

Maine Coordinating Working Group on Access and Mobility

Meeting Minutes of February 11, 2026 – Held via Zoom

Working Group Members in attendance: Melissa Beecher, Roger Bondeson, Samantha Horn, Jess Maurer, Zoe Miller, Tom Reinauer, Megan Salvin, Libby Stone-Sterling, Joyce Taylor.

Others in attendance: Jennifer Grant, Ryan Neale, MaineDOT; Laura Machela, Jill Cahoon, AECOM; Will Reckley, RLS Associates; Elizabeth Gattine, Maine Cabinet on Aging; Megan Hannan, Greater Portland Metro.

Welcome and Introductions: The contract with consultant AECOM and subconsultant RLS Associates was finalized on February 10. Roger, Libby, Melissa, and MaineDOT staff scored the proposals. AECOM and RLS were introduced to the group.

Summary of Work to this Point: The Working Group has heard from New Hampshire, Ohio, and Vermont on their programs and from the Federal Transit Administration on the federal Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility's work. The Group has had several productive discussions and has identified questions and topics needing further research by the consultant.

Discussion of Consultant Work Plan and Timeline: AECOM has reviewed some of the group's work to this point. AECOM has experience in allocating 5310 funds and other work around providing transportation for older adults and individuals with disabilities. AECOM's 2023 study on a mobility management program for Massachusetts may inform the Working Group's efforts.

AECOM will prepare two memos, one led by RLS on existing NEMT and public transportation in Maine, including funding and regulatory constraints, and one led by AECOM on lessons for mobility management in Maine based on efforts in other jurisdictions. These will inform the implementation plan which will include recommendations for mobility management in Maine, including a timeline, budget, and staffing framework. The plan will also include recommendations for collaboration among and between state agencies and transportation providers, with a focus on improving efficiency, limiting costs, and sustainability over the long term.

The group will want to fully understand how the programs in Ohio and other states have actually worked, including pros and cons from experience on the ground, rather than a high-level academic study.

A simple outline of current and potential funding sources for public transportation will be a helpful starting point, including how human services funding can support this work. The available funding options may have changed from what was available when other states began their programs.

Regional mobility managers could help address the transportation needs of those not covered by Medicaid and that this should be included in the plan. Some programs will pay for rides but do not currently have the capacity for mobility management.

The group should fully understand the impact of potentially repurposing funds that have been used for capital needs for mobility management. With current finding constraints, we will need to find ways to be more efficient with the resources that are currently available.

Medicaid funding has many constraints but DHHS is open to creative approaches. Uncertainty at the federal level may affect overall funding levels. Some transporters are traveling up to 150 miles one way to pick up and transport passengers. Finding a way to reduce deadhead miles can greatly improve efficiency.

The group's recommendations can include both short term and longer term solutions. Some issues, like the connection between housing and transportation and workforce transportation, may be beyond the Working Group's purview but could be listed as areas for additional study. Funding for workforce transportation is another potential funding source.

RLS has a good deal of experience on cost allocation practices and implementation.

Next Steps, Recap, and Adjourn.

A smaller group will meet with the consultant team in advance of the next full Working Group meeting to flesh out some of the details and timeline. MaineDOT is in discussion with legislators around the timing of the Group's report to the legislature, including a possible interim report.

The next Working Group meeting, scheduled for February 23 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m., may be repurposed. If so, the full Working Group would next meet on March 9 from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m.