



Improvement Status

Increasing ridership on transit is a challenge in a state with no large cities. Nevertheless, most transit systems in New Hampshire have seen their ridership increase. A number of factors are responsible, and these vary according to local circumstances. COAST has expanded its services, including new commuter express bus services, and has focused on how it disseminates information to current riders and potential new riders. Advance Transit has used local funding sources and partnerships to make its service fare-free, which has increased ridership tremendously. Changes to schedules to make them more convenient, service expansion, new buses, and other improvements have increased ridership in Nashua, Concord, and Claremont. All public systems continue to work with the local communities which they service to become more widely known and recognized for the high quality of safe, convenient and affordable service they provide.

It is difficult to anticipate future funding that will support transit improvements and in turn lead to increased ridership. New Hampshire is more reliant on Federal Transit Administration funding than most states, given a lack of funding at the state level. A prudent projection for future ridership is for modest gains as local systems are able to make incremental improvements, but goals for future years would be more ambitious. With additional funds, transit could be expanded to unserved areas, and the frequency and convenience of existing services could be improved, leading to larger gains in ridership.

Increase Mobility

Transit Ridership

Purpose:

Transit ridership is a common measure of the utilization of transit service nationwide. Ridership measures one-way trips, i.e. boardings on transit vehicles. Transit systems report ridership, among other measures, to the Federal Transit Administration through the National Transit Database. Increasing ridership shows that more people are riding on transit, either because existing systems are attracting more riders, or because the availability of transit is expanding with longer hours, greater frequency or geographical reach, or a combination of factors.

Although transit ridership numbers in New Hampshire are small when compared to those of large urban transit systems, ridership has shown significant growth in recent years. Establishing targets for future ridership will provide a measure of the progress the state and local transit systems are making in increasing the options people in New Hampshire have for personal mobility.

Data:

A variety of factors influence transit ridership. Some are positive factors, such as the availability of transit convenient to home and workplaces or other destinations. The frequency of service is a major factor, along with the service schedule – how early and late the transit service operates. Amenities such as bus shelters can be important in inclement weather, and passenger information in the form of schedules or even “next bus” arrival message signs can encourage the public

to ride. Overall, a perception that transit is safe, convenient and reliable is critical to building ridership. Negative incentives such as the cost of gasoline, and especially availability of parking at the destination can also be strong factors in influencing people to take transit.

In New Hampshire, local transit agencies are responsible for managing their systems. These can be municipal, legislatively established, or private nonprofit organizations. Decisions on routes and schedules, capital improvements and changes to service are made locally and are highly dependent on available funding.

Transit Ridership

