

PACTS 2009 High Priority Project Candidates
December 11th Draft

Rebuild Veterans Bridge

Problem: Veterans Memorial Bridge is a major connector that carries commuter and commercial traffic onto and off the Portland Peninsula. Approximately 11,000 vehicles cross the bridge each day. The bridge provides access to the Peninsula from the south and southwest via I-295 and Route 1. Also in the event of an emergency Veterans Bridge would be a vital evacuation route off the Portland Peninsula.

Veterans Memorial Bridge has been identified by the MaineDOT as needing major rehabilitation work. Ideally the bridge should be replaced. PACTS staff has been working with the Department on getting an updated report on the condition of the bridge along with a scope of work. A detailed scope of work is not available at this time. The MaineDOT Bridge Review Team has recommended the bridge be funded for reconstruction over three biennia, starting in 2011 for a total of \$30M. It is not clear at this time if State funding will be secured.

NOTES:

- Bridge needs replacing – maintenance not practical at this point.
- Should be (ideally) replaced in next 10 years.
- Last major rehabilitation was in the 80's – work included sub-structure replacement and deck work.
- Built in 1954 (53yr/old) generally life expectancy is 60 plus year.
 - Initial concrete was poor?
 - Design faults?
 - Open joints?
 - Use and exposure a major contributor to deterioration
 - Salt and Ice Chemicals
- Funding not secured, only recommended at this point.
- Average of 11,000 cars a day

20 year projection is 15,000 cars a day

Purchase of replacement and new vehicles, including buses, vans, and passenger ferryboat

Problem: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) defines a replacement cycle for each type of transit vehicle. For example, full-size transit busses are on a twelve-year/500K mile replacement cycle; small medium-duty transit busses are on a 7 year/200,000 replacement cycle. MaineDOT tracks vehicle inventories and replacement

requirements statewide, and has projected that by the time federal funds become available in the next several years, at least **37** vehicles within the PACTS area will have exceeded their programmed service life and need replacement. Recent studies, including *Destination Tomorrow* the Long Range Plan for the PACTS region and the *PACTS Regional Transit Coordination Study* identify the need for increasing the frequency and effectiveness of existing services as well as expanding transit services where appropriate.

Project Scope: To replace 19 transit busses, 17 paratransit vans or busses, and one passenger ferryboat to maintain existing levels of service throughout the region. To begin the process of enhancing the present system by adding 10 transit buses and 14 vans to address the goal of developing more efficient, convenient, and economical public transportation services.

Cost Estimate: \$22,500,000

Source: PACTS Transit Committee

Regional Benefit: This project will retain the current level of service and begin to address much needed enhancements to public transportation provided by the Shuttlebus/Zoom, South Portland Bus Service, Greater Portland Transit District (METRO), Regional Transportation Program (RTP), York County Community Action Corporation (YCCAC), and Casco Bay Island Transit District. In a recent year these **six** public transportation agencies provided over **3** million passenger trips to people living in or visiting the communities of Saco, Old Orchard Beach, Biddeford, South Portland, Westbrook, **Portland – including Portland island neighborhoods of Peaks Island, Little Diamond Island, Great Diamond Island, and Cliff Island; the Town of Long Island, the Town of Chebeague Island,** and areas of Falmouth and Scarborough. In the case of the two Para-transit/Demand Response carriers, RTP and YCCAC, the service provided is county-wide for Cumberland and York respectively. The passengers' trips include work, shopping, school, medical appointments, recreation, and tourist sites, mirroring almost every purpose of those who travel by automobile.

Recognition of public support: PACTS leadership and the municipalities they represent recognize that investment in maintaining the existing level of service with modest extensions of transit routes, and replacing the existing fleets in a timely matter, is a wise policy. This project is consistent with the guiding policies of *Destination Tomorrow* and the MaineDOT's Strategic Transportation Plan. Unsolicited public response to the draft High Priority Projects list has advocated for placing this project at the top of the list.

MaineDOT Seeking Earmarks

The MaineDOT submitted a funding request for buses for the METRO in both the 2007 and 2008 discretionary application processes. They were unsuccessful. They will re-submit the project for consideration in the 2009 annual process and the 2009 multi-year reauthorization.

Build Phase II of the Gorham Bypass

Problem: Route 25 is a major east-west commuter corridor. It connects towns west of Gorham to the region's main urban areas to the east. It also serves as Gorham's main street, running directly through the center of Gorham Village. Consequently, Rte 25 experiences high traffic volumes, extensive congestion, and prolonged delays during peak travel periods. Truck traffic is of particular concern in Gorham Village. The existing narrow lanes with limited turning radius lead to bottlenecks and delays as trucks try to maneuver through downtown.

Currently Phase I of the Gorham Bypass is underway; however, it is only the beginning in solving Gorham's traffic problems. To realize the full, benefit to cost ratio of one, as outlined in the Gorham Bypass Study, Environmental Assessment, both phases of the bypass should be built. Construction of Phase II is critical if safety, traffic congestion and improved levels of service are to be achieved.

A survey conducted by PACTS in 2000 revealed Gorham village traffic congestion was the worst in the region

Project Scope: To build a limited access two-lane bypass north of Gorham Village connecting Rte 25 near West Gorham to Rte 25 at Mosher Corner. The total length will be just over four miles. The typical cross section will consist of two 12ft travel lanes and two 8ft paved shoulders for a total pavement width of 40ft. In areas warranted, an additional 12ft. truck climbing lane with 4ft. paved shoulder will be constructed. At-grade, signalized intersections would be installed where the bypass interconnects Rte 25 at Mosher Corner, Rte 114 north of Gorham Village and Rte 4/202 northeast of Gorham Village; however roundabouts similar to those in Phase I might be an alternative. Roundabouts are designed to keep traffic flowing as opposed to an intersection with stoplights.

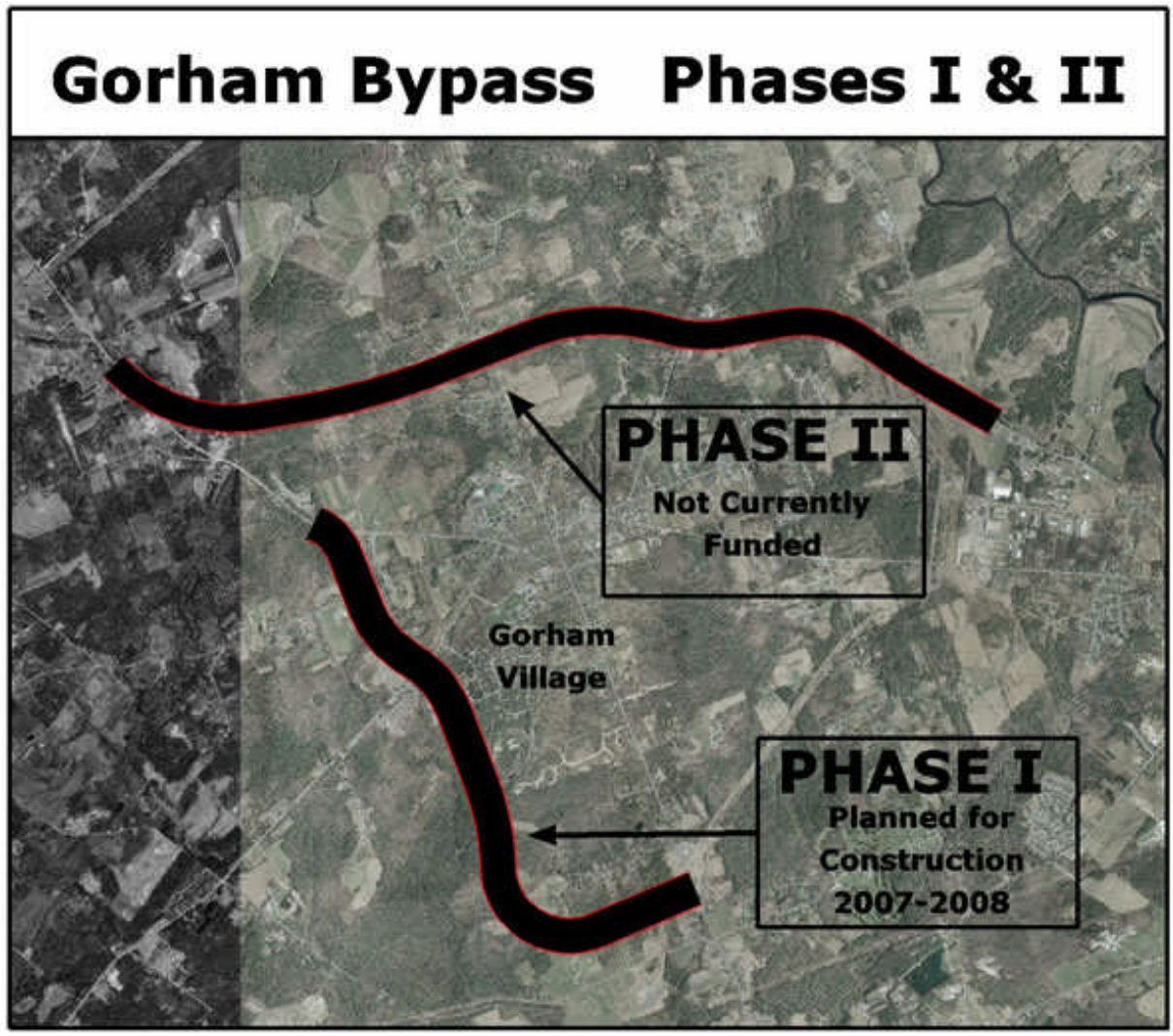
A 200ft. wide highway right of way will be acquired for the bypass. Additionally, some right of way acquisitions might be required along some intersecting cross roads.

Cost Estimate: \$35,000,000

Source: MaineDOT (\$30,000,000) plus inflation.

Regional Benefit: The 1997 Gorham/Portland Corridor Alternative Analysis calls the corridor an integral part of the region's freight transportation route. It is also an important route for employees who work in the greater Portland area. The Gorham Bypass is a major component of the Gorham/Portland Corridor.

Public Support: This project has already completed an Environmental Assessment, and received a FONSI from the Federal Highway Administration on October 21, 2005. It has received unanimous public support from the Gorham Town Council and strong public support during public hearings, support from surrounding municipalities and strong support from the MaineDOT and from the State's existing Congressional Delegation.



Add travel lanes on I- 295 in Portland between Exits 5 and 7

Problem: Exit 6 at Forest Avenue has chronically poor level-of-service performance along the I-295 mainline. The compact cloverleaf design of this interchange creates short high-volume weaving areas where through traffic, on-ramp traffic, and off-ramp traffic conflict. This conflict will result in higher levels of congestion at this interchange and greater likelihood of crashes as traffic volumes increase in the future.

The proposed new lanes will help shift through traffic on I-295 away from the on- and off-ramp areas of Exit 6 where conflicts with ramp traffic currently exist. The result will be improved levels of service at the weaving areas and less traffic congestion. Levels of service will also be improved on mainline segments between Exits 5, 6, and 7 and at ramp junctions of these interchanges.

Project Scope: Increase the number of travel lanes on I-295 between Exits 5, 6, and 7 from four lanes to six lanes by converting space in the median to an additional lane in each direction.

No right of way will have to be purchased. It is anticipated that the widening will stay within the existing foot print of I-295 (see sketch).

Cost Estimate: \$30,000,000

Source: MaineDOT's 2006 Corridor Study

Regional Benefit: The I-295 corridor extends from Scarborough to Brunswick, and serves a mix of local and through travelers. The interstate is essential to the economy of the region, and the mobility of freight, services and individual drivers.

Public Support: The MaineDOT conducted a survey as part of their I-295 Corridor Study. Participants were asked what problems they had experienced along the I-295 corridor during the prior 12 months. Sixteen percent of participants agreed that problems at entrance and exit ramps were a problem. This issue ranked 7th out of 8 possible scenarios. However, when asked what types of improvements should be considered, 57% answered improve existing entrance and exits and 39% answered with add more through lanes. These ranked 1st and 3rd respectively.

Several years ago the City Council of Portland expressed their concern with the potential of increasing I-295 capacity, but wanted to make sure exits 6 and 7 provide good access to Portland

Make I-295 Corridor and Interchange Improvements along the Falmouth, Yarmouth, and Freeport Corridor

- a. Auxiliary Lanes and On/Off-Ramps
- b. Exit 15 Interchange Improvements (Yarmouth)
- c. Exit 11 Interchange Improvements (Falmouth)

Cost Estimate: \$50,000,000

Source: MaineDOT's 2006 Corridor Study (includes inflation)

Regional Benefit: The I-295 corridor extends from Scarborough to Brunswick, and serves a mix of local and through travelers. The interstate is essential to the economy of the region, and the mobility of freight, services and individual drivers.

Auxiliary Lanes and On/Off-Ramps

Problem: Many on-ramps and off-ramps along I-295 have inadequate acceleration and deceleration lanes for existing and future traffic volumes. These lanes are too short to adequately allow vehicles to comfortably accelerate or decelerate between mainline speeds on I-295 and low speeds on the ramps. In the rural areas north of Portland, this results in on-ramps and off-ramps with a reduced level of service and reduced safety.

Extending the auxiliary lanes will improve the level of service at on-ramps and off-ramps. Vehicular movements at the improved ramps will also be safer and merge movements at the on-ramps and diverge movements at the off-ramps will be accomplished more smoothly.

Project Scope: Upgrade on-ramps and off-ramps from Falmouth to Freeport to provide adequate acceleration and deceleration lengths between the 65-mph mainline of I-295 and the low-speed ramps. The added length of auxiliary lanes should be parallel to the mainline through lanes in these high-volume locations.

Public Support: To date there has been no explicit vocal support or opposition for this project.

Exit 15 Interchange Improvements (Yarmouth)

Problem: The southbound on-ramp at Exit 15 in Yarmouth adds an AADT of 4,000 vehicles per day to the 23,000 AADT on I-295 southbound. The straight alignment of on-ramp and its tangent approach to the downstream mainline of I-295 invites high-speed entry onto I-295 with little consideration for upstream I-295 traffic, which enters the ramp junction area on a curve. The on-ramp lacks a parallel acceleration lane. The result of these deficiencies is a High Crash Location at the ramp junction. This location currently operates at level of service D in the AM peak hour.

Another deficiency in the Exit 15 is the lack of a northbound on-ramp, which would allow Exit 15 to be a full-service interchange with four interchange ramps. The lack of this on-ramp adds a traffic burden to Exit 17 where a full-service interchange exists.

Project Scope: Reconstruct the southbound on-ramp to provide a curved lower-speed alignment and a parallel acceleration lane approximately 1000 feet in length along I-295. For the northbound, design and construct a new northbound off-ramp and convert the existing off-ramp to a northbound on-ramp (see attached aerial).

The realigned southbound on-ramp will address the High Crash Location at the ramp junction with I-295 and will create an opportunity for a park-and-ride lot along the St. Lawrence & Atlantic railroad line for potential commuter bus and rail service. It is expected that the 2025 level of service in the AM peak hour will improve from E to D after the southbound on-ramp has been realigned.

The creation of a fourth ramp (northbound on-ramp) at Exit 15 will create a full-service interchange, reduce travel time and distance for some I-295 trips, and relieve safety and congestion issues at Exit 17. The existence of a full-service interchange will enhance Exit 15's ability to serve a park-and-ride location.

Public Support: Currently there is no official support or opposition to this project.

Exit 11 Interchange Improvements (Falmouth)

Problem: Exit 11 is a partial-service interchange that does not have the capability to serve on-and-off traffic in both the northbound and southbound directions. This deficiency limits the effectiveness of these interchanges in allowing traffic to use I-295 to avoid congested arterial streets near the I-295 Corridor.

Project Scope: Improve Exits 11 by adding new ramps to serve interchange movements not currently served. At Exit 11, add a southbound on-ramp from the Falmouth Spur and a northbound off-ramp to the Falmouth Spur. As a part of this action, Exit 10 southbound ramps would be relocated to the south side of Bucknam Road.

Exit 11 improvements will improve access between I-295 and the Maine Turnpike and provide new opportunities for using both facilities to reduce traffic on congested arterial streets in Portland and Falmouth.

The relocation of Exit 10 southbound ramps would provide space for park-and-ride lot on Bucknam Road with convenient access to I-295 and the St. Lawrence & Atlantic railroad.

Public Support: John Duncan and David Willauer gave a presentation to the Falmouth Council regarding this project. The Council received the project favorably.

Build Philbrook Road area Improvements in South Portland

Problem: The Maine Mall in South Portland is home to the largest retail center in Maine including a sizeable number of industrial and office complexes. Existing roadways support major commercial and industrial development in the South Portland and Scarborough areas, and often operate at or above capacity. Philbrook Road provides access from Maine Mall Road to the retail/commercial/office/light industrial facilities along Gorham Road and John Roberts Road, as well as functioning as a principal service road for the Mall. A nearby Turnpike access road, known at MaineDOT as Route 703, runs parallel to Philbrook Road as it approaches Maine Mall Road.

This project was a recommendation of a study completed by MaineDOT and PACTS in 2000 that was intended to address safety, congestion and related issues in the Mall area. Following the study, MaineDOT agreed to implement the Philbrook Connector and proceeded with it through the preliminary design stage. However additional funding was needed for the replacement of the nearby Payne Road bridges, and the Philbrook Connector project lost its funding. This project also scored well in the PACTS 2008/2009 TIP process but could not be funded due to the considerable cost estimate that exceeded the MPO Allocation.

Project Scope: The proposed project consists of two parts. The first is to combine Philbrook Road with the Rt. 703 westbound on- and off-ramps, and to merge the two signalized intersections on Maine Mall Road into one. The second is to build a bridge over Rt. 703 to enable eastbound traffic to access Rt. 703 from the Mall and Philbrook Road.

The Philbrook Connector cross section will include 12ft. travel lanes, 2ft. curb offsets and 12ft. turn lanes, with a median width of 10ft on SR703. The proposed scope of work includes full-depth reconstruction, box widening and overlays. Curbing is proposed where profile grades exceed 3%, and adjacent to proposed sidewalks. Work includes drainage, lighting, signing and guardrail improvements throughout.

Cost Estimate: \$10,000,000

Source: City of South Portland

Public Support: This project has been vetted by the South Portland City Council as part of its PACTS TIP submission. It was reviewed and approved by the South Portland business people, residents, and City officials that participated in the City Manager's ad hoc oversight committee for the 2000 Mall Area Transportation Plan. In addition, three public meetings were held as part of that transportation planning process. The Philbrook Road/Rt. 703 improvements emerged as the top priority of that process.

Make Capital Investments for “Portland North” Passenger Rail to Brunswick

Purpose: To provide intercity and commuter rail services from Portland to Brunswick *

Project scope: To make track upgrades, build stations and purchase rolling stock.

Capital Cost Estimate: \$100,000,000 (based on \$70,000,000 for track upgrade to Brunswick and construction of five stations, and \$30,000,000 for ten diesel units)

Source: MaineDOT

Operating Subsidy: It appears that the Legislature and Governor Baldacci will formally decide during the next session to support the future operating costs of the Portland-to-Boston Downeaster service with General Fund dollars. (The federal CMAQ operations funds may no longer be used after September 2009.) MaineDOT advises that this Legislative action will not include funding for operations for the “Portland North” service.

FTA Small Starts Study:

MaineDOT has just started a two-year “Small Starts” planning process in the Portland-Brunswick and Portland- Auburn corridors. This \$1,700,000 planning process is required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to be eligible for capital rail funding. . MaineDOT’s past analyses for the corridor have shown enough potential benefit that the FTA has funded the Small Starts study. When the MaineDOT and FTA complete the study then MaineDOT will apply for the Small Starts capital funding. The Small Starts program is very competitive.

MaineDOT and GPCOG staff recently gave an overview of the Small Starts study purpose and process to the PACTS Planning Committee. MaineDOT has hired a rail planning consultant for the study, and GPCOG and AVCOG to help with outreach meetings and to serve as liaisons with corridor municipalities. MaineDOT also advises that the study will look carefully at bus rapid transit options.

MaineDOT Priority: If the Small Starts Study is far enough along by 2009, then MaineDOT will seek full funding for the project in the reauthorization process.

Public Support: Based on past experience, the public supports public investments in passenger rail service.

* Please note that the MaineDOT is examining opportunities for passenger rail service to Auburn. The MaineDOT’s current estimate for track upgrade work (\$31,000,000) and stations construction (\$2,000,000) is an additional \$33,000,000 for this additional section.

Build new Turnpike Interchange in Northern Saco

Problem: In recent years southern Maine has experienced significant growth, and the current growth pattern is expected to continue. Consequently, excessive traffic demands are being placed on local roads. Mobility along Routes 1, 5 and 112 is affected as congestion increase. As the region has grown, access to the interstate has not. With limited access to the Turnpike, traffic from Old Orchard Beach, Saco and Scarborough are forced to use Route 1, which runs parallel to the interstate, as an alternative major travel way. As capacity on these local roads increases, mobility, congestion, and safety become more of an issue. The question of improved access from the Turnpike to the west and the possibility of a new interchange in the Flag Pond Road area have been suggested several times over the years.

Project Scope: The proposed interchange would connect the Maine Turnpike with Route 1 north, or at Route 1 and Cascade Road intersection. The approximate length of the project would be 4,300 feet, not including ramps. The specific improvements would include: north and south bound ramps on the Maine Turnpike and a new connector road linking Route 1; construction of a toll plaza; right of way for the construction of ramps, and intersection with Route 1, and the connector road; the installation and relocation of traffic signals at the intersection of the connector road and Route 1; and new pavement markings for the intersection. The project would link the Maine Turnpike in close proximity to Old Orchard Beach, Scarborough and Saco town lines.

Cost Estimate: \$17,000,000

Source: Municipal Proposal

Regional Benefit: This interchange would create some clear regional transportation benefits by: more directly linking growing portions of Saco, Old Orchard Beach and Scarborough to the Turnpike enabling more efficient travel to Portland, other points north and points south; and reducing regional through travel on Route 1 and other local roads.

Further, an interchange can foster additional economic growth and development in portions of Saco, Old Orchard Beach and Scarborough by: providing convenient highway access to the northern end of Saco and southern end of Scarborough.

Public Support: The City of Saco and the Town of Scarborough have both demonstrated their support for this initiative by endorsing and committing to help pay for an initial feasibility study of the interchange.

Build Two Interchanges and a Connector Roadway in Biddeford

Problem: Mobility, congestion and safety are major concerns for the local residents living and commuting along the Route 1 and Route 111 corridors in and around Biddeford. Also Turnpike access is limited for motorists traveling from Sanford, Alfred and areas west of Biddeford. The proposed improvements will not only increase safety, mobility and reduce congestion in both the Biddeford and Saco areas but will also increase mobility within and through the region, by addressing and relieving the impacts of traffic which emanates from areas south and west of the City.

Project Scope: One component of the proposal would provide a roadway connection from South Street to Route 111. The road would run west of the Maine Turnpike and would begin on South Street west of the turnpike overpass in the vicinity of the Biddeford Saco Water Company treatment facility and end on Andrews Road/ Route 111 southwesterly of the current exit 32.

A second component of the proposed project, the Exit 32 South interchange, would provide an interchange to the turnpike south of the current Exit 32 with a connector road to Route 111 (from the interchange) that would begin/end at the Route 111/Andrews Road intersection.

A third component of the project would be to provide a turnpike interchange and associated roadway improvements at South Street as well as additional improvements to South Street and Route 1 that would be required in order to accommodate traffic from these areas that would be expected to utilize this interchange.

Cost Estimate: \$30,000,000

Source: Tom Milligan, Biddeford City Engineer

Regional Benefit: A new interchange would provide motorists traveling to and from the Sanford/Alfred area a convenient access point to the Turnpike and relieve the current congestion at Exit 32 and on Route 111. Furthermore, the project has the potential to relieve traffic volume and congestion along the Route 1 Corridor by diverting traffic that currently uses South Street and Main Street onto the Turnpike. The South Street interchange should reduce impacts both to Saco and to the Downtown Biddeford area especially on Main Street and also has the potential to relieve traffic at the Saco Exit of the turnpike.

Public Support: This concept was developed by Biddeford officials and a feasibility study has not been done. Biddeford officials generally advise that the public supports solutions that reduce traffic and congestion within residential neighborhoods as well as solutions that will increase mobility.