

**DOWNEAST COASTAL CORRIDOR  
MULTI-MODAL MANAGEMENT PLAN:  
HANCOCK AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES**

Prepared with Technical Assistance from Hancock County Planning Commission, Washington County Council of Governments and the Maine Department of Transportation for the East-West Corridor Committee. Funding was provided by the Maine Department of Transportation. Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the funding agency.

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## Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION.....	2
1.1	Purpose and Needs Statement.....	2
1.2	The Downeast Coastal Corridor.....	3
1.3	Public Participation Plan.....	3
1.4	Advisory Committee.....	3
2.0	AN OVERVIEW OF EXISTING CONDITIONS.....	4
2.1	Types of Travel on the Corridor.....	4
2.2	Transportation Facilities.....	7
2.3	Review of Existing Plans.....	13
3.0	CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND ISSUES.....	15
4.0	DRIVING FORCES.....	16
5.0	SCENARIO BUILDING.....	17
6.0	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	17
7.0	APPENDICES.....	18
7.1	Corridor Committee and Outreach Meetings Minutes.....	18
7.2	Corridor Advisory Committee Members.....	18

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This plan is a key regional link to the Maine Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT) *Connecting Maine* report, the state's long-range transportation plan. This statewide document identifies statewide and regional issues and opportunities through the year 2030, establishes goals and performance-based strategies to reach those goals, and identifies the funding shortfalls that must be addressed to keep Maine competitive and to meet the socio-economic and environmental needs of those who live, work and play in Maine.

The Hancock County Planning Commission (HCPC) and Washington County Council of Governments (WCCOG) solicited extensive public input to formulate regional needs and objectives and identified the Downeast Coastal corridor as one of the 38 Corridors of Regional Economic Significance for Transportation (CREST's) across the state. HCPC and WCCOG developed a series of transportation, land use and economic objectives for the corridor. A series of strategic investments was derived from these objectives. These goals and objectives are summarized at: [www.hpcme.org/transportation/needs/sipcres/SipCres031907.pdf](http://www.hpcme.org/transportation/needs/sipcres/SipCres031907.pdf)

We are now prepared to undertake the next step – defining a prioritized list of transportation and other strategies that will meet the regional objectives for the corridor. This next step is called *Multi-Modal Corridor Management Planning* (MMCMP) and will be done for all 38 corridors. This MMCMP has been developed by an Advisory Committee consisting of the representatives from MaineDOT, HCPC, WCCOG, affected municipalities and others who are interested in transportation, land use and economic development, as well as related quality of life considerations.

### 1.1 Purpose and Needs Statement

The purpose of this study is the assembly of relevant, accurate information to promote decisions that are in the overall best interest of the Downeast Coastal corridor communities, the region and the state. The study builds on previous efforts. While it contains some background information, its primary purpose is to look at what is needed for the future and to formulate detailed, prioritized action plans with achievable implementation schedules. This will allow for efficient investment of limited local, state and federal funds.

This plan presents alternative scenarios for consideration in developing the goals and strategic action plans for the corridor. The action plans will be prioritized, with a lead group identified for each action, an estimated cost and an implementation schedule. The completed MMCMP will result in the development of Memoranda of Agreement, which all parties will sign to ensure broad support. This document will enable MaineDOT and other funding agencies to be assured that broad support exists for all of the items identified in the action plan. This is a critical element necessary for implementing any major capital investments.

The plan addresses several key priorities (subject to revision by the advisory committee):

- promoting corridor improvements and preservation measures that assure that the corridor remains viable for the efficient movement of freight and tourist and commuting traffic;
- developing corridor improvements in conjunction with efforts throughout Hancock and Washington Counties to expand its tourism base in an environmentally sound manner;
- undertaking measures that address the needs of area businesses both in terms of promoting fast and efficient movement of freight and employee/customer traffic;
- enhancing connections between modes of travel by planning for improvements that address the movement of vehicles and alternative modes such as bicycles and pedestrians;
- encouraging future development policies that preserve key natural features and the small town/rural character of most of the corridor while promoting economic prosperity;
- promoting measures that remove or minimize major traffic bottlenecks to through traffic in the region's service centers;
- increasing opportunities for multi-town assessment of transportation impacts of large-scale residential, commercial and other forms of development

## **1.2 The Downeast Coastal Corridor**

This plan addresses the major east-west connections crossing Hancock County, southern Washington County and a portion of Penobscot County as a group. Included in this broad corridor are Route 1 from Bucksport to Calais, Route 9 from Bangor to Calais, the Calais Branch Railway from Bangor to Calais as well as several major collector highways that serve as connectors and short-cuts.

Route 1 and Route 9 carry different mixes of passenger and freight traffic, provide users with different driving experiences and, with planning, should prove to be compliments rather than competitors. The Calais Branch Railway has been out of service since 1985, but has potential to provide an important third alternative either as a restored railway or as a mixed-use trail. For a full report on this corridor, see: [www.hcpcme.org/transportation/needs/decoastal](http://www.hcpcme.org/transportation/needs/decoastal)

## **1.3 Public Participation Plan**

HCPC and WCCOG organized a series of public outreach meetings, press releases and web site postings to solicit input for this plan. There have also been mailings to municipal offices, transportation providers and business development groups. Summaries of meetings are found in Appendix 1. In order to focus discussion, HCPC and WCCOG will prepare drafts of documents for review, comment and revision by the advisory committee, which is described below.

## **1.4 Advisory Committee**

The advisory committee consists of a cross-section of municipal officials, representatives from MaineDOT, transportation providers, public safety officials, major employers, chambers of

commerce, freight interests and advocates for alternative modes. The full roster of committee members is found in Appendix 2.

## 2.0 AN OVERVIEW OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section of the report presents a summary of existing conditions. In the interests of brevity, data are summarized from other reports. Readers interested in more detail may refer to those reports. Topics covered in this section include types of travel on the corridor, transportation facilities, major transportation problems and corridor characteristics.

### 2.1 Types of Travel on the Corridor

#### 2.1.1 Vehicle Miles Traveled

The 1990s witnessed unprecedented growth in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). Growth was particularly great in counties with expanding populations and increasing lengths of commutes. There are few programs in place that will slow this trend toward higher VMT, though rising fuel prices will eventually affect choices made about travel and fuel efficiency.

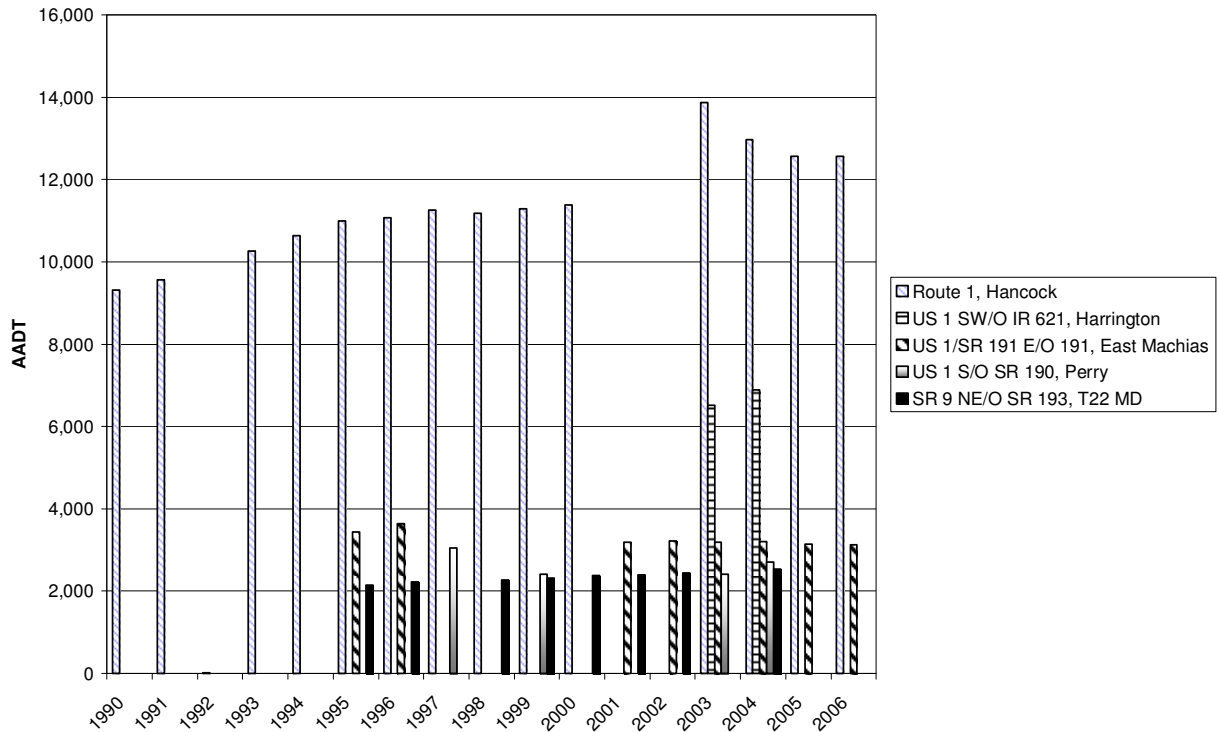
#### Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

County	1990	2000	Change (Rounded)
Hancock	561,524,946	702,581,167	25.1%
Washington	367,976,097	421,588,863	14.6%
<b>SOURCE:</b> Maine Department of Transportation			

The only permanent traffic counter in the Downeast Coastal corridor is at Route 1 in Hancock (see chart below). Four other locations (three on Route 1 and one on Route 9) provide intermittent data over the 1990-2006 time period. While the Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) shows some fluctuations from year to year, there is an overall gradual increase on Route 1 in Hancock and a stable amount of traffic volume on Route 1 in East Machias and Perry. For example, in Hancock the AADT in 1990 was 9,230 compared to 12,550 in 2006.

Factored AADT (estimated based on periodic counts) are available for Route 9. For 2004, the FAADT on Route 9 in Aurora, west of Route 179 was 4,590. This compares to 3,350 in 1999 and 2,790 in 1989. The latter figure predates major shifts in the roadway alignment so is not entirely comparable. These data do show, however, that traffic is increasing on Route 9, but it has not reached the volumes of Route 1. Actual counts on Route 9 in Township 22 in 8 out of the ten years between 1995 and 2005 indicates a modest increase in traffic volume.

Downeast Coastal Corridor 1990-2006 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)



The two highways have different travel characteristics. Truck traffic along Route 9 is significant. For example, in Eddington, it accounts for 11 percent of all traffic. Route 9 serves as a major link supporting international trade between the U.S. and the Canadian Maritimes. It crosses through a lightly populated area of each county. There are no congestion problems in the Hancock County portion of the highway. Route 1 crosses through the most populated towns of Hancock and Washington Counties. It carries relatively high volumes of passenger traffic and has significant levels of tourist traffic during the summer and early fall.

In 1999, EMDC and HCPC conducted a survey of trucking firms to identify problems with the road system. The firms did not note any major concerns about Route 1 other than problems with congestion, particularly in Ellsworth. Access to Route 1 from some of the peninsula connectors was considered to be difficult due to tight turning radii, traffic back-ups and poor visibility. Most Hancock County-based firms do not use Route 9 often and did not note any difficulties with this route.

In Washington County communities and shippers report an increase in freight traffic along connector roads (notably Route 193, Route 192, Route 191 and Route 214) since the completion of roadway improvements on Route 9. Freight traffic on Route 190 has also increased as a function of increased activity at the Federal Marine Terminal in Eastport. Route 189 and 187, which connect Lubec and Jonesport/Beals (respectively) to Route 1 also carry significant volumes of freight traffic and function as important commuter and tourist routes.

### 2.1.2 Commuting Patterns

Most of the Route 1 Corridor is rural, with small employment centers in Bucksport, Ellsworth, Machias and Calais. Morning commuting traffic generally moves without significant delays even during the peak summer months. Afternoon commutes are coincident with higher tourism demand and can experience significant delays in Ellsworth and to, a lesser degree, in Bucksport.

According to Census figures, the number of commuters traveling along Route 9 and the connector roads (notably Route 191 into Machias, 190 into and out of Eastport and the eastern end of Route 9 into Calais) increased between 1990 and 2000. However, the overall number remains small. Commuting along Route 9 and the connector road does not contribute to any significant delays during either morning or evening commute.

Data from the 2000 census indicate that commuting continues to be dominated by single occupancy vehicles. Alternative modes are far less often used. Buses carry less than 1 percent of commuters. Biking and walking take up another very small percentage of commuters. The one significant exception to the one-person-one-car pattern is the 10 percent that report car pooling. It should be noted that these data pre-date the rapid increase in fuel costs in the latter years of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Reported commuting time rose sharply during the 1990s for 20 out of 23 towns along Route 1. These increases result from living further from work and slower driving speeds due to congestion or deteriorated road surfaces.

Commuters along Route 9 and the connector roads tend to commute in a single direction. For example, the overwhelming number of commuters in Northfield (54 out of 79) worked in Machias in 2000, and the overwhelming number of commuters in Alexander were employed in Calais (74 out of 177) or Baileyville (56 out of 177). In the communities average commuting time is directly related to the community's distance from the center of employment. In 2000, more people commuted into than out of peninsula communities (though only marginally in Jonesport/Beals).

The number of commuters into the major service centers on the corridor in Hancock County exceeded the number commuting out. For example, nearly 4,000 workers commuted into Ellsworth compared to about 1,200 who commuted out. (see table below). There is also substantial commuting traffic through the corridor to destinations on Mount Desert Island. For example, 66 Hancock residents commuted to Bar Harbor.

<b>Commuting Patterns: Major Corridor Towns,</b>			
	<b>Commute within town</b>	<b>Commute Out</b>	<b>Commute In</b>
Eastport	484	163	416
Lubec	466	113	355
Jonesport-Beals	493	305	327
Bucksport	907	1321	1,537
Ellsworth	2002	1194	3,946
SOURCE: 2000 U.S. Census			

### 2.1.3 Underutilized Passenger Transportation Infrastructure

There is no rail service along most of the corridor. The only operational line in Hancock County provides freight service between Bucksport and Bangor. The Brewer to Calais line has not been operational since September, 1985. There is presently (2008) a proposal for a short-run excursion line from Ellsworth to Dedham. A management plan for the Ellsworth-Ayers Junction portion of this line was adopted in 2006 to renovate and preserve the corridor for rail in the event it becomes feasible. In the interim the corridor will be managed as a multimodal trail. For details, see [www.hcpcme.org/transportation/sunrise/index](http://www.hcpcme.org/transportation/sunrise/index). Passenger bus services in the Downeast Coastal corridor are described below in the Transportation Facilities section.

## 2.2 Transportation Facilities

This section examines current transportation facilities, the roles they are playing on the corridor and their overall performance. For detailed data see the maps at: [www.hcpcme.org/transportation/needs/decoastal/decoastalneeds.html](http://www.hcpcme.org/transportation/needs/decoastal/decoastalneeds.html)

### 2.2.1 Highways

Road surface conditions vary dramatically along the corridor. State Route 9 has been substantially rebuilt during the past decade. Passing lanes, paved shoulders and smooth driving conditions prevail through most of the Bangor to Calais run. US Route 1 has several sections that are still classified as “un-built”, primarily in Washington County. These sections present significant impediments to safety and capacity of the road to handle freight. After one passing lane in Hancock on Route 1 there are no passing lanes on Route 1 between Hancock and Calais. The lack of passing lanes on this 100-mile section of coastal Route 1 is an impediment to the separation of freight and commuter traffic. A mobility and safety analysis conducted in 2007 by the Washington County Council of Governments makes recommendations for passing lanes, turning lanes and turn-out areas along Route 1 from Steuben to Calais (this analysis is posted at [www.wccog.net/transport/route1.html](http://www.wccog.net/transport/route1.html)).

In Washington County the condition of connector roads, most of which also classified as “un-built,” also present significant impediments to safety and the movement of freight traffic. Natural resource-based industries (forestry, blueberries, wreaths, and seafood) located in Washington County all move significant volumes of freight. Due to the lack of freight rail, all freight moving through and along the corridor, as well as all freight moving through the Federal Marine Terminal at Eastport must be transported by road. This contributes to roadway safety concerns and increased roadway deterioration, particularly along un-built sections of highway.

### 2.2.2 Intersections and traffic control capacity

In Hancock County the major intersection and traffic control capacity issues are in Ellsworth and, to a lesser extent, Bucksport. In Washington County the major intersection and traffic control issues are in the center of Machias during commuting hours and when tourists swell the roadways during events and festivals and in Calais in association with the international bridge.

### 2.2.3 Bicycle and pedestrian facilities

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are primarily concentrated in service center communities. They provide an important transportation option for those without access to automotive transportation. Shoulders are added when sections of state highways are reconstructed but not when they are only re-surfaced. Many new shoulders have been constructed in recent years but there remains an interrupted patchwork of shoulders throughout Washington County (see Map of shoulders) inhibiting use of roads for bike commuting or touring.

The condition of pedestrian facilities varies greatly from town to town and even within each community. Winter-time conditions of sidewalks are often poor. When sidewalks are not cleared of snow, pedestrians are forced to walk along the edge of the travel lane, presenting a significant safety issue.

The East Coast Greenway and other designated bike routes contribute to the mix of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The Downeast Sunrise Trail will be an 85-mile off-road multi-use trail Ellsworth-Calais (expect completion in 2010). It starts in Ellsworth and passes Hancock and Sullivan in Hancock County. It also passes through the communities of Steuben, Milbridge, Harrington, Cherryfield, Columbia, Columbia Falls, Jonesboro, Whitneyville, Machias, East Machias, Dennysville, Pembroke and Charlotte in Washington County.

### 2.2.4 Transit service (fixed route and para-transit)

Bus service is provided by Downeast Transportation, Inc, West’s Transportation and Washington Hancock Community Agency (WHCA). Downeast Transportation, Inc, provides fixed route service to most towns in Hancock County. Scheduled service along the corridor generally serves different towns in Hancock County on different days. This service is supplemented by subscription commuting service to some Washington County towns that serves employers such as Jackson Lab in Bar Harbor. West’s provides seven-day intercity service from Calais to Bangor with stops in Washington and Hancock County.

WHCA service is aimed primarily at social service clients. Ride share programs are offered by the Washington Hancock Community Agency primarily for commuters through Go Maine! In addition to MaineCare and other social service transportation, the Washington Hancock Community Agency provides trips to shopping centers, grocery stores, pharmacies, and medical appointments by a Washington Hancock Community Agency bus in certain communities for seniors. When space is available, the Washington Hancock Community Agency will accommodate other riders and other destinations. For more information, see [www.hpcme.org/transportation/transit](http://www.hpcme.org/transportation/transit)

Acadian Bus Lines offers daily intercity bus service from Saint John, New Brunswick to Bangor, Maine along Route 9 (with stops in St-Andrew & St-Stephen, New Brunswick). The service does not currently offer any stops in Maine. Taxi service is available in large portions of Washington and Hancock Counties, but it is not currently (2008) available along parts of Route 1 and much of Route 9.

### 2.2.5 Rail facilities and service

There is no rail service along most of the corridor. The Brewer to Calais line has not been operational since September, 1985. Most of the remaining segments of the line are scheduled for conversion into a multimodal trail. For details, see [www.hpcme.org/transportation/sunrise/index](http://www.hpcme.org/transportation/sunrise/index) In Hancock County, the only operational line in Hancock County connects Bucksport to the Bangor area. There is presently (2008) a proposal for a short-run excursion line from Ellsworth to Dedham.

In Washington County, there are no active rail lines moving freight within the corridor. Existing rail connections to New Brunswick are utilized to move freight across the international border. Developing rail service in Washington County is seen as way to increase activity at the Port of Eastport while also improving roadway conditions and roadway safety by moving freight traffic onto rail.

### 2.2.6 Ports and marine service

The State of Maine promotes development of cargo port facilities at the Federal Marine Terminal in Eastport as part of its Three-Port Strategy (Portland, Searsport, Eastport). Since 1981 cargo handled at the Eastport facility has steadily grown (from 15,198 tons in 1981 to 363,747 tons in 2004). In 2004, Eastport handled 24% of the cargo tons that passed through Maine's ports. The facility boasts a 64-foot natural channel and is the closest U.S. port to Europe. Shipping activities are confined primarily to exports of Maine and New Brunswick forest products including wood pulp primarily destined for European and far eastern ports.

All freight shipped through Eastport must currently (2008) be moved by truck. The lack of a rail connection contributes to traffic and safety concerns on Route 190 and Route 1; and is a limiting factor in the potential for the port to accommodate growth.

### 2.2.7 Airports

The only airport in Hancock County offering scheduled service is the Bar Harbor-Hancock County Airport in Trenton. While not on the corridor, it serves corridor communities to a limited extent. It is served by two active runways. They are able to accommodate Gulfstream III's and Cessna 441's. In addition to general aviation flights, it has scheduled commuter service to Boston. According to the 2004 Airport Master Plan, enplanements are expected to increase to 19,500 by 2013. There were a total of 42,500 operations in 2002 and this is expected to increase to 50,600 by 2013.

In Washington County, five small general aviation airports are located along the corridor. There is no scheduled air service in Washington County.

<b>General Aviation Facilities in Washington County</b>		
<b>Facility</b>	<b>Surface</b>	<b>Length</b>
Deblois Flight Strip	Asphalt	4,000'
Eastport Municipal Airport	Asphalt	4,000'
Lubec Municipal Airport	Gravel	2,032'
Machias Valley Airport	Asphalt	2,900'
Princeton Airport	Asphalt	4,005'
Source: MDOT.		

The Maine Aviation System Update Plan identifies the need for an all-weather airport to serve the Downeast region. The site selection process for a facility to replace and upgrade the current Machias Valley Airport to a Level 1 facility (with a minimum runway of 4000 feet), the Downeast Regional Airport, is currently (2008) underway.

### 2.2.7 Passenger Intermodal and Park and Ride Lots

There are presently (2008) no passenger intermodal facilities in the corridor study area. Initial planning is underway for such a facility in Ellsworth. This facility would serve as a transit point for bus, excursion rail and bicycle and pedestrian traffic. It would connect the Sunrise Trail to these other services.

There are no state-recognized park and ride facilities along the corridor. There are several informal sites where cars are parked. These sites have no official recognition and some may be in use without the landowners' permission.

### 2.2.8 Freight Intermodal facilities

There are no freight intermodal facilities in the study area. This is a potential weakness for the port facility in Eastport. According to the 2002 Maine Integrated Freight Plan, highway access to the facility is limited. The closest railhead is located seventeen miles away and, as mentioned above, the line is not in active service and large portions are being converted to a trail facility.

According to the Freight Plan, some believe that the port's lack of intermodal access prevents it from efficiently serving its inland customers.

### 2.2.9 Traveler and truck rest areas & other freight or passenger facilities

Trucker rest facilities along the corridor are limited. According to the MaineDOT Office of Freight Transportation's 2003 Commercial Vehicle Service Plan, 21 truck parking spaces are needed on the Route 1 between Ellsworth and Calais and there is only one known space. Thirteen spaces are needed on Route 9 between Bangor and Calais and eight are presently available. Truckers are required by federal law to have mandatory rest periods and are subject to a ten-hour driving limit. This means that truck rest facilities have to be sufficient to allow truck drivers to have a prolonged period of rest.

Passenger car rest facilities are also limited, but new sites are being added. According to the 2003 Commercial Vehicle Service Plan, there was a fifteen car facility at Long Cove in Sullivan and 30 spaces at Pike Woods in the Calais area. Other sites have since been added along the portions of Route 1 that are part of the Route 1-Route 186 Scenic Byway. Along the approximately 100-mile Route 1 corridor between Steuben and downtown Calais, the Mobility and Safety Analysis referenced above (and posted at [www.wccog.net/transport/route1.html](http://www.wccog.net/transport/route1.html)) identified 16 locations where roadway improvements for turning access are needed. It recommends that MDOT make necessary roadway improvements for turning access at all 16 identified locations. The study also identified 11 potential sites for scenic pull-outs to facilitate separation of tourist and freight traffic; and 26 potential locations for passing lanes. This report recommends development of four additional scenic pull-outs; and at least four passing lanes in each direction.

### 2.2.10 Where and when are transportation problems occurring?

The most significant transportation problems in the corridor fall into several categories including 1) restricted mobility on Route 1 in Washington County due to the lack of passing lanes and safe truck turn-out facilities, 2) the lack of rail service in general and to the port of Eastport in particular, 3) inadequate winter maintenance on the north-south connectors between Routes 1 and 9, and 4) crash rates associated with congestion and excessive speed.

Restricted mobility on Route 1 is most severe in the late summer when tourist traffic and freight movement are both at their highest volumes. With no passing lanes for 100 miles motorists become frustrated and may take greater risks in their efforts to pass slower moving vehicles. This can lead to dangerous collisions causing further delays, frustrations and inhibitors to economic growth. Truck pull-off areas are used/created along shoulders near services (at the junction of Route 1 and 1A in Harrington and at the triangle in Pembroke for example) causing dangerous loss of sight lines for other motorists. The lack of rail service to the port of Eastport limits growth of this facility and contributes additional truck traffic throughout the corridor.

Inadequate winter maintenance on the north-south connector roads in the corridor (Routes 178, 179, 180, 181, 186, 189, 193, 192 and 191) contributes to higher crash volumes and reduced

economic activity. The demand on municipal finances to keep these roads open is significant even with State aid and is often overwhelmed. The result is road surfaces that are inadequately plowed during and after significant storms and an extension in the length and severity of poor road conditions.

Crash rates along the arterials of the Downeast Corridor are highest in the most heavily congested areas, particularly High Street in Ellsworth. The severity of accidents is higher where traffic speeds are at their maximum, including large sections of Route 9 and open portions of Route 1. The following specific issues have been identified:

- Operational issues (e.g. signal timing, etc.);
- Passing lanes
- Unsafe intersections
- Signals – Ellsworth
- Speed limits
- Vehicle/pedestrian conflicts.
- Cross walks safety issues:
- High Street, Ellsworth
- Western Machias – center turning lane
- Bucksport

#### 2.2.11 Characteristics of the corridor that influence the range of possible solutions

Historically this corridor has been characterized by forests and open farmland. Recent trends include expansion of road-side commercial uses and large-lot (over one acre) residential development in the rural hinterland. The projections suggest that the trend toward low density residential development will continue creating a patchwork pattern of exurban residential growth. The absence of sewer treatment capacity and municipal water supply in most towns will discourage subdivisions with lot sizes less than one acre or other more intensive uses. This means that most development and driveways and other curb cuts will be dispersed. It is easier to manage the traffic impacts from new development when it is concentrated rather than dispersed.

A review of comprehensive plans indicates a predominance of poorly drained soils. For example, about 56 percent (16,676 acres) of all land in Gouldsboro is rated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as having a very low potential for low density development. Most other towns have similar constraints. For recent comprehensive plans see: [www.hcpcme.org/landuse.html](http://www.hcpcme.org/landuse.html) and [www.wccog.net/landuse/status.html](http://www.wccog.net/landuse/status.html). The natural resource maps from these plans indicate the many constraints on development along the Route 1 corridor, including wetlands, shore lands, and areas with steep slopes. There are additional constraints related to rare and endangered species and significant wildlife habitats. In most cases development is still possible, but additional mitigation costs are likely. These constraints mean that roadway improvements are likely to be costly.

Land ownership patterns vary along the study area. It is characterized by small (under one acre) residential holdings in the more built-up areas of larger towns and commercial strips. Holdings

tend also be small along and adjacent to water bodies. In the more remote areas, holdings may be as large as several hundred acres or more. These larger holdings are frequently blueberry growing areas or industrial (large-scale) forests.

#### 2.2.12 Projected future development patterns

Population projections by the State Planning Office indicate that there will be 58,006 year-round residents in Hancock County by 2020 compared to 51,069 in 2000, an increase of 13 percent. This means that year-round dwelling units will continue to be built in the corridor communities. In addition, recent trends indicate that second home construction will also continue. This development will be accompanied by a corresponding increase in commercial and other service-related development. By contrast, projections for Washington County show the population decreasing from 22,906 in 2000 to 31,090 in 2020.

The only Hancock County Route 1 corridor towns with town-wide zoning are Bucksport, Ellsworth and Hancock. These three towns permit a range of land uses along the immediate highway corridor. The only Hancock County Route 9 town with town-wide zoning is Aurora. There are no zoning restrictions, apart from those in shoreland zoning in the other corridor towns. This will make it difficult to enact land use measures that preserve corridor mobility.

One emerging land use pattern is a shift of new development away from the coastal communities to more inland locations. The high price of land along the coast has made inland towns more attractive locations for development. Most jobs, however, are located along the coast. This means that more commuting-related traffic from inland towns to the coast can be expected. A related pattern is the sale of large parcels of land previously used for forestry for residential uses. In some cases, this may mean subdivisions of over 100 units being created when until recently it was rare for a subdivision to exceed 20 units.

One demographic change that may affect land use development is the increase in median age. Hancock County is a popular retirement destination and most of its population growth is occurring in the older age groups. For example, the 0-19 age group is projected by the State Planning Office to decrease from 12,551 persons in 2000 to 10,609 in 2020, a decrease of 15 percent. By contrast, the age 65 and over age group is expected to increase by 85 percent (7,158 in 2000 to 13,158 in 2020). This means that not all of the recent arrivals will be seeking employment. It also means that as this group ages demand will increase for elderly-related services such as assisted living units.

### **2.3 Review of Existing Plans**

All towns immediately along the HCPC portion of Route 1 corridor have adopted comprehensive plans since enactment of Maine's Growth Management Act in 1988. With the exception of the town of Hancock, all these plans were deemed consistent with the State Planning Office review criteria. The plans for Sullivan and Hancock were adopted in the early 1990s and are due for an update. The only Hancock County town on the Route 9 corridor to have adopted a

comprehensive plan consistent with the Growth Management Act is Aurora. While the plan was adopted in the early 1990s, there has been relatively little change in town since then.

In Washington County all towns along the Route 1 corridor have adopted comprehensive plans since the enactment of the Growth Management Law with the exception of Whitneyville (no plan), Jonesboro (local adoption pending) and Harrington (near completion and submitting to the State Planning Office for a review for consistency with the Act). With these exceptions, all are consistent with the Growth Management Act and two (Perry and Pembroke) are currently being updated. Route 9 in Washington County traverses 5 unorganized territories and 5 organized municipalities. Three of the five municipalities (Beddington, Alexander and Baileyville) have adopted comprehensive plans that are consistent with the Growth Management Act. The other two (Wesley and Crawford) have no comprehensive plans at all.

One challenge of implementing plans is resistance to enacting town-wide zoning. This makes it difficult to manage development along the corridor. The plans, however, all address corridor management concerns such as access management and concentrated commercial development.

There are also several county-wide and regional planning documents. These can be found at: [www.hpcme.org/transport.html](http://www.hpcme.org/transport.html). Much of the baseline data cited in this report comes from these documents. Some contain goals and objectives that can be used in refining the goals for this corridor plan. For example, the 2005 Region 4 Transportation Assessment has the following goals:

- Improve overall condition of US Route 1, including better travel surface, shoulders, and guardrails.
- Strengthen the connector roads between US Route 1 and State Route 9. These include US Route 1A in Hancock County, State Route 182, State Route 191, State Route 192, and State Route 193 in Washington County.
- Enhance tourism through transportation corridor development. Strategies include creating thematic nature and history-based tours, rail-to-trail conversion, access for walking and bicycling and alternative transportation modes, increase access to marine transportation, and support scenic byways.
- Improve communications access. There are many locations along these corridors that are dead-zones for cell phones. These dead zones present some security concerns for vehicle break downs.
- Increase access management to improve highway efficiency.
- US Route 1 has a major bottleneck passing through Ellsworth and several sections where passing lanes are recommended.
- Promote car-free tourism with better bus, ferry, and bicycle infrastructure.
- Construct additional infrastructure for tourism, such as scenic turnouts and restrooms.

The 2007 SIPCREs (Strategic Investment Plan for Corridors of Regional and Economic Significance) MaineDOT Region 4 Transportation Corridors had the following objectives for the corridor:

*Downeast Regional Airport:* Construct new airport in greater Machias Region to serve regional passenger and freight needs. Re-use existing airport for mixed use development. *Region identified by MDOT Office of Passenger Transportation Aviation System Plan as an area in need of a Level-One Facility (5,000 foot runway).*

*Eastport Regional Connector Road and Bridge:* Reconstruct the former bridge connecting Eastport to the mainland, improve highway connections to Meddybemps and Route 9. Local and regional comprehensive Planning efforts of regional service centers (Eastport and Calais) identified need to increase Port of Eastport access to Route 9 and I-95 and to separate freight and tourism traffic on Route 1.

*North – South Connector Routes:* Improve state highways connecting Route 1 with Route 9 including Route 46, Route 193, Route 192 and Route 191. These routes would safely move freight up to Route 9 and facilitate tourism connections with coastal Hancock and Washington County.

*Route 1 Mobility and Safety:* Complete road improvements on coastal Route 1 between Bucksport and Eastport. Add passing lanes, turning lanes, paved shoulders and other improvements to facilitate traffic flow and safety. *Extensive public and corridor committee input has stressed the need to facilitate mobility of commuters and freight while supporting an increasing tourism market.*

*Downeast Sunrise Trail:* Convert rails to multi-use trails between Washington Junction in Hancock and Ayers Junction. Add visitor information, way-finding signage, parking facilities and other support infrastructure. *Rail-banking concept will ensure corridor is available and upgraded for rail use if and when such use becomes economically feasible while creating a world-class tourism amenity.*

*Tourism Infrastructure Program:* Implement transportation to enhance visitation to Hancock and Washington Counties including scenic turn-outs, rest areas, way-finding signage and separation of visitor traffic from commuters and freight. *Coordinated effort of multiple state (Transportation, Tourism, Conservation) and regional agencies to ensure that visitors attracted by abundant nature-based resources find an experience that is matched by equally high quality infrastructure.*

### **3.0 CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND ISSUES**

This summary identifies two basic groups of needs and issues. Those that are current and those likely to emerge in the future. The current needs include:

- *Improving Unbuilt Sections of Route 1.* There are segments of Route 1 in Washington County that are not built to modern standards. These sections need to be improved including the addition of guardrails, shoulders and additional passing lanes.
- *Address traffic bottlenecks in Ellsworth and Bucksport.* Traffic congestion in two areas significantly slows overall travel speeds in the Hancock County.

- Improve connector roads between Routes 1 and 9: these roads are important to the promotion of smooth freight and passenger connections between the two key highways (Routes 1 & 9).
- Recognize how land limitations will affect transportation system improvements: the corridors are characterized by many areas with poorly drained soils and ledge. This may limit some highway improvements and certainly affect their costs.
- Address deferred maintenance. Increased asphalt prices and other road construction and maintenance costs at a time of decreasing gasoline tax revenues mean that maintenance and road improvements are being deferred, increasing long-term costs.
- Improve multi-modal access to port of Eastport. There is a need to improve rail access to the port which may be direct or through the establishment of marshalling and warehousing in nearby centers like Ayers Junction.

Longer term issues include:

- Creating measures to assure that future road improvements reflect the needs of the major groups of users: truckers, commuters and tourists. The needs of these three groups must be addressed in a manner that preserves and protect the unique character of the corridor.
- The challenge of promoting effective access management policies and other land management measures given the general resistance to land use controls. The continued spread of commercial and residential development will be difficult to manage without additional land use controls. The creation of access roads parallel to existing highways should be encouraged.
- Preparing for increased rates of congestion due to more traffic. High housing prices relative to income in coastal communities mean more people are commuting to jobs from places further inland. This, along with the continued popularity of Hancock County as a retirement area, will mean continued increases in vehicular traffic.
- Adjusting the transportation system to reflect increased fuel costs. Measures will be needed to promote ridesharing (such as vanpools and park and ride lots) and public transportation,
- Addressing the needs of an aging population. As the population ages, there will be increased demand for services for the elderly including transportation, assisted living and home-based elder care. This will involve demand for specialized transportation services.

## 4.0 DRIVING FORCES

The corridor planning process involves the identification of driving forces. These forces are defined as trends that affect the future development of the corridor. All predictions are subject to change and changes in the driving forces will affect trends along the corridor

(Available online at: [www.hpcme.org/transportation/needs/decoastal](http://www.hpcme.org/transportation/needs/decoastal))

## 5.0 SCENARIO BUILDING

A scenario is a thumbnail sketch of a possible future. Unlike a projection that shows a predicted future for a particular item, such as future ridership on a bus route, a scenario considers the whole. We present here five alternative scenarios that consider how economic development and transportation may interact over the course of fifteen years.

(Available online at: [www.hpcme.org/transportation/needs/decoastal](http://www.hpcme.org/transportation/needs/decoastal))

## 6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The initial recommendations are taken verbatim from the SIPCRES report. These are presented for review and comment by the Corridor Committee. Only those that apply to the corridor are included here.

Corridor	Investment	Econ. Dev (rank)	Quality of Life (rank)	Safety (rank)	Asset Preserve (rank)	Total
DE Coast	Eastport Regional Connector Road and Bridge	19.4	4.2	11.7	-5.8	29.4
DE Coast	North South Connector Routes	17.6	6.5	10.0	11.7	45.7
DE Coast	Route 1 Mobility and Safety	18.5	5.6	15.0	10.0	49.1
DE Coast	Tourism Infrastructure Program	7.4	10.2	3.3	5.8	26.8
DE Coast	Downeast Regional Airport	13.9	3.2	3.3	7.5	28.0
DE Coast	Downeast Sunrise Trail	7.4	10.6	6.7	10.8	35.6

## 7.0 APPENDICES

### 7.1 Corridor Committee and Outreach Meetings Minutes

(Available online at: [www.hpcme.org/transportation/needs/decoastal](http://www.hpcme.org/transportation/needs/decoastal))

### 7.2 Corridor Advisory Committee Members

#### Hancock County Members:

Name	Affiliation
Roderick Franzius	Town of Hancock, HCPC executive board;
Michelle Beal	City Manager, Ellsworth;
Roger Raymond	Town Manager, Bucksport
Janet Michaud	Schoodic Futures Committee, HCPC executive board
Richard Bishop	County Sheriff's Department
Linda Belfiore	Transportation Coordinator, Washington Hancock Community Agency
John Kelly	Park Planner, Acadia National Park

#### Washington County Members:

Name	Affiliation
Dale Crowley	Town of Addison
Barbara Drisko	Town of Columbia Falls
Stuart Shotwell	Town of Cooper
William Attick	Town of Dennysville
Betsy Fitzgerald	Town of Machias
Lisa Hanscom	Town of Roque Bluffs
Rick Tanney	Town of Trescott
Linda Pagels-Wentworth	Washington County
Chris Gardner	Port of Eastport
Eleody Libby	Washington County, One Community
Harold Clossey	Sunrise County Economic Council
Alan Brooks	Quoddy Region Land Trust
Skip Roger	Federal Marine Terminal
Roger McIver	Domtar, Inc.
Dale Crowley	Town of Addison