

METRO

ROUTE 1 CONGRESS STREET

Route Overview

Route 1 connects Portland’s East End residential communities with downtown Portland, Maine Medical Center and Mercy at the Fore, Thompson’s Point, and the Portland Transportation Center (PTC). It also connects low-income communities in Bayside to medical, employment, and transportation opportunities west of downtown Portland, albeit with some walking required. This is the only route serving the Eastern Promenade.

Alignment

Route 1 operates bi-directionally on Congress Street, with clockwise terminal loops around the Eastern Promenade and on Fore River Parkway to serve Mercy at the Fore and the Barber Foods factory. These loops require some riders to travel out of direction and lengthens trip times, especially to and from the Portland Transportation Center. There is also a small loop to facilitate the PTC turnaround and serve Thompson’s Point.



Connections

Transfers with all other METRO routes except Route 3 Westbrook Crosstown, all SPBS routes, and BSOOB Transit’s Routes 60 Green and 70 Purple/ZOOM can be made at the PULSE. Connections with the Downeaster and Concord Coach Lines can be made at the Portland Transportation Center.

Schedule

On weekdays and Saturdays, Route 1 operates every 30 minutes for most of the day, with less frequent service—up to 60 minutes—early and late in the day. Sunday service operates every 60 minutes. Weekday and Saturday service operates for long hours, from 5:08 AM to 11:10 PM, and Sunday service operates for much shorter hours, from 7:43 AM to 6:35 PM.

Schedule Summary

	Span of Service	Headways (mins.)	On-Time Performance
Weekdays	5:08 AM to 11:10 PM	30-60	85%
Saturday	5:08 AM to 11:10 PM	30-60	
Sunday	7:43 AM to 6:35 PM	60	

Note: Span and frequency are from February 2022 data, while revenue hours, ridership, and OTP are from October 2019 data.

On-Time Performance

Route 1 on-time performance is higher than the METRO system’s route average of 76% but does not meet the agency’s standard of 90%. Traffic congestion impacts on-time performance at the Congress Street at St. John Street intersection and on Thompson’s Point.

Ridership and Productivity

Ridership and Productivity by Day

In October 2019, Route 1 carried 711 passengers on weekdays, 524 on Saturdays, and 200 on Sundays. It had the sixth-highest ridership in the METRO system during weekdays, fourth highest on Saturdays, and fifth highest on Sundays. Productivity, in terms of boardings per revenue hour, was highest on weekdays at 22. The route was slightly less productive on weekends, with 16 boardings per hour on Saturday and 19 on Sunday.

Weekday Ridership by Stop

In October 2019, Route 1’s ridership was generally well distributed along the route, but with a few locations with higher or lower ridership. The highest ridership stops were:

- Congress Street at the PULSE, with about 160 boardings and alightings
- Congress Street at Forest Avenue, with 105 boardings and alightings
- Union Station Plaza, with 45 boardings and alightings
- Congress Street at North Street, with 79 boardings and alightings

Areas with low ridership include the Eastern Promenade and at Mercy at the Fore.

Weekday Ridership by Stop Map: Inbound



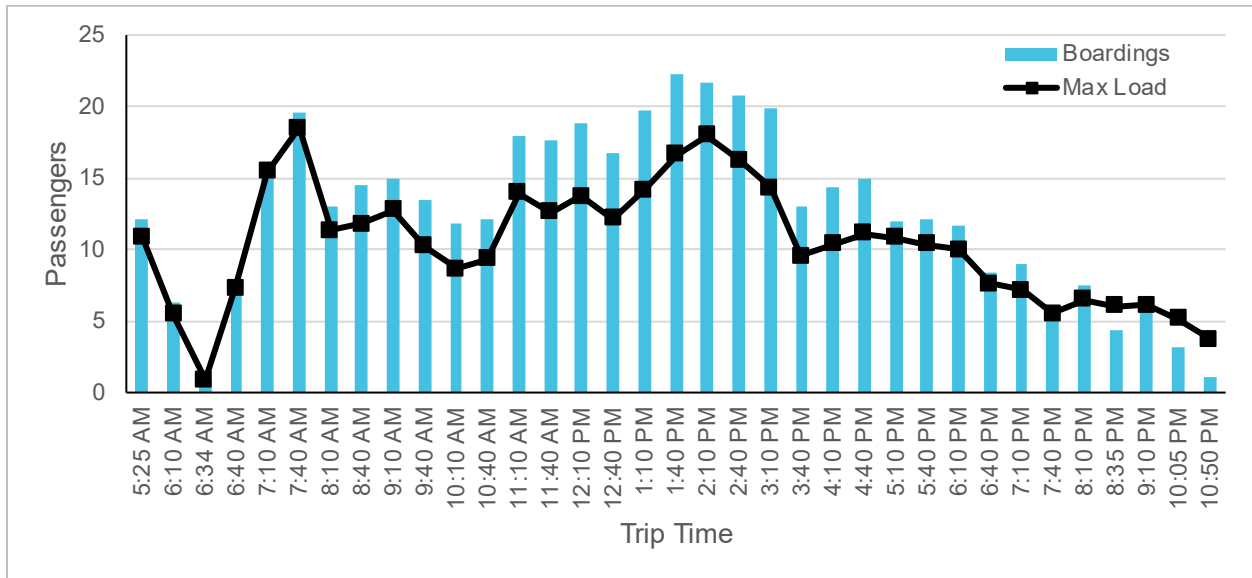
Weekday Ridership by Stop Map: Outbound



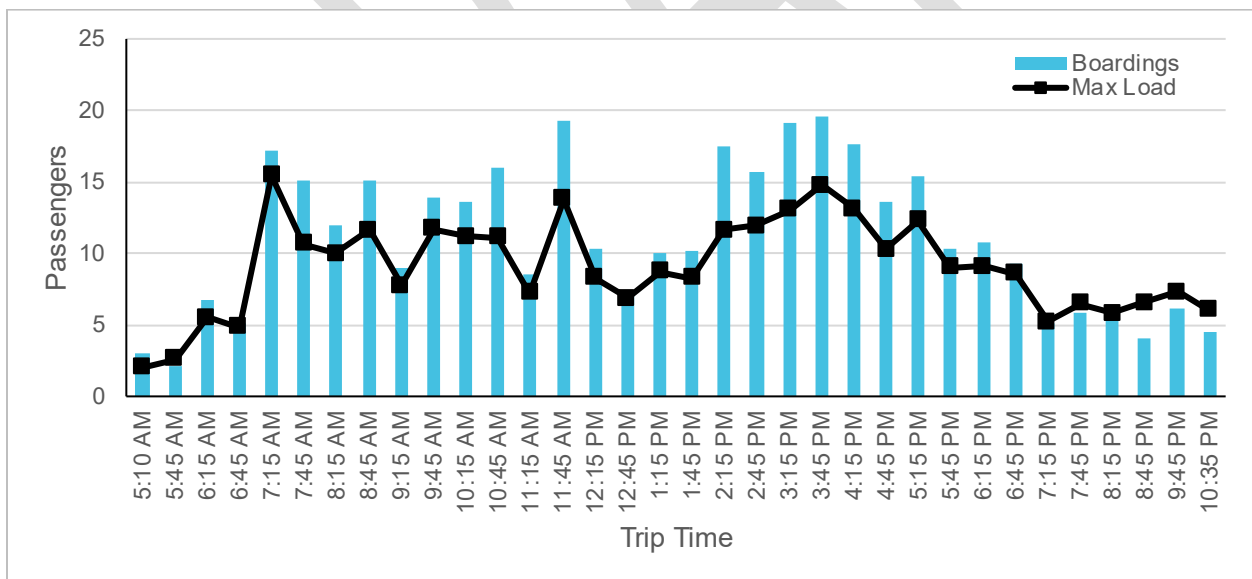
Weekday Ridership by Trip

October 2019 Route 1 ridership was highest from approximately 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM, with ridership slowly declining throughout the evening. The last trips carried very few passengers.

Weekday Boardings by Trip: Inbound (October 2019)



Weekday Boardings by Trip: Outbound (October 2019)



Overall Service Assessment

Strengths

- Route 1 Serves the key Congress Street corridor, and ridership is generally good along most of the route.
- The route provides service every 30 minutes throughout most of the day, which is among the best service provided in the region.

Weaknesses

- The large, one-way loops through Munjoy Hill and Valley Street have very few riders.
- There is low ridership on the Eastern Promenade and at some stops along the Valley Street neighborhood loop, as well as at Mercy at the Fore.
- The Mercy at the Fore loop increases travel times to and from the Portland Transportation Center.

Opportunities

Opportunities to strengthen Route 1 are listed below. Some suggestions may be contradictory, as there is usually more than one approach to improving a route.

- Discontinue the Mercy at the Fore loop to improve service between the Portland Transportation Center and downtown Portland (and serve Mercy at the Fore and other destinations on the loop with one or more other routes, for example Route 8).
- Reduce the size of the Eastern Promenade loop to provide more direct travel for most riders. Nearly all Munjoy Hill residents would still be within walking distance of transit.
- Improve service frequencies to every 15 minutes during peak periods.
- There may be bi-directional alternatives to serving Mercy at the Fore and/or Barber Foods.
- Along with other route changes, re-route Route 1 via the Portland Ferry Terminal to provide a one-seat connection between the Portland Transportation Center and the ferry terminal.