

RESOLUTION 17-001
RESOLVE TO FOLLOW THROUGH WITH
A TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE ACTION PLAN
FOR THE GORHAM EAST-WEST CORRIDOR

WHEREAS,

A. Vital to the economy of our region are the principal East-West routes between the urban core of Portland and South Portland and the suburbs in Scarborough, Gorham, Westbrook and other areas to the west, connected by Routes 22, 25, and 114, and the intersecting North-South Routes 1 and 202, and the Maine Turnpike (I-95) and I-295.

B. At the request of the Towns of Gorham and Scarborough and the Cities of South Portland and Westbrook, the 123rd Maine State Legislature in Resolve 2007, c. 95, commissioned the Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA) and the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) to review existing and potential new routes from the Maine Turnpike to municipal centers in western Cumberland County, to determine how to reduce congestion on state and local roads and to improve access between the Turnpike and outlying communities.

C. As directed by the Legislative Resolve, the parties have completed the Gorham East-West Corridor Feasibility Study led by a Steering Committee of officials from Gorham, Westbrook, South Portland, Scarborough, MTA, MaineDOT, and the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS).

D. The Feasibility Study published in September 2012 responded to the Resolve with findings that the study area is highly congested with 64 high crash locations and seven intersections operating at unacceptable levels of service.

E. Current morning and evening rush hour congestion on key arterials such as Route 114, Route 22, Running Hill Road, and Spring Street is probably the worst in Maine. Traffic backups of more than a mile long are not uncommon. This congestion causes an unacceptable loss of productivity, wasted fuel, degraded air quality, safety hazards, ever-worsening environmental impacts, and mobility constraints for those who depend on these over-burdened roads for daily passage.

F. The Feasibility Study projected that over the next 25 years this area of Maine will receive a significant share of statewide growth, leading to worsening traffic, a tripling in the number of congested intersections, a shift of traffic to residential and secondary roads, and an increase in safety “hotspots.”

G. It is currently projected that population growth if left unchecked will build out rural areas rather than congregate in existing suburban and urban centers and that this will impose unsustainable demands on the existing transportation network.

H. The 2012 Feasibility Study identified and evaluated a range of potential solutions to the area’s transportation and land use needs, resulting in recommendations to implement roadway improvements; transit service expansion; and land use, zoning and growth management measures in a regionally planned and coordinated manner. The Study highlighted that all three of these strategies are necessary to address the existing transportation congestion and capacity issues. A regional approach is necessary to provide more efficient land use choices, expand transit services, and maximize the efficiency and safety of the roadway system to avoid an over-reliance on adding highway capacity.

I. The 2012 Feasibility Study identified two alternative highway improvement scenarios to address congestion and safety within the study area:

- (1) further develop, widen and expand the capacity of existing roads and intersections along the congested routes; or
- (2) build a limited access by-pass corridor to provide unimpeded mobility, remove traffic from existing roads, and preserve local roads for local destinations including residential, village, and small businesses areas.

J. MaineDOT has limited resources with which to build either scenario recommended by the 2012 Feasibility Study. If granted Legislative authority, MTA does have the fiscal capacity to plan for and build a limited access by-pass through the region as a connector to the Turnpike provided that a toll is imposed to build and maintain the connector and amortize necessary bonding.

K. Until a new strategy for regional traffic management is defined for the study area, it is not possible for municipalities to complete long range plans for future land use, to zone affected regions appropriately, to consider how and where to extend public utilities, or to determine how best to develop or preserve existing villages in North Scarborough, South Gorham and other areas under pressure from growing congestion.

L. All area communities have benefited from extensive reviews and studies conducted by (PACTS) which is the region's federally-mandated metropolitan planning organization.

NOW, THEREFORE,

1. Given the public consensus among municipal and regional interests, the shortage of resources from the Maine Department of Transportation, the compelling long term and sustainable safety, environmental and livability advantages of a new limited access highway, and the fiscal capacity of the Maine Turnpike to address such needs, we urge the Maine Legislature to find it in the public interest for the Turnpike to pursue planning and development of a limited access connector between South Gorham and an appropriate juncture to the Maine Turnpike at or near Exits 44 or 45.

2. The undersigned communities find that building a new limited access highway corridor is appropriate from an economic, environmental, and land planning perspective if done in conjunction with coordinated plans supported by each of the engaged municipalities under guidance and coordination from PACTS.

3. Each of the undersigned municipalities pledges to make sensible and appropriate land planning decisions to adjust to improved patterns of travel through and within the affected area in coordination with each other.

Signed by:

/s/ Shawn A. Babine
Council Chair

Attested by:

/s/ Yolande P. Justice
Town Clerk

City of South Portland

Signed: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

City of Westbrook

Signed: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Town of Gorham

Signed: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Town of Scarborough

Signed: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

**Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation
System**

Signed: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____