

METRO

ROUTE 9A/9B

NORTH DEERING/WEST FALMOUTH

Route Overview

Route 9A/9B serves Portland and Falmouth with a large bi-directional loop. The route connects the PULSE with the East Deering, North Deering, Deering Center, Oakdale, Libbytown, and Peninsula neighborhoods. Key destinations on the route include Maine Medical Center, Union Station Plaza, Westgate Shopping Center, UNE, Shaw's, and the Social Security Administration building. This route also provides service to many schools, including Deering High School, Portland High School, and Casco Bay High School. This route serves three primary purposes: it is a school route, a crosstown route connecting North Deering with Rosemont and Libbytown, and a downtown connection.



Alignment

Routes 9A and 9B operate as large loops, with 9A operating clockwise and 9B operating counterclockwise. As indicated on the map, select school trips operate via Summit Street, Allen Avenue, and Ray Street, and many Route 9B trips deviate to the West Falmouth Hannaford. In many respects, Route 9A/9B is two radial routes that operate to and from Washington Avenue Extension at Auburn Street (location D on the map), combined into one large loop.

Connections

Transfers with all other METRO routes (except Route 3 Westbrook Crosstown), all SPBS routes, RTP’s Lake Region Explorer, and BSOOB Transit routes 60 Green and 70 Purple/ZOOM can be made at the PULSE. Connections can also be made to Route 2 Forest Avenue at Morrill’s Corner, Route 4 Westbrook at Brighton Avenue, Route 5 Maine Mall at Congress Street at Stevens Avenue, and Route 7 Falmouth at Veranda Street.

Schedule

On weekdays, Route 9A/9B service generally operates every 30 minutes from 5:35 AM until 6:30 PM and then every 60 minutes through the end of service at 10:25 PM. However, there are several exceptions. On Route 9A:

- One supplemental trip operates around the entire loop.
- Two school trips operate partially along the loop.
- Two trips operate via Summit Street and Allen Avenue instead of Auburn Street.

Route 9B’s service is much more complex:

- 12 trips operate to and from the West Falmouth Hannaford. These trips operate before 11:45 AM and after 4:00 PM.
- Three trips operate via Summit Street and Allen Avenue instead of Auburn Street.
- Three school trips operate partially along the loop.

Schedule Summary

	Span of Service	Headways (mins.)	On-Time Performance
Weekdays	5:35 AM to 10:25 PM	30-60	71%
Saturday	7:30 AM to 10:25 PM	60	
Sunday	8:30 AM to 5:10 PM	60	

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

On weekends, without additional school trips, service operates much more consistently: every 60 minutes from 7:30 AM to 10:25 PM on Saturdays and every 60 minutes from 8:30 AM to 5:10 PM on Sundays.

On-Time Performance

Route 9A/9B on-time performance is below the METRO system's route average of 76% and does not meet the agency's standard of 90%. Traffic congestion impacts on-time performance on Washington Avenue, in Morrill's Corner, on Congress Street west of I-295, and at the St. John Street at Congress Street intersection.

Ridership and Productivity

Ridership and Productivity by Day

In October 2019, Route 9A/9B had 1,850 boardings on weekdays, 698 on Saturdays, and 343 on Sundays. It was the highest-ridership route in the METRO system during weekdays and third-highest ridership on Saturdays and Sundays. Productivity, in terms of boardings per revenue hour, was high on weekdays at 38 boardings per revenue hour and lower on weekends, at 25 boardings per revenue hour on Saturdays and 22 on Sundays.

Weekday Ridership by Stop

In October 2019 and on weekdays, about 990 passengers boarded stops on the eastern side of the loop and 845 on the western side of the loop. The highest-ridership stops were:

- Downtown Portland/Portland High School, with over 320 boardings and alightings
- Deering High School, with 213 boardings and alightings
- Washington Avenue near the Front Street low-income housing development, with around 161 boardings and alightings
- Casco Bay High School, with 144 boardings and alightings
- Maine Medical Center, with 119 boardings and alightings

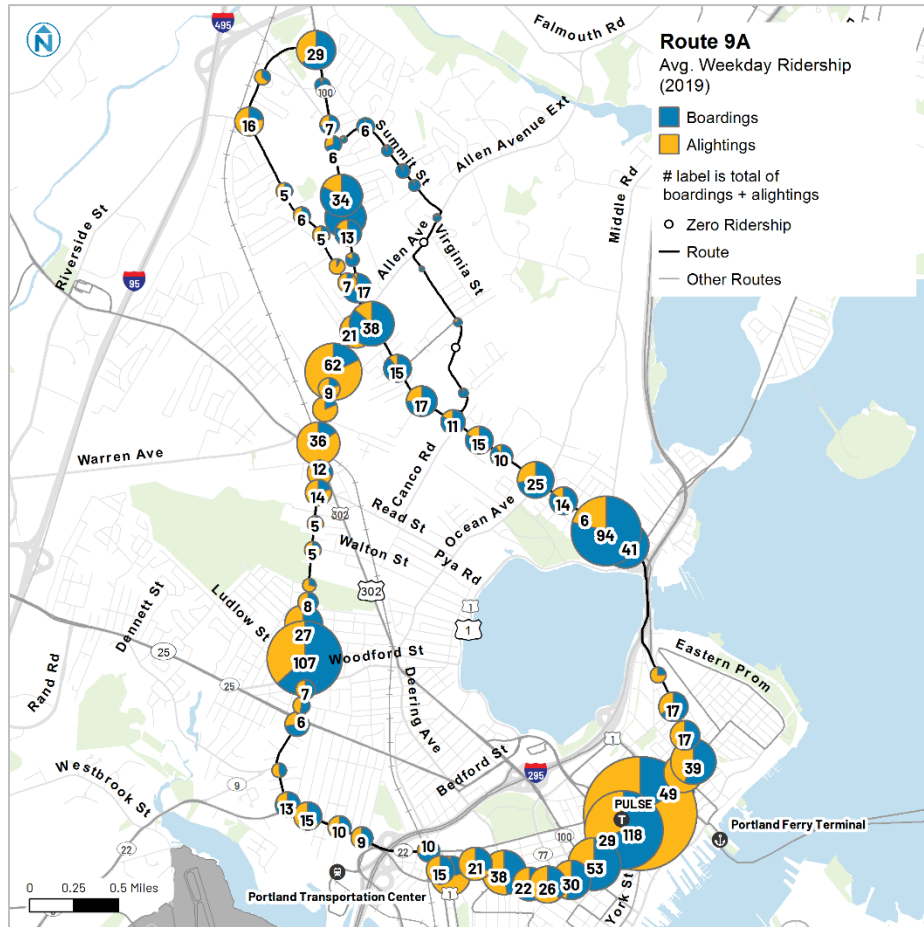
Ridership was also strong along the Congress Street corridor on the Peninsula, Washington Avenue corridor, and Stevens Avenue corridor.

Areas of the route with low ridership were:

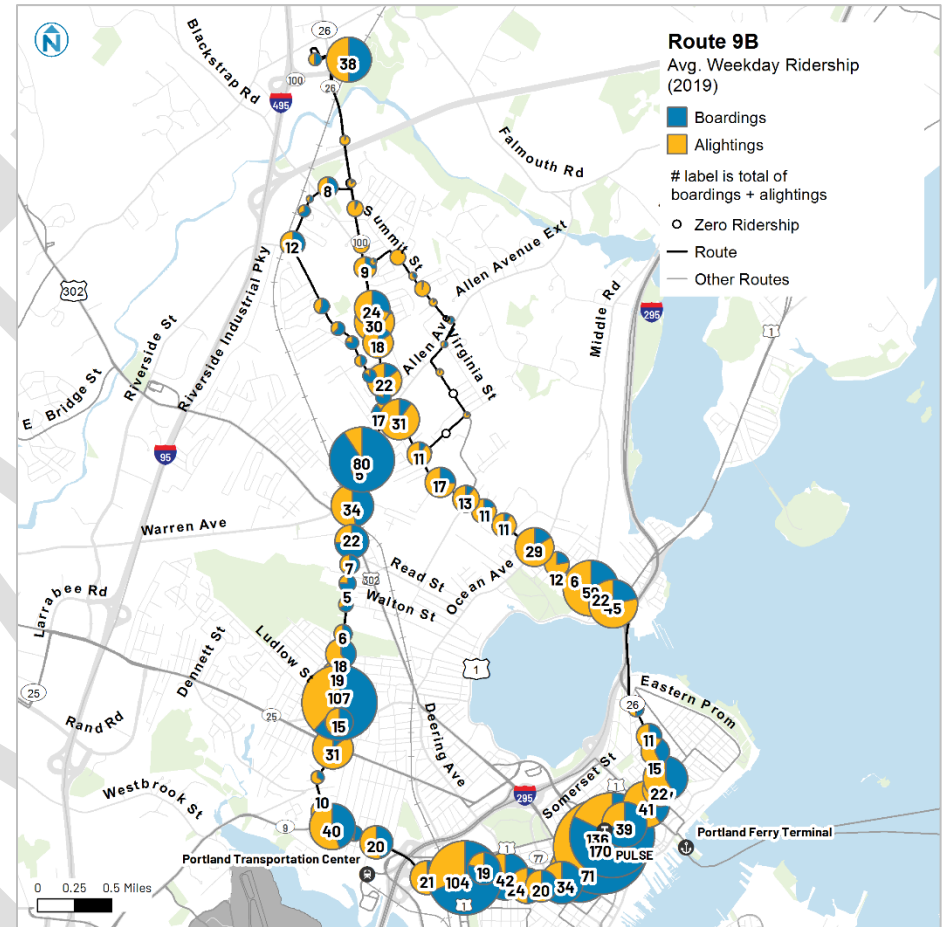
- The Summit Street, Allen Avenue, and Ray Street deviation
- The Washington Avenue Extension loop
- Congress Street west of I-295
- The TD Bank offices in Falmouth



Weekday Ridership by Stop Map: Route 9A



Weekday Ridership by Stop Map: Route 9B

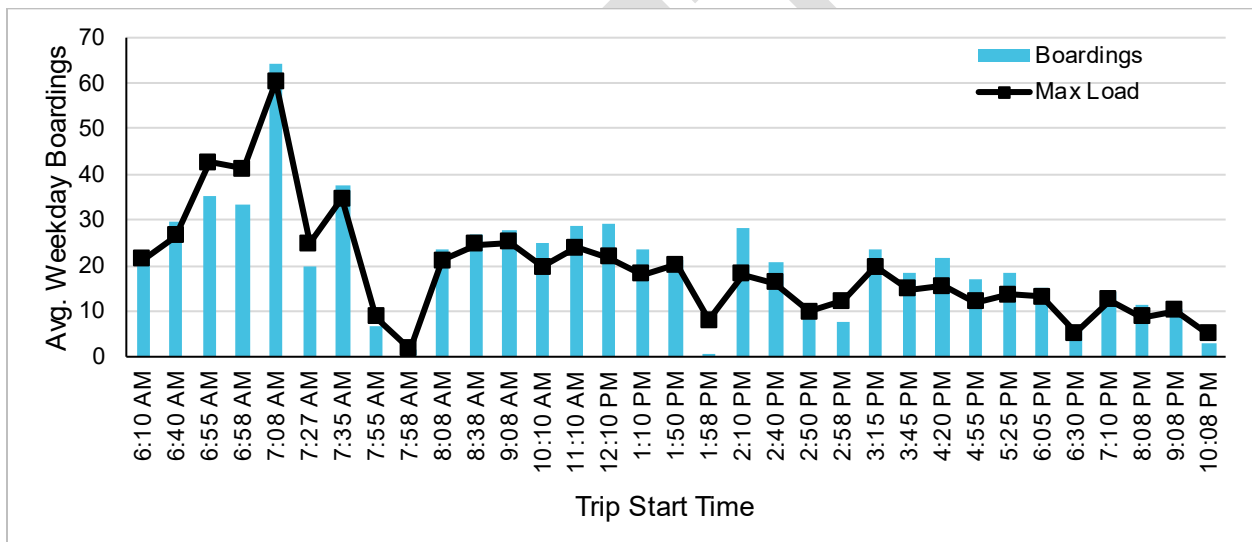


Weekday Ridership by Trip

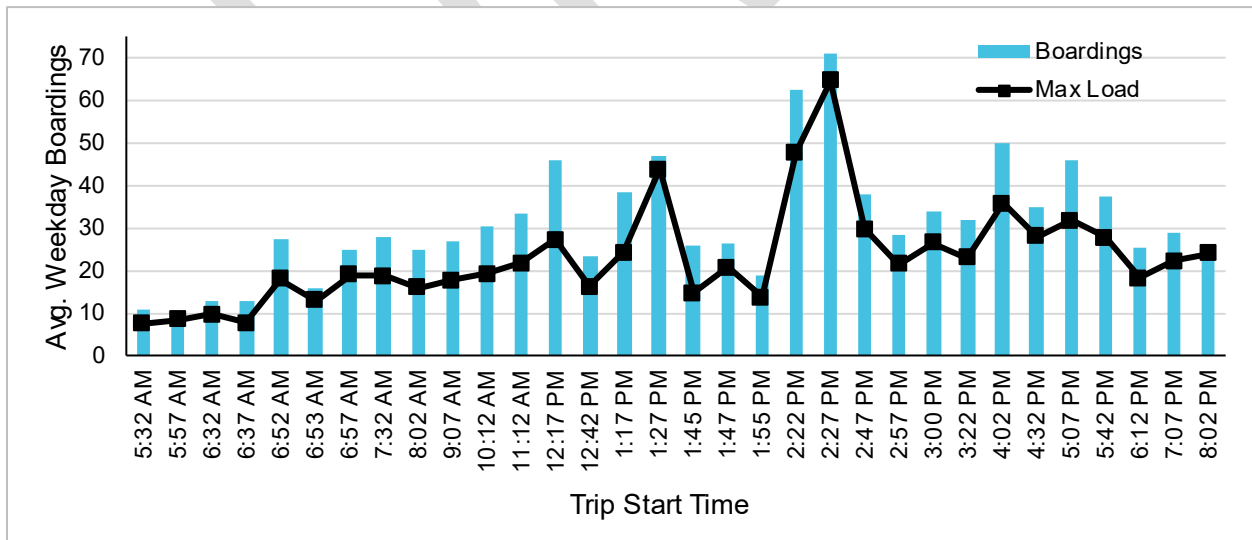
Based on October 2019 ridership, Route 9A/9B largest peaks are during school periods, followed by AM and PM commute hours. When viewing each half of the loops separately, this is true on both sides, but especially so on the west side, which serves Casco Bay and Deering high schools.

On the east side trips, ridership is near or above 60 total passengers on some school trips and generally 10 to 30 passengers on non-school midday trips. PM peak northbound trips carry up to 50 passengers, which southbound trips carry significantly fewer.

Weekday Boardings by Trip: Route 9A Southbound (East Side of Loop via Auburn St and Washington Ave) (October 2019)

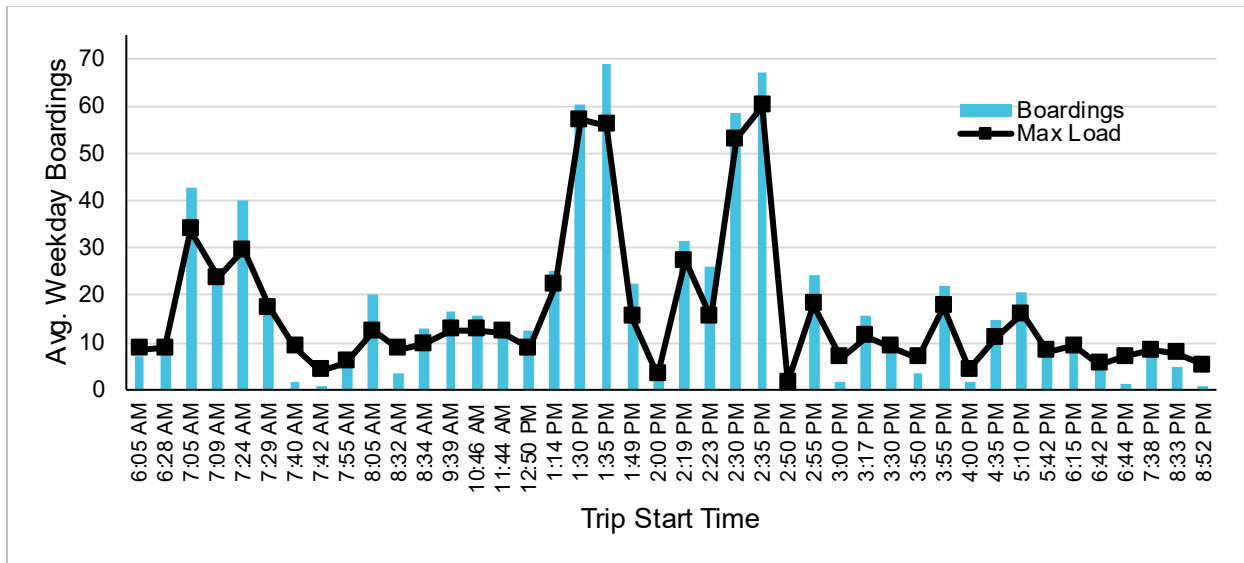


Weekday Boardings by Trip: Route 9B Northbound (East Side of Loop via Auburn St and Washington Ave) (October 2019)

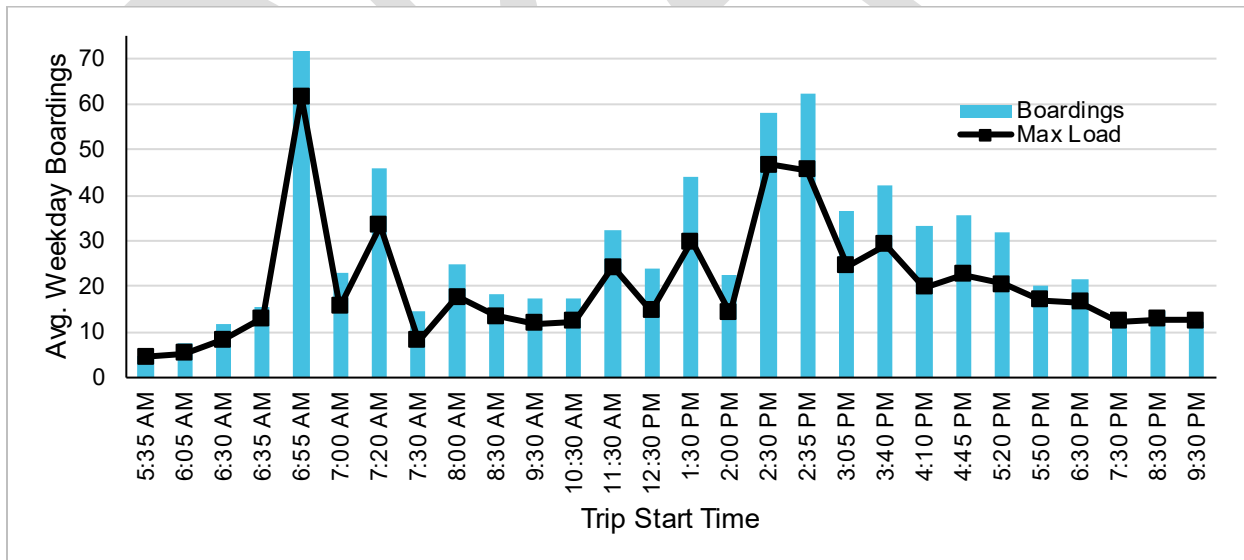


On the west side trips, ridership is very heavily oriented toward school ridership. As on east side trips, many school trips carry near or over 60 passengers. However, ridership during other periods is lower, with most trips carrying 30 or fewer passengers and many only around 10.

**Weekday Boardings by Trip: Route 9B Southbound
 (West Side of Loop via Washington Ave Ext, Allen Ave and Stevens Ave) (October 2019)**



**Weekday Boardings by Trip: Route 9A Northbound
 (West Side of Loop via Washington Ave Ext, Allen Ave and Stevens Ave) (October 2019)**



Overall Service Assessment

Strengths

- Route 9A/9B is the highest-ridership route in METRO system. This is the case for two reasons: (1) high school ridership, and (2) the route is effectively two routes combined into one (when the two sides of the loop are considered separately, ridership is 992 on the eastern side and 845 on the western side).
- The route provides bi-directional service along key corridors including Congress Street, Stevens Avenue/Allen Avenue, Washington Avenue, and Auburn Street.
- The route has 30-minute frequencies for most of the day on weekdays.
- Productivity is high.

Weaknesses

- There is low ridership on the Summit Street, Allen Avenue, and Ray Street deviation.
- There are irregular schedules on Route 9B due to the irregular service to the West Falmouth Hannaford.
- The route has relatively low ridership on Washington Street Extension.
- The route's on-time performance falls short of METRO's standard.

Opportunities

Opportunities to strengthen Route 9A/9B are listed below. Some suggestions may be contradictory, as there is usually more than one approach to improving a route.

- Split the route in two to make service easier to understand for some riders. Operate all service on one of the two routes to the West Falmouth Hannaford and turn the other around at or near Washington Street Extension at Auburn Street.
- Split the route in two to make service easier to understand for some riders. Operate all service on one of the two routes to the West Falmouth Hannaford and turn the other around at or near the intersection of Washington Street at Allen Avenue, discontinuing service along Washington Street Extension.
- Increase weekday evening service frequencies to every 30 minutes.
- Increase Saturday frequencies to every 30 minutes.
- Lengthen the span of service on all days.
- Operate service via the Portland Transportation Center.