

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the
LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from electronic originals
(may include minor formatting differences from printed original)

**PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY COUNCIL
BIENNIAL REPORT TO GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE
April 2019**

Submitted by



MaineDOT

April 29, 2019

Joint Standing Committees on Transportation and Health and Human Services, c/o

Senator Bill Diamond, Senate Chair, Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

Representative Andrew McLean, House Chair, Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

Senator Geoff Gratwick, Senate Chair, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Representative Patty Hymanson, House Chair, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Dear Members of the Committees on Transportation and Health and Human Services:

Please find enclosed the biennial report of the Public Transit Advisory Council (Council) required in 23 MRSA §4209-A.

The Council identified several factors that indicate a need for increased investment in public transportation in Maine. Maine has an increasing number of older adults who can no longer drive. Residents recovering from addiction have lost their licenses and vehicle access. Employers are struggling to fill workforce needs -- lack of transportation is often cited as a factor. Millennials are attracted to walkable urban areas, many avoiding car ownership. Tourists expect public transportation options. The Greater Portland area is experiencing vehicle congestion; shared rides cut emissions in half.

Maine ranks 38th among states in per capita annual operations funding at 86 cents. This represents 9% of the basic level of operations supported at the 50% level by Federal Transit Administration formula allocations to Maine, leaving 41% of the responsibility to cover basic costs to local transit providers. Many of these providers are community action agencies. Others are non-profit transportation corporations, municipalities or multi-municipal transit districts. Most struggle to raise the needed matching dollars for federal allotments to cover existing services. Some routes are being curtailed due to lack of revenue, at the same time requests for service expansions increase.

The Council has worked in concert with the MaineDOT staff to understand emerging transportation needs in all regions of the state and identify the most productive and cost-effective means to address these needs. The recommendations within this report were prepared in concert with development of the quinquennial Local Coordinated Transit Plan required under 23 MRSA §4209. As such, a concerted outreach effort informed the Council's conclusions. Six public forums held in the fall of 2018 were co-sponsored by Age-Friendly Communities. Attendees confirmed that the strategies under consideration were on target.

The Council's major recommendations include:

- 1) Increase state operations funding for public transportation systems to the national median state fiscal effort of \$5/capita;
- 2) Organize multi-sector transportation management relationships and train mobility navigators under the umbrella of the Moving Maine Mobility Network;
- 3) Support grassroots volunteer driver networks with technical assistance;
- 4) Consolidate transit and ridesharing options on the GoMaine portal, then build publicity campaign to promote usage;
- 5) Prudently invest in efficient, low-emissions vehicle fleets and supporting technologies; and
- 6) Provide incentives for age-friendly community development design.

Other recommendations involve the exploration of partnerships between K-12 and public transit systems. While the Council is tasked with seeking coordination opportunities with programs managed by MaineDOT, the Maine Department of Labor and the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, we noted that the Department of Education and school districts hold enormous transportation resources and responsibility. Can synergies be leveraged? Should that department join us at the table?

In summary, the Council greatly appreciates the opportunity to share its analysis and recommendations. Members would welcome the opportunity to further explain the Council's process and explore collaborative options for moving forward.

Sincerely yours,



Mary Ann Hayes, chair
For the Public Transit Advisory Council

cc: Commissioner Bruce A. Van Note
Commissioner Jeanne Lambrew
Commissioner Laura Fortman

Report Attached (Council Membership List in Appendix A)

**PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY COUNCIL
BIENNIAL REPORT TO GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE
April 2019**

CONTENTS

I.	STATUTORY REPORTING REQUIREMENT.....	1
II.	SUMMARY OF DELIBERATIONS.....	1
III.	UNMET TRANSPORTATION NEEDS.....	2
IV.	CAUSAL FACTORS.....	3
V.	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEVEL OF SERVICE THAT SHOULD BE PROVIDED AND ESTIMATED COSTS.....	4
VI.	MAINE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FUNDING SUMMARY	5
VII.	COMPARISON WITH OTHER STATES	6
VIII.	OPTIMAL COORDINATION OF TRANSIT SERVICES WITH OTHER SENIOR AND VETERAN SERVICES	7
IX.	RECOMMENDED PRIORITY STRATEGIES AND ASSIGNED ACTION STEPS	8
X.	CONCLUSION	9
	APPENDIX A – COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP LIST.....	10
	APPENDIX B – GRAPHICAL SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	11

PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY COUNCIL
BIENNIAL REPORT TO GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE
April 2019

I. STATUTORY REPORTING REQUIREMENT

Excerpt from PTAC Statute 23 MRSA 4209-A:

- 1. Report.** The council shall report on its deliberations and any recommendations by March 1st of each odd-numbered year to the Governor and the joint standing committees of the Legislature having jurisdiction over transportation matters and health and human services matters. The report must include the following:
- A. An assessment of the level of public transportation services provided to the public; [2015, c. 182, §8 (NEW).]
 - B. Recommendations for the level of service that should be provided and an estimate of the cost of providing those services; and [2015, c. 182, §8(NEW).]
 - C. Recommendations for the optimal coordination of transit services with other senior and veteran services. [2015, c. 182, §8(NEW).]

II. SUMMARY OF DELIBERATIONS

The Public Transit Advisory Council (council) is currently comprised of 28 members offering diverse perspectives on Maine’s urban and rural transit needs (see Appendix A). The council is charged with advising the Departments of Transportation, Labor and Health and Human Services on matters related to public transportation. The council meets on an as-needed basis, typically three times/year. All meeting materials including minutes are available at www.maine.gov/mdot/transit/ptac.

During the past two years, the council has been actively advising the departments on matters related to public transportation. Specific attention has been given to the following topics:

- Transportation Needs of Maine’s Veterans including proposed pilot program (*see report delivered February 2018*)
- Community-based volunteer driver networks
- Rider information systems and transit service awareness
- Discretionary grant submittals for transit bus fleet including battery electric buses
- Use of Maine’s Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust Funds
- Transit workforce needs
- Coordination with the Shared Community Health Needs Assessment process
- All aspects of the Locally Coordinated Plan including outreach strategies to older adults, people with disabilities, low-income residents, tribal members and immigrant populations
- Moving Maine mobility network development
- Transit and age-friendly community development and design standards
- Statutory changes needed to improve council function (*see LD 1578 sponsored by Rep. Sheats*)

Council members have engaged their networks to broaden the department’s outreach and build partnerships. Ad hoc working groups gather between council meetings to further specific initiatives. Over the past 12 months, the council has worked closely with MaineDOT to guide the development of the quinquennial Local Coordinated Plan as required in 29 MRSA §4209. This thorough statewide outreach and planning process has deepened the council’s understanding of transit needs and informed the development of prioritized action steps for 2019-2023. The full plan and supporting appendices may be found at www.maine.gov/mdot/transit/publications/lcp. Recommended strategies to improve public transportation, consistent with the 2019-23 Local Coordinated Transit Plan, are listed in Section IX.

III. UNMET TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

While it is difficult to precisely pinpoint unmet transportation needs as many of those surviving without basic services are hidden from view, three methods of assessing unmet needs have informed the recommendations of the council and are summarized below.

- A. Qualitative: Based upon substantial Locally Coordinated Plan outreach in 2017-18;
- B. Documented: Based upon unfunded applications requested by transit providers; and
- C. Modeled: Based upon Transit Cooperative Research Program Estimation Methodology

A. Qualitative: Based upon Substantial Local Coordinated Plan Outreach in 2017-18. Based upon significant outreach conducted (see www.maine.gov/mdot/transit/publications/lcp for details), it is determined that the following groups of people have unmet transportation needs:

- Low-income Mainers (outside of Non-Emergency Medical Trips if MaineCare members), including significant numbers of veterans, new Americans and homeless citizens.
- Older adults, especially those living in rural areas.
- Developmentally disabled (outside of MaineCare covered trips).
- Visually impaired – many have given up and are leaving Maine due to a combination of the low levels of service and lack of accommodations.
- Most people without the ability to own/maintain/drive a vehicle outside of key service centers.
- Evening and weekend workforce in urban areas, including employees of restaurants, convenience stores, entertainment venues, malls and big box stores.
- Those in addiction recovery, many without driver's licenses or financial resources.
- Those with choices who would like to rely on public transportation but service levels are too low (headways too long).

B. Documented: Based upon Unfunded Applications Requested by Transit Providers. Each year MaineDOT entertains annual funding applications from its network of rural sub-recipient public transit providers but must turn a significant portion of requests down. Separate applications are made for capital needs (primarily replacement vehicles). In 2018, requests for operating assistance outweighed available federal and state funding by \$2.25 million. On top of this gap, MaineDOT could neither fully fund requests to support intercity feeder route services, nor several emergency requests for assistance received during the year. This brings the documented funding gap for rural providers alone to \$2.5 million.

Local resources are not emerging to address the gap. As a result, services are being cut in both urban and rural areas (Auburn, Saco-Portland and Lewiston-Brunswick are examples). Provider funding requests are modest as they are aware of MaineDOT's fiscal constraints. They likely understate the real need. Following the existing formula of evenly dividing state funding between urban and rural systems, the identified need based on unfunded rural system applications is conservatively \$5 million.

C. Modeled: Based upon Transit Cooperative Research Program Estimation Methodology. The calculation of estimated needs, as set forth in the Maine Strategic Transit Plan 2025, is based on the number of households in Maine that do not have a vehicle (40,892 households in 2017). The primary methodology relied upon to calculate need in the Strategic Plan followed the analytical process outlined in *Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Report 161, Methods for Forecasting Demand and Qualifying Need for Rural Passenger Transportation: Final Workbook*. (Washington D.C. 2013.) A comparable method was used to estimate demand in urban areas. The calculation is based on the difference in the number of daily one-way trips that a household with no vehicles would take when compared to a household with one vehicle (households with no vehicles make 1.7 fewer trips in rural areas, 5.2 fewer trips in urban areas). To arrive at total need in Maine, the number of no vehicle

households in rural areas is multiplied by 1.7, and that number is multiplied by 300 days to get estimated annual need in rural areas. The number of no-vehicle households in urban areas is multiplied by 5.2, and result is then multiplied by 300 days to get estimated annual need in urban areas. The formula uses 300 days, rather than 365 days, to account for the fact that fewer transit trips are taken on weekends.

This same calculation could be done using other indicators, such as the number of households below the poverty line, mobility limited population, or population over 60 years old. Each of these would yield higher trip demands and costs than the zero-vehicle household indicator. Therefore, these figures are conservative. They also only include operating and administrative expenses. Capital costs for vehicles and facilities are also needed for the system to function.

Table 1. Trip Needs, Trips Provided, Trip Gap				
	100% of Trip Need (# of Trips) 2017	20% of Trip Need (# of Trips) 2017	Trips Provided 2017	Trip Gap 2017 (# of Trips)
Fixed Route	21,243,029	4,248,606	3,348,091	900,515
Flex Route	6,768,676	1,353,735	348,924	1,004,811
Rural	8,773,386	1,754,677	171,325	1,583,352
Total	36,785,091	7,357,018	3,868,340	3,488,678

Source: Update to estimated needs contained in Maine Strategic Transit Plan 2025 by Rothe Associates, March 2019.

IV. CAUSAL FACTORS

Five key underlying factors increase the difficulty of addressing these needs:

A. Dispersed Settlement Pattern and Cultural Traditions. Maine’s widely dispersed rural population is inherently expensive to serve regarding transportation and virtually all social services. Rural households have traditionally been dependent upon personal vehicles for mobility. Low cost fuel has enabled a culture of independent travel with rural transit services largely provided by social service organizations for dependent populations. Although a modest level of general public service is now available in much of the state, the services are not widely understood. Transit agencies do not have the resources to conduct massive publicity campaigns; it is difficult to overcome lifelong impressions that only qualified needy people are welcome to ride in a van or bus.

B. Rapidly Aging Population. Maine’s significantly growing cohort of older adults is creating a large group of residents — notably rural and dispersed — that can no longer transport themselves. Some can afford to pay a cost-based fee for transport services but it is widely understood that most cannot. All are at high risk of social isolation and attendant health problems. Needs include: lack of available coordinated services, poor publicity of existing services and how to access them, timely information-sharing, transit training, mobility management services and funding (to support the ride and all ancillary services to make the ride accessible).

C. Lack of Age-Friendly Housing and Community Design. Maine’s now century-long relationship with the individual car and pickup truck has been reinforced by an auto-centric layout of residences, employment venues and services of all kinds. While it is difficult to make the determination that it is time to leave one’s rural home and move to a community center, those who do often find no housing units available. There are multi-year waits for affordable housing units suitable for older adults.

D. Funding. Given the cultural tradition of self-driving, it is not surprising that public transportation has not been given priority attention by the Legislature over the years. Maine is among the lowest tier of states with a per capita funding level of 86 cents, totaling \$1,147,845 in 2018. These funds are distributed by formula to twenty-two transit agencies that receive Federal Transit Administration assistance, and may be used towards the recipient’s significant local match requirement. The funds are not appropriated from the General Fund but rather from the approximately \$9 million in proceeds collected annually via the rental vehicle tax directed to multimodal transportation. Ferries, freight, ports, passenger rail, aviation and active transportation expenditures that do not qualify for limited capital bond funds available are also largely reliant on this narrow funding base.

Per current administrative practice, the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) receives up to a \$2 million annual allocation from this fund to ensure that available federal funds (which differ from year to year) are matched. The Maine State Ferry Service (MSFS) receives no operating assistance from this fund nor from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) but relies upon the Multimodal Fund for preventative maintenance typically costing \$0.5 million per year and match for Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Ferry Boat Program funding. MaineDOT allocates 20% of transportation bonds toward multi-modal capital investments, including transit buses. These funds are used to leverage federal and private sector contributions whenever possible.

E. MaineCare Brokerage System. The MaineCare (Medicaid) program spends \$60 million annually to transport members to non-emergency medical appointments, funded 65.5% federally and 35.5% by the state. The increased separation in management of single-population eligible public funding from general public funding since 2013 has reduced the number of shared public-supported rides and increased the overall average cost per trip. Transit providers that attempt to serve both populations are forced to invest in an intricate accounting system to carefully allocate and justify costs.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEVEL OF SERVICE THAT SHOULD BE PROVIDED AND ESTIMATED COSTS

By all accounts, Maine has a weak, underfunded public transportation system. Even with federal support, local governments and transit agencies struggle to cover their share of both operational and capital funding requirements. To what degree should this shortcoming be addressed and by whom?

TCRP Report 61 (referenced above) concludes that for rural demand response operations, meeting 20% of the unmet need is a reasonable goal for a rural public transit system (effectively leaving 80% for friends and family). The Maine Strategic Transit Plan 2025 adopted this 20% of unmet needs target level of service for both rural and urban systems. It could be argued that the urban goal should be higher given the far lower cost per trip. Urban ridership would go up, perhaps significantly, if fixed route headways (waits between service) were reduced and/or routes were shortened to provide more efficient service.

Table 2. Estimated Cost to Fill Trip Gap to Reach 20% of Trip Need for Households without a Vehicle			
	Trip Gap 2017 (# of Trips)	Average Cost Per Trip 2017	Total Cost Estimate
Fixed Route	900,515	\$4.00	\$3,602,060
Flex Route	1,004,811	\$9.00	\$9,043,299
Rural	1,583,352	\$24.00	\$38,000,448
Total	3,488,678	\$14.52	\$50,645,807

Source: Update to estimated needs contained in Maine Strategic Transit Plan 2025 by Rothe Associates, March 2019. Average Cost per Trip estimated by MaineDOT staff based on 2017 transit provider reports to the National Transit Database.

While a dollar amount is not a level of service, it is an indicator of effort directly tied to service provision. With extreme distinctions in needs throughout the state, it is difficult to name a level of service in terms of frequencies available within prescribed geographic boundaries. Transit providers do the best they can with available resources to respond to expressed needs throughout their service territories. If a portion of additional state resources were distributed on a competitive matching basis, employers, municipalities and other sponsors would be incentivized to contribute to service expansions that meet their needs.

Given the high cost per trip to provide demand response services in rural areas meeting federal standards, other strategies such as volunteer network support and building an online Trip Planner site to facilitate carpool and transit planning are recommended as the most cost-effective approaches to addressing the challenging rural need environment.

VI. MAINE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FUNDING SUMMARY

A. State Fund Source Limitations. Maine has a constitutional provision (*see below*) preventing the use of Highway Fund dollars for other than named infrastructure costs. Support for public transportation and freight facilities/operations (rail, ports) are not allowed. The Maine State Ferry Service is considered an extension of the highway system to connect roadways on either side. ***These funds come out of the \$9 million/year in multimodal transportation funds raised through the tax on vehicle rental fees. Given the lack of other funding sources for multimodal operations, this fund is overcommitted. New funding would be needed to support additional funding for transit (or other modes) on an ongoing basis.***

Article, IX, Section 19 from Maine State Constitution:

Limitation on expenditure of motor vehicle and motor vehicle fuel revenues. All revenues derived from fees, excises and license taxes relating to registration, operation and use of vehicles on public highways, and to fuels used for propulsion of such vehicles shall be expended solely for cost of administration, statutory refunds and adjustments, payment of debts and liabilities incurred in construction and reconstruction of highways and bridges, the cost of construction, reconstruction, maintenance and repair of public highways and bridges under the direction and supervision of a state department having jurisdiction over such highways and bridges and expense for state enforcement of traffic laws and shall not be diverted for any purpose, provided that these limitations shall not apply to revenue from an excise tax on motor vehicles imposed in lieu of personal property tax.

B. Federal and State Funding Summary. For FY19, the Federal Transit Administration is providing the state of Maine \$35,485,593, with rough breakdown as follows:

Federal operating/planning/administration	\$11,000,000
Federal capital (vehicles, ferries, buildings, equipment, rail).....	\$24,485,593

State Operations: The state allocates \$1.47 million of Multimodal Transportation Fund monies to FTA-funded transit providers to assist with their federal operations match requirement, less than 10% of the operations budget (*see Table 3*).

State Capital: The state provides varying amounts of capital from bond funds as the voters authorize, most often to match available federal funding. Transit buses, ferry vessels and rail improvements are all considered and prioritized based upon relative need. VW Settlement funding is allowing a short-term boost for eligible engine replacements of transit vehicles (\$3.7 million has been programmed for transit bus upgrades over the last 12 months and more is anticipated). MaineDOT is seeking to leverage additional public and private funding with those dollars.

Table 3. Federal and State Annual Support for Public Transportation in Maine (Note: Does not include fares or other significant local revenues raised to complete service costs; does not include capital or discretionary state/federal funding.)								
FY19 Estimate	22 Transit Providers		NNEPRA		MSFS		TOTAL	
Federal Annual	\$11,000,000	90.5%	\$2,172,000	52.1%	\$0	0%	\$13,172,000	61%
State Annual	\$1,147,845 ¹	9.5%	\$2,000,000 ¹	47.9%	\$5,395,710 ²	100%	\$8,543,555	40%
F&S Total	\$12,147,845	100%	\$4,172,000	100%	\$5,395,710	100%	\$21,715,555	100%
Average Total F&S \$/Provider	\$552,175		\$4,172,000		\$5,395,710		\$904,815	
Average State \$/Provider	\$52,175		\$2,000,000		\$5,395,710		\$355,981	
Share of State Funding	13.4%		23.4%		63.2%		100%	
State \$/capita	\$ 0.86		\$1.49		\$4.03		\$6.39	

Source: Funding levels from MaineDOT; 2018 population estimate of 1.338M from U.S. Census Bureau

¹ Multimodal Transportation Fund. This figure is an upward cap (administrative decision; not in statute) used if needed to complete match for federal funds received.

² Highway Fund

VII. COMPARISON WITH OTHER STATES

A. Survey of State Funding Summary. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) collects data from each state and publishes a survey to inform this discussion. The most recent survey published in 2018 is based upon 2016 data. States support public transportation to greatly varying degrees and utilizing a broad array of funding sources. Many states do not have a constitutional provision prohibiting the use of fuel taxes such as Maine does and fund public transportation with the equivalent of Maine’s Highway Fund dollars. Others use General Fund dollars. Many, like Maine dedicate rental car taxes and other special funds to support public transit. Additionally, municipalities, counties and regions may have access to a broader array of funding sources to support public transit than Maine does. The data are somewhat clouded by combinations of annual and capital funding and are not separated by mode. Maine’s data as reported did not include funding for passenger rail or the Maine State Ferry Service. It is unclear how other states interpreted the data request and what is included.

B. Appropriate Level of Effort for Maine. While statistical data of actual need are difficult to derive with confidence, the needs expressed by individuals and employers in the field are not being met with existing resources. Municipalities are struggling with the level of commitment they can make to public transit (e.g., as this report goes to print, the Brunswick Explorer service is in danger of being discontinued for lack of local/state operating support). For the non-transit dependent, services must be performed at a sufficient level of frequency and convenience to draw people out of their personal automobiles. Since petroleum prices have remained low for far longer than many projected, pricing has not driven modal choice. Only recently in Portland has parking availability and cost begun to apply pressure on single-vehicle travel.

However, Maine’s aging population is creating a growing cohort of citizens who cannot transport themselves. They have varying levels of incomes and support resources around them. Urban areas need a higher level of service to offer a reliable and effective way to serve workforce and basic needs. Tourism is Maine’s largest industry and visitors to urban areas expect transit services to be available. A survey of potential Portland visitors conducted by Visit Portland in 2018 identified the lack of public transportation to be the greatest barrier to increased visitation.

The AASHTO survey demonstrates that the average federal/state ratio of funding public transportation for states with total funding of under \$1 billion is roughly 61%/39%. With the very high District of Columbia expenditures removed, the median level of state support is \$5.17 per capita. Maine ranks 38th at \$0.86 per capita. The council feels that the State of Maine can and should rise to match the median level of effort. Were a road mile per capita factor incorporated to approximate relative service costs compared with that of other states, Maine would rank even lower than 38th.

VIII. OPTIMAL COORDINATION OF TRANSIT SERVICES WITH OTHER SENIOR AND VETERAN SERVICES

Like MaineCare and USVA-Togus services, if transportation were an included component of social service delivery, the programs would be far more successful. Because Maine has such a weak public transportation system and dispersed settlement pattern, providing rides to those in need is more difficult and expensive than it might otherwise be. That said, there are many organizations and volunteers that are donating time and money to transport seniors and veterans for multi-purpose trips. At the council's urging, MaineDOT has agreed to hire a consultant to assist community-based volunteer driver networks to connect with and learn from one another, as well as coordinate with transit providers in their regions. This service is due to be launched in 2019. Older adults, veterans and cancer patients are some of the more common users of such services who will be served through this initiative.

The council applauds the efforts of the US Veterans Administration (USVA) - Togus Mobility Manager, who initiated and continues to develop creative partnerships with transit providers and others to provide needed rides for Veterans to medical appointments. As with other people with low incomes and/or other barriers to transportation (including MaineCare members), there are few funding sources to cover non-qualifying medical trips for veterans. Most transit agencies offer a discounted fare for seniors but rides cannot be provided for free without a sponsoring funder. Some of the Area Agencies on Aging have made such trips possible by providing funds to regional transit providers. Providing additional funds to address unmet transit needs as outlined above will improve access to transit for all members of the general public, including seniors and Veterans.

The council includes representatives of Maine's Age-Friendly Community network. MaineDOT worked closely with many of these communities to host the public forums held in the Fall of 2018 which led to the recommendations presented in this report. The need to create more transit and age-friendly community designs and integrated programming will enhance the quality of life for seniors and people of all ages while reducing transportation barriers. MaineDOT and MaineHousing are willing partners in such initiatives but municipalities, developers and social service organizations have a more prominent leadership responsibility in creating livable communities. Fortunately, over 60 municipalities in Maine have achieved the Age-Friendly Community designation from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), so the foundation is in place for movement in that direction.

The council advised MaineDOT in the preparation of *Transportation Needs of Maine's Veterans, Final Report to the 128th Maine Legislature*, February 5, 2018, which acknowledged the lack of quantitative data surrounding the transportation needs of Maine's Veterans. To better understand specific needs and test strategic interventions, the report recommended the establishment of a pilot project to develop a coordinated network of person-centric services inclusive of transportation and document results (the \$150,000 study was not funded by the Legislature in 2018). ***The Moving Maine Mobility Network initiative endorsed by the council would employ a similar approach through cross-sector partnership development and trained mobility navigators. These mobility navigators would be embedded within diverse health and social service organizations to serve all citizens with transportation barriers. In the event that the veterans' pilot project is ultimately funded, it should be conducted under the Moving Maine umbrella to maximize its reach.***

IX. RECOMMENDED PRIORITY STRATEGIES AND ASSIGNED ACTION STEPS

A. Immediate (2019-20)

Increase State Operational Funding to Transit Agencies (Lead = Legislature and MaineDOT)

- Increase state funding share from 9% to 25% of operational costs in FY2020 (\$4.25 million) and to 35% national average (\$6.8 million, \$5 per capita) in FY2021 – Funding source TBD
- MaineDOT may utilize a portion of the funds for statewide initiatives such as the Moving Maine Mobility Network, volunteer driver support system, rider information systems and cost-effective centralized purchasing of shared infrastructure and services.
- Distribute 50% of the remaining state funding by formula to be used as needed and 50% on a competitive basis for service expansions requiring the new locally-sourced matching funds

Accelerate Fleet Modernization (Lead = MaineDOT)

- Pursue federal discretionary grants
- Apply VW Environmental Mitigation Funds as match when eligible
- Budget for state matching funds in transportation bond
- Prudently invest in electric and hybrid propulsion systems and charging infrastructure
- Seek assistance from FTA and AASHTO in addressing small transit bus manufacturing quality and delivery problems

Support Volunteer Driver Networks (Lead = MaineDOT)

- Develop scope of services
- Hire consultant using federal planning funds to provide collaborative technical assistance
- Evaluate after two years and propose budget going forward if justified

Launch Moving Maine Network (Co-Leads = Greater Portland Council of Governments, Maine Cancer Foundation, Maine Primary Care Association, MaineDOT)

- Secure core funding (FTA grant application pending); \$250,000 start-up funding for Network could be secured by state in FY2019 budget if funding is increased as proposed above
- Formalize steering committee
- Confirm goals and work plan (to include mobility navigator development plan)
- Engage working groups

Develop Medical Scheduling Pilot Program (Lead = Maine DHHS)

- Convene MaineCare Advisory Board to engage providers
- Work with Mobilize Maine/Council working group to create framework
- Identify pilot providers & region(s)
- Trial and record value to medical providers, patients and transit providers
- Evaluate and replicate

Explore GoMaine Trip Planner (Co-Leads = MaineDOT and Maine Turnpike Authority)

- Create work plan and budget with technology consultants advised by GoVermont
- Perform cost-benefit analysis; evaluate and proceed accordingly (may require new funding)

Foster Age-Friendly Community Development (Lead = Maine Council on Aging)

- Launch Municipal Task Force on Healthy Aging (Lead = Maine Council on Aging)
- Develop long range development and transit plan for southern Maine: Transit Tomorrow project (Lead = GPCOG/PACTS)
- Enable optional local and regional sales taxes with portions dedicated to public transportation, transportation-oriented development, transportation demand management strategies and Age-Friendly Community design (Lead = Maine Municipal Association, MPOs)

Update Maine Transit Association Directory (Co-leads = Maine Transit Association and MaineDOT)

- Establish data repository and updating procedure
- Model print version after Southern Maine Mobility Guide <https://www.gpcog.org/mobility-for-all/>

Deepen State Agency Coordination (Lead = MaineDOT)

- Department of Education (multi-use of buses & drivers, driver recruitment & training; transit buses on school grounds)
- Department of Labor (workforce transportation, employer-sponsored routes, driver recruitment & training)
- MaineHousing (transit-friendly development requirements and developer outreach; residential housing manager engagement as mobility managers)
- Department of Economic and Community Development (employer-sponsored routes, age-friendly community development, tourism & outdoor recreation transport)
- Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry (age-friendly community development)
- Department of Health and Human Services (engage MaineCare medical providers in coordinated appointment scheduling; seek opportunities to enable multi-funder ridesharing; work with State and District Health Coordinating Councils and hospital networks to address transportation challenges for patients and workforce)
- Bureau of Motor Vehicles (CDL process)

B. Mid-Term (2021-23)

- Develop Transit and RideSharing Promotional Campaign (after information is easy to access)
- Explore Coordinated Statewide Electronic Ticketing/Transit Pass System (following evaluation of METRO system implementation)
- Explore Relationships with Independent Transportation Networks for End Mile Services
- Encourage Employer-Sponsored Transit Routes; develop and share models that work

X. CONCLUSION

No single entity is responsible for solving Maine's transportation challenges. However, a critical mass of public base funding is needed to establish the capacity with which to build an innovative, nimble and effective public transportation system – one that can assist older rural Mainers to remain in their homes as well as rise to the level of replacing single passenger vehicle dependency in Maine's urban centers. Stepping up to fund the system at the national per capita median level of \$5 is within the state's capacity and would incentivize further public and private investments.

Let's do it!

Appendix A
PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP
APRIL 2019

NAME	AFFILIATION	TERM END
Mary Ann Hayes	MaineDOT Commissioner's Designee & Chair	unspecified
Tom Reinauer	Kittery Area Comprehensive Transportation System	1/14/2020
Jennifer Williams	Androscoggin Transportation Resource Center	1/14/2020
Connie Reed	Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System	1/14/2020
Zoe Miller	Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System	1/14/2020
Jessica Maurer	Maine Council on Aging	1/14/2020
Kalie Hess	Maine Primary Care Association	6/3/2021
Casey Gilbert	Portland Downtown	8/9/2021
Chris Hall	Maine Economic Development Directors Association	1/14/2021
Marcia Larkin	Penquis	1/15/2022
Dennis McCartney	Limestone Development Foundation	1/15/2022
Richard Taylor	MaineHousing	12/11/2020
Dana Knapp	Concord Coach Lines	1/14/2021
Rep. Bettyann Sheats	Transportation Committee, Democratic Party	12/2/2020
Sen. Brad Farrin	Transportation Committee, Republican Party	12/2/2020
Patricia Quinn	Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority	1/15/2022
Greg Jordan	Greater Portland Transit District (METRO)	1/15/2022
Lisa Feldman	Transportation for All	6/3/2021
Chris Chop	Maine Medical Center / MaineHealth	1/31/2020
Jonathan LaBonté	Lewiston and Auburn Railroad Company	12/11/2020
Al Schutz	Schutz Transit Solutions, LLC	12/11/2020
Rebecca Grover	Maine Turnpike Authority/GO MAINE	12/11/2020
Giselle White	Maine VA Healthcare	6/3/2021
Sandy Buchanan	Maine Transit Association	6/3/2021
William Shane	Town of Cumberland	6/3/2021
Barbara Schneider	Citizen	6/3/2021
Duane Scott	Augusta Age-Friendly Advisory Committee	6/3/2021
Deirdre Wadsworth	Hardypond Construction	8/9/2021

Public Transit Advisory Council: Legislative Summary

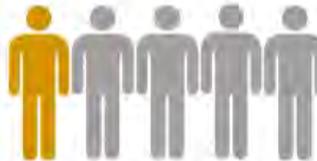
Needs and Recommendations



Public Transportation Needs:

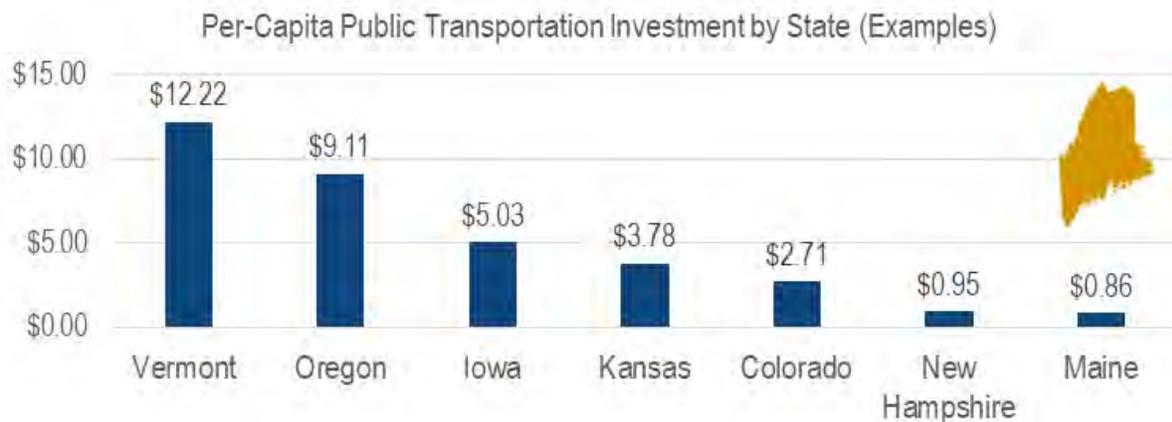


40,892 Maine households do NOT own a personal vehicle

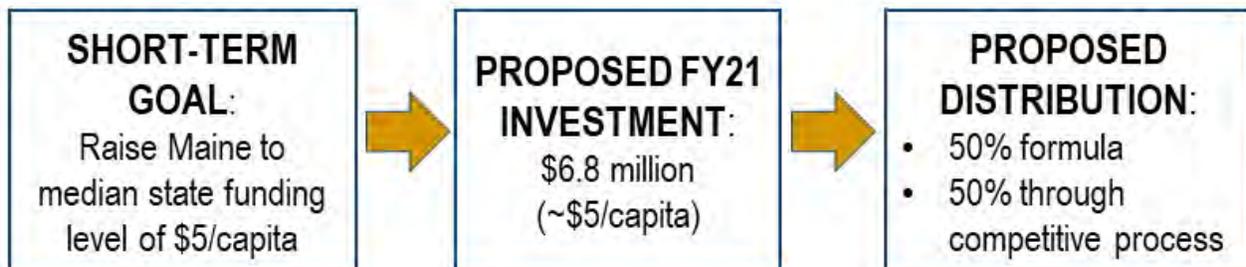


1 in 5 Maine residents will be older adults (65+) by 2020

Maine ranks 38th in per-Capita Public Transportation Investment by State DOT:



Funding Recommendations



Public Transit Advisory Council: Legislative Summary

Return on Investment



Operating Assistance



Maintenance



Rent and
Insurance



Fuel



Advertising &
marketing

Workforce Development



Wages,
benefits, staffing



Operator
trainings

Passenger Experience



Better service,
potentially higher
ridership



Improved
reliability