

Maine State Library

**Digital Maine**

---

Transportation Documents

Transportation

---

5-1-2008

## **Midcoast Bypass Task Force Meeting Minutes, May 1, 2008**

Maine Department of Transportation

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalmaine.com/mdot\\_docs](https://digitalmaine.com/mdot_docs)

---

## Minutes of May 1, 2008 Task Force Meeting

### Midcoast Bypass Task Force

### Meeting Report

May 1, 2008

### Lincoln County Communications Room, Wiscasset

Attending: Don Jones, Wiscasset; Jo Cameron, Edgecomb; Amanda Russell, Edgecomb; Dave Bertran, Westport Island; Arthur Faucher, Wiscasset; Pat Hudson, Newcastle; Ross Edwards, Boothbay; Bob Faunce, Lincoln County; Jaimie Logan, Boothbay Harbor Region Chamber of Commerce; Doug Baston, Alna; Tom Eichler, Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association; Tom Woodin, Boothbay Harbor; Dave King, Woolwich; Ed Hanscom, MaineDOT; Peter Kleskovic, FHWA; Mark Hasselmann, FHWA; Kat Fuller, MaineDOT; Gerry Audibert, MaineDOT; Carol Morris, Morris Communications.

Guests: George Freeman, Wiscasset; John Van Orsdell, Boothbay; Carol Pilgrim, Boothbay Harbor; Greg Foster, Lincoln County News; Charlotte Boynton, Wiscasset Newspaper.

*The meeting opened at 5:41 pm.*

Carol Morris: We'll begin with a recap of last week's meeting. I have sent you all via email an overview of the action steps you recommended last week. I have not received comments to date – is there any disagreement or comments?

*(Don Jones noted he had not received the email but said he had been having email problems would re-check. No one else had a comment.)*

Carol: MaineDOT will put together a specific action plan to share at the June 10 meeting. Before we start I'd like to say that last week for the first time we tried an informal discussion and it didn't work very well. This is a big group for that kind of discussion and it got frustrating for many of you – and for me. Today, I'd like to request that you speak only when called on so that everyone can hear what is said and we can proceed in an orderly manner. For today's meeting we will start by looking at MaineDOT's updates on the Edgecomb land use analysis for Davis Island and Englebrekt Rd. This is based on Edgecomb's comment that items in the DEIS were outdated and incorrect. And we will give Edgecomb an opportunity to talk about how this bypass could affect their town.

Ed Hanscom: (Explained maps that showed the updated land use on Davis Island and Englebrekt Rd.) The land use maps I first handed out show land use reported in DEIS in chapter 3, with the being pink residential, brown commercial, orange mixed use. The second sheet shows updates we've made based on a recent tour with Jo Cameron. It shows areas we have mapped as residential, including new housing on Englebrekt and Davis Island. Pat Hudson: I don't see the MaineDOT transportation yard marked off.

Ed: Good point, we need to add that, any others? We know there are additional proposed changes on Davis Island, but they have not yet happened.

Jo Cameron: The development on the shoreline of Engelbrekt Rd. is not shown – those lots go all the way to the shore.

Ed: We are primarily showing houses, but we can modify the shape to include the shoreline.

Jo: Pink should extend to the shore, yes.

Ed: The house symbols are color-coded: light blue are residences, black represents the auto repair business off Englebrekt Rd., and a camp near the shore on the Wright property. In green, we have also shown the national historic registered property in Edgecomb, which is Fort Edgecomb.

Jo: The older farmhouse on Englebrekt was built in 1760 but isn't on national preservation records.

Ed: I checked with the Maine preservation office and found three properties in the study area that qualify, two on Davis Island on Fort Rd., and the motor court at the intersection of Rte. 27 and 1. They did not find 105 Englebrekt Rd. as eligible, maybe due to modifications or other factors. The two structures on Fort Rd. are in the DEIS.

Next page on subject of neighborhoods, we did update our count of houses in neighborhoods. Our community impact assessment expert believes Englebrekt Rd. should be classified as a neighborhood.

Jo: What is the definition of a neighborhood?

Ed: It varies, but generally, people rooted to one place, physical land use, shared responsibility, the type of houses and associated community area, link to a local institution that is patronized by residents, ethnicity, longevity. All these help define a neighborhood. Englebrekt Rd. is a neighborhood. Another area we are looking at is Davis Island, which is changing and coming more residential. We would like to know if the town considers it is a neighborhood.

Carol: No potential neighborhood on Davis Island would be affected by any of the routes.

Jo: There is a traffic issue regarding the possible amount of traffic entering Route 1 from Eddy Rd. and from the new driveway for affordable housing as well as the proposed assisted living complex. This will have 26 units, and will involve workers, service travel and visitors, as well as traffic from the bank. There are a total of 37 condos with an associated resort - my understanding is that all condos are owned by one person but can be sublet to others, and this could traffic along with the restaurant/bar that is popular.

Carol: So you want updated traffic projections on all these changes?

Jo: Yes.

Ed: How would you see the boundaries of Englebrekt Rd. neighborhood mapped out?

Jo: You need to commit all the way to the shoreline. We took that tour and it looked like a place where there are children and this is an area they can walk to and from each other's house to play and play on the shore. I don't know the income level of residents but there would be recreational shell fishing if not commercial fishing.

Amanda Russell: Jo is right about the lots being used by everyone, there are no no-trespassing signs – the lots are part of the neighborhood, where people hang out and play.

Jo: The kidney bean-shaped inlet is part of Cod Cove, which is a very rich clamming and worming area.

Ed: So the western boundary would be the shore and eastern would be the back of the house lots.

Jo: Yes. It is unique for Edgecomb in not being home to retirees. We don't want Edgecomb to become an old folks' home, I like children and don't mind paying taxes. It is interesting all these routes are going to affect the Rte. 27 and 1 intersection and there's a motel with traffic, a post office, a restaurant and the camp on the southeast side.

Pat: Although Cochran Rd. doesn't have businesses on it, it is a definite neighborhood, which extends up into Newcastle, houses on both sides of the road and there are families with children as well.

Bob Faunce: What is the significance of a neighborhood?

Carol: It is something that DOT would try to avoid bisecting.

Ed: It doesn't have legal protection like a wetland, however.

Doug: Did you do the same thing in Wiscasset regarding mapping neighborhoods?

Ed: Yes. There is reference to a number of neighborhoods in the DEIS, and there were maps. We did not identify any in DEIS for Edgecomb.

Bob: The goal is to avoid or minimize impact of the alignments to reduce impact on neighborhood.

Ed: Yes, it becomes one of those factors we avoid or minimize.

Jo: I am curious about the relationship between DOT and the Federal Highway vis a vis the new severe state regulations on shoreline regulations, which we have spent months preparing for. Why can these routes go through shoreland?

Bob: There is a permitting process, the regulations will allow roads, but standards have to be met, it's not like an endangered species habitat.

Tom Woodin: In the DEIS there was a comparison chart of the impacts of the different routes and N8c, which is most expensive, seemed to dislocate the fewest number of people. It seemed like a no brainer. Was there another option that was more attractive?

Carol: There were a few concerns with that one: it was the most expensive, it had the most lightweight connection to Rte. 27, it goes through a little bit of Wiscasset's historic district. DOT's feeling is there was no clear winner at that point.

Doug Baston: Looking at the development on Davis Island, it looks like a bunch of people are close to this route. Where's the workforce housing?

Carol: It's on the second map in purple.

Doug: N8c comes right across from it?

Carol: Not opposite - down the road a bit. As I understand it, the assisted living location may be on the either side of road and is still up in air?

Jo: Yes.

Mark Hasselmann: I want to make a comment about Coastal Zone protection. Through the Maine DEP and through NEPA permitting, those things will be clearly addressed.

*(Question from the audience from John VanOrsdell asking if the group could address his proposal on alternative routes now, instead of later on the agenda. Carol agreed. VanOrsdell explained his proposal and entertained brief questions.)*

John VanOrsdell: I have two proposals. The one I recommend is the one in green, using a tunnel all the way. The visual impact is non-existent and we've had lots of people dislike routes because it takes peoples' homes out. The advantage is that there are no impacts of this route. My question to Ed is regarding the cost of the tunnel - what sort of a tunnel is this?

Ed: The tunnel alternative we looked at in 2001 did go under the river completely. We had a consulting firm that deals with tunnels work on it, and they assumed it would be a bored tunnel, twin tunnels one-way for each direction.

John: I found an economical way to do it on the internet this morning.

Carol: This is new information the DOT doesn't have yet?

John: Yes. This is new information that was not part of the proposal. The second sheet is for the transportation task force. The only issue left is the question of environmental impact and there would be impact at the two coves, but I can't believe it would be any more than any other alternative. If you put a tunnel on top of riverbed, lower a section of tunnel, and cover with concrete, so there will be no impact of navigation, cost is the only impact. I am asking MDOT to look at the piece I gave you and figure out how much it would cost based on that website

Dave Bertran: When we looked at the tunnel in 2001 we found when you get into that environment in contained areas, you run into ventilation and lighting needs.

John: Yes, we would have lights and ventilation, the whole length of the tunnel. I am not sure how long it would be – maybe about two miles. People think it would cost too much but no one looks back. This is a permanent solution and no one would be displaced. An underwater route is a popular alternative. If MDOT were to try to take people's properties, they could contest that in court saying that they don't have to take my home.

Jaimie Logan: What is the estimated cost?

John: That's based on what MDOT came up with, but twin tunnels would be more money.

Arthur Faucher: How deep is the tunnel?

John: As deep as the river bed.

Jo: What is the size of the cylinder?

John: 18-wheelers would have to fit through, and it would be four lanes. Whatever MDOT comes up with

Jo: So there would be a bump?

Don: It doesn't have to be to bedrock, just submerged in the mud?

John: You dredge a trench, half way down

Don: The C3 route - the all-tunnel version, what is impact (shown on the evaluation form) of that?

Ed: We haven't evaluated the impact for a full-length tunnel

Don: There would be an impact to the historic waterfront.

Ed: In the bridge version, yes. (NOTE: the evaluation form was in error.)

Dave: Are there any tunnels in Maine?

Ed: No, I am not aware of any underwater tunnels, we don't have any experience in this, that's why we brought in an expert last time.

Carol: On the back of the handout is a cost estimate based on what we received from Mr. VanOrsdell last fall.

Jo: Where it comes by Davis Island and meets up with Rte. 1, it would go under a bar and that's difficult because it's just a causeway and it's shallow over there.

John: We are not proposing a causeway, we are looking at a tunnel.

Peter Kleskovic: Would it be possible to use fanhouses for ventilation?

Ed: The estimated cost ventilation is rolled into the estimates.

John: The only house affected is on Pottle Cove Rd. It comes down to a question of cost.

Carol: Thank you for your presentation.

Kat Fuller: Many of you are aware of the Gateway 1 project, and next week in Edgecomb we will present a regional overview of findings based on data collection we have been working on for three years and counting. Don, Amanda, and Jo have all been involved.

Gateway 1 is a collaboration of 21 towns working together looking at what the corridor could be 20-30 yrs in future. We are currently testing one scenario - Riding the Current, which is a steady-as-she-goes, continuing the trend scenario. In the Perfect Storm scenario, everything economic goes wrong, and in Full Wind, economic growth is optimized. In Riding the Current, these are the assumptions: Bath Iron Works is stabilized and BNAS job loss will be recovered, fishing is stable, long-standing industries shrink, Mack Point is at capacity. (For more information, go to [www.gateway1.org](http://www.gateway1.org).) In housing, people move inland due to price, replaced by early retirees in coastal areas. Property taxes remain high. The Wiscasset bypass is built, but there are no other new roads in the Corridor. MaineDOT introduces the concept that roads are tolled in order to maintain the cost of existing roads. High fuel prices don't affect driving habits. The results of this analysis are reasonable job growth: 20,000 new jobs in the next 30 years, Region 2 (Wiscasset to Nobleboro) will account for 3,300 of those. Job growth is at 34% in corridor town, with faster growth (44%) in peninsula communities and 32% in inland communities.

Carol: The reason this is important is that in an economic forecast, the number of jobs drive housing and transportation change.

Tom Eichler: How did you do the projections?

Lat: Evan Richert is on our team and developed them based on a combination of Dept. of Labor information and interviews up and down the corridor with businesspeople.

Doug: Did you value these jobs? Are they service jobs?

Kat: We are basing it on looking at the current pattern of jobs, so it is a combination.

Dave B: You say that fuel prices won't impact transportation. Yet recent surveys show that gas consumption is down and gas prices are predicted to triple over next 12 years.

Kat: In the Perfect Storm we will look at that, we know there will be fluctuations in one area or another

Kat: In the summary of dwelling units, there will be 11,000 additional dwelling units in Corridor towns, with slightly less inland. However, the largest percentage growth is inland, with a 50% increase due to affordability. When jobs and houses go out into those areas, we see the effect that will have on transportation. Broken down by subregion, the percentage rate of growth in Region 2 is big – 36% total.

Carol: This is because Region 2 has a lot of proximity to jobs and there is lots of land in this area – that is what is driving it.

Tom E: What is the inland area relationship?

Kat: Inland, dwelling units increase ten thousand or 50%, jobs increase by a few thousand. Jobs are going to locate in the corridor more than inland because of lower cost housing inland.

Kat: Looking at daily traffic, as an overview, the only place that traffic goes down is downtown Wiscasset because in this scenario the bypass is built. Essentially, what we will see is strong traffic growth on Rte. 1, but even stronger growth on the smaller road as more people move to inland communities and Rte. 1 one fills up, moving people onto side roads to avoid traffic. Traffic growth from Rte. 1 to 27 down to Boothbay is enormous. There will be a changed feeling, as more vehicles effects quality of life, or the rural feel of these roads. Most people were concerned about the loss of rural character when we went into this project. The largest growth on Rte. 1 is between Brunswick and Waldoboro.

Carol: The local roads have the capacity to carry these cars, but it will feel much less rural.

Kat: The Level of Service measure shows the carrying capacity for each road and how smoothly traffic will move. A-C is good, D is good but has a little more inconvenience, E has its bad points during the day, moving but more cumbersome, in F you are facing common delays. We can predict just south of the bypass we will see level of service F.

Amanda: This is due to the impacts of growth we are expecting.

Tom W: This is assuming no change in roads.

Kat: Yes, that's assuming the bypass is built, jobs increase and land use policy stays the same. That's what you can expect in 2030. We have not modeled yet what this looks like if there isn't a bypass.

The section below Wiscasset is not at Level of Service F because of commercial development, but because of the amount of traffic. It's a commuter corridor and it fills up. The commercially developed areas worsen to failure.

Don: It was shortsighted to reduce the scope of the bypass study by excluding Route One from the Kennebec River to Wiscasset village.

Kat: That may be, but we are here to look forward. We also interviewed people on their attitudes towards strip development. They felt some of the reasons they are

here in the first place are eroding. We measured what exists now in strip development. The existing commercial strip in the corridor is 12 miles. We will be looking at places that are built up, but are not quite strip yet. We see that 24% of the corridor is controlled access by MaineDOT. We project that an additional 5% of commercial strip could occur - where would it be likely go if nothing changes?

Amanda: Does Davis Island qualify as strip?

Kat: No, but it could qualify as emerging strip. Next week we will have additional slides that look at more information, including the scenic character of the corridor.

Amanda: What can we do about it?

Kat: We are identifying actions that others can take, and a list of interventions to get feedback from community members on what is feasible and effective. The plan will identify each region's best set of reasonable solutions to lengthen the life of the corridor, protect visual and rural character, and allow for growth.

Tom E: The desirability of concentrating housing near jobs is clear - lots of current zoning blocks that.

Kat: This scenario is using a low-density pattern of development. Other patterns include high-density micropolitan and transit-oriented corridor. We are testing both these patterns to see how much difference these development patterns would make on these problems.

Doug: How do you handle things that are value judgments?

Kat: Those are the toughest things. We know from socioeconomic value surveys that property rights and municipal home rule are important, but the majority of people wanted a balance point. The need to generate tax base is high, but not at the expense of losing community character. We have a large set of interventions and will tweak them back and forth in order to find the best set.

Arthur: Where is the migration is coming from, are people coming into Maine or is there migration coming from inside Maine?

Carol: A lot of retired people from outside Maine, plus job growth in construction and the service industry will draw from other parts of Maine.

Arthur: The growth area of population that will follow these jobs is another percent of unskilled labor that can become a burden to municipalities to pick up the slack.

Kat: We have done a lot to highlight the effects of transportation and see effects of character change, but have not yet done the effects of growth on bottom line of municipal budgets. There's going to be effects regardless of where they come from. These are the things we are beginning to look at to see what this means and help communities to prepare for this. Any other questions or comments?

Carol: Peter, can you give an update on the Diversion Analysis Peer Review?

Peter: We have been emailing with traffic experts at FHWA to look at analysis and have gotten positive feedback in terms what's been done. However, we still need to package all this into a consolidated traffic report, send it back to the traffic experts and get a final opinion of adequacy. We've been doing this informally but will get formal feedback in mid May. We will have that before we come back and distribute it to the Task Force.

Pat: Can we get it earlier than the meeting, by the first of June?

Peter: We will push to have that happen.

Carol: The next meeting is June 10, Tuesday, from 5-7 pm. The alternatives will be narrowed down to an as yet undetermined number. That will be our primary item to discuss.

Don: Did you cover item one, review action steps?

Carol: I sent everyone a matrix of what we discussed last week, and Gerry is putting together an action plan for MaineDOT to move ahead on. The signage piece, which is more controversial, will require some sort of discussion with the communities before implementation.

Bob: So DOT is going to reduce the alternatives to a smaller number. Are we being asked to do anything? Make a recommendation?

Carol: You will be asked to comment on the pros and cons of each alternative, if there is more than one. What you will see is a new, enlarged matrix that is a reflection of all the comments DOT has received, and so you will need the chance to ask questions as to why DOT is leaning in that particular way and give DOT the chance to respond. You should also be prepared to make suggestions on possible improvements or compromises.

Peter: Only one meeting for this?

Carol: That is unlikely, but we will see.

Bob: Are we going to take any action as a committee at that meeting?

Kat: Ideally, that would be great, if we found a one we all like. The reality is that there is no requirement that we all come to consensus. We take your input and move forward regardless, but the more we can understand why one is better than another will help us figure out what to chose in the final analysis.

Bob: When is the next meeting after that?

Carol: Regarding the meeting after the 10th, I will ask you to pick four five or five dates that work and find a date that works.

Doug: This is the most important part of process and the worst time of year.

No public comments were made.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.