

Casco Bay Island Transit District (CBITD)

Contact Information

Provider: Casco Bay Island Transit District (“Casco Bay Lines”)
Contact person: Henry Berg, General Manager
Address: 56 Commercial Street, Portland, ME 04101
Telephone number: (207) 774-7871
E-mail: HankB@cascobaylines.com
Website: www.cascobaylines.com

Service Summary

Service area: City of Portland, Town of Long Island, Town of Chebeague Island
Type of service: Ferry boat service

Casco Bay Islands

Casco Bay Lines provides year-round, public passenger, freight, postal and vehicle ferry service to the islands of Casco Bay from CBITD’s ferry terminal located on the Maine State Pier in the City of Portland. Ferry service is provided to Peaks Islands and the Down Bay Islands (Little Diamond, Great Diamond (State Wharf and Diamond Cove), Long, Chebeague and Cliff Islands), as well as limited seasonal service to Bailey Island. There are two year-round routes:

- 1. The Peaks Island Route** consists of 14 to 16 trips per day seven days per week between the Ferry Terminal in Portland and Peaks Island depending on the season. Passengers, freight and vehicles are transported to Peaks. The service day runs from about 5:45 a.m. until 11:00 p.m. during the winter season (about an hour later during the summer season).
- 2. The Down Bay Route** consists of passenger, freight and non-commercial vehicle service four to six times per day seven days per week between the Ferry Terminal in Portland and the following islands: Cliff Island, Chebeague Island, Long Island, Great Diamond Island (State Wharf and Diamond Cove) and Little Diamond Island, as well as Bailey Island. There are variations in the route depending on the time of day, day of week and season. Service generally begins after 5:00 a.m. and runs until early evening, depending on the island.

Summary of Service Changes

There have been no major schedule changes during the past five years. However, CBITD has been evaluating existing schedules and levels of service and is planning to consider revamping the schedule in 2019 to improve efficiencies and customer service.

Summary of Accomplishments

- 1. Phase I terminal renovation.** Completed the CBITD terminal renovation phase I project which relocated and doubled the passenger waiting area, replaced portions of the existing worn exterior marine infrastructure and minor site improvements.
- 2. Phase II terminal renovation.** Started the design for the phase II terminal renovation project. The primary focus will include site work to improve the flow of passenger, freight and vehicle traffic, as well as renovations to include an addition of a second floor to the building to move a majority of the administrative offices and public meeting area and allow more room for freight handling on the first floor. Project also looks at additional improvements to the existing marine infrastructure that was not addressed during the Phase I project. Design has also included a pier extension that may need to be accomplished as a future project.
- 3. New vessel.** Started the design process for a new ferry for Peaks Island to be put into service in late 2020 or early 2021. The new ferry, which is fully funded, may include increased passenger and vehicle capacity. It will replace the aging Machigonne which reached its end of life and has become costly to maintain and repair. The feasibility of a hybrid propulsion system is being explored, which would require the installation of a shore power system.
- 4. AVL.** Implemented a new vessel location system.
- 5. Website.** Revamped the website to improve customer experience.
- 6. Fares.** Maintained fares for 10 years without a system wide fare increase.
- 7. Accounting system.** Replaced an outdated accounting system.
- 8. Fiscal year.** Converted to a fiscal year which now begins October 1.

Fares

All tickets are round trip tickets. Adult fares for passenger 14 and over:

Peaks Island: \$4.10 off-season, \$7.70 peak season

Little Diamond Island: \$5.20 off-season, \$8.20 peak

Great Diamond Island: \$6.15 off-season, \$9.55 peak

Diamond Cove Island: \$6.95 off-season, \$10.70 peak

Long Island: \$6.95 off-season, \$10.70 peak

Chebeague Island: \$6.75 off-season, \$11.05 peak

Cliff Island: \$7.45 off-season, \$11.55 peak season

Peak season in 2019: April 13-October 14. There are additional rates for vehicles, bicycles, animals and freight.

Discounts

Senior/disabled half fare available. Medicare Card, Metro reduced fare card, or an out of state disability card required.

Children under 5 free; children 5-13 half fare/price.

Commuter passes - 5 round-trip tickets

Monthly and annual passes available, cost varies by island.

Passes available at Casco Bay Ferry terminal.

Future Priorities

1. **New Peaks Island vessel.** Construct the new vessel for Peaks Island.
2. **New Down Bay vessel.** Start the design of a second new vessel for Down Bay service to replace a ferry reaching the end of its useful life. Vessel should look to be put into service by the end of 2023.
3. **Renovation of terminal.** Complete the design and implement Phase II terminal renovations.
4. **Electronic ticketing.** Evaluate a new ticketing system that would allow for the Implementation of a more robust electronic ticketing system for customers to use online and add new terminal kiosks.
5. **Pier Extension.** Advance the designs and construct a pier extension near the existing Gate 4 to allow for improved passenger and freight handling opportunities as well as the potential for side loading facility for the car ferry at Gate 5.
6. **Waiting Facilities.** Plan for and coordinate with the City the opportunity to design and construct additional waiting facilities on portions of the existing pier that is owned and operated by the City. This would allow for the potential to pre-screen passengers for expedited boarding and provide additional protected space for passengers waiting to take a ferry.

Plans and Studies

Planning for the new vessel is underway and is almost completed for the terminal and revised schedule. CBITD has made presentations to each of the islands to keep the public informed and gather helpful input about CBITD's plans for schedule changes and terminal renovations. The public will have an

opportunity to contribute ideas for the design of both new vessels before they are finalized by the Vessel Advisory Committee and CBITD Board. A revised RFP has been issued for a technology consultant to guide the development of an electronic ticketing and on-line purchasing system that will work well for the district.

Ridership

Ridership has increased each year since 2013, as shown in the table below. Except for the Machigonne, all ferries and elevators are wheelchair accessible. Freight has also been increasing, including contractor supplies and FedEx/UPS packages.

CBITD Fixed Route Trips					
	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017
General Public	936,447	952,663	988,273	1,060,752	1,009,593
Tours & Charters	35,978	33,793	29,491	36,809	98,900*
Total	972,425	986,456	1,017,764	1,097,561	1,108,493

*includes Bailey Island

Ferries/Facilities

As previously discussed, the procurement process for a new ferry is underway, as is the design for Phase II ferry terminal renovations. CBITD has been using a locally procured 80/20 biodiesel mix in all vessels since 2015.

Coordination/Outreach/Partnerships/Unmet Needs

- **Municipal representation.** At least one representative of each municipality served by the ferry system is on the CBITD Board of Directors. Public outreach efforts are extended to each municipality and island. Committee and Board meetings are open to the public with opportunity for the public to make comments.
- **PACTS and other meetings.** CBITD attends PACTS meetings two or more times per month, and is also part of the Portland Waterfront Alliance and the Maine Transit Association.
- **METRO schedule coordination.** Improved protocols have been put into. The Phase II terminal renovation includes a much improved bus and taxi pick-up location with far fewer pedestrian and vehicle movement conflicts.
- **Urban formula program.** CBITD would like passenger ferry systems to be eligible for operating assistance under the urban formula program.
- **Limited real estate.** The parcel of land on which the CBITD terminal is located is limited and cannot accommodate much horizontal expansion.

Innovations/Creative Approaches

- **AVL.** The AVL system is working as well as can be expected.
- **Electronic ticketing.** The electronic ticketing didn't work under the old technology, but CBITD is exploring implementation of a new system to better serve ferry customers.
- **Parking garage.** The parking garage is partially owned by the City of Portland, and CBITD has an agreement with the City under which CBITD receives a portion of any profits to be used toward capital projects for the ferry service.

Major Challenges

Major challenges facing CBITD include:

- Limited parking, both short-term and long-term for island residents and visitors.
- The age of the vessels.
- Limited real estate to accommodate growing ridership and increasing freight volumes.
- Limited passenger waiting areas that provide protection from the elements.
- Congested site circulation for arrivals and departures from the facility by passengers and freight operators.