

Falmouth Mass Transit Committee Report



Town Council Presentation, October 14, 2008

Ad-Hoc Committee Charge

“Study all aspects of the Metro bus service in Falmouth”

Two key questions:

- 1. How to improve the bus service?**
- 2. Join Metro or not?**



Ad-Hoc Committee Charge

Q1: How to Improve Bus Service?

Look at:

- efficiency of the current bus route,**
- marketing,**
- financing,**
- ways to increase bus ridership, and**
- possibility of expanding the route into Cumberland and Yarmouth.**

Ad-Hoc Committee Charge

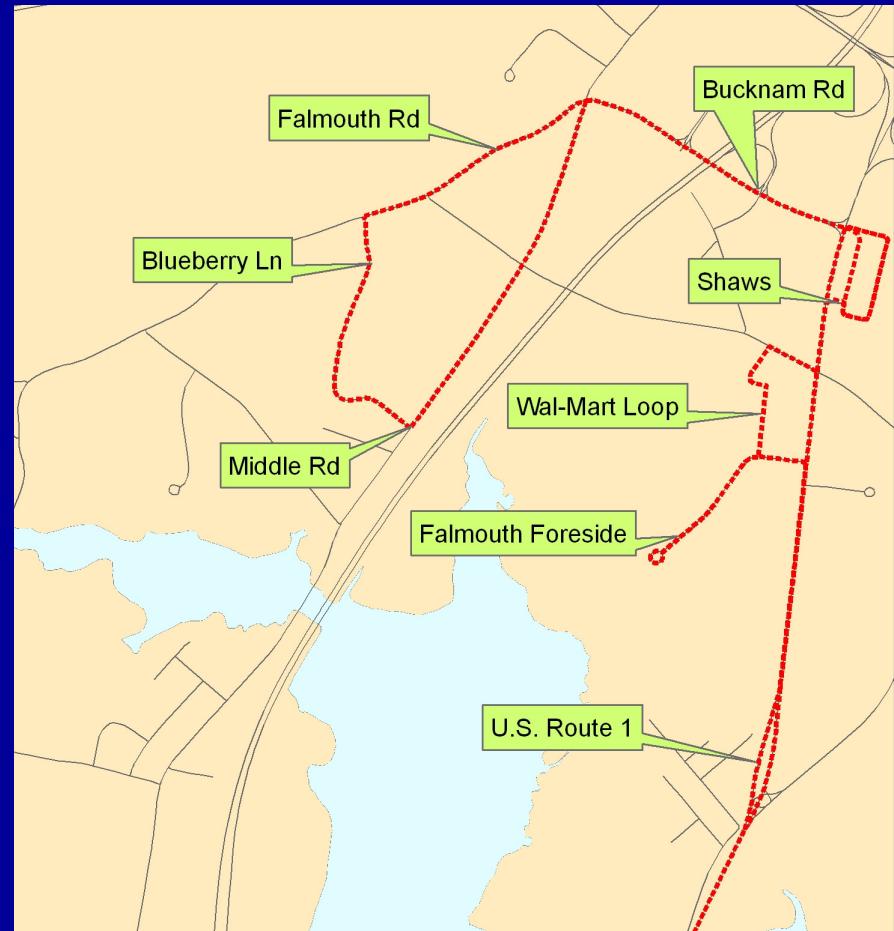
Q2: Join Metro or not?

- Should the Town of Falmouth become a full member of the Greater Portland Transit District (“Metro”)?**
- Should the Town continue with Metro in another capacity?**
- Should the mass transit needs in Falmouth be served by other means?**



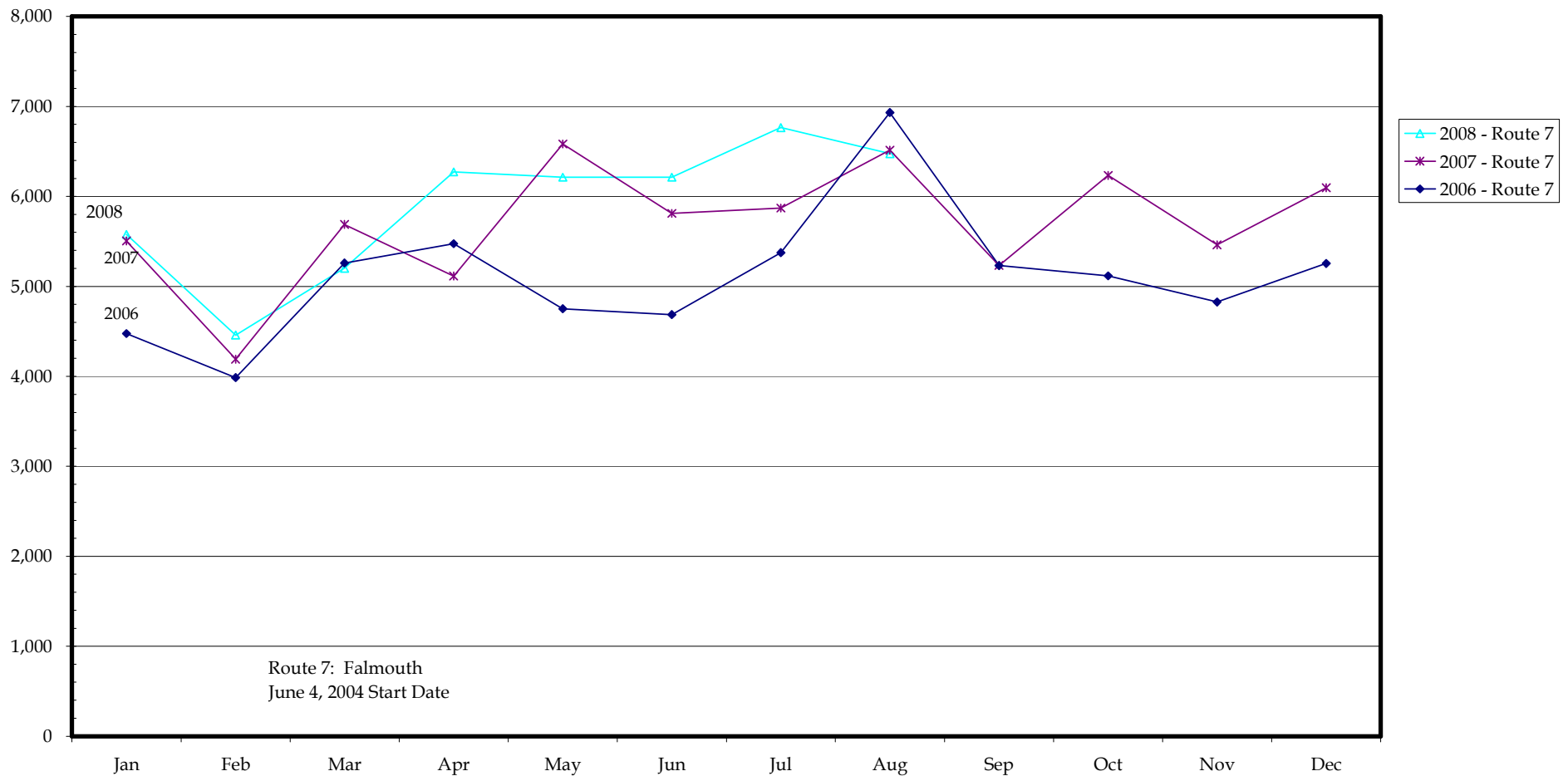
“Falmouth Flyer” History

- Bus service started by Metro in 2004
- 2004: 3,000 trips/mo.
- 2008: 6,000 trips/mo.
- 13 trips/day
- 6:30 AM-6:30 PM
- Monday through Saturday
- Bus fare: \$1.25 One Way



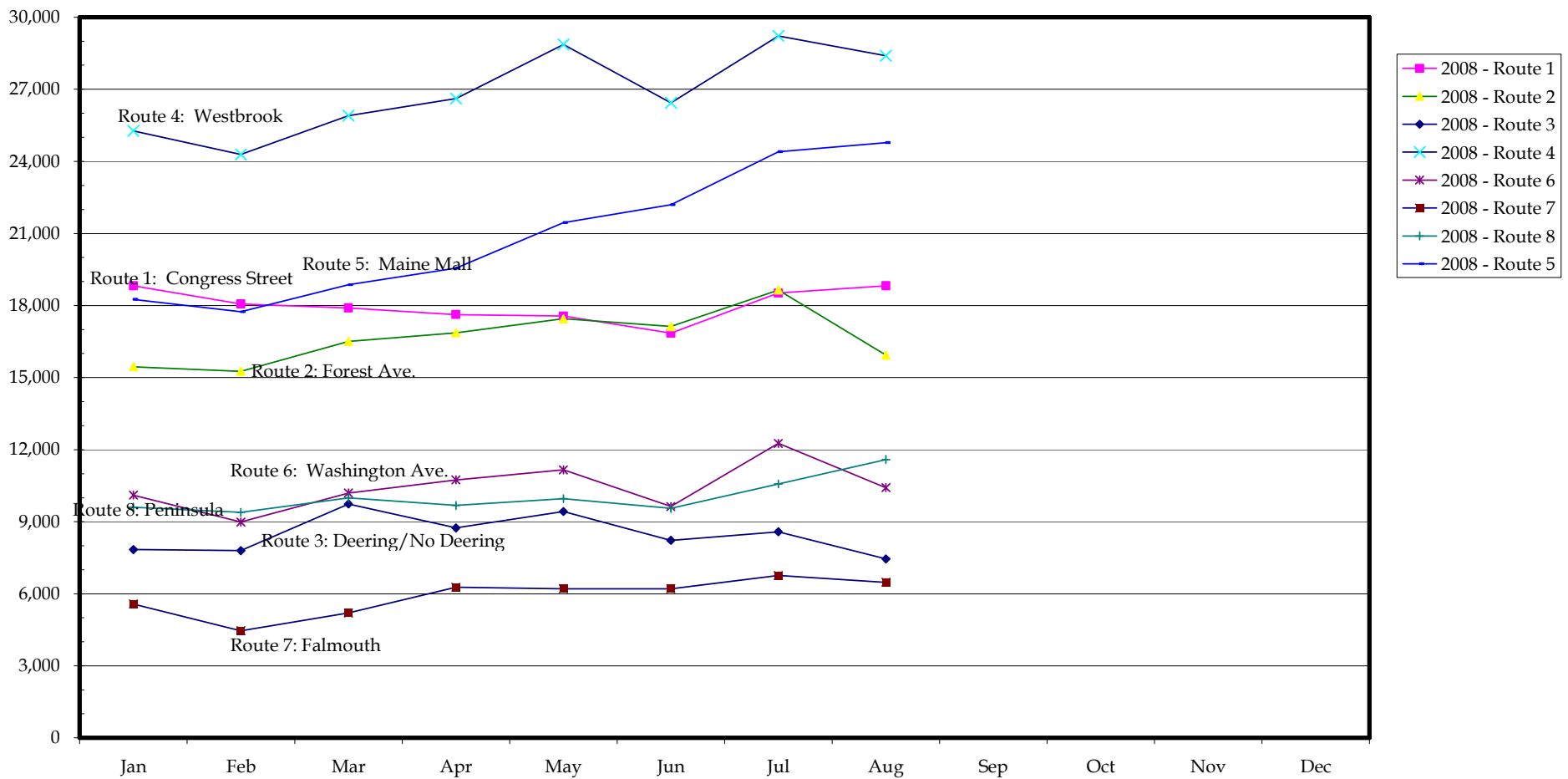
Ridership Trends - 1

Greater Portland Transit District
Monthly Ridership: Route 7
January, 2006 through December, 2008



Ridership Trends - 2

Greater Portland Transit District
All Routes - Current Year Overlay



2008 Survey

- **Mail survey within ¼ mile of Route 1**
 - **Residents**
 - Neighborhoods off Route 1
 - Foreside Estates
 - Ocean View
 - **Businesses**
- **On-line survey:**
 - **Parents of school children**



Survey Response Rates

- Mail survey
 - **Businesses (32%, 72)**
 - **Residents**
 - **Neighborhoods off Route 1 (36%, 270)**
 - **Ocean View (29%, 58)**
 - Foreside Estates (4%, 8)
- On-line survey:
 - Parents of school children (23)

Resident Survey Questions

- Knowledge of service
- Frequency of ridership
- Primary transportation
- Destination
- Enticements to use bus
- When likely to ride?
- Why not ride more often?
- Children on bus
- Continue service?
- Schedule changes
- Route changes
- Transfers
- Respondent age

Business Survey Questions

- Employee bus usage
- Employee residences
- Convenience of service
- Employee enticements
- Time to get to or from bus
- Employer bus pass subsidies
- Best schedule
- Customer bus use
- Importance of service
- Continue service
- Type of business

Q: Continue the bus service?

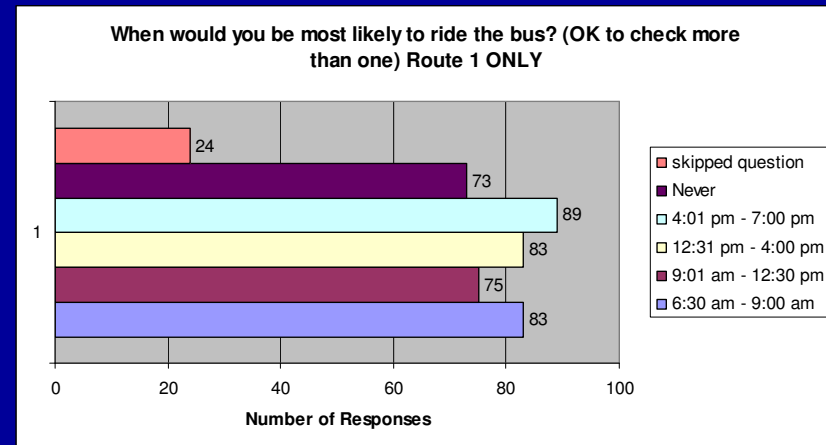
Answer = Yes!

- Residents:
85% (251)
- Business people:
86% (43)

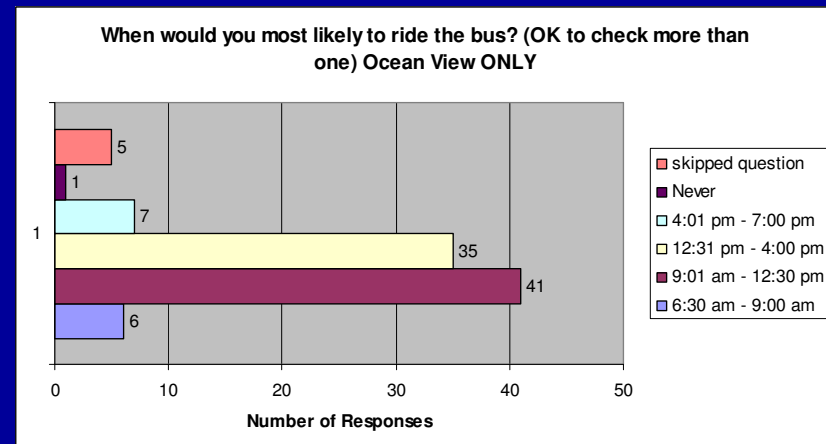


Q: When would you most likely ride the bus?

Route 1 Respondents:



Ocean View Respondents:



Other survey conclusions

Current Riders

- Most people ride *to* Falmouth to work or shop
- There is small corps of *regular* Falmouth riders

Potential New Riders

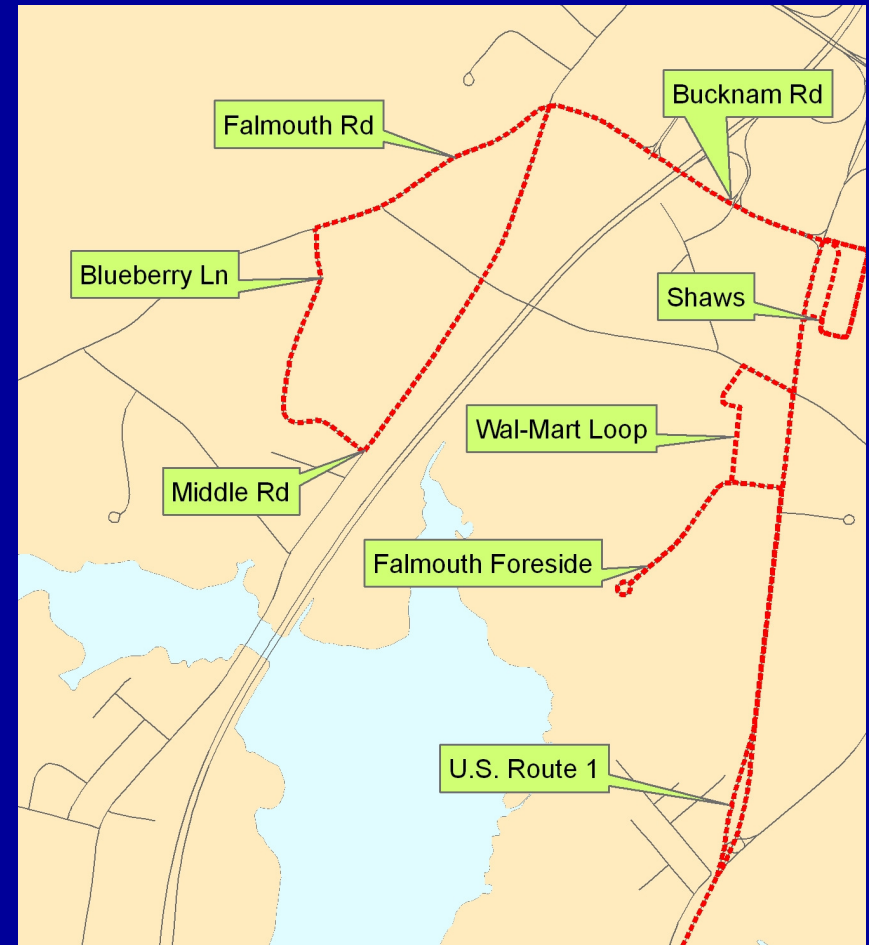
- *General*: Riding is influenced by higher gas prices, better marketing and more frequent service, as well as concern for the environment
- *Students*: Many parents are willing to let their children ride the bus at some point
- *Commuters*: While 86% of businesses said that their employees currently do not use the bus, 61% replied that bus service was “important” to “very important.”

Route Evaluation

- Use survey results
 - Increase frequency (30 min. interval)?
 - Consider route expansion?
- Avoid need for second bus
- Add stops in areas currently not served

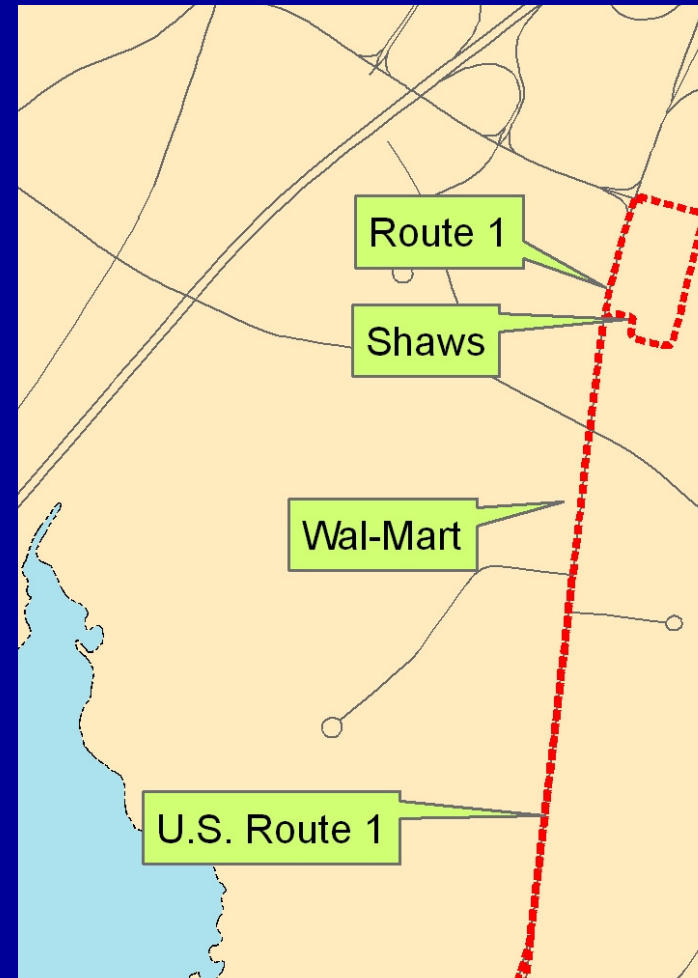
1: Current Route

- Falmouth miles: 11.16
- Stops include Foreside Estates, Wal-Mart, Shaw's, and Ocean View



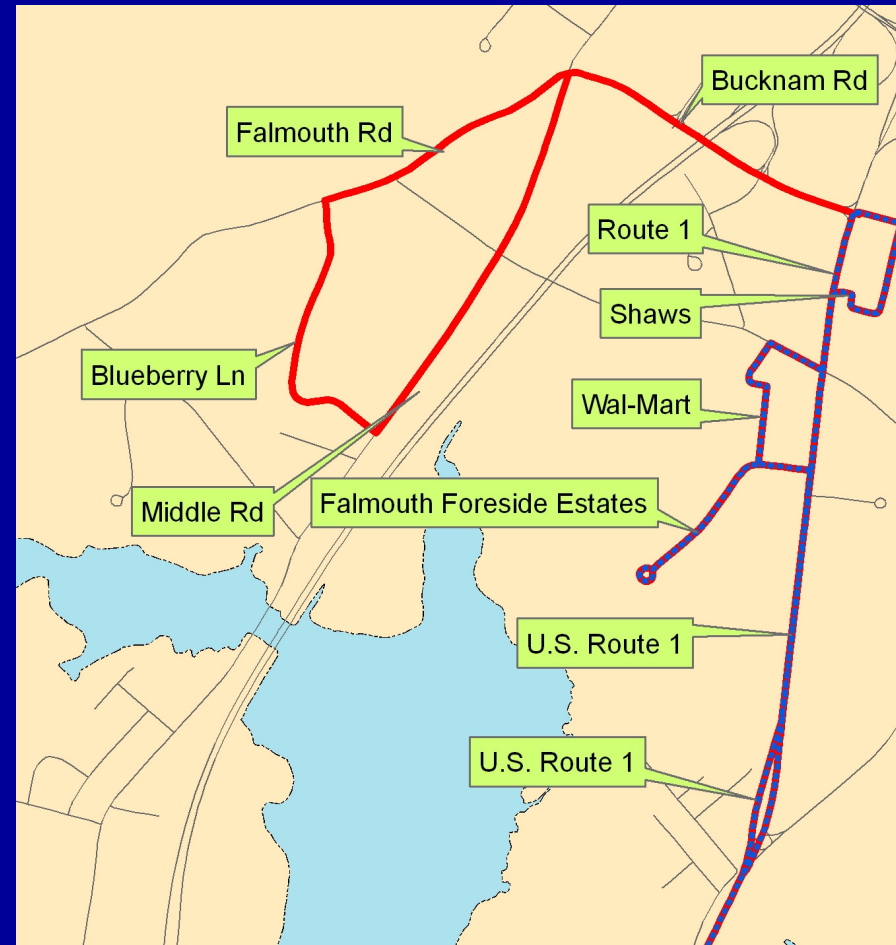
2: Streamlined Route

- Falmouth miles: 5.98
- All stops along Route 1 will be similar to the current route (Option 1)
- Exceptions are:
 - Elimination of stop in front of Wal-Mart (move directly on Route 1)
 - Elimination of Ocean View and Foreside Estates portion of the Route
- This route provides the least amount of service at the lowest cost.



3: Modified Streamlined Route

- Two different routes that will change throughout the day
 - Commuter: 6.88 miles
 - Non-commuter: 9.98 miles
- First two and last five runs will stop at Shaw's, Wal-Mart, and Foreside Estates.
- Other runs will also stop at Ocean View.
- Less cost because of route reductions in the middle of the day.



4: Expanded Route

- Two different routes that will change throughout the day:
 - Commuter: 10.49 miles
 - Non-commuter: 11.16 miles
- First two and last five runs will stop at Shaw's, Wal-Mart, Foreside Estates, Route 1 North, Johnson Road, and Route 88.
- Other runs will also stop at Ocean View.



Route Analysis

Miles of service per day

1: 145 miles
2: 78 miles
3: 105 miles
4: 146 miles

Projected Net Annual Cost

(each includes anticipated
\$60K JARC subsidy)

1: \$ 140,000
2: \$ 47,168
3: \$ 84,665
4: \$ 140,882

All routes run 13 times per
day once an hour

Service Recommendations

- **Switch to Expanded Route (#4)**
 - Increased ridership potential (businesses along Route 1 North and Route 88, higher density residences)
- **Expand Falmouth ridership through marketing campaign**
 - Include free 6-month passes from Metro

Council Decisions to Make

1. End service when funding runs out, sometime after Dec. 31, 2008?
2. Pay less now for reduced service only through 2009?
3. Pay more money now to continue current service only through 2009?
4. Continue some form of service through 2009; decide in June 09 whether to become member?

Option 1: End service when funding runs out

- Current service ends sometime after Dec. 31, 2008
- Loss of more than 72,000 bus rides per year to and from Falmouth
- Loss of independence for former riders
- Loss of jobs for employees who can't get to work
- Town saves \$
- Metro might continue to run bus to Wal-Mart and Shaw's

Option 2: Pay less now for reduced service only through 2009

- Lose all or some service to OceanView
- No route expansion
- No marketing campaign
- Town saves \$
- After Dec. 31, 2009, See Option 1

Option 3: Continue current service only through 2009

- Cost: \$140,000
- Subsidy: \$60,000 in JARC funding
- Obligated over 5 years for buses
- No route expansion
- No marketing
- Provide more than 72,000 bus rides to and from Falmouth
- After Dec. 31, see Option 1

Option 4: Decide in June 2009 whether to join Metro

- Continue service through Dec. 31, 2009
- Cost: Ranges depending on amount of service
- Subsidy: Depends on amount of service
- Obligated over 5 years for buses
- If Falmouth decides to join Metro, move ahead with possible route expansion or marketing campaign.
- If Falmouth decides to join, can terminate membership one year after notice on Jan. 1.

Join Metro or not?

Some considerations...

- To continue Metro service beyond Dec. 31, 2009, Metro requires:
 - full membership
 - payment of full cost
- Without Metro, no private carrier provides same service for less.
- Bus route can be reduced to cut costs, but:
 - service will be lost to elderly
 - difficult to regain lost miles
- It is possible Metro may continue service to Wal-Mart, but that is unpredictable.

Committee Recommendation

1. Negotiate with Metro Board on deducting some of JARC funding from Falmouth's cost, if Falmouth becomes a member
2. Clarify liability for debts if Falmouth is not a member.
3. If Council is satisfied with negotiations, Council will commit to two years of full financial support.
4. Expand route to include Route 88 once construction ends.
5. Conduct marketing campaign with help of free passes.
6. Falmouth can terminate Metro membership as long as notice is provided by Jan.1, 2010.

Why commit to long-term bus service in Falmouth?

- Bus service is important to certain segments of our population. It is critical to some.
- Need is growing with increased fuel prices.
- New riders (commuters and students) will be attracted through a marketing campaign.
- Adding Route 88 will make bus accessible to more people.
- OceanView will be served at hours of highest ridership.