

1. Introduction

South Portland Bus Service (SPBS) and Shuttlebus-ZOOM provide local bus service in Biddeford, Saco, Old Orchard Beach, South Portland, and to Scarborough, downtown Portland, and the Maine Mall. Services include local routes, ZOOM turnpike express routes, and a summer trolley route. The two systems provide connections to each other and to Portland's METRO services.

The communities that are served by the ShuttleBus and South Portland Bus Service have been growing and changing rapidly. With the notable exception of the relatively new ZOOM turnpike express service, improvements to transit services have not kept pace with the rate of change in the area. This study was undertaken to identify and develop changes to provide transit services that better reflect current needs.

In addition, the communities that were the focus of this study lie within a larger Southern Maine region that is also growing and changing rapidly. As this growth occurs, the region's communities are becoming more intertwined and transit needs have increased. To serve these needs, and provide better services in a more efficient manner, the need for better coordination among existing and new services has become apparent. In response, the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS) Committee has undertaken a Regional Transit Coordination Study that has developed a "4C" process of Communication, Coordination, Collaboration, and Consolidation. This study recommends improvements to help achieve these regional transit coordination objectives.

OVERVIEW OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

South Portland and Shuttlebus-ZOOM services provide a basic level of transit service that provide for travel throughout the South Portland/Saco Bay area. Most densely developed areas and major attractions are served, and direct service is provided to Portland from most areas.

However, the services that are provided are complicated. Most are circuitous, a number of route deviations or alternative alignments are operated on most routes, and headways are irregular. There is also very little schedule coordination between routes, which limits travel opportunities.

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED CHANGES

The proposed changes described in this report (in Chapter 5) are designed to simplify service and make it much easier to use, and include both systemwide and route-by-route changes. The route-by-route changes are designed to:

- Make service more direct.
- Make service simpler.
- Minimize route deviations.
- Eliminate duplication of service.
- Operate service at clockface headways.
- Make service more understandable.

The route-by-route changes also include the elimination of poorly utilized services. In addition, relatively minor span of service adjustments would be made on some routes. These changes are necessary to provide the resources necessary to improve service in higher demand areas and to address reliability problems.

The proposed systemwide improvements are designed to create a more seamless system and to implement PACTS recommendations.

OVERVIEW OF STUDY

This study consisted of a comprehensive examination of the local transit market, existing services, and the development and evaluation of service improvement alternatives. The results of this work are presented in the following five chapters:

1. Introduction
2. Market Analysis
3. Evaluation of Existing Services
4. Service Improvement Alternatives and Evaluation of Alternatives
5. Recommendations