



**Local Coordinated Transit Plan
2019-2023
Key Findings and Recommendations**

Draft for PTAC Discussion 1.22.19

State Requirements for Local Coordinated Plan (for Regional Transit) From 23 MRSA §4209

The quinquennial locally coordinated plan for regional transit submitted by each regional public transportation agency must provide for the following:

- Maximum feasible coordination of funds among all state agencies that sponsor transportation in the region;
- Development and maintenance of a permanent and effective public transportation system, with particular regard to riders who are low-income or elderly or who have disabilities
- Participation of private transit operators in the service, to the greatest extent possible;
- Conformity with general operations requirements as may be prescribed by the commissioner; and
- Compliance with any appropriate federal regulations, including but not limited to the federally required locally coordinated plan.

Who We Heard From

- Veterans and their Advocates
- Disabled Persons and their Advocates
- Aging Persons and their Advocates
- Community-Based Volunteer Drivers
- Residential Care Providers and Housing Advocates
- Tribal Officials and Staff
- The Public through Long-Range Plan Surveys & Public Forums
- People who Rely on Public Transit and Others who Would Like to
- Private Bus Operators
- Public Transportation Providers
- MaineCare Brokers
- Other State and National Mobility Networks

People with Unmet Needs (based on outreach)

- Low-income Mainers (outside of NEMT trips if MaineCare members), including many veterans and others especially in rural areas
- Elderly, especially those living in rural areas
- Developmentally disabled (outside of MaineCare covered trips)
- Visually impaired – poor services and accommodations (many are leaving Maine for this reason)
- Most people without ability to own/maintain/drive a vehicle outside of key service centers
- Evening and weekend workforce in urban areas
- Those with choices who would like to rely on public transportation but service levels are too low (headways too long)

Key Finding Topic Areas

- Program Coordination
- Funding
- Transit Provider Infrastructure
- Transit Workforce: Driver Shortage
- Partnerships
- Rider Information Systems
- Last Mile Options
- Miscellaneous

State Transportation Program Coordination

- Each transportation program has separate mission
 - Significant resources put into financial integrity (only legitimate services provided to eligible individuals)
 - Creates barriers to sharing rides with other programs
 - Coordination is not a goal
 - Most of these policies are set at federal level so state agencies have little choice
- **RECOMMENDATION: Follow work of federal CCAM and seek opportunities for workable integration**

Funding

- Maine has an ingrained culture of expecting people to drive individual vehicles at personal expense; budget allocations reflect that fact
- State level funding in public transportation operations is one of the lower ones nationally at \$.86/capita in FY16
- MaineDOT commits bond and VW Mitigation Fund dollars to share local match requirement for federal infrastructure funding opportunities
- Few local governments fund public transportation
 - **Continue to compete for federal discretionary grants**
 - **Maintain state commitment to matching federal funds**
 - **Strengthen value proposition message to state, county and local governments**
 - **Grow partnerships with public and private stakeholders**

Transit Infrastructure

- Vehicles, trains, rail lines, vessels and their support systems need constant maintenance, replacement and sometimes upgrades
- Providers do an excellent job stretching the dollar to balance maintenance, replacement and expansion needs
- Multimodal stations, signage, disability accommodations and connectivity need improvement in many place
- Lack of predominant infrastructure contributes to single passenger vehicle culture
- **Continue to prioritize transit bus and ferry replacement funding**
- **Incorporate ADA best practices into all infrastructure projects**
- **Study and act on market opportunities for expansion to improve transit service**

Transit Workforce – DRIVER SHORTAGE!

- Chronic shortage of drivers for transit, school buses and other CDL professions.
- More reimbursed agency volunteer drivers and grassroots volunteer drivers are needed (average age of Community Concepts driver is 72)
- Explore with the Department of Motor Vehicles:
 - if the training time for CDL licensure can be shortened;
 - if military-trained or other experienced candidates can be fast-tracked; and
 - whether CDL licenses lapse when employment changes.
- Ask Maine Department of Labor / Maine Department of Education to consider the development of a commercial public transit driver workforce development program.

Federal Requirements for Local Coordinated (Public Transit Human Service Transportation) Plan

- All Section 5310 project funding in state for 5 year period must be identified in this plan (can amend/update if needed) so should be very complete
- Need to have engaged seniors, individuals with disabilities, public/private/nonprofit transportation and human service providers and other members of the public in its development
- Must contain:
 - Assessment of available services that identifies current providers
 - Assessment of transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, seniors, people with low incomes
 - Strategies, activities and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to address efficiencies in service delivery
 - Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified

Partnerships

- Transportation is a means to an end. To provide responsive transportation, trip generators and riders need to be fully engaged in organizing activities around transportation availability.
- Create multi-sector mobility management network (“Moving Maine”) to integrate transportation demand with supply, develop innovative cross-sector solutions and make the most of available resources. Each region should have its own, with connection to statewide steering committee.
- Incorporate mobility management function into origin and destination settings, e.g. housing managers, medical providers, employers, retail centers, court system, recreation venues.
- Develop more employer-sponsored transit routes (e.g. Jackson Labs, Sugarloaf Explorer).
- Build walkable and transit-friendly neighborhoods and developments.

Rider Information Systems

- People generally do not know what is available for existing services
- Rural areas need general information about demand response and flex route services and favor mobility navigators to help people 1:1 learn what is available and help them learn how to use it
- Urban areas and more sophisticated users want on-line information and easy means to purchase tickets
- Real-time vehicle locator builds confidence in knowing connections will be made; desired in urban and rural areas
- Develop publicity and marketing campaign with Maine Transit Association and partner organizations
- Partner with Maine Turnpike Authority to expand GoMaine platform
- Consider state group purchase of compatible on line ticketing platform

Last Mile Options

- Getting to and from fixed or flex route services is a problem in both rural areas (where it could be last 50 miles) and urban areas (Portland Transportation Center to Old Port)
- Public and private services are lacking outside of Portland area
- Coordinated services are lacking
- Cost of providing rural services is well beyond what most riders can afford to pay
- Volunteer systems alone will not provide sustainable, reliable options for those who cannot drive themselves
- Develop statewide Volunteer Driver Network with best practice, shared learning, driver recruitment strategies and group purchase support for ride scheduling software
- Incorporate all possible solutions into GOMaine trip planner so individuals can arrange private ride-sharing on self-service basis and navigators can assist individuals in finding solutions

Miscellaneous Findings

- Single purpose vehicles (e.g. school buses, UPS trucks?) could possibly be deployed for transit services
 - Explore relationship of Dept of Education to PTAC conversation (add 4th agency to oversight role?)
- Our sprawled development pattern and aging population are a poor combination for sustainable living when transportation needs are considered; new affordable housing options are needed
 - Support age-friendly communities in creating designs that work
- Whole-system planning for social service needs including opiate addiction recovery is needed (people can't rebuild their lives without access to employment and positive relationships, requiring a means of transportation)
 - Make suggestion to new Office of Innovation and the Future

Setting Priorities: Review of Forum Polling

1. Increase state funding
2. Replace aging buses
3. Pursue federal discretionary grants
4. Publicize existing services
5. Support volunteer networks
6. Recruit agency & volunteer drivers
7. Create multi-sector mobility network
8. Create mobility navigators
9. Install real-time vehicle locators (where's my bus?)
10. Establish employer-sponsored commuter runs
11. Develop on-line trip planner

Setting Priorities: Suggested Criteria

- Addresses verified need
- Practical approach identified (explore → pilot → evaluate → deploy)
- Strong likelihood of having intended impact
- Passionate leadership/capacity on board with time to devote
- Other needed resources identified and within reach
- Supported by key partners
- As package of initiatives, is manageable, in logical order, and of the right magnitude
- Clear objectives and evaluation plan in place

Priority Candidates

Ready to Implement

- Prioritize investment in replacing aging bus fleet
- Pursue federal discretionary grants
- Hire consultant for 2 years to build Volunteer Driver Network support system (use federal planning funds)

Seeking Resources

- Moving Maine
- State funding (patience please!)

Ready to Explore

- Expansion of GoMaine to full trip planner
- Contact Dept. of Education re school buses & PTAC engagement
- Contact DMV re CDL options
- Contact DOL & DOE re driver training program

Growing Partnerships (need leads)

- Developers
- Medical providers
- Employers
- Municipalities

Outstanding Questions to Discuss

- State funding – please give new Administration time to settle in 😊
- How should we strengthen promotion & marketing of existing services (and in what order with Trip Planner and Moving Maine/Mobility Navigator initiatives?)
- How important is a coordinated approach to on-line ticketing? Should MaineDOT be managing this process?
- Anything important missing?
- How would PTAC members like to be involved in reviewing final draft documents if at all?