



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
16 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0016

JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI
GOVERNOR

DAVID A. COLE
COMMISSIONER

June 24, 2008

Honorable Dennis S. Damon, Senate Chair
Honorable Boyd P. Marley, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Report to the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation in Response to LD 1720
"Resolve, Directing the Department of Transportation and the Maine Turnpike Authority To Conduct a Study of Possible Western Connector Roads to Municipal Centers in Cumberland and York Counties"

Dear Senator Damon, Representative Marley and Members of the Committee:

In the 123rd 1st Maine Legislative Session the Legislature passed LD 1720 (RESOLVE Chapter 95) "Resolve, Directing the Department of Transportation and the Maine Turnpike Authority To Conduct a Study of Possible Western Connector Roads to Municipal Centers in Cumberland and York Counties." In accordance with this Resolve The Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) and Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA) have been working together to develop a process to study the opportunity to enhance, expand, and preserve highway connections west of Route 1 in York and Cumberland counties, specifically noting the Gorham and Sanford Areas. Attached is a report of the process that we have developed describing the approach, participants and schedule.

A report was due back to you February 28, 2008. We apologize for this late report. Please know that The MaineDOT and the MTA have been working with regional and municipal officials and other interested parties to move this study forward. We hope that you will find our process thorough. Please contact me or Kat Fuller, Chief Planner, Bureau of Transportation Systems Planning at 624-3300 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

David Cole, Commissioner
Maine Department of Transportation

Paul Violette, Executive Director
Maine Turnpike Authority



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Enclosures

cc: Sen. Philip Bartlett
Sen. Jonathan Courtney
Sen. Richard Nass
Rep. Christopher Barstow
Rep. Andrea Boland
Rep. John Tuttle
Karen Nadeau Drillen, Office of Policy and Legal Analysis
Gregory Nadeau, Maine DOT
Conrad Welzel, MTA
Theresa Savoy, MaineDOT



Report to the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation in Response to LD 1720

Study of Possible Western Connector Roads to Municipal Centers in Cumberland and York Counties

Introduction

In response to growing pressures to improve east-west connections in York and Cumberland Counties, the 123rd Maine State Legislature passed LD 1720 (RESOLVE Chapter 95) "Resolve, Directing the Department of Transportation and the Maine Turnpike Authority To Conduct a Study of Possible Western Connector Roads to Municipal Centers in Cumberland and York Counties" directing the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) and Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA) to study the opportunity to enhance, expand, and preserve highway connections west of Route 1 in York and Cumberland counties, specifically noting the Gorham and Sanford Areas.

It should be noted that both the York and Cumberland county studies are referenced in the MaineDOT's Long Range Plan, the PACTS Destination Tomorrow Long Range Plan, and are consistent with the mission statement in the MTA's 10-year plan.

Jointly, the MaineDOT and MTA have drafted scope of services for two separate studies to directly address this Resolve. The resolve specifically requires that these studies assess all modes of transportation, in addition to land use strategies, in accordance with Maine's Sensible Transportation Policy Act (STPA), the USACOE Permitting process, and the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The general scope and approach of these studies are defined below.

Study Approach

The York County study will encompass a broad area, covering the area from Biddeford/Saco to the north, Route 1 to the east, Sanford/Springvale to the west, and Wells/Ogunquit to the south. This study will build upon recent and relevant York County studies including:

- 2005 Regional Transportation Assessment for Southern Maine
- 2005 York County & Southern Cumberland County East-West Corridor Strategic Investment Plan
- 2006 Route 236 Corridor Study
- 2003 Route 111 Corridor Study
- 2005 Route 109 Corridor Study



The York County study will involve extensive community outreach to identify issues and attitudes towards transportation and land use issues relative to the east-west travel within Central York County.

The Cumberland County study will encompass a slightly smaller area, covering the area from Portland/Falmouth to the north, South Portland/Route 1 to the east, Standish/Buxton to the west, and Scarborough to the south. Much of this study will build off of the recent 2003 Gorham Bypass Environmental Assessment (EA). Other relevant studies include:

- Destination Tomorrow – PACTS (2006)
- 1988 Westerly Connector Study
- 1993 Route 25 Corridor Study
- 1997 Gorham/Portland Corridor Alternatives Analysis
- 1999 Route 22/114 Location Study
- 2001 Maine Mall Area Transportation Plan
- 2002 22/114 Overlap Study
- 2001 and 2005 MTA South Portland – Gorham Toll Road Revenue Forecast Study
- 2007 Brookings Institutions Report – Charting Maine’s Future

The Cumberland County study, to be known as the Gorham East-West Corridor Study, will also build off of the 2007 joint council resolutions from Gorham, Scarborough, South Portland, and Westbrook. This joint resolution called for an immediate study of transportation improvements in the form of a “Westerly Access Road”.

Both Feasibility Studies will evaluate the existing, planned, and future needs for land use management strategies; existing transportation infrastructure and future transportation needs; and other existing and future modes of transportation, that includes, but are not limited to, vehicular, aviation, transit, rail, bicycle and pedestrian. The Feasibility Study shall assess the existing, planned and future needs of the public for east-west travel between the Maine Turnpike (Turnpike) and the Cumberland County communities to the west, consistent with Maine’s Integrated Transportation Decision-making (ITD) process.

Prior to undertaking the Studies, a Memorandum of Agreements (MOA) involving MaineDOT, MTA, the Communities and the Regional Planning Agencies will be executed to describe agreed upon roles and responsibilities including those of Steering Committee Members.

Schedule

It is anticipated that both the York and Cumberland County studies will follow relatively parallel schedules. Both are anticipated to begin in the fall of 2008 and continue for approximately 18 to 24 months.

The Maine Turnpike Authority will lead the Cumberland County study, in partnership with the MaineDOT.

The MaineDOT will lead the York County study, in partnership with the Maine Turnpike Authority.

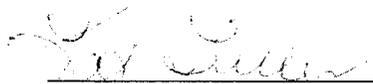
Anticipated Outcome

The product for both studies will be a detailed Feasibility Study Report. Feasibility studies, such as these, are the first step to any potential transportation study. The purpose of the feasibility studies are to clarify the needs and identify possible feasible alternatives to meeting the needs identified. The Studies will focus on both land use and transportation strategies and will evaluate both existing and future transportation needs and modes of transportation.

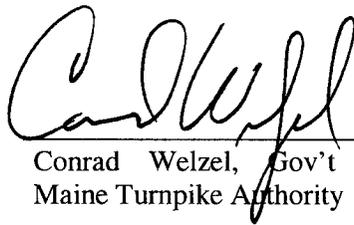
Recommended outcomes can range from or be a combination of:

- Do Nothing (No Build)
- Enhancement and preservation of existing infrastructure (*Transportation Demand Management (TDM) & Transportation Systems Management (TSM)*)
- New or expanded alternate modes
- Add capacity to existing infrastructure
- New capacities on new alignments
- Any of the recommended outcomes could be accompanied by appropriate land use management recommendations.

Based on the outcome of the Studies, a more detailed Alternatives Study may be undertaken in accordance with Maine's Sensible Transportation Policy Act (STPA), The USACOE Permitting process, and the federal National Environmental Policy Act.



Kat Fuller, Chief Planner
Bureau of Transportation Systems Planning



Conrad Welzel, Gov't Relations Manager
Maine Turnpike Authority