

MEMORANDUM

TO: 2019 Comprehensive Plan Committee
FROM: Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner
DATE: November 6, 2017
SUBJECT: Public bus preliminary research

Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan Committee will begin review of the draft Transportation Chapter in the comprehensive plan. Several comments have been made by the public and committee members regarding providing public transportation to Cape. Below is a summary of some preliminary research.

Research framework

Bus routes are typically laid out to destinations where riders will be concentrated. For example, the town center might be chosen as a destination in Cape Elizabeth where bus service would be desirable. Connections to Mill Creek in South Portland or downtown Portland may be the goal.

I spoke with Carl Eppich, Senior Transportation Planner with the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS) and Art Handman, Director of Transportation for the City of South Portland, to get some preliminary information about expanding bus service to Cape Elizabeth.

Logistics

The closest existing bus stop to the town center is on Route 77 at the intersection with Sawyer Rd in South Portland. This bus stop is part of the South Portland Bus service route 21. Route 21 includes Southern Maine Community College (SMCC) and Congress Street, Portland. Buses run this route every 1/2 hour and it is pretty full, averaging 100 riders. Adding to the existing route would increase commute time on an already long route.

Art suggested we might need to consider a new route "21A", which runs between the town center and South Portland (maybe with a Mill Creek destination). Transfer to a bus to Portland is assumed.

Costs

The South Portland bus service just updated its hourly cost calculations to arrive at \$70/hr. Offering bus service from the town center to Mill Creek once an hour,

from 7 am, to 7 pm would be 12 hours of service. On the weekends, service would decrease to once every 2 hours.

7am-7pm/hour: $12 \text{ hrs} \times \$70/\text{hr} \times 5 \text{ days} = \$4,200$

7am-7pm/2 hours: $6 \text{ hrs} \times \$70/\text{hr} \times 2 \text{ days} = \840

This calculates to a total weekly cost of \$5,040 and total annual cost of \$262,080.

Costs can then be offset by revenues. An adult fare costs \$1.50 and a monthly pass is \$45. Assuming 2 dozen monthly passes, revenues of less than \$2,000 might be available to offset expenses.

These numbers are speculative, and do not include state and federal subsidies. Subsidies are based on factors such as population density in proximity to the bus stop, density of jobs, concentration of low-income populations, and other factors which likely would not apply in Cape Elizabeth.

Based on this limited information, providing bus service to the town center would require a town subsidy of approximately \$260,000 annually.