

**COASTAL CANADIAN CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING – MARCH 14, 2011**

**Attendees:** Nan Sprague, Sandra Smith, Jo-Anne Cannell, David Herrick, Ed Renaud, Neil Lane, Dana Altvater, Michael Day, Jim Porter, Lee Sochasky, Brent Bubar, John Devin, Austin Olmstead, Chris Gardner, Roger Holst, Dean Preston, Diane Smith-Hallett

After a round of introductions, the advisory committee selected dates for future meetings and the final public meeting for the project. Please reserve the following dates on your calendar:

**Monday, May 2, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** – Third advisory committee meeting

**Monday, May 23, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** – Contingency final meeting date (will meet only if necessary needed to wrap up work on the management plan)

**Wednesday, June 22, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.** – Public meeting to present the plan and receive feedback

An alternate date for the public meeting, tentatively set by the committee for June 29, will not be needed. Locations for all of these meetings will be finalized and distributed to all stakeholders in a follow-up e-mail, but you can expect them to all be held in the Calais area, since Calais is both the population center and the approximate geographical center of the study area for the Coastal Canadian Corridor (CCC).

WCCOG contract facilitator Sandi Duchesne updated the committee on the data collection effort for the CCC management plan. Approximately 60 percent of the requested data has been collected thus far from private individuals, state and federal agencies. Sandi noted that she may be contacting other advisory committee members and stakeholders to follow up and obtain additional data. Three students in the GIS class at the University of Maine-Machias, under the direction of instructor Tora Johnson, will be mapping corridor features and data sets as their final project for the class. These maps will be made available for advisory committee members and the general public to use as reference materials, both during the study and after its completion. Dean Preston, the Unorganized Territories Supervisor for Washington County and a member of the advisory committee, is one of the students in that class who will be participating in the mapping process.

Ed Renaud, a selectman from Waite and also a member of the advisory committee, completed his own preliminary study during February on the feasibility of a short (30-mile) rail line that could connect working forestland in the Vanceboro area to the mill in Woodland. This study followed up on a discussion at the kickoff meeting regarding the transportation economics of commercial trucking vs. rail for logging operations. Ed's conceptual-level discussion is included

as an attachment with these minutes; please review them and offer any comments or ideas that you may have on the subject. Of course, any in-depth planning for a new rail route would also need to account for right of way acquisition and environmental permitting, in addition to potential new funding sources to cover the construction costs. Advisory committee members also noted that the economics of rail service usually create a situation where short lines are far more expensive to maintain and operate on a per-mile basis than longer lines.

The next item on the agenda was to complete brainstorming about the issues and potential investments for the CCC in marine transportation, under the three economic development scenarios that the committee agreed on at the kickoff meeting: tourism, natural resources, and energy development. Sandi also encouraged the committee to identify multimodal opportunities that could be leveraged between marine transportation and some of the other transportation modes discussed at the kickoff meeting. Highlights of this discussion were as follows:

#### **Marine Transportation:**

- Eastport is a hub for tourism in the corridor, and there is potential for much more marine activity related to tourism; city is currently courting mid-range (300-400 passenger) cruise ship market, cross-marketing with St. Andrews and Campobello to create a more tourist-friendly “destination region” spanning Passamaquoddy Bay
- Eastport is one of only three deep-water ports in Maine; does not face mounting congestion problems that plague larger ports in the Northeast
- Eastport now ships everything that the Woodland mill produces
- They are now shipping dairy cows overseas from the Midwest via Eastport!
- Port facility is also focal point for overseas shipments of components and supplies for the growing energy development sector in Washington County
- Highway improvements as related to marine transportation: County Road is used by 18,000 heavy trucks annually, and this number is expected to grow; road will need reinforcement to handle heavier loads. (This led to a general recommendation that all road improvement projects be designed for a 100,000-lb weight limit, rather than 80,000 lb; there is a pilot project underway that allows 100,000 lb. trucks to travel between the Canadian border and the mill at Woodland without an overweight permit)
- Route 1 from Robbinston to Perry is OK for heavier trucks, but the rest of the roads surrounding the port facility need to be improved
- Fishermen from Washington County (and elsewhere) harvest scallops along the section of coast abutting the CCC, as it is one of the few areas that has remained open to scalloping; fishing is a significant portion of the local economy in the Eastport area

- Possibility of an alternate rail terminal at Calais LNG potential off-load sites in Robbinston or Devil's Head?
  - Pipeline tie-in may make rail shipment unnecessary
  - USCG study determined that both sites were feasible; both are directly across the bay from Eastport port facility
  - Same problems as for Woodland to Eastport: distance from mill to port (and LNG sites) is probably too short for rail to compete economically with trucking
- The eternal dilemma about providing rail service to Eastport: rail service would definitely help to attract new business customers to the port, but we need more of an existing customer base to justify the high start-up and operational costs of rail service...
- Recent investments in a port conveyor system could make a rail (or more likely, rail-to-truck) connection even more attractive to customers
- Can the port handle containers? Yes, but unless it is a specialized commodity, you need high volumes to justify the costs (i.e., enough containers to fill the ship) – Port Authority is trying to build container capacity and markets ; the ratio of “quantity over distance” is the key determinant of whether or not it makes economic sense for the customer
- Rail service to Eastport and the industrial seaport were never fully operational at the same time – the port was developed after the rail line to Eastport had already been abandoned
- Port currently employs 60-70 longshoremen, plus indirect multiplier benefits to entire region; a 15-year-old study estimated \$80K in regional economic impacts for each ship that uses the Eastport port facility
- Cobscook Bay region is mostly outside of CCC study area, but area businesses will use the port facility and other CCC transportation facilities to tap markets in fisheries, tourism, value-added marine food products, and energy; unorganized townships are eligible for TIF funding of economic development projects
- MaineDOT Three-Port Study was strongly biased toward Searsport, as it was issued during MaineDOT's fight to keep Sears Island open to industrial use; in Chris Gardner's opinion, the study didn't give full credit to Eastport's economic potential, because it would have detracted from MaineDOT's urgent need to justify expansion of Searsport
- Local harbors and water access points are also important marine transportation assets; they are essential to working fishermen, and also attract many tourists and ecotourism industries; both fresh-water and salt-water access points are important, and we should look for opportunities to create new access points wherever possible
- St. Croix River has seen huge increase in guided canoe trips in recent years; plenty of potential for more ecotourism development along coast and in CCC freshwater lakes and streams

- (Not marine-related, but a follow-up comment on telecommunications as discussed at kickoff meeting): Cell-phone coverage sometimes governs choice of transportation routes for those who need phone connectivity while on the road; if we want people to stay on the larger roads that are designed to handle high traffic volumes, we need to improve signal coverage along these routes.

The next item on the agenda was preliminary work to develop a purpose and needs statement that will govern the recommendations for the corridor plan. This statement will also help to keep the advisory committee on track, if the discussions start to go too far afield of the original plan objectives. The members who attended this meeting would like the following items to be worked into the purpose and needs statement for the CCC:

**Purpose:**

- System preservation (keeping what we already have in a usable condition)
- Develop alternative funding source(s) to increase opportunities for improvement across all transportation modes
- Identify top priorities that will make each transportation dollar do more to stimulate the regional economy

**Needs:**

- Improved signage, possibly with opportunities for private contributions to MaineDOT to improve way-finding throughout the region (example provided was a sign at the junction of Route 1 and Route 9 in Baileyville to direct tourists toward Grand Lake Stream)
- Improved bike-ped facilities, ideally extending East-Coast Greenway (or similar off-road route) beyond Calais into northern half of CCC
- Widened shoulders (where they are feasible and affordable) would benefit bicyclists, pedestrians, disabled vehicles; also provide some degree of separation of faster from slower traffic
- Rural public transit
- Adequate (and predictable) annual funding streams, both for maintenance and for future improvements
- Rebuild “unbuilt” section of Route 1, from Topsfield to Danforth
- Maintain and upgrade smaller roads and bridges in corridor, not just Route 1 and other high-volume state-aid highways

The purpose and needs statement is still under development, so stakeholders are welcome to add their comments by phone or e-mail prior to the next meeting.

The final portion of the meeting was a discussion of some of the driving forces that are likely to both influence the transportation system, and to be influenced by it. The advisory committee only had time to work through one of the six matrices of driving forces – grouped under the general headings of **Economy, Social Trends, Infrastructure, Built & Natural Environment, Political Actions, and Travel Demand** – and it turned out to be a very slow process to evaluate each force and finally arrive at a group consensus. After the group had finally completed the first worksheet, a committee member recommended that the remaining worksheets be distributed individually, so members could work on them outside the meeting and discuss them further with colleagues and others in their communities, then return the filled-in worksheets to Sandi for tabulation and a report on the final results. The blank matrices are attached with this set of minutes. Here are the directions for how to evaluate each driving force. Please print out the blank worksheets attached with these minutes, so you can refer to these directions as you work your way through them.

1. Likelihood of Growth: Is the driving force described in the left-hand column likely to experience High, Medium, or Low growth in the CCC study area during the next 10-20 years? This is not an indication of whether you favor growth in any particular area, rather it should be your realistic and objective view of current and future trends. For instance, you could be personally opposed to a specific energy project or entire industry, yet still believe that alternative sources including wind, solar, tidal, LNG, and biomass are likely to experience high growth over the next two decades due to the price and supply volatility of petroleum products; you would mark “H” in this column for the “Energy” driving force, to indicate High expected growth.

2. Impact on Transportation: Will the expected growth in this driving force contribute to a High, Medium, or Low impact on components of the existing transportation system (highway, air, marine, rail, bike-ped) over the next 10-20 years? For instance, if you expect to see High growth in the Natural Resources and Manufacturing sector, you would also expect to see a High impact on the transportation system, since the markets for these products are typically located far away from the resource extraction zones and manufacturing plants. The more this sector grows, the higher the demand will be on the transportation system. Note that not all driving forces will have this sort of direct relationship between growth and transportation impacts; some forces may have practically no impact at all, or may lead to an overall REDUCED demand for transportation within the CCC, in which case you would mark an “L” in this column to indicate a Low impact. Obviously, an “M” for “Medium” impact would be between these extremes.

3. Overall Impact: The previous column indicated the effect of the driving force on transportation system elements; this column evaluates the potential effect of transportation investment on the driving force. If MaineDOT and communities in the region agree to support activities and transportation investments that benefit this driving force, what will be the overall benefit to the CCC region in terms of economic development and quality of life? Use a 1 to 5 scale, where

1=this investment is vital to ensure continued growth and future prosperity;

3= this is a good investment, if sufficient funding can be made available; and

5= this will not contribute significantly to economic development or quality of life in the region; it makes more sense to invest in higher priorities.

Please note that this exercise was initially confusing even to the committee members present at the meeting, so don't be shy about asking for help if you find these directions somewhat hard to follow. The first worksheet, showing the opinions of those present at the meeting as they evaluated driving forces in the Economy sector, is shown on the next page as an example. Please contact Sandi Duchesne by phone at 735-5436 or [smduchesne@roadrunner.com](mailto:smduchesne@roadrunner.com) for further assistance. Completed forms can be e-mailed back to that same address, snail-mailed to Sandi Duchesne, 478 Beechwood Avenue, Old Town, ME, 04468, or faxed to GreenLight Solutions, LLC, (888) 924-3577; or, if it is more convenient, you can bring in your completed forms to either WCCOG office, in Machias or in Calais. Please return your completed forms by **Monday, April 25** so they can be compiled and presented at the May 2 meeting.

<b>DRIVING FORCE:</b> <b>Economy</b>	<u>Likelihood of Growth</u> Is future growth likely to be <u>high, medium, or low</u> over the next 10-20 years? Give your honest opinion, whether or not you personally support continued development of the force being evaluated.	<u>Impact on Transportation</u> What effect, if any, do you think growth in this driving force will have on the multimodal transportation system (highway, rail, bike-ped, air, marine) in the Coastal Canadian Corridor? <u>High, medium, or low?</u>	<u>Overall Investment Impact</u> What impact will result from targeted efforts and transp. investments to benefit this force, in terms of regional economic development and quality of life in the study area? <u>Scale of 1 to 5</u> (1=very strong positive impact, 5=a waste of money to invest in this)
Natural resources & manufacturing (includes farming and fishing related industries)	H	H	1
Energy development	H	M-L	5
Wholesale and retail trade	L	L	5
Tourism, hospitality, & local culture	M	H	2
Science, technology, education, high-tech home-based business	M	L	5
Health care & related community services	M-H	M-H	4
Size of workforce	L	L-M	4
Wealthy retirees & second home purchasers	L-M	L	5

**OTHER: (write in)**