

Town of Cranberry Isles Commuter Ferry

The Town of Cranberry Isles Commuter Ferry provides ferry service between Great Cranberry Isles, Little Cranberry Island, and Northeast Harbor.

Service Description and Fares

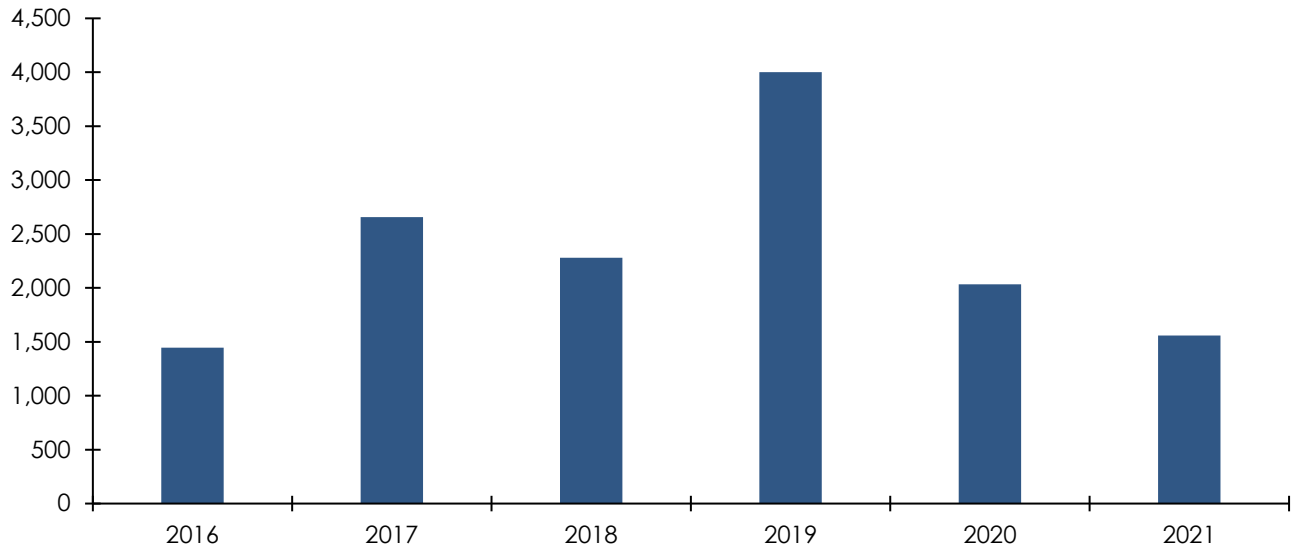
The Town of Cranberry Isles Commuter Ferry is one of three ferry services providing transportation from the unbridged locations of Great Cranberry Island and Islesford (Little Cranberry Island) to Mt. Desert Island, which is connected by bridge to the mainland. Supplementing the Beal & Bunker Mailboat and Cranberry Cove Ferry services, the Town of Cranberry Isles Commuter Ferry operates on weekdays and consists of one directional run during the summer months, and two directional runs during the off-season. One-way fares are \$13.00 per person.

Beal & Bunker is also the current contracted boat service for the summer commuter ferry. This includes subsidized early morning commuter trips that fall outside the regular ferry service. The Beal & Bunker contract is for 3 years, starting in May 2023 and running through September 2025. Downeast Windjammers operates the winter commuter ferry service; the 3-year contract runs through the 2025/2026 season.

Ridership

Total ridership for 2016 through 2021 is shown in Figure 1. Ridership varied within a range of just under 1,500 in 2016 to a high of 4,000 in 2019. Through 2021, annual ridership decreased back to approximately 1,500.

Figure 1 Town of Cranberry Isles Commuter Ferry Annual Unlinked Trips (2016–2021)



Modal Operating Characteristics

Revenue miles and revenue hours are shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3. From 2016 through 2019, revenue miles rose from approximately 1,700 to 3,500, before dropping to approximately 2,200 through 2021. Revenue hours peaked at just under 500 in 2019, before declining to 369 through 2021.

Figure 2 Town of Cranberry Isles Commuter Ferry Revenue Miles (2016–2021)

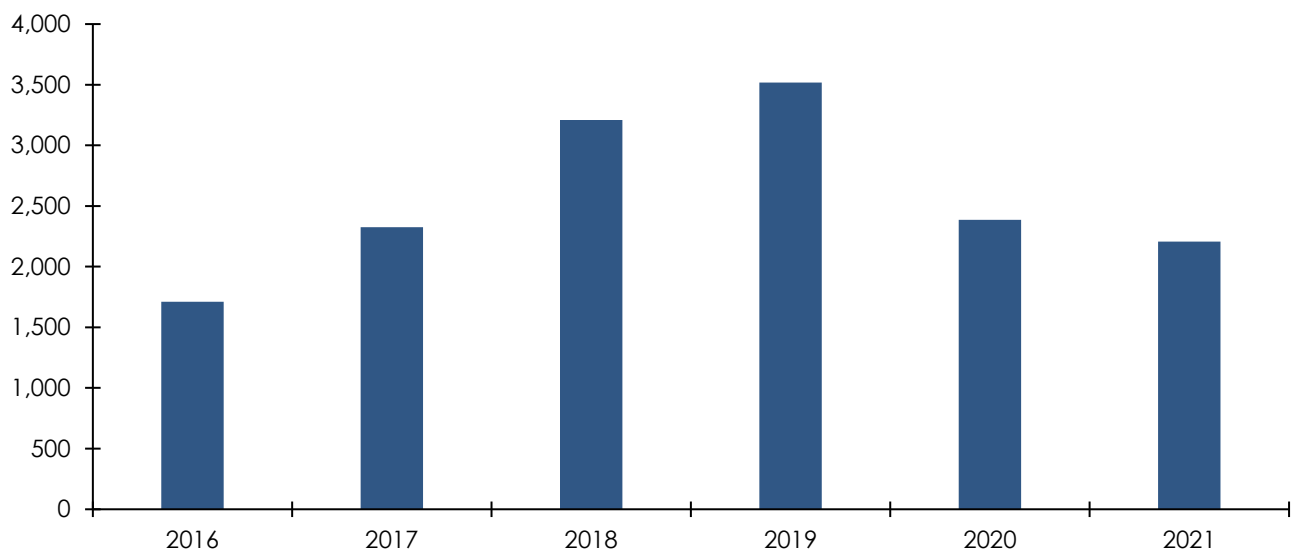
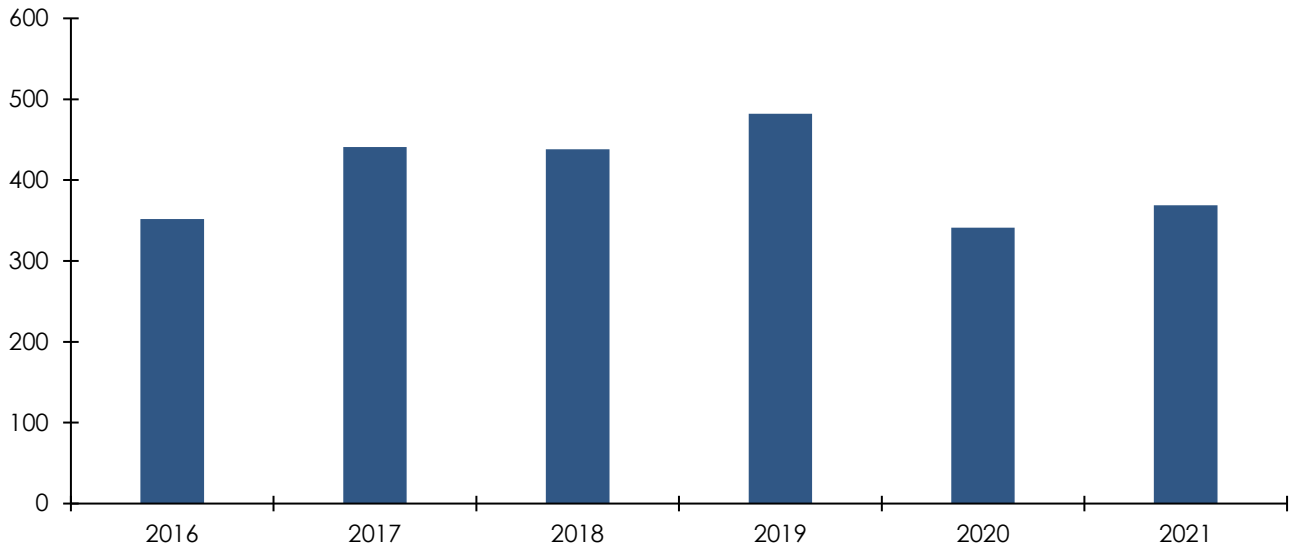


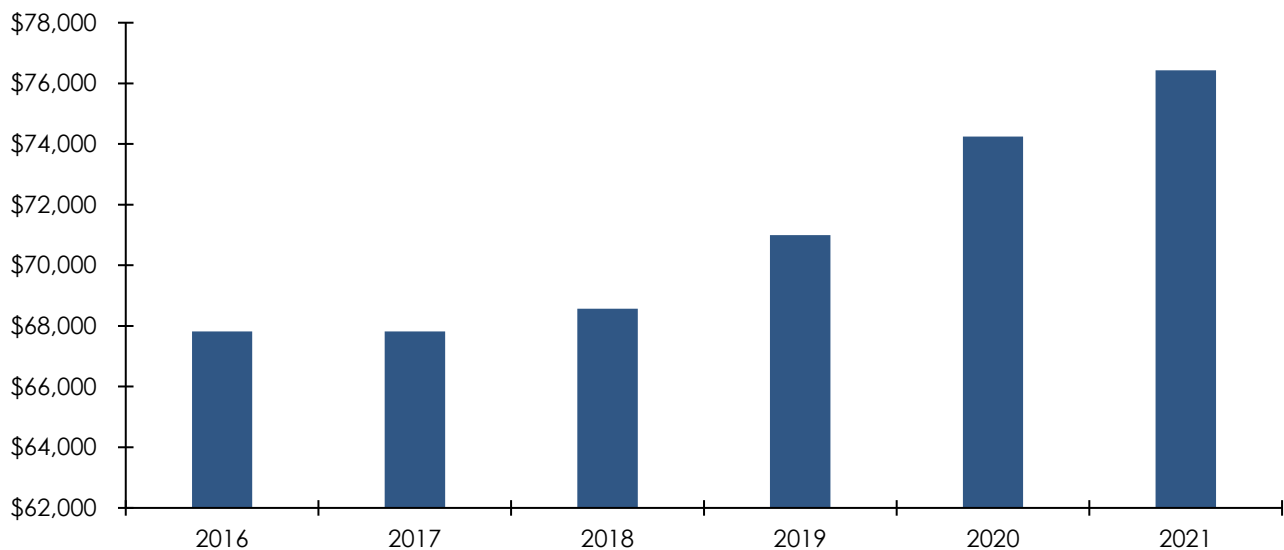
Figure 3 Town of Cranberry Isles Commuter Ferry Revenue Hours (2016–2021)



Budget Metrics

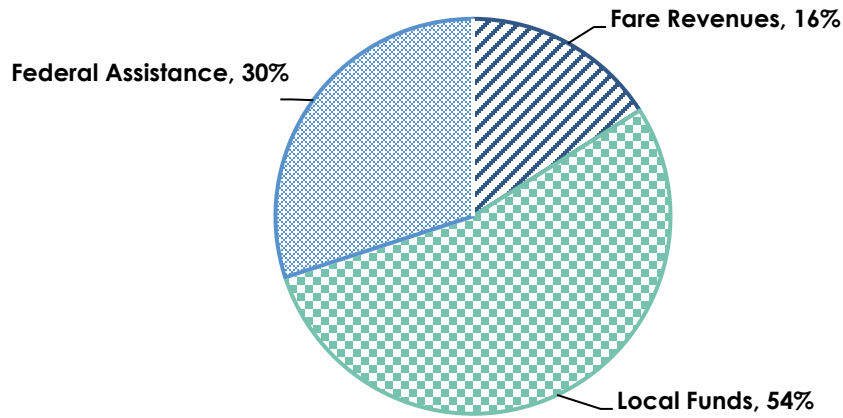
Annual operating expenses for 2016 through 2021 are shown in Figure 4 below. From 2016 through 2021, operating expenses rose from approximately \$68,000 to \$76,000.

Figure 4 Town of Cranberry Isles Commuter Ferry Operating Expenses (2016–2021)



The breakdown of operating expense funding sources for 2020 is shown in Figure 5. In 2020, local funds accounted for 54 percent of operating expense funding. Remaining funding was comprised of federal assistance (30 percent) and fare revenues (16 percent).

Figure 5 Town of Cranberry Isles Commuter Ferry Operating Funding Sources (2020)



Service efficiency metrics are shown in Figure 6 and Figure 7. From 2016 through 2019, vehicle revenue mile operating expenses dropped from approximately \$40.00 to \$20.00, before increasing to \$35.00 through 2021. Following a low of just under \$150 in 2019, vehicle revenue hour operating expenses increased to over \$200 in 2020 and 2021.

Figure 6 Town of Cranberry Isles Commuter Ferry Operating Expenses per Vehicle Revenue Mile (2016–2021)

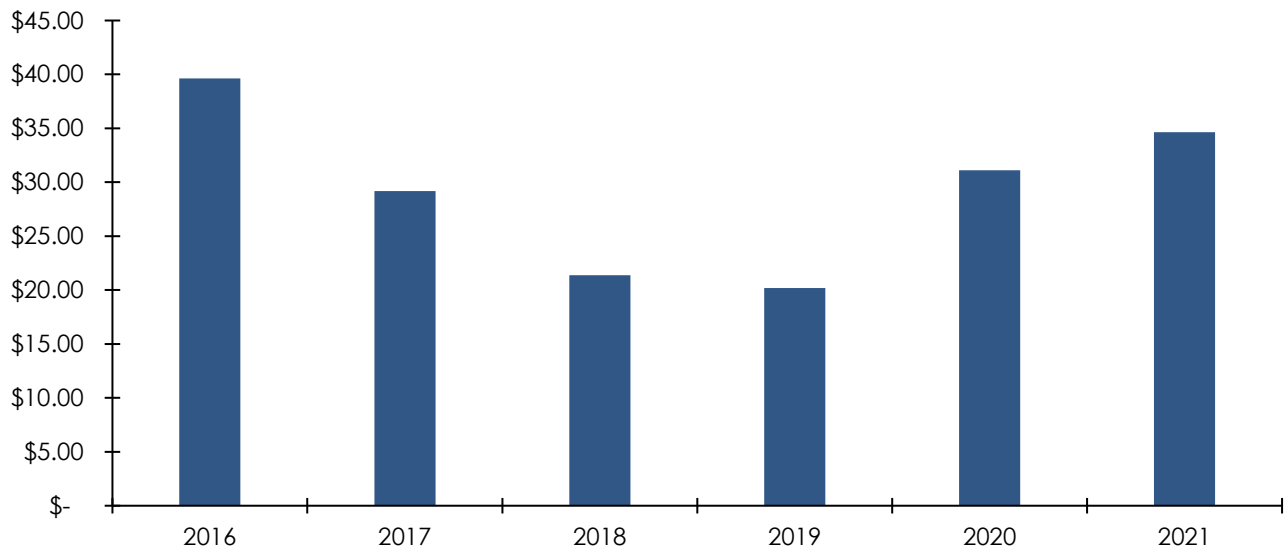
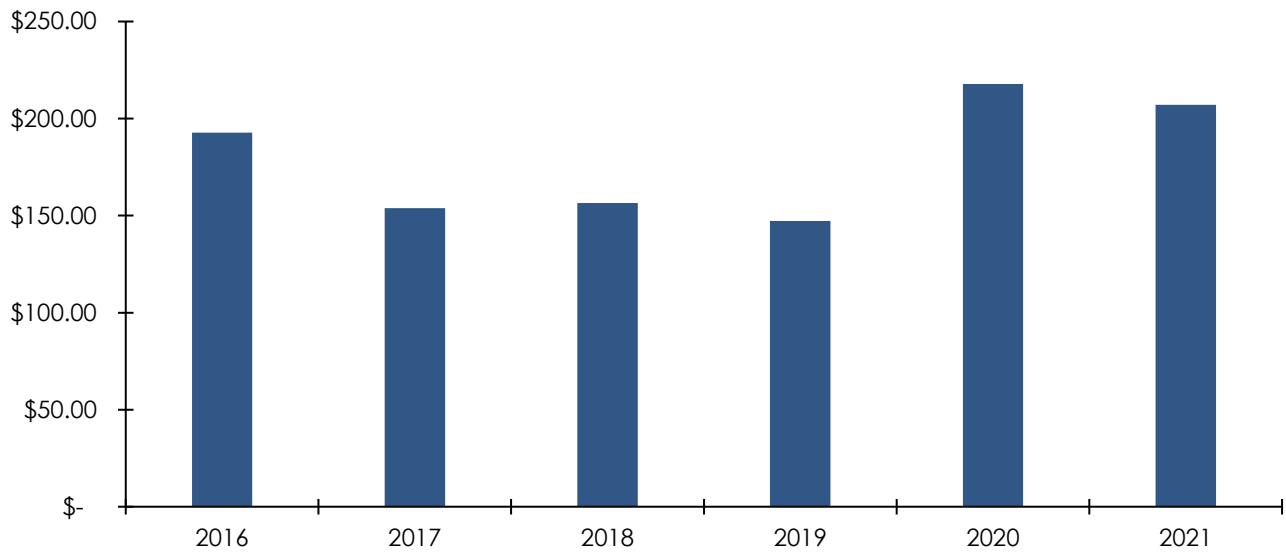
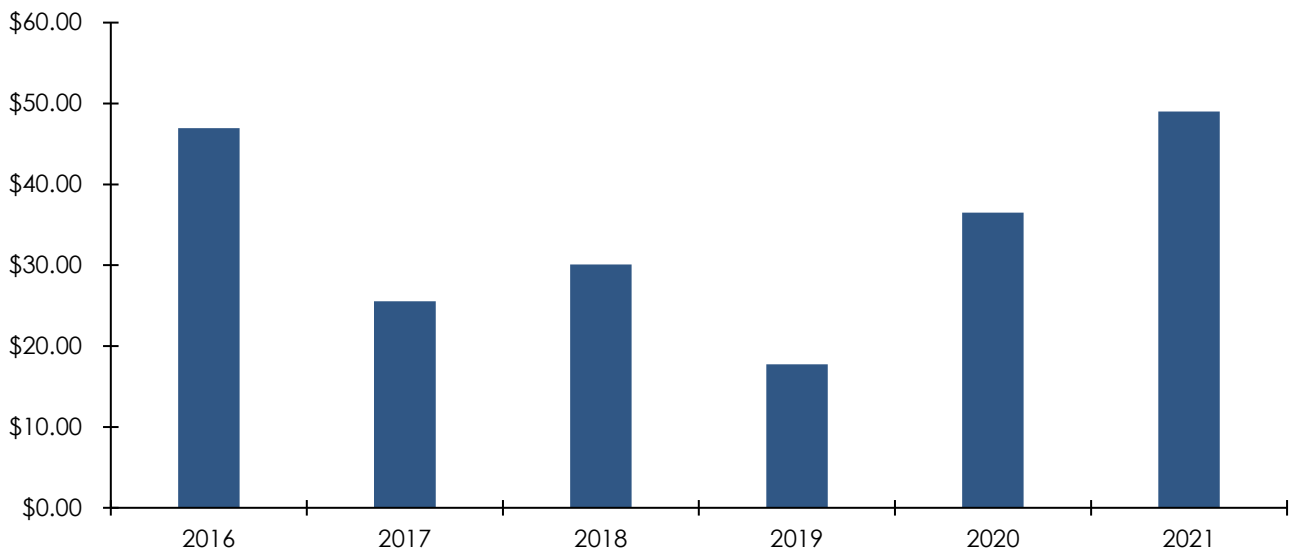


Figure 7 Town of Cranberry Isles Commuter Ferry Operating Expenses per Vehicle Revenue Hour (2016–2021)



Operating expenses per unlinked passenger trip are shown in Figure 8. Per passenger operating expenses fluctuated between 2016 and 2021. From a low of under \$18.00 in 2019, per passenger operating expenses rose to approximately \$49.00 through 2021.

Figure 8 Town of Cranberry Isles Commuter Ferry Operating Expenses per Unlinked Passenger Trip (2016–2021)



Organizational Management Structure

The Town of Cranberry Isles contracts the commuter ferry service that is operated by private independent boat operators. These contracts are awarded for a length of three years. The commuter service contract is overseen and managed by the Cranberry Isles Selectboard and delegated to the Town's Administrative Assistant and Town Clerk. Responsibility for the day-to-day operation is conducted by the contractor/owner of the boats. Town staff manage the administrative aspects between the Maine Department of Transportation and the Town of Cranberry Isles.

Asset Management

The Town of Cranberry Isles does not have a specific formal asset management plan related to the commuter ferry itself. The contractor for the service is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the boat according to contractual obligations set by the Town and Maine Department of Transportation.

The Town of Cranberry Isles owns and maintains the municipal docks, piers, floats, and gangways located within the Town of Cranberry Isles from which the ferry operates as part of the Town's overall infrastructure. Maintenance is done annually and as needed to maintain this infrastructure. The maintenance and management of the water access infrastructure owned by the Town is conducted through the Town's annual budgeting process and fees charged to users of such public facilities located within and owned by the municipality. The mainland dock facility is located within and owned by another municipality. The Town of Cranberry Isles does not manage or maintain that facility.