

MaineDOT Locally Coordinated Transit Plan

Region 2

Washington Hancock Community Agency (WHCA)

Downeast Transportation, Inc. (DTI)

West's Transportation

Cranberry Isles Commuter Ferry

Isle au Haut Boat Services/IaH Mailboat

FY 2013 – FY 2017

Locally Coordinated Plan Update

Updated May, 2017

Table of Contents

Summary of Service Changes since FY 2012 1

Accomplishments since FY 2012 2

 Report on Projects and Priorities in the FY 2013 – 2017 LCP 4

New Topics of Interest..... 6

One-way Trips FY 2013 – FY 2017 12

Public Participation Summary 14

**Region 2
Hancock and Washington Counties**

Summary of Service Changes since FY 2012

Washington Hancock Community Agency Transportation Program

1. **Maine Fair Trade Lobster.** Work related transportation is provided to Maine Fair Trade Lobster employees in Washington and Hancock County.
2. **Additional service to coastal communities.** WHCA was able to expand services in additional coastal communities such as Stonington, Deer Isle and the Bar Harbor region. This was done by adding additional vehicles and staff. We are reviewing feasibility of expanding flex route service in both counties.
3. **New senior routes.** We have added two routes for seniors - Bucksport to Bangor Shopping and Eastport/Lubec to Bangor.

Downeast Transportation, Inc.

1. **Operating season extension - Schoodic.** Extended the operating season at Schoodic.
2. **Schoodic service frequency.** Doubled the frequency of service at Schoodic.
3. **Commuter starting point.** Changed the start point of our commuter route from Cherryfield to Milbridge.
4. **Jordan Pond routes combined.** Combined the Jordan Pond Express and #5 Jordan Pond Routes.
5. **Sand Beach and Blackwoods routes combined.** Combined the #3 Sand Beach and Blackwoods routes.

West's Transportation, Inc.

1. **Ridership.** Ridership on the general public routes (Bangor/Calais intercity daily service and Washington County route) stayed the same or increased. Medicaid ridership and ridership on the summer migrant program have stayed the same.
2. **New bus.** A new bus was added to the intercity route in 2016.
3. **Used buses.** Used buses from ARTS have helped with the success of the migrant program.

Isle au Haut Boat Services

The scheduled operations of Isle au Haut Boat Services remain the same as described in the previous plan. We have been able to add two weeks to our service schedule to the Duck Harbor Landing of Acadia National Park, which provides additional day trip and camper fares during the later September weather.

Cranberry Isles Commuter Services

Cranberry Isles Commuter Boat service has been operating successfully since the fall of 2010. There have been no service changes since FY 2012.

Accomplishments since FY 2012

Washington Hancock Community Agency

- 1. New Service for Seniors.** We have added two new routes for the expansion of transportation services for the elderly. We have provided 1500 rides to seniors as of December 31, 2016.
- 2. Economic Impact.** We have made a positive economic impact utilizing Section 5311 funds, by providing transportation for workers at Maine Fair Trade Lobster in Prospect Harbor. As of December 31, 2016 we provided over 28,000 rides over multiple years to 272 workers.
- 3. Ridership.** The need for transportation continues in Washington and Hancock Counties, however ridership has increased. In 2012 we provided 24,848 general public rides and in 2016 we provided 62,914 general public rides.

Downeast Transportation, Inc.

- 1. Gateway Center.** Opened the Acadia Gateway Center in February 2012.
- 2. Ridership record.** Set new Island Explorer ridership records in 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016.
- 3. 6 millionth passenger.** Carried Island Explorer's six millionth passenger in 2016.
- 4. Strategic Plan.** Participated in MDOT's Strategic Plan 2025 project.
- 5. Acadia transportation planning.** Participated in Acadia National Park's two year Transportation Planning process.

- 6. Transportation Research Board.** Presented to the Transportation Research Board in Washington DC in 2014 and again in 2016, on public/private partnerships and intelligent transportation systems, respectively.
- 7. Jackson Lab commuter service.** Began a planning process with The Jackson Laboratory for expanded commuter service when their new facility comes on line in 2018.
- 8. ITS upgrade.** Performed a major system-wide upgrade to our ITS in 2016.
- 9. Bus radios.** Changed frequency and replaced all two way radios on all buses in 2016.

West's Transportation, Inc.

- 1. Growing public support.** We have been visiting communities and organizations to help them better coordinate their transportation needs.
- 2. Expansion of Maine recreational trails.** West's has had an increase in ridership from hikers and biker groups due to interest in the trail system.
- 3. Sea Coast Mission.** The programs for their food pantries and children's programs have gone from a seasonal project to a year-round service.

Isle au Haut Boat Services

- 1. Ridership.** Ridership remains roughly even, as the community of Isle au Haut has not grown appreciably since the last report. We continue to operate two daily round trips Monday – Saturday in the winter season (approximately 9 months), using one boat. During the summer season we continue to operate five daily round trips to the Isle au Haut Town Landing, two of which also serve the Acadia Park Land at Duck Harbor. The great majority of our income depends on July and August day trip and summer resident traffic. We have been able to remain economically stable in the face of increasing costs, with only moderate fare increases for non-residents. Our resident fare and our school fare have not increased since 2011.
- 2. Sightseeing services.** We have continued to expand our offering of sightseeing excursions during the times when our boats are not operating scheduled trips. These are primarily scheduled on Sundays, when our summer Sunday schedule requires only boat, leaving the second boat free. Puffin viewing trips and Lighthouse viewing trips have proved very popular. During 2016 Sunday sightseeing trips provided an additional \$58,500 in income (not included in any of these reporting tables) with little additional operating cost.

Cranberry Isles Commuter Services

Residents have come to rely on the Cranberry Isles Commuter Boat for transportation needs that are not met by the regular private commercial ferry service(s), particularly during the

winter months (Mid-October through the end of April). Ridership remains steady for trips needed for getting to employment on the mainland, school trips, doctor's appointments, etc.

Report on Projects and Priorities in the FY 2013-2017 Locally Coordinated Plan

Washington Hancock Community Agency

- 1. New Services for underserved.** We have added staff and vehicles and have been able to expand services in both counties.
- 2. Addition Buses.** Since 2012 we have added an additional 19 vehicles to our fleet and we now have 37 Agency drivers.
- 3. Grant funding.** Work related transportation has made an economic impact. We provided about 28,000 rides to work at Maine Fair Trade Lobster.
- 4. Wheel chair accessible vehicles.** Since 2012 we have added 19 vehicles to our fleet and 15 of those are wheelchair accessible.
- 5. New Service for Seniors.** We have added two new routes for the elderly. We have provided 1500 rides to seniors as of December 31, 2016.
- 6. Car Washes.** This is still a need in both Washington and Hancock County. We have purchased a pressure washer and attachment to clean the undercarriage of vehicles. A new car wash in Ellsworth has been added, but it only can service the mini-vans.
- 7. Dialysis Transportation.** Dialysis transportation has fluctuated over the past four years. Currently requests for dialysis transportation are at an all-time low.
- 8. Expansion of Community Transit.** Feeder routes between Peninsula communities and Route 1 have not been successful.

Downeast Transportation, Inc.

- 1. Mount Desert Island Service** This remains a goal. We have not made significant progress. This may change as we explore our options for new commuter service with The Jackson Laboratory.
- 2. Bar Harbor/Bangor frequency.** We continue to look for opportunities that will enable this.
- 3. Ellsworth/Bucksport.** Although this is identified as a goal in the LCP we do not believe there is a market sufficient to justify this service.
- 4. Schoodic Peninsula/Ellsworth.** Although this is identified as a goal in the LCP we do not believe there is a market sufficient to justify this service.

5. **Loop Service.** We have begun discussions of increasing frequency on the Ellsworth Shuttle.
6. **Acadia Gateway Center.** We are currently engaged in a two year planning process with Acadia National Park and the National Park Service. The Gateway Center is part of this process.
7. **Intercity Service.** This is being coordinated with planning for the Acadia Gateway Center.
8. **New Routes to Bar Harbor and Southwest Harbor.** This is being coordinated with planning for the Acadia Gateway Center.
9. **Transit/Ferry Connections.** In 2016 we created connections with a new ferry service between Winter Harbor and Mount Desert Island. The former Blue Nose ferry terminal in Bar Harbor has been purchased by the State of Maine and is anticipated to be operated by the Town of Bar Harbor. We are engaged with the town and Acadia National Park about enhanced operations serving that terminal.
10. **Ellsworth Star Center** This project is no longer being considered.

West's Transportation, Inc.

1. **Expansion difficulty.** West's is having a difficult time expanding its services due to the growth of publicly supported transportation.
2. **New direction, transportation industry.** The new direction of our industry has changed during the last four decades. It has helped transportation needs for now, but is on the edge of creating a monopoly.
3. **Lost opportunities.** Since the 1970's, West's has lost seasonal opportunities, employee shuttles, school contracts and other services due to new providers that did not exist until recently.

Isle au Haut Boat Services

1. **Boat Replacement.** Our most important priority for the period just ended was to replace our 49 year old wooden boat, *Miss Lizzie*. Maintenance costs for *Miss Lizzie* averaged \$31,000 per year from 2011 through 2015, with occasional annual doubling under Coast Guard requirements. In February of 2015 we began construction of a new fiberglass boat, a Wesmac 46 Super. She entered service in August of 2016, christened *Otter*.
 - *Otter* is licensed for 79 passengers and two crew (compared with 52 for *Miss Lizzie*). We filled her to capacity several times in her first three weeks of service. *Otter* can also cruise at more than twice the speed of our older boats. For economy we operate at a speed of only 10 knots on scheduled runs, but in an emergency we have 23 knots available.

- The capital cost of *Otter* was about \$1 million. She has an expected life of 50 years in service. The funding of the project included \$100,000 from 5311 capital support, \$31,500 from the sale of *Miss Lizzie*, \$50,000 from our own cash reserves and a bank loan of \$125,000. The balance, about \$694,000, was raised in private donations from in and around the Isle au Haut community. Over 45 individual donors contributed.
2. **Life Raft.** We had also listed the purchase of a new inflatable raft for our other boat, the *Mink*, as a priority. This was also completed.
 3. **New Equipment.** We did not complete our goal of purchasing a new chart plotter, new radios and new radar for *Mink*. We will carry this goal forward, with the objective of having identical modern electronic equipment on both boats. The installed cost of a chart plotter, two VHF radios and a new radar set will be about \$20,000.
 4. **Stonington Wharf.** Work was completed to install stronger and higher railings around the edges of our Stonington wharf, and also to replace worn out portions of the plank decking on our wharf.

Cranberry Isles Commuter Services

Since the Cranberry Isles Commuter Boat serves a relatively small but stable population living on the two islands with year-round populations, the goal is to maintain ridership at current levels. A new boat was put into service by the contractor which is faster and more reliable, and provides greater passenger comfort. The Town and boat operator are working to reduce the number of cancelations due to weather conditions.

New Topics of Interest

The following ideas were identified and prioritized at a public transit workshop held at DTI's office in Trenton on October 12, 2016. An anonymous polling system was used to determine instant digital ratings. There were 24 people who participated in the polling and a total of 21 questions. The polling results obtained at the workshop are summarized for each question.

It was explained to those in attendance that support for a topic of interest does not guarantee its implementation. Transit providers face many challenges, not least of which are budget considerations, as well as opportunities that may not be foreseen at this time.

In addition, MaineDOT reserves the right to address service gaps by redirecting funds to other groups and organizations, even though such actions could negatively impact one or more of the identified areas of interest summarized and rated below.

Region 2 Rating of New Topics of Interest

1. How important is public Transit to you?

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	73.91%	17
Somewhat Important	26.09%	6
Little Importance	0.00%	0
No opinion	0.00%	0
Totals	100%	23

2. Do you or any of your family members use public transportation?

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Yes	40.91%	9
No	59.09%	13
Totals	100%	22

3. Education/Training re: transit

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	58.33%	14
Somewhat Important	33.33%	8
Little Importance	8.33%	2
No opinion	0.00%	0
Totals	100%	24

4. GoMaine – Van pool/Car pool/Commuter

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	31.82%	7
Somewhat Important	36.36%	8
Little Importance	27.27%	6
No opinion	4.55%	1
Totals	100%	22

MaineDOT Locally Coordinated Transit Plan – Region 2

5. New Model for General Transit

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	86.96%	20
Somewhat Important	4.35%	1
Little Importance	8.70%	2
No opinion	0.00%	0
Totals	100%	23

6. Local Funding Strategies

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	63.64%	14
Somewhat Important	31.82%	7
Little Importance	4.55%	1
No opinion	0.00%	0
Totals	100%	22

7. (DTI). Replace fleet

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	56.52%	13
Somewhat Important	34.78%	8
Little Importance	4.35%	1
No opinion	4.35%	1
Totals	100%	23

8. (DTI). Redesign year-round schedule

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	37.50%	9
Somewhat Important	54.17%	13
Little Importance	4.17%	1
No opinion	4.17%	1
Totals	100%	24

MaineDOT Locally Coordinated Transit Plan – Region 2

9. (DTI). Implement Acadia Transportation Study

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	56.52%	13
Somewhat Important	13.04%	3
Little Importance	8.70%	2
No opinion	21.74%	5
Totals	100%	23

10. (DTI). Redesign operations – year-round

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	52.38%	11
Somewhat Important	33.33%	7
Little Importance	4.76%	1
No opinion	9.52%	2
Totals	100%	21

11. (DTI). Enhance Jackson Labs commuter service

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	39.13%	9
Somewhat Important	30.43%	7
Little Importance	13.04%	3
No opinion	17.39%	4
Totals	100%	23

12. (Isle au Haut). Relocate ticket sales

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	4.35%	1
Somewhat Important	21.74%	5
Little Importance	21.74%	5
No opinion	52.17%	12
Totals	100%	23

MaineDOT Locally Coordinated Transit Plan – Region 2

13. (Isle au Haut). Replace floats/repair wharf

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	45.45%	10
Somewhat Important	31.82%	7
Little Importance	0.00%	0
No opinion	22.73%	5
Totals	100%	22

14. (Isle au Haut).Extra space use – Stonington Building

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	8.70%	2
Somewhat Important	26.09%	6
Little Importance	13.04%	3
No opinion	52.17%	12
Totals	100%	23

15. (Cranberry Isles). Extend dock on Little Cranberry

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	39.13%	9
Somewhat Important	43.48%	10
Little Importance	0.00%	0
No opinion	17.39%	4
Totals	100%	23

16. (Cranberry Isles). Consolidate services

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	54.17%	13
Somewhat Important	20.83%	5
Little Importance	8.33%	2
No opinion	16.67%	4
Totals	100%	24

MaineDOT Locally Coordinated Transit Plan – Region 2

17. (WHCA). Washington County focus

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Very Important	41.67%	10
Somewhat Important	37.50%	9
Little Importance	4.17%	1
No opinion	16.67%	4
Totals	100%	24

18. (WHCA). Replace vehicles

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Very Important	52.17%	12
Somewhat Important	21.74%	5
Little Importance	4.35%	1
No opinion	21.74%	5
Totals	100%	23

19. (WHCA). Coordinate approach with DHHS

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Very Important	50.00%	12
Somewhat Important	25.00%	6
Little Importance	4.17%	1
No opinion	20.83%	5
Totals	100%	24

20. (West's). Replace vehicles with transit vans

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Very Important	50.00%	11
Somewhat Important	22.73%	5
Little Importance	0.00%	0
No opinion	27.27%	6
Totals	100%	22

MaineDOT Locally Coordinated Transit Plan – Region 2

21. (West’s). Eastport-Calais, plus ferry

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Very Important	30.43%	7
Somewhat Important	26.09%	6
Little Importance	0.00%	0
No opinion	43.48%	10
Totals	100%	23

One-Way Trips FY 2013 – 2016

WHCA

WHCA Demand Response Trips				
	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
General Public	2,574	3,812	11,822	12,490
MaineCare	110,833	44,229	50,237	55,179
DHHS Other	7,553	9,656	15,539	10,704
Other	10,186	1,803	1,782	2,871
Total	131,146	59,500	79,380	81,244

Downeast Transportation, Inc.

Downeast Transportation, Inc. Flex Route and Demand Response Trips				
	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
General Public	488,659	561,999	590,970	627,441

West’s Transportation, Inc.

West’s Transportation, Inc. Flex Route and Demand Response Trips				
	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Washington County Route	4,399	4,268	3,905	4,569
Bangor/Calais Intercity	2,982	2,876	2,893	3,323
MaineCare	5,492	4,795	4,182	6,595

Isle au Haut Boat Services

Isle au Haut Boat Services Flex Route Trips				
	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
General Public	19,264	18,177	19,284	19,622

Cranberry Isles Commuter Services

Cranberry Isle Commuter Services Flex Route Trips				
	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
General Public	907	885	891	872

Public Participation Summary

Public participation has played a central role in planning and providing general public transit services in Hancock and Washington Counties. All transit agencies in the two-county region value the important role that the public plays in ensuring that general public transit services continue to support the economic and social fabric of the communities that they serve. The following highlights major public participation milestones.

WHCA

WHCA Transportation participates in a variety of local groups with an interest in transportation

- 1. Commuter transportation.** WHCA has had discussions with two employers, one in Washington County and one in Hancock County, regarding the possibility of commuter transportation.
- 2. Transit workshop.** WHCA attended the Region 2 Transit Workshop on October 12, 2016, at the Acadia Gateway Center in Trenton.
- 3. Flex route service to Gateway Center.** We have had discussions with the Ellsworth Chamber of Commerce regarding general public flex route to the Gateway Center in Trenton.
- 4. Washington County Transportation Work Group.** WHCA has also participated in the Washington County Transportation Work Group.
- 5. Community Care and Collaborative.** WHCA attends monthly meeting with Community Care and Collaborative, where transportation is always identified as a problem within the community.

Downeast Transportation, Inc.

- 1. MaineDOT Strategic Plan.** Participated in MDOT's Strategic Plan 2025 process.
- 2. Acadia planning process.** Participated in Acadia National Park's two year Transportation Planning process.
- 3. Transit workshop.** Hosted a Region 2 Transit workshop at our facility on October 12, 2016.
- 4. Transportation Research Board.** Presented to the Transportation Research Board in Washington DC on the topics of public/private partnerships and intelligent transportation systems.

MaineDOT Locally Coordinated Transit Plan – Region 2

5. **MDI League of Towns.** Presented information on transit to MDI League of Towns in October, 2016.
6. **Local budget presentations on transit.** Presented information on our services to municipal budget meetings in Bar Harbor, Southwest Harbor, Mount Desert, Tremont, Ellsworth, Winter Harbor, Bucksport.

West's Transportation, Inc.

1. **Transit workshop.** West's Transportation attended the Region 2 Transit workshop on October 12, 2016, at the Acadia Gateway Center in Trenton.
2. **Municipal outreach.** Went to the town offices in Steuben, Milbridge and Jonesport to provide information about West's bus services.
3. **Hands and Hands.** Met periodically with the local migrant organization, Hands and Hands, to review West's bus services.
4. **Educational outreach.** Went to the University of Maine at Machias, Washington Academy in East Machias, and Calais Vocational Technical College, to provide information about West's bus services.
5. **Ridership survey.** Distributed a ridership survey several times a year to obtain customer feedback on available services.

Isle au Haut Boat Services

1. **Isle au Haut town meeting.** Our principal public appearance is at the Isle au Haut Town Meeting. The President and the Treasurer of Boat Services attend the Town Meeting in connection with our request for funding from the Town, which has been \$50,000 for the past three years. We normally give a brief presentation and answer questions. There have been several occasions when requests for changes in our service to the island were raised, and we normally have been able to comply with these requests.
2. **Transit workshop.** Isle au Haut attended the Region 2 Transit workshop on October 12, 2016, at the Acadia Gateway Center in Trenton.
3. **Acadia Park management.** We also meet annually with Acadia Park management in Bar Harbor to plan for each coming season in terms of scheduling, information sharing, and Park Service outreach to campers and hikers.

Cranberry Isles Commuter Services

1. **Survey and public forums.** During FY 2015 & 2016 we conducted a survey and public forums to hear comments about all ferry operations serving Cranberry Isles, including the Cranberry Isles Commuter Boat, and how they are meeting the transportation needs of the

MaineDOT Locally Coordinated Transit Plan – Region 2

Town. This was part of a year-long effort to develop a plan to consolidate the 3 ferry services operating in the Town. Although the consolidation plan was not funded in FY 2016, the plan remains a goal of the Town in order to develop a more efficient ferry transportation system for the future, to include the Cranberry Isles Commuter Service as a component of the system.

- 2. Transit workshop.** Cranberry Isles attended the Region 2 Transit workshop on October 12, 2016, at the Acadia Gateway Center in Trenton.