**Maine DOT Virtual Public Involvement Comment Summary\***

Project Name: MaineDOT's Family of Plans  
PIN: N/A  
Description: MaineDOT's Long-Range Transportation Plan 2050 and MaineDOT's Family of Plans

*\*Note: many blank comments were received during the public meeting registration process. These have been deleted. As a result, the numbering for the public comments is not in order and some may appear to be missing from this summary.*

Public Comment 1  
Date: 02/19/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: Improvement of Amtrak speed and extension of the Amtrak Downeaster train to Bangor and the University of Maine

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/22/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response: Thank you for your comment. It will be taken into consideration.

Public Comment 2  
Date: 02/20/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Route 161 from Caribou to Fort Kent has seen total reconstruction projects over the years all the North to Ouellette Rd. Crossing. The remaining section from that point North to Fort Kent has yet to see any reconstruction efforts. This is a major commercial route to St John Valley communities and the terminus for an international crossing between Canada and the US. When will MDOT reconstruct this last 10+ miles of road? it was resurface in 2021 but it desperately needs much more than that!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/22/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response:

Thank you for your input. I have provided a link to our latest Work Plan which does include some Highway related projects within this footprint over the next three years:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/95b12905e40e4cc48f1022b7461ca751>

Public Comment 3  
Date: 02/28/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: How will the MDOT ensure active transportation is a key strategy toward meeting our climate goals?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/01/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your recent comment on MaineDOT’s Active Transportation Plan.

For detailed information regarding Maine’s Climate Goals, including the role of transportation in meeting them, please visit the Governor’s Climate Council website at climatecouncil.maine.gov.  MaineDOT has been a major participant in the Governor’s Climate Council and embracing the future of transportation in Maine is a principal strategy in the Climate Council’s Four-Year Plan for Climate Action in Maine, “Maine Won’t Wait.” Our Family of Plans, including our Statewide Active Transportation Plan, will be looking at how MaineDOT can help meet these goals throughout the transportation system, including Maine’s active transportation infrastructure and programs. If you have any ideas or recommendations, please feel free to share them with us through the comment portal.

Public Comment 4  
Date: 02/28/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: No.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/28/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response: Thank you for your comment.

Public Comment 5  
Date: 02/28/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: xxx

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/01/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response: Thank you for your comment.

Public Comment 6  
Date: 02/28/2022  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Test--interesection of Cottage/Highland needs better ped accommodation

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/01/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response: Thank you for your comment.

Public Comment 7  
Date: 02/28/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: No.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/01/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response: Thank you for your comment.

Public Comment 8  
Date: 03/01/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: We are interested in creating some off-road trails as Safe Routes to Schools in Deer Isle. Is there any funding there would help with construction and maintenance? Our school is in an isolated rural location, but may be connected to different neighborhoods more efficiently by trail than road.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/02/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT’s Family of Plans.

Identifying and implementing the appropriate bicycle and pedestrian facility can be a multiyear effort involving bicycle/pedestrian advocates, municipalities, engineers, planners, and others. It typically involves planning studies, fundraising efforts, gaining permission to use land (oftentimes with abutter issues) applying for funding assistance, and many levels of environmental permitting. These projects usually begin as a community-driven effort, a group of people who get together to improve their community. Perhaps the appropriate first step in exploring safe school connectivity in Deer Isle would be to review MaineDOT’s Community Based Initiatives and Bicycle Pedestrian Improvements pages on www.mainedot.gov and follow-up with your community. If your municipality is interested in formally discussing avenues to plan and partner for these improvements, please contact MaineDOT’s Active Transportation Planner, Patrick Adams, at patrick.adams@maine.gov.

Public Comment 9  
Date: 03/01/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Deer Isle is very concerned about our connection to the mainland across the Deer Isle Causeway and the Deer Isle bridge. What steps is MaineDOT taking to secure funding for upgrading the causeway? Has MaineDOT continued to consider the long term costs of maintaining the bridge versus building a replacement?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/02/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment regarding the Long-Range Transportation Plan. Typically, MaineDOT does not include projects or project-specific details in this plan, instead, I would refer you to our latest Work Plan accessible here: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/95b12905e40e4cc48f1022b7461ca751> .  While this plan will not address specific projects, it will discuss MaineDOT's goals and objectives related to addressing the impacts of climate change.

MaineDOT relies on data-driven processes to prioritize and select work to include in our Work Plans, and additional details about this methodology may be found in our Transportation Asset Management Plan, accessible here: <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/publications/docs/plansreports/MaineDOT-Transportation-Asset-Management-Plan-final.pdf>

Public Comment 18  
Date: 03/02/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Curious to hear what is planned for improving accessible paths and bike routes.

Public Comment 24  
Date: 03/02/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Funding for railroad grade crossing upgrades.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

We are reevaluating existing processes related to Active Transportation improvements including rail crossings.  If you have specific locations you would like considered for improvements, please let me know at martin.rooney@maine.gov.

Public Comment 26  
Date: 03/02/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Can Active Transportation $$ go to trails, some of which are used to get from home to work, or health care location, or shops? What are your criteria?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

Yes Active Transportation resources can and do go to trails.  Existing programs are described in detail at <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/pga/funding/>.  This link includes the existing application for funding and all criteria used in project selection.  Please let us know if you have any specific improvement recommendations.  I understand you've spoken with Patrick Adams who is following up with you as well.

Public Comment 27  
Date: 03/03/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Regarding Active Transportation: when will we see more comprehensive planning and investment ie more stakeholder involvement, more funding mechanisms, and more connectivity?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

As part of the development of this Active Transportation Plan, MaineDOT is reevaluating existing stakeholder collaborate efforts and how investment decisions are made.  Existing programs are discussed at <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/pga/funding/> should you have specific improvement recommendations.  Thank you.

Public Comment 29  
Date: 03/03/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: What is the possibility of utilizing B-Train (2 trailer system) in New England. This seems to be a major opportunity not only to reduce the number of trucks on the road but support the increased demand for transportation and increased efficiencies start to finish. Is there a way to improve communications with rail lines? A challenge we face is the unknown of what it takes to move product via rail to other parts of the country. This process could certainly be simplified to support the desire to install a rail siding.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on the MaineDOT Family of Plans.

The process for permitting overlimit commercial vehicles, including B-Trains, on Maine highways can be found in Chapter 310 of Department of Transportation rules. The link can be found here. <https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/17/chaps17.htm.>

Essentiality, a party may petition MaineDOT for-Special Haul Route Permit. At the conclusion of a Technical Review, the Department will issue a written decision approving, approving with conditions or rejecting a formal request.

Generally, your rail service operator should be able to give you a quote to move product to most locations in North America along the rail system. It you need help contacting a particular operator please give me a call.

The Industrial Rail Access Program (IRAP) has been designed by the Maine Department of Transportation to encourage economic development and increased use of the rail transportation mode. The installation of rail siding is an eligible use of this funding.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Nate

Nathan Howard

Director, Rail Transportation

MaineDOT, Office of Freight and Passenger Services

(207) 624-3042

Public Comment 38  
Date: 03/03/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I would just like to participate by being made aware of the hearings on the three plans listed below.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/03/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response: Thank you for your comment. You will be notified of all future public meetings related to our Family of Plans.

Public Comment 42  
Date: 03/03/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: What is MaineDOT's plan for extending the DownEast Sunrise Trail to Eastport and Calais? How can DACF/BPL and MaineDOT get sufficient funding to better maintain the riding surface of the DownEast Sunrise Trail?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/10/2022  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thanks you for your comment on the MaineDOT Family of Plans.

At this point in time, neither MaineDOT or Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry have any plans to extend the Down East Sunrise Trail to either Eastport or Calais. The Calais Branch is preserved for future rail use under the Maine Rail Preservation Act. The process for converting an inactive, state-owned rail line to an interim non rail use was recently established in Maine Statute: <https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/23/title23sec75.html>

If you have concerns regarding the condition of the Down East Sunrise Trail, please contact the Bureau of Parks and Lands, Off-road Recreational Vehicle Office: <https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/trail_activities/atv/index.shtml>

Nathan Howard Director, Rail Transportation MaineDOT, Office of Freight and Passenger Services (207) 624-3042

Public Comment 43  
Date: 03/03/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I'm interested in the State's plans for integrated transportation systems, as well as any incentive programs and/or tax credits that it hopes to offer for people who commute using active or integrated transportation systems.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

MaineDOT is updating multiple modal transportation plans simultaneously (Active, Rail, Transit, Long-Range Transportation Plan) to ensure integration where it makes sense and is cost effective.  We will also consider your idea for incentives/ tax credits as part of policy recommendations.

Thank you,

Public Comment 44  
Date: 03/03/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Mostly interested in ensuring adequate inclusion of bicycling and other active transportation in DOT's future planning efforts, for reasons of (a) assisting in reaching Maine's climate goals; (b) improving public health; and (c) enhancing our tourism economy.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

As part of this plan's development, we are reevaluating existing policies and programming decisions such that Active Transportation is considered as appropriate in policy and programming decisions.  We also appreciate your comment regarding the benefits of Active Transportation in meeting the state's climate goals, improving physical health and supporting tourism and the state's economy.  We anticipate the plan will include recommendations that support these goals.

Public Comment 45  
Date: 03/03/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Plans for integrated bike lanes to entice bike use over car use safely. Also plans to enable bike riders to easily use other forms of mass transportation—bike racks (bus), bike loading access (rail, ferry)—when moving around the state.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

As part of this plan's development, we are reevaluating existing policies and programming decisions such that Active Transportation is considered as appropriate in policy and programming decisions. We also appreciate your comment regarding the benefits of Active Transportation in meeting the state's climate goals, improving health and supporting tourism and the state's economy. We anticipate the plan will include recommendations that support these goals.

Public Comment 48  
Date: 03/03/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan  
Comment: safety concerns about the poor conditions of road shoulders

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/03/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response: Thank you for your comment. It will be taken into consideration.

Public Comment 50  
Date: 03/03/2022  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Please prioritize the following investments as part of your planning: 1. Developing a statewide network of rail trails and multi-use paths with clear timeline for construction 2. Scale up statewide transit, including service that connects key regions of Maine and targeted investment in Bus Rapid Transit features 3. 3. Support for e-bikes as a transformative travel option with subsidies, technical support, e-bike loaner program 4. Design and funding support for separated, protected bike lanes in denser areas 5. Clear criteria for integrating wide sidewalks & separated paths on bridge projects 6. Immediately end all “education” programs that blame victims & spread “safety is a two way street” myth. Instead focus investments on real design changes that will slow traffic or increase safety for pedestrians and people on bikes 7. Make a real investment in design changes in response to crashes, safety concerns 8. Immediately put an end to the outdated 85th percentile practice for setting speed limits. Give towns greater flexibility to reduce speed limits 9. End costly, effective, and polluting highway expansions that divert money from maintenance and active transportation or transit. 10. Shift funding priorities away from road and highway expansion to active transportation and transit using flexibility provided by federal funding and by taking advantage of fed grant programs

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/03/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response: Thank you for your comment. It will be taken into consideration.

Public Comment 57  
Date: 03/03/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Getting trail from Yarmouth to Portland

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

We also encourage you to contact municipal officials directly regarding support for this trail.  These type of efforts are usually collaborative partnerships with strong support among the public and by municipalities.

Public Comment 63  
Date: 03/03/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: What is actively done to promote biking, walking, rolling, and combating climate change? In the wake of the mostly ignored IPCC report #2, it seems to be past time that our beautiful state act as a climate leader.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

Information regarding MaineDOT's Active Transportation programs and policies and MaineDOT's Climate Initiative are available at www.mainedot.gov.  As part of this plan's development, we are reevaluating existing policies and programming decisions such that Active Transportation is considered as appropriate in policy and programming decisions. We also appreciate your comment regarding the benefits of Active Transportation in meeting the state's climate goals.

Public Comment 64  
Date: 03/03/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I am interested in how we can convert non-active rail lines into the Active Transportation Plan. I see great promise in this area. Thank you!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

This plan includes an evaluation of inactive state-owned rail lines.  Please continue to monitor the study's website for updates, public meetings or feel to reach out directly with any questions or comments.

Martin Rooney

martin.rooney@maine.gov

207 624 3317.

Public Comment 65  
Date: 03/03/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Bicycling safety

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

Safety, including bicycling safety, will be a critical component.

Public Comment 67  
Date: 03/03/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Cycle lanes and bicycle safety/share the road

Public Comment 68  
Date: 03/03/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Safer access for cyclists and pedestrians

Public Comment 71  
Date: 03/03/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: How long will it take

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

We will continue to update the study's website with schedules, public meetings and eventually a draft plan anticipated toward the end of 2022.

Public Comment 72  
Date: 03/03/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: National Scenic Byways are very important tools for economic development through travel and transportation. They succeed in this nationwide. Maine has several world class National Scenic Byways. It's important to invest in transportation infrastructure that elevates the experience of these National Scenic Byways and better achieves their intent. Invest in the Byways that haven't gotten as far as others in build-out, so they can all offer a quality travel experience, one that reflects the quality of Maine's National Scenic Byways as a whole system.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

We will share your thoughts on Scenic Byways and we continue to reevaluate plans and policies for not just Active Transportation but other plans such as MaineDOT's Long Range Transportation Plan as well.

Public Comment 77  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Roads are maintained for all weathers. When / How will MDOT make winter bike lanes maintenance normal?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

As part of this plans development, we will be re-evaluating all appropriate policies including maintenance on Active Transportation facilities.

Public Comment 78  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I cycle commute most days. Falmouth to Portland and Falmouth to Biddeford. Would you please consider adding marked bicycle lanes to as many roads as possible?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

As part of this plans development, we will be reevaluating all appropriate policies and programming decisions including active transportation safety, striping and markings.

Public Comment 82  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: How to support biking and walking in rural areas, and how to coordinate with other levels of government on designing and implementing complete streets.

Public Comment 83  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: None currently.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Please continue to monitor the study's website and let us know if you have any questions or comments.

Thank you,

Public Comment 88  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Reduce car speed to 20mph on town/city streets

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/07/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response: Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 03/07/2022  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: I like the FHWA document: ACHIEVING MULTIMODAL NETWORKS, page 57, SLOW STREETS. I believe all streets should be Slow Streets in towns, with high speed arterials connecting towns. Too often, towns will try to compromise car and pedestrian use on a street by street basis. The result is typically 35 mph roads which suits no one - too fast for pedestrians, and too slow to really get anywhere. The compromise should instead be at the network level, with some roads clearly for cars, and others multimodal. We should have clear guidelines for Slow Streets in Maine, for example: maximum width of 16ft, trees to provide shade for pedestrians, remove road markings at junctions. Not only is this less expensive, but will improve public safety. Cycling infrastructure can then be built where it is needed most, running parallel to the arterials in separated bike lanes. The "Complete Streets" idea only applicable in certain situations. It's prohibitively expensive to build and maintain, takes up huge areas of public space and doesn't solve the problem of separate car and bike+ped lanes – I ask you: what happens are intersections? The simpler, better, cheaper, solution is a max 20mph. Thank you for considering my comment!!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/08/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response: Thank you. As you may know, we are primarily in the information gathering and analyzing phase of the Active Transportation Plan. I will make sure your input is part of this information and considered as we develop recommendations.

Public Comment 91  
Date: 03/04/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I bike, walk and drive a plug-in hybrid car on ME roads. Safe, maintained pavement on shoulders offers the safest routes fo r biking or walking. I appreciate where such roads exist (part of Rte. 130/129, Rte. 1) near me. EV charging stations are sorely needed. I appreciate the one behind Reny's in Damariscotta, and those on Bowdoin's campus. I wish my family could board a train in Newcastle to access rail transportation to Freeport, Portland, Boston and further south and west.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/07/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

MaineDOT is currently updating multiple transportation plans including Active, Transit, Rail and the Long-Range Transportation Plan.  We will be evaluating opportunities for connections between different transportation modes as we implement these plans.  We also understand the benefits of Electronic Vehicles in reducing green house gas emissions.  Developing policies, plans and incentives to accelerate Maine's transition to electric vehicles is part of a Maine's Climate Council's principal immediate strategies.

Public Comment 96  
Date: 03/05/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: No

Public Comment 97  
Date: 03/05/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Is Maine maximizing its RTP funding? I believe that not all of the federal funds are used for trail projects, VT and NH programs have far more dollars available. is that still true?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/07/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

MaineDOT works closely with Maine's Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry's Bureau of Public Lands to ensure we use all RTP funding.

Public Comment 98  
Date: 03/05/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Plans for safer biking and walking in neighborhoods where residents may not have automobiles.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/07/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

MaineDOT regularly partners with municipalities to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety.  As part of the Active Transportation Plan, we will be evaluating ways to improve existing processes.

Public Comment 99  
Date: 03/06/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: With the ease of upgrading existing infrastructure, versus building new, can you relate how much consideration has been given to the enhancing the former BNAS (Brunswick Naval Air Station) for air, rail, sea, and motor carrier transportation-related services?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/07/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response: Thank you for your comment. It will be taken into consideration.

Public Comment 100  
Date: 03/06/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: What will be the relationship of the Maine State Rail Plan (passenger and freight rail) to the Port Plan, the Energy Plan, Environmental Plan, Economic Development Plan, Tourism Plan, etc. Rail transportation (Freight & Passenger) does not exist in a vacuum.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/10/2022  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on the Maine State Rail Plan.

The update of the Maine Rail Plan will be guided by MaineDOT's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2050 as component of MaineDOT's larger Family of Plans. These plans include the Statewide Strategic Transit Plan, Statewide Active Transportation Plan and the Statewide Aviation System Plan.

Nathan Howard

Director, Rail Transportation

MaineDOT Office of Freight and Passenger Services

(207) 624-3042

Public Comment 105  
Date: 03/07/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: This may be a duplicate; I got a message saying my earlier attempt had a problem.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/07/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response: I'm following up to let you know your comment went through. Thank you.

Public Comment 106  
Date: 03/07/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: When will the will start for the Sebago to the Sea trail that runs through Standish, Westbrook and Portland. Especially removing the train sleepers for easier walking, cycling and skating.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/08/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on the Active Transportation Plan.

Projects such as these typically require years of development to secure funding and undertake design and construction.  A portion of trail in Windham and Westbrook has been recently funded to begin design which is a necessary first step for a new trail funded with state and federal transportation resources.

Public Comment 113  
Date: 03/08/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I see the goal of a thriving future-focused transportation plan to aim to serve every human being (and some non-humans!) with free, or affordable, transportation from where we live to nearly anywhere we might need or want to travel, with a priority of the most efficient and pro-social transportation possible. This means walking first, of course. Then, in order of value we add other options. Next is human powered vehicles (bicycles, tricycles, quadcycles, scooters, skateboards, roller skates, etc.). Then regular non-profit public transit within towns and connecting towns for normal day-to-day work and play. Then for-profit rental services including Uber, Lyft, taxis, shuttles, buses, etc. And finally small electric vehicles such as electric bikes, electric scooters. Larger, personal motor vehicles such as cars, vans, and trucks, ideally electric and with machine learning "self-driving" assist to prevent crashes need to be a last resort option, that are only used for rare situations. Gasoline powered vehicles need to be phased out entirely, asap (within 5-10 years, hopefully). The constant threats and harm done by theses larger, personal/corporate vehicles need to be eliminated, so that we humans can be healthy and feel truly welcome when using public spaces, as we go about our normal business living a creative, curious, and compassionate life.

Public Comment 117  
Date: 03/08/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: How will Maine support safe and accessible pedestrian infrastructure in communities that can’t afford/won’t pay for it?

Public Comment 118  
Date: 03/08/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: What is the current plan to improve cycling infrastructure and mass transit options? Funding, planning, timeframe?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/09/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

Detailed discussion and lists of current funded cycling and transit projects over the next 3 years are included in MaineDOT's Work Plan available on [www.mainedot.gov.](http://www.mainedot.gov.)  MaineDOT's :Long-Range Transportation Plan, Active Transportation Plan and Transit Plan all under development now will layout a broader framework for investments over the coming years.

Public Comment 119  
Date: 03/09/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: How is Maine and the Country going to focus on human powered mobility (especially Bicycles) as a major piece of the transportation solution?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/09/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

Over the rest of the 2022, MaineDOT is going to work with the public, stakeholders as well as our consultant team to layout a framework for human powered mobility including bicycles as part of the Active Transportation Plan.  We encourage you to participate in the public meetings or provide us any specific suggestions via additional comments here.

Public Comment 122  
Date: 03/09/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: How does MDOT plan to support meeting Maine's climate goals through it's strategic planning process and ensure that all areas of the state are included and supported in the transition, especially making sure that rural areas, renters and disadvantaged communities are not left behind.

Public Comment 129  
Date: 03/09/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Support for local roads, sidewalks, crosswalks, trails. Shoulder paving policy

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/10/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on the Active Transportation Plan.

Patrick Adams indicated he would be reaching out to you to discuss your comments, concerns and coordination opportunities on Deer Isle.

Public Comment 130  
Date: 03/09/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I am interested in the DOT getting a good plan in place for removing the barriers to active transportation. I also would like to about how what the DOT sees for future budget allocations to increase the use of car alternatives (walking, biking, public transportation) instead of our current reliance on cars. I think that this is vitally important for the future of Maine, for both quality of life and climate reasons.

Public Comment 133  
Date: 03/09/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Perceived safety is important for most to walk/bike. How is this being addressed in the Active Trans Plan.

Public Comment 134  
Date: 03/09/2022  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I would like to see NACTO's Urban Bikeway Design Guide adopted as the standards that the DoT uses

Public Comment 137  
Date: 03/09/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I just have two suggestions for design standards and a suggested design firm that the state should work with. The first is adopting the National of Transportation Officals' Urban Bikeway Design Guide and the second is to consider partnering with the Copenhagenize Design Company. If you're interested in seeing the design process and thinking of this company I highly suggest reading Copenhagenise: The Definitive Guide to Global Bicycle Urbanism by owner and founder Mikael Colville-Andersen who designed the bike infrastructure in Copenhagen and Montreal.

Public Comment 138  
Date: 03/09/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan  
Comment: Is there any plan on building BRT along Route 1 from Biddeford to South Portland and from there on to Portland? Portland has rather poor connections to its South and I feel that this corridor, especially if it connected to the Maine Mall, would greatly benefit from this.

Public Comment 139  
Date: 03/09/2022  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: \* Create continuous bike-ped lane that are separated/protected from traffic all over the greater Portland area and in particular in high traffic areas (for commuting) and around commercial area (less car = more business for local shops) \* Protected bike-ped lanes that are properly maintained (enforcement of clean and safe bike lanes that are not used as snow dumps, parking, if maintenance of the road/sidewalk needs to be worked on, ensure that the bike lane is kept). It is extremely frustrating to have to jump through hoops when you're trying to walk or bike around town instead of burning fossil fuel. \* Speed traps in cities and town to avoid road raging SUV that are a death threat to pedestrians and bikers. I have been passed by speeding cars several times while biking or skating and really thought I'd lose an arm (or my life). \* Ensure that all intersections are pedestrian and bike friendly all year long (limited wait once the ped button is pushed to request passage, no intersection blocked to pedestrians or bikers by snow etc...). It is frustrating and scary to wait for the sign to allow me to cross, when it's dark or the weather is nasty outside. Drivers are protected, we are not: so intersection should be designed to prioritize pedestrians and bikers. Not cars. \* Remove turn on red on every intersection: oversized SUV never see pedestrian and I almost got hit several time down town in the past few months. \* Ban loud engines: a bike passed me while I was walking and revved their engine. My ear drum hurt for 2 days it was so loud. \* Dream situation: close the downtown area to through traffic and let active transportation take back the city. We'll all breath better, have more fun in the city, be safer and happier.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/10/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you very much for your comments on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

We are currently assessing existing conditions and gathering information on various policies and programs.  We will consider your suggestions as we develop recommendations for the Active Transportation Plan.  Please feel free to reach out again with any further input or suggestions as we continue to develop this plan over the rest of 2022.

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 03/21/2022  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Hi Martin, Should I submit a separate comment or comment under the thread? I would suggest to make Cumberland & Congress with Portland center (from East to West End) single way - single lane streets for motorist, with the space gain reserved for active transportation. I've been witnessing more and more road rage on these two road, by motorist insulting pedestrians or behaving dangerously (speed or disregard of the fact that they are sitting in a several ton metal shied and butting heads with unprotected bodies).

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/23/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thanks you,

Commenting on this thread is fine.  I will make sure we share your concerns about safety and lane configurations both internally and with the City.

Public Comment 140  
Date: 03/09/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Developing a policy to evaluate projects/plans and their impact on the climate in terms of emissions.

Public Comment 141  
Date: 03/09/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I heard part of the focus is on HCP 4 and 4 roads, which are seemingly more recreational in nature, which of course is very important. However from a strictly transportation perspective HCP 1 & 2's in urban settings are extremely important.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/09/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Hi,

The component related to HCPs 3 and 4 is to help us prioritize where to add shoulders for bicycling and pedestrian purposes.  The need for shoulders on these roads greatly exceeds available funding and MaineDOT doesn't have a program to systematically address them like we do in other areas of Active Transportation.  Please let me or Patrick know if you wish to discuss further.

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 03/09/2022  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Sounds good Marty. Here we go again.... All set for now.

Public Comment 142  
Date: 03/09/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Rail trail corridors Road safety for children Traffic calming Lower speed limits/more local context for speed limits Sidewalk and trail winter maintenance Equitable cost sharing for active transportation infrastructure

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/09/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.  We appreciate you proposed strategies for improvements.

Public Comment 143  
Date: 03/09/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: major road repair to include margins 18" wide for bicycle / pedestrian safety; other safety options

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/10/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

As part of this plan, MaineDOT is reevaluating our Complete Street's Policy which I believe will address your concern.

Public Comment 152  
Date: 03/10/2022  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Is there a character or word limit on the size of the comment provided?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/10/2022  
Response By: Scott R  
Response:

Jim,

There is no character limit when making a comment. 

Public Comment 157  
Date: 03/10/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Bangor is working on a comprehensive plan so we are looking to coordinate our strategies with projects/programs already in planning stages.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

All funded MaineDOT projects, including Active Transportation ones, are available in MaineDOT's Work Plan available at [www.mainedot.gov.](http://www.mainedot.gov.)  Please let us know if you have any follow-up questions.

Public Comment 158  
Date: 03/10/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: Very interested in expanding passenger rail and providing funding for municipalities to build active transportation infrastructure (incentives for road diet projects would be fantastic).

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on the MaineDOT Family of Plans.

MaineDOT is working with our consultant team to gather information and assess existing policies and programs. We will consider your suggestions when we develop strategies and implementation recommendations.

Nathan Howard Director, Rail Transportation MaineDOT, Office of Freight and Passenger Services (207) 624-3042

Public Comment 164  
Date: 03/10/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: FYI interested in better biking and pedestrian experience Maine-wide. Also transportation planning that moves beyond fossil single person cars.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

Please continue to check MaineDOT's web page for updates and public involvement opportunities on this plan for updates related to active transportation including biking and walking.

Public Comment 165  
Date: 03/10/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Rural villages getting sidewalks

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response: Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan. MaineDOT has a new series of programs related to village improvements in the Village Partnership Initiative Program discussed under Community Based Initiatives on www.mainedot.gov.

Public Comment 171  
Date: 03/10/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Will tradespeople be able to carry their tools and equipment aboard these trains? If so, I’m all aboard!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thanks you for your comment on the MaineDOT Family of Plans.

Each passenger may carry on two suitcases (up to 50lbs) and two personal items (up to 25lbs) onboard the Amtrak Downeaster. Please click here to view Amtrak's Baggage Policies: <https://www.amtrak.com/baggage-policy>

Nathan Howard Director, Rail Transportation MaineDOT, Office of Freight and Passenger Services (207) 624-3042

Public Comment 173  
Date: 03/10/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Will the Active Transportation Plan include specific ways MaineDOT plans to invest in engineering, education, emergency services, and enforcement safety strategies to reduce vehicle speeds in areas where people walk and bike, reducing the probability and severity of crashes for people who walk and bike?

Public Comment 174  
Date: 03/10/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: 1) MDOT policies need to consider bike/ped facilities as they are considered for vehicles. So when a road project moves forward, funding for bike/ped infrastructure is not the responsibility of local towns, but are part of the overall MDOT plan. Example, if a road redo is planned, incorporate bike/ped infrastructure into the plan. 2) Another MDOT policy issue: Incremental implementation of bike/ped infrastructure is more affordable than a complete design. Some MDOT policies, like not allowing crosswalks/sidewalks to be constructed unless they connect to other bike/ped infrastructure creates a large financial hurdle. For example, a local school was built which incorporated a ped sidewalk leading out to a major artery road. MDOT did not allow the sidewalk to be built because the major artery had not sidewalk. When we eventually construct the sidewalk along the road, there will be no sidewalk leading into the school. Another example, a sidewalk cannot be built until a crossing system exists at an intersection. Coordinating these two projects can be a deal killer. 3) Another MDOT policy - when speed limit surveys are done, often in hopes of reducing speeds where ped/bikes are present, if the avg speed limit observed is above the posted speed limit, MDOT will raise the posted speed limit. This is a bad policy and should be changed to be decided within the context of road usage - both bike/ped and vehicular. 4) Another policy suggestion - implement Complete Streets when building new/redoing roads, not just consider vehicle needs.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on the Active Transportation Plan.

MaineDOT is working with our consultant team to gather information and assess existing policies and programs.  We will consider your suggestions when we develop strategies and implementation recommendations.

Public Comment 175  
Date: 03/10/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: 1) MDOT policies need to consider bike/ped facilities as they are considered for vehicles. So when a road project moves forward, funding for bike/ped infrastructure is not the responsibility of local towns, but are part of the overall MDOT plan. Example, if a road redo is planned, incorporate bike/ped infrastructure into the plan. 2) Another MDOT policy issue: Incremental implementation of bike/ped infrastructure is more affordable than a complete design. Some MDOT policies, like not allowing crosswalks/sidewalks to be constructed unless they connect to other bike/ped infrastructure creates a large financial hurdle. For example, a local school was built which incorporated a ped sidewalk leading out to a major artery road. MDOT did not allow the sidewalk to be built because the major artery had not sidewalk. When we eventually construct the sidewalk along the road, there will be no sidewalk leading into the school. Another example, a sidewalk cannot be built until a crossing system exists at an intersection. Coordinating these two projects can be a deal killer. 3) Another MDOT policy - when speed limit surveys are done, often in hopes of reducing speeds where ped/bikes are present, if the avg speed limit observed is above the posted speed limit, MDOT will raise the posted speed limit. This is a bad policy and should be changed to be decided within the context of road usage - both bike/ped and vehicular. 4) Another policy suggestion - implement Complete Streets when building new/redoing roads, not just consider vehicle needs.

Public Comment 177  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: How can we make roads safer for cyclists. What will it take to make wider, cleaner shoulders on the road so Cyclists have a chance.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

As part of this plan's development, we are reviewing crash history, holding at least four public meetings, stakeholder discussions and at least one survey for input on safety and other active transportation concerns.  The Active Transportation Plan will also evaluate existing policies and programs to identify ways to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Please tell me you are not saying that a cyclist has to die before Maine DOT will make change to keep cycling safe.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

I apologize if that was your take away from my earlier comment.  MaineDOT is continuously working to improve safety on a daily basis and as part of all transportation projects statewide.  However, the Active Transportation Plan referenced here is an opportunity at a policy level to take a step back and reevaluate all policies and programs with broad-based pubic and stakeholder input.

Public Comment 178  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: Plans for light rail in the future

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on the Rail Plan.

The Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) and MaineDOT are in the process of conducting an economic evaluation of commuter and passenger rail service that builds upon the Lewiston-Auburn Passenger Rail Service Plan. The passenger service plan may be found here: <https://www.nnepra.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Final_Phase_2_L-A_Report_with_Appendices.pdf.>

Light rail is not considered appropriate for the corridors being considered because it cannot operate on existing railroad track. As such, this mode was not advanced for inclusion in the development of the Alignments.

Nathan Howard Director, Rail Transportation MaineDOT, Office of Freight and Passenger Services (207) 624-3042

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 03/12/2022  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Morning Nathan, Thanks very much for responding. I believe we have talked previously one morning a few years ago with your boss, Bruce at DOT. When I mentioned light rail, I realize I was not technically accurate with that description . I speak more to exploring the possibilities of smaller units, updated Budd or tram style cars both battery and hydrogen propelled rather than the particulars of standard gauge. Units now entering production with both Siemens and Alstom are where I’m aiming and these could be sized in appropriate fashion on both the Lewiston line and a rebuilt Brunswick, Bangor route. I have read the Lewiston study and am looking forward to the findings of the upcoming propensity study regarding the Brunswick, Bangor line. I wrote an article, published in the KJ , Maine Compass section Dec 11 explaining my thoughts. I differ with some other rail people in that I see the lines utilized more as commuters with frequent, accessible use rather than being too absorbed by long haul at the moment. Those lines are no question currently wasted assets, but their ability to transform has enormous potential if sized appropriately. They are sitting right in front of us linking all these downtowns together. Way too much solid infrastructure to be given to the bikers. Given these new, greener technologies, I think the capitalization, utilization question should be revisited in the context of carbon footprint. There, that’s a mouthful. Happy to chat again anytime.

Public Comment 181  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: Passenger rail connection to Lewiston-Auburn

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on the MaineDOT Rail Plan.

The Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) and MaineDOT are in the process of conducting an economic evaluation of commuter and passenger rail service that builds upon the Lewiston-Auburn Passenger Rail Service Plan. The passenger service plan may be found here: <https://www.nnepra.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Final_Phase_2_L-A_Report_with_Appendices.pdf.>

Nathan Howard Director, Rail Transportation MaineDOT, Office of Freight and Passenger Services (207) 624-3042

Public Comment 184  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: "Transportation" infrastructure should INCLUDE bike/ped infrastructure as PART OF EACH project. NOT an afterthought. 1. With renovations of MDOT roadways, include and execute plans for safe bicycle and pedestrian passage alongside, with esplanade separating cars from the path. 2. When excavation is planned along a roadway, like installation of a sewer line, plan and execute a pathway on the same alignment. 3. Where schools are located along an MDOT roadway, incorporate a safe, esplanade-separated ped/bike path to the school and a safe ped/bike crossing or overpass at the school entrance. Determine if there is need for crossings elsewhere for walkers from school to nearby student destinations: playing fields, outdoor study or walking areas, subdivisions, downtown. 4. Buses, including inter-regional buses, should each have racks for carrying multiple bicycles (can help solve the "last mile" transportation inaccessibility problem.) 5. Build up a fleet of electric passenger vans and use them in a shared program for ferrying passengers from public transport (eg. bus or train depots) to common destinations. Vans are used in morning and late afternoon on predictable routes to ferry commuters between work nexus points and transportation hubs, also morning and afternoon school schedules to ferry students to/from school. During the day, once students are in school and workers at work, the vans shift destinations and routes to ferry shoppers from transportation hubs to shopping and medical districts, on predictable scheduled routes. 6. Create an incentive and cost-sharing program to encourage towns to construct safe bike/ped infrastructure along the roads and streets they are responsible for. 7. Educate towns about how they can fund bike/ped infrastructure improvements. 8. Advocate for a state-wide law forbidding utility companies from planting their utility poles in sidewalks! This should be patently illegal state-wide and generate significant fines, over $100/day. Fine income goes into bike/ped infrastructure funding. 9. Raise awareness of the dangers of unsecured loads, in particular long loads (like lumber) beyond a truck's bed, which when unsecured can shift diagonally and seriously endanger cyclists that the truck passes. That awareness should include ALL police/sheriff departments - ask them to watch for it and stop and ticket non-compliance. 10. Add to network of bike paths over disused rail beds. Can bike paths be built alongside rail lines that are in use? 11. How can MDOT help in creating bike/ped transportation corridors (pathways) along utility line ROWs? Esp. along cleared high-tension power lines' cleared swaths. In our area such a corridor would most directly connect middle school and high school, 2 miles.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

MaineDOT is currently evaluating different policies and programs while gathering feedback from the public and different active transportation stakeholders.  We will revisit your suggestions as we prepare the Active Transportation Plan with specific policy recommendations.

Public Comment 187  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Is there a comprehensive plan for funding improvements of pedestrian/cyclist safety in sub/urban areas? Examples: Woodfords Corner, Morrils Corner, intersections around the Maine Mall

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

Most of the planning for the locations/ projects you referenced in Portland and South Portland is lead by the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) or PACTs for the greater Portland area.  Their processes and programs are discussed at <https://www.gpcog.org/155/Transportation.>  If you have additional questions or this information is not useful, please feel to reach out to me directly at martin.rooney@maine.gov or at 624-3317.

Martin Rooney

Public Comment 191  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: lack of paved shoulders

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response: Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan. We will certainly consider paved shoulder needs and related policies as we develop the plan.

Public Comment 193  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment: I was involved with a Committee to bring Rail passenger trains from Portland to LA.It failed because of lack of funding.Now with nearly 5 dollar a gallon for gasoline its time to act.Too bad it was not implemented .

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on the Maine State Rail Plan.

The Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) and MaineDOT are in the process of conducting an economic evaluation of commuter and passenger rail service that builds upon the Lewiston-Auburn Passenger Rail Service Plan. The passenger service plan may be found here: <https://www.nnepra.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Final_Phase_2_L-A_Report_with_Appendices.pdf.>

Nathan Howard Director, Rail Transportation MaineDOT, Office of Freight and Passenger Services (207) 624-3042

Public Comment 196  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: We know that due to constrained finances, MaineDOT must focus on bridges and LCP, with rehab/reconstruction coming next. What is the outlook for rehab and reconstruction on those roads that are only scheduled for LCP? Do you see the percentage within your work plan increasing, decreasing, staying the same? Also, I am excited about your renewed focus on villages. The work you and Sargent did in Hallowell, where I live, was transformative and we are grateful you were able to do it. Thank you.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/17/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response: Thank you for your comments. In response to your question regarding investments in our roads and bridges, we are also updating our Roads Report and Keeping Our Bridges Safe reports this year, in addition to our Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP) concurrent with our Family of Plans update. We anticipate that we will have a better understanding of those priorities and investments later this year as these plans are developed.

Public Comment 197  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Is there a list of all the Bike/Ped Committees or Active Community Teams that are currently active in Maine?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on the Active Transportation Plan.

Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, MaineDOT would convene the Maine Bicycle and Pedestrian Council, a statewide group that met 1-4 times annually to discuss bicycle and pedestrian issues. MaineDOT also facilitates a Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Education Workgroup that meets at least annually to discuss bikeped safety issues and programming. Beyond these two statewide working groups, numerous communities also maintain committees with a local or regional focus. Unfortunately, the existence of these groups tend to be dynamic (new groups evolve and other groups fade away) and MaineDOT has not had a system or process for maintaining a list of active committees. We are also familiar with numerous Age-Friendly and Active Community Teams throughout the state, but again MaineDOT does not maintain a listing of which communities are participating in which programs.

Public Comment 199  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: It seems to me that PAVED SHOULDERS on our roadways have multiple benefits 1) safety for cars and trucks who may get stuck in crumbling or soft shoulders causing accidents, 2) safety for pedestrians and bicyclists to provide a buffer for safe non-vehicular transportation when there are no other options, 3) cost savings in the long run to prevent crumbling road edges that need frequent repair/repaving. I know that communities on the Pemaquid Peninsula have been calling on this type of upgrade for years, yet the cost seems prohibitive. But in the long run, isn't it worth the investment? Can the state use some infrastructure funds to make these much needed improvements?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response: Thank you for your comment on the Active Transportation Plan. This plan will certainly evaluate existing policies related to shoulder paving.

Public Comment 200  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: continuity of level of service for active transportation between communities

Public Comment 205  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: With the transportation sector being one of the biggest drivers of greenhouse gas emissions, what is the Maine DOT's plan to move more people away from fossil fuel consumption as quickly as possible and what is the plan to make active transportation a more desirable mode especially for short trips within our cities?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

MaineDOT understands the benefits of active transportation and other modal choices on green house gas omissions.  These benefits will be factors as we develop the Active Transportation Plan this year.

You may wish to also visit Maine's Climate Council which discusses transportation in relation to climate change including specific strategies at www.climatecouncil.maine.gov/.

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Active Transportation has health benefits to those who choose to use it but making it a desirable mode that people will choose has so much to do with how safe people feel on our streets when cycling or walking. Maine DOT should commit to invest equitably in safer and complete streets for all modes of transportation. I will explore the Climate Council link. Thanks

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response:

Thank you for your thoughtful comments.

Martin Rooney

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Mr. Rooney, I explored the Climate Council website and found the Maine Won't Wait plan. There is a photo of a bicyclist on page 39 of the plan but not a single mention of how the state plans to invest in cycling and pedestrian infrastructure to make active transportation a more desirable mode to help reduce vehicle miles travelled. It would appear that they don't consider active transportation worthy of any investment which is very disappointing in a state with a lot of good progressive thinking. Maybe I'm missing something or another source of information. Would be happy to be kept abreast of Maine DOTs planning going forward. Thanks, Patrick.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/16/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response:

Thank you Patrick,

Please continue to periodically check the study website for updates and materials.  Please let me know if you have specific questions or comments and I will do my best to answer or put you in touch with someone who can.

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 03/17/2022  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Will do Martin but let me rephrase this then with a specific question... How much money will the Maine DOT be including in its budget to fund the construction of on street bike lanes and off road trails to encourage active transportation over the next 5 to 10 years?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/17/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response:

Thank your for your continued input.  MaineDOT's current Work Plan available on [www.mainedot.gov](http://www.mainedot.gov) includes more than $38 million for active transportation including $11.3 million in funding for 25 stand-alone active transportation projects in 18 different communities across Maine.  We anticipate that all funding allocation processes and investment decisions will be reevaluated during the development of the Active Transportation Plan to support investment decisions over the next 5 to 10 years.  We should be better prepared to answer your question once this plan is complete but I wanted to provide you an indication of the types of investments and amounts currently being made.

Public Comment 206  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment:

Public Comment 207  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: The Maine Rail Transit Coalition (MRTC) is an advocacy group engaged for the purpose of expanding passenger rail services as per the 1995 Maine State "Passenger Rail Service Act.", that established the Maine State rail authority NNEPRA “… to take all actions that are reasonably necessary to initiate, establish or reinitiate regularly scheduled passenger rail service between points within this State and points within and outside this State.” Our belief is that it is critical that the State of Maine preserve, and invest in restoration of the state-owned railroad infrastructure. The concept that these valuable transportation corridors would be converted to recreational trail at a time of Climate crisis and rising gasoline costs is incomprehensible and must not be a state transportation policy. Active Transportation in Maine has a lot of trails and outdoors without risking the loss of these railroads

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Hello again Tony

Thank you for your comment on the Active Transportation Plan. MaineDOT is working with our consultant team to gather information and assess existing policies and programs. We will consider your suggestions when we develop strategies and implementation recommendations.

As you are aware, the process for reviewing interim non-rail recreational or nonrecreational transportation use along inactive, state-owned rail lines was recently established in Maine Statute: <https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/23/title23sec75.html.>

Nathan Howard Director, Rail Transportation MaineDOT, Office of Freight and Passenger Services (207) 624-3042

Public Comment 208  
Date: 03/11/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I have repeatedly observed utility poles replaced in the middle of sidewalks during an MDOT project. There don't seem to be any checks and balances in the design/construction process that holds utility companies to a higher standard of practice/awareness for pedestrian accommodation. Replacing (or placing) utility poles in the middle of a sidewalk impedes strollers and wheelchairs not to mention winter clearing of the sidewalk of snow by mechanical means. 11 towns collaborated on pushing forward a request to the PUC to improve/remedy this issue. Testimony by utilities said they were doing the best they could. This is not sufficient. MDOT has an opportunity to put into their engineering plans proper placement of utility poles. Please make this a policy and create some sort of checks/penalties to assure the utility companies comply.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response: Thank you for this and your earlier comments on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

Public Comment 213  
Date: 03/12/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan  
Comment: Any plans on reviving the public trolley / rail that used to run through Portland?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

﻿I am not aware of any plans to revive the public trolley system in Portland.

Nathan Howard Director, Rail Transportation MaineDOT, Office of Freight and Passenger Services (207) 624-3042

Public Comment 215  
Date: 03/12/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Bicycle Trail plans and updates on timelines

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

MaineDOT's Work Plan available on [www.mainedot.gov](http://www.mainedot.gov) lists all existing funded transportation projects.  If you have specific project funding or schedule questions, please let us know and we will do our best to provide a status update.

Public Comment 219  
Date: 03/12/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: What are ME plans to lengthen and connect multi use trails, along with building on road protected or buffered bike lanes for new road construction or major repaying efforts on existing roads. How does fit with reducing pedestrian and cyclist injuries and fatalities.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/23/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

As part of this plan, MaineDOT is re-evaluating relevant policies including how multi-use trails are funded and Complete Streets, which ensures multi-modal considerations as part of the scope of work for highway and other transportation projects.  This plan is also evaluating bicycle and pedestrian safety and efforts to improve safety both through education and outreach and as part of future projects.

Public Comment 223  
Date: 03/13/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: no

Public Comment 225  
Date: 03/13/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: Are the rail trails throughout the state still considered rights of way? Is it realistic to think they could really be used again given the public outcry that would come from atv and snowmobile users?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on the Maine State Rail Plan.

Rail Trails, like the Downeast Sunrise Trail, are preserved for future rail use under State Railroad Preservation and Assistance Act: <https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/23/title23ch615sec0.html>.

These interim non-trail uses are allowed by agreement-only and do not constitute a public Right-of-Way.

Nathan Howard Director, Rail Transportation MaineDOT, Office of Freight and Passenger Services (207) 624-3042

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Thanks. I'm more concerned about the odds of it actually happening since I'm sure reclaiming them would be immensely unpopular and no one in an elected office would dare to put there name on something that would do it.

Public Comment 243  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: yes, it is time the speed was reduced in east Winthrop on 202 from 55 to 45 from East Winthrop east to Manchester Me. Then a bike lane could be established, East Winthrop to Augusta. Also it would be great to have a way for people North of 202 to be able to cross the street to the beach South of 202, and the people South be able to cross North to go to the Post office. Slowing things down would make these things possible. And Rail to Augusta or Winthrop would be wonderful!!

Public Comment 246  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: What are the specific locations where native indigenous plants have been restored and also where invasive plants are being and have been removed? Thank you http://rightofway.erc.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Roadside-Vegetation-Bumblebee-Butterfly-Final-Report-8\_2018.pdf https://rightofway.erc.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/MaineNativePlantsForRoadsideRestortation\_sm.pdf

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/10/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Cindy,

I apologize for the long-delayed response! We did receive this during the initial public comment period, but the response got lost in the mix.

I don't have a list of specific locations where MaineDOT has planted native species. MaineDOT is required to use native species as a part of any project that we do with the Army Corps of Engineers, which means anything that impacts the waters of the United States. In addition to this, MaineDOT uses a blend of native grasses when we plant along our highway right-of-way. Grass planting makes up most of the planting that MaineDOT does along the highway system. We have also started to plant some native pollinators along some parts of our system. All of this is in addition to our various environmental efforts, which you can find more about here: <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/env/>

Thank you for your question, and I apologize again for the late response.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 248  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: When can we expect to see actual usable bike/pedestrian pathways in Southern Maine?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/17/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

The Active Transportation Plan will revisit policies associated with active transportation planning and programming decisions for the future.  Information regarding existing trails and projects is available at [www.mainedot.gov.](http://www.mainedot.gov.)

Public Comment 250  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan  
Comment: Improving rail service from Brunswick up the coast Local public transportation for elderly, youth & unable to drive individuals.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/25/2022  
Response By: Ryan N  
Response: Thank you for your comments. They will be considered as we develop our Statewide Strategic Transit Plan and Rail Plan.

Public Comment 251  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan  
Comment: I am interested to see what transportation options can be provided for those with various disabilities, e.g. blindness, wheelchairs, poor stamina, age, language barriers, etc.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/25/2022  
Response By: Ryan N  
Response: Thank you for your comments. Improving transit service and access for individuals with disabilities will be considered as we developed the Statewide Strategic Transit Plan.

Public Comment 252  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment:

MaineDOT Response  
Date:   
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response:

I'd like see if a free bus system is feasible in the Portland/Lewiston/Bangor areas. I used to work for Missoula In Motion in Missoula Montana and we recently completed our LRTP. The cities are very similar. I think this plan should focus on moving people, rather than moving cars. Improve walkability, improve bikability, increase no idling education, increase open street celebrations, increase transportation equity (seniors, disabled). Consider a bike share in Maine's larger cities, create mobility hubs in Portland/Lewiston/Bangor areas. Introduce a community carshare program. Decisions regarding the use of public streets and sidewalks prioritize public transit, pedestrians, and people on bicycles. Emphasis on complete streets. Bring more outreach and awareness and celebration to active, sustainable transportation such as a rewards program. I think offering free transit in Portland would be a game changer. Changing the narrative around active, sustainable transportation.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/17/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan. We will be sure to review the LRTP for Missoula, Montana for information and ideas that could add and improve our planning process in Maine.

Public Comment 255  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: How does the state p[lan to expand help to local communities to increase public transportation?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/17/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response: Thank you for your question. That particular topic is going to be explored more comprehensively in our Statewide Strategic Transit Plan, and subsequently pulled into a more comprehensive discussion in the Long-Range Transportation Plan.

Public Comment 256  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment: I am interested in two Transportation modes that I think could help the people of Maine at this point: 1) a regular bus route from one end of Route 1 to the other, at the very least Kittery to Ellsworth, or all the way to Calais, with more frequent buses serving the more populated sections, ad 2) a state regulated, certifies, insured system of private (?) "jitneys", that would run regularinland routes and pick people up in the rural areas, and employ people who had cars.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 04/05/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response: Thank you for your comments.

Public Comment 258  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Bus service for Bartlett Circle, Yarmouth residents

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/17/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response: Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan. We will also share it with staff working on updating the Transit Plan as well.

Public Comment 259  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Expansion of Greater Portland area bike paths, rail trails and connectivity to other regional rail systems. Making roads safer for bicyclists.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/17/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

MaineDOT works closely with the City of Portland and the federal designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the great Portland region or PACTs in making transportation planning decisions within PACTs.  More information on PACTs planning and programming is available at www.pactsplan.org.

Public Comment 263  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: commuting by bike is becoming much more viable with ebikes. What plans are there for dedicated bike paths?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/17/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

As part of the development of this plan, MaineDOT is evaluating all existing plans and policies which are available at [https://www.maine.gov/mdot/bikeped/bikepedimprove/](https://www.maine.gov/mdot/bikeped/bikepedimprove/.) should you have specific questions or policy recommendations.  Any funded dedicated bike paths are listed in MaineDOT's Work Plan at [www.mainedot.gov.](http://www.mainedot.gov.)  However, if you have specific questions about a certain location, please let us know and we will provide you any additional information regarding any projects under development.

Public Comment 266  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment: Here is a suggestion: I live in New Harbor -- one of the villages of Bristol. Bristol is also comprised of Bristol Mills, Chamberlain, Round Pond, and Pemaquid. Damariscotta is our "service" town. Damariscotta is also the service town for the South Bristol and Walpole communities, among others. It would seem to make sense if there were a circulating shuttle bus (or two, in opposite directions) that made regular loops through these communities, connecting them to Damariscotta via state routes 129, 130, 32, and Biscay Rd. These buses would be electric, charged up overnight. They could be used for commuting to work, shopping, social events, etc. Coming out of the pandemic, folks might find them attractive and useful. Run a survey of residents to get a sense of interest. There must be other communities surrounding a service town for which a system similar to this would work well -- getting people out of their cars, avoiding fossil fuels, less pollution, decreased automobile wear-and-tear , etc.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 04/05/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response: Thank you for your comments.

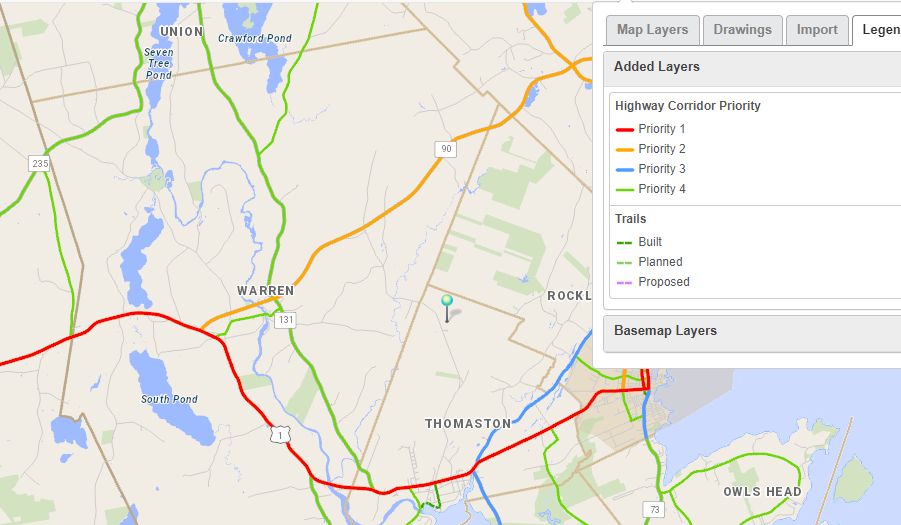
Public Comment 268  
Date: 03/14/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I wanted to learn about plans to widen shoulders of narrow roads in rural maine to allow for safer biking and walking. I live on route 131 in Warren and it has no shoulder on either side despite a 45 mph speed limit and a lot of traffic, including bicyclists. What would it take to widen the shoulders or add a bike lane?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/17/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

I wanted to learn about plans to widen shoulders of narrow roads in rural maine to allow for safer biking and walking. I live on route 131 in Warren and it has no shoulder on either side despite a 45 mph speed limit and a lot of traffic, including bicyclists. What would it take to widen the shoulders or add a bike lane?

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

While the plan is more policy based and will not list location specific projects, it is evaluating criteria for MaineDOT to use when adding shoulders on Maine Highway Corridor Priority 3 and 4's which includes Route 131 in Warren.



Public Comment 270  
Date: 03/15/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: THIS IS A WONDERFUL MOVE!! Concerns and ??: Easy access to clean energy bus and train service. Will it cater to workers and shoppers schedules? Will seniors be considered for medical visits needs. Will businesses be supporting the financial needs of this service? Low income availability to these services? Reasonable costs and schedules? Thank you!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/16/2022  
Response By: Scott R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

I hope you had the opportunity via the public meeting or the project websites to learn about interrelated planning efforts underway at MaineDOT including the Long-Range Transportation Plan, Transit Plan, Rail Plan and Active Transportation Plan.  We hope to coordinate planning efforts to the best extent practicable in order to meet MaineDOT's transportation system users.

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 03/16/2022  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: I was able to join 1 breakout session. Well attended and responsive to our questions. Seems like there is much work ahead to make this a reality. ONE STEP AT A TIME!!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/17/2022  
Response By: Scott R  
Response:

Thank you Roger,

Glad you were able to attend.  We certainly received some amazing and substantive input which is what we're looking for.  We have at least three more meetings similar to the one on Tuesday if you are available and interested.  Please continue to monitor the study website for updates.  Also, please do not hesitate to post any additional comments or questions here or contact me directly at martin.rooney@maine.gov or at 624 3317.

Martin Rooney

Public Comment 271  
Date: 03/15/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Will this mtg. e interactive in any way?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/16/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Hi Roger,

Sorry for not responding to your comment sooner.  I hope you had the chance to interact and ask questions during last evening's public meeting.  If you have any additional questions or comments, please let us know.

Public Comment 274  
Date: 03/15/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan  
Comment: Need for 'complete streets' in residential and urban areas: to produce traffic calming and avoid splitting communities. There should never be limited access throughways in residential and urban areas. All such roads should be a top priority to convert to boulevards or other types of complete streets with at-grade intersecting streets to re-knit-together previously severed comminities.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/25/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response:

Thank you for your comments.  We'll be considering complete streets in the Family of Plans, particularly in the Statewide Active Transportation Plan.  You may also be interested in additional information on MaineDOT's Complete Streets Policy, available here:  https://www.maine.gov/mdot/completestreets/

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 03/28/2022  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Two other concerns: 1. There is no excuse for tower lights on the Turnpike, interststes or any other road. They are an insult, obscuring the night sky obliterating good motorist visibility with their shadowless fog of illumination and the LED fixtures are too bright with short-wave blue-white light 3000K or higher. More recent LED fixtures use 2200K to 2700K, gentler longer wave lengths by which the human eye actually sees better. Instead of fewer-higher fixtures with tower lights (with more energy cost using higher lumens [foot-candles]), use lower-more fixtures, (25 feet or less in heighth) with lesser energy cost using lower lumerns foot-candles. 2. By trying to build its way out of rushhour traffic, MDOT is simply engaging in a never ending arms race with traffic. The more lanes that are added to limited access arterials the more vmt is induced, mostly by single-occupant commuter vehicles. And, wide arterials in residential and urban areas (as we have already discussed) devide and destroy communities. Rather, design for the annual average traffic and use other modes of transporttion for the daily rush hours: bus, rail, bicycle, walking. Soon, we will also have eledctric aerial commuter vehicles too.

Public Comment 275  
Date: 03/15/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I'm most interested in having all forms of transportation be safer. Reducing speeds is an obvious solution especially when there aren't separate corridors for different modes. I have seen many roads "improved" for truck and car traffic without any thought given to bicycles and pedestrians. When lanes are widened to allow for safer 2 way truck traffic that shouldn't eliminate the shoulders needed for safe pedestrian and bicycle use. Where corridors are shared, speed limits must be safe for all users.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/16/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

MaineDOT is currently evaluating different plans and programs to develop recommendations for improvement as we prepare the Active Transportation Plan.  These will include ways to improve safety for all transportation system users including but not limited to Complete Streets, speed limit and shoulder improvement policies.

Public Comment 276  
Date: 03/15/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment: How will these plans, particularly active transportation, prioritize accessibility? Will existing infrastructure such as sidewalks, parks, and shared use paths but updated to meet accessibility standards? Thank you!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 04/05/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response: One of our goals relates to a safe, accessible transportation system, and the Long-Range Transportation Plan and each of the modal plans will explore objectives and strategies to meet this goal, as well as other goals in the plans. These strategies may be in the form of policies, programs, and other investments. We are also concurrently updating our Complete Streets policy which will touch upon this as well.

Public Comment 280  
Date: 03/15/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Looking for suggestions in updating our town’s comprehensive plans with an eye toward the active transportation plan so that we can safely navigate our roads via bicycle and pedestrian.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/16/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

With regard to suggestions for your town's comprehensive plan, you may wish to review different programs and polices on MaineDOT's website particularly guidance for creating bike and walk friendly communities at  <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/bikeped/bikepedimprove/.>  Please reach out directly with any specific questions or suggestions.  Feel free to contact me at 207 624-3317 or at martin.rooney@maine.gov.

Martin Rooney

Public Comment 281  
Date: 03/15/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Topic - Creating more non-internal combustion engine (ICE) biking and hiking trails using abandoned railways or making new trails.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/17/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response: Thank you for your comment. We will take it into consideration during the development of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, as well as other plans in our Family of Plans.

Public Comment 286  
Date: 03/15/2022  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: We would like the state plan to address bicycle routes and safety, and the interface of bike routes and road building/repair. Also, please address the future of smart cars and mobility esp. for the elderly.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/16/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on the Active Transportation Plan.

MaineDOT is certainly looking at ways to improve bicycle safety in general and as part of road construction and maintenance.  In additional to the Active Transportation Plan, MaineDOT is updating our Long Range Transportation Plan which will likely be of interest to you related to transportation options for different users including elderly populations.  Additional information is on the project website or please let us know if you have specific comments.

Public Comment 287  
Date: 03/15/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Not sure what each plan covers so don’t know which one to sign up for? Interested in transit to travel locally but that is interconnected like in Europe to avoid using my car as much as possible. Especially locally into the city to attend events, avoid driving and parking. I’m a senior who would like to stay in my home and keep my life as it is. Maine used to have public transit as people had just one car. Time to get out of the dark ages. And use electric buses etc. Electric cars are not the main answer. Transit is terrible here which is why no one uses it. I use it in Europe but not here as it is so impossible to use, not reliable, not convenient, not accessible for people who don’t speak English, not easy to use find or navigate. Not interconnected. Works in the rest of the world. Just follow their example. No need to reinvent the wheel here. No mystery. Just do it.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/16/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response: Thank you for your comments, we will take them into consideration.

Public Comment 288  
Date: 03/15/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan  
Comment: very interested in how we start shifting away from auto use

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/25/2022  
Response By: Ryan N  
Response: Thank you for your comment. Improving our public transportation system to enable people to convert from personal vehicles is an area that will be addressed in the plan.

Public Comment 290  
Date: 03/15/2022  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: It's critical that the active transportation plan recognizes that it depends on safe road design, not just the inclusion of paths. Everyone trying to use a from of active transportation must traverse roads designed for cars as well as paths. 4 lane roads passing through dense economic &amp; residential areas make it challenging &amp; unsafe to get around, for motorists, cyclists &amp; pedestrians- it's deadly high speed chaos. Sections of road like the Exit 6 area in Portland, outer Congress Street in Portland &amp; the Roosevelt trail portion of 302 in North Windham are barriers for all active transportation users &amp; excessively dangerous even for motorists. Road diets need to be applied across all roads like these, with wide, protected bike lanes &amp; carefully designed intersections. If a road has businesses &amp; residences along it, it should be designed to discourage high speed driving, as people will cross the street, cars will need to make frequent stops &amp; cyclists need to be allowed safe access to the corridor.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/16/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

MaineDOT is currently in the process of evaluating existing programs and policies as part of the Active Transportation Plan.  These will include a number of ways we try to improve safety for all transportation system users, MaineDOT's Complete Street Policy, criteria for Road Diets and other concerns that you  mentioned.  Please continue to monitor the study website for updates including a draft plan toward the end of 2022 and please let us know if you have any additional comments or questions.

Public Comment 291  
Date: 03/15/2022  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I am emphatically in favor of more state funding to make things safer and easier for pedestrians and cyclists and to tie that in with more public transit and rail that is bike friendly, so that Mainers will not have to depend on an auto for transportation. This will lead to a healthier population and less dependence on the fossil fuels that are causing immense damage to the state of Maine.

Public Comment 294  
Date: 03/15/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I'm most interested in biking and walking plans and options.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/16/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan.

Please continue to follow updates on the project website for more information on active transportation policies and programs in Maine.  You may also find information regarding biking and walking at MaineDOT's webpage <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/bikeped/bikepedimprove/> and the Bicycle Coalition of Maine [www.bikemaine.org](http://www.bikemaine.org) useful.  Please do not hesitate to contact us further with any comments or specific questions.

Public Comment 295  
Date: 03/15/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment: Don't know enough about your efforts to ask an intelligent question at this point (Everything is a question!)

Public Comment 298  
Date: 03/15/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment: YES! while transitioning from gas-powered vehicles to EVS, there remains the issue of carbon emissions due to IDLING. What's being planned STATE-WIDE? Here in Kennebunk we have a no-idling policy, which is one of the best kept secrets :((( I think it is needed statewide, and I think too that it is an EZ roll-out: 1) Have all Drivers Ed Instruction include this as a topic of instruction and have each student ing a pledge of allegiance to it before "passing". 2) When drivers register their vehicle, make it mandatory for them to pledge allegiance to a No-IDLING ordinance.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/17/2022  
Response By: Scott R  
Response: Thank you for your input; we will consider it during the development of our Family of Plans.

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 03/17/2022  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Thank you, Jennifer. Any advice you could give me now to push this forward would be appreciated. Unnecessary idling is wasteful and damaging to so many on so many levels. ~ Andrea 914.980.3974

Public Comment 306  
Date: 03/16/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment:

(From March 15, 2022 Family of Plans public meeting, SATP breakout session, chat)

1. Regarding your attention to improving shoulders for safer bicycling, will you add to your priorities the route of the East Coast Greenway through the state, that hosts bicyclers from far and wide, & many out of state visitors.

2. Can you coordinate with transit vehicles so that ALL buses incorporate bike racks? This enables bikers to get back and forth to the transportation hub.

3. Is there any possibility you could collaborate with utilities to use their ROW's for active transportation trails?

4. It has been distressing to see major utility replacement work done along a main corridor (eg. sewer line) with NO coordination with MDOT to create a paved bike/ped path on top when finished. It seems to be up to the local advocates to be alert to DOT's plans early enough like 2 years in advance) to try to influence such plans. Ditto on Sunrise trail - very large sharp stones, hard to bike on and lots of flats!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/16/2022  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Anita,

Thank you for attending the Family of Plans public meeting last night. I do apologize that we were unable to get to your comments due to the number of questions from participants. I just wanted to confirm that we received your comments and they have been logged in the project record.

Regarding the HCP 3&4 shoulder assessment, we will be considering a variety of factors including connectivity to paths, proximity to destinations, and connecting existing active transportation corridors, such as the East Coast Greenway. As a part of our plan, we will also look at ways to better connect Active Transportation with transit, including bike racks. MaineDOT does sometimes collaborate with utilities to place trails in their ROW, but this is context-dependent. We are also looking at updating our Complete Streets policy to ensure that active transportation needs are considered at all times.

Public Comment 307  
Date: 03/16/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment:

1. Need speed limits for ATVs. Then enforcement becomes an issue.

2. Down East Sunrise Trail: As a bicyclist, I normally avoid weekends and bicycling on the trail during a drought. All the ATV riders I've encountered have given way and been courteous. It can get dusty.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/16/2022  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for attending the Family of Plans public meeting last night. I do apologize that we were unable to get to your comments due to the number of questions from participants. I just wanted to confirm that we received your comments and they have been logged in the project record.

MaineDOT is currently evaluating different plans and programs to develop recommendations for improvement as we prepare the Active Transportation Plan, including speed limit policies.

Public Comment 308  
Date: 03/16/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment:

(From March 15, 2022 Family of Plans public meeting, SATP breakout session, chat)

There are a lot of active rail lines in Maine that run along very dangerous roads. Is there any discussion or work being done to use these corridors to have a double use for bike/ped and rail? Beyond inactive railways, it seems these active rights of way are a good way to add to the bike/ped network in Maine, especially in rural areas without safe passageways to bike.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/16/2022  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for attending the Family of Plans public meeting last night. I do apologize that we were unable to get to your comments. I just wanted to confirm that we received your comments and they have been logged in the project record.

MaineDOT is currently evaluating different plans and programs to develop recommendations for improvement as we prepare the Active Transportation Plan. Our current focus with regards to rail trails is focused on the four inactive, state-owned rail corridors discussed during the meeting. MaineDOT is open to exploring the possibility of other rail-with-trail options, and we are currently supporting a feasibility study in Biddeford/Saco: <https://www.easterntrail.org/et-feas-study-publ-mtg-for-bidd-saco-march-8/>

Constructing trails along active railways is generally more complicated than along state-owned or inactive corridors, as in most cases the ROW is owned by private railroads who must approve of the construction of the trail.

Public Comment 310  
Date: 03/16/2022  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Please consider prioritizing the East Coast Greenway as a "spine" of a connected network of multi-use trails/active transportation system extending from Calais to Kittery. The East Coast Greenway Alliance has a GIS layer with identified segments and the project development status of each one. Prioritizing the ECG would allow Maine to have a clear vision for a connect network of active transportation facilities, and to more effectively direct investment into already-identified projects to bring the vision to fruition. Maine is the most popular state consistently in terms of visits by ECG users, and therefore investing in this route would encourage additional bicycle/eco tourism to the state, and in patricianly regions like Downeast (past Acadia) that can support economic development in small rural communities that need it the most, and spread out visitors that are currently overrunning Acadia National Park/MDI. Also, the Complete Streets Policy needs to be applied across the board for every single construction project, as well as paving project. In my experience, during every single project process the local communities and advocates have to beg for bike/ped facilities, and sometimes their requests are denied. This is not an effective way to build out an active transportation network. Also in terms of local cost share- I suggest MaineDOT considers not requiring communities to pay only for the bike/ped portion of large road or bridge projects. If the communities aren't required to pay for the vehicular aspects of projects, why would bike/ped be singled out and the burden put on municipalities if they want to provide active transportation infrastructure to their residents and visitors? Also MaineDOT should consider tiered local match requirements (as they do for the PPI program) based on communities ability to afford that match. Requiring all communities to pay 20% match, puts smaller and rural communities at a disadvantage. I also suggest MaineDOT consider creating a new large pot of funding to implement the Active Transportation Plan. Without dedicated funding (besides the very small Transportation Alternatives funding) the plan will sit on the shelf without being implemented. Plans are only as good as the funding that is available to make projects happen. On that note, I'm also aware that some communities struggle with effective Local Program Management. This often times leads to projects being dragged out, and increased costs over time due to construction inflation. I would suggest that MaineDOT considers a different scheme for project management for bike/ped projects to significantly increase project delivery to implement the Active Transportation Plan. I also strongly support the Plan's evaluation of the four unused rail corridors to be used on an interim basis for rail trails . Given that several of these rail corridors are many miles long, they will require dedicated funding to be able to design and construct them in any kind of timely manner.

Public Comment 311  
Date: 03/16/2022  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: Please consider the Maine Trails Coalition- Maine Rail Trail Plan 2020-2030; the plan shows what is possible in terms of a connect active transportation and rail network that maintains existing passenger and freight service. Also, please consider passenger rail on the SL&A line through Bethel that would continue onto Quebec. This line could also have increased freight opportunities for the forest products industry because they could transport logs as well as finished products on this line. Passenger rail to/from Quebec would be an opportunity for economic development, and to use the Bethel Rail station and platform that were built and never really utilized.

Public Comment 313  
Date: 03/20/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Is the Department of Transportation taking any steps to incorporate development into these plans? Specifically, is the DOT insisting on transit oriented development for certain investments in transportation to maximize efficiency? If not, why isn't this a priority?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/25/2022  
Response By: Ryan N  
Response: Thank you for your comment. We will be considering the connection between development patterns and transportation in the Statewide Strategic Transit Plan and the other modal plans in the MaineDOT Family of Plans.

Public Comment 314  
Date: 03/23/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Many of the recent road projects, seem to have shifted to prioritize cars. I have seen many roads where the main section of road has been paved, but the shoulders have only been sealed. (Route 7 Newport for example). This is an issue for active transportation, as the shoulders typically are still substandard for cycling, and cause cyclists to move closer to traffic. Roads that have better shoulders are better all around for cyclists. There are not many options for off highway cycling that are reasonable, and choices like the selecting paving and sealing are not making the shared roads any safer.

Public Comment 315  
Date: 03/23/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment:

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my proposals. If you have any questions, you can contact me.

Proposal # 1 I would like to propose that the Maine DOT put a paved shoulder on roads leading from the Whistle stop trail in Farmington to the Madison Branch Rail Trail in Anson. A distance of approximately 19 miles. Starting on Route 43 in Farmington and continuing on Route 43 past Clearwater Lake through Industry, Starks to Anson and then a short way on Route 201A where it intersects the Madison Branch Rail Trail in Anson . This would open up a vast area for cyclists, hikers, campers and others from the towns along the Whistle Stops Rail Trail from as far South as Livermore Fall to as far North as Greenville. Route 43 passes by Clearwater Lake, through scenic wooded areas and open picturesque open farmland. Currently there is no paved shoulder along Route 43. This would give access to approximately 20,000 people who live along the Whistle Stop trail as well as giving access to the Farmington, Wilton, Livermore falls areas to people who live along the Madison Branch Rail Trail.

Proposal # 2 The Weld area with Web Lake, Mount Blue State Park, Dummers Beach and Tumble-Down Mountain has long been a recreational area and destination spot in Maine. I would like to propose that a paved shoulder be provided on Route 156 from the Whistle Stop Rail Trail in Wilton to the intersection of Route 142 in Weld and then continue North on Route 142 to Route 4. Approximately 25 miles. This would give access to all the areas mentioned from the Whistle stop Rail Trail and also open up the Weld area to the Rangely area and Rangely State Park via Rt. 4 which already has a paved shoulder. I have cycled much of this area and other rural areas in the State. Both these route are currently too narrow and unsafe because of narrow roads and the lack of shoulders. These two routes would open a vast area of central and Western Maine to hikers, pedestrians, campers and cyclists. Thank you.

Public Comment 316  
Date: 03/24/2022  
Level of Support: Not In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Instead of building a $250 million highway to Gorham. Invest that money in a better Bus Network. Correct me if I'm wrong but $250 million could double the bus fleet, double the frequency up to 10 to 15 mins on most routes. Probably create 3 or 4 new routes. Plus bus stop upgrades, a new transit hub, and traffic signaling priority for busses. It would be the best way of using the money in my eyes plus better for the environment, and less traffic when more people replacing car trips for transit.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 03/25/2022  
Response By: Martin R  
Response: Thank you very much for your comment on the Active Transportation Plan.

Public Comment 317  
Date: 04/04/2022  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: Imagine the benefit to UMaine, Colby, Waterfront Concerts, MCI, and Central Maine in general by extending rail service to Waterville and Bangor.

Public Comment 318  
Date: 04/06/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: POLICY SUGGESTION: Rt.4 Auburn to Turner; Rt.1 in Scarborough or Rt. 3 Ellsworth to MDI are 'poster children' of unsmart growth. The incremental development has resulted in lack of pedestrian connectivity -- getting from the car dealership to the Dollar Store is very difficult. Sidewalks aside how about when a curb cut is approved, there is an incentive to developers to provide a walking connection between properties -- if only a couple of boards across the drainage ditch. I think Jim Tasse has alluded to such MDOT policy improvements. Residential or commercial 'cul-de-sacs' might be OK for cars but not for people on foot.

Public Comment 319  
Date: 04/09/2022  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics:   
Comment: I just want to read the Plan

Public Comment 320  
Date: 04/15/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I'm not sure how any of this helps the elderly in rural areas.

Public Comment 321  
Date: 04/19/2022  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics:   
Comment:

I am so glad there is a plan. My niece designs and implements light rail systems for Small cities, like Charlotte, N.C. I believe both Portland and Augusta are ripe for one! Also I lost my only daughter in a car accident. She was a pedestrian but a car mowed her down in a crosswalk. It was many years ago, but brings home the consequences of congestion coupled with poor planning. We need a comprehensive plan. I a a retired farmer ( and historic developer) . What May I do to aid you in this process? I have sold two homes in Maine due to UNWALKABLE and UNBIKEABLE neighborhoods. Thank you for wanting to make a plan to make our towns more green, and more habitable!

“Injustice anywhere, is a threat to justice everywhere”

Public Comment 322  
Date: 04/21/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Are you able to construct a bypass though or around Ellsworth? Driving though all the traffic lights takes a lot of time and uses a lot of gas and creates more congestion if I don't need to stop at any stores. A Bypass though SW harbor would be helpful if people on Freeman Ridge road would extend that road to 102.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 04/28/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response: Thank you for your comment. It will be taken into consideration.

Public Comment 323  
Date: 04/26/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: what are the incorporation of cycle plans for the lrtp?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 05/10/2022  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Dear James,

We are developing the Statewide Active Transportation Plan and the Long-Rang Transportation Plan in close coordination. While the LRTP will focus more on statewide and cross-cutting needs, it will incorporate high-level elements of the Active Transportation Plan as they relate to the statewide system. The Active Transportation Plan will then focus on more specific goals, strategies, and needs for active transportation, including bicycling.

Thank you

Ian Gorecki

MaineDOT

Public Comment 324  
Date: 04/28/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment:

Hello, Ian, I filled out the DOT survey and sent it in. My husband and I have lived on Naskeag Point Road in Brooklin ME for 20 years. The road is narrow, hilly, curvy and runs about 4-5 miles from Brooklin General Store in the center of town to Naskeag Point, where fishing boats are harbored and people gather to enjoy the small beach, the views, and the water. Naskeag Road is the only road to this Point. It has no car or bike lanes marked and it has no sidewalks. Pedestrians walk in the road (often 2 abreast, or with a dog or two on leash) and must avoid vehicles by moving off the road to stand on a narrow (1-foot wide) shoulder of sand, which is frequently blocked by tree limbs, to avoid bikes and vehicles. And the vehicles. Since Naskeag Point is a "public" landing to this point, fishermen come daily from many towns, some towing boats, to pursue their livelihoods. They are not prone to follow the speed limits posted (40 MPH and under); many fly by walkers on the few straight sections at 50 mph or more. Many tourists are also lured down the road to launch kayaks, and are also not prone to slow down. Last summer, a biker and a pedestrian had stopped on the side of the road to talk together and were hit by a driver, causing bruises to the pedestrian and a broken femur to the elderly bicyclist. Does the DOT have any role in educating small towns about safety requirements on such a road as I have just described? Or does the DOT provide installation of adequate safety requirements? Small towns like Brooklin (less than 800 year-round citizens) have troubles enough raising tax dollars to pay for our school and general road maintenance. Widening Naskeag Point Road to allow a proper shoulder for walkers would be a major project, although the town has the right of some measure of feet for expansion on both sides of the road. Thank you for your time , and we look forward to hearing from you.

Public Comment 325  
Date: 05/04/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment:

"Maine....the Way life should be." There may be truth in advertising, especially these days, but that is not the way it is on the Castine Road where cars and trucks race past the 45 mph speed limit as if it were a state highway rather than a secondary country road. The speed limit, set by the DOT, is based on a number of danger factors: driveways, shoulders, break-down areas, curves and hills, large rocks and trees close to the road. The speed limit is the law not a mere suggestion. When drivers apply for a Driver's License they are agreeing to abide by the rules of the road. A recent month- long study monitoring speed on the Castine Road revealed stunning statistics of drivers going well over 50, 60, and even 75 mph 66% of the time. One out of every 4 drivers is a disrespectful law breaker. Terrified residents must navigate a daily nightmare just to drive out of their driveways, get their mail, take a walk, or visit their neighbors. Forget about riding a bike! The safety of children and pets is a constant worry. One woman reported that her snowplow man will no longer plow her driveway because it is unsafe to back into the road. Americans have a love affair with cars and trucks fueled by the rise of propaganda from the auto industry which provides a dizzying number of car "choices" and touts such nonsense as "king of the road." Once pedestrians shared the streets, but now they remain huddled in their houses, frustrated, isolated, depressed and gaining weight from lack of exercise. Loving vehicles doesn't mean you're a good driver. Good drivers respect the law, are concerned about the safety of other drivers, pedestrians, and residents, especially the elderly, who struggle to share the road outside of cars. This is an appeal to everyone. Drive more slowly. Vehicles are deadly weapons that can maim and destroy lives. Roads are for people, not just cars. Obey the speed limits and make the Castine Road and all roads safe, and improve our...."life as it should be." We are all in this together.

MaineDOT Response  
Date:   
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

(sent from MaineDOT email account)

Good afternoon Heidi, Thank you for sharing this with me. I can certainly understand your concerns regarding speeding along Castine Road. Throughout the Statewide Active Transportation Plan public outreach process, driver speeds have been flagged repeatedly as a concern for walkers, bicyclists, and others in many Maine communities. I wanted to also confirm receipt of your completed survey, along with the supplemental documents that you provided. I am going to upload those into our survey results, which will be finalized in mid-May. As I promised when we spoke on the phone, I am also going to mail you a copy of our Long-Range Transportation Plan survey, which we are releasing today. I will be away from the office, but I plan to have that in the mail to you early next week (the deadline is May 31, so there should be plenty of time). Thank you again for all of your input as we work to develop these plans. Best regards,

Public Comment 326  
Date: 05/10/2022  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan  
Comment: I am happy to be part of this process.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 05/10/2022  
Response By: Scott R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment and your interest in the Family of Plans, including the Statewide Active Transportation Plan. Please note that our next public meeting will be held on June 7.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Policy Development Specialist, Bureau of Planning

MaineDOT

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 05/10/2022  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Thank you for your feedback, Ian. Don

Public Comment 327  
Date: 05/10/2022  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I look forward to learning more about the Active Transportation Plan. I have completed the Trek Across Maine for about 25 years.

Public Comment 328  
Date: 05/18/2022  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Aviation System Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: If we really care about our future, any plan to facilitate carbon intensive transportation (cars & planes in particular) should be reassessed. The effect of our carbon intensive lifestyle are already making the global south suffer, and turning some regions of the USofA into inhospitable areas (due to extreme weather event, crop failure, destruction of biodiversity). Trains should be front and center in the LRTP, especially to link major cities in New England (Portland, Bangor, Augusta, Boston, etc.) as well as places of interest (i.e. place with high tourist Value). The ultimate goal being to reduce pollution in these areas. Specific attention on on serving undeserved areas (especially these of low income community) in a way that is relevant to them. Operating in conjunction with the short range transportation in order create transportation hubs where people can leave their car or bikes and travel to various area (still focus on removing polluting vehicle from the roads, the air and the sea). Blanket ban on cruises (in case these pollution nightmare are considered "transportation").

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 05/19/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response: Thank you for your comment. It will be taken into consideration.

Public Comment 329  
Date: 05/24/2022  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: We absolutely need to develop better and more comprehensive rail service both passenger and freight

Public Comment 330  
Date: 05/25/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: We need affordable fossil fuels, not EVs. The vast majority of Maine is rural, plus EVs not do well in our cold winter environment.

Public Comment 331  
Date: 06/01/2022  
Level of Support: Less In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: In a relatively poor state with HIGH TAXES IN RELATION TO MOST STATES, MY CONCERN IS WHAT ARE THE ONGOING COSTS AND SPECIFIC BENEFITS.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 06/01/2022  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment. All of our upcoming plans are meant to help MaineDOT better identify both Maine's transportation needs and the most cost-effective ways to address them, in order to better achieve our mission of providing our customers with the safest and most reliable transportation system possible, given available resources.

You many be interested in viewing our Three-Year Work Plan page, which lays out MaineDOT's funding levels, funding sources, and how the Department plans to invest in our transportation system over the next three years: <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/projects/workplan/>

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki, MaineDOT

Public Comment 332  
Date: 07/12/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment:

What are the plans to aggressively build out the CCS DC Fast Charging stations for electric vehicles? And how quickly can this be done? They are badly needed all over the state, but especially in northern Maine.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 07/12/2022  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

I apologize for the delay in getting back to you regarding your question during the June 7 MaineDOT public meeting on our Family of Plans. Your question was recorded as a part of the official record, along with all the others in the Q&A, but I'm afraid our response to you was delayed.

You asked us "What are the plans to aggressively build out the CCS DC Fast Charging stations for electric vehicles? And how quickly can this be done? They are badly needed all over the state, but especially in northern Maine."

MaineDOT is certainly aware of the need to build out DC Fast Charging stations, including in northern Maine. While the Long-Range Transportation Plan will look at supporting EVs at a high level in Maine, a more detailed charger expansion program is being developed in the Maine Plan for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment (Maine PEVID). The PEVID will include key corridors, potential charger locations, and an implementation plan.

While the public comment period for that project had closed before our June meeting, you can find the on-demand public meeting and the draft PEVID as of May 2022 here:<https://my.mainedotpima.com/public/event-registration/search?project_id=15307&pe_guid=bac41e69-2769-406d-aa72-8896d3a733c8>

Thank you,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 333  
Date: 07/13/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment:

Where do ferries fit in the Transit plan? The geography of our state means the most direct route is often across water. Think of driving around Casco Bay vs taking a ferry through it.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 07/13/2022  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

I apologize for the delay in getting back to you regarding your question during the June 7 MaineDOT public meeting on our Family of Plans. Your question was recorded as a part of the official record, along with all the others in the Q&A, but I'm afraid our response to you was delayed.

You asked us, "Where do ferries fit in the Transit plan? The geography of our state means the most direct route is often across water. Think of driving around Casco Bay vs taking a ferry through it."

In short, the Statewide Strategic Transit Plan is principally focused on ground-based transit options for the state's urban and rural areas. We are looking at our ferry services as well, as they provide an important link in the transit network, but at a higher level. Where feasible and appropriate, MaineDOT may evaluate options for new or enhanced ferry service, if circumstances warrant.

Thank you,

Ian

Public Comment 334  
Date: 12/29/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: How do I access the draft of the "Active Transportation" Plan?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 12/29/2022  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response:

Good afternoon,

A draft of the Maine State Active Transportation Plan has not been posted for public comment to date. Once it (along with the other plans from our Family of Plans) has been posted, you will be notified.

Thanks,

Jenn

Public Comment 335  
Date: 12/31/2022  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Moments ago I returned from Brunswick to my home in Biddeford on I-295 and the Turnpike. I was VIRTUALLY THE ONLY ONE following the speed limit. Any transportation plan that hopes to increase travel safety must include a corresponding increase in police patrols and traffic law enforcement on the highways. This situation has gotten completely out of hand. It will already be difficult to engender compliance. The longer that is delayed, the more difficult it will become.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/03/2023  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response:

Good Morning Jim,

Thank you for your comment. The Department's updated Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) addresses the issue you mentioned and explores ways that MaineDOT, in conjunction with our partners, can work to improve safety on Maine's highways. The LRTP and several of our modal plans look at specific strategies (in addition to those in the SHSP), MaineDOT can implement to improve safety for all transportation users.

Jenn

Public Comment 336  
Date: 01/01/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Hello, Thks for info. Where are we at w/High Speed EV Chrg stations in Central and Northern ME? Roger

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/04/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment. An environmentally sustainable transportation system is one of the *Long-Range Transportation Plan*'s five key goals, with "position for an electric future" being one of the principal strategies for achieving this. While the LRTP does not go into detail about exactly where charging stations should be located, the *Maine Plan for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment* (*Maine PEVID*) goes into more detail about MaineDOT's plan to build out the charging network. The PEVID was approved by the Federal Highway Administration in September 2022, and implementation

You can find more details here: <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/climate/docs/pevid-2022.pdf> 

Public Comment 338  
Date: 01/05/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I do not want our railways turned into paved bike paths. We spent millions of tax payers dollars to save and restore these railways. The last thing we need in this era of severe climate change, is to lock us into more petroleum use. We need passenger rail restored immediately on all lines including Portland to Auburn/Augusta on the St Lawrence Atlantic and also the Lower road to Augusta, Waterville and Bangor. Electrified rail is the preference.

Public Comment 339  
Date: 01/06/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: WOW!! This short &amp; long-range planning for Maine transportation, jumpstarted by the national infrastructure boost, is heartening to read &amp; look forward to. In particular I love the focus on rail expansion &amp; Active Transport such as bicycle lane expansion. Most of all, I appreciate the transparency of sharing these goals &amp; foci with me, a member of the public. THANK YOU!!!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/06/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hi Sarah,

Thank you for your comment, we are excited to have these plans wrapping up and will look forward to implementation over the coming years. Both rail and Active Transportation will continue to be important in Maine's future, and transparency and public input are crucial to the success of these plans.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 340  
Date: 01/06/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Thank you for all the hard work in planning for Maine's future🙏👵🗽

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/06/2023  
Response By: Jennifer G  
Response:

Thank you, Arlene. We're excited about the opportunities that lie ahead for Maine's transportation system.

Jennifer

Public Comment 341  
Date: 01/06/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan  
Comment: Overall I'm very happy to read this plan-it's wonderful to see a DOT presenting comprehensive transportation solutions rather than just widening highways and inducing more demand for car travel! One thing in the Active Transportation Plan that I take issue with is equating "wider highway shoulders" with "safe bike infrastructure". As a commuting cyclist myself, I do not consider a wide shoulder on a highway to be "safe" at all. Traveling side by side with cars and trucks traveling at highway speeds is nerve-wracking, and a guaranteed recipe for disaster, sooner or later. All it takes is one distracted/drunk/tired driver swerving into the shoulder at 50mph to cause a terrible (and completely preventable) crash. I would love to see MaineDOT take its commitment to active transportation further and commit to not just widening shoulders, but doing it right the first time and providing protected bike paths alongside state highways. I live in Rockland, and if Thomaston, Rockport and Camden were connected via a protected bike route along Rt 1 it would be nothing short of a transportation revolution for the area. I was thrilled to see the Transit Plan mention the midcoast area from Rockland to Belfast as an area that would benefit from intercity transit service. I completely agree. The midcoast has so much going for it, and a reliance on personal automobiles for all interurban transit is one thing that's holding us back from being even better. If there was frequent and reliable bus service along Rt 1 from Thomaston>Belfast it would, again, be a revolution for residents as well as tourists and would significantly contribute to reducing car traffic in the area. I'd also like to chime in with my enthusiastic approval of all passenger rail upgrades/investments and my fervent desire that passenger rail returns to Rockland soon, ideally with 7 day a week service and at least 3 trips a day.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/10/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment. The Active Transportation Plan includes plans for a variety of active transportation infrastructure improvements, including widening highway shoulders along the proposed High-Priority Active Transportation (HPAT) corridors. These are meant to complement and not replace other facilities such as off-road trails or protected active transportation infrastructure=. Shoulder improvements along HPAT corridors will be focused on Highway Corridor Priority 3 & 4 roads with few-to-no existing active transportation facilities. These HCP 3 & 4 roads are generally more rural and carry lower traffic volumes than HCP 1 & 2 roads (such as Route 1). Given the extent of Maine's highway network, MaineDOT may not always have the resources or the right-of-way to construct fully separated facilities, especially along HCP 3 & 4 roads, but providing shoulders where there are none is an opportunity to increase safety along roads that currently provide minimal or no accommodations.

- Ian Gorecki

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 01/11/2023  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Hi Ian! Thanks very much for your response. I absolutely understand that it doesn't always make sense to build fully separate facilities, especially on a low-traffic 3 & 4 road, and that if that road has NOTHING, then a wider shoulder is an improvement. I stand by my previous statement that "wide shoulder" doesn't equal "safe", but I get it. In my specific area I do think an investment in a fully separate bike path along Rt 1 from Rockland to Rockport/Camden would be money well spent. In addition to making bike commuting between these 3 communities a pleasant and safe reality for residents (the 8 miles between Rockland, Camden and points in between would be a gorgeous bike commute, and with the availability of e-bikes a very easy one as well), it would also be a big step towards fully realizing the outdoor active tourism potential of our chunk of coastline. There is already at least one "active travel" company (Backroads) that runs bike trips around Rockland and Camden, and I imagine that a fully separate and bikeable Route 1 would be a boon to their business too, not to mention making the East Coast Greenway and US Bike Route 1 that much more safe. -Eddie

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/26/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Sorry for the late reply, our system is not great at highlighting when we get new responses to comments. I just wanted to thank you again for sharing your thoughts. We do appreciate your engagement and will keep this in mind as we finalize the plans.

Best regards,

Ian

Public Comment 342  
Date: 01/06/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: It's really hard to tell from the way the information is presented how and whether the balance of funding and commitment will be expanded past the single occupancy vehicle. Instead of asking "How would you distribute $1.00 towards active transportation?" I would ask "How would you distribute $1.00 among all forms of active transportation?" . The balance has been largely against the most most vulnerable and least polluting residents in this state; often adding lanes to increase highway speed when many people can't even walk from their homes without feeling in danger. Unless you signal loudly that that balance of priorities is shifting, it's easiest to assume that the priority is still towards increasing speeds of auto traffic, while ignoring or imperiling less fortunate and more vulnerable users.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/10/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment. The Active Transportation Plan lays out several potential funding options for new active transportation infrastructure, but like other elements of the Family of Plans it is principally a policy document that provides direction and guidance for MaineDOT's investment decisions, rather than a specific budget. MaineDOT's expenditures are laid our in our Work Plan: <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/projects/workplan/>

The Active Transportation Plan includes several goals and strategies focused on reducing speeds and increasing safety, including improving shoulders along rural highways, gateway treatments to slow down traffic entering dense areas, our Village Partnership Initiative focused on improving multimodal mobility in towns and villages, and a plan to work towards development of off-road trails statewide - among others. MaineDOT is committed to implementing this plan, although we must do so as responsible stewards of our funding and in the context of limited available resources.

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 01/10/2023  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Does the plan dramatically shift resources from single occupancy vehicle to active transportation to transit, or is it the same old?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/11/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response: The Family of Plans calls for increased investments in active transportation and transit to improve multimodal accessibility and mobility throughout Maine, but they do not call for a dramatic shift or reduction in highway funding. Maintaining our extensive highway and bridge network, as well as other modes, will remain a major priority for MaineDOT.

Public Comment 343  
Date: 01/08/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics:   
Comment: MaineDOT does not seem to be embracing rapidly-emerging applications for drone (unmanned/uncrewed aircraft systems, or UAS) nor could I find any evidence of planning for the deployment of advanced air mobility (AAM) applications such as Regional Air Mobility and Urban Air Mobility, all of which are expected to expand flight services while reducing carbon footprint through use of electric aircraft (e.g. eVTOL) powered by batteries or hydrogen. In particular, RAM offers the potential to greatly expand aviation services to rural / underserved communities. Further, spacecraft operations are being developed for deployment in the Downeast coastal region. MaineDOT is remiss in not including these aerospace technologies in its family of plans, and should work to include them in a modern, multi-modal transportation plan. Maine's universities and public safety communities lead the state in advanced air mobility / drone applications. Their organizations should be included along with traditional manned aviation constituents, rather than be shunned by an old guard which invariably works to preserve their narrow interests.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/10/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment.

While MaineDOT's aviation planning efforts have not prioritized UAS and other emerging technologies in the past - including in Phase I of our Statewide Aviation System Plan - we recognize their growing importance to the state. We are currently developing Phase II of the Aviation Plan, and addressing emerging technologies in this plan is a priority for our Aviation unit.

Please feel free to reach out to Alan Lambert, Director of Aviation (alan.d.lambert@maine.gov), as he is leading the Phase II effort and would be glad to get your input.

- Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 344  
Date: 01/09/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I may have missed it, but there needs to be an on-call door-to-transport availability. Of course people need door-to-door for medical services, etc, but some need a ride to a place where they can pick up a bus or train, for shopping, for family visits, for work. Boothbay is among the places that need employees, but don't have adequate housing. People from outside the peninsula could work here if they had transportation. Those who most need employment are often those who most need transportation. (Spoken from experience. Before marrying a Mainer, I lived in rural South Jersey, and weighed each job opportunity against my ability to actually get to the job.) Scheduling could be arranged through consultation with local businesses. I'm sure this circumstance is not only in this area.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/19/2023  
Response By: Ryan N  
Response:

Good afternoon, and thank you for your comment, we will keep it in mind as we finalize the Maine State Transit Plan and other modal plans.  You may be interested in the Maine Department of Transportation's Workforce Transportation Pilot program, a competitive grant program which provides funds to support other workforce transportation projects around the state.  You can learn more about this program at <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/grants/mjrp/workforce/>

Public Comment 345  
Date: 01/09/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: PLEASE. NO NEW RAIL until state and owners companies properly invest in upgraded locomotives, platforms and infrastructure. As a Rockland resident who lives near the old "train station" -- I am constantly in fear of an Amtrak service starting up. We lived here when the Eastern Train ran and, thanks to ZERO requirements that would cut down on idling, we were frequently exposed to diesel fumes INSIDE of our home when the train idled directly behind our home picking up and dropping off passengers. We were told, when we moved here, that they weren't allowed to do this and then discovered after it began happening that there was not a single rule surrounding their operation in regards to protecting residents from noise or pollution. The train shut down a couple of years after our living here. But one evening I was alarmed by a large roaring sound -- I thought something was wrong with our furnace. But no -- it was Amtrak -- testing out the line. A huge train sat behind our home. The noise and vibrations were significantly louder than the Eastern. And thanks to their complete lack of planning (or care) that train sat there and idled all night long behind our home. Sleep was not an option. The noise was heard for blocks away. This experience made me feel sick to my stomach -- the thought that this may be what is coming to our neighborhood -- it would, very literally, make my and many of my neighbor's homes unlivable. In addition to the noise and pollution, the vibrations would damage these old foundations. Many the homes here existed a 1/2 century before the train in Rockland was built. I am ashamed and frustrated to live in a state that has such low standards for air quality or planning requirements for a new train service. I have tried to reach out to Senators, Representatives and those at the state level -- and no one seems to know why our standards are so low -- or to genuinely care to update them. Meanwhile, we have one of the HIGHEST rates of lung cancer in the country. And due to our lax emission rules, we allow some of the oldest and dirtiest locomotives in the country. Multiple new studies have been published in the last year reporting that even small amount of exposure to the particulate pollution that is by these locomotives results in serious and immediate negative health impact and outcome. (https://epic.uchicago.edu/insights/particulate-pollution-is-the-greatest-threat-to-human-health-globally-yet-funding-to-tackle-the-problem-lags/ https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/people-poor-neighborhoods-breate-more-hazardous-particles/ https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/even-low-level-air-pollution-may-harm-health-202202212692 https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/even-low-levels-of-air-pollution-can-harm-hearts-lungs-in-elderly/ ) We should be doing everything we can to decrease residential exposure to particulate pollution, not be considering infrastructure that would SIGNIFICANTLY increase it. Rail transit should not come at the cost of our health or homes. I see included in the transportation plan, mention of "goals" of updating locomotives and reducing idling. These should not be simply goals -- they should be REQUIREMENTS. Please look at a map of Rockland. No one in their right mind would, by today's standard, design for an Amtrak-sized train to terminate in the middle of a densely populated residential neighborhood, abutting 200+ year old stick-built homes. When you see trains running in the middle of a city -- you see adequate infrastructure -- for example, tracks built below ground, cement walls, and proper engineering to ensure that the abutting neighborhood is insulated from their sound and vibrations. Or often you see train stations built just outside of the city, as in the case of Portland. To propose a train terminate in Rockland simply because that was what was done in the past—a terminus built in the early 1900s (back when we thought it was okay to huff factory fumes and no one wanted to live downtown because it was so dirty)—demonstrates a complete lack of quality planning, design or care for the people who live here. We have a near-perfect spot for a new train station—at the Round House (aka Rockland Turntable on Google Maps). There is even an existing building, owned by the O'Hara's, that has a built-in train platform. Yes, this would require some serious investment to renovate into a legit station -- but this is the kind of investment the state should be making if they are serious about expanding rail. The Round House location doesn't abut any residences and is only 1/2 mile walk from our Main Street. And regardless of location, investment will need to be made in a platform and terminal infrastructure as the "old station" has neither. Please invest consider investing in the Round House location as a new Rockland terminus. Please prioritize our health first. Please don't cut corners when proposing new transportation infrastructure.

Public Comment 346  
Date: 01/10/2023  
Level of Support: Not In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Don’t widen any bridges or pave any dirt roads - these calm traffic and make it safer for people. Implement TRAFFIC CALMING configurations in any area where cars go too fast and put pedestrians and cyclists at risk.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/11/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment. Traffic calming is an important part of our Active Transportation Plan and efforts such as our Gateway Treatments and Village Partnership Initiative. We will also be taking a closer look at these issues when we update MaineDOT's Complete Streets policy later this year.

- Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 347  
Date: 01/10/2023  
Level of Support: Not In Favor  
Topics:   
Comment: I do not want them to widen or make faster the bridge on South Freedom Rd over the 15 Mile Stream. Right now people slow down for it and my neighbor and I are both able to get out of our driveways, but if it is made wider and faster someone is going to get killed because my neighbors house and my barns are already ridiculously close to the road.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/11/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your message. I've forwarded your message to Tony Beaulieu, who is managing that project. If you have any other comments regarding that, I would recommend reaching out to him. His email is: tony.beaulieu@maine.gov

- Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 348  
Date: 01/11/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan  
Comment: Re: Goal 2: Improve mobility and accessibility of goods and people through enhanced multimodal connectivity. PLEASE prioritize connecting the Portland Transportation Center and Portland downtown to the surrounding towns by PROTECTED BIKE LANES or multi-modal paths. Example 1: Rt. 77 from Cape Elizabeth to So Po, over the bridge, and to the Transportation Center. Example 2: Brighton Ave. and Forest Ave. Electric bicycles make this much more feasible than it was even 5 years ago. Climate change makes the connection of people from their homes to public transportation absolutely critical.

Public Comment 349  
Date: 01/11/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan  
Comment: Re: Goal 2: Improve mobility and accessibility of goods and people through enhanced multimodal connectivity. PLEASE prioritize connecting the Portland Transportation Center and Portland downtown to the surrounding towns by PROTECTED BIKE LANES or multi-modal paths. Example 1: Rt. 77 from Cape Elizabeth to So Po, over the bridge, and to the Transportation Center. Example 2: Brighton Ave. and Forest Ave. Electric bicycles make this much more feasible than it was even 5 years ago. Climate change makes the connection of people from their homes to public transportation absolutely critical.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/11/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hi Jennie,

Thank you for your comment on the Active Transportation Plan. As you pointed out, multi-modal connections are a very important part of the plan, and your examples illustrate that importance very well. MaineDOT hopes to work with other partner agencies toward additional connections between modes of transport through the implementation of this plan. The link between safety, climate and mobility that you mentioned is a crucial part of how this plan fit into the other plans within the Family of Plans framework, ensuring that we have a well connected transportation system for Maine's future.

Thank you,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 350  
Date: 01/11/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Public input is of utmost importance, but remember Henry Ford’s wise words, something like, “If we’d asked them what they wanted, they would have said, ‘faster horses’.”

Public Comment 351  
Date: 01/11/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I see the signs w letters for emergency evacuation on the roads. I have never heard it explained how you know which to use or where they go??

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/17/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your question. Please find attached a document with a brief explanation of the emergency route system. This is only used as a detour route for traffic to follow when a portion of the Interstate is shut down.

- Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 352  
Date: 01/12/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Thank you for remembering Northern Maine is also part of the State.

Public Comment 354  
Date: 01/12/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: There was a time when people could take trains to nearly every town in Maine. Interstate highways came and the powers that be got rid of all passenger trains, except for a few, and they play second fiddle to freight trains. We could revive those old rail lines and begin connecting towns again. If the will is there it can be done!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment. We appreciate your taking the time to reach out, and we will keep this in mind as we finalize the plans.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 355  
Date: 01/14/2023  
Level of Support: Less In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Commend FOT for the great changes to the new ramping of the veranda street entrance as well as the parking spaces created for looking out at Cascade Bay. This is how it was prior to 1960 when that was possible!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/17/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment!

- Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 356  
Date: 01/14/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: 1. Widening roads without providing protection to bike riders = "painted gutters." Few people ride on these roads now. With widening, people may THINK the roads are safer for biking, but cars/trucks move even faster with the widening, thereby inviting only the dare-devil bicycle riders among us. There is room for both with separation. NARROW the roads for cars/trucks to slow them down. The bikers/pedestrians/mobilityscooters need separation from cars in order to invite all types of people trying to get to work or business or sporting events, etc. 2. https://www.dutchcyclingembassy.nl/en/ The Dutch Cycling Embassy is now providing consulting to North American municipalities. https://urbancyclinginstitute.com/resources/ The Urban Cycling Institute also has lots of resources. The state of Maine could benefit hugely. Please connect with one/both.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/17/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hi Jennie,

Thank you for providing comment on the Active Transportation Plan. The paved shoulder portion of the plan is focused primarily on rural areas where further separation is often not feasible. Thank you for sharing those resources, I will be sure to check them out.

Thank you,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 357  
Date: 01/14/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics:   
Comment: Connect South Portland Greenbelt to SP High School and SP Community Center. The greenbelt, with connects many neighborhoods and business centers of South Portland is only about 1/2 mile from the SP High School and Community Center. Students walk and bike on the east side of Evans St, just a few feet from traffic. There is no sidewalk on that side. If there were a protected pathway (an extension of the Greenbelt) from the Greenbelt to those buildings, many, many people could bike or walk or roll to some of the most important public buildings in the city.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

I believe that my colleague responded to your other comment, but I just wanted to close the loop and confirm that we did receive both of these and will keep them in mind as we finalize these plans.

Thank you,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 358  
Date: 01/15/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Having Reflective paint on the roads would improve safety and make it much better for driving at night. Every summer the lines get painted and is gone by the middle of winter, so finding a more durable solution should be found. It would save money and you could see the lines longer than a few months. Thank you.

Public Comment 359  
Date: 01/15/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Having Reflective paint on the roads would improve safety and make it much better for driving at night. Every summer the lines get painted and is gone by the middle of winter, so finding a more durable solution should be found. It would save money and you could see the lines longer than a few months. Thank you.

Public Comment 360  
Date: 01/15/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Having Reflective paint on the roads would improve safety and make it much better for driving at night. Every summer the lines get painted and is gone by the middle of winter, so finding a more durable solution should be found. It would save money and you could see the lines longer than a few months. Thank you.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/17/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hello,

Thank you for your comment, we will consider this as we continue to work on the MaineDOT Family of Plans.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 361  
Date: 01/15/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Rail Plan  
Comment: Regarding passenger rail, communities around Lewiston, Waterville, and Bangor should have an affordable 1 seat ride to Boston (and beyond) that doesn’t add buses to the highway system. Maine’s current Downeaster service has been a model route for the entire Amtrak network; expanding to the states other metro areas makes sense for both business/pleasure transit and bringing in tourists. Carriers along the rockland (summer) and bethel (fall-winter) lines should receive incentives for excursion service. There are many large communities that are completely unserved by bus service. As it stands, the midcoast only has a single daily service provided by Concord Coach. There should be once- or twice daily busing in towns like Farmington, Skowhegan, Sanford, and Ft Kent to the closest metro area. Owning a car in Maine (both expensive and prohibitive) should not be requisite for living and working here. Finally, tourism-focused ferry transit should make some form of return. Maine is a brand that should be leaned into- and our coastal heritage and scenery should be used to our advantage. Even a single ferry between, say, Portland and Rockland or Bar Harbor could be part of an itinerary for a trip to Vacationland. We need our transportation network to make traveling through and out of Maine more accessible (rail, bus) for our current and potential residents, as well as using our Maine brand- coasts, forests, mountains- to provide experiential travel (excursion rail, ferry) to supplement our tourism industries.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/19/2023  
Response By: Ryan N  
Response: Kenneth, thank you for your comments. Regarding potential additional transit service, the Maine State Transit Plan assesses at a high level current demand and gaps in our existing system and provides a framework for assessing in further detail the potential need for additional service in particular areas of the state. We will note your comments as we continue to work on the several modal plans currently in draft form.

Public Comment 362  
Date: 01/16/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan  
Comment: Having taken the public rail system in Italy and Boston everywhere not needing a car once, I am a firm believer in the passenger rail system and a freight rail system. Maine's is woefully inadequately for the state. I am in full support of developing both rural and urban passenger rail systems in this state. It would reduce emissions as people wouldn't have to use cars to travel everywhere, it would alleviate the congestion in Maine's cities for people who don't have vehicles, and it would help the economy by reducing transportation costs for Maine companies.

Public Comment 363  
Date: 01/16/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan  
Comment: Having taken the public rail system in Italy and Boston everywhere not needing a car once, I am a firm believer in the passenger rail system and a freight rail system. Maine's is woefully inadequately for the state. I am in full support of developing both rural and urban passenger rail systems in this state. It would reduce emissions as people wouldn't have to use cars to travel everywhere, it would alleviate the congestion in Maine's cities for people who don't have vehicles, and it would help the economy by reducing transportation costs for Maine companies.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment.

- Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 364  
Date: 01/17/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: The Route 236 corridor needs improvements on traffic calming. The increasing traffic is putting a strain on southern Maine communities-both from visitors skipping out on the 95 York toll and from PNSY daily commutors.

Public Comment 365  
Date: 01/17/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: We need some sort of rail system or hyperloop from Houlton to Banghor to Portland. The County is historically left behind. I think it is wise to think of the future. The County may be dying now but slowly there is an influx of remote workers who are looking for more space and freedom. If we want young people to come, we need to have better transportation infrastructure.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment.

- Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 366  
Date: 01/17/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment:

I would be interested in seeing Appendix C: State-Owned Inactive Rail Corridor Existing Conditions and Cost Estimates if that draft is ready to be viewed. I would also like to make one suggestion. The term “active transportation” is a relatively recent designation for human powered modes of transportation. The draft AT Plan is deemed to be the “first ever” in Maine. Though not called active transportation there is an even older study which is largely unknown which you may want to reference. It was written in response to a legislative resolve in the first years that Maine DOT was created in the 1970’s. The resolve enacted as an emergency measure requested that Maine DOT and its co-author, the Bureau of Parks and Recreation in the Department of Conservation, study among other topics the “methods of bicycle path construction and innovations used in other states.”

http://lldc.mainelegislature.org/Open/LDs/106/106-LD-1908.pdf

The report, Bicycling in Maine, is nearly 200 pages long and has a technical supplement both of which are attached above. Though nearly half a century old the study is still highly relevant and remains the most comprehensive to be done in Maine.

Ian, I do a lot of research on Maine’s environmental and transportation history and thought you may find these notes below of interest in your current work. Best regards, Tom The 1974 bicycling report mentioned below is available online:

Bicycling in Maine: An Examination of the Transportation, Recreation, and Safety Aspects of Maine Cycling Prepared by Bureau of Parks and Recreation, DOC and MDOT at the request of the 106th Legislature (March, 1974) gv1052\_u62m25\_1974.pdf (mainelegislature.org)

As part of its study Parks and Recreation reviewed at the time abandoned railroad right of way. The Bureau published its study in 1973 and for decades it was a little known and largely forgotten work. It is now available online! "Abandoned Railroads in Maine: Their Potential for Trail Use" by Arnold S. Biondi and Frederick W. Lyman

Since these lines were abandoned before enactment in 1987 of the State Railroad Preservation and Assistance Act Title 23, §7101: Short title (maine.gov) they do not fall under MDOT’s regulatory framework. It is possible that the Department of Conservation acquired some of these lines to be used as trails. Title 12, §1813: Acquisition of railroad rights-of-way for open space or recreation corridors (maine.gov)

The last major active transportation plan written by MDOT was in 2010, Improving Maine’s Quality of Place Through Integrated Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections, is available online. 2010+MDOT+quality+of+place+report.pdf\_file.pdf (squarespace.com)

MaineDOT Response  
Date:   
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

*RESPONSE SENT SEPARATELY BY EMAIL:*

Hello Tom, I’ve attached the draft of Appendix C here. Please keep in mind that the appendices are still drafts and will be undergoing additional formatting and editing. They also have not yet undergone a full accessibility check, so if you need a screen-reader accessible version, please let me know and I can provide that. Thank you for the note about the Bicycling in Maine report. We will review and keep that in mind as we finalize the AT Plan. Best regards, Ian

Public Comment 367  
Date: 01/18/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Great Job on this Draft Transportation plan. I personally want to add my voice to the need for reducing barriers and improving safety in the systems we already have - like completing sidewalks where there are now gaps between sidewalks, adding crosswalks where there are absent crosswalks especially in rural settings and poor communities, and immediately addressing the huge challenges of speeding traffic - no matter the settings or speed limits!!! I would also like to add additional points for the health and wellbeing of our youth and families. Research has shown that the more outdoor activities that children, youth and families are engaged in, the less likely the underage person will use substances including tobacco, cannabis, alcohol, and non-prescribed or illegal medications. Increasing our safe and active transportation opportunities both set good examples of active living, TA also will help establish lifelong practices of being outdoors, being active, and being overall increasing the health and therefore productivity of out community members - from early childhood through healthy older ages. Goal 2 - building on the 4 priority areas makes sense as a starting point! AND there are other areas of the state that would benefit from expansion of regional trails - It would be excellent to let local communities know where they are on the long term goals list - and how they might move up as communities work together to expand connections - Both Penobscot and Hancock Counties have expanded local trails in the past few years. Goal 4 - please add to your outreach and education to connect with the 8 Public Health Districts which cover the entire state, and the Regional Superintendent Districts to keep active transportation prioritized for these systems as well.

Public Comment 368  
Date: 01/18/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Thank you for undertaking this critical planning for the state. It is much needed! I am writing to support the consideration of repurposing unused rail corridors as trails on an interim basis. If a rail corridor is unlikely to have train service in the next 20 years, the public should be able to use this languishing public asset by repurposing it as a trail. This would bring economic and health benefits to communities and provide safe alternative transportation routes for local residents. I am especially supportive of the Merrymeeting Trail project, which would utilize the Lower Road corridor. I appreciate that Maine DOT has built this consideration into their planning process, and I hope the Department and the Legislature take this opportunity seriously. It would be a mistake to let dormant corridors languish any longer. Let's use them as trails until they are needed for train service again! And let's leverage federal infrastructure dollars in order to do so! Thank you.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/18/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment. MaineDOT will continue to review potential uses for inactive rail corridors following the process outlined in L.D. 1133, passed in 2021. If you are interested in the proposed Merrymeeting Trail, I would recommend continuing to follow the Lower Road Rail Use Advisory Council review that is currently underway regarding this corridor:  <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/ofps/ruac/lowerroad/>

- Ian Gorecki

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 01/18/2023  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Thank you, Ian! Very helpful.

Public Comment 369  
Date: 01/18/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: In addition to road maintenance, passenger rail and EV charging, should be priorities. Specifically, -fast EV charging for all of I-95. Are there plans to expand passenger rail north of Brunswick?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/18/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment. Expanding EV charging is a priority for MaineDOT, and you can find more details about our EV charging plans in the *Maine Plan for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment (PEVID):*<https://www.maine.gov/mdot/climate/docs/pevid-2022.pdf>

MaineDOT is currently conducting a Portland to Bangor Transit Propensity Study, which is assessing the demand and viability for new or enhanced transit service between Portland and Bangor. MaineDOT will be holding a public meeting tomorrow, January 19th, from 6:00-7:30 pm regarding the study. This will be a Zoom meeting, and you can find the link to the meeting here:  <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/ofps/portland-bangor-study/meetings/>

- Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 370  
Date: 01/18/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment: Spending a few hours outside completely changes my disposition to a much healthier perspective on life. In addition, it makes my dogs....and my coon cat who also likes to take walks, smile!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/18/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment. We hope that our Active Transportation Plan helps to improve people's ability to enjoy our beautiful outdoors and access the many physical and mental benefits of an active lifestyle. I am glad that your dogs and your cat are able to enjoy it as well. My sweet cat loves being outside, but she is far too scared to last long on a walk!

- Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 371  
Date: 01/18/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan  
Comment: Good work. I hope that action is taken rather than having the Plan die on a shelf. As a bicyclist and XC skier, I am encouraged to see that Active Transportation is being acknowledged and supported. As a (retired) surgeon, I like any measures to keep active people and children safe. I also support Rail to Trail and Rail with Trail projects.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/18/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment. MaineDOT is committed to implementing these plans to the best of our ability and achieving the goals we have developed. We view this as the beginning and not the end of the process. Regarding rail trails, when appropriate we will continue to follow the Rail Use Advisory Council process created by Public Law 21, Chapter 239 (from LD 1133, passed in 2021). For more information about these efforts, please visit:  <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/ofps/ruac/index.shtml>

- Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 372  
Date: 01/18/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I live next to the Mountain Division Railway in Westbrook and strongly favor turning this unused railroad into a formal biking trail. That could be instead-of or along-side a working rail road. This line goes from Sebago Lake to Portland and the western half of that is already maintained with beautiful bike trails. The maintained trail is heavily used by local for recreation. I just want to see that extended into Portland. Imagine being able to bike from Westbrook to Portland (currently, there's no nice way to do that).

Public Comment 373  
Date: 01/18/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I live next to the Mountain Division Railway in Westbrook and strongly favor turning this unused railroad into a formal biking trail. That could be instead-of or along-side a working rail road. This line goes from Sebago Lake to Portland and the western half of that is already maintained with beautiful bike trails. The maintained trail is heavily used by local for recreation. I just want to see that extended into Portland. Imagine being able to bike from Westbrook to Portland (currently, there's no nice way to do that).

Public Comment 374  
Date: 01/18/2023  
Level of Support: Less In Favor  
Topics:   
Comment: Is washington county ever going to get decent highways? lack of them is stopping any economic growth here. Also the roads we have are not looked after appropriately.

Public Comment 375  
Date: 01/18/2023  
Level of Support: Less In Favor  
Topics:   
Comment: Rt 1 heading south from South Street calais is horrendous, and I assume it will be for another year or 2. Can't they hire someone who knows what they are doing? I hire they are also going to be doing the North St area/

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comments. MaineDOT has just received a federal grant to fund rehabilitation of Route 1 in Washington County from Calais to Machias. Most of this work has been scheduled for 2024-2025. This is in addition to several other highway maintenance projects scheduled in the region. A breakdown of the work MaineDOT has scheduled in your area is available in our just-released 2023-2025 Work Plan: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/f0f9f927ce9948ca84180f02f5c43290>

- Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 376  
Date: 01/19/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: These comments are with regard to the Maine SATP, dated December 2022. p.10: “shoulders of at least four feet can provide additional space for AT users and for motorists pulling over to the side of the road.” Also on p.50 under section 6.2. When a car is occupying the shoulder the bicycle must enter the lane of traffic to go around the car. A dedicated, separated bicycle lane will be much safer for the bicyclist, or a shoulder of sufficient width for both a parked car as well as the bicyclist. Throughout, the document misses opportunities to include planning for children riding for recreation or to school. Sections 3.3 and 3.4 could both note the reduction in parents’ driving children to school, for example. The document does recognize children in the note on p.32 that children comprise 15.4% of the Maine population, and p.53 does include proximity of schools under criteria #6. But otherwise children are absent from this document. p.29 Existing Bicycle Infrastructure should note that, in addition to minimal shoulder availability. those shoulders that are available are often filled with trash or road debris, or are in poor condition, causing the bicyclist to need to enter into the traffic lane. Throughout the document a four-foot minimum for shoulders is established, but p.73 (iii.1 and iii.2) specifies one to three feet for some situations. This width is not adequate for bicycling, even at road speeds associated with HCP4.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/20/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Karl,

Thank you for providing your comments regarding the roadway shoulders and importance of including younger transportation users, these will be taken into consideration as we work toward finalizing the Active Transportation Plan.

Thank you,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 377  
Date: 01/19/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I think connecting Bar Harbor to Greenville (via rail) would be good for our local quality of life, economy, and also for tourism. We could have stop in Ellsworth, Bangor, Corinth, and Dover-Foxcroft along 15 which would be very helpful for local transportation out here in Eastern Maine.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment.

- Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 379  
Date: 01/19/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: In the plan, it states that the formula used for deciding on prioritization of trail development can be found in Appendix C. However, Appendix C is not included in the posted plan. Where can I find Appendix C in order to see how this ranking was determined?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/20/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

We have not yet finalized all of the appendices, and the final versions of those will be included in the final version of the AT Plan. However, Appendix C is complete (in terms of content if not formatting). It is too large to send through our comment system, so I will attach it in a separate email.

Please keep in mind that while the prioritization of the four inactive rail corridors assessed in the AT Plan will help inform MaineDOT on the potential active transportation uses for those corridors, this is only an initial step and many factors will be considered in any potential future development of those corridors - especially the recommendations of the relevant Rail Use Advisory Councils.

Public Comment 380  
Date: 01/20/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment: Where is your plan for the Ferry Service? Where is your plan for Port Development?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Becky,

Thank you for sending us your questions.

With regards to port development, MaineDOT continues to follow the three port strategy of port development and will follow industry trends to stay ahead of the curve to ensure port capabilities are in place and ready to service an ever changing industry with variable needs, myriad different commodities and infrastructure demands. More details about this will feature in our upcoming Freight Plan update.

Regarding the Maine State Ferry Service, the Maine State Transit Plan focuses mainly on over-the-road public transportation services. It acknowledges that there are other marine and rail services that also provide complementary public transportation services. The overall scope of the Maine State Ferry Service is set in statue (Title 23: Transportation Part 6: Chapter 412: Waterborne Transportation) and is a specialized form of public transportation between fixed points on the mainland and 6 island communities. MaineDOT does maintain a staffing plan that meets US Coastguard regulations and asset management plans for vessels and land based facilities. I hope this is helpful. If you would like additional information please contact Mark Higgins at mark.a.higgins@maine.gov.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 381  
Date: 01/20/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan  
Comment: Bangor-area transit needs to be greatly improved. For example, I can't work a 9-5 shift at the University of Maine and get home on the bus, because the bus from Orono leaves at 5:30 and reaches Bangor at 6, after which point there are NO connecting routes, so my family has to pick me up by car. And if I miss my 7:45 bus at home, I don't reach UMaine until 9:50, because the Orono bus runs only every hour. This is dangerously close to unusable. I lived for a while outside of Seattle, where a 30-minute bus ride to Downtown Seattle ran 3 or 4 times an hour, from 4 am to 10 pm, with less frequent runs up to midnight. And I did use these, because I could. I'd love to go to a concert at the Collins Center and take the bus home afterwards - but that isn't even an option for the Waterfront.

Public Comment 382  
Date: 01/21/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I am a hard core conservation minded 7th generation resident of the Town of Penobscot Maine. Please stop bowing to the extreme environmental activists and develop Sears Island into a container facility rather than a wind mill construction site. OSW is a dream fraught with an over estimated carbon offset and exaggerated environmental benefits. OSW will be a disaster - however it will probably kill all of the whales so that the lobster industry can continue, but I digress. Maine is poised to become a major transportation hub where containers can be moved to northern New England, Quebec, and beyond - saving thousands of gallons of diesel fuel currently consumed by the trucking industry. Less expensive consumer goods and good paying jobs are much needed in Maine. Maine needs to implement the three point strategy immediately ! The Maine Department of Economic Development is actively courting foreign investors to develop industrial scale aquaculture in Maine. Why isn't the state courting an entity to develop a cargo port on Sears Island ?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/27/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Dear Bailey,

Thank you for your comments. We really do appreciate your taking the time to review the plans and share your thoughts.

Searsport / Mack Pt. is a liquid and bulk cargo facility with project specific cargo and container handling abilities. Portland’s International Marine Terminal is the primary container / intermodal facility in the State due to its location offering economic advantages over Canadian ports due to proximity to major highways and rail as well as geographical advantages for trans-Atlantic and coastal transport including short transit to the facility from open ocean. Maine Port Authority recently moved a container handling mobile harbor crane to Eastport to allow them the ability to handle any backlogs from Atlantic Canadian ports. There have been economic and operational studies done so that the State utilizes each of the three major ports in the State to capitalize on their strengths to further enhance the viability of marine transportation in the region.

You can find all the information regarding the State’s OSW plans in its road map found here: <https://www.maineoffshorewind.org/road-map/>

The State has made significant investments in the three ports of Portland, Searsport, and Eastport. MDOT and the Maine Port Authority are working hand in glove to implement the three port strategy and continue to pursue federal grants and other initiatives to further execute this long held strategy.

Thank you again,

Chris Mayo,

Public Comment 383  
Date: 01/21/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: A critique of the draft MSRP: To Cambridge Systematics: I must critique your use of the Rail Use Advisory Council (RUAC) process in the Maine State Rail Plan. Rail Advocates universally condemn the RUACs as they are detrimental to rail planning. The reason itself is quoted in the MSRP draft on page 60 "... historically, once a rail corridor is converted into a different use, it does not return to rail use." This disapproval is stated on page 80 of the MSRP draft: "Advocacy Groups Perspectives » There is strong opposition to rail-to-trail conversions from rail and environmental advocates, who argue that trail conversion of rail corridors inevitably erodes the possibility of future rail use." Furthermore, the RUAC process is still in its infancy. One committee has met and formulated an advisory opinion (Mountain Division RUAC) but this has yet to become final before it can be utilized by MDOT. The process must continue on to be presented to the Maine Legislative Joint Transportation Committee for approval, then the whole of the 131st Legislature, then the Executive Branch, and finally Federal approval. Until that process is complete, no actual guidance to MDOT regarding rail use resulting from the RUAC process can be implemented. As such, statements such as on page 10 "Some rail planning processes in Maine have been guided by a Rail Use Advisory Council (RUAC) " are misleading and incorrect The following paragraph, (page 10): »" The Mountain Division RUAC - completed (formed August 2021): Formed in response to letters of support from several communities along the rail corridor requesting that the future of the 31 miles of state-owned, inactive rail-line be discussed. This 12-member council was composed of representatives from each town along the section of rail corridor under consideration. Members also included representatives from state agencies, Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs), the Portland Water District, and trail and rail advocates. After a seven-month review of potential rail and non-rail uses for the Mountain Division rail corridor from Standish to Fryeburg, the council recommended the interim conversion of 31 miles of the existing railroad track to an interim ten-foot-wide paved bicycle and pedestrian trail. " should be eliminated from the Maine State Rail Plan. As stated above, the entire process has not been completed and cannot be implemented. Furthermore, regarding the Mountain Division RUAC, there was only one Rail Advocate on this council, and this outcome was not accepted by supporters of trains. If this statement needs to be included in the Family of Plans, it should be under the Active Transportation Plan as supported by Trail Advocates. I do agree that the RUACs need to be mentioned in the Maine State Rail Plan. This documentation of the RUAC process should be a simple, factual statement that Public Law 21, Chapter 239 was passed by the 130th Legislature which gives MaineDOT the authority to establish RUACs , and these could potentially influence State Rail Policy once fully completed. A link to further explanation of this process should be provided. I am a Rail Advocate who is involved with multiple State Transit and Rail Advocacy Groups, and someone who has followed the RUAC process in detail from initial formation through to ongoing studies. I can say with confidence that the RUAC process, as currently carried out, has been a frustrating and alarming development for the return of trains to Maine. The process was brought forth by Trail and Bike Advocates with no Rail Sourced input. They should not be falsely promoted in the Maine State Rail Plan as universally accepted by Rail Supporters, nor falsely alluded to as influencing actual MDOT policy until the entire RUAC process has been fully completed. Thank you for your consideration,

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thanks again.

I will include these comments with the others.

Have a great day

Nate Howard

MaineDOT

Public Comment 384  
Date: 01/22/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan  
Comment: In all seriousness, I have a hard time believing that vehicles will run solely on renewable energy by 2035 and beyond. I do believe that there will always be a need for vehicles that run on petroleum based fuels whether new or old. Until people are willing to make a serious investment in the solar, wind, and electric infrastructure, there will always be a problem with the existing power grid to power these electric and hybrid vehicles. The other problem with these electric vehicles is the price tag. As long as the price tag remains anywhere from $32,000 to $85,000 and more, you will not be able to convince people to purchase these and to purchase them used, in many cases the battery life of a used electric vehicle has pretty much been used up and the replacement cost of the battery for an electric vehicle is more than $12,000. Because batteries require lithium and as long as Maine has a ban on mining operations in this state, and we are a state rich in lithium, we are cutting our nose off in spite of ourselves. We could really help our country if could mine this metal. This too needs to be evaluated. The next thing is our roads and bridges. I have seen some of these bridges from the underside and there is no way I will drive over them in their current condition. I also think that there needs to be a plan for some private roads who have a brook, stream, river running under them whereby it is not the homeowners association who is completely responsible. What I mean is, they spent the original tens of thousands and sometimes hundreds of thousands putting in these bridges and culvert pipes and have spent literally tens of thousands each year in property taxes and get nothing in return from the state or local municipality when these culvert pipes fail after years and decades of use. Sure, when it happens to a town or state maintained road or bridge, MDOT is there with public hearings and state funds to replace the bridge. The same thing needs to happen for those on a private road. They have paid their income taxes, they have paid their excise taxes, they have paid their property taxes, they have paid their sales taxes all these years and it is time for the state to step up to help fix some of these roads as well. Not asking it to be a multi-million dollar project, but do what needs to be done. Now lets discuss our railroads, I have seen some of the tracks that our trains travel on. Lets just say when it is posted for 40mph but because of the condition of the tracks, you are lucky to be doing 3 or 4 and it looks like the train is floating going over those rails and the rails don't look straight say nothing for how rotted some of the ties are in our state. We are not talking about how these are used for transportation service, we are also talking about cargo, the transportation of chemicals, the transportation of petroleum based products. This is an accident waiting to happen. Can I name exactly where, no not really. It was a video I saw on FB and it just said some where in Maine. Because the person worked for the railroad and was posting by anonymous identity, they did not want to say where exactly in Maine. People were making a lot of educated guesses where this area or that area could be. It was the same way with some railroad crossings that are not clearly marked. But it means having all rail beds inspected from one end of the state to the other and fixing everything that needs to be. I also think we need to remove all railroad crossings that are no longer in service or paved over but all the signs are still there.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/26/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comments. Please find several responses below

Thank you for your comments. I have included some responses in the bullets below.

* As a part of Maine Won't Wait and Maine's climate change goals, MaineDOT is committed to supporting the transition to electric vehicles and the development of clean electricity, principally by providing supporting infrastructure where feasible. However, while there are legitimate concerns regarding vehicle prices, the makeup larger electricity grid, and state mining regulations are not principally within MaineDOT's authority.
* MaineDOT is committed to improving our roads and bridges, and these projects make up the vast majority of our capital budget. The Family of Plans reiterates that MaineDOT continues to see our highway and bridge network as the backbone of transportation in Maine.
* MaineDOT is responsible for the state highway system, while municipalities manage local roads. In general, under Maine law municipalities do not have a legal right to spend public funds on private roads. There are some exceptions with regards to protecting or restoring a great pond, and you can find more details here: <https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/23/title23sec3106.html>
* There are two Federal Railroad Administration-certified inspectors that cover Maine: Nathan Howard, Rail Program Director, MaineDOT (nathan.howard@maine.gov, 207 557 0942) and Eric Gay, Track Safety Inspector, FRA (Eric.Gay@maine.gov, (207)215-8529). If there is specific information about an unsafe location, please reach out to them directly with that information.

Thank you again,

Ian Gorecki

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 01/26/2023  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Thank you for this information. The state law I was not aware of.

Public Comment 385  
Date: 01/22/2023  
Level of Support: Not In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: You state that Maine is to make long range reasoned decisions yet DOT only covers problem areas that do not have sufficient drainage and thereby wet soils. You simply shim and overlay or shave and pave. When you do have new construction your testing standards on borrow and in place densities are nearly non-existent. Also the design is trash because you only use 2-3 feet of non-frost susceptible soils because of funding issues. Meanwhile you have an active layer (freeze-thaw) of 5-6 feet. Why not use 5-6 feet of NFS material and have little to no chance of frost heaves? Overall your decisions in construction are short sighted and I believe this is because those at the top are doing business as usual. Upper management is just as shitty as the pay. #whyIvefoundajobelsewhere.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comments. While you may not always agree with specific planning or engineering decisions, and we welcome your feedback, I can assure you that MaineDOT staff are dedicated to achieving our mission of responsibly providing our customers the safest and most reliable transportation system possible, given available resources.

- Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 386  
Date: 01/22/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I am a sometimes bicyclist, sometimes driver, sometimes bus rider living in the Bangor area. However, if rail from Bangor to Portland were offered, I would use it. Please support the option of rail travel to and from Bangor.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment.

- Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 387  
Date: 01/22/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: To improve safety, especially for vulnerable road users, MaineDOT should partner with other agencies and organizations to create a road user education curriculum to be taught in Maine's elementary schools. Too often we rely on driver education as a form of road user education but it is inequitable as it leaves out those who can't drive or choose not to drive. It is also occurs far too late, as children develop safety behaviors long before they get behind the wheel. Children are also users of the system before they learn to drive. A road user education program for Maine schools could be part of Maine's Highway Safety Improvement Program and there is now money in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to fund such an idea. Also, MaineDOT should prioritize construction of roundabouts over traffic signals to improve safety, climate, resiliency and user equity. Traffic signals are archaic, fragile, inequitable and do not provide safety benefits like a roundabout. They only provide an illusion of safety due to user familiarity but do nothing to reduce kinetic energy transfer in a crash, unlike roundabouts. Thousands of Americans are killed at signalized intersections each year, with around a thousand due to red-light running alone. They are also costly to maintain and upgrade. Roundabouts significantly reduce fatalities and injuries not just at the roundabout, but along the corridor they are placed, if in succession, because they lower speeds. Roundabouts that are constructed require little maintaining and no technology upgrades. They function during and after during all severe climate events because they do not need power to function. This is extremely important to consider due to the severe storms Maine will continue to experience that will cause more frequent and extended power outages. They are also autonomous vehicle ready because they will rely on V2V technology. Roundabouts also reduce greenhouse gas emissions when compared to conventional signals, and only are exceeded by a well-timed signal at the peak hour. All other hours, the roundabout has lower emmissions. Roundabouts also provide the ability for green space for landscaping to help fight climate change and provide placemaking for a community Once a leader in roundabouts, Maine has fallen behind its peers in Massachusetts and New Hampshire in implementation in recent years. There should be a goal to at least double the number of Maine roundabouts from 30 to 60 in the next 20 years, as there are plenty of locations to install them to improve safety, user equity and climate resiliency over current intersection controls. Because of their benefits to users over orher options, states like New York and Virginia have adopted "roundabouts-first" policies to make sure that a roundabout option is thoroughly reviewed before other alternatives are selected instead. Roundabouts have also been codified in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law as providing safety for all users unlike traffic signals and there are many grant programs to facilitate their design and construction that Maine should take advantage of. Roundabouts may seem like a more antiquated choice than a signal because of its advanced technology, but the roundabout, in spite of its lack of technology, is still the superior option because of its benefits to all users, no matter how "smart" a signal may become. Through a road user education program for elementary schools, and embracing and increasing implementation of roundabouts instead of traffic signals, Maine can better reach the vision of zero deaths and serious injuries on our roads. We can also increase user equity, have resiliency to severe climate events, and a greener, cleaner environment for the decades to come.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comments. Our Active Transportation Program does help fund some active transportation education and outreach efforts, and the Active Transportation Plan does highlight our intention to continue these. A school curriculum would be a larger effort and require a more extensive, coordinated effort involving many parties. Your comment about the benefits of roundabouts is also well taken.

- Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 388  
Date: 01/22/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: Both my husband and I are aging (69 and 77), but eager to travel within and outside of Maine as much as possible within our physical limitations. Rail service from our Knox County home base to the rest of the Eastern seaboard AND Canada will be one of our highest priorities going forward, as we are not physically able to drive long distances any longer. I hope you will make rail service north of Brunswick your highest statewide priority! We would like to be able to visit Canada (Maritimes and west to Montreal, Toronto, Alberta, and westward) and states in the Eastern U.S. without driving or flying, which is too stressful. Maine is well positioned to be a rail gateway to these areas.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment. Addressing the needs of people in Maine who have difficulties driving is an important issue, and MaineDOT continues to explore options to improve multimodal mobility for all people. In Knox County, MaineDOT is working to launch a pilot project restoring passenger rail service between Rockland and Brunswick, where it would connect to the Downeaster.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 389  
Date: 01/22/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I would specifically like an answer on how each plan addresses accessibility for Maine's mobility-limited, non-driving population. Even though my husband and I both currently drive everywhere, there will probably come a time when we can't. Because we prefer to age in place, we need a transportation infrastructure that respects our desire--and the desires of many other aging Mainers--not to be trapped in our rural home without access to the amenities and services we rely on. What's happening on this front? How can folks of our demographic weigh in regularly?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hello Kathryn,

Thank you for proving your comment. The Maine State Active Transportation Plan does address this concern for aging people of Maine by emphasizing the importance of ADA and accessibility on the transportation network, as well as accessibility between multiple modes of transportation. You bring up a very important aspect of the Active Transportation Plan, accessibility for ALL Maine people is an integral part of the plan.

Thank you,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 390  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics:   
Comment: I do not want to see abandoned rail spurs make into hiking trails. They should be used for light rail, with trails beside the tracks!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment.

- Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 391  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: One of the best ways to encourage active transportation in our cities is to help people feel safe making this choice — and that means building the proper infrastructure. Bike lanes — and especially separated, protected bike lanes —are a proven way to convert people over to active transportation options. No one wants to deal with traffic and parking, but they'll do it if they feel unsafe with other options. If you build it, they will come!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hi Brittany,

Thank you for your comment on the Active Transportation Plan. Your thoughts are very much in-line with the vision of the plan, use of the proper infrastucture improvements in context with the roadway can promote Active Transportation, and provide for safe means of travel for vulnerable roadway users.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 392  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Aviation System Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Maine DOT must reconsider expansion of car infrastructure in Maine in 2023 and instead plan for shared transit, bicycles and pedestrians. New car infrastructure only supports residential sprawl and unsustainable development patterns. Swift and comprehensive change is needed if Maine is to keep up with climate change goals and avoid designing traffic clogged commuter cities instead of sustainable dense mixed use town centers. Dedicated bus and bike lanes should be a part of any new road project in Maine in 2023. Furthermore dangerous state roads in cities should be downsized and redesigned to prevent the unacceptable rate of pedestrian casualties. Intersections with dangerous slip lanes need to be redesigned and speed limits must be lowered.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hi Nick,

Thank you for your comments on the Active Transportation Plan, many of your comments correspond with the Goals and Strategies in the draft plan that seek to increase safety for vulnerable users, and to utilize roadway design and infrastructure tools available to prioritize bicyclists and pedestrians in human scale contexts.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 393  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: 1. Use existing rights of way to develop separate commuting bike lanes and walkways along highways. 2. Look to develop separated bike lanes and walkways in urban areas wherever possible. 3. Seek to adds additional rain lanes along Downeaster routes and increase scheduled departures to expand usability of train service. 4. Actively anticipate demand by adding e vehicle charging stations at municipal parking lots and Maine Pike rest areas.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comments.

- Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 394  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment:

Public Comment 395  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: The Active Transportation Plan should be revised to include a clear timeline associated with all goals, as well as specific tactics within each of those goals. Measures for success should also be included, with a plan to collect baseline data and opinion, as well as data collection checkpoints throughout the entirety of the process. A commitment to increasing funding is necessary as this plan will not come to fruition with it. Please also consider the health of not only our environment, but all of its citizens. By creating a clear plan for implementation, this plan will allow for greater access to safer routes of transportation and will undoubtedly contribute to the collective health of our state. Lastly, Maine was in the top 5 states for outdoor recreation's economic output. This plan, with the above additions, will only increase the state's reputation for excellent recreation opportunities and continue to draw people here to experience all we have to offer.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hello Shelby,

Thank you for your comments regarding the Active Transportation (AT) Plan and its future implementation. Your mention of the nexus between Active Transportation and outdoor recreations is also a very important point, MaineDOT plans to work closely with other partner organizations in the realm where AT and recreation overlap.

Thank you,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 396  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: The Active Transportation Plan should be revised to include a clear timeline associated with all goals, as well as specific tactics within each of those goals. Measures for success should also be included, with a plan to collect baseline data and opinion, as well as data collection checkpoints throughout the entirety of the process. A commitment to increasing funding is necessary as this plan will not come to fruition with it. Please also consider the health of not only our environment, but all of its citizens. By creating a clear plan for implementation, this plan will allow for greater access to safer routes of transportation and will undoubtedly contribute to the collective health of our state. Lastly, Maine was in the top 5 states for outdoor recreation's economic output. This plan, with the above additions, will only increase the state's reputation for excellent recreation opportunities and continue to draw people here to experience all we have to offer.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comments.

- Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 397  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: The Active Transportation Plan should be revised to include a clear timeline associated with all goals, as well as specific tactics within each of those goals. Measures for success should also be included, with a plan to collect baseline data and opinion, as well as data collection checkpoints throughout the entirety of the process. A commitment to increasing funding is necessary as this plan will not come to fruition with it. Please also consider the health of not only our environment, but all of its citizens. By creating a clear plan for implementation, this plan will allow for greater access to safer routes of transportation and will undoubtedly contribute to the collective health of our state. Lastly, Maine was in the top 5 states for outdoor recreation's economic output. This plan, with the above additions, will only increase the state's reputation for excellent recreation opportunities and continue to draw people here to experience all we have to offer.

Public Comment 398  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I live in Midcoast Maine. Mixing bikes and cars is scary for me to ride my bike. Infrastructure to separate cars and bikes is essential. Infrastructure to encourage cars to go slower. Lower speed limits dramatically (15-20 mph) within towns and cities.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comments.

- Ian Gorecki

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Could some snowmobile trails become bike routes? Paving them away from car traffic and using state money to encourage tourism in a safe place.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/26/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for following up. Most snowmobile trails are not owned or operated by MaineDOT, so we would likely only be involved in this if the responsible agency would approach us with a request to change the use to paved bike paths. There would need to be strong community support for changing the purpose of an existing facility.

Public Comment 399  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: RE: the Active Transportation Plan, please emphasize a priority towards connectivity - not just to multimodal hubs, but to each other- to build connectivity across the state through active transportation networks. This will better support the climate action plan and it will better drive economic development including tourism development. The connectivity of trails to trails and trails to downtowns is also important. Active Transportation is a smart investment for the health of the people, the planet and the economy.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hi Anne,

Thank you for your comment on the Active Transportation Plan. Connectivity is very important at both a Statewide scale and a community wide scale for active transportation users.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 400  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I ask that you try to install protected bike lanes. I was just in Quebec City and Montreal, places that get plenty of snow. They have bike lanes that are protected by medians, upright posts and raised like sidewalks. On busy streets this would make cycling much safer.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hi Susan,

Thank you for providing your comment on the Active Transportation Plan, raised or protected bike lanes are one great tool that can be used in appropriate context to facilitate a safer way for cyclists to navigate an urban area.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 401  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I'd like to see more painted bike lanes around Bangor and Orono. Paint doesn't cost as much as building a separate bike lane.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hello,

Thank you for providing your comment on the Active Transportation Plan regarding painted bike lanes. Tools such as bike lanes and others are important infrastructure improvements that can provide for safe active transportation use.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 402  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: The funding allocation and timelines do not align with Maine's carbon commitments. Road construction and maintenance funding allocation still dominate. Funding needs to be high enough for transit and active transportation to makeup for decades of underfunding. Funding for roads needs to be reduced to makeup for decades of overfunding. There is also too much emphasis on aviation. We should be improving our train system to the point that numerous airports aren't needed throughout Maine.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/26/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for reviewing the plans and sharing your feedback.

In terms of addressing climate change, MaineDOT is supporting *Maine Won't Wait* through several efforts, including but not limited to the expansion of our EV charging network as outlined in our PEVID plan, supporting electrification of the transit fleet where feasible, and supporting other multimodal efforts as outlined in our Active Transportation, Transit, and Rail Plans.

While our Family of Plans, especially our Transit and Active Transportation Plans, highlights the need to identify opportunities for additional funding, MaineDOT must make difficult choices about how to allocate limited resources. We recognize that the highway and bridge system remains the backbone of our transportation system in a rural state like Maine - including for electric vehicles and most transit services - and we are focused on maintaining these vital connections. The vast majority of our highway capital projects are focused on maintenance and repair, rather than construction of new roadways.

Thank you again,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 403  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: So great that Maine has put this together. Will an implementation plan follow that has milestones with due dates and details like how many bike lanes, where, and how wide?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hi Jenine,

Thank you for reading the Active Transportation Plan and providing comment. At this time a formal separate implementation plan is not planned, rather MaineDOT will work both internally and with partners and stakeholders to regularly assess plan progress. As many of the strategies in the plan will require specific funding, millstones will depend on availability of funding to address each strategy.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 404  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Nothing on active boat transportation especially on coastal peninsula islands as well as lakes and rivers. Small boat like kayaks and canoes and electric assist boats. We need safe places to store lock and charge ebikes and escooters.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hello Jonathan,

Thank you for providing your comment on the Active Transportation Plan. Bike parking, e-bike charging, and micromobility options will all be important aspects of the future of Active Transportation in Maine.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 405  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Hello, Please, Please, Please try to expand all roads with a 3' shoulder to accommodate bicycle traffic and maintaining surfaced shoulders when resurfacing roadways. Route 90 in Warren/Rockland/Rockport is a good example of resurfacing the shoulder when resurfacing the road. l am thankful for the Rte 90 shoulder paving but to be honest as an experienced (50 years of competitive cycling) I found sections of the breakdown lane to be poor resurfaced...there are what I'll refer to a wavy bumpy sections. thank you for listening to my views and keep up your good work!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hi Donald,

Thank you for providing your comment on the Active Transportation Plan. As you mentioned, rural road shoulders are often an important consideration for cyclists riding through rural parts of Maine. MaineDOT plan to embark on identification of some High Priority Active Transportation road segment on rural highways, and in these areas a 4-foot shoulder with be prioritized as the roadway is repaved.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 406  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: Moving forward, I believe that there should be a state wide emphasis on expanding passenger rail as an alternative transportation option wherever possible. Portland especially is transitioning into a larger economic hub that is no longer just a summer town - and that is squeezing roads and home prices. As this drives people outside of the city, more transit links to the peninsula are imperative. Creating a viable commuter rail to the Ocean Gateway would be TRANSFORMATIONAL and would allow people to commute safely on to the peninsula without the hassle of Commercial Street traffic.

Public Comment 407  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: Moving forward, I believe that there should be a state wide emphasis on expanding passenger rail as an alternative transportation option wherever possible. Portland especially is transitioning into a larger economic hub that is no longer just a summer town - and that is squeezing roads and home prices. As this drives people outside of the city, more transit links to the peninsula are imperative. Creating a viable commuter rail to the Ocean Gateway would be TRANSFORMATIONAL and would allow people to commute safely on to the peninsula without the hassle of Commercial Street traffic.

Public Comment 408  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: As a cyclist living in Boothbay I am extremely aware and concerned about the lack of adequate road shoulders on which to safely ride. Many roads (at least in the Boothbay area) are paved without any thought to extending the pavement for safe cycling.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hi Richard,

Thank you for providing comment on the Active Transportation plan, especially in regards to shoulders on rural roads. MaineDOT plans to begin identifying High Priority Active Transportation road segments on rural roads, these segments will them be prioritized for 4-foot shoulders when repaving is done to provide a safer shoulder for active transportation users.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 409  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: We need an extremely strong focus on pedestrian and cycling driven infrastructure. Way too many people are being killed by outdated city infrastructure. Please ensure cities like Bangor have proper cycling infrastructure, we are way too far behind the country in improvements towards livable communities.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hello Michael,

Thank you for providing comment on the Active Transportation Plan. As you mention, pedestrian and cyclist safety continues to be a very important aspect of Active Transportation in Maine and eleswhere.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 410  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: US Route 1, from Fort Kent to Van Buren. The condition of the road is extremely poor especially from Frenchville to Madawaska. We often have to take a backroad to avoid extremely poor conditions and the damage to vehicles. When is the I 95 coming to the St. John Valley? We have been forgotten for at least two generations! 🤷🏻‍♀️

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comments. Route 1 between Frenchville and Madawaska is scheduled for a Light Capital Paving treatment this year, and there is a partially-funded reconstruction project tentatively planned for 2024-2025, pending a successful grant application. You can find more details about MaineDOT's scheduled capital projects in your area in our 2023-2025 Work Plan, which was released today: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/f0f9f927ce9948ca84180f02f5c43290>

At this time there are no active plans to extend the Interstate north of Houlton.

- Ian Gorecki

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 01/26/2023  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Mr. Gorecki, Thank you for your timely response. Also, thank you for your and all of Maine DOT dedication to improving our roads and all types of transportation. The new international bridge and Customs and Immigration Port of Entry in Madawaska is vital infrastructure to our region and if we will experience considerable revitalization in our region in the future. Maine for All of Maine! 🥳💖

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/26/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response: Thank you! We really do appreciate your taking the time to send us your thoughts!

Public Comment 411  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: Not In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I have been actively following the RUAC. I am so disappointed in the process and lack of transparency. Only the consultants are benefitting form this work. As a property owner and town councilor in Cumberland, I asked to be included. I was not selected and I very much feel as if my comments have been ignored and worse, seen with disdain. There has been no outreach to landowners who abut this rail line except by me at personal expense. Here is a letter I sent to the RUAC: 6 December 2022 Dear Rail Use Advisory Council Members: Thank you for taking public comment last night, though I can’t tell you how disappointed I was in Council attendance. Only seven of you were actually present. How can you take the temperature of the public if you’re not present? You were not able to see who clapped for certain points, and who clapped for other points, nor who did not clap at all. I would like to reiterate how deeply flawed this entire process has been, the most concerning being the lack of landowner participation in the process. You may or may not have abutter support, especially in the lesser traveled outlying areas, but you could have benefitted by their questions. Dale Storey asked an excellent question last night: what are you going to do when you need to widen 295, one of the most high volume crash areas in the state? In the summer, there is a crash in Yarmouth, Cumberland or Falmouth every Friday night. Abutters know this because the noise from the highway is diminished, so it is a nice night to sit outside. In Cumberland, you can’t expand east because of ledge and topography, and there is not enough space between the rail corridor and highway to add additional lanes. Nor is there enough land in the median for expansion. Early in the process, Casco Bay Trail Alliance, the well-organized promoter of this corridor said there could be approximately a half a million users a year, making the CBT the most traveled section of the Eastern Trail. They’ve since taken this information off their website, which is telling. It was propaganda they must have rethought. Since most use will occur from May to October, 25% of the users being tourists, that’s more than 2500 people a day traveling very close to homes in Cumberland and Falmouth. Even at half those estimates, that volume is unacceptable to our way of life. The abutters in Cumberland live in a rural residential area, not urban or suburban. CBT also advocates for commuter rail on the CSX line. I don’t think I need to remind you CSX is a privately owned rail, and valid arguments exist about putting commuters and freight on the same line. Next, you need to reread the report more carefully, paying attention to the small print. With regards to the economic projection of the trail, the fine print indicates that number will be reduced by 25% if snowmobiles aren’t allowed. What are the chances snowmobiles are going to be allowed? The honest answer is nil. Another major consideration you have overlooked are the environmental impacts. While a trail could conceivably reduce carbon emissions (so could an electric train), what about the damage to wildlife habitats? There are deer, herons(summer), turkeys, rabbits, and a bobcat currently residing on my property. They are cohabitating on several abutting acres with cows and a horse. The corridor has also hosted moose and bear and is home to many species of birds. They won’t stay with that amount of human scent in the air. In addition, Chenery Brook that runs adjacent to the trail through Cumberland, flows unencumbered into Casco Bay. Humans, even the most well-intended, produce pollution-from microtrash to human waste. Another concern with the information presented is that maintenance costs were included, but those costs do not appear to include public safety expenses. Right now, my home cannot be accessed by anyone without a relative/neighbor seeing something. With thousands of people traveling behind my house, comes the potential for increased crime, the least of which is trespass. I fear vandalism and robbery. The CBT supporters promote positive impacts, but gloss over these concerns. If there are transients camped along the trail, as happens in many other locations, then cyclists are going to avoid the more urban areas. In Ohio for example, there are wonderful trails that go along the old canal towpaths and rail corridors from Akron to Cleveland. However, people avoid the part of the trail that goes through downtown Akron out of fear for safety. You have heard support for both rail and trail. How about consideration and support for abutting landowners? I have further concerns directly related to Cumberland. Why should Cumberland invest any dollars in this project, even maintenance, when it does not provide connectivity to any of our current public lands, of which we’ve preserved hundreds of acres? Secondly, why would we not instead, if we wanted safer pedestrian and bicycle traffic, invest in sidewalks in our more populated areas of town? Finally, Cumberland has more pressing concerns, like care for our seniors and educational space needs for our students to consider spending one penny on this proposal. The CBT may conceivably be a nice-to-have, but it is certainly not a need-to-have. Finally, there would be one condition I would support if trail development is eminent, and that is for the DOT to collaborate with the PUC and CMP to insist that the proposed Brightline expansion be put underground between Greely Road and the station on Johnson Road. The rail/trail abutters own this land, not CMP, and this compromise would allow abutters full access to land they already pay taxes on. For me, that would be ⅔ of an acre. Then I could plant all the trees I want so I don’t have to see the thousands of users, and my privacy would be restored. In conclusion, I request that you consider all the RUAC members’ motivations when writing your reports. The biases are significant, even in your consultants’ report. I specifically asked to be appointed to the council as an abutter, but I was not selected. Bill Shane has done a terrific job, as the DOT knew he would, but he is not an elected official. The Town of Cumberland’s Council support for the RUAC was with the condition that one of our councilors be selected which did not happen. Cumberland’s support was not for the CBT, as has been misrepresented to you. These are facts. When it comes time to write your report, do not bow to special interests; do the right thing. Thank you for your time and service.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/03/2023  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thank you very much for your comment on MaineDOT’s Family of Plans and the Rail Use Advisory Process (RUAC) in particular. You raise some interesting points for MaineDOT to consider as we finalize the Active Transportation Plan and continue implementation of all MaineDOT’s Family of Plans (Long-Range, Transit, Aviation, Rail and Active Transportation).  With regard to your comments on the RUAC process, MaineDOT certainly understands that the future of inactive rail lines is something many diverse groups have very strong opinions on. MaineDOT is following the RUAC Process in State Law, Public Law 21, Chapter 239 which will be the basis for any decisions. Thank you once again for your comments on MaineDOT’s Family of Plans.

Public Comment 412  
Date: 01/23/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I am interested in learning how Rockland can be made bicycle friendly. I am a daily commuter, cycling from Rockland's south end to Pen bay Medical Center, summer and winter. I am from the Netherlands and am very happy to help brainstorm about ways to make the daily commute safer. This includes effective education for drivers.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hello Elisabeth,

Thank you for your comment on the Active Transportation Plan and comments about cycling safety in Rockland. If you would like to speak specifically about projects in Rockland, please feel free to reach out to me via email or engage directly with City staff in Rockland. I believe there is also a non-profit organization in Rockland who works to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety also.

Rockland Rolls Organization:  <https://www.renewrocklandme.com/>

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT Active Transportation Planner

dakota.hewlett@maine.gov

Public Comment 413  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: In addition to estimates of cost per mile, there needs to be some qualitative assessment of the work to realize each project. Widening a state road in a rural are where the state owns the right of way requires less political capital than does changing road widths in urban areas. E.g. - Building community support and dealing with community resistance might generally be easier in rural areas and harder in more settled areas. That would allow creation of a matrix that includes a measure of anticipated effort involved (easy, modest, hard) or how costly a project would be vs. where it fits on the priority range (low, medium, high). With priorities established, The plan should include outcome measures that matter (population served, intersection safety improved, etc.) and some timelines/signposts against which to measure success or lack of it.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hi Ned,

Thank you for your comment on the Active Transportation Plan. Prioritization of projects, based on available resources and other constraints, is one of the most difficult steps that will need to be address as this new Active Transportation Plan is finalized.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 414  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the Active Transportation Plan! I am very happy to see dedication to improving conditions for non-motorized travel. After reviewing the draft plan, I have the following comments I would like to see considered in plan revisions: - My biggest worry about this plan is the lack of a timeline or measurable objectives for the goals outlined in the plan. This has me worried that this will become another plan that gets shelved or progress will be slowed. As the plan laid out, improving active transportation infrastructure needs to happen fast, both for safety and climate concerns. Please consider revising the plan to include a timeline of when the department plans to accomplish some of its goals. I know this may take time due to needing to determine additional funding sources and priority corridors, but would showcase the great work MDOT does and help us who rely on active transportation to know what to expect. - I appreciate making a priority of widening shoulders on Maine highways. My e-bike commute requires me to avoid a major arterial due to there being zero shoulder for two miles on a high-traffic road. However, shoulders are not enough in some areas, and bike lane infrastructure (preferably with separation) needs to exist for safety. I was surprised to hardly see any mentions of bike lanes in the plan. - It was nice to see revisiting speed limits on major corridors as a priority. Personally, I believe the MDOT (and generally federal standard) of determining speed limit by traffic flow and safety such as sight-lines for automobile traffic is a flawed way of determining a speed limit which does not account for safety for vulnerable road users. I hope as part of reassessing these speed limits, MDOT revisits their policy of how speed limits are set and can determine methodology which keeps AT users safe. (Yes, this means just about every speed limit is too fast.) - I am part of the executive team for a bicycle and pedestrian advisory committee in Southern Maine. While we have been somewhat following the drafting of this plan, the public comment period for the draft seems extremely rushed and did not work with our committee's meeting timeline to get a public comment approved for submission. As our group is a significant portion of active transportation commuters in our community, we feel as though the timeline for public comment should be extended to allow for relevant stakeholders to submit comment on this important plan. Again, thank you all for the work that has gone into this plan, and I look forward to reviewing the final plan.

Public Comment 415  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: Jennifer Grant Director, Public Outreach and Planning Leah Pickett, Analyst Cambridge Systematics Regarding the Maine State Rail Plan draft, I have a concern about the makeup of the Stakeholders in the Maine State Rail Plan, and related to this, in the Active Transportation Plan. The purpose of the stakeholder engagement is stated on page 75 of the MRSP as: "The purpose of these interviews was to collect detailed input on rail needs and opportunities in Maine from a variety of perspectives. " The Stakeholders of the MSRP are listed in part below: (pg 75) "TrainRiders Northeast Independent Rail Advocate Maine Rail Group Maine Rail Transit Coalition \*Maine Trails Coalition \* Rail Users Network " I cannot emphasize strongly enough that Trail Supporters who advocate for pulling up Rail Infrastructure are the antithesis to the stated purpose of the Maine State Rail Plan. They have no right to be included in the Stakeholder List of Train Related Groups. This point is exemplified by Rail Advocate position on rail conversion: "There is strong opposition to rail-to-trail conversions from rail and environmental advocates, who argue that trail conversion of rail corridors inevitably erodes the possibility of future rail use. " pg 80 Including the counterpoint from Trail Advocates "Trail advocates point to strong public support for trails and argue that the most important inter-urban corridors do not require a choice between trains and trails as there are alternate routes that allow both. " is both an insult to Train Supporters -for there is also 'strong public support for trains'-as well as a patently false statement. For many of the corridors involved with State Rail to Trail Conversions, there is NO alternative State Owned rail routes. Two examples of this in corridors undergoing RUAC consideration are the Mountain Division Rail (this is the ONLY track through this portion of Western Maine) and the Berlin Subdivision (the only other route running in this general area is a PRIVATELY owned, for-profit freight line.) Perhaps the reasoning that trail advocates are included is that they are a competing use for the railroads, and hence could be, in some opinions, a stakeholder. Using this same reasoning, Rail interests would also be a competing use of the rail trail conversions and should therefore be a stakeholder in the Active Transportation Plan. But there are NO rail related groups listed as stakeholders in the Active Transportation Plan. pg 18 of the Active Transportation Plan: "4.2 Stakeholder Meetings A series of 12 stakeholder and expert meetings were organized, providing a diverse set of organizations to provide input on AT needs throughout Maine. Key stakeholders included: Environmental and smart-growth organizations. Staff and board members from the Bicycle Coalition of Maine (BCM). Trail advocates. Metropolitan and Regional Planning Organizations (MPOs and RPOs). Age-friendly and disability-rights advocates. Organizations supporting people experiencing homelessness. Public health and safety organizations. Pedestrian or bicycle advisory committees. Social justice advocates. Staff from Tribes and Nations. MaineDOT leadership and technical expert" Furthermore, there is no Train Advocate's counterpoint included in the extensive discussion of rail-trail conversions that take up multiple pages in the ATP. This inequality in the treatment of Trail voices over Rail voices, in the Maine State Rail Plan, is biased and gratuitous. The Maine State Rail Plan should be a guideline and summary of the future of trains and rail opportunities. Any mention of bike/ped trails belongs only in the Active Transportation Plan. Thank You for your consideration.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Patty

Thanks again you for your comments on the Maine State Rail Plan. They will be taken into consideration as we revise the final plans.

Nate Howard

MaineDOT

Public Comment 416  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I thoroughly agree with this statement "A robust AT system statewide will support the Maine Climate Action Plan and the Maine Economic Development Strategy 2020-2029 and enhance the vibrancy of Maine’s cities, quintessential villages, and rural areas." It's not too late to help towns make their centers safer and more attractive for bikers and pedestrians. We need more funding, and more deadlines or timelines for getting this done. Lowering speed limits, and widening shoulders costs are critical strategies that won't take quite as many resources, especially where shoulders are already paved. In our town, high levels of commuter traffic on roads without sufficient shoulders and at high speeds make it more dangerous for bikers and walkers. Walkable village/town centers must take priority over commuting throughways. This may result in traffic being backed up for a fraction longer each day, but it also means that for the other 20-22 hours each day the space can be claimed to benefit residents, small businesses, and visitors attracted to nicer spaces.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hi Anne,

Thank you for providing comment on the Active Transportation Plan. You comments are well articulated and echo the importance of our downtowns and rural village centers in Maine.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 417  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: We as a state are behind other states that are taking advantage of rail trails and multi use trails to attract and keep their citizens happy and healthy. Focusing on these trails as must needs for communities should be a top priority for the DOT. This plan is a great start but only if it is worked on aggressively. Southern and coastal Maine are well situated to take advantage of the population density, the tourism, and connecting locals with outdoor recreation. Also, would I travel to work by bike if I could safely? Yes, I would. Up to 20 miles away. I live very close to the mountain division line that I would like to see completed from Fryeburg to Portland. The state needs to make this a priority as the corridor is best used for a trail with no rail opportunities in the near or far future. I’m convinced once the mountain division trail is finished it will be a great example for the DOT to show that a trail of this length and quality works and brings in a high amount of annual revenue paying for itself in a matter of years. I have pop up events planned for the trail once it is completed, connecting the users with others and strengthening the trail experience, one event I have already done and will again this year is “Chalk the Trail”. Please also when the trails are approved to be made and funding has begun please put up signs that say “Future home of the Mountain Division Trail”. This will give people an idea of what is happening. Thank you for making this plan and I look forward to seeing the vision presented in it realized.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hi Andrew,

Thank you for taking the time to review the Active Transportation Plan and provide comment. As you mention, off-road trail connections can provide great opportunities to expand active transportation for commuters in Maine.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 418  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: The state should be concerned with the rapid loss of railroads to trails, and recognize the ability of both modes to co-exist alongside each other on lines such as the Mt. Division and Berlin Sub. Rail lines such as these should also involve conferring with other states which they run through.

Public Comment 419  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Hugely important. Goes hand in hand with getting more of the Eastern Trail off road so that it's safer and also calming traffic on local roads to reduce speed which is the real impediment to more people using active transportation.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hi Patrick,

Thanks for you comment on the Active Transportation Plan in regards to off-road and as well as off-road Active Transportation Infrastructure.

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 420  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I watched the zoom meeting. I am 73 yo. I am a walker and a former cyclist. I only walk now because I stopped cycling due to the danger I felt from traffic. People drive too fast. People drive distracted and this has gotten worse and worse. It’s obvious when a cell phone is being used. I must always watch for cars drifting towards me. I desire a 5 ft bicycle lane.

Public Comment 421  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I have reviewed MaineDOT's familiy of plans and I support the recomdations in each plan.

MaineDOT Response  
Date:   
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hi Jackson,

Thank you for taking the time to review the Active Transportation Plan.

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 422  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan  
Comment: There is something much more compelling about the way the Long-Range Transportation Plan's 5 key goals is laid out vs the Maine DOT's mission and guiding principles guide our vision for transit in Maine. The 5 key goals in the LRTP are exactly the same key goals of the Maine transit systems. I think that having a Safe, Well Managed system is key, it would not continue to receive funding if it wasn't that now, you and the transit systems have done a good job in the safety and compliance realm.. I think if you want a bigger funding hammer for transit you need to focus on IMPACT's. IMPACT's to Safe Travel, IMPACT's to a Vibrant Economy and World Class Quality of Life, IMPACT's to Environmentally Sustainability, IMPACT's to Equitable Access. Transit is viewed as a social service and a support in Maine currently, a draw on public resources. The script needs to be flipped. We need to change the perspective and truly push the impacts transit has on all of Maine. Somehow, we need to show what the ripple effect is of that $1 dollar of transit spending... the politicians, the economists, the investors, the philanthropists. These people, these are the ones so intimately responsible for transit funding through budgets and policy committees... and yet they are the least compelled to maintain or expand transit services, regardless of how safe or well run these systems are. Transit has no value to many county commissioners because no one has explained to them how transit supports the economy, increases GDP, generates employment taxes, employee spending, etc. Transit needs to be seen as an investment, not a service... otherwise funding will always be an issue to try and overcome. I appreciate what you've done here, lots of hard work. Just my two cents.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response By: Ryan N  
Response: Larry, thank you for your thoughtful comments on the Maine State Transit Plan. We will keep them in mind as we look to finalize the plan and identify funding sources and opportunities.

Public Comment 423  
Date: 01/24/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: enjoy the railroad trail line in Fryeburg and elsewhere and hoping for more safe places like that for walkers:)

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment.

- Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 424  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: As a resident of Cornish, there are not many safe options for running or biking. Often I will travel by vehicle to access the Mountain Division rail trails in Standish or Fryeburg. A continued connection from Fryeburg to Standish via the rail trail would be a safe & healthy option for residents of Cornish (and surrounding areas). Currently I run along the shoulder of route 25 & other side roads and do not feel safe exercising alongside fast driving vehicles. The Mountain Division rail trails provide a safe & healthy way of transportation for Maine residents. Hopefully, one day the rail trails will connect all the way through to provide a healthy & safe alternative for exercise and transportation. Thank you

Public Comment 426  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Being an avid road cyclist, I'm supportive of changes that will improve the safety of cyclists (and others such as pedestrians) on the road. I know that the Bicycle Coalition of Maine has submitted their support and feedback for the Active Transportation Plan. While I generally support, I believe that more funding/attention should focus on 1) improvements at intersections (see link https://ppms.trec.pdx.edu/media/1223584239DKJJTZE.pdf); 2) more education to ensure all motorists know these are roads for everyone, not just automobiles, and 3)better enforcement of laws when there is a serious infraction by a motorist - and a cyclist for that matter.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hello Jim,

Thank you for taking the time to review the Active Transportation Plan and provide comment. Your points regarding intersection improvements, and enforcement are certainly part of the tools needed to create a safe active transportation environment.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 427  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Appalachian Mountain Club Comments on MDOT’s Long Range Transportation Plan Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Maine DOT’s Long Range Transportation Plan. The Appalachian Mountain Club is the nation’s oldest conservation, recreation, and education organization, with the mission to foster the protection, enjoyment and understanding of the outdoors. We have 6,600 members in Maine, and we appreciate the goal of a safe transportation system for all users and modes of transportation. We are particularly pleased with the inclusion of the first-ever Active Transportation Plan, and its acknowledgement of the many benefits of active transportation. To the list of economic, connectivity, environmental and physical health benefits, we would add that trails increase quality of life and build community, and that physical activity is a recommended strategy to improve mental health. It’s no coincidence that trail use in Maine and across the country increased exponentially in response to the COVID-19 epidemic as we all sought to ease anxiety and socialize safely. There is clearly both a need and strong public support for more infrastructure to support active transportation. The 2,000 comments that Maine DOT received from stakeholders about AT demonstrate a strong public desire for safe and nearby options. We note that 69% of the miles of existing trails and greenways in the state are in northern and Down East Maine, and we support the prioritization of trail corridors that serve population centers. We likewise support the plan to expand road shoulders in high priority areas. Clearly all of the goals identified in the plan will require substantial resources to implement, and we applaud the goal of identifying and pursuing new funding opportunities. We must note, however, that only Goal Two: Make prioritized expansions to the off-road AT network, is qualified by the use of the phrase “within available resources”. We hope this language does not signal a lower level of commitment. Expanding active transportation opportunities--from on-road improvements, to dedicated trails, to multi-modal connections—has the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase both safety and a sense of community, improve our daily lives, and benefit our communities and state economically. Given that importance, we should prioritize the plan, and find the funding to make it reality.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hello Eliza,

Thank you for reviewing the Active Transportation Plan and providing comments on behalf of the AMC. Your thoughts in regard to rural road shoulders, off-road trail prioritization, and funding are certainly all important points of consideration as MaineDOT begins implementation of the plan.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 428  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I 100% support the Active Transportation Plan particularly the elements for improving rural access through expanded shoulders and preferably off-road trails. I believe a connected off-road trail network in this State would reap many benefits and help achieve other program goals such as improved health and economic growth through tourism and job creation. I also am in support of the other plans (rail, transit and aviation) but feel strongly that the AT plan represents the biggest return on investment and has much lower barriers to achieving measurable goals quickly in comparison to the other plans.

Public Comment 429  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: THINGS WE LIKE • It exists! • It makes a strong statement on the importance of AT in the state • Robust stakeholder and public input process. It captures specific desires on the part of the public • It is honest–acknowledging funding constraints, and that some MaineDOT policies may have hindered implementation of some AT projects • It acknowledges and leans on work already done that showcases the potential rail trail and other corridors have to be transformative AT resources. • Good mix of infrastructure, policies and programs, and educational efforts–well rounded approach that recognizes need to address limitations/success through a variety of methods • It identifies good goals for the department to pursue • Can provide a roadmap to improved AT facilities, safer roads, and more transportation choices (needs stronger calendar, implementation specificity to realize that roadmap) THINGS WE THINK NEED MORE WORK • There are NO timetables on any of this. E.g. there are no references to when the CS policy review process will begin, or when the HPAT corridor prioritization process will begin, or when match policies will be reviewed, or when speed setting policies will be reviewed, etc. It is not really a plan if there is no timeframe for getting the work done. • Action items and metrics are frequently vague to the point of meaningless–e.g. Miles of trails built per year is characterized as something the Dept “aspires” to achieve, which leaves it as little more than a hope.. Four foot shoulders are “desired.” There is no commitment to focused effort to achieve what is described in the plan, no mechanisms for driving the department towards compliance with its aspirations and desires, no metrics to measure success or failure. Model plans from other states are referenced, but there is no evidence that the MaineDOT plans to consider implementing any of the practices in Minnesota, Pennsylvania, or Vermont. • There are few, if any references to bike lanes in the document, except for in a call out box on AT facilities. In the section discussing the VPI, which is supposed to be the flagship program for improving AT in the state, there is no reference to bike lanes, separated side paths, buffered bike lanes or any of the more robust facilities that the rest of the country is increasingly using. There are mostly references to more shoulders, and more sidewalk, which is great, but it feels like bike facilities are being de-emphasized. There are no references to opportunities to narrow lanes to less than 11 feet in contexts posted 30 and under etc. • The emphasis on more shoulders is of concern to some stakeholders, who fear “a one size fits most” approach. And the plan is quite inconsistent on shoulders: e.g. page 48 references four foot shoulders where feasible as (what appears to be) a minimum standard, But by page 71, we learn that four foot shoulders are only “desired,” and that three feet will be the likely standard minimum, and that the minimum roadway cross section will be two 1 ft shoulders with two 11 ft travel lanes, irrespective of speed and context. Page 74 again refers to four footers. In short, the language around this issue in the plan is inconsistent, provides weak guidance for achieving more four foot shoulders, and gives plenty of rationalizations as to why less is provided. There is no metric assigned to HPAT corridors, only a blanket statement that 15-25 miles of shoulders will be created, and “some” will be on HPAT. So are shoulders really the AT solution? • The constant refrain about how financial constraints are going to limit the ability of the department to build out improved facilities seems to be a strategy to manage expectations downward. Again, there are no metrics to assess how well the department is doing with this in terms of when this effort would begin, what the target funding goal might be, etc. • The plan continues to celebrate the piecemeal work done incidentally on other projects as evidence of significant financial commitment ($26 million annually!) but it is impossible to find a list of those investments and see how they might extend the AT network in the state. Kristine Keeney of ECG has bird-dogged this issue for a while, and it is hard to get concrete information about these other investments. A list of the projects that used this money should be published. • It still feels like AT is a tier below other uses in importance, despite the intense public participation in the process that demonstrated the interest in better conditions. THINGS WE RECOMMEND • Add a Timeline and calendar--Plan needs clearer process steps tied to a calendar. Without the schedule, this whole doc is just a series of aspirations, rather than a plan for achieving them. The plan itself needs to include a calendar or it needs to request MDOT create one within one year of plan completion • Increase funding. Make a commitment to increasing the stand alone bike/ped budget by 10% annually for the next ten years or until the stand alone funding corresponds to the percentage of persons killed/injured as vulnerable users. Cannot simply rely on federal funding for bike/ped projects. The state also needs to increase funding and re-prioritize how funding is currently allocated • Create a System for measuring success. Set targets for miles of bike lanes built, miles of shoulder on HPATCs, miles of trail, feet of sidewalk or sidepath constructed. This should be reported publicly annually, and missing targets should trigger mitigation actions to make up the shortfalls. OTHER MISC NOTES • The plan needs more copy editing and polish. Punctuation and italics on titles is not always present. I did not do a complete editorial close read, but saw enough that this should happen. • Section mentioning ebikes and escooters as “exceptions” to AT is confusing and unclear. • Get specific. The vagueness of “improvements to AT facilities” means almost anything–just repaving a road as part of a VPI might qualify as an improvement. • Lay out how the Complete Streets review might work–who is on the review team? How will the department ensure compliance? • Lay out meaningful changes in engineering guidance (ie. on lane widths). • Acknowledge that the current system of setting speed limits just rewards drivers pushing the 85th percentile speeds upward, and commit to changing that. • The Mountain Div Line and Berlin Subdivision Corridor (Portland-Auburn) RUACs have made their call for a trail. Build them • Regarding the $26mil in AT investments–need to make that accounting public and provide a list of projects. • Federal funding sources on page 75 implies you are only looking for new funding from feds, not re-allocating state money. Dedicate more state funding. The transportation system should see more balance in funding.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hi Jim,

Thank you for your comments. These are well-noted. We've said it before, but again, we really do appreciate BCM's continued engagement throughout this process. We look forward to continuing to partner with you as we work to improve active transportation in Maine.

- Ian

Public Comment 430  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I live wi 1/2 mile of the Mountain Division Trail in Windham which is a RWT. I bike, walk, and X-country ski the trail a couple of times a week and have done so for 15 years. Simply put it is life changing. Over the years the number of trail users has grown most dramatically during the pandemic when it was common to see dozens of people in a 3 mile walk. I have also walked, biked and hiked a significant portion of the other stretches of the Trail from Westbrook to Windham and Standish to Hiram. It is a very scenic trip and has tremendous potential from an economic (tourism), environmental, and health perspectives. I have been involved with the Mountain Division Alliance for several years now and strongly advocate for the development of the proposed section from Standish to Fryeburg - connecting to the existing section -> NH Border. While I found the Maine State Active Transportation Plan very well written and thought out. I would point out that benefits of the Mountain Division Trail is greatest when the entire length from the sea in Portland to the Mountains in NH. The evaluation of Cost Estimate Assumptions: Trail-Until-Rail on Page 20 of Appendix C may change when the entire length of the trail is considered (town of Windham/Westbrook have commissioned a feasibility study of the 6 mile section connecting the Trail in Windham (Rt202) to Westbrook. In particular, the scoring of SATP Goals rating may be increased in particular the "Serves First/Last mile connections to Transportation modes". Great work! Very exciting prospects for Maine and visitors (Fryeburg/NH entry to Maine is 2nd busiest crossing for visitors to Maine in the state).

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/26/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hi William,

Thank you for taking the time to review the Active Transportation Plan and to provide comment. The Mountain Division is just one exciting piece of Maine's future Active Transportation opportunities.

We did note that you may have requested a response by mail. We believe that may have been a mistake, but if you would like a written, paper response, please do let us know!

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 01/27/2023  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Thanks Dakota your response via email is all i need.

Public Comment 431  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I live in Portland, and everyday I'm shocked by how much quality of living is lost to making it easier for SUV to circulate than to pedestrians. I don't own a car, and therefore, the Active Transportation Plan means a lot to me. Still, I'd like to suggest a few improvements: PERFORMANCE METRICS: The plan needs to include a timetable and performance metrics, or it needs to direct MaineDOT to create one within one year of the plan's finalization SUCCESS MEASURE: The Plan lacks clear performance measures. Miles of trails built per year are characterized as aspirational. Four foot shoulders are “desired,” but not planned for. MORE FUNDING NOW: The Plan notes in several places that there are “financial constraints,” and the goals of the SATP cannot be achieved with current funding. We suggest that funding increases begin immediately, and that AT sees a 10% increase annually or until funding is proportional to VU injuries and fatalities MORE BIKE LANES: There are few references to bike lanes, buffered bike lanes, or separated sidepath facilities–all types of infrastructure the public mentioned as a priority. The Village Partnership Initiative, for example, does not refer to bike lanes or other on-road bike facilities. SHOULDER WIDTH: The plan emphasizes shoulders as a solution on many (esp. rural) roadways, but while 4’ minimum shoulders are repeatedly mentioned (pp. 23, 48, 74), on page 71, the plan emphasizes that 3’ are the likely minimum on HPC 3 roads, and 1-3’ on HCP 4 roads. 4’ Shoulders are noted as “desired.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/26/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hello Colin,

Thank you for taking the time to review the Active Transportation Plan and provide your comments. Your comments will be taken into consideration as the plan is finalized.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 432  
Date: 01/25/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Aviation System Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Sounds like a lot of money is going to be spent on studying infrastructure that should already be known, more government spending and higher taxation for those of us already in financial hardship

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/27/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

John,

Thank you for your comment. While we have many excellent engineers who excel in designing infrastructure, in many cases projects are highly specific and require detailed, individual study. The MaineDOT Bureau of Planning also works closely with communities to ensure that new infrastructure is developed in line with a local vision for their community, rather than as a top-down decision from Augusta. Planning also enables us to assess the costs and benefits of a project, before committing resources to the construction of infrastructure that must then be maintained for decades. Moreover, depending on the source of funding used for a project, many different legal requirements for the planning process may apply, such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). While these definitely require time and money, they help to ensure that the project matches the needs of the community and the state, and uncover unforeseen complications before the project has advanced too far. Failure to follow these requirements is illegal and can lead to lawsuits, which can delay projects for years and lead to massive cost increases that significantly exceed planning costs. While it can be frustrating, MaineDOT works hard to complete planning requirements through a timely, fair process and get to the important work of building and maintaining our critical infrastructure.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 433  
Date: 01/26/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I urge MDOT to work closely with organizations like Portland Trails and Bike Coalition of Maine to make our state safer and more environmentally friendly.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/26/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hello,

Thank you for reviewing the Active Transportation Plan and providing comment. MaineDOT looks forward to working with Bicycle Coalition of Maine and other stakeholders on implementation of the plan and prioritization of key projects in the future.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 434  
Date: 01/26/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: TO: Jennifer Grant, Director, Public Outreach and Planning MaineDOT jennifer.grant@maine.gov CC Leah Pickett, Analyst, Cambridge Systematics FROM: Anthony J Donovan, Director MRTC RE: Maine State Rail Plan – MRTC Comments Also submitted to the MaineDOT Family of Plans comments https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/27763afe326645c285cb1d726ee68cae The Maine Rail Transit Coalition (MRTC) is an advocacy group engaged for the purpose of expanding passenger rail services as per the 1995 Maine State “Passenger Rail Service Act.", that established the Maine State rail authority NNEPRA “… to take all actions that are reasonably necessary to initiate, establish or reinitiate regularly scheduled passenger rail service between points within this State and points within and outside this State.” In the early part of this 21st century the MRTC identified the former Grand Trunk railway between mile 0.0 and beyond the US border with Canada as a railroad transportation corridor of significant value. MRTC work is reflected in a number of reports independent of state financing and supported by the findings of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts Portland North Alternative Modes Analysis published by the State of Maine in 2011. The Portland North report, and the supporting data provided by the report consultants AeCOM, led the MRTC to engage in several actions in support of restoration of this railroad corridor for passenger train and multi-modal transportation services. These actions included legislation that established Transit Corridor Districts , funding for evaluation and analysis of the corridor including the Lewiston-Auburn Passenger Rail Service Plan published in 2019 and a Federal TIGER Grant application in 2018. The Portland North report provided data on the use of light rail trains, Diesel Multiple Units (DMU) to locations not otherwise served by Amtrak trains, specifically the state-owned portion of the route from Auburn into downtown Portland (MP 0.0). Portland North also led to the Portland to Lewiston/Auburn & Montreal study on 2011 based on demand for Amtrak-type passenger train services to Montreal, and Oxford and Androscoggin counties. In a series of public meetings over the past decade, the MRTC has met with communities, Chambers of Commerce, and landowners in municipalities where the MRTC planning team of land-use, transportation and economic development professionals have identified as locations for train stations. These locations were selected based on their potential for higher ridership, economic return on investment and environmental benefits. The MRTC report on this plan was intended to establish the project for consideration in Federal Capital Improvement Grant funding. This plan, a combination of inter-urban light rail and intercity/long distance heavy rail passenger services is explained in the Smart Growth Mobility Plan published in 2013. This current Maine State Rail Plan drafts identifies and includes the MRTC as a stakeholder. However, the MSRP draft does not reference the actual “stake” MRTC holds in state transportation planning. In meeting the Federal requirements for initiatives in the MSRP over the next three years, and in consideration of the significant funding opportunities represented by Federal Infrastructure initiatives, it is critical that the MRTC proposals for passenger train service operations be referenced in the 2023 MSRP. On behalf of the MRTC leadership and its coalition of interests, we request that the following be included in the current Maine State Rail Plan. ------- 1. Of issue in the MRTC review of the draft MSRP are references to state-owned railways influenced by the position of trail advocates. We believe these references to tearing up state railroads, e.g., “Interim Trail Use,” are not appropriate to this important state rail use transportation planning document. For example: A. Pg 80 Advocacy Group Perspectives \* “… Trail Advocates point to strong public support for trails and argue that the most important inter-urban corridors do not require a choice between trains and trails as there are alternative routes that allow both.” a. (a) this comment should be a separate and distinct from the beginning of this section that speaks to the rail planning aspect of this issue, and b. (b) the claim by trail advocates that a separate route can be used for the same purpose is unsubstantiated. It is presented by individuals with no experience or knowledge of railway logistics. B. Page 81 Section 5.2.2 Issues and Needs a. State-Owned OOS Rail Lines “Trail Advocates” should not be provided a forum in a federally mandated state rail plan. b. This plan is not intended to provide a basis for national East Coast trails or any rail-to-trail conversion. 2. State-Owned Railways (SMO). MRTC’s focus is on modern, light rail use of the state-owned railroad corridors for inter-urban transit and transit-oriented development at train station locations. We seek to leverage critical, and valuable state transportation assets to attract private investment to local communities, and federal dollars to Maine. The outcome can and should be equitable methods to move people efficiently and economically to work and jobs, and to protect the environment. A. The MSRP references the Rockland Branch as a pilot for expanding passenger rail between Brunswick and Rockland and the Westbrook Rail study for connecting business centers in Westbrook and Portland. This section of the MSRP should also include. i. Maine Rail Transit Coalition plan for operating inter-urban light rail transit on the SMO Berlin Subdivision e.g., the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad (SLR), between downtown Portland to Auburn and into downtown Lewiston-Auburn. ii. Maine Rail Group proposal to operate passenger train service on the Augusta Lower Roads by connecting Brunswick to Augusta with the potential for extending passenger train service to Waterville and Bangor. 3. Montreal. There is strong public support for achieving passenger rail service to Lewiston/Auburn – and ultimately to Montréal. A market study in 2000 found that as many as 600,000 travelers per year might utilize passenger rail connecting Maine to Montreal. A survey conducted by the Sierra Club in 2014 indicated 80% support for train service to Montreal in all demographic segments of Maine. A. The Portland to Lewiston/Auburn route is part of the federally designated Northern New England High Speed Rail Corridor. Rail planning in this corridor has included the design and permitting of a new intermodal facility at the Lewiston/Auburn airport, which would improve connections for auto, bus, rail, and air travelers, and would serve commuters working in the Portland region. The future extension of intercity passenger rail to the Lewiston/Auburn region is an incremental step in further development of the state’s passenger rail network. a. The USDOT’s Vision for High-Speed Rail in America (see figure 6) includes enhancements to the Northeast Corridor, as well as incremental steps to utilize the Northern New England High-Speed Rail Corridor that will ultimately connect Portland with Montreal. The Maine leg of this corridor is consistent with Maine’s long-range transportation plans, and reflects the cultural, economic, and historical relationships of Maine and neighboring Canadian provinces. B. Androscoggin, Oxford & Coos Counties Corridor Coalition (AOCCFC) a. Representatives from the communities of Androscoggin, Oxford and Coos Counties have been meeting regularly since 2010 for the purpose of exploring opportunities for collaboration in the restoration of passenger rail to this region; and b. The AOCCC has signed resolutions from 14 towns along the corridor for restoration of rail service on the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railway Corridor   C. The Train-Hotel on the Saint-Laurent & Atlantic Railroad The passenger train is proposed on the SLA from Montreal to Portland going through Maine and to Boston. a. François Rebello, Train-Hotel Inc. “The passenger train we are proposing has run for more than 100 years on the SLA track. Indeed, between 1860 and 1967, there was a passenger train connection from Montreal to Portland going through the actual SLA. b. Eight years ago, François Rebello, Train-Hotel Inc discussed this project with the different rail owners along the route in question. MRTC participated with the Train-Hotel in the organized a meeting at the Coaticook train station where more than 60 representatives have contributed $100 to participate in this event.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Tony --

Thanks again you for your comments. They will be taken into consideration as we revise the Plan.

Nate Howard

MaineDOT

Public Comment 435  
Date: 01/26/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: https://www.pressherald.com/2023/01/26/from-the-business-desk-working-on-the-railroad-all-the-live-long-day/ It almost seems like a no-brainer. The Rail Authority, as they did with Panam to Brunswick, makes the decision to go to Lewiston. The state, with NNEPRA, already built a 4 mile passing siding at Royal Junction and the DOT has secured funding ($35m) to rebuild the now CSX freight- rail from Royal Junction to Waterville. The state cuts a deal with CSX to allow Amtrak 2 or 3 round-trip slots in return for reconstruction of the (25+/- miles) to Lewiston train station to Class 3 standards continuously welded 115 lb rail. Using funds from FTA CIG. \* the 30 miles Portland to Brunswick costs about $35m... CSX like it's predecessor gets a substantial increase in the value of their asset using public money and their own freight train speeds increase to Class 3, 40mph. The only thing preventing this is the state rail authority relunctance to consider service to Lewiston. A conversation with the nnepra Board may be in order. Medot is focused only on freight and have shown zero interest in passenger trains expansion (see the $200k rail study , that became a bus plan to LA). But, this improves freight service so Medot should buy in. It is how the original deal was made to get Amtrak to Boston, improve the track for both uses using FTA funding for passenger rail. MRYC focus is on restoration of the state railroad for light rail service into downtown Portland. That will not change. Need 1st of course to deal with this rail to trail mess When the state-owned SLR is rebuilt , it can be used for both light rail between Portland and downtown Lewiston- Auburn, and the Amtrak to Lewiston can shift its 2-3 runs a day to the SLR providing a 20 to 25 mile temporal separation for passenger from freight which in turn should set the stage for Amtrak (or VIA) connection to Montreal. I understand the challenge in getting this into public policy at both NNEPRA and MaineDOT. But the concept is ripe right now. There are substantial federal funds available. Mrtc look for thoughts and perhaps an audience with decision makers in LA on this subject. This should even spark interest from the City of Portland. Question: why Brinswick and not Lewiston-Auburn?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thanks Tony --

I also got your emailed comments submitted prior to the Commissioner's Stakeholder meeting.

We are currently reviewing all comments receiving during the public comment period for consideration in the final plans.

Thanks again

Nathan Howard

MaineDOT

Public Comment 436  
Date: 01/27/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Being able to safely enjoy biking and walking in Maine matters a lot to me. I’ve had “close calls” with aggressive drivers while walking and while biking. We have to educate the public regarding the rights of pedestrians and bikers, but the design of our roadways must incorporate the needs of pedestrians and bikers as well. For the sake of our climate and for the health of Maine citizens we must end the era of motor vehicle dominance.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Mary Ann,

Thank you for your comments. We will keep this in mind as we go about finalizing the Family of Plans. The Active Transportation Plan does note the need for both infrastructure and education/outreach to help make active transportation safer in Maine.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 437  
Date: 01/27/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Here are my comments on the SATP. (1) The importance of funding and building bike lanes and safe adequate shoulders in urban and rural areas. (2) The Need for a Clear Timeframe Detailing When the Work Outlined in the Implementation Plan Will Begin and End. (3) The Need for Performance Measures that Will Quantify Progress Towards the Implementation Goals. (4)The Need to Expand Funding Immediately, and to Lay Out a Plan and a Schedule for the Pursuit of Other Funds.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Timothy,

Thank you for your comments. We will keep these points in mind as we go about finalizing the plans.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 438  
Date: 01/27/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Thank you for producing such a thorough and thoughtful report. I am a resident of Sanford, Maine and am on our trail committee. Our trail system certainly enhances living in Sanford/Springvale. Our trails are both recreational and an alternative pathway to our schools and commerce. One goal is to connect to the Eastern Trail. Our immediate need is to cross route 4 and the Mousam River at the proposed bridge renovation. We could cross route 4 under the bridge and then over,or under, the bridge to cross the river. This would allow us access to the settling ponds, a major birding site, at the sewer district complex. We would then recross the river and continue on to the Eastern Trail. Such an expansion would involve getting easements from many private land owners.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Albert,

Thank you for your comments, and for your work in Sanford. As noted in the draft Active Transportation Plan, MaineDOT's goal is to improve and expand our off-road trail network, but these improvements will have to be incremental and pragmatic as we balance needs against available funding. I have forwarded your message to our Active Transportation Planner, Dakota Hewlett, who is working with the Eastern Trail on several planning efforts.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 439  
Date: 01/27/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: More rail trail connectivity and walking/biking pathways

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/27/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Jasmin,

Thank you for your comment. We appreciate your taking the time to respond, and we will keep your feedback in mind as we finalize the Family of Plans - including the Rail Plan and the Active Transportation Plan.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 442  
Date: 01/27/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: The more resources that are devoted to bicycle trails, the better off the citizens of Maine will be in terms of personal health, attracting healthy tourists and protecting the environment. Such trails are a great investment in the Sunrise State’s future.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/27/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

John,

Thank you for your comment. Our Active Transportation Plan includes a significant focus on expanding off-road trails, and MaineDOT plans to continue pursuing opportunities to improve and expand our network.

Best regards,

Ian

Public Comment 443  
Date: 01/27/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Notes on Dec 2022 draft of Maine State Active Transportation Plan Page # 8 The RUAC process, which claims to propose “interim” trails in currently inactive rail corridors, is really proposing a short-sighted destruction of rail corridors by recommending the Trail-Until-Rail treatment, which removes the rail structure to replace it with a trail. As MaineDOT’s draft State Rail Plan acknowledges, future rail use in currently inactive corridors does not happen if tracks are removed for other uses. That certainly is the case in Maine. Rural rail corridors between Maine cities are especially valuable as car-free transportation corridors when they are used for passenger rail services. The distances between Maine cities are too distant to be practical every-day transportation corridors for pedestrians and most people who can ride a bicycle. Most pedestrian trips are less than half a mile and most bicycle trips are less than 3 miles. This means that such intercity trails would be paths useful only for recreational use by elite cyclists. These cyclists are sufficiently confident, conditioned, and equipped to travel between cities on paved shoulders, which are already in place between Maine cities. Intercity bicycle investments should be focused on closing existing gaps in paved shoulders between these communities. Passenger rail is the most effective way of moving people of all ages and abilities between cities along Maine’s rail corridors. 9 Under Goal 2, off-road trail development should not include Trail-Until-Rail (TUR) facilities. MaineDOT is required to preserve inactive rail corridors for future rail use. TUR facilities that have been proposed through the RUAC process would remove tracks and destroy, rather than preserve, the potential for future rail use. 9 Under Goal 3, a well-conceived multimodal, car-free passenger transportation network would use passenger rail and bus transit to cover the distance between communities and use pedestrian and bicycle modes for “first- and last-mile” connections. 9 Active transportation facilities that users drive to and park at will do little or nothing to help mitigate climate change. Instead, vehicle-miles would increase. However, if the roads where people live are made more bike-ped friendly, people will use their cars less. 14 The economic benefits of trails are grossly overstated. The cited November 2021 ETE Economic Impact Report states that, on average, $118 are generated by 1 user-day of the Eastern Trail. I suspect that most users spend next to nothing to use the trail. In my own case, I bike on the Kennebec River Rail Trail about 50 days of the year, and I have not spent any money on lodging, food, transportation, equipment, other recreation, or anything else that I can attribute to the trail. Almost all users of the trail appear to be local frequent users. I have seen an occasional out-of-state license plate at a trailhead, but those are rare. 16 Regarding connectivity, the East Coast Greenway, outside of the urban areas through which it passes, can do nothing for shifting short trips to walking and biking trips. The ECG is intended as a recreational facility for elite cyclists, not for the everyday use of the broader public. The best opportunities for improving everyday bike and ped connectivity are within villages and urban areas. 16 Regarding environmental benefits, again, the best opportunities for reducing motor-vehicle trips lie improving everyday bike and ped connectivity within villages and urban areas, where trip lengths are short. Trail facilities that people need to drive to do nothing to reduce vehicle-miles traveled. 19 Regarding infrastructure, off-road trails should not be built at the expense of rail infrastructure. Rail-With-Trail is preferable to Trail-Until-Rail. Track structure should not be scrapped for trail structure. 19 There is a great need for widespread availability of bicycle parking infrastructure. Every time there is bicycle locked onto a chain-link fence, a utility pole, a tree, a handrail, or a guy cable is a location where convenient bicycle parking is needed. “Inverted U” type bike racks should be available at all public facilities: parks, schools, post offices, municipal offices, parking garages, etc. Businesses should be encouraged to install bicycle parking. Bicycle parking should be integrated into new developments and redevelopments. Bicycle parking should be as available as handicap parking spaces. The space needed for useful bicycle parking is minimal. Widespread availability of bicycle parking will encourage more bicycling for everyday use. 19 Regarding traffic calming, local streets should be for local traffic only. Cut-through traffic should be discouraged by traffic calming techniques that are also bike-ped friendly. This will make local streets quieter and safer, encouraging more bicycling and walking. 21 Regarding Figure 2, much could be done to expand the availability of bicycle parking at a very low cost. 23 Bicycle parking is notably absent from the discussion of existing AT facilities. They are as important for bicycles as parking spaces are for cars. 23 Regarding multiuse trails, off-road trails should not be built at the expense of rail infrastructure. Rail-With-Trail is preferable to Trail-Until-Rail. Track structure should not be scrapped for trail structure. 27 Regarding existing bicycle infrastructure, bicycle parking is notably absent from the discussion of existing AT facilities. They are as important for bicycles as parking spaces are for cars. 29 Figure 4 is supposed to show existing trails and greenways. It should not show dashed routes on the Mountain Division, the Berlin Subdivision, the Lower Road, and the northern end of the Calais Branch. These are not existing trails. 45 One of the challenges of AT planning is the lack of performance measurement in terms of use --- traffic volumes of pedestrians and bicyclists. Knowing these volumes for intersections, road and street segments, and trail segments would be useful in measuring safety risks, identifying geographic focus areas, and prioritizing projects. Traditional data collection methods are costly. Newer methods, such as cellphone-based data sources, may be the key to measuring levels of active transportation use. 47 Regarding on-road system needs, ample paved shoulders are beneficial for the safety of all road users: not only for bicyclists and pedestrians, but also for motor vehicle users. 52 Regarding off-road system needs, AT planning should avoid targeting underutilized rail corridors with potential for future rail use. This is especially true of corridors with tracks currently in place, such as the Mountain Division, the Berlin Subdivision, the Lower Road, and the Ellsworth Branch. The State Rail Plan anticipates significant growth in rail freight and passenger volumes. Freight carloads are expected to double. Freight containers on rail are expected to increase more than 30-fold. The reach, the efficiency, and the frequency of Downeaster trains will continue to increase. This rail freight and passenger growth makes all rail corridors more valuable for rail transportation than before, including inactive rail corridors with tracks in place. With the renaissance of rail transportation for Maine in full swing, it would work at cross-purposes for AT planning to rely on converting these rail corridors to off-road trails. These rail corridors will be needed for future rail freight and/or passenger services. Instead, find other off-road and on-road routes that will make the desired AT connections, as has been done on much of the East Coast Greenway. 54. Avoid Trail-Until-Rail concepts on rail corridors with tracks in place. The TUR concept is detrimental to future rail use. It does not preserve the rail corridor. 63 From the viewpoint of someone who has done a lot of biking in daily life over the last 40 years, I believe the needs assessment has omitted an important element in bicycling infrastructure. While on-road needs have been discussed, and off-road needs have overemphasized, the need for bicycle parking has been overlooked. If bicycles are going to used for everyday trips that would otherwise have required a car, reducing vehicle-miles traveled, fighting climate change, and improving our personal health, bicyclists will need places to park. With safe, secure, and convenient places for people to park their bicycles, the viability of making the trip by bike is enhanced, and that bike trip is more likely to be made. As people who drive cars need parking spaces at destinations, so do people who ride bicycles need bike racks at destinations. Whenever a bicycle is attached to a utility pole, a guy wire, a chain-link fence, a tree, or a sign post, there is a lack of safe, secure, and convenient bicycle parking. Every public destination --- park, school, post office, municipal office, parking garage, ferry terminal, passenger station --- should have adequate bicycle parking. Many businesses should, too. Bike racks, such as the inverted U type, are inexpensive to install, require little space or maintenance, and can be expanded easily as demand dictates. There should be an inventory of bike parking for every town interested in encouraging bike use, and programs for funding the installation of bike parking wherever needed. Where the availability of safe, secure, and convenient bicycle parking exists at the destinations, along with safe, secure, and convenient bicycle routes to connect people to those destinations, we can grow bicycle use for everyday travel needs and make a difference for people and their communities. 70 Regarding Goal 1, there should be a strategy or sub-strategy to increase the availability of bicycle parking in villages and urban areas. Perhaps there could be a program where financial and technical support is provided to municipalities through Community Services or to businesses with public-private partnerships.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Ed,

Thank you for your comments on the Active Transportation Plan. We will keep these points in mind as we go about finalizing the plan. I did want to clarify a few points regarding your comments.

As noted in the Active Transportation Plan and in accordance with Public Law 23, Chapter 239, MaineDOT is following the Legislatively-authorized process for assessing certain state-owned inactive rail corridors for potential interim nonrail use. The Active Transportation Plan notes that any consideration of Trail-Until-Rail is contingent upon the RUAC process, as laid out in state law. Neither the Active Transportation Plan nor the Rail Plan supersedes this process.

Regarding Goal 3.a, the objective here is to increase active transportation connections to multimodal transportation facilities, including bus stops, rail stations, and park-and-ride lots where people can access transit (in some locations) or carpools, which are a proven means of reducing emissions. This has been a repeated request from many stakeholders and members of the public.

Regarding bicycle parking, we do currently list expanding bicycle parking on state transportation facilities in Goal 3.a.iii. We will take into consideration your recommendations for other areas where it may be useful and feasible.

Thank you again for taking the time to review the plans and for sharing your comments with us.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 444  
Date: 01/27/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: Notes on December 2022 Draft of Maine State Rail Plan. Page# Viii Downeaster also produces economic development benefits, especially in the communities served. Xi Short-term policies and strategies should include… • feasibility analyses for passenger rail expansion, and • expanded passenger rail services through improved utilization of existing passenger rail assets. 3 Under Goals 3 and 4, consider that the Lower Road is part of a shared/use corridor between Portland, Waterville, and Bangor that can function as a continuous second main line that allows northbound and southbound long freight trains and passenger trains to move without interference, thereby improving safety, capacity, reliability, and on-time performance. 4 Under Goal 5, anticipate investment needs in intermodal freight, considering that Maine is now served by two Class I freight railroads. The Greater Bangor area, where the two Class Is interchange and rail-served Searsport is nearby, could become an intermodal hub that’s attractive for development. 4 Under Goal 5, include expanded passenger rail service to more communities. Do not limit the beneficiaries to those communities with existing passenger rail service. 5 Responsible stewardship of underutilized rail corridors like the Lower Road means not allowing the destruction of the track structure for “interim” uses. The track and roadbed should be protected. Destruction is not preservation. 6 Figure 1.2 does not mention passengers anywhere. It would seem that a family of plans would be a matrix of modes (active, highway, bus, rail, ports, and aviation) that serves the movement of customers (people/passengers and goods/freight). Service to customers requires coordination of modes and modal plans. Modal plans require that the needs of people and goods are addressed. 7 The LRTP should include a vision of transportation that does not require an automobile. Many people do not drive for a variety of reasons: youth, physical limitations, economics, exercise, and environmental consciousness. This broad segment of our population needs transportation alternatives to the private automobile. Bus transit, bike-ped facilities, trains all can and should be part of that vision. That vision should include the Village Initiative, that aims to make communities more bike-ped friendly, with a focus on village centers. These village centers can also be the nodes of bus transit and passenger rail services--- passenger rail for long-distance transit between villages and cities, bus transit for local transit and transit to villages without rail access. Passenger rail can be the intercity “spine” of a statewide carless passenger network. 10 The RUAC process is a biased and flawed advisory process that is weighted to result in a trail recommendation. The interests of rail potential (which extends far beyond the corridor under review) are not adequately represented, and therefore the interests of the State of Maine are underrepresented. Evidence to date indicates that the RUAC process inevitably results in trail-until-rail (TUR) recommendation based on trail interests and a lack of regional and statewide transportation perspective. Evidence in Maine also shows that a TUR treatment on a rail corridor results in “interim” trails becoming permanent and future rail use denied forever. Only when the track structure is preserved, has rail service returned to inactive rail lines. 25 The description of the Canadian Pacific fails to mention the former Bangor and Aroostook line to Searsport and the marine terminal there. It also fails to mention the connection to the former Pan Am railroad (now CSX) at Northern Maine Junction (near Bangor). More could be mentioned about the investment CP has made to improve its acquired lines, the improved connectivity to the Atlantic ports in St. John and Searsport, and the international freight opportunities it creates. 27 In the Carload Yards discussion, the use of the word “ever-declining traffic” is inappropriate. It implies that traffic volume reduction is unending and irreversible. In addition to reduced freight tonnage, larger car sizes, and improved car utilization (shorter dwell times) may also contribute to reduced car capacity needs in freight yards. A better term would be “reduced carloads”. 30 Since the average length of rail freight shipments differs from the average length of truck shipments, a more accurate measure for comparisons of rail and truck would be ton-miles, rather than tons. 30 The analysis of freight rail relies on pre-2020 data and overly depressing. This is pre-pandemic data, but also pre-Class I data, and largely pre-MNR revitalization data. What does 2022 tell us about the current freight rail trends? MNR is reporting their highest-ever carload volumes (based on a presentation at the 2022 Maine Transportation Conference). 30 The graphic in the box looks distinctly outdated European. 31 Where does intermodal freight fit in rail freight picture in terms of containers, both through and terminating? 32 The graphic does not show Texas as a significant trading partner. 35 In the Downeaster ridership chart (Figure 2.9), the YTD 2022 number is potentially misleading, suggesting a slowing post-covid recovery. It would be better to have an estimated (\*) annual figure. 36 Observation: If the reduced commuting from NH and MA to Boston continues, that leaves more seats available for growing Maine-Boston ridership. 39 What is the underlying source of the forecasted decline in population? (Where did S&amp;P Global get the information?) How old is that forecast? As noted in the text, recent developments indicate an increasing in-migration. 40 How old is the employment forecast? 41 If population grows, so will general business-driven freight demand. 42 The 475,000 ridership figure is what should be used in Figure 2.9 for 2022. 44 The Investment Scenario is Portland-centric and limited to the current service area of the Downeaster. There should be an “Expansion Scenario” that extends the passenger rail service area to the north and east. It would build on the current planning to extend services to Rockland, Lewiston-Auburn, Augusta, Waterville, and Bangor. In this State Rail Plan, the Expansion Scenario cannot be as detailed as the Investment Scenario, but it is a necessary long-term scenario to truly expand the benefits of passenger rail service to Maine communities beyond York and Cumberland Counties. The economic, environmental, and social benefits from expanding the Downeaster to Brunswick can be extended to other communities and raise the connectivity between established and new passenger rail-served areas of Maine. 46 When measuring intermodal traffic in “units”, does units refer to TEUs (20’ containers) or 40’ containers or something else? Please clarify. 49 In the first sentence, the term “rail travel” is used. This may imply that the Chapter is about passenger rail only, when it is actually about freight and passenger. A suggested term is “rail transportation”. 51 In Table 3.2, how do the “passenger trips in Maine” figures square with the numbers in Figure 2.9 or on page 42? Do they exclude the NH-MA Downeaster trips? 54 In the first sentence of the first paragraph, “network connectivity” should read “roadway network connectivity” to avoid confusion with the rail network. 57 In Table 3.4, how do the propane storage tracks in Hampden, Millinocket, Presque Isle, and Auburn “accommodate growth of the commercial market for … heating oil in Maine”? Was “and heating oil” really intended in the project descriptions? 60 The Passenger Service Expansion section needs to be expanded to identify and describe the routes and cities where service extension pilot and the passenger rail feasibility studies are funded and contemplated. These cities should include Rockland, Lewiston-Auburn, Augusta, Waterville, and Bangor at a minimum. The Rockland Branch pilot service is rightly in Table 3.5, but a sustained service should be part of the long-term program in Table 3.6. Completion of the feasibility studies for Lewiston-Auburn, Augusta, Waterville, and Bangor should short-term projects in Table 3.5, but passenger rail service extensions to these cities should be part of the long-term program. The shape of those extensions is unknown at this time, but passenger rail service to those cities need to be part of the plan. Each of these cities (and the villages along the Rockland Branch) have rail lines through the cores of those communities, and each of the cities has a transit service that radiates from that core. Rockland is the hub of the Mid-Coast region. Lewiston-Auburn is Maine’s second largest urban area. Augusta is Maine’s capital and third largest employment hub. Like Brunswick, Waterville is a center of education with a redeveloping downtown. Bangor is Maine’s second largest employment hub, with the largest Maine university (in Orono), third largest city, and gateway to Maine’s eastern and northern tourist attractions. The passenger service expansion will happen in steps, just as the original Downeaster did, and continue to build incrementally, just as the Downeaster did and does. The long-term vision for Maine’s passenger rail expansion needs to be expressed in Maine’s State Rail Plan. 60 Corridor preservation must not be merely preserving ownership of the right of way. It must also include preservation of the track structure from encroachment by vegetation and by destruction by “interim” uses. The embankment, the ballast, and the track must remain in place. Only when the track has been preserved (as in downtown Augusta), has rail traffic returned. Whether the proposed interim use is parking or a trail, the track structure must be preserved. 60 Multimodal connectivity is essential to car-free transportation. Passenger rail stations located in walkable and bikeable villages and urban centers and serving as hubs for local and regional bus services is what should be strived for. 61 Coordination among freight and passenger rail systems is important for service reliability. The Lower Road and the Back Road (CSX mainline) between Royal Junction (Yarmouth) and Waterville have been, in Maine Central days, and could still be considered as parts of a coordinated corridor to improve track capacity and service reliability for future freight and passenger trains. 61 Table 3.5 should include completion of feasibility studies for passenger rail service to Lewiston-Auburn, Augusta, Waterville, and Bangor as Passenger Service Expansion. 61 Table 3.6 should include implementation of passenger rail service expansion to Rockland, Lewiston-Auburn, Augusta, Waterville, and Bangor. 64 Improving bicycle and pedestrian connections to the Downeaster should never include Trail-Until Rail. Such an “interim” use would destroy potential rail connections to the Downeaster. 64 Develop a strategy for the Bangor area to develop a container terminal that would serve both CSX and CP. The availability of two Class I carriers for intermodal and carload freight could be an economic boon for eastern Maine. 65 Under "Expand passenger rail service…”, identify Rockland, Lewiston-Auburn, Augusta, Waterville, and Bangor as the envisioned service area. 66 Develop a strategy for leveraging Class I accessibility to the Mountain Division to build freight and scenic/tourist rail operation on this connecting line to New Hampshire and Vermont. (While this may have been tried in the past, the presence of CSX in Maine could be a game changer for freight.) 69 The Short-Range program should include sufficient funds to complete the feasibility studies for passenger rail expansions to Lewiston-Auburn, Augusta, Waterville, and Bangor. 70 The “Long Term” pie chart meaningless for a 16-year time period since so many amounts in Table 4.4 are “TBD”. The “Short Term” pie chart isn’t much better. 70 Not all of the items in Table 4.5 are rail planning efforts. The Rail Use Advisory Councils are efforts aimed at trail acquisition. As far as rail is concerned, the aim is to RUin Available Corridors. It is understood that MaineDOT is compelled by law to have these councils when requested, but MaineDOT doesn’t have to follow their recommendations. As mentioned in earlier comments, the RUAC is a flawed process that does not allow adequate representation of the broader transportation perspective and is structured to result in a destructive Rail-Until-Trail recommendation. 71 In evaluating proposed passenger rail service expansions, it should be recognized that intercity bus services with terminals on outskirts of cities serve a different market than intercity rail that connects city centers. The users of outskirts bus services are auto-dependent customers often looking for express rides to airports. The users of intercity rail are often auto-less or less auto-dependent customers going to an urban destination where an auto is a burden. 79 Freight traffic on the Rockland Branch is turning upward with the fuel deliveries to the cement plant. 80 Regarding the third bullet under General Public Perspectives, if post-covid commuter patterns flatten peak-hour travel patterns, some commuter-oriented passenger rail resources can be shifted toward more off-peak general-purpose regional rail travel use. 80 There are indications that freight rail carload and intermodal volumes have increased since the Class I acquisitions took place. Figure 2.19 shows more than a doubling of tonnage by 2050. This is a big change in the direction of freight rail in Maine. 80 Baseline data in Figures 2.6 and 2.7 and forecast data in Figure 2.20 shows outbound carloads exceeding inbound carloads. This contradicts the second bullet under Advocacy Groups Perspectives. 81 The Maine rail network is not dense enough to support a fully off-road East Coast Greenway through conversion of rails to trails without decimating the rail network. Brunswick to Augusta is a prime example. Only the Lower Road can provide a rail connection between the capital city of Augusta and Brunswick (and by extension, Portland and Boston). Route 201 between Gardiner and Topsham already provides a gently rolling, rural, low-traffic bike route with paved shoulders. Maine can’t afford the opportunities lost by tearing up tracks for an unnecessary trail. Funds for active transportation would be better spent on improving walkability and bikeability to village and town centers. Far more people can benefit from the Lower Road with passenger rail service than with a trail for elite cyclists. 81 Amtrak service extension to Brunswick has been successful and ridership there has been growing fast. Extension of service to other cities like Rockland, Lewiston-Auburn, Augusta, Waterville, and Bangor could succeed as well or better. Each of these cities has local transit services that connect other areas to the city center. Maine has villages and city centers that are largely intact and fit well with passenger rail services, as Brunswick, Freeport, Old Orchard Beach, and Saco demonstrate. Amtrak connections to major cities from small cities as far as 300 miles away have proved successful. Passenger rail service from Roanoke, VA to Washington, DC was implemented in 2017 and frequency was doubled in 2022. The Roanoke area, 250 miles from DC, is comparable to the Bangor area in size and distance from a major city (Boston, in Bangor’s case). Incidentally, both Roanoke and Bangor serve university communities and are gateways to outdoor recreation. 83 Regarding intermodal opportunities, there appears to be untapped potential for growth in intermodal traffic in Maine. In North America, there are more containers and trailers shipped by rail than carloads. In Maine, intermodal traffic, by tonnage, is less than 3% of total rail freight tonnage (as shown on page 47). This would shift some of the modal market share from trucks, easing the burden on Maine’s highways.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thanks Ed -

I got your email as well.  Good stuff!

We are currently reviewing all comments receiving during the public comment period for consideration in the final plans.

Thanks again

Nate

Public Comment 445  
Date: 01/27/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan  
Comment: There are errors of fact in the paragraph describing ITN. The national nonprofit organization is ITNAmerica, not the Independent Transportation Network. I have sent the paragraph to Ryan Neale with tracked changes, some correcting errors, others suggesting changes. I have copied the corrections and changes in the text below, though my tracked changes do not shoe in the formatting provided by this comment section. See suggested text below: The Independent Transportation Network of America (ITNAmerica) is a national, non-profit transportation network serving older adults and people with mobility challenges. ITNAmerica’s affiliate in Maine, ITNPortland, serves the greater Portland region and ITNAmerica’s rural transportation program, ITNCountry, includes twelve rural regions across the country, including Hancock County, Kennebunk, and Millinocket in Maine.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/27/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Katherine,

Thank you for your feedback. I just spoke with Ryan and he confirmed receipt of your message. We will make the requested updates.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 446  
Date: 01/27/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Passenger night train Montreal-US The passenger train being referred to ran for more than 100 years on the Saint-Laurent & Atlantic Railroad (SLA) track and we are ready for its comeback! It is a fact that passenger railway services connecting big markets, serving a total population of approximately nine million, on both sides of the Canadian-US border are making profits. It is also important to consider that the population from Quebec going to Maine is so large that with only 3% of it, the summer train would be full. The other distinction in the overnight model is that there is no need for a considerable investment on the tracks speed as would be the case for a higher speed day train operation. It all makes perfect sense!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/03/2023  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thank you very much for your comment on MaineDOT’s Family of Plans and Rail Plan in particular. Your comments will be considered as we finalize the Family of Plans.

Public Comment 447  
Date: 01/28/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment:

Just read the active transportation plan and it looks good. One aspect that the Maine DOT fails to completely articulate is that "Maine DOT has historically catered and prioritized efficiently and quickly moving motor vehicle traffic and by doing so, has directly and indirectly reduced transportation access and caused serious injury and death to those who utilize the transportation system through unavoidable human error." It would be great if Maine DOT made a mention of the fact that the elderly, children, pedestrians and bicyclists are the most vulnerable road users. More so, pedestrians and cyclists do not have a metal cages protecting them and because of that (and other reasons mentioned in the plan), Maine DOT will prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable road users and insure that moving forward, transportation equity guides all transportation funds which are allocated.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Ian,

Thank you for your comments. We note that bicyclists and pedestrians are vulnerable road users in the AT Plan (such as on page 36), and we consider them as such, but we can look at ways to make that more explicit in the final plan. Our guiding principals lay out MaineDOT's commitment to meeting our customers where they are and pursing equitable solutions that best address the diverse needs of all users of Maine's transportation system.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 450  
Date: 01/28/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I’m the next 20 years Maine needs rail to Toronto and Quebec. A higher speed train to Boston preferably a line direct to airport. Much need for a highway loop that circles west and two highways, one going west and another north west. Big unused parking lots should be used for parks and housing around businesses.

Public Comment 451  
Date: 01/28/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Please reinstitute the paved breakdown lane on all roads. This is so critical for safe biking and walking. While I support the development and expansion of trail systems like Merrymeeting Trail - there is simply no safe spaces to walk or ride on much of route 24. Trails are part of the solution but having roads wide enough to accommodate walkers and bicyclists are sorely needed.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Linda,

Thank you for your comment. MaineDOT does plan to expand our shoulder paving efforts, especially along some of our more rural Highway Corridor Priority 3 & 4 roads. We go into a bit more detail on this in the plan, (Goal 2.b), but this is driven by the knowledge that we will not be able to serve all locations with trails or other separated infrastructure, and in many cases wider shoulders can help provide critical space for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Thank you,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 452  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: thank you for taking the time and for making this a priority. Our family is a one car family as I commute via bicycle. I put 2000 miles a year on my electric cargo bike. We moved to Maine from New York City six years ago to raise our daughter. as a biking advocate, anything you can do to help create a safer, biking infrastructure in the state, specifically, the largest cities, is greatly appreciated by myself, my family and my colleagues. I’ve been hit by cars twice, once a week, I have close calls with Cars, and the majority of them are due to distracted drivers, primarily on their phones texting while driving. The city of Portland has a real opportunity to lead and set an example for safer, biking and walking infrastructure. Thank you again for making this a priority.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Tom,

Thank you for taking the time to review the plans and provide us with your comments.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 453  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: In reading your active transportation plan I see it is sorely lacking any measurable metrics related to it’s goals. Having been involved in a number of strategic plans across different types of organization from international businesses to local non profits I have found one important truism - “What gets measured gets done.” Without measures most plans are a lot of lofty blah blah and deliver little to no results. I encourge you to add measureable metrics. They provide both motivation and good guidance in decision making. Thank You

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Ben,

Thank you for taking the time to review the plans and send us your comments. We will keep this in mind as we work to finalize the Active Transportation Plan.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 454  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: • The plan could be improved with clear timelines for action: what actions prescribed in the draft AT Plan are to be accomplished in the short term (1-2 years), medium term (3-5 years), and long term (6-10 years? • Measures for success are a missing component of the AT Plan: how many miles of expanded shoulders are to be completed in the short, medium and long terms? How many linear feet of sidewalks are to be added to state highways annually to be considered a ‘success’? When will an annual report on achievements regarding Active Transportation become a standard feature of the MaineDOT website? • A commitment to increase funding: a critical piece of the success of AT in Maine. Across the country states like Massachusetts, New York, Minnesota, Wisconsin, California, Oregon, Washington and more have made Active Transportation a standard piece of operations, supported by budgetary decisions. Until a consistent, in-state source of funding is identified and dedicated to AT in Maine, all the talk is just that: talk.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Bob,

Thank you for taking the time to review the plans and send us your comments. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the Active Transportation Plan.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 455  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I am glad to see work progressing on an Active Transportation Plan. Thank you!! After reviewing the work to date, I encourage Maine DOT and partners to tweak a few things, such as better define shoulder requirements (wider is better for human powered transportation) and bike lanes as well as update recommendation for speed limits. As both a pedestrian and cyclist (and car driver) I think speed limits need to be reduced in village and city neighborhoods. For example, near me, Franklin St in Portland has a 35 MPH speed limit. Motor vehicles go much faster than that. I have witnessed a car hitting a pedestrian. It was horrible. Had the car been going slower (25 MPH or less) the person may have had less severe injuries. This is especially true for older pedestrians and cyclists according to research I have read. Lastly, resourcing implementation and measuring progress are key. The best plan that remains unimplemented is not helpful. Thanks for listening.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hi Paul

Thank you for your comments. I'm sorry that you had to witness that, and even more sorry that it happened at all. We will keep all of these points in mind as we work to finalize the Active Transportation Plan.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 456  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: PLEASE bring Rail Service up to Bangor !!!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thank you for your comment regarding the Maine State Rail Plan. We are currently reviewing all comments receiving during the public comment period for consideration in the final plans.

Thanks again

Nathan Howard

MaineDOT

Public Comment 457  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment: I am a long time resident of Orono and a physician who specializes in medical and surgical weight management. More active transportation options would greatly benefit our community and our mental/physical health. I am also a dedicated cyclist. I rode my bike from Acadia to Astoria OR last summer. I experienced a wide variety of surfaces, shoulders, bike lanes etc. I applaud the Active Transport plans but have the following comments: -timelines for projects need to be set -measurable metrics are needed, in my line of business we need to "QTI" quantify the impact -funding needs to be a priority. Are there plans for raising more or allocating more to active transportation -shoulders need a consistent and adequate width where possible and please be thoughtful about the placement of the rumble strip. Idaho and Montana did not consider this placement which made some of their busy roads nearly impassable for cyclists

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hi Michelle,

Thank you for taking the time to review the plans and send us your comments. That sounds like an incredible trip and a huge accomplishment! We will keep all of your points in mind as we work to finalize the Active Transportation Plan.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 458  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: 1. More funding for active transportation 2. Rail trail expansion, particularly Mountain Division and Casco Bay Trail 3. Time frame ... dates and metrics

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Art,

Thank you for taking the time to review the plans and send us your comments. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the Active Transportation Plan.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 459  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Thanks for the chance to comment on the Family of Plans. It's a good set of documents with which to move forward. The Active Transportation and Transit sections are particularly relevant as we try to meet the goals of Maine Won't Wait. However, I don't see any explicit commitments to do two things that other states to do help promote biking, walking and transit: 1. The state should commit to funding completing of sidewalks, bike facilities (including separated lanes) and transit improvements along any corridor it completes a roadway project. I have seen municipalities expected to pick up the tab for reasonable corridor improvements when MDOT was only willing to fund the section for cars. Roadway improvements should come with full ADA accessible sidewalks on both sides in any town or city in Maine, funded by the state. Similarly, bike accommodations should mean more than a few sharrows and perhaps a 2' shoulder, but a bike lane that is safe for us to send our kids to school on. 2. Generally, MDOT should commit to funding transit and AT projects by flexing more funding from highway sources. Numerical goals should be set and met. As just one example, rural Vermont provides state funds for transit at almost ten times the level of Maine. The results are noticeable. Thanks again for the chance to comment. These are important documents and I am glad MDOT is working on long-range transportation planning.

Public Comment 460  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Thank you for the initial work on this plan. It is my hope as an active citizen the plan develops some clear goals with targeted dates of completion. I feel that the plan presents some wonderful ideas that can help Maine to have sustainable and safe seasonal activities and be a vacationland for a variety of outdoor activities throughout the year. Let's make this a front-page agenda item that blends with the other efforts that focus on keeping young and old citizens from leaving the great State of Maine.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hi Paul,

Thank you for taking the time to review the plans and send us your comments. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the Active Transportation Plan.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 461  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: 1) when building for walkers and bicyclists, please prioritize multi use paths along side of roads rather than wide shoulders. Drivers can easily hit someone on the should but a separated multi use path creates a safer experience. 2) please continue to support intercity paths like the eastern trail. Specifically, please support the Casco Bay Trail which would connect Auburn, Brunswick, Portland, and points in between. 3) The State should dedicate resources to creating a frequent and fast transit system that is useful to the greatest number of people. To do this, work with BSOOB, citylink, METRO, NNEPRA and South Portland as they serve the greatest number of people and are located in the most populated regions of our state. Above all else, our transit priority should be increasing ridership. 4) To encourage people to take transit, taking the bus has to be easier than driving. If a new road is built or a road is widened, provide bus only lanes or make it open only to busses, bikes and emergency vehicles. Take an approach like Portland, OR did with the Tilikum Crossing, a bridge for use by trains, buses, streetcars, cyclists and pedestrians. When we build new infrastructure, we’re building the future we want to see. Let’s build a future that prioritizes transit, pedestrians, and cyclists.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for taking the time to review the plans and send us your comments. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the Active Transportation Plan.

Regarding shoulders, we are principally focusing this work on rural, Highway Corridor Priority 3 & 4 roads that currently lack any significant shoulders or other AT infrastructure and serve areas with low population densities. In villages, towns, and other more urban areas, MaineDOT will make use of a larger set of infrastructure options, including separated facilities when feasible, depending on the specific context.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 462  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment:

I encourage a statewide policy for DOT and local governments to make safe, accessible alternatives to cars: bike lanes (specific lanes, “share the road” and “bikes can use full lane” signs and road pavement symbols), pedestrian sidewalks and crossing signals at busy intersections, and partial or full paid public transportation along major routes. It would be very helpful to incent complete streets for all major arteries in towns and to do sharrows for sub arterial streets with substantial cross thru traffic. Look at major destinations and use 1, 2, 3 mile circles (the average amount walkers, bikers will travel if safe) to evaluate where to emphasize complete street applications. The more we can get people out of individual cars and using walking/biking/public transportation the better and healthier we will be as a state. What about using school busses as beach shuttles to reduce cars at beaches and use existing school parking lots for beach parking? How to make it easier/feasible for beach communities to consider this?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Portia,

Thank you for taking the time to review the plans and send us your comments. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the Family of Plans. We will also be updating our Complete Streets policy after finalization of the Active Transportation Plan (which is scheduled to be completed by March 1, 2023), and we will be looking into some of the areas that you highlight here.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 463  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I am support of any action to improve bicycle and pedestrian safe transportation. Please help make Maine a safer and more inviting place to bike and walk.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Peter,

Thank you for taking the time to review the plans and send us your comments. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the Active Transportation Plan.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 464  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Focus on unused rail corridors that serve no purpose (such as the Belfast Moosehead rail from Belfast to Brooks) would be better served as a connector from Belfast and the Greenway trail from Downeast to Florida. Such a trail would open up commercial opportunities in northern Waldo county and allow safe bicycle and pedestrian access from Brooks to Belfast. The opportunity for exercise and recreation in the area would be greatly enhanced and be a great benefit to an area that lacks such opportunities.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Edward,

Thank you for taking the time to review the plans and send us your comments. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the Family of Plans.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 465  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I applaud the plan to increase paved shoulders as some roads are downright dangerous given the speed (mostly speeding) of some of our roads such as route 139 and 137 in Waldo county.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for this comment as well!

- Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 466  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Jennifer Grant Public Outreach and Planning Phil Goff VHB As someone who has read through the Active Transportation Plan, I feel the need to critique a few aspects of it during this Draft Process. The first concern is the Stakeholders involved. Pg 18 of the Active Transportation Plan reads: "4.2 Stakeholder Meetings A series of 12 stakeholder and expert meetings were organized, providing a diverse set of organizations to provide input on AT needs throughout Maine. Key stakeholders included: Environmental and smart-growth organizations. Staff and board members from the Bicycle Coalition of Maine (BCM). Trail advocates. Metropolitan and Regional Planning Organizations (MPOs and RPOs). Age-friendly and disability-rights advocates. Organizations supporting people experiencing homelessness. Public health and safety organizations. Pedestrian or bicycle advisory committees. Social justice advocates. Staff from Tribes and Nations. MaineDOT leadership and technical expert" Page 52 starts the coverage of the topic of Off Road Needs: "An important element of the AT Plan is the identification of off-road AT needs in the state—in particular, where state-owned, inactive rail corridors may be able to be used for AT purposes either as rail-with-trail or as an interim trail-until-rail. The AT Plan provides a high-level overview of the state’s long-term vision for identifying and developing the HPAT trail system, as well as how MaineDOT could potentially prioritize the use of the inactive rail corridors to support this vision (pending the Rail Use Advisory Council [RUAC] process and legislative approval)." page 54 Some of the trail segments proposed in the report would be located along active or formerly active, state-owned railroad corridors, which may have potential for trail use but would need to follow the Rail Use Advisory Council (RUAC) process as defined in state law before any non-rail use of these corridors may be considered. The RUAC process has already been initiated for some of these segments, which includes an in-depth study of the corridor and public input from a wide array of stakeholders. For any proposed corridor that may consider colocation in the right-of-way of a private railway corridor, an agreement with that private railroad would be required for any project to advance. Following this explanation, it is obvious that the corridors which still have viable railroad infrastructure, yet are not currently hosting trains, are a major part of the Active Transportation vision. As such, it would be expected that a major stakeholder affected by this process would be Railroad Interests. After all, the Maine State Rail Plan addresses this issue by inviting Trail Advocates to be a Stakeholder in the Rail Plan development. Page 75 of the Maine State Rail Plan The Stakeholders of the MSRP are listed in part below: "TrainRiders Northeast Independent Rail Advocate Maine Rail Group Maine Rail Transit Coalition \*Maine Trails Coalition \* Rail Users Network " And even gives them a voice in the final decisions. Yet, if you compare the stakeholder list for both the MSRP and the ATP, you see that NO Railroad Interests were invited to participate in the discussion of removing Rail Infrastructure to build a trail, yet trail interests were invited in the discussion of returning Trains to the corridors. This alludes to biased favoritism towards trail interests in the long-term discussions of Maine Transportation needs. The stakes are very high for the potential removal of intact train infrastructure; some corridors under study for this removal have ongoing MDOT studies on the benefits of returning trains. At this very moment. At the same time trail advocates are recommending removal. So the inclusion of all voices, and the equal representation of all stakeholders, needs to be fair and balanced in our State Transportation Discussions. Thank You,

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thank you for your comments regarding the Active Transportation Plan and the Maine State Rail Plan. We are currently reviewing all comments receiving during the public comment period for consideration in the final plans.

Thanks again

Nathan Howard

MaineDOT

Public Comment 467  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Congratulations on this excellent work. Please devote the same attention, energy, and resources to implementation that was done in planning. I especially appreciate the emphasis on active transportation because it is past time to rethink how we move people and goods in a climate-changing world. Even if we shift toward electrification of vehicles, we will stay pay a painful price in our health and our environment if we just continue to rely so much on the automobile. This reliance brings added environmental degradation and safety risks caused by mining for critical minerals, big batteries in ever-heavier cars and trucks, and endless stresses on road construction and maintenance that never achieve optimum movement.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello William,

Thank you for your comments. Here at MaineDOT we are excited to finish up plan development and get started on the critical work of implementation. We fully intend for these plans to lead to concrete, pragmatic actions to improve our multimodal transportation system.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 468  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Congratulations on this excellent work. Please devote the same attention, energy, and resources to implementation that was done in planning. I especially appreciate the emphasis on active transportation because it is past time to rethink how we move people and goods in a climate-changing world. Even if we shift toward electrification of vehicles, we will stay pay a painful price in our health and our environment if we just continue to rely so much on the automobile. This reliance brings added environmental degradation and safety risks caused by mining for critical minerals, big batteries in ever-heavier cars and trucks, and endless stresses on road construction and maintenance that never achieve optimum movement.

Public Comment 469  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I applaud Maine DOT’s efforts to come up with plans, both short and long range, that will make it safer and easier to walk and bike in this state, either for recreation or for utilitarian purposes. My ultimate wish is to not have to depend on owning an auto; meaning making it possible to get from point A to point B in Maine using a combination of walking, biking, and public transportation including buses and rail. I hope to see the state put more monetary resources into making this happen.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

William,

Thank you for taking the time to review the plans and send us your comments. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the Family of Plans.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 470  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan  
Comment: Thank you to MaineDOT for putting together this set of transportation family of plans, and in particular for drafting an active transportation plan. I have several comments focused on the active transportation plan, with a particular eye towards improving options for safely getting around by bicycle. I live in Rockland, where I get around town primarily on bike and on foot, year-round, even in inclement weather. I’m often with my small child, either with him in a bike trailer, or walking or biking on his own. This is the least safe and accessible area I’ve lived from a transportation perspective. In a place with such a vibrant downtown and relatively close by residences and amenities, I know we can do better. I hope that MaineDOT, in partnership with the local entities, will commit to important improvements that make our towns more accessible for everyone. First, I encourage MaineDOT and local governments to prioritize grade- and curb strip (easement)-separated bike lanes over on-road infrastructure shared with cars and trucks. While I personally have some level of comfort with riding in bike lanes next to cars, this is only true for a small subset of people on bikes–especially when it comes to rural roads. No amount of paint is going to protect me or my child if a driver veers into a bike lane with us in it. A lack of continuous sidewalks or other safe routes makes trips to the library, some parks, friends’ houses, and other important destinations out of reach for my child to ride to. He’s perfectly capable of biking that far–he’s been able to ride over a mile since he was four years old, and loves being on his bike whenever he can. But we’re stuck with having to keep him in the trailer or drive for these relatively short distances rather than him bike alongside me. This usually results in frustrations for everyone; reduces his ability to build independence and be physically active; and sometimes adds car trips which cause more pollution, wear and tear on the roads, and uses up another parking spot unnecessarily. If you have any doubt as to whether an on-road bike lane truly serves everyone, I welcome you to join me for a ride with me and my child. I noticed that there are references in the draft plan to trails and shoulders. My impression is that trails primarily serve recreational users. While this is certainly an admirable goal, I hope that we prioritize routes and infrastructure for people who need to get to their jobs; run errands; and visit local events. While wider shoulders would certainly be an improvement over none at all, they only serve a small subset of the population and uses. Most places I observe on nearby rural roads, e.g. along Rt. 1 and 17, seem to have plenty of width to be able to accommodate separated bike lanes – especially notable after snow falls and seeing where people are actually driving. Narrowing the space for cars and trucks would have the added benefit of slowing down vehicles in areas prone to speeding. Through the process of these transportation plans, I hope that MaineDOT is able to offer better ways to coordinate with local governments to achieve all of the stated goals. I hear from local officials that it is challenging to understand how to work with MaineDOT on potential projects or proposals in areas where there are both town- and state-owned roads. As an individual resident, I am unsure about how to advocate for needed safety and accessibility improvements in those types of areas (e.g. where Rt. 1 goes through a town). In addition to issues concerning walkability and bikeability, I hope that MaineDOT also focuses on the surrounding regional infrastructure needed to make these options more realistic. When I first moved to Maine, I didn’t have a car. Getting around town within Rockland was doable, but farther distances were mostly out of reach. To get to the airport with my then 2-year-old, I was able to take the Concord bus to Portland. I managed to get from the bus station to the airport with a lift from a friend I had just met. Otherwise, I would have had to find a taxi and wrestle with installing the car seat yet again, and incurring the extra cost for that leg of the trip. Increasing frequency, options (e.g. more bus trips and expanding passenger rail to Rockland and elsewhere), and connections between destinations, as well as and having safe, walkable areas at either end, are crucial for getting more people to where they need to be, especially for those who don’t want to or can’t use their own vehicle. I thank MaineDOT for all of your work on these efforts thus far, and hope that you provide the funding, clear goals and timelines, and coordination needed to make all of these transportation goals a reality so that they work for us all.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Emma,

Thank you for your comments.

MaineDOT is working to improve active transportation in our towns and villages, especially through our Village Partnership Initiative. This program involves a close partnership with municipalities to make improvements in their mixed-use areas, ranging from small, spot improvements to major investments. An important focus of these efforts is increasing the bicycle and pedestrian safety and mobility. An example of this would be the VPI that was recently funded to improve downtown Sanford. I have asked around and it is my understanding that Rockland's town government is aware of the program and is considering developing an application to the program.

In terms of more rural areas, Maine DOT is looking at enhancing shoulders along some of our lower-priority roads (Highway Corridor Priority 3 & 4). While fully-separated facilities may be ideal, they may not be feasible in all situations due to right-of-way and funding limitations.

In terms of remaining engaged, you can certainly always reach out to us. You can reach our Active Transportation Planner, Dakota Hewlett (dakota.hewlett@maine.gov). If town officials have concerns about working with MaineDOT, they can reach out to Dakota or our Regional Planner, Stephen Cole (stephen.cole@maine.gov). They would both be happy to work with Rockland and give more information about how your town can work with us to improve transportation in your area.

We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the Family of Plans and the Active Transportation Plan.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 471  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Why are most state roads designed for only cars and trucks? I live in Damariscotta and sometimes attempt to ride my bike or walk down route 1 Business, route 129 or School St. (A state supported road). Because the speed limits are too high, the roads are too narrow, and drivers are in a hurry, I am often pushed off the road. These roads should use traffic calming techniques that have been used in other parts of the country. They should include a separate lane for bikes and pedestrians. Most people drive because there isn't another alternative. Why isnt walking or biking considered a valid form of transportation and an integral part of your plan?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment regarding MaineDOT's Family of Plans.  One of the reasons MaineDOT updated multiple plans concurrently (Long-Range Transportation, Rail, Transit, Aviation and Active Transportation Plan) is for a collaborative and integrated approach to transportation policy versus a focus on one mode such as cars/ trucks.  One of the major focus points of the Active Transportation Plan in particular is to provide the ability to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.  As discussed in the AT Plan, MaineDOT will continue to make safety improvements to accommodate all transportation users and will work collaboratively to prioritize different types of improvements such as trails, shoulders and sidewalks.

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 02/06/2023  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: That's great! When the School St and US 1 B intersection in Damariscotta is upgraded it seems like it will include a crosswalk and shoulders so bikers don't get pushed into the gully that tries to be the shoulder. Hopefully you will lower the speed limit so we all feel safer.

Public Comment 472  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment: We need walking/bikepaths or wide road shoulders in all committees. In Harpswell, walking or biking along the road is extremely dangerous. I feel safer riding in many cities than I do in rural committees. Roads are narrow, drivers are fast, and there is simply no place to walk or ride. The result is terrible for the community and the health of its residents.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Bruce,

Thank you for your comments. A key part of the Active Transportation Plan's goals are improving active transportation infrastructure, which may take the form of improved paved shoulders, sidewalks, or other features depending on the context of the community. We will keep your specific comments in mind while we go about finalizing the plans.

Thank you again,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 473  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: Jennifer Grant Public Outreach and Planning Leah Pickett Cambridge Analyticals Patricia Quinn NNEPRA Hello! A few more points I'd like to make regarding the Maine State Rail Plan Draft 1) The emphasis on trying to shave minutes off of any train service, and the outsized emphasis the plan alludes to that train users put on that metric. "The current location at the Portland Transportation Center, near Thompson’s Point, is located on a spur which adds approximately 10 minutes of delay to travel between Portland and Brunswick and 15 minutes of delay between Brunswick and stations to the south of Portland. " While on-time performance is an important criterion in the overall train user's experience, as a long-term train user, my opinion is that total travel time is not a criterion as to whether one takes the train. No one would ever say "Oh dear, the train takes 15 minutes longer than a car drive, I think I'll use the car instead for my trip to Boston". Time is, on my list, not even a consideration when choosing to ride the train. My reason for choosing the train are convenience, safety, cost saved in not using my car, the chance to sleep, do work or read social media while I travel, the ability to get up and move around, etc . I could care less if it takes longer, I just plan that into my scheduling. Even people who commute to work don't really care about total travel time. They just plan the total time for their commuting needs. The vast benefit of being able to work while traveling far outweighs a 15 or 20 minute longer commute. The only metric here that matters, is relative 'on-time' performance, for if the train is delayed over the scheduled time, that could negatively impact workers. So to summarize, total travel time of a leg of the journey is not that important in choosing the train over the car. The emphasis should be on being able to stick to the on-time promise. 2) North-South Station Link " The Downeaster could be enhanced by developing and marketing a reservation link (rideshare, taxi voucher, etc.) between South and North Stations in Boston" YES PLEASE!!!!I have been traveling the Portland to Boston route for decades. I travel by train constantly from Boston South. I do not fly in airplanes anywhere. I hate to drive or be driven. I have tried every way possible to get from North Station to South Station. I have tried the T to BackBay. I have taxied to South St. I have read about the proposed cross-station link to get the train through Springfield and then down to NYC. (how does that help me if I want to go North of NYC?) I have chosen Concord Bus instead of the Downeaster, because it drops you at South Station. (Which by the way is a huge loss of business for the Downeaster because of this) My method of choice is taking a taxi from North to South Station, because then I can take the Downeaster. If I am loaded down with luggage, a taxi is much easier than trying to wrangle it on/off the "T". I hate riding the bus for the same reason I hate taking a car. Claustrophobia, motion sickness, fumes. It only take 10-15 minutes, and only costs an average of $10 with tip. Of course the ultimate solution is a rail link between the two- duh!!. Why in tarnation this was never done is beyond me. But without a rail link being an option, a taxi voucher would be wonderful, one I would use immediately. 3) Bus service to L-A. "Thruway and Commuter Bus Connection to Lewiston-Auburn and Portland: MaineDOT, NNEPRA, Amtrak Establish thruway bus connection between Downeaster service and Lewiston-Auburn." I was shocked that this was proposed. Where were MDOT, NNEPRA and Amtrak when the trail people decided to pull up the train tracks from Portland to L-A? A commuter link along the SLR between the two cities should have been a no-brainer. Bus service is a poor alternative for many reasons. A bus does little to alleviate traffic along the route, especially around the Portland area. The volatile fumes and greenhouse gas contributions of a bus are exponentially greater per mile than a passenger train. I do not like the bus for the same reasons I don't like taking a car. If bus service is present, it will be an excuse for trail people to say the tracks aren't needed. And it will take funding away from advancing commuter rail service to this area. Is there even a bus station within walking distance from town? Or will one need to take an Uber or Taxi to get from the bus drop-off to the city? The only way I could advocate for a thru bus would be if actual work was being done by MDOT, NNEPRA and Amtrak to support commuter rail to L-A from Portland. Without that commitment, a tru bus is a misdirection, a poor substitute. That's it for now, Thank You,

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thank you again,

I appreciate your thorough review of the plan. Your comments will be taken into consideration as we revise the final plan.

Nate Howard

MaineDOT

Public Comment 474  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan  
Comment: To whom it may concern, I am a lifelong Maine resident, now living in midcoast, and I see incredible promise and potential in investing in healthier, more resource-conscious, and more equal transportation options in our good green state. Having seen the difficult transformation of Portland into “car-first” infrastructure, we’ve seen what those policies create. Pedestrian dead zones like Franklin Arterial, lots of crawling traffic, and multi-story parking garages where once there were open ocean views. Virtually all of the older Mainers I speak with lament that children do not run about in the same streets where they once played pick-up games of baseball, without recognizing the size and speed of the vehicles now consuming those same streets, and the incredible danger these present to small children. I encourage the employees and partnerships of the Maine DOT to envision a world where kids can walk and play freely, where those of us that desparately want to ride our bikes to work, to visit friends, through the beautiful parts of our state (that truly only cater to automobiles) may do so without fear and endagerment, and where the incredible efficiency and convenience of those same cars can be fully realized, while perhaps modifying the couple minutes of a journey across the state. It’s possible! A more enjoyable, free-er, healthier way to get around this beautiful state would make us even more attractive to tourism, and make the long-term health and happiness of the residents here even greater.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Andrew,

Thank you for your comments. I just wanted to quote our Long-Range Plan's vision, "MaineDOT envisions a transportation system that is safe; meets the diverse mobility needs of Maine people, businesses, and visitors; enables communities to thrive; supports a growing economy; is accessible to all; supports the growing movement of freight; and is environmentally responsible." This is truly MaineDOT's vision and we hope that by implementing these plans, we can make pragmatic progress towards achieving it.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 475  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Thank you for acknowledging the need for improvements to our cycling a pedestrian infrastructure. Having a broad spectrum of transportation alternatives, also including public transportation alternatives, will only the desirability of Maine. This will further our economy and the great state of Maine.

Public Comment 476  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: In general, I’m very pleased with the state’s first-ever Active Transportation Plan. Even the existence of the plan is a major positive step. I was in particular encouraged to see in the plan repeated mention of coordination with and assistance to municipalities, which perpetually struggle with these issues despite the best of intentions. Though the plan is a relatively general document, I encourage MDOT to think about next steps in terms of specifics: funding, implementation, and timelines.

Public Comment 477  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: I have been involved with the railroad industry for some 50 years, 37 at a class1 and consulting since. Besides satisfying the FRA, the plan is also something that existing and prospective shippers look at for planning purposes. Accordingly, the Rail Plan should highlight "industrial" areas. No mention, for example, the industrial parks in Maine or areas that could be developed with rail service. The plan mentions "yards". But yards may or may not be actual freight generators. I would go back to the roads and add that as a new section. Regards energy, our absolute bonehead state energy initiatives are unnecessarily driving up the effective cost per KWH. If it were not for the high REAT credits, al the hole solar initiatives would crumble quickly. The plan needs to emphasize that low KWH costs will directly influence positive freight generation and point to the corridor project as being a positive step to supply baseload power. Page 48 shows comparative commodity stats. 2019 is missing for "mixed shipments. More emphass is needed to highlight rail/port interfaces. For example, Searsport should be listed along with key ship lines serving the port. How about something about possible inter-coastal moves. The report beats around the bush on possible passenger extensions versus funding. It mentions feasibility studies. Given that legislation will likely be enacted to require a feasibility study for Brunswick to Bangor, why not just put in a definite statement that the State will pursue a "Feasibility Study" since funding is available. Over all, I believe three additional timeline graphs would be helpful. X axis = time, Y axis lists the projects with the coordinates showing tentatively when the project may take place or for ones in motion -End. One for passenger only, one for freight, and one for those that benefit both.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thank you for your comments regarding the Maine State Rail Plan.

We are currently reviewing all comments receiving during the public comment period for consideration in the final plans.

Thanks again

Nathan Howard

MaineDOT

Public Comment 478  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment:

Before moving my business out of Portland I was a daily year-round (weather permitting) commuting cyclist from S. Portland to Portland. Bike Safety is my #1 consideration of where I will live in Maine. If the roads were safer, I would always rather bike before driving. CELL-PHONES and distracted drivers: If you look around at drivers, you will notice many are actually looking at their phones or texting. SPEED: On the bridge from S.Portland to Portland the speed limit is 40 mph and it’s a two lane road. Most drivers are going at least 50 - 60 mph. It feels like a highway and as a cyclist you are in an extremely vulnerable place in that lane. I often call authorities regarding debris in the bike lane. This being a very popular biking route for commuters. In Lincoln County the speed limit is often 50 or 55 mph. Drives go much faster then this and there is little attempt at sharing the roads with bikers. I have been run off the road while biking on these roads and there is no bike lane and very little signage. This is why I do not want to live in this area. TRAFFIC SAFTY AND ENFORCEMENT: why and when did it become okay to go through red lights and stop signs? What is this teaching our young drivers? CYCLING REVOLUTION: There needs to be a new view towards cycling as a form of alternative transportation. We all know that the roads are not safe and there are far too many cars on the roads and many young drivers. The more of us on bikes the better. That means less cars and more cycling awareness and a healthier and happier culture! How wonderful would our communities feel if our roadways became multi-use friendly and allowed ample space for cycling?Imagine taking the slow, and peaceful route to work or the grocery store—and taking in all the beauty the state of Maine offers.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Ela,

Thank you for taking the time to review the plans and to share your comments with us. We will keep these points in mind as we go about finalizing the Family of Plans.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 479  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I commend you for developing Maine’s first comprehensive Active Transportation Plan. AT has the combined impact of reducing VMT, contributing to community health, addressing issues of equity (by providing access to transportation to those without a car), and strengthening the social fabric of our communities). There are many components of the plan that I support such as the continued emphasis on safety education, the public engagement component of the plan and laying out of clear options for improving Active Transportation. I was also glad to see the inclusion of the Lower road Corridor from Brunswick to Augusta included as a priority corridor. I feel strongly that education programs should be included in K-12 education and driver training. There have been several bills submitted on this topic which have had the support of educators, but to date comprehensive legislation has not been enacted. There needs to be much more of an emphasis on driver training and awareness. Public feedback prioritized wider shoulders and bike lanes. Although I do support investment in wider shoulders, I am concerned that these two infrastructural approaches are combined. Bike lanes save lives by protecting vulnerable users. I wonder if this had been broken out for stakeholders, if many more survey respondents might have selected the bicycle infrastructure option rather than widening bike lands. Wider shoulders are one option but need to be much wider than currently exist and do not protect cyclists and walkers as we have seen over the last few years. Separated bike lanes protect vulnerable users. Although expanded trails provided opportunities for recreationalists and serve as alternative transportation corridors, many current trails are difficult to navigate without a specialized bike due to use of these corridors by mechanized vehicles. Certain trails should be designated for non-motorized vehicles to encourage more cyclists and pedestrians. Limiting trails to non-motorized vehicles (but allowing e-bikes) will ensure a more efficient use of funds for constructing and maintaining trails. Rail to trails should focus on trail only and not rail with trail. Rail to trail is an expensive option and many rail trails are used to an increasing rate by cyclists. Funds should focus on providing more trails for cyclists and not investing in maintaining rails lines that likely will not be used in the future. Specifically, the Mountain Division Line and Berlin Subdivision Corridor should be built as trail only and use the funds saved by not building a trail with rail to other active transportation projects throughout the state. There needs to be a schedule for implementation of the plan and a clearer statement of how funds will be invested. I feel very strongly that we need to create a dedicated funding mechanism for investing in and improving AT and specifically bicycle infrastructure. Funding of AT needs to be transparent – such as showing funding expenditures in a dashboard of projects (how much is funding road vs active transportation projects, where investments are being made). The state needs to develop a more consistent funding mechanism for ensuring bicycle and pedestrian safety through investment in infrastructure and education and reallocation of state funding on an ongoing basis. Thank you

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Eileen,

Thank you for taking the time to review the plan and sharing your thoughts with us. We will keep all of this in mind as we go about finalizing the plans.

Just to confirm, for the Active Transportation Plan survey, we did include an option for people to rank (one to five stars) their support for various types of infrastructure, including wider shoulders, bike lanes, multi-use paths, paths along inactive rail corridors, sidewalks, and other infrastructure. These were all disaggregated, so there is information for people's responses to each. For instance, 711 survey-takers gave "wider shoulders" five stars as a way to address the lack of adequate bicycling facilities, while 699 people gave bike lanes five stars. Multi-use paths received 778 five stars. We can look into clarifying some of this data, and more extensive information on the survey responses will be included in the appendices.

Regarding the inactive rail corridors, while the AT Plan looks at potential active transportation uses for the corridors, it is only informative and the final decision about how to proceed with the corridors will depend on the decisions of the Rail Use Advisory Councils, the Commissioner of Transportation, and the Legislature.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 480  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan  
Comment: Notes on the December 2022 draft State Transit Plan Page# 8 Under Existing Conditions Assessment, the last sentence in the first paragraph has a skeptical tone, not an objective tone. The word “anything” or the phrase “anything close to” should be deleted. Also, remember that some people may rely on transit because they choose not to own a car. (They can choose to spend their income on other things, at their discretion.) For them, the mode choice is made long before the trip. 11 This matrix of service schedule and service intensity should have a title. If the ferry service and passenger rail are forms of public transit, why are they not shown. Maybe have an acknowledgement in the text that they are fixed route transit that may serve daily, peak-only, or all-day needs. 16 In the last sentence before section 2.2, the rebounding transit ridership is described as “These declines are due…”. What is meant is that the “The less-than-complete rebound may be due…”. It is uncertain when transit ridership will rebound fully. 17 Hopefully, tables like Table 2.2 will not be split between pages in the final report. 17-19 Tables 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 do not show growth or change in ridership between 2016 and 2019, as claimed in the text. It seems like a 2016 ridership column is needed for each of these tables. 21 Although ferries are not a focus of this plan, some mention should be made of the intermodal coordination that takes place between ferry services and mainland bus services. 22 In Table 2.6, what is “Baals-Ellsworth”? 23 In Figure 2.1, Intercity Bus should not be lumped in with Intercity Rail. The “Intercity Bus &amp; Rail Service” bar is greatly misleading. Almost 99% of that figure is rail. Only Intercity Rail ridership should be shown. The note should explain that intercity bus ridership is unavailable except for West’s Transportation, which had ridership of 8,097. 23 Figure 2.2 is also misleading when intercity rail and bus are aggregated. 35 Multimodal connectivity should also include connecting rural transit services to urban transit hubs, ferry services, and intercity rail and bus. 37 Regarding increased geographic coverage of transit services, extension of intercity passenger rail services from Portland to Lewiston-Auburn and from Brunswick to Augusta, Waterville and Bangor should be the direction forward for developing “a more robust intercity service”. The private intercity bus companies, particularly Concord Coach and Greyhound, with their terminals on the outskirts of Auburn, Augusta, Waterville, and Bangor, are structured to serve the car-owning market, not the car-free market. However, intercity passenger rail services, connecting urban transit hubs in those cities to existing Downeaster coverage, would serve the car-free market directly. Cyr Bus and West’s Transportation could connect with the passenger rail terminal in Bangor. 37 Another way to build a more robust and rural transit system would be to establish flexible-route transit services to connect the islands to the mainland by using the Maine State Ferry Service. A bus on the island (Vinal Haven, for example) collects island residents heading for the mainland (Rockland area), rides the ferry to the mainland, disembarks and delivers island residents to their destinations. Later, the bus picks up the island residents, rides the ferry back to the island, and delivers the residents to their island destinations. The process could also work for mainland residents visiting the island. A pair of buses could provide transit service for every inbound and outbound ferry run. Because the island residents and visitors could go from origin to destination without the need for a car, use of this transit service would free up vehicle space on the ferry by reducing the number of vehicles that need to ride the ferry. Car-free travel would be an option for island residents and island visitors, and vehicle-miles travelled would be reduced. 49 Under Strategy 2, explore ways of using transit to help island residents and island visitors traveling between the islands and the mainland. The Maine State Ferry Service is a fixed-route transit system that carries people and vehicles. A successful ferry-borne bus service could reduce vehicle-miles travelled and parking demand on the islands and the mainland. It would also free up vehicular space on the ferries themselves. 49 Also under Strategy 2, move toward extending passenger rail services to cities north and east of Portland and Brunswick. Passenger rail can be the mainline service that connects local transit systems to each other in a car-free transportation network that includes bus services, passenger rail, ferry services, and bike-ped access. 74 Regarding Figure 4.1, this matrix shows only highway-based transit services. If the ferry service and passenger rail are forms of public transit, why are they not shown? Maybe have an acknowledgement in the text that they are fixed route transit that may serve daily, peak-only, or all-day needs. 75 Define and explain “LBS data”. What is it and what does it do? 79 Include the ferry services (Casco Bay Lines and the Maine State Ferry Service) and passenger rail service providers (NNEPRA/Amtrak) as partners in implementing the State Transit Plan. 83 Ferry services and passenger rail services may be partners in investments to coordinate schedules and expand transit services at local and regional levels.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response By: Ryan N  
Response: Ed, thank you for your very thorough and thoughtful comments on the Maine State Transit Plan. We have made note of them and will keep them in mind as we look to finalize the plan.

Public Comment 481  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Please support cyclists and pedestrians

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hi Anne,

Thank you for your comment.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 482  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Thanks for continuing to strive to make Maine more bike and pedestrian friendly! As a resident of Harpswell, I was disappointed that the recent repaving work on routes 123 and 24 left in place very narrow gravel shoulders. This has the direct result of vehicles occasionally crossing between pavement and gravel that inevitably leads to the edge of the pavement fracturing setting the stages for the rapid deterioration of the road surface. In addition, the lack of any appreciable paved shoulder requires that bikers must ride more on the paved travel surface, leading to a dangerous overlap between cars and cyclists. Of note, both 123 and 24 do have dirt shoulders that typically measure 3 to 4 feet beyond the white fog line in most areas. If these had been paved by the State, it would have improved cyclist safety markedly as well as, I believe, improve the longevity of the roadway overall. Will the State please consider making these improvement either prior to or in conjunction with any future work on these roads?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Scott,

Thank you for your comments. There are many different levels of paving projects, and historically MaineDOT's policy for Highway Corridor Priority 3 & 4 roads (which include 24 and 123) has been not to add additional paved shoulders. As outlined in the Active Transportation Plan (Goal 1.b), our recently restarted Regional Program and Collector Highway Improvement Program (CHIP) is going to be looking at exactly these types of roads and providing some new paved shoulders. MaineDOT will also be working on identifying "High-Priority Active Transportation" highway corridors where there is a high demand for improved shoulders, which will factor into the CHIP program. We will keep your comments in mind as we finalize the Active Transportation Plan.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 483  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Alternative transportation is the way and need for our future. Maine's road system is almost totally focused on motorized vehicle traffic. Biking or walking in most of Maine, one takes a great risk to life and limb. Recent statistics show this. Most roads have little to no shoulder. Commuting by bike is for the brave and foolhardy. Even the majority of on road routes listed as bike trails are extremely dangerous with minimal, rutted, and inconsistent shoulders. Very little signage exists reminding drivers to respect the rights of bikers. Many drivers seem to think they have the right of way, no matter what the risk to bikers or pedestrians. As Maine rapidly becomes more congested, the risks get greater, as does the need to encourage biking, walking and mass transportation systems. The time to act is now. Our roads will last much longer, communities will thrive, and citizens will be healthier if we make opportunities to walk and bike more available across the state. Studies have shown limiting traffic through towns has spurred economic growth, as have green ways and bike trails. Drunk drivers may well be surpassed by drivers texting and on phones as hazards to other drivers, pedestrians and bikers. It seems weekly somewhere in the state one or more drivers have crossed into the opposing lane injuring or killing innocents. Please encourage enforcing and fortifying existing laws. This is all the more reason to develop off road systems for biking and pedestrians. If not in this panning session, when? Climate instability is here now and progressing rapidly. We need to be taking aggressive measures to stem this crisis. Thank you for listening.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello James,

Thank you for your comments. We will keep these points in mind as we go about finalizing the plans.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 484  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Alternative transportation is the way and need for our future. Maine's road system is almost totally focused on motorized vehicle traffic. Biking or walking in most of Maine, one takes a great risk to life and limb. Recent statistics show this. Most roads have little to no shoulder. Commuting by bike is for the brave and foolhardy. Even the majority of on road routes listed as bike trails are extremely dangerous with minimal, rutted, and inconsistent shoulders. Very little signage exists reminding drivers to respect the rights of bikers. Many drivers seem to think they have the right of way, no matter what the risk to bikers or pedestrians. As Maine rapidly becomes more congested, the risks get greater, as does the need to encourage biking, walking and mass transportation systems. The time to act is now. Our roads will last much longer, communities will thrive, and citizens will be healthier if we make opportunities to walk and bike more available across the state. Studies have shown limiting traffic through towns has spurred economic growth, as have green ways and bike trails. Drunk drivers may well be surpassed by drivers texting and on phones as hazards to other drivers, pedestrians and bikers. It seems weekly somewhere in the state one or more drivers have crossed into the opposing lane injuring or killing innocents. Please encourage enforcing and fortifying existing laws. This is all the more reason to develop off road systems for biking and pedestrians. If not in this panning session, when? Climate instability is here now and progressing rapidly. We need to be taking aggressive measures to stem this crisis. Thank you for listening.

Public Comment 485  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: I am a Civil Engineer with 8+ years working in the private sector as a consultant to many railroads and railroading companies across the Northeastern U.S. I have inspected, designed, maintained, repaired, built, and ridden thousands of miles of tracks and the structures that support them, including nearly every line in Maine. I have up-to-date, real world information on materials and construction costs, and very recently worked on a huge project here in Maine that is listed on the Maine Rail Plan. I am also an avid bike rider and active transit user, and have dreamed of light-rail service and better trails in Portland for years. Before my family settled in the Greater Portland area, I spent many of my childhood years moving around the country, experiencing firsthand how other communities like Boulder, CO and Seattle, WA flourish through their walkability or great transit. I have also lived and traveled abroad and in the U.S., where I always take note of the sustainable transit aspects in every city or country I visit, and would say I have a passion for it. Now, I make Portland my home, and while I love what it has to offer, I know there could be more. As fellow engineers, planners, volunteers, or even Mainers, I am sure you, too, have an interest in making Maine a more connected and sustainable place. This comes through in the new plans presented within the Long-range Transportation Plan (LRTP), including the plans for Active Transport, Rail, and Transit. I applaud the work evidenced in these plans, and look forward to seeing the forward momentum. That said, I worry about a few things. Specifically, with my railroad experience, I worry about a lack of clear or true assessment of the existing and potential for rail in Maine, and how that intersects with the greater plans as envisioned. I believe many of the implementation options in the Rail plan fall in line with an understanding of some of the existing limitations, such as the Positive Train Control limitation, and how increased frequency and speeds would greatly increase the potential for the Downeaster. This is a huge, but necessary cost at improving both Downeaster and freight rail service in Maine. At the same time, I see huge costs associated with the shifting of the Portland transportation hub, and wonder about the overall vision. Why does the Amtrak Downeaster, a 1-2 locomotive and 5-6 car consist, adequate for hundreds of passengers and burning hundreds of gallons of fuel, need to go all the way to Freeport, let alone Rockland? How many more riders are there expected, and how many minutes or hours will be saved from the critical path (Portland to Boston), from a new station located less than a mile away from the existing station? The LRTP mentions meeting people where they are, but what about meeting existing transport options where they exist? Why is a better option not to spend that money on regional light rail, or improved active transport options (the Mountain Division continues to lay fallow), or most cost effectively, improved bus transit? Cities and countries around the globe use these large transit style trains, such as the Downeaster, as commuter service; which means connecting existing population density with fast, frequent, and efficient transport from hub to hub. These places then utilize local services, be it light rail, active transport, and transit, to get people to the stations. I worry that NNEPRA has too much influence as a monopoly on passenger rail in Maine, and I question the continued reliance on a single body in that regard. In a related concern, I worry that real, actionable progress could be made today, and is being neglected for grand designs of the future. For example, the Rail-to-Trail and Rail-With-Trail debate. Rail-to-Trails is a tried and trued path to protecting the railroad right-of-way, while also providing safe, scenic, and healthy off-road active transport options for people; all at a modicum of the cost of new roadway or new railway or rail-with-trail construction. Rail-With-Trail, at least in rural or suburban sprawl, is far more costly and time consuming to build, and is ultimately less safe and less attractive than either option on their own. In cases like the Portland to Auburn (SLR) right-of-way, with two existing parallel options in CSX (old Pan-Am) and I-95, any excuse to not begin converting this abandoned rail line to trail is a waste of time. I also see a lack of outside-the-box thinking in the bulk of the plans. Directly related to rail/trails, dedicated busways have begun seeing more use in various places around the world, mostly to good reactions. While perhaps less trendy, a dedicated busway may also be used with an active transport trail, with far less safety issues compared to rail-with-trail. In a similar vein, waterfront transport is also widely utilized in other cities around the globe, and with direct placement on the water for the existing AMTRAK Portland transportation center (Thompson’s Point/Fore River), the institution of a ferry service to downtown Portland may be far more successful than moving the station. Lastly, I also worry that many of the plans looked at neighboring states or existing examples for various projects, but perhaps do not adequately note that examples from Boston or Connecticut do not truly reflect conditions in Maine. Just as anyone would recognize that Ellsworth is different from Portland, or Bangor different from Wells, a project’s success in one area does not mean success for another. I believe Maine needs to be a leader, Dirigo. In other words, I caution that an example based approach is not adequate, and that we should pursue a needs and fact based approach based on density and access. In all fairness, I believe these plans are already well on their way to addressing a great need. Thank you for this work, and for taking the time to review these comments.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/03/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you very much for your comment on MaineDOT’s Family of Plans and the Rail Plan in particular. You raise some interesting points for MaineDOT to consider as we finalize the Rail Plan and continue implementation of all MaineDOT’s Family of Plans (Long-Range, Transit, Aviation, Rail and Active Transportation). With regard to your comments on the Rail-to-Trail and Rail-With-Trails debate, MaineDOT certainly understands that the future of inactive rail lines is something many diverse groups have very strong opinions on. MaineDOT is following the RUAC Process in State Law, Public Law 21, Chapter 239 which will be the basis for any decisions. Thank you once again for your comments on MaineDOT’s Family of Plans.

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 02/06/2023  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: I really appreciate you taking the time to go through these comments, and for your thoughtful response, Nathan. Of course, I believe you must be dealing with many strong opinions from people who are excited at the diverse options that are coming to light for Maine, and I hope my words do not come across tersely. I look forward to following the progress of these plans, and of the RUAC processes.

Public Comment 486  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I love the ideas for improving infrastructure so that people can walk and bike to get places, which is healthier than driving. But there isn't a timeline or clear priority list for which roads will get the 4 ft shoulders and over what timeline in miles per year or locations/connections per year.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Mary,

Thank you for your comment about the timeline for the plans. This is something we will be considering as we go about finalizing them.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 487  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I appreciate Maine DOT’s active long-range transportation initiatives and action plans. It is important that we, as a State, continue to engage and plan for environmentally friendly and safe transportation alternatives to our historic reliance on automobiles. Maine has the opportunity to be an innovative leader and mentor in the transportation space. Having a vision outlined in a documented plan such as 2050 Plan and Family of Plans will serve as the cornerstone for the diversification and expansion of various transportation modalities.

Public Comment 488  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: The Maine DOT needs to allow Maine's few cities to act quickly to calm traffic and make progress- they're growing and they need to have the ability to ensure that people don't need to own cars to live in them. Simply put, the Maine DOT knows what rural areas need & it needs to relinquish all control over urban areas which have their own planning & public works departments. The public works & planning departments in Maine's towns and cities know their work- they should set the speed limits not the Maine DOT. Without that local control, neighborhoods feel utterly powerless to create the kind of conditions necisary for active transportation to have any real value as an alternative to the rising price of car ownership. Additionally, 4 feet is not an shoulder width for a bike lane, I fear that widening roads with shoulders will only increase the speed of cars, without really increasing safety for cyclists & pedestrians.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Winston,

Thank you for your comments. MaineDOT works to be an active partner with Maine's municipalities, as well as it's Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Regional Planning Organizations, in developing projects that support their communities. While there can be friction between different levels of jurisdiction, MaineDOT does manage the state transportation system and intends to continue carrying out our mission as described in Maine state law.

Regarding shoulders, MaineDOT sees these as an option for rural areas along Highway Corridor Priority 3 & 4 roadways that often lack any paved shoulders. The shoulder efforts as described in the draft Active Transportation Plan generally do not apply to urban or village areas.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 489  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Well done MDOT…..The Active Transportation component of Plan should be more visible and better funded as we look to future.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hi Todd,

Thank you for your comment. We will keep this in mind as we go about finalizing the plans.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 490  
Date: 01/29/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I have been very discouraged with the lack of bicycling lanes in the town of Winter Harbor. The Summer Harbor Road is listed as a scenic byway and yet it's so narrow and curvy that we consider it unsafe to bicycle on. The Gray Road where the town beach is located gets quite a lot of traffic especially in the summer time but the pavement is so broken up with massive crevices that many feel it's a road hazard at this point for motorist, pedestrians as well as cyclist. The town triples in population in the summer and Main Street has a lot of motorist coming through. And yet there are no bike lanes on route 86 to Schoodic Peninsula . It would benefit all to have bicycling lanes beginning on Route 1 down the Clinic Road and all along Route 86. I am in favor of decreasing motorist traffic and encouraging cycling and pedestrian traffic especially since we get a lot of tourist coming off the ferry on Sargent Road from Mount Desert Island. For several years there has been the Schoodic Peninsula benefit bike ride for Schoodic Arts for All which usually brings together many cyclist enthusiast. from all over. Sadly there isn't even a place for bicyclist to park at Winter Harbor Provisions. Our local grocery store that gets a lot of patrons from Schoodic Woods Campground .I hope to enhance our community by encouraging a healthier lifestyle by enjoying this picturesque area in environmentally friendly ways.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Mary Lane,

Thank you for your comments. While the Active Transportation Plan is not meant to be a comprehensive list of all active transportation projects, it establishes guidance for how MaineDOT will begin identifying "High Priority Active Transportation" corridors that will be prioritized for improved active transportation infrastructure. We will keep your comment in mind as we go about finalizing and implementing the plan.

Thank you,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 491  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Please consider that an untreated sidewalk in winter is not an adequate passage for pedestrians. Plowed but not sanded = too slippery to be safe for any age. It forces pedestrians into the street. Yarmouth does a wonderful job with its sidewalks. Lewiston, not so much. Is there a better type of sidewalk plow than the ones that are currently in use?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you very much for your comment on MaineDOT's Family of Plans/ Active Transportation Plan.  We agree that Active Transportation facilities, sidewalks in particular, need adequate maintenance, particularly winter maintenance to function safely.  In most areas, municipalities perform winter maintenance on sidewalks, and even highways in many urban areas.  Nevertheless, as part of this state/ municipal partnership, MaineDOT and municipalities need to continue to evaluate our approaches and consider new technologies to improve our business practices.

Public Comment 492  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan  
Comment: Dear Citizens, I am inviting you to think about the future… Would you like to build mores roads or use the roads that are already in place? I am talking about railroads: a safe way to travel, with low carbon monoxide emission, the best way to give life again to the heart of your city that is built along a railroad worth so much more and that already exist....

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Michel,

Thank you for your comments. We will keep these in mind as we work to finalize the plans.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 493  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: The AT plan is a step in the right direction but will not effect change unless it includes a LOT more specifics on timelines, specific milestones or amounts for it to make a difference. For example, on page 72, for Goal 2 a iv: you say, “MaineDOT will aspire to build five to ten miles of new off-road trails per year (rolling average), given available resources.” That is a remarkable number because it is so much more than the state has done in the past 20 years and it's about the only place in the plan where you mention such a specific goal. The plan needs a lot more of that kind of specificity. One of the places to be more specificity is on dollar amounts. In order to make this plan a reality, we need a huge increase in funding. Sometimes that funding may have to come from other budgets in the MaineDOT. Ideally, MaineDOT would spend a much higher percentage of the full budget on AT.

Public Comment 494  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: 1. As the parent of two teens, I wish they could have safely biked to their high school (Bangor High), from our home, about two miles away. The lack of a buffered bike lane made this too hazardous for them to do so. 2. As a recreational cyclist, I wish I didn't have to limit my weekend rides to carefully vetted roads with adequate shoulders. I wish instead that I could simply head out on my bike, with confidence that any non-major-highway would have wide shoulders on which I wouldn't feel threatened by cars. 3. As a citizen of our melting planet, I urge you to expedite, with all possible speed, vastly improved biking and pedestrian opportunities, statewide. I would happily pay higher car registration taxes/fees, for example, if I knew those funds would go into non-automobile transportation access/routes, quickly.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

William,

Thank you for your comments. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the plans.

Regarding vehicle fees, I wanted to note that the Maine Constitution (Article IX, Section 19) does include restrictions on the use of revenue from motor vehicle fees and fuel taxes.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 495  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: The Casco Bay Trail Alliance (CBTA) supports many aspects of Maine DOT’s Long Range Transportation Plan and Active Transportation Plan, and appreciates in particular the commitment to safe travel, a vibrant economy, an environmentally sustainable transportation system, equitable access and a world class quality of life. Our mission is to plan and support a 72-mile off-road trail loop between Portland, Lewiston-Auburn, and Brunswick, Maine, running through Yarmouth and North Yarmouth among other towns..The DOT’s plans very much align with the benefits we see deriving from a trail that connects and is accessible to many of our densest Maine communities. The threat to cyclists in Greater Portland is a given, as bike lanes are sporadic and roads heavily traveled. Increasing active transportation opportunities will lead to fewer accidents, injuries, and deaths, and fewer bike crashes and traffic slowdowns, creating a safer travel environment for all. Economic benefits from investing in walking and biking infrastructure has been proven by studies in Maine and nationally. An economic study of the Eastern Trail demonstrates a total annual economic impact of $44.6M. Our communities benefit not only by fuel savings, CO2 reduction, and health cost savings, but also by small businesses that thrive with visitors to the region and state. A trail connecting our communities and providing opportunities for active transportation would invariably lead to improved quality of life for Mainers and beyond. In addition to the improvement in general health from the increase in physical activity and reduction in pollution, people who might otherwise be disincentivized to exercise because of busy roads and crowded spaces, would have opportunities to walk, bike and stroll safely and easily. Studies show that investments in bike and walkway miles increase participation in both recreational walking and biking, and bicycle commuting miles. The inevitable result of this increase is a decrease in automobile travel. In regards to equitable access, improving walking and biking access often increases access to public transit travel, as it can provide the first/last mile link to other modes of transportation. We also envision the Casco Bay Trail offering opportunities for wheel-chair use, which would be far more enjoyable and accessible for community members with injuries and disabilities than recreating on busy roads and sidewalks. In summary, Casco Bay Trail Alliance supports Maine DOT’s Long Range Transportation Plan and Active Transportation Plan, and feels the priorities identified dovetail closely with our mission. We appreciate the evolution from historically investing in road infrastructure, to an increased emphasis on active transportation. We look forward to helping make this vision for Maine a reality.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Martha,

Thank you for your comments. We appreciate your feedback, as well as your support and that of the CBTA. We look forward to continued partnership on these issues and supporting active transportation in Maine!

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 496  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: First, it's great to see a plan like this being created! I have a few quick comments: The recommendations on shoulder width for roadways is confusing (to me at least) and inconsistent. Are 4' shoulders going to be the norm (I hope so!) or is it OK to have narrower shoulders in some places (I hope not)? Please clarify! There is a lack of timelines and performance targets and metrics. How many miles of trail do you expect to be constructed by what date? How much funding is required, where will it come from and when will it be raised? I'd like to see more emphasis on the creation of bike lanes. I know people who simply won't ride a bike on a road unless a designated bike lane exists.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hi Mark,

Thank you for your feedback. We will keep this in mind as we work to finalize the Active Transportation Plan.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 497  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Please prioritize active transportation for the environment, health, and safety.

Public Comment 498  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: As an avid bicyclist, living in central Maine, I would like the state DOT to build as many dedicated bicycle lanes as possible in any new (and any revisions to older) transportation projects. Bicycling is still not very safe on the roads where I live, due to narrow roadways with minimal shoulders, but wherever you do create or improve dedicated cycling infrastructure, cyclists like myself will take the time to go there to enjoy them and the tens (and maybe eventually hundreds) of thousands of others who live where bicycling infrastructure is built will be able recreate and commute much more safely. This new infrastructure will also make many more Mainers see how much fun bicycling is, either for pure recreation or for commuting, because they won't be kept from trying it out of fear of getting hurt or killed. If we shift the paradigm in this way, less fossil fuels will be used, saving Mainers money and keeping greenhouse gases from being created. It will be money very well spent.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Bob,

Thank you for your feedback on the Active Transportation Plan and bike lanes. We will keep this in mind as we work to finalize the Active Transportation Plan.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 499  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: As an avid bicyclist, living in central Maine, I would like the state DOT to build as many dedicated bicycle lanes as possible in any new (and any revisions to older) transportation projects. Bicycling is still not very safe on the roads where I live, due to narrow roadways with minimal shoulders, but wherever you do create or improve dedicated cycling infrastructure, cyclists like myself will take the time to go there to enjoy them and the tens (and maybe eventually hundreds) of thousands of others who live where bicycling infrastructure is built will be able recreate and commute much more safely. This new infrastructure will also make many more Mainers see how much fun bicycling is, either for pure recreation or for commuting, because they won't be kept from trying it out of fear of getting hurt or killed. If we shift the paradigm in this way, less fossil fuels will be used, saving Mainers money and keeping greenhouse gases from being created. It will be money very well spent.

Public Comment 500  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I want to commend MaineDOT for the inclusive and effective way it reached out to the public, especially the active transportation public, in the course of developing this Family of Plans. Consistent with Maine's climate change and emission reduction goals, as well as our economic well-being, health, and quality of life, I appreciate DOT's affirmative inclusion of active transportation in the Family of Plans and the set of recommendations for infrastructure improvements, program opportunities, and policy steps they include to improve active transportation in Maine. In order to realize these recommendations, each of them should have metrics defined by which to clearly ascertain progress, coupled with definitive a timeframe, and of course committed funding as may be necessary to fulfill them.

Public Comment 501  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: The AT Plan is a good start. Please consider quantifying the safety of on-road vs. off-road facilities in evaluating cost feasibility, ie. serious injury per mile of off-road in the section Pedestrian Injury Crash Data. A dedicated effort should be made to look at locations where AT facilities would be valuable and inexpensive to add to highway ROW's. Example: Freeport, South Portland, Kittery. Rte 1's addition of the Brunswick bike/pedestrian trail is a prime example. DOT should take a lead in removing inter/intra-departmential barriers to AT project approval. Specifically, off-road facilities should not be burdened with long and expensive environmental impact review processes, as if they were highway projects. Especially where they would by nature have a net positive environmental impact by reducing motor vehicle load. DOT's rail department should not be working against AT projects.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Steve,

Thank you for your comments. With regards to the environmental review process, this is largely outside of MaineDOT's hands as we are required to follow the applicable law, depending on the type of project and the funding source. For instance, any project that uses federal funding must abide by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) - even if projects may result in a net environmental benefit. Failure to follow the correct environmental procedure is not legal and opens the project up to lawsuits, which can result in major delays and cost increases.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 502  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Overall, I really like this plan. The identification of HPAT segments for improvements to existing roadways is a good idea. The plan layouts out a reasonable set of evaluation criteria. I was a little dismayed that 1-3 feet shoulders was considered adequate for active transportation use. When debris, gravel and sand often cover part of the shoulder, it doesn’t leave much room for cyclists. I think 4’ should be the minimum. I’m also very pleased that the off-road system needs are being addressed in the plan. Separated and protected bike/ped facilities are essential to getting greater participation in active transportation. I think the implementation section still needs some work. In particular, there’s no mile posts attached to most of the implementation strategies mentioned in section 8.2. For instance when can we expect an update of MaineDOT’s Complete Streets Policy (1.a.i). How often can we expect reports of AT infrastructure improvements? The number of projects completed and miles of AT facilities added would be useful metrics. The target of 15-20 miles of shoulder paving in 1.b.ii is too little. At that pace, it would take many decades to add shoulders to all HPAT corridors. I know resources are limited, but we have to do better. The plan should call for a timeline detailing which improvements will be made over the next 5 years so MaineDOT has a pipeline lined up for BIL funding. Thanks again for everyone's effort in putting this plan together. --Victor

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hi Victor,

Thank you for your comments. We will keep these in mind as we work to finalize the plans.

Just to clarify one point regarding BIL funding, the increase to MaineDOT's formula funds has mostly served to (partially) compensate for the inflation of capital costs over the past several years - basically allowing us to continue funding our current operations. For us, the major change from BIL is the significant increase to discretionary grants, which is where MaineDOT is looking to fund our more transformative, capacity-adding projects. The challenge, of course, is that those grants are competitive and not always a sure thing - so unfortunately our "pipeline" is not always be a certain thing.

Thank you again!

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 503  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: The Mountain Division Alliance (MDA) appreciates MDOT's effort to create an active transportation plan. MDA has a few recommendations below we hope you will incorporate into the final draft that will increase context and accuracy related to the Mountain Division Corridor. 1. It is important to clarify throughout the report that Mountain Division Corridor is 50 miles long from Portland to the NH border in Fryeburg. And 45 of those miles are owned by MDOT and are on an unused rail corridor. 2. When describing the Mountain Division Corridor, it is important to clarify there are already two complete sections of trail. That needs to be added to the maps and described. To make it clear that has been and continues to be a corridor that MDOT has invested in over the last twenty years. 3. There are two sections of the Mountain Division Corridor that are actively in review to become trails. The report only describes one of those two sections. This is a glaring inaccuracy throughout the report. When both sections of corridor currently under review (with MDOT actively funding feasibility reports) to become trails are added to the report, that dramatically changes the population who will access the trails for active transportation. This report should describe both the Fryeburg to Gorham (30 mile) and Windham to Westbrook (5 mile) sections in the report. And since both sections are adjacent to trail sections that have already been completed in the corridor, the full length should be 45 miles (the whole MDOT owned section). Adding the populations of Windham and Westbrook to the study should be considered when reviewing the ranking of the Mountain Division Corridor. 4. The Mountain Division Corridor and future 45-mile trail runs through some of the fastest growing and most dense communities in Maine where there is a need for safe active transportation corridors because Westbrook, Windham and Gorham have some of the highest rates of accidents in the state. This future trail system will be a critical bikeway. This report only mentions bikeways once. We recommend MDOT state the value of the Mountain Division Trail and other future rail trails that run through dense communities as bikeways and active transportation routes. In addition, below is information that we recommend considering in the final draft: The Mountain Division Trail currently has 2 completed sections. Each of these sections are used by more than 100 people every day, possibly more than any other trail in the state. Mile 0 of the MDT is Congress St in Portland, which would make the 1-mile paved section to the Transportation Center part of the MDT. Although the ATP states that the segment under study is the 31 miles from Standish to Fryeburg, it should be noted that the actual segment is a 45-mile section from Westbrook to Fryeburg. The 5-mile Windham to Westbrook section is being actively pursued by both the state and the municipalities of Windham and Westbrook. The state has already approved spending $250,000 for preliminary and final design for the Windham to Westbrook section. This is in the MDOT 22-24 Capitol Work Plan. Windham, and Westbrook have each committed $50,00 for the local match. In addition, Rock Row developers have commissioned a feasibility study to connect the final 5 miles of the Mountain Division from Westbrook to Portland. This last 5 miles is currently not owned by the state, but the state has first refusal to purchase the rail row. This investment is in addition to the investment the state has already made in the 10 miles of completed paved trail. Looking at first and last mile connections, the northern end of the MDT starts at the second busiest entry point into the State of Maine, just to the east of the Mt Washington Valley at the Maine Tourist Center in Fryeburg. On its journey through the towns of Fryeburg, Brownfield, Hiram, Baldwin, Standish, Gorham, Windham, and Westbrook, it connects over 11 recreation areas and preserves. It follows the course of the Saco River, part of the Presumpscot River and passes near Sebago Lake. When the trail connects to Portland, it will pass through 9 towns with a combined population of 144,000 people. Trail use is predicted to be substantial in both directions as people ride to recreational areas as well as to connect their communities. Many of these towns are in the same school districts and the trail could serve as a commuting corridor for students. There will also be ample opportunity for business creation along the trail. Looking at trip estimates: In interviews conducted by prior Maine DOT staff, municipal officials and members of the MDA, many residents of Westbrook and Windham indicated they would very much like to commute by bicycle into Westbrook and Portland for work. Percentage of residents who commute by bicycle from other cities: Portland, Or. 6%, Washington DC 5%, Minneapolis 4%, Montreal 4%. Like similar trails in other parts of the country and Canada the MDT will attract tourists who may take multiple days to ride the entire length of the trail with the possibility of connecting to the Eastern Trail, Casco Bay Trail or the Amtrak/Downeaster. Please consider this information when completing the final draft. Mountain Division Alliance

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hi David,

Thank you for taking the time to review the Active Transportation Plan and provide these comments. As you have pointed out, the Mountain Division corridor is a crucial piece of the future of Active Transportation in Maine. We’ll take these comments, any many others we have received, into consideration as we work to finalize the plan.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett

Public Comment 504  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: It is an excellent thing to have a draft active transportation plan. My feedback is relatively broad and speaks to the need to provide connection between the various plans and "Maine Won't Wait", the December 2020 document issued by the Maine Climate Council. It is also important to note that Maine, particularly southern and central Maine, has a housing crisis unlike anything seen in generations. Based on the 2021 ACS data cited in the Active Transportation Plan, the two least prominent modes of transportation are biking and transit. Due to the sprawling nature of housing construction in Maine over the past 60-80 years, this is no surprise. As sprawl in and of itself results in infrastructure with no sustainable means to pay for its ongoing maintenance, and results a higher per capita greenhouse gas emission AND results in a single-occupant vehicle reliance making alternative modes of travel unlikely, other solutions are needed. As such, finding strategies to resolve multiple state challenges with a variety of identified goals should be paramount. This synergy could help to create financial opportunities to reduce what is likely to be the Department's reliance upon various federal discretionary funds. As a member of the Portland to Auburn RUAC, I will provide an example of ideas and possible solutions to accomplish many outcomes on the state-owned portion of the SLA line from Ocean Gateway to Auburn - these are broad suggestions only, but might suggest opportunities for the future: 1.) Support the adoption of LD 298 presented by Rep Williams of Bar Harbor (http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP0196&amp;item=1&amp;snum=131) and identify the SLA corridor as an energy corridor. This right of way has sufficient width for energy transmission, either above or below ground, and could also support a variety of either linear or nodal generation facilities, including solar, wind (i.e. microturbines), and potentially geothermal. This line would also provide some redundancy in the energy transmission corridors between Maine's two largest cities. 2.) Utilize the activation of this corridor for energy transmission and generation to complete additional grading and widening along the corridor, and bond based on future revenue to create a pathway adjacent to the existing rail lines, as well as upgrading and electrifying the rail line itself. 3.) Create a dual active transportation corridor and transit corridor along this route. Both would be high-quality, with lighting and amenities for active transportation, and high speeds and small headways for transit. 4.) Provide various incentives to communities at key locations along this route (i.e. downtown Yarmouth, Pine Land, etc.) to create mixed-use walkable developments, ideally constructed to Passivehaus standards. Obviously, these are broad suggestions, but along the lines that are already happening at each end of this corridor. Such ideas could be carried to other key corridors or nodes to further improve and increase housing options, energy availability (and not based on large-scale, out-of-state sources), and adding more travel into the active transportation and transit sectors while making climate-friendly outcomes a top priority.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you very much for both your broad high level and specific comments/ recommendation on MaineDOT's Family of Plans/ Active Transportation Plan.  MaineDOT appreciates the time you took to make such detailed and informative comments.  You made some very strong points regarding the interrelationship between different modes of transportation, climate, land use policies including affordable housing and suburban sprawl.  One of the reasons that MaineDOT updated the Family of Plans (Long-Range Transportation, Rail, Transit, Aviation and Active Transportation) concurrently is because of the interrelations between different transportation modes and how transportation, climate, land use, etc. are interconnected.  We will need to continue to consider these relationships as we move toward implementing these plans.

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Thank you very much for your response.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response By: Martin R  
Response: You are very welcome.

Public Comment 505  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan  
Comment: Looking at Figure 5 in the Active Transportation Plan, I am struck by how few miles of trails and greenways exist in Maine. Given the extraordinary benefits of trails and greenways--and low cost compared to auto road development and maintenance--we should have far more. Please make this more of a priority. I strongly support the development of additional greenways, specifically Trail Until Rail methods, which prioritize non-motorized transportation on unused rail lines. Trail Until Rail is the least expensive, least intrusive way to create a public good, while still preserving the possibility of rail if it ever again becomes a viable potential on that line.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Marna,

Thank you for your comments. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the plans.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 506  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan  
Comment: 1. I support the rail to trail plan. I also support rails, but there's a private line that essentially runs parallel between Portland and Lewiston. 2. I think the state should offer rebates for ebike purchases. E-Bikes offer commuters farther commuting ranges, decrease traffic congestion, and lessens the housing shortage by providing an inexpensive commuting option to homes further away.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Brenden,

Thank you for your comments. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the plans.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 507  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: The Plan lays out a promising framework for building safer streets and paths that encourage more people to walk and roll but it needs some improvements so we will be able to realize the goals, and have a vision for the future that will make it safer and easier to walk or bike around town or connect to surrounding communities. The first improvement that could be made is to elevate a recognition that whether you are 8 or 80 you should feel comfortable and safe biking or walking in Maine and not have to be dependent on a car to get everywhere. I encourage MaineDOT to incorporate a clear commitment to designing for all ages and abilities in the plan’s vision statement, and then reflect it more clearly in the plan's goals. The draft plan’s focus on widening roads to provide shoulders on rural roads needs to be balanced with a much stronger commitment to build wider sidewalks and multi-use paths across the state that are safe for all users, not just those comfortable enough walking or biking next to speeding cars. Second, the success of this plan will depend on how it is implemented and on that measure there is little detail. There should be more clarity about how MaineDOT will implement this plan and on what timelines. Specific performance criteria like miles of multi-use paths built should be developed and clear milestones should be added, especially for completion of an updated Complete Streets Policy and new policy for setting speed limits on local roads. Both these policies are out-of-date and are slowing progress. Because road deaths are on the rise, MaineDOT should aim to release these updated policies in 2023. Third, the draft plan includes a vague recognition that we will need to increase funding for active transportation which has been sorely underfunded for decades. The state can use existing resources to “flex” more federal funding to support sidewalks, separated trails, and other active transportation infrastructure instead of choosing to spend it on expanding highways or building wider roads which encourage speeding. They can also take advantage of several new federal grant programs. I'd also like to see MaineDOT increase the state’s share of funding for safety projects like wider sidewalks or multi-use paths. The current approach requires local towns to foot a large part of the bill even if the improvement is part of a state project, which forces hard decisions about how to use taxpayer money, often pitting local road projects against each other. Finally, I'd like to see MaineDOT bring together a bike/ped advisory group on a regular basis to advise the DOT and Commissioner and ensure the plan is being implemented. For this to work the group would need to meet regularly and have a direct line to DOT leadership.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you very much for your detailed and thorough comments on MaineDOT's Family of Plans/ Active Transportation Plan. You raise several points for consideration as we finalize the AT Plan particularly around safety, clarifying information on shoulders, funding, etc. We received a significant amount of comments that will be considered both as we finalize it and begin implementation. There are some challenges regarding language around funding and capital production performance measures that will unlikely be as refined in the final plan as you would like.  This is primarily due to unknowns such as consistent and reliable transportation funding. Nevertheless, MaineDOT recognizes that there is much work to be done to implement the AT Plan. Please continue to monitor MaineDOT's web page for updates. Thank you once again for your comments.

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Thank you for this reply and for all your hard work! I look forward to MDOT continuing to expand its work on Active Transportation and a commitment to safer streets for all.

Public Comment 508  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan  
Comment: I support the expansion of active transportation in the state, particularly by working on safer road design for all users and the creation of more off road AT paths. I also support the expansion of passenger rail service in the state.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Luke,

Thank you for your comments. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the plans.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 509  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Active Transportation is a key ingredient to enabling active healthy lifestyles, improving public health outcomes and reducing reliance upon personal vehicles and the pollution emanating from them. Active Transportation is only viable however under certain conditions of the built environment. In Maine, the most rural state in the country, Active Transportation is not viable in most of the state because the population is so disbursed. Humans, or at least Americans, have demonstrated that they have a transportation duration tolerance level of about twenty minutes or so, meaning if they cannot get to where they want to go in about twenty minutes, they are less likely to want to take the trip. This threshold is true for all forms of transportation, by car, by bike, by foot. Any Active Transportation plan must therefore focus primarily on developing infrastructure that enables trips by bike or foot that are of reasonable and attainable duration for most people. This will focus on urban, or otherwise fairly densely developed built environments. Since the viability of Active Transportation is so closely tied to elements of the built environment, efforts to impact how Maine addresses development are an important, but perhaps not obvious component of this discourse. Maine should address policies that promote sprawl. Instead Maine should focus on policies that encourage compact and mixed use development so that people can settle in cities and towns in which they can walk or bike to places they need to or want to go; grocery store, school, office, shopping, etc..

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Douglas,

Thank you for your comments. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the plans. A key challenge in developing a statewide Active Transportation Plan is exactly what you have pointed out - Maine's rural, dispersed settlement pattern. This is why one of MaineDOT's guiding principals is to "meet customers where they are" and address the diverse needs of Mainers. The Active Transportation Plan lays out goals and strategies that acknowledge that appropriate infrastructure will vary depending on the rural or urban context of a location.

Thank you again,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 510  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Notes on the December 2022 draft of Maine’s Long Range Transportation Plan Page # 20 In Figure 2.1, thick overlaid lines obscure some features of the transportation system. For example, transit municipality outlines obscure other network features. (Shading of these municipalities without outlines and placement of the shading behind other system layers would help.) Also, U.S. Bicycle Routes obscure some U.S. Route Highways and Railroads. (Thinner route lines would help.) Perhaps a second map that covers Old Town, Bar Harbor, and Kittery at a larger scale may be helpful. 21 Use of 2021 transportation data is outdated, given the recovery from covid-19. Use 2019 or 2022 figures, where possible, and be consistent with the modal plans. For example, the State Rail Plan uses an estimated 2022 figure of 475,000 passengers on the Downeaster. Other 2022 figures for vehicle-miles traveled, air boardings, transit trips, and container shipping are likely to be more representative of the existing state. 27 The Downeaster ridership numbers for 2020 are incorrect (much too high, according to the State Rail Plan). The service was shut down completely for part of 2020, and service was slowly restored to pre-covid levels. Use figures consistent with full annual values used in the State Rail Plan for 2020 and 2022. The numbers as presented in this draft LRTP are very misleading about the depth of the covid-19 impact and the strength of the recovery. 28 There should be some discussion of the covid-19 impact on air passenger volumes and the recovery through 2022. 42 Tourism and visitor numbers for 2022 would be very helpful in showing the recovery trend more completely. 46 As part of Maine’s transportation planning, work toward a seamless, integrated designed for equitable mobility for those who need or choose to travel without the need for driving a car. There are many reasons for not driving a car --- physical or age limitations, budgetary choices and constraints, environmental consciousness, and health benefits. The modes of transportation that allow car-free living --- bus transit, passenger rail, walking, and bicycling --- should be integrated into a car-free transportation system that serves the traveler from the beginning of the trip to the destination. Villages and urban areas should have neighborhood networks that are bike-ped friendly, eliminating cut-through motor-vehicle traffic and allowing people to walk or bike from home to everyday destinations. Local transit should help these car-free travelers reach more distant destinations within their areas. Bus transit, in all its forms, and bike-ped facilities should link to city centers where intercity passenger rail and bus can transport people to other cities in the state and beyond. It’s a car-free system that provides equitable mobility for all. It’s a system that can be built incrementally to reach long-term goals.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/07/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hi Ed,

Thank you for all of your comments on this plan, and all the others. We really appreciate your in-depth assessment and feedback. We will keep all of this in mind as we work to finalize the Family of Plans.

Regarding the data in the LRTP, the existing conditions assessment was one of the first LRTP elements that was completed in early 2022, so it reflects the most recent available data at that time. Where possible, we are going to be updating some of those figures for the final plan.

Thank you again,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 511  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Thank you for undertaking this critical and challenging work. Thank you, too, for considering the following comments as you revise and finalize planning. Please articulate a clear and measurable vision in three sentences or less. Please articulate measurable and timebound outcomes (e.g. zero fatal crashes within 10 years) and specific, ambitious, actionable, timebound interim performance measures (e.g. build 10 miles of new off-road trails per year for the next ten years). Please avoid waste words such as “continue existing funding” and “explore and pursue new funding” and instead adopt ambitious, actionable, achieveable goals such as “Increase active transportation funding by at least X% or $Y by 2030.” Please avoid language that mistakenly implies desirability or inevitability of an undesirable and avoidable phenomenon. For example, “While the total number of fatal and serious injury crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists has remained relatively stable over the past decade…” uses the term “stable,” usually a term with a positive connotation, to assess crash data that is anything but desirable. Characterizing this data as remaining relatively stable implies, too, that this trend is somehow inevitable and normalized. This phrasing also leaves the reader with no context as to whether the “relatively stable” number of crashes is lower or higher than expected, for example, as compared to other states on a per capita basis. Please also avoid unnecessarily passive language, such as “total pedestrian fatalities have seen an upward trend.” Again, things on an “upward trend” usually come with a positive connotation, which is anything but true here. Indeed, the entire phrase “total pedestrian fatalities have seen an upward trend” seems passively (and dangerously) detached from the underlying reality that car crashes are killing more people on foot or bike in Maine in recent years. Please avoid overly generalized language such as “identify more funding” and be more specific about where that funding will come from. Also, it is not enough simply to “identify” or “explore” or “pursue” funding. The State should be striving to actually procure and deploy that funding. Please eliminate hedging words and phrases such as “given available resources,” or “within available resources.” The point is NOT just to identify what we MIGHT do IF we happens to have a few extra dollars kicking around, but rather to increase the overall resources and to reprioritize existing resources, The statement “Maine DOT will aspire to build 5-10 miles of new off-road trails per year (rolling average), given available resources” is a sad example of a presumably well-intentioned goal gone awry. “Aspire to build”? How about just “will build”? “5-10” and “rolling average” are more hedges, followed by the ultimate hedge: “given available resources.” Starting when? To achieve what? By when? More miles for the sake of…what exactly?? In its current form, this whole sentence amounts to no real goal of any value at all. Please beware the goal of simply widening shoulders, which, without specific and thoughtful design, would only serve to widen the entirety of the road and thus invite drivers to increase speeds. Widening alone has seldom, if ever, achieved any desirable goal in transportation. I do not understand how you can devise an 80-page Active Transportation plan in 2023 without even a single mention of Vision Zero, the demonstrably most effective transportation safety improvement plan in recent decades in multiple countries. How many bicyclists and pedestrians deserve to experience crashes, injuries, and fatalities this year on Maine roads? Zero. The answer is zero. So please stop beating around the bush and pretending that there is not already an evidence-based solution and strategy that could and should be deployed right here in Maine as a core strategy to improve the safety of active transportation in the state. Relatedly, there is not enough time and attention paid in this plan to the most vulnerable users, i.e. children, seniors, the disabled, the poor who are trying to navigate from point A to point B on foot, bike, or wheelchair in a world of poorly maintained or nonexistent facilities for them among speeding SUVs and trucks. Not so long ago, the majority of children biked or walked to school. Now it I a vanishingly small minority who do so. When they bike or walk to school, children are healthier, gain a better sense of geography and community, reduce overall carbon emissions, and focus better in school. How about a specific, measurable goal or two to improve the safety of, and increase the frequency of, this simple but vital, daily, round-trip commute for our most vulnerable users? Thank you again for your work on this vital effort and for your consideration of these comments in your future revision and finalization of this plan.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you very much for your detailed and thorough comments on MaineDOT's Family of Plans/ Active Transportation Plan. You raise several points for consideration as we finalize the AT Plan particularly around safety, clarifying information on shoulders, funding, etc. We received a significant amount of comments that will be considered both as we finalize it and begin implementation. There are some challenges regarding language around funding and capital production performance measures that will unlikely be as refined in the final plan as you would like. This is primarily due to unknowns such as consistent and reliable transportation funding. Nevertheless, MaineDOT recognizes that there is much work to be done to implement the AT Plan. Please continue to monitor MaineDOT's web page for updates. Thank you once again for your comments.

Public Comment 512  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment:

Comments on Maine DOT Active Transportation Plan First, let me say congratulations and thank you. This plan is great and much needed, and I am in strong support. I am the current chair of the Sanford Trails Committee, which is a group of volunteers appointed by the Sanford City Council. We are a formal committee of the City reComments on Maine DOT Active Transportation Plan First, let me say congratulations and thank you. This plan is great and much needed, and I am in strong support. I am the current chair of the Sanford Trails Committee, which is a group of volunteers appointed by the Sanford City Council. We are a formal committee of the City responsible for developing and maintaining our trail system in the City of Sanford. We currently have about 30 miles of city trails for walking, bicycling, horseback riding and a section for ATVs. I am also on the Board of the Mousam Way Land Trust which also has nearly 10 miles of additional trails on many of our properties. Basically, all of the components of your draft plan are important and we support them. I am particularly interested in the prioritized expansion of off-road Active Transportation. In 2020, we finished a two year effort to develop a Master Plan for the Sanford trails system. A large part of that plan concerned connectors between various sections of our Trails. Sanford recently was awarded a Raise Grant which is highlighted in your ATP draft that will significantly address a number of these important connectors. We are very grateful. One of our priorities is connecting with the Eastern Trail in the Wells-Kennebunk area. As you know the Eastern Trail is a significant part of the East Coast Greenway. There are sections of that connector that I think we will be able to easily make. We are forming a special subcommittee to focus specifically on developing that connecting sector of trail. One key part is the Route 4 bridge over the Mousam River in South Sanford. We have been told that rebuilding this old, narrow bridge is a DOT priority. We have been awaiting an announcement of a public hearing on this project. One of our major city trails follows the Mousam River to the bridge and continues on the other side of the bridge and then on toward Wells and the Eastern Trail. We are hoping that when the bridge is rebuilt it can include passage under it along the edge of the river allowing foot traffic and bicycle passage. Route 4 is a heavily traveled road and vehicles tend to travel that section of road at a high rate of speed, making crossing over the roadway perilous. The spur from Sanford to the Eastern Trail is part of the Maine Active Transportation Arterial Plan to connect Maine’s 25 largest cities (Sanford is the 8th largest city in Maine.) Information about the Sanford spur appears on pages 9, 11, and 13 of that plan. If the Route 4 bridge is rebuilt now without an under pass, it is very unlikely to happen afterwards. I want to make one other suggestion for the future. I try to stay well-informed but I knew nothing about the development of the Active Transportation Plan draft until I received an email from the Maine Trails Coalition. I didn’t know about district meetings, I would have commented at the public hearings if I had know about them, and I would have filled out the on-line survey. Please do your best to make this important effort better known. Finally, the draft plan states that appendices are saved in separate documents. I can’t find them. Can you help? Thank you. Lawrence Furbish, Sanford Trails Committee Chair

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT’s Family of Plans/ Active Transportation Plan. Thank you also for your past, present and future volunteer work in Sanford. As you know, the partnership between Sanford and MaineDOT leading to significant transportation and downtown investment in Sanford would not be possible without strong municipal leadership and work from individuals such as you and various committees in Sanford. I’m sorry that you only learned about the draft ATP and public meetings late in the process. We will continue to try to improve the ways that we promote these meetings. Two methods to keep informed of future public meetings would be to periodically check MaineDOT’s Active Public Meeting website at <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/415913f8cfcf4fc5a5cc3039a8fe6dd4> and/ or follow MaineDOT’s Facebook Page. Any MaineDOT meetings regarding the projects you inquired about should be announced on them. We are also updating the AT Plan based on comments we received and the entire plan including appendices should be available on our webpage in the coming weeks. Thank you once again for your comments and involvement in Active Transportation in Maine.

Public Comment 513  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: On behalf of Let’s Go!, an initiative of MaineHealth, we applaud the Maine Department of Transportation and collaborators, like the Bicycle Coalition of Maine, for the development of Maine’s FIRST Active Transportation Plan. Let’s Go! is a community engagement initiative working with communities to create environments that support healthy choices. Using evidence-based strategies, we promote policy, systems, and environmental changes that facilitate healthy eating and active living in over 1,000 early care and education programs, schools, out-of-school programs and health care practices across Maine and Carroll County, New Hampshire. While our current work on changing environments and policies is essential to obesity prevention and overall health, evidence suggests that in order to move the needle on obesity, communities have a significant role to play. The Maine State Active Transportation Plan will provide communities with a road map to make critically important changes, however, we would like to provide the following feedback for your consideration before putting the plan forward for finalization: 1) Inclusion of Measurable Targets: It is important for communities and partner organizations to have measurable targets for monitoring progress. You could consider calling out the Maine Obesity Advisory Council Recommendations as a source for evidence-based strategies and refer to the Maine State College Walking plan which has measurable goals to improve active transportation statewide. 2) Health Impacts and Benefits: Please consider an expansion on this section to further engage the public on the health benefits of physical activity and movement. Additionally, an educational component on the health benefits of physical activity could be included in the Implementation section Goal 4. Let’s Go! would be happy to provide content support if there is interest. 3) Increase Youth Focus: Safe Routes to School and the Walking School bus encourage families and young people to practice active transport and we’d love to see these opportunities called out more in the plan; perhaps in the AT Education Programs section. Thank you for your consideration and please reach out should you need clarification on our feedback.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comments on MaineDOT’s Family of Plans/ Active Transportation Plan. In particular, we appreciate your work at Let’s Go! and comments about promoting and encouraging families and youth to utilize and benefit from active transportation. MaineDOT will keep them in mind as we continue safety training, education and outreach. I understand your comment regarding measurable targets and the need to be transparent and proactive as we work with partners to implement the Active Transportation Plan. Unfortunately, uncertainty surrounding sustainable and consistent transportation funding create significant challenges for performance measures and targets. Thank you once again for your comments and work at Let’s Go!

Public Comment 514  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I would like to see more accessibility for non motorized vehicles and safe places for pedestrians. The amount of people I see walking on streets and roads due to lack of established safe pathways is alarming and it seems only a matter of time until someone walking with the flow of traffic is run down by a driver who is holding a giant beverage in one hand and a phone in the other.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Jake,

Thank you for your comments. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the plans.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 515  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I encourage Maine DOT to elevate a recognition that whether you are 8 or 80, you should feel comfortable and safe biking or walking in Maine and not have to be dependent on a car to get everywhere. The draft plan’s focus on widening roads to provide shoulders on rural roads needs to be balanced with a much stronger commitment to building wider sidewalks and multi-use paths across the state that are safe for all users, not just those comfortable enough walking or biking next to speeding cars There should be more clarity about how the DOT will implement this plan and on what timelines Specific performance criteria – like miles of multi-use paths built – should be developed and clear milestones should be added, especially for the completion of an updated Complete Streets Policy and a new policy for setting speed limits on local roads. Both these policies are out of date and they are slowing progress. Because road deaths are on the rise, the department should aim to release these updated policies in 2023. Third, the draft plan includes a vague recognition that we will need to increase funding for active transportation which has been sorely underfunded for decades. The state can use existing resources to “flex” more federal funding to support sidewalks, separated trails and other active transportation infrastructure instead of choosing to spend it on expanding highways or building wider roads that encourage speeding. It can also take advantage of several new federal grant programs. I'd like to see Maine DOT increase the state’s share of funding for safety projects like wider sidewalks or multi-use paths. The current approach requires local towns and cities to foot a large part of the bill even if the improvement is part of a state project, which forces hard decisions about how to use taxpayer money, often pitting local road projects against each other

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comments on MaineDOT’s Family of Plans/ Active Transportation Plan. Based on several comments we received, MaineDOT will be clarifying and discussing efforts associated with shoulder improvements versus other potential active transportation investments in more detail in the final plan. We will also continue working on revised and improved Complete Streets and speed limit related policies over the next year or so. MaineDOT has and will continue to seek all available sources of transportation funding including new federal grant programs. Nevertheless, the lack of clarity and policy around reliable transportation funding in the future does pose challenges for specific performance criteria. However, as MaineDOT publishes its Work Plan every year, MaineDOT will describe specific Active Transportation investments and how they fit within MaineDOT’s budget. Thank you once again for your input in this plan and hopefully you will continue to be active and provide comments as we continue to develop and refine policies as we implement the Active Transportation Plan.

Public Comment 516  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I'm glad you have created this plan but until the MaineDOT decides that Active Transportation, NOT single occupancy vehicles, is a priority, and that AT should get a much higher percentage of the annual transportation budget, this plan will be only a vision and not a reality. You have done some great research and analysis here and I truly appreciate most of the goals for realizing the AT vision, but please put your money where your mouth is. There are so many Mainers that care about supporting AT and AT, as you note can help address some of our most severe challenges--climate, equity, public health, etc.--so please change the funding paradigm at MaineDOT. Thank you.

Public Comment 518  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: My mother wrote her own obituary before she died at 94. She wrote "...my husband was hit by a car and killed on his bicycle. The world stopped." His death has been an ongoing source of grief for my family for decades. For me, road safety matters. I think your new plan is good, but it needs to be firmed up in a number of ways: (1) strict timelines for updating the state's complete streets policy, (2) more money from the state for building local paths and road improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists, (3) if possible, a mandate for local towns and municipalities to develop their own Complete Streets (or Vision Zero) plans by a date certain. Here in Topsham, a year or so ago, a woman was walking with her 6-year-old son from a shopping center to a residential area alongside a busy state road that has no separated sidewalk (and for which there is no other viable route if you happen to need to go to the grocery store). She was hit by a driver who, apparently, fell asleep at the wheel, crossed two lanes of traffic, and killed her, leaving her child alive. Can any of us even begin to imagine what that child will live with for the rest of his or her life? Why don't we have a separated sidewalk on that busy road? In honor of those already killed, could we not go to the effort to provide timelines for improvements to our planning and more funds for pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure? Other countries have done it. Why can't we?

Public Comment 519  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Healthcare, college student and staff accessibility, economic access and growth, commuter, tourism: All feasible, financially and environmentally beneficial and practical servicing methods and more for expansion of passenger rail to Western Maine (Lewiston-Auburn lines to Sherbrooke, Canada). Harmonizing with bus, alternate vehicular relays. Europe and other areas of the Country platforms show defined feasibility. Let us expand the accessibility to Maine. Vacationers and commuters will gladly jump on board as current state is a hardship getting in, out and around this beautiful State. Adding an additional transportation vein to Western Maine will allow our State to thrive, in turn creating less dependency due to limited job availability/State dependency of Western Mainers.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Family of Plans.  One of the primary reasons that MaineDOT prepared a Long-Range Transportation, Rail, Transit and Active Transportation Plan concurrently is to be able to consider transportation needs and opportunities holistically.  Accessibility for all transportation users has and will continue to be the aim of a balanced multimodal transportation system in Maine.

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: That is great. We would like as a State to see feasible progress. Our State and its children deserve practical results. As a mother and a tax-payer who has ridden rail transport since her early childhood in New England, as well as resided in this State since attending college up North in Maine in 1998 and as a resident of Lewiston-Auburn area since 2002 historically commuting to Portland/Falmouth I have seen and heard the above mentioned needs and wants from Maine residents, as well as friends and family who enjoy visiting Maine, but are very discouraged by the miles of I-95 backed up traffic at the tolls that they sit in for hours to get in or out of the State in the summer, holiday weekends and more.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response: Thank you. These are all legitimate concerns for MaineDOT to consider in our planning process.

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Thank you kindly. Have a good one. We are here to help as we can.

Public Comment 520  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Four-foot minimum shoulders, please. They make a big difference in terms of safety and peace of mind, especially for older bike riders like myself.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response By: Martin R  
Response: Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Family of Plans/ Active Transportation Plan. The final AT Plan will offer additional clarity regarding MaineDOT's intent to add shoulders for uses, particularly AT uses.

Public Comment 521  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: We thank the Department for all their work on the Long Range Transportation, through public stakeholder processes. Public input ensures those most impacted by policies have a seat at the table, and we hope MDOT fully considers all comments to improve the plans. Overall, we would like to highlight a few items: Lead by Example on page 94, the discussion of Complete Streets on page 57, and the discussion of last mile and trip chaining issues on page 61. That being said, the final plan should be more specific and actionable. The metrics and measurements on the last two pages are impactful, but we hope that the environment/equity metrics are finalized before the report is completed. Specifically, the impacts of our climate crisis are mentioned, but the urgency for bold, specific action is lacking. Also, there can be more specific linkage between transportation and health; the Active Transportation plan covers some of, but the cutting of emissions cannot be overstated as a public health benefit. Additionally, we encourage MDOT to integrate other environmental benefits into this plan: habitat fragmentation, wildlife corridors, runoff and water quality, and more. This plan would be enhanced by addressing opportunities, such as looking to integrate the transportation and energy systems. One example of this would be using already impacted land for solar development (or at least supporting doing so). Specifically, MDOT should have a goal to help develop more projects like the solar development in Augusta. There is also a tendency in this report to mix together distinct goals, strategies, and trends in single statements in a way that a) reduces clarity and b) increases the risk of important aspects getting buried. A key example from our perspective is combining “Reduce crashes, fatalities, and serious injuries or all transportation users” and “promote safe and connected active transportation options,” into a single strategy. These are separate. Here are more specific comments with page references: p. 9: The language should include a transportation system that accomplishes these goals at the lowest level of carbon production and other negative impacts on our state’s environment. p. 10: The proposed strategies are vague, please add more specifics. p. 14-15: The text of page says that Figure 1.2 presents the family of plans relative to other statewide initiatives – including Maine Won’t Wait. However, Figure 1.2 does not reference Maine Won’t Wait or indicate how the execution of the LRTP and modal plans will work to achieve the goals of Maine Won’t Wait. The text and figure should be clear that the LRTP will require that MDOT actions must combine to meet the goals of Maine Won’t Wait. p. 16: Add environmental and health impacts in assessments of long-term benefits and costs. p. 24: There is a disconnect on VMT and improving motor vehicle infracture. This page reports that by the fall of 2021, VMT had fully recovered to pre-pandemic levels. On page 74, there is a recommendation of reducing VMT. A significant change to our funding and infrastructure is needed to bring a real change. Simply improving existing motor vehicle infrastructure will increase VMT. p. 24: This definition of reliability is likely to push towards building more lanes on roads in the southern part of the state to reduce congestion. Especially in denser urban areas, it is important that delays and congestion be seen as a function of the transportation system, not just of the road. p. 41: Need more details on the anticipated impact of sea level rise and increase stormwater runoff on the transportation system. We have seen multiple major roads wash out in Northern Maine in the last couple of years. And along the coast there are a number of roads that may be inundated or undermined by rising sea level. The changing climate presents direct threats to the transportation system that need to be seriously grappled with. At the same time, transportation accounts for 54% of emissions in Maine. So, mitigation is impossible without change in the transportation system. p. 42: Maine's tourism industry also stands to be impacted by climate mitigation measures. In particular, if the population in other states (say MA) transition to electric vehicles faster than Maine develops the infrastructure to support them, it will negatively impact Maine's tourism industry as EV owners will choose to go elsewhere. p. 47: Focus of safety programs should be to create safe systems, educate drivers, and enforce rules. The primary responsibility for safety should not be put on active transit users. p. 47: For active transportation to be viable as transportation it must be maintained year-round. Options that are only viable in the summer are not serious transportation options. p. 52: What is the purpose of Table 3.4, especially around climate? Wouldn’t climate considerations create a more vibrant economy and a more sustainable transit system? p. 57: Strong Support for Complete Streets and expanding Village Partnership program p. 74: While we appreciate the commitment to align with the goals in Maine Won't Wait, the second piece of an "Environmentally Sustainable Transportation System" also needs attention. How are we preparing to adapt to the anticipated climate impacts? In fact, this really should be its own objective separate from reducing impacts. p. 84: Invest in practical solutions– what does practical mean? Isn’t active transportation the most practical and what customers want and what our climate/communities need? p. 86: This section should mention Wildlife Corridors and working with IFW on terrestrial and aquatic crossings p. 86: Two distinct strategies are better than one here. By combining them it seems more likely that the second half, "Promote safe and connected active transportation options," will be neglected, overlooked or overshadowed. p. 87: "Position for an Electric Vehicle Future" is also related to supporting economic opportunity. Specifically, failing to do so will significantly hamper our tourism industry and may impact other sectors as well. It is also related to an objective that is not listed but should be, which is creating a system which promotes the health and wellbeing of Maine people. Emissions from the transportation system are a major cause of illness and death. EVs significantly reduce those emissions. p.90: In general, more specificity for these strategy sheets would ensure there are action next steps for MDOT. p. 93: Prepare for climate change section is inadequate. Village Partnerships should focus density in resilient areas. Yes, bridges should be raised, but what about natural solutions, protecting marshes, etc.? Maybe this section also includes adding more solar to MDOT land. p. 94: Lead by Example should include ‘Buy Clean’ principles (see examples from other states here). We are also happy to discuss further.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Matt,

I would like to thank you and the Sierra Club for your detailed comments on our draft Long-Range Transportation Plan. We will keep all of these in consideration as we work to finalize the LRTP. I did want to respond to a few of your points, just to clarify what is currently in the plan.

Pg. 14-15: Maine Won't Wait is a part of the statewide initiatives listed at the top of Figure 1.2. We can look into making this more clear.

Pg. 24 (VMT): This simply states the fact that VMT had returned to the pre-COVID baseline by the fall of 2021. This is an existing conditions section and does not contradict the Maine Won't Wait goal of reducing VMT.

Pg. 24 (reliability): MaineDOT supports efforts to reduce VMT, as outlined in *Maine Won't Wait* and the *Maine Clean Transportation Roadmap,* but system reliability remains an important metric and critical for Maine people and the economy of Maine.

Pg. 41: This page points out numerous threats posed by climate change to the transportation system, including the risk of connections being destroyed and communities being cut off. In the page describing the strategy "Prepare for Climate Change" we also provide a link to the MaineDOT Climate Initiative Infrastructure Resilience Assessment: <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/climate/assessment/>

Pg. 47: This plan notes the need for a wide variety of interventions to address safety issues, many of which are focused on drivers. At no point does it suggest that the primary responsibility for safety should be put on active transportation users.

Pg. 52: The purpose of this table is to show different categories of spending that are listed in the 2022-2024 MaineDOT Work Plan. There is not a specific "climate" category as this lays out funding by different modes and types of operation.

Pg. 84: Investing in practical solutions, which is keeping in line with MaineDOT's guiding principals, means focusing MaineDOT's limited resources where they can have the most benefit. In terms of reducing GHG emissions, mitigating environmental impacts, and reducing disruptions, active transportation investments may or may not be the most practical solution for a given context. It is also worth noting that environmental benefits are an important, but not the only, benefit that would be considered with regards to active transportation infrastructure.

Pg. 86: MaineDOT sees providing safe and connected active transportation options as a critical part of our integrated approach to increasing safety, in line with the Safe Systems approach.

 Pg. 93: MaineDOT works to support community's visions for their villages, towns and cities, including increasing density. However, decisions about land use and zoning generally rest with municipalities.

Again, thank you for your comments.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 522  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I am glad to see MaineDOT and other statewide partners are focusing even more on active transportation and forms of transportation and access to recreation. Infrastructure improvements such as wider and better sidewalks, cyclist accommodations, better infrastructure for mobility challenged people, share use paths, etc. are obviously extremely important. Although mentioned in the plan, a concerted effort must be made on the educational and enforcement front as well. Millions of dollars can, and should be spent on infrastructure, but unless we instruct people in the correct and lawful way of utilizing that infrastructure, the state will continue to experience high injury and fatality rates. Along those lines enforcing the laws currently in existence is imperative to lower those rates. I hope these two "E's" can become a major focus at the state and local level to cost effectively and efficiently improve safety under current conditions for all who utilize our transportation system including access to recreational facilities.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comments on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan. As we move forward to implement the plan with various partners, education and enforcement will continue to be necessary for a safe and efficient multimodal transportation system.

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Thank you for your response and that is good to hear.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response By: Martin R  
Response: You are very welcome

Public Comment 523  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: We applaud the efforts thus far to create an Active Transportation plan, especially the close coordination with the Bicycle Coalition of Maine. And, this plan also needs some improvements to be comprehensive. Increasing Active Transportation in Maine is critical to creating healthy and resilient communities. It’s also a critical strategy to meeting Maine’s climate goals. Complete Streets and Village Partnership programs are integral to Maine’s strategy, but more strategic transportation/community planning is also needed. The BIF and IRA will provide much funding for the state, but transitioning our transportation requires bold solutions and potentially new funding. Specifically, here are more questions/comments with page references: p.6: this plan should not simply ‘accommodate’ AT within given resources, it should prioritize it and make resources available (Vision on Page 9 gets at this) p.10: MDOT might need to change its mission? Who are customers? Why not say ‘users’? Transportation is a public necessity for all in Maine. p.12: why is climate/ building community not included in MDOT guiding principles, although is included in context for AT on pg. 64? Should be in guiding principles. p.19: AT planning and Design- ditto!! p. 21: Were there no responses from people that they want planned downtowns with amenities that were close enough to bike or walk? What was the demographic of those surveyed, were they all in dense areas? p. 26: New AT proposals need not compete with maintenance funds. Those should be budgeted differently. There are also more federal funds than ever. And, in some cases, money could be moved from ‘maintenance’ of existing lanes/roads for cars to transition to more AT-friendly infrastructure. It does not necessarily have to be an ‘either/or’. At the very least, MDOT could help identify and plan for whatever areas could use more AT infrastructure the most, whatever timeframe for implementation exists. p. 31: Although we appreciate the current trends for AT, what is the future potential for AT in the state? This highlights the need for more planning as the public need is for more AT. p. 65: Appreciate the focus on equity p.70: 1a- is complete streets/ Village Partnership enough? Doesn’t there need to be some type of formal planning on the state/regional level to leverage development where we want it? p.75-76: This could mention that there will be $$ through IRA. The Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program: a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) program will provide funding for highway removal, remediation, or capping; mitigating local impacts of highways; building or improving “complete streets, multiuse trails, regional greenways, or active transportation networks”; and providing “affordable access to essential destinations, public spaces, or transportation links and hubs.” $1.893 billion is appropriated for use in any community, and an additional $1.262 billion is set aside for economically disadvantaged communities; communities with community benefits agreements in place; communities with anti-displacement policies, community land trusts, or community advisory boards; and communities with a “demonstrated… plan for employing local residents in the area impacted by the activity or project” covered by this grant program. An additional $50 million is appropriated for technical assistance, including in the form of subgrants to local governments. A cost sharing provision caps the federal grant at 80 percent of the cost of a project, unless the project is located in a disadvantaged or underserved community, in which case the federal contribution may be as high as 100 percent. The funding is set to remain available until September 30, 2026. (Sec. 60501) See Surface Transportation Block Grant Program: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/specialfunding/stp/ Complete Streets Guidance from DOT: https://highways.dot.gov/newsroom/federal-highway-administration-details-efforts-advance-complete-streets-design-model

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for all your detailed and diverse comments on MaineDOT’s Family of Plans/ Active Transportation Plan. As discussed in the AT Plan, MaineDOT agrees with most of your comments regarding the benefits of AT and will continue to move forward with improvements to Complete Streets and Village Partnership Programs. With regard to your questions, about the survey, public involvement, etc., the final plan will include some additional information related to comments received and discuss public involvement efforts. Related to your comments on funding, a key theme inherent to all MaineDOT’s Family of Plans (Long-Range Transportation, Aviation, Rail, Transit, Active) was a desire for more investment in general. As MaineDOT implements the AT Plan, we will work to continuously improve our processes and maximize transportation investments. MaineDOT’s Annual Work Plan available at www.mainedot.gov will continue to discuss all available resources for MaineDOT and our investment decisions. Thank you once again.

Public Comment 524  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I agree with plan for rail trail from Yarmouth to Lewiston. We need to make biking a priority in the transportation plan for Maine, and build the infrastructure for protected bike lanes to encourage more people to use a bike as their daily form of transportation.

Public Comment 525  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Please invest in more active transportation. Investment in trails, walking, biking infrastructure has economic benefits that support and revitalize our local economies. The State of Maine should also make provisions to maintain all active transportation infrastructure, just as it does with other tranpsortation assets such as roads and bridges.

Public Comment 526  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan  
Comment: Strategy 1: Be more specific on who is responsible: Establish an entity that oversees and creates accountability for coordination efforts – like a coordinating council (New Hampshire). Strategy 3: Support establishment of a statewide mobility management program with staff in each region that helps individuals navigate the transportation system, while also working to make the system more coordinated and easier to access. The program could: Increase direct supports for customers like travel training, trip planning, and financial supports. Help communities develop partnerships and build capacity by leveraging new funding. Facilitate design and implementation of solutions – bringing partners together to develop solutions to fit the community’s needs and secure resources to achieve the vision. Expand low-cost programs by expanding the number of volunteer drivers and supporting initiatives like transit ambassadors to facilitate access among people with moderate to low mobility levels. Apply universal design principles: Mobility management seeks to create a transit system that may be accessed, understood, and used by people of any age or size or having any physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual ability or disability. Strategy 4: Need to incorporate an equity lens and universal design into the process for modernizing fare payment. More fully study and promote low income fare programs (e.g. free fare). Strategy 5: The intent looks okay, but it needs to be broadened to cover people with low incomes, people with disabilities, and other underserved communities. Need to spell out who does the on-the-ground work to make this happen. More specific comments with page references: p.14: why is expanding hybrid and electric vehicles the only mention of climate in the mission vision for transit? Should there not be at least some mention of active transit and/or planning around smart growth? p.16: More context is needed for ridership. There would be more riders on buses if there were more trips available and/or increase in bus rapid transit or less frequent designated stops. p. 28: Fare free transit needs to be more thoroughly discussed analyzed. One portion of its mention is insulting and indicative of something MDOT should be consulting HHS on, not just using it to dismiss a fare free program: “There is also a concern that the absence of fares may lead to passengers using the transit system for non-transportation purposes, such as staying warm in the winter months.” We are happy to discuss more about fare free, but this is a place to start learning more: https://nextcity.org/webinars/the-future-of-fare-free-transit/watch p. 36: definitely increase frequencies of transit p. 37: coordination is critical, especially around payment p. 44: might need to change Constitution to allow for highway funds to be redirected, especially if we can fully utilize federal funds. We should be looking at the best use for funds. p. 57: modern fare systems to standardize= yes p. 65: looking forward to seeing EV fleet transition plan. There is A LOT of federal funding available, and MDOT could help coordinate the transition. p. 68: Incorporate Buy Clean principles! Happy to help coordinate these efforts, from our experience in other state and collaboration with BlueGreen Alliance

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response By: Ryan N  
Response: Matt, thank you for your thoughtful comments. We will keep them in mind as we finalize the State Transit Plan and begin to work with stakeholders to implement the strategies and recommendations.

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Thank you, Ryan! Much appreciated. Also, I should note-- it became confusing after my first entry, but my entries are on behalf of Sierra Club Maine.

Public Comment 527  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I strongly support the MDOT's efforts to expand off-road active transportation routes in the state, as well as longer range transit services. Given the opportunity, I would regularly commute up to 15 miles each way via bike if off-road paths existed. I am likely to be a first-time home-buyer in the next 2-4 years, and the access to active transit options will be a top priority in my housing search. I currently live in MDI, and the best part of my community is the carriage trails that link my town of Northeast Harbor with Bar Harbor. I wish the rest of the state could enjoy active transit trails like these. Transit options, particularly those in the greater Portland area also need to have increased frequency. I lived in Brunswick for several years, and while the Breeze is great, it needs to run at least every 15 minutes to truly be convenient for riders. Hourly service is simply not convenient enough for most trips for most riders. While I understand that ridership figures don't currently support that frequency of service, I think that the DOT should adopt a "if you build it they will come" approach to reducing traffic on I-295 and other heavily-used corridors. Induced demand for transit services is not linear, and will only appear when the service frequency is high enough.

Public Comment 528  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I support the state Active Transportation Plan. I am a regular volunteer with Portland Wheelers, an adaptive bike program that gives residents of assisted living facilities and adults with disabilities opportunities to be outside and feel the wind in their hair as we explore their backyards. They ride in a detachable wheelchair at the front of the tricycle and we go on rides right from their front door down public streets, bicycle paths, and ADA-accessible trails maintained by Portland Trails. This kind of program is only possible in places with well-maintained bike lanes, streets with low-speed limits, and effective traffic calming measures that allow our riders to feel safe and comfortable, or paths away from streets. We need to invest more state dollars in creating safe places for all Mainers to walk, bicycle, and ride their wheelchairs. Safe opportunities for the elderly and school-age children should be available to all. Investment in trails, wide sidewalks, traffic calming, and bike lanes is an investment in opportunities for all. I regularly bike and walk to my office from my home and see drivers of cars engaging in dangerous behaviors every single trip. As I walk around Maine, I regularly am fearful for my safety because of distracted drivers blowing past me as I wait in the crosswalk and have seen numerous car accidents occur on sidewalks I regularly walk down. There are a few visually-impaired individuals I encounter on my commute who are unable to drive and instead are forced to walk down dangerous streets, treated like second-class citizens since they aren't behind the wheel of a car. We need to design streets that invite people out of their cars and slow them down to create community and connection. There is no mention of cars in the mission of the MaineDOT and the value of our transportation system should be measured by the vehicle miles traveled. We should focus on building a MaineDOT we are proud of for the economic opportunities it provides and the positive quality of life it creates. The Active Transportation plan is a great step in the right direction. I regularly bike to run errands and recreate and since it's a slower method of transportation I am more likely to spend my money locally and with small businesses. Further investments in safer pedestrian and bike infrastructure are good for lively main streets and small businesses. When I do have to drive, I'm less likely to be sidetracked by local businesses, instead driving to big box stores that are owned by out-of-state corporations. Investing in pedestrian and bike infrastructure means investing in locally owned businesses. I also regularly ride the Metro bus into Portland and Concord Coach bus to Bangor and Boston. These buses support a wide range of Mainers as they go to work, visit family and friends, and run errands. I've also enjoyed the opportunities of the Lakes Region Explorer and Amtrak Downesaster. These are amazing services that create social cohesion and should be expanded. Some destinations are just out of the reach of the existing public transportation networks and more work should be done to build more robust and regular bus service to more locations in Maine. Any child being driven to school represents a series of policy failures. Children deserve safe buses or walkable routes to school.

Public Comment 529  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Jennifer Grant Public Outreach and Planning MDOT Phil Goff VHB Hello! Below are some critiques of the Active Transportation Plan Draft 1) Regarding snowmobile use on trails, page 27 states that very few Southern or Western trails allow motorized use. " Approximately 325 miles (mostly in Northern Maine and Down East) are open to nonmotorized users, snowmobiles, and ATVs. The remainder are mostly open only to non-motorized users, with snowmobiles permitted on some trails. " Yet VHB goes on to quote a study for expanding the Eastern Trail, which does NOT allow any motorized use, including snowmobiles. The extremely important context that is missing from this paragraph below is that the $118 figure used was calculated using data from Snowmobile Users from altogether different trail configurations. "In a hypothetical analysis of the expansion of the Eastern Trail in Maine, Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission’s (SMPDC’s) report indicated that each new trail user could spend $118 per trip to the trail. While many locals may take a bike ride or walk along the trail without spending money, the $118 figure is an average that includes visitors who spend money on lodging, food, retail goods, and equipment before, during, or after using the Eastern Trail. Per the SMPDC’s 2021 Economic Impact of the Eastern Trail by Camoin Associates, the trail brings many annual benefits to the SMPDC Region," This $118 figure, used without context explaining it was derived from snowmobile users and includes snowmobile repair, snowmobile clothing, and gas, as well as lodging and food is very misleading and disingenuous and should be corrected. 2) Working together: In my opinion, the ATP focuses too much on the Interim Trail, or tearing up of the rails, as a long-term goal of AT. Pages 52 to 63, almost the entire section of "Off-Road" goals -describe dependence on this strategy. The RUAC process is fraught with conflict and distrust and may be exposed to legal challenges from rail and rail-based transit advocates. The Plan does do a good job of explaining that the process still needs to play out and could change as it does, and I commend those statements. Perhaps MDOT should try to focus more on collaboration with the rail advocates, such as emphasizing Rail With Trail, which is a wonderful compromise for both parties. The following paragraph from page 33 is a good example: "working WITH transit AT facility improvements create mutually beneficial results as well: › More people have improved access to the public transportation system and rely less on their personal vehicle. › The transit system itself is more viable because more people are able to use it and to extend the range of their trips along various routes." Thank You,

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/03/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Patty,

Thank you very much for your comments on MaineDOT’s Family of Plans, and the Active Transportation Plan in particular. You raise some interesting points for MaineDOT to consider as we finalize the AT Plan and continue implementation of all MaineDOT’s Family of Plans (Long-Range, Transit, Aviation, Rail and Active Transportation).

We have heard several comments about expenditures per trip on trail use or $118 referenced in from your comment. Some people have made the point that a significant amount of users live locally and do not spend anything per trip while others have claimed the figure is too low. The $118 per trip estimate is from research prepared by the Eastern Trail, that was focused on the Eastern Trail and its users, which is cited in the document. Looking deeper into economic impacts associated with trail use is something MaineDOT will certainly consider in the future.

With regard to your comments on the RUAC process, MaineDOT certainly understands that the future of inactive rail lines is something many diverse groups have very strong opinions on. MaineDOT is following the RUAC Process in State Law (Public Law 21, Chapter 239) which will be the basis for any decisions.

Thank you once again for your comments on MaineDOT’s Family of Plans.

Ian Gorecki

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 02/03/2023  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Thanks Ian , for the consideration. I just want to point you to the data I used for this critique. On Dec 8, 2022 I had sent MDOT a critique of their VHB's Draft Berlin Subdivision Rail Corridor Study about this very point, contesting the use of snowmobiles in the $118 figure. Below is my comment to MDOT at that time: " VHB's Draft Berlin Subdivision Rail Corridor Study." {PAGE 37: "...the average non-local trail user spends an average of $118 for each daily trip to the trail for food, lodging and equipment...using $118 as a multiplier, spending by non-local trail users would range from 3.5m to 5.3m annually." Then in footnotes the disclaimers 1) "(This includes snowmobilers who have different needs than walker and bicyclists when visiting a trail, including gas, snowmobile maintenance, and cold weather gear)" 2) Footnote 8- "If snowmobile use is ultimately prohibited along portions of the entirety of the Berlin Subdivision corridor, average daily spending would be significantly less than $118." See page 28- "Existing trail usage data includes non-motorized trail user counts" The entire section on snowmobile users should be eliminated from this report. A reminder that the Eastern Trail, which was the focus of much of the presentations and discussions of this RUAC, does NOT allow snowmobile use.} I do not know the origin of this study- whether it was the Eastern Trail analysis, which would be misdirected since the Eastern Trail has been mandated to never allow snowmobiles due to the gas lines running under it, or whether the original figure was done from a different study and just utilized (incorrectly in my view) in the Eastern trail analysis as well as (incorrectly again in my point) the VHB Berlin Subdivision Study just completed. Footnotes 1 and 2 help, but I feel this point is too important and too easily misinterpreted to be just footnoted statements, but should be readily visible in the main body of the reports. I do appreciate the interaction! Regards,

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/07/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Patty,

Thank you for following up regarding your concerns. We have looked into the reports and the $118 figure. The Eastern Trail report is from 2021 and was completed by Camoin Associates (<https://www.easterntrail.org/the-economic-impact-of-the-eastern-trail/)>. The figure in question was developed specifically as part of that report, and does not factor in snowmobiles as (like you have noted) they are not permitted on that trail. The footnote stating that in the RUAC report is not accurate, so we will be making the necessary changes to the reports to reflect that.

Thank you,

Ian Gorecki

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 02/07/2023  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Hi Ian, Thanks for the link to Camoin. In looking at that report, they used another source for that figure: Maine Office of Tourism's Visitor Tracking Research 2019 Annual Report. "Camoin Associates used visitor spending data from the Maine Office of Tourism’s Visitor Tracking Research, 2019 Annual Report along with additional trail-related research to estimate spending per user day by category. It is estimated that trail users spend an average of $118 per day. " I will look into that 2019 report. Also Camoin doesn't link to what their "additional trail related research " was. My reason for a deeper dive into the $118 figure is that I don't feel VHB would make up a footnote about snowmobile use, especially the additional details about 'gas, maintenance and cold weather gear'. Why even bring snowmobiles into the discussion, unless it was linked someplace in the previous research? As a scientist, I have seen firsthand the use of a reference that is carried forward, and forward again, when the original data was used in a different context. So I'm trying to get to the original source. I do thank you for the interaction- I'm just trying to be sure the data out there is correct. Regards,

Public Comment 530  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: January 30, 2023 Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) 24 Child St Augusta, ME 04330 RE: MaineDOT’s Long-Range Transportation Plan Dear Commissioner Bruce A. Van Note, Global Partners LP (Global) appreciates the opportunity to present comments on MaineDOT’s recently released Long-Range Transportation Plan. Global helps to ensure a fair and efficient domestic energy supply as one of the Northeast’s largest independent suppliers and operators of liquid energy terminals, gasoline stations, and convenience stores. Global’s efforts to support the communities where we live and work began 90 years ago, during the Great Depression, when the company first began delivering heating oil – door to door – in the neighborhoods around Greater Boston. Global is proud to serve the energy needs of Mainers through our marine terminal location in South Portland and through our 33-company operated, leased, and supplied gasoline station locations. As such, we believe we are uniquely positioned to provide commentary concerning Maine transportation and energy policy while helping the state meet its climate goals. Global generally supports the principles of MaineDOT’s Long-Range Transportation Plan, which aims to “manage Maine’s transportation system in all modes, support economic opportunity and quality of life, and build reliability and trust throughout the coming decades,” while also focusing on energy improvements and strategies to mitigate climate change. The report also “calls attention to the transformational economic opportunities related to climate change in Maine, such as the growth of clean-energy sources… incentives for consumer, business, and industrial investment in energy efficiency through weatherization, innovative building materials, and alternative energy sources.” Reliability and resilience, however, are important concepts of this plan that the report fails to properly address with its glaringly apparent technology bias that largely ignores alternative fuels. Alternative fuels such as biodiesel and renewable diesel are useful tools to immediately reduce carbon emissions and ensure that legacy infrastructure is able to contribute to emissions reductions over the next several decades. In 2021, data from the California Air Resources Board showed the bulk of California’s successful transportation sector greenhouse gas reductions came from the use of biofuels, beating the benefits of electrified cars, trucks, and buses by a factor of 3:1. Encouraging the use of alternative fuels can also contribute to economic development by sourcing renewable feedstocks in multiple sectors, including Maine’s heritage agriculture and forestry industries – as highlighted in the Maine Won’t Wait plan for climate action, which has a goal to, “Increase, by 2024, local biofuel and biodiesel production and use in Maine transportation sectors, especially heavy-duty vehicles.” Finally, utilizing alternative fuels ensures a just energy transition for thousands of Maine workers who would otherwise be left behind in the clean energy economy. Despite these advantages, this dynamic fuel type is only mentioned twice in MaineDOT’s 110-page draft plan: once in reference to the tax system and again in “Section 3.3. Our Transportation Goals” as a recommendation to "increase fuel efficiency and alternative fuels" as part of an environmentally sustainable transportation system. The report’s failure to expand upon this environmentally sound and energy efficient option comes as a surprise, as MaineDOT has recently piloted successful usage of biodiesel in their vehicles and even fueled South Portland city vehicles with biodiesel. As mentioned in the Maine Standard Biofuels (MSB) 2022 Green Leader Impact Report highlighting their partnership with MaineDOT… “after a favorable study with the direct biofuel replacement, the pilot project offices and garages found no negative effects to their facilities or fleets… The resulting data from the study was a clear reduction in CO₂ emissions in comparison to their traditional past practices… MSB now services eight Southern Maine DOT locations with heating oil, and fifteen garages with on-road biodiesel blends for their fleets… the Maine DOT has utilized over 154,000 gallons of biofuel since December 2019. Between on-road biodiesel and biobased heating oil, the resulting impact has shown a 15% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions without the need for any major changes.” The recently released Long-Range Transportation Plan for Greater Portland also highlights the importance of alternative fuels in meeting net zero emissions goals in the transportation cycle. The report reads, “Electrification of some medium- and heavy-duty vehicles (and vehicles with long-duty cycles) is technically challenging. Where electrification is not currently practical, alternative fuels like renewable natural gas, hydrogen and other fuels are being evaluated. The state is using renewable biofuels as an immediately available, cleaner option in state and municipal fleets. Biodiesel can be used immediately in vehicles without additional modification to reduce lifecycle emissions as other alternative fuel technologies are evaluated and developed.” Setting unrealistic deadlines and ignoring proven policies in favor of misguided mandates can be yet another way to indirectly perpetuate climate change. Electrification is and will continue to be part of the climate solution for the state, but any commonsense discussion cannot be taken seriously without incorporating biofuels. The current infrastructure in place relies on these fuels to continue to reduce emissions and drive us toward the net-zero future we all desire, and the dialogue must at least in part address this topic. In summary, taking the above-discussed principles of energy policy and flexible transportation policy design into account will result in better environmental outcomes, which is a shared goal for all of us. Thank you again for your time and consideration of our perspective. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out. Sincerely, Catie Kerns Senior VP of Corporate Affairs and Sustainability Global Partners LP

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Catie,

Thank you and Global Partners LP for your comments regarding the role of alternative fuel sources in addressing climate change.

MaineDOT's is committed to implementing the State of Maine's official climate action plan, *Maine Won't Wait;* and the goals, strategies, and targets set in that plan. For transportation, key actions include accelerating Maine's transition to electric vehicles, increasing fuel efficiency and alternative fuels, and reducing vehicle miles traveled. MaineDOT's Long-Range Transportation Plan and Family of Plans support this effort, as well as Maine's *Clean Transportation Roadmap.*

As you have noted, two of the actions included in *Maine Won't Wait* are to "significantly increase, by 2024, freight industry participation in EPA’s SmartWay program," and to "increase, by 2024, local biofuel and biodiesel production and use in Maine transportation sectors, especially heavy-duty vehicles (assuming Maine biofuels production becomes viable)." MaineDOT supports these efforts.

Electrification does have challenges, especially for the heavy-duty fleet. In some areas, alternative fuels can serve an important role, as you have outlined and as is stated in *Maine Won't Wait.* We can look into clarifying that in the LRTP. However, it is worth noting that the large majority of Maine's transportation emissions come from the light-duty fleet (59%), and it is in this sector that electrification offers some of the largest potential benefits. Thus, MaineDOT places a heavy emphasis on increasing EV-supportive infrastructure as a cost-effective way to significantly reduce emissions. It is also worth noting that MaineDOT has responsibility for the state's multimodal transportation system, but policies regarding the promotion of specific types of fuel (especially when new transportation infrastructure is not required for its use) is generally not within MaineDOT's purview.

Thank you again for your comments,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 531  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: The AT Plan is a great plan. You've collected some valuable data and metrics, identified key barriers to better AT in Maine and come up with some great goals. However, those goals need more specific timelines, milestones and dollar amounts. We need more goals like Goal 2 a iv: “MaineDOT will aspire to build five to ten miles of new off-road trails per year (rolling average), given available resources.” Specific numbers in goals will make realizing the goals more likely. (At the same time, "aspire" and "given available resources" isn't very promising.) I hope that MaineDOT WILL update the Complete Streets Policy, giving it much more teeth and integrating it into all levels of transportation planning and construction. I also hope that MaineDOT will give AT a significantly higher percentage of the total transportation funding than it gives now. Until the MaineDOT decides that AT is as high a priority as transportation for single occupancy vehicles, I'm worried that this plan won't have an impact.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Nancy,

Thank you for your comments. We will keep these in mind as we work to finalize the Active Transportation Plan. We will be updating the Complete Streets policy, and more details on the timeline for that process will be available soon.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 532  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: AT Plan Graphic Executive Summary Final Draft: Great to have upfront references to “AT system statewide will support the Maine Climate Action Plan and the Maine Economic Development Strategy 2020-2029, and enhance the vibrancy of Maine’s cities, quintessential villages, and rural areas.” In the middle of the Executive Summary it states “MaineDOT will maintain, improve, and expand safe AT options statewide,” and based on the draft plan, this is the “Active Transportation Vision.” It would potentially be helpful if that graphic said this was the “vision,” so that it’s more clear. Would suggest considering more of an emphasis on safety and traffic-separation, particularly due to the high rate of pedestrian fatalities that have been occuring in Maine over the last several years. Surprised to see that survey responses show $0.22 for wider road shoulders and bike lanes. That’s fine, but it also doesn’t necessarily represent the vast majority of the population (demonstrated by academic research) that will not feel safe walking or biking in shoulders or painted bike lanes. These facilities should not be considered completed sections of a safe, connected, and accessible local, regional, and statewide AT network. AT Case Study: Downtown Sanford Village Partnership Initiative I don’t know the details of this project, but just looking at the “after image” makes me think of a suggestion with regards to MaineDOT being sure to think about both biking and walking when proposing safety improvements to roadways. Oftentimes a sidepath/shared use path can serve both people walking and riding bikes, rather than just providing sidewalks and no bike facilities, shoulders, or just painted bike lanes. Goals & Strategies Glad to see “Make prioritized expansions to the off-road AT network” as a goal, and “develop HPAT trails along some state-owned, inactive rail corridors” as a strategy. “Enhance multimodal connections for all Maine people;” I might specify connections to existing and future transit opportunities. Strategy: “Review local match policy” - what is the mechanism or accountability for actually reviewing and making changes to this policy. MaineDOT should review this policy as part of the AT Plan, and make changes in order to make policy changes once the plan is in force that will encourage the construction of AT infrastructure across the state. This is both in terms of equity for municipalities that are less affluent, as well as the fact that currently MaineDOT pays for 100% of vehicular infrastructure, while requiring municipalities to pay for the AT portion of projects. In the middle of the Executive Summary it states “MaineDOT will maintain, improve, and expand safe AT options statewide,” however, there is no goal or strategy related to reviewing MaineDOT’s policy to maintain state owned roads and rail corridors, but not state owned AT facilities. This is not an equitable policy currently, and I would suggest this is changed as part of this process. I don’t see any references in this section to the MaineDOT Complete Street Policy; the current policy is not consistently implemented across projects. This is something that should be addressed in this plan and going forward to be consistently implemented across MaineDOT Division, Regions, and project development processes. Maine State AT Plan Final Draft: 1. Executive Summary “The plan provides an opportunity to significantly enhance AT infrastructure and programs for people of all abilities in Maine.” I would suggest saying “for people of all ages and abilities in Maine” Current Practices and Programs “Updating the MaineDOT Complete Streets Policy (anticipated for 2023)”- it shouldn’t just be updated, but tweaked so that it is actually consistently implemented across MaineDOT Divisions, Regions, and project development processes. “Increasing support for low-cost traffic calming to reduce motor vehicle speeds and pedestrian safety visibility-enhancing projects.” -this is great in theory, but there is no formal program from which municipalities and advocacy groups can access technical assistance, funding, and/or materials to implement these projects. MassDOT has a new program called the “Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program,” which does this consistently. MaineDOT should consider formalizing this program and making dedicated funding available so it’s clear how to access support for these projects. “Identifying dedicated funding for the bicycle/pedestrian program” - it is not clear what this means. My understanding is that the MaineDOT Bicycle/Pedestrian Program is almost entirely funded by USDOT annual funding formula. MaineDOT does not provide annual dedicated funding to this program, despite a few instances in the past of a small amount of funding from the Transportation Bond Bill. Public Input & On-Road Active Transportation System Needs Same comment as above on the AT Plan Graphic Executive Summary: Surprised to see that survey responses show $0.22 for wider road shoulders and bike lanes. That’s fine, but it also doesn’t necessarily represent the vast majority of the population (demonstrated by academic research) that will not feel safe walking or biking in shoulders or painted bike lanes. These facilities should not be considered completed sections of a safe, connected, and accessible local, regional, and statewide AT network. Off-Road Active Transportation System Needs “In 2022, a coalition of AT and recreational trail advocacy groups published Maine Active Transportation Arterials, which proposed an off-road trail network connecting 25 of Maine’s largest cities.” Really glad to see this included, but I would just change the word “cities” to “municipalities.” Glad to see the 4 rail corridors listed as priorities “if these corridors were to be developed for AT use following the RUAC process.” Goals and Implementation Strategies Same feedback on this section as I made above on the AT Plan Graphic Executive Summary Final Draft 2. Introduction Appreciate the inclusion of the “AT Case Study #1: Augusta Downtown Street Redesign” and the Key Takeaways. I would suggest also referencing the importance for safety of AT users, in addition to the improvement to the character and economic development. 2.1 MaineDOT Guiding Principles The plan does a great job of analyzing and focusing on improving safety, so i would suggest that safety is added to MaineDOT’s Guiding Principles. 2.2 Summary of the AT Plan Process Active Transportation Plan Overview Graphic Safe System- i would add a reference to reducing crashes and fatalities 3. Benefits of Active Transportation I would also include references to reducing vehicle trips & emissions, traffic in congested areas, connectivity, safety, etc in the first paragraph. “Economic Spillover From Trails”- I would change the title to “Economic Impact from Trails” 3.3 Connectivity Benefits Really happy to see a reference to completing the East Coast Greenway (ECG) 3.4 Environmental Benefits I would suggest referencing that e-bikes make longer trips more realistic for more users. “A 20-percent reduction of vehicle-miles traveled by 2030 is one of the transportation goals listed in the Plan.” - I would end this sentence with something like “Active Transportation and improved first/last mile connections to transit is one key salutation to achieve reduced vehicle miles traveled” 4.3 Key Meeting Takeaways I think this is a great summary of the stakeholder meetings Programs and Policies I would add to the “The impact of ATVs on multiuse trails from noise, speed, safety, and environmental/erosion perspectives” something about the negative impact to the trail surface for AT users and accessibility. I would add to “A desire for enhanced communication between MaineDOT and MPO/RPO representatives” and other state agencies that develop or support AT and outdoor recreation facilities including DACF/BPL and DECD/Office of Outdoor Recreation. I would add to “The ongoing desire by MaineDOT to institutionalize AT planning and design among a broader range of staff” the consistent implementation of AT facilities across project types. 4.4 Online Input Tools According to this section, “survey participants were asked to rank the anticipated effectiveness of a series of mitigation strategies in addressing each barrier.” And to address the top barriers of “Speed and the amount of traffic” and “Lack of adequate bicycling facilities” the majority of respondents thought “trails and paths” and “multi use paths” respectively “would be the most effective mitigation strategies and deserved five-star designations” According to the Executive Summary and reflected in the Goals & Strategies sections, it appears that On-Road improvements to shoulders and bike lanes are being prioritized over traffic-separated facilities including trails and multi-use paths. I would suggest there is too much of a focus and a priority in Executive Summary and reflected in the Goals & Strategies sections on on-road improvements given this clear public feedback. “Hazardous intersections: Roughly 460 respondents thought “traffic signals”....would be the most effective mitigation strategies and deserved five-star designations.” As professionals, research and data shows that signalized intersections actually cause more crashes than non-signalized intersections like roundabouts. I think this is a key point to be made, as the general public is not familiar with this fact. Adding more traffic signals (for vehicles) will not make hazardous intersections safer. “Distance and hills” - I don’t think this was included as an option, but rail trails or rail with trails can be a solution for distance and hills because these corridors are typically flat and direct. 5. Existing Conditions AT Case Study #2: Brewer Riverwalk A third phase of this trail was just completed in 2022 “by accessing many destinations and recreational activities without vehicle trips” I would change the end of this sentence to “without a vehicle.” AT Facilities in Maine “Bicycle Lanes: These lanes are a designated space for bicycles along the edge of a roadway using line striping, stencils, and signs. Some include painted buffers for additional separation between modes.” I would change the last sentence to say “painted buffers and physical separation between AT users and vehicle traffic is preferred according to FHWA’s Bikeway Selection Guide depending on AADT and posted speed limits.” I’d also suggest including “Figure 9. Preferred Bikeway Type for Urban, Urban Coare, Suburban, and Rural Town Contexts” from the aforementioned FHWA Guide and generally including this key Guide in the plan to assist MaineDOT in selecting bikeway types on its roadway network. “Multiuse Trails” should also include sidepaths along roadways 5.1 Assessment of Past and Current Practices and and Programs Same comment as above on the draft plan Executive Summary’s “Current Practices and Programs” section 5.2 Assessment of Existing AT Infrastructure Existing Bicycle Infrastructure- “While four-foot-wide shoulders provide a relatively comfortable facility for bicyclists on most roadways…” Relatively comfortable for who? That is not what the research tells us, nor the plan survey that shows people think that multi-use trails would best address barriers of “Speed and the amount of traffic” and “Lack of adequate bicycling facilities” Figure 5- Statewide Map of Existing Trails and Greenways- the legend doesn’t explain what the dotted red symbolization represents (looks like proposed trails) 5.3 Trends Impacting AT Happy to see these statements and data included: “Many Maine people do not or cannot drive a motor vehicle, including children below the legal driving age (15.4 percent of the state’s population)23, those with a disability that precludes them from driving, residents who cannot afford to own and maintain an automobile, and those who have temporarily lost driving privileges. In 2019, approximately seven percent of Maine households had no vehicle available, while more than 33 percent had one vehicle available.” ““In parts of the Auburn Downtown and the Lewiston Downtown, as many as 50% of households do not own a car.” “For additional perspective, the percent of working families in the state living under 200 percent of the poverty line is 28.5 percent (e.g., a family of four with a total household income of only $55,500 or less). Lower-income households and communities are typically more dependent on ways to access jobs and services without using a personal automobile. Many lower-income residents do not have access to a personal car, making them more likely to walk, bike, or roll on roadways that may lack AT facilities. This frequently results in higher rates of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists.” “More than 340,000 people in Maine live with one or more disabilities. Among the six types of disabilities identified, the highest prevalence rate was for “mobility disability," at 13 percent. (The national average is 13.7 percent). Visual disabilities account for five percent.” Joyce Taylor’s quote about e-bikes and reducing VMT 5.4 Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Analysis I really appreciate seeing this: “With these goals in mind, MaineDOT collected and analyzed pedestrian and bicycle crash data over a ten-year period (2012-2021). With the long-term goal of “driving towards zero deaths” the AT Plan uses the crash data and analysis to inform the needs assessment. For example, the analysis clarifies for the need to lower traffic speeds where possible and provides safe and accessible facilities for vulnerable roadway users such as pedestrians and bicyclists.” Summary of Pedestrian and Bicycle Collisions, Injuries, and Fatalities: “Over the past decade, there has been a gradual increase in fatalities. Per Figure 7—Maine Pedestrian Fatalities, increases in 2015- 2017, 2020, and 2021 have offset the dip in pedestrian fatalities experienced in 2018 and 2020.” Pedestrian and Bicycle Crashes and Posted Speed Limits: “It is important to note that although the proportion of pedestrian and bicycle injuries is heaviest along Maine’s roadways with a 20-35 MPH speed limit, this is not necessarily reflective of a safer environment compared with roadways posted at 40 MPH or greater. Firstly, 85th percentile speeds can be >5 mph more than posted, and pedestrians and bicyclists tend to avoid high-speed roads unless no other option exists. Although not apparent in the data, lowering traffic speeds and providing safe and accessible facilities for vulnerable roadway users is critical to AT safety.” Safety Analysis Findings: “The pedestrian and bicycle safety analysis highlights several key issues facing AT users in Maine: › While the total number of fatal and serious injury crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists has remained relatively stable over the past decade, total pedestrian fatalities have seen an upward trend. › Intersections are the site of a significant percentage of injuries for pedestrians and bicyclists. › Driver failure to yield right-of-way remains a significant factor in crashes—including fatal and serious injury crashes. › A disproportionate number of pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities occur on roads posted above 35 MPH—indicating that speed and separation are critical factors in reducing fatalities. 5.5 Review of Peer States’ AT Plans It would be helpful to have additional clarification on this: “MaineDOT’s AT efforts are generally comparable to those of our peer states, including our winter maintenance efforts.” MnDOT We would strongly encourage to MaineDOT to particularly implement, adopt, and develop the “Programs and Policies for Consideration from Peer State’s AT Plans:” MnDOT Emphasis on developing separated bike lanes in urban areas and providing dedicated space for pedestrians and bicyclists in rural areas. Complete Streets projects that affect Environmental Justice populations receive higher priority for funding and implementation. There are two distinct sets of evaluation criteria, guiding principles, goals, and performance measures for pedestrians and bicyclists. Establishment of a statewide pedestrian and bicycle traffic count program to understand trends in various regions. Emphasis on ways MnDOT can assist municipalities with winter maintenance of pedestrian and bicycle facilities without committing to being fully responsible. PennDOT Equity-related criteria will soon be incorporated into the funding prioritization process for pedestrian and bicycle projects. Collaboration with municipalities and transit providers to incorporate AT infrastructure projects with transit investments. Evaluation criteria for AT projects and policies include safety, equity, connectivity, partnerships, public health, and economic mobility. VTrans Emphasized snow removal from sidewalks and bikeways. A Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress analysis was conducted for all state-owned, paved roadways Location and use data for current and future multiuse trails are utilized to assess opportunities to connect AT with transit. Revised grant selection criteria rewards transit connectivity with AT, especially at high-crash locations. Recent legislation (2021 VT Transportation Bill, Act 55) provides residents a $200 rebate for purchases of an e-bike, the first state to do so. 5.6 Current AT Funding- Really appreciate having an overview of “funding sources and amounts utilized by MaineDOT and the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for AT projects.” and “estimates of AT investments” under other programs including the Highway, Bridge, and Multimodal Programs. 6.1 Overview of AT Needs- in addition to the needs listed in the general categories of AT in Maine, i would also suggest: Complete Streets and Trails Consistently implementing the Complete Streets policy across all programs (including, but not limited to, the Highway, Bridge, and Multimodal Programs), Divisions, and Regions Local Cost Sharing Revising the policy that requires communities in many cases to pay for only the bicycle/pedestrian portion of a larger project being funded by the Highway, Bridge, and Multimodal Programs for example. While the vehicular facilities and costs of the projects are 100% covered by MaineDOT funding. Roadway Design: Emphasis on traffic-separation for AT users to reduce exposure to high speed traffic and reduce crashes and fatalities. 6.2 On-Road System Needs Evaluation Criteria for prioritizing HCP 3 and 4 corridors: “Vehicle speeds: Using roadway posted speeds, determine if the roadway has high vehicle speeds. The higher the speed, the higher the priority to widen roadway shoulders for safer travel for pedestrians and bicyclists.” and “Number of Travel Lanes: Wider, multilane roadways can create a more uncomfortable environment for people who need to use the shoulder to walk, bike, or use a mobility device. The higher the number of travel lanes, the higher the need for wider shoulders.” Widening roads with more lanes that already have high speeds, will likely only increase the speed at which vehicles are driving. So while in some cases it certainly makes sense to add shoulders, prioritizing the widening of roadways that already have high speeds and a higher number of lanes will likely result in higher vehicle speeds, but with no physical separation for AT users. MaineDOT’s pedestrian and bicycle safety analysis as part of this plan “highlights several key issues facing AT users in Maine,” including the fact that “a disproportionate number of pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities occur on roads posted above 35 MPH—indicating that speed and separation are critical factors in reducing fatalities.” I like to see some of the other evaluation criteria including: crash history, residential density, proximity to AT destinations, proximity to environmental justice communities, connecting to existing trails and greenways. 6.3 Off-Road System Needs Maine Off–Road Regional Trail Network Proposal- it is great great to see Maine Active Transportation Arterial vision, proposal, and map included. “Collectively, the trail advocates’ vision has helped to inform some of the planning-level recommendations in the AT Plan. The report included a high-level analysis of potential costs associated with developing the 67 trail segments, which totals more than $157 million for the identified priority segments. This initial cost analysis helps frame the vision for this interconnected network.” “MaineDOT recognizes the hard work and vision put forth by many stakeholder organizations in the “Maine Active Transportation Arterials” report; this vision could provide an array of benefits to the communities along these trail segments as well and the entire state. Building on this vision, MaineDOT will work collaboratively with stakeholders, municipalities, and many others to identify the feasibility and prioritization of trail segments from this vision, as well as requests put forward by other communities, to identify HPAT trail segments to prioritize for implementation, as timelines and resources allow.” State-Owned, Inactive Rail Corridors- it’s great to see “Figure 11- Inactive, State-Owned Rail Corridors with Existing Trails, East Coast Greenway (ECG), and U.S. Bike Routes map and “Table 9—Summary of Rail Corridor Characteristics for Three AT Plan Inactive Rail Corridors” It is fantastic that the Plan includes Cost Estimates in terms of an order of magnitude for the 4 inactive, state-owned rail corridors as it is a significant step in project development It is great to see that the Plan calculated and sets a priority for the 4 inactive, state-owned rail corridors As such, the AT Plan prioritizes the four corridors in the following order: Berlin Subdivision Corridor 2: Lower Road Corridor 3: Mountain Division Line 4: Calais Branch Line 7. Vision and Goals 7.1 Context- it’s great to see MaineDOT’s Statement on Equity is referenced and, “traditionally underserved” populations are defined. 8. Implementation Plan 8.1 Introduction- It’s great to acknowledge that “Coordinated actions among several agencies and organizations are needed to improve conditions for AT and increase the number of people of all abilities walking, bicycling, and rolling in Maine.” But i would suggest formalizing a process and inter-agency “Active Transportation and Recreation Team” that is a concrete strategy that will support this Plan to be successfully implemented “Those supporting the implementation of the AT Plan include: “State agencies assisting with the planning and implementation of AT strategies, including the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF); the Department of Health and Human Services; the Department of Education; the Bureau of Motor Vehicles; and the Bureau of Highway Safety.” I would also add the DECD, Office of Tourism, Office of Outdoor Recreation 8.2 Implementation Strategies In addition to updating MaineDOT’s Complete Streets Policy to include training for agency staff and better paving project coordination, I would add “consistently implementing the policy across project types, funding programs, Divisions, and Regions.” It’s great to see the MaineDOT “Gateway Treatment Options,” however, I’m surprised to see that guidance seems to only include “sharrows” for bicycle facilities. This is not the only type of bike facility that is appropriate in these contexts. Glad to see “develop solutions for transporting e-bikes on public transit” as one of the strategies to “Increase AT access to multimodal connections.” Table 15- Planning-Level Cost Estimates for Example AT Facility Improvements that includes rough cost estimates per mile for AT facilities is very helpful. Hopefully a substantial amount of this funding can be used to implement the AT Plan: “the new Carbon Reduction Program provides formula funds to reduce transportation emissions, including through the construction of on- and off-road AT facilities. In FY23, MaineDOT will receive more than $5.8 million.” Municipal Guide to AT Year-Round- glad to see this, but also concerned about the lack of maintenance on MaineDOT AT facilities like sidewalks that are often icy or uncleared of snow. 8.3 Implementation Next Steps Concerned that there are not more specific actions steps to implement the HPAT once identified by stakeholders and MaineDOT Words like “continue, conduct, maintain,” but not more specific next steps General feedback Plan should identify as a goal to incorporate HPAT’s into MaineDOT’s Work Plan and the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) so that there is a clear process by which priority projects will be funded and constructed over the next 3-5 years, and these key projects are eligible for various federal funding sources. Add a timeline to action steps that are identified in the AT Plan like “review the Complete Streets Policy” and considering changes to the Local Match policy for example. This will introduce some accountability, and make it more actionable, rather than just being aspirational. Consider increasing the target miles to move forward in the development process on an annual and 5 year basis; this would include projects that are moved from concept to feasibility, planning, design, and construction.

Public Comment 533  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Page 8 Section: Off-Road Active Transportation System Needs -This section does not mention the potential for using either state owned road or active rail right-of-ways for active transportation, but both have been used in projects. I think when the Kennebec River Rail Trail was built alongside the tracks, the route may have been considered an active train right of way - it was still leased at that time. The Androscoggin River Bicycle Pedestrian Path in Brunswick was built in the Route 1 right of way. Some suggested edits to Paragraph 2 to incorporate these additional options: “Some state-owned road and rail right-of-way corridors can be used for AT purposes. The Androscoggin River Bicycle Pedestrian Path and the proposed Androscoggin to Kennebec Trail in the Route 1 corridor are examples of an off-road trail in a road right-of-way. State-owned inactive rail corridors provide additional opportunities to be either used as a rail-with-trail or as an interim trail-until-rail, depending on the Rail Use Advisory Council process (including local preferences) and legislative approval. In this plan, four rail right-of-way corridors were evaluated and prioritized for potential implementation (see map at right). Anticipated trail use and estimated costs for both rail-with-trail and interim trail options were included, resulting in these priorities if these corridors were to be developed for AT use following the RUAC process:” Page 22 Introduction: Existing Conditions -Consider adding a reference to, “multiuse trails or paths that have had Maine DOT supported feasibility studies or engineering completed.” Suggestions for an updated paragraph are included below: “The assessment of existing conditions includes a review of current programs, policies, and infrastructure relevant to AT in Maine. The assessment features current safety efforts by MaineDOT, a review of existing bicycle education programs, efforts to promote equity, and an inventory of existing multiuse trails; paths; an inventory of multiuse trails or paths that have had Maine DOT supported feasibility studies or engineering completed; and inactive, state-owned rail corridors that could potentially be used for interim trail use.” Page 23 Multiuse Trails: -This section does not mention the potential for the trail to run in state owned road right of ways, like the Androscoggin Bicycle Pedestrian Path along Route 1 in Brunswick. This type of trail positioning is similar to the trails highlighted from the Minnesota plan on page 42 - separated bicycle pedestrian facilities along rural state roadways with high traffic volumes and speeds. The potential for expanding this type of trail network along state highways like US Route 1 is highlighted in the East Coast Greenway’s vision. Their webpage identifies that their long-term vision is for the Greenway to be a connected set of off-road, protected, multi-use paths, and the current coastal on-road route of the East Coast Greenway primarily follows Route 1. -This section also does not mention the potential for a trail to run in active train right of way. -Suggested change is below: “Also called shared-use paths, multiuse trails often run alongside bodies of water, in state-owned road and rail right of ways, or within inactive rail corridors owned by the state that have been designated for interim trail use. In winter, many are used by snowmobiles and cross-country skiers.” Page 25 AT Education Programs -I would find it helpful if this section gave a quick outline of the education areas, without needing to flip to the appendix. Are these programs for kids in schools, road commissioners, contractors, or town planners? Are they focused on bike/ped safety, safe driving, complete streets, bike/ped infrastructure design, or other topics related to AT? It would be neat to be able to read more about the education programming provided. Page 29 Map: -The dotted red lines are not labeled in the key. -These dotted red line routes do not appear to be existing completed trails or greenways. -The Capital to Coast Trail is a trail stretching from Bath to Augusta. It includes the completed Kennebec River Rail Trail, the proposed Merrymeeting Trail, the completed Androscoggin River Bicycle Pedestrian Path, and the proposed Androscoggin to Kennebec Trail. Both the Androscoggin to Kennebec Trail and Merrymeeting Trail have interim on-road bicycle routes. Due to the scale of the map, it is difficult to see whether the completed off-road and interim on-road routes are accurately shown. Page 27: Existing Trails and Greenways -It would be helpful if this section defined a little more clearly what qualifies as a trail. If trails in state parks, public reserved lands, national parks, and land trust properties are included, there are many more than 500 miles of trails and many many more than 175 miles of non-motorized trails. Are these multi-use trails of a certain width? Or trails that included Maine DOT investment/management? -The East Coast Greenway’s webpage identifies that their long-term vision is for the Greenway to be a connected set of off-road, protected, multi-use paths. They note that 35% (1,050 miles) is complete. Can the plan address ways that this vision can be advanced in the USBR1 and USBR1A corridors, potentially identifying priority segments for next steps? Page 35: Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Analysis -It is interesting to see the safety performance targets. It would be helpful if the introduction paragraph provided a little more information about how these numbers were developed. Are these numbers a 5 year average from the previous 5 years? Or are they a goal for numbers that are a decrease from the 5 year average from the previous 5 years? Page 36: Summary of Pedestrian and Bicycle Collisions, Injuries, and Fatalities -It is a little hard to follow the numbers and timeframe in the second sentences of Paragraph 1 and Paragraph 3. A suggested modification is included below. “In Maine, total crashes resulting in pedestrian injuries have generally declined over the past ten years, from 295 in 2012 to 217 in 2021. Within that 10 year period, fatal pedestrian crashes account for five percent (132) of collisions involving pedestrians, while severe injuries for pedestrians are 18 percent (462). Pedestrian fatalities (as distinct from total crashes) over that period totaled 136, with another 488 suspected serious injuries.” “Total crashes resulting in bicyclist injuries have generally declined over the past ten years, from 209 crashes in 2012 to 167 in 2021, with a low of 137 crashes in 2020. Fatal crashes within that 10 year period account for one percent (21) of all bicycle crashes, while severe injuries resulted from 11 percent of crashes (209). Bicyclist fatalities (as distinct from total crashes) over this period totaled 21, with an additional 213 suspected serious injuries. Bicyclist fatalities have remained relatively stable year-over-year.” Page 48: On-Road System Needs -It might be helpful if the definitions of HCP3 and HCP4 roads from the first two sentences of paragraph 3 were moved to the first paragraph or perhaps a pop out box on the side. Understanding what HCP3 and HCP4 roads are early in that section would help to make it clearer. Page 51: Evaluation Criteria (Quantitative Criteria) -Would it be possible to add proximity to subsidized apartments? (https://www.mainehousing.org/programs-services/rental/subsidized-housing) to the evaluation criteria? I have had two separate neighbors who have had incomes low enough to qualify for subsidized housing who have spent a few months without a vehicle because it took them time to raise the funds to pay for the fixes that would allow their vehicle to move or to pass inspection. It was very important for these neighbors to have a safe way to travel to the grocery store and other businesses in town during the time they could not use their vehicle. The “Proximity to Environmental Justice Communities” seems helpful for identifying roads where there are AT user needs, but adding additional criteria may help to further identify important areas of need for vulnerable populations. Page 52: Off-Road System Needs -The comments for this section are consistent with comments on page 8 and page 23 above. It is exciting that the plan highlights inactive train routes as potential trail corridors, but this section seems to imply that the only place a multi-use trail can be located is an inactive rail corridor. The Androscoggin River Bicycle Pedestrian Path (Brunswick), the Back Cove Trail (Portland), and some sections of the Eastern Trail are all Maine multi-use trails that are not located in rail corridors. Would suggest expanding this section to identify other types of locations, beyond inactive rail corridors, that may be suited for multi-use trails. Page 54: high level assessment of multi-use paths -Would suggest adding an additional high-level assessment for the Androscoggin to Kennebec Trail, with cost estimate, potential use estimate, and prioritization. Page 56 Map: -The title might be clearer if it was: Existing Multi-use Trails, Inactive, State-Owned Rail Corridors with Proposed Trails Under Review, East Coast Greenway (ECG), and U.S. Bike Routes -The Androscoggin River Bicycle Pedestrian Path is shown on this map as a green completed segment, but although it is an existing trail, it is not located in a rail corridor. The inclusion of this trail on the map would make more sense with an update to the title, like the one proposed above. -A note about the Capital to Coast Trail label - The Lower Road Corridor is part of the Capital to Coast Trail system. It includes two trails in the four trail system - Kennebec River Rail Trail (completed) and Merrymeeting Trail (proposed). The other two trails in the system are in the Route 1 right of way: the Androscoggin River Bicycle Pedestrian Path (completed) and the Androscoggin to Kennebec Trail (proposed). -If this section is expanded to address potential locations for multi-use trails that are outside inactive rail corridors, potentially consider adding the Androscoggin to Kennebec Trail. A feasibility study was completed for Maine DOT for the Androscoggin to Kennebec Trail between Bath and Brunswick in the Route 1 right-of-way. The study identified a preferred route for the trail. Page 58: table -The Lower Road Corridor list of towns is incomplete. In addition to the five towns listed, it also incudes: Hallowell, Farmingdale, and Augusta. Page 59: cost estimates -Is it possible to update the costs in the table for the Lower Road to the values calculated for this route as part of the RUAC process and reported at the 1/25/23 meeting? Page 64: Vision and Goals -Suggest updating 1st sentence for clarity: “MaineDOT’s vision and goals for AT in Maine are a synthesis of needs identified in the preparation of this plan, the input received from stakeholders and the general public, and the vision for the statewide multimodal transportation system articulated in the LRTP.” Page 69: Implementation strategies -Check the grammar of the second sentence. I think “another” should be “and.” Page 72: Goal 3 -Consider adding a strategy or bullet that includes the prioritization of on-road and off-road AT improvements for routes that allow AT users to access train and bus stops. I live in Bath, and there is no safe route to walk to the Concord Coach bus stop. Page 73: Goal 4 -Education programs for youth are not mentioned in this section. Consider calling out youth road use and safety education as a component of strategy B. Page 74: Goal 5, Strategy B ii. -The table shared in this section is useful, but section ii. appears to be a statement of calculated values and does not include an action that would lead to exploring and pursuing new and expanded funding opportunities. It instead plays the role of increasing understanding of funding needs, which could be added as an additional strategy. Page 76: Goal 5, Strategy C -I would be interested in seeing a little more information about MaineDOT local match polices for Complete Streets and the Village Partnership Initiative. Do either of these identify instances when it is acceptable for local match to be less than 20%?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response By: Dakota H  
Response:

Hi Ruth,

Thank you for taking the time to read the Active Transportation Plan so thoroughly, you provided some great in-depth comments. We will be reviewing all of the comments we have received, revising the plan, and hope to have a final plan next month.

Thanks,

Dakota Hewlett, MaineDOT

Public Comment 534  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics:   
Comment: I see many worthy goals in this plan. However, there is no timetable shown. The plan should include specific yearly goals. Obviously, achievement of the goals require money, but the State is experiencing a period of budget surpluses. Money spent on AT improvements will serve the people of Maine better in the long run than a few more dollars from reduced taxes. There should be a yearly plan to implement the goals contained in this draft along with the necessary dollars needed to attain these goals. This plan should be submitted to the Legislature as part of the budget process. Finally, there needs to be an annual accounting of results.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello David,

Thank you for your comments. We will keep these in mind as we work to finalize the Active Transportation Plan.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 535  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: TrainRiders Northeast has the following comments with regard to the December 2022 draft of the Maine State Rail Plan: 1. TrainRiders Northeast is a tax-exempt, grassroots, citizens’ organization whose purpose is to educate public officials, as well as the public at large, as to the benefits of passenger rail travel in the Northeast. I was volunteer legal counsel to TrainRiders from 1989 until the beginning of 2023, when I became its president. TrainRiders was the primary advocacy voice for the return of passenger rail to Maine, which, in 2001, resulted in the commencement of Amtrak’s Downeaster service between Portland and Boston, and was an important supporter of the expansion of that service to Brunswick in 2012. In 1990, I wrote the original version of the “Passenger Rail Service Act”, which required the Maine Department of Transportation (“MDOT”) to spend at least $40 million to return passenger rail service to Maine. A political action committee formed by TrainRiders then gathered the signatures of approximately 90,000 registered Maine voters petitioning the Maine Legislature to adopt that Act. In 1991, that is exactly what the Legislature did, with the Act becoming the first citizen-initiated bill to ever be adopted by the Maine Legislature without the need for voter approval. In 1995, I helped write legislation that amended that Act to create the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (“NNEPRA”). Later in that same year, then-Governor King appointed me to NNEPRA’s first board of directors, where I served until 2000. 2. The Plan should include a statement as to its purpose. The current Executive Summary does, indeed, include such a statement. That Summary, however, is supposed to be a quick guide to what appears in the Plan itself. Therefore, this statement should be repeated, or, possibly, be more developed in the body of the Plan itself. 3. Goal 3 of the Rail Plan (page 3, and repeated throughout the Plan) is to “preserve” rail rights-of-way for future rail use or as part of the overall transportation network. These statements need to be given some context. Preservation of rail lines is a statutory mandate including the following: a. Maine’s Rail Preservation Act starts by saying that “The Legislature makes a finding of fact that a viable and efficient rail transportation system is necessary to the economic well-being of the State. The Legislature makes a further finding of fact that the State must take active steps to protect and promote rail transportation in order to further the general welfare.” 23 M.R.S. § 7102. b. The Act goes on to say that “If the department finds that the welfare of the State would be significantly and adversely affected by the loss of the line for railroad transportation purposes, the department shall seek to negotiate the purchase of the abandoned portion of the line. In making this determination, the department shall consider, among other criteria considered significant by the department, future economic development activities and opportunities in the area served by the abandoned railroad service.” § 7105(3)(A). Inclusion of a reference to the above provisions of the Preservation Act would show the background of statutory duties and conclusions against which MDOT’s goal of preserving rail lines in Maine must be developed and evaluated. 4. There are two parts to “preservation” of rail lines. First are the standards and processes for acquisition of those lines. The last item in Table 4.1 at page 65 of the draft Plan sets a standard for acquisition of the rail corridor. Second, are the steps that MDOT will take to preserve any line that the State has acquired. No part of the draft Plan deals with those steps. Accordingly, the plan must be modified to add specific actions that MDOT would take to preserve a line after acquisition, keeping in mind that the Corridor Preservation section appearing at page 60 of the Plan states that “once a rail corridor is converted to a different use, it does not return to rail use” and page 81 notes that rail advocates caution that fewer than 2% of trails are ultimately converted back to rail. 5. Page 81 of the draft Plan indicates that trail advocates see a need for conversion of rail lines into trails to fill gaps in existing trail networks. Page 7 also references four inactive state owned rail corridors that are being considered for conversion to nonrail uses. The Plan needs to make clear how any such conversions can be consistent with MDOT’s goal of preserving State-owner rail lines given the language appearing at pages 60 and 81 of the draft Plan referenced in item 4 above. 6. Working to further enhance the quality of service and conductivity between the Downeaster and other regional and national rail networks to provide alternatives to medium-and long-distance highway and air travel is included in Goal 5 at page 4 of the draft Plan. Once again, the Plan should list specific actions that MDOT will take to promote this goal. Supporting the North South rail link in Boston, as well as train service to New York City via the Downeaster with a cross-platform change at North Station to a train that would then proceed to New York City via Worcester, Springfield, Hartford, and New Haven, should be in that list. Although those projects primarily involve the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, they would provide substantial benefits to rail passengers traveling to and from Maine. Accordingly, the State of Maine should support such connections politically, analytically, and, where feasible, financially. 7. The draft Plan only mentions service from Portland to Montréal in passing. Potential service to Montréal, while not something that will happen quickly, should be specifically mentioned as a potential project in the medium to long-term future. Moreover, the line from Boston to Portland and on to Lewiston/Auburn was long ago designated as a high-speed rail corridor, potentially making accessibility to additional funds for this service somewhat easier. Any additional funding opportunities associated with this designation should be included in Table 4.3 of the draft Plan. 8. Using rail to provide transportation services in an equitable manner is important. The draft Plan mentions this as follows: a. Goal 5 appearing at pages vii and 4 states that transportation investments should promote equity. b. Section 1.2 at page 5 states that pursuing “equitable solutions that best address the diverse needs of all users of Maine’s transportation system” is one of MDOT’s guiding principles. c. The Passenger Service Expansion section appearing at page 60 says that “Access to multimodal transportation options helps ensure equity for those who cannot or do not own a personal vehicle to access education, jobs, housing, healthcare, and other destinations.” Although these various snippets permit an inference that MDOT means that “equity” is the availability of transportation options to all, a direct and more complete definition of that term should appear early in the Plan. Additionally, the Plan should also include an explanation of how the current and future expansion of passenger rail service in Maine helps or would help to achieve equitable transportation services in this State. Finally, the Plan should include concrete steps for achieving equitable transportation results through rail use. 9. Goal 5 also includes linking rail transportation and land-use planning to regional and statewide development practices. Once again, the Plan should reference specific instances of what is included, i.e., density requirements, transit oriented development, etc. 10. Page 18 of the Plan references various technical memoranda that will not be available online until early 2023. No party can fully evaluate any proposed Plan without access to these memoranda. Thus, MDOT should not finalize the Plan until those memoranda are publically available and can be evaluated and commented upon in light of any draft Plan then in place. 11. Table 4.1 appearing at page 64 of the draft Plan mentions updating an inventory of industrial land parcels with access to rail sidings, as well as existing rail infrastructure and corridors. It is unclear what process will be used to complete such an update beyond inquiry of freight rail providers. MDOT should note that the Vermont Rail Action Network developed a program for doing this in that State, something that might be helpful here. See https://railvermont.org/vrans-track-record/ (last accessed January 30, 2023). 12. Some parts of the Plan indicate that certain improvements would benefit freight rail service only. Several of these would also benefit passenger rail, as follows: a. Grade crossing improvements referenced at multiple points in the draft Plan. b. The reference in Table 4.1 at page 64 of the draft Plan to investing in railroad infrastructure to achieve a standard of good repair. c. The statement in the same table that the priority for public funds to achieve a state of good repair should be for state owned infrastructure and infrastructure that provides essential services within the targeted trade corridors. The Plan should be modified to indicate that the first two of these items would also benefit passenger rail and the last item should be changed to make it applicable to infrastructure not owned by the State, but that is important to passenger rail service. 13. MDOT should make two minor corrections to the draft Plan: a. Page 24 of the proposed plan states that the inauguration of the Downeaster service marked the return of passenger rail to Maine for the first time since 1965. This is simply incorrect. The last run of VIA Rail Canada's Atlantic between Vanceboro and Jackman was on December 16, 1994. b. The project description of the upgrade of track from Houlton to Brownsville at the top of page 57 of the draft Plan includes the phrase “on in”. This should either be “on” or “in”, but not both. Overall, TrainRiders is impressed with the draft Plan and hopes that the above comments can help lead to its further improvement. We look forward to working with MDOT to achieve that result. Thank you for this opportunity to comment upon the Plan.

Public Comment 536  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: First, I wish to applause Maine's efforts to envision multimodal forms of transportation throughout the state. The ability to safely walk, cycle, or e-bike to work or shop helps Mainer's access to employment, mental and physical health. The plan needs quantifiable timelines with annual progress updates. Without an implementation calendar, the proposed projects are apt to fail to ever make it to the top of priority lists. The requirement for 4 ft shoulders unless geologically impossible needs to be added. Travel routes are only as safe as the least safe section. An example is Rte 35 around Arundel. There is a paved 3 ft shoulder for all but a steep down &amp; up hill following a curve. This makes it unsafe to ride between Lyman, areas of Arundel and Kennebunk.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Alicia,

Thank you for your comments. We will be working to identify High-Priority Active Transportation corridors where MaineDOT can prioritize wider shoulders for active transportation use, but given funding, right-of-way, and engineering constraints it may not always be possible. Thank you for flagging that location. We will keep your comments in mind as we work to finalize the AT Plan.

Thank you,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 537  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I am a resident of Portland who uses multiple modes of transportation within the state and for travel to other states. Like most Mainers, I depend on a car to travel to many locations. My primary car is an EV. I regularly commute by walking or cycling. I also use the Downeaster to travel to Boston. I appreciate that the Draft LRTP puts more emphasis on active transportation (“AT”), rail, and transit. However, the plan needs stronger language and more specific goals for the increase in the use of these modes and with regard to the environmental impact of transportation in Maine. The LRTP includes many references to the importance of AT, rail, and transit and includes vague statements about increasing the role of these modes. However, it needs much more specific action items, clear statements that the MaineDOT plans will give higher priority to these modes, and specific, measurable goals to be achieved over specific time frames. The LRTP also needs stronger language regarding the environmental impact of transportation and its impact on climate change. Maine has adopted a detailed climate action plan with specific goals. The LRTP references Maine Won’t Wait (“MWW”), but does not state with clarity that the LRTP or other actions by MaineDOT will comport with this plan and it’s goals. This is a mistake. Maine citizens need a clean environment and Maine should be a leader in moving to a low carbon economy. The LRTP should include the goal of transporting people and freight effectively and with the lowest possible environmental impact and carbon output. The LRTP should state unequivocally that MDOT Work Plans and other choices will comport with MWW and the goals of that climate action plan. When the goals are framed this way, this will lead to the growth of AT, rail, transit, and EV use. The LRTP should include more specificity on funding for AT infrastructure in MaineDOT projects. Despite multiple references to the cost sharing formula for AT infrastructure, the LRTP makes no clear statement about how that should be addressed going forward. I urge MaineDOT to stop any current policies that put the burden on municipalities to fund AT portions of projects, shift more of the cost to local sources, or make AT infrastructure optional. If MaineDOT wants to expand alternative modes of transit, AT infrastructure should be funded using the same formula as other portions of projects or even done at a lesser burden on municipalities. Our current approach has created a system heavily dependent on motor vehicles. Significant change requires a radically different approach. Please see my comments on specific pages below. p. 9 The figure on this page includes a list of “Maine Citizen Needs” – feel safe as they travel, infrastructure maintenance and improvement, meet all Mainers where they are, practical multimodal mobility solutions. It should include a transportation system that accomplishes these goals at the lowest level of carbon production and other negative impacts on our state’s environment. p. 14-15 The text of page 14 says that Figure 1.2 (p. 15) presents the family of plans relative to other statewide initiatives – including Maine Won’t Wait. However, Figure 1.2 does not reference Maine Won’t Wait or indicate how the execution of the LRTP and modal plans will work to achieve the goals of MWW. The text and figure should be clear that the LRTP will require that MDOT actions must combine to meet the goals of MWW. p. 24 This page reports that by the fall of 2021, VMT had fully recovered to pre-pandemic levels. On page 74, there is a recommendation of reduced VMT. First, this demonstrates that the current approach is completely failing to meet the goals of MWW, including 10% reduction of VMT by 2025 and 20% reduction by 2030. Second, it demonstrates that a significant change to our funding and infrastructure is needed to bring a real change. Simply improving existing motor vehicle infrastructure will increase VMT. p. 32 Fig. 2.3 describes factors shaping the use of funds. MaineDOT has significant discretion in this. The second box states that resources are first allocated to “must do” uses. There is no mention of AT in this box. At a minimum, “plowing” should be expanded to include winter maintenance of AT infrastructure. Without winter maintenance, AT infrastructure becomes more recreational in nature and citizens are pushed back toward motor vehicles, causing a failure to reduce VMt. The fifth box notes that MaineDOT staff committees drive the prioritization and selection of projects. The LRTP should be clear that active transportation and transit must be prioritized. Without this directive, there is no assurance that the LRTP will result in meeting the goals of MWW and the direction of significant funding is at the whim of MaineDOT staff members and their biases. p. 47 The last bullet point of the AT section states that “Local cost sharing and equitable funding through the state” is a Near Term Need. What this means is not clear. This section, and the LRTP should be clear that MaineDOT will change the funding structure for AT components of all projects so that this is not left as a responsibility of the local municipality. AT components should be funded by MaineDOT using the same formula as other components of projects, at a minimum. p. 57 This presents the same issue as p. 47. This page includes language regarding the consideration of “all modes in every project” but makes no clear commitment. Given the many decades of the vast majority of planning and funding focusing on motor vehicles, stronger language and a clear commitment is necessary to bring about significant change in mode utilization by Maine citizens and visitors. This section should state a clear goal of increasing the use of transit, rail, and AT whenever possible with an overall requirement of meeting the goals of MWW. p. 73 Section 3.3 lays out the vision for Maine’s desired future for multimodal transportation. In the “Environmentally Sustainable Transportation System” section, it states that “Maine is committed to preventing and mitigating the impacts of climate change” and references MWW. The recommendations are too vague and are not necessarily consistent with each other. Changing vehicles to alternative fuels and EV’s will not necessarily result in reducing VMT. This section should state clearly that the LRTP will comport with the laid out in MWW and the recommendations should include, “Expand and improve rail services, transit, and AT infrastructure.”

Public Comment 538  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I am a resident of Portland who uses multiple modes of transportation within the state and for travel to other states. Like most Mainers, I depend on a car to travel to many locations. My primary car is an EV. I regularly commute by walking or cycling. I also use the Downeaster to travel to Boston. I appreciate that the Draft LRTP puts more emphasis on active transportation (“AT”), rail, and transit. However, the plan needs stronger language and more specific goals for the increase in the use of these modes and with regard to the environmental impact of transportation in Maine. The LRTP includes many references to the importance of AT, rail, and transit and includes vague statements about increasing the role of these modes. However, it needs much more specific action items, clear statements that the MaineDOT plans will give higher priority to these modes, and specific, measurable goals to be achieved over specific time frames. The LRTP also needs stronger language regarding the environmental impact of transportation and its impact on climate change. Maine has adopted a detailed climate action plan with specific goals. The LRTP references Maine Won’t Wait (“MWW”), but does not state with clarity that the LRTP or other actions by MaineDOT will comport with this plan and it’s goals. This is a mistake. Maine citizens need a clean environment and Maine should be a leader in moving to a low carbon economy. The LRTP should include the goal of transporting people and freight effectively and with the lowest possible environmental impact and carbon output. The LRTP should state unequivocally that MDOT Work Plans and other choices will comport with MWW and the goals of that climate action plan. When the goals are framed this way, this will lead to the growth of AT, rail, transit, and EV use. The LRTP should include more specificity on funding for AT infrastructure in MaineDOT projects. Despite multiple references to the cost sharing formula for AT infrastructure, the LRTP makes no clear statement about how that should be addressed going forward. I urge MaineDOT to stop any current policies that put the burden on municipalities to fund AT portions of projects, shift more of the cost to local sources, or make AT infrastructure optional. If MaineDOT wants to expand alternative modes of transit, AT infrastructure should be funded using the same formula as other portions of projects or even done at a lesser burden on municipalities. Our current approach has created a system heavily dependent on motor vehicles. Significant change requires a radically different approach. Please see my comments on specific pages below. p. 9 The figure on this page includes a list of “Maine Citizen Needs” – feel safe as they travel, infrastructure maintenance and improvement, meet all Mainers where they are, practical multimodal mobility solutions. 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Given the many decades of the vast majority of planning and funding focusing on motor vehicles, stronger language and a clear commitment is necessary to bring about significant change in mode utilization by Maine citizens and visitors. This section should state a clear goal of increasing the use of transit, rail, and AT whenever possible with an overall requirement of meeting the goals of MWW. p. 73 Section 3.3 lays out the vision for Maine’s desired future for multimodal transportation. In the “Environmentally Sustainable Transportation System” section, it states that “Maine is committed to preventing and mitigating the impacts of climate change” and references MWW. The recommendations are too vague and are not necessarily consistent with each other. Changing vehicles to alternative fuels and EV’s will not necessarily result in reducing VMT. This section should state clearly that the LRTP will comport with the laid out in MWW and the recommendations should include, “Expand and improve rail services, transit, and AT infrastructure.”

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/03/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Craig,

Thank you for your detailed comments, and for taking the time to review the LRTP. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the plan.

MaineDOT's is committed to implementing the State of Maine's official climate action plan, Maine Won't Wait; and the goals, strategies, and targets set in that plan. For transportation, key actions include accelerating Maine's transition to electric vehicles, increasing fuel efficiency and alternative fuels, and reducing vehicle miles traveled. MaineDOT's Long-Range Transportation Plan and Family of Plans support this effort, as well as Maine's Clean Transportation Roadmap. The LRTP and the Family of Plans lay out strategies that MaineDOT is taking, including a major push to support electrification of the vehicle fleet, which is one of the core strategies in Maine Won't Wait and a major opportunity to significantly reduce GHG emissions.

Several of the strategies listed in the LRTP highlight MaineDOT's support for improving transit and active transportation options as a part of our multimodal transportation system, and more detail about these are included in the Active Transportation and Transit Plans. We have already begun several initiatives in support of this, such as our Village Partnership Initiative that is focused on improving transportation infrastructure in mixed-use areas with a strong focus on safety and multimodal mobility. The Downtown Sanford Village Partnership Initiative is an example of these types of projects.

As noted in the LRTP, MaineDOT will also be developing a Carbon Reduction Strategy in 2023.

I did want to respond to a few of your specific points, just to clarify what is currently in the plan.

Pg. 14-15: Maine Won't Wait is a part of the statewide initiatives listed at the top of Figure 1.2. We can look into making this more clear.

Pg. 32: the "must-do" list references tasks that are considered first-line, essential elements to MaineDOT, such as debt service, federal compliance, winter plowing, and other critical safety needs. There are many other critical tasks that are not included in this list, but these are core operational and legal requirements that MaineDOT absolutely must meet. Regarding the use of funds, these are determined by several factors, including long-term planning, data-driven technical asset management principles, resource allocation principles arising from funding eligibility and system priorities, asset management studies, community outreach, partnership initiatives, and project selection input from experts on various MaineDOT committees. You can find more details about this, as well as our sources of funding and their uses, in our most recent Work Plan: <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/projects/workplan/docs/2023/WORK%20PLAN%20FINAL%202023_2024_2025-3.pdf>

Again, thank you for your comments.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 539  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I have reviewed the Active Transportation Plan and wish to submit the following brief comments. First, I urge MaineDOT to include much clearer language about the importance of AT as part of the transportation system in Maine. It needs to be viewed as a integrated and important part of our system that will be used on a year round basis. Without this clarity, AT can be viewed as simply recreation and will never be given priority. Without real growth in AT, Maine cannot meet the climate goals set out in Maine Won't Wait. Treating AT as an important part of the transportation system necessarily forces changes such as true multi-modal connections, inclusion of AT infrastructure in most projects, and year round maintenance of AT infrastructure. Second, I ask that the plan set specific, measurable goals for increases in AT. Without such goals, it is impossible to measure whether MaineDOT efforts are bringing about change or to otherwise evaluate. Finally, the plan needs more clarity regarding funding of the AT portion of MaineDOT projects. The need to address these formulas is referenced, but the plan does not require change. AT infrastructure should be required wherever possible and should be funded using the same formula as all other portions of the project or at higher levels of support from the State. It is not appropriate to leave AT infrastructure funding to municipalities.

Public Comment 540  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I am submitting this comment a second time because I received an error message with the last submission. I apologize if it is a duplicate. I am a resident of Portland who uses multiple modes of transportation within the state and for travel to other states. Like most Mainers, I depend on a car to travel to many locations. My primary car is an EV. I regularly commute by walking or cycling. I also use the Downeaster to travel to Boston. I appreciate that the Draft LRTP puts more emphasis on active transportation (“AT”), rail, and transit. However, the plan needs stronger language and more specific goals for the increase in the use of these modes and with regard to the environmental impact of transportation in Maine. The LRTP includes many references to the importance of AT, rail, and transit and includes vague statements about increasing the role of these modes. However, it needs much more specific action items, clear statements that the MaineDOT plans will give higher priority to these modes, and specific, measurable goals to be achieved over specific time frames. The LRTP also needs stronger language regarding the environmental impact of transportation and its impact on climate change. Maine has adopted a detailed climate action plan with specific goals. The LRTP references Maine Won’t Wait (“MWW”), but does not state with clarity that the LRTP or other actions by MaineDOT will comport with this plan and it’s goals. This is a mistake. Maine citizens need a clean environment and Maine should be a leader in moving to a low carbon economy. The LRTP should include the goal of transporting people and freight effectively and with the lowest possible environmental impact and carbon output. The LRTP should state unequivocally that MDOT Work Plans and other choices will comport with MWW and the goals of that climate action plan. When the goals are framed this way, this will lead to the growth of AT, rail, transit, and EV use. The LRTP should include more specificity on funding for AT infrastructure in MaineDOT projects. Despite multiple references to the cost sharing formula for AT infrastructure, the LRTP makes no clear statement about how that should be addressed going forward. I urge MaineDOT to stop any current policies that put the burden on municipalities to fund AT portions of projects, shift more of the cost to local sources, or make AT infrastructure optional. If MaineDOT wants to expand alternative modes of transit, AT infrastructure should be funded using the same formula as other portions of projects or even done at a lesser burden on municipalities. Our current approach has created a system heavily dependent on motor vehicles. Significant change requires a radically different approach. 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This section should state clearly that the LRTP will comport with the laid out in MWW and the recommendations should include, “Expand and improve rail services, transit, and AT infrastructure.”

Public Comment 541  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan  
Comment:

I would ask MDOT to put a higher value on bike and pedestrian travel. Everybody in the state walks. Many people bike both for getting to/from work and school in addition to biking for pleasure. Active transportation decreases pollution and keeps people healthier. It's also a great draw for tourists, a big part of the Maine economy. Spending more time and funding is important to me. I believe that MDOT is not just for cars, boats and trains. I believe that the state should spend more resources both building as well as maintaining bike and pedestrian transportation infrastructure. Cities such as Boston and New York have made big changes to improve their bike and pedestrian infrastructure, even with excellent public transit options. And these are used both for cost reasons as well as active lifestyle of the users. I would suggest that for intra-city transportation Maine emphasize buses over train. I would guess that the number of bus riders from Portland to Boston exceeds the number of train riders by at least 2-fold, if not more. Buses from Portland to LA, Augusta and Bangor would work even better than the buses to Boston as there is less traffic going north. Thank you very much for reading my comments.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Elizabeth,

Thank you for your comments. Our vision is for a safe, interconnected, multimodal transportation system. We will keep your comments about active transportation, funding, and transit in mind as we work to finalize the plans.

Thank you again,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 542  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to strengthen trail systems and bike lanes for people to feel safe commuting, exercising and connecting with their community outdoors.

Public Comment 543  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment:

On behalf of the Androscoggin Brunswick-Topsham Riverwalk Advisory Committee, I want to applaud Maine DOT for initiating the first-ever Maine State Active Transportation Plan (AT Plan). Our committee likes this draft particularly because it is clear that Active Transportation includes: “human-powered modes of transportation—walking, bicycling, skating, skateboarding, operating a wheelchair or other mobility device, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing.” The Androscoggin Brunswick-Topsham Riverwalk, a planned, accessible, all-season, in-town 1.25-mile loop, incorporates over half of those modes of transportation. It continues to be a successful community, business, local, state, and federal partnership. Since the preliminary design of the Androscoggin Riverwalk: • ADA compliant sidewalk around Priority Real Estate Group LLC’s building was installed by the landowner during its construction by the owner, Priority Group LLC. • A portion of Summer Street, Topsham ADA-compliant sidewalk was installed as approved by Topsham Town Meeting vote creating a $1 million sidewalk bond in 2006. • Concept designs for the project were prepared by Anthony Muench, Landscape Architect, and consultant to the Advisory Committee. • Alfred Senter Fund provided a $20,000 grant for project development and fundraising. • National Parks Service awarded a Technical Assistance grant. • Maine DOT awarded $96,000 Maine DOT Quality Community Grant FY 2010-2011. • Another Alfred Senter Fund grant for $5,000 was provided. • Wright-Pierce Engineers prepared construction documents with estimates as an in-kind contribution to the Riverwalk Project. • 2-foot interval contour mapping for project area completed, and paid for by the advisory committee. • The committee paid for a complete site survey of the project area around Fort Andross. • Davis Conservation Foundation awarded a $20,000 grant in November 2010. • Engineering contract awarded for wooded path in Topsham. Construction was completed Fall of 2012 with local match funds donated by Fore River Foundation, Portland, Maine. • Maine DOT Feasibility Study grant obtained by Brunswick to explore Phase 3 & 4. The Advisory Committee raised money to fund a local match of $16,000. • Maine DOT Preliminary Engineering and Right of Way Grant obtained by Brunswick. The Advisory Committee pledged to raise $25,000 local match. We also noted on page 11 under Goals and Implementation Strategies: Goal 1: Make prioritized, cost-effective improvements to the on-road AT network • Strategy 1A: Improve AT in villages and downtowns. Maine DOT has funded portions of our project in four separate grants. We do appreciate that Maine DOT continues to recognize the importance of this project to the Towns of Topsham and Brunswick and to the surrounding communities. Goal 1, Strategy 1A, aligns with the mission of the Riverwalk Advisory Committee. That is to bring together the Topsham and Brunswick communities to design, support, and create a 1.25-mile dedicated recreational in-town loop. The plan envisions a safe, year-round, fully accessible route along the Androscoggin River that encompasses and enhances the Swinging Bridge and the Main(e) Street Bridge for the purpose of connecting the two towns through education, recreation, transportation, and promotion of healthy lifestyles. Maine DOT’s mission and funding of this project are in accord. “To support economic opportunity and quality of life by responsibly providing our customers the safest and most reliable transportation system possible, given available resources.” We ask that you keep this project at the forefront to allow the entire 1.25-mile project to be completed in a timely manner. Thank you for your efforts towards improving transportation in the State of Maine.forefront to allow the entire 1.25-mile project to be completed in a timely manner. Thank you for your efforts towards improving transportation in the State of Maine.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Active Transportation Plan and your continued work on the Androscoggin Brunswick-Topsham Riverwalk Advisory Committee.  MaineDOT has worked well with your committee in the past and we hope to continue to be able to make investments on the Riverwalk.

Public Comment 544  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Hello, I am a resident of South Portland who uses multiple modes of transportation within the state of Maine and surrounding states. I try to commute to work and get around the community on my bicycle as much as possible. I strongly encourage you to add more dedicated bike paths to new infrastructure projects, as well as pathways that are safe, legible, and environmentally-friendly. Let’s start thinking about connecting communities by bike and pedestrian pathways to encourage a healthier lifestyle, and to add safe options for those who commute or recreate on bicycles. As a family, we look to use our cars as little as possible, and are beginning to rely more on the Downeaster for trips to Boston, and further south. I encourage Maine DOT to place more emphasis on active transportation (“AT”), rail, and transit as the long-range transportation plan emerges.

Public Comment 545  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I support all efforts to expand pedestrian and cycling safety and access in Maine. I hope we continue to reduce cars as primary transportation and increase other ways of moving around, including better public transportation and rail service.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Kimberly,

Thank you for your comments. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the plans.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 546  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Safety is a really big concern for me- separated bike lanes, lighted crosswalks, street calming. I think a lot more people would walk and ride their bicycles if it was safe to do so.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Anna,

Thank you for your comments. MaineDOT certainly recognizes that concerns over safety are an important barrier to walking and biking in Maine, and we aim to make progress in making our system safer for all users. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the plans.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 547  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Safety is a really big concern for me- separated bike lanes, lighted crosswalks, street calming. I think a lot more people would walk and ride their bicycles if it was safe to do so.

Public Comment 548  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Dear Maine Department of Transportation: We are writing on behalf of the Town of Brunswick Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee with comments on the Maine State Active Transportation Plan. We are very encouraged at the steps MaineDOT has taken and believe the times call urgently for such a plan. We hear from many Mainers in our community who would bicycle and walk much more if the infrastructure and culture were in place to make active transportation safe. It is critical that we increase the active transportation mode share to protect our climate, natural resources economy, and keep the cost of living in Maine under control. The MaineDOT plan is a step in that direction. Here are some areas of the plan we believe need improvement: • Greater focus on describing separated and/or buffered facilities for walkers and bicycle riders in addition to shoulders and sidewalks. • More attention and focus on pedestrian and bicycle off-road trails that provide connectivity between Maine communities. • Commitment to a minimum of 4-foot shoulders especially on HCP 3 &amp; 4 • Provide performance measures that will let Mainers know how well the work towards stated goals is progressing. • Establish a clear timeline detailing implementation. • Begin funding immediately with plans and timelines for pursuing alternate and additional funding sources. Brunswick is a natural hub for active transportation. Multiple planned trails of statewide and national significance converge in our town, and we want to grow a reputation for being a destination for bicycling and walking. We are actively working to increase access to safe bicycling and walking infrastructure by implementing our Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, and applying to US DOT grants in partnership with MaineDOT, such as the Reconnecting Communities Grant and the ATTAIN grant. We are also currently reapplying for Bicycle Friendly Community status with the League of American Bicyclists. Brunswick and Bath are the only Maine towns with Bike Friendly Community status. Thank you for this important work and improving active transportation in our state. We are firm believers in all the good that will come of making Maine a safe and encouraging place for walking, rolling, and riding. Sincerely, Tom Farrell, Brunswick Director of Parks &amp; Recreation Sally Costello, Economic Development Director Chrissy Adamowicz, Economic Development Project Manager Peggy Brown, Co-Chair Brunswick Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Kathy Thorson, Co-Chair Brunswick Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comments on MaineDOT’s Family of Plans/ Active Transportation Plan and your continued work on the Brunswick Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. MaineDOT appreciates the work that you do and have partnered with Brunswick on a number of multimodal transportation projects recently and hope to continue to do so. We have heard similar comments as some of yours and expect the final Active Transportation Plan to have some additional clarity regarding shoulder investment, need to prioritize and other types of active transportation improvements. We will begin, in many ways we already have, plan implementation immediately but one of the challenges associated with precise and detailed performance measures is unknown transportation funding over the next several years and even decades.  Nevertheless, MaineDOT will continue to implement AT investments and our Work Plan available at www.mainedot.gov will be updated annually and provide information on AT investments within MaineDOT’s budget. Thank you once again for your input into the Active Transportation Plan.

Public Comment 549  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I would very much like the plan to state much more clearly that it will increase Active Transportation (walking and biking) and that the DOT Work Plans will adhere to and meet with the goals of Maine Won’t Wait. I would also like to see many more EV charging stations. Mostly however, increasing the safety and ability of Mainers to commute to work and their life activities via AT is so important. Also preserve Maine natural environments and it's animals but building transportation systems with this priority in mind.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Jen,

Thank you for your comments about the plans and *Maine Won't Wait.* We will keep your points in mind as we work to finalize the plans.

For more information about EV charging, we have a separate, completed plan available here: <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/climate/docs/pevid-2022.pdf>

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 550  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Comment 1 P64, Section 7: Context - in the Blue Table under Safe Travel for All. Please consider updating this statement in the “Safe travels for all” section to be “Provide a safe transportation system for users of all ages and all modes of transportation”. Children and the elderly are not adequately represented here in the current statement. Children in particular are a significant percentage of the population that cannot drive, and the current accommodations for children in this state are poor. Please consider raising the profile of their needs in the Vision Statement and elsewhere throughout the plan. Comment 2 P8, Off Road Active Transportation Needs This section highlights the Rail to Trail opportunities. Can the plan be updated to also include a reference to trails that can be built along the Right of Way on State owned roads e.g. the Route 1 Corridor? Comment 3 P19, Traffic Calming The current approach for assessing speed limits can sometimes result in speeds increasing from what they were before a speed study due to the 85% rule and asa result not taking into consideration the desired use of a street to support more active transportation. Can you include a reference to “revisiting or abolishing the 85% rule” as part of what’s being evaluated?

Public Comment 551  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics:   
Comment: Dear Maine Department of Transportation: The Town of Brunswick, City of Bath, and Town of West Bath are writing in support of the Androscoggin to Kennebec Path (A2K), our section of the Capital to Coast trail. Deemed by MaineDOT in 2014 as a Trail of Statewide Significance, we have been working in partnership to build this trail since 2004. Our communities support and recommend the alignment along Route 1 proposed in the 2004 feasibility study. To show our support and commitment, the Town of Brunswick and Town of West Bath have adopted a tri-community Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The City of Bath is expected to adopt the MOA on February 1, 2023. The City of Bath has already completed a majority of the trail in Bath, and the Town of Brunswick has an additional 2.6 miles of trial that will connect to the A2K path. These existing sections are extremely popular and we are confident that a completed A2K trail will bring significant economic, environmental, and societal benefits to our communities. One thing that we would like to see in the plan is the identification of state-owned road right-of-ways for off-road multi-use paths. The preferred route of the A2K trail is in the Route 1 right-of way, and we are excited about the way this right-of-way can facilitate an Active Transportation resource for our towns. We ask that the maps on page 56 included in the plan reflect the accurate location of the A2K Trail. The MaineDOT Statewide Active Transportation Plan is an important step in the right direction. Maine’s tourism based economy can not wait any longer for new recreational opportunities such as the A2K path. Non-motorized trails are universally popular and attract in-state and out-of-state users, and that activity will help our local economies. Thank you for considering our comments. We look forward to a future of active transportation with MaineDOT. Sincerely, John Eldridge, Brunswick Town Manager Marc Meyers, Bath City Manager Kristine Pollard, West Bath Town Administrator

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Thank you for your comments on MaineDOT’s Family of Plans/ Active Transportation Plan and your update on planning associated with the Androscoggin to Kennebec Path. If you have not already done so, please contact Dakota Hewlett, Active Transportation Planner: Dakota.hewlett@maine.gov to discuss your planning efforts.

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Thank you for the quick response. Representatives from Brunswick, West Bath and Bath met on January 25th with Dakota Hewlett and Steve Cole from MaineDOT to inform them of the desire of the three communities to move the A2K project forward. We agreed that Dakota would be our primary point of contact at MaineDOT regarding the project and have already had follow up contact with him.

Public Comment 552  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I am a resident of Yarmouth and use a variety of transportation modes, but primarily driving to get around the state. I try to commute to work on my bike as much as possible. I would like the plans to state clearly that they will increase Active Transportation (walking and biking) and that the DOT Work Plans will comport with the goals of Maine Won’t Wait.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Holly,

Thank you for your comments. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the plans.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 553  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Thank you for a comprehensive plan. The Down East Sunrise Trail may offer opportunities for increased DEI as we reach out to the Passamaquoddy in Pleasant Point and Indian Township promoting AT in Washington County. Look forward to working with the RUAC to complete the DEST to Calais. What are the timelines for RUACs?

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/03/2023  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

The RUAC process can take up to nine months to complete.  MaineDOT will start a 4th RUAC in the Spring.  The remaining requests will be handled in the Fall and Winter.

Public Comment 554  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: General Comments: "Reinvigorating quintessential New England charm" seems like a weak goal given the challenges faced by our transportation system; In some cases objectives are repeated as strategies, such as "reduce" crashes and fatalities; When considering the costs of any measure, please be sure to calculate the cost of climate impacts, either positive or negative, as much as possible; With our aging rural population combined with a surge of young people, who would rather not own cars, into our rural towns, please seriously consider robust rural public transit pilots with as much integration to AT as possible, i.e. bike racks on buses, covered bike racks at bus stops, "last mile" protected bike lanes, etc.; Given increasing crashes caused by elderly drivers, please consider some kind of retesting for drivers over 70 or 75.; Active Transportation comments. Overall this is going in a great direction,. Given the amount of cyclists riding against traffic and on sidewalks, we need better cycling education in our schools and elsewhere; More promotion of cycling as an alternative to autos for commuting as well as general transportation is needed. Promote cargo bikes for hauling kids and groceries, etc!; Please do NOT exlude eBikes from AT. These are amazing tools for elderly, and rural residents facing hilly or long commutes. They are not electric motorcycles. Just a bike with a boost which will get many more people out of their cars and into healthy exercise.; More funding is needed for AT infrastructure and education. Build it and they will come!; Bike/Ped infrastructure will play a critical role for reducing emissions, attracting youth to the stated and increasing the health of our communities. Thank you!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Scott,

Thank you for your comments. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize all of the plans. I just wanted to respond to a few points:

* "Reinvigorating quintessential New England charm" is a part of our long-range transportation vision, not an LRTP goal. However, it reflects a desire to address many of the issues that the public has expressed, such as the need for safe, walkable villages that have long been a cornerstone of our region. It reflects MaineDOT's mission: "To support economic opportunity and quality of life by responsibly providing our customers the safest and most reliable transportation system possible, given available resources."
* Under Maine law, testing drivers and issuing driver's licenses is actually managed by the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, which is a part of the Department of the Secretary of State and not MaineDOT. That said, I believe that most of the requirements for testing and licensing are set by law.
* Regarding e-bikes, we are going to clarify our language to note that e-bikes *are included* in our definition of active transportation. The wording that we used was a bit unclear and makes it seem as though we are excluding them, but that is not the case. MaineDOT is also working on several programs to showcase e-bikes as a useful transportation option around the state.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 555  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment: I am disappointed in the draft of the Maine State Transit Plan. While highlighting the need for enhanced transit in Maine, the plan does not adequately address or quantify the critical need for State funds to improve the system. In fact the "plan" gives a distorted view of State support for these services. Section 2.4.3 identifies that Maine contributed $20.6 million in State funding that translated to a per-capita contribution of $10.81, while also identifying that $16.9 million of that funding was in support of the Maine State Ferry Service that, while important, serves a proportionally small percentage of Maine's population. Removing the $16.9 from the total reduces the State funding to $3.9 million for the remaining transit services, including bus, small ferries and Amtrak, to $3.7 million or a per-capita investment of $2.67. This continues to place Maine in the lowest quartile in the US in State funding for public transportation. Until this is recognized and improved, Maine will have great difficulty implementing any of the strategies identified in this, or previous, transit development plans. The plan also distorts the impact on Maine's public transit system of DHHS' decision to implement a brokerage model for NET services in 2014 that served to undermine what was a reasonably well coordinated regional transportation provider network. Maine pioneered coordination efforts in the late 1970's that became a national model for United We Ride and more recently CCAM initiatives that were reversed in the past decade under the brokerage model, and returned Maine's transportation funding to highly siloed and restricted funding streams that benefit important but limited target populations at the expense of the general public. The Federal rules that guide Maine DHHS' current brokerage model presume that states have adequate public transportation infrastructure in place that Medicaid systems can use to lower costs for the Medicaid program. The fact that Maine invests $72 million in NET while contributing $20.6 million to public transportation serves as contradictory evidence to the CMMS presumption. Maine would be well served by a return to a more coordinated transportation network combined with an increased investment in state funds for public transportation that could functionally serve to lower NET costs while greatly enhancing general public access to badly needed transit services. As the plan identifies, strong public transit serves as an economic development incubator; allows elder and transit dependent populations to be active and vital in our communities; allows important access to medical and therapeutic services, allows greater access to educational opportunities; allows older veterans access to services; and helps to alleviate the severe consequences of poverty and isolation. These require coordination and fiscal commitment toward the end result. The draft plan is a good start, but falls short in critical detail to move Maine forward. I firmly believe the Maine State Transit Plan would be a much more effective tool if the plan were to include more specific strategies and action plans for increasing Maine's investment in public transportation.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response By: Ryan N  
Response: Thank you for your comments on the Maine State Transit Plan. States report funding sources and amounts annually to the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials and have considerable discretion in which sources and amounts to include in their reporting. Regardless of which funding amounts and sources are considered, increasing funds from all sources is a goal of the plan. The plan also acknowledges the challenges and opportunities in improving coordination with the Maine Department of Health and Human Services to provide transportation. We will keep your thoughtful comments in mind as we look to finalize the plan.

Public Comment 556  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: We have less specific recommendations for the rail plan, but specifically we want to highlight the stakeholder comments on electrification of our rail. "Electrification of passenger rail services should be considered as a means to improving travel times and addressing climate change." Instead of considered, it should be prioritized and implemented quickly and thoroughly. Freight trains/lines are different than passenger rail, and electrification might take more time, but the Northeast Corridor has been electrified for over 20 years. The Downeaster in particular should not be emitting toxics into our neighborhoods when it could be electrified. This plan should initiate an electrification plan for the state, recognizing some practical barriers, but having as the goal to have all train lines be non-greenhouse gas emitting. MDOT should initiate conversations with Amtrak as soon as possible to that end.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/03/2023  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thank you for your comments on the Maine State Rail Plan. Your suggestions will be taken into consideration as we revise the draft plan.

Public Comment 557  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Leaning In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan  
Comment: Please find a way to include expanding the Amtrak to Downeaster to Rockland in your Rail Plan. I know the railroads are somehow privately managed, but this is the easiest expansion of commuter/passenger rail currently available in Maine. The state government should empower the DOT to buy out the railroad segment to prioritize passenger rail if the private corporation managing that segment of rail resist accommodating the expansion. It is honestly an embarrassment to Maine's infrastructure planning that this expansion has been toted "coming soon" for the near decade that I have lived in the midcoast. Also, please add to your active transportation plan's prioritization criteria whether or not ANY shoulders exist on a HCP 3 or 4 roadway, not just whether the shoulders are paved. Some roads, like Route 131 from Thomaston to Belfast, do not have ANY shoulders, paved or unpaved, for long stretches of the curvy and hilly roadway, which is incredibly dangerous. Other criteria being equal or similar, roads without shoulders should be prioritized above roads with unpaved shoulders.

Public Comment 558  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Thanks in advance for your attention to these items: --p. 23 – Bicycle lanes – no mention of physical separation between bike lanes and travel lanes, should be a goal in at least some situations: higher traffic, in-town. --Consideration given to increasing # of dedicated bike-ped staff from 1 to 2? --Does MDOT ever consider tooting its bike-ped horn from time to time? The Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Funding (formerly known as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), Transportation Enhancements, Quality Communities) was funded at about $2.3 million annually for years, now up to $3 million, has quietly funded bike and ped projects across Maine for over 2 decades that I’m aware of, and probably much longer. Please consider celebrating your successes and progress. The trail and bike and ped and alt-transportation communities want to hear about progress, and the entire community needs to be reminded there is a multi-modal piece of the pie. We have viewed the MNDOT website recently – they put it right out there, and MN is noted nationwide for its progress with bike and ped. Let’s adopt that model and tell the world about bike and ped projects in ME. --p. 25 – “… Striped bike lanes have been provided in some cities and towns How many and which?. In suburban and rural areas without sidewalks, AT users are typically accommodated with paved or unpaved roadway shoulders. Accommodated? Is a bicyclist forced to contend with unpaved roadway shoulders being “accommodated”? --p. 27 Existing Bicycle Infrastructure “… While four-foot-wide shoulders provide a relatively comfortable facility for bicyclists on most roadways, this is not the reality for many roads in Maine that frequently include minimal shoulders or lack them entirely.” Assumedly this is written prior to on-bike training provided for DOT staff. A four foot shoulder falls short of the national standard 5’. On low traffic volume roads, a 4’ shoulder is adequate for experienced bicyclists, but falls short of providing a reasonable comfort level for young and inexperienced cyclists. --“… With help from MaineDOT, an increasing number of communities have striped designated bike lanes on streets in both commercial and residential areas. These include Belfast, Falmouth, Lewiston, Norway, Ogunquit, Portland, South Portland, Topsham, Yarmouth, and York.” Where do we sign up? --p. 46 MaineDOT’s website states, “MaineDOT annually allocates the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program about $3 million in federal funds for this statewide program. Each project has a 20% local match requirement with a maximum federal allocation of $400,000 per project.”, while p. 46 of the AT Plan states that the “Federal Transportation Alternatives Program (Maine Bicycle and Pedestrian Funding Program): was funded at $2.06 million up thru 2021, and at $4.26 million in 2022, and now at $4.37 million for 2023. Which number is correct -- $3 million, or $4.37 million for 2023? How many projects funded at the MDOT-imposed ceiling of $400,000 end up being only partially completed due to insufficient funding to complete the project? How many years has the MDOT-imposed ceiling of $400,000 been in place, and what does $400,000 buy in 2023 dollars as opposed to, say, 2010 dollars? We would like to see the $400,000 limit increased in order to stand a chance at keeping up with inflation. --p. 71 “iii. General cross-section expectations from the CHIP parameters are listed below, although cross-section widths on CHIP projects on HCP 3 and 4 roads may be adjusted with the approval of Regional Program Manager or designee when needed to address specific customer or location factors (see “Cross-Section Variances” in the CHIP Parameters). 1. For CHIP projects on HCP 3 (2019) corridors, four-foot-wide paved shoulders are desired, especially when AADT is 2,500 or more, or on HPAT road segments. Three-foot-wide shoulders will generally be the minimum, except as provided in the “Cross-Section Variances.” 2. For CHIP projects on HCP 4 corridors, generally provide one-to three-foot-wide paved shoulders established in accordance with the factors set forth in the “Cross-Section Variances.” Four-foot-wide paved shoulders are desired on HPAT road segments. 3. A minimum of 24 feet in total paved width with two 11-foot-wide travel lanes generally will be provided.” Sadly insufficient: 22’ feet of vehicle travel lanes and a 1’ bicycle and pedestrian lane on each side of the roadway? Isn’t this the existing condition this draft report is trying to address and improve? p. 74 1. MaineDOT’s Regional Program will require funding for its paving efforts, which will cost approximately $175,000 per mile. 2. The Village Partnership Initiative will depend on available federal funding, with a target of approximately $20 million per year. 3. HPAT trail construction costs will vary based on their specific planning, engineering, right-of-way, and construction requirements. Funding for these trails will be subject to the availability of federal funds. If MaineDOT and the AT population begin to think outside the box, how can Maine develop funding sources that are not limited to federal funds? How does Maine fund snowmobile revenue sharing? Why not a % of fees paid relative to Active Transportation? How about a 1/10th of 1 cent fee imposed on every gallon of water hauled out of state by Poland Spring/Nestle? Michigan instituted a mechanism four decades ago by which a nominal percentage of oil and gas tax revenues was applied to bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Today they have a good deal to show for it. Until Maine creates a similar guaranteed revenue stream for Active Transportation, it remains at the mercy of federal funding aka $3 million a year. --p. 75 -- includes a list of funding opportunities available over 5 years from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Of equal interest: what does MDOT plan for getting a share for ME? And what happens in 5 years when the BIL funding is zeroed out? --The Vision Zero public meeting that took place in Biddeford and was intended to solicit comment from several nearby communities; we were unable to attend. Is there a record of attendance and comments received available for review? Can comments still be made? A Bipartisan Infrastructure Law fact sheet found at Bipartisan Infrastructure Law - Transportation Alternatives (TA) Fact Sheet | Federal Highway Administration (dot.gov) includes info on Transferability to and from Other Federal-aid Apportioned Programs, as follows: • A State may transfer up to 50% of TA funds made available each fiscal year for TA projects in any area of the State to any other apportionment of the State, including the National Highway Performance Program, Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, National Highway Freight Program, [NEW] Carbon Reduction Program, and [NEW] Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Formula Program. Conversely, subject to certain limitations, a State may transfer up to 50% of funds made available each fiscal year from each other apportionment of the State to TA. [23 U.S.C. 126(a)] What does the MDOT do along these lines – are TA funds retained for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, or is a % of TA funds transferred to address other programming? Thank you very much!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Bob,

Thank you for your detailed comments on the Active Transportation Plan. We really appreciate your taking the time to review the document and share your thoughts with us. We will keep your points in mind as we go about finalizing the plan.

I did want to respond to a few of your comments.

* Regarding bicycle lanes, we will be providing more detail on different active transportation facilities, including bike lanes, in the updated draft. As you note, communities that have added bike lanes include Belfast, Falmouth, Lewiston, Norway, Ogunquit, Portland, South Portland, Topsham, Yarmouth, and York. MaineDOT does not currently have a GIS dataset that includes all bike lanes, and roads under local jurisdiction could have bike lanes added any time the municipality makes the decision to do so, making tracking difficult. If a community is interested in adding bike lanes, please have your municipality or local bike/pedestrian committee contact MaineDOT’s Active Transportation Planner to begin discussion about improving AT infrastructure in your community. That is Dakota Hewlett, Active Transportation Planner: Dakota.hewlett@maine.gov
* Regarding the word "accommodated" on page 25, we can look into the language for that, but that section is only meant to point out what kinds of infrastructure generally exist today.
* The Active Transportation Plan is not going to call for changes to internal staffing. In addition to MaineDOT’s Active Transportation Planner, our Regional Planners are also deeply engaged on active transportation issues facing communities in their regions.
* For your comment about pg. 27 and shoulders, it is important to reiterate that this statement is intended to refer to rural roadways, where a marked and signed bike lane is not an option, paved shoulders are often the most feasible alternative. We plan to clarify that these statements are referring to rural roads, primarily Highway Corridor Priority 3 and 4. FHWA guidance notes that 4’ is the minimum for facilities paved shoulders to accommodate bicyclist and pedestrian use: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/publications/small_towns/fhwahep17024_lg.pdf>
* For pg. 46, the MaineDOT webpage is out of date. The numbers included in the plan are correct. TA funds shift up and down from year to year a little bit because of formulas, BIL accounts for the large increase that gets us up to 4 million. We will be reviewing the $400,000 ceiling in the future, but we do have to ensure geographic distribution of projects and balance some other requirements, rather than spend the full amount on a few, larger projects.
* For pg. 71, regarding shoulders on HCP 3 & 4 roads, per the current CHIP parameters, HPAT-designated corridors on HCP 4 highways will have a desired shoulder width of 4’. CHIP projects on HCP 4 roads not designated as HPAT will generally have one-to-three foot wide paved shoulders, which will be an improvement over the existing shoulders on these roadways. Narrow shoulders are utilized in paving treatments not as AT infrastructure, but as roadway preservation assets that can improve drainage, reduce erosion, and protect the roadway edge from wear and damage. Given current resources, it is not feasible to provide 4’ shoulders along all HCP 4 highways, so MaineDOT will prioritize HPAT corridors where there will be the greatest benefit.
* For pg. 75, regarding BIL funding, MaineDOT is actively pursuing discretionary grant opportunities as they become available, and has significantly ramped up our planning efforts to support this. It is not possible to say exactly how much Maine will receive through the discretionary process. Federal funding after BIL will be dependent on the subsequent surface transportation bill.
* Regarding the Vision Zero meeting, I believe the meeting you are referring to was the one held on November 7th at Biddeford City Hall? This was not organized by MaineDOT, but rather by GPCOG. I am not sure if that information is available at this time, but you can find more information here: <https://www.visionzerogreaterportland.org/> You can also reach out to GPCOG at [info@gpcog.org](mailto:info@gpcog.org)
* Regarding Federal-Aid funds, currently MaineDOT does not transfer any Federal-Aid funds between programs in the Surface Transportation Block Grant and its set asides. MaineDOT uses TA for TA eligible projects as well as sometimes utilizes multiple of these programs in the budget for a bike/ped project as needed. Beyond Bike/Ped, DOT uses HSIP, CMAQ, and the other programs to support other modes and areas of the transportation system as well.

Thank you again for taking the time to share your comments with us,

Ian Gorecki

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 02/02/2023  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Ian, many thanks for responding. We appreciate this effort on the part of MaineDOT.

Public Comment 559  
Date: 01/30/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: We would like to underline the extreme need for bike lanes. We bike regularly around Thomaston, Rockland, Rockport, and Camden, and over the years have seen our safety deteriorate. We are \*desperate\* for bike lanes, and for sharrows where bike lanes are not yet possible. The tiny sharrow infrastructure implemented years ago was never repainted, and it is mostly gone. These markings not only keep us safe, they communicate to drivers that \*we are allowed to be on the road.\* We have both had experiences where drivers yelled at us just because we were on the road. We are also \*desperate\* for divider lines to be painted on the roads where a right-turn lane develops from the road. Drivers experience it as a widening of the road, and make their choice. A bicyclist must do the same, which means riding in the center of an unmarked, high-speed road. It's dangerous. Places we feel most likely to be hit by a car, because of the complete lack of safe bike-thru: 1) the intersection of Route 1 and Old County Rd in Thomaston, westbound; 2) Park St & Broadway intersection, in Rockland, any direction; and 3) northbound on Rt 1 in Rockport, through the traffic light, passing PenBay Hospital. Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Margaret,

Thank you for your comments. We will keep these in mind as we work to finalize the plans. We have also noted your concerns about those specific locations and will keep those in mind as we move forward into plan implementation.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 560  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I participated in the process of the plans development by attending 2 of the online meetings. I am delighted that the DOT is engaging in the process that will hopefully expand the opportunities for more and better resources for active transportation for pedestrians and cyclists in the state, I am hopeful that what the plan currently lacks in specifics ( timelines for getting resources deployed, specifics of funding and concrete commitments to that funding, development of the widespread use of bike lanes in cities and towns, specific planning for off road bicycle and pedestrian travel ways) will be forthcoming in revisions of the plan. Thank you for the opportunity to give feedback.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Michael,

Thank you for your comments and for your continued engagement with MaineDOT. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the plan. We do hope that you will remain engaged with us as we work to implement these plans.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 561  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment:

Please make our cities and towns more pedestrian and bike friendly. We need shoulders-and wide ones-4" wide In looking at the plan, please include performance measures so we can quantify progress Please look at including facilities for cycling including buffering/protected lanes Please include appropriate funding asap and look at increased funding A clearer time frame of when all of this will happen I live in Rockland. Pedestrian safety and encouragement is a low priority. Please help us to get people out walking and riding as a form of commuting, for recreation, and for exercise! Thank you

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello John,

Thank you for sharing your concerns with us. We will keep these in mind as we work to finalize the plans.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 562  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: Jennifer Grant Director of Outreach MDOT Leah Pickett Cambridge Systematics One last concern about the draft Maine State Rail Plan. The lack of any follow-up of the 2014 MSRP priority corridor the Mountain Division Line. In the 2014 Maine State Rail Plan, Critical Rail Corridors were identified. The criteria to identify these corridors was ".. that rail functions both regionally and nationally, and advocated for collaboration and infrastructure enhancement in coordination with other states and with Canada’s rail plans. • Make rail investments that tie into New England and Canadian plans"• and "Focus investments on Maine, New England and Canada rail plan priorities" The Mountain Division to Portland Corridor was one of those 2014 priorities. "Table of contents 6.2 Maine’s Critical Rail Corridors . Figure 6-21: Mountain Division-to-Port of Portland Corridor Initiative " pg 6.21 A paragraph describing the Corridor work to date : "Mountain Division Restoration The MaineDOT contracted with HNTB in 2007 to evaluate the condition and potential passenger and freight rail uses of the 50 mile state-owned Mountain Division rail line in southern and western Maine. The study concluded that if the line could have the potential to serve freight customers if it were upgraded to Class 2 standards. It was determined that the upgrade was estimated to cost $31.4 million. This level of investment would also make it possible for passenger excursion service to operate (maximim authorized speed of 40 mph). The study found that the population density inthe surrounding communities was not sufficient to support the much larger investment capital and operating investments required to support commuter rail service. MaineDOT made an effort to solicit $28.5 million in funding for this effort from the FRA through the TIGER programfor the initial Class 2 upgrade, however funding was not awarded. Subsequently, the Maine Legislature appropriated $4M in state bond funds to initiate an upgrade of this rail line. As part of its maintenance program MaineDOT has performed culvert repairs and other holding actions performed to preserve the line. Not included in current cost estimates would be continuing the project across the state line to provide for a connection to the Conway Scenic railroad, and the tourist centers in the region. This project could proceed incrementally, with initial rehabilitation being focused on development of freight operations, with passenger services developing over time." pg 3.17 This corridor was also seen as part of the Freight Triangle: "The primary trade corridors include the Freight Triangle – linking Portland to Brunswick and the LewistonAuburn region. This multi-modal corridor includes highway, rail, marine and air as key transportation elements that support a vibrant and active freight region. The “Freight Triangle” links the major resources of Portland’s seaport, the Mountain Division rail line, Auburn’s intermodal rail services and warehouses, and Pan Am Rail and St. Lawrence &amp; Atlantic main lines. These facilities combine with the highway network to provide a unified system to enhance mobility and competitiveness within the region." pg 6.1 And as part of the CanAm Corridor- essential goals were " CanAm Corridor In August of 2009 a report was prepared for the Atlantic Provinces of Canada and the U.S. states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York to identify transportation deficiencies that had economic development ramifications based on physical infrastructure or policy.3 The map in Figure 6-15 illustrates the study area. The region commissioned the study to address the fact that the region was lagging their competitors in the area "6.14 The Mountain Division Line links Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York via Amtrak Stations in Portland directly to Amtrak Stations in St Johnsbury VT. It is also mentioned as a critical component of the Ocean Gateway/Portland Interstate Corridor development: "Portland Interstate Corridor This multi-purpose corridor connects Portland and the Southern Gateway Corridor with key railway and highway links to New Hampshire...Ocean Gateway Mega Berth in Portland and a future potential rehabilitation of the Mountain Division rail line to Fryeburg (Figure 6-21), with a possible link into New Hampshire’s scenic Conway region. Studies have identified both the potential and the challenges for both freight operations and tourist/ excursion passenger services along this route. Commuter connections from Westbrook and Windham to Portland have also been studied, identifying the Mountain Division rail line as a potentialmulti-purpose transportation corridor in the future. Figure 6-21: Mountain Division-to-Port of Portland Corridor Initiative" 6.21 In discussions on rural transportation and commuter rail, the Mountain Division is included again: "6.3.2 Traffic Density Versus Public Benefits The quality of life and economy in rural Maine is dependent on an efficient, effective, and coordinated multimodal transportation system that provides choices for the movement of people and goods and enables transfers between modes when and where they are needed. Similarly, public transportation for personal mobility often requires state intervention to assure that residents in lightly populated regions have transportation options beyond the private automobile. "3. Future commuter rail for the Greater Portland region is viewed as positively important to meet the strong public desire for transit options, especially in I-295 corridor; but also in the western corridors." "Other intercity and commuter rail projects have been proposed. They include: Portland to Lewiston/Auburn; Brunswick to Bath/Rockland; restoration of the Mountain Division, which connects Portland to Fryeburg, and restoration of service to Montréal." 7.21 The Mountain Division was allocated a slot in the 2014 Projects Under Development" "Timing :"mid-term Project :Mountain Division rehabilitation Title Location: Continue rehabilitation Total Capital Cost (In Millions) :$ 30 M Rationale :Subject to development of both freight and passenger service needs and viability continue to extend rail restoration Estimated Completion Date:2018 " You can see from my examples from the 2014 MSRP that the Mountain Division Line through to Fryeburg and on to New Hampshire was a critical piece of the overall Maine Rail Priorities. Why was this Line dropped completely from the MSRP? Surely the priorities listed are still very much desired and this line still has fully intact rail infrastructure that could be utilized and improved upon. In fact, a section of the Mountain Division actually had upgrades of Continuous Welded Rail put in place. As a resident of Hiram, which is directly on this Line, I can attest that we need investments such as these for our economic development and rural transportation equity. I know the Mountain Division Line has been the subject of a recent group that was tasked with giving suggestions of 'best use' to MDOT. I was monitoring this process as a member of the public. This group was comprised of trail and bike interests, and a single representative of each town along that section of the line. There was only one rail advocate and no transportation or transit policy experts on the council. There was limited outreach to all of the taxpayers and abutters in each of these towns. This suggestion has not been officially sanctioned by the Legislature or the Governor at this time. Therefore, I feel it should not be given priority over State Transportation Goals. The lack of inclusion of the Mountain Division Line in the 2022 Maine State Rail plan, in continuation with the Goals of the 2014 MSRP, is very discerning and alarming. At the very least, if the State has deemed the Mountain Division Line and all of the stated goals for that line in the 2014 MSRP obsolete, then the current MSRP should announce that decision and the reasons that it was deemed so. Thank You for allowing me to comment on what is a very important issue to me.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/03/2023  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thank you for your comments on the Maine State Rail Plan. Any nonrail use of the Mountain Division must be approved by the Legislature and will be considered interim in nature as the line remains preserved for future use under the Rail Preservation act. Currently, MaineDOT has not identified any viable freight or passenger rail opportunities on the Mountain Division line beyond the active section in Westbrook. If this changes, the Rail Plan can be amended at any time to include additional rail initiatives. Thank you once again for your comments on MaineDOT’s Family of Plans and Draft Rail Plan.

Public Comment 563  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Please create safe ways for people to get around. Shoulders and plowed sidewalks help kids get to school and help people to get groceries, etc. Not everyone has a car, or needs one if they can get around safely. Thanks!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Iver,

Thank you for your comments. We will keep these points in mind as we work to finalize the plans.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 564  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Consider a plan to extend the bike path going North from Brunswick to Bath--could start with widening the Old Bath Road, designating a bike lane, and providing signage so riders would know where the path is going.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Mark,

Thank you for your comment. We will keep this in mind as we work to finalize the plans and as we work to improve active transportation options in Maine.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 565  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: First, thank you for putting together this plan. It is wonderful that active transportation is being talked about and prioritized. I am concerned that there isn't enough emphasis on funding and timing. We need to dramatically increase the funding put toward these uses and this plan needs a timeframe and some way to measure how we are meeting our goals. Another point on shoulders: 5 feet is the minimum necessary for cycling. Anything smaller than that should only be considered a shoulder that helps protect the pavement edge from breaking down, not a cycling facility. Again, thank you!

Public Comment 566  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: This comment concerns cost estimates for the Lower Road rail line from Brunswick to Augusta contained in the draft Active Transportation Plan. (Pages 58-59). It also applies to the draft report being prepared by VHB for the Lower Road’s Rail Use Advisory Council. Since 2010 VHB has prepared two cost estimates. The first estimate is contained in a feasibility study done in 2011 for Midcoast Council of Governments and the Merrymeeting Trail Committee, Merrymeeting Trail: Connecting the Maine Communities of Topsham, Bowdoinham, Richmond, and Gardiner. I was a committee member and worked extensively in developing the report. The second cost assessment was initiated in 2022 and is ongoing for the two studies mentioned above. The 2022 estimate includes $19 million for wider pedestrian bridges over the Androscoggin River, route 1, and route 196 for the Trail with Rail option which was not done in 2011 because that section was not included in the study. The 2011 study estimated the cost to construct a trail with rail to be $50 million. The 2022 estimate is $83 million. If one deducts $19 million the cost is $64 million, an increase of 28% over the 2011 estimate. In 2011 the stone dust option for a 25 mile long Trail until Rail was estimated to cost $7.7 million. In 2022 the cost for that option (which is now a bit longer going to Brunswick) is $32.6 million which is over 4 times the estimated 2011 cost. I have a hard time reconciling the costs given in 2022 with the earlier study and would suggest VHB review this issue. The two estimates do not use the exact same methodology and key differences have been highlighted below. 2011 Study Draft Environmental Assessment &amp; Section 4(f) Evaluation (merrymeetingtrail.org) VHB evaluated the feasibility of establishing an unpaved shared use trail on the east side of the railroad corridor. The east side offers unsurpassed, spectacular views of the Kennebec River, Merrymeeting Bay and a number of tributaries, marshes and wetlands, but it also experiences significant physical challenges and environmental constraints. The cost of constructing the East Side Trail was estimated to be about $50 million, or about $2 million/ mile on average. The East Side Trail costs are summarized in Section 5. Building the trail immediately to the west of the rail within the right-of-way would not result in significant savings. By way of contrast, if the railroad corridor consisted of a double track for its entire length (only about 4 miles is actually double track today), removing one of the rail lines and building an unpaved trail would cost about $7.7 million, or about $0.3 million/ mile. (Executive Summary, page 2) In terms of initial investment the option to pave the trail adds between $100,000 and $200,000 per mile to the overall trail cost due to the asphalt pavement and increased depth of base material requirements. The majority of the trail development costs are related to constructing the wide stable subbase and all that goes into developing the basic trail including clearing, earthwork, ledge cuts, retaining walls, drainage swales, fences, railings, bridges, design, permitting and acquisition of land rights. (3-3) 2022 Study Maine State Active Transportation Plan - Draft (mainedotpima.com) Cost Estimates Understanding costs is critical to prioritizing potential investments in the four inactive, state-owned corridors. Order-of-magnitude estimates include a RWT and TUR alternative, and each with a sub[1]option that includes either a stone dust/gravel surface or an asphalt paved surface. The conceptual project cost estimates include: › Trail construction. › Grade crossing upgrades (marked crosswalk; warning signs; or, depending on speed of traffic, a flashing beacon). › Bridge improvements. Costs were estimated for both stone dust or gravel and paved trail surfaces for both TUR and RWT configurations. Each alternative includes 30 percent for a construction contingency, 10 percent for design engineering, and 15 percent for construction administration and engineering. (For assumptions used for the cost estimates, see Appendix C.) Potential additional costs for right-of-way impacts or environmental mitigation were not included. Table 12—Estimated Costs: Lower Road Corridor from Augusta to Brunswick Trail Alternative (26 miles) Estimated Project Costs46 Rail-with-Trail with Stone Dust or Gravel Trail Surface $83,500,000 Rail-with-Trail with Asphalt Pavement Trail Surface $88,400,000 Trail-until-Rail with Stone Dust or Gravel Trail Surface $32,600,000 Trail-until-Rail with Asphalt Pavement Trail Surface $41,100,00 Footnote 46 In the two rail-with-trail alternatives, the segment from Jordan Avenue in Brunswick to Tedford Road in Topsham alone costs $19 million to accommodate wider bridges over the Androscoggin River and Route 1, and wider underpass below Route 196 in Topsham. In both the RWT and the TUR alternatives, cost estimate spreadsheets in the Appendix C include a separate sub-total for this complex segment to distinguish it from the rest of the corridor (58-59)

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Tom,

Thank you for your comments, and your detailed analysis of this section of the report. We will share your feedback with VHB and assess if any changes need to be made to the Active Transportation Plan. To clarify, while the cost estimates in the Active Transportation Plan are helpful as a general guide to comparing the corridors, the more extensive assessment that will be conducted as a part of the RUAC process will provide a more accurate picture of the cost of the various options for that corridor. I should also note that while the Active Transportation Plan does include a general prioritization of these four corridors, it does not supersede the RUAC process and any final implementation of trail construction (if approved through that process) would likely be developed in segments pending further planning, engagement, and available resources.

In terms of cost, it is also important to note that there has been very significant inflation in the construction industry over the last decade, especially in the last several years. MaineDOT has seen this on multiple occasions with our projects. Some costs should be expected to have seen fairly significant increases since 2011.

Thank you again,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 567  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Regarding the Mountain Division corridor: The Mountain Division Alliance (MDA) appreciates MDOT's effort to create an active transportation plan. MDA has a few recommendations below we hope you will incorporate into the final draft that will increase context and accuracy related to the Mountain Division Corridor. 1. It is important to clarify throughout the report that the Mountain Division Corridor is 50 miles long from Portland to the NH border in Fryeburg. And 45 of those miles are owned by MDOT and are on an unused rail corridor. 2. When describing the Mountain Division Corridor, it is important to clarify there are already two complete sections of trail. That needs to be added to the maps and described. To be clear, that has been and continues to be a corridor that MDOT has invested in over the last twenty years. 3. There are two sections of the Mountain Division Corridor that are actively in review to become trails. The report only describes one of those two sections. This is a glaring inaccuracy throughout the report. When both sections of corridor currently under review (with MDOT actively funding feasibility reports) to become trails are added to the report, that dramatically changes the population who will access the trails for active transportation. This report should describe both the Fryeburg to Gorham (30 mile) and Windham to Westbrook (5 mile) sections in the report. And since both sections are adjacent to trail sections that have already been completed in the corridor, the full length should be 45 miles (the whole MDOT owned section). Adding the populations of Windham and Westbrook to the study should be considered when reviewing the ranking of the Mountain Division Corridor. 4. The Mountain Division Corridor and future 45-mile trail runs through some of the fastest growing and most dense communities in Maine where there is a need for safe active transportation corridors because Westbrook, Windham and Gorham have some of the highest rates of accidents in the state. This future trail system will be a critical bikeway. This report only mentions bikeways once. We recommend MDOT state the value of the Mountain Division Trail and other future rail trails that run through dense communities as bikeways and active transportation routes. In addition, below is information that we recommend considering in the final draft: The Mountain Division trail currently has 2 completed sections. Each of these sections are used by more than 100 people every day, possibly more than any other trail in the state. Mile 0 of the MDT is Congress St in Portland, which would make the 1-mile paved section to the Transportation Center part of the MDT. Although the ATP states that the segment under study is the 31 miles from Standish to Fryeburg, it should be noted that the actual segment is a 45-mile section from Westbrook to Fryeburg. The 5-mile Windham to Westbrook section is being actively pursued by both the state and the municipalities of Windham and Westbrook. The state has already approved spending $250,000 for preliminary and final design for the Windham to Westbrook section. This is in the MDOT 22-24 Capitol Work Plan. Windham, and Westbrook have each committed $50,00 for the local match. In addition, Rock Row developers have commissioned a feasibility study to connect the final 5 miles of the Mountain Division from Westbrook to Portland. This last 5 miles is currently not owned by the state, but the state has first refusal to purchase the rail row. This investment is in addition to the investment the state has already made in the 10 miles of completed paved trail. Looking at first and last mile connections, the northern end of the MDT starts at the second busiest entry point into the State of Maine, just to the east of the Mt Washington Valley at the Maine Tourist Center. On its journey through the towns of Fryeburg, Brownfield, Hiram, Baldwin, Standish, Gorham, Windham, and Westbrook, it connects over 11 recreation areas and preserves. It follows the course of the Saco River, part of the Presumpscot River and passes near Sebago Lake. When the trail connects to Portland, it will pass through 9 towns with a combined population of 144,000 people. Trail use is predicted to be substantial in both directions as people ride to recreational areas as well as to connect their communities. Many of these towns are in the same school districts and the trail serves as a commuting corridor for students. There will also be ample opportunity for business creation along the trail. Looking at trip estimates: In interviews conducted by prior Maine DOT staff, municipal officials and members of the MDA, many residents of Westbrook and Windham indicated they would very much like to commute by bicycle into Westbrook and Portland for work. Percentage of residents who commute by bicycle from other cities: Portland, Or. 6%, Washington DC 5%, Montreal 4%. Like similar trails in other parts of the country and Canada the MDT will attract tourists who may take multiple days to ride the entire length of the trail with the possibility of connecting to the Eastern Trail, Casco Bay Trail or the Amtrak/Downeaster. Please consider this information when completing the final draft. Regarding statewide policy: Key goals of Maine Department of Transportation’s Long Range Transportation Plan and Active Transportation Plan align with the Maine Trails Coalition’s Maine Active Transportation Arterials vision, released in May of 2022. These include: Safe Travel A Well Managed System A Vibrant Economy World-Class Quality of Life Environmentally Sustainable Transportation System, and Equitable Access, MTC would add, Healthier Maine These are cornerstone values to connecting communities throughout Maine with regional off-road, multi-use bikeway arterials. The Maine Trails Coalition (MTC) believes these values contribute in the following ways: Safe Travel When Active Transportation (AT) share is increased, there are fewer crashes, traffic slows and less injuries result. AT policies align with Vision Zero strategies which many agencies have recently adopted. A Well Managed System Many studies find that appropriate improvements in infrastructure and safety significantly increase walking, bicycling and micro mode travel. A Vibrant Economy Working to move Maine forward must include investment in all modes of transportation. Investment in bikeways and multi-use trail infrastructure has economic benefits. An economic study of the Eastern Trail in Southern Maine highlights a total annual economic impact of $44.6M associated with use of the Eastern Trail. Nationally, the current Return on Investment of active transportation infrastructure, which accounts for fuel savings, CO2 reduction, net spending impact of rail–trails and health cost savings, is $34.1 billion annually and has the potential to grow to $138.5 billion annually. Maine’s opportunities for additional Active Transportation (AT) will yield other economic and financial consequences, including: - Reduction in road construction, repair and maintenance costs - Reduction in fuel, repair and maintenance costs to users - Positive impact of active travel tourism - Increased property value along bikeways and trails. A national survey reveals that the ability to walk or bike through a neighborhood is a strong factor in determining where to relocate when considering a move. On a national level, forward thinking includes the global e-bike market size was valued at USD 17.56 billion in 2021 and is expected to reach over USD 40.98 billion by 2030, poised to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9.6% from 2021 and 2030. Electric bikes offer huge growth potential as they gain traction as a more ecological means of transport. Sales in the U.S. are predicted to lift as associated regulations will take shape. World-Class Quality of Life A robust active transportation system that includes bikeway arterials does much more than benefit the economic and health environment of the state. By having a more active and healthy population, Maine can have a future with a quality of life that is unparalleled, including: Reduction in health care costs due to increased physical activity An aging-in-place friendly environment Positive impact of active travel tourism Build better social connections between neighbors and communities After the Federal Highway Administration’s four-year Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program invested about $100 per capita in pedestrian and bicycling improvements in four typical communities, walking trips increased 23 percent, bicycling trips increased 48 percent, and automobile travel declined 3 percent. A recent U.S. study found that a 10 percent increase in per capita bikeway-miles increases bicycle commute mode shares 2.5 percent, and a 10 percent increase in protected bicycle lanes increases bicycle mode shares 4 percent. Walking and bicycling support more compact, multimodal communities by reducing the amount of land devoted to roadways and parking and creating more attractive streets. Environmentally Sustainable Transportation System The value of fuel savings from shifting short car trips to walking and bicycling trips, using walking and bicycling to access public transit, inducing mixed use, and reducing congestion is currently $3.3 billion annually, which could increase to nearly $22 billion annually. The amount of CO2 saved annually could grow from 13 million tons to 54 million tons annually. Increased AT modes reduce harm to plants and animals by eliminating noise, light and vibration pollution that reduce the abundance and variety of some insects, amphibians and birds. AT eliminates acoustic disturbance that can alter the behavior of breeding birds that can lead to the eventual abandonment of occupied territories, nests and broods. The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy notes, “greenways and trails help preserve important natural landscapes, provide needed links between fragmented habitats and offer tremendous opportunities for protecting plant and animal species. They also can be useful tools for wetland preservation and the improvement of air and water quality. In addition, they can allow humans to experience nature with minimal environmental impact.” Equitable Access Well-planned, convenient, and connected AT systems provide an equitable and affordable space for all to be able to travel safely without a car, including those who are isolated or limited by their level of income, ethnic and racial background, ability, gender, age or other factors. An AT plan focused on healthy communities should include multi-use, traffic-protected bikeway arterials allowing all populations within the community to have access to the same choices and opportunities for healthy lifestyles as the population at large. Since most transit trips include walking and bicycling links, improving these modes supports public transit travel and transit-oriented development. Well-designed AT can provide the first-mile/last-mile answers to all other modes of transportation. Healthier Maine Increasing AT mode share will reduce pollution related illness and increase overall physical and mental health for all trail users. For every $1 invested in building trails there is a direct correlation to $3 of saved medical costs. (American Heart Association, 2019). Physical inactivity is on the rise amongst all ages and demographics. People who live within less than a mile of safe, high-quality biking and walking infrastructure get on average 45 minutes more exercise a week after trails were built near them than before they had trail infrastructure available to incorporate into a daily routine. (American Journal of Public Health) Regular exercise can lower blood pressure and cholesterol, reduce the risk of type II diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic diseases, and positively impact many aspects of cognition and mental health. Studies of active commuting walkers and cyclists have shown that the increase in cardiovascular exercise, leads to significantly lower rates of cardiovascular disease and cancer than compared to those who commute by car. (Association Between Active Commuting and Incident Cardiovascular Disease, Cancer, and Mortality: Prospective Cohort Study, 2017) (American Trails) Access to bikeways and trails increases community health benefits for all trail user types. Studies cited by American Trails show that not just walkers and cyclists see health benefits. Equestrian and motorized trail users also see cardiovascular and muscle strengthening, toning and flexibility benefits. (American Trails) A vibrant AT system will help vulnerable Mainers, who face greater risk of negative health impacts, lack of access to other recreation opportunities and are often also vulnerable due to poor access to safe streets, sidewalks, parks and greenspaces, trails, and community garden spaces. Bikeway arterials, trails, and greenways encourage interaction and reduce isolation. They connect people by providing opportunities for both physical activity and socialization. Trails are the conduit in providing a space for informal opportunities to meet and interact, or to connect while they travel to and from their destination together. Bikeway arterials and trails can reduce crime by creating regularly used spaces that are highly visible, cared for, and lively. Trails build community pride and sense of place through communal projects and campaigns aimed at adding value through physical activity and community-focused programming. Implementation Strategies Related to Section 8.2, Implementation Strategy, Goal 2, Strategy 2A: Develop a list of High-Priority AT trails and begin building out the network”: The MTC seeks a joint endorsed timeline with specific action steps and measures of success to fully achieve the prioritization of building, resurfacing and completing an adequate and exemplary active transportation arterials vision. The MTC would like to see the bikeway arterials segments outlined in the Maine Active Transportation Plan identified as High-Priority Active Transportation (HPAT) corridors and as such, have them included on the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) list. Related to Goal 2, Strategy 2A, IV: “Make prioritized expansions to the off-road AT network, given available resources”: The MTC strongly recommends MaineDOT prioritize building, resurfacing, and completing segments of bikeway arterials at the scale of 120 -150 miles over 5 years. Related to Goal 5 in Section 8.2, Implementation Strategy, “Identify and pursue new funding opportunities”: The MTC strongly recommends the Maine DOT build a robust Bikeways Program and include the term “bikeways” more often in the Maine Active Transportation plan. This language as defined in Title 23 §611 in the state statue opens the door to securing federal highway funding dedicated to bikeways and AT infrastructure. Additionally, MTC would like to see a timeline and action steps for other priorities outlined in the plan, particularly: Implementing the updated Complete Streets Policy. Review the Local Match Policy, and the Equity Statement. Review the Complete Streets Policy. Incorporate Vision Zero strategies

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Paul,

Thank you, the MDA, and the MTC for your comments, including those regarding the Mountain Division and the many benefits of active transportation and their relation to MaineDOT's long-range transportation goals. We will take your comments, including those regarding timelines and performance measures, into consideration as we work to finalize the plans. While we recognize the desire for a major and rapid expansion of the bikeway network, as you call for in your proposed five-year target, MaineDOT must balance these proposals with available funding opportunities and other infrastructure needs - including other active transportation efforts.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Stakeholder Reply  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response Type: e-mail  
Response: Hi Ian, thanks for the reply. We're particularly interested in seeing MDOT acknowledge the full and complete Mountain Divison corridor which would add Westbrook and Portland (and thereby upgrade it's priority with MDOT). Thank you

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/03/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Paul,

Thank you for your message. We will clarify that there are other sections of the Mountain Division which are either existing trails or under review by MaineDOT that would extend into Westbrook and Portland. This plan is focused on the state-owned inactive sections of trail that are being assessed through the RUAC process. This is the same for the other corridors as well. For instance, the Lower Road assessment in the AT Plan goes from Brunswick to Gardiner, not including the existing Kennebec River Trail that continues north from there to Augusta. The Mountain Division RUAC was completed before this plan, and the information on the Mountain Division in this report is taken from the more extensive HNTB feasibility study.

The prioritization laid out in the Active Transportation Plan is focused on these segments, and is informative about the potential relative uses of these specific segments of railway, but it is not a final determination of which potential segments may be built in which order. As we noted and will further clarify in the final plan, actual implementation of any trails along these corridors would involve further review, and would likely be broken up into segments. MaineDOT will also be considering the many other trails that have been proposed statewide, which are not included in this assessment. All of this is also pending the completion of the RUAC process - including a decision by the Commissioner of Transportation and legislative approval.

Again, we will update the plan to clarify that the Mountain Division segment presented here is not the complete trail and provide additional context for this element of the plan.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 568  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Thank you for making it easy to comment on the Family of Plans. I have 2 comments: For the goal "Invest in transportation initiatives that support economic opportunity for Maine people, communities, and businesses" - I think a rail trail from Brunswick to Rockland would be a fantastic economic driver for many midcoast communities. I had the great fortune to be on the very last leaf peeper train that used to run each fall. The scenery along that route is simply stunning. I think it would be a fantastic asset for the area and I believe the tracks are state owned? Is this possible? 2nd idea regards the Frank J Wood bridge. Mimic what was done with the John Greenleaf Whittier Bridge on I95 over the Merrimac River in Newburyport, MA. That isn't a trestle bridge...it is a new bridge with a decorative trestle on top. Let's REPLACE the FJWB with a new concrete bridge - exact same location - and put the trestle right back on it. Sh\*t..we can even leave the rust on it! I'm proposing we save the trestle, rip out the FJWBridge, build a new bridge (complete with separated bike lanes from the traffic, please!!! and then put the trestle back on as if we've repaired the existing bridge. Yes, i'm proposing a replacement in place which will be a major traffic cluster for a while. But let's be serious... Trucks and busses already can't use it. Let's put up with a detour for a shorter time period vs the much longer build-a-new-bridge-next-to-the-old-bridge approach. Rip off the bandaid. This will also address the environmental concerns of building a new bridge closer to the dam and the impact to wildlife. Mayyyybe could we get a temporary bridge where the the Black Bridge was to ease the detour pain?? This approach is a win-win-win!!

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hi Mary,

Thank you for your comments. With regards to the Rockland Branch rail corridor, you are correct that the tracks belong to the State. However, it is an active rail corridor with ongoing freight rail operations providing important service to the Midcoast. MaineDOT is also working on a pilot project that will add a passenger rail connection between Rockland and Brunswick running along that corridor. This project is included in our most recent Work Plan: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/f0f9f927ce9948ca84180f02f5c43290>

Regarding the Frank J. Wood Bridge, MaineDOT has completed the environmental process and review, and has received a final determination from the Federal Highway Administration that allows us to proceed with the replacement as planned. You can find more details here: <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/env/frankjwood/>

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 569  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Great to see and be able to review an active transportation plan in Maine-- thank you! A few comments: (1) More bike lanes and trails ASAP! People can't bike to school, work or for shopping when they don't feel safe. We can't realize the power of bikes to move people (in addition to recreational benefits) until make a network of bike lanes in and between towns. See this Washington Post article adding bike lanes INCREASED the number of people able to travel (contrary to what you might think): https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/12/30/washington-dc-bike-lanes-commute/ (2) Start increasing funding for bicycle infrastructure NOW. People who bike (and people who would bike if it were safe) pay taxes too. We need to stop funding car-centric projects as they generate a car-only world (causing traffic, air pollution, climate change.) (3) Revisit the state's speed limit policies ASAP. So many times I hear from local officials in Brunswick: "we can't lower speed limits because of the state policies. If you inquire, they will do a study to see how fast people are driving and might even increase the speed limit." Please, in the future, address all current and potential users when designating speed limits. Think carefully about what back roads might be used by cyclists. (4) Advocate and provide incentives for traffic calming measures on roads used by cyclists. Slower speeds means safer cycling. Increase shoulder widths and consider decreasing travel lanes. (5) Do more to educate drivers about sharing the road with cyclists. We need to decrease bike and pedestrian fatalities.

Public Comment 570  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Rail Plan  
Comment: Rail Plan. It would be useful to have a table on the average annual daily traffic for the 12 rail passenger stations over say a 10 year period.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/03/2023  
Response By: Nathan H  
Response:

Thank you for your comment. It will be taken into consideration as we revise the Draft Rail Plan.

Public Comment 571  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: There needs to be specific, measurable accountability in the plan. A plan is fine, but without accountability to progress it will remain a plan.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Andy,

Thank you for your comments on the Active Transportation Plan. We will keep these in mind as we work to finalize the plans.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 572  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: There needs to be specific, measurable accountability in the plan. A plan is fine, but without accountability to progress it will remain a plan.

Public Comment 573  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: I am writing to comment on the Active Transportation Plan. First, I'm thrilled that MaineDOT is developing an active transportation plan and this plan has a lot of good stuff in it. The high-level goals and objectives outlined in the plan are laudable. I particularly like the emphasis on creating a connected "network" of on- and off-road AT facilities. I would like to see the plan establish more specific, measurable objectives, with clearly defined timelines. Timelines are particularly important in the context of making the AT plan part of the Climate Action Plan and Economic Development Strategy, both of which have specific timelines. The AT plan identifies federal funding options but only discusses reworking state funding for AT in a limited sense. While I suppose this is a political question that must be addressed by the legislature, it would be helpful if the plan laid out a buffet of options (e.g. revise how Turnpike funds are allocated, or some new development tax, etc.) and their pros and cons to provide expert guidance to the legislature when they take up this topic. Specific feedback: p. 74, Table 15 "(e.g., “Share the Road”)" --- NACTO recommends the "Bicycles may use full lane" sign (MUTCD R4-11) over the "Share the road" (W16-1P) sign, as it more clearly conveys the message, consistent with Maine's 3-foot passing law, that drivers should give adequate space to people on bikes. I'd suggest changing the example here. p. 53- The section on an off-road regional trail network focuses entirely on rail corridors. I suggest that the state also consider other utility corridors - power line and fiber optic corridors have been used very successfully in other states to develop long-distance trails in both urban and rural settings (e.g. the Interurban Trail north and south of Seattle and the Palouse to Cascade State Park trail, both in Washington state). Instead of taking an abandoned corridor and converting it, trails can be part of a mitigation plan in exchange for providing a right-of-way to a private utility.

Public Comment 574  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Key goals of Maine Department of Transportation’s Long Range Transportation Plan and Active Transportation Plan align with the Maine Trails Coalition’s Maine Active Transportation Arterials vision, released in May of 2022. The MTC would like to recognize these cornerstone These include: Safe Travel A Well Managed System A Vibrant Economy World-Class Quality of Life Environmentally Sustainable Transportation System, and Equitable Access, MTC would add, Healthier Maine These are cornerstone values to connecting communities throughout Maine with regional off-road, multi-use bikeway arterials. The Maine Trails Coalition (MTC) believes these values contribute in the following ways: -Safe Travel- When Active Transportation (AT) share is increased, there are fewer crashes, traffic slows and less injuries result. AT policies align with Vision Zero strategies which many agencies have recently adopted. -A Well Managed System- Many studies find that appropriate improvements in infrastructure and safety significantly increase walking, bicycling and micro mode travel. -A Vibrant Economy- Working to move Maine forward must include investment in all modes of transportation. Investment in bikeways and multi-use trail infrastructure has economic benefits. An economic study of the Eastern Trail in Southern Maine highlights a total annual economic impact of $44.6M associated with use of the Eastern Trail. Nationally, the current Return on Investment of active transportation infrastructure, which accounts for fuel savings, CO2 reduction, net spending impact of rail–trails and health cost savings, is $34.1 billion annually and has the potential to grow to $138.5 billion annually. Maine’s opportunities for additional Active Transportation (AT) will yield other economic and financial consequences, including: - Reduction in road construction, repair and maintenance costs - Reduction in fuel, repair and maintenance costs to users - Positive impact of active travel tourism - Increased property value along bikeways and trails. A national survey reveals that the ability to walk or bike through a neighborhood is a strong factor in determining where to relocate when considering a move (American Heart Assoc). On a national level, forward thinking includes the global e-bike market size was valued at USD 17.56 billion in 2021 and is expected to reach over USD 40.98 billion by 2030, poised to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9.6% from 2021 and 2030. Electric bikes offer huge growth potential as they gain traction as a more ecological means of transport. Sales in the U.S. is predicted to lift as associated regulations will take shape. -World-Class Quality of Life- A robust active transportation system that includes bikeway arterials does much more than benefit the economic and health environment of the state. By having a more active and healthy population, Maine can have a future with a quality of life that is unparalleled, including: - Reduction in health care costs due to increased physical activity - An aging-in-place friendly environment - Positive impact of active travel tourism - Build better social connections between neighbors and communities After the Federal Highway Administration’s four-year Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program invested about $100 per capita in pedestrian and bicycling improvements in four typical communities, walking trips increased 23 percent, bicycling trips increased 48 percent, and automobile travel declined 3 percent. A recent U.S. study found that a 10 percent increase in per capita bikeway-miles increases bicycle commute mode shares 2.5 percent, and a 10 percent increase in protected bicycle lanes increases bicycle mode shares 4 percent. (Sustainability. 2021; 13(6):3113. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13063113) Walking and bicycling support more compact, multimodal communities by reducing the amount of land devoted to roadways and parking and creating more attractive streets. -Environmentally Sustainable Transportation System- The value of fuel savings from shifting short car trips to walking and bicycling trips, using walking and bicycling to access public transit, inducing mixed use, and reducing congestion is currently $3.3 billion annually, which could increase to nearly $22 billion annually. The amount of CO2 saved annually could grow from 13 million tons to 54 million tons annually. Increased AT modes reduce harm to plants and animals by eliminating noise, light and vibration pollution that reduce the abundance and variety of some insects, amphibians and birds. AT eliminates acoustic disturbance that can alter the behavior of breeding birds that can lead to the eventual abandonment of occupied territories, nests and broods. The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy notes, “greenways and trails help preserve important natural landscapes, provide needed links between fragmented habitats and offer tremendous opportunities for protecting plant and animal species. They also can be useful tools for wetland preservation and the improvement of air and water quality. In addition, they can allow humans to experience nature with minimal environmental impact.” -Equitable Access- Well-planned, convenient, and connected AT systems provide an equitable and affordable space for all to be able to travel safely without a car, including those who are isolated or limited by their level of income, ethnic and racial background, ability, gender, age or other factors. An AT plan focused on healthy communities should include multi-use, traffic-protected bikeway arterials allowing all populations within the community to have access to the same choices and opportunities for healthy lifestyles as the population at large. Since most transit trips include walking and bicycling links, improving these modes supports public transit travel and transit-oriented development. Well-designed AT can provide the first-mile/last-mile answers to all other modes of transportation. -Healthier Maine- Increasing AT mode share will reduce pollution related illness and increase overall physical and mental health for all trail users. For every $1 invested in building trails there is a direct correlation to $3 of saved medical costs. (American Heart Association, 2019). Physical inactivity is on the rise amongst all ages and demographics. People who live within less than a mile of safe, high-quality, protected biking and walking infrastructure get on average 45 minutes more exercise a week after trails were built near them than before they had trail infrastructure available to incorporate into a daily routine. (American Journal of Public Health) Regular exercise can lower blood pressure and cholesterol, reduce the risk of type II diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic diseases, and positively impact many aspects of cognition and mental health. Studies of active commuting walkers and cyclists have shown that the increase in cardiovascular exercise, leads to significantly lower rates of cardiovascular disease and cancer than compared to those who commute by car. (Association Between Active Commuting and Incident Cardiovascular Disease, Cancer, and Mortality: Prospective Cohort Study, 2017) (American Trails) Access to bikeways and trails increases community health benefits for all trail user types. Studies cited by American Trails show that not just walkers and cyclists see health benefits. Equestrian and motorized trail users also see cardiovascular and muscle strengthening, toning and flexibility benefits. (American Trails) A vibrant AT system will help vulnerable Mainers, who face greater risk of negative health impacts, lack of access to other recreation opportunities and are often also vulnerable due to poor access to safe streets, sidewalks, parks and greenspaces, trails, and community garden spaces. Bikeway arterials, trails, and greenways encourage interaction and reduce isolation. They connect people by providing opportunities for both physical activity and socialization. Trails are the conduit in providing a space for informal opportunities to meet and interact, or to connect while they travel to and from their destination together. Bikeway arterials, trails, and greenways can reduce crime by creating regularly used spaces that are highly visible, cared for, and lively. Trails build community pride and sense of place through communal projects and campaigns aimed at adding value through physical activity and community-focused programming. --Implementation Strategies-- The MTC has considered the implementation strategies outlined in the draft SATP and offers the following feedback: Related to Section 8.2, Implementation Strategy, Goal 2, Strategy 2A: Develop a list of High-Priority AT trails and begin building out the network”: - The MTC seeks a timeline, by trail segments, with prioritized goals for engineering/design, building, resurfacing and completing that is agreed to by the organizations identified in the Maine Active Transportation Arterials vision. This should also include specific action steps and performance measures. - The MTC seeks a timeline, by trail segments, with prioritized goals of engineering/design, building, resurfacing and completing that is agreed to by the trail organizations identified in the Maine Active Transportation Arterials vision. - The MTC would like to see the bikeway arterials segments outlined in the Maine Active Transportation Plan identified as High-Priority Active Transportation (HPAT) corridors and as such, have them included on the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) list. Related to Goal 2, Strategy 2A, IV: “Make prioritized expansions to the off-road AT network, given available resources”: - The MTC strongly recommends MaineDOT prioritize building, resurfacing, and completing segments of bikeway arterials at the scale of 120 - 150 miles over 5 years. Related to Goal 5 in Section 8.2, Implementation Strategy, “Identify and pursue new funding opportunities”: - The MTC strongly recommends the MaineDOT build a robust Bikeways Program and include the term “bikeways” more often in the Maine Active Transportation plan. This language as defined in Title 23 §611 in the state statue opens the door to securing federal highway funding dedicated to bikeways and AT infrastructure. Additionally, MTC would like to see a timeline and action steps for other priorities outlined in the plan, particularly: - Implementing the updated Complete Streets Policy. - Review the Local Match Policy, and the Equity Statement. - Review the Complete Streets Policy. - Incorporate Vision Zero strategies.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Silva,

Thank you and the MTC for your comments, including those regarding the many benefits of active transportation and their relation to MaineDOT's long-range transportation goals. We will take your comments, including those regarding timelines and performance measures, into consideration as we work to finalize the plans. While we recognize the desire for a major and rapid expansion of the bikeway network, as you call for in your proposed five-year target, MaineDOT must balance these proposals with available funding opportunities and other infrastructure needs - including other active transportation efforts.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 575  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics:   
Comment: I believe the Active Transportation plan needs stronger language and commitment to funding bikeways and multiuse trails for use by all modes of human power. Also a timeline with actions, and measures of progress. Less language that makes it seem like multi-use trails are less important than sidewalks, and more buy in into connecting segments of trails and really making a model system that can be used in 4 seasons for Mainers and visitors alike.

Public Comment 576  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Maine has 625 miles of sidewalks along 8,400 miles of state highways. (26) There is a lot of data presented in the plan but nothing on the quality of experience by the user. Why not do an inventory measuring the levels and implement a program to do so? Attached is a chart demonstrating how it might be done. http://www.walkable.org/images/1\_LOQWalking.jpg The AT Plan scarcely mentions rural Maine particularly its western and northern areas and offers little more than paved shoulders. How about doing some big sky planning for these areas and develop rural pilot projects? Funding for active transportation needs to be mainstreamed. The bikeway statute opens the door for both state and federal funding. Title 23, §612: Authority of Department of Transportation (maine.gov) The Department of Transportation is authorized to construct bikeways within the existing rights-of-way of any state or state-aid highway. The department may also acquire additional rights-of-way adjacent to existing highway rights-of-way for the construction of bikeways. Such construction and acquisition of rights-of-way shall be accomplished in the same manner provided in this Title for highways. [PL 1975, c. 615 (NEW).] The Department of Transportation shall consider development of bikeways when developing capital improvement programs.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Family of Plans/ Active Transportation Plan.  In particular, MaineDOT appreciates that you not only shared concerns/ areas from improvement but also provided some policy tools for us to evaluate to improve inventory and analysis and options available under Title 23.  MaineDOT will continue to evaluate them as we implement the Family of Plans, AT Plan in particular.  You also commented on the insufficiency of shoulders and need for sidewalks in more rural areas of the state.  The Final AT Plan will provide some additional information and clarity regarding policy intent on shoulders.  MaineDOT will also continue to implement programs for sidewalks statewide and reevaluate policies pertaining to municipal matches for sidewalks as discussed in the AT Plan.  Thank you once again.

Public Comment 577  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan  
Comment: I'm very encouraged by these plans. I strongly believe the combination of public transportation and AT is the key to decreasing VMT by automobile. Making AT infrastructure safer and extending train and bus access, quality, frequency, and speed, will do wonders for the health, quality of life, and economy of Maine. I hope to see specific measurable goals in these efforts, and progress reports so we can get a detailed view of the progress in the years ahead. Additionally, I hope that MDOT can work with the state to help facilitate better zoning and development policies that encourage construction and redevelopment of communities that are conducive to walking, biking, and transit service in the future. Thank you.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello William,

Thank you for your comments. We will keep these in mind as we work to finalize the plans. In terms of zoning, it is important to note that in many cases authority for these decisions is primarily at the local, not state, level. MaineDOT is very open to working with municipalities to realize their visions for their communities.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 578  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan  
Comment: I am a family doctor in Portland and a year round bike commuter. The ability to walk and ride safely is high priority for the health of the more than 2000 patients that I care for. Too many times my patients tell me that there is no safe place for them to walk in their neighborhoods because of lack of sidewalk and adequate shoulders on roads. I am sick and tired of telling my patients to go to the mall to walk. Pedestrians need sidewalks and paths that are separate from traffic and maintained for safe passage year round. It is more than a little ironic that I felt safer riding in my home state of New Jersey than here in Maine due to better shoulders on the roads and dedicated bike paths Cyclists need adequate shoulders as well as more dedicated bike lanes and paths, also maintained for year round travel. A real opportunity north of Portland is the abandoned St. Lawrence and Atlantic rail line. It is ideally suited for active transportation such as cycling and walking. To make it a commuter rail line would be an expensive boondoggle.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Patrick,

Thank you for your comments regarding the need for separated active transportation infrastructure and the SLA line. We will keep these in mind as we work to finalize the plans.

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 579  
Date: 01/31/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: Thank you for thinking about our future. Alternative modes of transportation in our state are important to consider given many factors such as wealth disparity, climate change, harsh weather conditions and the need for commuting further from our homes to obtain better work and pay. I would like to see more commuter train lines and improved service, perhaps even a light rail or bringing back the old trolley lines to connect from rail lines to other parts of towns. As a biker I also support more SAFE bike routes for commuting and pleasure but not at the expense of rail lines or other alternative transportation that can be used to move more people from point A to B. Also I live off of Forest Ave near Allen and it's a mess! We need bike and pedestrian over or underpasses so please consider these all over Portland as well in your plan. And please prevent University Park trails from being built upon. There's an entire parking area at Bruno's that's abandoned...can't we look at swapping open spaces with abandoned areas of the city so we can keep and protect our forests? Create some kind of incentive plan for owners of these abandoned areas to work with those looking to construct new homes? We live here because Portland is a green gem in our industrial world. If we keep building and not protecting green space then people won't want to live here. Thanks for listening.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Family of Plans/ Active Transportation Plan.  Your comment raises a number of issues from multimodal transportation options, coordination between land use and transportation and other areas.  These types of interrelated and overlapping issues are one of the major reasons why MaineDOT worked on our Family of Plans (Long-Range Transportation, Transit, Rail, Aviation and Active Transportation) concurrently.  There will certainly be challenges implementing all of them but thanks in large part to considerate and detailed comments from individuals such as you, we feel we have an excellent baseline to continue to improve transportation safety and options.

Public Comment 580  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan, Rail Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I would like safe corridors identified in areas where bike / e bike commuting is currently dangerous like getting to Portland or South Portland from outlying communities like Gorham, Windham and Westbrook. Also I favor areas where rails could connect communities leave the rails for trains. If they won't be used and are highly useful for safer commuting as mentioned above, convert to rail-trail or dual use.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response By: Martin R  
Response:

Thank you for your comment on MaineDOT's Family of Plans. One of the most important active transportation needs in Maine is to improve safe connections for all users, particularly along regular commuter routes. MaineDOT will be working with communities to improve safe transportation options. In Maine's largest urban areas such as greater Portland including Gorham, Westbrook and parts of Winham, the USDOT/ Federal Highway Administration has designated Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) which lead most transportation planning within their regions. PACTs is the MPO for Greater Portland. Detailed information regarding PACTs is available at https://www.gpcog.org/. MaineDOT and PACTs will continue to plan for transportation options to improve safety for all users. Thank you once again for your comment.

Public Comment 581  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Level of Support: In Favor  
Topics: Active Transportation Plan  
Comment: Thank you for the opportunity to publicly comment in favor of the Maine DOT’s Active Transportation Plan. I have two points- a recent study showing the benefits of trails for health and a specific request related to a slated project in Sanford. https://oem.bmj.com/content/80/2/111 This recent study, as seen on CNN, shows spending time in nature reduces the needed amount of medications for blood pressure, asthma and other conditions. Despite increasing costs for construction and maintenance, we must continue to invest in trails. As a member of the Sanford Trails Committee, it is a high priority for us to extend our trails to connect with the Eastern Trail. A major piece of this connection hinges upon the Rt. 4 bridge near School St. The rt. 4 bridge should be reconstructed with an underpass allowing pedestrians and bikes to avoid the road. This specific crossing, if done properly, will allow the expansion of Sanford’s trails all the way to the Eastern Trail. Are there additional hurdles to that goal? Yes. But the Rt. 4 bridge pedestrian underpass greatly helps the effort.

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hi Sam,

Thank you for your comments, and for sharing the study. Regarding Route 4 in Sanford, I spoke with the project manager and he is in touch with city officials and other stakeholders and is aware of the concerns about accommodating the trail. There is going to be a public engagement process for that project, and you can expect the first public meeting to launch this February. We hope that you will remain engaged and continue to share your thoughts with us during the project development process. The meeting will be online, and you will be able to find it here: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/415913f8cfcf4fc5a5cc3039a8fe6dd4>

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki

Public Comment 582  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Level of Support: Neutral  
Topics: Strategic Transit Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan  
Comment: I would like to see the state DOT enact a policy of widening roads as an extreme last resort and stop building "connectors and bypasses" as a way to reduce congestion. Volumes of research shows that these approaches just buy some time and encourage more driving. All we have to do is look to the south to learn what happens when we take the widening approach. It doesn't look great, it's deadly for wildlife and there are better approaches. Let's begin looking at how we move when coming to Maine and within the state and begin thinking long term and in ways that will allow us to credibly retain the "The Way Life Should Be" signs

MaineDOT Response  
Date: 02/01/2023  
Response By: Ian G  
Response:

Hello Henry,

Thank you for your comments. MaineDOT follows the requirements of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (<https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/23/title23sec73.html)>. Among other things, this requires that "...the full range of reasonable transportation alternatives be evaluated for all significant highway construction or reconstruction projects and give preference to transportation system management options, demand management strategies, improvements to the existing system, and other transportation modes before increasing highway capacity through road building activities."

Best regards,

Ian Gorecki