



New Summertime Service Approved

Friday Night & Saturday Bus Service Improved

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Dover, NH – This summer it will be easier than ever to leave your car at home and enjoy a Friday evening or Saturday out at your favorite restaurant, theatre, or area event and leave the driving to COAST.

Recently the COAST Board of Directors unanimously approved important and long sought after expansions of regional public transit service for this coming summer. The planned expansions include extended evening service on Fridays and added daytime and evening service on Saturdays. The bus routes that will be part of the summer service expansion include COAST Route 1, operating between Berwick, Somersworth and Dover, and COAST Route 2, operating between Rochester, Somersworth, Dover, Newington and Portsmouth.

Later evening departures from the downtowns of Portsmouth, Dover and Rochester will allow for people to leave their cars at home and enjoy a more affordable “night on the town” without having to drive. Jeremy LaRose, COAST Manager of Operations & Planning observed, “The Seacoast has so much to offer. There are a tremendous number of activities and events during the summer. We (COAST) are attempting to make it even easier to take advantage of this by expanding Friday evening service and adding Saturday service through the summertime.”

The demand for later service on weeknights and more service on Saturdays is nothing new. It has been consistently mentioned as a top priority on all recent COAST ridership surveys. In fact, COAST has wanted to make such improvements for several years, but did not have the funding. This year they have enough funding to offer a summertime expansion over a ten-week period between June 25 and August 28.

“Providing later evening service on Fridays and Saturdays, and expanding Saturday service levels, is a big deal,” remarked Rad Nichols, COAST Executive Director. “It will improve many people’s access to local shopping, later-shift employment, and entertainment. This is an important step for the six (6) communities through which these bus routes operate.”

Friday Evenings

Friday evening service on COAST Route 2 will be extended to 11:15 pm. Southbound bus service from Rochester will depart hourly throughout the entire afternoon and evening, up until 9:00 pm. Northbound bus service from Portsmouth will depart hourly from mid-afternoon and evening up until 10:30 pm.

Saturdays

New and not previously available, Saturday bus service on COAST Route 1 will be operated between 6:40 am and 10:30 pm. Similar to weekday service offered by COAST, timely connections between COAST Routes 1 & 2 will be maximized to promote ease of travel for passengers.

COAST Route 2 will also be expanded with the addition of a second bus being placed into service in the early afternoon. Two new southbound departures from Rochester will be added in the afternoon. Three new northbound departures from Portsmouth will be added, with the last departure at 10:25 pm.

COAST Routes 1 and 2 offer safe, affordable, and convenient connections between the four cities of the region: Rochester, Somersworth, Dover and Portsmouth. The achievement of this seasonal service expansion represents COAST's continued long-term commitment to better meet the growing transportation needs of the region and improve the availability of affordable public transit service.

It is estimated that the additional summertime bus service will cost approximately \$29,000 to put in place. Approximately 60% of the funding will come from the Federal Transit Administration, while the remaining 40% will come through passenger fares and the local communities serviced by COAST.

Details on the specific schedule changes and promotional materials are being finalized and should be ready for distribution in early June.

COAST Executive Director, Rad Nichols, announced, "COAST is very excited to be able to offer expanded Friday night and Saturday service through the summer. These service expansions are improvements the organization has been committed to achieving since 2007. We hope to end this summer with strong ridership, which will help us build support for permanent and year-round service expansions in the future."

Mr. Nichols stressed the bus service is there for everyone, not just people who cannot drive or do not own a car. COAST is hoping that residents who have never ridden the bus before will take this opportunity to give public transit a try. "This summer, when you're getting ready to go out, consider leaving your car behind and taking the bus instead," Mr. Nichols said. "You'll avoid the hassle of traffic and finding a parking space, you'll save on gas, too. You may even find that the bus goes other places you need to get to. Taking the bus occasionally could be the start of a whole new, greener routine."

The Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST) has provided public transit service to the Seacoast New Hampshire region since 1982. COAST is a public, non-profit transit system that relies primarily on federal and local government support to operate. For complete information on routes, schedules, and service, visit their web site at www.coastbus.org.