

Transportation Working Group (TWG)

Meeting details: 3/13/24 (1:00-4:00 PM), hybrid meeting

1) Welcome and meeting overview

Meeting Goal: to discuss strategies for transitioning away from single occupancy vehicles in rural and urban areas and begin coalescing around updated recommendations for reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) based on small group and large group discussions.

The meeting agenda included:

- Review Maine Won't Wait (MWW) goals and actions
- Review of studies and tools that help us quantify benefits from policies and VMT reduction strategies (spoiler alert: we are data poor)
- Recap of completed and ongoing work (with an accompanying handout)
- Possible, updated actions for MWW

2) Centering Ourselves in the Data

To center the conversation on VMT reduction strategies, several studies and tools that provide data were reviewed with the group. The key take-aways from the review of these studies and tools are:

- Existing tools, reports, and studies give an indication of the most cost-effective strategies to reduce emissions and achieve other benefits.
- They do not calculate VMT reduction for individual strategies.

See the accompanying PPT presentation for more information on these studies and tools.

3) Testing Possible Actions for an Updated Maine Won't Wait

Both the large TWG group and smaller break-out groups discussed possible updated actions for MWW. Initial, possible actions were provided for the discussion and included:

- Conduct a *VMT Reduction Roadmap* that addresses data gaps and sets equitable short-, medium-, and long-term data-informed priorities.
- Pursue immediate actions that achieve progress and generate data:
 - Pursue active transportation options by prioritizing first and last mile infrastructure; filling gaps in the network; supporting demonstration pilot programs.
 - Improve transit service and accessibility through small, cost-effective projects and pilots
- Public education and awareness campaigns
- Other policies?

These actions were developed based on TWG discussions during past meetings and with input from the smaller VMT working group. To facilitate the break-out group discussions, each group used a discussion and note-taking template with the actions above and provided recommendations on how to improve the actions and identify any missing actions.

A summary of the input provided during the large group and smaller group discussions includes:

VMT Reduction Roadmap

- Support for VMT Reduction Roadmap action.
- Recommendation to get Maine-specific data, if possible, through pilot projects, etc.
- Identify priority corridors for pilots using Streetlight origin-destination data.
- Better understand benefits of active transportation “arterials” and the services we provide communities by providing active transportation and transit options.
- Be more specific about the benefits of different transit solutions.

Transit

- The suggested transit action should include innovative and large-scale pilots (e.g., intercity pilots and on-demand transit)
- Action should include improved, streamlined, and coordinated transit service
- Action should include unmet transit needs in rural areas.
- Explore pilot project to incentivize cleaner vehicles for volunteer driver programs.
- Provide more concrete goals for transit and active transportation.

Public Education and Awareness

- Need for multiple public education and awareness campaigns (e.g., active transportation, transit (including the Downeaster), and for different users and regions of the state).
- Pursue public education campaign for kids to use school buses, especially if they are electric.
- Work with employers to help educate and incentivize employees to take transit, active transportation, and use commuter programs to reduce use of single occupancy vehicles.
- Assign responsibility for campaigns.

Other

- Any investments that increase VMT should have accompanying VMT offsets elsewhere.
- Review elements that weigh into a person’s decision to drive.
- Understanding the implications of new roads to VMT and GHG.

There were several recommendations related to land use strategies. These have been pulled out of the notes and will be carried forward to a separate land use discussion.

6) Next Steps & Close

- The next TWG meeting will be held virtually on April 10th and will focus on the medium- and heavy-duty vehicle roadmap. It will also include an update on the EV and VMT actions.