



## Improving East-West Travel in the Region

### Key Recommendations

1. Build Phase One of the Gorham Village Bypass.
2. Widen the Route 22/114 "Overlap" to three lanes.
3. Do further study of extending the Exit 7 Turnpike Spur to Running Hill Road.
4. Do further study of widening a section of Running Hill Road to four lanes.

### Limited East-West Travel Routes in the Region

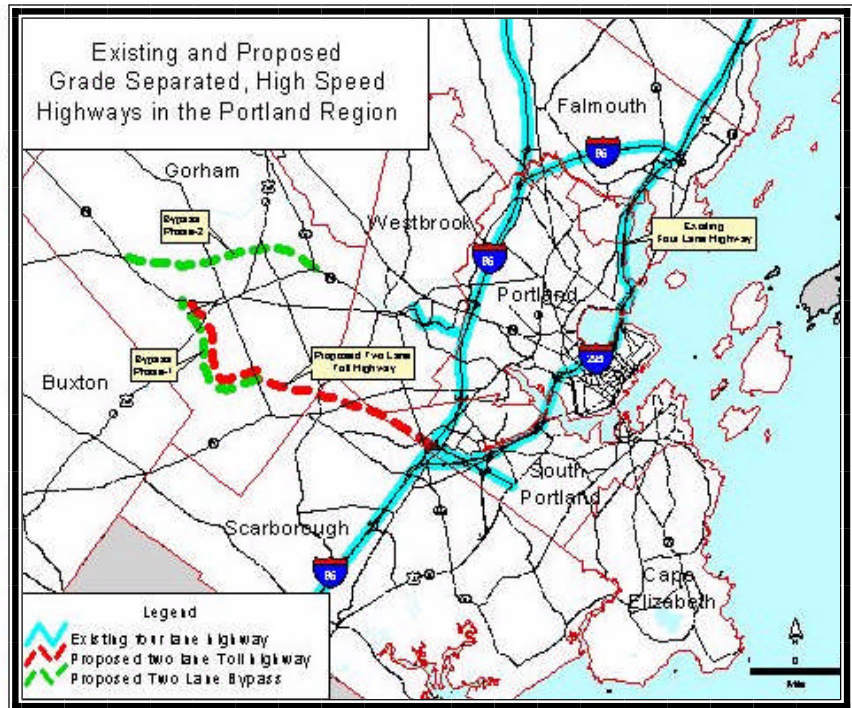
The limited number of routes and travel options hinder travel in an east-west direction. As the region continues to grow, increasing demand for east-west travel will magnify these limitations. This current and growing need makes improving east-west travel options a pressing matter. *Destination Tomorrow* addresses several areas where delays in east-west travel are particularly noticeable.

### Studies and Plans of the Last Forty Years

Since the 1960s, numerous regional studies and plans have sought ways to improve east-

west travel options and to reduce the travel time between Portland and points west. The four notable examples below have all occurred in the last five years, indication of the growing importance of improving east-west travel.

- Gorham-Portland Corridor Study (1997) – Recommended general alignment for Gorham Village Bypass, further study for additional capacity in the Route 22/114 corridor, additional bus service to Gorham, a regional land use analysis, and a Gorham Village Main Street master plan.



**Map 1**

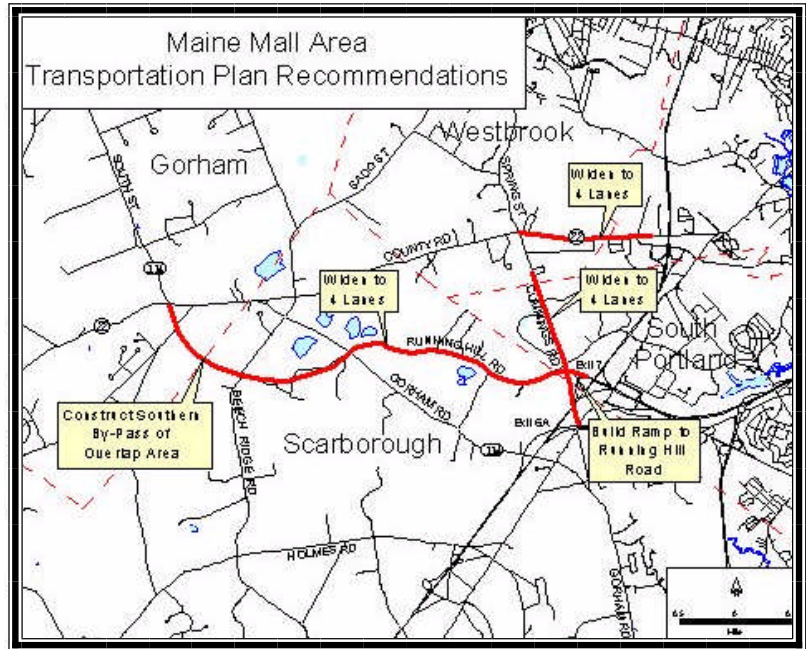
This issue paper is one of nine prepared by the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Committee (PACTS) for the *Destination Tomorrow* regional transportation plan. *Destination Tomorrow* provides a transportation vision and plan for the PACTS region for 2004 to 2025. The Plan will be implemented by the Maine Department of Transportation, the PACTS Policy Committee, the region's municipalities and public transit providers, the Greater Portland Council of Governments and the Maine Turnpike Authority.

PACTS members oversee transportation studies and allocate federal transportation funds for the PACTS region. In 2003, PACTS members will prepare an addendum to this Plan in response to the addition of eight municipalities in 2002 that increased the size of the PACTS area from seven to fifteen municipalities. In order to learn more about PACTS and this Plan, go to [www.pactsplan.org](http://www.pactsplan.org), or call John Duncan at 207-774-9891.

- Survey of 2,000 Residents of the Portland Region (1999) – Key findings included a preference spending transportation funds on regionally significant projects. Downtown Gorham, South Gorham and Morrill’s Corner (in Portland) were perceived as the three most congested places in the region.

Maine Mall Area Transportation Plan (2001) —  
 Recommends more highway capacity in the Route 22 and 114 corridors including a bypass of the Route 22/114 “overlap”, connecting the Turnpike Exit 7 Spur to Running Hill Road and also widening parts of Running Hill Road; widening portions of Cummings Road and County Road. (See Map 2.)

Rt. 22/114 Overlap Study (2002) —  
 Recommends widening the overlap to three lanes and intersection improvements in the short term, and constructing a bypass of the overlap in the long term.



**Map 2**

### Gorham Village Bypasses

No where in the region are the limitations of east-west travel more noticeable than in Gorham Village. For most people traveling between towns west of Gorham and the region’s main urban areas, there is no other choice but to go through the village on Route 25. As a result there are extended daily tie-ups, and heavy traffic volumes throughout much of the day. Many challenges and delays have been encountered as a strategy to alleviate this problem was developed, but the construction of a village bypass is now closer than it has ever been.



Main Street in Gorham Village at 4:00 pm.



Trucks in Gorham Village at the intersection of Routes 25, 202, 4 and 114

In the fall of 2002 MaineDOT will complete an environmental assessment of the Gorham Village bypass alternatives. This report will specify locations for a \$10 million bypass to the southwest of the village (Phase One) and a \$20 million northerly bypass (Phase Two). MaineDOT, the Town of Gorham and PACTS are working with the Maine Congressional delegation to seek “earmark” funds from Congress for the construction of the Phase One bypass. If the necessary funding is secured, MaineDOT will begin to design Phase One in 2003, and could complete construction by 2007. (See Map 1) After the environmental assessment is completed, PACTS members will consider whether *Destination Tomorrow* should also support Phase Two of the Gorham Village Bypass.

## The Route 22 and 114 Corridor

*Destination Tomorrow* recommends widening the Route 22/114 overlap in the short term, building a bypass of the overlap in the long term, and – after further study – widening sections of other significant roads in the corridor.

### The Route 22/114 Overlap

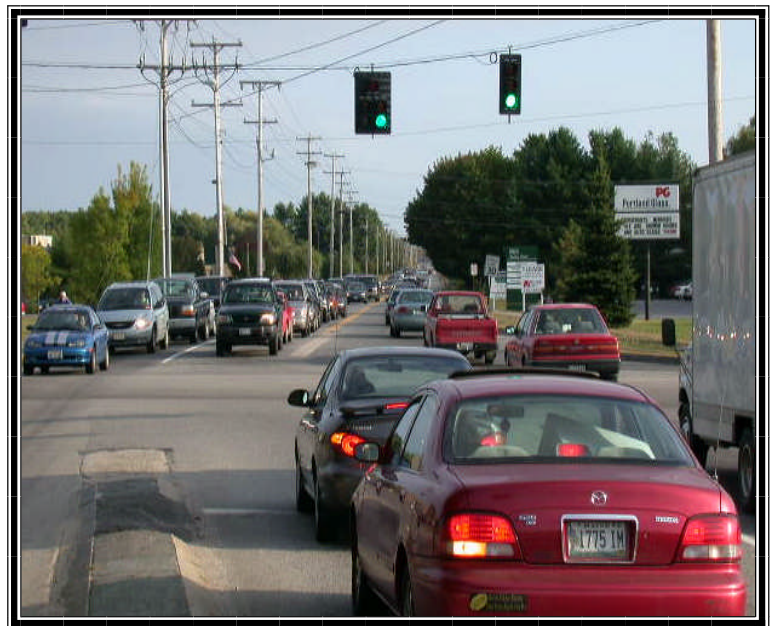
The Route 22/114 overlap – the mile where these two highways run together in South Gorham and North Scarborough – suffers from significant traffic congestion on a daily basis. The recommended long-term solution for this area is a bypass to be built *either* to the north *or* the south of the overlap. (See Map 2, that lists only the southern bypass.)

Seeking a more immediate solution, PACTS completed a study in 2002 that recommends a \$1,500,000 widening of the overlap to three lanes, and improvements to the intersections on both ends of the overlap. The Towns of Gorham and Scarborough are currently seeking federal funds from PACTS and Maine DOT for this action. If funds are secured, the widening could be completed by 2005.

### Other Long-Term Proposals for the Route 22/114 Corridor

There are several current proposals for widening other significant roads in the 22/114 Corridor. Because of their potentially substantial effect on the future of the Portland region, *Destination Tomorrow* recommends further review of the following plans.

- Widen Running Hill Road in Scarborough to four lanes.
- Widen portions of Cummings Road and
- Route 22 (in Westbrook and Portland) to four lanes.
- Connect the Turnpike Spur to Running Hill Road..



**Intersection of Spring Street and County Road in Westbrook**

### **Toll Highway from South Portland to Gorham**

Another option to improve east-west travel is the construction of an 8-mile toll highway that would connect South Portland near the Turnpike Exit 7 Spur with Gorham west of the village on Route 25.

MaineDOT (with the assistance of the Maine Turnpike Authority) conducted a financial feasibility study of this highway in 2001. The study was done because of the Town of Gorham's anticipated request for federal and state funds to build a bypass, and because of the reality of limited resources for the bypass. The study was based on a two-lane highway with bridges at all crossroads, and a 50¢ toll. The limited-access road would cost \$40 million to construct.

- *MaineDOT concluded that the toll highway would be financially feasible.*
- *MaineDOT has not acted on the results of the study, and is neither for nor against it.*

The finding of the study presents the State and the Portland region with a trade-off between building a highway financed by toll payers, or building one or more projects in the same corridor financed with local, state and federal funds.

PACTS members recognize that MaineDOT will soon complete the Gorham Village Bypass Environmental Assessment, and that appropriate further study will be required of the other proposals listed on pages two and three of this paper. PACTS members also recognize that further study of additional options (including a toll highway) may be necessary in the future if implementation of the proposals on pages two and three are not achieved due to federal funding constraints, or if the proposals – after implementation – fail to meet the mobility needs of the corridor.

In the event that future study of a toll highway is needed, PACTS members recommend that regional land use plans and regulations be developed and be considered as a condition of pursuing any toll highway option. The recommendation is based on the conclusion that a limited access highway would provide an inducement to further population and employment growth to the west that would be in addition to the existing pattern of low-density dispersed homes and places of employment.

The Planning Committee will develop a land use planning and regulation framework for consideration at the January 2003 Policy Committee meeting in preparation for adoption of a final plan in February. During these eight weeks we will seek input from the State Planning Office, the MaineDOT and the public.

### **Other East-West Travel Opportunities**

Planning for increased east-west travel will also consider public transportation opportunities. Expanding bus service to communities that are currently not served such as Windham and Gorham are two opportunities that have been studied and that show promise for increasing the use of public transportation. (*See Issue Paper 5.*)