

# Southern Maine Corridor Committee

Greater Portland Council of Governments  
Maine Department of Transportation  
Maine Turnpike Authority  
Southern Maine Economic Development District  
Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission



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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Southern Maine Corridors Committee and Interested Parties

**From:** Josh Mack, Transportation Planner

**Date:** October 8, 2004

**RE:** December 7, 2004 meeting of the Southern Maine Corridors Committee

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Committee Members present: James Gulnac, Sanford; Roger Winn, Newfield; Dan Fleishman, Arundel; Margaret Forbes, disability advocate; Jim Long, Old Orchard Beach; Sandra Guay, Saco; Connie Garber, York County Community Action Corporation; and George Flaherty, Cumberland County.

Staff Members present: Natalya Harkins, GPCOG; Tom Reinauer and Josh Mack, SMRPC; Chris Mann and Marc Guimont, MaineDOT; and Dan Stewart, Maine Turnpike Authority.

Tom Reinauer opened the meeting by describing how the MaineDOT is launching a new public outreach program and replacing the former Regional Transportation Advisory Committees (RTAC) with new regionally-based committees that will focus on a Regional Needs Assessment this year. The regions will be based on the economic development district jurisdictions. The Regional Needs Assessment document is scheduled to be complete by the end of the fiscal year, June 2005. Tom proposed having a meeting every other month on the first Thursday from 5:30 to 7:00. At the end of the meeting, there was consensus that the meetings should take place on a monthly basis because there is a great deal of work to do. The Committee agreed to try to keep to the Thursday evening schedule. Tom asked the committee if they preferred having staff run future meetings or if the committee would like to elect a Chairperson. George Flaherty was nominated and selected to be the Chair. There was consensus that at future meetings, the agendas should denote the desired outcome of agenda items and the procedure for carrying out agenda items. **The next meeting will be held at the Scarborough Municipal Offices on November 4 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.**

As the Regional Needs Assessment is an entirely new process, the ensuing discussion at the first meeting was dominated by two major themes:

- The methodology that will be used to identify and prioritize regional needs, including the Committee's role in the process;
- Regional needs that should be incorporated into Southern Maine's Regional Needs Assessment

Staff and Committee comments were collected and grouped under these two meeting themes:

### ***Regional Needs Assessment Methodology***

Committee comments:

- The Regional Needs Assessment process should be informed by Maine DOT updates on the status of the Department's planning and project efforts--especially those projects and planning efforts aimed at mitigating issues on corridors with major transportation issues such as the Route 111, Route 302 and the Gorham bypass;
- Groups such as existing corridor committees, private developers, manufacturers, freight carriers, and tourism groups should be included in the process;
- The Regional Needs Assessment should have a 3-5 page summary as a final product with pictures and graphics that the general public can use to better understand how the MaineDOT outreach to the public affects the Department's decision-making processes;
- The Regional Needs Corridor planning process should consider the primary needs of corridor communities stationed at endpoints of the corridor in relation to the secondary intermediary needs of communities inside the corridor;
- The Committee should consider developing a matrix analysis as a tool to identify transportation issues for each corridor and prioritize corridors. Regional traffic generators and I-95 exits should be identified in the matrix as well as a sublist of fast growing municipalities;
- The Regional Needs Assessment should take into consideration Southern Maine's relationship with New Hampshire and other sources of traffic moving through the area, as well as Maine's relationship with New Brunswick;
- The Committee should focus on the public involvement plan;
- The Committee should consider breaking down into subgroups to talk about sub-corridors or groups of corridors;
- The Regional Needs Assessment should focus on regional policies, and not focus on smaller needs and issues.

Staff comments:

- Maine DOT may require some standardization of the corridor committee reports, but wants to give the Committee the flexibility to allow the regions to make their own conclusions about their own unique transportation needs;
- A transportation inventory, outreach methods outlined in a public involvement plan, and an inventory of state and regional planning studies are being used to guide the Regional Needs Assessment and to identify and prioritize regional needs;

- The Regional Needs Assessment process will be guided by two major principles: (1) the desire to create a balance between transportation, land use and economic development planning and (2) examine this relationship by corridor;
- The Corridor analysis should examine the relationship between nodes and corridors;
- The Committee should keep in mind that each corridor is unique and will need to be evaluated separately;
- The Committee may want to think of the Regional Needs Assessment as a book, where each corridor is a chapter. A major goal of the committee would be to find commonalities between each chapter of the book.

### ***Regional Needs Identified***

#### Committee Comments:

- The following transportation planning issues were identified as being important considerations for a regional needs assessment: hazmat routes, residential growth, truck weight limits, congestion and movement of people, highway access control, truck length standards, pavement depth standards, transportation opportunities for people with disabilities;
- The following goals were identified as being important candidates for regional needs: mobility, universal access, economic sustainability, preserving capacity and safety of highways, sea lanes, balance between transportation, land use and economic development;
- The corridor committee should be cognizant of the fact that Southern Maine gets a disproportionate amount of transportation investment when compared to the tax revenue it generates for Maine;
- The corridor committee should analyze how an East-West Highway might affect existing corridors in Southern Maine—especially Route 302 and Route 26.