



50% Reduction of Additional Fee

to ride some COAST services in Somersworth

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dover, NH – At their June meeting, the Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST) Board of Directors voted to authorize a reduction in the additional fee charged to passengers boarding COAST buses in Somersworth. The change will take effect on July 1.

The additional fee, implemented August 1, 2015, is being charged to help COAST close a revenue gap resulting from the City only being able to level fund COAST services for the fourth year in a row. COAST Executive Director Rad Nichols, had stated at the time, “We appreciate the position the City is in with the budget, particularly in light of the School budget and the State continuing to push down financial responsibilities to local communities. As an organization however, we have to generate the revenues necessary to support the services we provide, or make adjustments.”

In the subsequent 10+ months since implementing the additional \$0.50 fee, COAST has generated significant new revenues through bus shelter advertising in Somersworth. The Somersworth Council’s passage of an ordinance to allow for this form of advertising within the City in mid-2015 ultimately has allowed COAST to generate revenues equaling approximately 50% of the gap in funding not covered by the City.

At the same time, the negative impacts on passenger boardings in Somersworth have more than offset any additional revenues collected as a result of the additional fee. Ridership on Route 1 alone has declined by over 8.5% over the past 10 months.

Given these two results, the COAST Board voted this past Wednesday to reduce the additional fee from \$0.50, to \$0.25. “The Board of Directors recognizes the negative effects the additional fee is having on riders, creating a hardship. They also acknowledge the positive impacts bus shelter advertising has had and wanted to effect some relief for our passengers”, remarked Rad Nichols. “I am very happy we have been able to reduce the additional fee for our passengers.”

Annually, there is an average of approximately 55,000 passenger boardings in Somersworth on COAST vehicles. In the last 4+ years ridership within the City has grown substantially. Without the extra fee, the fares to board range from free to \$3.00, depending on age or a disability and the service being used. Residents in Somersworth have demonstrated the critical need for the services.

The Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST) has provided public transit service to the Seacoast New Hampshire region since 1982. Over that time, over 13 million passengers have ridden COAST buses. COAST is a public, non-profit regional public transit system with the mission of promoting and/or providing public mass transit services in Southeastern New Hampshire. COAST relies primarily on passenger fares, federal grants, local government support and advertising revenues to support its services.

Riding public transit is one of the best ways to support more convenient, green, and affordable alternatives to driving your car. To find out more about the COAST system and its work to improve public transportation in Southeastern New Hampshire, visit www.coastbus.org or call 603-743-5777.