
Board Briefing Materials

October 23, 2023

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

October 23, 2023

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority

Draft Agenda

3:00pm Public Session

- Welcome and Safety Briefing
- Public Comment
- Approval of Minutes from September 18, 2023 Board Meeting
- Downeaster Performance Update
 - Operating Statistics
 - Marketing Initiatives
- Finance Update
 - Approval of September Variance Report
- Overview of FY23 Financial Audit
 - Christian Smith, WipFli
- FY24 Fare Plan Comment Review
- Project Updates
- Other Business
 - Insurance Broker procurement/award
 - 2023 Mitchell Award Nomination

Next Meeting: November 27, 2023



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

September 18, 2023

Directors in Attendance:

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

NNEPRA Staff in Attendance:

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

Interested Parties:

Mr. Irwin Gratz, Maine Public Radio; Mr. Luke Irvine, Amtrak

OPENING REMARKS

Meeting called to order at 1:01 pm and a safety briefing was provided.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Cohen opened the floor to public comment.

There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve August 14, 2023, Minutes

Motion: Ms. Alison Harris

Seconded: Mr. Alan Casavant

Approved: All

OVERVIEW OF DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE – Patricia Quinn

Patricia Quinn began by announcing that the month of August had been the best month for ridership and revenue in the history of the Downeaster. Patricia reviewed cancellations and noted that they were largely due to weather and mechanical related issues.

Mr. Brian Beeler provided a review of the inconvenience vouchers that had been distributed due to the cancellations and provided clarification to the Board that the vouchers expire sixty (60) days from the date issued.

Patricia noted that month-to-date, the ridership was pacing ahead of budget for the month of September.

MARKETING UPDATE – Taylor Belanger

Ms. Taylor Belanger provided an update on the recent photoshoot with Amtrak that took place in August both on the train and at the Saco station. Taylor commented that the shoot was a success and a lot of great content had been collected from it.

Taylor commented that the most recent digital campaign aired in August. Taylor highlighted the TV spots on WGME and WCSH where a fresh Downeaster commercial is featured during the weather segments. There have been positive public interactions and impressions on the new campaign.

Taylor provided an update on recent events and community outreach. Taylor noted a successful U-Day at the University of New Hampshire and provided an overview of the UNH athletics partnership. She explained that she would attend a select number of UNH hockey games and have a Downeaster booth with giveaways.

FINANCE REPORT – Olivia Richmond

Ms. Olivia Richmond provided a review of the July variance report. Patrica provided a review of Amtrak expenses.

Motion to approve July Variance Report

Motion: Ms. Carol Murray
Seconded: Mr. Alan Casavant
Accepted: All

FARE PLAN – Natalie Bogart

Ms. Natalie Bogart provided a review of the Fare Plan process. An updated plan was circulated to the Board based on comments from the August meeting which included increases to multi ride passes and some other city pairs.

Chairman Cohen lead the Board in a discussion regarding the changes made. Mr. Nate Molton provided feedback and noted that Commissioner Van Note appreciated the additional analysis.

Motion to open the Fare Plan to public comment period.

Motion: Ms. Carol Murray
Seconded: Ms. Maggie Fleming
Accepted: All

PROJECT UPDATES – Jim Russell

Mr. Jim Russell provided an update regarding the Wells Area Improvement Project noting that there would be no construction on the siding or platform until spring of 2024.

Ms. Catherine Davidson provided an update on the WAIP grant noting that FRA processing of administrative amendments was taking longer than expected, but that additional federal funding for the Project had been approved. Catherine also commented that the amendments will not change the scope of work.

Jim provided an update on the FY24 Capital Maintenance Program noting that CSX had provided draft work elements and anticipate that by the October meeting a fully executed CM24 agreement would be in effect.

Jim noted that Amtrak crews have expressed concern about the significant vegetation growth along the right of way and that discussions were ongoing with CSX to address the situation.

Jim also made note of two specific projects to take place at the BLF which include access road improvements and construction of a sand and salt shed.

STATION UPDATES – Brian Beeler

Brian noted there had been a well-attended Station Committee Meeting in August, hosted by the town of Exeter. Brian commented that NNEPRA continues to provide support to community leadership to help maintain the station facilities.

Brian briefly discussed the success of the Downeaster Ambassador program noting that there continues to be efforts to expand and increase volunteers.

OTHER BUSINESS – Patricia Quinn

Patricia reported that Amtrak had not yet responded to Chairman Cohen's memo regarding Amtrak's proposed equipment change. Additionally, Patricia updated the Board regarding the SAIPRC 209 Policy scheduled for review in October.

Natalie noted that NNEPRA would be going out for bid on insurance services and there would be an update at the next meeting regarding the results of the procurement.

The Board concluded with a discussion regarding the cadence and time of monthly meetings. All members were open to resuming a schedule of meeting on the fourth Monday of each month. Additionally, for the October meeting, all agreed to move the time from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Cohen opened the floor to public comment.

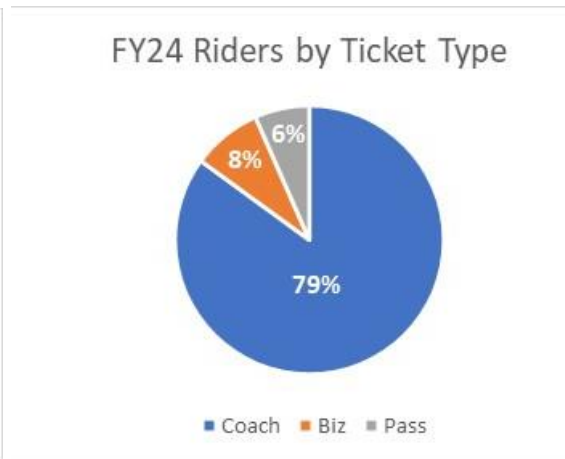
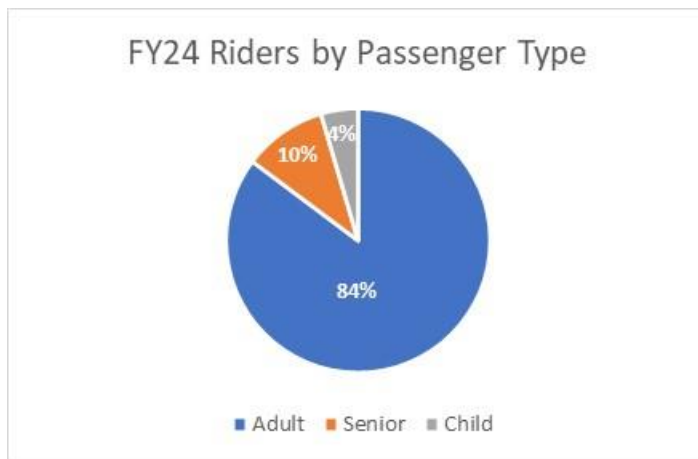
There was no public comment.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:20 pm.




Downeaster FY2024 Performance Report


Downeaster Performance Metrics - Last 12 Months									
Period	FY	Ridership				Revenue			
		Actual	Budget	Variance	vs. FY23	Actual	Budget	Variance	\$/Rider
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 To Date		172,639	156,943	15,696	115%	\$ 3,473,163	\$ 3,060,379	\$ 412,784	\$ 20.12
Jun 23	FY23	45,027	43,411	1,616	93%	\$ 900,524	\$ 835,654	\$ 64,870	\$ 20.00
May 23	FY23	39,276	39,986	-710	88%	\$ 754,624	\$ 769,732	\$ (15,108)	\$ 19.21
Apr 23	FY23	44,730	41,390	3,340	92%	\$ 831,278	\$ 796,756	\$ 34,522	\$ 18.58
Mar 23	FY23	38,277	37,430	847	80%	\$ 778,241	\$ 720,520	\$ 57,721	\$ 20.33
Feb 23	FY23	33,402	32,368	1,034	83%	\$ 636,652	\$ 623,084	\$ 13,568	\$ 19.06
Jan 23	FY23	35,435	30,370	5,065	93%	\$ 701,691	\$ 584,630	\$ 117,061	\$ 19.80
Dec 22	FY23	39,649	37,008	2,641	86%	\$ 830,010	\$ 712,404	\$ 117,606	\$ 20.93
Nov 22	FY23	43,636	38,058	5,578	92%	\$ 882,688	\$ 732,624	\$ 150,064	\$ 20.23
Oct 22	FY23	47,822	40,290	7,532	95%	\$ 1,009,651	\$ 775,590	\$ 234,061	\$ 21.11
FY23 Final		516,723	479,651	37,072	90%	\$ 10,420,681	\$ 9,233,283	\$ 1,137,637	\$ 20.17




Fiscal Year 2024 To Date




1,777



1,926



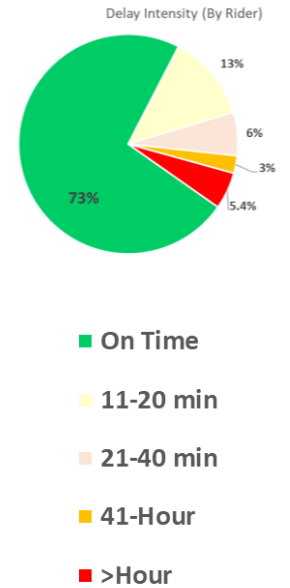
349



1,243

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	
Sep 23	FY24	297	4,521,123	60%	73%	18%	\$ 10.35	
Aug 23	FY24	300	5,444,093	65%	78%	18%	\$ 10.47	90
Jul 23	FY24	310	5,072,263	55%	68%	19%	\$ 10.10	91
FY24 To Date		907	15,037,479	60%	73%	18%	\$ 10.31	90%
Jun 23	FY23	300	3,737,241	80%	83%	18%	\$ 9.97	90
May 23	FY23	310	2,827,872	76%	87%	17%	\$ 9.46	88
Apr 23	FY23	300	3,513,832	85%	88%	18%	\$ 9.60	87
Mar 23	FY23	302	2,985,606	83%	90%	19%	\$ 9.49	88
Feb 23	FY23	240	2,701,879	70%	77%	17%	\$ 9.38	89
Jan 23	FY23	307	3,047,410	70%	84%	18%	\$ 9.11	90
Dec 22	FY23	308	3,548,669	69%	80%	19%	\$ 9.26	90
Nov 22	FY23	296	3,744,739	82%	92%	16%	\$ 8.76	88
Oct 22	FY23	310	4,094,733	60%	75%	16%	\$ 8.46	89
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
Aug	1,807	89.5	9.0	8.9	9.3	8.3	8.4	8.2	8.0	9.2	8.7
Jul	1,335	92.2	9.1	9.0	9.4	8.1	8.5	7.9	8.1	9.2	8.6
FY24	3,142	90.9	9.1	9.0	9.4	8.2	8.5	8.1	8.1	9.2	8.7
Jun	1,175	89.7	9.0	9.0	9.2	8.7	8.7	8.3	7.9	9.2	8.7
May	853	87.7	9.0	9.0	9.3	8.7	8.4	7.9	8.0	9.1	8.6
Apr	784	86.7	9.1	9.0	9.2	8.7	8.6	8.0	8.0	9.1	8.7
Mar	315	90.0	9.0	8.9	9.3	8.9	8.7	8.2	8.1	9.2	8.8
Feb	706	88.9	9.1	9.0	9.3	8.4	8.3	9.4	9.0	9.5	8.5
Jan	422	90.1	9.1	9.1	9.2	8.6	8.5	8.2	8.0	9.2	8.8
Dec	513	90.4	8.9	9.0	9.2	8.1	8.0	8.0	7.4	9.0	8.7
Nov	447	87.8	9.0	9.0	9.1	8.8	8.5	8.2	7.4	9.1	8.8
Oct	538	88.8	7.8	9.1	9.1	8.2	9.0	7.4	9.1	9.1	8.2
Sep	230	90.2	9.1	9.1	9.2	8.9	8.9	8.1	8	9.2	8.8
FY23 Year End	8,610	89.3	8.9	9.0	9.2	8.6	8.6	8.2	8.0	9.2	8.7

**NNEPRA Fiscal Year 2024
Operating Budget Variance Report
July 2023 - September 2023**

	September-23			Fiscal Year to Date September 23			
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance	%
Operating Revenue							
Amtrak Ticket Revenue	\$ 1,060,397	\$ 935,237	\$ 125,160	3,473,163.00	\$ 3,060,378	\$ 412,785	13%
Food Service Revenue	\$ 108,458	\$ 81,557	\$ 26,901	314,268.49	\$ 266,881	\$ 47,388	18%
Parking Lot Revenue	\$ 46,251	\$ 45,000	\$ 1,251	138,734.50	\$ 148,500	\$ (9,766)	-7%
Interest & Other Revenue	\$ 59,505	\$ 37,000	\$ 22,505	223,971.20	\$ 111,000	\$ 112,971	102%
Total Operating Revenue	\$ 1,274,611	\$ 1,098,794	\$ 175,817	\$ 4,150,137	\$ 3,586,758	\$ 563,379	16%
Expenses							
Administration							
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 78,288	\$ 95,833	\$ (17,545)	\$ 241,661	\$ 287,499	\$ (45,838)	-16%
Office Expenses	\$ 9,890	\$ 18,140	\$ (8,250)	\$ 48,932	\$ 49,770	\$ (838)	-2%
Professional Services	\$ 12,884	\$ 20,270	\$ (7,386)	\$ 44,590	\$ 49,290	\$ (4,700)	-10%
Insurance	\$ 4,346	\$ -	\$ 4,346	\$ 14,596	\$ -	\$ 14,596	N/A
Board Operations	\$ 1,397	\$ 1,250	\$ 147	\$ 3,649	\$ 3,750	\$ (101)	-3%
Total Admin Expenses	\$ 106,805	\$ 135,493	\$ (28,688)	\$ 353,429	\$ 390,309	\$ (36,880)	-9%
Train Operations							
Amtrak Train Operations	\$ 818,326	\$ 605,300	\$ 213,026	\$ 2,045,243	\$ 1,815,900	\$ 229,343	13%
Amtrak Equipment Maintenance	\$ 694,559	\$ 687,616	\$ 6,943	\$ 2,054,489	\$ 2,062,848	\$ (8,359)	0%
Amtrak Support Services	\$ 278,501	\$ 167,877	\$ 110,624	\$ 647,184	\$ 527,834	\$ 119,351	23%
Train Fuel Cost	\$ 254,836	\$ 216,216	\$ 38,620	\$ 728,254	\$ 663,062	\$ 65,192	10%
Other Train Operations	\$ 122,312	\$ 170,443	\$ (48,131)	\$ 444,713	\$ 511,329	\$ (66,616)	-13%
Facilities	\$ 27,757	\$ 34,694	\$ (6,937)	\$ 92,736	\$ 126,149	\$ (33,413)	-26%
FY24 Capital Maintenance	\$ 123	\$ -	\$ 123	\$ 511	\$ -	\$ 511	N/A
Total Train Operations	\$ 2,196,414	\$ 1,882,146	\$ 314,268	\$ 6,013,130	\$ 5,707,122	\$ 306,008	5%
Station Operations							
Portland Station	\$ 43,907	\$ 40,371	\$ 3,536	\$ 128,166	\$ 121,499	\$ 6,667	5%
Platform Insurance	\$ 16,854	\$ -	\$ 16,854	\$ 50,561	\$ 51,228	\$ (667)	-1%
Station Platform Leases	\$ 3,798	\$ 4,020	\$ (222)	\$ 11,600	\$ 12,060	\$ (460)	-4%
Station Improvements	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 321	\$ -	\$ 321	N/A
Total Station Operations	\$ 64,559	\$ 44,391	\$ 20,168	\$ 190,649	\$ 184,787	\$ 5,862	3%
Total Food Service	\$ 131,466	\$ 114,989	\$ 16,478	\$ 339,957	\$ 336,504	\$ 3,452	1%
Total Marketing	\$ 30,353	\$ 34,442	\$ (4,089)	\$ 81,304	\$ 105,017	\$ (23,713)	-23%
Total Expenses	\$ 2,529,597	\$ 2,211,461	\$ 318,136	\$ 6,978,469	\$ 6,723,740	\$ 254,729	4%
Add'l Funding Required	\$ 1,254,986	\$ 1,112,667	\$ 142,319	\$ 2,828,332	\$ 3,136,982	\$ (308,650)	-10%
Downeaster Ridership	52,994	47,961	5,033				
Overall cost recovery	50%	50%		59%	53%		
Café Recovery	82%	71%		92%	79%		