

Washington County –Transportation Investment Strategic Priorities



March 23, 2014 DRAFT (to be finalized by March 28 with more input from committee)

The Downeast Coastal Multi-Modal Corridor Management Plan committee serves as the GROWashington-Aroostook work team on the subject of Transportation Infrastructure in Support of Economic Development.

The following summarizes their prioritization of policies that are partially or not implemented from Transportation Plans since 2004¹ in Washington County.

HIGH PRIORITIES

Policy Recommendations – High Priority

- Develop sustainable and predictable funding mechanisms for transportation system maintenance and upgrades. (Coastal Canadian Corridor Plan and Eastern Interior Corridor Plan)
- Include shoulder-widening (where feasible) in all road improvement projects (Coastal Canadian Corridor Plan)
- Improve unbuilt sections of US-1 from Danforth to Calais,
- Improve multimodal access to port at Eastport,
- Address regional needs for improved air transportation,
- Address deferred maintenance (above 4 recommendations from Downeast Coastal Corridor Plan)
- Establish long-term corridor management team with stable participation and funding (Bold Coast Scenic Byway) (tie M-H)
- Support municipal land use districts that reinforce regional transportation initiatives, such as trailhead and commercial districts along the Down East Sunrise Trail and transloading areas where rail corridors intersect with roads. (Downeast Coastal Corridor Plan) (tie M-H):

Infrastructure Recommendations – High Priority

- Infrastructure recommendations still in development as of 1/2014 (Bold Coast Scenic Byway)
- Continue to seek funding for major rail-to-truck improvements to increase rail and seaport activity,

¹ Blackwoods Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan – 2004
Port Development Strategic Plan – 2007
Eastport Freight Rail Restoration Plan – 2009
Northeast CanAm Connections - 2009
Downeast Coastal Multi-Modal Corridor Management Plan -2010
Canadian Coastal Multi-Modal Corridor Management Plan – 2011
Eastern Interior Multi-Modal Corridor Management Plan – 2012

- Explore public-private partnerships to undertake high-cost, high-value projects (above 2 recommendations from both Coastal Canadian Corridor Plan and Eastern Interior Corridor Management Plan)
- Provide additional scenic pull-offs and tourist-friendly roadside amenities,
- Increase funding for tourist attractions, e.g., scenic byways, working harbors, multi-user trails, designated bike routes (Coastal Canadian Corridor Plan)
- Improve connector roads between US-1 and State Route 9 (Downeast Coastal Corridor Plan (Tie M-H))
- Reconstruct "unbuilt" portion of US-1 between Calais and Danforth, 5) expand rural transit service (Coastal Canadian Corridor Plan)
- Include shoulder-widening (where feasible) in all road improvement projects
- Focus on expansion of breakbulk and bulk cargo handling services to expand customer base (Above 2 recommendations from both Eastern Interior Corridor Plan and Port Development Strategic Plan)
- Rehabilitate existing rails between St. Croix Junction (New Brunswick), Woodland Junction, and Ayers Junction,
- Lay new rail in existing state-owned right-of-way from Ayers Junction to Perry,
- Construct a new rail-to-truck transloading facility in Perry
- Upgrade Eastport port facilities to handle increased truck traffic (Above 4 recommendations from Eastport Freight Rail Restoration Study)
- Improve existing east-west short line international freight rail service and east-west highways (Northeast CanAm Connections)
- Develop one or more new high-speed, east-west corridors for freight rail and trucks
- Develop a radial inter-regional transportation system through a combination of north-south, east-west, and inland port connectors (above 2 recommendations from Northeast CanAm Connections)

Other Recommendations – High Priority

- Nurture and intensify development of regional specialty industries (i.e., energy sector, aircraft and transportation equipment manufacturing, forest and paper products, green technologies, four-season tourism) (Northeast CanAm Connections)

MEDIUM PRIORITIES

Policy Recommendations – Medium Priority

- Establishment of steering committee to bridge various local, regional, and state entities involved in land use and transportation planning (Blackwoods Byway Scenic Byway)
- Lease port facilities & operations to a private entity to be developed as an industrial park (would generate additional demand for raw materials & exports). Public-private partnership would be preferable, but unlikely to generate bids from private investors (Port Development Strategic Plan)
- Develop a shared regional tourism marketing strategy (Northeast CanAm Connections)

Infrastructure Recommendations – Medium Priority

- Safety improvements at scenic vistas and recreational access roads (Blackwoods Byway Scenic Byway)

- Implement recommendations in regional and local bike-ped plans (Downeast Coastal Corridor Plan)
- Improve wayfinding signage to tourist destinations,
- Expand seaport indoor storage capacity for large-scale cargo (above 2 recommendations from Coastal Canadian Corridor Plan and Eastern Interior Plan)
- Reconstruct "unbuilt" portion of US-1 between Calais and Danforth,
- Expand rural transit service (Above 2 recommendations from Eastern Interior Plan)
- Provide additional scenic pull-offs and tourist-friendly roadside amenities,
- Increase funding for tourist attractions, e.g., scenic byways, working harbors, multi-user trails, and designated bike routes
- Improve infrastructure at general-aviation airports particularly for ground transportation
- Reinstate the "backlog" program for upgrading structurally deficient roads using local stakeholder input to establish regional priorities
- Collaborate with Department of Conservation to improve safety and public access at the rest area on State Route 6 at Musquash Lake (Above 5 recommendations from Eastern Interior Plan)

Other Recommendations – Medium Priority

- Study the feasibility of adding climbing lanes, shoulders, and two-way left-turn lanes (in more developed areas) where needed to improve mobility on State Route 6 (Eastern Interior Plan)
- Bring Eastport Port Authority under Maine Port Authority umbrella to consolidate operations at all state port facilities (Port Development Strategic Plan)
- Develop more "inland ports" -- i.e., centralized transloading facilities for truck-to-rail service (Northeast CanAm Connections)
- Increase inter-regional trade and tourism with other Northeast Can-Am states and provinces (Northeast CanAm Connections)

LOW PRIORITIES

Policy Recommendations

Infrastructure Recommendations

Other Recommendations

- Linkage of Byway to established special-interest trails, regional assets, business and organizational websites (Bold Coast Scenic Byway)
- Educational program for schoolchildren
- Coordinated regional anti-litter and anti-graffiti campaign (Blackwoods Byway Scenic Byway)
- Study feasibility of rerouting State Route 190 to avoid the Passamaquoddy Indian Reservation and restore natural tidal flow to the waters currently impeded by the Carlow Island causeway (Coastal Canadian Corridor Plan)