

Chapter 5: Evaluation of Existing Services

This chapter presents the results of a critical evaluation of existing Bangor-area bus routes. This review process included three steps:

- Analysis of ridership records and driver survey sheets
- On-site inspections of Bangor-area bus routes
- Interviews with bus drivers and operating staff

The goals of this service evaluation are to understand and describe how buses are currently being used, and to identify strengths and weaknesses of the existing service design. This effort is important for at least two reasons. First, it will provide a basis for identifying possible service improvements. Second, it will help to ensure that any proposed changes do not undermine the strengths of the current operation.

The consultant spent time riding each of the Bangor-area bus routes at different times of the day. This was done to gain a first-hand understanding of who is riding and how buses are being used. The consultant looked for strengths in service design and service delivery. And he looked for inconveniences, obstacles, and other issues that may discourage use or reduce customer satisfaction.

The chapter begins with general observations about the fixed-route bus system. It then presents a description of individual bus routes, identifying key features along with strengths and weaknesses of each route.

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5.1 Overview of Fixed-route Bus Service

The Bus is a fixed-route public transportation system owned and operated by the city of Bangor. The Bus provides regularly scheduled transit services for Bangor, Brewer, Hampden, Veazie, Orono, Old Town, and the University of Maine.

The system includes seven bus routes. All routes except the Hampden route operate Monday through Saturday. The Hampden bus operates Monday through Friday. Most routes operate from 6:15 a.m. until 5:45 or 6:15 p.m.

All buses offer service to and from a central terminal located at Pickering Square in downtown Bangor. Most buses are scheduled to depart from the downtown terminal at either fifteen minutes before or fifteen minutes after the hour. Schedules are designed to allow quick and easy transfers between buses at Pickering Square. Most transfers involve waits of ten minutes or less. Connections for passengers in-bound on the Mount Hope route involve a 22-minute wait during most of the day. Some Hampden connections involve downtown layovers of 15 minutes.

The basic one-way cash fare for most rides on The Bus is \$.75. This cash fare applies to trips within any one community, as well as trips between neighboring towns. Additional zone fares apply on the Old Town route, with a \$1.00 fare for rides between Bangor and Orono or between Veazie and Old Town, and a \$1.25 fare between Bangor and Old Town.

The Bus offers a \$30 Monthly Pass for good for unlimited rides during a single month. Students and staff of the University of Maine can ride the Old Town route for free by showing their University ID card to the bus driver.

Strips of five tickets are available from bus drivers, offering five rides for the cost of four regular cash fares. A special ten-ride ticket is available for trips that originate on the Brewer bus. Children under the age of five ride free. Half-fare rides for senior citizens and persons with disabilities are available between the hours of 8:15 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.

Transfers between routes are free, with the exception of trips that include the Old Town bus. Old Town transfers are good for a \$.25 fare reduction. This means, for example, that an individual traveling from Orono to the Bangor Mall will pay \$1.00 boarding the Old Town bus in Orono, and an additional \$.50 transferring to the Mount Hope bus in downtown Bangor, for a combined charge of \$1.50. The return trip will cost \$.75 boarding the Mount Hope bus at the Mall, and \$.75 boarding the Old Town bus at Pickering Square, for a total fare of \$1.50.

Figure 5.1: Summary of Ridership by Route

	2001 Ridership	Percent of System Total	Increase from 1995
Capehart	113,673	24%	10.3%
Center Street	62,303	13%	32.1%
Hammond Street	49,073	10%	3.1%
Mount Hope	117,242	25%	39.3%
Brewer	41,140	9%	29.1%
Hampden	10,634	2%	50.9%
Old Town	83,235	17%	-4.0%
Total	477,300	100%	17.1%

5.2 Evaluation of Individual Bus Routes

5.2.1 Capehart

Two buses are used on the Capehart route to provide service every 30 minutes. The Capehart route is the Bangor transit system's second busiest route. In FY 2001, Capehart buses carried 113,673 riders and accounted for 24% of system ridership. During this time period, the route averaged 16 riders per hour and 16 riders per round trip.

Between FY 1995 and FY 2001, annual ridership on the Capehart route increased by 10.3%.

Key locations along the Capehart route include:

- (1) downtown Bangor
- (2) residential neighborhoods along Ohio Street
- (4) Eastern Maine Healthcare offices on Union Street
- (5) the Airport Mall
- (6) the Bangor International Airport
- (7) Maine Department of Human Services/ASPIRE
- (8) Maine Job Corps
- (9) a residential complex adjacent to the Griffin Road
- (10) the Capehart residential area

Ridership data suggests that as many as a third of Capehart bus riders transfer to and from other bus routes. The strongest transfer activity occurs between the Mount Hope and Center Street routes.

Strengths

Ridership on the Capehart route is strong in part because it serves a combination of markets and trip purposes.

- The Capehart route gives residents of the Capehart neighborhood a vital link with the rest of the Bangor urban area. Without this bus service, many low-income families would be stranded in this outlying residential development.
- The route provides both in-town and outlying residential neighborhoods with access to a supermarket and to other shopping destinations at the Airport Mall.
- It provides public transportation access to the Airport.
- It provides car-free access to the Maine DHS ASPIRE program and to the Maine Job Corps.
- It offers a convenient front-door stop at Eastern Maine Healthcare offices located at the former Westgate Shopping Center.

Weaknesses

While the Capehart route operates reasonably smoothly and efficiently, there are a number of factors that may begin to diminish the effectiveness of the service in the future.

- Schedules are tight, with little extra time to accommodate wheelchair passengers or unexpected traffic delays.
- Because of a limited time window, buses serve the Airport on their inbound trip only. This means that an intercity traveler who boards in downtown must ride all the way to Capehart for a drop-off at the terminal entrance. This trip should take about 10 minutes; instead it requires a bus ride of more than half an hour.
- Significant traffic delays sometimes occur as buses exit the Airport Mall.
- The route is somewhat indirect, due to diversions to serve the airport and the DHS office.
- Trips using Mount Hope and Capehart buses to travel from the Bangor Mall to Capehart are time-consuming, in part due to a 22-minute layover between the inbound Mount Hope bus and the outbound Capehart bus.

5.2.2 Center Street

One bus is used to provide 30-minute service on the Center Street route. The Center Street route is the most productive in the Bangor system when measured in terms of riders per hour. In FY 2001, the route carried 62,303 riders, or 13% of the system total. During this time period, the route carried an average of 20 riders per hour and 10 riders per round trip.

Between FY 1995 and FY 2001, annual ridership on the Center Street route increased 32%.

Key locations along the Center Street route include:

- (1) Bangor public library (outbound only)
- (2) St. Joseph's Hospital
- (3) Bangor Garden Apartments
- (4) Northwood Apartments
- (5) Husson College
- (6) Broadway Shopping Center

The route serves an extensive neighborhood of older homes located between Center Street and Kenduskeag Avenue east of Interstate 95. It operates through newer residential subdivisions south of Broadway and west of I-95. Husson College is served via a bus shelter located at the edge of the college campus, roughly a quarter of a mile from the nearest Husson facilities. It also serves the Broadway Shopping Center, which is the busiest stop on the Center Street route after downtown Bangor.

Ridership data suggest that more than a third of Center Street riders transfer to or from other routes. The greatest level of transfer activity involves the Capehart, Mount Hope, and Hammond Street routes.

Strengths

The Center Street route serves a strong mix of destinations and trip purposes.

- It serves the Broadway Shopping Center, which is a major shopping destination for many bus riders. A significant portion of the transfer activity on this route appears to involve travel to and from this location.
- It provides direct access to St. Joseph's hospital.
- It serves significant residential neighborhoods located both east and west of I-95.
- It provides a car-free transportation link to Husson College.

Weaknesses

Bus drivers on the Center Street route often have difficulty completing a round trip within the available 30-minute window. On-time problems occur at various times throughout the day. They are particularly severe when wheelchair passengers ride, because schedules do not include enough time to operate the lift and to secure wheelchairs.

Because of a high level of transfer activity, Center Street buses that are running late can significantly disrupt other routes in the system. This occurs when other buses wait at Pickering Square for passengers transferring from a Center street bus that has been delayed.

As originally designed, the Center Street route was a very efficient and cost-effective service. It accommodated a broad mix of destinations and user groups every half-hour

with only one bus. However, because of increasing traffic-related delays, it is no longer possible to use one bus to provide reliable 30-minute service to all of these destinations.

There are a number of other issues that should be taken into consideration when problems with the Center Street schedule are addressed:

- Although the route provides a link between downtown and the Bangor Public Library, direct access is possible on outbound buses only.
- Because of the one-way loop at the end of the current route, there is no direct bus link for shoppers returning from the Broadway Shopping Center to residences located west of I-95. People who live in these neighborhoods must travel via downtown Bangor on their return ride from the Broadway Shopping Center.
- Current time constraints do not allow Center Street buses to offer a more conveniently located Husson College bus stop.
- The current route provides no service to destinations located west of the Broadway Shopping Center. This includes (1) Bangor High School; (2) a new complex of medical offices operated by St. Joseph's Hospital; and (3) new residential subdivisions located west of the high school.

5.2.3 Hammond Street

One bus is used to provide 30-minute service on the Hammond Street route. In FY 2001, Hammond Street buses carried 49,073 riders, 10% of the system total. During FY 2001, Hammond Street buses carried an average of 15 riders per hour and 7.5 riders per round trip. Between FY 1995 and FY 2001, annual ridership on the route increased 3%.

Ridership data suggest that nearly 40% of Hammond Street bus rides involve transfers to or from other routes. Most of this transfer activity involves the Mount Hope, Center Street, and Capehart routes, though there is also significant travel between Hammond Street and Brewer buses.

Traffic generators on the Hammond Street route include:

- (1) Residences along Union Street
- (2) Bangor's Health & Welfare Department
- (3) University College
- (4) Maine Business Enterprise Park
- (5) Residential neighborhoods between Hammond Street and Third Street

The route appears to serve two different and distinct markets: (1) individuals who wish to reach institutional destinations located west of Interstate 95 and (2) people traveling to and from residences located south of Union Street and east of I-95.

Strengths

The route benefits from:

- A strong mix of institutional and residential uses
- A schedule and traffic pattern that allows Hammond Street buses to generally operate on time
- Direct access to residential streets, which allows bus stops to be located in calm locations away from speeding traffic

Weaknesses

The one-way loop pattern of the Hammond Street route allows one bus to be used to serve Union Street and Maine Avenue outbound, and Hammond Street and Third Street inbound. While this represents efficient use of drivers and equipment, it results in some compromises in customer convenience:

- The main drawback is that people traveling from downtown to Hammond Street or Third Street must travel the full loop via Union Street and Maine Avenue. An inbound bus ride from the corner of Buck and Third Streets takes five minutes. The outbound trip requires fifteen minutes.
- While the Hammond Street bus provides service to Union Street between downtown and I-95, buses serve this segment outbound only.
- The outbound bus passes a senior apartment complex located on the west side of Union Street, but residents must cross this busy roadway to reach a bus stop.
- While Hammond Street buses travel relatively near to the airport and to lodging establishments on the Odlin Road, there is not enough time in the 30-minute schedule to provide direct stops at either of these locations. Walking distances are too great for most people. Moreover, there are no pedestrian walkways linking the bus route and either of these areas.

5.2.4 Mount Hope

Two buses are used to provide 30-minute service on the Mount Hope route. Mount Hope was the busiest route in the Bangor system in FY 2001. Mount Hope buses carried a total of 117,242 riders, accounting for 25% of all trips provided by The Bus. The Hammond Street route carried an average of 20 riders per service hour and 17 riders per round trip.

Between FY 1995 and FY 2001, annual ridership on the Mount Hope route increased 39%.

Locations served by the Mount Hope route include:

- (1) Residential neighborhoods adjacent to Garland Street, Forest Avenue, and Mount Hope Avenue (outbound only)

- (2) Bangor Mental Health Institute
- (3) Eastern Maine Vocational Technical Institute
- (4) Retail business north of the Hogan Road (Home Depot, Wal-Mart, Shaws)
- (5) Retail business south of the Hogan Road (K-Mart, Bangor Mall, Circuit City)
- (6) Acadia Hospital
- (7) Residences and offices along Stillwater Avenue and Broadway (in-bound only)

Ridership records suggest that nearly 40% of trips on the Mount Hope route involve the use of transfers. Transfer activity is greatest between Mount Hope and Capehart, but all routes in the system carry passengers transferring to and from Mount Hope.

One bus provides service every 30 minutes on the route before 9:15 a.m. Early morning runs do not include service to Wal-Mart and Shaws. After 9:15 a.m., two buses are used to maintain 30-minute headways. The second bus was added to the route several years ago because drivers were unable to complete a round trip in 30 minutes.

Beginning at 9:15 a.m., schedules allow 38 minutes for a round trip on the Mount Hope route. Drivers then have a 22-minute layover between trips at the downtown bus terminal. Inbound Mount Hope passengers wishing to transfer to other routes likewise must wait 22 minutes for their connecting bus to depart.

Strengths

There are a number of factors that account for relatively strong ridership on the Mount Hope route:

- Mount Hope buses provide a key transportation link to retail shopping destinations near the Bangor Mall. Retail destinations located west of I-95 appear to account for much of the transfer activity on this route.
- The route serves significant residential neighborhoods adjacent to Garland Street, Forest Avenue, and Mount Hope Avenue.
- A bus shelter on Mount Hope Avenue provides car-free access to BMHI. Individuals without cars who travel to BMHI for outpatient services board and alight at this location.
- The route provides a car-free link for students enrolled at EMTC.

Weaknesses

The current configuration of the Mount Hope route includes some serious deficiencies:

- The one-way design of the route results in bus rides that are unnecessarily long for most origin-destination pairs. Most passengers enjoy a direct ride in one direction, and must endure an indirect, time-consuming ride for their return trip. This situation was not improved by adding a second bus to the route. On the contrary, buses can now take even longer to travel the full one-way loop.

- A bus ride from the Bangor Mall to downtown takes only 13 minutes. The bus ride from downtown to the Mall (via Mount Hope Avenue and Wal-Mart) takes 25 minutes, nearly twice as long.
- A bus ride from downtown to Mount Hope Avenue takes only 8 minutes. A ride from the same location to downtown takes 30 minutes, nearly four times as long.
- Each 38 minute round trip is followed by a 22-minute downtown layover. (During midday hours, Mount Hope drivers currently utilize this time to provide a round trip between Pickering Square and Shaws on lower Main Street.)
- The extended downtown layover results in indirect and poorly timed transfers for inbound Mount Hope passengers transferring to other routes. For example, a Capehart resident returning from the Bangor Mall must wait 22 minutes for a connecting bus at the downtown terminal.
- Poorly designed land use patterns in the Bangor Mall area mean that buses must travel circuitous driveways through heavy traffic to move between retail locations. Because of the one-way configuration of the Mount Hope route, all passengers who use this bus for round-trip travel must endure a slow-moving tour of the region's retail sprawl.

It is important to recognize that the Mount Hope route serves two important but different route segments: (1) residents, BHMI patients, and EMTC students served by the outbound portion of the route; and (2) retail shoppers served by the in-bound portion. Any solution for the problems outlined above will need to accommodate the needs of both groups.

5.2.5 Brewer

The Brewer route consists of two loops connecting residential neighborhoods of Brewer with downtown Bangor and with shopping locations in Brewer. One bus is used to provide service on both loops. The North Loop departs Bangor every hour at 15 minutes past the hour. The South Loop departs Bangor hourly at 45 minutes past the hour.

In FY 2001, the Brewer bus carried a total of 41,140 passengers, accounting for 9% of total system riders. Since FY 1995, when the last system-wide route study was carried out, annual Brewer ridership has increased 29%.

The North Loop provides access to (1) the North Brewer Shopping Center, (2) residential neighborhoods adjacent to Parkway North, Washington Street, and Chamberlain Streets, (3) a senior citizen apartment building on Chamberlain Street, (4) the Twin City Plaza, and (5) the Brewer Shopping Center. The North Loop bus returns to downtown Bangor via State Street.

The South Loop serves (1) businesses and residences along South Main Street, (2) the Eastern Fine Paper mill, (3) residential neighborhoods along Parkway South, (4) the Brewer High School, (5) the Brewer Shopping Center, and (6) Twin City Plaza. The South Loop also serves Marden's and other commercial establishments on Wilson Street.

The Brewer route is designed in part to allow residents to travel to and from Brewer's two large shopping plazas. A passenger who boards at a residence along the North Loop can travel directly to either shopping center. The same individual can then return home by boarding a South Loop bus as it heads toward Bangor, returning to Brewer on the North Loop. A similar situation exists for residents along the South Loop.

The route also offers service for Brewer residents who travel to downtown Bangor for employment, shopping, medical appointments, and other errands. Inbound trips to Bangor are somewhat indirect, since most residents must travel via the shopping centers before heading into Bangor. Inbound passengers on the South Loop must also travel out and back on Wilson Street on their way to downtown Bangor.

Brewer buses sometimes have difficulty making it back to Pickering Square within the available 30-minutes. On-time performance problems are worse during the summer months due to increased traffic along Wilson Street.

Strengths

The Brewer service has a number of strong points:

- It provides the city of Brewer with fairly comprehensive service using only one bus.
- The two loops allow the bus to provide direct service to a wide variety of Brewer neighborhoods.
- Brewer service operates all day, a significant improvement over past years when service was interrupted midday.

Weaknesses

The Brewer route includes a number of shortcomings. Some of these result from the current practice of limiting Brewer service to one bus.

- The route, schedule, and service pattern are complicated and may confuse some potential riders.
- Drivers have difficulty remaining on time, especially on South Loop runs that operate via outer Wilson Street.
- Brewer residents traveling to downtown Bangor must endure traffic delays and congestion at the intersection of Wilson and State Streets. This situation is worse for South Loop riders who must also travel via outer Wilson Street to reach downtown.
- On both loops, buses exit the Twin City Plaza by turning left onto State Street. Drivers sometimes must wait for 3-4 minutes or longer for a break in traffic at this intersection.
- Bangor residents who wish to reach shopping destinations at the Brewer Shopping Center must travel a circuitous route via residential neighborhoods on either loop.

5.2.6 Hampden

One bus operates on the Hampden route connecting the town of Hampden with downtown Bangor. The Hampden bus offers hourly round trips between 6:15 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. and between 2:15 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. There is no service on the route between 10:00 a.m. and 2:15 p.m.

In FY 2001, the Hampden bus carried a total of 10,634 riders. This represents a 51% increase in annual usage since the last system-wide study was done in FY 1995. At that time, the annual ridership total for Hampden service was 7,047. In FY 2001, the route averaged 5.5 riders per hour and per round trip.

The Hampden route serves a fairly large geographic area, most of which has limited population density. The Hampden bus also provides the only downtown bus link for portions of Main Street in Bangor, including Beal College and the Bangor Auditorium.

The Hampden bus operates in both directions along Main Road between Bangor and Hampden's commercial center. In Hampden, it operates on a one-way loop via Western Avenue, Mayo Road, and Kennebec Road. It serves a section of Main Road south of Kennebec before reversing direction and heading back toward Bangor.

Within the town of Hampden, the bus passes:

- (1) Taylor Park, a trailer park in East Hampden
- (2) a light-density residential neighborhood along Old County Road
- (3) Crestwood Trailer Park
- (4) Hampden's commercial center
- (5) the Hampden municipal building
- (6) Roe Village, a subsidized housing development with about 30 units
- (7) a new Graves Shop 'n Save supermarket
- (8) subdivisions and apartment complexes adjacent to Western Avenue
- (9) a former shoe factory on the Mayo Road that is now closed
- (10) light density rural residential neighborhoods along Kennebec Road
- (11) a residential neighborhood adjacent to the intersection of Kennebec and Main
- (12) Hampden Academy
- (13) a small shopping center in Hampden's commercial center

The Hampden route has been designed to offer bus service to a wide range of Hampden's residential neighborhoods. Although The Bus is lightly used in most of these areas, the service is available for many town residents if someone in their household needs a ride. While potential benefits are widely shared, this approach results in a long, slow route that is only marginally productive.

Strengths

Despite a limited population base and limited ridership, the Hampden route provides some meaningful benefits to Hampden and the region.

- The Hampden bus provides a transportation choice for residents who cannot drive, or who occasionally need an alternative to driving their cars.
- There are some area residents, including at least one individual in a wheelchair, who rely on the Hampden bus for access to Bangor for work, shopping, and other business.
- The route provides Bangor's only transit link for lower Main Street and Beal College.
- The route includes a front-door stop at a new Graves Supermarket on Western Avenue in Hampden. This stop was added in June of 2002.

Weaknesses

There are a number of factors that limit the usefulness and effectiveness of the existing Hampden bus service as currently designed:

- There is no service during midday hours. This makes use of the service complicated for people who are not commuters. Hampden residents who do not want to stay in Bangor for four hours must plan their trips so they arrive home by 9:30 in the morning, or they must wait until after 2:30 in the afternoon to begin their errands.
- The one-way loop at the south end of the route results in indirect and time-consuming trips for some people. There is no direct two-way access for Hampden residents traveling to and from the new Graves Shop 'n Save.
- The route serves areas with little or no ridership. This includes service on the Mayo Road, Kennebec Road, and Main Road south of Kennebec Road.
- The first morning bus arrives in Bangor at 6:54 a.m., missing connections with other Bangor routes that depart downtown at 6:45 a.m.
- The route does not offer a direct connection with the Old Town route that serves the Eastern Maine Medical Center and the University of Maine. In the morning, the Hampden bus arrives in Bangor at 15 minutes past the hour, while the Old Town bus departs at 45 minutes past the hour. In the afternoon, the Old Town bus arrives in Bangor at 42 minutes past the hour, while the Hampden bus departs at 15 minutes past the hour.
- While the Hampden bus passes by Hampden's town office and a senior apartment complex, the bus does not turn off the highway at these locations. Passengers must wait on the main roadway to board the bus.
- The route diversion via Old County Road lengthens the bus ride for other passengers, while apparently generating few additional riders.

5.2.7 *Old Town*

In FY 2001, the Old Town route accounted for 83,235 riders, making it the third busiest route in the system. Old Town buses carried an average of 12 riders per hour and 23.6 riders per round trip. This is the system's best route measured in terms of riders per round trip. The next best per-trip performance is Mount Hope, with 16.9 riders per round trip.

Unlike the rest of the Bangor transit system, the Old Town route experienced a net decline in riders between FY 1995 and FY 2001. The route carried 81,289 riders in FY 2001 compared with 86,670 in FY 1995, a decline of 4%. It is important to note, however, that the FY 2001 total represents a 10% increase when compared with FY 2000. Between FY 1995 and FY 2000, Old Town ridership decreased 13%. This downward trend was reversed in FY 2001, thanks in large part to introduction of the Maine Card program for University students and staff.

Two buses are used to provide hourly service on the Old Town route. A complete round trip takes 90 minutes to complete. This means that Old Town drivers have a 30-minute layover in downtown Bangor between runs. Prior to 1987, this route was served during the academic year by three buses operating every half hour. Service frequency was cut back in June of 1986 as a cost-saving measure.

The Old Town route connects Old Town, Orono, Veazie, and Bangor, and includes service to the campus of the University of Maine. Key locations along the route include:

- (1) Commercial businesses and residences adjacent to State Street in Bangor
- (2) Eastern Maine Medical Center
- (3) medical clinics on Route 2 in Orono
- (4) residential neighborhoods adjacent to Route 2 in Orono
- (5) downtown Orono
- (6) the University of Maine
- (7) University Mall
- (8) Old Town Plaza
- (9) residential and commercial districts in Old Town

The Old Town route serves a variety of trip purposes. Students and staff of the University of Maine use it to travel to the Orono campus from Old Town, Orono, Veazie, and Bangor. Commuters use it to travel to a variety of work sites along the route.

The Old Town route provides the only public transportation link to the Eastern Maine Medical Center. (Passengers wishing to reach EMMC must board and alight on State Street, because Old Town buses are too large to fit through the circle at the medical center entrance.)

Local residents use the route for a variety of shopping trips. It offers front door stops at the University Mall and the Old Town Plaza. Buses travel in alternating directions on a loop connecting Orono and Old Town. While this makes the schedule somewhat confusing, it allows Old Town residents to travel to and from the two shopping centers without a transfer.

Strengths

The Old Town service has a number of strengths, most of which stem from the important markets located along the route.

- The route allows off-campus students of the University of Maine to reach the Orono campus without a car.
- It gives on-campus students car-free access to downtown commercial centers in Old Town, Orono, and Bangor.
- It gives University staff a car-free commuter option.
- It provides commuter access to a variety of job sites in Bangor, Orono, Veazie, and Old Town.
- It provides a transportation alternative for EMMC patients, visitors, and employees.
- It gives Old Town senior citizens and others two-way access to grocery shopping and other retail stores at the Old Town Plaza.

Weaknesses

The Old Town route also has a number of deficiencies that limit the usefulness of the service for current and potential riders:

- The current 60-minute service is too infrequent for the markets served. This is especially true for commuters traveling to the University of Maine and EMMC.
- Senior citizens and others have difficulty walking from the State Street bus stop to the EMMC entrance.
- Bangor residents transferring from other routes must pay an extra fee to reach EMMC and other Bangor destinations along State Street.
- The service configuration between Orono and Old Town (with alternate buses traveling a loop in opposite directions) is complicated and confusing.
- The route diversion to the University Mall results in longer bus rides for people traveling between Old Town and the University of Maine.
- The University Mall diversion does not include a convenient bus stop for people who work at the nearby MBNA facility. (Extending the route to MBNA would result in a longer diversion and even more time on the bus for other riders.)
- While University students and others can use the Old Town route to reach the Bangor Mall area, to do this they must transfer in downtown Bangor. The resulting bus ride from the Orono campus to the Mall takes about 55 minutes. A more direct route via Interstate 95 would require less than half an hour.

- The last bus to Bangor departs the University at 6:15 p.m. The lack of evening service limits the usefulness of the service for off-campus students who use campus facilities in the evening, and for Bangor-area residents who wish to take advantage of evening cultural events at the University.

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