

From: Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov
To: [Howard, Nathan](#)
Subject: Lower Road Public Comments
Date: Wednesday, January 25, 2023 10:53:47 AM

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Wednesday, 25-Jan-2023 10:49:24 EST
Name: Frank O'Hara
Organization(if applicable):
Phone: 2075921788
Email: frankomaine@gmail.com

Topic:

Comments:

I strongly support the proposed Merrymeeting Trail, which would eventually be part of a biking trail from Brunswick to Augusta. It's tourism, it's recreation, it's downtown development, it's health exercise, it's community development. The tracks have sat unused for 30 years. It is a total waste of an asset to let them sit unused for 30 more years.

If required, please respond as soon as possible.

From: Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov
To: [Howard, Nathan](#)
Subject: Lower Road Public Comments
Date: Wednesday, January 25, 2023 10:08:43 AM

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Wednesday, 25-Jan-2023 10:02:11 EST
Name: Ryan Tracy
Organization(if applicable):
Phone: 2074414720
Email: ratracy85@gmail.com

Topic:

Comments:

I would Definitely use the rail bed to brunswick and beyond, I live in Augusta and have snowmobiles and an Side By Side. I would use it both in the winter and summer! Thank you

If required, please respond as soon as possible.

From: Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov
To: [Howard, Nathan](#)
Subject: Lower Road Public Comments
Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2023 7:53:30 PM

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Tuesday, 24-Jan-2023 19:45:20 EST
Name: Steve Eagles
Organization(if applicable):
Phone: 2077378023
Email: seagles4@gmail.com

Topic:

Comments:

It was pleasant to have the train run through Richmond 40 years ago but the line has been unused for too long. Please make it a pedestrian and bike path to connect Augusta to Bath. It is a beautiful ride around Merrymeeting Bay, an area that would benefit from more tourism.

If required, please respond as soon as possible.

From: Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov
To: [Howard, Nathan](#)
Subject: Lower Road Public Comments
Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2023 4:23:28 PM

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Tuesday, 24-Jan-2023 16:18:24 EST
Name: Dj Merrill
Organization(if applicable):
Phone:
Email: misc@deej.net

Topic:

Comments:

I am writing to voice my support to use the old railroad tracks from Topsham to Gardiner (The Lower Road Rail Corridor) as a multi-use trail to include ATV and Snowmobile use.

As we can see by the many examples in the northern part of the state, converting old railroad tracks to ATV and Snowmobile trails brings economic benefit to the surrounding communities. Maine is a destination state for ATV and Snowmobile tourism activities, and extending the trail systems to additional communities will help bring those benefits to those areas.

As a Topsham resident, I am particularly interested to see this economic benefit brought to my town.

Thank you,
Dj Merrill

If required, please respond as soon as possible.

From: Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov
To: [Howard, Nathan](#)
Subject: Lower Road Public Comments
Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2023 2:13:22 PM

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Tuesday, 24-Jan-2023 14:11:29 EST
Name: Alden Robinson
Organization(if applicable):
Phone: 2078370636
Email: alden.robinson@gmail.com

Topic:

Comments:

I support the Merrymeeting Trail as a safe, healthy and environmentally friendly way to enhance mobility between Bowdoinham and surrounding towns. Bowdoinham is a great place to raise kids but lacks safe roads for biking and walking. We live on a stretch of Main Street where the shoulders are collapsing and traffic regularly exceeds the posted 35mph limit by 15-20mph. A multi use trail would provide a safe way for us to enjoy biking with our young son, as well as a way to get to Brunswick/Topsham and beyond for shopping, meetings and cultural activities. I am passionately in favor of this project and would welcome any outreach if I can provide further support. Thank you!

If required, please respond as soon as possible.

From: Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov
To: [Howard, Nathan](#)
Subject: Lower Road Public Comments
Date: Thursday, January 19, 2023 9:21:59 PM

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Thursday, 19-Jan-2023 21:17:27 EST
Name: Lynne Sanford
Organization(if applicable):
Phone:
Email: Lyssanford@gmail.com

Topic:

Comments:

I am writing to support the use of the rail corridor as a trail.

I am a walker and I sometimes walk along the right of way beside the rail bed in Bowdoinham. I see that the rail bed has not had much maintenance done on it. The biggest problem is the drainage ditches. Some of them have filled up so that water runs under the rails eroding the rails. If the rail bed was being used as a trail, someone would be responsible to do maintenance on the drainage, thus preserving the rail bed.

In Bowdoinham we already have lots of walkers who use the sidewalks. I am sure we would walk Merrymeeting trail as well. Thank you for your attention to this project.

If required, please respond as soon as possible.

From: Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov
To: [Howard, Nathan](#)
Subject: Lower Road Public Comments
Date: Wednesday, January 18, 2023 8:41:37 PM

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Wednesday, 18-Jan-2023 20:36:39 EST
Name: John Bursley
Organization(if applicable):
Phone: 2077516982
Email: lchafingers@myfairpoint.net

Topic:

Comments:

Hello

I would like to see this trail as a multi use trail - like the Down East Sunset trail. I am a avid cyclist and SXS rider. this trail would be a win win for everyone!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!1

If required, please respond as soon as possible.

From: Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov
To: [Howard, Nathan](#)
Subject: Lower Road Public Comments
Date: Sunday, January 1, 2023 6:30:50 AM

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Sunday, 01-Jan-2023 06:27:35 EST
Name: Paul Weiss
Organization(if applicable):
Phone: 2077560776
Email: weissp@me.com

Topic:

Comments:

Please do not allow our railways to be ripped up and turned into walking trails. It is the most irresponsible thing you can do. We have seen what it did to Downeast maine. As a tax payer I helped pay millions for the railways to be restored not turned into bike trails.

If required, please respond as soon as possible.

From: [Edward Hanscom](#)
To: [Howard, Nathan](#)
Subject: Lower Road RUAC input
Date: Wednesday, January 18, 2023 12:46:59 PM
Attachments: [Critique of Adopted Trail Support Resolution Dec 5, 2022.pdf](#)

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi, Nate. We made it through the holidays!

Here is updated information on the Maine Rail Group's petition in support of passenger rail on the Lower Road and beyond. The petition reads as follows:

“PETITION IN SUPPORT OF BRINGING PASSENGER RAIL TO BANGOR”

“We, the undersigned, support Maine Rail Group's (MRG) efforts to restore passenger rail service from Brunswick, Maine to Bangor, Maine, over the state owned 'Lower Road' to Augusta and then on CSX's rail line to Waterville and Bangor”

“We respectively urge the Maine State Legislature to pass a bill during the 131st legislative session to provide funding for a feasibility study as the next step to be eligible for federal funding under the Federal Railroad Administration's new Corridor ID Program which serves 'as a key vehicle for directing federal investments and technical assistance toward new or improved intercity passenger rail services across the nation.’”

After the Maine Transportation Conference, the number of people signed on to the petition has grown to nearly 500. Below is a breakdown. As you can see, there is support in every county of Maine, with Penobscot, Kennebec, and Cumberland leading the way. However, most of the support is beyond these the counties, indicating that the value of this service is seen far beyond Augusta, Waterville, and Bangor.

State/Province		Pct
ME	473	95.9%
NH	3	0.6%
VT	2	0.4%
MA	10	2.0%
RI	0	0.0%
CT	1	0.2%
NY	1	0.2%
VA	1	0.2%
FL	1	0.2%
NB	1	0.2%
Total	493	100.0%

Maine County	Signers
Androscoggin	15
Aroostook	6
Cumberland	60

Franklin	5
Hancock	43
Kennebec	65
Knox	33
Lincoln	20
Oxford	5
Penobscot	112
Piscataquis	3
Sagadahoc	18
Somerset	12
Waldo	50
Washington	10
York	15

Also, attached is my critique of the "Adopted Trail Support Resolution" found at the Lower Road RUAC website. I felt compelled to address some of the statements made in the document. Please enter the petition data and the critique into the record of the Lower Road RUAC. Thanks! --- Ed Hanscom

Resolution Requesting Town of Brunswick Support for Merrymeeting Trail and Casco Bay Trail

Adopted by the Brunswick Town Council on December 5, 2022

WHEREAS Brunswick was the first town in Maine designated by the League of American Bicyclists as a Bike Friendly Community;¹

WHEREAS Brunswick has a multi-modal transit center with access to the Amtrak Downeaster², Brunswick Link³, Concord Coach Lines⁴, and Metro Breez⁵;

Brunswick's role as a transportation hub would be more enhanced with rail service to the north (to Augusta, Waterville, and Bangor) as well as east to Rockland.

WHEREAS Brunswick's future development and infrastructure plans call for robust bicycle and pedestrian ways;⁶ A bicycle-pedestrian trail to Topsham already exists on the Bypass bridge.

WHEREAS the Merrymeeting Trail will provide people of all ages and abilities a safe, traffic separated trail for transportation and recreation⁷;

FALSE. The trail would be of little value to the average person. Most bicycle trips are under 3 miles in length. The trail distances are too long. Invest in in-town improvements.

WHEREAS the Casco Bay Trail will provide people of all ages and abilities a safe, traffic separated trail for transportation and recreation⁸;

Trail distances in many locations are too long for practical bicycle and pedestrian use.

WHEREAS no train has run on the Lower Road for nearly 40 years⁹, or run on the Portland to Auburn corridor for over 7 years¹⁰;

FALSE. The Lower Road was actively use for passenger and freight rail use in the 2000s.

WHEREAS Brunswick is a critical hub and connection point between both the Merrymeeting Trail and the Casco Bay Trail¹¹;

Brunswick's role as a transportation hub would be more enhanced with rail service to the north (to Augusta, Waterville, and Bangor) as well as east to Rockland.

WHEREAS the Maine Department of Transportation has authority to initiate Rail Corridor Use Advisory Councils to recommend to the Commissioner the best future use for state-owned corridors, including the option of using the corridor as a trail on an interim basis, in accordance with Maine statute¹²;

The structure of the RUAC is inherently biased toward trails by minimizing membership for interests that appreciate the corridor's value for rail transportation beyond the corridor limits.

WHEREAS the Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council was formed in April 2022 to consider the best use of a state-owned corridor that would form the backbone of the Casco Bay Trail Alliance¹³;

This statement of why the RUAC was formed illustrates the bias toward trails.

WHEREAS the Lower Road Rail Use Advisory Council was formed in November 2022 to consider the best use of the state-owned corridor that would form a key part of the Merrymeeting Trail¹⁴;

This statement ow why the RUAC was formed illustrates the bias toward trails.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Town of Brunswick supports recommending to the Commissioner of the Maine Department of Transportation that the rail corridors known as the Lower Road and the Portland to Auburn be permitted to be used as trails;

The Lower Road is more valuable to Brunswick as a rail corridor. A bike-ped trail to Topsham already exists.

The relevance of the Portland to Auburn corridor to Brunswick pedestrians and bicyclists is highly questionable.

FURTHER, LET IT BE RESOLVED the Brunswick Town Council will notify both the Commissioner of Maine DOT and the appropriate RCUACs of this Resolve.

From: [Howard, Nathan](#)
To: [patricia barber](#)
Cc: [Moulton, Nathan](#)
Subject: RE: Lower Road Public Comments
Date: Wednesday, January 4, 2023 7:35:00 AM

Patty -

MaineDOT uses a Department Wide Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is to establish a pre-qualified pool of consulting firms that we anticipate hiring for projects outlined in the Two Year Work Plan. In order for a firm to be added to the prequalification list, an evaluation committee reviews their qualifications based on scoring criteria for this service and based on the relative capabilities of the other qualified firms. Firms, like VHB, are qualified for the service: "Freight Rail Planning, Design, & Technical Assistance".

The top ranked, in the pool of pre-qualified Consultants, are selected for interviews and considered placed on the "shortlist". Following the interviews and selection of the successful firms, we award "On-call or Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity" ("IDIQ") Contracts. These agreements/contracts are used for the performance of services for a number of projects, under task or work orders issued on an as-need or on call basis for an established contract period.

We have contracts with the 3 top rated firms, including VHB and HNTB, to provide Freight Rail Planning, Design, & Technical Assistance.

We selected HNTB for the Mountain Division RUAC as this firm had previous experience with that railroad corridor. We selected VHB for the Berlin Sub and Lower Road for the same reason.

Nate

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

-----Original Message-----

From: Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov <Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 3, 2023 1:51 PM
To: Howard, Nathan <Nathan.Howard@maine.gov>
Subject: Lower Road Public Comments

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The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Tuesday, 03-Jan-2023 13:45:17 EST
Name: Patricia Barber
Organization(if applicable):
Phone: 3018326766
Email: rugbyvet88@yahoo.com

Topic:

Comments:

To Nate H and Nate M: what is MDOT's bidding process to choose a consultant to do a RUAC study (or any rail study for that matter). Doesn't it have to go out to competitive bid, just like any bridge or road study needs to? ie why does VHB have a monopoly on the rail and rail/trail studies? Thanks, Patty Barber Hiram

If required, please respond as soon as possible.

From: [Kimberly Lindlof](#)
To: [Howard, Nathan](#)
Subject: RE: SUPPORTOF PASSENGER RAIL
Date: Friday, January 20, 2023 2:30:50 PM

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Nathan,

I am referring to the CSX formerly Pan Am Lewiston/Auburn to Waterville. Where some of the other lines are removed, this is the most practical route, plus by running Lewiston- Waterville-Bangor we connect to lots of college students as potential passengers (Bates, Colby, Thomas, Husson and UMaine). Our big thing is that we would like rail to come north, we feel the Lewiston to Bangor route is the most practical. Our region is very vulnerable to higher gas prices and having a passenger rail would give us an alternative if gas prices rise even further.

Make it a great day,

Kim

Kimberly N. Lindlof

President & CEO, Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce

Executive Director, Central Maine Growth Council

50 Elm St., Waterville, ME 04901

207-873-3315; cell: 207-649-6676

www.midmainechamber.com; www.centralmaine.org;

www.midmainefun.com; www.tasteofwaterville.com; www.midmainebass.com

From: Howard, Nathan <Nathan.Howard@maine.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 19, 2023 8:43 AM
To: Kimberly Lindlof <Kimberly@midmainechamber.com>
Subject: RE: SUPPORTOF PASSENGER RAIL

EXTERNAL MESSAGE:

Kim –

Any chance you could clarify this statement:

*“support of passenger and freight railroad systems from Portland to Bangor via the **Lewiston line.**”*

Are you referencing the *Lower Road* (from Brunswick to Waterville) or the CSX (formerly PAN AM)

Freight mainline that runs through Lewiston/Auburn north to Waterville. There is also a *Lewiston Lower Road* that runs from Brunswick to Lewiston that is inactive and partially removed beyond Lisbon.

Thanks

Nate

Nathan Howard
Director, Rail Transportation
MaineDOT, Planning
Division of Freight and Business Logistics
(207) 624-3042

From: Moulton, Nathan <Nathan.Moulton@maine.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 28, 2022 3:48 PM
To: Howard, Nathan <Nathan.Howard@maine.gov>
Subject: FW: SUPPORTOF PASSENGER RAIL

Please put this in the Lower Rd. comments when you start putting those together.

From: Kimberly Lindlof <Kimberly@midmainechamber.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 28, 2022 11:26 AM
To: Moulton, Nathan <Nathan.Moulton@maine.gov>
Cc: ironmike928@aol.com; jtsutton@roadrunner.com
Subject: SUPPORTOF PASSENGER RAIL

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Mr. Moulton,

I understand that you are taking testimony on Rail vs. Trail between Gardiner and Topsham. I would like to add Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce's (MMCC) position to that discussion.

Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce is in support of extending passenger rail through Waterville and up to Bangor. The greater Waterville area has a robust education, healthcare and arts presence: 4 colleges – Unity, KVCC, Thomas and Colby; Northern Light Inland, Maine Eye Care, and

MaineGeneral plus all of the nursing home and affiliate specialty offices; Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville Opera House, Railroad Square Cinemas, Ticonic Gallery, Colby's new modern art downtown gallery, and PechaKucha. MMCC feels that all would be enhanced by the connectivity that passenger rail would bring to our region.

Our 2023 White Papers advocate as follow, *"support of passenger and freight railroad systems from Portland to Bangor via the Lewiston line."* This position is supplied to all of our region's elected officials, and posted annual on our Web site. This is a position that we've been advocating for years.

The greater Waterville area has a robust trails system, which we wholeheartedly support, so MMCC understands the delicate balance between these two endeavors. It does not believe that one has to be at the expense of the other, however. Once those rail lines are removed, however, it's very difficult to turn back. MMCC supports the expansion of passenger rail while looking for alternative paths for a trail system for the Topsham/Gardiner extension.

Please let me know if you have any questions, and Happy New Year.

Make it a great day,

Kim

Kimberly N. Lindlof

President & CEO, Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce

Executive Director, Central Maine Growth Council

50 Elm St., Waterville, ME 04901

207-873-3315; cell: 207-649-6676

www.midmainechamber.com; www.centralmaine.org;

www.midmainefun.com; www.tasteofwaterville.com; www.midmainebass.com

From: Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov
To: [Howard, Nathan](#)
Subject: Lower Road Public Comments
Date: Sunday, January 29, 2023 2:29:51 AM

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Sunday, 29-Jan-2023 02:19:47 EST
Name: Benjamin Mowatt
Organization(if applicable):
Phone: 6033124023
Email: nebkram@hotmail.com

Topic:

Comments:

Dear Sir/Madame,

My partner and I are looking to lease railroad tracks for a rail bike tourist operation. The idea would be to preserve the rail for potential future train use, bring in funds to the state for leasing, as well as bring significant tourist dollars to the surrounding areas. This business would be a green, no-impact to the environment, business. If you can send me the contact information of someone I could speak with regarding this, I would appreciate it. Thank you. Ben Mowatt

If required, please respond as soon as possible.

From: [Howard, Nathan](#)
To: nebkram@hotmail.com
Subject: RE: Lower Road Public Comments
Date: Wednesday, February 1, 2023 3:06:00 PM

Mr. Mowatt -

As the result of recent Legislation, many state-owned inactive corridors are the subject of Rail Use Advisory Councils. The purpose of these councils is to facilitate discussion, gather information, and provide advice to the commissioner regarding the future use of a rail corridor identified in the petition. These recommendations will include the benefits and costs of potential uses of the rail corridor, including rail and trail use, with the understanding that any non-rail use of the corridor is considered interim in nature.

Some of these rail lines many may be converted into trails subject to approval by the Legislature.

I would suggesting waiting for this process to complete before exploring use of these lines for rail bikes.

For more information on Rail Use Advisory Councils: <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/ofps/ruac/>

Nate

Nathan Howard
Director, Rail Transportation
MaineDOT, Planning
Division of Freight and Business Logistics
(207) 624-3042

-----Original Message-----

From: Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov <Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov>
Sent: Sunday, January 29, 2023 2:26 AM
To: Howard, Nathan <Nathan.Howard@maine.gov>
Subject: Lower Road Public Comments

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

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Date: Sunday, 29-Jan-2023 02:19:47 EST
Name: Benjamin Mowatt
Organization(if applicable):
Phone: 6033124023
Email: nebkram@hotmail.com

Topic:

Comments:

Dear Sir/Madame,

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