

# Public Transit Advisory Council Meeting

January 12, 2017

# Agenda

- Introductions
- MaineDOT Updates
- Veterans Initiatives
- LCP Update
- State Management Plan Update
- Questions
- Wrap up 12:00 PM

# Veterans Initiatives

Rich Rothe, Consultant

## **MaineDOT Study**

**Directive** (Chapter 77 Resolves of 2016):  
MaineDOT, in consultation with Department of Defense, DHHS, DOL –to determine need for locally available transportation system for veterans for:

- Employment/employment services
- Medical appointments
- Mental health services
- Community activities

- **Purpose:** To inform the development of a pilot program served by a regional transportation network, and inform potential future development of a long-term transportation policy to meet need of veterans.
- **Participants:** Various stakeholders including Public Transit advisory Council.
- **Reports:** Initial report to Legislature Feb. 1, 2017; final report Jan. 15, 2018.

# Topics

- Homeless Veterans
- Career Center Veterans
- Medical Transportation
- General Transportation Needs
  - ✓ Employment
  - ✓ Social Services
  - ✓ Community Activities
  - ✓ Criminal Justice System

# Homeless Veterans

***Overview: The need is relatively small and is being addressed***

- The number of homeless veterans has been declining since 2009, when there were 450 homeless veterans in Maine (*Maine State Housing Authority*)
- 90% of homeless veterans in 2016 are found in Cumberland, Kennebec and Penobscot Counties (*MSHA*)
- 84 homeless veterans noted in “Point in Time Survey,” January, 2016: (down 12% from 95 in 2015) (*MSHA*)

# (Homeless Veterans)

- 238 veterans utilized emergency shelters in 2015, 204 of whom were located in 5 shelters:
  - ✓ Bead of Life - Augusta (22)
  - ✓ Oxford Street Shelter - Portland (102)
  - ✓ Bangor Area Homeless Shelter (15)
  - ✓ Hope House - Bangor (21)
  - ✓ Milestone Substance Abuse Shelter - Portland/OOB (44)  
(MSHA)
- These 5 shelters appear to be on or near scheduled transit routes

# (Homeless Veterans)

In the past year, the VA used Homeless Assistance Funds to purchase:

- \$2,025 of Portland Metro Tickets
- \$1,025 of Portland Zoom Bus Passes
- \$160 of Concord Coach Line tickets.

In addition, \$1,725 worth of Portland Zoom Shuttle Tickets or 345 tickets were donated by the Cape Elizabeth Rotary Club

\$468 worth of Zoom bus Tickets; Biddeford-Saco Transit, and Community Connector Shuttle bus were donated by Maine Elks Association

*(VA email November 20, 2016)*

# Career Center Veterans

***Overview: About 50 to 75 veterans statewide per year are not able to be served by the state's Career Center programs (MDOL email Nov 21, 2016)***

- There are 12 career centers in Maine. Each one utilizes a “Jobs for Veterans” State Grant
- 8 of the career centers are served by one or more flex or fixed route transit systems
- The 50 to 75 unserved veterans live outside the service areas of the state's transit systems. MDOL does not have travel \$ for these vets (*MDOL email Nov 22, 2016*)

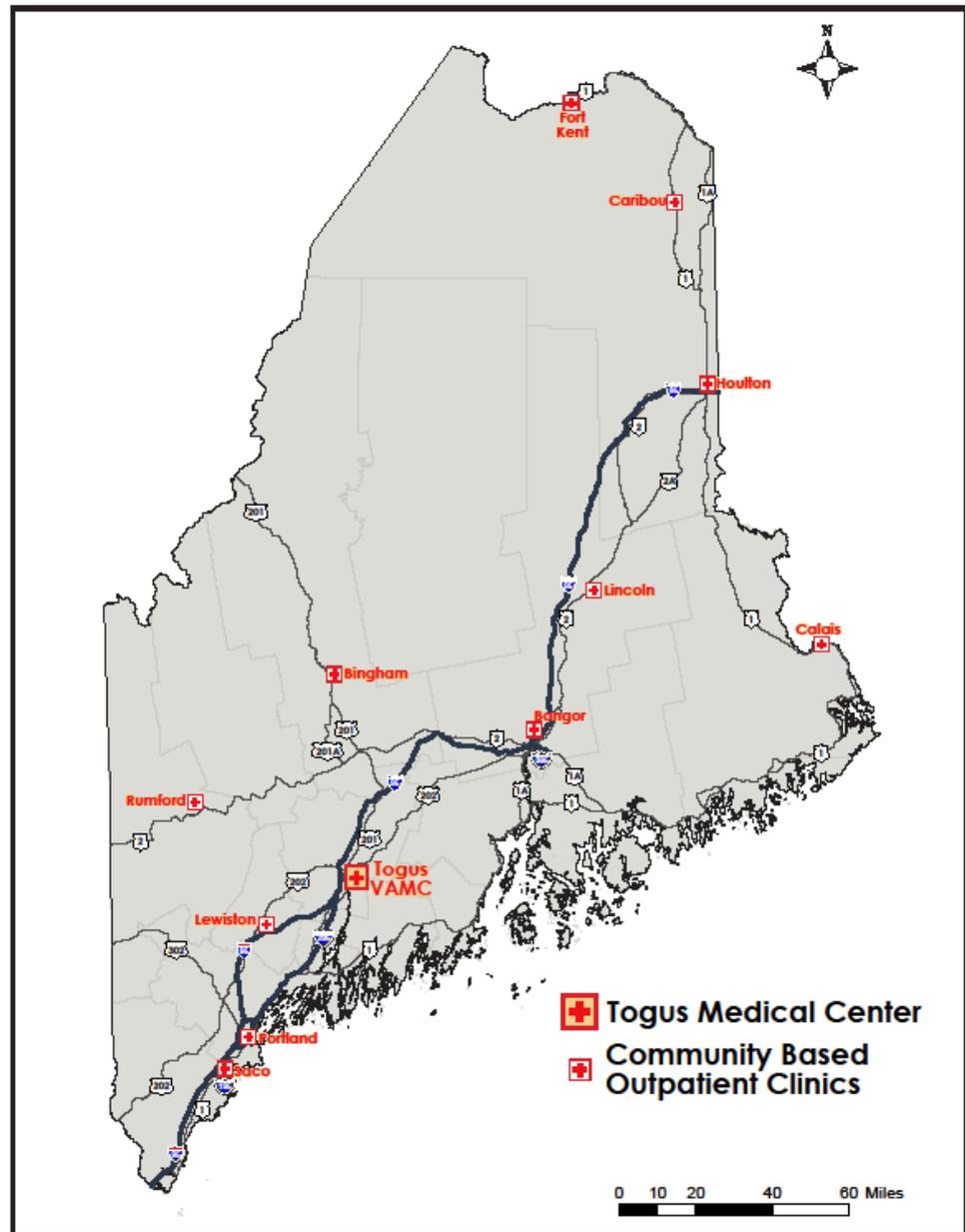
## (Career Center Veterans)

- The estimate of 50-75 vets includes only the ones known to MDOL
- Career Centers sponsor workshops (resumes, job interviews) and one-on-one assistance for veterans
- The transportation need/veteran is about 3 trips
- Actual job training is provided by other facilities
- Training grants pay 55 cents/mile  
*(MDOL email Nov 22, 2016)*

# Medical Transportation

- Self Drive
- Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
- Veterans Transportation Services (VTS)
- Highly Rural Transportation Grant - Piscataquis County
- Transit Providers
- Veterans Service Organizations (e.g. American Legion, VFW)

# The System



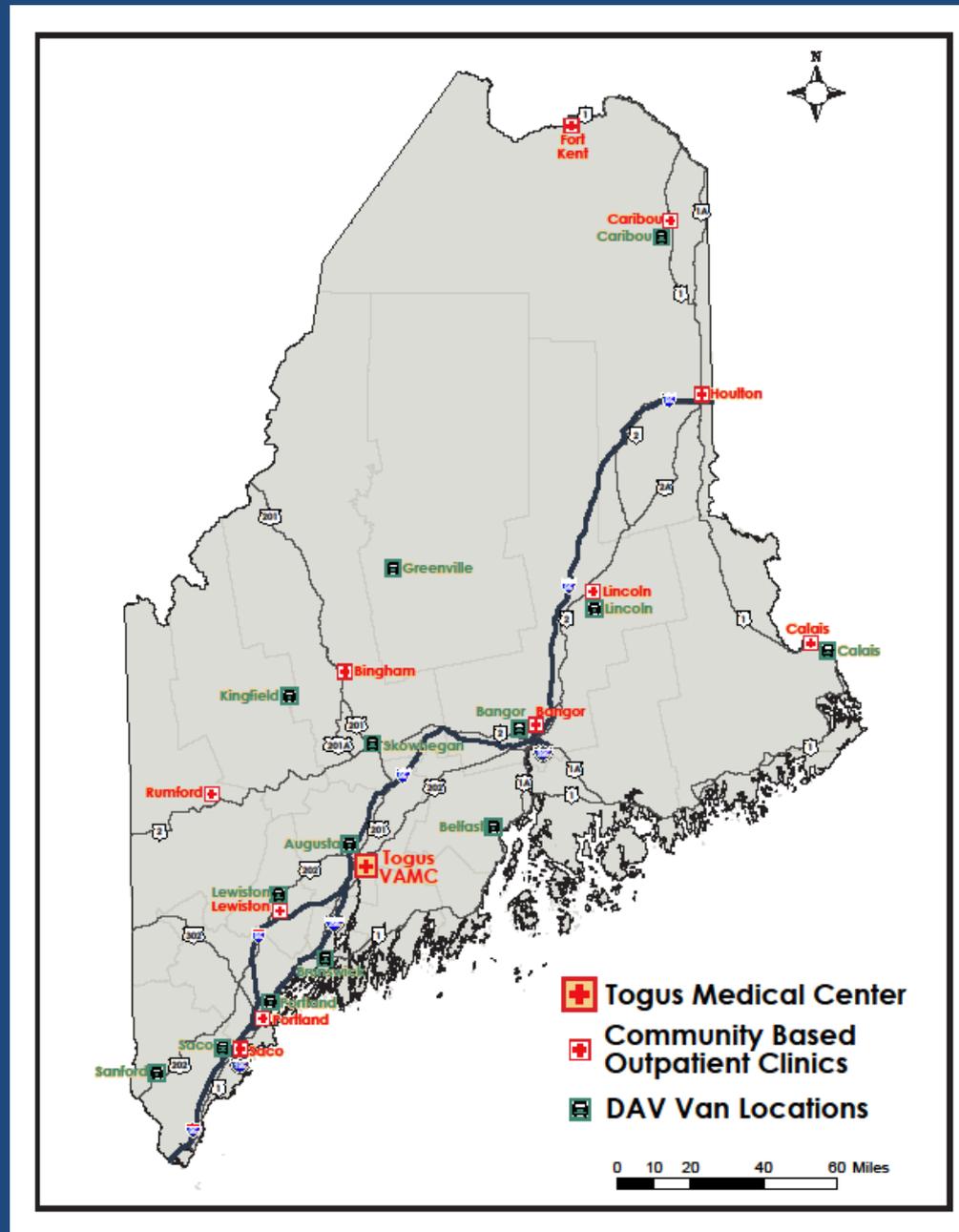
## Disabled American Veterans (DAV)

- DAV, under contract to VA, provides rides only to Togus in VA vans operated by volunteers (not permitted to go to a CBOC, even if van travels past one – except for Caribou)
- 12 VA Vans; about 34 volunteer drivers
- Veteran must be ambulatory to ride van
- No cost to veterans riding DAV Vans
- 2015 – transported 4900 veterans

## (DAV Continued)

- Service from outlying areas to Togus (5 to 8 vans/day)
- DAV receives \$15,000 annually from Legislature from table games in Bangor
- Riders not eligible for MaineCare
- Veterans who cannot be served are referred to Veterans Transportation Service (*VA phone contact 28 Nov. 2016*)

# DAV Van Locations



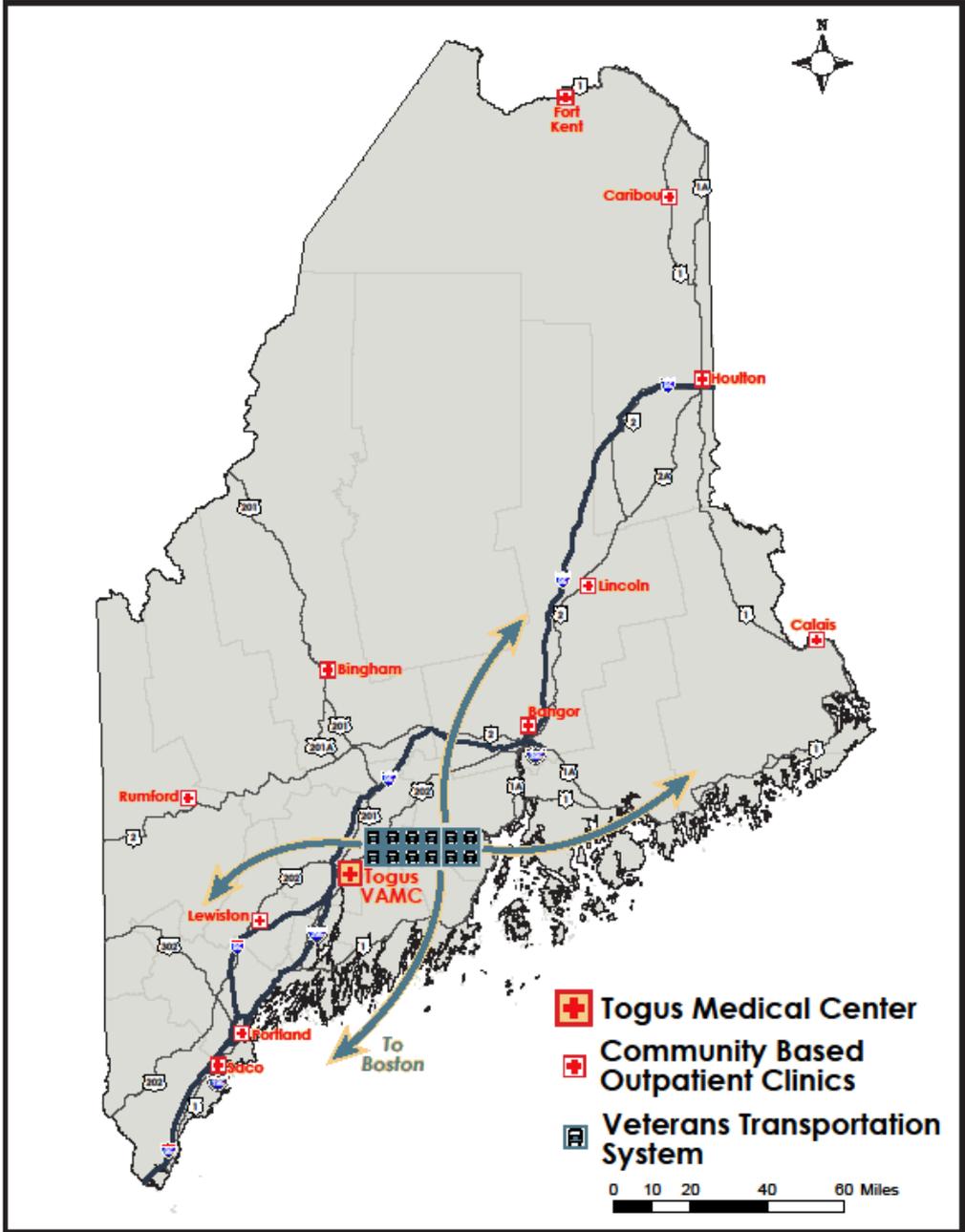
# Veterans Transportation Services (VTS)

- Paid VA Drivers
- 12 vans (5 accessible) based at Togus
- Daily shuttle to Boston (15-25 veterans/day; In 2015, 2,160 veterans transported)
- Can take non-ambulatory veterans to CBOCs, Togus
- Service to veterans in community living center, contract nursing homes, dialysis, homeless veterans, veterans with no other transportation options

# (VTS Continued)

- No cost to veterans
- Special mode veterans (door-to-door; 3-5/day) in central and southern Maine (2015 – 1,167 veterans transported)
- Shuttle van in Caribou serving Caribou, Fort Kent, Houlton, Bangor
- Ambulance transport, Angel flight, VA
- Coordination with and requests for veterans transportation to, FTA-funded providers, Veterans' Service Organizations, other groups (Friends in Action in Washington County) and individuals
- No ride denials, but reliance on groups and individuals outside VA system (*VA phone contact 29 Nov. 2016*)

# Veterans Transportation Services



## DAV/VTS Transportation Summary

### Unique patients – FY 2013

Togus	37,953
Togus Misc	886
Aroostook County	2,855
Calais	1,023
Rumford	1,910
Saco	4,511
Lewiston/Auburn	3,733
Bangor	8,833
Portland	3,671
Bingham	415
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,613</b>

# Highly Rural Transportation Grant

- Piscataquis County only Maine county with density low enough to qualify
- \$50,000 pilot project grant
- Administered by The Lynx; funds veterans' travel to Bangor CBOC and Togus
- In 2015, 209 trips totaling 20,657 miles at a cost of \$13,010.52, or \$62.25 for one-way trip (2 trips to Boston are figured into costs).

## Veterans Medical Transportation by Transit Provider

- Region 1: ARTS – service to Caribou CBOC/Hospital & Houlton CBOC/Hospital (no data on # of vets)
- Region 3: Community Connector – service near Bangor CBOC; Penquis – service from Piscataquis to Bangor, Togus using \$50,000 grant
- Region 4: Kennebec Explorer – service to Togus 3 times/daily
- Region 6: Metro – service ¼ mile from Portland CBOC (no data on # of vets)
- Region 7: Citylink, WMTS - service to Lewiston CBOC

# Veterans Medical Transportation by VSOs, Others

- VSOs (e.g. VFW, American Legion)
- Other veterans support organizations and civilian groups (e.g. Rotary, Elks) that support veterans
- No data on numbers of veterans transported by organizations, individuals
- Many anecdotes of unmet need but no compilation of anecdotes

# Anecdotal – Examples of Problems

- Many calls to Maine Department of Labor, VSOs and other veterans groups for needed transportation
- Some younger veterans can't take time off work to go to Togus, but could go to CBOC
- For some older veterans, long trip to Togus is too taxing
- Too long to wait for DAV ride – need medical attention sooner

# Multi-Purpose Veterans Transportation

## Existing Transit Systems

- Includes transportation for employment, social services, community activities, criminal justice system
- Strengths and weaknesses are the same for veterans and civilians; service is focused on the larger communities; very little service in very rural areas. More support for transit helps veterans and civilians
- Little to no data on # of veterans transported
- In FY 2012, 4,195,476 total trips on intercity, fixed route, flex route and seasonal systems. Veterans' trip estimate is 9% of total, or 377,600 trips
- Grants and contributions support some veterans transportation

## Other Resources - Examples

- Maine Military and Community Network – regional groups/ local forums
- Choice Card (VA) – can be used by veterans with 30+ day wait at VA facility or more than 40 miles from facility. Does not include transportation support
- Rural Veterans Coordination Pilot Project – federal grant, pilot program for veterans discharged after August 26, 2012: help transitioning veterans by removing barriers to employment

# Possible Pilot Program Candidates

- Survey of Veterans to better document needs
- Transportation to and from Career Centers to support veterans needing workshops, career assistance (e.g. \$25,000 to \$30,000 for unmet need)
- Free van service for veterans to local CBOC (e.g. one in urban area, such as Lewiston; one in rural area, such as Calais) – to document need through actual usage

## (Possible Next Steps)

- Establish a veterans transportation steering committee to include representatives of state agencies, the VA, veterans groups, transit providers and others to further projects and initiatives and assess programs that tailor transportation options to veterans and their needs
- MaineDOT presence at one or more meetings of Maine Military and Community Network

# Committee Discussion

# Locally Coordinated Plan Update

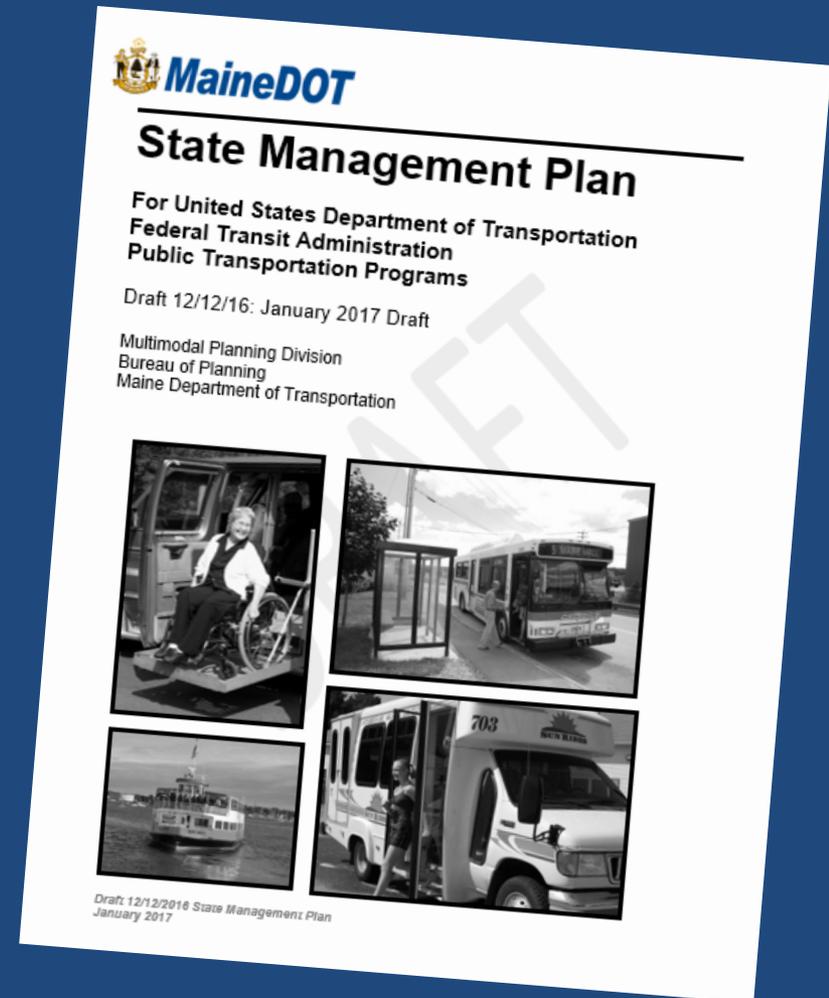
Rich Rothe

# Advancing Public Transit State Management Plan Update

Peter Schauer, Consultant  
Comments or Questions:  
[peter@peterschauer.com](mailto:peter@peterschauer.com)

# Maine State Management Plan Version January 2017

- Background and References to Policy and Implementation Recommendations



# Foundation of State Management Plan is the Maine Strategic Transit Plan 2025

<https://www1.maine.gov/mdot/planning/docs/FinalStrategicPlan.pdf>

# Maine Strategic Transit Plan 2025

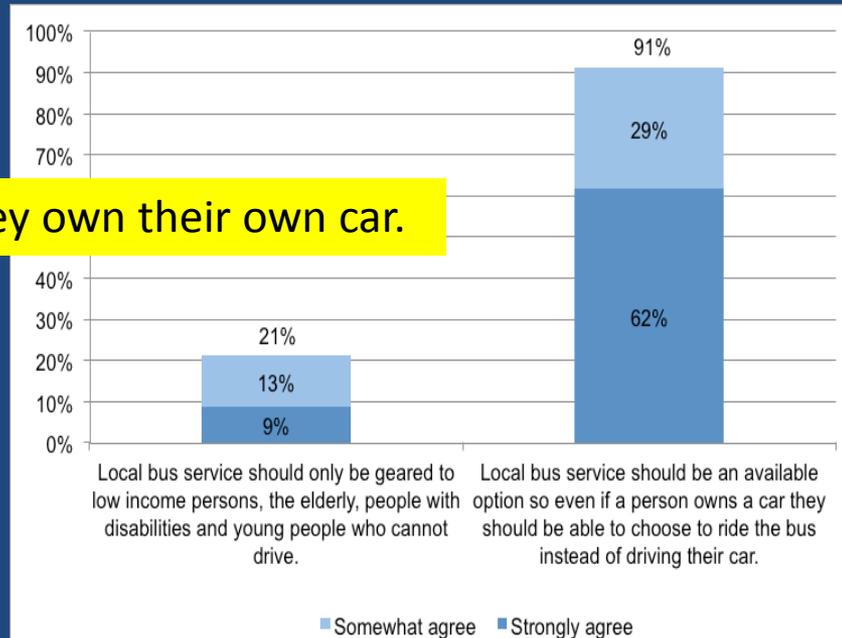
- Completed June 30, 2015
- Describes Goals and Objectives
- Estimates Demand for Public Transit
- Estimates Cost to meet Demand
- Makes Recommendations for Future Improvements



# From Strategic Transit Plan

- Concept of public transit is well supported by population of Maine. Mainers recognize that there are needs for people to get places who do not have an automobile.

Buses should be open to all even if they own their own car.



# Lessons from Strategic Transit Plan and Reality

1. Good public support for concept of transit.
2. Funding – difficult – need more local support  
Federal funding not encouraging. FAST Act 5 year bill modest growth 2% - 3% barely inflation adjusted – only good news added discretionary funds for bus and facilities
3. Room for improvement on productivity of existing providers to meet predicted demand and increase focus on general public riders.

# Problems to Solve from the Strategic Transit Plan

1. More focus on general public/non-sponsored rider is needed.
2. Increase productivity and methods to allocate funds to productive services by putting in place procedures to allocate funds differently.
3. Better maintenance of buses and vans (Transit Asset Management)
4. Recognition for providers to be more flexible regarding service boundaries.
5. More local involvement both for policies and funding is needed.

# Significant Solutions for Problems

- Change in matching ratio (80% to 50%) for Administration (All 5311 operating grants at 50%)
- Regional Provider allocation formula changed
  - 5311 percent from 55% to 30%
  - 5310 is discretionary
- Contracts are for one year – no operational carryover
- No operating costs at 100%
- Requirement to not exceed 35% (FY18), 30% (FY19), 25%(FY 20) administration expense of total project cost
- Regional Boundaries less important – corridor planning encouraged
- Low performing projects – termination procedures

MaineDOT is allowed to be more  
restrictive than FTA  
(Federal Transit Administration)

Cannot be less restrictive

Recommendations  
from  
Strategic Plan  
and  
How they are addressed

**Goal 1: Manage the Existing System.** Effectively manage Maine's existing transportation system for safety and effectiveness within reliable funding levels.

Recommendations:

- Improve and Update the State Management Plan

**In progress. Posted for public comment no later than December 12, 2016. Public hearing will be January 12, 2017 at MaineDOT, Augusta, Conference Room 216, beginning at 9:00 AM.**

**Goal 1: Manage the Existing System.** Effectively manage Maine's existing transportation system for safety and effectiveness within reliable funding levels.

Recommendations:

- Elevate and Clarify the Message that MaineDOT's Focus is on General Public Transportation

**Focus of State Management Plan is on general public services and more effective monitoring of those services. In addition RTAP funds will be used to educate and inform public on what is available and how to use it.**

**Goal 1: Manage the Existing System.** Effectively manage Maine's existing transportation system for safety and effectiveness within reliable funding levels.

Recommendations:

- Administer State, Federal, and Local Funding for Public Transportation

Through the State Management Plan revisions more effective administration will come about. Building more time into evaluation process and a more thorough application with a scoring methodology will improve fund allocation and productivity.

**Goal 1: Manage the Existing System.** Effectively manage Maine's existing transportation system for safety and effectiveness within reliable funding levels.

Recommendations:

- Improve the Grant Decision Making Process

What is key is having the applications on hand longer prior to when decisions must be made. More time has been built into the grant decision making process. Most importantly a review and scoring tool is being developed.

**Goal 1 (con't):** Manage the Existing System. Effectively manage Maine's existing transportation system for safety and effectiveness within reliable funding levels.

## Recommendations:

- Use Population Density of a Geographic Area to Determine Types of Service Offered

The formula for distribution of funds is being revised to set amounts that will be available for demand response services so more funds can be allocated for flex services to connect and provide more transportation in populated areas.

# Was 55% now 30%

- Page 18: Allocation of Section 5311 funds to each region is by the use of a formula which includes the three basic factors of population, road mileage and square miles. 30 % of rural funding remaining after the 10% administrative deduction and the 15% deduction for the intercity program is distributed by this formula. The remaining 70% is assigned to projects which meet needs identified by MaineDOT and the LCP.

**Goal 1 (con't):** Manage the Existing System. Effectively manage Maine's existing transportation system for safety and effectiveness within reliable funding levels.

## Recommendations:

- Use a Demand Based Capital Priority Setting Process

The 5310 capital program will be removed from the current formula allocations and applications will be evaluated on demand and needs met. Not for profit service providers beyond the regional providers can be eligible for 5310 funding support.

# 5310 is discretionary

- Page 18: *Project Evaluation Criteria and Method for Distributing Funds*
- **Introduction**
- § 5310 funds are distributed on the basis of need and project evaluation criteria.

**Goal 1 (con't):** Manage the Existing System. Effectively manage Maine's existing transportation system for safety and effectiveness within reliable funding levels.

## Recommendations:

- Establish and Use Performance Measures and provide technical assistance to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of sub-grantees.

Performance measures were solicited and required as part of the current grant application process and are being evaluated for broad application.

Page 37, 38, 39 Draft SMP

# Monitoring of Project Productivity and Termination of Projects

- Page 38, 39
- Service measure goals are compared against Maine peers and average performance measures are established. The peer states selected in the Maine Strategic Transit Plan 2025 are Idaho, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia and Wyoming. Those services performing at or above the average are rated “Successful.”
- Those services performing at or above one half the statewide average are rated as “Acceptable.” Those services below one half of the statewide average are rated as “Deficient” and are subject to further review.
- Those services rated as deficient are placed in a three year improvement program to help improve their performance. The improvement program consists of technical assistance and more frequent monitoring until project is improved or terminated.

**Goal 2: Support Economic Opportunity.** Wisely invest available resources to support economic opportunity for our customers.

Recommendations:

- Support General Public Transportation Systems

**Operative word – wisely- risk assessment is formalized.**

**Services that have minimal 5311 general public ridership are being reviewed.**

**Page 37, 38 Draft SMP**

# Risk Assessment

- Page 37: The risk assessment review conducted at any time may be generated by the following or other notable actions or issues:
- Exceeding grant contract funding amounts or requests for additional funds.
- Tardy or inadequate reports and reimbursement requests
- Significant changes in principal staff or changes in oversight boards or advisory groups
- Pattern of service delivery problems
- Pattern of incidents, complaints, crashes and collisions

# Monitoring of Project Productivity and Termination of Projects

- Page 38, 39: Overall trends are monitored such as, local cash share (not contract), in-kind and contract match share, farebox recovery, percent of elderly, disabled, and general public riders.
- Boardings per hour, cost per hour, cost per trip, ridership per capita (population of service area using Maine only statistics) are also monitored and all measures are used to evaluate services.

**Goal 2: Support Economic Opportunity.** Wisely invest available resources to support economic opportunity for our customers.

### Recommendations:

- Support a Mix of Transit Services

Applications for any type of transit service are accepted (Flex, Intercity, Demand Response). Expansion of existing services and establishment of new services are being encouraged.

Page 18 Draft SMP

# Regional Boundaries

- Page 18: While the eight regions are autonomous, coordination among and between regions is encouraged. However only one sub-grantee for any specifically defined service will be funded in any given region. That is no two like services will be funded in any specific geographic area. But any region can have more than one sub-grantee providing the services provided do not overlap or duplicate each other.

**Goal 2: Support Economic Opportunity.** Wisely invest available resources to support economic opportunity for our customers.

### Recommendations:

- Support New Systems and Expand Existing Services

**New methods of providing state match for new and expanded systems are being investigated and is an ongoing activity.**

**Goal 2: Support Economic Opportunity.** Wisely invest available resources to support economic opportunity for our customers.

### Recommendations:

- Encourage Volunteer Networks and Alternatives to Traditional Transit Services.

**Administrative costs will be reduced so that more funds can be allocated to productive services.**

**Page: 15, 18**

# Wise Use of Resources

- Page 15: Administrative expenses cannot exceed 35% of the total sub-grantee budget in FY18, 30% in FY19 and 25% in FY20 and following years.
- Page 18: The remaining 70% is assigned to projects which meet needs identified by MaineDOT and the LCP.

**Goal 2 (con't): Support Economic Opportunity.** Wisely invest available resources to support economic opportunity for our customers.

### Recommendations:

- Provide incentives for local communities and transit providers to leverage new sources of private funding for transit services.

With revised formula funding, incentives can be provided for applicants that receive more private or community support. Concept is to provide match on a sliding scale where over a three period services would be programmed to meet more strenuous match requirements.

Page: 15 sliding scale of state match.

# Sliding Scale of State Match

- Page 15: Section 5307 and 5311 programs may also receive State funds as available for match. The State may provide up to 10% as matching funds and, upon request, may increase its share up to 50% of deficit for § 5311 programs.

**Goal 2 (con't): Support Economic Opportunity.** Wisely invest available resources to support economic opportunity for our customers.

### Recommendations:

- Explore ways to Increase State and All Sources of Potential Funding for Public Transportation

**Ways to leverage funds through alternative state match is an ongoing activity.**

**Goal 3: Build Trust.** Demonstrate our core values of integrity, competence, and service, both individually and organizationally.

Recommendations:

- Establish a Public Transportation Advisory Group

**Established January 2016.**

**Goal 3: Build Trust.** Demonstrate our core values of integrity, competence, and service, both individually and organizationally.

Recommendations:

- Expand Education, Outreach, and Marketing

RTAP program to upgrade brochures and web sites of providers is in place.

RTAP program is being planned to improve statewide education and information to improve knowledge of available services and how to use them.

# Expand Education, Outreach, and Marketing

- Page 8: MaineDOT provides RTAP funds to assist subrecipients in meeting their technical assistance and training needs.
- Page 24: These funds are available to rural transit providers and planning organizations for training and technical assistance in matters of statewide significance.

**Goal 3: Build Trust.** Demonstrate our core values of integrity, competence, and service, both individually and organizationally.

## Recommendations:

- Reinvigorate Provisions of Maine Revised Statutes Title 30-A, Part 2, Subpart 5, Chapter 163 Concerning Regional Transportation Corporations and Transition to Government or Quasi-governmental Governing Bodies

**2017 funding application will require specific involvement and oversight by advisory or governing boards.**

# Involvement and oversight by advisory or governing boards

- Page 21: Local Oversight and Public Comment on Fare and Service Changes
- Each project must have a locally based oversight and policy board specific to passenger transit.

# 2017

- January 12: Public Hearing On SMP
- March 1: Revised Application Distributed
- April 15: Application for Federal FY 2017 Funds Due  
(Formula money reduced and awards will be based on service provision and productivity)
- June 13: Marketing Education Workshop
- June 15: Advisory Council Meeting

# Comments or Questions

*Susan Moreau*

*Manager, Multimodal Planning Division*

*Bureau of Planning*

*MaineDOT - 16 SHS*

*Augusta, ME 04333-0016*

*Direct Line: 207.624.3239*

*Office: 207.624.3300*

[Susan.Moreau@maine.gov](mailto:Susan.Moreau@maine.gov)