

From: [Moulton, Nathan](#)
To: [jbartlett](#); [Howard, Nathan](#)
Cc: [wshane](#)
Subject: RE: Rail Use Advisory Council - Questions from Portland
Date: Monday, November 14, 2022 3:23:01 PM

Hi Jeremiah,

See below for brief answers to your questions in **Red** from MaineDOT's perspective, they certainly can be raised with the larger Council for discussion at the meeting. Nate Howard will forward your questions and our answers to the Council and post on the RUAC webpage so that everyone has the same information and can follow up.

Thanks for your continued participation in the RUAC.

Nate

From: Jeremiah Bartlett <jbartlett@portlandmaine.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 14, 2022 2:00 PM
To: Howard, Nathan <Nathan.Howard@maine.gov>; Moulton, Nathan <Nathan.Moulton@maine.gov>
Cc: wshane <wshane@cumberlandmaine.com>
Subject: Rail Use Advisory Council - Questions from Portland

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Good Afternoon,

Thank you both for your time and effort so far on this process to date.

I wanted to make sure that questions I have are able to be considered as we move forward in this process. I have them below, and I am sure others may follow depending upon our level of deliberation.

Other Passenger Rail Initiatives: While it is clear that many additional questions remain unanswered regarding this topic, and several studies and proposals surrounding it, our work would benefit from a concise update on the latest discussions relating to any and all passenger rail expansion efforts that may include or impact activity between Auburn and Portland. One of the current challenges we have in our deliberative process is attempting to understand all of the disparate efforts taking place on related matters.

The continuing study process that the State is involved in is the Economic Evaluation Study for Passenger Rail between Portland and Lewiston/Auburn. The link for that webpage for that study is below, the previous L/A rail propensity study and Operations Plans and Assessment study are also on this webpage and are also included in the webpage for this RUAC. The Economic Evaluation Study has had one public meeting and will have a second in December before the report is issued. That project was directed by the Legislature and is the only expansion study the MaineDOT is involved in

at this time between Portland and L/A.

[Lewiston Auburn Rail Plan | Meetings and Minutes | MaineDOT](#)

Relocation of NNEPRA Facility: Some provision of information to the Council on this relocation would be helpful, in terms of likely scale, accommodations, and geographic placement. Even for a Portland staffer, these details remain cloudy, and as of late this effort appears to have slowed.

NNEPRA has not announced a final proposed location but is focused on a location on the CSX mainline between Congress St. and the Fore River Bridge for any new station.

Implications of Pan Am Acquisition by CSX: If there is real movement in the direction of expanded passenger rail utilizing the Maine Central Main Line, to what extent has this been acknowledged by CSX? To what extent is CSX seeking to accommodate such changes? Is CSX even supportive of expanded passenger rail?

There is active passenger service on CSX to Yarmouth, CSX is aware of the ongoing L/A passenger Economic Evaluation study referenced above but has not taken a position that we are aware of. Any service or route will require the use of CSX property to get to downtown locations in Lewiston/Auburn and in Portland if a direct connection to the Downeaster is desired. Any agreements would be part of a future host railroad negotiation if a formal service plan and financing for a state sponsored passenger rail moved forward.

Population Representation: Does each member of the Advisory Council's input hold the same weight? Or, to put it differently, does Portland's input have the same weight as communities with a smaller population?

Yes, each vote would have equal weight

Equity: Often the challenge with public process, input thus far seems highly skewed toward specific demographics, and ones that may not experience the same benefits as those who have more barriers to providing input. Will any listening sessions be held at either end of the corridor, where generally speaking, input from a larger array of demographic interests tends to be more prevalent?

There will be a public meeting on December 5th in Cumberland for input by any party, the webpage is open for comments at any time. If it is felt by the RUAC that additional public meetings are required then that should be discussed and voted on by the Council. LD 1133 which directed this process requires one public meeting in corridor under review.

Future Steps: Regardless of recommendation moving forward, is there much action required following any direction from the Council? Is the outcome as much symbolic as it is deliberative? If a community commits to a certain outcome, will any sort of future commitment be required, be it a memorandum of understanding, or a financial commitment, or potentially, supportive zoning and land use regulations?

LD 1133 outlines the process for the RUAC and steps following a recommendation from the RUAC to the MaineDOT Commissioner. See Section 2 at the link below for LD 1133.

Future commitments would be likely from municipalities if any scenario contemplated in LD 1133 moves forward. Such things as passenger rail platform/station construction and/or maintenance in a future passenger rail scenario as currently is the case with most Downeaster stations or a trail corridor group representing municipalities in the corridor doing day to day maintenance on a trail as with the Kennebec River rail/trail currently. Things such a supportive zoning are likely necessary as well for any project to be successful.

<http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP0811&item=4&snum=130>

Thank you,
Jeremiah

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