

## BIDDEFORD-SACO-OLD ORCHARD BEACH TRANSIT

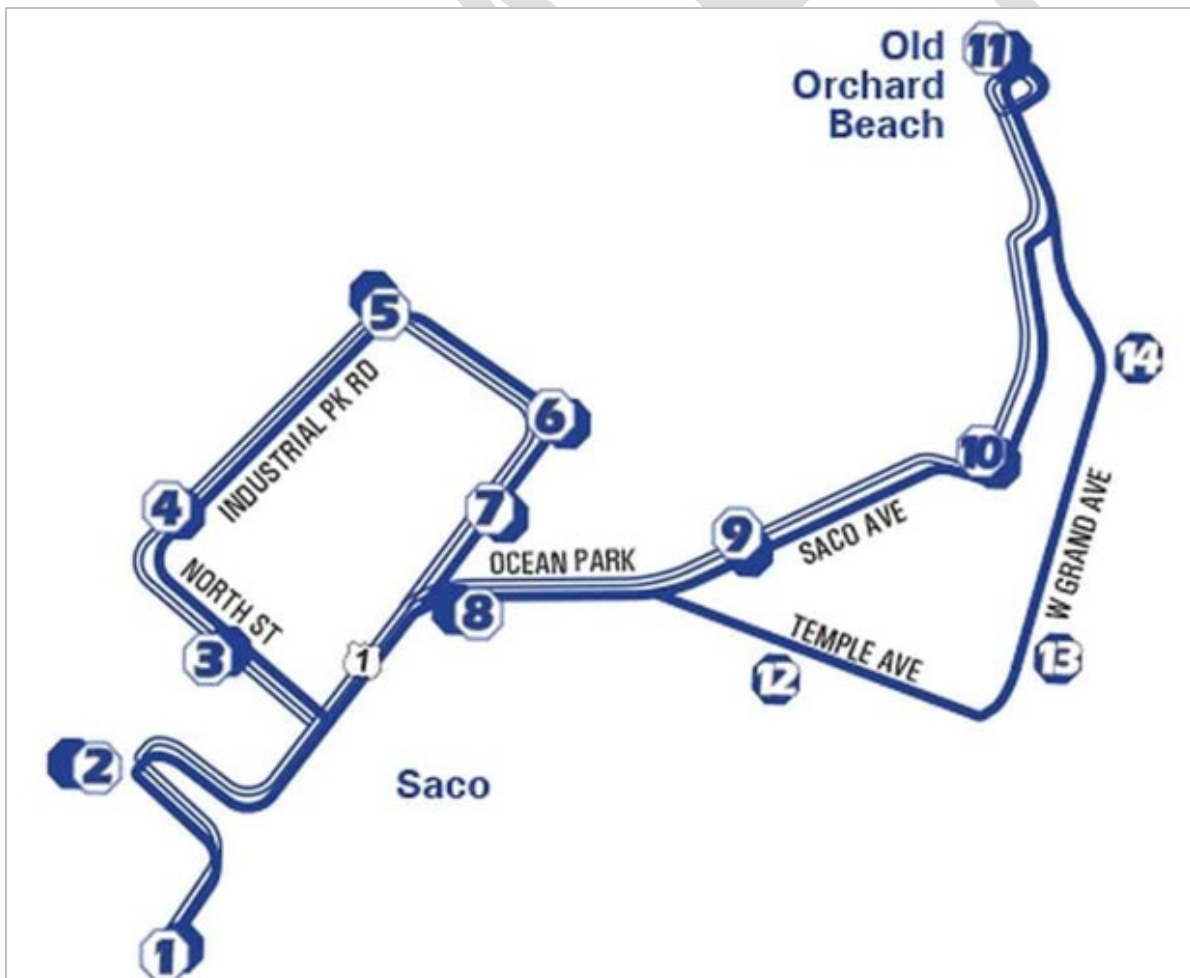
# 52 WHITE/53 BLUE

### Route Overview

The Route 52 White/53 Blue operates between Old Orchard Beach and Saco, and serves several key shopping destinations, the Saco industrial park area, and Old Orchard Beach residential communities. The other BSOOB Transit service that operates between Saco and Old Orchard Beach is the Route 60 Green Line, which operates between Portland and Saco via Old Orchard Beach.

Route 52 White/53 Blue is a new two-route combination that was created as part of BSOOB Transit's 2019 service changes. Prior to the development of Route 52/53, similar areas were served by parts of the former Maroon Line and Blue/Saco-OOB Loop.

### Route Map



## Alignment

The Route 52/53 is essentially two different routes (which serve many of the same streets) that are grouped under one name and presented to the public as one service.

- **Route 52 White** trips begin at the Saco Transportation Center and operate outbound sequentially via the numbers on the map through 11, which is Cascade Plaza in Old Orchard Beach. Inbound trips then return to Saco via Saco Avenue, Ocean Park Road, and the Saco Valley Shopping Center (2 on the map). Inbound trips do not serve the Industrial Park loop.
- **Route 53 Blue** trips begin at Saco Transportation Center and travel to outbound to Cascade Plaza in Old Orchard Beach via the Saco Valley Shopping Center, Main Street, Ocean Park Road, Temple Avenue and West Grand Avenue (via numbers 2, 8, 12, 13, and 14 on the map above). Inbound trips operate in the reverse of 52 White trips (via numbers 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, and 2 on the map above).

Together, routes 52 and 53 provide bi-directional service in the Saco industrial park area and along Saco Avenue, and one-way service on Temple Avenue and West Grand Avenue. Because service is only offered in one direction on some roads, round trips are very time-consuming for riders.

## Connections

Transfers are available to all BSOOB Transit routes (except one Route 70 pattern), the YCCAC Southern Maine Connector, and the Downeaster at the Saco Transportation Center. Summer-only transfers are also possible to the Downeaster and seasonal BSOOB Transit routes at Old Orchard Beach Station.

## Schedule

Service frequencies are extremely long, with Route 52 White trips operating two to two-and-a-half hours apart on all day, and Route 53 Blue trips operating with 2.5-hour headways.

### Schedule Summary

	Span of Service	Headways (mins.)	One-Way Trips
<b>Route 52 White</b>			
Weekdays	5:30 AM to 10:10 PM	120 - 150	8
Saturday	5:30 AM to 10:10 PM	120 - 150	8
Sunday	5:30 AM to 6:20 PM	120 - 150	6
<b>Route 53 Blue</b>			
Weekdays	6:15 AM to 10:10 PM	150	7
Saturday	6:15 AM to 10:10 PM	150	7
Sunday	6:15 AM to 7:40 PM	150	6

Notes: Span and frequency from February 2022 schedules. Ridership data from October 2019 Maroon Line and Blue/Saco-OOB Loop.

Weekday and Saturday service on the Route 52 White operates from 5:30 AM to 10:10 PM and Sunday service operates from 5:30 AM to 6:20 PM. Weekday and Saturday service on the Route 53 Blue operates from 6:15 AM to 10:10 PM and Sunday service operates from 6:15 AM to 7:40 PM.

## Ridership

### Ridership and Productivity by Day

Route 52/53 was established in late 2019 so no pre-pandemic ridership data are available. However, ridership figures from its predecessor routes show pre-pandemic ridership levels of approximately:

- 236 average weekday boardings
- 116 average Saturday boardings
- 76 average Sunday boardings

If these numbers were compared to other BSOOB Transit pre-pandemic routes, they would be the highest-ridership route. Because this ridership was largely concentrated between Saco and Old Orchard Beach, it suggests a strong transit corridor connecting the two communities, particularly along Main Street, Ocean Park Road, Saco Avenue, and Portland Avenue. It must be

noted that these ridership data are from different routes that served the same locations but with different patterns, so conclusions drawn from the data are estimates of current demand only.

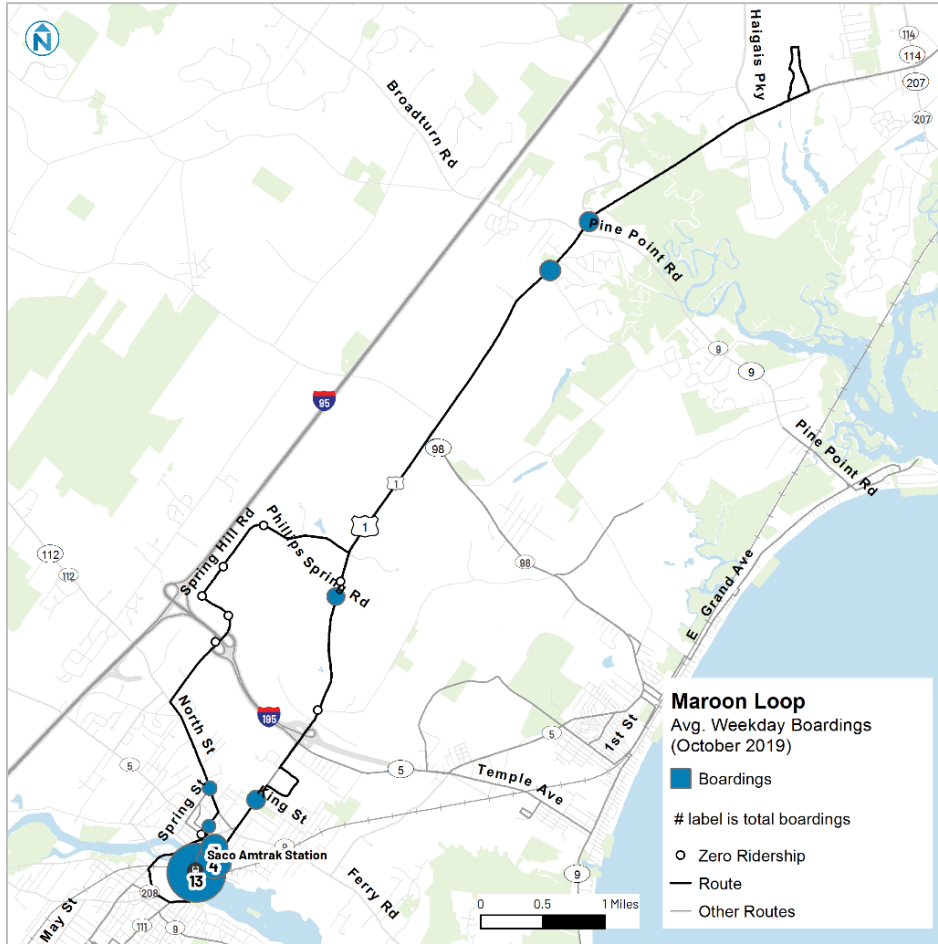
### **Weekday Ridership by Segment**

The maps below show 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, the highest average weekday ridership stops on Route 52/53 predecessor routes (i.e., the Maroon Line and Blue/Saco-OOB Loop) were:

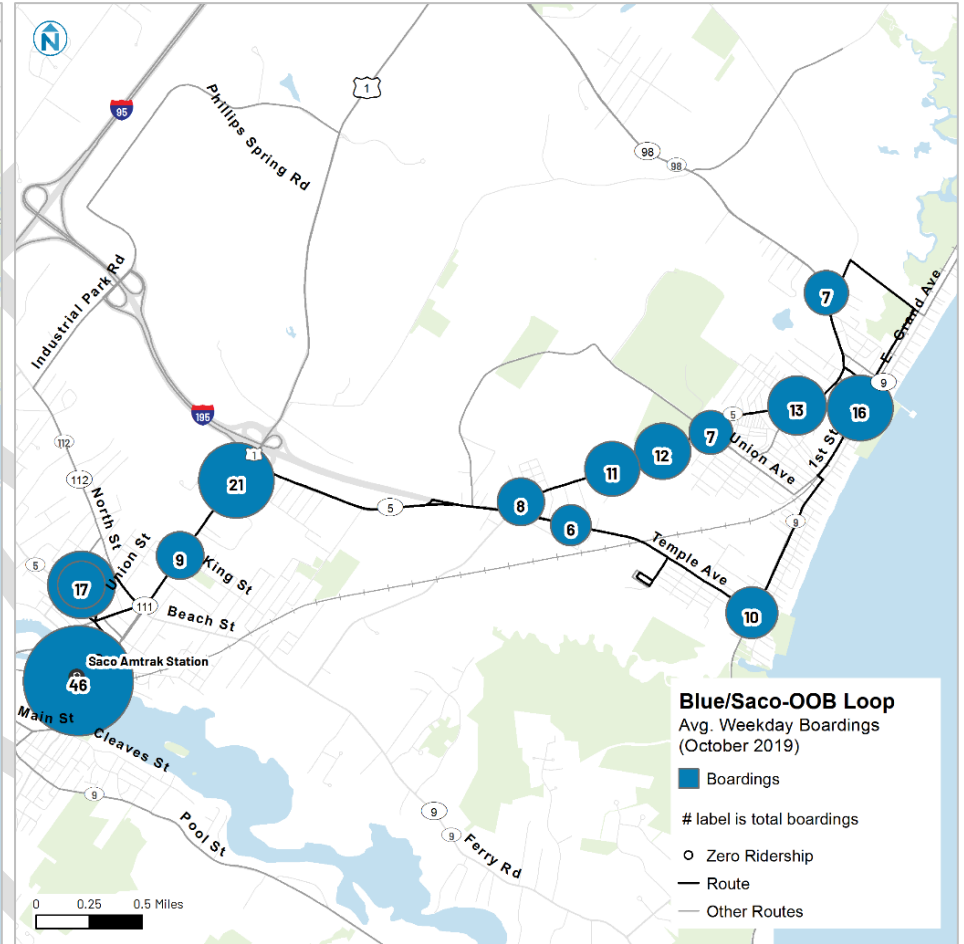
- The Saco Transportation Center, with 59 boardings
- Saco Avenue, with over 50 boardings
- The Saco Valley Shopping Center, with approximately 20 boardings
- Hannaford, on Main Street just south of I-195, with over 20 boardings
- Downtown Old Orchard Beach, with 16 boardings
- The intersection of Temple Avenue and West Grand Avenue, with 10 boardings

Ridership to and from the Saco industrial park area was extremely low.

Weekday Ridership by Segment: Maroon Line (October 2019)



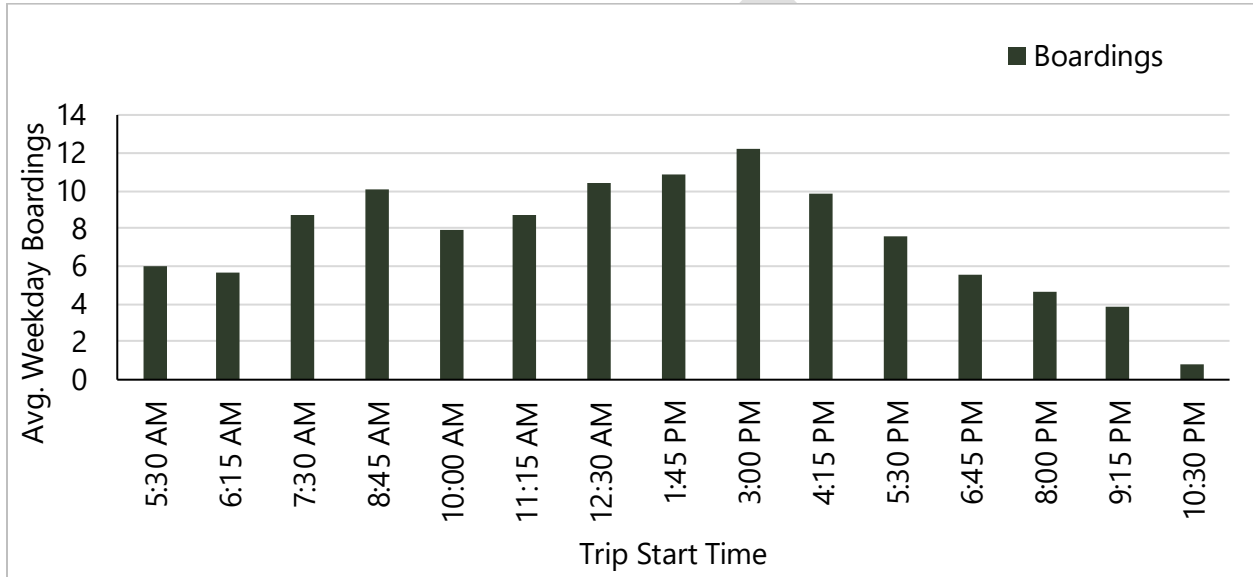
Ridership by Segment: Blue/Saco-OOB Loop (October 2019)



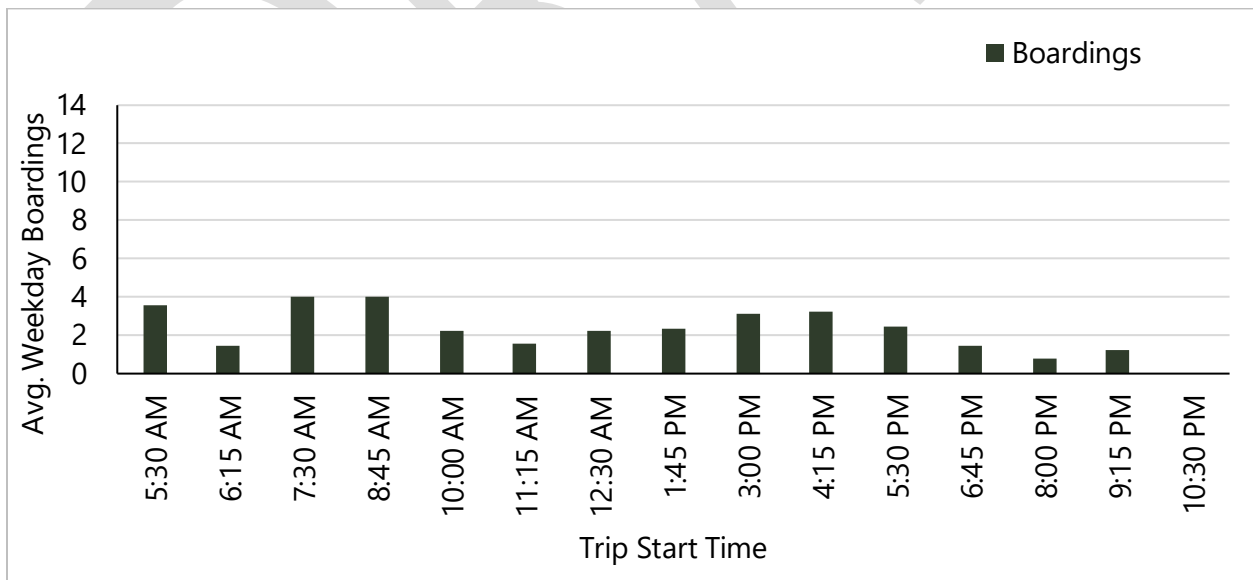
### Weekday Ridership per Trip

Again, due to the recent establishment of Route 52/53, no pre-pandemic ridership per trip data are available. However, ridership on the old Blue/Saco-OOB Loop, which was most comparable to the new Route 52/53, ranged from one to 12 passengers per trip. Ridership on the old Maroon Line was extremely low, at only one to four passengers per trip.

### Weekday Boardings by Trip: Blue/Saco-OOB Loop (October 2019)



### Weekday Boardings by Trip: Maroon Line (October 2019)



# Assessments and Opportunities

## Strengths

- The route serves several important locations, including two supermarkets, Saco Avenue in Old Orchard Beach, and Old Orchard Beach itself.

## Weaknesses

- The route's very long headways are a major weakness. This is because services that operate less frequently than every 60 minutes are very inconvenient, and as a result, most potential riders will only use infrequent transit services as a last resort. Route 52/53 operates every 120 to 150 minutes, which is far from the typical maximum of 60 minutes.
- The service design is overly complex, which makes service difficult to understand and schedules difficult to interpret.
- The industrial park area loop makes service very circuitous and takes most riders out of their way to get where they are going, all while serving very few riders.
- One-way service on Temple Avenue and West Grand Avenue makes round trips to those areas very difficult.
- Deviations from the main alignment increase travel times for riders not traveling to and from the deviation destinations.

## Opportunities

Opportunities to strengthen Route 52/53 are listed below. Some suggestions may be contradictory, as there is usually more than one approach to improving a route.

- Redesign the route to provide bi-directional service between the Saco Transportation Center and Old Orchard Beach via Main Street, Ocean Park Avenue, and Saco Avenue.
- Discontinue the long loop through the industrial park area due to very low ridership. Alternatively, if service to that area is deemed necessary, provide service with microtransit rather than fixed-route bus service.
- Improve service frequencies to every 60 minutes, which most riders consider to be the minimal acceptable frequency.
- Redesignate the route with a single number and name that reflects areas served.
- Interline with streamlined Route 50 Orange/51 Black service to strengthen connections with Biddeford.
- Eliminate front-door deviations that increase travel time for most riders on board the bus. These include destinations such as The Pines at Ocean Park and, potentially, front-door Shaw's service.