



CITY OF BANGOR

Government Operations Committee
Monday, January 5, 2026
73 Harlow Street, Council
Immediately following the Special
City Council Workshop

AGENDA

1. Community Connector Fare Study Discussion
2. Advisory Committee on Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Statement & Request for a Council Order Directing the City Manager to Establish a Transitional Safe Outdoor Space for Unsheltered Residents
3. Discussion of Housing & Homelessness Advisory Committee

Upcoming Items (subject to change)

(Items may go to Government Operations Committee or be moved to another committee, depending on timing.)

- *Community Connector Update*

To: Government Operations Committee and City Council

From: Laurie Linscott & Courtney O'Donnell

Subject: Technical Summary of Fare Structure Study, Financial Impacts, and Operational Considerations

Date: January 2, 2025

Purpose and Context

This memorandum is provided as a supplement to the Community Connector Fare Structure Analysis presented to the Government Operations Committee on December 15, 2025. It is intended to support Council deliberations by summarizing the underlying rationale for the study, key findings, financial implications, and operational considerations, including impacts to drivers and administrative staff.

Rationale for Conducting the Fare Structure Study

The fare structure study was undertaken to evaluate the long-term sustainability, efficiency, and equity of Community Connector's fare system in light of changing operating conditions and rider expectations. Key drivers for the study included:

- **Declining farebox recovery:** Fare revenue accounted for approximately 20 percent of operating costs in 2019 and has declined to approximately 12 percent today.
 - **Growth in operating costs:** Annual operating costs have increased steadily, reaching approximately \$5.0 million in FY25, driven by labor, fuel, vehicle maintenance, and expanded service expectations.
 - **Inefficiencies in fare collection:** Continued reliance on cash and paper fare media increases dwell times, administrative workload, and reconciliation complexity.
 - **Equity and affordability concerns:** Traditional monthly passes require large upfront payments, which can be burdensome for lower-income riders.
 - **System modernization investments:** Significant recent investments in vehicles, facilities, and rider-facing technology have elevated service quality and warrant a fare structure aligned with current service levels.
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Fare-Free Service Considerations

During the Government Operations Committee discussion, the concept of systemwide fare-free service was raised. Findings from the study and Community Connector's prior experience indicate the following:

- **Limited ridership response:** Previous fare-free days resulted in modest increases in ridership, but not at levels sufficient to materially change system demand or cost recovery.

- **Multiple drivers of ridership:** Service frequency, reliability, span of service, and ease of use are stronger determinants of ridership than fare price alone.
- **Revenue replacement challenge:** Eliminating fares would remove a consistent revenue source without an identified, stable replacement, increasing long-term reliance on local subsidies and external funding.

Fiscal Risk of Systemwide Fare-Free Service

Summary: A fare-free policy is financially viable only when a stable, dedicated replacement funding source exists and is structured to grow with operating cost inflation.

Key fiscal risks for Community Connector include:

- **Loss of recurring operating revenue:** A fare-free program would remove fare revenue currently supporting operations. Absent replacement funding, the structural funding gap would increase.
- **Cost pressure amplification:** Operating costs typically rise over time due to wage growth, fuel and parts escalation, and vehicle lifecycle needs. A fare-free policy shifts all cost growth to the local subsidy/grant side.
- **Revenue volatility risk:** If replacement funding relies on annual appropriations, discretionary grants, or donations, funding stability may be reduced relative to a diversified revenue model.
- **Capacity and service impacts:** If ridership increases without proportional service expansion, system crowding and reliability impacts may occur. If service is expanded, operating costs increase.
- **Equity tradeoffs:** Fare-free service is universally available, but universal subsidy can reduce the resources available for targeted affordability programs (income-eligible discounts, paratransit supports, or service improvements benefiting riders with the greatest need).

Policy implication: From a fiscal management perspective, a fare-free policy is best evaluated as a “funding program” first (replacement revenue source, governance, sustainability), and a “fare policy” second.

Regional Context: How Nearby Agencies Approach Fare-Free and Reduced Fare Policy

In looking at examples such as the seasonal Island Explorer (Acadia/Hancock County, ME), Concord Area Transit (Concord, NH), and southern Maine systems, the following takeaways were identified.

- Fare-free service is feasible when a stable external funding stream is identified and program goals are aligned (e.g., seasonal visitation management, parking and congestion relief).
- Fare-free policies can be workable at smaller scale, but typically require a durable funding plan and community buy-in to maintain service levels as costs rise.
- Regional partners have pursued targeted programs focused on affordability for specific populations (e.g., income-eligible pilots), while maintaining fare structures for the general

public. Many of these agencies are independent of a particular community and have additional administrative staff dedicated to transit.

- Targeted affordability programs may achieve equity objectives with lower fiscal exposure than systemwide fare-free service.
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Proposed Fare Structure and Financial Implications

The study recommends a revised fare structure coupled with modernized fare collection technology. Key elements include:

- Increasing the **base single-ride fare from \$1.50 to \$2.00** or by 50 cents.
- Replacing traditional monthly passes with **fare capping**, ensuring riders do not pay more than a defined monthly maximum (\$60 standard fare; \$30 half fare).
- Eliminating paper multi-ride tickets and replacing them with account-based products.
- Maintaining **free transfers** when using mobile app or smart card payment.
- Continuing **fare-free access for college and university ID holders**.

Projected financial outcomes:

- Annual fare revenue is projected to increase from approximately **\$550,000 to the low-to-mid \$800,000 range** following full implementation.
- Fare revenue as a percentage of operating costs is projected to recover to approximately **18 percent**, approaching pre-pandemic levels.
- One-time capital costs for fare technology implementation are estimated at **\$130,000–\$170,000**.
- Ongoing operating and maintenance costs are estimated at **\$30,000–\$32,000 annually**, plus transaction-based fees.

The analysis anticipates a short-term ridership adjustment following fare changes, with stabilization and gradual growth as riders benefit from improved payment convenience and service reliability.

Operational Impacts: Drivers and Frontline Staff

The proposed fare structure and payment modernization yield several operational benefits for vehicle operators:

- **Reduced cash handling**, improving operator safety and reducing fare disputes.
 - **Shorter boarding times**, supporting schedule adherence and on-time performance.
 - **Simplified fare rules**, decreasing customer confusion and operator intervention.
 - **Improved working conditions**, allowing operators to focus on safe and efficient vehicle operation.
-

Operational Impacts: Administrative and Support Functions

Administrative and support staff are expected to benefit from:

- **Reduced workload associated with paper fare media**, including printing, distribution, and inventory control.
 - **More accurate and timely fare data**, supporting service planning, reporting, and grant compliance.
 - **Streamlined reconciliation and auditing processes**, reducing manual handling and error potential.
 - **Scalable fare infrastructure**, enabling future integration with additional payment platforms or programs.
-

Summary

Fare has not increased in over a decade despite ever-increasing expenses and value added. In that time, we have: taken ADA paratransit services over in-house for better service and increased the van fleet to meet demand; replaced inventory with new, quality fixed route buses; built a small administrative building to include a breakroom for staff (previously combined with Fleet); implemented technology such as automatic announcements and ability to track the bus; and opened a full-service transit center.

While we are working hard to return to full service, it too is an operational hurdle that will likely require more resources to solve in the long-term particularly as it relates to barriers in licensing, high demand for CDL certified individuals, and the like.

The fare structure study supports a technically sound and financially balanced approach to fare policy. The recommended fare structure and payment modernization strategy improves equity, operational efficiency, and financial sustainability while aligning Community Connector's fare policy with current service investments and rider expectations.

Recommendation

Staff recommend approval of the proposed fare structure. If approved, a Council Order authorizes it will appear on the January 12, 2026 Council Agenda.

BACTS

Community Connector Fare Structure Analysis

Government Operations Committee Meeting

December 15, 2025



Prepared by:



Content

- Project Overview
- Study Findings and Goals
- Proposed Changes and Implementation Approach
- Outreach Update





Project Overview

Activities since August, Overview, Assessment Findings (Refresher)

Project Update

- What has happened since August:
 - Developed **phasing** approach and **implementation plan**.
 - Engaged with the public at **pop-up events** and **public hearings**.
 - **Drafted** the scope of work for a fare technology **RFP**.



Project Overview



Current
Fare Structure
Assessment



Project Goals,
Alternatives,
Impact Analysis,
Transition Planning



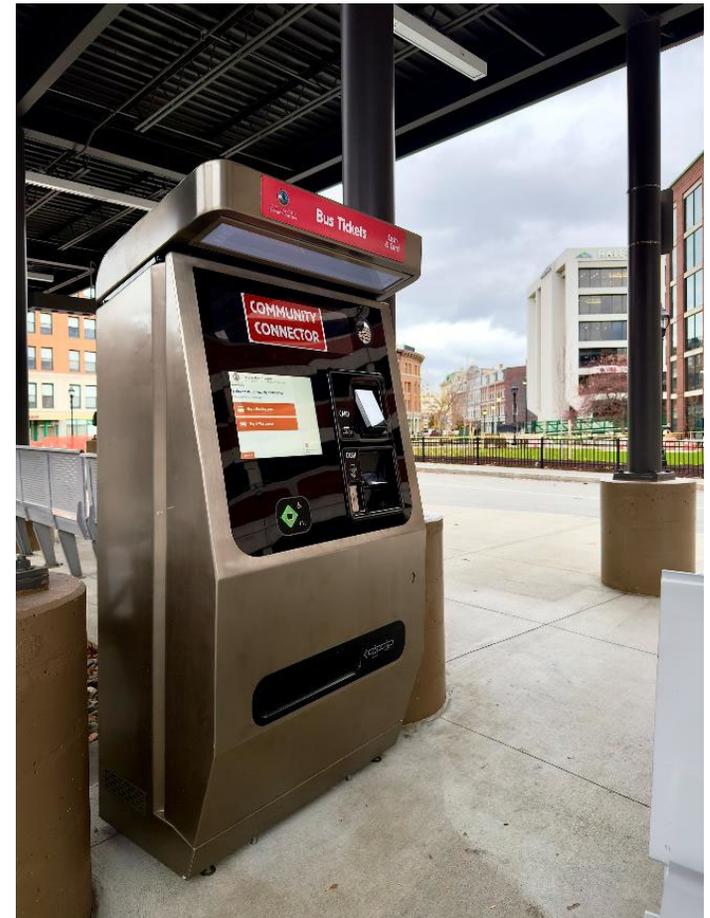
Pop-Up Events
Public Hearing
*(In person
and virtual)*



Implementation
Plan, RFP, and
City Council
Approval

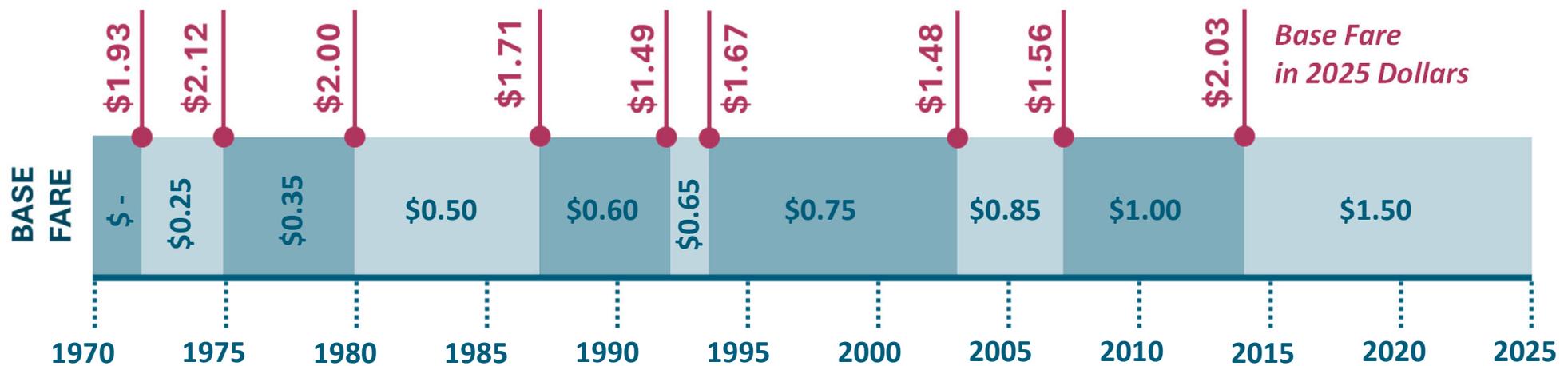
Recent Improvements

- 2018 ● New Administrative Building, In-House ADA Paratransit
- 2019
- 2020 ● New Buses and ADA
- 2021 ● Paratransit Vans
- 2022 ● New Transit Center
- 2023
- 2024 ● New Fixed Stops and Rider App
- 2025 ● New Ticket Vending Machine



Project Background

- Fare revenue now covers a smaller share of operating expenses than before the pandemic, decreasing from 20% in 2019 to 12% today.



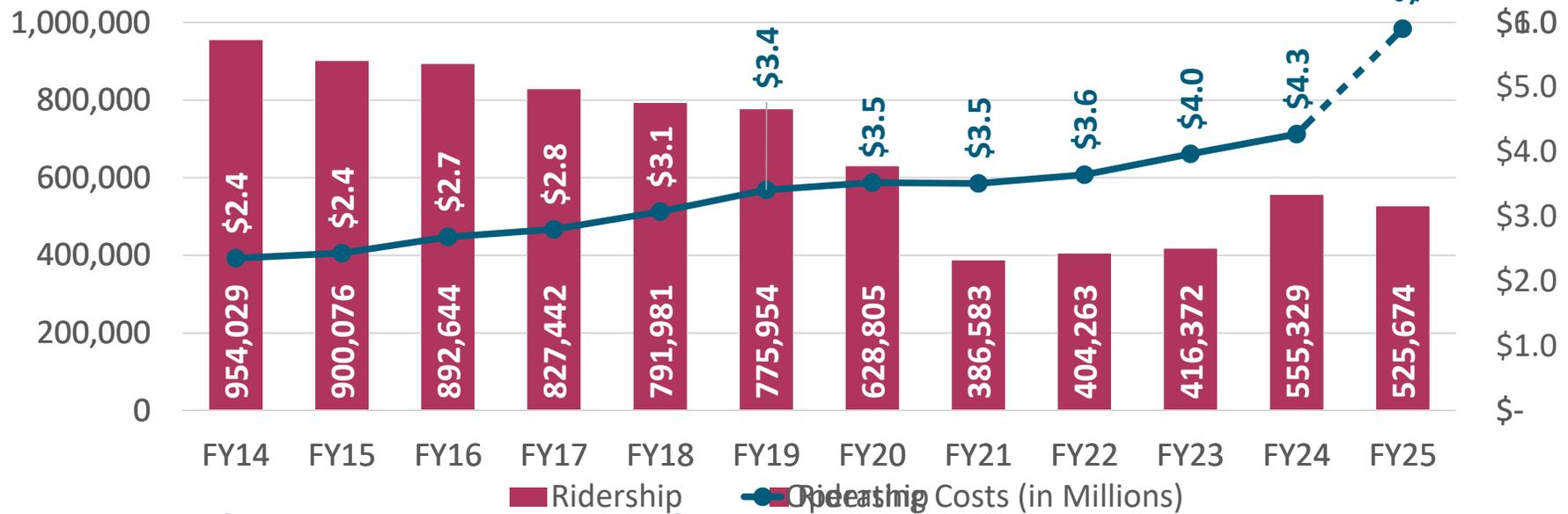


Current Fare Structure Assessment

Assessment Findings and Project Goals

Study Key Takeaways

System improvements have strengthened the foundation for **ridership growth and serving our community**, but operating costs continue to increase for several reasons.



Study Key Takeaways

CITY OF BANGOR
COMMUNITY CONNECTOR

Help Shape the Future of Fares!

Community Connector is conducting a survey to better understand who rides our buses and how you use fares. Your feedback will help us improve our fare structure to better serve the community.

COMPLETE THE SURVEY FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A \$50 E-GIFT CARD!

We Want to Hear from You!

Take our survey at:
www.SurveyMonkey.com/r/CommunityConnectorFares

Analysis - RIDER SURVEY

Wants to better understand who rides our buses and how they use fares on a range of urban and rural routes.

6. Does a local agency provide your tickets/passes?
 No
 Yes (please specify agency)

6. What are your thoughts on tickets/passes?
 Tickets/passes are too expensive, than cash
 It is a hassle for the time taking to get tickets
 I do not buy tickets/passes
 I don't get access because I don't use it every day
 Other: _____

When using Community Connector, do you usually need to transfer to another bus or route to complete your trip?
 No

What do you think of the current fare prices? They're a reasonable price.
 They're a bit high.
 They're too high.

What would you like to see for alternative payment options?
 I use a contactless ID.
 Which of the following alternative payment options would you be most interested in?
 Tap-to-pay, mobile app, cashless, etc.

10. Are you familiar with the Bangor Community Connector new app?
 Yes, and I frequently use it to track my bus
 Yes, but don't use the app often
 No, I don't know an app exists and I do not probably use it
 No, but I'm excited to try it.

4. If you buy tickets/passes, how do you pay?
 Cash
 Credit
 Apple Pay
 Google Pay

"I would easily pay \$2.50 for a ride [for] the ability to pay via credit card, and I would need longer bus hours."

"More frequent service and later hours are worth more money."

"Good value for reasonably fast transportation"

COMMUNITY CONNECTOR

TRANSFERS ARE FREE

SUBJECT TO TERMS ON REVERSE SIDE

1	2	3	4	5	6	BN	BS	
7	8	9	10	11	12	C1	C2	
							CS	HA
							HS	MT
							ML	SW
							O1	O2

FOR BUS LEAVING TRANSFER POINT AT [] FOR BUS PUNCHED TIME ONLY

00 :15 :30 :45

M T W TH F S



Challenges

- Operating the system keeps getting more expensive.
- Fare revenue covers an increasingly smaller share of the operating costs.

- The paper ticket and passes distribution is time-consuming and complicated.
- Cash fare payments create additional challenges for both operators and staff.

- The cost of a monthly pass can be a burden for lower-income riders.
- Cash remains a key payment method for many riders.

Project Goals

GOAL 1

Increase Fare
Revenue

GOAL 2

Decrease
Fare Collection
Burden and
Inefficiencies

GOAL 3

Consider the
Impact on
Riders



Proposed Changes

Fare Collection Modernization and Proposed Fare Options and Prices

Mobile Ticketing App

- The mobile ticketing app allows you to **pay your fare right from your phone.**
- You can buy fares anytime via the app with credit cards or Apple/Google Pay, or at the transit center and authorized sellers in the region with cash or other payment modes.
- Then just show or **scan your phone** when boarding the bus.



Smart Card

- A smart card is a **reloadable plastic card** that **stores values for fares**.
- You can **add money** to it via a **website** or **in person** at the transit center and other authorized sellers.
- You **tap** on the fare reader **when boarding**.
- The **system automatically** takes the fare **from the card**.



Fare Capping

- **Fare capping** means you **never pay more than a set value in a month**.
- You **pay one trip at a time**, and once you **reach the price cap**, the **rest of your rides** during that period **are free**.

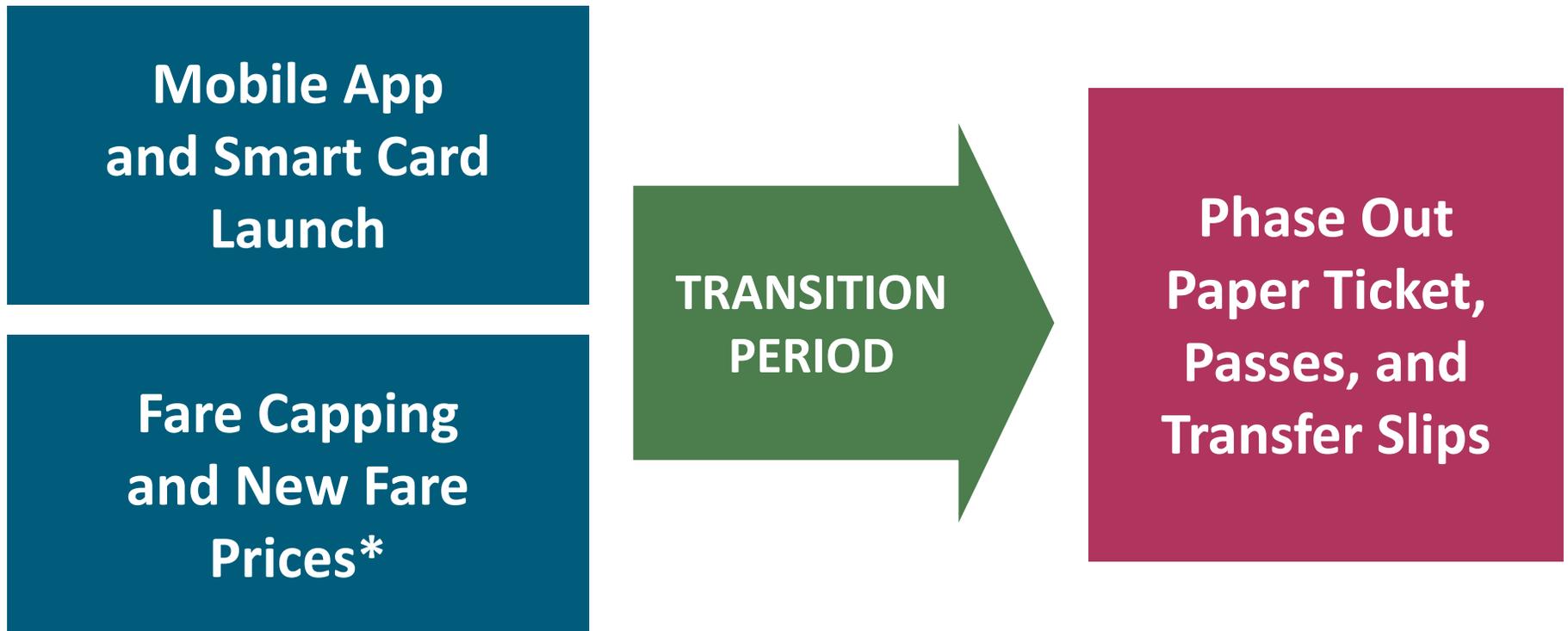
Take **30** paid trips in a month

and ride **FREE** for the rest
of the month!



PRODUCT	CURRENT PRICE	NEW PRICE RECOMMENDATIONS
Single Ride	\$1.50	\$2.00*
Half Fare	\$0.75	\$1.00
Children's Fare	\$0.75	\$1.00
Five-Ride Ticket	\$6.00	<i>Eliminated</i>
Monthly Pass	\$45.00	<i>Replaced</i> with Fare Capping
Student Monthly Pass	\$20.00	<i>Replaced</i> with Half-Fare Capping**
Transfer	Free	Free with Mobile App or Smart Card payments
College/University ID	Free	Free
ADA Paratransit	\$3.00	\$4.00
Fare Capping (Monthly)	N/A	<i>New product</i> \$60.00
Half-Fare Capping (Monthly)	N/A	<i>New product</i> \$30.00**

Implementation Approach



**Pending City Council Approval*



Outreach Update

Feedback Summary and Recommendation Changes

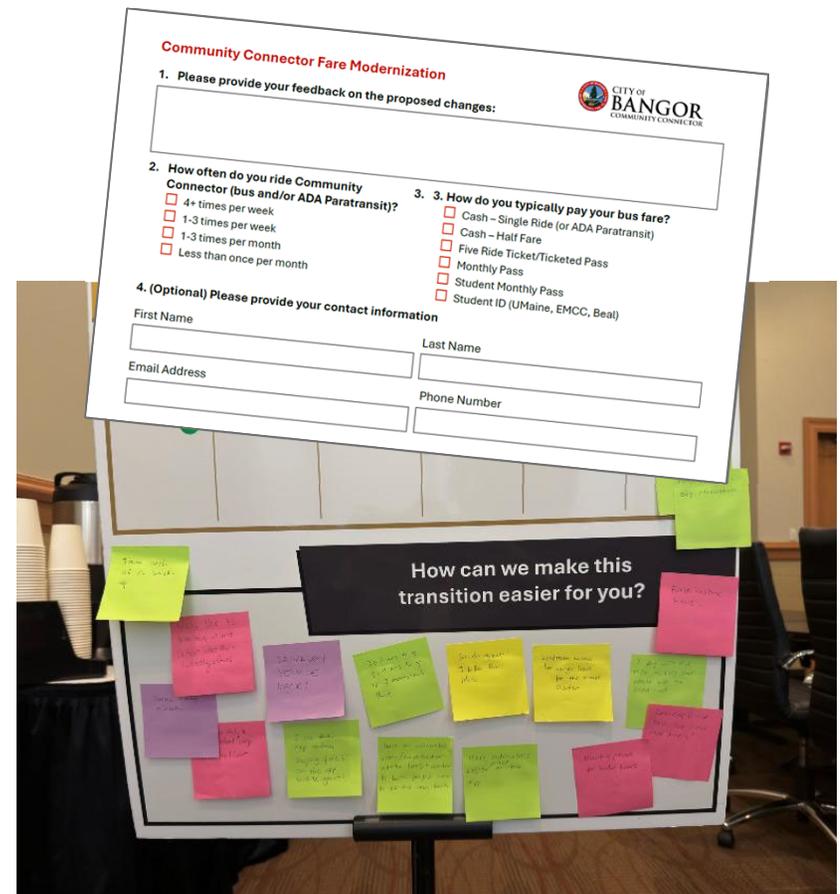
Outreach Activities

- We held six pop-up events
 - Talked to almost 90 people at the transit center and bus stops in Old Town, Hampden, and Brewer.
- We hosted in-person and virtual public hearings.
- We gathered 27 feedback comments from online and in-person events.



Public Feedback

- Survey respondents were overwhelmingly **open to new fare payment options**.
- In-person events **reinforced the public's preference for smart cards** and openness to mobile apps.
- The public supports maintaining **cash as a payment option** and a network of **authorized sellers**.



Public Feedback

- While the feedback on potential fare increases was mixed, **participants generally supported fare increases, particularly if the level of service improvements followed.**

"I would love being able to use my phone wallet and/or an app to pay for fares."

"Modernize! But please leave the option for BOTH for those that do or cannot afford a smartphone."

"I support modernizing the fare system but want to ensure equity and accessibility for all riders."

Response to Feedback

- Fare and **half-fare capping**
- Robust implementation plan and stakeholder engagement
- **Future proofing** the fare collection with RFP requirements and optional components
 - Future open payment capability
 - Student ID use
 - ADA Paratransit ticketing solution approaches:

TRIPMASTER TICKETING SOLUTION
FOR ADA PARATRANSIT

SINGLE TICKETING SOLUTION FOR
FIXED ROUTE AND ADA PARATRANSIT



Thank you!

Learn more at FoursquareITP.com



Reinaldo Germano

Project Manager & Senior Transportation Planner

rgermano@foursquareitp.com

301.917.3574

CITY OF BANGOR, MAINE

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RACIAL EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

TO: Bangor City Council

FROM: Advisory Committee on Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights

RE: Statement of Support — Legislative Policy Directive: Safe Outdoor Space

DATE: December 17, 2025

Purpose:

To provide the Council with the Advisory Committee's formal recommendation and rationale for enacting the Legislative Policy Directive establishing a Safe Outdoor Space as a temporary stabilization site for residents displaced from the railroad encampment.

Statement Regarding the Legislative Policy Directive on Safe, Sanctioned Outdoor Space

The Advisory Committee for Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights voted to recommend that the City of Bangor adopt the Legislative Policy Directive establishing a sanctioned temporary outdoor stabilization site. This recommendation is based on clear evidence that involuntary encampment removal without a designated alternative location causes preventable harm, worsens public health outcomes, and exposes the City to legal and human-rights risks.

Current data show Bangor's shelters operate at or near capacity, leaving individuals at the railroad encampment with no viable placement. Many unhoused residents hold rental vouchers but cannot use them due to the lack of housing inventory. Without a structured transitional option, individuals who are actively pursuing housing have nowhere safe or legal to remain.

Public health risks—including the ongoing HIV outbreak—have been identified by the Maine CDC, and national research confirms that forced encampment displacement increases rates of death, infection, hospitalization, and overdose. Locally, the City spent approximately \$119,000 to clear one encampment in 2024, producing *no long-term housing outcomes*. This pattern is unsafe, unsustainable, and financially inefficient.

Immediate removal without meaningful alternative shelter also raises significant equity and civil-rights concerns. Federal courts have determined that municipalities may not penalize individuals for sleeping outdoors when no shelter is available, and evidence shows that the most severe harms occur when people lose stability, medical access, and supportive contact.

This directive strengthens, rather than replaces, ongoing work by service providers and nonprofit partners. Establishing a sanctioned site will improve coordination, reduce service gaps, and position the City to pursue external funding tied to planning, accountability, and safety standards.

The directive offers a legal and humane framework: a time-limited stabilization site that prevents displacement-related harm, maintains access to services, supports housing efforts, and protects community health and safety. It is not a permanent solution, but an urgent, practical response while housing placements continue and while the railroad encampment is closed.

For these reasons, the Advisory Committee for Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights strongly urges the Council to adopt this directive and act swiftly to prevent avoidable injury and death, uphold human rights, reduce fiscal waste, and protect the health and welfare of all Bangor residents.

Note: If approved, this will be reformatted into the Council Order form prior to inclusion to the Council Agenda packet.

Council Order – City of Bangor

TITLE: Legislative Policy Directive: Emergency Establishment of a Transitional Safe Outdoor Space (SOS)

AUTHORITY: Code of the City of Bangor § 9 - 18

WHEREAS, the City of Bangor is confronting an ongoing humanitarian emergency in which existing emergency shelters, including the Hope House Health and Living Center and the Bangor Area Homeless Shelter, are consistently operating at or near capacity, leaving an estimated 40 to 50 individuals without access to safe indoor overnight shelter; and

WHEREAS, many unsheltered residents possess valid housing vouchers but are unable to utilize them due to a severe shortage of available rental units, rendering immediate implementation of a Housing First strategy infeasible without an interim stabilization solution; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bangor expended approximately \$119,000 in 2024 to clear and clean a single encampment, known as “Camp Hope,” resulting in zero sustainable housing outcomes, demonstrating that displacement without destination is fiscally irresponsible and ineffective; and

WHEREAS, repeated encampment clearings without stabilization plans result in predictable and recurring municipal costs related to emergency medical response, public works, law enforcement, and sanitation, without improving outcomes for residents or the broader community; and

WHEREAS, the City is currently experiencing a serious HIV outbreak with more than 32 confirmed cases among vulnerable populations, and the Public Health Director has advised that displacement without a stable destination exacerbates communicable disease transmission and disrupts continuity of care; and

WHEREAS, the Advisory Committee on Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights (ACREIHR) has formally voted to recommend the creation of a transitional stabilization site, finding that the displacement of individuals without viable alternatives conflicts with the City’s stated commitments to equity, human dignity, and human rights; and

WHEREAS, numerous nonprofit organizations and community-based programs in the Bangor area are already providing essential services to unsheltered residents, and effective stabilization requires coordinated, not duplicative, action among municipal and community partners; and

WHEREAS, a Safe Outdoor Space is a temporary, transitional stabilization measure—distinct from permanent housing—intended to reduce harm, improve public health outcomes, and serve as a bridge to permanent housing when units become available;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BANGOR:

Section 1. Policy Directive.

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Council by City Code § 9 - 18, it is the policy of the City of Bangor to immediately establish a Safe Outdoor Space (SOS) as an emergency, transitional stabilization site for unsheltered residents.

Section 2. Directive to the City Manager.

The City Manager is directed to execute the following actions immediately:

A. Site Selection.

Identify and secure a suitable location for the SOS. The City Manager may utilize City-owned property or enter into lease agreements or partnerships with private or nonprofit entities for this purpose.

B. Infrastructure and Basic Services.

Ensure the immediate installation and maintenance of essential infrastructure, including at minimum:

- Sanitation facilities (toilets and showers);
- Potable water access;
- Regular waste removal;
- Access to electricity and power for residents.

C. Operations and Governance.

Develop and implement an operational plan for the SOS. The City Manager may convene a coalition of service providers or issue Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to secure a qualified operator. Governance structures shall be clear, transparent, and focused on safety, dignity, and stability.

D. Staffing and Support Services.

Ensure staffing and support presence at the site as needed. Services shall follow a harm-reduction and public health framework, prioritizing stabilization over enforcement and supporting access to healthcare, case management, and housing navigation.

E. Performance Metrics and Funding Readiness.

Develop outcome-based performance metrics, including but not limited to:

- Reductions in emergency medical responses and communicable disease transmission;
- Improved access to healthcare, case management, and housing services;
- Decreases in unsheltered encampments resulting from displacement;
- Comparative cost analysis relative to prior encampment clearings.

These metrics shall be incorporated into reports and external funding requests.

F. Interagency and Community Partnership Coordination.

The City Manager shall coordinate the planning and operation of the Safe Outdoor Space with relevant local nonprofit organizations, healthcare providers, harm-reduction programs, housing

agencies, and community -based service providers with demonstrated experience serving unsheltered populations. Such coordination shall be intended to avoid duplication of services, strengthen continuity of care, and leverage existing expertise and resources in support of resident stabilization and transition to permanent housing.

Section 3. Resident Inclusion and Collaboration.

It is the explicit will of the Council that the design, rules, and operations of the SOS be developed in collaboration with those it is intended to serve. The City Manager shall establish a formal mechanism for meaningful participation by unhoused residents, including representatives from organized encampment groups or unions, in planning, governance, and ongoing evaluation.

Section 4. Implementation and Reporting.

The City Manager shall present a written status report to the City Council within thirty (30) days of passage of this Order, detailing site selection, operational readiness, partnerships, projected costs, and anticipated outcomes.

DRAFT



CITY OF BANGOR

Jennifer Gunderman, Director
Public Health & Community Services
Phone: 207-992-4550
Jennifer.gunderman@bangormaine.gov

To: City Council Workshop
From: Jennifer Gunderman, Director Public Health and Community Services
Date: December 8, 2025
RE: Advisory Committee on Homelessness Models & Staff Recommendation

Over the course of the last several weeks, as the City has discussed the encampment located along the Penobscot River that exists on a combination of City and railroad property, Council has coalesced around the idea of creating an Advisory Committee to help advise Council on the City's strategy for homelessness response.

An Advisory Committee on the topic of homelessness response is a strategy used nation-wide and as a result, there are numerous models for Bangor to pull from. City staff have review several models, some of which we highlight below, and have identified common themes that inform the following recommendation:

Staff Recommendation

- **Advisory Committee Composition** – The Advisory Committee should include local partners, leading experts, and a robust cross-section of the impacted community. Representatives of the City, local service providers, the expert community with experience both inside and outside of Bangor, individuals with current or recent lived experience, businesses, schools, property owners, and families should all have a role so that the needs of the entire Community are reflected in the Committee's work.
- **Discrete Tasks with Time Limitation** – Rather than create an Advisory Committee with an ongoing role and an indeterminate length, we recommend that the Advisory Committee start with a discrete task and a firm deadline. Starting with a discrete and deadline driven task will serve to focus the Committee's work on the area that Council wishes the Committee to prioritize. Having a stated Committee expiration date will provide Council with the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the Committee and thoughtfully consider whether to request additional specific work from the Committee when and if the Committee is extended.
- **Initial Task** – We recommend that the initial task for the Committee be the creation of a strategic plan for the City's response to homelessness that is data driven, evidence informed, and that considers regional and structural coordination. Critical components will include specific strategies for homelessness prevention, encampment response, and other necessary City policies. We think this work would substantially benefit from the assistance of a hired facilitator to assist the Advisory Committee in the strategic planning process.
- **Plan Operationalization** – After an initial strategic plan is established by the Advisory Committee, the Plan would be operationalized by City staff (we envision the Homelessness Response Coordinator) along with community partners and social service organizations.
- **Future Committee** Tasks - If Council determines that the Advisory Committee is effective, their existence could be extended with added tasks such as monitoring plan implementation, providing support and guidance on emerging issues, federal/state policy advocacy, completing gap analyses to inform City budget and grant funding decisions, and ongoing City policy review.



CITY OF BANGOR

Jennifer Gunderman, Director
Public Health & Community Services
Phone: 207-992-4550
Jennifer.gunderman@bangormaine.gov

Background Information

City of Atlanta: The Atlanta City Council authorized the formation of a 90-Day Homelessness Task Force to critically examine the City's existing policies and procedures related to homelessness, with a key focus on creating standardized protocols for encampment decommissioning. The legislation designated 33 organizations and key City departments to serve on the Task Force, which includes nonprofit, faith based, advocacy, and government stakeholders.

The Task Force was facilitated by APD-Urban and structured into four topical subcommittees: (1) Standard Operating Procedures and Policies, (2) Medical and Mental Health, (3) Prevention and Diversion, and (4) Alternative and Emerging Solutions.

<https://www.atlantaga.gov/government/mayor-s-office/the-mayor-s-cabinet/city-of-atlanta-90-day-homelessness-task-force>

City of Dallas: Dallas created The Hope Taskforce. One of the leading organizations that led this effort, Housing Forward, is one of the most innovative and effective models for managing encampments and supporting folks who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Their Crisis Systems Senior Director, Hannah Sims (hannah.sims@housingforwardntx.org), has been a thought partner for Jena Jones, particularly during the Camp Hope closure. The group was tasked to be data-informed and to try to build consensus around a series of solutions to a complex problem.

About task force: <https://dhantx.com/city-of-dallas-task-force/>

Report: <https://dallascityhall.com/government/Council%20Meeting%20Documents/hopetaskforcereport.pdf>

City of Denver Task Force: Created a strategic plan for a collaborative approach to addressing homelessness.

Strategic Plan: <https://www.denvergov.org/files/assets/public/v/1/housing-stability/documents/denver-housing-stability-action-plan-2025-eng-final.pdf>

City of Lexington: This task force is charged with conducting a focused review of the city's emergency shelter system and programming and providing formal recommendations to the Mayor regarding strategic next steps. Their work should be grounded in the data and findings of the 2025 Emergency Shelter Study and informed by national best practices, local context and community input.

About the task force: [Task Force on Homelessness | City of Lexington, Kentucky](#)

City of Lowell: In Winter 2019 the City Manager formed a Task Force comprised of various community leaders to change how the City at large responds to growing homelessness, housing, and other associated issues. Under the guidance of a nationally renowned consultant, the Task Force determined a shift towards a "housing first" model would make the biggest impact on these collective problems.

About Task Force and Report: <https://www.lowellma.gov/1354/Task-Force-on-Homelessness-and-Sustainab>

I: Homelessness and Housing Standing Committee Purpose & Duties

Section I: Establishment of the Homelessness and Housing Standing Committee

Purpose. The purpose of the Homelessness and Housing Standing Committee is to advise the Bangor City Council about the development and implementation of a comprehensive, data-driven strategy to prevent and end homelessness. Recognizing Bangor's unique status as the region's primary service center, the Committee shall focus on creating a Full Continuum of Housing—ranging from emergency shelter to permanent supportive housing (for households earning 30% or less AMI), and workforce units (for households earning 60% to 100% AMI). The Committee's overarching goal is to transition the City's response from reactive crisis management to proactive structural solutions that reduce the burden on municipal emergency services and taxpayers.

Specific Duties and Directives. To achieve this purpose, the Committee is charged with the following five specific directives:

1. Regional and Structural Coordination

- a. **Fiscal Impact Analysis:** The Committee shall annually evaluate the correlation between the regional shortage of supportive housing and the rising costs of municipal and county emergency services (including the Penobscot County Jail and Bangor Police/Fire).
- b. **Fair Share Advocacy:** The Committee shall produce a "Regional Fiscal Impact Report" quantifying the housing contributions of neighboring municipalities. This report shall be used to advocate for equitable County-level funding and to encourage neighboring communities to adopt zoning changes that alleviate the concentration of high-acuity needs within Bangor.
- c. **Hub Alignment:** The Committee shall align its strategic planning with the State of Maine's Hub 7 structure to ensure municipal resources complement, rather than duplicate, regional "By-Name List" interventions.

2. Service Gap Analysis

- a. **Annual Deficit Matrix:** The Committee shall annually identify and quantify specific gaps in the local housing inventory. This analysis must distinguish between the need for:
 - i. Low-Barrier Emergency Shelter (immediate crisis response).
 - ii. Medical Respite & Detox Beds (post-hospitalization recovery).
 - iii. Permanent Supportive Housing (long-term housing with case management).
 - iv. Workforce Housing (units affordable to those earning 60–100% of Area Median Income).
- b. **Zoning Recommendations:** Based on these identified gaps, the Committee shall recommend specific amendments to Land Use ordinances to incentivize private

and non-profit development of the needed unit types.

3. Data Monitoring and Deliverables

- a. **Outcomes vs. Output:** The Committee shall monitor data focusing on outcomes (e.g., "length of time homeless," "returns to homelessness," and "placements into permanent housing") rather than simple output metrics (e.g., "number of meals served").
- b. **Functional Zero Targets:** The Committee shall set measurable benchmarks for achieving "Functional Zero" for specific sub-populations (e.g., veterans, youth, families) and report progress to the City Council semi-annually.

4. Sustainable Funding and Revenue Strategy

- a. **Advisory Role on Municipal Bonding:**
 - i. **Immediate Bond Support:** The Committee shall serve as the primary citizen advisory body to the City Council regarding the proposed Affordable Housing Bond (targeting the June ballot). The Committee shall review the proposed bond language to ensure it aligns with the "Full Continuum" of housing needs (from PSH to workforce units) and assist in defining the permissible uses of bond funds to maximize developer participation.
 - ii. **Oversight & Transparency:** Should the bond pass, the Committee shall act as the oversight body to review bond expenditures, ensuring funds are deployed rapidly and in accordance with the voter-approved mandate.
- b. **Threat Mitigation & Voucher Preservation:** The Committee shall immediately develop a "Voucher Cliff" contingency plan. This includes identifying state (MaineHousing) and private bridge funding to maintain tenure for the estimated 150 households currently relying on federal Continuum of Care (CoC) Permanent Supportive Housing vouchers, should federal eligibility criteria change to exclude "Housing First" models.
- c. **Fiscal Sustainability:**
 - i. **Incentivizing Sustainable Models:** In its advisory role regarding municipal funding (e.g., CDBG recommendations, Opioid Settlement Fund allocations, or Housing Bond expenditures), the Committee shall give priority weighting to proposals demonstrating a long-term, diversified revenue strategy.
 - ii. **MaineCare Alignment:** The Committee shall encourage service providers to maximize federal and state reimbursement streams (e.g., MaineCare Section 17, 21, 29, or 1115 Waivers) for ongoing supportive services. The goal is to ensure limited municipal funds are utilized for "gap" financing (e.g., capital costs, pilot programs) rather than permanent operating subsidies.
 - iii. **Capacity Building & Advocacy:** The Committee shall identify barriers preventing local providers from billing MaineCare (e.g., administrative burden, licensing requirements) and advocate to State DHHS officials for necessary waivers or technical assistance to unlock these federal funds for the Bangor region.
- d. **Exploration of Innovative Revenue Models:** The Committee is charged with

researching and presenting feasibility studies to the City Council regarding non-traditional funding mechanisms. These may include, but are not limited to:

- i. **Municipal Housing Trust Funds:** Investigating the viability of a dedicated local fund supported by revenue streams such as short-term rental fees, vacancy fees, or payment-in-lieu of development options.
 - ii. **"Pay for Success" Initiatives:** Exploring social impact financing models where private capital funds high-risk housing interventions, with municipal repayment contingent upon verified cost-savings in emergency services and jail reductions.
 - iii. **Public/Private Partnerships:** Identifying opportunities to leverage private philanthropy and hospital "Community Benefit" obligations to subsidize capital costs for supportive housing developments.
- e. **Hospital Community Benefit Alignment:** The Committee shall formally request Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center and St. Joseph Hospital allocate a specific percentage of their federally required "Community Benefit" dollars directly to the Housing Trust Fund, classifying these housing contributions as a "Social Determinant of Health" interventions.

5. Public Education and Engagement

- a. **Fiscal Responsibility Narrative:** The Committee shall develop public-facing educational materials clearly articulating the cost-savings of Permanent Supportive Housing compared to the costs of emergency room usage, incarceration, and long-term shelter stays.
- b. **Neighborhood Integration:** The Committee shall proactively engage with neighborhood watch groups and business districts to address concerns regarding new housing projects, facilitating "Good Neighbor Agreements" balancing the needs of unhoused residents with neighborhood safety and aesthetics.

6. Operational & Staff Alignment

- a. **The "Policy Intake" Function:** To ensure the City's Homelessness Response Manager (HRM) can focus on operational execution, the Committee shall serve as the primary legislative drafting body for the position. When the HRM identifies ordinance-level barriers to housing (e.g., zoning restrictions, shelter licensing rules), the Committee is responsible for researching and developing the necessary policy amendments for City Council review.
- b. **Operational Feasibility Checks:** The Committee shall formally designate the HRM as an ex-officio technical advisor to vet all proposed "innovative plans" for operational realism prior to their submission to the City Council.

Section III: Mandatory Deliverables and Reporting

To ensure the Committee remains action-oriented and accountable, it shall be required to submit the following work products to the City Council on a recurring basis. These are not merely status updates, but actionable documents requiring Council review or vote.

A. The Annual Legislative Action Plan (Due: 2nd Council Meeting of January)

- a. **Purpose:** To set the legislative agenda for the upcoming year.
- b. **Requirement:** The Committee must submit a prioritized list of specific municipal ordinances, zoning amendments, or policy changes it intends to draft or review for the coming year. This plan must identify:
 - i. Specific zoning districts targeted for density increases or use-changes.
 - ii. Ordinance barriers identified for removal (e.g., parking minimums, lot size restrictions).
 - iii. State legislative bills the City should support or oppose regarding housing.
 - iv. Recommended new State legislation to address identified barriers and opportunities.

B. The Semi-Annual Housing Inventory Report (Due: July & January)

- a. **Purpose:** To track real-time progress against housing production goals.
- b. **Requirement:** A data report quantifying the net change in Bangor's housing stock over the previous six months. It must include:
 - i. Number of new units permitted (broken down by AMI affordability levels).
 - ii. Number of units lost (due to condemnation, conversion to short-term rental, or fire).
 - iii. Current occupancy rates of emergency shelters.

**Strategic Note: The January report shall serve as the "Report Card" for the previous year.

C. The "Gap Analysis" Matrix (Due Annually in April)

- a. **Purpose:** To inform the municipal budget process and grant applications.
- b. **Requirement:** A quantitative analysis identifying the specific deficit between the current inventory of beds/units and the population need. This report must quantify the exact deficit of:
 - i. Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) vouchers/units.
 - ii. Low-barrier emergency shelter beds.
 - iii. Medical respite beds.
 - iv. Transitional housing units for special populations (youth, re-entry).

D. Regional Data & Fiscal Analysis

- a. **The Regional Fiscal Impact Report:** By October 1 of each year (prior to the County Budget cycle), the Committee shall produce a "Regional Fiscal Impact Report." This report shall:
 - i. **Define "Fair Share":** Utilize the State of Maine's goal of 10% affordable housing stock as the baseline for all municipalities in Penobscot County.
 - ii. **Calculate the "Regional Infrastructure Contribution":** Develop a weighted formula recognizing the diverse ways municipalities support the region. This metric shall grant "Service Credits" to any municipality that hosts critical shared regional infrastructure (e.g., county facilities, major medical centers, waste management systems, or higher education institutions). This ensures the final housing goals reflect a holistic view of each community's existing land-use commitments and service to the region.
 - iii. **The "Tax-to-Housing" Correlation:** Specifically analyze the correlation

between the County Jail’s occupancy rates/funding deficit and the regional lack of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH).

- iv. **Distribution:** This report shall be formally presented to the Penobscot County Commissioners and the Budget Advisory Committee to advocate for the use of County funds to support municipal housing projects alleviating jail overcrowding.

II. Membership Appointment & Terms

Section I: Membership Structure and Appointment Process

Appointment Authority. All members shall be appointed by the City Council.

- **Institutional Seats:** For seats designated for specific organizations (e.g., Bangor Housing, Northern Light/St. Joe’s, Penobscot County), the governing body of that organization shall submit a nominee for Council confirmation.
- **At-Large/Expert Seats:** For seats designated for specific expertise (e.g., Landlord, Lived Experience, Harm Reduction), the Personnel Committee of the City Council shall interview applicants and recommend appointments to the full Council.

Staggered Terms. To ensure continuity of institutional knowledge while allowing for fresh perspectives, the 11-member committee shall serve 3-year terms, staggered as follows upon the committee’s inception.

Group	Term Length (Initial)	Seats Included (Examples)	Reappointment Year
Group 1	1 Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Developer/Landlord • Lived Experience Rep • Planning Board Rep 	Reappointed/Selected every 3 years starting 2026
Group 2	2 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harm Reduction Specialist • Hospital System Rep • City Councilor 	Reappointed/Selected every 3 years starting 2027
Group 3	3 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangor Housing Authority Rep • Homeless Shelter Director • County Rep • 2 At-Large Members 	Reappointed/Selected every 3 years starting 2028

Vacancies and Removal.

- Any member who misses three (3) consecutive regular meetings without prior notice to the Chair shall be considered to have vacated their seat.
- Vacancies shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term using the same

appointment process as for the original seat.

Section II: Ex-Officio and Technical Advisory Membership

To ensure the Committee's recommendations are operationally viable, legally sound, and integrated with existing state systems, the following positions shall hold permanent Ex-Officio (Non-Voting) seats on the Committee. These members shall have full speaking rights and may serve on sub-committees, but shall not count toward a quorum nor vote on final recommendations.

The Homelessness Response Manager (HRM): To serve as the primary bridge between the Committee's legislative planning and the City's daily operations. The HRM shall review all proposed "Action Plans" to ensure they can be realistically executed by City staff. The HRM is responsible for bringing systemic barriers encountered in the field (e.g., specific ordinance conflicts) to the Committee for legislative remedy.

The Region 3 (Hub 7) Homeless Response Coordinator: To ensure the City of Bangor does not duplicate existing regional efforts. This member is responsible for:

- Ensuring the City utilizes the regional "By-Name List" data rather than creating disparate tracking systems.
- Advising the Committee on available State housing resources (MaineHousing) to prevent the use of municipal funds for services that could be state-subsidized.
- Providing monthly updates regarding Hub 7 resources, gaps, and barriers at each meeting to give a broader perspective of successes and areas needing more attention.

The Planning Officer (or Designee): To advise the Committee on land use, zoning, and building code realities. When the Committee proposes strategies such as increasing housing density or creating "Low-Barrier" shelters, this advisor must immediately flag potential conflicts with State Fire Codes or Municipal Land Use Ordinances to ensure proposals are legally viable before reaching the Council.

Public Safety Liaison (Police or Fire Command Staff): To provide data regarding overdose trends, encampment safety issues, and emergency service call volumes. This member ensures housing locations and service models recommended by the Committee adequately account for the safety of both the residents and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Recommended Committee Timeline: Year 1 (2026)

Assumption: Committee members are appointed and seated by late January 2026. This schedule balances the immediate need to support the June Housing Bond with the structural work of getting the committee running.

Phase 1: Foundation & Bond Strategy (Feb – April 2026)

February:

Meeting 1: Orientation, Election of Chair/Vice-Chair, Establishment of Meeting Cadence.

Action Item: Review draft language for the June Affordable Housing Bond. Provide formal feedback to Council to ensure bond funds act as flexible financing through low-interest loans for both "new construction" and "adaptive reuse."

March:

Data Dive: Staff Liaison presents current baseline data (shelter census, waitlists).

Action Item: Finalize endorsement and public education talking points for the June Bond.

April:

Deliverable Due: The Initial "Gap Analysis." (Note: This will be a "Version 1.0" based on available data, but crucial to have before the bond vote to prove the need).

Policy Work: Begin review of the "Regional Fiscal Impact" formula (the Jail/Tax connection).

Phase 2: Advocacy & The "Fair Share" Framework (May – Aug 2026)

May:

Public Engagement: Hold a public workshop regarding the Housing Bond to answer resident questions.

Sub-Committee: Form a "Zoning Review" subcommittee to start identifying barriers for the next year's Legislative Plan.

June:

ELECTION: Housing Bond Vote.

Meeting Focus: Post-election strategy. If Bond passes -> Draft oversight criteria. If Bond fails -> Draft "Plan B" contingency options.

July:

Deliverable Due: Bi-Annual Housing Inventory Report (First Edition).

Regional Work: Send data requests to neighboring towns (Brewer, Hampden, etc.) to populate the "Regional Fiscal Impact Scorecard."

Phase 3: Legislation & Budget Prep (Sept – Dec 2026)

September:

Drafting: Review initial drafts of the "Regional Fiscal Impact Report" (The Tax/Jail report).

Grant Review: Review potential CDBG allocations or winter emergency shelter funding needs.

October:

Presentation: Present the Regional Fiscal Impact Report to City Council and County Commissioners (timed for County budget season).

November:

Strategic Planning: Workshop the specific legislative goals for 2027.

Voucher Cliff Check: Review status of CoC Vouchers and federal funding outlook.

December:

Finalize: Vote on the 2027 Annual Legislative Action Plan.

Review: End-of-year review of Committee effectiveness and attendance.

Phase 4: The Cycle Begins (Jan 2027)

January 2027: Submit the Annual Legislative Action Plan to Council. The regular cycle is now established.

The Gap Analysis Matrix

Objective: To quantify the deficit between existing resources and the actual population needs in Greater Bangor.

Housing / Service Type	Target Population	Current Inventory (Beds/Units)	Current Demand (Waitlist/PIT Count)	The Gap (Deficit)	Barriers to Expansion
Emergency Low-Barrier Shelter	Adults with active SUD or behavioral health issues	<i>e.g., 40 beds</i>	<i>e.g., 65 individuals/night</i>	-25 beds	Staffing shortages; Funding limits
Medical Respite Care	Unhoused individuals discharged from hospitals needing recovery time	<i>e.g., 0 beds</i>	<i>e.g., 5 referrals/month</i>	-5 beds	Licensing/Zoning; Operational funding
Transitional Housing	Youth (18-24) or those leaving incarceration	<i>e.g., 12 beds</i>	<i>e.g., 30 applicants</i>	-18 beds	Lack of suitable real estate
Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)	Chronically homeless with disabilities (Housing First model)	<i>e.g., 50 vouchers</i>	<i>e.g., 120 qualified</i>	-70 units	Lack of landlords accepting vouchers; Lack of case management staff
Workforce Housing (30-60% AMI)	Service workers, those exiting homelessness who are employed	<i>e.g., X units</i>	<i>e.g., Y applicants</i>	-Z units	Construction costs; High interest rates
Diversion/Prevention Funds	At-risk tenants facing eviction	<i>e.g., \$50k annual budget</i>	<i>e.g., \$150k in requests</i>	*-\$100k*	Limited General Assistance (GA) flexibility

The Regional Fiscal Impact Scorecard

The "Fair Share" Formula

The Formula:

(Total Housing Units × 10% Target) - (Existing Affordable Units + Service Credits) = The Housing Deficit

- 10% Target: Based on Maine's goal that 10% of a community's housing stock should be classified as affordable.
- Service Credits: A collaborative "bonus" for towns hosting regional burdens (Jail, High Schools, Hospitals). This acknowledges why Bangor's number is already high.

The Visual Matrix (To be presented to Council/County)

Municipality	Total Housing Units	Statutory Goal (10%)	Current Affordable Inventory	Regional Service Credit	Net Deficit (Units)	Est. Jail Tax Impact
Bangor	15,000	1,500	2,200	+500 (Hosts Shelter/Jail)	+1,200 (Surplus)	\$0
Brewer	Ex. 4,000	Ex. 400	Ex. 50	Ex. 0	Ex. -350 (Deficit)	Ex. \$ High
Hampden	Ex. 2,500	Ex. 250	Ex. 0	Ex. 0	Ex. -250 (Deficit)	Ex. \$ Med
Hermon	Ex. 3,000	Ex. 300	Ex. 290	Ex. +10 (Hosts Transfer Station)	Ex. 0 (Balanced)	Ex. \$0
Orono						
Old Town						
Orrington						

Veazie						
Glenburn						
Eddington						
Holden						

The "Est. Jail Tax Impact" Column:

This is the "teeth." You calculate this by saying: "The Jail is 20% over capacity. 40% of inmates are homeless. Therefore, the housing deficit in Town A contributes to the \$4M jail shortfall."

Collaborative Strategy: "The Tax-Shed Coalition"

To keep the tone collaborative, the Committee shouldn't just mail this report to the towns and say "Fix it." They should invite the towns to a "Tax-Shed Working Group."

The Pitch to Neighbors:

"Bangor doesn't want to tell you how to zone your town. But the County tax bill just went up 20% because the jail is full of people who need housing, not handcuffs. If we work together to build 50 supportive units regionally, we can drop the daily jail count and lower everyone's property taxes."

Why this works:

1. It respects autonomy: You aren't forcing them to build; you are showing them the bill for *not* building.
2. It shares the pain: It acknowledges that Bangor is hurting from the tax hike too.
3. It targets the Wallet: Town Managers in the suburbs care about their mill rate more than social justice. This speaks their language.