

MaineDOT Locally Coordinated Transit Plan

Region 7

Western Maine Transportation Services (WMTS)

Lewiston-Auburn Transit Committee (LATC)/citylink

FY 2013 – FY 2017

Locally Coordinated Plan Update

Updated May, 2017

Table of Contents

Summary of Service Changes since FY 20121

Accomplishments since FY 20121

Report on Projects and Priorities in the FY 2013 – 2017 LCP.....2

New Topics of Interest.....3

One-way Trips FY 2013 – FY 201710

Public Participation Summary11

Region 7
Androscoggin, Franklin and Oxford Counties and
and
The Town of Brunswick in Cumberland County (Flex Route Brunswick Explorer)

Summary of Service Changes since FY 2012

Western Maine Transportation Services

1. **Brunswick Explorer.** WMTS assumed operation of Brunswick Explorer on April 25, 2016. In less than a year of operation WMTS has increased ridership by approximately 35%, increased fleet dependability, expanded the operating schedule and increased the overall reliability of the service.
2. **Ridership increase.** WMTS saw a 20% increase in ridership for the Mtn. Explorer from FY 2015 to FY 2016.

LATC/citylink

1. **Service reduction.** LATC/citylink did not experience any major changes in service during FY 2013-2016. October 1, 2016 (FY 2017), local funding supporting citylink was reduced and LATC had to eliminate one bus from service, approximately 12.5 hours of service per week day.

Accomplishments since FY 2012

Western Maine Transportation Services

1. **Mobile data terminals and tablets.** Implementation of Mobile Data Terminals and Tablets to increase efficiency, improve data collection accuracy, reduce redundancy in data entry, improve communications between dispatch and drivers by providing drivers with electronic manifests for our demand response services.
2. **Tablet use.** Working with dispatching and scheduling vendor to develop and implement use of tablets in fixed, flex and future commuter services operated by WMTS. WMTS expects to begin implementation of electronic data collection for these services during FY 2017.
3. **Maintenance.** Invested in maintenance staff training, vehicle maintenance equipment and overhauled procedures and protocols to extend useful life of most transit equipment by approximately 30%.

4. **Transit feasibility study.** Secured funding through MaineDOT to undergo a feasibility study and planning process to begin March 2017 that will focus on providing public transit to support employment and continuing education.
5. **Transit forum.** Hosted a transit forum in July 2016 that was well attended by economic development and municipal officials throughout the WMTS service area. The demand for meaningful public transit access for all was reaffirmed.
6. **LATC contract.** Awarded new three-year contract for operation of LATC's citylink service and provision of ADA service for Lewiston & Auburn.

LATC/citylink

1. **Ridership increase.** LATC saw a steady increase in ridership through 2013 and 2014, peaking in 2015. Ridership in 2016 experienced a slight decline which has continued into 2017. The ridership decline in 2017 is attributed to the reduction in service.
2. **WMTS contract.** LATC entered into a new three-year contract with Western Maine Transportation Services, Inc., for operation and maintenance of fixed route and ADA service, FY 2017-2019.
3. **Bus shelters.** LATC installed four new bus shelters in Auburn in 2016. The new shelters provide an opportunity for advertising. The shelters were purchased by the City of Auburn.
4. **Bus station.** In October 2016, LATC opened a new bus station in Great Falls Plaza, Auburn. LATC worked with MaineDOT and the Federal Transit Administration for several years to complete construction of the station. The station is approximately 1,500 sq. ft., provides amenities for passengers, and a breakroom and restroom facilities for the drivers.
5. **Short range transit study.** LATC, with consultant Main Street Connections, completed a short range transit study in March 2016. LATC has been able to institute some of the study recommendations.
6. **FTA Direct Recipient.** AVCOG, LATC's fiscal agent, became a direct recipient for Federal Transit Administration funding. As a direct recipient, AVCOG/LATC is responsible for additional areas of compliance.

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

Western Maine Transportation Services

1. **Flex route service restoration.** WMTS stepped back from the "loop transit service" in the rural areas, but expects to have flex route operations return to the Norway/Oxford/South Paris area and the Farmington/Wilton area during 2017 and anticipates additional flex route services for the Rumford/Mexico and Jay/Livermore Falls areas soon after. (This

change in service was necessary to re-evaluate public transit needs and changing funding model.)

2. **Explorer services.** WMTS is moving forward with expansion of services and connecting services across our service areas. WMTS assumed operation of the Brunswick Explorer in April 2016 and adding this service to WMTS' other services allows WMTS to provide service from the western mountains to the eastern coastline.
3. **Feasibility study and transit plan.** The feasibility study and transit plan will allow WMTS to address a number of the priorities and projects in the locally coordinated plan. WMTS is presently planning to implement commuter service that will provide connections from the rural areas to the urban hub, allow passengers to access train (in Brunswick) and Greyhound in Lewiston and Concorde bus services in Auburn and Brunswick. WMTS will implement services as resources permit and expect to have commuter services fully implemented by FY 2021.
4. **Extension of vehicle life.** Although it has not been able to replace vehicles that are beyond their useful lives as defined by FTA, improved maintenance and care procedures has allowed these vehicles to remain in service.

LATC/citylink

1. **Full service.** As funding permits, LATC's goals are to reinstitute FY 2016 service levels, provide additional weekday hours of service and provide full service on Saturday.
2. **Tablets.** LATC is planning on installing tablets on its buses in FY 2017. The tablets will have real time GPS, have the ability to track on-off data, provide more accurate ridership data, and provide automated stop announcements.
3. **Portland service.** LATC will continue to work with partnering agencies to expand service to Portland, as well as assisting in making connections from other towns along the Route 4 corridor to towns along Route 196.
4. **Industrial park service.** LATC's Main Street Connections Study addresses the potential for future service to the Auburn Industrial Park.
5. **Concord Coach connection.** Other future service expansions would be to connect with Concord Coach at the Auburn Turnpike Exit to provide connections for intercity travel.

New Topics of Interest

The following ideas were identified and prioritized at a public transit workshop held at the offices of the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments in Auburn on October 25, 2016. An anonymous polling system was used to determine instant digital ratings. There were 22 people who participated in the polling and a total of 23 questions. The polling results obtained at the workshop are summarized for each question.

MaineDOT Locally Coordinated Transit Plan – Region 7

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 7 Rating of New Topics of Interest

1. How important is public transportation to you?

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	76.19%	16
Somewhat Important	23.81%	5
Little Importance	0.00%	0
No opinion	0.00%	0
Totals	100%	21

2. Have you or a member of your family used public transit?

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Yes	14.29%	3
No	85.71%	18
Totals	100%	21

3. Expand Mt. Explorer year-round; to go beyond recreation

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	30.00%	6
Somewhat Important	35.00%	7
Little Importance	20.00%	4
No opinion	15.00%	3
Totals	100%	20

4. Expand ¾ mile required for ADA to further distance

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	20.00%	4
Somewhat Important	35.00%	7
Little Importance	30.00%	6
No opinion	15.00%	3
Totals	100%	20

5. Expand L/A to Wilton employment

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	25.00%	5
Somewhat Important	45.00%	9
Little Importance	20.00%	4
No opinion	10.00%	2
Totals	100%	20

6. Student transportation between UMF/CMCC/USM-LA/Bates

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	47.62%	10
Somewhat Important	28.57%	6
Little Importance	14.29%	3
No opinion	9.52%	2
Totals	100%	21

7. Marketing/promotion information

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	80.00%	16
Somewhat Important	15.00%	3
Little Importance	5.00%	1
No opinion	0.00%	0
Totals	100%	20

8. Funding for transportation/transit planning for small communities

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Very Important	75.00%	15
Somewhat Important	20.00%	4
Little Importance	5.00%	1
No opinion	0.00%	0
Totals	100%	20

9. Flex route from Dixfield/Rumford to Bethel area

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Very Important	47.62%	10
Somewhat Important	19.05%	4
Little Importance	9.52%	2
No opinion	23.81%	5
Totals	100%	21

10. Increase options for low income

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Very Important	71.43%	15
Somewhat Important	19.05%	4
Little Importance	9.52%	2
No opinion	0.00%	0
Totals	100%	21

11. Route 4 commuter corridor L/A to Farmington/Rumford

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Very Important	47.62%	10
Somewhat Important	19.05%	4
Little Importance	14.29%	3
No opinion	19.05%	4
Totals	100%	21

12. Transit to employment hubs

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Very Important	65.00%	13
Somewhat Important	35.00%	7
Little Importance	0.00%	0
No opinion	0.00%	0
Totals	100%	20

13. Sunday service

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Very Important	20.00%	4
Somewhat Important	20.00%	4
Little Importance	40.00%	8
No opinion	20.00%	4
Totals	100%	20

14. Evening service – L/A

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Very Important	28.57%	6
Somewhat Important	38.10%	8
Little Importance	19.05%	4
No opinion	14.29%	3
Totals	100%	21

15. Expand Saturday service – L/A

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Very Important	38.10%	8
Somewhat Important	28.57%	6
Little Importance	14.29%	3
No opinion	19.05%	4
Totals	100%	21

16. Service to Airport – L/A

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	18.18%	4
Somewhat Important	36.36%	8
Little Importance	22.73%	5
No opinion	22.73%	5
Totals	100%	22

17. Expand service area

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	42.86%	9
Somewhat Important	42.86%	9
Little Importance	14.29%	3
No opinion	0.00%	0
Totals	100%	21

18. Healthcare transportation

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	59.09%	13
Somewhat Important	36.36%	8
Little Importance	0.00%	0
No opinion	4.55%	1
Totals	100%	22

19. Transportation to shopping

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	45.45%	10
Somewhat Important	45.45%	10
Little Importance	4.55%	1
No opinion	4.55%	1
Totals	100%	22

20. Rideshare on-demand

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	40.00%	8
Somewhat Important	35.00%	7
Little Importance	25.00%	5
No opinion	0.00%	0
Totals	100%	20

21. Replace equipment

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	71.43%	15
Somewhat Important	23.81%	5
Little Importance	4.76%	1
No opinion	0.00%	0
Totals	100%	21

22. Connect to other modes

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	61.90%	13
Somewhat Important	23.81%	5
Little Importance	4.76%	1
No opinion	9.52%	2
Totals	100%	21

23. Undercarriage bus wash

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	47.62%	10
Somewhat Important	14.29%	3
Little Importance	9.52%	2
No opinion	28.57%	6
Totals	100%	21

One-Way Trips FY 2013 – 2016

Western Maine Transportation Services

WMTS Explorer Services General Public Flex Route Trips				
	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Mountain Explorer (seasonal)	23,725	16,818	15,570	19,219
Sugarloaf Explorer (seasonal)	149,862	134,989	128,181	113,225
*Brunswick Explorer (assumed operation 4/25/2016)(year-round)	N/A	N/A	N/A	7,540
Total	173,587	151,807	143,751	139,984

WMTS Demand Response Trips				
	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
General Public	6,996	8,800	13,438	15,845
ADA (by contract with LATC using WMTS equipment)	10,271	10,316	8,140	12,594
MaineCare	76,531	101,426	93,413	69,344
DHHS Other	4,398	2,084	1,290	1,538
Other- CDS, Contracts, etc.	3,227	5,560	5,004	6,187
Total	101,423	128,186	121,285	105,508

LATC/citylink

LATC/citylink Fixed Route Trips				
	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
General Public	352,923	372,864	424,652	381,080

Public Participation Summary

Public participation has played a central role in planning and providing general public transit services in Region 7. WMTS and LATC/citylink 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 they serve. The following highlights major public participation milestones.

WMTS

- 1.** 11/5/2015 Bethel Regional Airport meeting to discuss resuming seasonal service to be provided by the Mountain Explorer.
- 2.** 1/14/2016 Bethel Age Friendly Communities area transportation public meeting. WMTS served as consultant to the AARP Age Friendly Community initiative in the Bethel area as it determined the need for transportation and modes by which it could be provided.
- 3.** 3/2/16 Otisfield Select Board Public meeting on transportation needs of the community.
- 4.** 3/10/2016 Bethel Age Friendly Communities area transportation public meeting, WMTS served as consultant to the AARP Age Friendly Community initiative in the Bethel area as it determined the need for transportation and modes by which it could be provided.
- 5.** 4/4/2016 Brunswick Explorer Advisory Committee meeting to receive community input on the service and how it can be improved.
- 6.** 4/24/16 Sumner/Hartford Select Boards combined public meeting on transportation needs of the two communities.
- 7.** 6/8/2016 Brunswick Explorer Advisory Committee meeting to receive community input on the service and how it can be improved.
- 8.** 6/9/2016 Mountain Explorer Advisory Committee meeting to receive community input on the service and how it can be improved.
- 9.** 7/27/2016 Mountain Explorer Advisory Committee meeting to receive community input on the service and how it can be improved.
- 10.** 8/23/2016 Mountain Explorer Advisory Committee meeting to receive community input on the service and how it can be improved.
- 11.** 9/28/2016 Brunswick Explorer Advisory Committee meeting to receive community input on the service and how it can be improved.
- 12.** 10/25/2016 MaineDOT Region 7 Transportation Workshop regional meeting to discuss public transportation priorities in Androscoggin, Franklin and much of Oxford Counties.

MaineDOT Locally Coordinated Transit Plan – Region 7

13. 11/14/2016 MaineDOT Region 5 Transportation Workshop regional meeting to discuss public transportation priorities in part of Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Knox and Waldo Counties.
14. 11/18/2016 Mountain Explorer Advisory Committee meeting to receive community input on the service and how it can be improved.
15. 12/8/2016 Mountain Explorer Advisory Committee meeting to receive community input on the service and how it can be improved.
16. 12/21/2016 Brunswick Explorer Advisory Committee meeting to receive community input on the service and how it can be improved.
17. 1/20/2017 Brunswick Transportation Roundtable Sponsored by the Town of Brunswick to discuss all modes of transportation available and the future of transportation in Brunswick.
18. 1/26/2017 Rangeley Transportation Focus Group to determine the need for transportation in the Rangeley/Oquossoc area and modes by which it could be provided.
19. 3/7/2017 Farmington Transportation Focus Group to determine the need for transportation in the greater Farmington area and modes by which it could be provided.

LATC/citylink

1. LATC held two public meetings to present its short range transit study. The meetings were held on the same day but a daytime meeting was scheduled to accommodate transit dependent individuals and an evening meeting was scheduled for those that are unavailable to attend during the day because of work schedules.
2. 11/25/16 – LATC co-hosted with Western Maine Transportation Services, Inc., a Transit Workshop for MaineDOT as part of the development of the Locally Coordinated Plan.
3. Lewiston-Auburn Transit Committee meets bi-monthly and is open to the general public. Occasionally a member of the general public will attend the meeting to share thoughts/concerns/ideas.