

Ridership Committee

August 21, 2024 | 3:30 – 5:00pm



Onsite:

Greater Portland Transit District
114 Valley Street, Administration Conference Room | Portland, ME 04102

Remote:

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87474514366?pwd=RWZTWlBmTEZRVExEaEFUSkdjQTVEZz09>

Webinar ID: 874 7451 4366 | Passcode 880326 |

Phone: (301) 715-8592 | Telephone participants: *9 to raise hand, *6 to unmute

MEETING AGENDA

AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER	ACTION or INFORMATION
1. Call Meeting to Order (3:30)	Hope Cahan, Chair	N/A
2. Public Comment (3:30-3:35) The Metro Board's Ridership Committee welcomes public comment for items not listed on this agenda at this time. For items listed on the agenda, the chair will allow members of the public to comment following staff presentation. There is a <i>three-minute time limit</i> per citizen at each point. (Comments will be paraphrased in the meeting minutes)	Hope Cahan, Chair	Information
3. Approval of Meeting Minutes (3:35-3:40) Review and approve the minutes from the April 2024 meeting of the Ridership Committee.	Hope Cahan, Chair	ACTION
4. Portland's ReCode and Transit Implications (3:40-4:00) Portland is undergoing Phase 2 of its ReCode process, which seeks to overhaul its Land Use Code. This process will likely change zoning in numerous places throughout the city, including requirements related to land use, onsite parking, and transit. Portland staff will discuss this process, including draft language related to transit.	Kevin Kraft, Portland Planning Director Helen Donaldson, Portland Director of Special Projects	Information/ Discussion
5. Ridership and Project Update (4:00-4:20) Staff will provide an update on ridership, projects, and other updates related to service development.	Mike Tremblay, Transit Dev. Director	Information
6. Route 1 service on Munjoy Hill (4:20-4:45) Staff will provide an update on the status of Metro's Route 1 service on Munjoy Hill, which was modified in August 2023.	Mike Tremblay, Transit Dev. Director	Information/ Possible ACTION

7. Future Agenda Items (4:45-4:50) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnering with bicycling entities – September 2024 • Bus shelters and bus inventory • Microtransit vendor and marketing strategy 	Hope Cahan, Chair	Information
8. Upcoming Meetings (4:50-4:55) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Directors – August 22, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. • Finance Committee – September 4, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. • Executive Committee – September 11, 2024 at 3:30 p.m. • Ridership Committee – September 18, 2024 at 3:30 p.m. 	Hope Cahan, Chair	Information
9. Adjournment (5:00)	Hope Cahan, Chair	N/A

As of November 9, 2022 Greater Portland Metro is holding meetings of the Board of Directors (and its committees) in hybrid format, both in person at Metro’s offices and via webinar. The remote portions of all meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of [Metro’s Remote Participation Policy](#) (adopted August 25, 2022) as well as LD 1772, PL 2022 Ch. 666, and 1 MRSA Chapter 13, Subchapter 1.



**Greater Portland Metro Ridership Committee
Wednesday, April 17, 2024:
DRAFT Meeting Minutes:**

Member	Municipality	Role:	Status
Hope Cahan	Falmouth	Chair	Present
Julie Dubovsky	Yarmouth	Vice Chair	Present
Prosper Lohomboli	Westbrook	Member	Present
Bill Rixon	Freeport	Member	Present
Roberto Rodriguez	Portland	Member	Present
Pious Ali	Portland	Member	Present

Staff Present	Identified Members of the Public
Mike Tremblay – Director of Transit Development Denise Beck – Marketing Manager Glenn Fenton – Chief Transportation Officer, Acting Executive Director	

- I. With a Quorum in place, this meeting was called to Order By: Hope Cahan at: 3:31 pm**
- II. Public Forum:** No members of the public were present.
- III. Approval of October 2023 Meeting Minutes:**
Bill Rixon made a motion to approve October 18, 2023 meeting minutes, Hope Cahan seconded the motion, after a roll call vote of the members present, the minutes for October 18, 2023 minutes were unanimously approved.
- IV. Selection of Ridership Committee Vice Chair:**
Hope leads the discussion on the selection of Ridership Committee Vice Chair. Hope nominated Julie Dubovsky. After a roll call vote, Julie Dubovsky was elected as vice chair of the Ridership Committee, unanimously of those present.
- V. Ridership Update:**
Mike leads the discussion on item 5 on the agenda: Ridership Update. The committee discussed the trends in ridership, and several upcoming projects, including the Gorham-Westbrook-Portland Rapid Transit Project and the potential for RTP to join the DiriGo fare payment network.

VI. Route 7 Service Improvements Update:

Mike leads the discussion on Item 6, Route 7 Service Improvements update. Due to struggles hiring bus operators, and delays in the procurement processes for microtransit, microtransit and the Route 7 frequency improvement is likely delayed until fall. The extension of Route 7 will proceed as planned in June. The Committee is satisfied by the contingency plan.

VII. Service Improvements Roadmap:

Mike leads the discussion on item 7, service improvements roadmap, which includes planned ARPA-funded service improvements in 2024, as well as Route 8 bidirectionality, potential extensions of Route 2 and Route 4, BREEZ Sunday service, and other improvements at later dates. Service requests have been made on several occasions to serve Portland's VA outpatient clinic on West Commercial Street, as well as the Stroudwater neighborhood of Portland.

VIII. Future Agenda Items:

- Partnering with bicycling entities
- Route 1 on Munjoy Hill
- Bus shelters and bus inventory
- Microtransit vendor and marketing strategy
- Pass Program partnership with Bowdoin

IX. Upcoming Meetings:

- Board of Directors – April 25, 2024 at 4:00 pm
- Finance Committee – April 24, 2024 at 4:00 pm
- Executive Committee – April 18, 2024 at 3:30 pm
- Ridership Committee – May 15, 2024 at 3:30 pm

X. Adjournment:

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting by: Hope Cahan at 4:29 pm. Seconded by Julie Dobovsky, the meeting was adjourned with no one opposed.

RIDERSHIP COMMITTEE

AGENDA ITEM 4

DATE

August 20, 2024

SUBJECT

Portland ReCode Overview

PURPOSE

To inform the Committee about proposed ReCode changes, particularly those that affect transit.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

For several years, Portland has been working on a significant ReCode project, to overhaul its land use code both in terms of legibility and organization but also content. The land use code includes, but is not limited to, rules and restrictions around development, including what can be built in what areas of the city, how much density can be built, the amount of a parcel that can be built on, and how much parking is required for a given development.

Any such examination of a land use code is bound to have indirect effects on transit, as the nature of development can help or hurt the propensity of transit in a given area. Transit tends to perform better where development is more dense, where more destinations can be reached within a short walk of a bus stop, where zones are mixed among residential, commercial, and institutional uses, etc. However, Portland's ReCode process also proposes items that will more directly involve transit, and Metro specifically, including removed parking vehicle minimums and introduction of vehicle parking maximums – in other words, providing a cap, rather than a floor, on the number of parking spaces a developer must (or is allowed to) build in order for a project to be approved. These measures are proven to reduce car use and encourage migration to other, more sustainable forms of transportation, including transit.

City Planning staff will provide a full overview of ReCode with a focus on how it may affect transit. A full background on the ReCode process can be found here: <https://www.recodeportland.me/>

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information and discussion.

CONTACT

Mike Tremblay, Director of Transit Development

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mtremblay@gpmetro.org

RIDERSHIP COMMITTEE

AGENDA ITEM 5

DATE

August 20, 2024

SUBJECT

Ridership and Project Update

PURPOSE

To update the Committee on ridership trends and other service-related updates

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Metro staff continues to track ridership on a daily and monthly basis. 142,694 in June 2024, and 139,492 in July 2024. This represents a -1.8% and 3.33% year-over-year change, respectively, and about 87.3% of pre-pandemic ridership. As has been the case since March, year-over-year values are being compared to a period in 2023 where fares were half-price, so near-stagnant growth in these months is not necessarily indicative of a lasting trend.

Ridership patterns on a route level changed significantly in June and July due to the extension of Route 7 to the Portland International Jetport via Hutchins Drive, and the corresponding removal of Jetport and Hutchins Drive service from the Route 5. Passengers using Route 5 to access Hutchins Drive, the Jetport, and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) appear to have immediately switched from Route 5 to Route 7, as expected; as a result, Route 5 ridership dropped while Route 7 ridership rose compared to June and July 2023. However, given the additional overall service provided by extending the Route 7 to a new destination, as well as additional hours of operation, did yield an overall ridership increase. In July 2024, combined ridership across the two routes rose by about 6.2% compared to 2023, nearly twice as much as the overall year-over-year increase.

Metro continues to progress several projects, including:

- Microtransit pilot in Falmouth
 - Procurement of vehicles nearing completion
 - White-label app via Spare Labs in development
 - Name (Metro Connect) and Brand (TBD) ongoing
 - Route 7 frequency improvements to launch with microtransit
- Gorham-Westbrook-Portland Rapid Transit Project
 - Metro taking ownership of project management
 - Working with MaineDOT on next phase of planning

- CAD/AVL
 - Equipment setup ongoing
 - Training ongoing with Optibus (transit planning, scheduling, and timekeeping)
- Transit Signal Priority
 - Equipment fully online, awaiting results

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information and discussion.

CONTACT

Mike Tremblay, Director of Transit Development
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ATTACHMENTS

Ridership Committee Slide Deck

DATE

August 20, 2024

SUBJECT

Route 1 in Munjoy Hill

PURPOSE

To update the Committee on the status of the service change to Route 1 in Munjoy Hill

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

In August 2023, Metro made the decision to modify the Route 1 service on Munjoy Hill, removing a segment of the route on Eastern Promenade/Fore Street from Congress Street to Atlantic Street; as well as the segment on Atlantic Street. The route currently turns from Eastern Promenade directly onto Congress Street. The change eliminated three stops and relocated a fourth, to Congress Street/Emerson Street. This change was made for the following reasons:

- Operability – The segment of route along Atlantic Avenue was difficult to navigate safely due to the narrow nature of the street, two-way traffic, and street parking on both sides.
- Route speed – Using Congress Street makes the route faster, improving on-time performance for the one-hour round trip.
- Ridership – Ridership along the discontinued segment was the lowest along the entire Route 1 alignment.
- Access to transit – While discontinuing the Fore Street and Atlantic Street segments of the route increases the distance some people need to walk in order to get to a bus stop – and thus likely reduces ridership among that population – the entirety of Munjoy Hill remains within a ¼ mile walk of a bus stop, which is considered transit-accessible.

Nearly a year has passed since the change was made. During this time, Metro staff analyzed nine months of data (September 2023 – May 2024), compared to the same nine months the previous year (September 2022 – May 2023), Metro has noted the following trends:

- Boardings in the affected area have risen by 10%, compared to an 11% increase on the route as a whole
- On-time performance on Route 1 has improved in eight of the nine months

Metro hopes to gather more information to make a more informed determination on service in Munjoy Hill in the coming months, including data for June, July, and August, when activity along Eastern Promenade is higher than the rest of the year, as well as stop-level boarding and alighting

data. Staff intends to keep the Route 1 alignment as-is for the time being, unless/until there is evidence that ridership has suffered as a result of the change.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information and discussion.

CONTACT

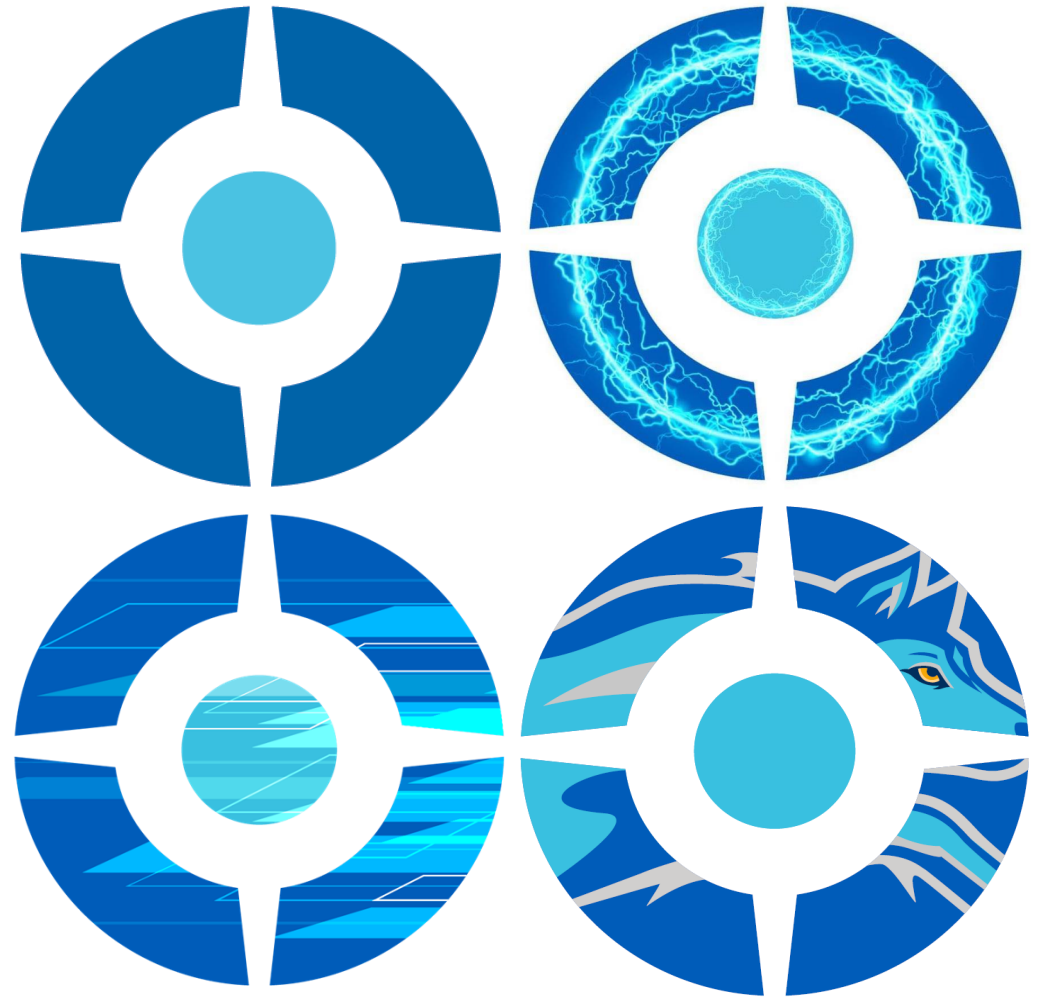
Mike Tremblay, Director of Transit Development
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ATTACHMENTS

Ridership Committee Slide Deck

GREATER PORTLAND METRO

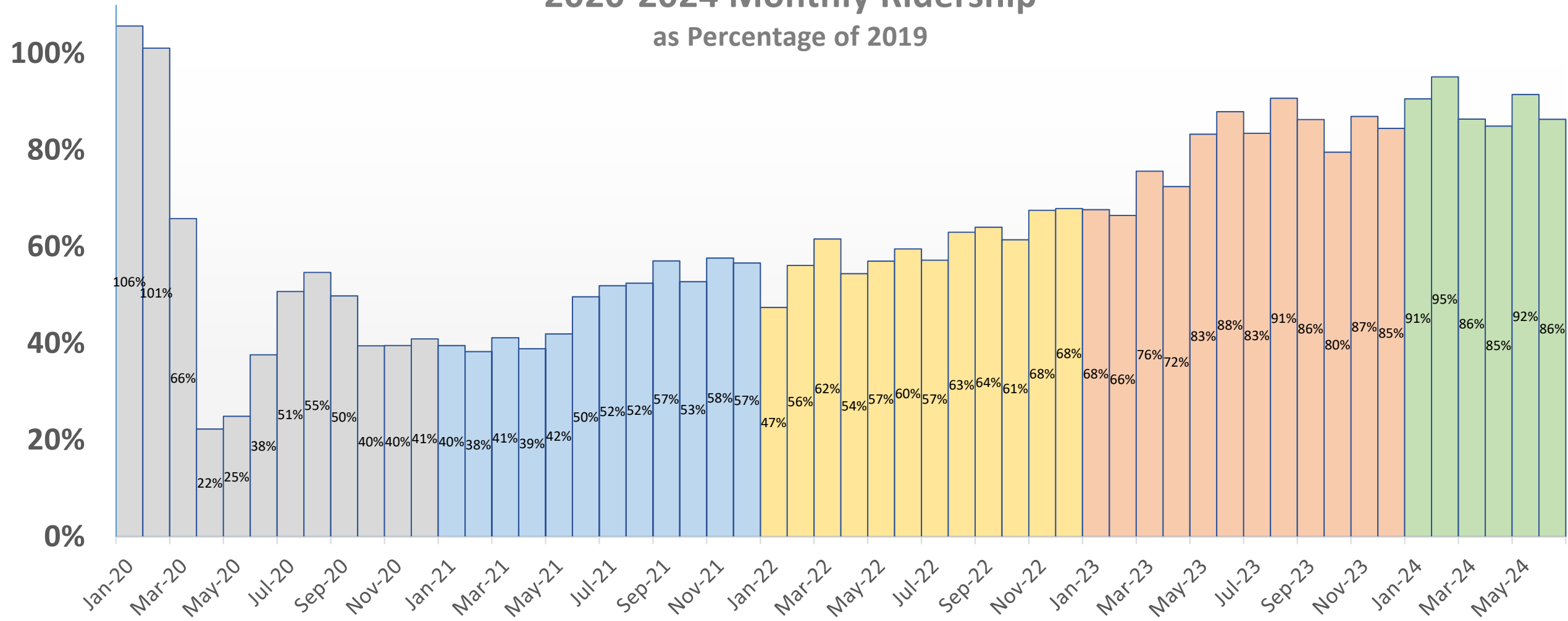
Board of Directors
Ridership Committee
August 21, 2024



Item 4: Ridership and Fare Revenue

Recovery

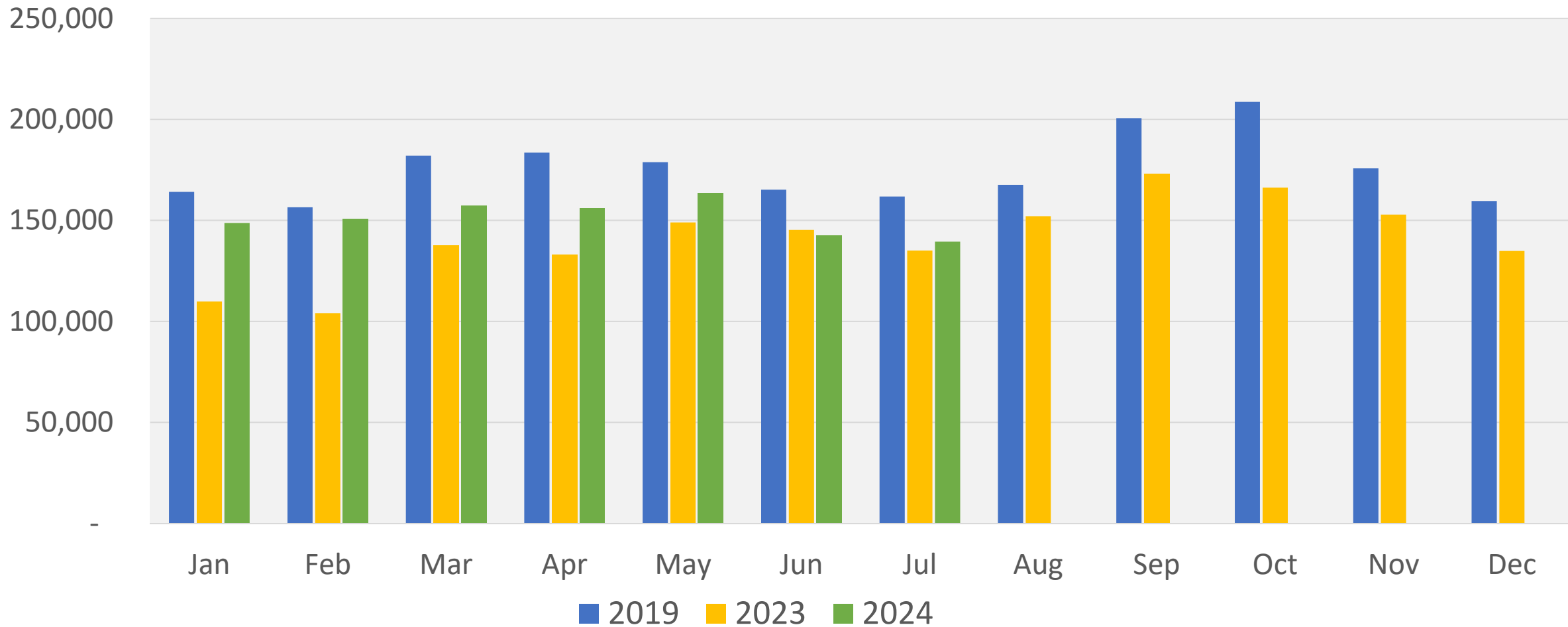
2020-2024 Monthly Ridership
as Percentage of 2019



Item 4: Ridership and Project Update

Ridership, 2019-2024

Metro Monthly Ridership: 2019, 2023, and 2024



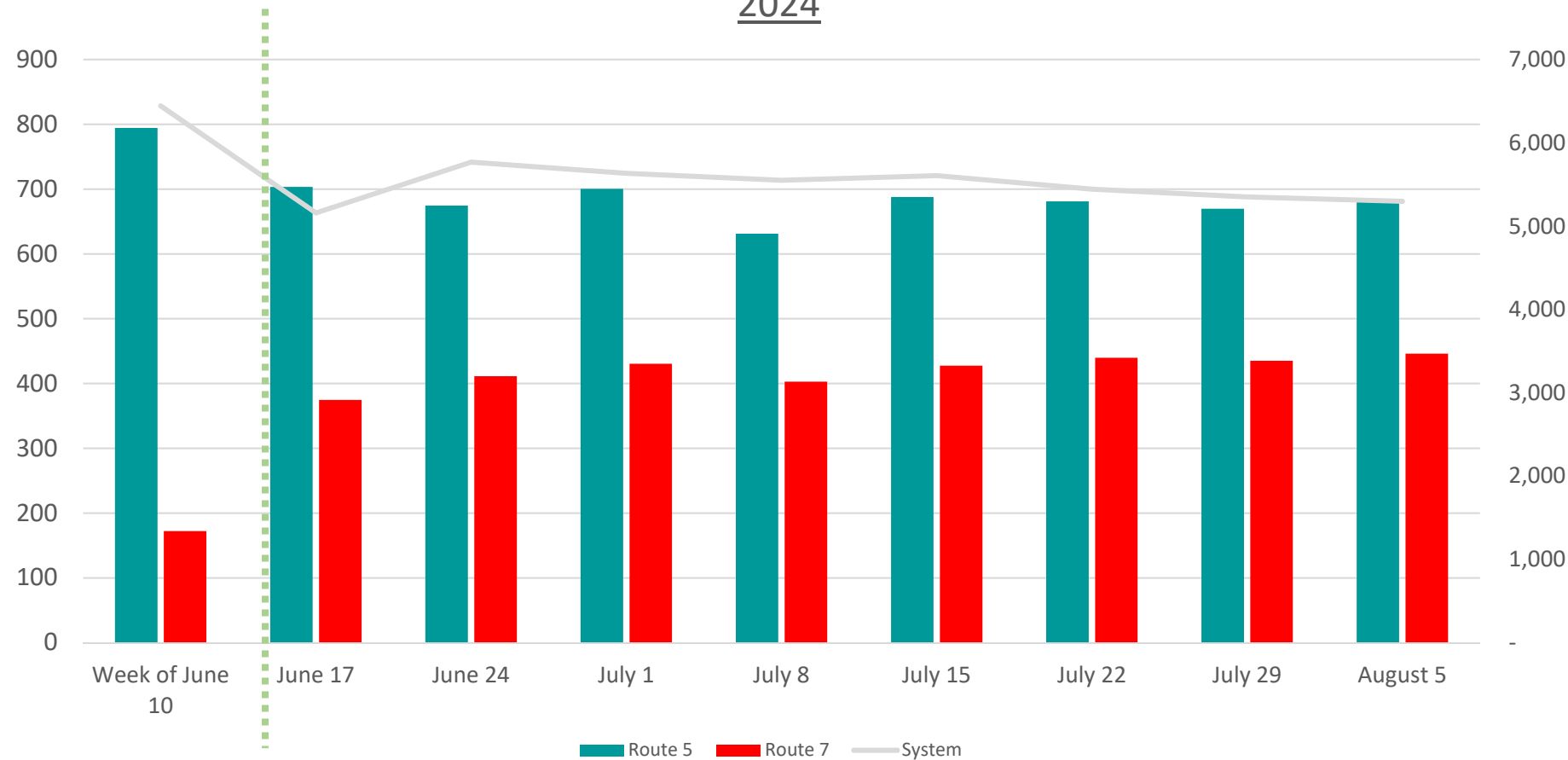
Item 5: Ridership and Project Update

Route 5 and Route 7 Service Change

June 2024 Service Improvements

- Route 7 extension to Jetport via Hutchins Drive/DHHS
- Route 5 runs direct to Mall (no service to Hutchins Drive/Jetport/DHHS)
- Modest drop in Route 5 trips (100-150 trips per week)
- Larger increase in Route 7 trips (200-250 trips per week)

Route 5 and Route 7 Weekly Weekday Average Ridership, June - August 2024



Item 5: Ridership and Project Update

June Service Improvements

Project Update

- Microtransit
 - Tentative launch planned for late October
 - Service name is “Metro Connect”
 - Vehicle purchase being finalized
- Transit Signal Priority
 - Fully deployed
 - Awaiting initial results
 - Anecdotal positive feedback from bus operators
- Website
 - Due to lack of contract agreement with our current website host, Metro is pursuing an alternative



The screenshot shows the Metro website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for RIDER INFORMATION, SERVICES & PROGRAMS, INSIDE METRO, ROUTES AND SCHEDULES, CONTACT US, and HOME. Below the navigation bar is a table titled "Routes and System Status".

Route	Status
SYSTEMWIDE	Normal Service
ROUTES AND SCHEDULES	STATUS -- See Alerts for short-term detours and service interruptions
Route 1	Normal Service
Route 2	Normal Service
Route 3	Normal Service
Route 4	Normal Service
Route 5	Normal Service - Portland/Maine Mall
Route 7	Normal Service - Falmouth, Portland, Jetport/DHHS
Route 8	Normal Service

Below the table is a banner for "More Metro Bus Service to the Portland Jetport" featuring an image of a blue and white Metro bus and an airplane on a tarmac.

Item 6: Route 1 in Munjoy Hill

Ridership Comparison, 2022-2024 (September-May)



Route 1 Ridership Zones

Zone 1 (Thompson's Point, PTC, Mercy, St. John's)

Zone 2 (Congress Street)

Zone 3 (North Street)

Zone 4* (Munjoy Hill/Eastern Prom)

*Ridership changes associated with removal of Atlantic Avenue are expected to be felt mostly within Zone 4

Item 6: Route 1 in Munjoy Hill

Ridership Comparison, 2022-2024 (September-May)

Zone	Boardings (Sept 2022 – May 2023)	Boardings (Sept 2023 – May 2024)	% change
Zone 1 (Umo)	8,826	7,375 (-1,451)	-17%
Zone 2 (Umo)	46,473	63,987 (+17,514)	+37%
Zone 3 (Umo)	1,942	2,610 (+668)	+26%
Zone 4* (Umo)	3,838	4,159 (+321)	+10%
<i>Route 1 total</i>	<i>111,298</i>	<i>123,922 (+12,624)</i>	<i>+11%</i>
<i>Metro Systemwide</i>	<i>1,118,671</i>	<i>1,403,198 (+284,527)</i>	<i>+25%</i>

Route 1 Ridership Zones

Zone 1 (Thompson's Point, PTC, Mercy, St. John's)

Zone 2 (Congress Street)

Zone 3 (North Street)

Zone 4* (Munjoy Hill/Eastern Prom)

**Ridership changes associated with removal of Atlantic Avenue are expected to be felt mostly within Zone 4*

Note: Half-price fares were in effect from March – September 2023

Item 6: Route 1 in Munjoy Hill

On-Time Performance Evaluation

Percent of buses departing timepoints on time*

Month	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.
Before Atlantic St. removal	80.6	90.2	88.4	90.6	92.6	91.6	89.6	88.7	88.8	77.9	79.9	77.2
After Atlantic St. removal	85.7	86.7	91.9	94.2	96.1	94.0	93.8	94.9	89.3	91.1	N/A	N/A

**A bus is considered on time if it departs a timepoint between 0 and 359 seconds (5m 59 sec) after scheduled departure*

- In 9 of the 10 full months since the service change, on-time performance has improved
 - No other service changes have occurred during this time
 - Differences in construction impacts and other outside factors likely affect the data somewhat

Item 6: Route 1 in Munjoy Hill

Discussion and Recommendation

Other factors

- Operability
 - Atlantic Street was difficult to navigate 12 months per year
 - During winter, Atlantic Street service sometimes needed to be skipped due to conditions
 - Uphill grade, two-way traffic, parking on both sides all factors
 - Atlantic Street was one of the narrowest streets in Metro's network
 - Skipping planned stops unexpectedly can result in stranded passengers
- Safety
 - Operating on narrow streets with two-way traffic tends to result in more property damage crashes
 - Atlantic Street is a low-priority street for plowing
- Transit Access
 - While not a front-door stop, the entire area of the removed segment of service is located within a ¼ mile walk of a bus stop

Recommendation

- Metro staff recommends that the changes made to Route 1 in August 2023 be continued
- Staff will remain open to service to the south side of Munjoy Hill in the future