

Maine Coordinating Working Group on Access and Mobility

Meeting Minutes of February 2, 2026 – Held via Zoom

Working Group Members in attendance: Nathanael Batson, Kirk Bellavance, Roger Bondeson, Zoe Miller, Samantha Horn, Tom Reinauer, Megan Salvin, Libby Stone-Sterling, Joyce Taylor.

Others in attendance: Jennifer Grant, Ryan Neale (MaineDOT); Elizabeth Gattine, Maine Cabinet on Aging.

Welcome and Introductions. MaineDOT is finalizing the contract with the consultant and will let the group know when this is complete.

Review of Tasks from the Legislation. The three main tasks from the legislation are establishing a mobility management plan among state agencies, building interagency coordination, and using federal guidance and models from other jurisdictions to remove barriers and develop methods of cost sharing. There is general agreement among the group on the second and third tasks, but we should develop a shared definition of mobility management to guide the consultant's work.

Mobility management can help address the lack of understanding of transportation resources but may not improve access. Mobility management can help highlight challenges that individual transportation providers are experiencing. A statewide mobility manager is needed to continue to advance these issues.

MaineDOT does not currently have a position or funding for a full-time mobility manager. The group could recommend that the legislature fund a new position or positions. Rural Health Transformation Grant funds are a possibility in the short term but a sustainable funding source would be needed. The statewide position could serve as a mobility facilitator, focused on high level issues, with regional hubs addressing specific issues at that level. We would need to identify funding sources and determine where a statewide position would be housed. We may need to identify which regions have sufficient resources currently and which need support, potentially starting small and expanding as needed.

Fund braiding may affect the structure of mobility management in Maine. We should understand the impact on transit providers of repurposing Federal Transit Administration funds that have typically been used for capital to support mobility management. Improved coordination may improve efficiency and free up funds to support the effort. State agencies will need to coordinate regularly on the braiding of funds from different funding sources. State agencies will need to understand the ongoing impacts on community action programs and other entities.

The consultant can assist with developing a vision that is informed by efforts in other states, including whether we want to pursue regional pilots or a statewide effort initially. The vision will then guide our implementation efforts. We should be flexible and fully understand the benefits and risks of different approaches in moving towards our overall goal.

We may want to look for short-term actions that will have lasting impacts and do not rely on funding, such as streamlining contracts (background checks, reimbursement rates) with DHHS, creating systems that can be implemented with existing resources, and expanding capacity to seek additional resources.

Discussion Topics from Previous Working Group Meetings.

The group discussed aspects of mobility management for our definition:

- Helping users easily and independently navigate transportation systems
- Building awareness of transportation systems, facilitating communication, and connecting to information and resources
- Providing direct service, including connecting individuals and families with services, travel training, trip planning
- Reviewing trends in transportation systems, identifying gaps in services and opportunities to address
- Communicating, which can be through advocates and stakeholders who can help communicate and facilitate discussions with individuals
- Connecting with community planning for transportation

Identify Questions for the Consultant or Others.

Members were invited to share questions for the consultant with MaineDOT staff.

Next Steps, Recap, and Adjourn.

MaineDOT staff are working with the Transportation Committee on the timing of the report to the legislature, including the possibility of an interim report, that does not rush the process. The group may need to find a balance between high-level and specific recommendations, such as streamlining contracts. It may be helpful to recommend the creation of an ongoing working group to address such issues rather than trying to address everything with this effort. There are good examples of such issues that a statewide coordinator could work with transit providers and state agencies to address.

Tom mentioned that he would share a blueprint for mobility management from New Hampshire.

The next meeting will focus on introducing the consultant and working with them to develop a work plan.

The next Working Group meeting is Wednesday, February 11, from 8:30 to 10 a.m.