

Board Briefing Materials

August 26, 2024

Location:

**Regional Transportation Program (RTP) Conference Room
1 Ledgeview Drive, Westbrook, ME 04092**

3:00pm Public Session



For More Information

 207-780-1000 x 105

 info@nnepra.com



**NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND
PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY**

FY2024 NNEPRA Strategic Workplan Summary:

Safety and Health

The safety and health of passengers, crews and employees remains our first priority.

Performance Measures

Meet and exceed Performance Targets identified in the approved FY24 Operating Budget and support efforts to provide customers with a travel experience that consistently exceeds their expectations, delivers value and benefit, and contributes to a modern, integrated public transportation system.

FY24 Performance Targets					
Ridership	555,899	Train On Time Performance	85%	Café Cost Recovery	75%
Revenue	\$ 10,840,029	Customer On Time Performance	90%	Café Capture Ratio	19%
Average Fare	\$ 19.50	Overall Customer Satisfaction	90%	Café Check Average	\$8.85
Overall Cost Recovery	50%				

Service Improvement and Planning

Support the reduction of vehicle miles travelled and State climate change initiatives by improving service accessibility and quality and by taking steps necessary to:

- Complete Wells Area Improvement Project
- Relocate Portland Station and build a new station in Falmouth
- Build a new station in Falmouth to improve access to I-95 and communities north of Portland.
- Initiate a *regularly scheduled passenger rail service pilot program* on the Rockland Branch
- Update the Downeaster Service Development Plan
- Collaborate with Amtrak and MassDOT to improve connectivity between North Station and NEC
- Collaborate with CSX and Amtrak to seek to reduce overall travel time and maximize utility of positive train control (PTC).
- Prepare for new Amtrak trainsets to replace legacy equipment and significantly reduce air emissions.
- Collaborate with MaineDOT on studies and planning efforts.
- Assure NNEPRA owned and Downeaster-related facilities remain in a state of good repair.

Funding Resources

Pursue state and federal operational and capital funding opportunities to meet operation and project needs.

Information and Education

Support and participate in policy efforts to maintain and secure favorable terms for the continuation and expansion of passenger rail service on the local, state and national level.

- Remain engaged and involved with transportation planning studies, organizations and initiatives in support of transportation access, expansion and connectivity.

NNEPRA BOARD of DIRECTORS

August 26, 2024

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority

Draft Agenda

3:00pm Public Session

- Welcome and Safety Briefing
- Public Comment
- Approval of Minutes from June 24, 2024 Board Meeting
- Review of Fiscal Year 2024
 - FY24 Year End Downeaster Operating Statistics
 - Year End Budget Variance Report
- Review of FY24/FY25 Strategic Workplan
- Fiscal Year 2025 Operations
 - Downeaster Performance FY25 to date
 - Current and pending infrastructure improvement and service impacts
 - FY25 Ridership and Revenue Generating Strategies
- Horizon Transition
- Project Updates
 - Wells Area Improvement Project
 - Portland Supplemental and Capital Maintenance
 - Fed State Partnership
 - Portland Station Relocation/West Falmouth
 - Corridor ID
- Other Business
- Public Comment

Next Meeting: September 23, 2024



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority**

June 24, 2024

Directors in Attendance:

Chairman Jim Cohen; Vice Chair Alan Casavant; Ms. Maggie Fleming; Ms. Carol Murray; Ms. Alison Harris; Mr. Nate Moulton

NNEPRA Staff in Attendance:

Ms. Patricia Quinn; Ms. Natalie Bogart; Ms. Olivia Richmond; Mr. Brian Beeler; Mr. James Russell; Ms. Belle Askinasi; Ms. Catherine Davidson; Ms. Taylor Belanger

Interested Parties:

Mr. Luke Irvine, Amtrak; Ms. Patty Barber, Rail Passengers Association; Mr. Daniel Leary, Amtrak; Mr. Kevin Chittenden, Amtrak; Ms. Stacey Caulk, Drummond Woodsum; Mr. Dana Knapp, Concord Coach Lines; Mr. Peter Cole; Mr. Bruce Sleeper, TrainRiders Northeast; Mr. Tom Wilhite, Camden Resident; Mr. Ryan Desanctis, Student; Mr. Donnie Mayley, DMW LLC; Ms. Carolann Ouellette, Maine DECD

OPENING REMARKS

Meeting called to order at 3:03 pm and a safety briefing was provided.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Cohen opened the floor to public comment.

Mr. Bruce Sleeper inquired if the Rockland project was going to be discussed during this meeting. Ms. Patricia Quinn responded that an update would be provided.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve May 28, 2024 Minutes

Motion: Ms. Maggie Fleming

Seconded: Ms. Carol Murray

Approved: All

TOWN OF CUMBERLAND PROPOSAL – Patricia Quinn

Mr. Bill Shane, former Town Manager of Cumberland, presented to the Board a proposal for a train station in the town of Cumberland off Stiles Way. Bill informed the Board that the Town is prepared to build and maintain the platform and paved parking lot with TIF funding. The Town envisions a year-round, climate-controlled platform that would be near the Cumberland Fire, Police and Emergency services stations. Bill noted that the Town is also exploring METRO service through Cumberland, west to the Windham / Gray area and adding a train station would be part of their Climate Action Plan to reduce vehicular commuting miles.

Bill inquired as to what next steps would be in the process, stating that the Town Council is ready to proceed upon approval.

Ms. Patricia Quinn thanked Bill for his presentation and the Town's support of the service. She explained that as part of the Corridor ID Program, NNEPRA will be preparing a Service Development Plan (SDP) to identify areas of expansion along the Downeaster Corridor. Patricia noted that this proposal is a good first step in consideration for being included in the SDP, but additional evaluation and discussion is needed as well.

Chairman Cohen inquired what the timeline for the CID program is. Patricia responded that the program is expected to last a few years and provided a high-level overview of the CID and SDP process.

Chairman Cohen led the Board in a discussion regarding the SDP in relation to the Town's proposal and with respect to current project NNEPRA has underway. Chairman Cohen commented that the Board's focus is station development and improvement. Chairman Cohen acknowledged that the Cumberland proposal presents opportunity and that the Board would be open to additional analysis and discussion.

OVERVIEW OF DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE – Patricia Quinn

Patricia provided an overview of Downeaster performance through May 2024, noting continued strong ridership and revenue. Customer Satisfaction (CSI) scores remain high, specifically regarding friendliness and the helpfulness of crews. Additionally, the Cafe continues to exceed the expected capture rates and check averages.

Patricia commented that June month-to-date statistics indicate that the service will close FY 2024 as its best year ever in ridership and revenue. However, OTP and COTP for the month of June have struggled due to construction projects, signal issues and heat restrictions.

MARKETING UPDATE – Taylor Belanger

Ms. Taylor Belanger provided an update on marketing initiatives and gave an overview of paid, visual, and traditional media strategies. Taylor noted that she is working with Blaze Advertising on the FY2025 creative strategy and will present the new campaign collaterals at the next Board Meeting. Taylor assured the Board that media will remain in market and promotions will continue on a limited basis during periods of construction-related service interruptions.

FINANCE REPORT – Patricia Quinn

Patricia noted that all invoices had not been received for June and therefore the budget variance report was not available.

Patricia reported that the FY 2025 Budget had been submitted to Commissioner Van Note for approval. Mr. Nate Moulton confirmed that the Commissioner had reviewed and given approval for the Board to adopt the budget as presented.

Motion to approve FY 2025 Budget as Presented

Motion: Ms. Carol Murray

Second: Ms. Alison Harris

Approved: All

HORIZON UPDATE – Patricia Quinn

Patricia stated that one (1) Horizon coach had been added to each Downeaster train set as of May 17th. NNEPRA and Amtrak continue working toward a formal agreement to transition the entire fleet. Amtrak is working with a vendor to install bike racks and improve WiFi in the Horizon fleet, but a schedule was not yet available.

PROJECT UPDATES – Jim Russell

Mr. Jim Russell provided an update on the Wells project noting that the double track extension portion of the project is underway and going well.

Patricia noted that the Positive Train Control (PTC) project between Amtrak and CSX is also ongoing. Patricia commented that Amtrak is working with NNEPRA to hold a press event to celebrate the PTC installation on Wednesday, June 26th at the Freeport station.

Director Nate Moulton provided an update regarding the Rockland project, noting that Midcoast Rail officially provided their notice to terminate their lease agreement to MDOT. Nate explained that the next step is to send out an RFP for a host railroad. The RFP is anticipated to go out in July 2024.

PORTLAND STATION RELOCATION PRESENTATION – Gordon Edington

Chairman Cohen recused himself from the meeting noting a conflict of interest associated with the Portland Station Relocation (PSR) site discussion. Vice Chairman Cassavant acknowledged Chairman Cohen's recusal and lead the remainder of the meeting.

Mr. Gordon Edington with VHB provided the Board with a presentation and overview of the project goals and challenges at the current Portland station. Gordon reviewed the three (3) sites considered for the PSR project and gave a summary of the pros and cons of each location. Gordon explained that sites one (1) and two (2) had been determined to be less favorable than site three (3).

Patricia noted that stakeholder outreach and engagement continued, noting recent meetings with Mercy Hospital, MaineHealth, the City of Portland and transit operators. Mr. Luke Irvine with Amtrak commented that site three (3) would work best from a train operations standpoint. Coordination with Amtrak, CSX and current stakeholders is ongoing and once complete, there will be a public meeting to present the recommended site location.

PUBLIC COMMENT PORTLAND STATION RELOCATION

Vice Chairman Cassavant opened the floor to public comment regarding the Portland Station Relocation project.

Mr. Bruce Sleeper with Trainriders Northeast commented that the number of parking spots (105) seems to not be enough and inquired about the possibility for expansion. Gordon responded that the potential for expanded parking did exist. Bruce also inquired about connectivity between the new station and the current Portland Transportation Center (PTC). Gordon responded that the intent is to maintain connectivity between a new station and the PTC. Bruce noted that Trainriders Northeast supports site three (3) as the best location for the relocation.

Mr. Ryan Desanctis inquired if shuttle services to the Portland Jetport was part of the study. Gordon responded that connectivity to the Portland Jetport was not directly part of this study, but that did not mean it could not be explored in the future.

End public comment on Portland Station Relocation project.

Vice Chairman Cassavant lead the Board in a discussion regarding the site locations. Director Fleming noted that site three (3) makes the most sense and has the most public support. Director Murray agreed, saying that site three (3) seems to provide the most balanced solution. Director Harris commented that site three (3) offers the most

advantages of the project needs and avoids disruption of the existing residential area. Director Moulton noted that MaineDOT has been working closely with NNEPRA and feels comfortable moving forward on site three (3).

Motion to agree that Site Three (3) best meets project needs

Motion: Ms. Carol Murray

Second: Ms. Maggie Fleming

Approved: All

PUBLIC COMMENT

Vice Chairman Cassavant opened the floor to public comment.

Ms. Patty Barber inquired why there needs to be a host railroad for Amtrak to run on the Rockland Branch. Nate responded that MaineDOT is prohibited by law from being a railroad and reiterated that an RFP will be developed to explore alternatives.

Ryan inquired if site three (3) of the PSR project is in or near a flood zone. Gordon responded that he is confident it is not. Additionally, Ryan inquired if NNEPRA would put out an RFP for architecture of the new station. Gordon responded that is the process but would happen further along in the project.

Mr. Tom Wilhite commented that communities between Brunswick and Bucksport have delayed a Train Festival initially planned for October 2024 until May 2025.

End public comment.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:48 pm.

Downeaster Performance Metrics - Last 12 Months									
Period	FY	Ridership				Revenue			
		Actual	Budget	Variance	vs. FY23	Actual	Budget	Variance	\$/Rider
Jun 24	FY24	50,853	48,530	2,323	109%	\$ 1,191,491	\$ 965,829	\$ 225,662	\$23.43
May 24	FY24	46,412	45,167	1,245	118%	\$ 1,105,299	\$ 880,764	\$ 193,384	\$23.14
Apr 24	FY24	48,976	51,405	-2,429	109%	\$ 1,151,840	\$ 989,546	\$ 162,294	\$23.52
Mar 24	FY24	46,537	40,191	6,346	122%	\$ 1,105,299	\$ 783,722	\$ 321,577	\$23.75
Feb 24	FY24	42,045	36,742	5,303	126%	\$ 1,009,621	\$ 707,287	\$ 302,334	\$24.01
Jan 24	FY24	41,238	38,979	2,259	116%	\$ 897,352	\$ 750,336	\$ 147,016	\$21.76
Dec 23	FY24	46,905	41,631	5,274	118%	\$ 1,020,290	\$ 811,813	\$ 208,477	\$21.75
Nov 23	FY24	48,005	45,818	2,187	110%	\$ 1,003,399	\$ 893,447	\$ 109,952	\$20.90
Oct 23	FY24	54,816	50,213	4,603	115%	\$ 1,093,794	\$ 979,155	\$ 114,639	\$19.95
Sep 23	FY24	52,994	47,961	5,033	116%	\$ 1,060,397	\$ 935,237	\$ 125,160	\$20.01
Aug 23	FY24	61,769	54,323	7,446	119%	\$ 1,241,359	\$ 1,059,295	\$ 182,064	\$20.10
Jul 23	FY24	57,876	54,659	3,217	111%	\$ 1,171,407	\$ 1,065,847	\$ 105,560	\$20.24
FY24 Final		598,426	555,619	42,807	127%	13,051,548	10,822,278	2,198,119	\$21.81
Jun 23	FY23	45,027	43,411	1,616	93%	\$ 900,524	\$ 835,654	\$ 64,870	\$20.00
FY23 Final		516,723	479,651	37,072	90%	\$ 10,420,681	\$ 9,233,283	1,137,637	\$20.17

Fiscal Year 2024



5,175



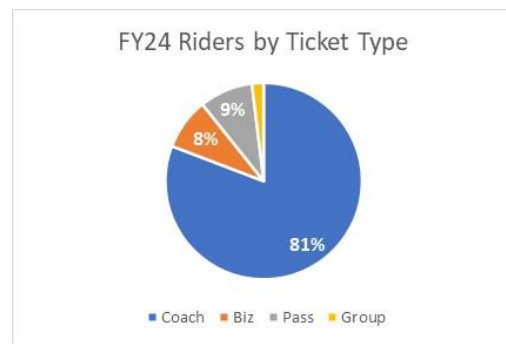
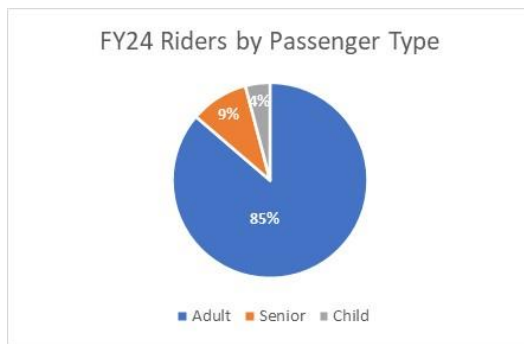
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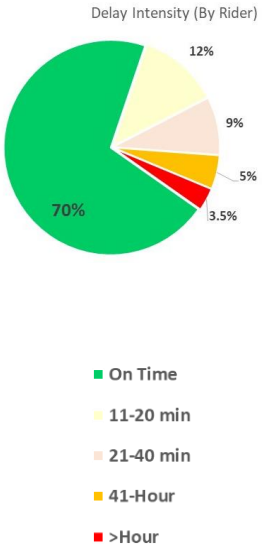


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FY24 Performance Targets			
Ridership	555,899	Train On Time Performance	85%
Revenue	\$ 10,840,029	Customer On Time Performance	90%
Average Fare	\$ 19.50	Overall Customer Satisfaction	90%
Overall Cost Recovery	50%	Café Cost Recovery	75%
		Café Capture Ratio	19%
		Café Check Average	\$8.85

Downeaster Performance Metrics - Last 12 Months								
Period	FY	Trains Operated	Passenger Miles	On Time Performance		Downeaster Café		CSI
				End Point	Customer	Capture Ratio	Check AVG	
Jun 24	FY24	298	4,529,993	55%	70%	19%	\$ 10.28	88
May 24	FY24	310	4,037,621	73%	86%	17%	\$ 9.92	92
Apr 24	FY24	294	4,307,349	74%	84%	18%	\$ 10.61	90
Mar 24	FY24	306	4,058,625	82%	86%	19%	\$ 10.88	88
Feb 24	FY24	290	3,655,150	83%	89%	18%	\$ 10.79	90
Jan 24	FY24	308	3,716,256	78%	87%	18%	\$ 10.76	94
Dec 23	FY24	305	4,137,821	82%	89%	17%	\$ 10.85	92
Nov 23	FY24	298	4,137,882	80%	86%	16%	\$ 10.37	90
Oct 23	FY24	306	4,711,135	69%	80%	16%	\$ 9.77	92
Sep 23	FY24	297	4,524,931	60%	73%	16%	\$ 8.88	91
Aug 23	FY24	310	5,439,692	65%	78%	18%	\$ 9.03	90
Jul 23	FY24	310	5,075,219	55%	68%	17%	\$ 8.64	91
FY24 Final		3,632	52,331,674	71%	82%	17%	\$ 10.05	91
Jun 23	FY23	300	3,737,241	80%	83%	18%	\$ 9.97	90
FY23 Final		3,593	43,148,483	73%	83%	17%	\$ 9.17	89%



FY 2024 Downeaster Customer Satisfaction											
	Sample Size	Overall Score	Train Comfort	Train Cleanliness	Train Crew	OTP	Train Status Info	Café	WiFi	Station Staff	Station Overall
Jun	746	89.8	86	82	90	70	75	73	68	90	83
May	604	92.2	89	88	96	88	85	76	76	91	84
Apr	546	90.3	88	85	95	86	82	78	77	95	83
Mar	529	88.2	86	85	94	83	79	76	70	91	88
Feb	528	90.3	86	84	93	86	84	75	72	91	88
Jan	635	88.6	87	83	92	82	82	76	72	91	87
Dec	751	92.0	87	87	94	92	88	78	74	91	83
Nov	680	90.0	87	87	92	84	83	76	72	88	85
Oct	1,477	92.0	89	88	94	84	83	79	68	89	82
Sep	1,654	89.1	88	87	90	75	77	79	74	89	86
Aug	1,807	89.5	90	89	93	83	84	82	80	92	87
Jul	1,335	92.2	91	90	94	81	85	79	81	92	86
FY24	11,292	90.4	87.8	86.2	93.3	82.9	82.2	77.2	73.6	90.9	85.2

NNEPRA Fiscal Year 2024
Operating Budget Variance Report
 July 2023 - June 2024

	June-24			Fiscal Year to Date June 2024			
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance	%
Operating Revenue							
Amtrak Ticket Revenue	\$ 1,191,491	\$ 983,580	\$ 207,911	\$ 13,051,548	\$ 10,840,029	\$ 2,211,519	20%
Food Service Revenue	\$ 108,382	\$ 85,774	\$ 22,608	\$ 1,076,134	\$ 948,078	\$ 128,056	14%
Parking Lot Revenue	\$ 34,324	\$ 40,000	\$ (5,676)	\$ 627,738	\$ 559,500	\$ 68,238	12%
Interest & Other Revenue	\$ 57,988	\$ 37,000	\$ 20,988	\$ 719,341	\$ 444,000	\$ 275,341	62%
Total Operating Revenue	\$ 1,392,185	\$ 1,146,354	\$ 245,831	\$ 15,474,761	\$ 12,791,607	\$ 2,683,154	21%
Expenses							
Administration							
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 90,502	\$ 95,830	\$ (5,328)	\$ 1,020,458	\$ 1,149,996	\$ (129,538)	-11%
Office Expenses	\$ 15,524	\$ 10,565	\$ 4,959	\$ 164,247	\$ 160,730	\$ 3,517	2%
Professional Services	\$ 11,873	\$ 13,630	\$ (1,757)	\$ 123,354	\$ 165,340	\$ (41,986)	-25%
Insurance	\$ 4,826	\$ 4,250	\$ 576	\$ 58,969	\$ 51,744	\$ 7,225	14%
Board Operations	\$ 2,121	\$ 1,814	\$ 307	\$ 19,168	\$ 21,823	\$ (2,655)	-12%
Total Admin Expenses	\$ 124,846	\$ 126,089	\$ (1,243)	\$ 1,386,196	\$ 1,549,633	\$ (163,437)	-11%
Train Operations							
Amtrak Train Operations	\$ 798,020	\$ 656,884	\$ 141,136	\$ 7,311,821	\$ 7,727,856	\$ (416,035)	-5%
Amtrak Equipment Maintenance	\$ 699,971	\$ 791,162	\$ (91,191)	\$ 8,870,002	\$ 9,681,508	\$ (811,506)	-8%
Amtrak Support Services	\$ 385,415	\$ 179,806	\$ 205,609	\$ 2,272,457	\$ 2,053,062	\$ 219,395	11%
Train Fuel Cost	\$ 207,574	\$ 216,216	\$ (8,642)	\$ 2,675,087	\$ 2,708,363	\$ (33,276)	-1%
Other Train Operations	\$ 175,600	\$ 210,350	\$ (34,750)	\$ 2,053,015	\$ 2,146,755	\$ (93,740)	-4%
Facilities	\$ 40,306	\$ 61,953	\$ (21,647)	\$ 592,753	\$ 704,520	\$ (111,767)	-16%
FY24 Capital Maintenance	\$ 660,088	\$ 100,000	\$ 560,088	\$ 1,115,399	\$ 1,200,000	\$ (84,601)	-7%
Total Train Operations	\$ 2,966,974	\$ 2,216,371	\$ 750,603	\$ 24,890,534	\$ 26,222,064	\$ (1,331,530)	-5%
Station Operations							
Portland Station	\$ 46,248	\$ 41,807	\$ 4,441	\$ 528,655	\$ 492,246	\$ 36,409	7%
Platform Insurance	\$ 16,518	\$ 17,076	\$ (558)	\$ 200,255	\$ 204,911	\$ (4,656)	-2%
Station Platform Leases	\$ 3,811	\$ 4,021	\$ (210)	\$ 45,795	\$ 48,245	\$ (2,450)	-5%
Station Improvements	\$ 5,978	\$ 500	\$ 5,478	\$ 30,467	\$ 431,000	\$ (400,533)	-93%
Total Station Operations	\$ 72,555	\$ 63,404	\$ 9,151	\$ 805,172	\$ 1,176,402	\$ (371,230)	-32%
Total Food Service	\$ 120,734	\$ 117,987	\$ 2,747	\$ 1,285,523	\$ 1,271,627	\$ 13,896	1%
Total Marketing	\$ 63,118	\$ 39,367	\$ 23,751	\$ 442,849	\$ 520,000	\$ (77,151)	-15%
Total Expenses	\$ 3,348,227	\$ 2,563,218	\$ 785,009	\$ 28,810,274	\$ 30,739,726	\$ (1,929,452)	-6%
Add'l Funding Required	\$ 1,956,042	\$ 1,416,864	\$ 539,178	\$ 13,335,513	\$ 17,948,119	\$ (4,612,606)	-26%
Downeaster Ridership	50,853	48,234	2,619				
Overall cost recovery	42%	45%		54%	42%		
Café Recovery	90%	73%		84%	75%		