

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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A REPORT  
ON THE FEASIBILITY OF A  
TRANS-MAINE HIGHWAY  
(ROUTE 6)

Prepared by: The Interim Committee on Corridor Roads  
March, 1967

STATE OF MAINE

LEGISLATIVE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON CORRIDOR ROADS

To the Honorable Senate and  
House of Representatives of the  
One Hundred and Third Legislature

This report is being submitted in accordance with an order of the One Hundred and Second Maine Legislature that a study be made of the feasibility of a Trans-Maine Highway, utilizing State Route 6 insofar as possible.

The conclusions of the Committee are that reconstruction of State Route 6 from the International Boundary with the Province of New Brunswick at Vanceboro, via Lincoln, Howland, Dover-Foxcroft, Greenville and Jackman to the International Boundary with the Province of Quebec, north of Jackman would be of inestimable value in improving the economy of those portions of Washington, Penobscot, Piscataquis and Somerset Counties, which it traverses as well as increasing the State's gasoline and sales tax income. It would in addition provide direct high-type travel service for motorists entering the State at its termini, including the motorists traveling between Quebec and the other Canadian provinces to the west and the Maritime Provinces.

It is urged that the One Hundred and Third Legislature initiate steps to insure construction of this road within the next five years, financed by the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$23,800,000.

Respectfully submitted,

LEGISLATIVE INTERIM COMMITTEE  
ON CORRIDOR ROADS

Sen. Peter Bernard, Chairman

Sen. John C. McDonald

Rep. S. Glenn Starbird, Vice Chairman

Rep. Charlotte H. White, Secretary

Rep. Arnold Jordan

Richard A. Luetlich, Planning and Traffic  
Engineer, State Highway Commission  
(Advisory Member Only)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Item</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
Introduction	1
Summary of Findings:	
A. Description of Route	3
B. Highway Characteristics	5
C. Construction Costs	5
Conclusions	8
Minority Report	10
Appendix "A":	
Summary of Committee Meetings	11

## List of Figures

<u>Title</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
Route 6 and Highway Systems Map	4
Traffic Volumes Map	6

## INTRODUCTION

The One Hundred and Second Maine Legislature ordered that a committee be formed to study the feasibility of an adequate modern Trans-Maine Highway utilizing to the fullest possible extent State Route 6. A copy of the Order, as amended, follows:

State of Maine

In House, January 24, 1966

WHEREAS, Maine is internationally famous for its recreational facilities and possibilities, and

WHEREAS, our State and local governmental agencies are promoting the recreational industry on a wide scale, and

WHEREAS, we have seven million Canadian neighbors who do not have ready access to these resources and who likewise have no efficient link between two of their great provinces, and

WHEREAS, there lies therein the potential for a tremendous and favorable impact on all phases of Maine's economy, it is hereby

ORDERED, that a study be made of the feasibility of an adequate modern Trans-Maine Highway linking the eastern townships, Sherbrooke areas of Quebec and New Brunswick, utilizing to the fullest practical extent Route #6, the first and only Trans-Maine Highway so designated on the State Highway map, and be it further,

ORDERED, the Senate concurring, that a committee of seven be appointed, including one engineer from the State Highway Commission; three Senators to be appointed by the President of the Senate; and three Representatives to be appointed by the Speaker of the House, to carry out the purposes of this order.

The Legislative Interim Committee on Corridor Roads was comprised of the following Members:

Senator Peter Bernard, Chairman  
Senator James M. Cahill  
Senator John C. McDonald  
Representative Charlotte H. White, Secretary  
Representative S. Glenn Starbird, Vice Chairman  
Representative Arnold Jordan  
\*Richard A. Luetlich, Planning and Traffic Engineer, M.S.H.C.

The Committee held a series of meetings and a public hearing in order to gather pertinent information regarding the corridor road. A brief record of these meetings is included as Appendix "A" and a listing of the meetings is shown below:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
1. May 7, 1966	Bangor, Maine
2. May 24, 1966	Boyd Lake, Maine
3. August 13, 1966	Greenville, Maine
4. October 8, 1966	Lincoln, Maine (Public Hearing)
5. December 22, 1966	Augusta, Maine

As a result of these meetings and hearings, the Committee gathered many facts and much knowledge concerning a corridor road, which is summarized in the following pages.

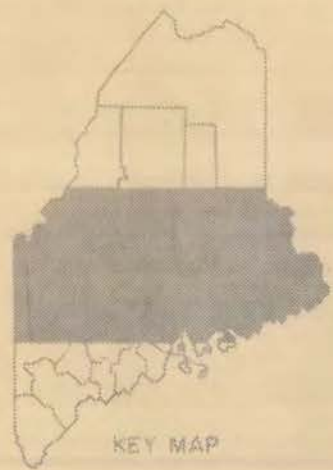
## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### A. Description of Route

State Route 6 starts at the International Boundary with the Province of New Brunswick at Vanceboro and extends easterly and northerly a distance of 208.6 miles to the International Boundary with the Province of Quebec at Sandy Bay, north of Jackman. From Vanceboro to Lincoln and from Greenville to Jackman, this route is on the Federal-Aid Secondary highway system while the other portions from Lincoln, via Howland, Milo, Dover-Foxcroft and Guilford to Greenville, and from Jackman to the Quebec boundary are on the Federal-Aid Primary system. The entire route is on the State Highway System.

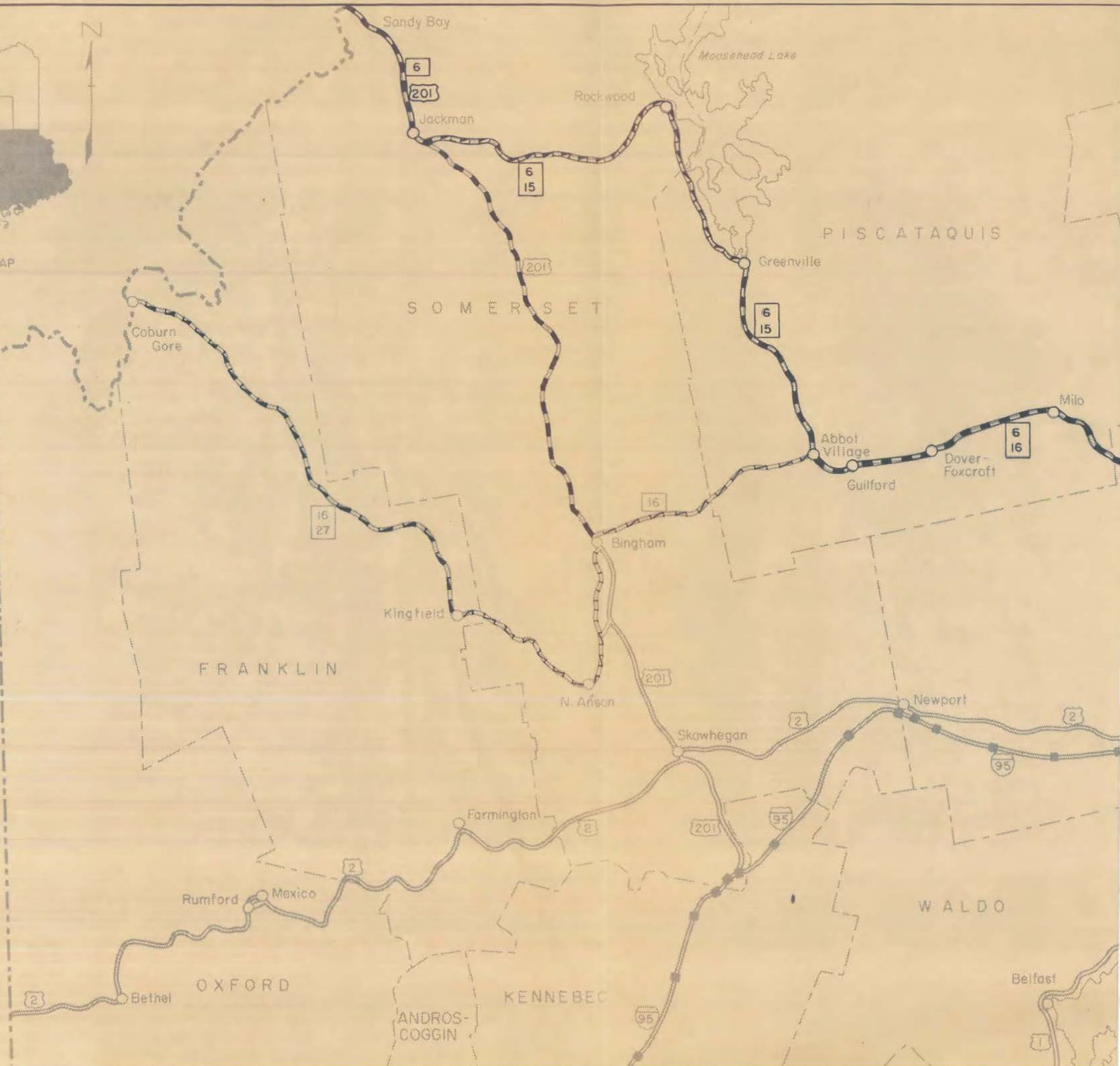
Also discussed by the Committee were two alternates, both utilizing the route as above described from Vanceboro to Abbot but both utilizing Route 16 from Abbot to Bingham. One of these alternates would proceed northward from Bingham on U.S. Route 201 to the same terminus at Sandy Bay as described above. The other alternate would extend on Route 16 from Bingham through North Anson to Kingfield and northerly therefrom on Route 27 to Coburn Gore.

That portion of Route 16 between Abbot and Bingham which is common to both alternates is on the Federal-Aid Secondary and State Aid systems. U.S. Route 201 from Bingham to Sandy Bay, used as one alternate, is on the Federal-Aid Primary and State Highway Systems. A Highway Systems map, showing system breakdown is included as Figure 1.



KEY MAP



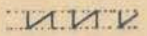

NEW HAMPSHIRE

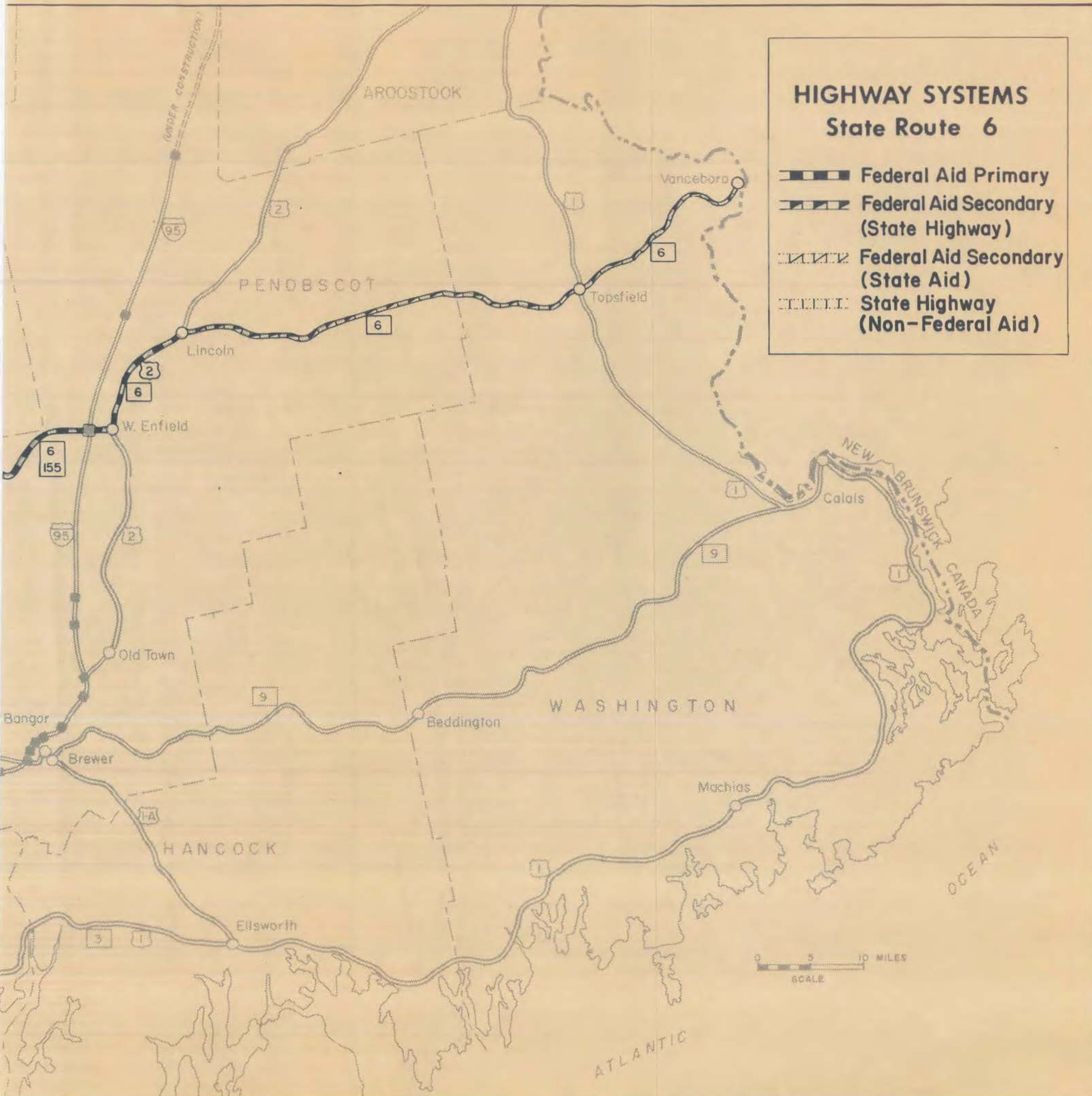




# HIGHWAY SYSTEMS

## State Route 6

-  Federal Aid Primary
-  Federal Aid Secondary (State Highway)
-  Federal Aid Secondary (State Aid)
-  State Highway (Non-Federal Aid)





## B. Highway Characteristics

Shown on Figure 2 are traffic volumes as provided by the Planning and Traffic Division of the State Highway Commission. Although the existing volumes of traffic and the growth of traffic in this corridor are moderate, the Committee anticipates that construction of this route would result in substantial increases in usage.

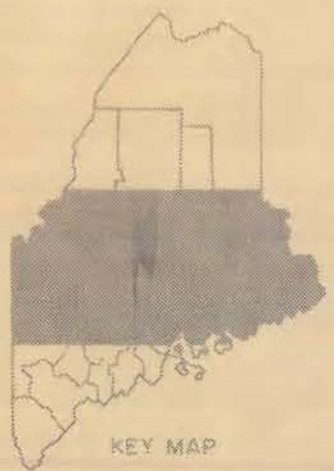
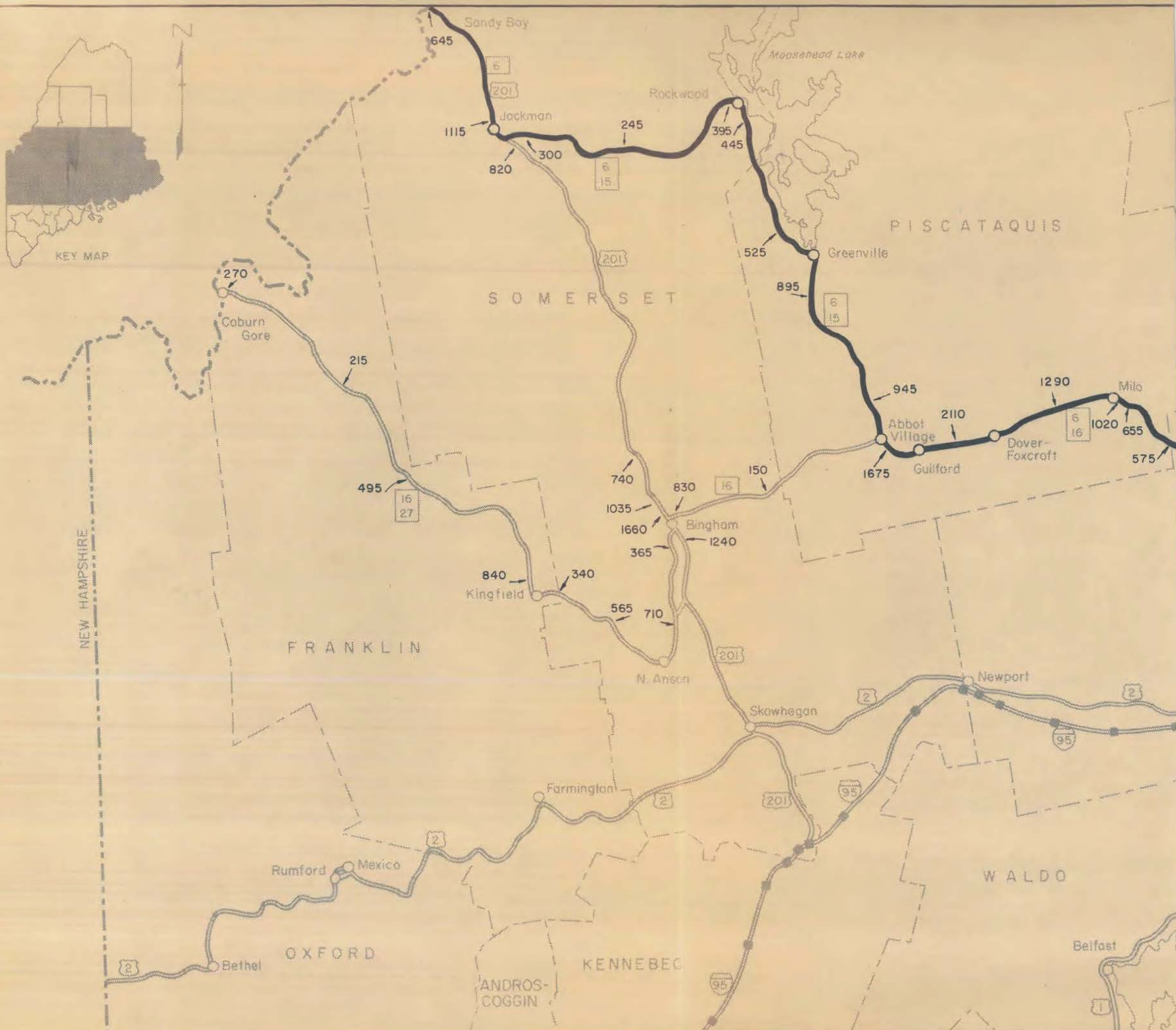
According to the State Highway Commission's Highway Sufficiency Report nearly one-half of the mileage on Route 6 does not meet adequate highway standards today and obsolescence due to wear and higher traffic requirements will result in significant increases in the inadequate mileage during the next twenty years.

In addition, hazardous locations which exist along the route indicate an immediate need for reconstruction to improve safety conditions.

## C. Construction Costs

The total estimated cost of improving State Route 6 between Vanceboro and Jackman to adequate standards is approximately \$21,800,000. This figure represents the cost of reconstruction or resurfacing of 145.3 miles on the route out of a total of 208.6 miles. The remaining 63.3 miles are of sufficiently high standards to provide safe and efficient travel for anticipated traffic. The above total costs include approximately \$1,800,000 which has been included in a construction program, leaving needs of \$20 million.





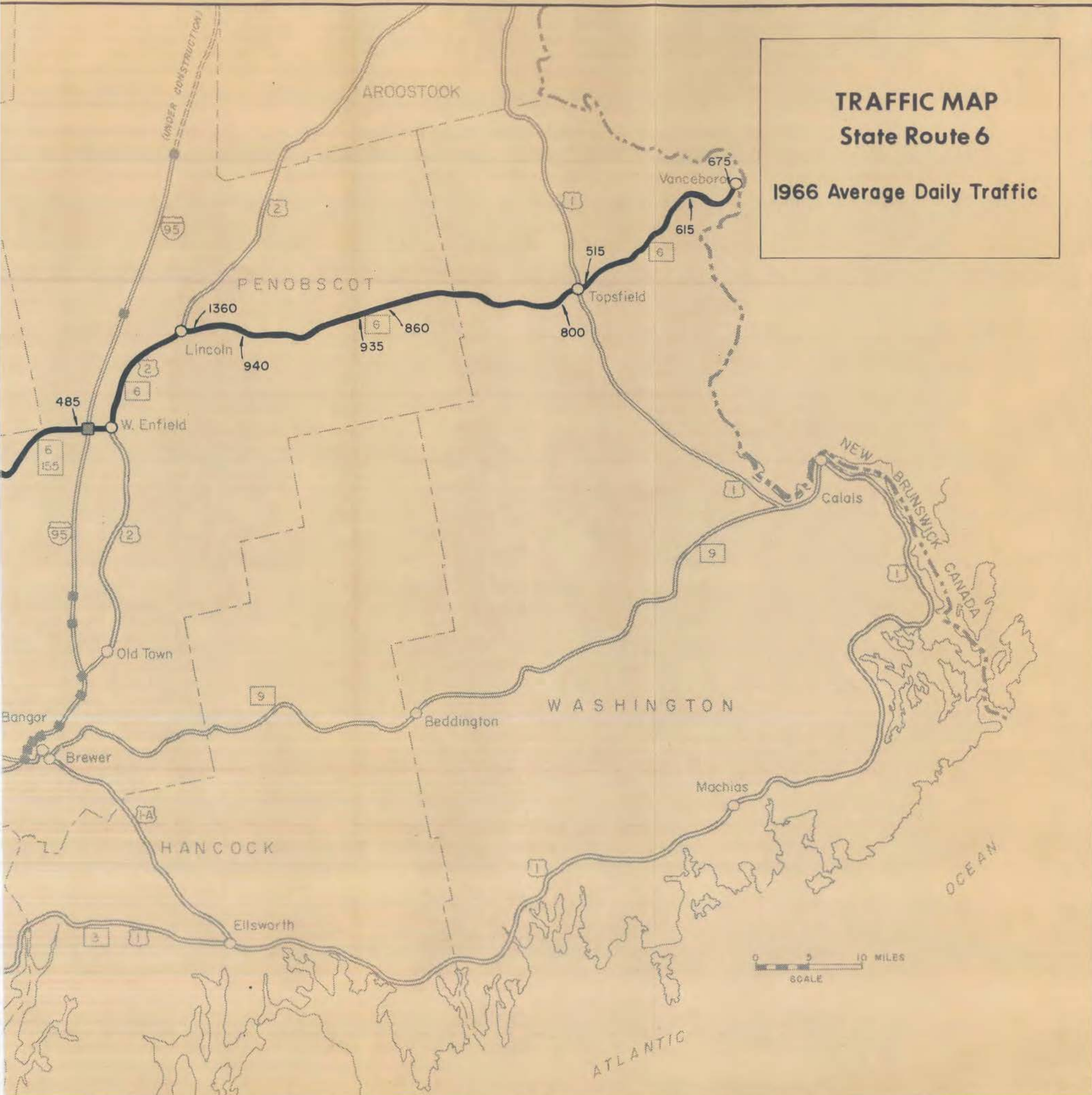
NEW HAMPSHIRE

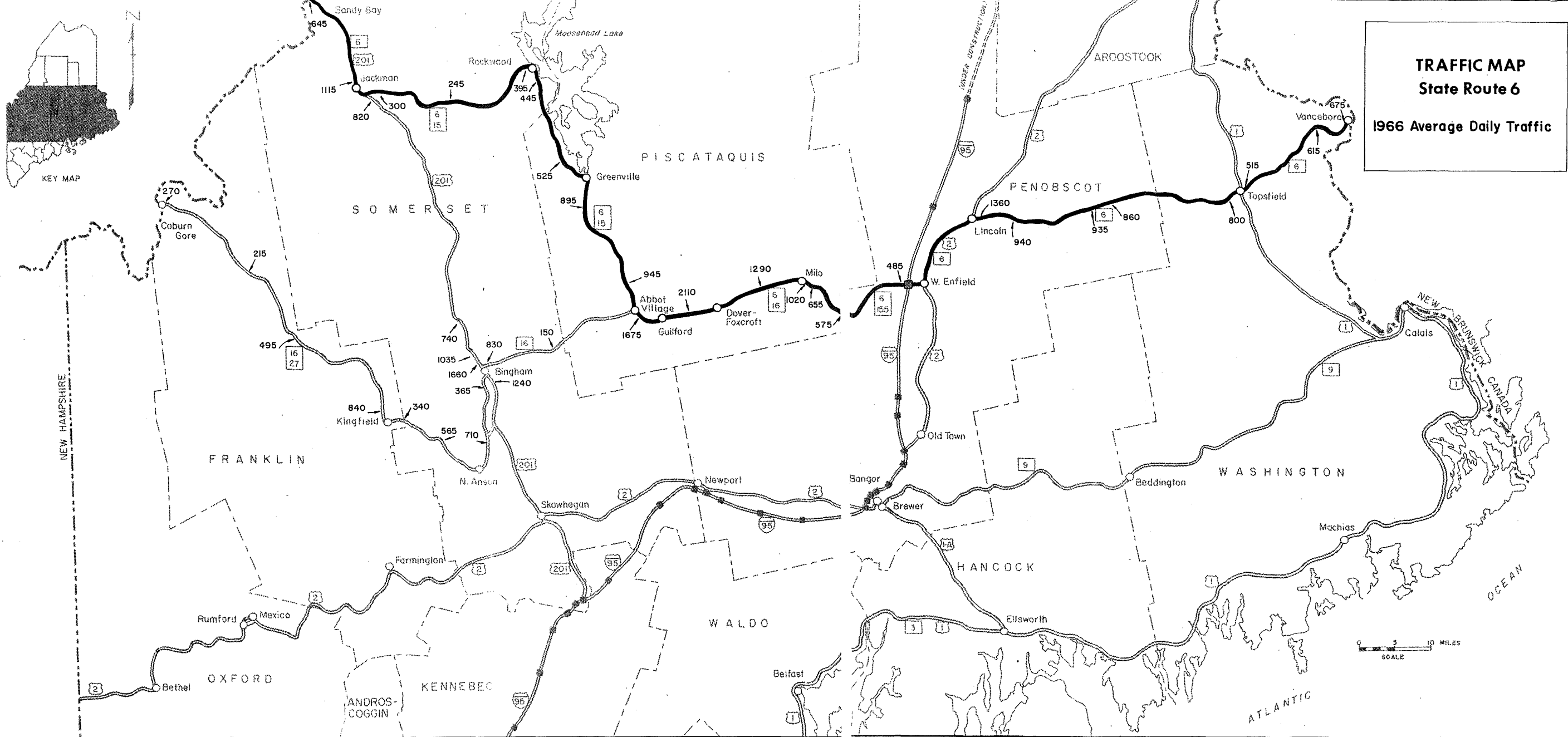




# TRAFFIC MAP State Route 6

1966 Average Daily Traffic





These estimates represent only a preliminary examination of the needed improvements. Revisions would undoubtedly be required following a detailed examination of the routes involved. More detailed analyses usually result in higher estimates. Costs of resurfacing and reconstruction have been estimated based on current price structures only, while highway costs are continually increasing. Also, costs used are average and will not account for an unusual right of way or construction problem. For the preceding reasons, construction costs reported should be used as minimum needs.

## CONCLUSIONS

After receiving a great deal of information from the public, from the International Atlantic Corridor Highway Committee and numerous groups of representatives from Canada, and doing what research the Committee could do on its own, it is the calculated opinion of the Committee that the increased gasoline tax revenue which could be created by the increase in travel by having a better highway; the increase in sales tax revenue from the money spent for services, etc.; the increase in property tax revenue due to increased property values along this highway; the savings which would be realized by the elimination of hazardous locations; and the savings which would accrue because of the projected increase in cost of construction in the next twenty years would more than offset the cost of the interest on the money needed to improve this highway.

Other benefits would be the increase in economic growth and employment in the area. The potential for economic development in the field of recreation in the area through which this highway passes is only limited by the amount of effort put into promotion of this potential. There are hundreds of lakes and streams, which provide the best of fishing and opportunities to build cottages and summer residences. The sales tax, gasoline tax, and other tax revenue from these activities is difficult to estimate, but again this amount is limited only by the amount of promotion and opportunity provided.

In order to develop widespread support for this project, the Committee prepared an estimate to show that this project is an investment that will pay for itself or even make a profit for the State.



The cost of construction per mile of Federal-Aid Primary highway in 1955 was \$114,000. The cost of one mile constructed to the same standards in 1965 was \$218,000. The cost of Federal-Aid Secondary construction in 1955 was \$90,500 per mile, with an increase to \$145,300 in 1965. The average increase in cost in the past ten years has been 75 per cent.

If the projected future increase is as much, and there is every reason to believe that it will be more, rebuilding this road over a period of twenty years would cost about \$35 million instead of the present estimated cost of \$20 million.

If this road is rebuilt in the next five years the cost would be \$23.8 million. This is a difference of \$11.8 million. The differential cost of interest between bringing this road up to modern highway standards in a period of five years and a period of twenty years is \$7.2 million. If we subtract the interest cost of \$7.2 million from the construction cost difference we have a net gain of \$4.0 million, besides all of the other benefits previously summarized.

This highway passes through some of the most economically depressed areas in our great State, and we believe it is our responsibility and privilege to provide those who are unfortunate enough to live in depressed areas with better opportunity. Rebuilding this highway in the next five years or even sooner would certainly provide a great deal of opportunity for these unfortunate people.

The Committee has in its files a great deal of correspondence indicating the need for this highway and the benefits to be derived therefrom.

MINORITY REPORT

To the Honorable Senate and  
House of Representatives of the  
One Hundred and Third Legislature

This minority report concurs with the needs set forth  
in the majority report except that it is recommended:

- (1) that the route diverge from Route 6 at Abbot  
and utilize Routes 16 and 27 via Bingham,  
Kingfield, and Eustis to the International  
Boundary at Coburn Gore, and
- (2) that rebuilding be done only if funds are  
available, and that no recourse be made to  
bond issue financing.

Respectfully submitted,

Senator James M. Cahill  
102nd Maine Legislature

## APPENDIX "A"

### SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The organizational meeting of the Committee was held in Bangor, May 7, 1966. Mr. David H. Stevens, Chairman of the Highway Commission, gave a brief resume of the history of the Trans-Maine corridor locations, which have been previously discussed. Mr. Richard A. Luettich, Planning and Traffic Engineer for the Commission, explained the study to be made jointly by Planning and Traffic agencies of the State of Maine and the Provinces of Quebec and New Brunswick in the Summer of 1966. The committee chairman, vice-chairman and secretary were elected.

At a second committee meeting held at Boyd Lake on May 24, 1966, Mr. Luettich, the Highway Commission representative, presented a map showing the approximate locations of the various proposals which have been made for a Trans-Maine highway and presented to the committee copies of a paper prepared by the late Mr. Vaughan M. Daggett, then Chief Engineer of the State Highway Commission, outlining the history of Trans-Maine highways.

Mr. Luettich also presented the committee with average per mile costs of constructing highways to Federal-Aid Primary and Federal-Aid Secondary standards, since Route 6 in its entirety falls into one or the other of these two categories. Considerable discussion involved the failure of Canadian people interested in this highway to contact their highway officials. Senator Bernard emphasized the need for the reconstruction of Route 6 to improve the economy of the area. The location of Route 6 and Route 9 and how they relate to each other was discussed. Mr. Clyde Hichborn, chairman of the International Atlantic Corridor Highway Committee, was present at this meeting.

Discussions concerning traffic, roads to recreational areas, and potential commercial use of Route 6 were the principal topics of the third meeting which was held in Greenville on August 13, 1966. Traffic data obtained at the traffic interviewing stations at the State's borders and the impact on Route 6 as a result of the construction of Interstate Route 95 were discussed.

Questionnaires were discussed which could be sent to industries to learn to what extent they use highways for moving goods, their estimated usage of Route 6 and anticipated growth in the next ten years. The question of competition between proposed Route 6 improvement and the Trans-Maine highway proposed by Mr. Bartlett Cram, Bangor public relations specialist, from Calais to Amsterdam, New York was raised. Senator Bernard expressed the opinion that the need exists for both roads since they should not be competitive. It was determined that a public hearing should be held wherein all interested parties would be able to air their views concerning the Trans-Maine highway.

A public hearing was held in Lincoln on October 8, 1966. More than 40 persons were in attendance at the Lincoln meeting including representatives from the International Atlantic Corridor Highway Committee, the Office of Economic Opportunity, Prince Edward Island, Maritime Province Transportation Association, Sherbrooke, P.Q., Maine commercial users and supporters from Medway, Lincoln, Greenville, Enfield, and Brownville. A wide variety of opinions was expressed at this meeting, but the consensus centered on the need for improving Route 6 to bolster the economy of Maine and New Brunswick. Representatives from Prince Edward Island emphasized that their market areas are Montreal and Toronto rather than Quebec City; also, that 24 per cent of their tourists are from Ontario against 15 per cent from Quebec, also that air travel from Montreal approximates 18,000 passengers per year. They expressed opinions that engineers should select the location of a Trans-Maine route. Commercial shipping interests in the Maritime Provinces indicate that a new road on the Route 6 axis would result in a 100 per cent increase in hauling in five years. They also indicated that an adequate highway would open markets in the provinces of Quebec and Ontario to their fish products which are presently marketed almost entirely in the United States. A Sherbrooke, P.Q. representative indicated that an improved Route 6 would be preferable to motorists over New Hampshire and Vermont roads and further stressed the importance of the route passing Lake Megantic and connecting with the City of Sherbrooke. He further noted that Premier Daniel Johnson of Quebec supports construction of the Megantic-Sherbrooke Route. Another speaker emphasized the benefits to the depressed area of Washington County.

Another committee meeting was held after the Public Hearing at which Route 6 traffic volume data and shipping information questionnaires were distributed. It was emphasized that the committee should refer to Route 6 as the "Corridor Road" as employed by the Atlantic Corridor Highway Committee. It was also decided that Senator Bernard should draft a letter to Governor John H. Reed, apprising him of the facts brought to light in the study and emphasizing the need for improvement of Route 6 prior to his proposed meeting with Premiers Louis B. Robichaud of New Brunswick and Daniel Johnson of Quebec.