

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority



January 2018



Board of Directors Briefing Materials

January 29, 2018

**University of Southern Maine
Abromson Center - Room 214/215
98 Bedford Street
Portland, Maine
1:00pm**

AmtrakDowneaster.com



NNEPRA FY2018 Action Plan

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority 75 W. Commercial Street, Portland, ME 04101 207-780-1000
Draft 9/30/2017

Meet or exceed projected Performance Benchmarks

- 46% Total Cost Recovery
- 84% Café Cost Recovery in Café
- 85% On Time Performance
- 95% Overall Customer Satisfaction

Improve Service Efficiency

- Increase revenue on peak trains
- Increase performance on off-peak trains
- Maximize equipment utilization
- Improve cost recovery in Café

Improve Passenger Services & Communication

- Implement PIDS at Maine Stations
- Improve/promote last mile connectivity
- Promote and improve connectivity to Amtrak network
- Improve customer interface on AmtrakDowneaster.com
- Formalize Station Ambassador Program
- Seek ways to improve bicycle access

Sponsor Capital Projects to improve service quality and efficiency

- Complete MBTA Haverhill Line Project
- Initiate Royal Junction Siding Construction
- Support Kennebunk Station development
- Participate in Portland Station improvements
- Secure Funding for and complete Rockingham Siding Rehabilitation
- Develop Wells Siding/Platform concept into a potential program.
- Plan FY19 tie replacement program

Explore Options for Service Improvement/Expansions

- Manage Lewiston/Auburn Service Planning study
- Explore implementation of seasonal service on Rockland Branch
- Identify opportunities for additional service growth

Maintain Compliance with all Regulations

- Improve and enhance written policies & procedures
- Improve and enhance data collection & reporting
- Improve internal documentation processes.

Identify and Promote Economic and Public Benefits associated with the Downeaster.

Work to secure a stable, dedicated and equitable funding mechanisms to sustain Downeaster operations and continued capital investments in the Downeaster Corridor.

BOARD of DIRECTORS MEETING AGENDA

January 29, 2018

12:00pm Vote to open meeting and enter Executive Session

1. 1 MRS § 405(6)(C) and 23 MRS § 8115-A to discuss negotiations with Amtrak regarding the operating agreement.

1:00pm Vote to close Executive Session and open Public Session

- Welcome & Introductions
- Approval of Minutes from November 27, 2017 Board Meeting
- Performance Update
 - Ridership & Revenue
 - Reliability & Customer Satisfaction
 - Winter outlook / Marketing
- Finance Report
 - Budget Variance Report
- Project Updates
 - Construction Projects
 - “Coastal Connection” Pilot
 - Lewiston/Auburn Passenger Rail Service Plan
- Other Business
 - SAIPRC Staff Hosting
 - Private Development Projects
- Public Comment

Next Meeting:
February 26, 2018

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

November 27, 2017
Portland, ME

Directors in attendance:

Mr. Brian Hobart, Mr. Ron McKinnon, Mr. John Melrose, Mr. George Gervais, and Mr. Herb Thomson

Staff in attendance:

Ms. Patricia Quinn, Mr. James Russell, Ms. Marina Douglass, Ms. Natalie Bogart, Mr. Brian Beeler, and Ms. Jennifer Crosby

Interested parties:

Mr. Wayne Davis, TrainRiders Northeast; Mr. George O'Keefe, TrainRiders Northeast; Mr. Dana Knapp, Concord Coach; Mr. Bill Lord; TrainRiders Northeast

Opening Remarks

Motion to open Public Session at 12:20 pm

Motion: Mr. Hobart
Seconded: Mr. Gervais
Accepted: All

Motion to enter Executive Session at 12:21 pm for:

2. 1 MRS § 405(6)(C) and 23 MRS § 8115-A to discuss negotiations with Amtrak regarding the FY2017 and FY2018 agreement.
3. 1 MRS § 405(6)(C) and 23 MRS § 8115-A to discuss negotiations with Concord Coach Lines regarding agreements related to the Portland Transportation Center.

Motion: Mr. Hobart
Seconded: Mr. Gervais
Accepted: All

Motion to reopen Public Session at 1:08 pm

Motion: Mr. McKinnon
Seconded: Mr. Thomson
Accepted: All

Vote to accept minutes as presented by the staff

Motion: Mr. McKinnon
Seconded: Mr. Thomson
Accepted: All

DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE REPORT

Ms. Quinn reviewed the Performance Report highlighting the following:

- October 2017 ridership of 47,174 was the best in October Downeaster history, 18% above target of 40,000.
 - The storm at the end of October and early November resulted in disrupted and cancelled service. Sixty-two trees fell on the railroad tracks between Portland and Brunswick.
 - The Downeaster only operated 29 days in October due to storm.
 - FY18 to Date ridership July 2017 through October 2017 of 212,148, 11% above target of 190,400.
 - Through November 26th ridership of 37,053 averaging 1420 daily. Anticipate 41,800 November 2800 riders over target.
 - Average fare per passenger October 2017 was \$18.56 NNEPRA budgeted \$17.14. NNPR's best October ever was 2013 that had an average fare per passenger of \$15.83.
 - Mr. Beeler commented on OTP noting that it continues to be a challenge.
 - Overall CSI score through August 2017 is 91%.
 - Mr. Beeler reported on the status of the Amfleet Refresh; the extensive overhaul of the train interior by Amtrak. The Downeaster has seen its first Amtrak coach with Brand-new seat cushions, new carpeting, and New LED reading lights. The Downeaster will continue to see the following upgrades in its coaches: new bathroom flooring, upgraded wainscoting and bulkhead, new curtains in Business Class, and redesigned galleys in the café car. All of this should be completed by Spring 2018.
 - Amtrak is in the process of implementing several changes to its policies after the first of 2018.
 - Currently seniors 62+ receive 15%; Amtrak is changing the discount from 15% to 10% and the age from 62 to 65. NNEPRA will stay consistent with this change, as the FTA requirement for half fares for seniors is also 65.
 - Currently up to two children age 2-12 can ride half off with full one fare paying adult. Amtrak is changing the ratio to one half fare child per each full fare paying adult.
 - Amtrak is eliminating the 15% AAA discount and the 15% student discount.
 - While NNEPRA does not support all of these changes, there is no choice. Staff will monitor the impact on the Downeaster ridership and revenue and hopes that the changes will result in an increase in our average fare per passenger.
 - There will be an opportunity to provide discounts through fare codes if needed.
-

Marketing Update: Natalie Bogart

- New website launched in September and continues to have a significant impact on site engagement.
- As NNEPRA moves into the winter months, the focus on our marketing programs remains building ridership on our off-peak trains during our off-peak season.
- NNEPRA launched the winter Train To Maine Transit Advertising Campaign with 120 posters at various locations throughout the MBTA subway system. The goal of this campaign is to generate northbound ridership to Maine on our off-peak trains with creative focused on our walkable station communities.

- NNEPRA has been focusing our grass roots marketing efforts by promoting concert trains, sports packages, and NNEPRA's senior and kids discounts.
- New this year, the Downeaster will be hosting a "Ride with Santa" promotion onboard Downeaster Train 691 and Train 696 on Saturday, December 2nd and Sunday, December 3rd to extend special greetings to our passengers. A series of station specific trip ideas have been developed to help passengers plan their ride with Santa.
- In January NNEPRA will be offering a special \$15 one-way fare with 3-day advance purchase.

FINANCE REPORT – Marina Douglass

Ms. Douglass reviewed the October 2017 variance report.

Vote to accept October 2017 preliminary variance Report

Motion: Mr. Thompson

Seconded: Mr. Hobart

Accepted: All

Mr. Melrose stated that the original financial audit had an error that is being corrected: page 6, the total of Capital Grant Revenue (Expense) should total (\$1,439,563) and not (\$1,401,396). This error does not change any of the final numbers.

Vote to accept corrected FY2017 Financial Audit

Motion: Mr. McKinnon

Seconded: Mr. Hobart

Accepted: All

Project Updates – Jim Russell

- The MBTA project (Haverhill Line Improvements) is virtually complete with the exception of a lingering slow order that still needs correcting and is set to be completed next week.
- Earthwork for the Royal siding project is 80% complete. Trackwork will begin in the Spring.
- Pan Am is replacing the signal control at the Brunswick Layover Facility to improve efficiency and noise set to be completed by December 22.
- Freeport culvert slipline, which is part of the capital maintenance agreement with Pan Am, will be completed today.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORTS

Rockland Pilot Program

Ms. Quinn and Mr. Russell met with municipal officials in Bath, Wiscasset, Newcastle and Rockland and received positive feedback regarding the seasonal expansion to Rockland. It was determined that stations only needed minimal improvements. In terms of timeline NNEPRA is hoping to have a tentative Rockland service schedule by the end of December.

NNEPRA will return to the communities for further public feedback. NNEPRA is hoping to present costs, schedule and requirements for final approval by January for a Board vote. The Amtrak Geometry car is scheduled to evaluate and determine speed and schedule.

Vote to authorize NNEPRA to spend money from restricted cash account with authorization from the Board Chairman and MaineDOT Commissioner to finish exploratory phase of the Rockland Pilot Program.

Motion: Mr. Hobart

Seconded: Mr. McKinnon

Accepted: All

Lewiston- Auburn Passenger Rail Service Plan

NNEPRA finalized the agreement with VHB. VHB will be reaching out to the Study Steering Committee to create a schedule for public participation. NNEPRA is a member of the Steering Committee.

Train Noise Workshop in Brunswick

Brunswick Town Council held a noise workshop on Nov 14. The town of Brunswick provided questions and concerns that were addressed by members of NNEPRA, Amtrak, FRA, and Pan Am. The council set the format, no public comment was accepted.

The Town of Brunswick is pursuing quiet zones.

Other Business

NNEPRA submitted an application for CMAQ funding for the Rockingham siding to the New Hampshire DOT.

Ms. Quinn acknowledged Mike Murray as the first executive director of NNEPRA who passed away in November.

Ms. Quinn thanked the Board and Staff for hard work and diligence.

Mr. Beeler reported on the status of the Passenger Information Display Signs (PIDS) installation. NNEPRA will begin to see indoor signs in Portland and Saco in February 2018.

Public Comment:

George O'Keefe commented that he has been monitoring changes at Amtrak, specifically their goal to eliminate their deficit, and questions how that might impact state supported services.

Vote to adjourn at 2:26 pm

Motion: Mr. Hobart

Seconded: Mr. McKinnon

Accepted: All

NEXT MEETING: January 29, 2018

Downeaster Performance Update

FY2018 to Date: July 2017 – December 2017

Ridership						
	FY2017 Actual	FY2018 Actual	FY2018 Target	Variance to Target	Var %	Passenger Miles
July	51,402	57,652	50,000	7,652	15%	4,865,639
August	53,627	57,306	54,400	2,906	5%	4,767,867
September	45,315	50,016	46,000	4,016	9%	4,034,228
October	38,979	47,174	40,000	7,174	18%	3,812,780
November	35,599	42,110	39,000	3,110	8%	3,369,379
December	38,259	43,557	38,500	5,057	13%	3,484,560
Total	263,181	297,815	267,900	29,915	11%	24,334,453

Revenue							
	FY2017 Actual	FY2018 Actual	FY2018 Target	Variance to Target	Var %	Average Fare	
July	\$ 921,482	\$ 1,042,712	\$ 887,500	\$ 155,212	17%	\$	18.09
August	\$ 942,790	\$ 1,052,422	\$ 965,600	\$ 86,822	9%	\$	18.36
September	\$ 752,830	\$ 933,017	\$ 772,800	\$ 160,217	21%	\$	18.65
October	\$ 550,988	\$ 875,607	\$ 685,403	\$ 190,204	28%	\$	18.56
November	\$ 539,612	\$ 791,778	\$ 679,677	\$ 112,102	16%	\$	18.80
December	\$ 660,248	\$ 831,519	\$ 667,845	\$ 163,674	25%	\$	19.09
Total	\$ 4,367,950	\$ 5,527,054	\$ 4,658,825	\$ 868,229	19%	\$	18.56

Customer Satisfaction			
October	Downeaster	Amtrak	FY to Date
Overall Customer Satisfaction	83	84	89
Value of Amtrak Service for Price Paid	83	80	87
Overall Cleanliness of Train	83	85	89
Clarity of Announcements	76	79	82
Friendliness/Helpfulness of Train Conductor	92	88	93
Friendliness/Helpfulness of Café Car Personnel	88	87	92
Quality/Freshness of Food in Café Car	78	78	84
Overall Experience in Café Car	81	79	86

Performance						
Calendar	July	August	September	October	November	December
2017	54%	72%	65%	58%	67%	65%
2016	65%	66%	51%	75%	66%	61%



PRELIMINARY VARIANCE REPORT - NOVEMBER 2017							
	Current Month Actual	Current Month Budget	Current Month Variance	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Year to Date Variance	Year to Date Percent
Revenues							
Operating Revenue							
Amtrak Ticket Revenue	791,778	679,677	112,101	4,695,536	3,990,980	704,556	18%
Food Service Revenue	55,889	60,450	(4,562)	372,146	355,570	16,576	5%
Advertising Revenue	0	0	0	2,678	500	2,178	436%
Parking Lot Revenue	44,079	34,000	10,079	263,266	216,500	46,766	22%
Interest on Accounts	1,033	141	892	3,742	705	3,037	431%
Other Revenue	19,678	39,061	(19,383)	112,598	144,046	(31,448)	-22%
Total Operating Revenues	912,456	813,329	99,127	5,449,966	4,708,301	741,665	16%
Expenses							
Wages and Benefits							
Permanent Full-Time	31,723	31,728	(5)	156,211	156,356	(145)	(0)
Benefits	19,985	19,992	(7)	102,315	102,236	79	0
Total Wages and Benefits	51,708	51,720	(12)	258,526	258,592	(66)	0%
Administration							
Office Expenses	7,868	9,425	(1,557)	40,685	46,958	(6,273)	(0)
Professional Services	4,126	8,334	(4,209)	39,147	56,670	(17,523)	(0)
Insurance	2,478	2,478	(0)	12,388	12,390	(2)	(0)
Board Operations	1,653	1,628	25	7,591	8,140	(549)	(0)
Total Administration Expenses	16,125	21,865	(5,740)	99,811	124,158	(24,347)	-20%
Train Operations							
Amtrak Operations	1,301,942	1,301,942	0	6,531,766	6,532,924	(1,158)	0%
Train Fuel Cost	152,646	160,000	(7,354)	772,046	800,000	(27,954)	-3%
PanAm	106,664	106,664	0	574,033	533,320	40,713	8%
Other Train Operations	5,554	2,802	2,752	19,073	14,010	5,063	36%
Facilities	24,261	20,932	3,329	113,635	110,660	2,975	3%
Capital Maintenance	0	0	0	25,961	25,600	361	1%
Total Train Operations	1,591,067	1,592,340	(1,273)	8,036,515	8,016,514	20,001	0%
Station Operations							
Portland Station	30,900	29,900	1,000	154,500	149,500	5,000	3%
Platform Ins	10,972	10,972	(0)	54,860	54,860	(0)	0%
Station Platform Leases	0	0	0	32,689	32,964	(275)	-1%
Other Station Improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Station Operations	41,872	40,872	1,000	242,048	237,324	4,724	2%
Food Service							
Regular	75,103	72,150	2,953	409,387	424,390	(15,003)	-4%
Total Food Service	75,103	72,150	2,953	409,387	424,390	(15,003)	-4%
Marketing							
Marketing	54,898	54,900	(2)	159,047	159,200	(153)	0%
Total Marketing	54,898	54,900	(2)	159,047	159,200	(153)	0%
Total Expenses	1,830,772	1,833,847	(3,075)	9,205,336	9,220,178	(14,842)	0%
Additional Funding Required	918,316	1,020,518	(102,202)	3,755,370	4,511,877	(756,507)	-17%
Overall Cost Recovery	50%	44%		59%	51%		
Café Cost Recovery	74%			91%			



PRELIMINARY VARIANCE REPORT - DECEMBER 2017							
	Current Month Actual	Current Month Budget	Current Month Variance	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Year to Date Variance	Year to Date Percent
Revenues							
Operating Revenue							
Amtrak Ticket Revenue	831,519	667,845	163,674	5,527,055	4,658,825	868,230	19%
Food Service Revenue	77,404	59,675	17,729	449,551	415,245	34,306	8%
Advertising Revenue	0	0	0	2,678	500	2,178	436%
Parking Lot Revenue	35,278	34,000	1,278	298,544	250,500	48,044	19%
Interest on Accounts	1,014	141	873	4,756	846	3,910	462%
Other Revenue	22,076	24,795	(2,719)	134,674	168,841	(34,167)	-20%
Total Operating Revenues	967,291	786,456	180,835	6,417,257	5,494,757	922,500	17%
Expenses							
Wages and Benefits							
Permanent Full-Time	33,324	33,334	(10)	189,536	189,690	(154)	0%
Benefits	20,641	20,792	(151)	122,957	123,028	(71)	0%
Total Wages and Benefits	53,966	54,126	(160)	312,492	312,718	(226)	0%
Administration							
Office Expenses	8,848	9,400	(552)	49,532	56,358	(6,826)	-12%
Professional Services	1,182	8,334	(7,152)	40,329	65,004	(24,675)	-38%
Insurance	2,439	2,552	(113)	14,827	14,942	(115)	-1%
Board Operations	862	1,638	(776)	8,453	9,778	(1,325)	-14%
Total Administration Expenses	13,330	21,924	(8,594)	113,141	146,082	(32,941)	-23%
Train Operations							
Amtrak Operations	1,300,442	1,300,442	0	7,832,208	7,833,366	(1,158)	0%
Train Fuel Cost	152,646	160,000	(7,354)	924,692	960,000	(35,308)	-4%
PanAm	106,664	106,664	0	680,697	639,984	40,713	6%
Other Train Operations	5,364	4,302	1,062	24,438	18,312	6,126	33%
Facilities	25,271	20,944	4,327	139,205	131,604	7,601	6%
Capital Maintenance	0	0	0	27,687	25,600	2,087	8%
Total Train Operations	1,590,387	1,592,352	(1,965)	9,628,927	9,608,866	20,061	0%
Station Operations							
Portland Station	29,900	29,900	0	184,400	179,400	5,000	3%
Platform Ins	10,904	10,972	(68)	65,764	65,832	(68)	0%
Station Platform Leases	0	0	0	32,689	32,964	(275)	-1%
Other Station Improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Station Operations	40,804	40,872	(68)	282,852	278,196	4,656	2%
Food Service							
Regular	82,427	71,225	11,202	491,814	495,615	(3,801)	-1%
Total Food Service	82,427	71,225	11,202	491,814	495,615	(3,801)	-1%
Marketing							
Marketing	59,457	59,457	(0)	218,504	218,657	(153)	0%
Total Marketing	59,457	59,457	(0)	218,504	218,657	(153)	0%
Total Expenses	1,840,369	1,839,956	413	11,047,731	11,060,134	(12,404)	0%
Additional Funding Required	873,078	1,053,500	(180,422)	4,630,473	5,565,377	(934,904)	-17%
Overall Cost Recovery	53%	43%		58%	50%		
Café Cost Recovery	94%			91%			

Downeaster Coastal Connection Info Sheet:

NNEPRA is exploring the potential to operate seasonal, weekend service to Rockland with interim station stops in Bath, Wiscasset and Newcastle on Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays during the summer months and early fall.

The Amtrak Downeaster currently makes 3 round trips daily between Brunswick and Boston and 2 round trips daily between Portland and Boston. The Coastal Connection would operate as an extension of existing Amtrak Downeaster service via the scenic Rockland Branch rail line between Brunswick and Rockland.

- The service would be operated using Amtrak train equipment and crews.
- Tickets would be sold through Amtrak's national reservation system.
- A 2-hour trip time between Brunswick and Rockland has been estimated. A final trip time has not yet been confirmed.

Conceptual schedule for discussion purposes only. Trains operating between Brunswick and Boston will make all Downeaster station stops.

	FRIDAY PROPOSED		SATURDAY and SUNDAY PROPOSED			
	Train #	Train #	Train #	Train #	Train #	Train #
	685	<i>new</i>	<i>new</i>	694	691	698
ROCKLAND	↑ 10:10pm	↓ 10:20pm	↑ 9:45am	↓ 10:00am	↑ 3:10pm	↓ 4:00pm
NEWCASTLE	9:10pm	11:20pm	8:45am	11:00am	2:10pm	5:00pm
WISCASSET	8:55pm	11:35pm	8:30am	11:15am	1:55pm	5:15pm
BATH	8:40pm	11:55pm	8:10am	11:35am	1:35pm	5:35pm
BRUNSWICK	8:20pm	↓ 12:15am	↑ 7:50am	11:55am	1:15pm	5:55pm
PORTLAND	7:30pm			12:55pm	12:20pm	6:55pm
WELLS	6:48pm			1:40pm	11:35am	7:34pm
BOSTON	5:00pm			↓ 3:30pm	↑ 9:45am	↓ 9:30pm

The Rockland Branch is owned by the MaineDOT. The Central Maine and Quebec (CMQ) Railroad operates freight rail transportation between Rockland and Brunswick on the line currently. Amtrak can contract with the CMQ for operating rights over the line.

The ability to operate the Coastal Connection service will be based on availability of funding for the operating costs and complete upgrades to station facilities as necessary. NNEPRA is working with Amtrak to finalize cost estimate and ridership/revenue projections. Station Communities would be



responsible for assuring temporary platforms are in place, that access to the train meets ADA accessibility requirements that access to boarding areas is safe for the travelling public.

The decision whether or not to proceed with a 2018 pilot program is anticipated in March 2018.

NNEPRA is interested in public interest, concerns and input regarding the potential for passenger rail service to Rockland and invites comment at info@nnepra.com.

Most Liked Downeaster Instagram Photos

