

From the Commissioner: Working to Move Maine

Dear MaineDOT Customers and Partners,

Transportation will always be a big job in Maine. Our vast, multimodal transportation system includes highways, bridges, airports, freight and passenger rail service, a state ferry service, and bike and pedestrian facilities. That infrastructure is spread out across a large, mostly rural state with geography, geology, and weather that – while beautiful – present challenges from an infrastructure perspective. Maine simply has much more transportation infrastructure per capita than most states do. For example, compared to New Hampshire, a state with about the same population, Maine has three-and-a-half times the land area and about double the number of state highway miles. Maine also is the least densely populated state east of the Mississippi River, and that population is the oldest in the nation, making rural transit solutions especially challenging. Fortunately, at the Maine Department of Transportation, we love tackling the constant and complex challenges associated with doing this big job. We see opportunities to make pragmatic progress in the years ahead.



To move Maine forward amidst these realities, we need a general direction, a map, and a plan – a guide that assesses where we are, where we're going, and how we're going to get there. This Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) aims to provide the general direction of that map. The LRTP is MaineDOT's overarching approach and vision for responsibly providing a safe and reliable transportation system within available resources over the long term. This general direction and approach include high-level goals, objectives, and strategies that we will use on our journey.

The LRTP is part of MaineDOT's Family of Plans – a group of distinct plans that deal with specific modes of transportation, aspects of the work we do, and work done by our partners at the regional and municipal levels as well as in the Tribes and Nations. These individual modal plans can be thought of as more specific destinations consistent with the general direction provided by the LRTP.

At the beginning of every calendar year, MaineDOT releases the latest version of our Work Plan. This document includes thousands of work items the department plans to deliver in the next three-year period. Extending the map analogy, one can think of the Work Plan as the specific routes we will use to reach the destinations in the modal plans and the general direction in our LRTP.



All movement requires energy or fuel. For transportation, that fuel is funding and is provided in federal and state budgets and state bond bills. Just as fuel comes in many varieties, so too does transportation funding. Historic underfunding of our transportation system has created significant challenges over time, and recent construction cost inflation has made the cost of meeting these challenges about 50-percent higher just to maintain the same levels of production. Despite these challenges, there is reason for cautious optimism. The potential for significantly more federal funding available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) coupled with unprecedented support for transportation at the state level couldn't have come at a better time. If we can provide adequate resources to match BIL funds and address inflation, a better transportation future is within reach.

Throughout this journey metaphor, notice there is no mention of specific modes of travel. Given our demographics and population density, most in Maine likely envision themselves driving or riding in a passenger vehicle – increasingly in a low- or zero-emission vehicle. Some are thinking of themselves flying. Others may envision themselves riding in a bus or train. Still others will be walking or riding a bicycle. At MaineDOT, we are charged with seeking a comprehensive, balanced, multimodal system that responsibly supports the economic opportunity and quality of life of all our customers, using the modes that makes policy and fiscal sense over the long term.

This is the first time that MaineDOT has developed so many modal plans at one time, resulting in a more complete and comprehensive vision of Maine's transportation future. We look forward to working with regional and local transportation providers, municipalities, our Tribes and Nations, modal advocates, and policymakers to pursue pragmatic progress that will help make the future of transportation in Maine brighter for all our customers – the people who live, work, do business, and travel in our great state.

Respectfully,



Bruce A. Van Note

Commissioner

MaineDOT

