry
Urban and Neighborhood Mixed-Use	15-30	10-15	Commuter Rail, Light Rail /Streetcar, BRT, Express Bus, Local Bus	15-30 mins.	
Mixed-Density Neighborhoods	10-15	5-10	Light Rail /Streetcar, Express Bus, Local Bus, BRT	30-60 mins.	
Low Density	2-10	2-5	Demand Response (microtransit)	60 mins. or less, or on demand	
Rural	<2	<2	Demand Response (microtransit)	On demand	

Transit Propensity

Demand for transit (transit propensity) is closely related to several factors. Each factor offers a different insight into transit demand and shows where that demand is geographically located in the Greater Portland region.

- **Population Density:** Transit relies on many people living near service, so higher population density supports higher levels of service.
- **Employment Density:** The density of jobs is a strong indicator of transit demand, as work travel is often the most common type of transit trip.

- **Socioeconomic Characteristics:** Different people have different likelihoods of using transit, often based on socioeconomic characteristics. For example, people without a vehicle are much more likely to use transit than people with a vehicle.
- **Composite Density:** This is a combined measure that uses population and employment density to match places with the level of transit frequency they can typically support. This is not an exact rule for where different levels of transit service should operate but does provide helpful guidance. Composite density was used throughout the Transit Together service planning process to help identify where and when transit service should operate.

Figure 4 Composite Density Map, Greater Portland Region

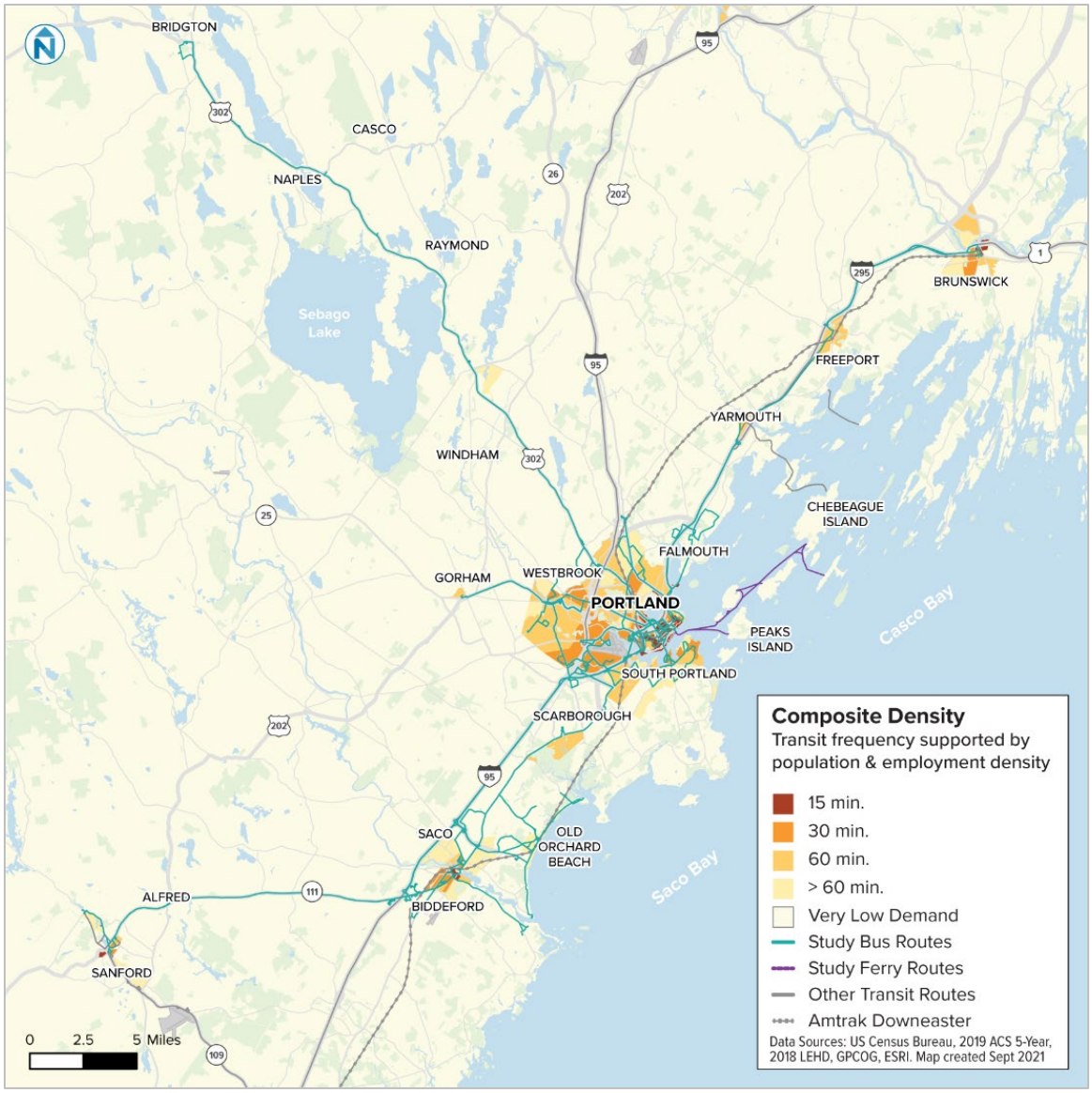
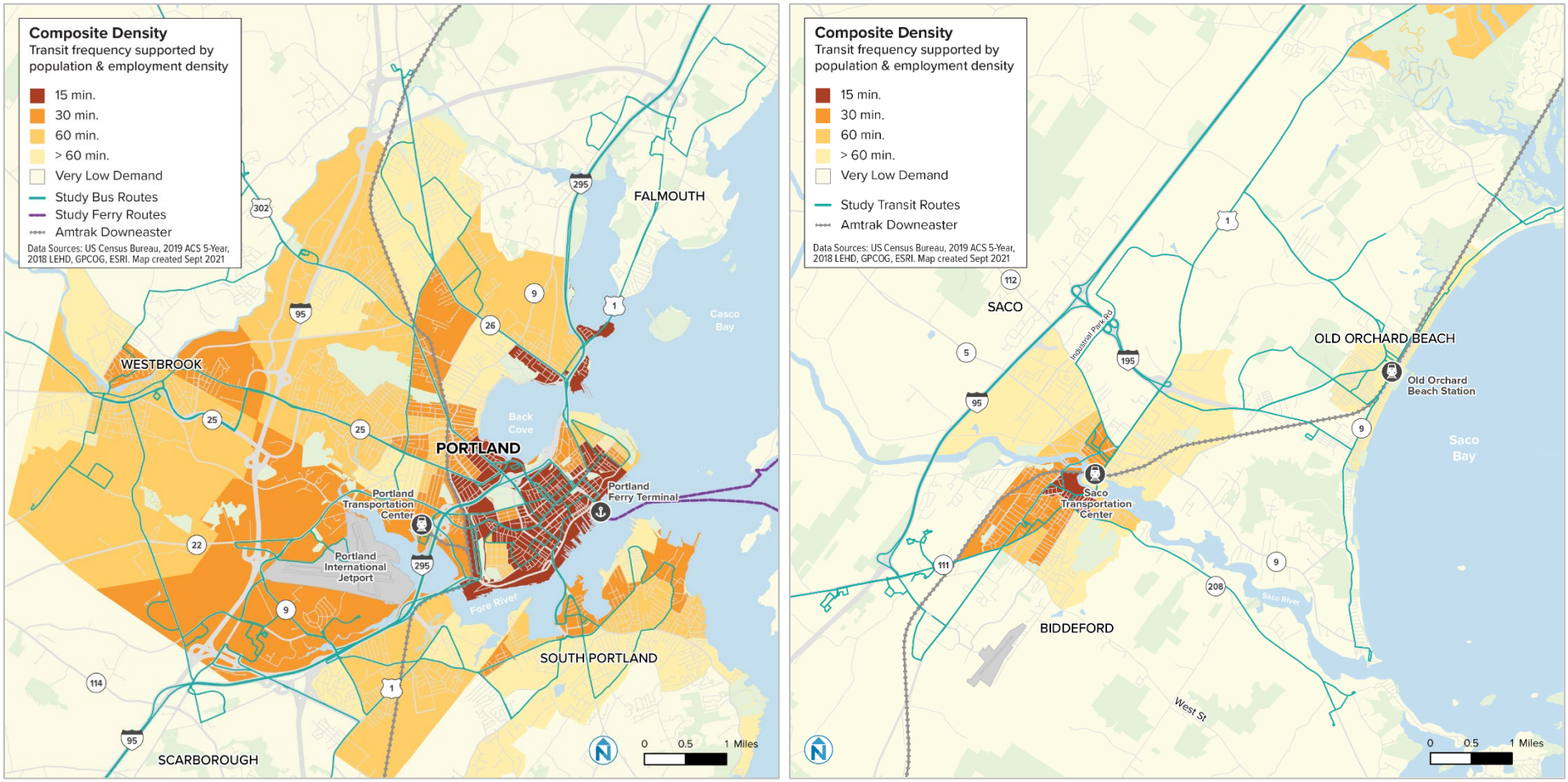


Figure 5 Composite Density Maps, Portland and Biddeford-Saco-Old Orchard Beach Areas

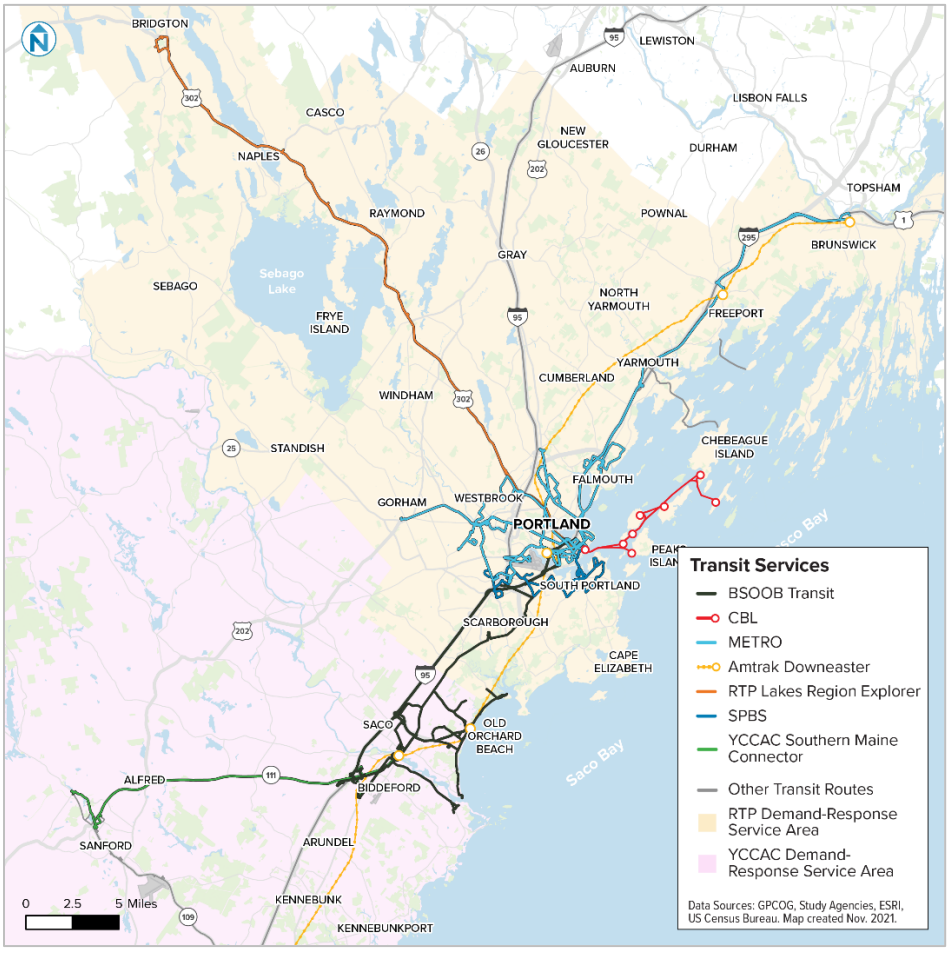


Current Service

The Transit Together study area includes PACTS member municipalities, as well as other municipalities served by fixed-route transit with at least one stop in a PACTS member municipality. This study area includes all of Cumberland and some of York County, and is served by seven main public transit providers operating bus, rail, and ferry service:

- Biddeford-Saco-Old Orchard Beach (BSOOB) Transit
- Casco Bay Lines (CBL)
- Greater Portland METRO
- Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA), which oversees Amtrak Downeaster service
- Regional Transportation Program (RTP)
- South Portland Bus Service (SPBS)
- York County Community Action Corporation (YCCAC)

Figure 6 Map of Greater Portland Region Existing Public Transit Services



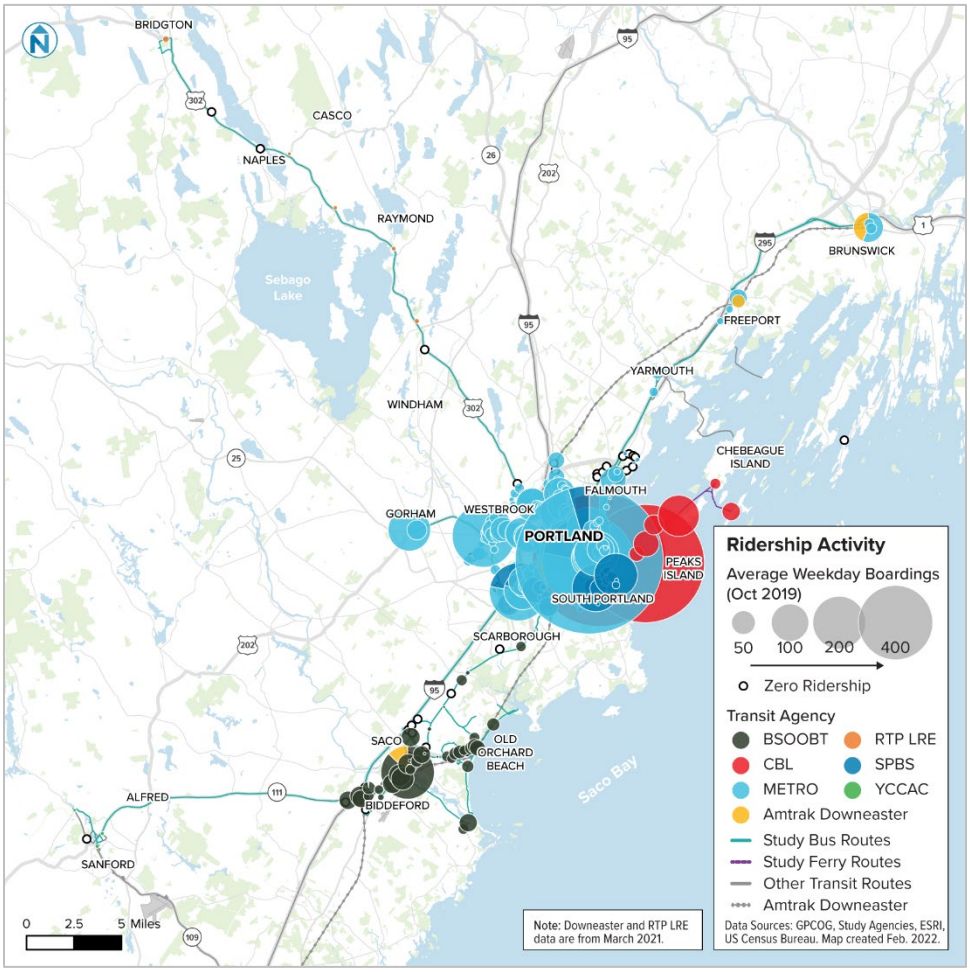
Ridership

Understanding where people use transit is essential information for recommending changes to the transit network. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the region's transit providers carried about 16,500 passengers a day.

In the Greater Portland region, most transit ridership occurs on and near the Portland Peninsula, where there is the greatest density of people and jobs. There is also considerable ridership on some of the major roads leading to and from the Peninsula, such as Brighton Avenue, Forest Avenue, Washington Avenue, and Congress Street. High-ridership locations further from the Portland Peninsula include:

- Downtown Westbrook
- Maine Mall
- Mill Creek Transit Hub
- Peaks Island
- Portland Transportation Center
- Saco Transportation Center
- So. Maine Community College
- USM Gorham

Figure 7 Map of Greater Portland Region Transit Boardings



Span and Frequency of Service

Most current weekday service in the Greater Portland region operates throughout the day, from approximately 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. During this period, only six routes consistently reach headways of every 30 minutes, and very few operate more frequently than that (although there are bursts of 15-minute service on the BSOOB Transit Route 54 circulator pattern). Several routes offer extremely infrequent service, with headways of two hours or more.

Opportunity Areas

The State of the Regional Transit assessment identified the following key opportunities:

- **Provide More Frequent Service:** Some places in the region could support more frequent service. Increasing service frequency generally increases ridership.
- **Better Match Bus Service with Demand:** Some places in the region have bus service that very few people use, while other places have service that isn't frequent enough to meet the community's needs. Better matching service to demand will increase ridership. Implementing targeted solutions like microtransit service is another form of matching service to demand.
- **Make Service Easier to Use and Understand:** Some bus routes in the region change their routes depending on the time of day and/or operate in places people wouldn't expect to see a bus. Making bus routes easier to understand generally causes more people to ride.
- **Plan Together/Work Together:** By working more closely together, the region's transit providers can use regional resources more efficiently to provide the most and best transit service possible.
- **Improve Bus Network Design:** Many parts of the bus network are confusing and operate in large loops that force riders to ride out-of-direction or for long periods of time to get where they're going. Improving the network can help bus riders get where they're going more quickly and reliably.
- **Improve Transit Stops:** The quality of transit stops in the region varies dramatically by route. Some stops have shelters and benches, while others are missing simple items like signs and sidewalks. Improving transit stops generally increases ridership.

3 TRANSIT SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Transit Together recommendations include a revenue-neutral rethinking of the Greater Portland region's five-agency fixed-route bus transit network, including improved multimodal connections to ferry and rail services. These recommendations can be grouped into two broad objectives:

- To serve the most people possible
- To serve the people that need it most

RECOMMENDED SERVICE PLAN

The study team used findings from the study's existing conditions analysis, public input, agency consultation, and best practices in transit planning to develop a recommended fixed-route bus service plan for the Greater Portland region.

The Recommended Service Plan is focused on achieving the following goals:

- **Improving Service Frequency**
- **Making Routes Simpler and More Direct**
- **Setting a Base Level of Service**
- **Increasing Transit Access to Jobs and Services**
- **Enhancing Multimodal Connections**
- **Better Coordinating Service on the Peninsula**

The recommended fixed-route bus network is shown in the maps below, and details on the recommended frequencies and spans of service are in Figure 11. The plan does not recommend changes to ferry or Amtrak service.

Figure 8 Map of Recommended Service Plan for Portland Area

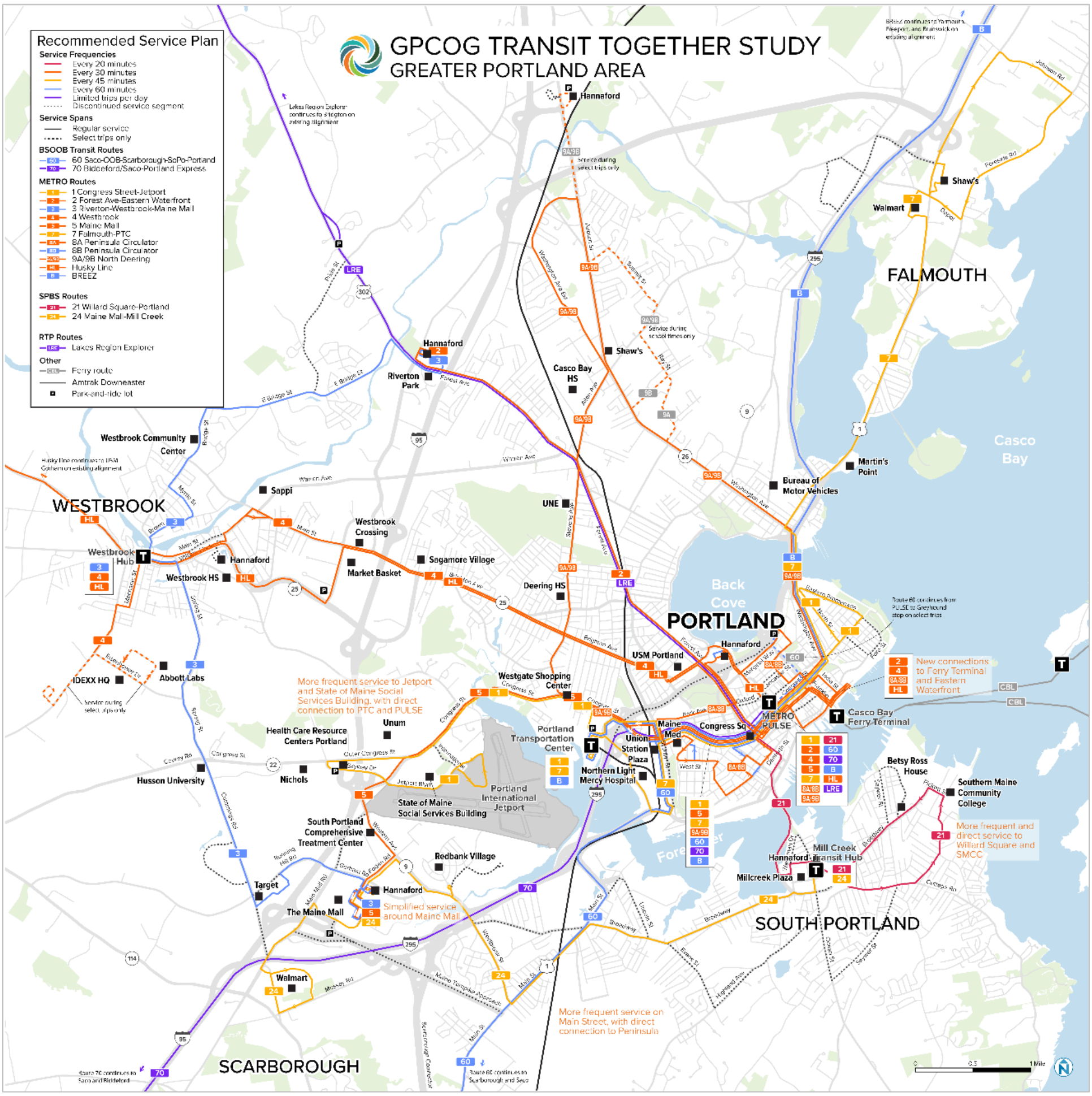


Figure 9 Map of Recommended Service Plan on Portland Peninsula

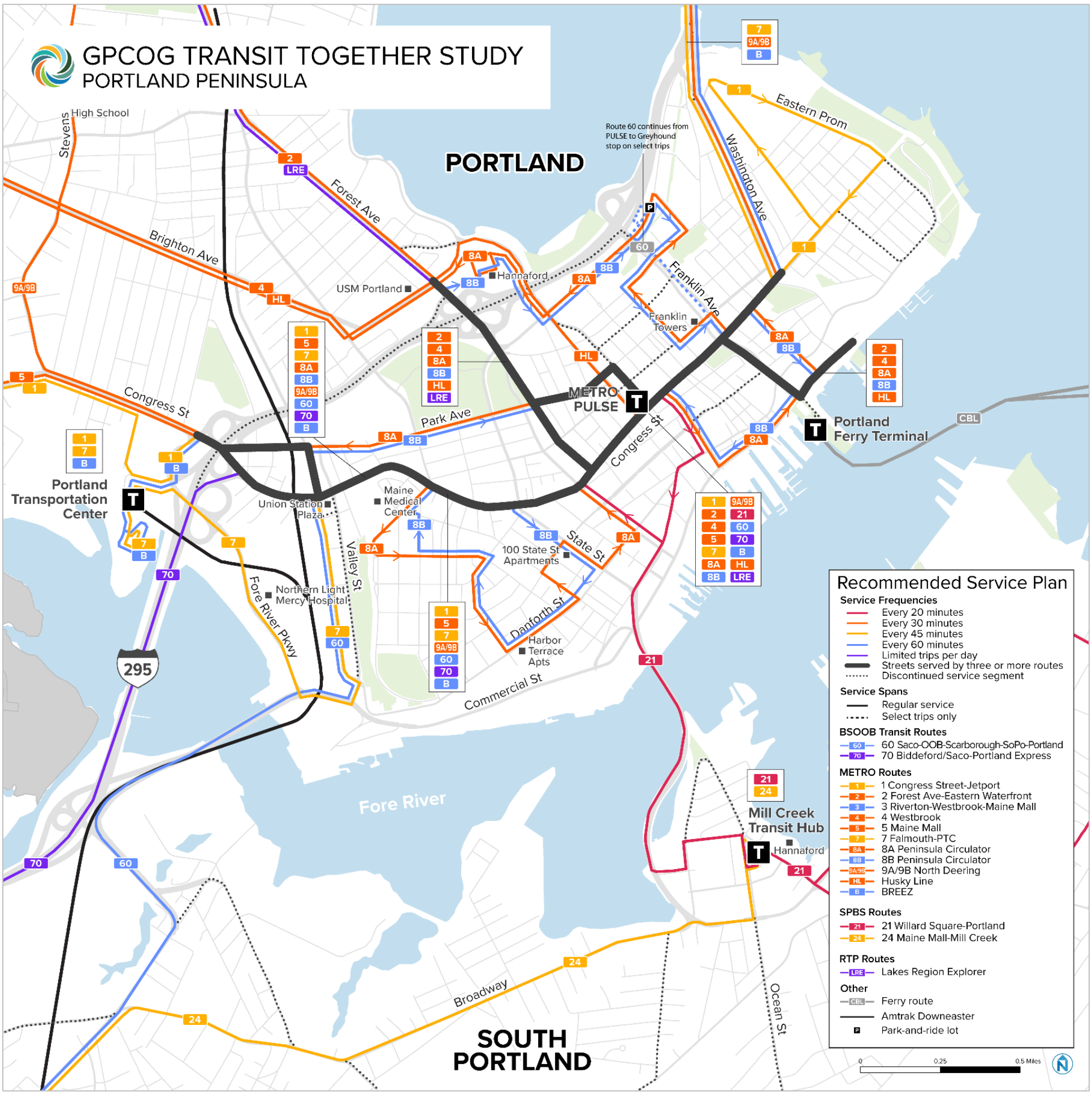


Figure 10 Map of Recommended Service Plan in Biddeford-Saco-Old Orchard Beach Area

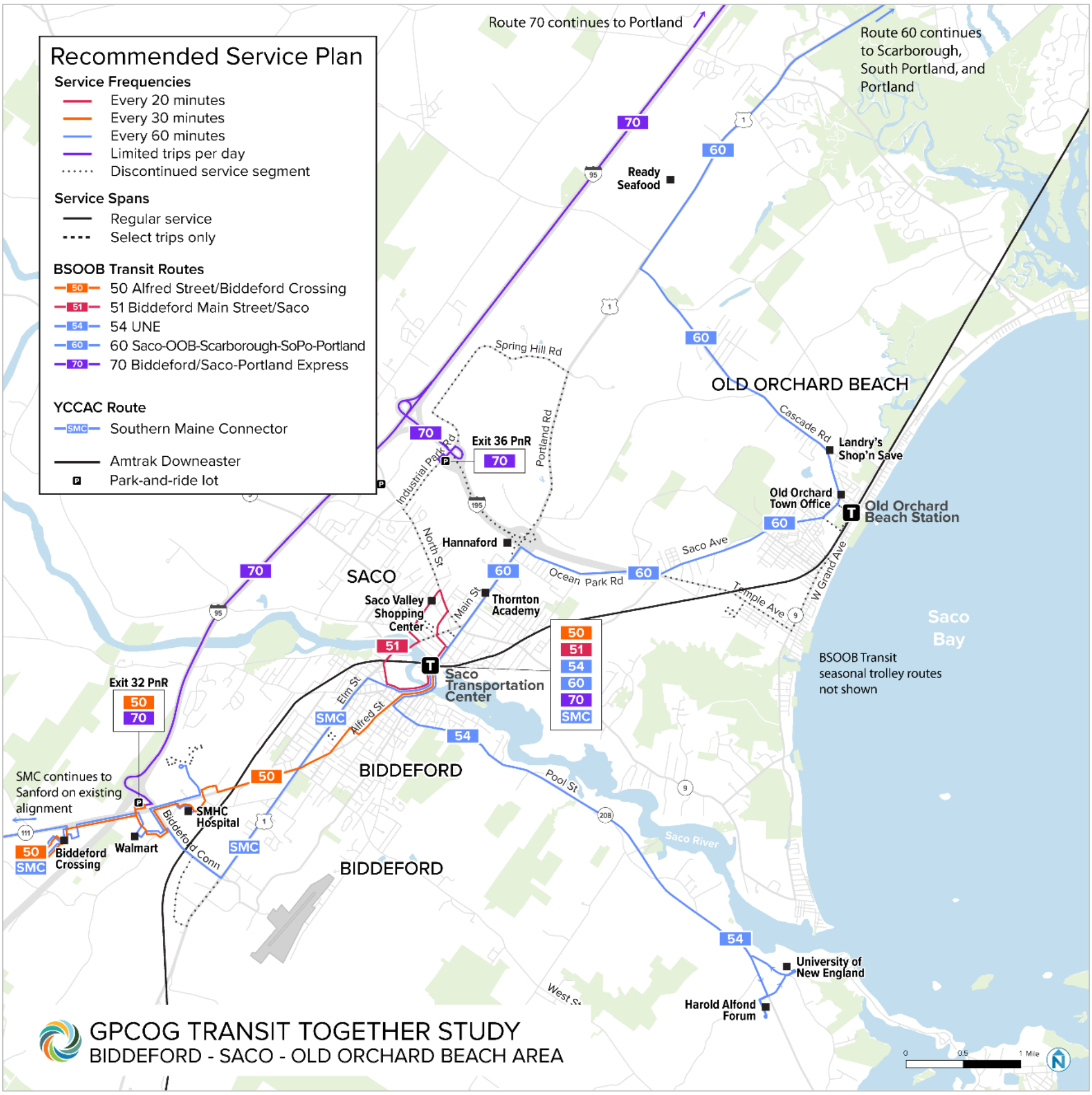


Figure 11 Recommended Service Plan Bus Frequency and Span of Service

			Weekday Span of Service (Apprx.)				Weekday Headways				Saturday Span of Service (Apprx.)				Saturday Headways				Sunday Span of Service (Apprx.)				Sunday Headways			
Existing or New?	Agency	Rt #	Existing Start	Existing End	Rec Plan Start	Rec Plan End	Existing Peak	Existing Off-Peak	Rec Plan Peak	Rec Plan Off-Peak	Existing Start	Existing End	Rec Plan Start	Rec Plan End	Existing Peak	Existing Off-Peak	Rec Plan Peak	Rec Plan Off-Peak	Existing Start	Existing End	Rec Plan Start	Rec Plan End	Existing Peak	Existing Off-Peak	Rec Plan Peak	Rec Plan Off-Peak
Existing	METRO	1	5:08 AM	11:10 PM	5:30 AM	11:00 PM	30	30	45	45	5:08 AM	11:10 PM	5:30 AM	11:00 PM	30	30	45	45	7:43 AM	6:35 PM	7:30 AM	6:30 PM	60	60	**45**	**45**
Existing	METRO	2	5:45 AM	10:56 PM	5:45 AM	11:00 PM	30	30	30	30	6:20 AM	10:23 PM	6:00 AM	10:30 PM	60	60	60	60	8:20 AM	4:15 PM	8:00 AM	6:00 PM	60	60	60	60
Existing	METRO	3	5:40 AM	10:25 PM	5:45 AM	10:30 PM	30	30	60	60	6:35 AM	10:26 PM	6:00 AM	10:30 PM	60	60	60	60	9:15 AM	6:00 PM	8:00 AM	6:00 PM	90	90	**60**	**60**
Existing	METRO	4	5:15 AM	11:40 PM	5:30 AM	11:30 PM	30	30	30	30	5:45 AM	11:35 PM	5:30 AM	11:30 PM	30	30	45	45	8:15 AM	7:45 PM	8:00 AM	8:00 PM	45	45	45	45
Existing	METRO	5	5:20 AM	10:40 PM	5:30 AM	11:00 PM	30	30	30	30	6:05 AM	10:40 PM	6:00 AM	10:30 PM	36	30	60	60	7:55 AM	6:40 PM	8:00 AM	8:00 PM	45	45	60	60
Existing	METRO	7	6:30 AM	7:25 PM	6:30 AM	8:00 PM	60	60	45	45	6:30 AM	7:25 PM	6:30 AM	7:30 PM	60	60	45	45	8:30 AM	4:25 PM	8:30 AM	5:30 PM	60	60	**45**	**45**
Existing	METRO	8A	6:40 AM	6:15 PM	6:30 AM	10:00 PM	30	30	30	30	7:50 AM	6:17 PM	8:00 AM	7:30 PM	60	60	60	60	8:50 AM	4:17 PM	8:00 AM	6:00 PM	60	60	60	60
New	METRO	8B	-	-	6:30 AM	10:00 PM	-	-	60	60	-	-	8:00 AM	7:30 PM	-	-	60	60	-	-	8:00 AM	6:00 PM	-	-	**60**	**60**
Existing	METRO	9A	5:35 AM	10:25 PM	5:30 AM	10:30 PM	30	60	30	30	7:30 AM	10:25 PM	6:00 AM	10:00 PM	60	60	60	60	8:30 AM	4:25 PM	8:00 AM	6:00 PM	60	60	60	60
Existing	METRO	9B	5:40 AM	9:05 PM	5:45 AM	9:00 PM	30	60	30	30	8:10 AM	9:00 PM	6:00 AM	10:00 PM	60	60	60	60	9:10 AM	5:10 PM	8:00 AM	6:00 PM	60	60	60	60
Existing	METRO	BZ	5:45 AM	10:18 PM	5:45 AM	10:15 PM	50	98	60	60	8:00 AM	9:28 PM	8:00 AM	9:00 PM	150	150	150	150	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Existing	METRO	HL	6:20 AM	10:44 PM	6:15 AM	10:45 PM	30	30	30	30	8:00 AM	11:18 PM	7:00 AM	11:15 PM	45	45	45	45	8:05 AM	7:10 PM	8:00 AM	7:00 PM	45	45	45	45
Existing	BSOOBT	50	5:30 AM	11:20 PM	5:30 AM	10:00 PM	75	75	30	30	5:30 AM	11:20 PM	5:30 AM	10:00 PM	75	75	60	60	5:30 AM	6:25 PM	7:00 AM	7:00 PM	75	75	**60**	**60**
New	BSOOBT	51	-	-	5:30 AM	10:00 PM	-	-	20	20	-	-	5:30 AM	10:00 PM	-	-	20	20	-	-	7:00 AM	7:00 PM	-	-	**20**	**20**
Existing	BSOOBT	54	6:15 AM	10:08 PM	6:00 AM	10:00 PM	19	19	60	60	6:15 AM	10:08 PM	6:00 AM	10:00 PM	19	19	60	60	6:45 AM	8:27 PM	7:00 AM	7:00 PM	19	19	60	60
Existing	BSOOBT	60	6:00 AM	10:44 PM	6:00 AM	10:00 PM	150	150	60	60	6:00 AM	10:44 PM	6:00 AM	10:00 PM	150	150	60	60	6:15 AM	8:14 PM	7:00 AM	7:00 PM	150	150	**60**	**60**
Existing	BSOOBT	70	3 trips per peak period		3 trips per peak period		75	75	60	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Existing	SPBS	21	6:35 AM	11:25 PM	6:20 AM	10:20 PM	30	30	20	40	6:35 AM	11:25 PM	6:20 AM	9:00 PM	45	60	40	40	6:40 AM	5:00 PM	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	147	83	**40**	**40**
Existing	SPBS	24	5:20 AM	11:15 PM	6:00 AM	10:00 PM	117	130	45	45	7:00 AM	7:15 PM	6:00 AM	9:00 PM	120	120	45	45	7:00 AM	6:35 PM	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	150	82	**45**	**45**
Existing	RTP	LRE	3 round trips		6:00 AM	3:30 PM	190	395	3 round trips		3 round trips		8:30 AM	7:45 PM	210	365	3 round trips		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Existing	YCCAC	SMC	7:30 AM	3:41 PM	6:00 AM	6:00 PM	157	171	60	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note: Numbers shown in **green** represent headways that would be more frequent than today. Numbers shown in orange represent headways that would be less frequent than today.

Enhanced Focus on Transit-Critical Areas

Some demographic groups are more likely than others to depend on public transit for transportation, so the Recommend Service Plan considers improvements through a transportation equity lens.

Directing public transit resources towards people who need them the most is transportation equity. In the Transit Together Recommended Service Plan, frequency and travel-time improvements are mostly called for in places where there are high concentrations of people who depend on the bus. These places include low-income neighborhoods, low-income senior housing developments, and places with recent immigrants who cannot acquire driver's licenses. Targeting resources in this way helps ensure the region's transit network **serves the people that need it most**.

The Recommended Service Plan calls for improvements to several bus routes that serve transit-critical populations. These routes, which have improved frequency and/or rider travel-time improvements, are:

- **Route 7** increases service from every 60 minutes to every 45 minutes all day and extension of route connects riders to Maine Medical Center
- New **Route 8B** is introduced with hourly service, minimizing out-of-direction travel for Route 8 riders on the Peninsula
- **Route 50** increases service from every 75 minutes to every 30 minutes all day
- New **Route 51** is introduced with service that arrives as frequently as every 15 minutes (alternating with service every 30 minutes)
- **Route 60** increases service from every 150 minutes to hourly
- **Route 21** increases service during the peak periods from every 60 minutes[1] to every 20 minutes
- **Route 24** increases service from every 120 minutes (on some parts of the existing routes 24A and 24B) or every 60 minutes (on some parts of the existing routes 24A and 24B) to every 45 minutes
- The **Southern Maine Connector** increases service from every 150 to 170 minutes during off-peak periods to every 60 minutes all day.

[1] Although Route 21 currently operates every 60 minutes, SPBS has the resources to operate this service every 30 minutes and intends to do so when possible.

Transit Corridor on Congress Street and Greater Transit Mobility on the Peninsula

The Recommended Service Plan also calls for Congress Street to become a more focused transit corridor serving the densely developed Portland Peninsula. This means many buses will operate along Congress Street between St. John Street and Washington Avenue, creating a spine of high-frequency service directly through the State of Maine's densest neighborhood, and serving some of Maine's most prominent destinations, such as the Maine Medical Center. More than 10 bus routes will operate on Congress Street, some for a few blocks, and some for nearly the entire length of the Peninsula. This means people traveling along Congress Street have many choices for bus routes and won't need to wait long before a bus arrives. It also increases the bus system's 'legibility'; both frequent and casual riders will know that Congress Street is where they catch the bus or transfer to another route. Making these changes helps ensure the region's transit network **serves the most people**.

In addition to the Congress Street transit corridor, the Recommended Service Plan calls for other Peninsula transit mobility improvements, including:

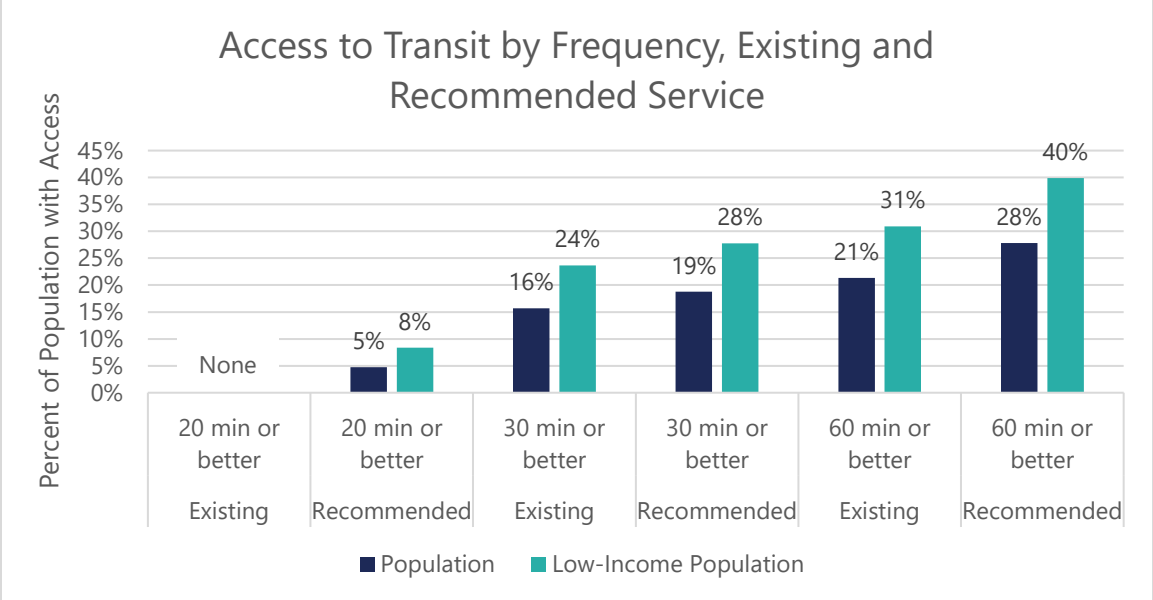
- A **bi-directional Route 8** that brings riders more quickly to and from their destinations. Riders traveling from Franklin Towers to Hannaford, for example, currently spend 42 minutes on the bus for their return trip; in the Recommended Service Plan, this would be improved to about 15 minutes.
- **Coordinated service among BSOOB Transit and METRO** in the Valley Street neighborhood and at Maine Medical Center. By planning METRO's Route 7 and BSOOB Transit's Route 60 together, the region provides one-seat ride access to destinations in this neighborhood from Falmouth, East Deering, downtown Portland, South Portland, Scarborough, Old Orchard Beach, and Biddeford/Saco.
- **More direct service to the rapidly growing Eastern Waterfront** neighborhood. The Recommended Service Plan calls for three bus routes to directly serve Portland's Eastern Waterfront, providing one-seat ride access to jobs, services, homes, and educational facilities for people traveling to and from Gorham, Westbrook, Riverton, Morrills Corner, Woodford Corner, Nasons Corner, the Peninsula, and neighborhoods in-between.

RECOMMENDED SERVICE PLAN BENEFITS

The Transit Together Recommended Service Plan shifts much of the region's bus network away from coverage-oriented service to a system that focuses on carrying more passengers. The trade-off with this approach is that some people may need to walk further to a bus stop in exchange for faster, more reliable bus service, and others may not have access to fixed-route transit at all. To better understand these impacts, the study team compared the number of people and jobs with access to different service frequencies between the existing and proposed transit network.

- **Serving the most people:** More residents and employers will have access to more frequent service:
  - Approximately 18,000 residents and 19,000 jobs will now have access to service operating every 20 minutes.
  - 20% more residents will now have access to service operating every 30 minutes or better.
  - 24% more jobs will be accessible by service running every hour or better.
- **Serving the people that need it most:** More low-income residents will have access to more frequent service:
  - Approximately 7,000 low-income residents will now have access to service operating every 20 minutes and 15% more will have access to service operating every 30 minutes.

Figure 12 Access Benefits of Recommended Service Plan



RIDER IMPACTS

What do these improvements look like for riders? One of the best ways to understand transit improvements is to stand in the shoes of everyday riders. The graphics below show how the Recommended Service Plan will make service faster and more convenient for many riders. Almost all transit service changes involve some sort of a trade-off, which often results in service becoming less convenient for a smaller number of riders than those that benefit. An example of this type of trade-off is included in Jim's rider experience, below.

IMPROVEMENT

Abigail

Lives in Westbrook and goes to school at SMCC

Current
Rt 4 (every 30 mins, 22-min. trip) + 23-min. wait + Rt 21 (every 45 mins., 24-min. trip) =
69-minute two-seat trip*

Preferred Service Plan
Rt 4 (every 30 mins, 22-min. trip) + 10-min. wait + Rt 21 (every 20 mins., 18-min. trip) =
50-minute two-seat trip*

Abigail gets to school 19 minutes faster!

**Travel time calculations assume that wait time between buses is half the headway of the bus being transferred to.*

IMPROVEMENT

Peter

Works at USM Portland and lives in Old Orchard Beach

Current
Rt 4 (every 30 mins, 6-min. trip) + 75-min. wait + Rt 60 (every 150 mins, 52-min. trip) =
132-minute two-seat trip*

Preferred Service Plan
Rt 4 (every 30 mins, 6-min. trip) + 30-min. wait + Rt 60 (every 60 mins, 39-min. trip) =
74-minute two-seat trip*

Peter gets home from work 58 minutes faster!

**Travel time calculations assume that wait time between buses is half the headway of the bus being transferred to.*

IMPROVEMENT

Florence

Lives in Falmouth and is taking the Downeaster from PTC to Boston

Current
Rt 7 (every 60 mins, 11-min. trip) + 15-min. wait + Rt 1 (every 30 mins, 12-min. trip) =
38-minute two-seat trip*

Preferred Service Plan
Rt 7 (every 45 mins, 26-min. trip) =
26-minute one-seat trip

Florence gets to the PTC 12 minutes faster, without changing buses!

**Travel time calculations assume that wait time between buses is half the headway of the bus being transferred to.*

IMPROVEMENT

Bill

Shops at Hannaford and lives in Franklin Towers

Current
Rt 8 (every 30 mins, 32-min. trip) =
32-minute one-seat trip

Preferred Service Plan
Rt 8B (every 60 mins, 11-min. trip) =
11-minute one-seat trip

Bill gets home from the grocery store 21 minutes faster!

IMPROVEMENT

Somaya

Lives on Fore Street in Munjoy Hill and works at USM Gorham

Current
4-min. walk + Rt 1 (every 30 mins, 3-min.trip) + 15-min. wait + Husky Line (every 30 mins, 36-min. trip) = ***58-minute two-seat trip****

Preferred Service Plan
6-min. walk + Husky Line (every 30 mins, 39-min. trip) = ***45-minute one-seat trip***

Somaya gets to work 13 minutes faster, without changing buses!

**Travel time calculations assume that wait time between buses is half the headway of the bus being transferred to.*

IMPROVEMENT

Eli

Works at the library on Congress Street and lives on Main Street in South Portland

Current
Rt 24A (every 120 mins, 24-min.trip) = ***24-minute one-seat trip***

Preferred Service Plan
Rt 60 (every 60 mins, 16-min. trip) = ***16-minute one-seat trip***

Eli gets home from work 8 minutes faster and his bus comes twice as often!

IMPROVEMENT

Felix

Lives on UNE campus in Biddeford and shops at Saco Shaw's

Current
Rt 55 (every 60 mins, 10-min. trip) + no wait (interlined) + Rt 55 (every 15 mins, 9-min. trip) + 5-min. walk = ***24-minute one-seat trip with walk***

Preferred Service Plan
Rt 55 (every 60 mins, 10-min. trip) + no wait (interlined) + Rt 51 (every 60 mins, 9-min. trip) = ***19-minute one-seat trip***

Felix gets to the grocery store 5 minutes faster and doesn't have to walk!

TRADE-OFF

Jim

Lives in Saco and works at the Maine Mall

Current
Rt 60 (every 150 mins, 45-min. trip) = ***45-minute one-seat ride***

Preferred Service Plan
Rt 60 (every 60 mins, 40-min. trip) + 22-min. wait + Rt 24 (every 45 mins, 15-min. trip) = ***78-minute two-seat ride***

Jim's bus comes more than twice as often but he now has to transfer and his trip takes about 30 minutes longer.

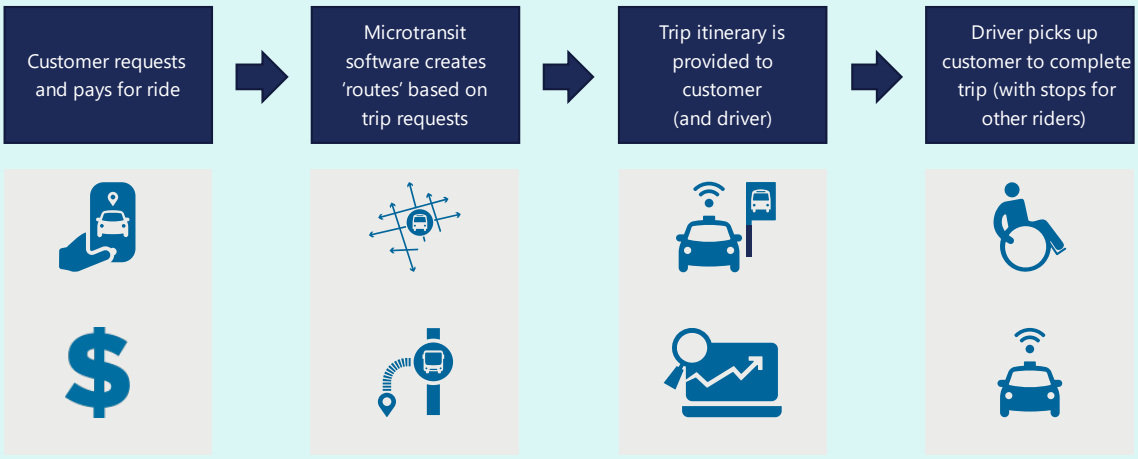
Microtransit

Microtransit is one way to provide transit in low-density communities that may not be able to support fixed bus routes. Microtransit is an on-demand transit service where passengers board or alight a small vehicle at a 'virtual' stop that may be up to a ¼-mile from their requested location. Unlike a fixed bus route, there are no schedules or route maps. Instead, trips can only be taken if they start and end in specific zones.

Transit Together recommends the region pursue and secure funding to support microtransit pilot programs in Saco/Old Orchard Beach, South Portland, and Falmouth, all based on a fixed-route coverage-replacement use case.

Microtransit pilot programs recommended in this study are not part of the resource-neutral Recommended Service Plan and will need additional resources and coordination before they could be implemented. If microtransit is advanced, a regional approach should be taken to the design and implementation of such a service. This regional approach will ensure a consistent, cost-effective implementation.

How Microtransit Works



Potential Microtransit Zones

Transit Together recommends microtransit pilot programs in Saco/Old Orchard Beach, South Portland, and Falmouth. These zones are not a part of the resource-neutral Recommended Service Plan and require additional resources and coordination before full implementation.

Microtransit Zone Characteristics

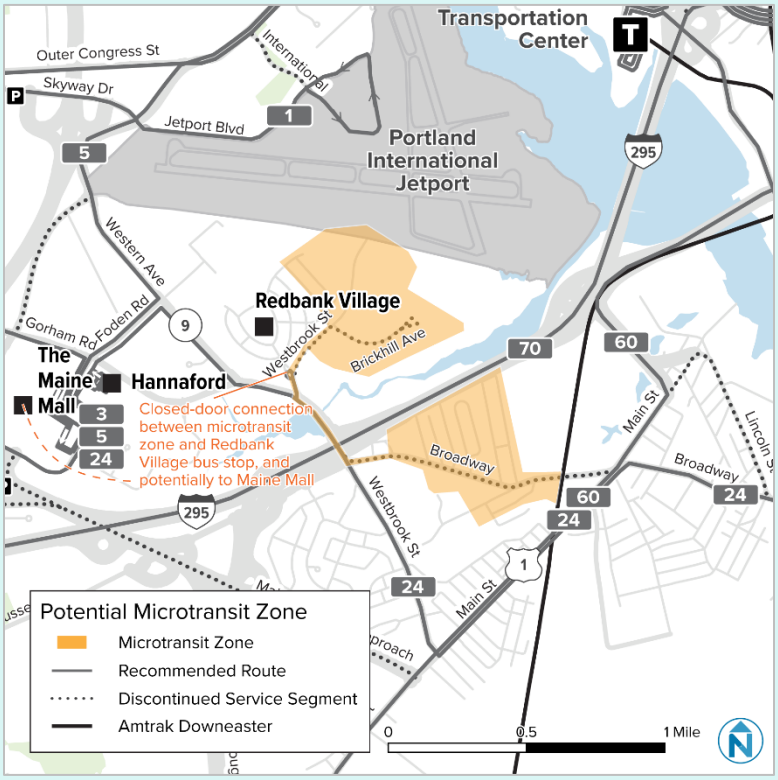
- A low level of transit demand that does not reach a provider's threshold for providing efficient fixed-route bus service.
- High-need (e.g., people with disabilities) or transit-critical (e.g., low-income people) communities that would benefit from microtransit service.
- Clear, legible boundaries (e.g., along major roadways or other natural barriers).
- One or more connection points to the fixed-route transit network.

Zone Identification Process

The Transit Together use case for microtransit is as a fixed-route replacement. To identify the recommended zones, the first step was to identify places with low fixed-route ridership that have service removed in the Recommended Service Plan. Next, those areas were analyzed for demand, potential trip generators, and natural physical barriers, to identify a preliminary zone. Finally, the zone size was adjusted to ensure microtransit service could be reliably operated, without extended wait times, using one or two vehicles.

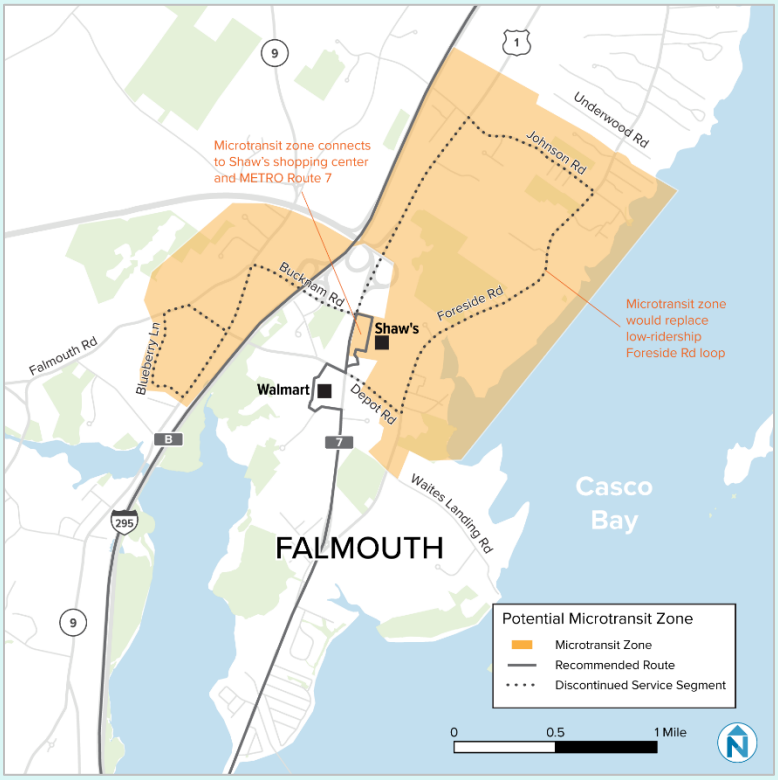
Saco Industrial Park and Old Orchard Beach

One or more coverage-replacement zones that connect the Saco Industrial Park/US Route 1 jobs center and the Temple Avenue area with Saco Transportation Center.



West South Portland

Coverage-replacement zone(s) for the Broadway and Brick Hill areas, with closed-door connection to Redbank Village bus stop or potentially Maine Mall.



Falmouth

Coverage-replacement zone with connections to shopping and METRO Route 7.

4 TRANSIT SERVICE IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the bus service improvements outlined in the previous chapter will better match fixed-route bus service with rider demand, enhance interagency connections and create a more cohesive regional transit network. Individual agency actions and sustained regional coordination are needed to make this plan a reality.

IMPLEMENT SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Fixed-route bus service recommendations are intended to be implemented over the short-to-medium-term (by mid-2024) to better match service with demand, increase ridership, and use resources more efficiently. These recommendations address network-level corrections to eliminate costly route deviations, provide more bi-directional service, and reduce the number of unproductive route segments.

Implementation will involve action by the individual fixed-route bus providers, additional interagency service coordination and support from both GPCOG and MaineDOT.

Individual Agency Actions

Greater Portland's fixed-route bus operators will largely be responsible for implementing the Recommended Service Plan within their individual districts and agency budgets.

Each agency will need to consider and implement service changes contingent on future revenue, operator availability, and obtaining board approval. Acknowledging that the Recommended Service Plan is most impactful when all agencies implement their respective service improvements, the PACTS Policy Board and MaineDOT may wish to play a strong role in encouraging implementation in alignment with regional goals and priorities.

Individual agencies may need to conduct Title VI equity analyses for major service changes, install bus stops on roads with new fixed-route service, and update bus schedules and other rider materials. Several site-specific infrastructure improvements are also needed to support the service changes (see Figure 14). These improvements are in addition to the broader transit-stop, fare-payment, and technology enhancements proposed under the Transit Together Regional Initiatives.

Figure 13 Steps Towards Fixed-Route Bus Service Changes (weeks from start, timeline and steps could vary considerably, depending on agency policies)

Step	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Conduct equity analyses and public hearings (if needed)	■	■													
Develop blocks and schedules			■	■											
Union review					■	■									
Public outreach and education							■	■	■	■					
Develop new rider-facing materials							■	■	■	■					
Bus-stop changes							■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Operators pick assignments											■	■			
Operator and customer service training													■	■	
Implementation															■

Note: Per note in caption above, this timeline could vary considerably based on the type and extent of service changes. It would not be atypical for an implementation timeline to be 30 weeks, instead of 15.

Action Steps:

- Individual fixed-route buses agencies advance Recommended Service Plan
  - ***Conduct Title VI equity analyses***, if needed, for major service changes
  - ***Obtain required approvals from boards and South Portland City Council*** (contingent on revenue and operator availability)
- Fixed-route bus providers to site and install substantial number of bus stops for new services (with potential construction) and prepare new schedules.

Joint Agency Coordination

Informed by shared performance metrics and regional data, the fixed-route bus operators should convene for quarterly service review and coordination meetings to share updates on planned service changes and coordinate on issues of mutual interest, such as the Congress Street bus corridor.

There are also multiple locations in the Greater Portland region where different agencies' bus services connect. Stops at and near the PULSE on the Peninsula serve the highest concentration of routes but the Maine Mall, Saco Transportation Center, Portland Transportation Center, Westbrook Hub, and Casco Bay Ferry Terminal also serve multiple routes and providers. Because the Recommended Service Plan is a coordinated transit network that depends on individual providers working together to best serve the region's riders, it will require agencies to implement service changes along a similar timeline. The timeline in Figure 13 is a rough approximation of the steps needed for a fixed-route bus service change, although the time to complete each step and the exact order of steps can vary by agency. The timeline illustrates the complexity of tasks to be completed before changing service and highlights the importance of interagency coordination, so these steps are conducted at roughly the same time for each agency.

Rider outreach is an important component of service changes. A coordinated regional marketing and service change campaign supported by GPCOG would likely be an effective and efficient way to inform riders of the proposed service changes and the goal of creating a more cohesive network. Other key action steps that are recommended to be included in the Recommended Service Plan service change process are:

Annual service coordination meetings should convene all seven multi-modal providers to continue to facilitate intermodal connections going forward. These annual meetings could be held in advance of joint board meetings (see below) to set the agenda and discuss desired meeting goals.

Action Steps:

- Fixed-route bus providers initiate a ***monthly Service Review and Coordination meeting*** to sequence, schedule, and appropriately phase in implementation of the Recommended Service Plan and any future service changes.
- Conduct ongoing quarterly ***service coordination meetings*** with fixed-route bus service providers. Expand to include all seven regional transit providers on an annual basis.

Regional and Statewide Coordination

While the Recommended Service Plan will primarily be implemented by the region's transit providers, GPCOG can help to facilitate ongoing coordination amongst the transit providers and communicate the need for additional support from MaineDOT to prioritize needed infrastructure. Further, GPCOG can identify and prioritize projects that could leverage additional federal funding.

Action Steps:

- GPCOG provides resources (e.g., through the region's formula funding) for ***a public outreach and education campaign*** that puts service changes and benefits into regional context.
- GPCOG leverages regional resources to encourage municipal, state, regional, and private partners to **pursue roadway geometry and pedestrian access improvements** needed to support bus service changes.
- MaineDOT ***directs resources to support infrastructure improvements*** needed for pedestrian access and safe operations.

Figure 14 Implementing the Regional Network Changes

Action	Timeframe	Implementation Steps
Implement Recommended Service Plan	**Near Term**	▪ Fixed-route bus agencies conduct Title VI analysis and agency-specific public outreach. ▪ Agency boards and South Portland City Council approve changes as required. ▪ Install/remove bus stops as needed for service changes. Prepare new bus schedules. ▪ Coordinate timing of service changes among agencies, so riders see benefits of changes that involve multiple operators. ▪ Work with GPCOG to conduct a regionwide public outreach and education campaign to present service changes in regional context.
	Medium Term	▪ Initiate a quarterly Service Review and Coordination meeting for fixed-route bus providers. ▪ Work with municipal, state, and private partners to implement recommended roadway, pedestrian, and bus turnaround improvements.
Roadway geometry and bus turning improvements	**Near Term**	▪ For the SPBS Route 21 to operate on a bi-directional alignment on Broadway, a transit bus must be able to reliably make a right-hand turn from Broadway onto Benjamin W Pickett Street. This turn is currently not consistently possible, due to roadway geometry and the current layout of parking and travel lanes. Improvements to this intersection would help riders traveling to and from important destinations in South Portland, such as SMCC and Betsy Ross House. Potential improvements include parking relocation, channelization changes, or curb reconstruction.
Pedestrian access improvements	**Near Term**	▪ The Maine Mall Hannaford in South Portland is a popular transit destination with no comfortable or ADA-accessible access from Philbrook Avenue. To be sure riders can safely access Hannaford via transit, three bus routes currently deviate from Philbrook Avenue and drive through the Hannaford parking lot to board and alight passengers at the Hannaford front door. This maneuver reduces the speed and reliability of these routes and introduces dangerous conflicts with moving vehicles in the parking lot. Adding a sidewalk and pedestrian crossings from Philbrook Avenue to the Hannaford would improve bus speed, reliability, and operational safety.
	Medium Term	▪ The Recommended Service Plan proposes eliminating fixed-route transit service on Gannett Drive in South Portland, due to low ridership and limited demand for transit. Service is recommended to remain on Cummings Road. To maintain some access to destinations on Gannett Drive, such as the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services field office, bus stops and a pedestrian crossing could be built on Cummings Road, and sidewalks added to Gannett Drive.
Bus turnaround and layover space	**Near Term**	▪ The Recommended Service Plan proposes the extension of several bus routes (METRO 2, 4, Huskey Line) to the Eastern Waterfront in Portland but does not specify layover and turnaround space for these vehicles. Ocean Gateway pier, Thames Street, or Hancock Street are good layover options. Sufficient space for buses to safely turn around and lay over should be added in this general area, with good proximity to restrooms for operators.
	Medium Term	▪ Real estate development occurring at the former B&M bean factory off Sherwood Street will likely support considerable transit ridership. The site is difficult to access, however, and will likely require a route to turn around at the location, as opposed to deviate from an existing route (a deviation will require a significant amount of running time that would considerably increase travel times for riders not traveling to and from the site). To facilitate transit service at this site, the City of Portland should work with the real-estate development team to ensure bus turnaround and layover space is constructed and/or better bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to reach nearby bus service without a deviation.

Implementation Timeframe

- **Near Term: 0 to 6 months**
- **Medium Term: 6 to 18 months**
- **Long Term: 18 months+**

Action	Timeframe	Implementation Steps
Pedestrian crossing, shelters, and wayfinding	**Near Term**	▪ The Recommended Service Plan proposes operating Route 1 on Thompsons Point Road and Sewall Street so that it boards and alights passengers at the PTC without needing to turn around in Thompson's Point. This would require new shelters on Thompsons Point Road, north of the PTC, as well as a safe pedestrian crossing near the shelters. Wayfinding to help riders understand where the bus stop is and which bus stop takes them to downtown vs. the Jetport should also be included. ▪ The Recommended Service Plan proposes BSOOB Transit Route 51 serve Saco Valley Shopping Center on Spring Street, which would require people traveling to and from the mall to walk to Spring Street from the front door of stores. To facilitate this pedestrian connection, a shelter and safe pedestrian crossing should be added on the south side of Spring Street at Bradley Street.
	Medium Term	▪ The Recommended Service Plan proposes BSOOB Transit Route 50 serve SMHC Hospital via the hospital access road, without entering the pick-up/drop-off circle at the front door. To facilitate this connection, shelters and a pedestrian crossing should be added on the access road, with safe and ADA-accessible connection between the shelters and the hospital front door.
Congress Street transit stop and priority treatments	**Near Term**	▪ The Recommended Service plan proposes operating many bus routes on Congress Street, creating a high-frequency transit corridor, which will simplify transfers and offer high-frequency service for people traveling up and down the Peninsula. Improving transit stop and transit priority infrastructure on the corridor will make sure transit operations are smooth and bus service is fast and reliable. (Routes include all METRO services (except Route 3), SPBS 21, BSOOBT 60 and 70)
Commercial Street transit priority treatments	**Medium Term**	▪ The Recommended Service Plan proposes operating Route 8A/8B on Commercial Street. The stretch of Commercial Street between Franklin Street and Union Street can serve as a valuable transit-priority pilot segment, where transit priority treatments are tested with Route 8A/8B, in potential preparation for future service along Commercial Street, including but not limited to at the new VA clinic.

Implementation Timeframe

- **Near Term: 0 to 6 months**
- **Medium Term: 6 to 18 months**
- **Long Term: 18 months+**

5 REGIONAL INITIATIVES

In addition to changes in route alignments and schedules in the fixed-route bus network, the study team and transit agency staff identified key opportunities to advance a more integrated regional system and make service more attractive to existing and new riders. The five recommended initiatives below would achieve these goals by offering more direct and frequent service, improving the transit experience, and pursuing coordination measures to realize efficiencies and improved connections:

- **Develop Regional Family of Services and Standards**
- **Improve Bus Stops and Transit Hubs**
- **Make Fares and Trip Planning Easier**
- **Make Buses Faster, More Reliable, and More Sustainable**
- **Establish a Regional Microtransit Program**

DEVELOP REGIONAL FAMILY OF SERVICES AND BUS-SERVICE STANDARDS

The Greater Portland region has many transit providers for an area of its size, all seven of which provide information to riders in different ways and formats. This information mix can make it hard for riders to understand and use the regional transit network.

Coordination among the region's bus operators is needed to develop and maintain a regional brand and appropriate, practical, and reasonable service standards in common. The Transit Together effort establishes a set of guiding principles and encourages the fixed-route bus operators to further consider and adopt regional service standards.

Working together to describe and promote transit at a regional level makes it easier for riders to learn about and use different services. This approach has worked in other urban areas with multiple transit providers. Enhancements can include the introduction of a regional transit map and other shared marketing materials, similar naming protocols for similar routes, and a common regional umbrella brand or icon to help draw connections across the network.

Regional Brand Identity

Today, each Greater Portland region transit agency uses different schedule formats and maps, making it harder to interpret the relationship between services. It may not always be clear whether there is a better route to reach your destination, whether real-time information is available, or how fares work when transferring to a different provider. A regional system map and the use of similar templates for schedules could help customers better decipher this information.

Above: Examples of Regional Transit Branding

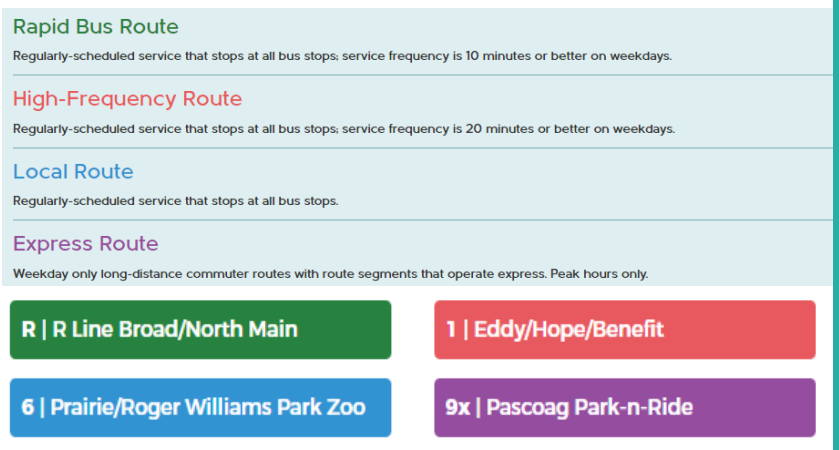
A common branding element need not prevent individual agencies from maintaining some brand individuality and familiarity. Rather, a regional approach would help riders by providing information in a similar format and using a common branding element. Introducing a regional brand, icon, color palette, or other measures would help riders easily identify all the public transit services in the region, navigate transfers, and be more likely to use transit for regional trips. It would also be helpful to use a similar nomenclature and/or numbering strategy for fixed route bus services.

Action Steps:

- Create initial ***regional materials*** (a regional brand or icon could be added later):
  - A common template for route schedules and systemwide service maps.
  - A regional information web page (for example, greaterportlandMEtransit.org) that can direct users to individual transit agency websites.
  - A regional transit system map.
- Incorporate a ***unified brand or common element*** into individual agency brands.
- ***Incorporate the regional brand or icon*** on regional website, maps, vehicles, facilities, communication materials, stop signage, and other rider-facing places.

Family of Services

Beyond a regional brand identity, a family of services to differentiate route types and frequencies can introduce user-friendly nuance to riders of all transit services. For example, BREEZ, Route 70 Purple/ZOOM, Lakes Region Explorer, and Southern Maine Connector all serve somewhat similar regional markets and could adopt a similar umbrella brand; any future microtransit services could also fall under a similar brand. A family of transit services could also be used to target investment in transit corridor priority and enhanced passenger amenities.



Regional Family of Services

The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority differentiates route types and frequencies using colors (e.g., rapid as green, high frequency as red, local as blue) throughout their statewide system.

This 'family of services' model could be used in the Greater Portland region.

Figure 15 Proposed Greater Portland Region Family of Transit Services

Service Type	Proposed Definition	Example Routes
Rapid	Bus routes that serve higher-density areas, connect several key destinations, or operate in a priority corridor.	▪ METRO routes 2, 4, and 5 ▪ SPBS Route 21
Local	Bus routes that serve moderate- to lower-density areas and connect neighborhoods with local centers or hubs.	▪ METRO routes 1, 3, 7, 8, 9 ▪ SPBS Route 24 ▪ BSOOB Routes 50, 51, 54
Limited	Long-distance bus routes connecting regional destinations via arterial roadways, serving many stops and several communities.	▪ BSOOB Route 60 ▪ METRO's BREEZ, Husky Line ▪ YCCAC's SMC ▪ RTP's LRE
Express	Long-distance commuter-oriented bus routes that make limited stops.	▪ BSOOB Route 70
Demand Response	Services that are not on a fixed schedule and operate when needed. Reservations/trip requests are required.	▪ RTP, YCCAC, Microtransit
Other Transit	Non-bus transit routes (for example, rail or ferry).	▪ CBL, NNEPRA

Action Steps:

- Adopt a ***family of services*** route classification system (for example, local and limited routes) to guide regional route-naming conventions and service standards.
- ***Convene agency boards*** to obtain buy-in and establish guidelines for:
  - Regional bus-route naming conventions.
  - Shared regional information (for example, mobile app, customer service center, website).
  - Advancing a regional branding study that promotes individual agencies within a shared regional brand.

Regional Bus Service Standards

Within the proposed family of services, all transit agencies operating in the region should adopt a common set of service standards for different types of routes. Setting expectations for service levels also creates a coordinated and consistent network of service by establishing uniform standards for each service type. This provides consistent expectations for riders as well.

Figure 16 Proposed Weekday Transit Service Standards for Greater Portland

Service Type	Definition	Frequency	Span	Routes
Rapid	Bus routes that serve higher-density areas	15 mins.	6AM–11PM	2, 4, 5, 21
Local	Bus routes that serve moderate- to lower-density areas	30 mins.	6AM–10PM	1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 24, 50, 51, 54
Limited	Long-distance bus routes connecting regional destinations	60 mins.	6AM–9PM	60, BREEZ, Husky Line, SMC, LRE
Express	Long-distance commuter-oriented bus routes that make limited stops	60 mins. during peak	Market-Based	70
Demand Response	Service that operates as needed, with reservations	30-minute wait time	7AM–7PM	RTP, YCCAC, Microtransit
Other Transit	Non-bus transit routes (for example, rail or ferry)	n/a	n/a	CBL, NNEPRA

Action Steps:

- Further refine ***regional bus service standards*** to classify each route by type and set minimum thresholds for span and frequency.
  - Propose performance targets (for example, passengers per hour or per trip) for each route type in the regional family of services using standard units of measurement and readily available data.
  - Consider different densities, land uses, and road types.
- Develop a process or ***policy for reviewing performance and adjusting standards*** as needed.

IMPROVE BUS STOPS AND TRANSIT HUBS

The Greater Portland region is home to nearly 1,000 transit stops but many offer little information and few passenger amenities. The region has long been committed to improving accessibility but does not maintain an inventory of stops and their amenities, nor a typology for what amenities should be present at certain stops. All key transfer points and intermodal hubs should offer good signage, accessibility, information, and other amenities to heighten the visibility of the overall network and to attract and retain riders.

Improving transit stops with consistent design standards, amenities, and information will make the region's transit system easier to understand and use. Regional tools (for example, real-time bus status) and branding can tie each transit stop or hub to the larger network. Improvements should be prioritized based on ridership and other factors (for example, safety, equity).

Unified Transit Stop Signage

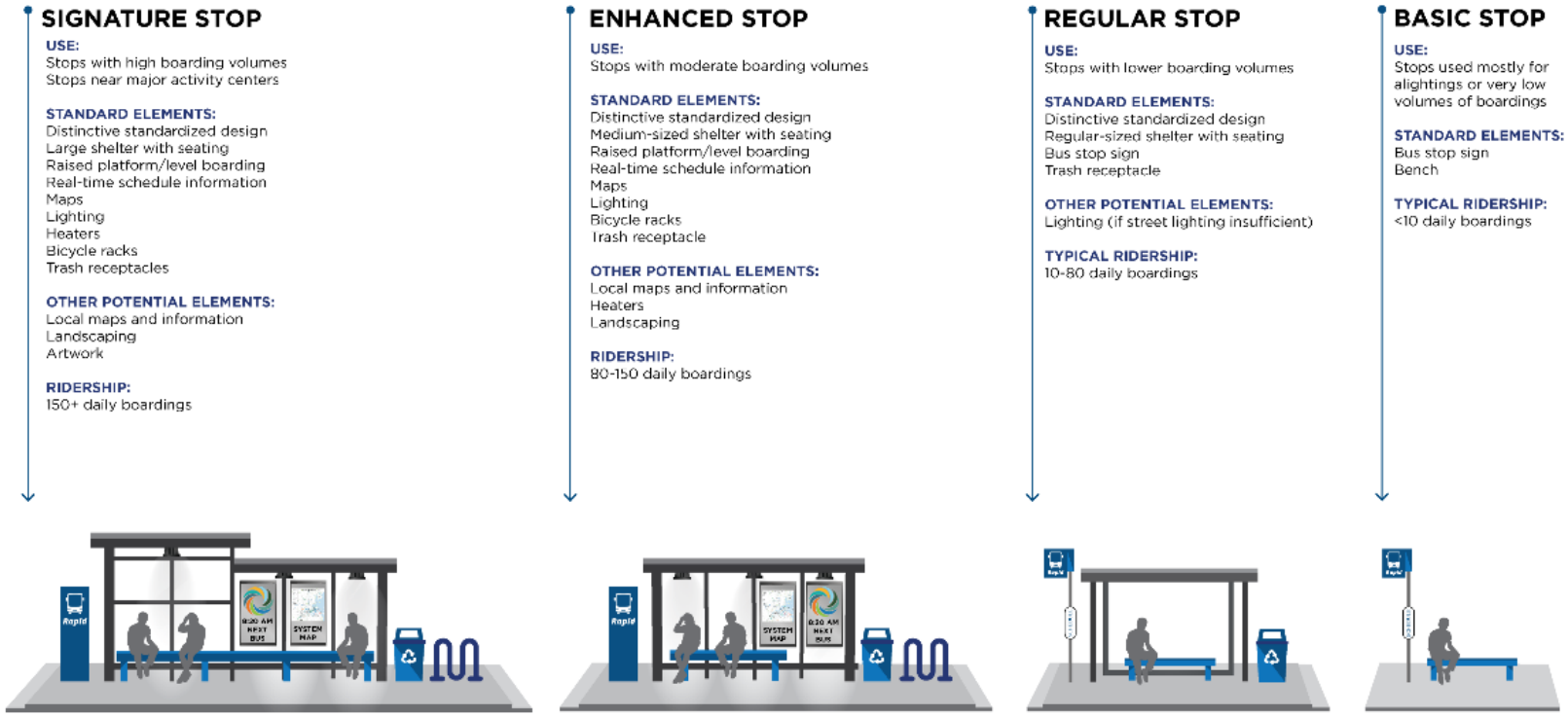
The Atlanta Regional Commission developed new multi-system bus stop signs that connect riders across several transit systems in the region. This will ensure riders have a clear understanding of routes, schedules, and fares, including how to connect between services.

Image source: Atlanta Regional Commission. May 2017. Regional Unified Bus Stop Signage 100% Construction Documentation <https://cdn.atlantaregional.org/wp-content/uploads/arc-regional-unified-bus-stop-signage-manual-100p-construction-5-25-17-final.pdf>

Transit stop improvements should be prioritized at a regional level, and not only within each agency's system. To that end, developing a working inventory and typology of transit stops is the first step in prioritizing investments. Transit-stop standards and design guideline documents should be developed to provide specifications for each bus-stop type and guide implementation.

Enhancements at multi-modal hubs with high ridership should be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Current needs include relocating the Portland Transportation Center to better integrate with the recommended bus network, as well as improving passenger amenities on Congress Street and near the PULSE to make it easier to wait and transfer routes.

Figure 17 Potential Greater Portland Regional Transit Stop Typology



Action Steps:

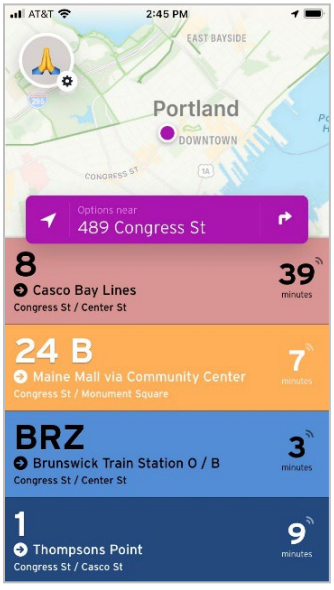
- Adopt a ***transit stop typology*** based on ridership and other factors. Coordinate with agencies that are already exploring bus-stop improvement.
- Use the stop typology to ***determine amenities***, such as:
  - Service information (routes, providers, links to real-time information)
  - Fare (price, payment tools) and customer service (phone number, website) information
  - Accessibility features (for example, braille) and wayfinding
  - Shelters, seating, lighting, trash barrel, etc.
  - Visual links/cues to the regional network (similar design style, brand, or icons)
- Obtain ***agency commitment*** to a regional bus-stop information standard by the boards of each fixed-route bus provider.
- Develop regional, unified, ***bus-stop signage specifications and design guidelines*** (sign information and placement, colors, etc.). Estimate costs by stop type.
- Develop and maintain a ***regional transit-stop inventory*** to monitor and maintain signage, amenities, and accessibility.
- Use the regional transit-stop inventory to ***prioritize stops for investment*** as funding becomes available.
- Develop ***a standard procurement contract*** for agencies to use as funding becomes available, and to ensure consistency in amenities.
- Engage MaineDOT and/or municipal partners to oversee design and construction of bus-stop improvements.
- Support ***Portland Transportation Center relocation*** to increase ridership on the Downeaster and facilitate better integration between rail and bus service.
- Support development of a ***transit priority corridor on Congress Street***, including transit operations priority (for example, transit signal priority), passenger amenities, and wayfinding. Other corridors that are planned or likely future transit-priority corridors include Brighton, Forest, and Washington avenues.

MAKE FARES AND TRIP PLANNING EASIER

Currently, METRO, SPBS, and BSOOB Transit offer fare payment through the DiriGO pass. This system has many benefits, including the ability to store value on a farecard and fare capping (where riders automatically receive the discounts associated with daily or monthly passes after taking a certain number of trips). Riders simply tap their card or smartphone when boarding and can reload value online or at retail locations. Fare coordination has improved the rider's experience but there are still different fare policies across bus providers and other regional providers use different fare payment systems.

Fixed-route bus providers also offer riders varying tools for learning where a bus is in real-time, and how soon it may arrive at a stop. Integrating these rider-facing technologies across as many agencies as possible would help make regional travel more seamless and convenient. This will also be important for any potential future microtransit mobile apps or trip reservation technologies.

A seamless fare payment system, with one card or account for making trips on many transit agencies, makes it easier for riders to use multiple systems and make transfers. Better integration would increase ridership by making the system more cohesive for riders and providing opportunity for regional fare promotions. Other regions with independent bus, rail, and ferry operators have successfully cooperated to use a single farecard (for example, Clipper card in the San Francisco Bay area and ORCA in the Puget Sound region).



Other Rider Tools

For riders, real-time information on their smartphone or at key transit stops gives a sense of reliability and allows for better trip planning. The region should consider updating the Southern Maine Transit Tracker (SMTT) or moving to an established, high-performance software, such as Transit App.

While there are considerable benefits to a fully regional fare payment system and/or real-time information tool, important questions that were raised during Transit Together workshops remain to be explored. The action steps below aim to address these questions and develop a regional strategy to upgrade and better integrate rider tools.

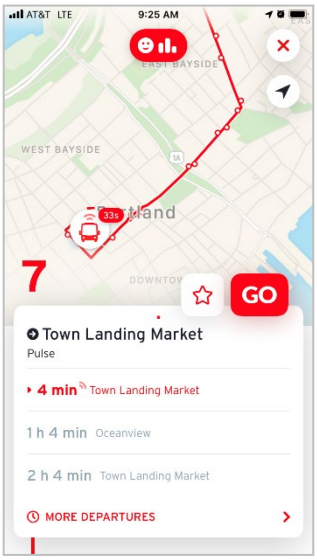
Action Steps:

- ***Identify desired goals and capabilities for regional fare payment*** (for example, future open fare payment with credit/debit cards). Identify individual agency criteria.
- ***Explore if DiriGO can meet identified regional goals.***
  - Work with DiriGO vendor to assess whether desired functionality could be provided for demand-response and future microtransit services.
  - Determine if/how DiriGO could integrate with ferry and/or rail payment, and whether it could fulfill any other desired regional capabilities.
  - Coordinate with MaineDOT regarding statewide adoption of automated fare payment.
- The fixed-route operators, GPCOG and MaineDOT should work together to determine whether to maintain the SMTT, or to **migrate to an externally managed tool** (for example, work with app vendors to assess potential for incorporating GTFS feeds from all regional providers and possibly the state). The study team recommends migrating from SMTT to the Transit App (which can be upgraded to Royale by the region or state) as it provides high-quality information to riders, can be used in other regions and would not require local software maintenance.
- ***Develop a regional fare policy*** that supports each agency's fare structure. Establish policies with respect to transfers, family accounts, youth fares, premium services, etc.
- ***Provide real time general transit feed specification (GTFS-RT) feeds*** for all fixed-route services in the region.

MAKE TRANSIT FASTER, MORE RELIABLE, AND MORE SUSTAINABLE

The Greater Portland region's seven transit providers recognize the importance of supportive transit technologies to help improve the speed and reliability of bus transit services and to enhance the rider experience. The agencies have expressed strong support for coordinated technology upgrades to ensure interoperability wherever possible. In addition, the individual agencies, with MaineDOT support, are moving towards zero-emissions vehicles (ZEVs) in response to the ambitious statewide climate goals set forth in *Maine Can't Wait*.

Consistent technology across most or all transit providers in the region would make it easier for agency planners and operators to interpret data streams to see the full regional picture, make coordinated service improvements, and offer all riders a consistent, convenient experience.



Regional Technology Roadmap

Real-time data, transit signal priority, trip-planning software, and fare payment systems increase rider satisfaction and improve transit performance. Other behind-the-scenes technologies support effective and reliable operations, such as transit-planning software, automated vehicle locators (AVLs), automated passenger counters (APCs), and GTFS feeds. A technology roadmap could identify needs and be used to pursue funding for

A Regional Technology Roadmap could establish the parameters and requirements of desired technology upgrades and help plan for future regionwide investments. For example, MaineDOT is leading a study to determine the costs for fixed-route bus electrification, introducing opportunities to consider shared maintenance and charging infrastructure. Exploring coordination opportunities for shared on-route charging at places where multiple systems meet (for example, PULSE, Maine Mall, and Saco Transportation Center) could support a faster and efficient fleet transition. MaineDOT is also evaluating statewide transit trip planning apps and automated fare payment technologies.

Action Steps:

- Survey each transit agency to ***inventory existing technology***, replacement needs and gaps in new technology and develop a ***Regional Technology Roadmap***.
- ***Invest in AVL technology*** for all fixed-route transit providers to enhance GTFS reliability for customer-facing tools.
- ***Invest in APCs*** and develop standard reports for agencies to better understand transit use throughout the region and facilitate informed service planning.
- ***Invest in a regional license for dynamic transit planning software***.
- Determine which ***transit tracking app*** will be used and promoted in the region: 1) SMTT or Umo which is tied to the fare payment system; 2) an externally managed option, such as Transit App; or 3) a common statewide app.
  - Address concerns regarding regional intermodal integration (for example, can system include ferry arrival information which varies due to freight loads?)
  - If switching apps, develop a multilingual communication campaign to instruct riders on use of the new platform and its benefits.
- Develop a ***regional transit signal priority program*** in coordination with MaineDOT and local municipalities.
- Support MaineDOT's Transit Bus Electrification Plan.
  - ***Program funds for vehicle replacement*** and regional charging infrastructure.
  - ***Assess maintenance facility readiness*** for selected technology. Consider regionalization of certain maintenance tasks or staff.
  - ***Utilize regional or state procurements*** to coordinate electrification and ensure charging infrastructure is optimized for interoperability.
  - Support efforts to secure ***onsite battery storage for Casco Bay Lines*** and longer-term proposals to transition ferry and rail away from fossil fuels.

Image source: Nelson\Nygaard.

MaineDOT Electrification Study

MaineDOT is working with all five bus agencies in the region to support a transition to ZEVs:

- Identifying vehicle technology options
- Developing a fleet replacement schedule
- Providing guidance on facility and remote charging infrastructure
- Coordinating with utilities on pricing and charging windows
- **Recommending further coordination to gain regional efficiencies**

ESTABLISH A REGIONAL MICROTRANSIT PROGRAM

As part of Transit Together, regional bus agencies and other stakeholders participated in a fall 2022 microtransit workshop to discuss potential models for introducing and testing this new service type. Attendees generally agreed that microtransit may be a useful tool for serving places that have lower levels of transit demand but where transit-critical populations—or the general public—would benefit from connections to the regional transit network. However, regional transit agencies raised several important issues regarding future regional microtransit program implementation:

- Agencies should use existing labor instead of contracted, turnkey operations.
- There are not currently enough vehicles or staff at any agency to operate microtransit; these resources would need to be acquired.

As microtransit would be a new service type in the region, it is an opportunity to ensure new transit service is seamlessly integrated with existing routes.

Microtransit is an alternative to serving areas that have lower levels of transit demand but where transit-critical populations or others would benefit from connections to the broader network.

Possible Greater Portland Region Use Cases

One microtransit model for the Greater Portland region is for individual transit agencies to operate zones under established regional policies. Based on the State of Regional Transit research and proposed changes in the Recommended Service Plan, three places are identified for further refinement and potential microtransit implementation. These zones are places that are proposed to lose fixed-route bus service in the Recommended Service Plan, due to resource limitations and low levels of transit demand. Implementing these microtransit pilot zones would require additional resources.

These three zones and potentially others in the future can facilitate a range of use cases to help improve the Greater Portland transit network, such as:

- Replaced fixed-route bus service in corridors where transit is currently unproductive, or serves very low ridership
- Providing first/last mile connections to more productive fixed-route bus services and/or train and ferry connections
- Serving off-peak travel demand to fill temporal gaps in fixed-route services, including late-night service for hospitality workers

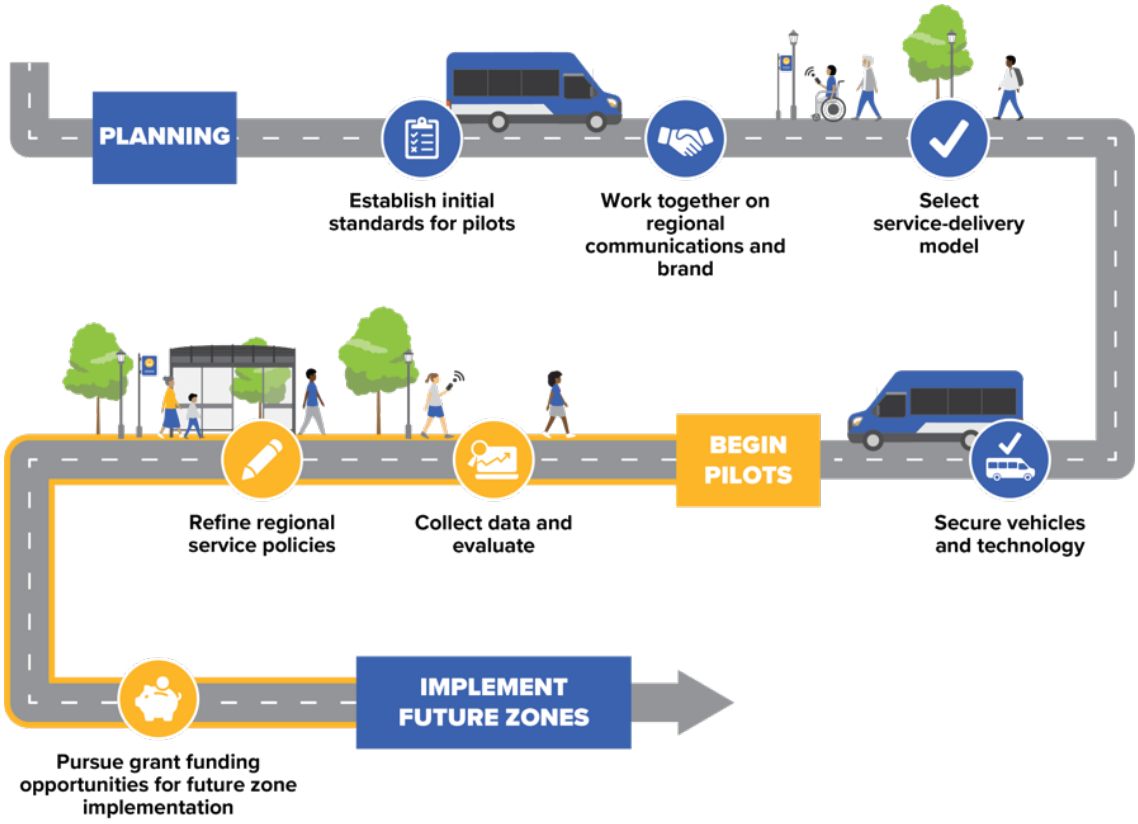
- Facilitating short trips for people living or working in a given zone
- Improving mobility for low-income residents
- Enhancing access to medical facilities, shopping centers, and employers
- Potentially providing a same-day mobility option for ADA paratransit customers

Develop Microtransit Roadmap

Two agencies (METRO and YCCAC) anticipate near-term funding for microtransit pilots. Although the Transit Together process initiated discussions on how to design and operate future zones in a regionally consistent and seamless manner, the pilots will let the region evaluate various service design parameters, assess demand, and evaluate impacts to ADA paratransit and other services. Stakeholders agreed that a cost-benefit analysis should be conducted to inform development of a regional Microtransit Roadmap prior to scaling up to larger or additional zones.

This roadmap should consider a regionally relevant mix of use cases and appropriate service design parameters, such as guidelines for hours of operation, data collection, or branding. Additional areas of cooperation could include shared vehicle maintenance, a common customer service and dispatch operation, and travel training.

Figure 18 Greater Portland Region Microtransit Roadmap



Action Steps:

- Identify ***pilot-program scope*** (zone boundaries, service levels, scheduling protocols, fares, etc.)
- Select ***service delivery model***
- Establish ***consistent marketing materials*** on how service works, how to use it, and how it differs from fixed-route or ADA paratransit
  - Unified rider-facing interface, including mobile app/call center and customer travel training
  - Regional fare structure with integration into regional fare payment
  - Regional branding (for example, GoSoPo, GoMETRO, GoBSOOB)
- Use pilot programs to ***establish/refine a regional Microtransit Roadmap*** with standards for future zones
- Building on the family of services approach, ***determine standards for service provision*** to ensure consistency of service provided to the public, as well as regionwide system legibility
  - Service standards may include:
    - Maximum walking distance to/from pickup/dropoff locations: ¼ mile
    - Maximum rider wait time: 20 minutes
    - Span of service: Weekdays from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
  - Determine data capture and reporting standards
- Develop a microtransit zone ***prioritization framework*** (for example, based on safety, equity, access, climate/sustainability, cost, or use cases). Use data to monitor performance and adjust priorities.
- ***Identify necessary funding to provide microtransit***, including additional vehicle and staff needs.
  - Study the cost and benefit, especially in terms of impacts to complementary ADA paratransit.
- Determine, procure, and contract with an appropriate regional dispatching software
- ***Establish a shared vehicle maintenance program***

6 MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Implementing Transit Together recommendations depends on a continued commitment to working together across agencies and stakeholder groups. It will also require additional levels of funding. The Transit Together Recommendations Action Plan (see Figure 21) summarizes recommendations and identified actions steps. It provides a framework to guide future planning decisions and regional transit investments.

CONDUCT ONGOING REGIONAL COORDINATION

As the region's metropolitan planning organization, PACTS is responsible for facilitating a collaborative process to prioritize limited federal transportation funding. The Transit Task Force, which is made up of the seven transit agencies, PACTS chairs, and MaineDOT, is one avenue to inform that decision making process. The Transit Task Force is recommended to lead implementation of several key components of this plan, including coordination of transit service planning and the design and advancing of regional transit enhancements and technology.

Key tasks related to implementing Transit Together recommendations include:

- **Developing Regional Bus-Service Standards**
- **Developing a Microtransit Roadmap**
- **Conducting Periodic Service Review and Coordination Meetings**
- **Advancing Regional Initiatives**

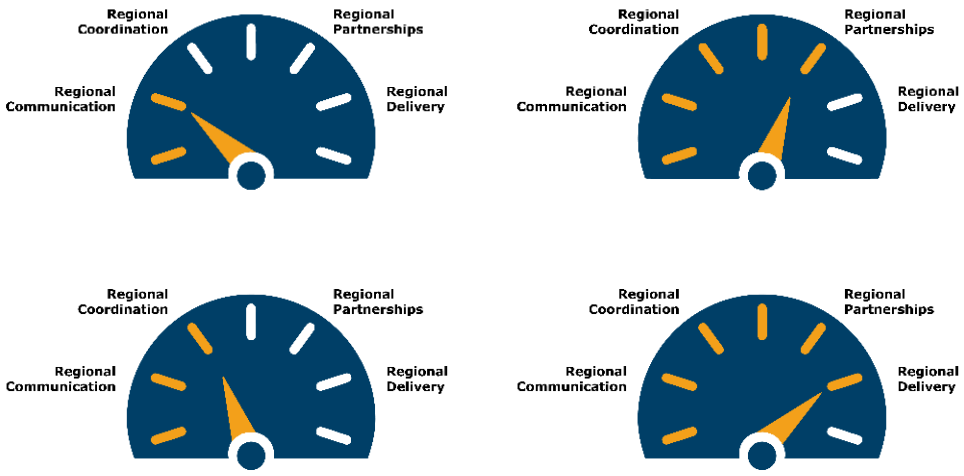
Regional transit staff came together at three workshops to identify areas of consensus and develop Transit Together recommendations.

ADVANCE REGIONAL INITIATIVES

Chapter 5, Regional Initiatives, outlined a series of action items related to enhancing service for the rider, making technology upgrades, and working regionally on more programs to introduce efficiencies and make riding transit an easier and more seamless experience.

Levels of coordination will vary across individual tasks. For some efforts, such as schedule changes at intermodal hubs, only communication would be needed. Other tasks, such as development of bus-stop design guidelines, will require more coordination. Regional technology upgrades, branding efforts, or joint procurements to provide a common real-time information app, fare payment, or bus charging stations might require a more formal effort with interagency memoranda of agreement.

Figure 19 Graphic of Transit Coordination Levels



Transit Together recommends GPCOG staff support the Transit Task Force and other coordination efforts by performing technology research, offering procurement support, writing grant applications, and completing other tasks.

Tasks related to funding prioritization (for example, for transit stop improvements) will fall to the RTAC and PACTS Policy Board. These committees are also ultimately responsible for making sure investment actions and priorities align with other plans such as *Transit Tomorrow*, *Connect 2045,* and *Maine Won't Wait*.

Transit Together Convention

To keep the spirit of interagency cooperation intact and to update regional priorities as time moves on, we recommend an **annual** convening of the seven transit agency boards. Joint board meetings were held in 2007, 2012, and 2019, and proved to be successful venues for obtaining individual agency buy-in and setting strategic direction.

Action Steps:

- Hold ***joint transit board meeting (or Transit Together convention***). Make this an annual event to reaffirm priorities and strategies for the year ahead. Obtain buy-in to advance critical-path items within the structure of PACTS Transit Task Force and other committees:
  - Regional service standards (including Microtransit Roadmap)
  - Reinitiated regionwide branding study (including microtransit brand)
  - Bus-stop design guidelines
- ***Transit Task Force leads***:
  - Family of services and regional service standards
  - Bus-stop classification hierarchy
  - Microtransit pilot guidelines and draft roadmap
- ***GPCOG leads*** in initiating coordination with state/MaineDOT on:
  - Fare payment integration
  - AVL, real-time information, and other technologies
  - Scheduling software technology, pilots, and goals for microtransit and other on-demand transportation

PURSUE ADDITIONAL FUNDING

The region receives a limited level of federal funding for transit each year, with the remaining needed funds largely made up by municipal contributions.

Today, the region's transit providers struggle to adequately meet transit demand across areas of mixed density. Difficult decisions and tradeoffs must be made. The providers are also working to address challenges such as ridership declines due to the COVID-19

pandemic, outstanding preventative maintenance needs, and desired fleet and technology upgrades.

Additional funding is needed to implement service improvements beyond the Recommended Service Plan and to advance Regional Initiatives to enhance the rider experience.

While the region benefitted from an infusion of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds during the pandemic, this level of funding is not currently anticipated to continue over the longer term. It is important to set and identify regional priorities to guide investments as federal funding levels vary year to year. Regional transit agencies should work together with local and regional governments to explore options for a new transit funding source to help the region grow sustainably.

Future Bus Service Improvements

The evaluation of regional transit demand and ridership data performed as part of the Transit Together study identified a need for additional service frequency and span of both weekday and weekend service. New needed connections that are not being served today were also identified. Due to the cost-constrained nature of the Recommended Service Plan, many of the changes that would help address these needs were not able to be included. Additional recommendations to implement microtransit, especially in South Portland, where replacement of fixed route service is critical to moving the Recommended Service Plan forward, would require additional resources beyond what is available for the Recommended Service Plan.

New and expanded service would make transit more useful for more types of trips, and demand is likely to persist and grow over the next few years. If additional funding becomes available, it could be used to operate an improved transit network and thereby increase ridership.

Other recommendations made in this report, such as regional route classifications, stop improvements, enhanced rider information, and technology investments will also make service more attractive for current and potential future riders.

Many daily riders use routes operated by two or more agencies and often have long waits between transfers. This results in transit travel times that greatly exceed the time it would take to make the same trip in a car.

Additional Service Needs Include:

- ***Frequency improvements***, including 15-minute service on Route 4; 30-minute service on Routes 1, 3, 7, 8B, 24, 54, 60, and BREEZ; and 60-minute service on the Lakes Region Explorer.
- ***Span improvements*****,** including late-night service on key routes serving the hospitality industry or new microtransit service, Saturday service on the Southern Maine Connector, and Sunday service on the BREEZ, Lakes Region Explorer, and Southern Maine Connector.
- ***Three microtransit zones.*** Future implementation would require additional resources to acquire or lease vehicles, procure scheduling software and app technology, hire drivers, and operate service.
- ***A new bus route*** connecting Brick Hill in South Portland directly with the Portland Peninsula.

Figure 20 Estimated Costs for Additional Service Improvements

Additional Service Improvements	Annual Operating Costs	One-Time Capital Costs
Frequency Upgrades	$6,740,000	$13,500,000
Extended Service Span	$860,000	-
Three New Microtransit Zones	$3,290,000	$1,570,000
New Bus Route	$1,110,000	$2,000,000
Total	**$12,000,000**	**$17,070,000**

Note: One-time capital costs are current cost estimates for new cutaway and electric fixed-route buses.

Action Steps:

- GPCOG to work with agencies, PACTS, and MaineDOT to ***identify funding*** for unfunded service recommendations (for example, additional fixed-route bus frequency).
- GPCOG to help ***pursue federal discretionary grants*** (or other funding sources such as MaineDOT RTAP funds) for:
  - Microtransit initial start-up costs (i.e., vehicles, scheduling technology, app)
  - Bus-stop design guidelines (to be adopted by agency boards)
  - Bus-stop improvements
  - Regional branding study (following joint agency board direction)
  - Enhanced integrated regional rider tools (whether expanding DiriGO or SMTT, or funding the recommended Transit App's Royale upgrade for the region).

Transit Together Action Plan and Timeline

A **Transit Together Recommendations Action Plan** is in Figure 21. This plan aims to serve as a summary of Transit Together recommendations and reference document to guide near-term planning decisions and investments.

The table organizes each recommendation into one of three timeframes:

- Near Term: 0 to 6 months
- Medium Term: 6 to 18 months
- Long Term: 18 months+

Figure 21 Transit Together Recommendations Action Plan

Recommendation	Timeframe	Actions to Move Us Forward
Implement Recommended Service Plan	**Near Term**	▪ Fixed-route bus agencies conduct Title VI analysis and agency-specific public outreach.
		▪ Agency boards and South Portland City Council approve changes as required.
		▪ Install/remove bus stops as needed for service changes. Prepare new bus schedules.
		▪ Coordinate timing of service changes among agencies, so riders see benefits of changes that involve multiple operators.
		▪ Work with GPCOG to conduct a regionwide public outreach and education campaign to present service changes in regional context.
	Medium Term	▪ Initiate a quarterly Service Review and Coordination meeting for fixed-route bus providers.
		▪ Work with municipal, state, and private partners to implement recommended roadway, pedestrian, and bus turnaround improvements.
Improve Bus Stops and Transit Hubs	**Near Term**	▪ Adopt and use a transit stop typology based on ridership and other factors to determine amenities at transit stops.
		▪ Develop and maintain a regional transit stop inventory and bus-stop improvement program to monitor, upgrade and maintain signage, amenities, and ADA accessibility.
	Medium Term	▪ Develop regional, unified, bus-stop signage specifications and design guidelines (sign information and placement, colors, etc.). Estimate costs by stop type.
	Longer Term	▪ Develop a regional procurement contract to ensure consistency in regional design and amenities offered.
		▪ Monitor and update stop prioritization for investment as funding opportunities become available and ridership changes.
		▪ Engage MaineDOT and/or municipal partners to oversee design and construction of stop improvements.
		▪ Support Portland Transportation Center relocation to increase ridership on the Downeaster through a better bus network connection.
		▪ Support development of a transit priority corridor on Congress Street, including transit operations priority (for example, TSP), passenger amenities, and wayfinding.
Enhance Regional Information and Brand	**Near Term**	▪ Develop regional route-numbering and -naming conventions organized around a family of services (for example, rapid routes, local routes). Develop regional bus schedule standards.
		▪ Develop guidelines to ensure individual agency websites help present a cohesive regional network (for example, links to regional map, transfer information, microtransit information). Work with other partners (for example, Visit Portland) to similarly portray the whole network.
	Medium Term	▪ Conduct a regional branding study to enhance ease of use and understanding of the regional transit network. Respect individual brands and unique agency missions but pursue unified branding elements (for example, icons, color templates, style guide)
		▪ Create regional materials to present network in cohesive form (for example, regional transit map, similar bus schedule templates) Update annually.
	Longer Term	▪ Incorporate regional brand or icon on websites, maps, communication materials, and transit-stop signage.
Make Fares and Trip Planning Easier	**Near Term**	▪ Identify individual agency goals and criteria for regional fare payment (for example, future fare payment with credit cards, cash flow, ADA and intermodal integration, transfers). Coordinate with MaineDOT on statewide goals.
	Medium Term	▪ Work within DiriGO to explore whether existing system can meet goals identified above.
		▪ Develop a regional fare policy that supports each agency's fare structure. Establish policies for transfers, family accounts, youth fares, premium services, etc.
		▪ Integrate regional fare payment on RTP and YCCAC fixed routes. Pursue support from CBL and NNEPRA to adopt identified strategies or systems.

Implementation Timeframe

- **Near Term: 0 to 6 months**
- **Medium Term: 6 to 18 months**
- **Long Term: 18 months+**

Recommendation	Timeframe	Actions to Move Us Forward
		▪ Provide GTFS-RT feeds for all fixed routes in the region.
Make Buses Faster, More Reliable, and More Sustainable	**Near Term**	▪ Survey transit agencies to inventory existing technology, replacement needs, and gaps in new technology. Coordinate with MaineDOT on similar statewide technology efforts.
		▪ Identify desired real time information app (e.g., transitioning away from Southern Maine Transit Tracker (SMTT) to Transit App to reduce local technology maintenance needs (SMTT software can be retained if needed in future). Consider upgrading all regional or state riders to Transit App Royale. Address concerns regarding non-bus integration.
		▪ Work with GPGOG to acquire Remix transit planning software for all fixed-route bus operators.
		▪ Coordinate with MaineDOT on regional bus electrification, select desired future technology and work with GPCOG to establish targets for fleet transition.
	Medium Term	▪ Invest in automatic vehicle locator (AVL) technology for all fixed-route transit providers to enhance GTFS reliability for customer-facing tools (under way).
		▪ Invest in automated passenger counters (APCs) and develop a regionwide quarterly ridership report for agencies to better understand transit use throughout the region.
		▪ Consider regional or state procurements for fleet transition to minimize customization and reduce cost for transit agencies.
		▪ Assess maintenance facility readiness and on-route charging locations based on selected technology. Consider opportunities to introduce regional efficiencies (for example, parts inventory, charger maintenance, shared layover)
	Longer Term	▪ Develop a regional transit signal priority program in coordination with MaineDOT and local communities.
		▪ Support efforts to make required facility upgrades to accommodate zero-emission fleets.
		▪ Support efforts to secure onsite battery storage for Casco Bay Lines and longer-term proposals to transition ferry and rail away from fossil fuels.
		▪ Support efforts to relocate Portland's Downeaster station to be better positioned to serve the Peninsula and integrate with the fixed-route bus system.
Conduct Ongoing Regional Coordination	**Near Term**	▪ Convene boards of seven regional transit agencies for the first annual Transit Together annual conference. Obtain strategic direction and buy-in on near-term actions steps (for example, bus-stop improvement, family of services and bus route classification, reinitiating regionwide branding study).
		▪ Hold regular bus service review and coordination meetings with fixed-route bus providers; add other providers seasonally.
		▪ Develop regional service standards for the 'family of services', using standard units of measurement and consistent data. Standards could classify each route by type and set minimum thresholds for span and frequency. Standards should include a process or policy for reviewing standards, and consider different densities, land uses, and road conditions.
		▪ Create initial Regional Microtransit Roadmap to guide microtransit pilot design (service parameters, scheduling technology, apps and communications, etc.).
		▪ Coordinate with MaineDOT to align with statewide goals on fare payment, technology, and on-demand transportation.
	Medium Term	▪ Develop a policy for periodically reviewing regional bus-service standards and use performance (by family classification) to consider service adjustments.
		▪ Assess microtransit pilots (ridership, impact on existing services) and refine Regional Microtransit Roadmap.
		▪ Develop regional microtransit procurement strategy and prioritization framework (based on equity, access, climate/sustainability, cost, use cases, etc.).
		▪ Develop microtransit co-branding strategy (as part of regional branding, see Enhance Regional Information and Brand above).
Pursue Additional Funding	**Medium to Long Term**	▪ Identify funding for fixed-route bus service frequency and span not included in cost neutral recommendations, and for microtransit zones.
		▪ Pursue federal discretionary grants and other funding sources to support start-up costs for microtransit and to advance regional initiatives.

Implementation Timeframe

- **Near Term: 0 to 6 months**
- **Medium Term: 6 to 18 months**
- **Long Term: 18 months+**

7 APPENDICES

Appendix A Market Analysis

Appendix B Existing Services Review

Appendix C Regional Coordination

Appendix D State of Regional Transit Executive Summary