

PORTLAND TO AUBURN RAIL USE ADVISORY COUNCIL

KICK-OFF MEETING

April 25, 2022: 1:00-2:30pm



LD 1133: RAIL USE ADVISORY COUNCIL

- LD 1133
 - Established Rail Corridor Use Advisory Council Process for review of *nonrail recreational or nonrecreational transportation use*
 - *The council shall review and make recommendations on the likelihood, benefits and costs of potential uses of the rail corridor, including, but not limited to, rail use, trail use or bikeways. Any nonrail use of a rail corridor must be considered by a council to be interim in nature, and all such rail corridors must be preserved for future rail use*
- How the Council Process works:
 - Within 9 months, Council submits findings and recommendation regarding use of the corridor to MaineDOT
 - May include majority and minority reports
 - Process will include 1 public meeting
 - If Commissioner concurs, MaineDOT shall seek legislative approval of the recommendation by submitting legislation to the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation prior to track removal or the other change for nonrail use.

STATE RAILROAD PRESERVATION ACT

- Railroads; lease or purchase of certain railroad lines by the Department of Transportation
 - The Department of Transportation may purchase or lease railroad lines or any part of a railroad line or any other property located in the State, owned or otherwise lawfully controlled by any railroad when, in the judgment of the department, the purchase or lease of those railroad lines or property is necessary to protect the public interest.
- Use of railroad line.
 - The department may lease the railroad line, or otherwise contract for operation of the railroad line, to a railroad operator, or it may hold and manage the railroad line for future transportation use.
- Dismantling of state-owned track or other nonrail use
 - The Department may not convert a state-owned rail corridor to a nonrail recreational or nonrecreational transportation use without following the rail corridor use advisory council process.
 - If the Commissioner of Transportation receives a recommendation of track removal or other change for nonrail use and the commissioner concurs with that recommendation, the commissioner shall seek legislative approval of the recommendation
 - Legislation submitted under this section must include language stating that any track removal or other change for nonrail use is considered interim in nature and that the rail corridor will be preserved for future rail use as provided under this chapter

CORRIDOR LOCATION UNDER REVIEW

- Grand Trunk Berlin Subdivision
 - The limits of the Council are MP 1.74 (n/o Back Cove Swing Bridge) to MP 25.97 (New Gloucester/Auburn line)
 - The Grand trunk extends from Portland, ME to Island Pond, VT
 - 149.5 miles with 83 miles in ME
 - State of Maine owns from MP 0 to MP 25.97 (New Gloucester – Auburn line)
 - Maine Narrow Gauge operates first 1 mile along Portland Waterfront
 - SLA operates from Auburn to Montreal, QC
- Purchased by MaineDOT under the Rail Preservation Act in 2007 and 2010
 - **Use of railroad line.** The department may lease the railroad line, or otherwise contract for operation of the railroad line, to a railroad operator, or it may hold and manage the railroad line for future transportation use.

CORRIDOR USAGE OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

- Rail Use
 - Continue to preserve rail for future use
 - Restoration of freight or passenger service
- Rail with Trail
 - 15' trail offset from rail or 10.5' with barrier (design exception required)
 - Continue to preserve rail for future use
 - Restoration of freight or passenger service
- Trail until Rail
 - Remove rail and convert to interim trail
 - Continue to preserve rail for future use
- Other considerations
 - Motorized vs non motorized uses
 - Maintenance responsibility

The screenshot shows the MaineDOT website. At the top left is the MaineDOT logo. To its right is the text: "OUR MISSION | To support economic opportunity and quality of life by responsibly providing our customers the safest and most reliable transportation system possible, given available resources." On the top right, there is a phone number "207-624-3000" and links for "Jobs | News | Events | Home | Email | Facebook | Twitter". Below this is a search bar. A navigation menu includes "Doing Business", "Government", "Residents", "Explore Maine", "About", and "Jobs" (which is highlighted). On the left side, there is a sidebar menu with "Office of Freight and Passenger Services" (with a house icon), "Rail Use Advisory Council Home", "Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council", "Meetings and Minutes", "Members", and "Contact Us" (which is highlighted with a red box). The main content area has the title "Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council". Below the title is a paragraph: "The Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council was officially formed in April of 2022 by MaineDOT Commissioner Bruce Van Note as a result of L.D. 1133, An Act To Amend the Transportation Laws." This is followed by another paragraph: "The Bill, passed by the State Legislature in 2021, established guidelines for the review of nonrail recreational or nonrecreational transportation use of state-owned inactive rail corridors by Rail Corridor Use Advisory Councils. Advisory Councils will review and make recommendations on the likelihood, economic benefits and costs of potential uses of the rail corridor, including, but not limited to, rail use, trail use or bikeways. Any non-rail use of a rail corridor must be considered by a council to be interim in nature, and all such rail corridors must be preserved for future rail use." A third paragraph states: "The Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council will review the approximately 24-mile section of the St. Lawrence and Atlantic rail corridor known as the Berlin Subdivision from railroad mile post 1.74 in Portland to railroad mile post 25." Below this is a section titled "Supporting Documents" with a bulleted list of three PDF links: "Lewiston-Auburn Passenger Rail Service Plan, Operating Plans and Corridor Assessments, May 2019 (PDF)", "Lewiston-Auburn Passenger Rail Service Plan, Transit Propensity Report, August 2018 (PDF)", and "Resolve, Economic Evaluation Study for Commuter and Passenger Train Service between Portland and the Lewiston and Auburn Area, June 2021 (PDF)".