
Board Briefing Materials

October 28, 2024

Location:

*University of Southern Maine, Abromson Community Center
Room 216
88 Bedford Street, Portland ME 04101*

3:00pm Public Session



For More Information

 207-780-1000 x 105

 info@nnepra.com



**NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND
PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY**

NNEPRA BOARD of DIRECTORS

October 28, 2024

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority

Draft Agenda

3:00pm Public Session

- Welcome and Safety Briefing
- Public Comment
- Approval of Minutes from August 26, 2024 Board Meeting
- FY2024 Financial Audit Review
 - Presented by Christian Smith, Wipfli
- Finance updates
 - August Budget Variance Report
 - FY25 Operating Budget Amendment
- 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
 - Capital Maintenance Projects
 - Fed State Partnership
 - Station Improvement Projects
 - Portland Station Relocation/West Falmouth
 - Corridor ID
 - Rockland Service
- Other Business
- Public Comment

Next Meeting: November 25, 2024

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

August 26, 2024

Directors in Attendance:

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

NNEPRA Staff in Attendance:

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

Interested Parties:

Ms. Patty Barber, Rail Passengers Association; Mr. Peter Cole; Mr. Luke Irvine, Amtrak; Mr. Irwin Gratz, Maine Public Radio; Mr. Mark Bickford; Mr. Bruce Sleeper, TrainRiders Northeast; Mr. Kevin Chittenden, Amtrak; Mr. Dana Knapp, Concord Coach Lines

OPENING REMARKS

Meeting called to order at 3:00 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 deferred to Mr. Nate Moulton who responded that an update would be provided.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve June 24, 2024 Minutes as Amended

Motion: Ms. Alison Harris

Seconded: Ms. Maggie Fleming

Approved: All

OVERVIEW OF FY2024 DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE AND BUDGET VARIANCE – Patricia Quinn

Patricia provided an overview of FY2024 Downeaster performance, noting the service had its best year ever in ridership and revenue. Patricia provided highlights including the FY24 Fare Increase and the Next Stop marketing campaign. Customer Satisfaction (CSI) scores were consistently high throughout the year and the Cafe had a successful year with strong performance and management of their budget.

Patricia noted that the cost adjustments resulting from the 209 Policy change had been settled in June. Chairman Cohen asked if any additional changes to the policy were expected. Patricia responded that there were no changes expected, however the FY25 rates have been approved and will be incorporated into a modified FY25 budget to be presented in September or October. Patricia noted that the budget adjustments will not require additional funding from MaineDOT.

Patricia commented OTP and COTP for the months of June, July and August have struggled due to construction projects, signal issues and heat restrictions.

Patricia provided an update on various station improvement projects to take place within the coming months including the canopy removal at Portland station as well as concrete and steel cleaning at Brunswick and Freeport stations.

Motion to approve FY 2024 Budget Variance

Motion: Ms. Maggie Fleming
Second: Ms. Alison Harris
Approved: All

OVERVIEW OF FY2025 STRATEGIC WORKPLAN – PATRICIA QUINN

Patricia provided the Board with a draft FY25 workplan for review and feedback. Additionally, she gave an overview of FY24 strategic goals that had been met including increased safety awareness, performance monitoring and exceeding CSI standards.

Director Nate Moulton asked if the workplan initiatives were more aspirations than goals, noting consistent challenges such as meeting OTP targets.

Chairman Cohen led the Board and Amtrak personal in a discussion regarding OTP tracking and reporting. Mr. Luke Irvine with Amtrak commented that there continues to be a multitude of different components that cause OTP delays; however, with installation of PTC there is hope that these issues will be reduced. Director Alison Harris commented that inclement weather seems to be a contributing factor to OTP issues as well as signal failures.

Chairman Cohen inquired about the effectiveness of delay notification to passengers. Luke commented that Amtrak has improved technology and Mr. Brian Beeler commented that there are six (6) stations that have PIDS displays that present delay notifications. Also, in addition to the Amtrak and Downeaster website service alerts, there is an email / phone relay system for stations that have hosts. However, for stations that are not staffed, it is difficult to ensure onsite service alerts.

Chairman Cohen closed the discussion noting that the Board is open to supporting the FY25 workplan efforts.

MARKETING UPDATE – Taylor Belanger

Ms. Taylor Belanger provided FY24 recap, noting that website engagement is up 18%. Taylor updated the Board on marketing initiatives and gave an overview of paid, visual, and traditional media strategies for FY25. NNEPRA continues to perform above average on numerous social media platforms, leading to ticket sales. Taylor provided an overview of the FY25 campaign strategy.

HORIZON UPDATE – Patricia Quinn

Patricia stated NNEPRA and Amtrak continue working toward finalizing the agreement to transition the entire fleet. NNEPRA’s attorney, Nat Rosenblatt, is working to write the conditions of the agreement and Patricia has authorization to send the agreement once finalized. Amtrak is working with a vendor to install bike racks and improve WiFi in the Horizon fleet. Luke commented that the bridge plate issues have been resolved.

PROJECT UPDATES – Jim Russell

Mr. Jim Russell provided an update on the Wells project noting a service outage from August 18 – 25 had been positive to progress the double track extension portion of the project and complete turnout and cross over work related on the Portland Supplemental project.

Jim commented that NNEPRA is working with CSX and the FRA to finalize the Fed State Partnership project agreement. Jim noted that the project had been slotted for the fall 2024, however, based on recent discussions with CSX, the project will likely happen next construction season.

Patricia provided an update on the Portland Station Relocation (PSR) project, noting that a second public meeting had been held on August 13th and NNEPRA had received 40 comments regarding the project. Patricia noted that MaineDOT has agreed to fund preliminary engineering and NEPA work to progress the project. Stakeholder outreach to local businesses continues and a meeting with the City of Portland is scheduled for September. Director Cohen inquired if there is further action that needs to be taken by the Board. Patricia responded not at this time and the next steps are for VHB to finalize a report documenting the process along with a site analysis explaining why Site 3 best meets the project needs.

Patricia noted that the West Falmouth project is still in the early conceptual stages and the next step is to schedule a meeting with Falmouth Hannaford and coordinate with other property tenants.

Ms. Catherine Davidson provided an update on the CID program noting that a Request for Proposals for the Service Development Plan had been issued and responses were due on September 6th. Catherine noted that a total of 18 questions had been submitted and there seems to be a lot of interest in the project.

Nate provided an update regarding the Rockland project, noting that Midcoast Rail filed with the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to give up the franchise. Nate explained that the RFP to solicit alternative operators was in the final stages of review and is anticipated to be publicized early September 2024. Passenger and freight service to Rockland is on hold during the RFP process.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Cohen opened the floor to public comment.





Mr. Mark Bickford of Portland commented that the initial Portland Station Relocation waiting room footprint seems small. Patricia responded that NNEPRA is still in the early stages of the process and that the information presented was conceptual only.

End public comment.

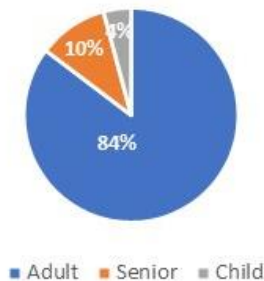
Meeting Adjourned at 4:43 pm.

Downeaster Performance Metrics - Last 12 Months									
Period	FY	Ridership				Revenue			
		Actual	Budget	Variance	vs. FY23	Actual	Budget	Variance	\$/Rider
Sep 24	FY25	51,640	45,045	6,595	0%	\$ 1,216,884	\$ 1,045,246	\$ 171,638	\$23.56
Aug 24	FY25	56,667	62,856	-6,189	92%	\$ 1,372,957	\$ 1,458,268	\$ (85,311)	\$24.23
Jul 24	FY25	57,854	59,034	-1,180	100%	\$ 1,368,838	\$ 1,369,578	\$ (740)	\$23.66
FY25 To Date		166,161	166,935	-774	100%	3,958,679	3,873,092	85,587	\$23.82

Jun 24	FY24	50,853	48,530	2,323	113%	\$ 1,191,491	\$ 965,829	\$ 225,662	\$23.43
May 24	FY24	46,412	45,167	1,245	118%	\$ 1,074,148	\$ 880,764	\$ 193,384	\$23.14
Apr 24	FY24	48,976	51,405	-2,429	109%	\$ 1,156,686	\$ 989,546	\$ 167,140	\$23.62
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	48,976	51,405	-2,429	116%	\$ 1,156,686	\$ 989,546	\$ 167,140	\$23.62
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 Total		594,408	559,063	35,345	127%	13,121,532	10,876,587	2,244,945	\$22.07

Fiscal Year 2025 To Date			
 1,670	 2,252	 345	 1,171

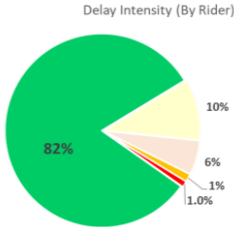
FY25
Riders by Passenger Type



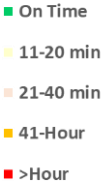
FY25
Riders by Ticket Type



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 24	FY25	294	4,384,718	70%	82%	17%	\$ 10.28	93
Aug 24	FY25	293	5,010,367	64%	75%	18%	\$ 10.47	90
Jul 24	FY25	300	5,444,093	65%	78%	18%	\$ 10.47	90
FY25 To Date		887	14,839,178	66%	78%	18%	\$ 10.41	91



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	90
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	4,714,176	69%	80%	16%	\$ 9.77	92
Sep 23	FY24	297	4,521,123	60%	73%	18%	\$ 10.35	89
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 Total		3,622	52,332,352	71%	81%	18%	\$ 10.43	90



FY 2025 Downeaster Customer Satisfaction												
	Sample Size	Overall Score	Train			OTP	Train Status Info		Café	WiFi	Station Staff	Station Overall
			Comfort	Cleanliness	Crew							
Sep	1,126	92.8	87	89	93	87	88	77	72	94	83	
Aug	786	89.7	86	86	91	75	79	80	81	87	86	
Jul	1,335	92.2	91	90	94	81	85	79	81	92	86	
FY25 to Date	1,335	91.6	87.9	88.4	92.7	81.1	84.0	78.7	78.0	91.0	85.0	
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	
FY24 Year End	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 2025
Operating Budget Variance Report
July & August 2024

	July & August 2024			Fiscal Year to Date July & August 2024			
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance	Percent
Revenues							
Operating Revenue							
Amtrak Ticket Revenue	\$ 2,741,795	\$ 2,827,846	\$ (86,051)	\$ 2,741,795	\$ 2,827,846	\$ (86,051)	3%
Food Service Revenue	\$ 197,305	\$ 253,592	\$ (56,287)	\$ 197,305	\$ 253,592	\$ (56,287)	22%
Parking Lot Revenue	\$ 106,784	\$ 125,600	\$ (18,816)	\$ 106,784	\$ 125,600	\$ (18,816)	14%
Interest and Other Revenue	\$ 139,732	\$ 110,035	\$ 29,697	\$ 139,732	\$ 110,035	\$ 29,697	-27%
Total Operating Revenues	\$ 3,185,616	\$ 3,317,073	\$ (131,457)	\$ 3,185,616	\$ 3,317,073	\$ (131,457)	4%
Expenses							
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 187,727	\$ 200,509	\$ (12,782)	\$ 187,727	\$ 200,509	\$ (12,782)	-6%
Office Expenses	\$ 32,207	\$ 35,154	\$ (2,947)	\$ 32,207	\$ 35,154	\$ (2,947)	-8%
Professional Services	\$ 25,097	\$ 27,840	\$ (2,743)	\$ 25,097	\$ 27,840	\$ (2,743)	-10%
Insurance	\$ 8,710	\$ 10,100	\$ (1,390)	\$ 8,710	\$ 10,100	\$ (1,390)	-14%
Board Operations	\$ 3,339	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,839	\$ 3,339	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,839	123%
Total Administration Expenses	\$ 257,080	\$ 275,103	\$ (18,023)	\$ 257,080	\$ 275,103	\$ (18,023)	-7%
Train Operations							
Amtrak Train Operations	\$ 1,166,321	\$ 1,311,000	\$ (144,679)	\$ 1,166,321	\$ 1,311,000	\$ (144,679)	-11%
Amtrak Equipment Maintenance	\$ 1,363,187	\$ 1,501,688	\$ (138,501)	\$ 1,363,187	\$ 1,501,688	\$ (138,501)	-9%
Amtrak Support Services	\$ 392,670	\$ 394,034	\$ (1,364)	\$ 392,670	\$ 394,034	\$ (1,364)	0%
Train Fuel Cost	\$ 364,893	\$ 459,702	\$ (94,809)	\$ 364,893	\$ 459,702	\$ (94,809)	-21%
Other Train Operations	\$ 297,307	\$ 352,434	\$ (55,127)	\$ 297,307	\$ 352,434	\$ (55,127)	-16%
Facilities	\$ 83,351	\$ 73,000	\$ 10,351	\$ 83,351	\$ 73,000	\$ 10,351	14%
Capital Maintenance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%
Total Train Operations	\$ 3,667,729	\$ 4,095,858	\$ (428,129)	\$ 3,667,729	\$ 4,095,858	\$ (428,129)	-10%
Station Operations							
Portland Station Rent	\$ 88,634	\$ 84,996	\$ 3,638	\$ 88,634	\$ 84,996	\$ 3,638	4%
Platform Insurance	\$ 33,036	\$ 35,858	\$ (2,822)	\$ 33,036	\$ 35,858	\$ (2,822)	-8%
Station Platform Leases	\$ 7,683	\$ 8,442	\$ (759)	\$ 7,683	\$ 8,442	\$ (759)	-9%
Station Improvements	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%
Total Station Operations	\$ 129,353	\$ 129,296	\$ 57	\$ 129,353	\$ 129,296	\$ 57	0%
Total Food Service	\$ 225,553	\$ 262,021	\$ (36,468)	\$ 225,553	\$ 262,021	\$ (36,468)	-14%
Total Marketing	\$ 59,174	\$ 86,667	\$ (27,493)	\$ 59,174	\$ 86,667	\$ (27,493)	-32%
Total Expenses	\$ 4,338,889	\$ 4,848,945	\$ (510,056)	\$ 4,338,889	\$ 4,848,945	\$ (510,056)	-11%
Add'l Funding Required	\$(1,153,273)	\$ (1,531,872)	\$ 378,599	\$(1,153,273)	\$(1,531,872)	\$ 378,599	24%
Downeaster Ridership	114,521	121,890	(7,369)	114,521	121,890	(7,369)	
Overall Budget Cost Recovery	73%	68%		73%	68%		
Café Cost Recovery	87%	97%		87%	97%		