

**Maine Rail Plan
Public Information Meeting
Portland, ME
September 29, 2009**

Presenting: Nathan Moulton, MaineDOT; Ray Tomczak, HNTB; Dennis Coffey, HNTB; Carol Morris, Morris Communications

Agenda: Carol Morris, Morris Communications

- Welcome and Meeting Overview
 - Carol Morris, Morris Communications
- Opening Comments
 - Nathan Moulton, MaineDOT
- State Rail Plan Presentation
 - Study Overview & Timeline, Ray Tomczak, HNTB
 - Passenger & Freight Rail Inventory, Dennis Coffey, HNTB
- Audience Commentary

Opening comments: Nate Moulton, MaineDOT

- Thank you for coming. We're here tonight to hear from you. We have a short presentation, and then we'll turn it over to you to get your thoughts, ideas and feedback.

POWER POINT PRESENTATION

Why a State Rail Plan: Nate Moulton, MaineDOT

- Meet current and future system demands
- Establish a vision to guide future investment
- Provide a basis for Federal and State investment in rail
 - Requirement of Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) of 2008
 - Submission to USDOT every 5 years
 - MaineDOT Critical Rail Program
- Ensure we prioritize investments to achieve maximum public benefit

What We Know: Nate Moulton, MaineDOT

- Rail supports the State's economy
 - Provides mobility for people and goods
 - Supports business/industry/jobs
- Rail knits communities together
- Rail can reduce highway congestion
- Rail is good for the environment

- Reduces energy use and harmful emissions
- *Rail is a vital part of a State's multimodal transportation network*

Our Challenges: Nate Moulton, MaineDOT

- Rail is important to Maine's future, but funding for infrastructure and passenger operations is scarce
- Changes in Maine's economy make it harder to predict future needs
- Informed, long-term planning and prioritization is key
- Input from the Technical Advisory Committee and the public will help guide prioritization

MaineDOT and Rail: Nate Moulton, MaineDOT

- The Governor's Rail and Port investment plan started needs identification/funding framework
- Developing this State Rail Plan will help shape rail's future and allow us to qualify for federal rail funding
- Actively support public-private partnerships such as IRAP
- *Willing* to put capital \$\$ into infrastructure rehabilitation and preserving non-active rail ROWs
- *Willing* to provide operational subsidy for viable passenger rail projects
- *Not willing* to subsidize freight rail operation and maintenance

Public Outreach Benefits: Carol Morris, Morris Communications

- Solicit feedback from key stakeholder groups without which the study cannot be successful
- Encourage the public to provide comment and thereby improve the end result
- Key is encouraging productive comment that will help MaineDOT develop a method to prioritize rail investment over the next ten years

Plan Outreach: Carol Morris, Morris Communications

- Public Meetings: September/December
- Technical Advisory Committee Meetings: September/November
- Individual Stakeholder Meetings/Surveys
- Media
- Project Website is www.maine.gov/mdot/railplan - will be used for additional public input

Technical Advisory Committee: Carol Morris, Morris Communications

- NNEPRA/Downeaster, Patricia Quinn
- Amtrak, Paul Eastwood
- Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway, Robert C. Grindrod
- Maine Eastern Railroad, Gordon Fuller
- St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad, Ed Foley,
- Pan Am Railways, Sydney Culliford
- Eastern Maine Railway Company/New Brunswick Southern, Ian Simpson
- GPCOG, Neal Allen
- AVCOG, Don Craig
- SMRPC, Tom Reinauer
- BACTS and EMDC, Rob Kenerson
- Northern Maine Development Commission, Robert Clark
- LA Economic Growth Council, Lucien Gosselin
- Maine International Trade Center, Janine Cary
- Maine Port Authority, John Henshaw
- State Planning Office, MacGregor Stocco
- DEDCD, Brian Doyle
- DEP, Lynne Cayting
- Maine Legislature, Hon. Ed Mazurek, co-chair State Transportation Committee, (Dist. 47)
- Safe Handling, Ford Reiche
- VERSO, Patty Aho
- Sappi, Michael Segal
- Fore River Distribution Center, Michael Cella
- Northeast Rail Shippers, Joe Gearin
- Trainriders , Wayne Davis
- Sierra Club, Paul Weiss
- Maine Rail Group, Jack Sutton
- MBTA, Maria Fuentes
- Maine Motor Transport Assn., Brian Parke

Public Meetings: Carol Morris, Morris Communications

- Two rounds of meetings
 - September 28, 29 and October 6: to talk with public on challenges, issues and prioritization criteria
 - Early December 2009: to review and comment on draft plan recommendations

Today’s Discussion Topics: Carol Morris, Morris Communications

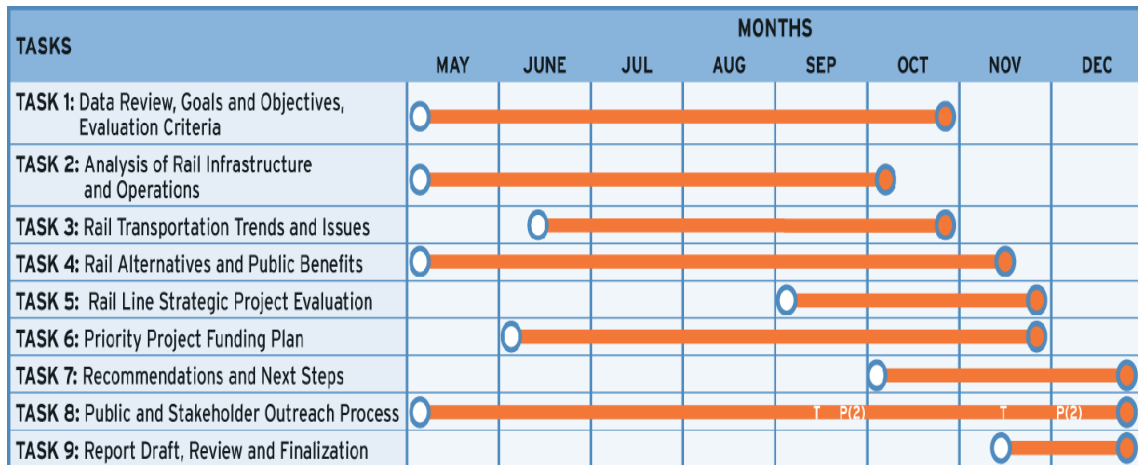
1. What are the most pressing statewide and regional rail issues and barriers over the next five to ten years?
2. What criteria should Maine use to prioritize rail investments?

Project Overview: Ray Tomczak, HNTB

- Project schedule
- Draft investment criteria
- Economic, employment and transportation trends

Schedule: Ray Tomczak, HNTB

MAINE STATE RAIL PLAN PROJECT SCHEDULE



P = Public Meeting T = Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

Draft Investment Criteria: Ray Tomczak, HNTB

- Enhance freight and passenger rail service that provides dual transportation system benefit
- Service key manufacturing industries
- Provide a net reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector
- Help facilitate the shift of rail-appropriate freight from road to rail
- Promote the leveraging of private or other funds for every state dollar invested

Economic Trends: Ray Tomczak, HNTB
(see Power Point for chart)

Employment forecast: Ray Tomczak, HNTB
(see Power Point for chart)

Peak period congestion on National Highway System, projected 2035: Ray Tomczak, HNTB.
(see Power Point for graphic)

Train volumes in 2035 compared to current capacity: Ray Tomczak, HNTB
(see Power Point for graphic)

Next Steps: Ray Tomczak, HNTB

- Complete infrastructure conditions assessment and commodity inventory
- Complete economic and environmental trend identification and benefits analysis
- Refine issues and opportunities
- Draft recommendations for investments, policies and next steps
- Conduct next round of TAC and Public Meetings: Nov./Dec.

Rail System Inventory: Dennis Coffey, HNTB

- Passenger Rail:
 - Current Conditions/Future Needs
 - High-Speed Rail Vision
 - Opportunities
- Freight Rail:
 - Historical Trends
 - Current Conditions/Future Needs
 - Opportunities

Passenger Rail: Dennis Coffey, HNTB

- Amtrak Downeaster offers five daily roundtrips between Portland and Boston
- FY 2008, over 266,000 Amtrak passengers started or ended their trips in Maine.
 - 170,100 in Portland
 - 48,500 in Wells
 - 35,300 in Saco-Biddeford
 - 12,200 in Old Orchard Beach
- Ridership business travelers, tourist and college students

New England high-speed rail vision: Dennis Coffey, HNTB

- Downeaster
 - Extend rail from Portland to Brunswick, stop in Freeport
 - Reduce travel time between Boston-Portland to 2 hours
 - Increase capacity to support 7 daily roundtrips
 - Connect Brunswick to Rockland, via Maine Eastern, subsequent service to island communities via Maine State Ferry Service

(see Power Point for graphic)

Vision for high-speed rail in America: Dennis Coffey, HNTB

(see Power Point for graphic)

- National government allotted 8 billion dollars for high speed rail development; that might sound like a lot of money, but they received applications totally over 103 billion dollars. These things do cost money.

Passenger rail opportunities: Dennis Coffey, HNTB

(see Power Point for graphic)

Shared-Use Benefits: Dennis Coffey, HNTB

- Most rail networks are privately owned
- Freight and passenger networks have different operational profiles
- Addressing shared-use scenarios can have broad benefits for multiple stakeholders

Passenger Rail Issues: Dennis Coffey, HNTB

- Intense competition for limited Federal funding
- State and local funding constraints
- Will there be enough ridership to adequately support current and proposed services?
 - If not, then what level of support should the State provide?
- Are there other types of financial arrangements that should be explored?
 - Private operations
 - Public-private partnerships

Rail Mileage History: Dennis Coffey, HNTB

(see Power Point for chart)

Freight Rail: Dennis Coffey, HNTB

- 1,154 active route miles
 - 100 public ownership

- 1,054 private ownership
- No Class 1 Railroads
- 3 Class II Railroads
- 4 Class III Railroads
- Rail terminals and intermodal facilities
 - Portland
 - Auburn
 - Waterville
- 90,700 carloads in 2007
- 40th State in Rail Miles Nationwide

Freight Rail Status: Dennis Coffey, HNTB

- 1,154 active route miles
- 230 miles inactive with no service, but track exist
- 85 miles removed, interim trail use
- 300 miles State owned railway

Maine Rail Ownership Comparison: Dennis Coffey, HNTB

- At least 20 other States own rail lines over which freight service is largely operated by private entities
 - Alaska – ARC owner/operator 544 miles (*unique case*)
 - Georgia – approx. 486 miles
 - New Hampshire – largest owner of NH rail (~201 miles)
 - North Carolina – NCR, privately run company owned by NC leased 317 miles to NS
 - Oklahoma – approx. 800 miles
 - South Dakota – approx. 301 miles
 - Vermont – approx. 305 miles
 - ***Maine has approx. 100 miles***

Share of total freight shipments by mode and tonnage (2007) for United States and Maine: Dennis Coffey, HNTB
(See Power Point for chart)

Share of total freight shipments by mode and value (2007): United States and Maine: Dennis Coffey, HNTB
(See Power Point for chart)

Maine freight shipments in thousands of tons by direction (2007) ALL MODES: Dennis Coffey, HNTB
(see Power Point for chart)

**Maine freight shipments in thousands of tons by direction
(2007) RAIL: Dennis Coffey, HNTB
(see Power Point for chart)**

**Top 10 rail commodities in thousands of tons (2007): Dennis
Coffey, HNTB
(see Power Point for chart)**

**Top 10 rail commodities in millions of dollars (2007): Dennis
Coffey, HNTB
(see Power Point for chart)**

**Maine Paper Industry, 2006 Production numbers: Dennis
Coffey, HNTB**

- Bucksport –Verso Paper
 - 4,700 tons per day (235 TPD)
- Skowhegan –Sappi Fine Paper N.A.
 - 4,000 tons per day (200 TPD)
- Rumford –New Page
 - 2,800 tons per day (140 TPD)
- Jay –Wausau Paper
 - 1,800 tons per day (90 TPD)
- Woodland –Domtar Industries Inc.
 - 1,460 tons per day (73 TPD)
- Madawaska –Fraser Paper Ltd.
 - 1,300 tons of paper per day (65 TPD)
- Lincoln –Lincoln Paper and Tissue
 - 760 tons per day (38 TPD)
- Madison –Madison Paper Industries
 - 750 tons per day (38 TPD)
- Millinocket –Katahdin Paper Co. LLC
 - 500 tons of paper per day (25 TPD)

Freight Rail Issues: Dennis Coffey, HNTB

- Heavy reliance on paper & pulp industry
- Insufficient rail cars & service to accommodate needs
- System abandonments and state ownership
- Weight and vertical constraints
- Junction constraints
- Lack of private and public capital to maintain and operate current system and future improvements

Freight Rail Opportunities: Dennis Coffey, HNTB

- Rail-to-Port Triangle

- Port of Portland seaport
- Auburn Intermodal Facility
- Lewiston / Auburn port inland rail port connections
- Redeveloped Brunswick Naval Air Station
- Searsport – Bangor rail connection, Sears Island?
 - Inland port
 - Port to rail
 - Port to truck
- Eastport Gateway
 - Rail—Port connection

TAC Suggested Criteria: Carol Morris, Morris Communications

- Return on Investment
- Multi-use lines
- Integration with other modes
- Integration with the State Plan, New England Plan, Canada
- Ability to serve existing customers, attract new business, retain existing customers
- Economic development impact
- Existence of DECD/OBD coordination
- Volume of goods, people moved
- Focus rail investment on areas where capacity and reliability intersect
- Congestion mitigation

DISCUSSION/AUDIENCE COMMENTARY

Comment: I'm a commercial developer from Portland. I have a certified degree in public policy and a certificate in urban planning. I am focused on transit-oriented issues. There's a group of us assembled to mobilize good rail policy in Maine. In 2008, I partnered with Sierra Club to work towards promoting rail. I represent Thompson's Point. The concept is based on a northern New England passenger rail study. In my opinion, this plan should include the following:

- Determine commuter rail markets radiating out along all of the existing rail corridors.
- Educate the populace on the locations, routes, sites along the routes and the cost & benefits of railway corridors.
- Once people learn about the resources a railway transportation corridor has to offer – right in our own backyards – they are very interested in how we might use these resources better.

The State Rail Plan needs to lead to better policy procedures in regards to decisions impacting the long-term viability of railway corridors including Rails with Trails, how they are engineered, and whether the economic benefit of recreational use of these corridors is in the best interest of the public.

Specific to Portland, there are railway transportation corridors that serve southern Maine and the Portland metro region which are owned in most part by the State of Maine. The Downeaster operates on the Pan Am–owned Mainline, which can be compared to the Interstate Highway system. This major arterial can be fed by local railway “arterials”; the Mountain Division, the SLR, the Rockland Branch, the Augusta Lower Roads and connections to Lewiston/Auburn and Pineland. These corridors provide an opportunity to transform how we live, how we travel, how we create jobs, how we do land-use, and our methods of addressing congestion and environmental protection. This rail plan should recognize that the Mountain Division and St. Lawrence & Atlantic railway corridors must first of all be preserved against obstacles that prevent the corridors from being used to their highest and best potential.

- Roadway reconstruction projects that impact railway corridors must analyze the long-term impact of those decisions on freight and passenger use of the railway corridors.
- State, local and county plans for land-uses of railway sites should carefully consider the potential economic impacts.

Our coalition wants the State of Maine Rail Plan to address rail as a method of getting us where we need to go. We believe that the potential exists for using the Mt. Division Railway Corridor at least as far as Standish for commuter rail. We also believe that the SLR railway corridor could be used for commuter rail service to at least Yarmouth, and possibly serving Auburn and Augusta.

- A regional planning effort should be conducted as soon as possible (NOW) to provide a realistic assessment of the benefits, costs and potential of these railway corridors.
- A public visioning should take place, including a program of educating residents, policy-makers and property owners on these railway resources.
- We are advocating for a determination of ridership, commuter and land use patterns in areas currently adjacent to these railway corridors.

- We are advocating for an analysis of the various revenue sources for funding rail transit that are currently used around the country and the impacts of funding for rail operations and capital improvements through a tax on the consumption of gasoline and through a collection of tolls on the Maine Turnpike.

Q: I'm concerned about the infrastructure investment slide that said the state wants a 50/50 public private investment policy.

A: (Nate) There's no required ratio. In a lot of our programs, there is a 50/50 match. We're always looking to partner with private sector.

Q: But as we look forward to the future, I think we might be looking at an outdated paradigm in terms of requiring that kind of match.

A: (Nate) Good point, we agree with that. The 50/50 figure referred specifically to two examples. For example, in the Rockland Branch, it was 100% state money.

Comment: I'm with the Sierra Club. If you look to our neighbors to the north, they have a passenger rail that goes from Quebec to Vancouver. They get passenger rail to towns much smaller than Portland. They have passenger rail to towns that are mostly populated by polar bears. They don't do cost-benefit analysis. Passenger rails are subsidized heavily. Let's keep that in mind. In Maine, we always hire these consulting firms and gather statistics, but we need to change our paradigm. In Portland, we have a port that is disconnected by hundreds of feet from a railroad. Those goods then move to trucks. Our rail routes are turning to bike trails. We drive by a dormant railroad on the highway to Auburn. The funding is in jeopardy for the Brunswick railroad. Hundreds of miles of railroad are being abandoned in northern Maine. When was the last time the state was going to abandon roads because not enough trucks drove on them? I think there needs to be a complete disconnect between profit and mobility.

Comment: I came down here from Bath. It would have been nice to have a light rail system to take. We hear talk about funding being scarce, that the President only gave \$8 billion towards rail construction, yet we're spending billions and billions a month in Iraq. Our congressional delegates need to have a stronger voice to change the national priorities.

Comment: Firstly, we're talking about a Maine State rail plan. But it doesn't make sense to consider a plan just in terms of this State. We need to look at connections to New England and Canada. Second, if you look at the table showing freight through Maine, 48% was paper

products, but I know there's plenty of gravel around. Rail isn't interested in transporting gravel because it's a cheap payload.

Comment: I own a trucking company, and I'm a proponent of rail. We don't want to put ourselves in a position of pitting one industry against another. Trucks have been valuable in this country a long time. But we all need to work together. My interest in the Mountain Division is in factories—unfortunately, you can't live here and earn a living. Railroad is essential to quality of life. But you need jobs. Everything is imported to us. We're giving away our manufacturing. We need lunch pails. We're not all selling lobsters to John Travolta. Factories on the rail line are essential for the benefit of Maine.

Comment: I'm on the transportation committee of Sierra Club. There are conflicting priorities in rail. We're all fighting. We're fighting against bikers right now for funding, which is sad. We're losing rails at an alarming rate. We need to prioritize. We don't need to spread out money and do things piecemeal. The rails to trails is a big issue—even though there's a clause that says trail will go back to rail, never in the history of the US has that actually happened. I hope we can address that in this study.

Comment: I'm a student in the Muskie School. I think we need to stress big oil and oil consumption—I saw something about greenhouse gases in the presentation, but nothing about oil. I think that should be factored in, just to educate people.

Comment: I'm an attorney with the Conservation Law Association. I wanted to touch upon a couple of things: as far as the need to plan a regional rail, that has been highlighted for us by the funding battle over the \$8 billion. The people who get that money will be the people with a real, robust and comprehensive plan that shows a regional approach. I think it behooves this group, and this study, to do something, and not just end up as another study that gathers dust on the shelf. Transportation is the fastest growing sector in greenhouse gas emissions. That's got to change. Tomorrow, a bill will be put before the Senate that hopes to change how we behave and how we pollute. There will be legislation coming down the pike. We need to be ready for it.

Comment: I'm a resident of Portland. I've been working with the Maine Rail Coalition. I was working in the State Planning Office when the three port plan was put together. I see the rail issue as being divided into three chunks: 1. The forest industry in Maine has got to be

maintained. 2. The connections between population centers (Bangor, Waterville/Augusta, Saco/Biddeford, etc), need to be linked; and 3. commuter rail implementation. This is where the paradigm needs to change. Portland passed a measure months ago that said we don't want cars and trucks to dominate the Portland Peninsula, so this plan needs to recognize that and deal with opportunities for rail. Toward that end, I'll read a letter from Justin Alfond, State Senator. (*Provide link to letter from Senator Alfond*).

Comment: I'm an electrical engineer who works/lives in Augusta. I wanted to share an observation I made several years ago. I was sent to Florida to work on a project. Florida and Maine are analogous in terms of transport. In Maine we have I-95 that runs north and south. And parallel to it we have rail lines. In Florida, you also have I-95, and you also have a parallel rail. What's the relevance? Well, in Augusta, if you sit next to the railroad, you'll be lucky to see a train go by if you sit there all night. You'll see 2/3 of the vehicles are trailer trucks. In Melbourne, Florida, 80% of the vehicles are passenger cars. If you park next to the rail line, every hour a train will come by carrying container freight. They found a way to cooperate, work together, be more efficient. I'm not sure what my observation means, but I think it's significant, and I hope somebody here can draw some conclusions so we can move forward.

Comment: I work with the Lincoln County Economic Development Office. I understand the perspective of Portland from a passenger and freight perspective. But much of the future of our economic growth is coming from small businesses in the county. The availability of rail to those businesses is key. As the whole state improves, Lincoln County will improve. I hope the plan addresses growth of the tourism sector throughout the entire state. I'd also like to speak on behalf of Wiscasset and Waldoboro that they all advocate for rail in the future of their communities.

Comment: I'm a town councilor in Standish. We're a small town with a lot of truck traffic. About 3 in the morning trucks head out with logs. We get 60 or 70 of them a day. Then dump trucks come out to pick up gravel—100 trucks a day right there - 60 or 70 oil trucks. And we're sitting on a rail system!! We could eliminate 20,000 trucks trips a year in our small town and cut a million dollars out of our capital improvements. Last year, the state says to us, we're giving you 11.2 miles of road back. But they don't repave it before they turn it over to us. So we then have to pay. Next year we're looking at half a million dollars in road improvements because the trucks ruin the roads.

Comment: I'm a state representative from Standish. I also work for the railroad. One thing I'd like to talk about is speed. Everyone talks about funding, but that's obvious. The successful passenger trains are fast trains. When we set our sights higher, freight will benefit. The Downeaster goes about 60 mph, but the train itself is capable of going 110 mph. If we can get higher speed commuter rail on the corridors, specifically the Mountain Division, it would be an amazing thing. Freight will flourish. People will move more efficiently. We have six rail routes into Portland and none of them are being used! There's a ton of potential. Let's seize the moment and get it done.

Comment: We have to be careful what we wish for. The trucking industry pays a phenomenal amount of money in gas tax that somehow finds its way out of the transportation fund and into the general fund. In response to Florida—that's the end of the line. That's why you don't see as many trucks. It's Canadian trucks going up and down Maine highways, not manufacturing coming from the state of Maine.

Comment: I live by Woodfords Corner. I'm in favor of commuter rail, but I want to make sure we think about what's in the transportation corridors. This is a dense area and that's why the trains have to go so slow through there, and I think we need to take advantage of that and make sure it isn't forgotten.

Comment: I'm a retired urban planner. You in the trucking industry should be pleased to know that our Maine Senators have just increased weight limits, which will do wonders for the roads. I think we need to get together among the New England states (formally) along with New York and Canada, so we can make a strong proposal for federal money. When you do your planning, remember all the ROW's that have been abandoned.

Comment: I'm with the Maine Rail Group. Regarding freight, a "rule of thumb" is 100 cars per mile per year for a viable railroad. Right now, in Maine, I'm seeing about 80 cars per mile per year. We've got to expand freight to make it viable. There has to be an emphasis on new opportunities, and looking at things that don't go by rail but could, like municipal solid waste. It's a low-revenue product, but it comes every single day. Second, why in the world are we thinking about tearing up railroads in northern Maine when that is our agricultural center, potatoes and forest, etc? The challenge on the passenger side is how to fund the operations once they're established. Getting funding to do

the projects is the “easy” part—sustaining them is the problem. People who build their livelihood around a passenger rail system need to be able to rely on it.

Comments: The barriers are the same this evening as they were 23 years ago. They are political and institutional. The public needs to make them change. The Downeaster has a payroll of 4 million dollars. If I were a small business that said I was bringing in that kind of money, people would be sending up rockets. But no one seems to care about railroads. *Trainriders* will be holding public events, as volunteers. There is a limit to what the state can do. We’ll be having meetings, getting out there. I hope you’ll join us. All you people will make the difference. Back when we started talking about rail, about bringing the Downeaster to Maine, we didn’t say “do it if it makes sense,” “do it if it’s economically feasible,” we said do it.” During this recession, Maine has had the smallest decline in ridership in the country (only 1%). That should say something about how we as a community want to move in the future.

Comment: I’m chair of the Rail Users Network and on the Gorham East-West Corridor Study. Many speakers tonight alluded to important issues. Two have not been emphasized, both revolving around social inclusion: Affordability and equality of mobility. What happens to seniors who can’t drive? Or teenagers who can’t afford a car once gas is 10 dollars a gallon? The Rail Plan has to include social issues. We have two lines, one running up I-95, and then the Mountain Line. Let’s utilize them. I agree that this is a political decision. We need to be out there speaking and making sure the state does the right thing.

Q: What is the difference in cost between upgrading one mile of track to Class One, and building one mile of road?

A: (Nate) It would depend on where you upgraded the rail and where you built the road. The costs would be different—upgrading the Mountain Line would be different from upgrading the Augusta Lower Road. Building a mile of turnpike is different than building a mile of Rte. 1. I can’t give you specific numbers because it varies. It’s specific to the line, the location and the field conditions.

Q: Why do I hear \$20 million for a mile of highway and \$1 million for a mile of rail?

A: (Nate) I don’t know, but that doesn’t sound right.

Q: Does that differential sound right though?

A: (Carol) We’ll do some research and do some comparisons and put it on the website.

Q: Will this final plan include suburban commuter in and out of Portland?

A: (Carol) The short answer is we don't know yet. We're in the beginning of the planning process.

Comment: I'm a lifelong resident of this area, and there's a huge need for commuter rail. There are 30,000 cars a day on Franklin Arterial, 16,000 a day on Brighton Ave., etc., and they are mostly single occupancy cars. The rail would have to be high speed, and the cost to use it would have to be less than the cost of maintaining a car. People could also do things on the train—work, use their phones, etc. These are all factors people would consider.

Comment: This conversation started by you asking us about priorities and criteria. I think they work hand in hand. I hope this is being documented. You said, "I don't know if there will be commuter rail." Well I say that should be one of the priorities. I have a friend who lives in Brunswick and he drives to Waterville every day for his job. I mean it's unbelievable. Also, it affects things like air quality and the environment. Portland is a non-attainment area – it doesn't meet federal air quality standards. That's ridiculous. Every time I see a trailer truck from Alabama, I get mad. That should be on a train. I love the social inclusion of mass transit. We're a rural state. Social inclusion is imperative. I'm ashamed of the United States for how behind we are from Europe and Japan. Our rail system is a shame.

Comment: You don't achieve 120 mph trains right off the bat. You work your way up to it. There's confusion between commuter rail and high-speed rail. We've got to think realistically. I come from Britain, we're covered with a commuter rail system, and they're not terribly high speed. They're still terribly efficient and they're packed with people. You wouldn't need the same weight of track as a high-speed rail.

Q: I'm from the Mountain Division Rail. My question is, we have several businesses interested in our rail. Should we go to them first and get a sense of their interest before we market, or do we build the rail and then market it?

A: (Nate) That's a great question. I think once things get underway, you can start to market it before it's finished. It's tough to get into specific pricing up front. It will vary.

Q: In all of my study of rail beyond Narrow Gauge, commuter rail and passenger rail are not compatible. Is that right? Commuter rail is lighter weight?

A: (Nate) Commuter rail does not necessarily have to be light rail. But if you're trying to mix commuter rail with light rail, it's difficult. The cars don't meet the same standards in terms of safety (FRA crashworthiness), etc.

Comment: Don't waste valuable corridors on commuter rail (light rail).

Q: Are tonight's slides available on the internet?

A: (Carol) Yes, they will be. It may take us a week or so to get them up there.

Q: What does HNTB stand for?

A: (Dennis) It's an engineering firm with the initials standing for Howard, Needles, Tammen, Bergondoff, the founders of the company.

Comment: The first step is to rehabilitate the track so it's usable. The Downeaster did a good job. We need to put some kind of service on the tracks just to get it started. Then it would make sense to upgrade tracks for higher speeds, etc. But first let's get it operable. Also, the Portland station should be on the waterfront. Where the station is right now isn't really that convenient.

Carol: Any other questions or comments? No? Thanks again for coming out and participating.

The meeting ended at 8:06 pm.