

Ridership Committee

September 20, 2023 | 4:00 – 5:30pm



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/83891311302?pwd=bUpsRk9JU3A2djVhOGZuMUU5UVROQT09>
Webinar ID: 838 9131 1302 | Passcode 950935 |
Phone: (301) 715-8592 | Telephone participants: *9 to raise hand, *6 to unmute

MEETING AGENDA

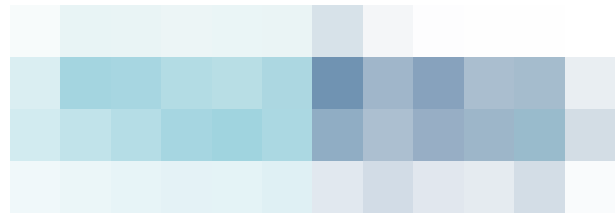
AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER	ACTION or INFORMATION
1. Call Meeting to Order (4:00)	Hope Cahan, Chair	N/A
2. Public Comment (4:00-4:05) The Metro Board's Ridership Committee welcomes public comment for items not listed on this agenda at this time. For items listed on the agenda, the chair will allow members 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 (4:05-4:10) Review and approve the minutes from the August 2023 meeting of the Ridership Committee.	Hope Cahan, Chair	ACTION
4. Ridership and Fare Revenue Update (4:10-4:30) Staff will provide information on ridership, including preliminary data on recent service improvements and the upcoming end of the Fare Deal promotion.	Mike Tremblay, Transit Dev. Director	Information
5. November 2023 and Calendar Year 2024 Service Changes (4:30-4:40) Staff will provide information upcoming planned changes to service in 2023 and 2024.	Mike Tremblay, Transit Dev. Director	Information
6. Metro Route 1 Service on Munjoy Hill (4:40-5:00) Staff will provide a detailed explanation for the reasoning behind the recent change to Metro Route 1 service on Munjoy Hill.	Mike Tremblay, Transit Dev. Director	Information

<p>7. Bus Shelter Prioritization (5:00-5:15) Staff will present a preliminary discussion on how Metro plans and prioritizes bus shelters.</p>	Mike Tremblay, Transit Dev. Director	Information
<p>8. Future Agenda Items (5:15-5:20)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnering with bicycling entities, including Portland’s proposed bicycle sharing program (October 2023) • Bus shelters and bus inventory • Microtransit and Route 7 improvements 	Hope Cahan, Chair	Information
<p>9. Upcoming Meetings (5:20-5:25)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Directors – September 28, 2023 • Finance Committee – September 27, 2023 • Executive Committee – October 11, 2023 • Ridership Committee – October 18, 2023 	Hope Cahan, Chair	Information
<p>10. Adjournment (5:30)</p>	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.

Ridership Committee

August 16, 2023 | 4:00pm -5:30pm



DRAFT

Draft Minutes of the Metro Ridership Committee Meeting Wednesday, August 16 from 4-5:30 PM

Onsite:

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

Committee Members Present: Andrew Zarrow (Vice Chair) Ed Suslovic Pious Ali Bill Rixon Prosper Lohomboli	Non-Committee Board Members present: None
Committee Members Not present Hope Cahan Merrill Barter	Staff and Others Present: Greg Jordan, Executive Director Mike Tremblay, Transit Development Director Glenn Fenton, Chief Transportation Officer Denise Beck, Marketing Manager
	Members of Public: Teresa Cantora, East End resident Marion Killian, East End resident Bobbie Lamont, East End resident

1 Call Meeting to Order Vice Chair Andrew Zarrow called Ridership Committee meeting to order at 4:02 pm

2. Public Comment – No public comments for items outside of the agenda.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes - Ed Suslovic motioned to accept; Seconded by Pious Ali.
Unanimous acceptance by those present

4. Ridership and Fare Revenue Update

Mike Tremblay provided overview of ridership and fare revenue through July 2023, noting that a 12-15% bump in ridership is likely due to the Fare Deal promotion. Ed Suslovic noted that raising fares was a prepandemic decision and asked if we should discuss fare costs again. Greg Jordan said that there is room to talk about Metro's fare policy going forward. The discussion may flow out of the strategic plan; but, fares should be adjusted more frequently, and we need to look at it in the context of how it affects ridership. Mike said a review of fares since the 1970s adjusted to today's costs are fairly consistent. Ed asked what percent of revenue comes from the fare box. Greg said the targeted policy is 25% and we need to do some math to get the current number. The Fare Deal promotion ends September 30. Greg recommended presenting an analysis in November to show the impact, after the campaign ends, on October ridership.

5. August 2023 Service Changes

Mike reviewed service changes planned for August 27, 2023 and showed the map of the Ocean Gateway area where the Huskly Line will extend, with a stop at Hancock and Thames streets. Greg said once funding is approved, Route 2 & 4 will likely also extend to the waterfront, where a mini-transit hub could be located. Once the other routes extend, we will look to another option for the stop instead of Hancock and Thames.

Andrew asked what some of the barriers are to make the transit hub at Ocean Gateway a reality. Greg said we would need to install shelters; but, noted that the real issue is the current use for parking on Thames Street.

Public Comments: Three members of the public commented on the Route 1 service changes on Munjoy Hill:

Marion Killian asked that the committee reconsider the decision to eliminate service (on the 'south side of Munjoy Hill, Fore and Atlantic streets), noting that the route being eliminated is a two-minute loop that has been part of the system going back through the 1970s. She said that there are several multi-family units on the route, including the Portland House, which has 110+ units. She added that eliminating this places a hardship for residents, for the sake of a few minutes. The statute for transit access is to make it safe, comfortable, and convenient and consider the needs of the elderly and disabled. She knew that Metro had held a public meeting about this, but she wasn't able to attend. She added that people who rely on the bus don't own a car and the change would force them to walk up almost a mile to the closest bus stop, cross Congress Street, and then walk all the way back when we return. It's slippery on inclement weather and major construction on Fore Street will make it very difficult for people in the area to go downtown. "I appreciate the bus system and use it to go to the doctor, the mall, all over the place. You should be really proud of your bus drivers."

Bobbie Lamont – "I love taking the bus. I'm originally from NYC where the culture is to take the bus. Portland is growing, and we have the opportunity to change the culture and have more people take the bus. There is a safety concern for pedestrians on the Eastern Prom where the bus would turn back on Congress St."

Teresa Contara said that the goal of the Metro is to have more people take the bus. This change goes against that goal, noting that this is a highly dense area with multi-unit houses. "I would like the loop to stay. Walking up the hills is horrible. We talked to Bruce Ward and said that the bus use to go down Munjoy and not Atlantic St. He said Munjoy would be better; it's an easier turn. Leave the loop. Drivers are excellent, courteous, kind, and fun."

Greg thanked the three members of the public who spoke and said that this change is one of many coming region wide that started with a study of all routes (Transit Together). That phase of the study had public involvement which led a series of recommendations to streamline some of the routes and operate faster for riders. He said he is open to evaluating the impact on the change of service and review in six months.

Mike said a goal of Transit Together is to make service faster. Atlantic Street is very challenging in the winter so we often have to detour off of Atlantic. Keeping routes on major streets is what we try to do. The times do add up, especially when we have slow downs. It's always a balance of coverage vs speed.

He added that four stops will be eliminated and the new stop will be at Congress and Emerson. We look at the coverage area as being ¼ mile to be transit accessible.

6. Fare Policy Update

Mike presented information on a TenRide pass option, planned for an October 1 rollout. Ed moved to accept the recommendation; Pious seconded. Glenn said that staff met with BSOOB Transit and Sopo bus and Chad and Donna support the policy. South Portland will need approvals. The Oct 1 date is contingent on the three agencies rolling this out. No public comment. Vote was unanimous of all present.

7. Proterra Update

Glenn reported that Proterra, the vendor for Metro's two electric buses, filed chapter 11 bankruptcy, which allows them to continue business. Part supplies are being evaluated, noting that the main exposure is getting the parts we need. Proterra reps have said that warranty issues will be followed. The good news is that this is two buses and we are not overly invested with this company. Andrew asked staff to update the committee if there's any change of status and suggested including this topic in future agendas.

Additional comments included:

Pious Ali asked about extending hours for people who work in the service industry. Greg said that Mike is looking at micro-transit as an option for late night.

Andrew asked about reviewing and improving bus stops. Greg said that is on Mike's workplan.

8. Future Agenda Items

- Fare Deal ending and TenRide pass
- Rock Row Transit Service Development
- Proposed UNE Medical Center (2022)
- Partnering with bicycle entities, including Portland's proposed bicycle sharing program.

9. Upcoming Meetings

- Board of Directors – August 24, 2023
Next week meeting at GPCOG. Second step of Strategic Planning
- Finance Committee – September 6, 2023
- Executive Committee – September 13, 2023
- Ridership Committee – September 13, 2023

9. Adjournment

Ed motioned to adjourn. Pious seconded.

Unanimous decision to adjournment at 5:28 pm



RIDERSHIP COMMITTEE

AGENDA ITEM 4

DATE

September 15, 2023

SUBJECT

Ridership and Fare Revenue Update

PURPOSE

Staff updating the committee on ridership trends, including data on the ongoing Fare Deal promotion

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Ridership continues to be strong in August and September 2023. August ridership was the highest of any month since January 2020, with a recovery rate of 91% compared to August 2019. September ridership has been extremely strong, as expected, and recovery is expected to be in the range of 85-90% compared to September 2019.

September 2023 marks the end of the Fare Deal promotion. Full priced fares will return on October 1, 2023.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information and discussion.

CONTACT

Mike Tremblay
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mtremblay@gpmetro.org

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Ridership committee slide deck



RIDERSHIP COMMITTEE

AGENDA ITEM 5

DATE

September 15, 2023

SUBJECT

November 2023 and Calendar Year 2024 Planned Service Changes

PURPOSE

Staff updating the committee on planned changes to service for the next 15 months.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Metro continues to adjust schedules in order to optimize on-time performance and passenger experience. The service changes introduced in August 2023 will be analyzed using on-time performance data, operator and passenger feedback, and ridership data to tweak service in November. Service changes will likely include:

- Adjustment to Husky Line to improve on-time performance, likely increasing overall revenue hours slightly
- Service changes to Route 3 and Route 5 to improve on-time performance and passenger experience. Ending some trips at Westbrook Community Center has caused some confusion. Metro will evaluate options and may make changes that result in reduced frequency on Route 3. In this case, Metro would conduct a public process to inform the community of this change. Ultimately, Metro's goal is to restore 30-minute weekday service to Route 3.
- Minor adjustment to Route 9A to allow for an additional trip to Casco Bay High School on school days.

FISCAL IMPACT

None; any additional hours added to Husky Line will be allocated to American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) balance.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information and discussion.

CONTACT

Mike Tremblay
Director of Transit Development
(207) 517-3023
mtremblay@gpmetro.org



RIDERSHIP COMMITTEE

AGENDA ITEM 6

DATE

September 15, 2023

SUBJECT

Metro Route 1 Service Changes on Munjoy Hill

PURPOSE

Staff providing a detailed explanation of recent service changes on Munjoy Hill

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

On August 27, 2023, Metro enacted a service change on Munjoy Hill that discontinued service along the southern portion of Eastern Promenade and Atlantic Street, instead turning directly from Eastern Promenade onto Congress Street. The full decision process and explanation are detailed in Attachment A and at <https://www.gpmetro.org/1657/Route-1-service-on-Munjoy-Hill>.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

RECOMMENDATION

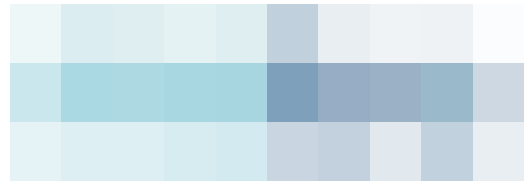
This item is for information and discussion.

CONTACT

Mike Tremblay
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(207) 517-3023
mtremblay@gpmetro.org

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment A: Ridership Committee Slides



RIDERSHIP COMMITTEE

AGENDA ITEM 7

DATE

September 15, 2023

SUBJECT

Bus Shelter Prioritization

PURPOSE

Staff providing a detailed explanation the decision process for providing bus shelters to a given site

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Metro currently deploys over 50 bus shelters across our service area. Requests for new shelters are often made by constituents and stakeholders. The determination as to where to place a shelter includes available space, ridership, significance as a transfer point, and other factors.

Metro is planning to inventory all of our bus stops in 2024 to determine where improvements should be prioritized. This inventory will give Metro an idea of where space may be available, where ADA improvements will be required, etc. It will also allow Metro to prioritize placement of other amenities, such as real-time arrival information and benches.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information and discussion.

CONTACT

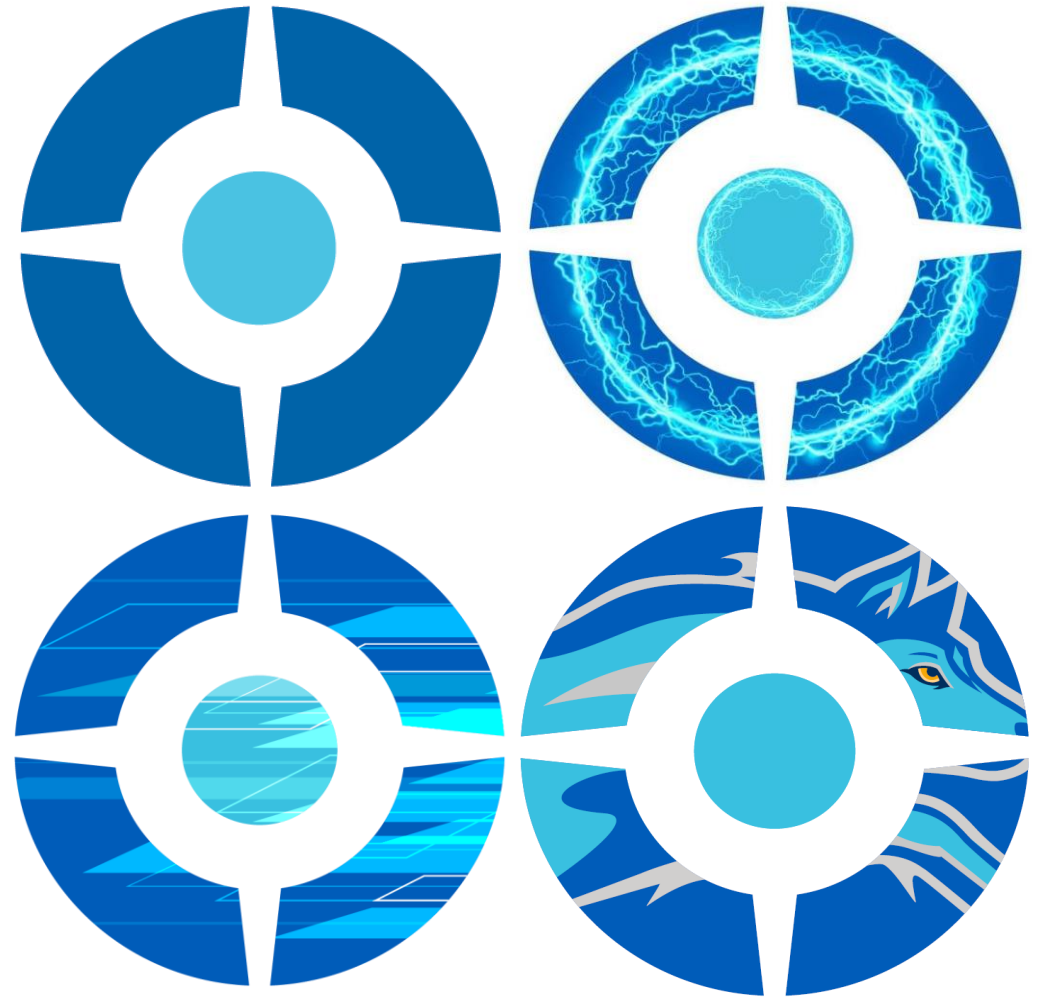
Mike Tremblay
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ATTACHMENT:

Attachment A: Ridership Committee Slides

GREATER PORTLAND METRO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

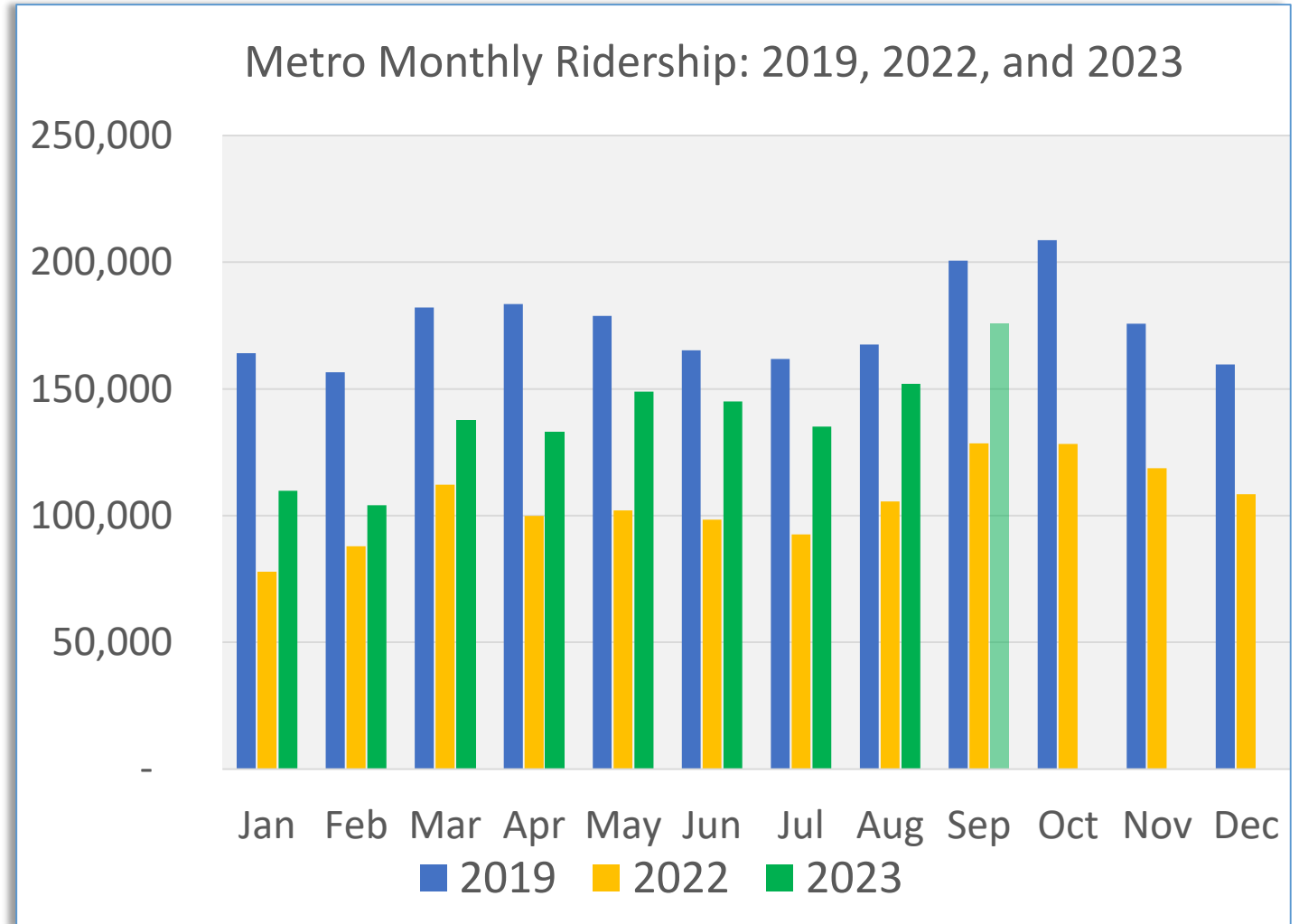
Ridership Committee
September 20, 2023



Item 4 – Ridership Update

Ridership Update

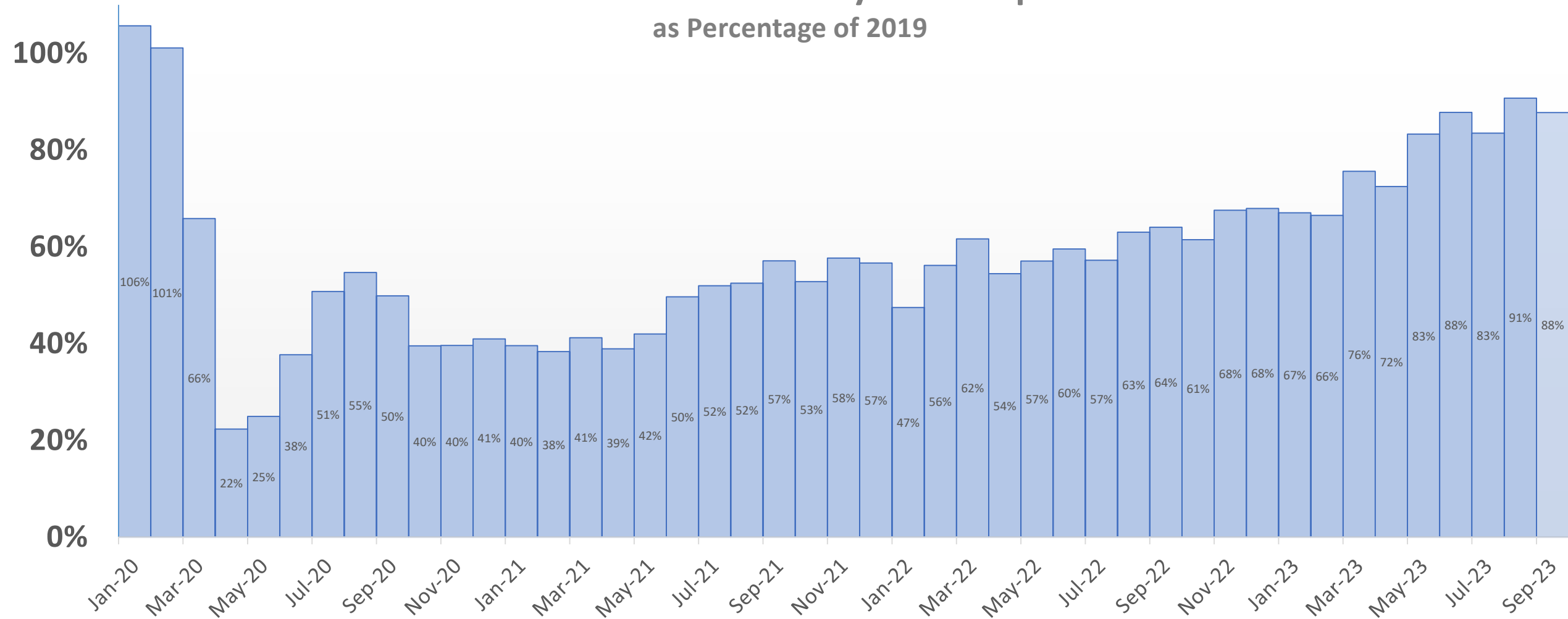
- August saw highest ridership since February 2020
 - +44% YOY, 91% recovery rate
 - 152,000+ rides
- September ridership extremely strong
 - On pace for 175,000+ rides, 88% recovery rate
 - Final month of Fare Deal



Item 4 – Ridership Update

Ridership Update

2020-2023 Monthly Ridership
as Percentage of 2019



Item 4 – Ridership Update

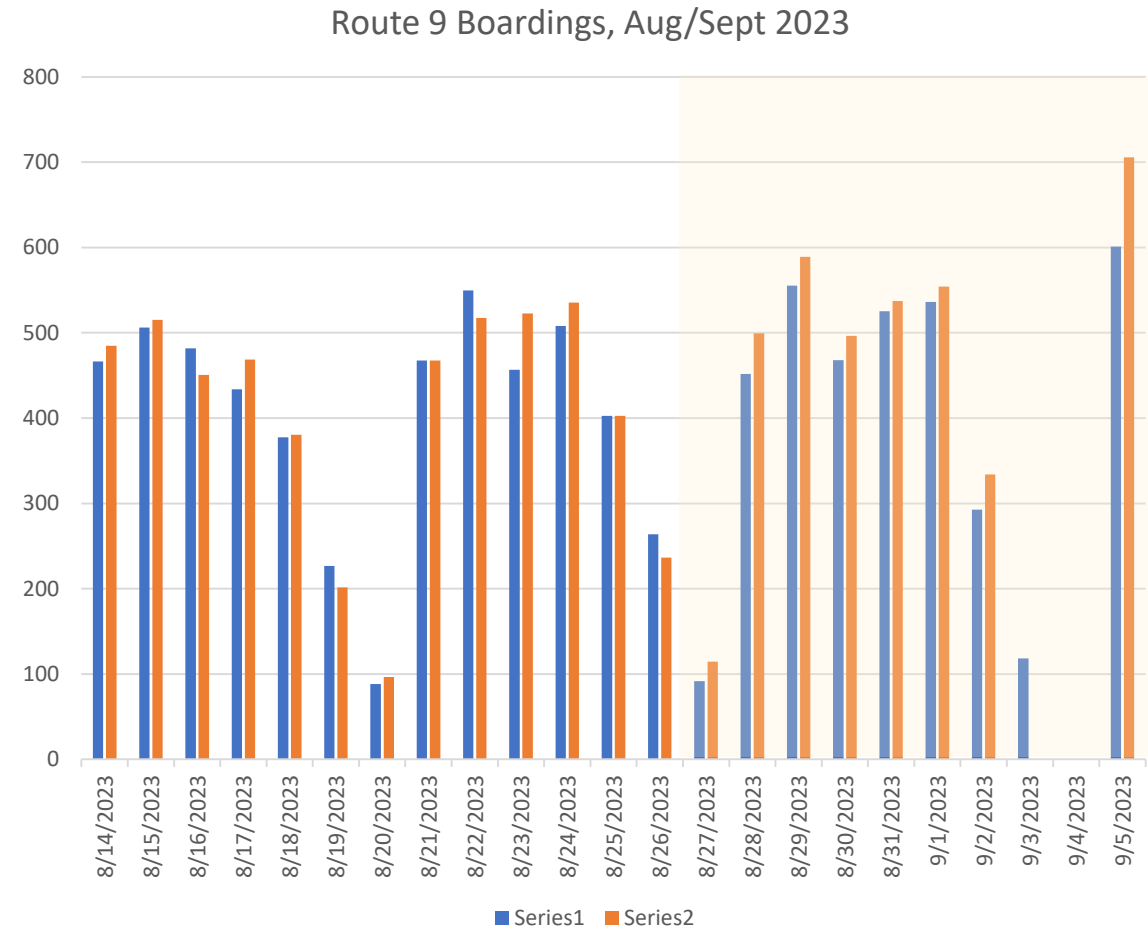
ARPA/Transit Together Improvements

- August Service Improvements

- Initial data shows moderate ridership improvements
- Route 9
 - Immediate +8% increase in weekday ridership
 - Immediate +25% increase in Saturday ridership

- Husky Line

- Boardings at new stops make up about 12% of non-USM Husky Line boardings



Item 4 – August Ridership

Fare Deal Ending

- Fare Deal ends 9/30/2023
- Marketing push underway
- Media, social media, hang tags on buses, outreach to community groups



GREATER PORTLAND
metro

Return to Full Fares
Effective October 1, 2023

يبدأ في 1 أكتوبر
تغيير سعر

Changement de tarif
Commence le 1er octobre

Alteração do preço da passagem
Começa em 1º de outubro

Isbeddelka qiimaha
Waxay bilaabmaysaa Oktoobar 1

Cambio de tarifa
el 1 de octubre

Local Service

Full Fare	\$2.00
Reduced Fare	\$1.00

Local Service
Falmouth, Portland, South Portland,
and Westbrook.

BREEZ Express Service

Full Fare	\$4.00
Reduced Fare	\$2.00

Express Service
Brunswick, Freeport, and Yarmouth



gpmetro.org/fares



Return to Regular Fares

Effective October 1, 2023

Metro, BSOOB Transit, and South Portland Bus Service

Local Fares

Full Fare:	\$2.00
Reduced Fare	\$1.00

Express Fares

Full Fare:	\$4.00
Reduced Fare	\$2.00

GREATER PORTLAND metro
gpmetro.org/fares

Transit
Biddeford | Saco | Old Orchard Beach
bsoobtransit.org

CITY OF SOUTH PORTLAND Bus Service
southportland.org

More Info and FAQs -- Dirigopass.org

Item 6 – Route 1 Service on Munjoy Hill

August 2023 Route Adjustment

- Route 1 service on south side of Munjoy Hill discontinued on August 27
 - Recommended as part of Transit Together changes
 - Public process on broad route changes in 2022
 - Public process on specific changes conducted in May 2023
 - Public meeting at Portland Public Library on May 17
 - Virtual public meeting via Zoom on May 18
 - Also discussed at Westbrook public meeting on May 9



Item 6 – Route 1 Service on Munjoy Hill

August 2023 Route Adjustment

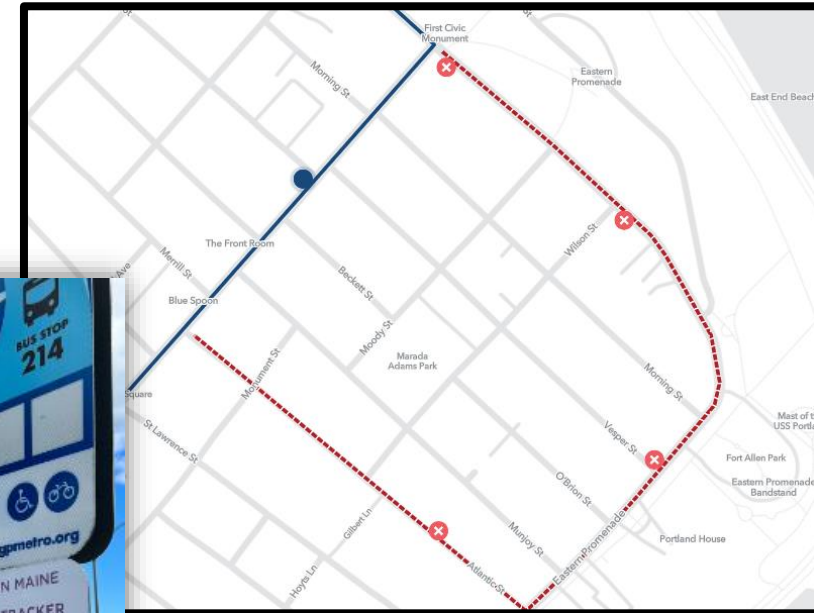
- Decision Factors

- Operations

- Especially in winter, Atlantic St. can be too narrow for safe travel
 - Delivery vehicles block traveled lanes occasionally
 - Atlantic St. is very narrow – 32 feet wide, with parking on both sides – effectively a 16-foot 2-way traveled way

- Availability of nearby service

- The entire area of discontinued service is within a ¼ mile walk of a bus stop
 - Concern about topography and condition of brick sidewalks has been raised



Item 6 – Route 1 Service on Munjoy Hill

August 2023 Route Adjustment

- Decision Factors

- Operations

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Item 6 – Route 1 Service on Munjoy Hill

August 2023 Route Adjustment

- Decision Factors

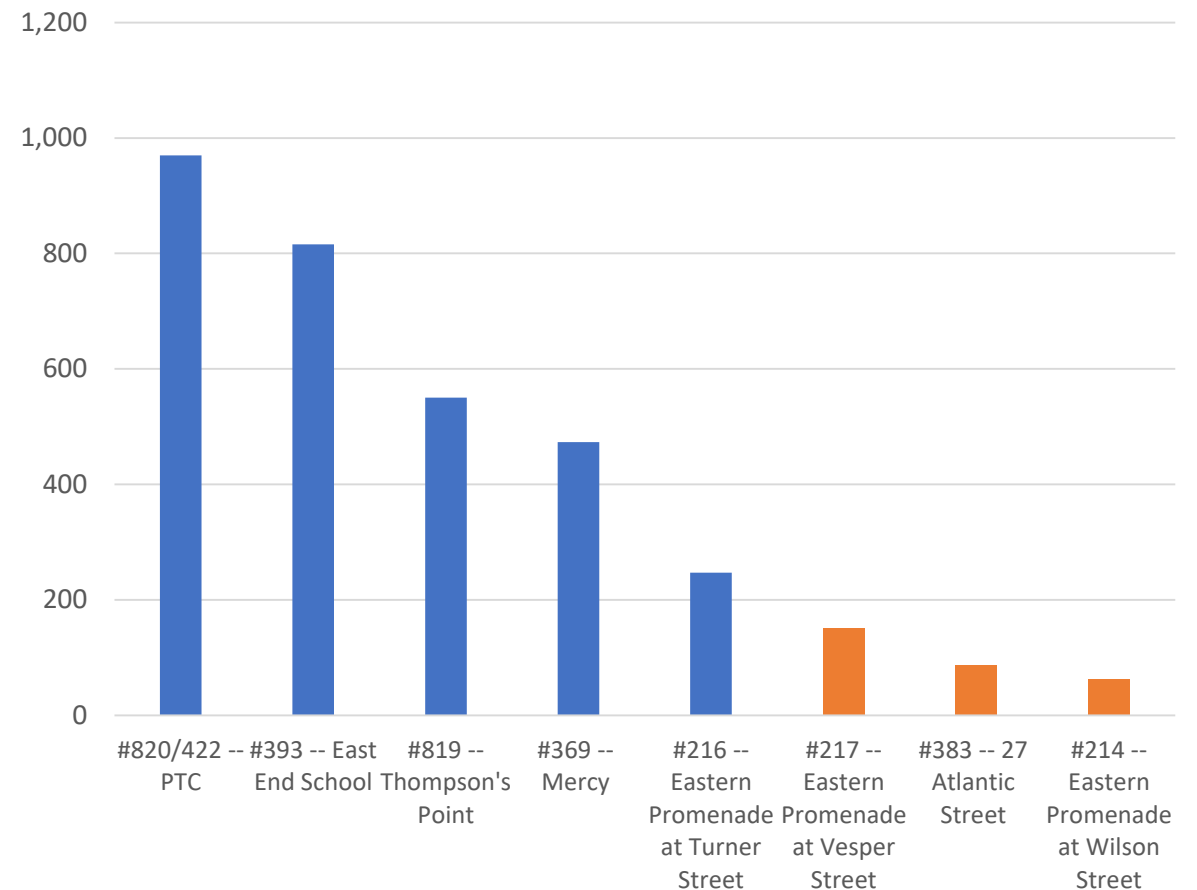
- Ridership

- Ridership in the discontinued area was lowest of the entire route
 - Stops typically generated between 3-7 total trips (ons + offs) per day across 34 total round trips

- Next Steps

- Evaluate ridership and on-time performance of new alignment
 - Meet with affected neighbors in early 2024

Ridership (ons + offs), March 2023 weekdays



Item 7 – Bus Shelter Prioritization

Preliminary Discussion

Metro Bus Shelters

- Metro deploys 52 shelters
 - 6 additional shelters not owned by Metro
 - 8 are “Creative Shelters” in partnership with Creative Portland
- Plans to deploy 4 more in 2023-2024
 - 3 locations in Yarmouth
 - Trinity Park in Portland
 - Harbor Terrace in Portland (c. 2025?)
- In March 2023, about 31% of Metro trips boarded at a stop with a shelter

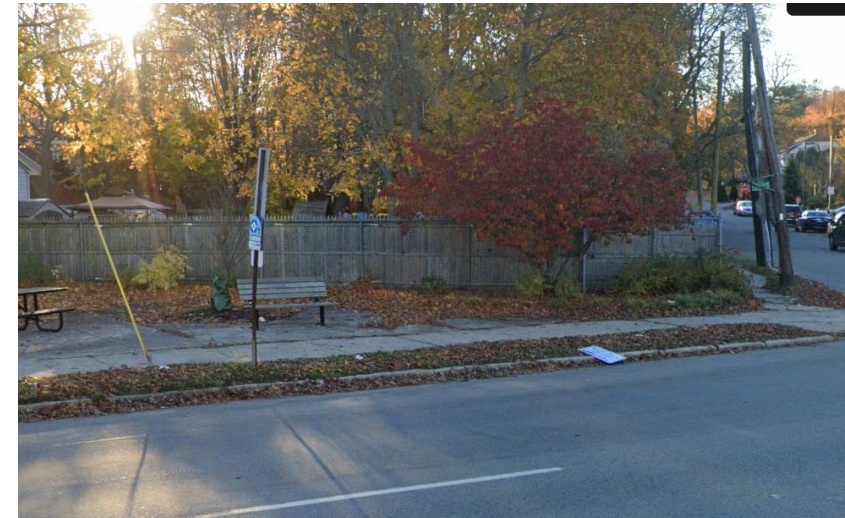


Item 7 – Bus Shelter Prioritization

Preliminary Discussion

Bus Shelter Considerations

- Available space in or behind the ROW
 - Space behind the ROW needs license agreement with property owner
- Boardings
 - Most transit agencies consider 25 to 50 boardings per day “justifies” a shelter
- Customers with limited mobility
- Transfer locations
- Regional equity



Item 7 – Bus Shelter Prioritization

Preliminary Discussion

Bus Stop Inventory and Design Guidance – 2024 Project

- Inventory the entire system for input into a GIS database
- Assess ridership, available ROW, sidewalk material, etc. to prioritize areas for improvements and amenities
 - Shelters
 - Benches
 - Real-time information
- Continually update database as locations are improved or affected by development

