

# **Auburn Intermodal Passenger Center Comments on the Environmental Assessment**

## **Introduction**

The Auburn Intermodal Passenger Center Environmental Assessment was released for public review on January 2, 2007. The comment period ended on January 31, 2007. A public hearing was held on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at 7:00 pm, at the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments in Auburn, Maine. Following is a list of substantive comments received during the public comment period and at the public hearing as well as responses to those comments. Enclosed are also copies of written letters received, a copy of the notice of availability, a copy of the sign-in sheet from the public hearing, and a transcript of the public hearing.

## **Written Commentators with substantive comments**

Jay Clement, Army Corps of Engineers

Summary of Comment and Response, page 1

## **Commentators, with substantive comments, who spoke during the Public Hearing**

Chris Andreasson Vermont Transit

Summary of Comment and Response, page 2

Gene Uhuad, Maine Department of Transportation

Summary of Comment and Response, page 3

# Response to Comments on the Environmental Assessment

A list of the agencies, organizations, and interested parties to whom copies of the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) were sent is provided in Chapter 7 of the EA. Comments on the EA were accepted until January 31, 2007. This section provides the Proponent's responses to specific comments received during the comment period.

Written comments were received from the following organizations and individuals during the comment period for the EA:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce (ACCC)
- Androscoggin Transportation Resource Center (ATRC)

A public hearing was held on January 18, 2007. The following individuals issued substantive comments during the hearing:

- Rick Cloutier (Auburn-Lewiston Municipal Airport)
- Chris Andreasson (Vermont Transit Lines)
- Gene Uhuad (MaineDOT)

Charles Morrison from the Androscoggin County Chambers of Commerce, Bob Thompson from the Androscoggin Transportation Resource Center, and Mr. Cloutier from the Auburn Lewiston Municipal Airport submitted comments in support of the proposed intermodal center.

## **The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Mr. Jay Clement)**

Mr. Jay Clement of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers submitted comments concerning future wetland impacts and secondary and cumulative impacts.

He requested additional information about the impacts to wetlands in the future and if that could be incorporated into the alternatives analysis.

*Response: As noted in Chapter 2 on pages 2-1 through 2-25, the Environmental Assessment described the site selection process and the conceptual design analysis. This screening of alternatives did not use wetland impacts as a criterion because none of the alternatives proposed impacts to wetlands. The Site Alternatives were analyzed against a set of criteria developed by MaineDOT and the PAC to determine which site offered the most reasonable and practicable*

solution for satisfying the Purpose and Need. Table 2-1 in the Environmental Assessment presents a summary of the evaluation and lists the criteria considered. The Environmental Assessment discussed that Alternatives 1 through 5 were not carried forward because those alternatives were not consistent with the project's Purpose and Need.

Although the proposed project will not impact any wetlands, other projects in the vicinity could impact existing wetlands. The Lewiston Auburn Municipal Airport has conceptual plans in their airport master plan for the construction of future apron, which would be located adjacent to the project site. Construction of this apron could impact existing wetlands. At this time, however, the Airport has not identified a time frame or funding for construction of the apron. Because the apron is not currently considered part of the proposed project and because construction of this apron could occur with or without implementation of the proposed project, no direct (i.e., filling) or indirect impacts to this wetland would occur due to the AIPC. Therefore, it was not considered as a criterion under the intermodal's alternatives analysis.

He also stated that "The secondary impact discussion could benefit from reference to available resource information to project natural resource impacts. For example, when you talk about development zones, add the available resource information. The cumulative impact discussion should reflect the community's projections for development impacts in the industrial park."

*Response: Resource information for areas subject to secondary and cumulative impacts was described with readily available resource information in the relevant sections and impacts were quantified when known. On page 4-18 and 4-19 of the EA, Past and Current Actions and Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions that could impact wetlands were discussed. Development of the Auburn Industrial Park is discussed on page 4-20 and impacts to wetlands from this development are discussed on page 4-21 of the EA. Although not all impacts could be quantified, the EA discussed that impacts to wetlands would occur. Foreseeable actions included the proposed runway extension and apron expansion (would disturb 2,000 square feet of wetlands) and the Auburn Industrial Park (the extent of impact to wetlands is unknown).*

*Subsequent to preparation and distribution of the EA, it was discovered that the Auburn Industrial Park project was modified. Since data collection for the EA, the industrial park site has grown to approximately 150 acres in size. Available resource information indicates that large portions of the Industrial Park area appear to be upland wetland. Therefore, the wetland impacts for the industrial park project will increase. Recent conversations with project proponents for the Auburn Industrial Park estimated that wetland impacts could be between 10-15 acres.<sup>1</sup> These Findings include an updated evaluation of cumulative impacts associated with the Industrial Park.*

### **Vermont Transit Lines (Mr. Chris Andreasson)**

Mr. Chris Andreasson from the Vermont Transit Lines attended the public meeting and submitted comments related to the intermodal center's access from the interstate, Vermont Transit Lines service to the site, and Vermont Transit Line's future service to the area. Mr. Andreasson believed the intermodal center did not have adequate access to I-95.

▼  
<sup>1</sup> Gotto, Mike. Technical Services, Inc/ Sebago Technics Inc. February 9, 2007.

*Response: Site selection for the intermodal center was based on proximity to multiple modes of transportation. Proximity to the Airport, railroad, and the Maine Turnpike is essential for the proposed AIPC to satisfy the Purpose and Need for the project, which is to enhance integration and connectivity of the intermodal transportation system. Therefore, the Study Area was identified as the area directly adjacent to the Airport and the SLR, and with access to the Maine Turnpike. The site is approximately 1 mile from the Interstate and other sites would not have been as close to all three modes of transportation.*

Mr. Andreasson stated that Vermont Transit Lines currently provides service from their bus station in Lewiston, and that it is unlikely that they would serve two stops in the Lewiston-Auburn area. Vermont Transit Lines has not committed to serving the AIPC.

*Response: The middle-growth scenario consisted of the same amount of bus service under the 2020 and 2030 middle-growth scenarios (Table 4-1 in the Environmental Assessment). The AIPC is not tied to any specific bus service, but to demand for intermodal services.*

#### **MaineDOT (Mr. Gene Uhuad)**

Mr. Gene Uhuad from MaineDOT had several specific questions with regard to traffic modeling, intersection traffic within the Study Area, and the compatibility of lighting at the intermodal center and the Airport.

For the traffic modeling, did you use ITE trip generation manual or actual experience?

*Response: The consultant used the RSG forecast model from a prior study for some intercity travel, but these were modified based on actual experience in analogous situations. The forecasts were done separately for each of the difference services that were thought to use the intermodal center.*

There are some intersections in the vicinity that I believe are close to capacity. The intersection of Kitty Hawk Avenue and Washington Street- I don't believe there is a dedicated right-turn lane there.

*Response: There are no substantial adverse impacts at any of the Traffic Study Area intersections when comparing future traffic conditions with the Preferred Alternative to future conditions without it. The traffic study shows no negative impacts from the estimated daily traffic volume of 500 cars in 2030. Also, they will not be traveling in the peak hours.*

What kind of lighting, including parking lots, is proposed and would it interfere with the visibility of the airport?

*Response: This conceptual plan does not include lighting layout and light structures have not been evaluated, but would be designed so it did not interfere with airport lighting. Illuminated parking lots are standard features at airports. The lights will be designed to ensure that they do not interfere with the utilization of the airport.*

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE

RE: Environmental Assessment

I have completed my review of the Environmental Assessment for the above referenced project, dated November 2006. Since the project does not result in a permanent or temporary discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States and does not affect navigable waters, the Corps has no jurisdiction. Therefore the following comments are informational in nature and may be used as you moved forward with additional NEPA documentation and the project itself.

1. Section 1.3. The purpose statement could benefit from a more defined focus area such as the "Lewiston/Auburn area".
2. The figures for the site alternatives should be consistent in their labeling. For example, wetlands in Figure 2-2 are colored but they are not in some of the other figures.
3. Section 2.2, Pages 2-17 & 2-18. If sites 3 and 5 potentially had future wetland impact, you could add that fact to the dismissal criteria e.g. they may also be more environmentally damaging.
4. Section 4.6.1. The secondary impact discussion could benefit from reference to available resource information to project natural resource impacts. For example, when you talk about areas zoned for development, you could add that available resource information indicates that large portions of the areas appear to be upland/wetland and therefore..... Also, since the apron project is reasonably well defined, you could be more specific in terms of its potential impact.
5. Section 4.6.2.5. The cumulative impact discussion should reflect the community's projections for development impacts in the industrial park. The key proponent for development is called the Auburn Business Development Corporation and early projections are for 10-15 acres of wetland impact in this area. DOT may wish to contact Mike Gotto of Technical Services, Inc./Sebago Technics, Inc. at 207-783-5656 who is the agent for the corporation. He can undoubtedly be more specific about the community's plans.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact me at 207-623-8367 at our Manchester, Maine Project Office.

Jay Clement  
Senior Project Manager  
US Army Corps of Engineers  
Maine Project Office  
Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE



January 22, 2007

Anna Price  
Office of Passenger Transportation  
Maine Department of Transportation  
16 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0016

Re: Support for the Auburn Intermodal Passenger Center

Dear Ms. Price;

On behalf of the Androscoggin Country Chamber of Commerce, I want to express our support for the Auburn Intermodal Passenger Center. The Chamber has, for the past number of years, fully supported the development of the Intermodal Passenger Center at the Auburn Airport. We have included it as a priority item in our annual "What We Stand For" document. We feel that the need to provide alternative means for people to commute to and from the Portland area is integral to continued economic development.

Again, I wish to state that we strongly support the Auburn Intermodal Passenger Center and the Environmental Assessment that you completed to move the process forward. If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Charles A. Morrison  
President

ANDROSCOGGIN COUNTY

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

179 LISBON STREET

P.O. Box 59

LEWISTON, ME 04243-0059

TEL. 207-783-2249 • FAX 207-783-4481 • E-MAIL: INFO@ANDROSCOGGINCOUNTY.COM

KEEP ALL OF US WORKING!  
**Think Local**  
BEFORE YOU BUY  
ANDROSCOGGIN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



January 25, 2007

Anna Price  
Office of Passenger Transportation  
Maine Department of Transportation  
16 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0016

Re: Support for the Auburn Intermodal Passenger Center

Dear Ms. Price: *Anna*

On behalf of the Androscoggin Transportation Resource Center (ATRC), I want to express our support for the Auburn Intermodal Passenger Center. The ATRC has fully supported the concept of the Intermodal Passenger Center at the Auburn Airport and it is a priority in our 20-Year Transportation Plan. ATRC has participated in the Environmental Assessment process and concurs with the recommendation of the preferred alternative. Providing alternative means to commute to and from the Portland area supports continued economic development while decreasing emissions.

If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

*BJT*

Robert J. Thompson  
Policy Chair

## **MaineDOT** AND

### **The Federal Highway Administration**

will be hosting a Public Hearing for the Proposed

### **Auburn Intermodal Passenger Center Environmental Assessment**

**Thursday, Jan. 18th at 7:00 p.m. at the  
Androscoggin Valley Council of  
Governments, 125 Manley Rd. in Auburn**

We are seeking public comment on the Environmental Assessment for the proposed construction and operation of the Auburn Intermodal Passenger Center in Auburn, which will provide bus and rail services to the surrounding region.

#### **JOIN US FOR THIS PUBLIC HEARING**

Representatives of MaineDOT and FHWA will be available to explain this project. We will listen to concerns, receive comments and answer questions about the Environmental Assessment. Accommodations will be made for persons with disabilities and auxiliary aids will be provided if requested in advance.

#### **WE WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT!**

The Environmental Assessment will be available to the public on January 2, 2007 and will be available for comment until January 31, 2007 at 5:00 p.m. We welcome all written comments submitted and received by January 31, 2007 and encourage you to send them to Tracy Perez at MaineDOT (see address below). Your comments will be considered as we develop decisions on this project. Accommodations will be made for persons with disabilities.

The Environmental Assessment is available for viewing on the internet at [www.MaineDOT.gov](http://www.MaineDOT.gov) and [www.state.me.us/mdot/major\\_planning\\_studies/major\\_planning\\_stds.php](http://www.state.me.us/mdot/major_planning_studies/major_planning_stds.php) and at the following locations:

- Federal Highway Administration Office  
40 Western Ave., Room 614, Augusta, ME  
Contact: Mark Hasselmann  
Telephone (207) 622-8350
- Androscoggin Valley Council of Government (AVCOG)  
125 Manley Rd., Auburn, ME
- Auburn Public Library, 49 Spring St., Auburn, ME
- Maine Dept. of Transportation Regional Office  
51 Pleasant Hill Rd., Scarborough, ME
- Maine Dept. of Transportation Main Office Library  
1 Child St., Augusta, ME
- Maine State Library, 230 State St., Augusta, ME

If you have questions regarding this study, please contact:  
**Tracy Perez, Office of Passenger Transportation  
Maine Department of Transportation  
16 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0016;  
Tel: 207 624-3248, or [Tracy.Perez@maine.gov](mailto:Tracy.Perez@maine.gov)  
TDD Tel: 207 287-3392**

**Auburn Intermodal Passenger Center**  
Public Hearing on the Environmental Assessment

AVCOG Building, 125 Manley Rd.  
Auburn, ME  
7pm

**SIGN IN SHEET**  
(Please Print)

Name	Affiliation (if applicable)	Address	E-mail
John Thompson	AVCOG	125 Manley Rd. Auburn, ME	thompson@avcog.org
Don Grace	AIRC	125 Manley Rd. Auburn, ME	dgrace@airc.org
Rick Cloutier	Auburn - Lewiston Municipal Airport	80 Airport Dr Auburn ME	rcloutier@clauburn.com
Chris Anderson	VT Transit	345 Pine St. Burlington VT	canderson@vttransit.com
Ken Wynne	VT Transit Lines	111 Bethel St. Lewiston ME	KEN@VTTRANSITLINES.ORG
Bob Thorpe	LA RC	10 Bardsley Ave Auburn ME	
Peter Kleskovic	EMVA	40 Weston Ave Augusta ME	
Kurt & Gosselin	KREG	415 Bishop St. Lewiston, ME 04243-1188	gosselin@kreg.org Kurt@kreg.org
Christine Holden	CITIZEN	183 Summer St. Lewiston 04240	































































































