

**COASTAL CANADIAN CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN**  
**KICKOFF MEETING – JANUARY 25, 2011**

**Attendees:** David Herrick, Jon Southern, Roger Soucy, Brent Bubar, John Devin, Neil Lane, Roger McIver, Fred Michaud, Diane Smith-Halkett, Linda Pagels-Wentworth, Lee Sochasky, Jeremy Gabrielson, Ronald LaPlant, Mark Barry, Roger Holst, Dana Altvater, Ed Renaud, Austin Olmstead, Todd Smith, Diane Barnes, Misha Mytar, Judy East

After a round of introductions, WCCOG contract facilitator Sandi Duchesne described the difference between traditional transportation planning, which focuses on costs, timelines, and funding sources for major capacity-building projects, and corridor management planning, which focuses on finding the highest and best uses for existing transportation facilities with a few high-priority improvements as needed. Corridor management integrates transportation planning with land use and economic development goals for the region. The Coastal Canadian Corridor (CCC) management plan will help MaineDOT identify transportation improvements and multimodal linkages that enjoy widespread public support throughout eastern Washington County, not just from a single town or stakeholder group. High-priority projects with a regional focus and popular support are more likely to rise to the top of the list of desirable projects for state and federal funding. The CCC is one of MaineDOT's designated Corridors of Regional Economic Significance for Transportation (CREST) that are expected to yield greater returns on statewide transportation investments over the next 10-15 years.

The transportation modes that will be covered under the CCC management plan include motor vehicle (highway), bicycle, pedestrian, rail, marine, and air. Telecommunications and intermodal connection points will also be examined. Snowmobiles and ATVs, which arguably are transportation modes in eastern Washington County rather than purely recreational toys, are funded in Maine by the Department of Conservation. Since this is a MaineDOT study, these modes can only be addressed to the extent that they overlap with the highway and bicycle-pedestrian transportation system – i.e., improved safety at major road-trail crossing points, and the possibility for DOT-DOC collaboration on improvements in trail linkages.

Numerous data acquisition and mapping needs were identified by stakeholders:

- Show existing railroad track lines (with ownership info), depots, directions on CCC map – this information can be taken from the Eastport Gateway Project engineering study
- Show all airports within the study area on map, including private airports; David Herrick will provide data
- Show all border crossings within study area on map
- Show all existing ferry crossings between US and Canada on map

- Show major shipping lanes to and from Eastport
- Show all ports, working harbors, and public water access points (both saltwater and freshwater)
- Show land ownership for all major undeveloped tracts in CCC on map (e.g., tribal, state and federal parks and reserves, land trusts, industrial forestland)
- Obtain updated traffic counts for major roads in study area
- If possible, obtain latest breakdowns on commercial freight/local/visitor traffic crossing the border in both directions at Calais. Tim Donnell of US Border Patrol Service was identified as a resource to determine if recent data is available; New Brunswick may be willing to share some of its most recent border crossing survey data as well.
- Identify highway high-crash locations on map
- Check current highway inventory to identify “unbuilt” (i.e., deficient according to modern highway design standards) sections of Route 1 and other major roads in study area
- Check the latest MaineDOT “Bridges in Danger” list for any bridges in the study area
- Show highway crossings of major ATV and snowmobile trails on map
- Show off-road bicycle-pedestrian routes within study area on map, plus shoulder widths for major roads
- Show all existing energy development and transmission facilities on map – windpower and biofuel generation sites, gas pipeline, electric transmission lines
- Show existing telecommunications utility infrastructure (emergency system, broadband, cell phone) effective ranges on map
- Review MaineDOT existing and in-progress documents for recommendations and data pertinent to corridor plan, including the Eastport Gateway Project engineering study, three-port study, statewide freight and airport studies

Sandi then asked stakeholders to help define the study area to be included in the corridor management plan. Within Washington County, the CCC plan will focus primarily on the north-south movement between Eastport and Danforth. However, other parts of Washington County should also be included, to the extent that they contribute to the transport of people and goods within the CCC. The study area needs to be large enough to identify major CCC traffic generators in the region, but small enough to permit an effective study on a very tight budget. The following summarizes the study area extents that the advisory committee members agreed upon:

- All of Route 190 peninsula between Eastport and Route 1
- Route 1 from junction with Route 214 in Pembroke north to Danforth, plus all shoreline east of Route 1 from Pembroke to Calais

- All of Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge (Baring Section) and adjacent roadways
- Stud Mill Road to the Hancock-Washington County border; also, extend study area west of Route 1 to the Hancock-Washington County border for all points north of the Stud Mill Road as far as Route 169 west of Danforth, to incorporate the Grand Lake Stream Road and the extensive network of private logging roads in this area
- Route 6 – extend study area eastward to the border at Vanceboro
- All of South Princeton Road
- All of Charlotte Road
- All of Route 214; Route 9 west from Route 1 to Route 191; Route 191 south from Route 9 to Route 214
- Network of private logging roads on both sides of Route 1 within defined study limits
- All small ports, harbors, and water access points (both freshwater and saltwater), in addition to the major port facility at Eastport

The next task for the advisory committee was to do some preliminary work in developing scenarios for future growth in eastern Washington County that are an essential component of each corridor management plan. These scenarios provide a context for future economic development and land use, which in turn makes it easier to identify the transportation modes and facilities that will help to sustain and fuel economic growth. The three major scenarios that were proposed were energy development, tourism, and natural resource extraction (i.e., logging and pulp). Committee members offered the following comments to guide WCCOG staff in scenario development:

### **1. Energy Development**

- Identify future transportation needs associated with potential sites for LNG, tidal power generation, wind farms, biofuel generation, gas pipeline extensions, new and extended electrical transmission lines

### **2. Tourism**

- Residents and tourists have sought for many years to establish a year-round or seasonal ferry service between Eastport and Lubec – would result in significant decreases in highway demand between the two peninsulas
- CCC serves as a connector between designated and proposed scenic byways on Route 1 – expect that this will create additional future demand for tourist services within the corridor
- Small harbors can be developed and marketed as tourism destinations, while remaining significant contributors to fishing industry and Eastport shipping
- Freshwater access points are just as important as saltwater access points for tourism

- Look for ways to separate commercial and tourist vehicular traffic within CCC; Route 1 Mobility Analysis from Steuben to Calais (on WCCOG web site) can be extended to Danforth
- Examine feasibility of rail tourism (would require new and upgraded rail lines to be designed and built to carry passenger trains as well as commercial freight)

### 3. Natural Resource Extraction

- Northeast Can-Am study, Global Trade study, East-West Highway study are not directly related to CCC, but should be reviewed for data and recommendations pertinent to CCC – particularly with regard to shipments to and from the port facility at Eastport
- Review Perry and Pembroke Comprehensive Plans for potential alternatives to the proposed site at Ayers Junction for a rail-to-truck intermodal facility
- If an intermodal facility is developed in any of these sites, the Passamaquoddy Tribe would like to see increased rail-truck traffic routed across the old toll road (Old Eastport Road in Perry; Toll Road in Eastport) rather than down Route 190 through the heart of the Sipayik Reservation; however, this will require new bridge construction
- Examine feasibility of a revived rail route between Baileyville and old siding in Tomah Township for wood extraction – no current state-owned right-of-way for trackage, but only a few major landowners (including Passamaquoddy Tribe and possibly a land trust or Dept. of Conservation easements) – look at cost-benefit ratios for trucking to the rail depot vs. over-the-road trucking across existing major private logging routes, Route 6, and Route 1 to get wood from Vanceboro area down to the mill at Woodland

The final task for the advisory committee at this initial kickoff meeting was to examine each of the major transportation modes and identify specific improvements that, based on committee members' individual backgrounds and expertise, could benefit eastern Washington County under one or more of these economic development scenarios. There will be ample opportunities to expand and prioritize these recommendations for improvements as the study progresses. The ideas presented at the kickoff meeting were as follows:

#### 1. Rail:

- Current 25-car "push" limit on trains coming into Woodland from SNB track lines is too short – needs to be upgraded to facilitate more commercial rail traffic

#### 2. Highway:

- Open existing causeways on Route 190 to restore natural tidal flow
- Maintenance projects (i.e., pavement preservation and reclamation) and low-cost safety improvements stand the best chance of being funded by MaineDOT

in the current economic climate; more fuel-efficient vehicles have reduced the gasoline tax money available for construction, even as construction costs have continued to rise

- Grand Lake Stream Road is important for both commerce and tourism in the CCC, but Maine is currently not doing a good job of maintaining it for either use; study potential for tribal-state collaboration in funding improvements for this road
- Route 1 from Topsfield to Danforth, and possibly other major roads in the study area, remain “unbuilt” (i.e., they have never been reconstructed to meet modern highway design standards, and therefore require much more frequent and more expensive maintenance to remain drivable). Identify and prioritize this section of Route 1, and any other unbuilt road sections in the study area, as candidates for future reconstruction projects.
- Forest City Road needs significant improvements
- Baileyville maintains part of South Princeton Road, but can’t find a pavement striping contractor to take on such a small job; can towns in eastern Washington County collaborate regionally to get all of their striping done within a single contract?
- West Street in Princeton (only road leading from Route 1 to airport and Greenland Point Center) has “skinny mix” pavement only – needs a lot of work
- Intersection of Routes 1 and 169 in Danforth is not a high-crash location but there are a lot of near-misses here, due to poor geometry and limited sight distances
- Design for wider shoulders wherever possible on future reconstruction jobs; shoulders provide multiple benefits for commercial traffic, tourists wishing to pull off and check maps, bikes, and peds (note: WCCOG completed a study from Steuben to Calais that looked at opportunities for passing lanes, additional turn-out lanes, and opportunities for scenic pull offs and widening; should WCCOG continue this study from Calais to Danforth? Committee members said yes, definitely)
- Speed limit enforcement on Route 1 is lax; also, isn’t 45 mph excessive for the zone surrounding the general store/post office in Waite, considering all the turning traffic at this location?

### 3. Telecommunications:

- Washington County TIF funds for telecommunications towers are currently limited to use in Unorganized Territories; possible to renegotiate for use wherever most needed?

Improved telecommunications would greatly enhance tourism and commercial development in eastern Washington County, as the entire CCC from Eastport to Danforth has spotty coverage and at times no reception at all, even with a booster<sup>4</sup>.

**Bicyclists and Pedestrians:**

- Extend the Sipayik Trail all the way to Eastport along abandoned rail right-of-way
- Develop off-road route for East Coast Greenway between Ayers Jct. and Calais, as current on-road route is via Charlotte Road (see off-road routing study on WCCOG webpage); new Lane quarry on Charlotte Road will generate increased truck traffic on a road that is already sub-optimum for bikes, due to high vehicular speeds and narrow road width
- Designate an Eastport-to-Calais bike route (Fred Michaud will check to see if MaineDOT's ARAN vehicle has mapped the shoulders)
- Many bicyclists come across the border at Calais and travel to Cobscook Bay State Park to camp – would benefit tourism to enhance the bicycling experience along this section of Route 1
- Develop a “Quoddy Loop” bicycle touring circuit route through Maine into New Brunswick and back (e.g., Eastport-Calais-St. George-Deer Island-Eastport)

**5. Air:**

- Existing airports within CCC are primarily engaged in moving business travelers, camp owners, and sporting camp customers in and out of the area rapidly; would like to attract a higher percentage of industrial freight customers, but this will be difficult unless existing airport infrastructure can be upgraded
- Chicken vs. egg problem: General Aviation (GA) airports need a strong and reliable customer base to justify major infrastructure investments, but potential customers need better infrastructure and support services, i.e., ground transportation and cargo handling facilities, before they will choose a small GA airport over other transportation alternatives
- Proposed regional airport for Machias still doesn't have a viable site; may end up being located in unorganized territory – how will this affect operations at GA airports in Princeton and Eastport?
- CCC airports need much better linkages to all other transportation modes in Washington County
- Eastport airport has a \$350K contract for new apron – currently planes can land, but there is nowhere for planes to park except on the runways!
- Prohibition on operations & maintenance use of federal transportation funds often results in a waste of taxpayer dollars; major infrastructure improvements can be funded and built, but with no budget to maintain them, they may only be

useful for a few years – need to develop alternative funding mechanisms to maintain infrastructure and preserve value of investment

Marine transportation could not be covered during the two-hour time available for the kickoff meeting, but it will be addressed at the next meeting of the advisory committee. A final question was raised at the end of the meeting, concerning planning for the closure of the Marion Township solid waste facility, possibly as soon as 2012. Should this study look at trash transport and future potential landfill sites as an aspect of corridor management?

A time and place for the next meeting has not yet been established, but it will be scheduled for late February or early March so that WCCOG and MaineDOT have sufficient time to assemble the requested data and support materials for the advisory committee. All committee members and stakeholders will be advised of the meeting date via e-mail, and it will also be publicized via local media. Please contact Sandi Duchesne at [smduchesne@roadrunner.com](mailto:smduchesne@roadrunner.com) or 207-735-5436 if you would like to be added to the stakeholders list, or if you have any questions or comments about the proceedings at this meeting.