

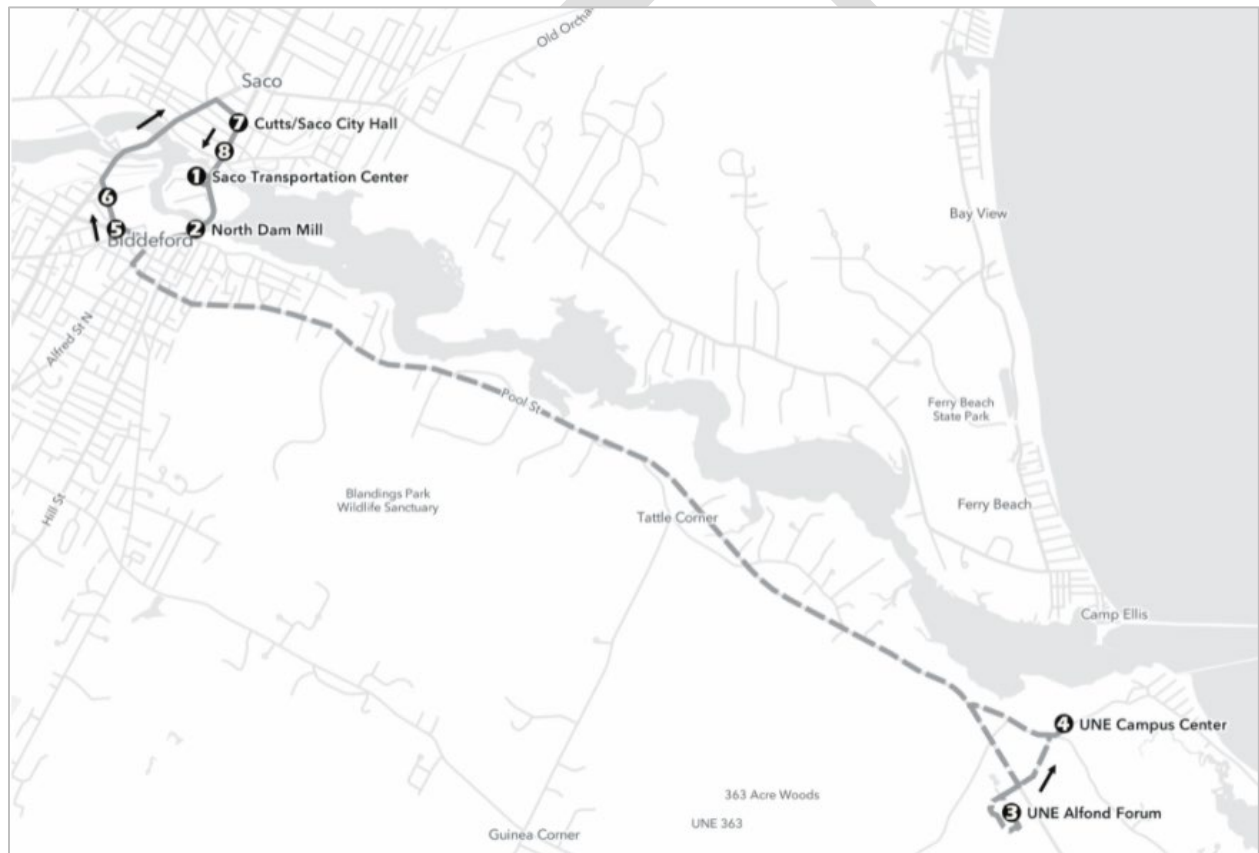
BIDDEFORD-SACO-OLD ORCHARD BEACH TRANSIT

54 SILVER/UNE

Route Overview

Route 54 Silver/UNE is one route with two distinct patterns: a downtown circulator loop for Biddeford and Saco, and bi-directional service to University of New England (UNE). This is a new, zero-fare route that combines the former Yellow Line with a new downtown circulator. The route is funded through a partnership with UNE and the cities of Biddeford and Saco.

Route Map



Alignment

The Biddeford-Saco downtown circulator pattern is a clockwise loop through downtown Biddeford and Saco, with service on Main Street, Lincoln Street, Elm Street, and Cutts Avenue. Service to UNE operates along Alfred Street and Pool Street (Route 9). Both patterns use the Saco Transportation Center as their hub.

Connections

Transfers to all BSOOB Transit bus routes (except for one pattern of Route 70), the YCCAC Southern Maine Connector, and the Downeaster are possible at the Saco Transportation Center.

Schedule

The downtown circulator and UNE patterns operate with very different schedules but are presented on the same timetable.

The downtown circulator mostly operates frequently on all days, with predominant frequencies of every 15 minutes, but intermittent 45-minute headways when the circulator bus operates a round trip to UNE. The UNE trip headways are between 60 and 90 minutes. These patterns hold on all days, except the overall spans of service are shorter on Sundays than on weekdays and Saturdays:

- Downtown circulator service operates from 6:45 AM to 10:08 PM on weekdays and Saturdays and from 6:45 AM to 7:53 AM on Sundays.
- UNE service operates from 6:15 AM to 9:57 PM on weekdays and Saturdays and from 6:15 AM to 8:27 PM on Sundays.

Schedule Summary

	Span of Service	Headways (mins.)	One-Way Trips
UNE			
Weekdays	6:45 AM to 10:08 PM	60-90	14
Saturday	6:45 AM to 10:08 PM	60-90	14
Sunday	6:45 AM to 7:53 PM	60-90	13
Downtown Circulator			
Weekdays	6:15 AM to 9:57 PM	15-45	36
Saturday	6:15 AM to 9:57 PM	15-45	36
Sunday	6:15 AM to 8:27 PM	15-30	31

Note: Span and frequency from February 2022 schedules. Ridership is from October 2019 Yellow Line data.

Ridership and Productivity

Ridership by Day

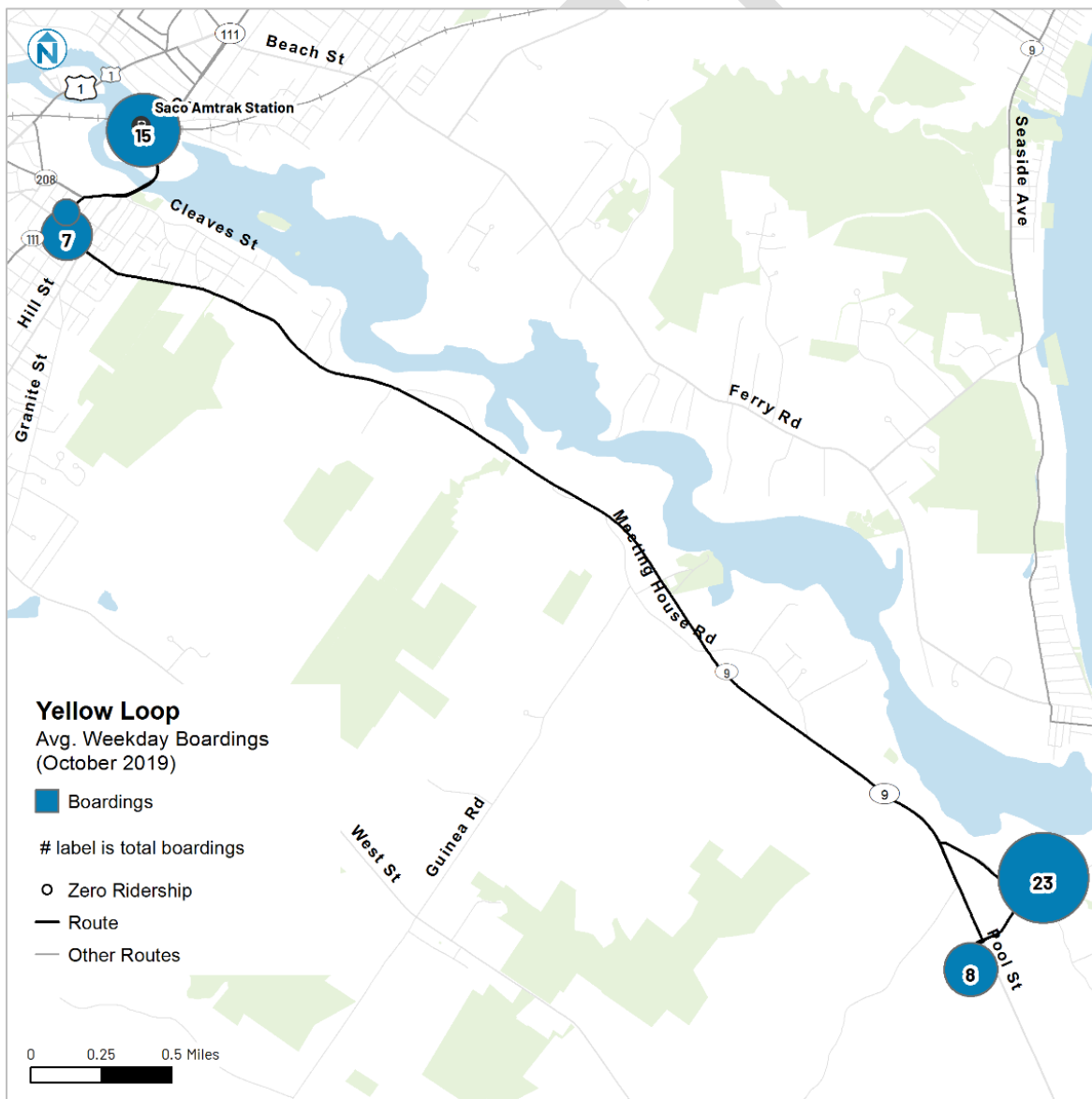
Since Route 54 was implemented in August 2021, pre-pandemic ridership figures are not available. However, October 2019 ridership on the Yellow Line, which previously ran between Saco and UNE, was only 55 passengers on weekdays, 51 on Saturdays, and 57 on Sundays.

Ridership data from spring 2021 indicate very little ridership on the new circulator pattern, with an average of three weekday boardings per trip, and 45 to 50 total average weekday boardings.

Weekday Ridership by Segment

The map below shows ridership by segment, where the size of the bubble indicates the average weekday boardings that occur on the segment of the route near the location of the bubble. In October 2019, most Yellow Line boardings occurred at UNE main campus and Saco Transportation Center. There were fewer than 10 boardings in downtown Biddeford and at Harold Alfond Forum stop.

Weekday Ridership by Segment Map

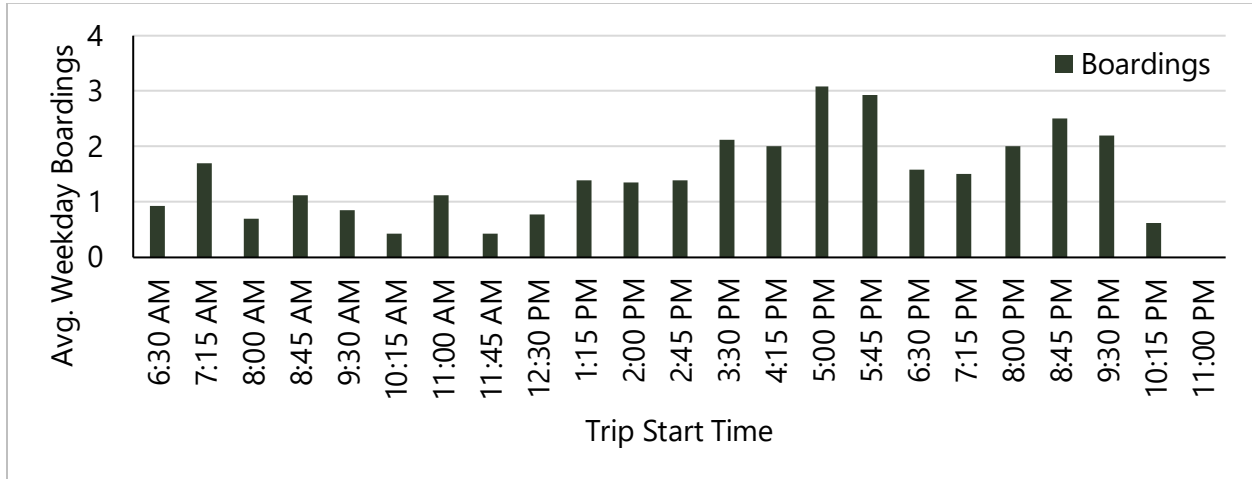


Note: Due to data limitations, map does not show every stop.

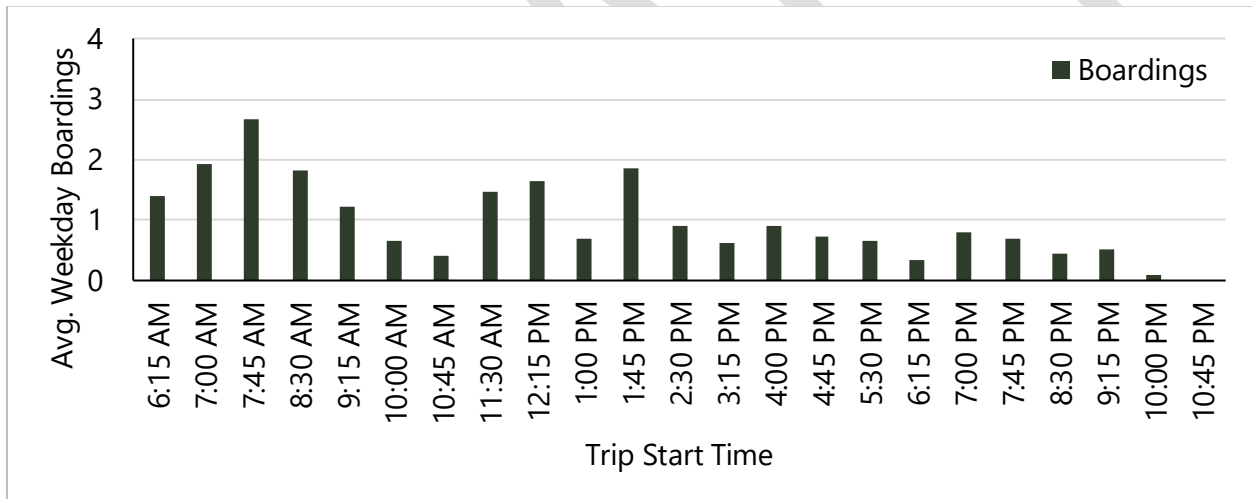
Weekday Ridership by Trip

October 2019 Yellow Line ridership was very low on all trips (one to three passengers).

Weekday Boardings by Trip: Yellow Line, Inbound (October 2019)



Weekday Boardings by Trip: Yellow Line, Outbound (October 2019)



Assessments and Opportunities

Strengths

- The route provides simple and direct service between Saco Transportation Center and UNE.
- The circulator pattern of the route is mostly frequent.

Weaknesses

- Ridership on this route is very low.

- The downtown circulator may be too small to be useful. Occasional 45-minute headways interrupt the consistency of the route and make it more difficult for riders to rely on.

Opportunities

Opportunities to strengthen Route 54 are listed below. Some suggestions may be contradictory, as there is usually more than one approach to improving a route.

- Renumber and rename Route 54 as two routes to better reflect how the route operates.
- Reconfigure the downtown circulator to provide connections with shopping. For example, adding the Saco Shaw's may make the route more useful to UNE students.
- Provide consistent 60-minute service to UNE.
- Provide consistent service on the downtown circulator; eliminate the 45-minute headways.
- Add service to either the Saco Shaw's or Biddeford Hannaford to the Biddeford-Saco loop to provide better connections to shopping.
- Market service for UNE students by calling the route the 'Nor'Easter Line', or something similar to Metro's 'Husky Line'. This may improve the perception of reliability and accountability for UNE riders, and signal to interested but non-riding people that the vehicle is open to UNE students, faculty, and staff. Incorporating branding used elsewhere in the region may improve the legibility of the service as a university-oriented route.