

**COASTAL CANADIAN CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING – JUNE 6, 2011**

Attendees: Normand Theberge, John Devin, Brent Bubar, Roger Holst, Lee Sochasky, Neil Lane

After a round of introductions, WCCOG contract facilitator Sandi Duchesne set the framework for the final work session on the Coastal Canadian Corridor Management Plan.

She first asked for any more feedback on the purpose & needs statement adopted for the management plan during the previous work session, as follows: **“The Coastal Canadian Corridor Management Plan seeks to preserve the existing regional transportation system in good working condition, while making targeted upgrades and investments in new multimodal transportation opportunities that are expected to stimulate economic growth. Plan stakeholders support the establishment of adequate annual funding streams to maintain all sectors of the regional transportation system, in addition to US Route 1 and other high-volume highways.”** Committee members present all agreed that this statement expressed the consensus of regional interests in the corridor, and that it should remain as written.

An update for the driving forces matrices was presented, since more committee members had submitted rating sheets since the previous meeting. Items on each sheet that received either a “HIGH” or “MEDIUM” rating from committee members for likelihood of growth over the next 20 years, AND a score of “1” or “2” (for very high or high potential for investments in this area to benefit regional economic development) were highlighted, since they appear to offer the best potential return on investment. Those items included:

Economy: Natural resources & manufacturing; tourism, hospitality, & local culture; energy development

Social & Demographic: Enrollment in educational or vocational courses for a new or better career

Infrastructure: Deterioration of existing roads and bridges; new bike/ped facilities; rural public transit and private passenger service; widely available broadband or other high-speed Internet

Built & Natural Environment: Downtown infill and redevelopment of existing developed properties

Political Actions: New tax (or increases to the gas tax) levied to pay for transportation improvements; alternative (non-tax) funding sources identified to pay for transportation improvements; demand from bicyclists, pedestrians, elderly, disabled, & non-drivers for investment in transportation alternatives and “complete streets” (i.e. roads that are designed to work well for all users, not just motorists).

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to fleshing out goals and strategies under each of the three economic development scenarios selected for study (natural resource-based industries, tourism, and energy development). The strategies were prioritized according to timeframe – ongoing (MaineDOT is already doing this), short-term (1-5 years), medium-term (6-10 years), or long-term (10+ years) – and also according to relative cost to complete (low, medium, or high). The summary by scenario is as follows:

A. Natural Resource-Based Industries

The major demands on the transportation system under this scenario are:

- Increased volumes of loaded freight trucks traveling over deficient sections of area roads, including unbuilt sections of US-1, State Route 190, and the collector road system which is already in a critical state of disrepair
- Increased use of the port at Eastport
- Potential conflicts with bicyclists, pedestrians, slower-moving tourist traffic
- Increased turning traffic movements by large trucks at warehouses and collection points for manufactured goods and agricultural product

Transportation investment goals proposed by the committee to promote this scenario are:

1. Minimize friction between transportation modes.
2. Minimize friction between vehicles traveling at different speeds.
3. Maintain good pavement on major roads.
4. Upgrade deficient secondary roads so they can stand up to heavier trucking use.
5. Improve connectivity between all regional freight modes (rail, truck, port).

The investment strategies proposed to promote natural resource-based development, and any amplifying additional comments offered by the committee, were as follows:

1. Widen shoulders during road improvement projects whenever possible. **Ongoing program, low to medium cost**
2. Focus on maintaining good pavement management of existing roads. **Ongoing program, low cost – good bang for the buck!**
3. Continue to work on funding and construction of an intermodal truck-to-rail transloading facility to improve freight shipping capability to and from Eastport. **Long term, high cost**

4. Practice good access management to support greater traffic mobility on arterial highways, even within urban compact areas.
Ongoing program, low cost – practically free, except for political difficulties in securing shared entrance agreements between business owners

B. Tourism

The major demands on the transportation system under this scenario are:

- Slower-moving, less predictable traffic
- Increased numbers of bicyclists and pedestrians
- Increased demand for boat landings, harbor facilities, and access to public parks and lands

Transportation investment goals proposed by the committee to promote this scenario are:

1. Showcase Maine's natural beauty and tourist attractions, while maintaining mobility for commuters and commercial traffic (e.g., scenic byways program).
2. Maintain good pavement on major roads.
3. Improve safety and connectivity of designated routes for pedestrians and bicyclists.
4. Increase the number of public access points and parking areas adjacent to trail systems, boat landings and shoreline on coastal waters, and boat landings and shoreline on inland waterways.

The investment strategies proposed to promote tourism development, and any amplifying additional comments offered by the committee, were as follows:

1. Widen shoulders during road improvement projects whenever possible. ***Ongoing program, low to medium cost***
2. Focus on maintaining good pavement management of existing roads. ***Ongoing program, low cost – good bang for the buck!***
3. Provide additional scenic pull-offs, picnic areas, rest areas, and public toilet facilities for corridor users. ***Medium-term, low-to-medium cost; may be an opportunity for siting and maintenance of toilet-equipped rest areas on private lots that want to attract business to site, as with toilet facility adjacent to Airline Diner on State Route 9. Also, need to test demand for toilet service: are there really not enough existing private toilet facilities open to the public (i.e., gas stations, restaurants, convenience stores) within the corridor?***

4. Increase funding for scenic byways, multi-user trails, and working harbors; designate bike routes and tours over corridor roads, e.g., a “Quoddy Loop” through Calais, Eastport, ferry to Deer Island and then back to New Brunswick mainland, and back up to Calais. **Short to medium term, medium cost**
5. Coordinate with DOC to improve access to public lands, boat landings, parking lots for trails, and safety at road-trail crossings; build these into the design for road improvement projects wherever appropriate. **Short term, low cost**
6. Improve wayfinding signage to tourist destinations, perhaps as public-private partnerships with regional businesses or Chambers of Commerce. **Short term, low cost**
7. Improve infrastructure at GA airports, and promote GA airports and private air services as the quickest way in & out of eastern Washington County. **Medium term, high cost**

C. Energy Development

The major demands on the transportation system under this scenario are:

- Oversize/overweight components must travel via road to reach windpower sites; may require spot improvements on area roads to enable wide turning movements
- Increased demand for covered storage and handling infrastructure at seaport, to stockpile windpower generator components over winter shipping season
- Increased volumes of tankers passing through Passamaquoddy Bay

Transportation investment goals proposed by the committee to promote this scenario are:

1. Support new development while maintaining mobility for existing highway users.
2. Maintain good pavement on major roads.

The investment strategies proposed to promote energy development, and any amplifying additional comments offered by the committee, were as follows:

1. Widen shoulders during road improvement projects whenever possible. **Ongoing program, low to medium cost**
2. Focus on maintaining good pavement management of existing roads. **Ongoing program, low cost – good bang for the buck!**
3. Increase funding for seaport infrastructure investments to handle and stockpile large volumes of oversized windpower components. **Long term, high cost**

It should be noted that widening shoulders and observing good pavement management practices were listed as the top two investment strategies to meet the challenges of all three economic development challenges, and that both programs are already being implemented by MaineDOT for a relatively low to medium cost.

After completing the goals and strategies exercise, Sandi briefed the group on next steps for the plan, since this was the final working group meeting for the advisory committee. The draft plan is expected to be published on the WCCOG website by June 15, and the public meeting will be held in the auditorium at the Washington County Community College at 7:00 p.m. on June 22, 2011. Advisory committee members are not required to attend the public meeting, but they are strongly encouraged to do so. Sandi thanked the group for its enthusiastic assistance with the formulation of the plan, and ended the meeting a few minutes before noon.