Gorham Connector White Paper

Responsible Alternatives to the Proposed Gorham “Connector”

A report by Mainers for Smarter Transportation (M4ST), September 5, 2024

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Executive Summary

We at Mainers for Smarter Transportation (M4ST) call the proposed expansion of the Maine Turnpike the "Gorham *Divider*". Because that's what controlled-access highways do. They divide the communities they cut through. They separate people from their destinations behind a wall of concrete and speeding steel. They are not a place for pedestrians, cyclists, children, flora, wildlife, or relationships between any of them.

Interstate highways that speed up long journeys across our country are a necessary part of our transportation ecosystem, and the Maine Turnpike, a state-sanctioned, tax-exempt, toll-funded monopoly, is such a highway. But suburban highways aiming to bring commuters to downtowns have failed to deliver the benefits they claim. Studies consistently show that adding lanes creates more sprawl, and induces more frequent trips, creating more congestion.[1] All over the country, people are rethinking the policies of the 1950s and 60s which paved farms, replaced forests with single family homes, tore down historic walkable neighborhoods, and gave us strip malls. In places like Rochester, New York, urban highways are getting pulled down[2] to reconnect neighborhoods and create space for housing and parks. In Denver, officials have canceled widening to their largest interstate because highway expansion does not meet their climate goals.[3] Here in Maine, Portland is moving forward with a plan to rebuild Franklin Street[4] as part of the fabric of downtown, abandoning the near-highway scale stroad[5] that replaced a working class neighborhood.[6]

In this context, the Maine Turnpike Authority and its highway design consultants HNTB are proposing a new $50 million-per-mile turnpike as a solution to rush hour delays in towns and suburbs west of Portland. MTA justifies the project by saying it was requested by local municipalities - but local resident support for the project is weak and eroding now that there is a proposed route. The turnpike would scar the beloved Smiling Hill Farm and the unique habitat of Red Brook. It would add to greenhouse gas emissions, encourage sprawl, and reduce safety. It's also not clear who would pay the tolls.

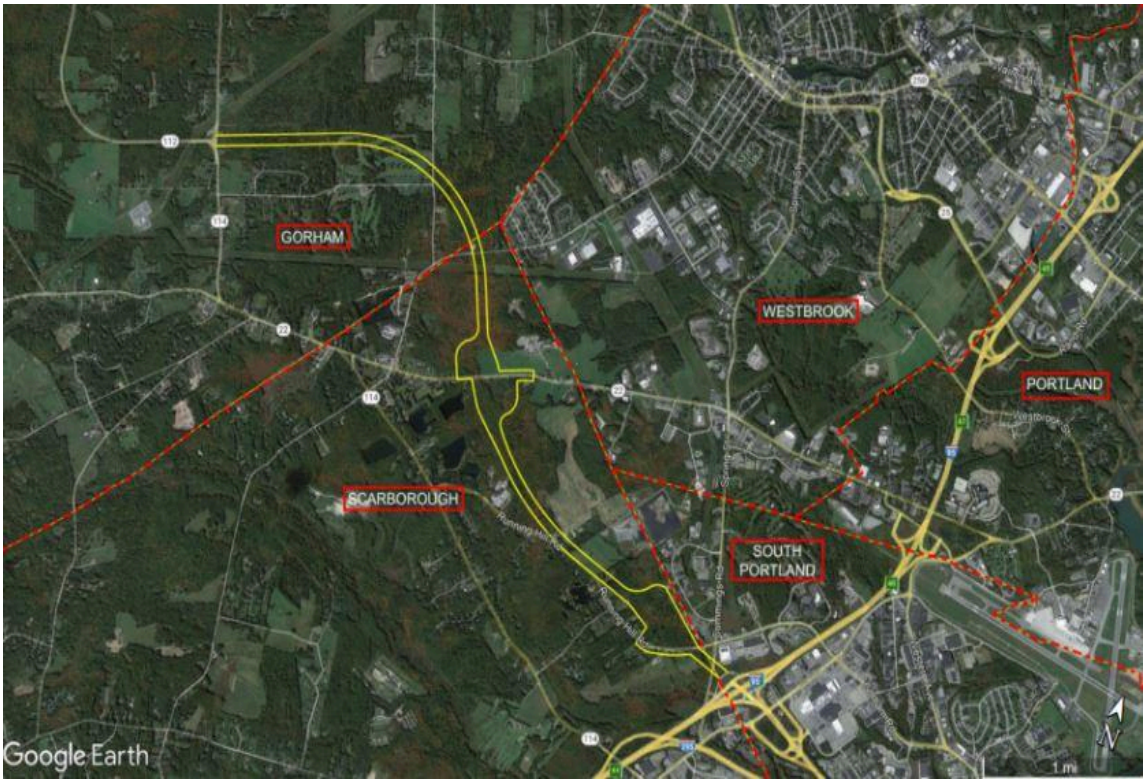
At best, MTA estimates that a new turnpike would save commuters an average of 4 minutes per rush hour commute. That's a ton of money - our money - to spend on something that may not even work. And here's the worst part: we have not even tried the numerous, more cost-effective, and less destructive solutions that currently exist to address the issue.

The MTA's study says even if they do build a turnpike expansion, it still won't fix local congestion in South Gorham and North Scarborough without the big changes to land use planning, public and active transportation that studies done by PACTS and GPCOG say are the solution - combined with far more cost-effective existing road improvements. But few of the planned solutions to congestion have been implemented.

This paper gives a timeline of the history of how we got here, and enumerates the many alternatives to building a new highway. Some alternatives we like better than others - but each alternative to building a new turnpike would spare Smiling Hill Farm and Red Brook, and be quicker, less expensive, less damaging to the local environment and climate, and could be changed, removed, or improved if needed.

In the long run, we need more housing close to jobs, services and activities and better regional coordination if we are to reduce the need for long, slow commutes from rural areas to our urban core. This is the heart of the problem, and expanding highways to encourage more sprawl and more driving will only make it worse.
Maine is finally starting to turn the corner in developing smarter transportation options, but the MTA sees their new turnpike as the only solution. Let's not take a huge step back with an expensive, destructive, irreversible boondoggle, when so many other options are available.

95 Exit 45 interchange



Maine Turnpike Authority's proposed route for highway expansion

About Mainers for Smarter Transportation (M4ST)

Mainers for Smarter Transportation (M4ST) is a coalition of individuals and groups formed to advocate for an alternative to highway expansions in Greater Portland. We are a volunteer-led, grassroots coalition with support from partner organizations across Maine. At time of publication, over 12,000 Mainers have signed our petition calling for a halt to planning the Gorham Divider. Our growing coalition so far includes the following groups:

SIERRA CLUB MAINE CHAPTER

Smiling Hill Farm

TROUT UNLIMITED

GrowSmart Maine

BICYCLE COALITION OF MAINE

Maine Fly Guys

VISION ZERO MAINE

MOVINGMAINE NETWORK
Improving transportation access for all

PCAT

BUILD MAINE

portlandbikeped
PORTLAND BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Westbrook WSMAC Safe Mobility & Access Committee

This report was compiled by volunteers and reviewed by professional planners and engineers.

For more information, or to volunteer or donate, find us at www.m4st.org and, if you can, you can donate here. For press inquiries, contact us at mainers4smartertransportation@gmail.com.

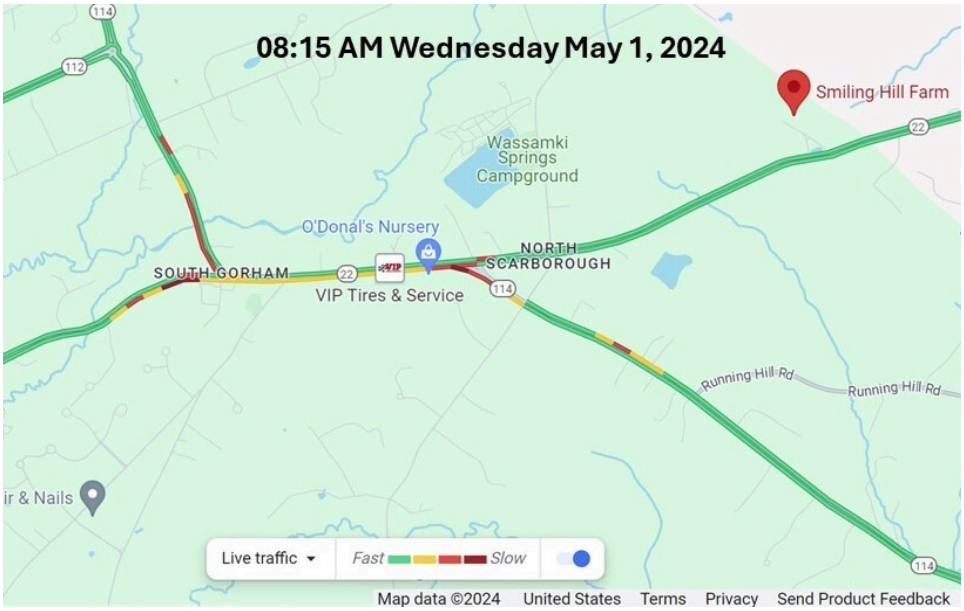
I. The Problem

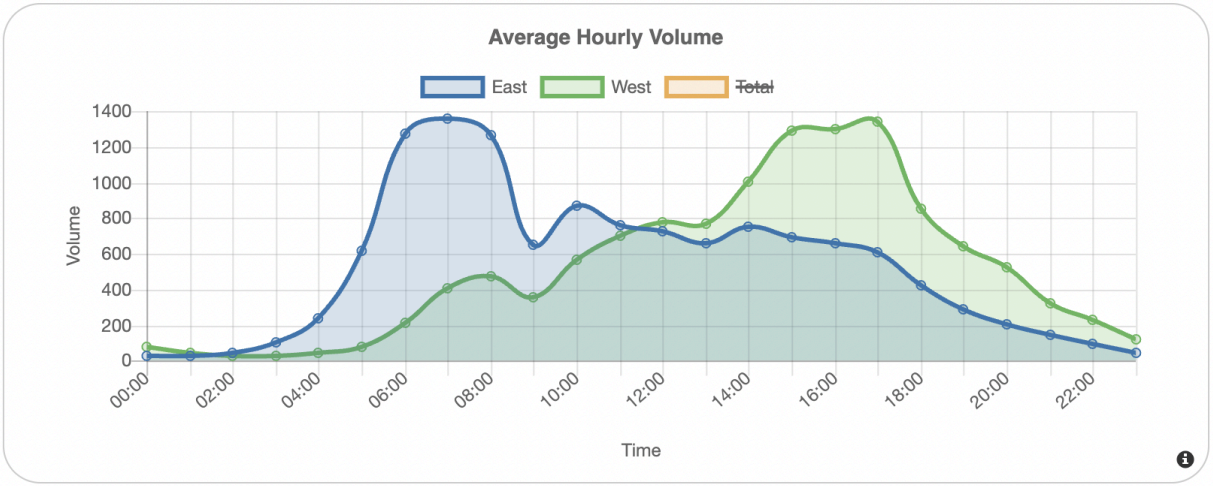
Localized traffic congestion often occurs on weekdays from 7-8:30am and 4-5:30pm in the South Gorham / North Scarborough area, specifically around a ⅞ mile section where Routes 114 and 22 overlap. During these rush hours, this area can see delays from commuters lined up at traffic lights at both ends of the overlap.

Because there are few bike shoulders, sidewalks, crosswalks, trails, or public transportation services here, there is no other way to get through or around the area except to drive.

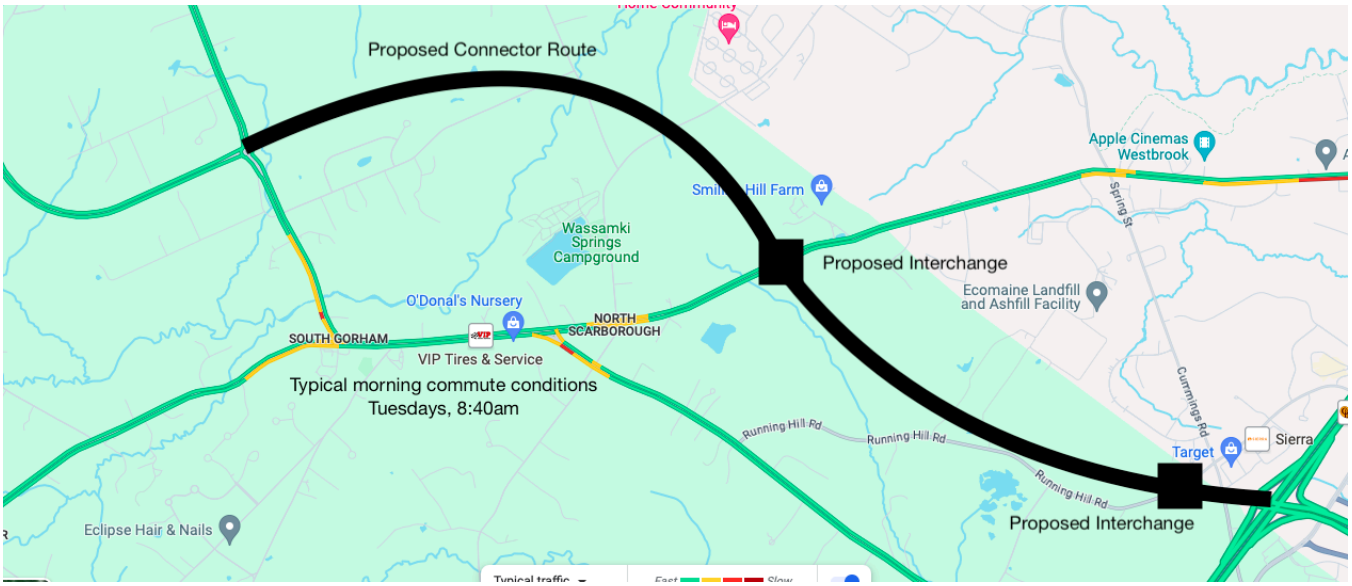
The intersections along the 114 and 22 overlap have outdated designs and the traffic lights are antiquated. Modern traffic lights have technology to sense and address changes in demand, or simple programming to change timings throughout the day, but these older lights have none of these features.

The map below shows typical morning rush hour commute delays at intersections at both ends of the overlap. Note the lack of traffic delays at the roundabout where the Gorham Bypass (Route 112) intersects with South Street (Route 114), as the roundabout performs much better at managing traffic flow than the outdated traffic lights on 114 and 22.[7]

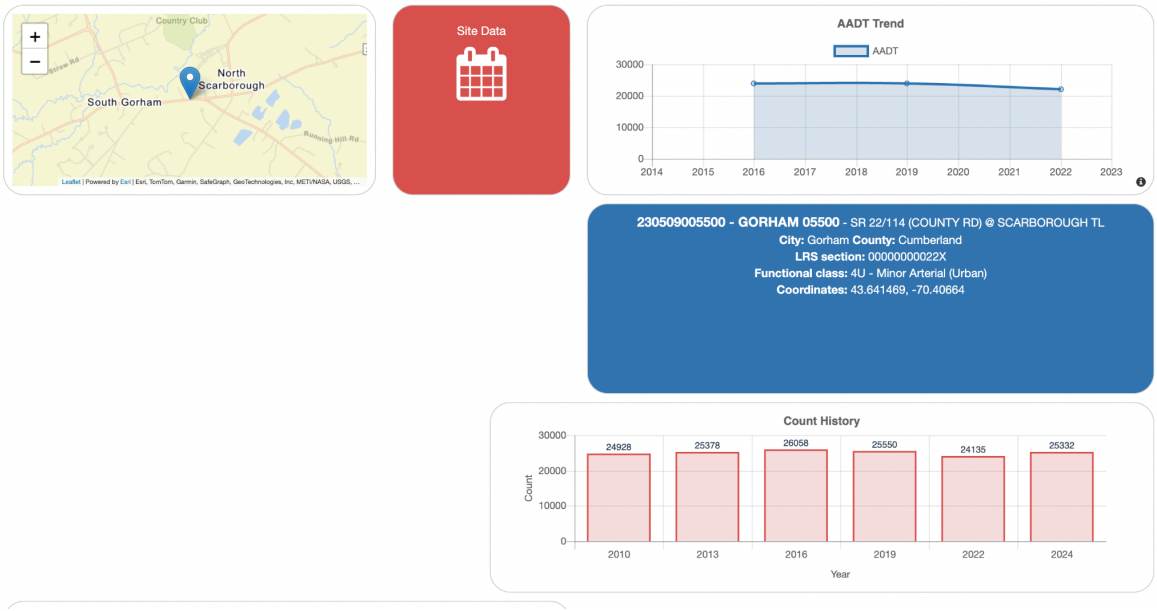




Here's another map with a slightly wider view of the region from Friday March 10, at 8:15am. Again, there is minimal congestion even though it is rush hour. This map shows the MTA's proposed solution, a 5-mile, 4-lane divided highway, with two interchanges about a mile apart, at Running Hill Road and County Road (Route 22).



While we understand traffic delays are an annoyance and inconvenience, it is important to put our traffic congestion in a broader perspective. According to a widely-followed traffic research group, Greater Portland has some of the mildest traffic delays in the world.[8] On a list of 1,000 global cities across 50 countries, Greater Portland's traffic was ranked 876th. In the United States, Portland ranked 224th in traffic congestion, despite being the 106th largest metro region in the country. The report estimates that current congestion costs drivers an average of $101 per year in lost time and fuel. For comparison, future users of the proposed highway would pay $440-$1,800 per year in tolls alone.[9]



Maine DOT traffic data [10]

II. The MTA's Claims about its "Solution"

The MTA makes a number of claims about the current conditions in the area and how its proposed solution will address them, which we at M4ST find to be unsubstantiated, and in some cases contradictory.

The following claims are derived from MTA/HNTB reports, statements to the press, and the public presentation of the proposed turnpike expansion at the March 25, 2024 public input session. All of these claims are poorly supported by the evidence, based on biased or outdated information, or simply false based on decades of evidence from independent researchers. They are also contradictory, for example, IF #4 (The benefits to users are so small that it won't promote sprawl development) is true, THEN demand for a toll highway must be low, which means #3 (Highway will pay for itself) will be false.[11]

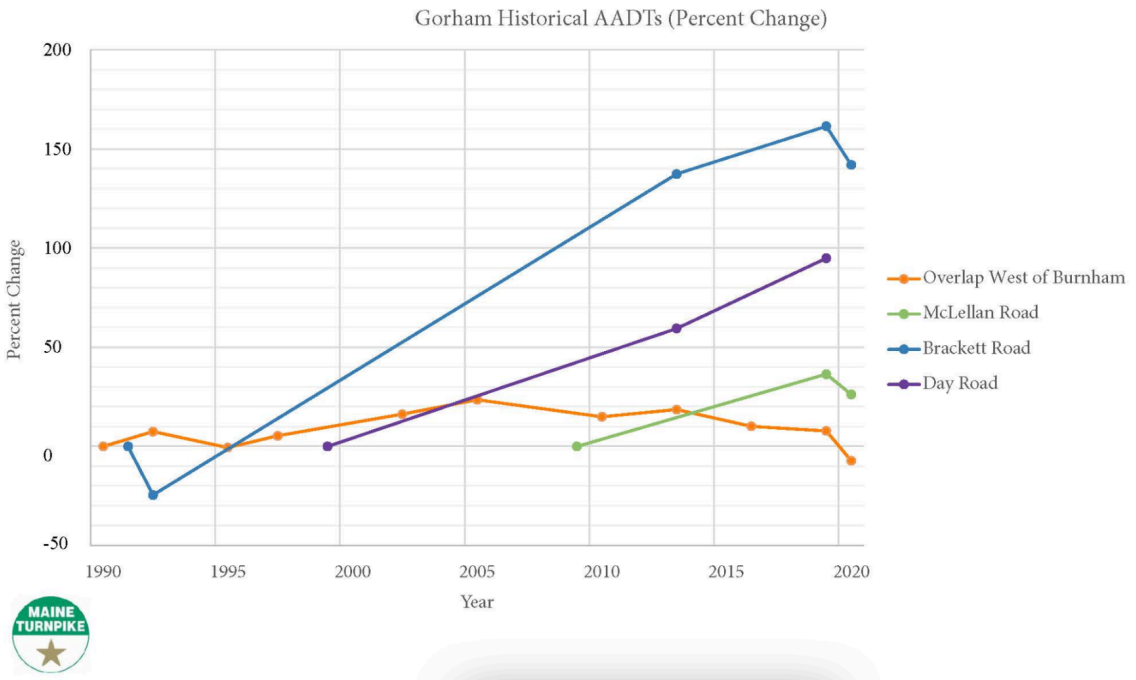
MTA Claim#1: A highway is necessary as no other alternative, or combination thereof, would be sufficient to address the growing local congestion and safety issues.

Reality: More cost-effective and less destructive existing roadway improvements would also reduce congestion., and traffic delays in the area have actually decreased 13% on average since the late 90s and early 00s.

All of the studies and data that MTA has released about conditions in the area are from before the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet MDOT's public traffic data shows that rush hour delays on Routes 22 and 114 have in fact decreased since 2019, as people have changed their commute times and patterns.[12]

A misleading graph on the MTA website appears to show skyrocketing traffic in the area - but it compares apples to oranges by using percentages for each road's traffic change instead of actual vehicle counts. The same data using actual vehicle counts shows that the percentage growth is largest among the roads with the fewest cars, and the drop in 2020 for two of the roads means *the overall vehicle count actually decreased by 5,815 vehicles/day* between 2013 and 2020.[13]

Diversions with increasing volumes on local roads



None of this is to say there is no congestion on these roads - there clearly are delays during rush hour on most days. But the MTA/HNTB claims on the matter appear prejudicial, and call into question their other claims on the subject.

According to a December 2022 PACTS report, "traffic [in the region] rebounded in 2021 but not to pre-pandemic levels".[14] Traffic data from traffic research firm INRIX reports that delays at signals in the overlap area in 2022 ranged from 20 to 47 seconds at the eastern intersection of the 114/22 overlap.[15] This data point better illustrates the average delay.

Traffic patterns have changed in Greater Portland and all over the country as thousands of commuters have shifted to partial or fully remote work. This means that not only have overall traffic levels dropped, those fewer trips have also spread out more over the course of the day, leading to even less delays during rush hours. We would like to see an independent analysis of the peak rush hour delays in this area, as HNTB's analyses may be biased- HNTB is MTA's in-house design and engineering consulting firm, and would have a lot more of both work to do should the project go forward.

Crucially, despite our requests, MTA has not released its "Updated Feasibility Study" from 2023, which it claims justified the project despite changes in traffic patterns with the shift to remote work. The report is cited on their website, but not released in full. And, as noted above, no alternatives have been implemented or studied to address the issues.

The Gorham Connector is seeking public approval based on faulty, outdated, or misleading information.

MTA Claim #2: The highway will increase safety, because delays at intersections which are currently poorly-managed create a high accident area, while a highway with higher, but predictable speeds is less likely to cause collisions.

Reality: Higher speed crashes are more deadly, and the Gorham "Connector" would decrease safety for commuters

MTA claims that their highways are safe because vehicles are traveling unencumbered by traffic. MTA justifies its approach by claiming the local roads around the Overlap are a 'high crash area'. Our research has found no serious injuries or deaths resulting from accidents in the overlap, and none in the area that have been attributable to high congestion.[16] The research is clear that increasing vehicle speeds leads to more injuries in deaths from vehicle collisions; one study found that for every 5 mph increase in a highway's speed limit, roadway fatalities rose 8.5 percent.[17]

Slow moving traffic, while an annoyance for some drivers, is safely moving traffic. This is true for drivers, passengers, and pedestrians. Low-speed fender benders do occur in areas with poorly-managed intersections, particularly multi-lane intersections with outdated traffic management like those in this area. But these accidents are less likely to lead to injuries or deaths.

Ultimately, encouraging more driving decreases road safety, as the driving itself is inherently risky. And increasing the traffic on arterial roads tends to increase the risks to those same drivers who are trying to get to and from the highway.[18] All of this means that the drivers using new highways tend to be less safe overall, as a result of their increased speed, the increased cars around them, and the additional driving they will do to use a new highway.

MTA Claim #3: The highway will pay for itself, and only those who use it will pay for it, because the vast majority of cars using local roads will opt to take the new toll highway

Reality: To pay for itself, the highway would need tolls as high as $4 per vehicle. Research studies and evidence in other parts of the state shows that people will drive longer to avoid paying even low tolls.

MTA claims three contradictory things in its campaign to garner support for its highway solution. First, that the highway will not increase sprawl, because the benefits are so slight that people would not change their behavior as a result. Second, that the cost of the highway will be covered by only the people who use it. Third, almost every one of the 20,000 vehicles that pass through the overlap per day will use the highway instead. These claims don't add up.

Will the vast majority of road users shift to paying to use a highway instead? No. A significant number will use the local roads to avoid paying the tolls - and the toll rate will be a big factor in how many drivers choose to use it.

Tolls can't be cheap if they're going to cover the full cost of the $250+ million construction, plus maintenance and interest.[19] MTA told us at the Gorham public comment event on March 25, 2024, that they didn't know exactly what the toll would be, but that it would likely be based on the distance that users travel, and similar to other short highway connectors like the Falmouth Spur ($1 for passenger cars and light trucks). At $1 per car, for 20,000 cars per day, the revenue would only cover about half of the monthly debt service on the bond. So, the toll will need to be something more like $2-4 per car if it is to pay for itself.[20]

MTA's own 'sprawl study' asserted that the highway will only save commuters an average of 2-5 minutes per commute (generously, let's call it 4 minutes). How many drivers are willing to pay $8 per day to save 4 minutes each way in commute time? Certainly not most, as evidenced by the number of drivers who use I-295 through downtown Portland rather than the uncongested but tolled Falmouth Spur that the MTA advertises as a faster route. About 30% of the traffic on Route 1 in Scarborough are drivers coming from Biddeford/Saco headed towards the Maine Mall that could save 5+ minutes if they were to take the turnpike instead.[21]

One study found "a significant negative bias against paying a toll, regardless of the toll amount." This was true regardless of the purpose of the driver in making the trip, and was "generally equivalent to 15-20 minutes of travel time."[22]

So, if the toll is set at the actual cost to build and operate, it will not attract many vehicles. We suspect that all Mainers who use the larger Turnpike will actually be subsidizing the cost to build and maintain this new expansion.

We may be off in our estimates and assumptions - they are just estimates and assumptions. But, according to the MTA's 2019 Traffic and Revenue Study, they claim that tolls will support the finances of this project. Given that this study was conducted by HNTB, which has a conflict of interest given that it will have further contracts if the project goes forward, and that it's unclear how it reflects post-pandemic driving behaviors, we are deeply skeptical that it would withstand independent scrutiny.

MTA Claim #4: The highway will not promote sprawl development. Because the benefits to commuters are so slight (2-5 minutes saved per average rush hour commute), there will be no increase in demand from commuters to live in the communities served by the highway or points west. In fact, the highway will induce no additional driving or traffic at all, because it merely moves current users from local streets to a toll highway.[23]

Reality: Towns west of Gorham will be far more attractive to build housing if highway expansion actually reduces commute times.

This claim cannot be true if the Connector would actually save commuters real time. A landmark report by the Brookings Institution coined the term 'exurbs' in 2005, describing them as low-density towns with fast population growth and 20% or more residents commuting to the urban core. Many of these new residents are middle-income commuters who must 'drive to qualify' for mortgages on less expensive homes further from the commuter destination city.[24] Making these towns more accessible to Portland increases their desirability for commuters, and invites development. Towns like Buxton (4.3%), Standish (3.7%), Hollis (10.8%), and Limerick (10.2%) have been growing quickly in the last decade. These towns are far from jobs and public transportation, and building a highway to them will create more incentives for development in these areas, and more demand for driving.

We need more affordable housing in our region, though we need it closer to jobs and activities, where it's less destructive to the environment and climate, and more affordable for our communities to absorb.[25] Portland in particular has been underperforming on new housing development,[26] and growth there would reduce the price pressures that shift demand away from urban centers and towards suburbs and exurbs.[27]

MTA argues that the highway is necessary to prepare for population growth in this area, though its solution, history shows, creates the incentives for the growth itself - build it, and they will come. Plus, the highway it has proposed doesn't actually reach those towns. We wonder, if this highway expansion were successful, how long it would be before the MTA begins planning further expansion to the west, widening and tolling the Gorham Bypass and extending to Standish and beyond, and bringing more destructive sprawl development pressure to these exurbs.

MTA Claim #5: The highway will have a positive impact on climate emissions. MTA claims that while a new highway will increase vehicle miles traveled (as it attracts drivers from local streets to a circuitous bypass highway route), it will reduce their vehicle hours traveled (by saving 2-5 minutes per commute). Further, they claim that shifting cars from idling on congested streets to traveling at high speeds on a highway will reduce overall carbon emissions.

Reality: Highway expansion creates more emissions and pollution, a fact that is as intuitive as it is true.

This one is particularly hard to square with common sense. It appears that the MTA and its consultants at HNTB have taken one small variable in the overall proposal, argued that it might improve, and ignored the big picture.

First, their claim itself is suspect. We have not seen how their calculations factor in the transition to low- and zero-emission vehicles, which is itself a goal of the Maine Won't Wait climate action plan. A low- or zero-emission vehicle emits little or no carbon while idling. Reporters from Energy Network News found a lot of holes in the MTA's claims.[28]

More importantly, the claim omits the obvious and massive cost of a huge construction project, and all the bulldozers, pavers, and millions of tons of concrete and pavement that would need to be manufactured, moved, and installed. It omits the long-term replacement of climate-repairing forests, streams, and fields with concrete. It ignores tire particulate runoff, which increases as speeds increase, which some scientists believe creates more pollution than tailpipe emissions. And it ignores the overall effect of the project, which is to encourage more high-speed driving from further away, increasing vehicle miles traveled and carbon emissions. Finally, highway-style development patterns incentivize low-rise, parking-focused developments around their interchanges, which create further emissions.

Summary of Claims and Realities

Mainers for Smarter Transportation completed this report with volunteer time and contributions from professionals in transportation and urban planning. Our resources are limited, but we believe our analysis is sound.

MTA and HNTB have circulated misleading information about traffic counts in the area and a bizarre assertion that highway expansion is good for the climate.

Also - some of these claims are contradictory. It cannot be true that the highway is the only option that reduces traffic, yet also incentivizes little to no growth because it only saves commuters an average of 4 minutes per trip, and also is in such high demand that it pays for itself at this exorbitant price tag.

We suspect that MTA's many competing and contradictory claims cannot all be true, and we request that the studies that underpin these claims be released for independent review.

III. Responsible Alternatives: Expert & Community-Informed Solutions

Building a new turnpike highway to resolve the limited rush hour traffic delay described above would be an exorbitantly expensive, time-consuming, climate-damaging, ecology-spoiling, community-disrupting option with little practical gain. We will all pay the price for this mistake for decades. We owe it to ourselves to study, pilot, and scale solutions that move us in the right direction without these huge risks to our communities.

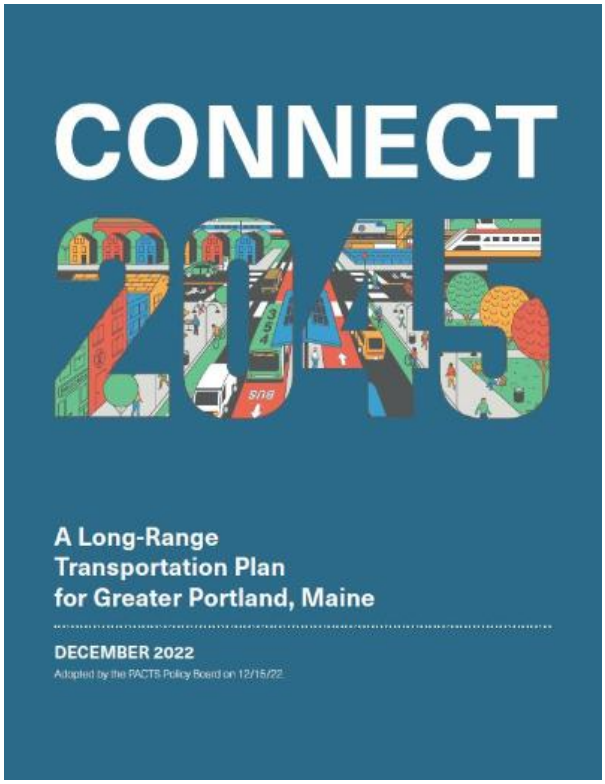
We deserve a people-centered design process based on a vision for what we want for our future with contributions from many perspectives and experts. There have been plenty of studies by qualified transportation professionals looking at the big picture of what we want our region to be. But our strange bureaucratic inertia hasn't implemented them. The Maine Turnpike has a monopolistic revenue stream, so it can build highways that don't appear in regional plans or on local or state balance sheets. Of course, we all pay for them, with higher tolls, pollution, increased feeder road maintenance, infrastructure to support sprawl, needing to drive farther to find quiet, increasing school budgets, and reduced municipal revenues, as MTA is exempt from paying property taxes.[29]

Regional transportation and land use planning alternatives
Remember that 2012 East-West Corridor Study? Well, it recommended serious investments in public transportation and land use reforms that concentrate development around transit infrastructure. Our region has not yet made those investments.

Greater Portland has a regional council of governments, GPCOG, which is dedicated to regional planning and transportation management. It includes all of the host communities for the highway, as well as those communities that would be feeders and destinations for the highway's users. We also have a regional transportation authority, PACTS, which itself has a process for addressing local congestion issues. Both entities have processes for gathering local input into solutions design. In December 2019, PACTS developed an inclusive planning toolkit that it uses to get public input into transportation planning.[30] MTA is not following this model for inclusive planning in any way. Its process thus far has been administrative and bureaucratic, circumventing the people who would be most impacted by the project.

In reviewing the documents that MTA and HNTB have released to the public, it appears the Gorham highway proposal was developed in a silo, walled off from any other collaborative solutions-oriented processes in the region. While GPCOG and PACTS were looking holistically at our region's transportation challenges and inviting public input, MTA and HNTB were promoting a highway expansion that would compete with or undermine other initiatives, including bus rapid transit in Gorham and efforts to reduce the size of urban roads in Portland. The Gorham Connector ignores the will of the Portland City Council, which voted unanimously against the project, as it would bring more traffic, parking demand, and pedestrian risks to city streets.

We already have a regional transportation vision, which preserves rural life, supports location-appropriate development, and creates options for commuters that would remove cars from the roads. This vision does not look like a highway expansion.



Vision #1: Connect 2045

In December 2022, the regional transportation authority PACTS adopted Connect 2045,[31] a long range transportation plan for the region. Notably, Connect 2045 did not envision highway expansion as a preferred solution for our region's future, as neither residents nor planning experts thought it was a good idea. MTA was among many organizations that contributed to Connect 2045, along with a host of organizations dedicated to transportation equity and choice.[32]

Vision #2: Federally-Mandated Congestion Management Process (CMP)

The federally-mandated mechanism to identify and propose solutions to local congestion issues is the Congestion Management Process,[33] led by the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS), which is under the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG). All the impacted communities of the Gorham Connector are dues-paying members of both of these organizations.

The draft CMP plan was not approved for 2017, and the 2023 Plan has been delayed until late 2024 while a new process and objectives were put in place.[34] These new objectives are based on the Connect 2045 vision, and are consistent with the types of highway expansion alternatives we advocate for here. The objectives focus on equity, placemaking, reduced traffic fatalities, transit frequency, active transportation investments, signal optimization, and reducing delays through intersections. These objectives are completely incongruent with a new highway. We look forward to the recommendations of the 2024 report, when it is released.

In the meantime, the draft 2017 Congestion Management Plan[35] looked at the issues with rush hour backups at Routes 114 and 22 and provided multiple alternatives to the proposed highway.

These included:

- Prioritize multimodal investment in priority centers within the corridor or centers served by the corridor
- Improve crash response time and devise a incident management plan through alternative routes
- Optimize traffic signal coordination
- Expand frequency and coverage of transit services
- Develop responsive strategies for high crash locations
- Improve wayfinding in and around commercial centers

PACTS's Destination 2040 report, the region's long term public transportation plan, calls for a study of the Routes 22 and 114 overlap area, specifically looking at these same solutions.[36]

None of the alternatives have been implemented, let alone studied by MTA since the draft 2017 CMP report was issued. Congestion issues in this area should be revisited by PACTS, using a process that considers all options to reduce congestion and achieve our goals for smart growth, fighting sprawl, mitigating climate change, and preserving local farms and ecosystems.

MTA's highway design consultants only looked at one non-highway alternative. Only one alternative was given a cursory consideration by HNTB, the MTA's advisory consultants for the highway expansion

proposal, which, unsurprisingly, rejected it. HNTB made the inexplicable choice of comparing the MTA's four-lane highway solution to widening Route 114 to a four-lane road from Gorham Bypass roundabout through the Overlap and all the way to 95. This alternative MTA is not legally able to build, maintain or finance. HNTB used the excessively wide standard of 76' wide roadway and 100 foot ROW - Congress street in Portland has 4 lanes plus sidewalks in a 65' Right of Way - making the new roadbed so wide it would require bulldozing many homes and businesses along the route. This plan was a straw man, and an obvious non-starter for residents. This plan was doomed to failure, as it would obviously generate intense resident opposition.

M4ST believes that we owe it to ourselves - to our communities, our environment, the property owners whose homes and farms are facing the bulldozers - to implement some or all of these lower-cost, lower-impact alternatives before considering a costly and irreversible highway expansion.

Crowdsourced solutions from the community

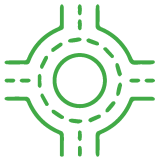
The best transportation planning listens to the lived experience and behaviors of the people directly impacted. M4ST volunteers and supporters gathered a host of solutions to address congestion in the immediate area, as well as regional solutions that would reduce delays along the commuter routes. See this Map of Alternatives for reference, which indicates road improvements in red, rush hour strategies in yellow, active transportation opportunities in green, and public transit alternatives in purple.

Note from the authors
M4ST does not specifically endorse any of the alternatives noted below. While many of them make intuitive sense, or at least more sense than a quarter-billion dollar highway expansion, some may not work to reduce local congestion for one reason or another. Some have received little study. Some have been studied in a limited fashion by the Maine Turnpike Authority and its consultants at HNTB, which are not neutral parties invested in non-highway alternatives.

A. Roadway improvements
Much of the issue concerns a short section of Routes 114 and 22 which are joined for less than a mile through South Gorham and North Scarborough, dubbed the "Overlap." There are myriad opportunities to mitigate delays at these intersections.

Notably, the Investing in Infrastructure and Jobs Act of 2021, passed by Congress and currently funding massive investments in transportation infrastructure throughout the country, specifically directs funds to mitigate congestion *within the existing rights of way* before building new lanes for single use vehicle traffic. To our knowledge, neither MeDOT, nor MTA, nor local transportation authorities have sought funding through the IIJA for such purposes. We should capitalize on this opportunity to secure federal funding to make these hyper local improvements.

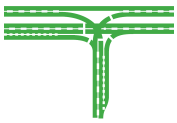
It is also important to note that the Maine Turnpike Authority has said it has studied some of these alternatives. However, as they have no mandate to invest in or operate existing local roads, they have no incentive, expertise to study them. The MTA specifically asked the Army Corps of Engineers to skip the legal requirement to examine these alternatives, but were denied that request. The highway-building MTA is in no place to weigh non-highway transportation systems.



1. Replace traffic lights with roundabouts at Rt. 22 / Rt. 114 Overlap Replacing these intersections with roundabouts would allow for a smoother flow of traffic, reducing backups during commuter hours. A study in New Hampshire showed that installing roundabouts reduced traffic congestion by 58-84% and average intersection delays during peak hours by 83-93%.[37] Roundabouts also increase safety by reducing road movement conflicts, where improving safety was a major rationale for making changes to the area road

network. One local success story is the roundabout at Brighton and Deering Avenues in Portland, which had a particularly high accident rate and massive rush hour delays as a signaled intersection.[38]

2. Upgrade antiquated traffic lights to smart signals. Installing stoplights with the capacity to respond to changing traffic patterns would move traffic through this area more efficiently, minimizing backups and delays. The existing stoplights are currently timed so that often Rt 114 traffic backs up while Rt 22 has extra capacity. Coordinating the traffic signals along this overlap area would additionally allow the traffic signals to operate as a group, so that the traffic flow would be better synchronized to allow more traffic to flow through the entire stretch without stopping.[39] Streetlight Data, a firm promoting big data-based solutions to traffic congestion, points out all the ways using data to reduce traffic delays is far cheaper and more sustainable than adding lanes. Newly placed smart signals along Route 1 in Scarborough (Dunstan) have already shown improved efficiencies of around 25%.[40] Scarborough recently announced it would improve signals in two intersections in the east end of the corridor,[41] a step that we welcome and urge should be expanded upon.



3. Utilize Continuous Green Tee Intersections: Traffic at the head of the T could have a separate lane to continue straight while right and left turning traffic have lanes to merge with continuing traffic. With this setup, the Rt 22 morning traffic headed east wouldn't have to stop at the intersection at Cumberland Farms and the Rt 22 evening traffic headed west wouldn't have to stop at the intersection at O'Donal's.[42]

4. Create Reversible Commuter Lane Along Rt 22 / Rt 114 Overlap: Add a single extra "commuter" lane in the middle of the road along the Rt 22 / Rt 114 overlap, which would flow east during the morning commute and west during the evening commute and also serve as a turning lane. A single extra lane (10-12 feet extra for a total road width of 48 feet assuming 6 foot shoulders for bike lanes) would very easily fit in the existing ROW (65 feet). This 7/8 mile overlap is the source of congestion in South Gorham/North Scarborough that the turnpike proposal is attempting to solve. This extra lane could also later on be used for rapid transit.

5. Add an Interchange Connecting Rt 114 Directly to I-95/295: Traffic sometimes backs up on 114 and Payne Rd by Sam's Club because there's no direct access from 114 to 95/295. By constructing a new interchange that connects to 114 directly, traffic in this area would not need to sit through multiple intersections on Payne Rd while moving between 95/295 and 114. This interchange has previously been designed and was a primary recommendation in the original 2012 study.

6. Improve shoulders on Rt 22, Rt 114, Running Hill, and other local roads: Building better shoulders on Rt 22, Rt 114, and other local roads would finally allow area residents and commuters the ability to safely travel around the area by bike and on foot, which has the potential to remove many more cars from the road. Most of these roads do not have any shoulders right now which make them unsafe and impractical for bike and pedestrian use. Many people who currently drive a car for a quarter mile to get to a bank, store, coffee shop, or neighbor's home, could choose to walk if it were pleasant and safe.

7. Consider a more modest four-lane widening along 7/8 mile of Rt 22 / Rt 114 Overlap: Even putting in four lanes along the overlap could fit within the existing ROW of 65 feet with no need for eminent domain. The width of Congress St in Portland where it has four lanes is 55 feet (including shoulders). Even with adding in extra shoulder room / drainage, a four-lane road can still fit within the 65 foot ROW, especially if lane width is

reduced to 10 feet instead of 12, or drain pipes are used along roadside instead of a wider ditch. During road widening, power lines could be buried along roadside instead of on poles overhead, which would be a welcome upgrade for abutting residents/businesses and offset any loss of yard. This would still be the most dramatic solution to the current issues, and would not be endorsed by all of our members. However, we agree it would be far less costly and damaging than a divided highway through undeveloped land.

B. Reducing peak road use demands in the area

Anecdotal evidence suggests that peak rush hour delays have declined since the pandemic. Yet, almost nothing has been done to support social changes that would reduce rush hour demands. Some ideas from our communities include:

1. Encourage school bus use over driving kids to/from school in private cars. The rise in parents transporting their kids to school in the two decades has led to more congestion, concentrating private vehicles along feeder roads to school, often during peak rush hour. School systems could limit parental drop-offs during peak commute hours to encourage bus use.

2. Adjust school start times so they don't coincide with peak traffic times. Shifting start times to outside the window could reduce road use by parents driving these roads, often on reverse-direction trips that generate twice the traffic per road user.

3. Create a peak hour toll on 114/22 overlap. Studies show that even small tolls have a huge impact on people's behaviors. Even a $1 toll administered via EZ-Pass only during rush hours would likely eliminate congestion during the toll period entirely, as many drivers could change their departure times or choose alternate routes, but are instead sitting in traffic that currently occurs at the overlap. While we acknowledge this policy would be unpopular, we include it here to illustrate the questionable assumptions of the necessity of the highway. It would be easy to exempt residents of the roads in question who have no other option. If, as we suspect, a small toll during peak demand hours would scatter vehicles to other times of the day, then we can comfortably conclude that a toll highway would have a similar effect on user behavior. This could be implemented for a fraction of the cost of the highway solution.

Gorham Road (Route 114) heading northwest at Saco Street and Beech Ridge Road in North Scarborough. Note the outdated traffic signals, abundant space for a roundabout, and lack of any other infrastructure. Image from Google Street View, July 2023, day and time unknown.

Intersection of South Street and County Road in South Gorham. Here, a slip lane was added to speed vehicles turning north from the overlap. Again, there is ample space for a roundabout, and the traffic signals in the area are outdated. Image from Google Street View, July 2023, day and time unknown.

C. Alternatives to create options for the wider region

Part of the cause of congestion in the area is backups in the downtowns and village centers. We believe, based on the research of countless urban planning experts over the last two decades, that highways induce demand for more driving in single occupancy vehicles. Vehicles traveling through downtowns should be moving slowly. This is what's safest for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as drivers trying to navigate and find destinations and parking, and what's most pleasant for customers patronizing downtown retail locations.

Slower moving traffic in town centers is also better for business, particularly locally-owned small businesses that are more likely to be in small, irregular downtown storefronts than those in more expensive, parking-intensive strip mall developments.

1. Allow more housing density in already walkable locations. Communities in the area can reduce traffic by allowing more housing, jobs and places to shop and eat in already walkable places. Currently, people have to drive both short and long distances for daily needs. Many of the commuters that drive these routes are there because they can't afford housing close to their workplaces and other destinations, particularly in Portland.[43] Because there isn't enough affordable housing in Portland and host communities, commuters wanting to buy or rent homes have to "drive until they qualify," moving farther from the places they visit and further increasing traffic.

2. Implement the proposed public transportation corridor between Gorham and Portland. The Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) has been planning a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor between Gorham and Portland for over a decade. Phase I made a recommendation to upgrade the current Husky Line service of Greater Portland Metro to a bus rapid transit service. A BRT service would be faster and more frequent than current buses, and designed to attract current and future commuters who would otherwise be driving. This BRT corridor could become particularly attractive to commuters if it were faster than driving by providing dedicated lanes, signal prioritization, station platforms with shelters and headway times, and other features that make service fast, frequent, and reliable. GPCOG handed over the project to Greater Portland Metro in 2023, and Phase II of the study is poised to be completed in 2024, and service beginning as soon as 2026. This is four years faster than the shortest possible highway timeline. Cost estimates would vary widely based on the amount of roadway realignments that were implemented, but would cost 50-90% less than a highway.[44]

3. Activate the Cross Town Trail corridor for active transportation. This off-street, multi-use trail connecting Westbrook and Gorham is incomplete and does not currently reach the center of

either town. This corridor could reduce the need for extra trips to Gorham's schools, and reduce vehicle use through the center of town. A new project is underway in partnership with MDOT, Gorham, and Westbrook to complete the necessary connections to both downtowns.

4. Activate the Mountain Division rail corridor for active transportation. A flat, paved, fast-moving, multi-use trail between Westbrook and Portland could attract users of congested streets, such as Route 25 in Westbrook. Many cars on local roads during rush hour are transporting children to schools, which could easily be done by bicycle. Westbrook has one of the youngest populations in the state, yet there are no continuous bike routes to Portland. Given that the average daily commute in Maine is 8 miles and the average daily errand is 3 miles, travel by bicycle is completely viable. With the advent of e-bikes that can go 20 mph, a flat and direct route from downtown Westbrook to Thompson's Point, the Fore River Trail, and Commercial Street, could attract many users who may otherwise use a car.

5. Activate the Mountain Division rail corridor for rapid transit service. With most mass transit policies trending toward electrification and rapid transit, this already-existing corridor could easily be retrofitted to accommodate the latest mass transit technology. A report by GPCOG, completed with support from MDOT, recommended bus rapid transit (BRT) for a corridor from Portland to Gorham. Some advocates are also calling for light rail on this corridor that would extend to Windham Center and Standish (see below). By running mass transit in its own, car-free, dedicated lanes would create a transit corridor that would not have to compete for corridor space with cars. In doing so, more people would be willing to adopt BRT as a legitimate form of transportation. This proposal could occur in concert with a "bus-with-trail" or "rail-with-trail" alignment. This would be the most expensive of the options, but would still cost a fraction of the Connector and yield the greatest public benefit. This option would meet the demands of transportation equity, quality of life, climate goals, public health, and reduced traffic conditions.

6. Enact rail service connecting Portland to Westbrook, Gorham, Windham and beyond. The Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) is studying the feasibility of reconnecting Portland with communities to the west via the Mountain Division Corridor, which would connect the regional Downeaster Amtrak service with Rock Row and Main Street in Westbrook. Attracting riders to this service would reduce vehicle demand along Route 25, which would relieve pressure to points further west. This proposal could occur in concert with a trail in the same corridor, which would be the more expensive, but still cost a fraction of the proposed highway. Both solutions would bring benefits to quality of life, climate, public health, and traffic conditions.[45]

7. Extend BREEZ-like Metrobus service to Buxton, Standish, and other areas further west of Portland. Connecting Portland, South Portland and other areas of employment concentration to the west would further reduce traffic and provide a means of transport to those who cannot or prefer not to drive for all trips. Recent municipal land use changes that encourage denser development make public transit more possible. For evidence that commuter bus routes to towns to the west of Portland can work, see the success of the Lake Region Explorer service along Route 302. Bus service to Buxton and Standish was one of the major recommendations from the 2012 study, but 12 years later, there is still no bus service to North Scarborough, South Gorham, Buxton, Standish, Hollis, Steep Falls, Bonny Eagle, or anywhere along the corridors to be directly served by the highway.

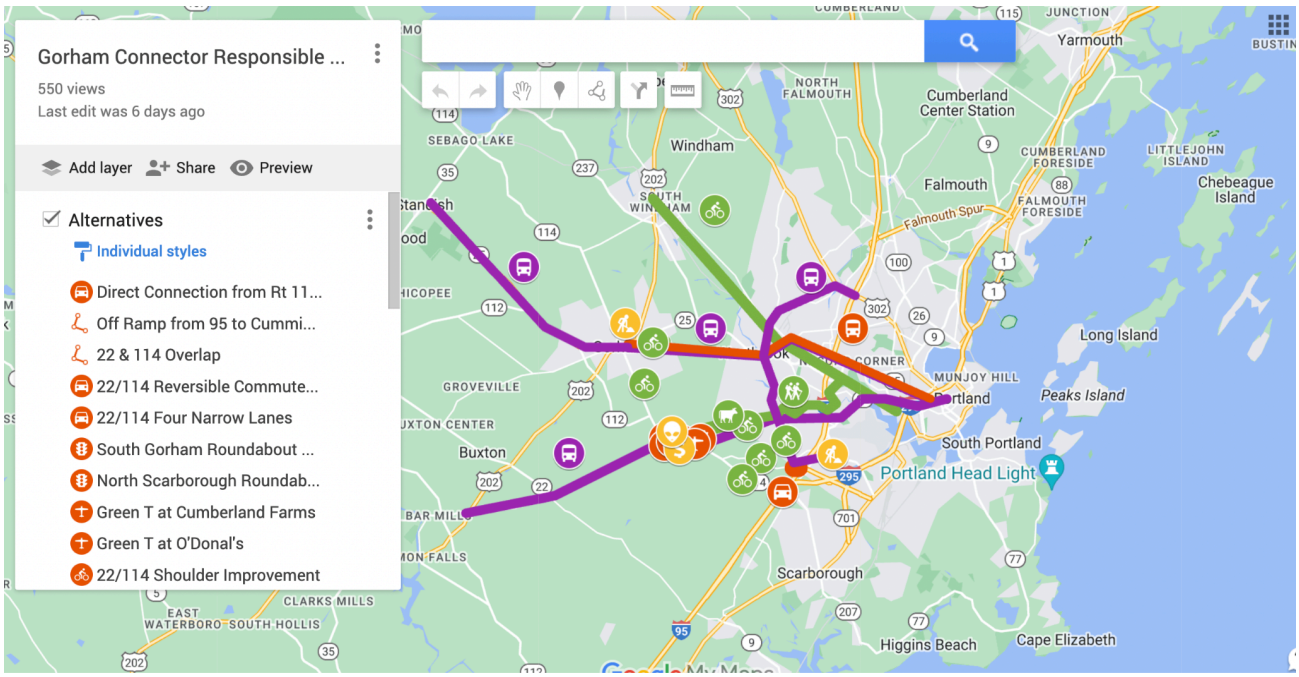
8. Create dedicated bike and bus lanes throughout the region to increase safety, reliability, equity and choice. The top reason cited by those who would walk or bike to their destination, but instead opt to drive, is that they do not feel safe. Aside from a few pilot projects, our region has done very little to make active transportation feel safe for those who would choose it. Routes 22

and 25 could have protected facility bike lanes by installing flex-post delineators every twenty-five feet throughout the corridor. According to the Federal Highway Administration, separated bicycle lanes can mitigate or prevent interactions, conflicts, and crashes between bicyclists and motor vehicles. In fact, converting traditional bike lanes to a separated lane with low-cost flexible delineators can reduce bicycle-vehicle crashes by up to 53 percent. The total cost of this project for the 9 miles of the route 25 corridor would be an estimated $250K. This is a minor fraction of the projected cost of the proposed connector that, unlike the regressive investment of a highway, would pay numerous dividends to the community in the form of positive and long-lasting economic, environmental, and health outcomes.

9. Encourage carpooling in the region. The draft 2017 Congestion Management Plan cited that park and ride use on the 114 and 22 corridors were extremely low and well below targets.[46] New incentives such as discounts for multiple-occupancy vehicles on Maine Turnpike and raising toll rates for single occupancy vehicles could encourage ride-sharing and reduce the amount of cars on the roads.

Even if existing drivers do not switch to active transportation or transit in large numbers, making responsible land use and transportation changes will allow new generations to have choices that will preserve our farms and town centers as our region grows.

We have gathered the above-described alternatives on a crowdsourced Google Map, available in interactive format here, and reproduced below.



Conclusion

We deserve better than this. We deserve a transparent, participatory process that uses quality data and puts all options on the table. Mainers for Smarter Transportation compiled this document to show all the many good alternatives to highway expansion in our region, most of which were developed and/or endorsed by professional planners and civil engineers.

So, where do we go from here? We see the following steps as critical to getting us to a better solution. In the short term, about the next 3 years, we should pick some of the low-hanging fruit suggested in this paper to address rush-hour backups at outdated intersections in South Gorham and North Scarborough. We welcome steps that the town of Scarborough is taking now, with impact fees from the Scarborough Downs development, to replace aging traffic lights at a couple of these intersections. The PACTS Congestion Management System will complete, and provide further recommendations and quality data for analysis. Further intersection improvements, limited roadway widening within the existing ROW, TDM strategies like shifting school start times and incentivizing school buses, and improved shoulders for non-vehicle use are also feasible, inexpensive improvements for this area in the short term.

In the medium term of 5-10 years, the same timeline for building and opening a new highway, the state and regional planning and transportation organizations can support many other investments in public transit, trails, and other policies to reduce driving dependency in this area. The GPCOG/METRO-backed bus rapid transit proposal from Gorham to Portland, if well-executed, could remove many cars from backed-up routes to the city. Many of the alternatives in the above section aimed for the wider region, extended bus service to the outer suburbs, rail service, trail connections, and land use planning reforms are feasible in this timeframe.

In the long term, we need to get to the root of the problem that led our state leaders to contemplate highway expansions in the first place. Greater Portland is a great place to live. Our quality of life and climate is attracting people from all over the country and world to move here. There's no way to reverse this trend or quell the demand without undermining why we all wanted to live here in the first place. But Greater Portland's greatest crisis is housing. We don't have enough of it, especially housing that's close to jobs, services, and activities. Until we fix this problem, the pressure for commuters to drive to suburban, exurban, and rural areas to afford housing will only grow. Portland is becoming a city of remote workers who reside in town, and service workers who drive in because they can not afford to live there. Many of the cars congesting the roads of South Gorham and North Scarborough do not want to be there - they would live closer to jobs in Portland if they could afford to. If these trends continue, officials will keep dusting off tired old solutions like highways to bring those commuters back to the cities. Proposals for highways along the 302 corridor towards Windham, or to Sanford, will follow not far behind. Soon, Maine won't look or feel like Maine anymore.

To achieve a better future, Greater Portland needs to add density in places where jobs and services already are. Portland has a lower population now than it did 80 years ago, despite the region growing rapidly and skyrocketing home values. There's much debate about whether policies to support affordability has helped or hurt the situation.[47] Portland's ReCode process envisions adding more housing, but it probably does not go far enough to meet demand and reduce the need for long commutes. Proposals for major housing developments like those in Bayside seem to always get scaled down, while ideas like downsizing Franklin Street to add more housing along its route take decades. South Portland is considering proposals to add lots more housing in places like Yard South and in the vacant parking lots around the Maine Mall. Westbrook, Scarborough, and Gorham should be applauded for adding significant new housing in recent years, though the places where that housing ends up, and the zoning for these new developments, often ends up resulting in a lot more driving too. Home rule traditions and weak county governments mean we have very little regional coordination among towns about where development should go, and how it will weave in better transportation. While the Greater

Portland Council of Governments does some great work to suggest regional solutions, the towns are voluntary members of the organization, so their suggestions do not always get the follow-up they deserve. The result of poor coordination in these areas can be preventable congestion, higher taxes due to sprawl, and more pollution from car dependency. We need stronger advocacy for regional cooperation to address our interconnected housing, transportation, and land use challenges. Mainers for Smarter Transportation is willing to be part of this solution.

Regardless of the steps we take to address these challenges, one thing is clear: the Maine Turnpike Authority should not be in the driver's seat. The MTA builds highways. That's all they do. We can not expect them to address complicated land use and congestion issues on local roads miles from their highway. The MTA has put forth its best offer, and not always in full transparency and good faith, and our communities have found it fatally flawed.

Instead, the process should be shepherded by an organization empowered to investigate, evaluate, and implement the least disruptive solutions to the problem. We deserve options, particularly ones that put the common sense, low-risk, reversible steps first. There's still plenty of time to get this right. If we're wrong, and many of the many faster, cheaper, lower-impact solutions cited above little impact, we lose very little. But, if MTA is wrong, this highway will be an expensive mistake, and we'll be paying the price for decades to come.

V. Resources

Everything But Highway Expansion: Better Data for Faster Congestion Mitigation
(Congestion Solutions Guide)

GPCOG Gorham-Westbrook-Portland Rapid Transit Study

Roundabouts improve traffic flow and are better for the environment

Exploring Bike Bus Programs in the United States

USDOT & FHA: Separated Bike Lanes—Making Roads Safer for Bicyclists

Appendix 1: Timeline of the Gorham Connector

Starting in 1913 with the creation of the Maine State Highway Commission, which was formed to promote auto travel and auto tourism,[48] there has been a long and cyclical push-pull of building roads to promote car travel, then noticing the negative impacts of traffic on towns, then state support for land use planning, then defunding that support during economic downturns, then returning to building more roads again.[49]

The building of highways was initially seen as an economic development tool, but as the costs of road maintenance, rural school construction became apparent, Maine flip-flopped many times between tightening up planning requirements and support, then weakening those requirements and cutting funding. The result is a system of restricting development in service centers that could reduce traffic, and inadvertently subsidizing sprawl in rural communities that increase traffic. The Maine Turnpike Authority's expiration date in the 1980s was canceled due to the need to fill a budget shortage, and has continued to be one of the few independent organizations not run by a governor-appointed director.

There are many known solutions to decreasing traffic, and most of those solutions for the towns west of Portland are spelled out in studies by PACTS and The Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG), our regional transportation planning organizations. Many of those solutions are cheaper, faster, reversible, and more sustainable than the construction of a $250+ million new highway.

According to the MTA's recent study, "Will the Gorham Connector Cause Sprawl?," many towns in the Gorham Connector area have adopted zoning that is not consistent with their adopted comprehensive plans. This zoning enables a low density, highway-oriented development pattern, which has contributed to traffic congestion and is not consistent with either goals of many towns or the state, but the state has not prioritized funding and technical assistance to the towns to update their zoning ordinances. Changes that were made to the Growth Management Law in the early 2000s and budget cuts in the mid-2000s made it more difficult for the fastest growing towns to access funding for planning and plan implementation.

PACTS is responsible for creating a regional transportation plan that is intended to guide transportation investments. They make excellent plans, as required by federal agencies, but PACTS and GPCOG's plans haven't been fully implemented in part because PACTS as a Metropolitan Planning Organization is not a transportation authority able to raise its own funding or make decisions for the region, and its plans have limited control over the actions of the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA). The current PACTS plan, Connect 2045[50], which was adopted unanimously by the PACTS Policy Board in 2022, *does not* cite the Gorham highway as a priority project. However, the Gorham-Westbrook-Portland Rapid Transit Corridor *is* identified as an important project. The Gorham highway is listed at the end of the plan in a section entitled 'Other Regionally Significant Projects,' which notes 'these projects may or may not be consistent with Connect 2045's goals and are included ... for context only.'."

In 2007, the MTA, for unclear political reasons, was designated by the legislature as the lead agency to solve area congestion. Despite compelling research conducted over the next decade demonstrating why highway expansion is no answer for congestion, the MTA persisted in advancing this proposal and excluded more cost-effective and sustainable solutions. The MTA formed its own advisory committee to plan the highway, ignoring participatory processes led by GPCOG and PACTS, ignoring the Portland City Council's opposition to the project, and brushing aside Maine's "Sensible Transportation Act" law[51] that requires prioritization of alternatives to highway expansion. Only now in the Spring of 2024 has the MTA finally presented an actual proposal to the community, which has been met with deep public opposition due to the impact of the proposed path and the damage it would cause to Smiling Hill Farm, Red Brook, and the surrounding neighborhoods. After seventeen years of stifling other traffic solutions and designing a process that could only recommend more turnpike, it is finally time for us to change

gears. The Maine Turnpike Authority is not the solution to the congestion in South Gorham and North Scarborough. MTA's continued advocacy for its expansion is making other solutions harder to achieve.

Timeline of a Broken Process
The following is a timeline and brief history of the projects leading up to the current proposal for an expansion of the Maine Turnpike from South Portland to Gorham.

Early 2000s: Local leaders in Gorham, pressed by rising school budgets and population growth, look for help to solve congestion in its downtown. State highways connected farm and mill towns like Gorham and Westbrook to Portland and parts afar for over a century, with those state roads converging at traditional main streets.

2007: The towns of Gorham, Scarborough, South Portland, and Westbrook enter into a joint memorandum seeking an MTA assessment of a new Turnpike Spur connecting the planned Gorham Bypass to the Maine Turnpike (I-95). "Maine's Sensible Transportation Policy Act" necessitates alternatives be studied before building a new highway, so MTA initiates the "Gorham East-West Corridor Feasibility Study" to assess alternatives per this legal requirement.

2008: The Gorham Bypass, a two-lane road from the west to the south of Gorham, was built with almost all funding coming via a Federal infrastructure earmark. Traffic coming east towards Gorham's central intersection is diverted south along the free road without traffic signals. The new road has some impact on vehicle traffic on South Street, but has minimal impact on traffic volume east of Gorham.[52]

2009-2010: In developing a feasibility study for the corridor, the project's Steering Committee notes that "Portland would need to be an integral part of the next phase because they are the major origin or destination of most east-west trips in the corridor."[53] The Advisory Committee further notes that data, mapping, and alignment with the city's plans was insufficient. Portland's City Council later votes unanimously against the project[54] in 2022. There is no evidence that the MTA has coordinated with the city on their proposal, which would clearly bring more traffic, accidents, parking demand, and costs to the city.

2012: The MTA contracts its in-house engineer consultants, HNTB, to complete the Gorham East-West Corridor Feasibility Study. It recommends a three-pronged approach to address congestion in the area:

1. Expand Transit Options: The region should significantly increase public transportation use through new transit routes and increased frequency.
2. Reform Land Use: Municipalities should create pockets of mixed housing and commercial density that could reduce the need to commute by car and increase the practicality and cost-effectiveness of public transit.[55]
3. Increase Road Capacity: To increase road capacity either through Scenario 1 - Improving Existing Roads or Scenario 2 - Building a New Road (though not necessarily a turnpike spur). The study estimates that Scenario 1 would reduce congestion by the same amount with less of an environmental impact, as well as cost 30% less (at $85M) than the building a new road scenario (then at $110 million).[56] The study recommends further exploring both road capacity scenarios with more in-depth studies.[57] HNTB authored the study, and we believe biased the conclusions in favor of further road expansion, its client.

2013 - Present: Despite the recommendations of the Gorham East-West Corridor study, no significant improvements have been made to date either to reform land use patterns, to grow active transportation or transit options, or to expand existing roadway capacity with incremental adaptations such as intersection improvements.

2013: Contrary to the intent of Maine's Sensible Transportation Act, the MTA argues to the Army Corps of Engineers that it should not be required to further study an improving local roads alternative

(Scenario 1) because "even if the MTA were legally empowered to undertake a project of this kind, it would be nearly impossible, financially, for the MTA to do so."[58]

2014: Army Corps of Engineers denies the MTA's request to ignore plausible alternatives to turnpike expansion, such as improvements to existing roads and public transportation, which the MTA does not have authority over. The Army Corps clarified: "only the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative may be permitted,"[59] regardless of whether MTA would eventually be responsible for making and operating the improved infrastructure. However, the MTA continues to lead the planning and alternatives analysis, largely implemented by their in-house highway design consultants, HNTB.

2017: The MTA secures support from the municipalities of Scarborough, Gorham, Westbrook, and South Portland to proceed with developing a turnpike proposal, despite no independent study being done to compare the alternatives, and no potential route being defined. The Maine Legislature authorizes $150 million in new bonds to pay for the project over Governor LePage's veto.[60]

2017: PACTS, the regional transportation organization, offers over a half-dozen non-highway alternatives to address congestion in South Gorham and North Scarborough through its federally-mandated Congestion Management Process. No further action has been taken to date on these alternatives.[61]

Mid-2019: HNTB completes a "Traffic and Revenue Study" to justify the financials of the project. This study, and its assumptions about toll rates and user demand, have never been released to the public.

Late 2019: The MTA board authorizes the next steps in the proposed turnpike project, including environmental impact studies, public outreach, potential land acquisition, and identifying a proposed route.

2020 - Present: The Covid-19 pandemic shifts work culture resulting in changing transportation patterns. Peak rush hour traffic is below pre-pandemic levels in most of our region, as flexible work schedules allow commuters to avoid peak times and skirt delays. MTA starts land acquisition using eminent domain and demolishes its first house on Running Hill Road.

2021: The MTA presents an "alternatives analysis" to the municipalities, which compares the new turnpike option to an alternative of widening the existing routes from Gorham to the turnpike into 76' wide roads with 100' Right of Ways (ROWs). Considering that a normal 4-lane road, like outer Congress Street in Portland, is only 48' wide and fits within a 65' ROW, and the only location with a traffic volume that might suggest a need for a four lane road is the 7/8 mile section of Route 114 / Route 22 overlap, a 76' wide roadway from Gorham to the turnpike, seems rather disingenuous as an 'alternative'. Nonetheless, the MTA uses this potential alternative to further advocate to the municipalities the necessity of building a new highway - the only thing that the MTA's charter happens to allow it to do.

2022: The MTA receives renewed support to continue to pursue the project through an MOA with the four host municipalities that states: "To the extent practicable, MTA will design the Gorham Connector to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts to cultural and natural resources, including wetlands, the Red Brook watershed, farmlands, historic areas and structures, and wildlife corridors and habitat." The MTA shows the proposed route to the Gorham Council, but not to Scarborough. It moves its plan further without public input.

2023: The MTA conducts an "Updated Traffic Study", which it claims supports their proposed highway expansion. Neither the Updated Traffic Study, nor the underlying data it uses have been released to the public.[62]

February 2024: The MTA first publicly announces its proposed route for the turnpike expansion – one that puts in jeopardy Smiling Hill Farm, the health of the Red Brook watershed, 40 acres of wetland, and many more acres of wildlife corridors and habitat, and would create multiple square miles of acoustic polluted property. The MTA announces they have acquired 30% of the land they need for the proposed route.

Early March, 2024: Mainers for Smarter Transportation (M4ST) is launched.

March 25, 2024: The MTA conducts its first public input session on the proposed turnpike expansion. HNTB consultants facilitate the event on behalf of MTA officials, who were also in attendance. Hundreds of opponents turn out to the event. In three and half hours of public comments, only one attendee spoke in favor of the proposal, with nearly 90 speaking against it.[63]

Maine's Sensible Transportation Act

Maine's Sensible Transportation Act supports alternatives to highway expansion. Passed in 1991, the law states: "It is the policy of the State that transportation planning decisions, capital investment decisions and project decisions must:
A. Minimize the harmful effects of transportation on public health and on air and water quality, land use and other natural resources; [RR 1991, c. 2, §88 (cor).]

B. Require 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; [RR 1991, c. 2, §88 (cor).]

C. Ensure the repair and necessary improvement of roads and bridges throughout the State to provide a safe, efficient and adequate transportation network; [RR 1991, c. 2, §88 (cor).]

D. Reduce the State's reliance on foreign oil and promote reliance on energy-efficient forms of transportation; [RR 1991, c. 2, §88 (cor).]

Full text can be found here.[64]

Maine Won't Wait: Maine's Climate Action Plan Requires a Reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled

Maine's Climate Action Plan, adopted in December 2020, includes strategies to reduce carbon emissions by 45% in 2030, and to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045. The plan includes eight strategies, the first one, "Strategy A: Embrace the Future of Transportation in Maine", describes how Maine would reduce transportation emissions.[65]

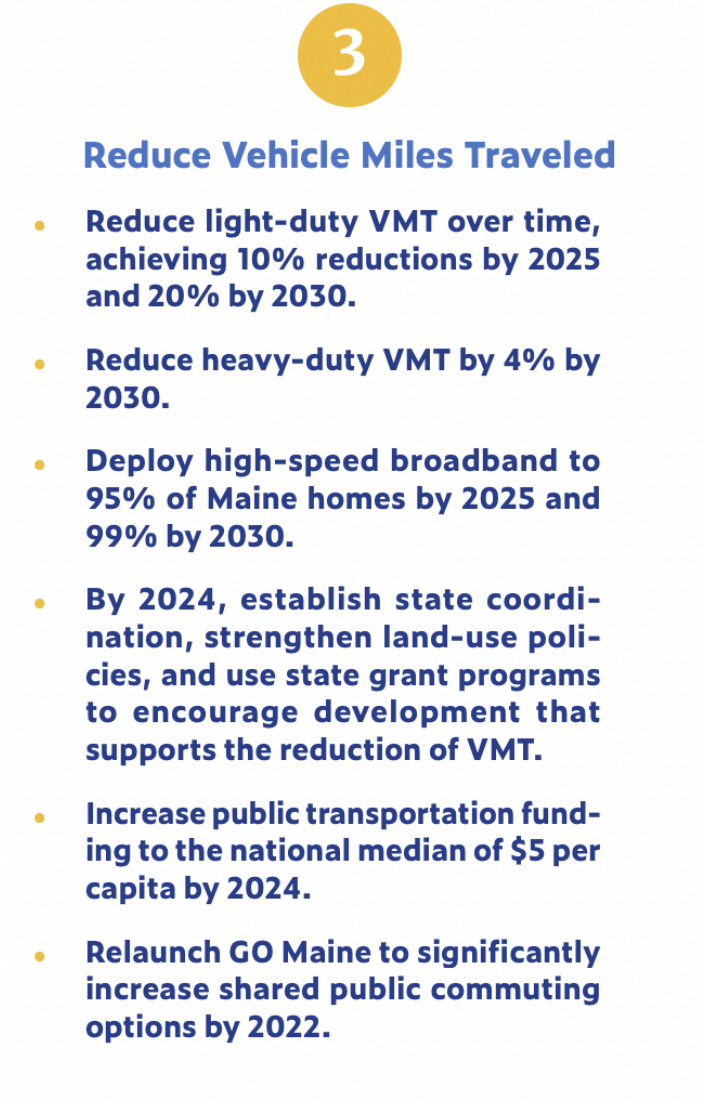
"Transportation is responsible for 54% of Maine's annual greenhouse gas emissions. To meet our emissions-reductions goals by 2030 and 2050, our state must pivot to the future by pursuing aggressive transition strategies and innovative solutions within this important sector…"

"The most significant reductions of greenhouse gas emissions in Maine's transportation sector will come through the long-term and large-scale electrification of our transportation systems, combined with strategies to increase the efficiency of gas- and diesel-powered vehicles, and to reduce the number of miles Mainers drive through expanded options and funding for public transportation, increased broadband deployment across the state, and support for policies that encourage development of

housing, schools, and shopping areas in pedestrian-friendly downtowns and villages… By enabling and encouraging Mainers and visitors to drive less, while offering more alternative transportation options, we can reduce our greenhouse gas emissions."

As a result, the 3rd part of the 3 part strategy is to reduce overall Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in the state.

By MTA's own analysis, the turnpike expansion would encourage drivers to drive more. Since 2020, Maine has not made progress in reducing driving - in fact, vehicle miles traveled has increased, not decreased. The Gorham Connector will increase emissions and leave us further behind in achieving our goals.



Appendix 2: Maine's History of Highways and Land Use Planning

1913: The Maine State Highway Commission was formed to promote auto-travel and auto-tourism by improving Maine's patchwork network of local roads [66] as an economic development tool to bring new customers and opportunities to rural Maine.[67]

1925: For the first time, a serious effort was made to keep the road open from Kittery to Bangor during the winter. Before this,motorists jacked up the family car after the first snowfall and impatiently waited for the season to end.[68]

1941: The Maine Legislature created the Maine Turnpike Authority.[69] Section 1 authorized the MTA to construct and operate a turnpike between Kittery and Fort Kent, subject to the approval of the State Highway Commission. Section 16 of the enabling legislation states that the Turnpike Authority shall be dissolved "when all bonds and interest thereon have been paid" and the property of the Authority shall be given to the state.[70]

1943: An Act Relating to Municipal Planning and Zoning enabled municipalities to form planning boards and adopt zoning, which resulted in restricted development and reduced population in Portland, and increased population in surrounding towns.[71] As new highways caused a significant rise in vehicle traffic in Portland, the City used zoning to limit development by separating commercial uses from residential uses, requiring off-street parking, and restricting building heights.[72] As zoning limited the amount of land that could be developed in Portland, new development spread along state highways into rural towns. Outlying towns like Cumberland adopted zoning that allowed low density residential development and some limited commercial development along state highways.[73] As a result, between 1950 and 1970, the population in the suburbs around Portland increased by nearly 25,000 people, while Portland's population decreased by over 12,500 people.[74]

1955: Statue enabled Regional Planning Commissions to create regional development plans and for local municipalities to adopt zoning consistent with the regional plan.[75]

1956: The 1956 Federal-Aid Highway Act established and authorized $25 billion in funding for fiscal years 1957-1969 to build the interstate highway system.[76] This provided an incentive of money and jobs for state and local governments to build highways.

1962: The 1962 Federal Aid Highway Act required comprehensive planning studies from metropolitan areas to be eligible for Federal highway funds.[77]

1965: Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Study (PACTS) was created to identify major Federal highway investments in the Greater Portland region, including Interstate 295 and the Route 1 Spur in Scarborough, the Westbrook Arterial, and additional highway and intersection improvements on arterials leading out of Portland.[78]

1969: GPCOG completed a regional development plan with funding from HUD and the new State Planning Office.[79] The plan showed Portland as the center of the region, commercial and industrial growth adjacent to Federal highway investments, suburban villages in the outlying towns, and the remainder of the region as rural. GPCOG's 1969 vision is still reflected in the local zoning in Greater Portland.

1969: State Income Tax and Municipal Revenue Sharing Enacted, Sending new revenues to rural towns. Due to a revenue shortfall, Governor Kenneth Curtis created a progressive state income tax with municipal revenue sharing.[80] Republicans supported the proposal because it transferred sales and income tax revenue from Maine's largest cities and towns to smaller, rural towns.81

1971: The State Highway Commission became the modern Maine Department of Transportation, with a commissioner who reports directly to the governor.[82] This was part of a general restructuring by Governor Curtis to consolidate hundreds of unaccountable agencies and boards in Maine into ten

departments with commissioners appointed by the Governor.[83] This also created the Department of Education, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the Department of Natural Resources.

The 1969 state income tax combined with the 1971 reorganization allowed Governor Curtis to "increase spending to protect the environment, equalize school funding, and improve highways."[84]

The reforms made during the Curtis administration enabled Maine's economy and population to grow in the last three decades of the 20th century while the state's environmental quality and traditional way of life were maintained.

1980s: The Turnpike Authority repays all bonds and interest, but instead of being dissolved and absorbed by MDOT as planned, is allowed to continue in order to fill the funding gap for MDOT caused by decline in gasoline tax revenues. The OPEC oil embargoes of 1973 and 1979 raised gas prices, and led people to buy more fuel-efficient cars and drive less. Meanwhile the cost of maintaining and rebuilding roads continued to rise,[85] so the State Planning Office recommended finding additional revenue sources to maintain the state's highways.

The Maine Turnpike Authority was intended to be dissolved and assets transferred to the state once their bonds and interest were repaid.[86] However, once bonds and interest were repaid in 1982, the Legislature allowed the Authority to continue on the condition that it provide a maximum of $4.7 million in annual funding to the Department of Transportation.[87] Legislators preferred raising revenue for highway maintenance through tolls over raising taxes.[88]

1988: Unplanned growth along highways resulted in Maine's Growth Management Law, which mandated and provided $1 million for regional councils and fast growing towns to complete comprehensive plans and adopt local zoning.[89]

1991: Maine went into a deep recession and the state cut funding for planning. The mandatory requirements of the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act were repealed, and the office of comprehensive land use planning was eliminated.[90] Some of the sections of the Comp Planning law were reenacted a few months later, and new deadlines for completing comprehensive plans and adopting zoning were established, but the funding was not restored.[91] Maine did experience a development boom in the 1980s, but as the economy slowed during the 1990s recession, the growth pressures were reduced, and many towns lost interest in planning and plan implementation.[92]

1997: State investments in highways and rural schools since 1970 shown to cause sprawl and cost taxpayers $300 million for new rural schools. The 1997 Cost of Sprawl[93] and 1998 Reviving Service Centers[94] reports showed that revenue sharing and the state investments in highways and rural schools encouraged residential development in rural communities through lower effective property taxes, lower land prices, and less restrictive development regulation.[95]

1998-2000: Task Forces recommend increasing state funding for planning and smart growth, and reforming Maine's Growth Management Law. See the 1998 Service Centers Task Force,[96] the 1999 Sprawl Task Force,[97] and the 2000 Growth Management Task Force.[98]

2001: State increases funding and requirements for planning and smart growth. LD 1693 amended the Growth Management Law to require the state to review plans completed with state funding[99] to determine if comprehensive plans are consistent with the law to be eligible for priority funding.[100] This was a big change from the original law, which allowed for voluntary state review of local plans and prioritized the fastest growing towns.[101]

Many towns' plans were found inconsistent with the Growth Management Law,[102] and were asked by the state to make substantial changes after local planning committees were exhausted, and the budget was spent.

Mid 2000s: State cuts funding for local planning and implementation. Facing a reduction in financial support from the state, many towns with plans that were inconsistent with the state's law gave up on their early 2000s comprehensive plans.[103] This meant that towns like Buxton or Gray who were facing

significant development pressure were no longer eligible for preferential funding from the state for planning and implementation.

2000: Access Management Law Created to slow development along highways Following the recommendations of the 1999 Sprawl Task Force,[104] LD 2550[105] established Access Management regulations for permitting new driveways, entrances and approaches on Maine's major highways to preserve highway capacity.[106]

2005: Maine's Access Management Law was weakened with legislation that allowed the department to waive the access management requirement outside of the compact area of an urban compact municipality.[107]

2013 Maine's Access Management Law was further weakened with legislation that replaced "the highway" with "a controlled access highway" and it allowed access at the discretion of the Commissioner.[108] This legislation eroded the capacity of state highways and contributed to highway congestion in the Gorham Divider study area.

Summary

The building of highways was initially seen as an economic development tool, but as the costs of road maintenance, rural school construction became apparent, Maine flip-flopped many times between tightening up planning requirements and support, then weakening those requirements and cutting funding. The result is a system of restricting development in service centers that could reduce traffic, and inadvertently subsidizing sprawl in rural communities that increase traffic. The Maine Turnpike Authority's expiration date in the 1980s was canceled due to the need to fill a budget shortage, and has continued to be one of the few independent organizations not run by a governor-appointed commissioner.

According to the MTA's recent study, "Will the Gorham Connector Cause Sprawl?," many towns in the Gorham Connector area have adopted zoning that is not consistent with their adopted comprehensive plans. This zoning enables a low density, highway-oriented development pattern, which has contributed to traffic congestion and is not consistent with the local goals of many towns in the study area, but the state has not prioritized funding and technical assistance to the towns to update their zoning ordinance to be consistent with state and local goals.

Maine's Growth Management Law has failed to slow growth in the fastest growing towns in Maine, including the towns in the Gorham Divider study area, because the changes that were made to the Growth Management Law in the early 2000s and budget cuts in the mid-2000s made it more difficult for the fastest growing towns to access funding for planning and plan implementation. This is why many towns in the Gorham Divider study area have zoning that is not consistent with the stated goals of their comprehensive plans.

Gorham Connector White Paper

ENDNOTES

Executive Summary

1. “There are myriad studies demonstrating this phenomenon, called ‘induced demand’. Journal Transport Policy, which finds any relief from congestion derived from expanding highway capacity vanishes within five years.”
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0967070X18301720
“Latest Evidence on Induced Travel Demand, An Evidence Review”
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c0e5848e5274a0bf3cbe124/latest-evidence-on-induced-travel-demand-an-evidence-review.pdf
“Deepening the understanding of how induced travel on the strategic road network”
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6172d37b8fa8f5297a62a241/deepening-the-understanding-of-how-to-address-induced-travel-on-the-strategic-road-network-options-for-improving-the-measurement-of-induced-travel.pdf
“Law of Peak Hour Expressway Congestion” https://trid.trb.org/view.aspx?id=694596
“Generated Traffic and Induced Travel” https://www.vtpi.org/gentraf.pdf

2. The conversion of a highway to a city street in Rochester 2017 has already attracted $52 million in investment in 500 new homes, restaurants and breweries in the reclaimed area, all while spurring no new traffic delays.
https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2023/10/2/how-one-american-city-reclaimed-a-highway-and-it-paid-off-big-time
Fast Company: “What happened when Rochester tore out a highway”
https://www.fastcompany.com/90795760/what-happened-when-rochester-tore-out-an-urban-highway

3. Colorado’s Bold New Approach to Highways — Not Building Them “Within a year of the law, Colorado’s Department of Transportation, or CDOT, had canceled two major highway expansions, including Interstate 25, and shifted $100 million to transit projects. In 2022, a regional planning body in Denver reallocated $900 million from highway expansions to so-called multimodal projects, including faster buses and better bike lanes.
Now, other states are following Colorado’s lead. Last year, Minnesota passed a $7.8 billion transportation spending package with provisions modeled on Colorado’s greenhouse gas rule. Any project that added road capacity would have to demonstrate how it contributed to statewide greenhouse gas reduction targets. Maryland is considering similar legislation, as is New York.”
https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/31/headway/highways-colorado-transportation.html

4. https://portland.civilspace.io/en/projects/franklin-street-2023-update

5. A “stroad” is a hybrid of the words “street” and “road.” ”Countless urban planners have criticized stroads for their safety issues and inefficiencies. While streets serve as a destination and provide access to shops and residences at safe traffic speeds, and roads serve as a high-speed connection that can efficiently move traffic at high speed and volume, stroads are expensive, inefficient, and dangerous.” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stroad

6. https://www.pressherald.com/2017/03/01/neighborhood-destroyed-franklin-street-franklin-arterial/

About Mainers for Smarter Transportation (M4ST)

No endnotes in this section

The Problem

7. https://mainedottrafficdata.drakewell.com/sitedashboard.asp?node=MAINE_DOT_SDC&cosit=230509005500

8. https://inrix.com/scorecard-city-2022/?city=Portland%20ME&index=876

9. Estimates based on a commuter using the highway twice per day, 220 commuting days per year, with a $1 toll. Many drivers will use the highway more often, and we estimate actual toll rates would need to be $2-4 to cover the bond repayment, and even higher for drivers with trailers or freight.

The MTA's Claims about its "Solution"

10. https://mainedottrafficdata.drakewell.com/sitedashboard.asp?node=MAINE_DOT_SDC&cosit=230509005500

11. Reducing vehicle miles traveled is one of the key goals of Maine's climate change mitigation policy, Maine Won't Wait https://www.maine.gov/climateplan/the-plan.
Maine is being sued by a coalition of environmental organizations (https://www.sierraclub.org/articles/2024/05/inaction-accountability-why-sierra-club-and-partners-are-suing-state-maine) for failing to implement the rules that support this plan, and has struggled to make good on the VMT indicator in particular https://www.pressherald.com/2019/12/15/reducing-emissions-from-transportation-is-a-long-difficult-road-for-maine/

12. https://mainedottrafficdata.drakewell.com/publicmultinodemap.asp

13. https://www.maineturnpike.com/cmstemplates/showAttachment.ashx?url=/Projects/Planning/Gorham-Connector/Gorham-Connector-FAQs/ABOUT-THE-ROAD/Local-road-traffic.jpg

14. PACTS Connect 2045 report, page 21. Source: Streetlight data estimates.

15. INRIX estimate based on signal data. Note at least a dozen other intersections in Greater Portland showed longer delays, none of which are being considered for a quarter billion dollar highway bypass.

16. Fatal accidents in the wider area included one during an ice storm at night, another where an elderly driver misjudged the roundabout at Route 112, and a third when a motorcyclist was cut off by a driver on Route 114 near the turnpike overpass.

17. "Higher speed limits led to more deaths, study shows." https://www.consumerreports.org/car-safety/higher-speed-limits-led-to-36760-more-deaths-study-shows/

18. An analysis of highway-arterial overall safety in Australia showed that accident rates are elevated on roads feeding into highways, where traffic speeds and volumes are elevated https://www.ptua.org.au/myths/safer/

19. One of our volunteers estimated that, with inflation since 2019, borrowing costs of around 5%, plus maintenance, that the annual cost of $25-28 million per year for 30 years, for a highway that would only host 4-7 million vehicles per year, a number that would be very elastic to the toll rate. At a toll rate that covers actual costs, the toll rate would rise sufficiently that demand would collapse.

20. We used the MTA's stated 2019 estimate of a $237,000,000 bond, for a 30 year term, at 5% interest. These estimates are based on the current conditions for corporate quasi-state entities like the Turnpike. MTA has an AA- rating, according to Fitch. The total cost of such a bond would be over $483 million, with a monthly payment of $1.32 million. Even at a generous 20,000 vehicles per day, tolls would need to start at $3-4 for single occupancy vehicles in order to cover this debt service. Trucks

would obviously pay more, though heavy truck use of Route 100 between Auburn and Portland shows another example of high tolls leading to truck drivers opting for slower, but free, alternatives. Demand for highway driving is highly elastic - set the toll high enough, and people will go around it. We don't think a self-paying toll rate is viable for this highway.

21. Source: Tom Hall, Scarborough Town Manager, during a presentation to the Scarborough Town Council

22. "Improving Our Understanding of How Highway Congestion and Pricing Affect Travel Demand," National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, 2012, p 14

23. See page 11 of this report: https://www.maineturnpike.com/cmstemplates/showAttachment.ashx?url=/Projects/Planning/Gorham-Connector/Gorham-Connector-Final-ILUE-Report-3-25-2024_to_MTA.pdf

24. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/20061017_exurbia.pdf

25.Sprawl development such as cul-de-sacs built in fields or wooded areas, as well as strip malls with large parking lots, are more expensive than village, town, or city-style density. The cost of providing public goods, utilities, roads, and services all increase dramatically with the distance they must travel. This is both for municipal budgets and for the residents, who need to drive for all daily necessities. Sprawl contains hidden costs that make it far more expensive per capita, and strains the budgets of towns and residents all over Maine's suburbs and exurbs.
https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-05-21/quantifying-the-cost-of-sprawl

26. In Portland, only 610 new units were approved between 2021 and early 2024
https://www.newscentermaine.com/article/news/local/housing/portland-maine-chips-away-at-housing-crisis-with-new-units/97-86fb95ba-cad6-418d-8ef5-56ccaf815e47

27. GPCOG found the majority of development and population growth has happened outside the urban core, where land prices and regulations are generally less restrictive.
https://www.gpcog.org/556/2022-Update

Summary of Claims and Realities

28. Studies have consistently shown that these claims fail to incorporate the climate cost of additional driving
https://energynews.us/2024/07/30/critics-studies-cast-doubt-on-maines-claims-of-climate-benefits-from-highway-expansion/. Maine's own climate change plan seems incongruent with the MTA's approach, which it admits will result in more driving
https://energynews.us/2024/08/07/can-maine-meet-its-climate-targets-and-keep-expanding-highways/.

Responsible Alternatives: Expert & Community-Informed Solutions

29. As just one example, Turnpike-owned and tax exempt land in Portland has a total value of $13,621,100, a cost to Portland taxpayers of $190,000 per year at the current mil rate of $14. Source: Portland Assessor's property tax database.

30.
https://www.gpcog.org/DocumentCenter/View/390/PACTS-Inclusive-Transportation-Planning-Toolkit-PDF?bidId=

Vision #1: Connect 2045

31. https://www.connect2045.org/: Page 71 - Goal 6: Optimize infrastructure - Objective: Maintain the Assets 2. Fix-it-First: Adopt a fix-it-first approach that incorporates Complete Streets and prioritizes upgrading roads over expanding them.

32. These included the Opportunity Alliance, Natural Resources Council of Maine, Greater Portland METRO, Bicycle Coalition of Maine, Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority, Disability Rights Maine, and Portland Trails.

33. https://www.gpcog.org/370/Congestion-Management-Plan

34. https://www.gpcog.org/DocumentCenter/View/3247/Congestion-Management-Process-Objectives

35. https://www.gpcog.org/DocumentCenter/View/3253/PACTS-Congestion-Management-Plan-Update-2017

36. Destination 2040, page 40
https://www.gpcog.org/DocumentCenter/View/526/D2040-0-Table-of-Contents-PDF

Crowdsourced Solutions for the Community

37. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286979578_Roundabouts_traffic_flow_and_public_opinion

38. https://www.bangordailynews.com/2012/07/13/news/portland-intersection-with-high-rate-of-accidents-may-be-changed-to-roundabout/

39. See examples of data-driven signal prioritization:
https://www.streetlightdata.com/best-city-traffic-congestion-solutions/

40. Source: Scarborough Town Manager Tom Hall to Scarborough Town Council during public council meeting

41. https://www.pressherald.com/2024/06/26/road-work-slated-for-northern-scarborough-this-summer/

42.See examples of Green-Ts from Virginia and Kentucky:
https://transportation.ky.gov/saferoadsolutions/Pages/ContinuousGreenT.aspx
https://www.vdot.virginia.gov/about/our-system/highways/innovative-intersections/continuous-green-t/

43. Commuters to Portland from the suburbs induce demand for street parking, surface parking lots, and parking garages, all of which occupy space that could be used for dedicated bus lanes, bike lanes, sidewalks, and, crucially, housing. Each parking space in a lot or garage requires 320 square feet, more than twice the space required for bedroom (US average 132 square feet)

44. https://www.gpcog.org/557/Gorham-Westbrook-Portland-Rapid-Transit-

45. https://www.nnepra.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Westbrook-to-Portland-Conceptual-Rail-Transit-Study.pdf

46. 2017 CMP draft, page 34
https://www.gpcog.org/DocumentCenter/View/3253/PACTS-Congestion-Management-Plan-Update-2017

Conclusion

47. The Press Herald has been covering the issue in depth in the summer of 2024 https://www.pressherald.com/2024/07/19/portlands-latest-housing-report-reignites-debate-over-inclusionary-zoning/

Appendix 1: Timeline of the Gorham Connector

48. See MaineDOT History: The State Highway Commission, The Maine Development Commission, established in 1927, created promotional materials that encouraged people from other states to visit Maine by Motor, to purchase the abandoned farms in Maine, or to move to Maine the Place to Live, Work, and Play

49. See the attached history, Appendix 1

50. https://www.connect2045.org/

51. Maine's Sensible Transportation Act states: "It is the policy of the State that transportation planning decisions, capital investment decisions and project decisions must:
A. Minimize the harmful effects of transportation on public health and on air and water quality, land use and other natural resources; [RR 1991, c. 2, §88 (cor).]
B. Require 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; [RR 1991, c. 2, §88 (cor).]
C. Ensure the repair and necessary improvement of roads and bridges throughout the State to provide a safe, efficient and adequate transportation network; [RR 1991, c. 2, §88 (cor).]
D. Reduce the State's reliance on foreign oil and promote reliance on energy-efficient forms of transportation; [RR 1991, c. 2, §88 (cor).] https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/17/229/229c103.doc

52. https://www.maine.gov/mdot/publications/docs/plansreports/gorhameastwestcorridorstudyFinalReport92812.pdf Page 2-3, 2-4

53. 2012 East-West Feasibility Study, pg 8-9 (136 in the PDF). The report also highlights concerns raised by the wider Advisory Council about the lack of mapping, data, and overall coordination by the MTA with Portland

54. https://www.pressherald.com/2022/07/14/portland-city-council-takes-stand-against-gorham-connector/

55. https://www.maine.gov/mdot/publications/docs/plansreports/gorhameastwestcorridorstudyFinalReport92812.pdf

56. 2012 East-West Feasibility Study, pg ES-11

57.2012 East-West Feasibility Study, pg ES-12 and 9-24

58. 2013 MTA Letter to Army Corps of Engineers

https://www.maineturnpike.com/cmstemplates/showAttachment.ashx?url=/Projects-Planning/Planning-Projects/The-Gorham-East-West-Planning-Project/Determination-of-Practicable-Roadway-Alternatives/ACOELetterFinal062813.pdf

59. 2014 Army Corps of Engineers reply to MTA, page 2
https://www.maineturnpike.com/cmstemplates/showAttachment.ashx?url=/Projects-Planning/Planning-Projects/The-Gorham-East-West-Planning-Project/Determination-of-Practicable-Roadway-Alternatives/ACOE-October-letter.pdf

60. LePage supported a new road in theory, but was against the expansion of the toll-funded Turnpike and wanted it to be built and operated as a freeway by MDOT
.https://www.pressherald.com/2017/05/18/senate-to-vote-to-overturn-lepage-veto-could-clear-path-for-gorham-turnpike-spur/

61. See more information in further sections

Maine's Sensible Transportation Act

62. See the MTA Project Background website, here https://arcg.is/1zDPzW0

63. See the recording of the meeting at https://youtu.be/RNsfHF9i7rM?feature=shared

64. https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/17/chaps17.htm

Maine Won't Wait: Maine's Climate Action Plan Requires a Reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled
65.
https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/MaineWontWait_December2020.pdf

Appendix 2: Maine's History of Highways and Land Use Planning

66. See MaineDOT History: The State Highway Commission

67. The Maine Development Commission, established in 1927, created promotional materials that encouraged people from other states to visit Maine by Motor, to purchase the abandoned farms in Maine, or to move to Maine the Place to Live, Work, and Play

68. https://www.maine.gov/mdot/about/history/

69. See PS 1941, c. 69

70. See page 17, numbered as page 560 in PS 1941, c. 69

71. See PL 1943, c. 199

72. See The Effect of the Interstate Highway on Portland

73. See Preliminary General Plan of the Town of Cumberland, 1958

74. See page 10 of Destination 2040 Chapter 3: Present Conditions and Trends

75. See PL 1955, c. 42.

76. See National Interstate and Defense Highways Act (1956)

77. See 1965 Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Study

78. Ibid.

79. See A Policy Plan for Regional Development

80. See Former Governor explains why Maines chose an income tax

81. See page 6 of Reviving Service Centers

82. See page 32 (numbered as page 31) of State of Maine Governmental Reorganization

83. See Former Gov. Kenneth Curtis and the emergence of the modern Maine government

84. See 1970-present Rediscovery & Rebirth
85. See page 65 (numbered as page 46) in Maine: 50 Years of Change

86. See Section 16 of PS 1941, c. 69

87. See PL 1981, c. 595

88. See MTA History

89. The fastest growing towns in Maine in the 1980s included many of the towns in the Gorham Divider study area, including Gorham, Standish, Buxton, and Hollis. See this document for a full list: Growth Management News. Enacted as PL 1987, c. 766 "Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act of 1988"

90. See PL 1991, c. 622

91. See PL 1991, c. 722

92. See Ten Years of Affordable Housing Policy: Is Maine Making Progress?

93. https://digitalmaine.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=spo_docs

94. https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/docs/revivingservicecenters.pdf

95. See page 8 of The Cost of Sprawl

96. https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/docs/revivingservicecenters.pdf

97. https://lldc.mainelegislature.org/Open/Rpts/ht167_5_m2m34_2000.PDF

98. https://lldc.mainelegislature.org/Open/Rpts/ht167_5_m2m36_2000.PDF

99. See PL 2001, c. 406

100. See P.L. 1999, chapter 731

101. See Senator Ludwig's remarks on pages 1169-1170: http://lldc.mainelegislature.org/Open/LegRec/113/Senate/LegRec_1988-04-19_SP_p1165-1187.pdf

102. https://lldc.mainelegislature.org/Open/Rpts/ht167_5_m2m36_2000.PDF

103. Buxton's 2003 plan was found inconsistent by the state according to the Municipal Consistency Status as of 6/3/2024. Gray received a finding of inconsistency from the state in 2004 and a copy of this letter is available upon request.

104. See Task Force on State Office Building Location

105. https://lldc.mainelegislature.org/Open/LDs/119/119-LD-2550.pdf

106. LD 2550 was enacted as P.L. 1999, c. 676. See Legislative History of LD 2550.

107. See PL. 2005, c. 188

108. See PL 2013, c. 220

V. Resources

Everything But Highway Expansion: Better Data for Faster Congestion Mitigation
(Congestion Solutions Guide)

GPCOG Gorham-Westbrook-Portland Rapid Transit Study

Roundabouts improve traffic flow and are better for the environment

Exploring Bike Bus Programs in the United States

USDOT & FHA: Separated Bike Lanes—Making Roads Safer for Bicyclists