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Wiscasset Route 1 Corridor Study : Summary of Non-Bypass Improvements Considered, December 15, 2010

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Wiscasset Route 1 Corridor Study
Summary of Non-Bypass Improvements Considered
December 15, 2010

Following is a summary of the non-bypass improvements considered as part of the Wiscasset Route 1 Corridor Study. Some were a MaineDOT initiative and others were as proposed by the Midcoast Bypass Task Force and through comments received on the October 2007 Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Pages follow further defining some of the initiatives that were undertaken and in an update of “Interim Measures” presented to the Midcoast Bypass Task Force in 2008.

Travel Demand Management (TDM)

TDM consists of strategies to reduce demand for travel during periods of peak traffic flow through an area. The baseline future estimated traffic volume was reduced 8% to account for the impact of TDM strategies and actions. Actions considered either by MaineDOT or from the DEIS comments received have included:

1. Install web cams or traffic counters to inform travelers of congestion periods – implemented (100 hours per year of delay currently (summers of 2009 and 2010) occurs in northbound travel, where delay as defined as speeds under 25 MPH as measured at US Route 1 at Birch Point Road in Wiscasset. Similarly, about 100 hours of delay was measured in the southbound direction on US Route 1 at Route 27 in Edgecomb.
2. Create sensor-based traffic information system – web cams web site and 5-1-1 traveler information system linked
3. Place Variable Message Signs along I-295 – installed at I-295 MP 27, linked to web cams
4. Eliminate “Coastal Route 1” signs – deemed to have minimal traffic impact, create issues with other communities
5. Install Alternate Route Signs on I-295 for points east – under consideration
6. Develop and improve transit services – AMTRAK extension to Brunswick under way, to be coordinated with the existing Rockland Branch Maine Eastern passenger rail service.
7. Reduce or eliminate access to some side streets – would severely impact local traffic and/or businesses
8. Provide Van Pools and Park and Ride Lots – MaineDOT has offered to work with groups to develop park and ride lots and possible GoMaine where warranted

Transportation System Management (TSM)

TSM consists of low impact roadway and intersection improvements and operational strategies designed to improve traffic flow through an area such as signal timing improvements. Actions considered either by MaineDOT or from the DEIS comments received included:

1. Reroute trucks in the summer – no viable route available that would not be longer, results in negative impact to commerce

2. Traffic Officer – conducted by Town through 1988, MaineDOT offered to test with focus on managing pedestrians
3. Convert perpendicular on-street parking to angled parking – tested and retained
4. Install Median Island & Turning Lanes – both tested, turn lanes retained.
5. One-Way Traffic on Side streets – tested on Middle and Water Streets (little to no improvement to traffic flow)
6. Consolidate Crosswalks – One of two crosswalks at Water Street permanently removed
7. Install Traffic Signals to manage vehicular and pedestrian traffic – tested at Middle and Water Streets with one-way streets (little to no improvement to traffic flow)
8. Install Pedestrian Overpass or Tunnel – considered but dismissed (low usage expected, ADA concerns, major change in historic aspects resulting in a negative effect (disallowed if alternatives exist)
9. Relocate the post office annex – considered infeasible and potentially negative impact to downtown
10. Create off-street parking – Railroad Avenue plan developed by Wiscasset
11. Modify speed zones to smooth transitions – deemed appropriate for conditions as is
12. Incorporate Access Management – MaineDOT will assist any community in establishing access management on urban and non-State highways
13. Install traffic signals to move traffic and pedestrians more efficiently (tested with little to no improvement in traffic flow)
14. Improve several intersections – Rte. 27 at Rte. 1 in Wiscasset funded for construction in 2011, Rte. 27 at Rte. 1 in Edgecomb part of the “No-Build” alternative

Other

1. Widen Route 1 – conflicts with the downtown aspects and results in an “adverse effect” on historic Wiscasset Village
2. Extend Washington Street or other alternate routes – pushes the congestion to local streets, has adverse effects to historic properties
3. Construct Bypass Tunnel – considered infeasible due to high cost, impacts to historic properties
4. Provide alternate plans at segmented levels of investment – not conducive to solving the long-term congestion problem, interim investments could be later found to be contraindicative for the final solution(s)

Wiscasset Route 1 Corridor Study

Non-Bypass Initiatives

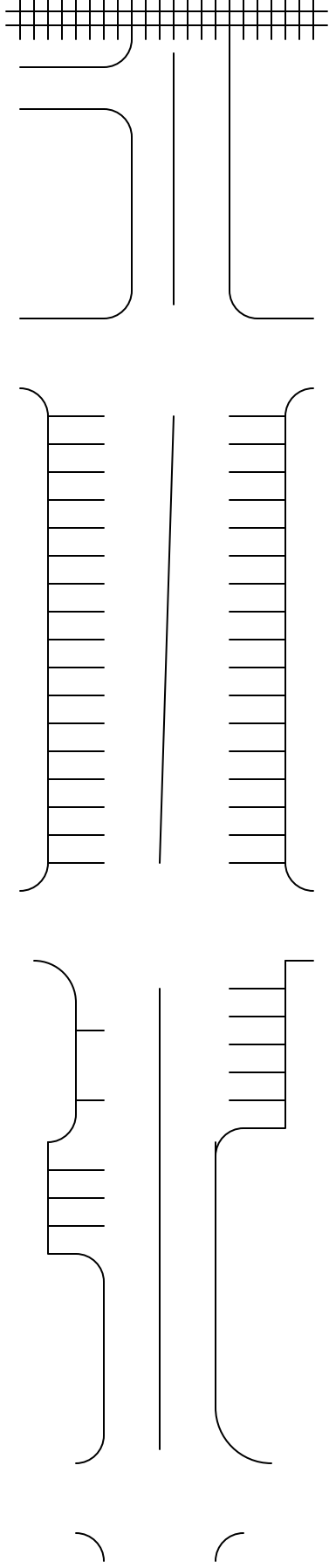
December 15, 2010

Actions Taken: Main Street – Before 2000

Route
218

Middle
Street

Water
Street



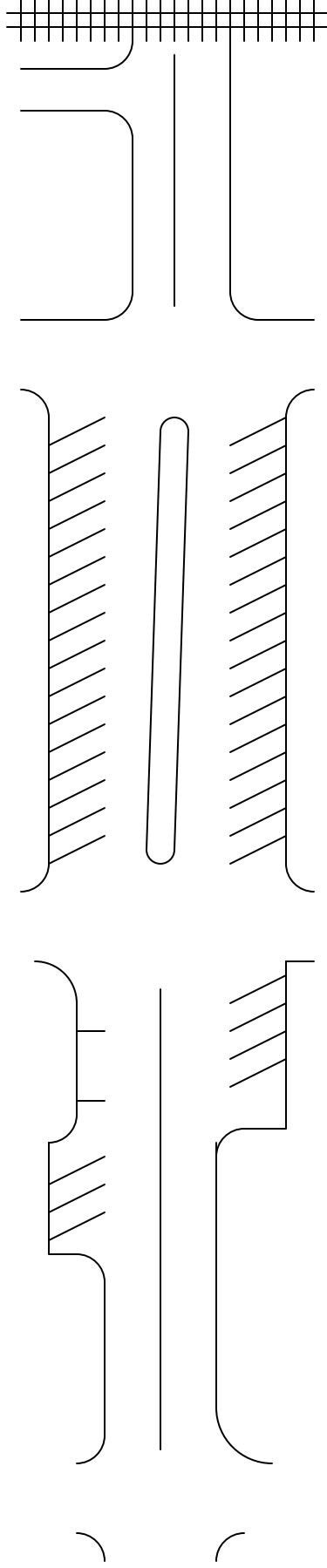
Changes: Summer traffic officer discontinued after 1998

Actions Taken: Main Street – 2000

Route
218

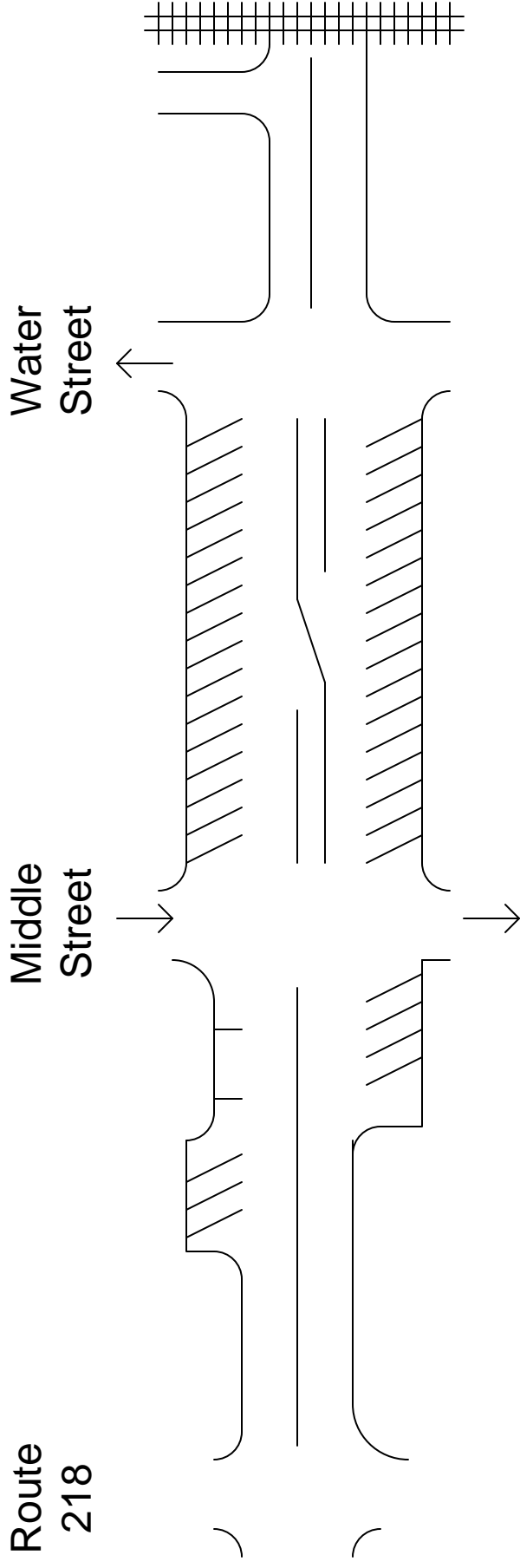
Middle
Street

Water
Street



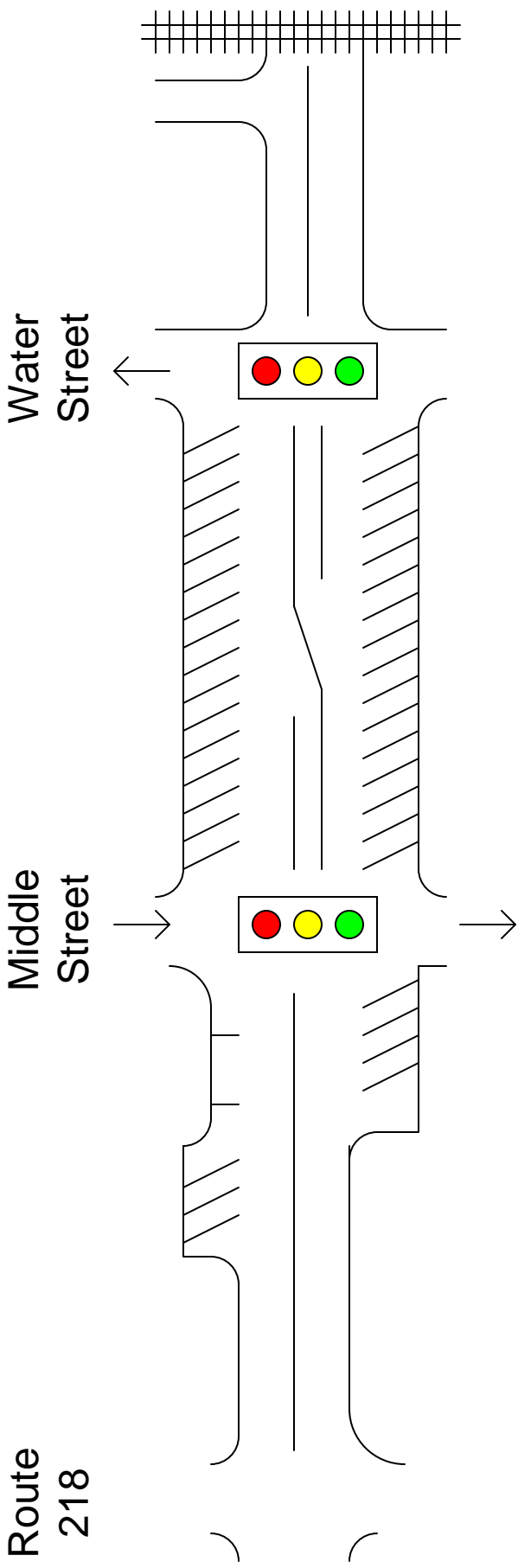
- Changes:
- Perpendicular parking converted to angle parking
 - Median island constructed
 - NB left turn to Water St prohibited
 - SB left turn to Middle St prohibited

Actions Taken Main Street – June 2001



- Changes:
- Median traffic island replaced by left turn lanes
 - One-way traffic implemented on Middle and Water Streets
 - Former left turn prohibitions removed
 - Long crosswalk at Water Street removed

Actions Taken: Main Street – July 2001



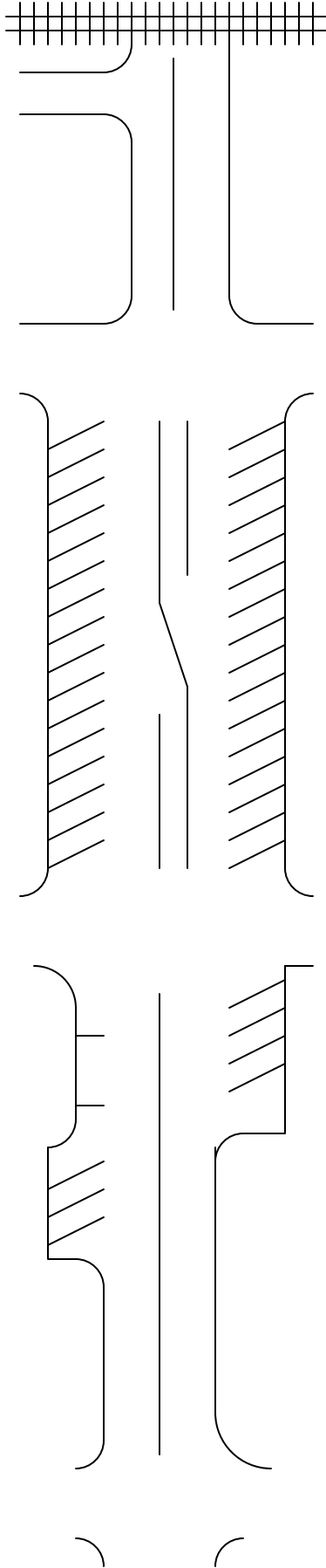
Changes: Traffic signals installed at Middle and Water Streets

Actions Taken: Main Street – After 2001

Route
218

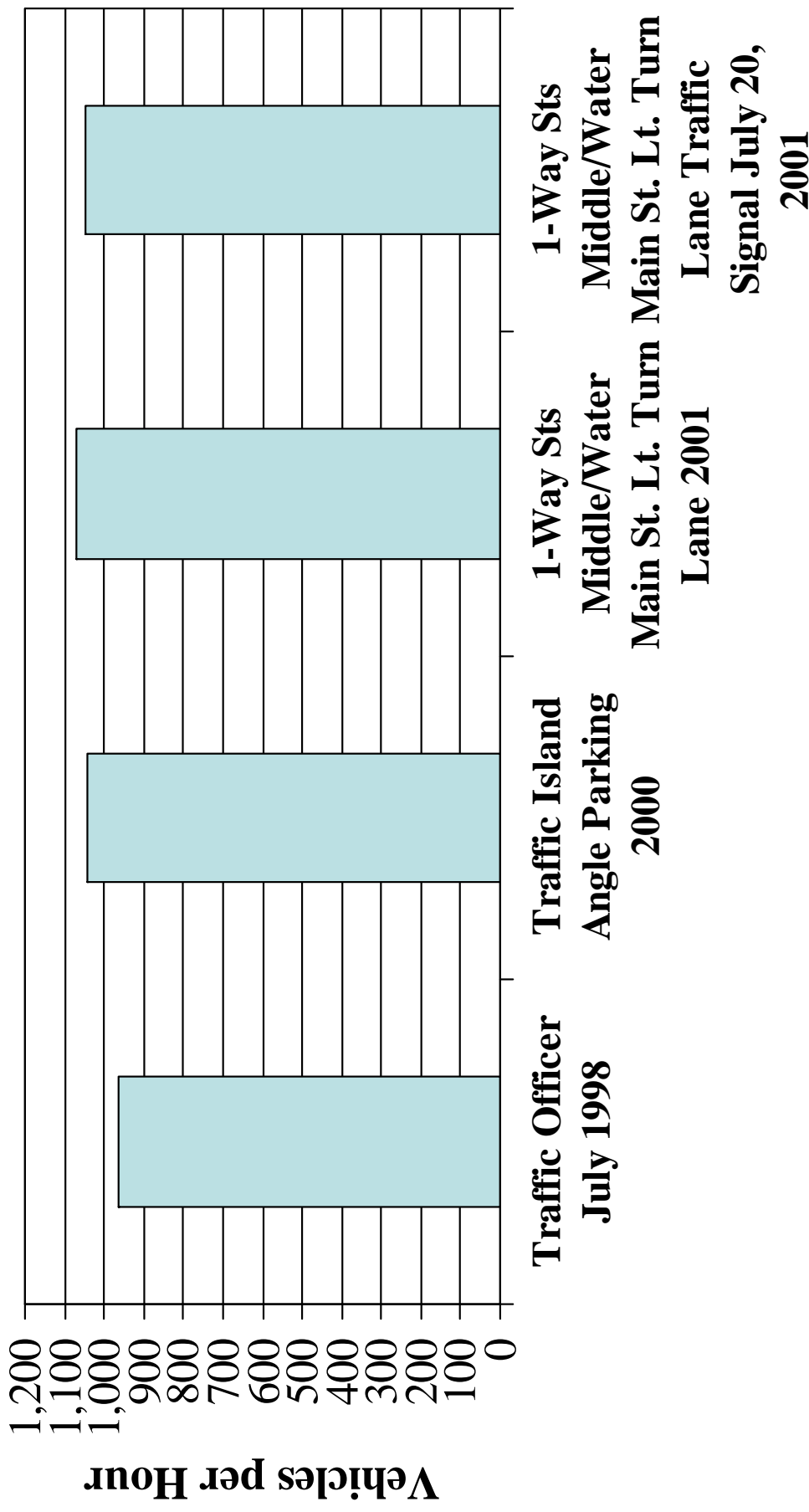
Middle
Street

Water
Street

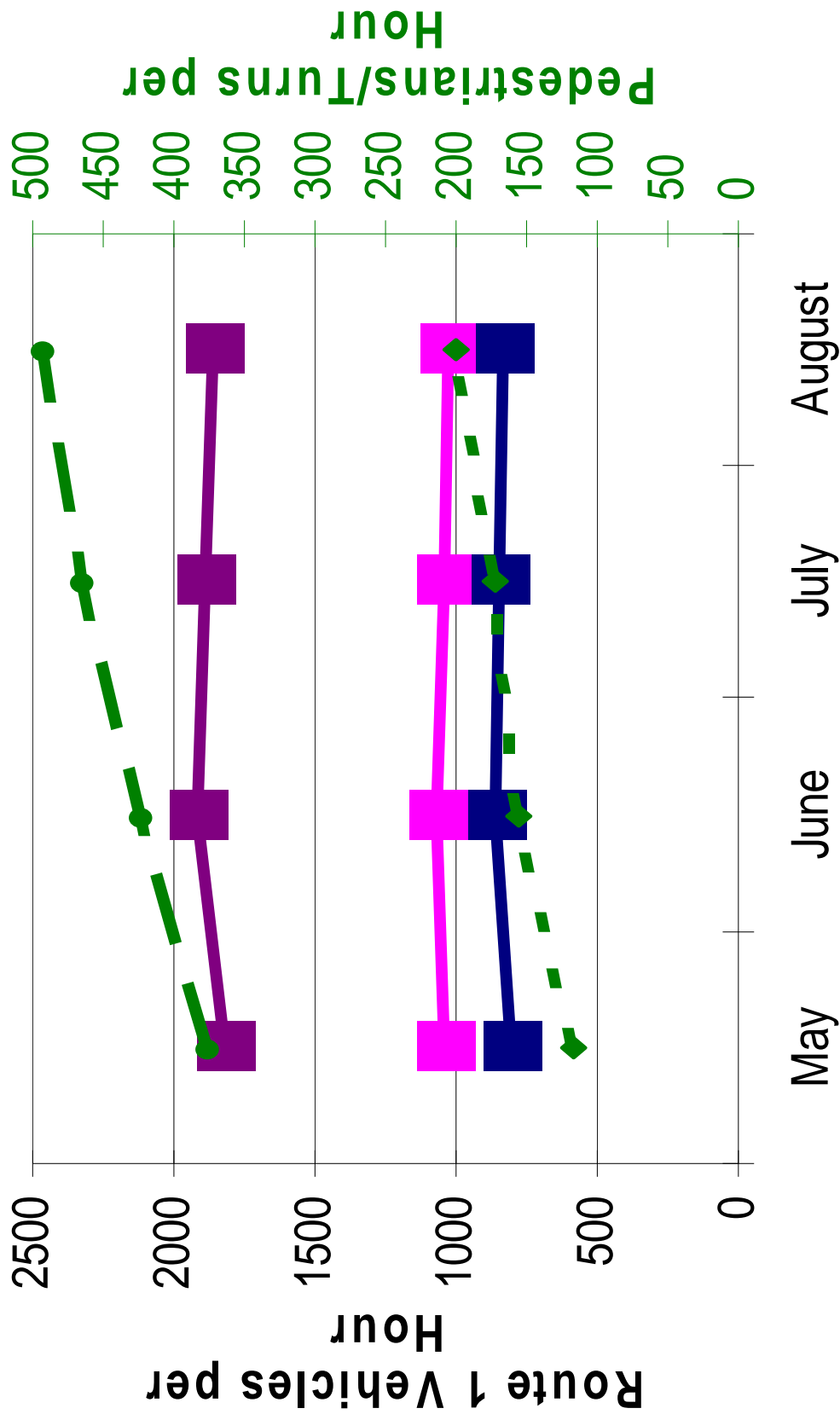


Changes: Traffic signals removed
One-way streets restored to two-way traffic

Performance Evaluation of Actions Taken



Downtown Activity and Route 1 Capacity



■ Northbound Capacity
 ■ Southbound Capacity
 ■ Combined Capacity

◆ Crossing Pedestrians
 ■ Turning Vehicles

Downtown Village Traffic Management Comments & Initial MaineDOT Responses

NOTE: Items in green font indicate approaches that MaineDOT believes may warrant further evaluation and discussion.

DEIS Comments Received (Similar Comments Combined)		MaineDOT Initial Response
Pedestrian Control		
1	Build pedestrian underpasses or overpasses on Main Street.	(1) Previous test shows minimal congestion reduction; expense of making handicapped accessible may offset limited benefit (2) Need to assess historic preservation concerns (overpass not acceptable).
2	Install pedestrian traffic signals so that people will cross in groups.	(1) Traffic signals could be somewhat effective in reducing vehicle-ped conflicts; data shows minimal congestion reduction in previous test (2) Need to assess historic preservation concerns.
3	Relocate and/or consolidate the crosswalks.	One crosswalk was eliminated in 2001; discuss benefits.
4	Provide a Post Office Summer Annex on Federal Street to minimize pedestrian and traffic conflicts.	(1) GSA approval required (2) Two locations would result in confusion as to which location to go to (3) Increased left turns if one new location (4) No mail deliveries - all locals go to Post Office
5	Reintroduce a crossing guard.	Crossing Guard was least effective at improving traffic capacity; review data
6	Depress Rte. 1 from Post Office to railroad and create parking / pedestrian plaza above.	(1) Technical issues (potential ledge with buildings nearby, sidestreet connections, etc.) (2) Significant traffic disruption during construction (3) Historic preservation concerns.
Parking Control		
1	Restrict parking on Main St. to parallel on one or both sides to create green strip in center.	(1) Businesses unlikely to accept this approach as parking spaces would be lost; need feedback.
2	Create extra parking off Route 1 in Wiscasset, with or without shuttle service, and/or elimination of on-street parking.	(1) There are no known lots available in the Village area (2) Limited parking is available at the Wiscasset Town Landing
3	Have Wiscasset require a certain number of parking spaces in order for a business to be permitted.	This is a Local Zoning Ordinance issue; need feedback.
Through Traffic Control		
1	Install web cams or traffic counters at either end of the congested area in Wiscasset – at NAPA and the junction of Rte. 27. This will allow people to change their travel plans if necessary.	(1) Technologically feasible (2) Traffic counters would not provide traffic queue information (3) Establish a regional work group to identify business issues and other concerns (4) Estimated installation cost = \$10,000/camera (no tie-in to VMS), M&O costs \$500/camera (5) Operations plan needed.
2	Create a sensor-based traffic information system for posting on 5-1-1, E5-1-1, information center kiosks, etc. See following websites: (www.gcmtravel.com/gcm_chicago.jsp and www.georgia-navigator.com/maps/georgia and www.511southflorida.com	(1) Technologically feasible (2) Establish a regional work group to identify business issues and other concerns (3) Annual cost estimated at \$1,000 per mile of covered area.
3	Place variable message signs (VMS) along I-295 south of Wiscasset, at Belfast and at Rockland to direct traffic to Rtes. 3 and 17. The VMS should be activated when there is more than a 5-minute wait in Wiscasset.	(1) Technologically feasible (2) Establish a regional work group to identify business issues and concerns (e.g., message provided, etc.) (3) Initial cost estimated at \$50,000/VMS, annual operational cost estimated at \$2,500 (4) Operations Plan needed.
4	Eliminate all "Coastal Route 1" signs on Turnpike and I-295	Not considered feasible - unacceptable to Midcoast businesses.
5	Install alternate route signs at the Kittery Toll Booth, Exits 44 and 52 on the Turnpike and at Exit 28 on I-295. Signs should indicate "Camden, Rockland and Points East – Use Rte. 295 to Rtes. 3 and 17; Woolwich, Wiscasset, Boothbay and Damariscotta-Newcastle – Use Rte. 1"	(1) Providing a brief meaningful message difficult (2) Static messages may be ignored due to longer travel distances involved (3) Establish a regional work group to identify business issues and other concerns
6	Revise speed zones to provide smoother transition from higher speeds, prominently post signs and enforce speed limits	(1) Speed Zones have been reviewed and reduced from 45 to 35 on the Wiscasset side of Davey Bridge. (2) MaineDOT cannot enforce traffic laws (3) Transitioning speed zones will not reduce congestion, as it cannot increase the number of vehicles that can move through the Village.

Downtown Village Traffic Management Comments & Initial MaineDOT Responses

NOTE: Items in green font indicate approaches that MaineDOT believes may warrant further evaluation and discussion.

	DEIS Comments Received (Similar Comments Combined)	MaineDOT Initial Response
7	Develop or improve intercity bus, passenger rail and other public transportation	(1) MaineDOT works closely with transit companies and is working on passenger rail expansion as part of their long-term plan (dependent on capital and ongoing operational funding). (2) Bus and rail services have been expanding.
8	Relocate businesses and / or the Post Office	Relocating businesses and / or Post Office is not considered feasible.
9	Install traffic signals to help traffic move more smoothly and to help pedestrians crossing the road.	Traffic signals were tested and found to manage pedestrian crossing activity, but will not address congestion. See pedestrian traffic signals under Pedestrian Control.
10	Interchanges at Rte. 27 and /or 218 to reduce traffic into Town	Full and partial interchange options are being considered.
11	Widen, elevate or depress Rte. 1	(1) Widening would require significant parking and other changes that would likely be opposed by Wiscasset Village businesses. Need feedback. (2) Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) has voiced strong opposition to changing the character of the Historic Village area.
12	Construct a Bath-like viaduct	(1) This is not considered a viable option (2) MHPC has voiced strong opposition to changing the character of the Historic Village.
13	Improve High Crash Locations (Rte. 1 at Lee and Bradford Sts., Rte. 1 at Gardiner Road, Rte. 1 from Railroad Street to the Edgecomb Town Line, Rte. 1 at Eddy Road, Rte. 1 at Boothbay Road).	(1) Reviews of all High Crash Locations (HCLs) along Rte. 1 within the Study Area will be evaluated once a final decision is made on the bypass, as a bypass itself would affect these. (2) A Benefit-to-Cost ratio will be assessed. (3) Boothbay Road is addressed in all of the Alternatives under consideration.
14	Block off Federal St. on both ends (at Route 1) during the summer.	This is not considered a viable option as it would severely restrict local traffic movements.
15	Prohibit left turns onto Middle and Water Sts. for NB traffic and left turns onto Middle and Water St. for SB traffic.	Most of this was done during the 2000-2001 field trials; discuss
16	Re-route trucks during the summer	There are no practical existing alternatives to routing trucks away from Rte. 1 in Wiscasset Village.
	Local Traffic Controls	
1	Extend Washington St. to the waterfront with a connector to the Davey Bridge – add rotary at junction of Rte. 27. Make traffic 1-way northbound.	(1) This would push traffic through residential areas (2) There would still be congestion at the waterfront with left-turning traffic NB onto Rte. 1. (3) MHPC has voiced strong opposition to changing the character of the Historic Village.
2	Look at creating alternate route: Mountain Rd. to the Bradford Rd., to Rumerill Road, to Willow Lane to Churchill St. across Rte. 27 and down Hooper St., left onto Rte. 218 north, right into Sheepscot and follow to Rte. 1 in Newcastle.	(1) This would result in pushing traffic through residential areas (2) These roads are not built to the necessary design standards. (3) Task Force should provide feedback
3	Provide Park and Ride lots with carpools and vanpools and educate the public about ride sharing	(1) No known vacant lots available in Village; discuss (2) Requires municipal support; discuss (3) Limited parking available at Wiscasset Town Landing (4) MaineDOT has a rideshare education program.
4	Collaborate with businesses to provide carpool and vanpool incentives, allow working from home when possible	Requires municipal support; discuss
5	Create proposals for alternate plans to solve the problem using the same amount of money - plans for \$10, \$20, \$30 and \$40 million.	(1) MaineDOT is working with the affected communities to identify interim solutions
6	Implement Rte. 1 Midcoast Study and Gateway-1 recommendations.	In process; MaineDOT intends to implement pertinent recommendations that relate to the Purpose and Need of the Wiscasset Bypass Study and the broader needs of the region.
7	Incorporate Access Management.	Requires municipalities to incorporate appropriate zoning and other ordinances; discuss.