

Midcoast Council for Business Development and Planning (MCBDP)

Major Corridors

The following is a summary of corridors that were analyzed for the purpose of this Regional Transportation Assessment. These corridors reflect the priority corridors first identified and ranked by the Midcoast Council for Business Development and Planning and further refined by the public at two public forums, one of which was held in Lincoln County, and the other in Sagadahoc County, and by a final weighting process that assigned rankings of high (3 points), medium (2 points) and low (1 point). The rankings are contained on the next page.

1. Route 1 Corridor

U.S. Route 1 is the most important highway serving the Midcoast Region. It is a principal arterial from Brunswick through Waldoboro and is part of the National Highway System.

2. Route 24 Corridor

Route 24 serves as Brunswick's Maine Street, but also provides important links north to Route 1, Route 295 and Topsham and Bath, and links east and south including the Brunswick Naval Air Station, Cooks Corner, Bath and Harpswell.

3. Route 196 Corridor

The Route 196 Corridor, including the Coastal Connector, serves a growing volume of through traffic. It is a major link between Route I-295 and Route 1, and between the Lewiston-Auburn area and Mid-coastal Maine.

4. Route I-295 Corridor

Route I-295 is the only Interstate highway serving Sagadahoc County. It provides high speed access to Portland and points south as well as Augusta and points north. The towns of Brunswick, Topsham, Bowdoinham and Richmond are served by interchanges.

5. Route 27 Corridor

The Midcoast portion of the Route 27 corridor begins in Boothbay Harbor and extends through Dresden on its way to the Gardiner/Augusta area. This corridor provides north/south linkages to the five communities through which it passes, as well as access to Route 1 and major employment centers along Route 1 and outside the MCBDP region.

6. Route 32 Corridor

The route 32 Corridor provides an important link between eastern Lincoln County, including Waldoboro and nearby communities, to Route 17 and the Augusta area. Although it is not an arterial, it is an important corridor for citizens in this part of the State.

Lincoln-Sagadahoc Regional Transportation Corridor Prioritization

Variable	Routes							
	1	24	196	295	27	17	197	32
Tourism	3	2	2	2	3	2	1	1
Job Center	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	1
Economic Dev. Potential	3	3	2	2	2	1	2	1
Truck Routes	3	2	3	3	2	2	1	1
Population Growth	3	2	2	1	2	2	2	1
Commuting Patterns	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	1
Traffic Counts	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	1
Total	21	18	17	16	15	12	10	7

Executive Summary

In July 2004, MaineDOT introduced a new process to improve public participation and to develop a Regional Transportation Assessment. The Regional Transportation Assessment incorporates regional transportation, land use and economic needs into a concise document for use by MaineDOT and communities in transportation planning and programming. The Midcoast Council for Business Development and Planning prepared the Regional Transportation Assessment with assistance from local officials and planners, members of the public, and staff from Maine DOT.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inventory and assess regional transportation, land use, and economic development issues and objectives along major transportation corridors within the Midcoast Council for Business Development and Planning region. This region comprises Lincoln and Sagadahoc Counties as well as the Town of Brunswick in Cumberland County. Identified

The following elements describe MaineDOT's new approach to transportation planning:

- Utilize creative techniques for increased public participation
- Increase the use of regional planning commissions
- Focus on corridor-based planning (Example: Pennsylvania Corridor Plan)
- Create a Statewide Regional Transportation Assessment by region
- Incorporate economic development strategic planning

Region-specific issues/goals/broad priorities include the following:

- A growing population, resulting in more people using the same roads;
- The migration of people from cities to rural areas, resulting in more frequent and longer trips to work and shop;
- Population growth in coastal communities that exceeds Maine's growth rate;
- Vehicle miles of travel and traffic growing faster than the population;
- Increased delays;
- Insufficient planning – some municipalities have enacted comprehensive plans designating growth areas on arterials without appropriate access management controls. Other communities have no long-range plans;
- There is little public transportation;
- By the year 2020, more than 18% of Maine's population will be 65 or older. Thus, Maine's future transportation system must adapt to the needs of an increasingly elderly population;

- Strip commercial development results in more curb cuts, turning vehicles, reduced speed limits and more accidents. The region's arterials serve a sometimes conflicting role of providing mobility and access;
- There is little likelihood that the State of Maine or municipal governments will ever have enough money to build their way out of the problems caused by strip commercial development and congestion.

Public Involvement Process

The purpose of direct communication with stakeholder groups is to introduce the regional transportation assessment project and to gather initial feedback on: 1) refining the proposed corridors; 2) identifying significant land use, economic and transportation variables to be incorporated in our inventory; 3) identifying local and regional concerns related to the major corridors, and; 4) identifying significant constituencies such as freight carriers, transit riders, business and tourism that have not yet been contacted but should be involved in this project.

MCBDP developed a survey and distributed several hundred copies to local officials including town and city managers, town/city council chairs, planning board chairs, chairs of local comprehensive planning committees, former RTAC members, and others. When only the chairperson was contacted, MCBDP included multiple copies of the survey and requested that he/she distribute copies to individual members. In order to ensure a high rate of return, all surveys included MCBDP's return address as well as first class postage. The survey included questions on the priority corridors, and asked for local input on key transportation issues affecting the region. MCBDP received and compiled over a hundred completed surveys.

In addition to the survey, MCBDP held two forums; one in Lincoln County and one in Sagadahoc County. The purpose of the forums was to introduce the assessment project, present the information gathered from the survey, review the corridor prioritization process, and review the draft issues and objectives paper prepared for each of the corridors. As a result of the forum held in Lincoln County, all in attendance agreed to delete one of the selected corridors (Route 17 – because it passed through a very small portion of the tip of Lincoln County and didn't actually serve County residents), and add another (Route 32 – because it served residents of eastern Lincoln County, and is an important link to the Augusta area).

Local officials who attended the Sagadahoc forum requested a second forum to review changes they requested in the issues/objectives document. Local officials who attended the Lincoln County forum simply requested to see a copy of any follow-up material and

be given an opportunity to comment.

At both forums, it was explained that the Regional Transportation Assessment does not duplicate the work on Route 1 being undertaken through the Gateway 1 project. However, the MCBDP planners emphasized that the results of the Gateway 1 project would be included in the Regional Assessment.

At each of the forums, MCBDP planners explained that they were making certain assumptions in the preparation of the Assessment. They distributed the following list of assumptions. The first seven assumptions are taken from the RTAC 5 Plan for the Greater Mid-Coast Region, dated May, 2002. The remaining two assumptions were made by MCBDP planners. These assumptions include the following:

1. Maine's population will continue to grow, resulting in more people using the same roads.
2. Migration of people from cities to rural areas will continue, resulting in more frequent and longer trips to work and shop.
3. Vehicle miles of travel and traffic will continue to grow faster than the population.
4. There will be increased traffic delays and congestion.
5. Insufficient planning will continue to be a problem. Some municipalities have comprehensive plans that designate growth areas on arterials. Other communities have no long-range plans.
6. Public transportation will continue to be absent in many areas.
7. Strip commercial development along Route 1 and some other arterials will result in more curb cuts, turning vehicles, reduced speed limits and more accidents.
8. BIW and BNAS will continue, but if not, there could be more traffic resulting from any redevelopment of the properties.
9. Funds for new road construction will be limited.