

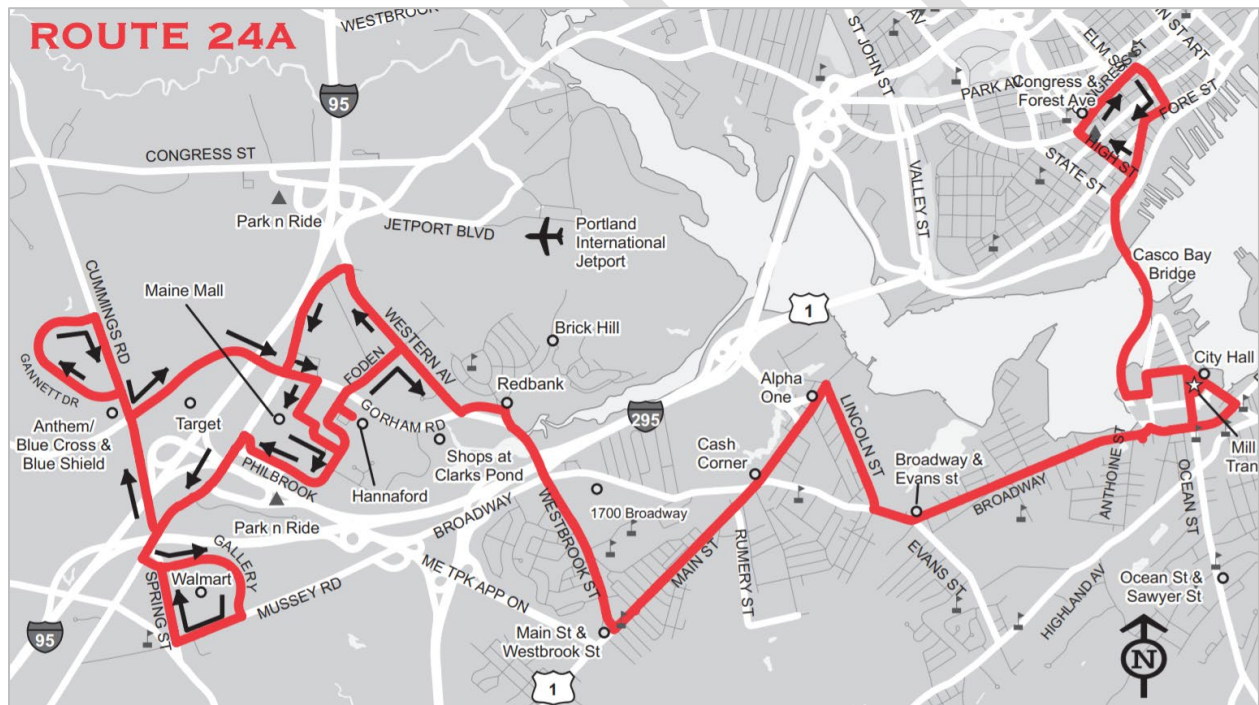
SOUTH PORTLAND BUS SERVICE

24A MAINE MALL

Route Overview

Route 24A is one of two east-west coverage routes that connect the Maine Mall area and several South Portland neighborhoods with downtown Portland. Route 24A serves the Knightville, Pleasantdale, Cash Corner, Thornton Heights, Country Gardens, Redbank, and Mall/Airport neighborhoods. Key destinations include downtown Portland, Shaw's Millcreek Plaza, Hannaford, Redbank Village, South Portland Comprehensive Treatment Center, the Maine Mall, and Walmart.

Route Map



The companion route that provides east-west service is Route 24B Maine Mall. The difference between the two is that Route 24A serves the Ligonias and Thornton Heights neighborhoods, while Route 24B serves Stanwood Park and South Portland High School.

Alignment

Along most of its length, Route 24A operates bi-directionally on Broadway, Lincoln Street, Main Street, Westbrook Street, and Western Avenue. The route deviates from the most direct east-west corridor of Broadway to provide coverage to several neighborhoods, increasing travel time

for riders not traveling to or from those neighborhoods. At its eastern end in downtown Portland, it operates a terminal loop to serve the PULSE. At its western end, it operates very circuitously along a generally clockwise loop-within-loop alignment that serves the Maine Mall, other retail, and the Gannett Drive business park. The alignment in this area is indirect and causes many riders to travel out of direction for considerable amounts of time.

Connections

Transfers to other routes can be made at three locations:

- Along Congress Street/the PULSE in downtown Portland, where connections can be made with METRO routes, RTP’s Lakes Region Explorer, and BSOOB Transit’s Route 60 and 70.
- At SPBS’ Mill Creek Transit Hub, where connections can be made with other SPBS routes.
- At the Maine Mall, where connections can be made with METRO’s Route 3 Portland–Westbrook–South Portland and Route 5 Maine Mall, as well as SPBS 24B and BSOOB Transit Route 60.

Schedule

Service frequencies are very low on all days. On weekdays, most trips operate two hours apart, from 5:20 AM to 11:20 PM. Also on weekdays, Route 24A trips alternate with Route 24B trips for most of the day (between 6:20 AM and 9:50 PM). This means that common locations along the two routes receive service approximately every 60 minutes, while unique locations receive service approximately every 120 minutes.

On Saturdays and Sundays, only Route 24A operates. On Saturdays, service is provided every 120 minutes from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. On Sundays, service is provided every 75 to 150 minutes from 7:00 AM to 6:25 PM.

Schedule Summary (Current)

	Span	Headways (mins.)	One-Way Trips
Weekdays	5:20 AM to 11:15 PM	100-130	20
Saturday	7:00 AM to 7:15 PM	120	12
Sunday	7:00 AM to 6:35 PM	75-150	14

Note: Span and frequency from January 2022 schedules. Trip counts from spring 2017 data.

Ridership and Productivity

Ridership and Productivity by Day

In Spring 2017, Route 24A carried 304 passengers on weekdays, 234 on Saturdays, and 170 on Sundays. On weekdays, it was SPBS' second highest ridership route, behind Route 21 Willard Square. On weekends, when there was little activity on Route 21 at Southern Maine Community College, it was SPBS' highest-ridership route. Boardings per revenue hours were 17 on weekdays and Saturdays, and 13 on Sundays.

Weekday Ridership by Stop

Route 24A's highest average weekday ridership stops were:

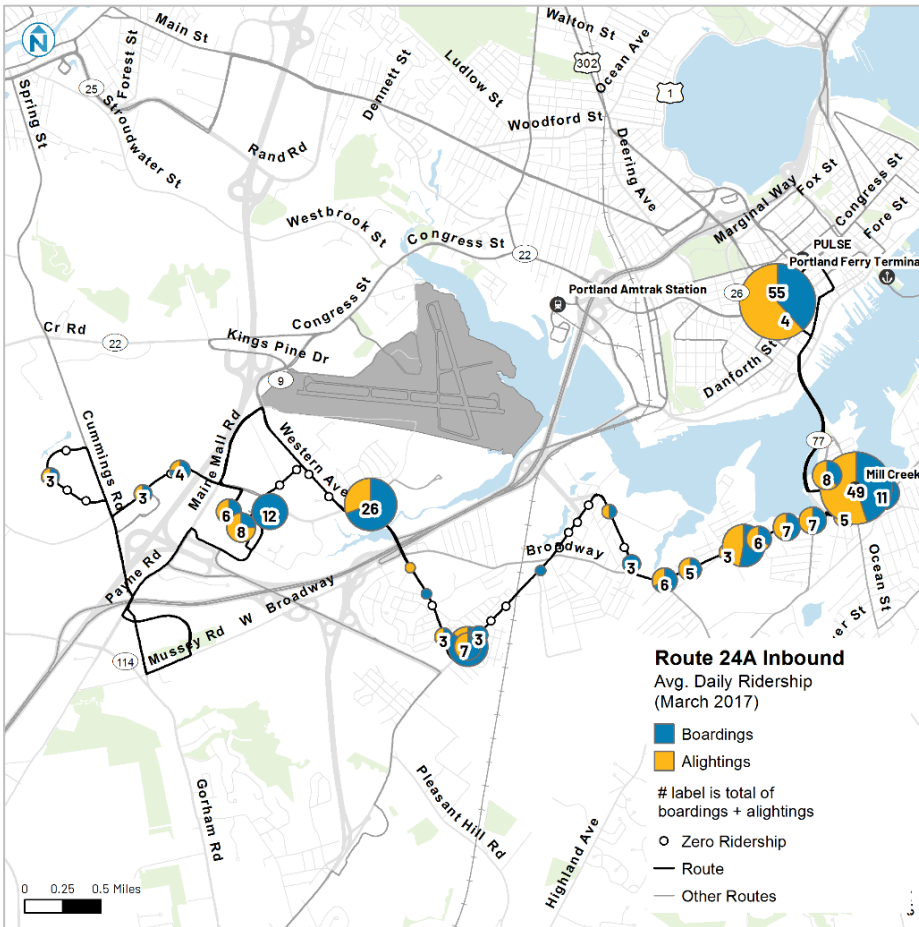
- Downtown Portland, with almost 200 boardings and alightings
- The Mill Creek Transit Hub, with 76 boardings and alightings
- Maine Mall, with 61 boardings and alightings
- Redbank Village apartments, with 45 boardings and alightings
- Walmart, with 30 boardings and alightings

In addition, the stops along Broadway between Mill Creek and Lincoln Street serve about 50 average weekday boardings and alightings, and stops near the intersection of Main Street and Westbrook Street serve about 25 average weekday boardings and alightings.

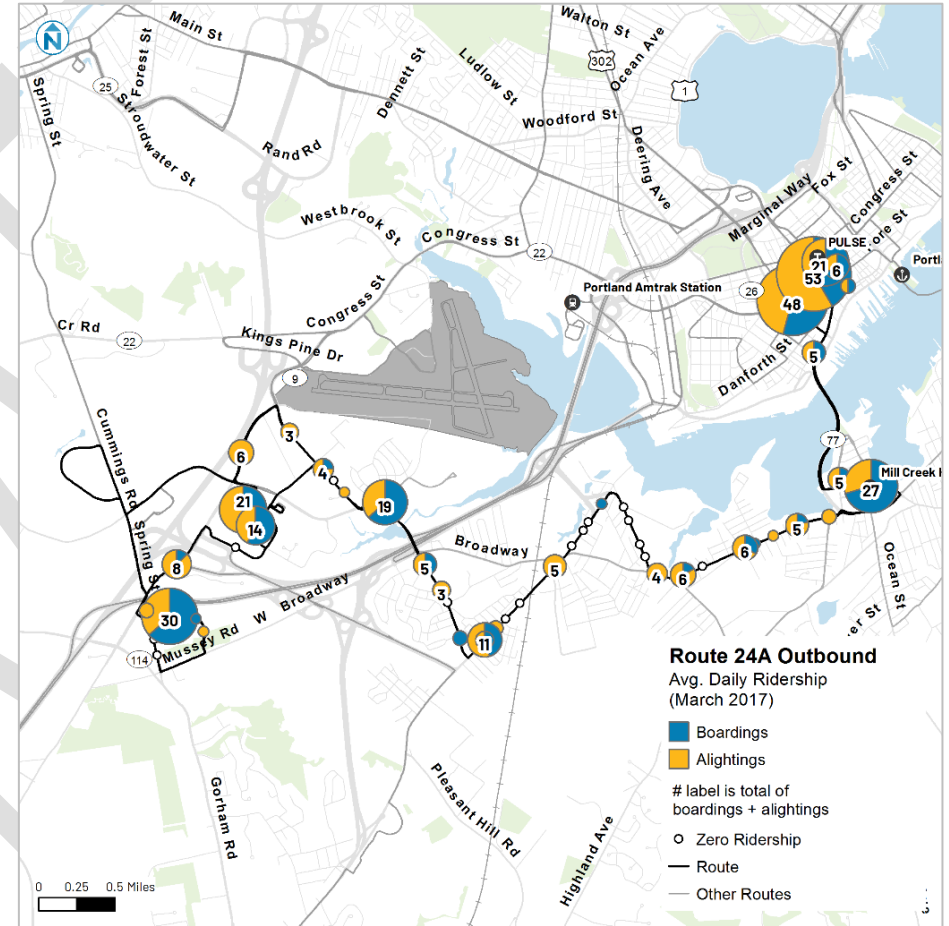
Several areas have very few riders. These include:

- The Gannett Drive business park loop is close to zero
- The Cash Corner neighborhood
- Parts of the Thornton Heights neighborhood

Weekday Ridership by Stop: Inbound (Spring 2017)



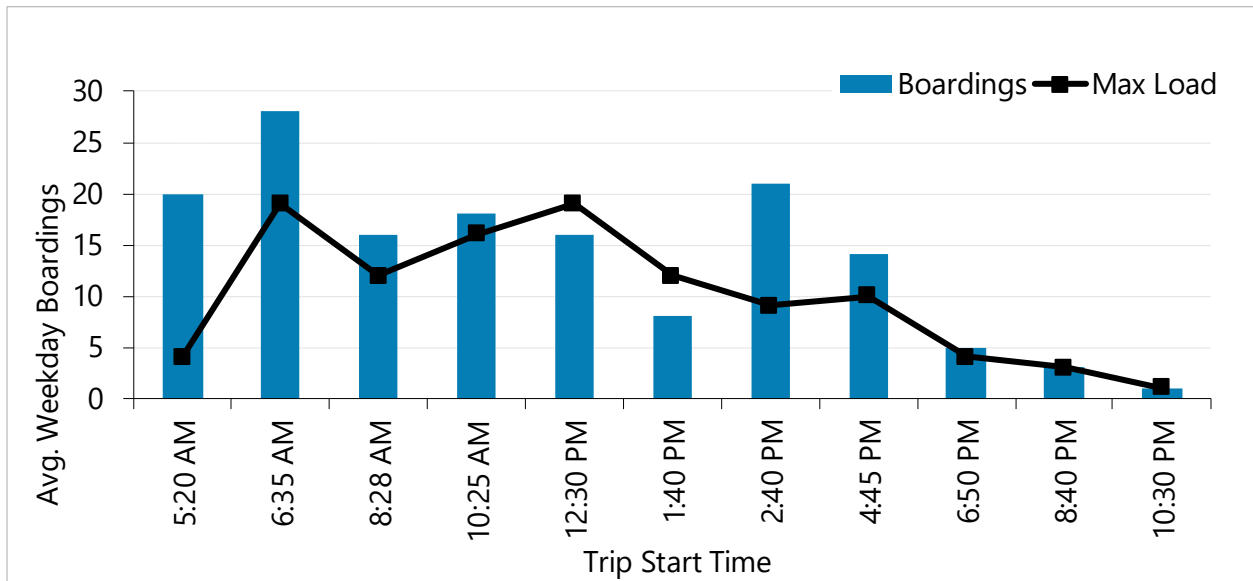
Ridership by Stop: Outbound (Spring 2017)



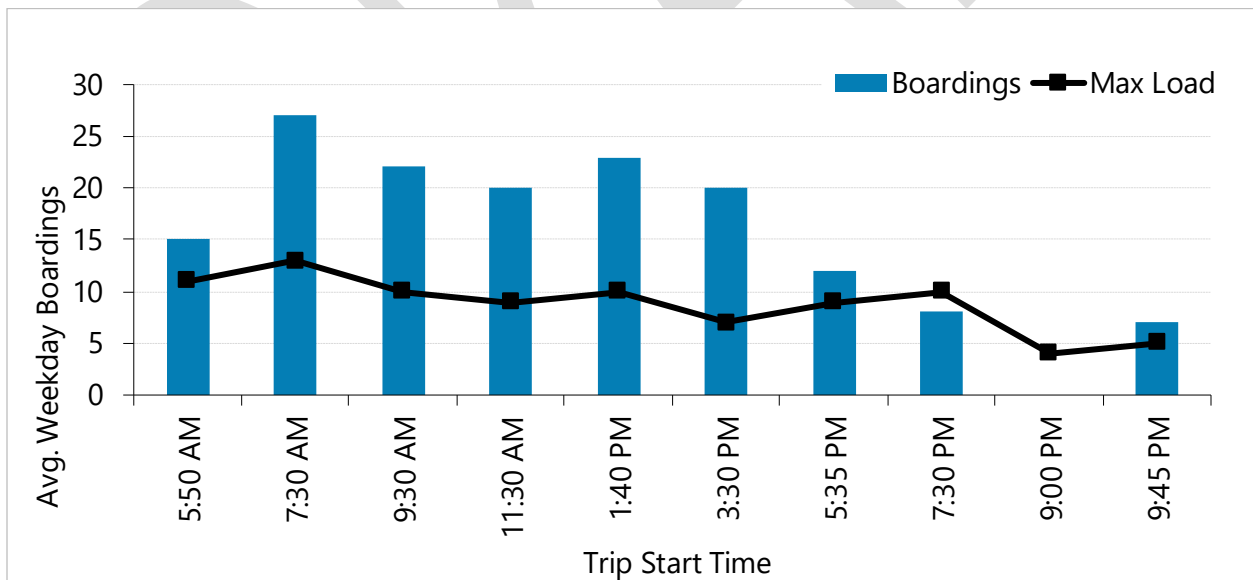
Weekday Ridership by Trip

Spring 2017 weekday ridership on Route 24A was highest in the morning and late afternoon and dropped off after approximately 7:00 PM. The first weekday trips on this route had some of the route's highest ridership.

Weekday Boardings by Trip: Inbound (Spring 2017)



Weekday Boardings by Trip: Outbound (Spring 2017)



Assessments and Opportunities

Strengths

- There are several strong ridership generators on the route, including shopping near the Mill Creek Transit Hub, downtown Portland, Redbank Village, Walmart, and the Maine Mall.
- There is strong early-morning demand for service.
- The route has a long span of service on weekdays.

Weaknesses

- Route 24A has very long headways. Because services that operate less frequently than every 60 minutes are very inconvenient, most potential riders will only use infrequent transit services as a last resort.
- Service is too infrequent to be useful for most residents.
- The route is circuitous overall, and extremely circuitous at its outer end. This makes service inconvenient by requiring most riders to travel out of direction.
- Many route segments serve very few riders, including along Gannett Drive, in Cash Corner, and in Thornton Heights.
- Routes 24A and 24B have many duplicative segments.

Opportunities

Opportunities to strengthen Route 24A are listed below. Some suggestions may be contradictory, as there is usually more than one approach to improving a route.

- Provide more frequent service, which buses arriving at least every 60 minutes.
- Reduce duplication with Route 24B, potentially by operating Route 24A much more directly (largely along Broadway) and providing coverage service with Route 24B.
- Consolidate routes 24A and 24B into a single route that provides more direct service to higher-ridership stops. Serve low-ridership locations with microtransit.
- Simplify the western loops to make service easier to understand and reduce out-of-direction travel. There are several ways this could be done, some of which may require additional resources.
- Discontinue Gannett Drive loop service, which is barely used.