



FY2024

FARE PLAN & ANALYSIS

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www.AmtrakDowneaster.com

Executive Summary

Purpose

The purpose of this fare plan is to establish pricing for Amtrak Downeaster passenger rail service. This document supports the fiduciary responsibility of Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) to maximize the public benefit and investment while minimizing required public operating support. This plan is developed by staff and forwarded to the Board of Directors for approval.

Plan Objectives

The Downeaster Fare Plan provides both fixed measurements and general guidance. Variables which influence fare policy include:

- a) Fiscal: Collect the maximum revenue that the market will bear**
- b) Mobility: Carry the greatest number of people as possible**
- c) Social: Provide an equitable and socially responsible public transportation service**

This Fare Plan seeks to balance these three objectives with a pricing program that reflects regulatory constraints, market expectations and fairness to customers, while also supporting the operations of the Downeaster service. NNEPRA strives to achieve an annual cost recovery ratio of 50% to financially sustain Amtrak Downeaster service. This has not been achieved since FY19.

Service Overview

Downeaster ridership of 547,000 and revenue of \$10.2M increased 85% between FY2006 and FY2019. Ridership was expected to exceed 600,0000 riders with revenue of more than \$12M in FY2020 prior to the pandemic. Downeaster ridership has recovered to approximately 90% of FY19 levels and \$10.4M in revenues for FY2023.

Downeaster one-way fares were modified in 2018 and multi-ride pass fares were modified in 2019. Downeaster operating expenses have increased 20% during that time. In addition, some discount programs were recently expanded. In February of 2023, Amtrak removed the adult/child ratio requirement from their national discount program to allow all children ages 2-12 to travel at 50% off with a fare-paying adult. In April 2023, Amtrak simplified the NNEPRA-specific 50% discount for Seniors age 65+, programming it to be automatically applied when the “senior” passenger type is selected during the reservation process on all Amtrak booking channels. A unique promo code was required previously.

FY24 Fare Plan Recommendation Summary

The FY24 Downeaster Fare Plan recommends a dynamic approach to fare and revenue management based on consumer demand and inflation. Increasing costs associated with Amtrak operations and inflation are the primary catalyst for fare increases and pricing modifications. The ability to adjust fares to meet rising costs and changing demand levels allows NNEPRA to maximize ridership, stay within budget limitations, meet cost recovery goals and minimize the impact of taxpayer contributions.

Per the FY24 Downeaster Fare Plan: Maximum increases in One-Way Coach value fares will not exceed six dollars (\$6) per segment and the premium for Business Class seating will not exceed twelve dollars (\$12) per segment. Modest changes are proposed to Multi-Ride Pass fares.

About Downeaster Fares and Fare Structures

The Amtrak Downeaster is part of the Amtrak national network. Reservations, and ticketing services are provided by Amtrak. Downeaster fares are collected by Amtrak and credited to NNEPRA to offset operating costs. NNEPRA has the authority to set fares and establish promotions for Downeaster trains. Ticketing classifications and standard discount programs are established by Amtrak.

There are four tiers of Downeaster ticket prices:

- One-Way Coach Fares
- Business Class Premium
- Multi-Ride Passes
- Group Travel Fares

One-Way Coach Fare Recommendations

Coach is the standard seating class for Downeaster passengers and features reclining leather seats with fold-down trays, overhead lighting and electrical outlets.

Amtrak currently provides up to three fare categories which offer various price points for one-way coach seating based on advance booking patterns, availability of seats, and refund/change policies. Value is currently the standard fare category in the Amtrak system with less expensive options available for advance non-refundable purchases, and more expensive options available for more restricted cancellation and change fee policies.

Amtrak has waived all change fees for reservations made by December 31, 2023, but cancellation fees may still apply depending on the type of fare purchased and additional changes the Amtrak Fare Program are planned. The Fare Finder on the Amtrak.com website displays the available fare options for each class of travel on each train so passengers are able to select the fare which best suits their travel needs.

The FY24 Downeaster Fare Plan recommends a dynamic approach to fare and revenue management for Downeaster service which allows the flexibility to modify fares based on consumer demand and inflation and to align with Amtrak’s national fare program parameters. The maximum allowable increases in one-way Value fares will not exceed six dollars per segment (\$6).

Current Value Fare

VALUE FARE	BRK	FRE	POR	ORB	SAO	WEM	DOV	DHM	EXR	HHL
FRE	\$ 3									
POR	\$ 3	\$ 3								
ORB	\$ 6	\$ 6	\$ 3							
SAO	\$ 6	\$ 6	\$ 3	\$ 3						
WEM	\$ 9	\$ 9	\$ 6	\$ 6	\$ 3					
DOV	\$ 12	\$ 12	\$ 12	\$ 12	\$ 11	\$ 8				
DHM	\$ 12	\$ 12	\$ 12	\$ 12	\$ 12	\$ 11	\$ 9			
EXR	\$ 12	\$ 12	\$ 12	\$ 12	\$ 12	\$ 12	\$ 12	\$ 9		
HAV	\$ 30	\$ 30	\$ 29	\$ 19	\$ 17	\$ 15	\$ 14	\$ 12	\$ 9	
WOB	\$ 30	\$ 30	\$ 29	\$ 24	\$ 23	\$ 20	\$ 20	\$ 19	\$ 16	\$ 13
BON	\$ 30	\$ 30	\$ 29	\$ 25	\$ 24	\$ 21	\$ 21	\$ 20	\$ 17	\$ 14

Maximum Value Fare

PROPOSED MAX VALUE FARE	BRK	FRE	POR	ORB	SAO	WEM	DOV	DHM	EXR	HHL
FRE	\$ 3									
POR	\$ 6	\$ 5								
ORB	\$ 8	\$ 5	\$ 5							
SAO	\$ 8	\$ 8	\$ 6	\$ 3						
WEM	\$ 11	\$ 11	\$ 8	\$ 8	\$ 5					
DOV	\$ 17	\$ 17	\$ 17	\$ 17	\$ 16	\$ 11				
DHM	\$ 17	\$ 17	\$ 17	\$ 17	\$ 17	\$ 14	\$ 14			
EXR	\$ 17	\$ 17	\$ 17	\$ 17	\$ 17	\$ 17	\$ 17	\$ 14		
HAV	\$ 36	\$ 36	\$ 34	\$ 24	\$ 22	\$ 20	\$ 19	\$ 17	\$ 14	
WOB	\$ 36	\$ 36	\$ 34	\$ 29	\$ 28	\$ 25	\$ 25	\$ 24	\$ 21	\$ 18
BON	\$ 36	\$ 36	\$ 34	\$ 30	\$ 29	\$ 26	\$ 26	\$ 25	\$ 22	\$ 19

One-Way Business Class Premium Recommendations

Business Class has the highest price point on the Downeaster. There are a limited number of Business Class seats on Downeaster trains, and they are located adjacent to the Downeaster Café. Downeaster Business Class seats are larger and fully reclining and Business Class passengers enjoy at-seat service of a complimentary non-alcoholic beverage. Business class tickets are fully refundable if cancelled prior to scheduled departure. Business Class fares are determined based on a “premium” applied to the Value Fare. The current Business Class premium on the Downeaster ranges from \$5 to \$10 per segment.

The FY24 Downeaster Fare Plan recommends increasing the Business Class premium to a maximum of \$12 per segment Value Fare.

Multi-Ride Passes

Multi-ride pass holders currently represent a smaller percentage of Downeaster riders than they did prior to 2020. Multi-Ride Passes provide a discount for frequent passengers and pass holders must confirm each trip prior to traveling using Amtrak’s RideReserve at Amtrak.com, Mobile App, or with an Amtrak Agent.

Four types of multi-ride passes are available on the Amtrak Downeaster:

- The Amtrak **Monthly Pass** is valid for unlimited rides between a selected Downeaster city pair for a calendar month for one fixed price. A modest increase is recommended for travel to Boston and other select city pairs.

CURRENT MONTHLY PASS FARE										
	BRK	FRE	POR	ORB	SAO	WEM	DOV	DHM	EXR	HHL
FRE	\$ 76									
POR	\$ 76	\$ 76								
ORB	\$ 76	\$ 76	\$ 76							
SAO	\$ 76	\$ 76	\$ 76	\$ 76						
WEM	\$ 76	\$ 76	\$ 76	\$ 76	\$ 76					
DOV	\$ 239	\$ 239	\$ 205	\$ 166	\$ 119	\$ 79				
DHM	\$ 269	\$ 269	\$ 237	\$ 197	\$ 152	\$ 116	\$ 100			
EXR	\$ 299	\$ 299	\$ 277	\$ 242	\$ 197	\$ 159	\$ 150	\$ 105		
HAV	\$ 299	\$ 299	\$ 299	\$ 277	\$ 237	\$ 234	\$ 220	\$ 160	\$ 135	
WOB	\$ 339	\$ 339	\$ 339	\$ 339	\$ 339	\$ 319	\$ 319	\$ 319	\$ 269	\$ 155
BON	\$ 339	\$ 339	\$ 339	\$ 339	\$ 339	\$ 339	\$ 339	\$ 339	\$ 339	\$ 339

PROPOSED MONTHLY PASS FARE										
	BRK	FRE	POR	ORB	SAO	WEM	DOV	DHM	EXR	HHL
FRE	\$ 76									
POR	\$ 76	\$ 76								
ORB	\$ 76	\$ 76	\$ 76							
SAO	\$ 76	\$ 76	\$ 76	\$ 76						
WEM	\$ 76	\$ 76	\$ 76	\$ 76	\$ 76					
DOV	\$ 239	\$ 239	\$ 205	\$ 166	\$ 119	\$ 79				
DHM	\$ 269	\$ 269	\$ 237	\$ 197	\$ 152	\$ 116	\$ 100			
EXR	\$ 299	\$ 299	\$ 277	\$ 242	\$ 197	\$ 169	\$ 159	\$ 109		
HAV	\$ 309	\$ 309	\$ 309	\$ 289	\$ 249	\$ 239	\$ 229	\$ 169	\$ 139	
WOB	\$ 349	\$ 349	\$ 349	\$ 349	\$ 349	\$ 329	\$ 329	\$ 329	\$ 279	\$ 165
BON	\$ 349	\$ 349	\$ 349	\$ 349	\$ 349	\$ 349	\$ 349	\$ 349	\$ 349	\$ 349

- The Amtrak **Ten-Ride Pass** is valid for 10 one-way trips between a selected Downeaster city pair and is valid for 45-days from date of purchase. A modest increase is recommended for travel to Boston and other select city pairs.

CURRENT 10-RIDE PASS FARE										
	BRK	FRE	POR	ORB	SAO	WEM	DOV	DHM	EXR	HHL
FRE	\$ 27									
POR	\$ 27	\$ 27								
ORB	\$ 27	\$ 27	\$ 27							
SAO	\$ 27	\$ 27	\$ 27	\$ 27						
WEM	\$ 27	\$ 27	\$ 27	\$ 27	\$ 27					
DOV	\$ 173	\$ 150	\$ 113	\$ 92	\$ 81	\$ 50				
DHM	\$ 180	\$ 158	\$ 134	\$ 108	\$ 92	\$ 72	\$ 60			
EXR	\$ 203	\$ 180	\$ 155	\$ 134	\$ 113	\$ 86	\$ 86	\$ 65		
HAV	\$ 225	\$ 195	\$ 177	\$ 155	\$ 134	\$ 113	\$ 102	\$ 96	\$ 70	
WOB	\$ 225	\$ 210	\$ 187	\$ 187	\$ 177	\$ 155	\$ 156	\$ 145	\$ 101	\$ 72
BON	\$ 225	\$ 210	\$ 187	\$ 187	\$ 187	\$ 179	\$ 179	\$ 179	\$ 147	\$ 135

PROPOSED 10-RIDE PASS FARE										
	BRK	FRE	POR	ORB	SAO	WEM	DOV	DHM	EXR	HHL
FRE	\$ 27									
POR	\$ 27	\$ 27								
ORB	\$ 27	\$ 27	\$ 27							
SAO	\$ 27	\$ 27	\$ 27	\$ 27						
WEM	\$ 27	\$ 27	\$ 27	\$ 27	\$ 27					
DOV	\$ 173	\$ 150	\$ 113	\$ 92	\$ 81	\$ 50				
DHM	\$ 180	\$ 158	\$ 134	\$ 108	\$ 92	\$ 72	\$ 60			
EXR	\$ 203	\$ 180	\$ 155	\$ 134	\$ 113	\$ 86	\$ 86	\$ 65		
HAV	\$ 225	\$ 195	\$ 177	\$ 155	\$ 134	\$ 113	\$ 102	\$ 96	\$ 70	
WOB	\$ 235	\$ 220	\$ 197	\$ 197	\$ 187	\$ 165	\$ 166	\$ 155	\$ 111	\$ 82
BON	\$ 235	\$ 220	\$ 197	\$ 197	\$ 197	\$ 189	\$ 189	\$ 189	\$ 157	\$ 145

- The **Downeaster Discover Maine Pass** is valid for 10 one-way trips between any two stations in Maine and is valid for 7-days from date of purchase. No changes are recommended.
- The **Downeaster College 6-Tix Pass** is valid for 6 one-way trips between any Downeaster city pair and is valid for use for one calendar year from the date of purchase. Riders must present a valid college student ID. **The current pass price is \$86. The Plan recommends a \$10 increase to \$96.**

Other Types of Fares and Discounts

Group Travel Fares

Group Travel Fares are generally available for groups of 15 or more passengers. Discounts vary depending on the time and date of travel and are handled on an individual basis based on availability. The popular Downeaster Discovery Program is targeted specifically at youth and school groups.

Amtrak Everyday Discounts

Amtrak offers Everyday Discounts for specific passenger types entered at the time tickets are reserved and are applied at the time of purchase. Everyday Discounts include:

- A national 10% Amtrak discount is available to **Senior Citizens** age 65 and older. A 50% is available for Downeaster passengers who select the Senior passenger type.
- **Children** under 2 years of age ride free. Children ages 2-12 receive a 50% discount off applicable full fare when accompanied by a paying adult.
 - Amtrak offers a national 10% discount for **passengers with disabilities**. An expanded discount of 50% is available for qualifying Downeaster passengers.
 - Amtrak offers a national 10% discount for all active duty and retired military personnel.

Minority and Low-Income Rider Impact Analysis

The following are statistics from a September 2022 Survey conducted to gather demographic information about Downeaster riders as well as the Amtrak FY22 Route Atlas.

Ethnicity:	
White/Caucasian	87.20%
Asian/Asian-American	2.40%
Latino/Hispanic	6.20%
Black/African-American	1.20%
Other	3%
% of Minority Riders impacted by the proposed fare increase:	13.80%

Total Household Income:	
Under \$50,000	5%
\$50,000-\$74,999	11%
\$75,000+	84%
Source Amtrak FY22 Route Atlas	
% of Riders with a household income less than \$25,000 impacted by the proposed fare increase :	<5%

Language Primarily Spoken in Household:	
English	97%
Spanish	1%
French	0%
Other	2%
% of Riders whose household language is other than English impacted by the proposed fare increase	3%

Employment Status:	
Employed Full Time	52%
Student	4%
Retired	41%
Not employed/ Other	4%

In summary, Downeaster passengers that will be impacted by the proposed fare policy change are 89% white Caucasian and 91% have mid to high income levels. Therefore, the impact of this proposed fare increase is not discriminatory on any particular minority or low-income population group.

Alternatives Analysis

Alternative Modes and Transit Options

Markets served by the Downeaster are also served by other modes and transit providers. Proposed Downeaster one-way fares appear to be comparable, yet not competitive, to other transit modes. However, further pricing increases could prove to be disadvantageous to Downeaster ridership growth in other segments of the service.

Regional Fare Analysis

NNEPRA evaluated the maximum Coach value fares proposed in the FY24 Downeaster Fare Plan against bus transit options in applicable markets and found proposed Downeaster fares to be sound and reasonable.

BRUNSWICK - PORTLAND	One Way	Round Trip
Downeaster Maximum Value Fare	\$ 6.00	\$ 12.00
METRO BREEZ	\$ 4.00	\$ 8.00
<i>Downeaster fare variance</i>	50%	50%

BRUNSWICK - BOSTON	One Way	Round Trip
Downeaster Maximum Value Fare	\$ 36.00	\$ 72.00
Concord Coach Brk-S. Stn	\$ 33.00	\$ 59.00
<i>Downeaster fare variance</i>	9%	22%

PORTLAND - BOSTON	One Way	Round Trip
Downeaster Value Fare	\$ 34.00	\$ 68.00
Concord Coach POR-S. Stn	\$ 27.00	\$ 43.00
Greyhound- Flexible Fare POR-S. Stn	\$ 18.98	\$ 33.97
<i>Downeaster fare variance</i>	26%	58%
Downeaster 10-Ride Pass (45 days)		\$ 197.00
Concord Coach POR-S. Stn (30 days)		\$ 155.00

DOVER - BOSTON	One Way	Round Trip
Downeaster Value Fare	\$ 24.00	\$ 48.00
C&J Portsmouth-South Stn.	\$ 14.99	\$ 29.98
<i>Downeaster fare variance</i>	60%	60%
Downeaster 10-Ride Pass (45 days)		\$ 189.00
C&J Dov/Portsmouth-S. Stn (30 days)		\$ 125.00

HAVERTHILL - BOSTON	One Way	Round Trip
Downeaster Value Fare	\$ 19.00	\$ 38.00
MBTA	\$ 11.00	\$ 22.00
<i>Downeaster fare variance</i>	73%	73%
Downeaster Monthly Pass		\$ 349.00
MBTA Monthly Pass		\$ 350.00
<i>Downeaster fare variance</i>		0%

Amtrak Fare Analysis

NNEPRA evaluated the maximum Coach value fares and Business Class fares proposed in the FY24 Downeaster Fare Plan against fares on comparable Amtrak routes and found proposed Downeaster fares to be sound and reasonable.

Amtrak Route	City Pairs	Miles	Value Fare		Business Class	
			Max Fare	Fare/Mile	Max Fare	Fare/Mile
Downeaster	BRK-BON	146	\$ 36	\$ 0.25	\$ 43	\$ 0.29
Cascades	PDX-SEA	146	\$ 42	\$ 0.29	\$ 87	\$ 0.60
Downeaster	POR-BON	116	\$ 34	\$ 0.29	\$ 42	\$ 0.36
Carolinian	NYP-WIL	116	\$ 83	\$ 0.72	\$ 87	\$ 0.75
Downeaster	SAO-BON	100	\$ 29	\$ 0.29	\$ 37	\$ 0.37
Blue Water	CHI-DOA	102	\$ 25	\$ 0.25	\$ 78	\$ 0.76
Downeaster	ORB-BON	104	\$ 30	\$ 0.29	\$ 34	\$ 0.33
Capital Corridor	OAC-SAC	90	\$ 29	\$ 0.32	N/A	N/A

Amtrak Route	City Pairs	Miles	Value Fare		Business Class	
			Max Fare	Fare/Mile	Max Fare	Fare/Mile
Downeaster	WEM-BON	84	\$ 26	\$ 0.31	\$ 24	\$ 0.29
NEC	NHV-NYP	75	\$ 62	\$ 0.83	\$ 55	\$ 0.73
Downeaster	DHM-BON	62	\$ 25	\$ 0.40	\$ 23	\$ 0.37
Hiawatha	SVT-CHI	63	\$ 24	\$ 0.38	N/A	N/A
Downeaster	HHL-BON	34	\$ 19	\$ 0.56	\$ 17	\$ 0.50
NEC	BOS-PVD	44	\$ 24	\$ 0.55	\$ 26	\$ 0.59