

State of Transit – Region 6

June 12th 2024 PTAC Meeting

Public Transit Advisory Council



Region 6 – Cumberland County

- Cumberland County transit service providers include:
 - Biddeford Saco Old Orchard Beach Transit (BSOOB Transit)
 - Casco Bay Lines (CBL)
 - Greater Portland Metro (Metro)
 - Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA)
 - Regional Transportation Program (RTP)
 - South Portland Bus Service (SPBS)





BSOOB Transit - Region 6

- BSOOB Transit operates two fixed routes and one summer seasonal trolley in Cumberland Co.
 - #60 – Saco – Portland / Green
 - Connects Saco – OOB – Scarborough – SoPo - Portland
 - #70 – Zoom Express
 - Commuter based service from P&R locations
 - #81 – OOB / Pine Point
 - Seasonal trolley service





BSOOB Transit – Region 6

- Funding

- #60 – 5311(f) Intercity funding \$399,510 + 50% local match
 - Was 100% funded pre-2024 via in-kind match (Greyhound)
- #70 – 5311 – Rural \$137,000 + 50% local match
 - Had Maine Turnpike support until 2021. Funding dissolved due to unknown reasons
- #81 – 5307 – Urban + 50% local match

- Ridership

- #60 – 56,403, May'23-May'24
- #70 – 16,996, May'23-May'24
- #81 – 36,654, Summer 2023





CBL – Region 6

- Given different service structure / service design, CBL will be given an opportunity to present individually in the summer of 2024
- NTD Data (2022):
 - Ridership - 997,335 UPT
 - Sources of OpEx:
 - Directly Generated - \$5,134,712
 - Fed - \$2,591,543
 - Local / State - \$1,590
 - Sources of CapEx:
 - Direct - \$581,765
 - Fed - \$9,204,554
 - Local / State - \$2,367,992





Metro – Region 6

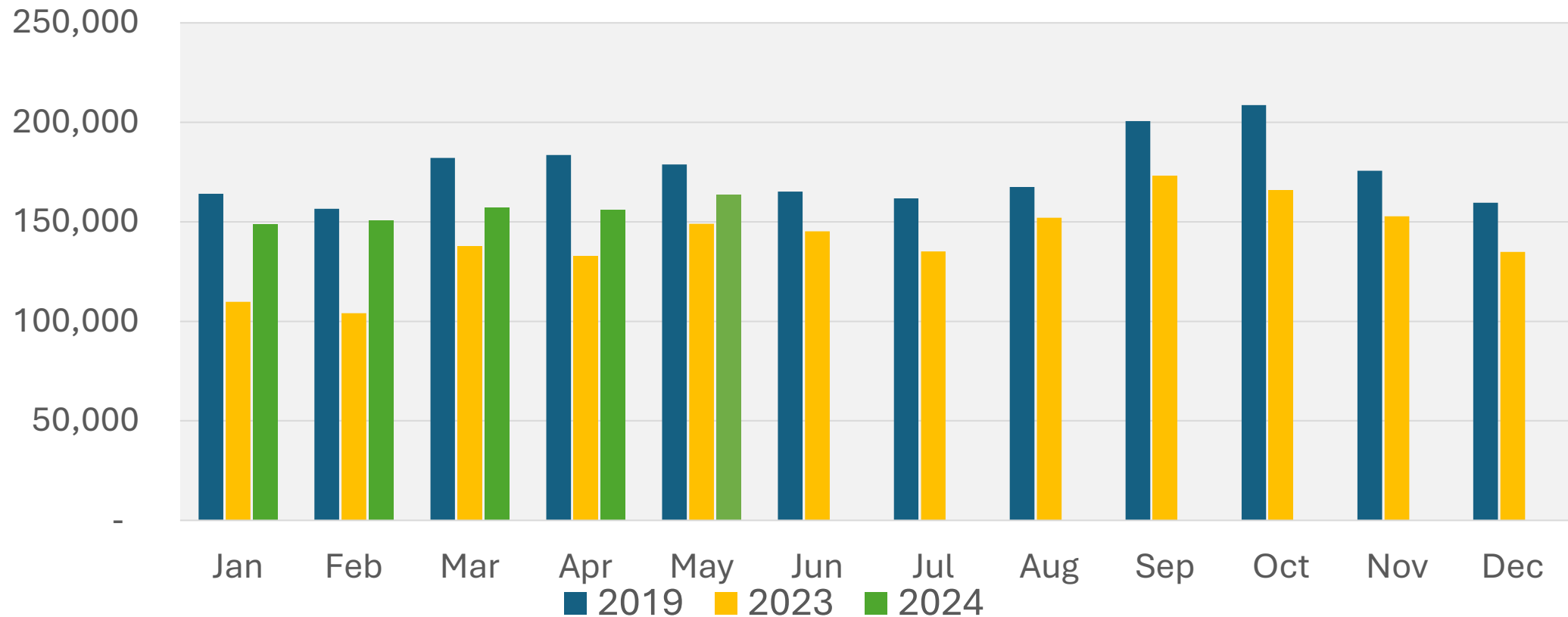
- Largest transit system in Maine by ridership and revenue hours
- Seven member communities
 - Portland, Westbrook, Falmouth, Gorham, Brunswick, Freeport, and Yarmouth
 - Also serves South Portland
- 10 routes
 - 9 local, 1 express
- 44 buses (including two battery electric)
- 115 employees
- Unified fare payment system “DiriGo Pass”
 - Joined with Biddeford Saco Old Orchard Beach Transit and City of South Portland
 - Free transfers between routes & agencies; fare capping
- Institutional pass programs
 - Maine Health, Portland Public Schools, UMaine Law/USM, Roux Institute, more
- 2,100,000 rides (2019); full ridership recovery expected in 2025





Metro – Region 6

Metro Monthly Ridership: 2019, 2023, and 2024





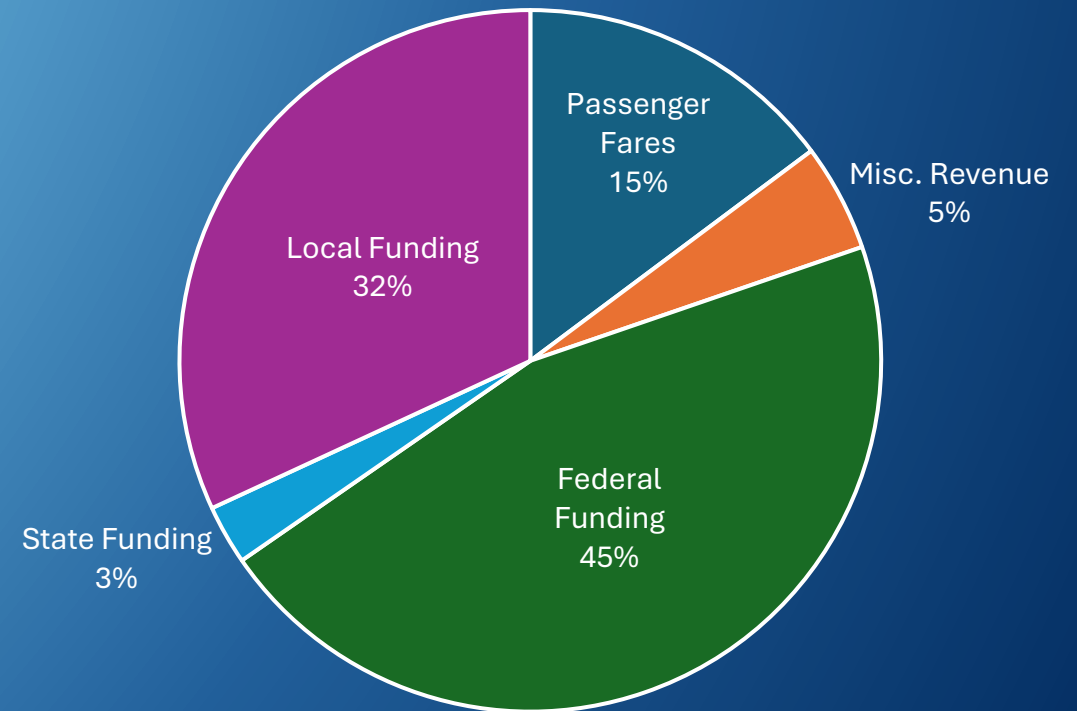
Metro – Region 6

Challenges to Sustainable Service and Growth

Funding Existing Service

- Federal funding has not increased enough to cover rising costs of operation
- State funding set to increase, but is still small compared to our budget
- Municipal budgets especially sensitive to increases
- Ridership and fare recovery still lagging behind 2019 pre-COVID benchmark

2023 GP Metro Funding Summary





Metro – Region 6

Challenges to Sustainable Service and Growth Capital Funding and Infrastructure

- Metro's 50-bus facility is near capacity; set to be replaced by 2030
 - Metro has reached out to MaineDOT for funding assistance related to new facility
- Zero Emission Vehicles
 - Metro committed to emission-free service by 2040
 - Costs of Battery Electric buses are significantly higher than diesel (approx. 100% higher)
 - Electric vehicle vendors more limited
 - Reliability of existing BEB's has been sub-par
 - Long-term battery range has yet to be determined
 - Shorter range may strain Metro's ability to maintain federal maximum spare ratio of 20%
- Other Capital Projects
 - Higher operating costs strains Metro's ability to collect local match for construction and other capital purchases
 - Shelters, benches real-time information, transit signal priority, facility upgrades, bus stop accessibility improvements

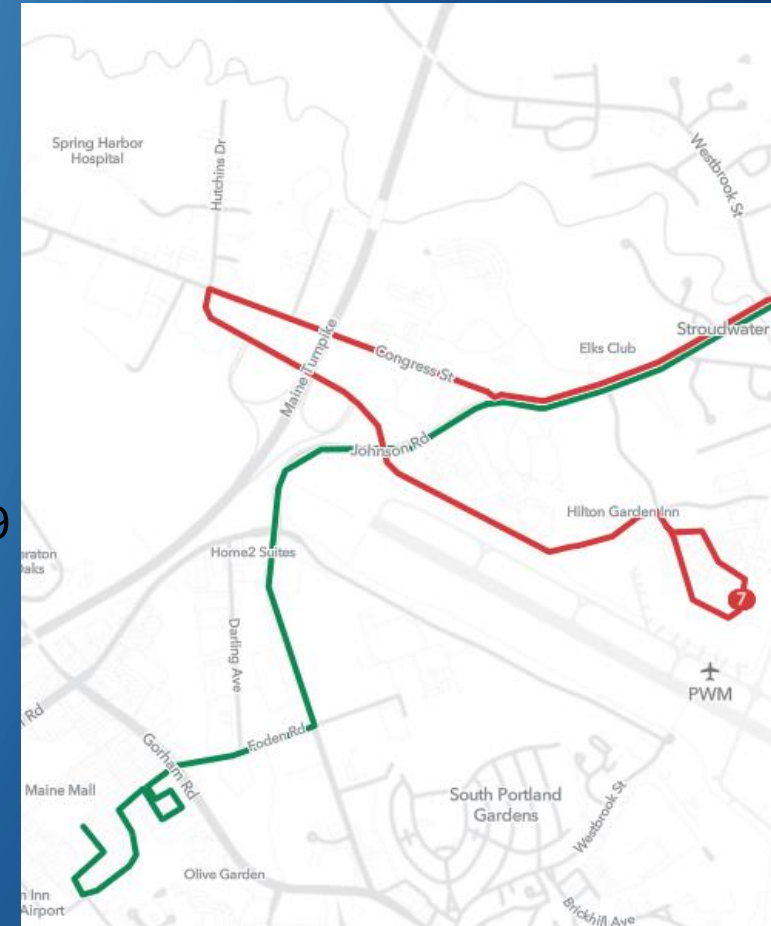




Metro – Region 6

Challenges to Sustainable Service and Growth Funding New Service

- Service improvement pilots funded by ARPA will be unfunded after 2025
- Numerous plans and requests for service improvements in 2025-2029
 - New service to regional destinations (Eastern Waterfront, VA Clinic, Roux Institute, etc.)
 - Later evening service (restaurant employees, etc.)
 - Expanded neighborhood coverage
 - Frequency enhancements
 - Service to new communities (Cumberland, others)
 - Limited federal, local capacity to stand up additional service
- Gorham-Westbrook-Portland Rapid Transit project planned for 2030



Metro's improved service to Portland Jetport, covered by ARPA funding, is set to expire in 2025 (among other service enhancements).





Metro – Region 6

Enhancing Transit Ridership and Infrastructure **Service Improvements**

- ARPA-funded service improvement pilots (2023-2025)
 - Improved off-peak and Saturday frequency on several routes
 - Route extensions
 - Improved service to regional destinations (Portland Jetport, Eastern Waterfront)
 - Expanded hours of operation
 - All operational improvements need alternative funding beginning 2026, or be cut
- Gorham-Westbrook-Portland Rapid Transit (planned 2029/2030)
 - MaineDOT-partnered planning work (2024/2025)
 - Federal RAISE Planning & Construction grants (2025)
 - 10 to 15 minute peak frequency, some dedicated lanes, enhanced stations
- Route extension to Roux Institute (planned 2028)
 - Provide direct transit service to Roux Institute
 - Extension enhances transit for all users on east side of Portland peninsula

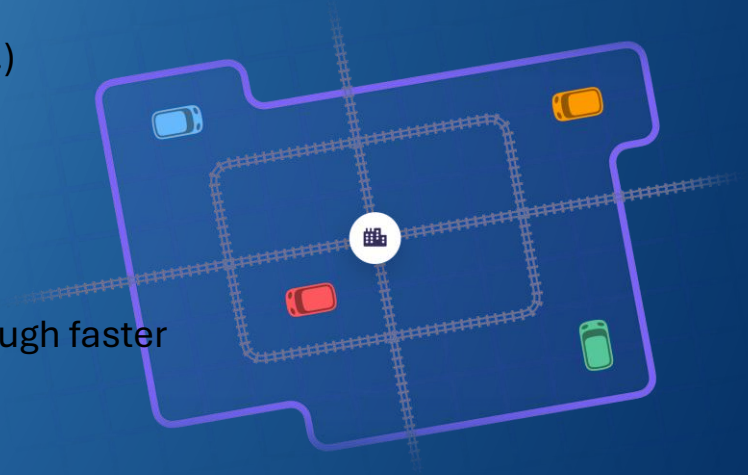




Metro – Region 6

Enhancing Transit Ridership and Infrastructure Technology Enhancements

- CAD-AVL upgrade (2024)
 - Enhanced passenger information (real-time route change alerts due to detours, etc.)
 - Improved on-board announcements
 - Improved data collection (Automatic Passenger Counting)
- Transit Signal Priority (2024)
 - Signals detect approaching transit vehicles and adjust timing to help buses get through faster
 - Potentially can include municipal/emergency vehicles
 - Applied Information Field Monitoring Units compatible with MaineDOT system
- Microtransit pilot in Falmouth (2024)
 - Demand-response service using algorithm to optimize travel/waiting times for passengers
 - Allows better coverage in harder-to-serve rural/suburban areas





NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND
PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY

NNEPRA – Region 6

- Given different service structure / service design, NNEPRA will be given an opportunity to present individually in the summer of 2024



RTP – Region 6



Services

- RTP provides shared-ride transportation for the disabled, elderly, low-income and general public residents of Cumberland County. The agency transports individuals eligible under Mainecare, DHHS, and Child Development Services without charge to the rider. Taxi service is also used as a back-up.
- RTP provides ADA paratransit service for Metro and SPBS.
- RTP also operates four round trips / day between Bridgton and Portland each weekday.



RTP – Region 6



Ridership

- Projected for 2023-24 – 72,000 riders
- Fare recovery through 5/17 – 97%

Challenges & Opportunities

- Labor – Operator recruitment
- Fleet / Vehicles – Units far past useful life benchmarks. Waiting on MDOT contract execution & delivery. Have had to buy used vehicles to maintain service.



SPBS – Region 6

- Currently lacking admin staff and support – Metro providing services
- Per 2023 NTD filings:
 - 243,092 passenger trips
 - 16,566 VRH
- 3 Routes operating between 5:45a – 11:15p Mon-Sat, 7:30a – 7:30pm Sun



PACTS – Greater Portland Metro MPO

Regional Planning Initiatives

Transit Tomorrow

- 1. Make transit easier**
- 2. Create frequent connections**
- 3. Invest in rapid transit**
- 4. Create transit-friendly places**



PACTS – Greater Portland Metro MPO

Make transit easier

The region's transit agencies and GPCOG coordinate on several efforts:

- Community Transportation Leaders
- Bus Ambassadors
- Ride with Me



PACTS – Greater Portland Metro MPO

Create frequent connections

Transit Together (2023) was a project to cultivate a more integrated and connected regional transit system:

- A redesigned network to better match service with demand
- Unified design of stops and stations, signage, service standards, and branding
- A regional approach to tech modules and procurement (GTFS, AVL, APC, fare payment, real-time info)
- Electrification, microtransit, and more



PACTS – Greater Portland Metro MPO

Invest in rapid transit

Transit Tomorrow establishes a vision for a regional rapid transit network.

- Gorham-Westbrook-Portland was the first of several corridors to be studied.
- Recommendation: BRT along Rt 25, Brighton Ave and Congress St



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Create transit friendly places

Leverages GPCOG's Planning and Comms & Engagement Teams to "sow the seeds" for transit-supportive land use.

Anticipated outcomes:

- Land use and zoning changes
- Increased housing production
- Walkable, bikeable, transit-able neighborhoods
- TOD planning

