PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY COUNCIL

BIENNIAL REPORT TO GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE

February 2025

I. BACKGROUND AND STATUTORY REPORTING REQUIREMENT

The Public Transit Advisory Council (PTAC or Council) is a voluntary board established in statute to advise the State Legislature and the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) on public transit services in the state. Council members are appointed by the MaineDOT Commissioner and represent a broad range of perspectives. The Council is administered by MaineDOT.

Excerpt from Public Transit Advisory Council Statute 23 MRSA 4209-A:

> ***5. Report.*** *The council shall report on its deliberations and any recommendations by March 1st of each odd-numbered year to the Governor and the joint standing committees of the Legislature having jurisdiction over transportation matters and health and human services matters. The report must include:*
>
> *A. An assessment of the level of public transportation services and infrastructure provided to the public in each geographic region;*
>
> *B. Recommendations for the level of service and supporting infrastructure that should be provided, an estimate of the cost of providing those services and supporting infrastructure and a recommendation for any necessary additional funding; and*
>
> *C. A progress report on the implementation of the most recent statewide strategic transit plan for the department as well as the quinquennial locally coordinated plan for regional transit under section 4209, subsection 2.*

II. SUMMARY OF DELIBERATIONS

The PTAC is comprised of 29 members offering diverse perspectives on Maine's urban and rural transit needs (see Appendix A). The Council is charged with advising the Departments of Transportation, Labor, and Health and Human Services on matters related to public transportation. The Council meets at the call of the chair no less than three times per year, meeting six times in 2024 (on February 29, April 22, June 12, August 14, October 9, and December 11) and three times to date in 2025 (on January 8, February 12, and February 19). The Council heard presentations from all transit regions in Maine, including a description of existing services and an assessment of challenges and needs. The Council also developed a committee structure with the idea that separate working groups would advance the process of evaluating existing conditions, assessing plans and investments, and developing recommendations to be compiled in the final report. Committees are made up of volunteer Council members and include a chair. The committees include:

- The Steering Committee, to provide guidance and direction to the PTAC and committees on goals, objectives, and schedules of work product, and act as the primary administrative unit of the PTAC;
- The State of Transit Committee, to review and document the current transportation systems and networks by region, to identify gaps or areas that need attention for improvement and/or investment, and/or to recognize satisfactory current conditions;
- The Research and Policy Committee, to identify, monitor, study, and report on transportation policies and considerations that are established and successful elsewhere, and may be viable for implementation in Maine; and
- The Mobility Alternatives Committee, to evaluate and propose recommendations for mobility options that are inside and outside of the network of publicly funded transportation services, that may address first/last mile needs, or that may be in a community with little or no public

transportation, using a total systems approach.

A survey of members on areas of concern and priorities informed Council discussions and decisions.

All meeting materials, including the regional presentations and minutes, are available at www.maine.gov/mdot/transit/ptac.

III. NEEDS ASSESSMENT/UNMET TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

As stated in prior PTAC Biennial reports, it is difficult to precisely pinpoint unmet transportation needs. The 2024-25 Council considered multiple approaches to review and document the needs of the state and its community members, including:

- A review of the most up to date state and regional plans;
- A compilation of funding requests and considerations provided by transit operators; and
- A summation of relevant reports on transportation services and unmet need in the state

The Maine State Transit Plan, along with the other modal plans in MaineDOT's Family of Plans, was finalized in March 2023. The plan's assessment of existing conditions describes the current transportation network. The full report is available on the MaineDOT website at https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/27763afe326645c285cb1d726ee68cae

Data submitted by the local transit providers shows a need for over $108,000,000 from 2024 to 2028 in capital expenses, including fleet replacements, facilities upgrades, and other critical investments. Table 1 presents the capital project needs of local transit operators from 2024 to 2028, over the five-year period, with the highest need in 2025 ($40,026,924) and the lowest in 2028 ($5,436,322).

Table 1. Capital Project Needs of Local Transit Operators

Year	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	5-Year Total
Project Totals	**$ 12,937,194**	**$ 40,026,924**	**$ 11,687,818**	**$ 37,132,122**	**$ 5,436,322**	**$ 108,116,270**

An independent report released by the John T. Gorman Foundation in January 2025 (Appendix B) highlights significant transportation challenges in Maine, particularly affecting low-income and marginalized communities. The report provides an update on the unmet transportation needs in Maine, using a similar methodology as the 2019 PTAC report. The table below summarizes the transportation need as of 2022, the last reporting year of available data required to quantify the metric.

100% of trip need (2018-2022)	20% of trip need (2018-2022)	Trips provided (2022)	Trip gap (2022)	% of need being met by current trips
28,370,428	5,674,086	3,251,703	2,422,383	11%

Sources: Calculations based on Transportation Research Board methodology and data from the National Household Travel Survey, American Community Survey, and the National Transit Database

Key findings from the report include:

- **Households Without Vehicles**: Approximately 40,000 Maine households lack reliable access to a vehicle. This includes about 15,000 employed workers without a vehicle and an additional 52,000 individuals living in households where the number of workers exceeds the number of vehicles.
- **Transportation Costs**: Basic transportation expenses for most Maine households exceed $1,000 per month, surpassing costs for necessities like food and housing for many families.
- **Public Transportation Services**: Current public transit programs meet only about 11% of Maine's total transportation need, providing 3 million out of 28 million trips per year. Approximately 3,000 Mainers regularly commute using public transportation, with one in four spending 60 minutes or more on their one-way journey to work.
- **Driver's License Access**: Nearly 90,000 Maine adults (ages 18 and older) do not hold a driver's license. This group includes over 15,000 individuals in their 20s, a critical age for accessing education and employment opportunities. Barriers such as the high cost of driver's education and lack of vehicle access for required practice driving contribute to this issue.

These transportation barriers disproportionately impact marginalized populations, including low-income households, rural residents, and communities of color. This is confirmed by the Moving Maine Network's 2024 report on transportation barriers, which found that 3 in 5 Maine adults experience transportation insecurity (see Appendix C). Young people, older Mainers, the disability community, and historically marginalized populations are far more likely to experience transportation insecurity. The lack of reliable transportation restricts access to essential services such as employment, education, healthcare, and social support, exacerbating existing inequalities and hindering economic mobility. According to fall 2024 data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey, about 10,500 Mainers are unemployed due to a lack of transportation.

Addressing these challenges requires targeted investments in public transportation infrastructure, support for low-income communities, and policies that reduce transportation costs to ensure equitable access for all Maine residents.

IV. SUMMARY OF CURRENT SERVICES, CHALLENGES, AND FUNDING

Maine's public transportation system is diverse and evolving, with investments aimed at providing consistent service levels, stabilizing the workforce, and maintaining fleets in good states of repair. During the course of the PTAC engagements, regional operators had an opportunity to report on current conditions and funding, successes, opportunities and challenges. While there are many positive advancements occurring across the state, there are considerable challenges. While each transportation provider is unique, there are common themes from across the state representing transportation challenges. Examples include:

- Funding shortfalls;
- Workforce shortages; and
- Difficulty in funding or obtaining vehicles

Region 1 – Aroostook County and Surrounding Towns

Aroostook Regional Transportation Systems (ARTS) provides vital transportation services to the largely rural Region 1 communities of Aroostook County, as well as parts of northern Washington and

Penobscot counties. Covering a vast area of approximately 6,600 square miles, ARTS ensures mobility for residents who often live significant distances from essential services. The organization offers demand-response transportation, medical appointment and cancer care transport, veteran services, and a workforce pilot program. Additionally, it provides limited public transportation, operating on Saturdays in Presque Isle, and serves each community in its region at least once or twice per week.

Opportunities for ARTS include expanding workforce transportation and providing Head Start transportation. There is also potential to bridge gaps in non-emergency health care transport, enhance municipal school bus services, and develop partnerships with tribal communities.

Challenges and Obstacles:
ARTS faces notable challenges, including the difficulties of servicing a sparsely populated and geographically vast region where 40% of residents live more than five miles from a grocery store and 24% are over 20 miles from the nearest hospital. A significant portion of the population finds accessing alternative transportation difficult, underscoring the ongoing demand for ARTS services.

Funding Considerations:
Financial support for ARTS comes from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), MaineDOT, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Modivcare, and local contracts. Most vehicles have been purchased through federal funding with local matching contributions, while some have been obtained entirely through local funding. Ensuring sustainable funding and investment in infrastructure, such as vehicle acquisition and maintenance, is critical to maintaining and expanding services to meet regional transportation needs.

Region 2 – Downeast Community Partners
Did not provide a presentation

Region 3 – Penobscot and Piscataquis Counties
Region 3 providers offer a mix of fixed route, demand-response, and paratransit services across Penobscot and Piscataquis Counties. Key providers include Community Connector, Penquis, West's Transportation, and regional connections to Downeast Transportation. The transit network ensures at least one scheduled stop per town weekly, with additional demand-based services funded separately. Despite significant ridership (over 330,000 trips completed annually), there is potential for expansion, particularly in rural and border areas. The region is working on increasing service hours, fleet capacity, and technology improvements to meet evolving transportation demands.

Challenges and Obstacles:
The region faces several challenges, notably driver shortages, lack of funding for new vehicles, and limited availability of child transportation services. Night and weekend transit options remain scarce due to workforce constraints. Coordination among transit providers and agencies like MaineDOT and DHHS is inconsistent, leading to inefficiencies. Vehicle procurement delays and insufficient funding for fleet expansion further complicate service reliability and expansion efforts.

Funding Considerations:
The total cost of service in the region was approximately $15.2 million in the last National Transit Database (NTD) report year (2023), including a combination of MaineCare ($12.4 million), federal ($1.8 million), and state and local sources ($423,000). While there has been some increase in funding, the

region remains focused on maintaining current services rather than building reserves for long-term sustainability. Additional investments are needed for workforce development, fleet expansion, and technological upgrades like mobile fare payment and improved coordination with rural providers.

Region 4 – Kennebec and Somerset Counties

Kennebec Valley Community Action Program (KVCAP) is the designated public transportation provider for Region 4, serving a predominantly rural area. Until December 21, 2023, KVCAP operated the Kennebec Explorer and Somerset Explorer flex-route services, connecting numerous communities. However, rising operational costs and stagnant funding, exacerbated by the depletion of pandemic relief funds (used from 2020-2023) and staffing shortages, necessitated a service restructuring. Effective January 1, 2024, KVCAP transitioned to a demand-response model using existing KV Van operations. This change was driven by cost and staffing constraints, as well as rider feedback favoring the personalized service experienced during the pandemic. The new service offers curb-to-curb/door-to-door transportation with next-day scheduling. This adaptation aims to serve larger population centers within three designated zones: Augusta, Waterville/Fairfield/Winslow, and Skowhegan, while maintaining intercity service between Augusta and Waterville.

Challenges and Obstacles:

The 2024 service transition aimed to expand demand-response service to smaller rural communities, connecting them to larger centers with essential services and medical care. KVCAP's plan to explore fixed-route services in larger population areas, offering shorter headways and greater convenience, has been delayed due to uncertainty surrounding the brokerage contract. While the agency envisions a system combining fixed routes and demand-response, current local match requirements and the lack of sustained additional funding impede progress. Despite these obstacles, KVCAP continues to seek innovative funding solutions to maintain and expand vital transportation services, remaining committed to addressing regional transportation gaps and ensuring mobility for residents.

Funding Considerations:

Securing the required 40-50% local match for state and federal transportation grants remains a significant challenge. Limited tax bases in many Kennebec and Somerset County municipalities make local fundraising difficult. These local contributions are essential for KVCAP to access crucial FTA grants, including the FTA 5311 (rural areas) and 5339 (bus and facilities) programs, which require hundreds of thousands of dollars in local support. A recent change in the MaineCare transportation brokerage contract also presents potential challenges.

Region 5 – Northern Cumberland and Sagadahoc Counties

Mid-Coast Public Transportation (MCPT) and Western Maine Transportation Services (WMTS) operate transit systems in Region 5, covering rural and urban areas with coordinated services. MCPT supports Waldo, Knox, Lincoln, and Sagadahoc Counties, as well as Brunswick and Harpswell, while WMTS serves Northern Cumberland and Sagadahoc Counties. Both providers leverage federal (FTA 5310, 5311, 5339) and state funding, municipal partnerships, and private grants to expand transit access. Key opportunities include upgrading scheduling software, implementing General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS, which provides real-time information to riders), expanding workforce transit, and constructing a regional transit center in Belfast.

Challenges and Obstacles:

Sustaining a coordinated rural transit model faces hurdles such as facility losses, potential funding shifts

due to MaineCare procurement decisions, and the need for diversified revenue streams. Driver recruitment and training remain critical challenges, along with increasing coordination among local and regional operators. For WMTS, challenges also include sustainable local matching funds, vehicle availability, and consistent branding.

Funding Considerations:
Annual funding for MCPT is approximately $11.4 million for 237,000 trips, sourced from federal and state agencies, municipalities, and private grants. WMTS relies on FTA funds, state support, municipal contributions, and business partnerships. Efforts to secure additional funding focus on improving passenger amenities, expanding service to evenings and weekends, and revamping routes to enhance accessibility.

Both agencies seek to strengthen partnerships, optimize service structures, and increase engagement in workforce transit solutions, ensuring equitable and reliable transportation for the region.

Region 6 – Cumberland County
Transit services in Cumberland County are robust, with several providers including Biddeford Saco Old Orchard Beach (BSOOB Transit), Greater Portland Metro, and Regional Transportation Program (RTP) offering a range of fixed-route, commuter, and paratransit services. Metro, the largest system, is planning service expansions such as the Gorham-Westbrook-Portland Rapid Transit project and enhancements like microtransit pilots and technology upgrades. Regional collaboration through the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS) supports long-term planning, promoting frequent connections, rapid transit, and transit-friendly development.

Challenges and Obstacles:
Sustaining and expanding transit services face significant financial and operational challenges. Federal funding has not kept pace with rising operational costs, and local municipal budgets are constrained. Ridership recovery post-pandemic remains a concern, particularly for fare-dependent services. Infrastructure limitations, such as Metro's near-capacity bus facility and outdated RTP vehicles, further complicate service expansion. Transitioning to zero-emission vehicles is another hurdle, given the high costs and reliability concerns of battery-electric buses.

Funding Considerations:
While state funding has increased, it remains insufficient to fully support operations and expansion. Many service improvement pilots are currently funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) but will lose support after 2025, requiring alternative funding to continue. Capital funding is also constrained, impacting investments in transit signal priority, bus stop improvements, and new facilities. PACTS initiatives emphasize the need for long-term investment in transit infrastructure and transit-oriented development to ensure sustainable growth.

Region 7 – Androscoggin, Franklin, and Northern Oxford Counties
Region 7, encompassing Androscoggin, Franklin, and Northern Oxford Counties, offers a range of transportation services catering to various commuter and seasonal needs. Demand-response services operate on weekdays from 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM, supported by funding sources such as FTA 5311 and 5310 grants, social service contracts, and business sponsorships. These services provided an estimated 42,055 trips in FY 2024 with a fleet of 12 vehicles and four spares. Fares range from $2.50 to $5.00 depending on age, disability status, and distance.

Workforce transit solutions have been piloted in Lewiston-Auburn, offering early morning, evening, and nighttime transportation for workers beyond the current citylink coverage. This initiative, supported by the Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan Workforce Transportation Pilot program and business sponsorships, seeks to address employment transportation gaps, with fares set at $3.00 or employer-paid.

Seasonal services, such as the Sugarloaf Explorer, provide free-fare flex routes catering to ski resorts and condo associations. These services operate 15–18 hours per day from late November through mid-April, utilizing up to 18 vehicles. The Sugarloaf Explorer recorded 96,704 trips, while the Sugarloaf Express accounted for 2,630 trips in FY 2024. Additional commuter routes connect Farmington, Rumford, Lisbon, Lewiston-Auburn, and Bath, serving thousands of riders annually with fares ranging from $0.75 to $5.00.

The cities of Lewiston and Auburn operate a fixed route and complementary ADA paratransit service called citylink that provided over 311,000 in FY24. This fixed route system has ten routes and provides service Monday through Saturday, with a reduced schedule on Saturdays. The system owns two bus stations with passenger facilities, one each in Auburn and Lewiston. These stations are utilized by multiple interline providers like WMTS' Green Line, Blue Line, Lisbon Connection, and MaineDOT's LAP commuter bus that provides service between Lewiston, Auburn, and Portland. Additionally, the Lewiston bus station is an interline point for some daily scheduled service via Greyhound.

Challenges and Obstacles:
Despite these extensive services, the region faces notable challenges, including sustaining local matching funds, staffing shortages, vehicle availability, and ensuring consistent branding and messaging. There is also a growing need for additional passenger amenities, expanded evening and weekend service, and technological enhancements. Priority projects include integrating Lisbon Connection into the Blue Line system and launching evening pilot programs for Oxford Hills and Mount Blue. Addressing these challenges requires coordinated efforts among municipalities, businesses, and funding agencies to maintain and expand services that meet the evolving needs of the region's residents.

Funding Considerations:
Citylink is supported by FTA 5307 formula funds and operating assistance provided by MaineDOT. The remaining system costs are split evenly between the cities. In FY24 each city provided over $468,000 in local match to keep the system operational.

Region 8 – York and Southern Oxford Counties
Region 8, covering York and Southern Oxford Counties, hosts several public transit providers, including BSOOB Transit, Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST), North New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA), and York County Community Action Corporation (YCCAC). These agencies provide a mix of fixed-route, seasonal, and on-demand services tailored to urban, rural, and workforce mobility needs.

Challenges and Obstacles:
Opportunities for expansion and service improvement exist, particularly in workforce transportation, commuter services, and transit accessibility. Recent grant awards, such as the Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility (ICAM) grant, support coordination efforts and the establishment of a mobility network for resource sharing. However, challenges include aging fleets, the need for infrastructure enhancements, and post-pandemic ridership recovery**,** which has only reached about 70% of pre-COVID levels. Additionally, some services, such as the Shipyard Commuter Program**,** require strategic deployment to ensure long-term sustainability.

Funding Considerations:
Transit agencies in the region rely on a combination of federal (FTA 5307, 5311, 5339, and others), state, and local funding sources, as well as municipal contributions and private grants. A lack of dedicated state funding presents financial constraints, making agencies reliant on grants and municipal support. Infrastructure needs, including fleet replacement, new signage, and technology improvements such as Computer-Aided Dispatch/Automatic Vehicle Location (CAD/AVL) and real-time passenger information systems**,** require additional investment. The region continues to seek innovative funding mechanisms to sustain and expand services while addressing workforce shortages and growing mobility demands.

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority
NNEPRA provides intercity passenger rail service with five round trips daily between Brunswick and Boston, covering 143 route miles, using three Amtrak train sets, operating at speeds up to 79 mph, serving 12 station communities in three states, and carrying approximately 600,000 riders in FY2024.

NNEPRA has the authority to set fares and establish promotions for Downeaster trains. NNEPRA adopted a dynamic fare and revenue management approach based on consumer demand and inflation. Modest increases to One-Way Coach value fares, Business Class fares, and Multi-Ride passes were implemented. The ability to adjust fares to meet rising costs and changing demand levels allows NNEPRA to maximize ridership, stay within budget limitations, meet cost recovery goals, and minimize the impact of taxpayer contributions.

Challenges and Obstacles:
NNEPRA has opportunities to expand service to new destinations, such as Rockland, and to increase ridership by improving service quality and marketing. NNEPRA also has the opportunity to partner with other organizations to improve transportation options for the region. Challenges include the need for funding to maintain and improve infrastructure, equipment, and services. NNEPRA also must balance the needs of different stakeholders, including passengers, communities, and host railroads.

Funding Considerations:
Obstacles include the need for substantial capital investments for infrastructure projects, competition from other modes of transportation, and potential disruptions caused by track maintenance or other unforeseen circumstances. Funding considerations are crucial for NNEPRA, as it relies on a combination of ticket revenue, federal grants, state match funding, and in-kind contributions from partners to support operations and capital projects. NNEPRA's funding considerations include the need to secure federal, state, and local funding to support operations, maintenance, and capital projects. NNEPRA also must ensure that fares are affordable for passengers while generating enough revenue to cover costs.

Maine State Ferry Service (MSFS)
By statute, MSFS provides routes from Rockland to Vinalhaven, North Haven, and Matinicus Isle; from Lincolnville to Isleboro; and from Bass Harbor to Swan's Island and Frenchboro. These services are vital for island communities, ensuring access to the mainland for goods, services, and travel.

Challenges and Obstacles:
Competition with other employers for the limited pool of qualified mariners is a significant challenge. Most MSFS crew positions are fully licensed, and Coast Guard regulations require vessels to be fully crewed to sail. Full-time relief personnel cover the absences of permanent crew members. MSFS employees are deemed essential personnel, with service continuing as weather allows during closures of

Maine State offices. MSFS is interested in exploring improved transit connections that would enable island residents to leave their vehicles behind when traveling to the mainland. MSFS' relatively modern and reliable fleet is funded though state funds and grants.

Funding Considerations:
State funds cover half of MSFS operating expenses, with ticket revenues providing for the other half. Fares were increased in the past year.

GO MAINE

GO MAINE is Maine's statewide travel resource program. GO MAINE was relaunched in 2022 and is administered by consultant AECOM on behalf of MaineDOT and the Maine Turnpike Authority, with funding contributions of 75% from MaineDOT and 25% from MTA. GO MAINE connects members with travel options for all destinations in the state, including public transit, carpooling, vanpooling, volunteer driver networks, and biking and walking. GO MAINE focuses on engaging employers, institutions, and other organizations that generate a significant number of trips, as well as community partners and stakeholders. It also supports Maine's Climate Action Plan by targeting a 10% reduction in light-duty vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by 2025 and a 20% reduction by 2030.

GO MAINE currently has nearly 12,500 total members, and since its relaunch in 2022, has reduced vehicle miles traveled by over 6 million and total trips by nearly 300,000, with 63% of inquiries producing a rideshare match.

Challenges and Obstacles:
GO MAINE provides various mobility solutions, including a co-branded website and app featuring a trip planner, environmental impact dashboard, and rewards for users. Additionally, it offers volunteer driver program support and employer-focused services such as new hire support, GIS mapping, and preferential parking. Opportunities lie in leveraging these tools to enhance commuter engagement, reduce carbon emissions, and contribute to state climate goals.

Funding Considerations:
The program faces obstacles related to maintaining sustainable funding sources and ensuring the scalability of its initiatives. The current funding model is heavily reliant on MaineDOT and MTA contributions, posing a risk if budget priorities shift. To address this, GO MAINE could explore diversified funding streams, including federal grants, private sponsorships, or partnerships with local businesses and community organizations.

V. MAINE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FUNDING SUMMARY

State Fund Source Limitations. Maine has a constitutional provision (see below) preventing the use of Highway Fund dollars for other than named infrastructure costs. Therefore, support for public transportation and freight facilities/operations (rail, ports) are not allowed. MSFS is considered an extension of the highway system to connect roadways on either side. These funds come out of the $9 million/year in Multimodal Transportation funds raised through the tax on vehicle rental fees. Given the lack of other funding sources for Multimodal operations, this fund is overcommitted requiring the need to develop new funding needed to support ongoing additional funding for transit (or other modes).

Article, IX, Section 19 from Maine State Constitution:

Limitation on expenditure of motor vehicle and motor vehicle fuel revenues. All revenues derived from fees, excises and license taxes relating to registration, operation and use of vehicles on public highways, and to fuels used for propulsion of such vehicles shall be expended solely for cost of administration, statutory refunds and adjustments, payment of debts and liabilities incurred in construction and reconstruction of highways and bridges, the cost of construction, reconstruction, maintenance and repair of public highways and bridges under the direction and supervision of a state department having jurisdiction over such highways and bridges and expense for state enforcement of traffic laws and shall not be diverted for any purpose, provided that these limitations shall not apply to revenue from an excise tax on motor vehicles imposed in lieu of personal property tax.

Federal and State Funding Summary.

For FY23, the FTA provided the state of Maine $49,427,702, with rough breakdown as follows:
Federal operating/planning/administration $12,000,000
Federal capital (vehicles, ferries, buildings, equipment, rail).....$37,427,702

Based on the details reported to the NTD, an arm of the FTA, the State of Maine contributed a total of $4,002,446 to assist with the federal match requirements for operating expenses, 2% for 16 local transit providers, and 7% towards NNEPRA's operating expenses. Additionally, the state contributed $6,285,240 towards MSFS, which does not have federal funding, nor a match requirement. These funds are primarily sourced from the state's Multimodal Transportation Fund *(see Table 2)*.

Table 2. Sources of Operating Funds for Public Transportation in Maine

NTD 2023	16 Local Transit Providers		NNEPRA		MSFS		Total	
Federal Annual	$32,329,648	38%	$12,030,755	45%	$0	0%	$44,360,403	36%
State Annual	$2,052,667	2%	$1,949,799	7%	$6,285,240	50%	$10,287,706	8%
Local Annual	$8,877,134	11%	$0	0%	$0	0%	$8,877,134	7%
Direct and Fare Revenue	$40,716,364	48%	$12,553,023	47%	$6,230,223	50%	$59,499,610	48%
AVG State $ per Provider	$128,292		$1,949,799		$6,285,240		$467,623	
Share of State Funding	20%		19%		61%		100%	
Total NTD OpEx	$83,873,666		$26,372,652		$12,515,463		$122,761,781	

The NTD collects and compiles financial, operational, and asset information from public transit agencies across the United States. It gathers data on transit operating funding sources, including federal, state, and local government contributions, as well as fare revenues and other income. The NTD then analyzes and reports this data to provide insights into the financial health, funding trends, and performance of transit systems nationwide. Transit operators are required to file annual reports that summarize fiscal year information in alignment with the definitions and classifications defined by the NTD. The most up to date information available at the time of this report's authorship is the fiscal year 2023 filings from each transit operator.

Table 3. NTD 2023 Performance Statistics

	16 Transit Providers		NNEPRA		MSFS		Total	
Total Ridership	5,241,662	84%	517,276	8%	453,209	7%	6,212,147	100%
Total Vehicle Revenue Miles	12,255,169	83%	2,431,369	16%	138,581	1%	14,825,119	100%
Total Vehicle Revenue Hours	602,969	87%	76,365	11%	13,235	2%	692,569	100%

State funding for transit operations was $1.14M for several years. State funding for transit was increased by $5M for state fiscal year 2025 ($3M for transit operations and $2M for discretionary projects). The $2M in discretionary awards was awarded to transit providers through a competitive application process. Total funding for state fiscal year 2026 is expected to be $6.14M, with $2M in discretionary funds distributed through a similar competitive process and the remainder to transit operations. The Lewiston/Auburn to Portland commuter bus service, a two-year pilot program, is supported solely with $1.4M in state funds.

MaineDOT and the Maine Transit Association are exploring a potential new methodology for distributing rural funding which incorporates service-related metrics such as ridership, vehicle revenue hours, and/or vehicle revenue miles, and also accounts for the impact of adopting any new methodology on transit providers and riders. Under the current methodology for distributing operating funds, total funding is split essentially in half between the urban regions (which receive 50.1% of total funds) and rural regions (which receive 49.9% of total funds). The rural portion is divided among the eight rural regions based on each's percentage of the state's total population, public road miles, and land area. Each of these is weighted equally and the average of the three determines the region's share of total available funding. The urban portion is divided between the Metropolitan Planning Organizations, with the PACTS region's funds further divided among the region's transit providers.

VI. COMPARISONS WITH OTHER STATES

Using the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Survey of State Funding for Public Transportation 2024 Final Report, funding strategies and sources in Maine can be compared to other states. The data in the 2024 report is sourced of state filings to AASHTO representing 2022 (See Appendix D for summary tables).

When evaluating state funding sources compared to other states Maine does not participate in the most popular funding methods, such as the **State Gas Tax** (used by 25 states) or **State General Sales Tax** (used by 19 states). Maine is represented under the following categories:

- **State Bond Proceeds**: Maine is one of 9 states using this funding source, making it a less common method.
- **State Rental Vehicle Fees and Taxes**: Maine is among 7 states using this method, again indicating a less common approach.

Comparing sources of local funding, Maine aligns with the more popular local funding methods, particularly **Fare Revenue** and **City/County General Funds**. Maine local funding revenues are sourced in the following methods:

- **Fare Revenue**: Used by 46 states, including Maine, making it the most common method.
- **City/County General Funds**: Maine is one of 42 states using this widely adopted method.
- **Advertising**: Maine is among 38 states using this source.
- **Service Contracts**: Maine participates in this method, used by 35 states.
- **Donations**: Maine is one of 30 states utilizing this less common method.
- **Local Property Tax**: Maine uses this source, which is adopted by 25 states.

Lastly, in reviewing and comparing state funding distribution methods Maine utilizes the following:

- **Formula Based Method**: Maine is among 35 states using this most common approach.
- **Discretionary Based Method**: Maine participates in this method, used by 29 states.
- **Other Methods**: Maine is one of 8 states utilizing a less common, unspecified method.

VII. BEST PRACTICES AND INDUSTRY STANDARDS FOR LEVELS OF SERVICE

The characteristics of a quality public transportation system revolve around frequency, convenience, reliability, and accessibility. Transit should not only serve commuters but also connect people to essential services, integrate smoothly with other forms of transportation, and be easy to use. Through these features, the system can build a loyal user base, increase ridership, and contribute significantly to the community's overall mobility and well-being.

Service Frequency

- **Urban Regions:** A good public transportation system has frequent service intervals, especially during peak hours. This ensures that passengers do not have to wait long periods for the next trip. Studies have shown that operational hours from 6:00 AM to midnight with a minimum frequency of at least 15 minutes in peak hours is the standard for effective service.
- **Low Density Regions:** Flex routes and on-demand services should be reliable, with an on-time rate of greater than 95%, and no more than a 30-minute wait between a requested ride and the arrival of that ride.
- **Rural Regions:** Demand-response with advance reservations, possible commuter services.

Spans of Service (All Regions)

- **Extended Hours of Operation:** To cater to people working non-standard hours (e.g., night workers, shift workers), public transportation should run late into the night or early in the morning.
- **Weekend and Holiday Service:** A high-quality system ensures that transportation continues throughout weekends and on public holidays, as people still need to travel for various reasons like recreation, shopping, and visiting family.

Coverage and Connectivity (All Regions)

- **Wide Coverage:** A quality system covers all major areas of a city or region, including neighborhoods, business districts, shopping centers, schools, hospitals, and recreational spots.
- **Integration with Other Transport Modes:** A good system should integrate with other transportation modes (such as cycling, walking paths, taxis, ridesharing, and even personal vehicles) to allow for smooth transfers between modes.
- **Critical Public Services:** The system should provide essential links to hospitals, government buildings, employment centers, educational institutions, and other essential services. Having convenient access to these places makes the system more valuable and crucial for daily living.

Accessibility (All Regions)

- **Universal Accessibility:** Public transportation must be accessible to all people, including those with physical disabilities, older adults, and parents with children. Low-floor buses, ramps, elevators, and clear signage are essential for ease of access.

- **Diverse Payment Options:** Offering easy, flexible payment methods, such as contactless payments, mobile apps, or monthly passes, encourages use by a wide range of people and simplifies the journey.

Safety and Security (All Regions)

- **Safe and Clean Vehicles and Stations:** Cleanliness and safety within the vehicles and stations or at stops or other facilities appropriate for the regional context are essential for user satisfaction. Regular cleaning, proper lighting, and maintenance contribute to an overall feeling of security.
- **Security Measures:** Systems should have visible security personnel, surveillance cameras, and emergency communication systems to reassure passengers about their safety, particularly in high-traffic areas or late-night services.

User Experience

- **On-Time Service:** A quality system should prioritize punctuality and reliability. Passengers should be able to depend on the system to get to their destinations on time, with minimal delays or disruptions.
- **Comfortable and Clean Vehicles:** Comfortable seats, adequate air conditioning/heating, and well-maintained interiors create a pleasant travel experience. Also, the cleanliness of stations and vehicles is crucial for attracting repeat users.
- **Clear Signage and Information:** Having clear, easy-to-understand signage, route maps, and information about timetables helps both regular and occasional users navigate the system with ease.
- **Integration of Technology:** Offering apps with route planning, real-time tracking, mobile payments, and notifications significantly improves the user experience.

VIII. TRANSIT VISION

Right now, transit operators are struggling to maintain current levels of service, and ridership among many local transit providers is rebounding from the pandemic low. An immediate boost in operating support is needed to keep transit operators afloat. Significant additional investment is needed if we want to see that the mobility needs of all Mainers are met and our downtowns, villages, and rural areas are interconnected with safe and affordable rides that boost our economy, reduce personal transportation costs, and get Mainers where they need to go.

According to the American Public Transportation Association, every $1 spent on public transit generates $5 in economic return. Even with a significant service gap, local transit providers employ 1,500 people and provide approximately 14,250 trips per day, or 5.2 million trips per year. Transit is utilized in Maine, but we are far from our potential. Continued investment in transit will produce more jobs, provide more rides (especially for those who cannot drive or cannot afford to drive), generate more economic activity, and improve quality of life for Maine residents.

We know that at least 40,000 Maine households do not have reliable access to a vehicle, and over 90,000 Mainers aged 18 or older do not hold a driver's license. According to the Moving Maine Network, 3 in 5 adults in Maine experience transportation insecurity. Transit services are indispensable for this population, and provide a lifeline to our economy and essential services. However, current transit services have been found to meet only 11% of Maine’s total need.

To close our service gap and provide the type of service that would enable Mainers in every corner of the state to reliably depend upon public transit, our transit operators need to be fully resourced in rural and urban communities alike. The State of Maine not only needs to request more federal support for our operators, it needs to increase the percentage of local match contributions for operators and boost annual operating funds. We propose implementing strategic measures that enhance funding and optimize resource utilization.

Through FY23, the State of Maine contributed 2% of total operating expenses for Maine's local transit providers (the state contributed 50% of operating expenses for MSFS and 7% for NNEPRA). The state has since increased operational support to $3 million annually.

In 2023, local transit providers raised $8.9 million in local municipal funding for operations, representing 11% of operating expenses. This is in addition to $35.3 million in other Directly Generated funds (advertising, private foundation grants, contracted services agreements, etc.). However, state funding is still a critical piece of revenue for all providers. It should also be noted that transit fares are deducted from eligible operating expenses, so cannot be used as local match for federal operating dollars. Comparing current state funding for operations to other levels of funding generated by providers, state funding accounts for only 2% of total operating expenses for all local transportation providers. To best support transit providers and match local funding for transit, the state should contribute at least $8.9 million annually.

This level of support is direly needed by transit operators to have a hope of maintaining existing service. These distributions must be accompanied by a transparent reporting of distributions, the rationale behind those distributions, and any formulas or guidelines used to determine funding amounts.

Maine's statewide long-range plans include goals to increase our state's workforce by 75,000 by 2030, increase housing production by 80,000 units by 2030, increase transit service, and increase transit ridership by 5% annually. To actualize this vision, a commitment to transit-oriented development alongside substantial investment in our existing and future transit system is critical.

IX. RECOMMENDED PRIORITY STRATEGIES AND ASSIGNED ACTION STEPS

To align with Maine's Climate Action Plan goal of increasing ridership by 5% annually, and with a focus on building toward a Maine in which all Mainers have access to regular and reliable transit options, the recommendations below are presented with consensus from the PTAC membership in priority order.

Recommended Priority Actions and Assigned Action Steps (2025-2026)

Priority Recommendations

- Increase state funding for transit. (Lead: Legislature and MaineDOT)
    - Last year, local transit providers raised $8.9 million in local municipal funding for operations, representing 11% of operating expenses. This is in addition to $35.3 million in other Directly Generated funds (advertising, private foundation grants, contracted services agreements, etc.). However, state funding is still a critical piece of revenue for all providers. It should also be noted that transit fares are deducted from eligible operating expenses, so cannot be used as local match for federal operating dollars.

    - Comparing current state funding for operations to other levels of funding generated by providers, state funding accounts for only 2% of total operating expenses for all local transit providers. To best support local transit providers and match local funding for transit, the state should contribute at least $8.9 million annually, or 11% of current operating expenses.
    - Following the success of last year's discretionary awards to innovative transit projects, the state should also continue to provide an additional $2 million annually in funding for innovative projects. Clearly tie project selection to specific goals, priorities, or recommendations in the Maine State Transit Plan.

- Establish a dedicated source for this funding. Ensure the funding source is permanent, long-term, and not subject to non-transit allocations. (Lead: Legislature)
    - The Council has identified three potential pathways for increasing funding for transit. For detailed options within each strategy, see Appendix E.
        - **Strategy A:** Adopt larger Highway Fund revenue sources and establish a statutory minimum transfer for transit expenditures.
        - **Strategy B:** Earmark minor revenue sources for the Multimodal Fund and establish a statutory minimum transfer specifically for Multimodal Fund purposes.
        - **Strategy C:** Earmark revenue sources specifically for transit operations.
    - Ensure transparency in decision making and funding allocations (Lead: MaineDOT)
        - Publish annual transit distributions, including the total amount made available for operations and innovative project support, and the amounts allocated to each agency.
        - For operations funding, publish the formulas and data inputs used to determine funding amounts. Engage stakeholders to ensure formulas and data inputs effectively and equitably advance agency, statewide, and other stakeholder goals.
        - For innovative projects, publish all projects submitted, all projects selected for funding, requested and awarded funding amounts, and the criteria by which selections are made. Engage stakeholders to ensure project selection criteria effectively and equitably advance agency, statewide, and other stakeholder goals.

Other Recommendations

- Implement a reporting system for transit projects that provides analysis on outcomes (Lead: MaineDOT)
    - Work with transit providers to measure and report ridership trends, obstacles, demographics of populations serviced, and accessibility measures implemented.
    - Release an annual report identifying statewide transit improvements and outcomes.
- Designate funds for transportation programs that support mobility for older adults and people with mobility challenges. (Lead: MaineDOT)
- Reduce local match for transit operators to leverage federal dollars. (Lead: MaineDOT)
    - Convene a stakeholder group including transit operators that identifies appropriate allocations.
- Improve Coordination Across State Agencies (Lead: MaineDOT, State Agencies)
    - Adopt a Mobility Management approach to strengthen efficiency, accessibility, and sustainability of transportation in regions across the state.
        - Appoint a state Director of Mobility Management within the state government who is tasked with coordinating all efforts.
    - Department of Health and Human Services

        - Develop an action plan for health systems and healthcare providers to collaborate with community transit services and volunteer transportation programs.
    - Build strong coordination between state agencies that fund transportation – including DOT, Department of Education, Department of Labor, DHHS, and Department of Justice – by establishing an interagency compact and coordinating council.
        - Create a transit service coverage map, outlining all transit routes with their varying headways.
- Enhance and resource GO MAINE and associated outreach and education efforts (Lead: MaineDOT)
    - Develop GO MAINE into a one-call, one-click service for all transportation options across the state.
    - Incorporate GTFS and GTFS Flex mapping of services and routes into the GO MAINE trip planner.
    - Incorporate automated fare payment systems into the GO MAINE trip planning platform, including single payment options across multiple providers.
    - Expand GO MAINE capacity to include regional support staff for Bangor north.
- Support volunteer driver needs (Lead: MaineDOT)
    - Establish scope of services and hire consultant using federal funds.
    - Following consultant report, propose budget to maintain service into the future.
    - Establish an incentive program for volunteer drivers, including mileage reimbursement and rebates for efficient and electric vehicle purchases.
- Conduct robust education and outreach with local partners pertaining to transit service availability and the means by which to use said service (Lead: MaineDOT, MPOs)

Appendix A

PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP
February 2025

Name	Affiliation	Term Expiration
Ryan Neale	MaineDOT (Commissioner's Designee)	Open
Stephanie Carver	Kittery Area Comprehensive Transportation System	12/31/2026
Larry Allen	Androscoggin Transportation Resource Center	12/31/2027
Maddie Jensen	Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System	12/31/2025
Andrew Clark	Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System	12/31/2026
Jessica Maurer	Maine Council on Aging	12/31/2027
Tim Cowan	MaineHealth	12/31/2025
Eamonn Dundon	Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce	12/31/2026
Kim Moody	Disability Rights Maine	12/31/2025
Michael Hallundbaek	Waldo Community Action Partners	12/31/2026
Jay Kamm	Northern Maine Development Commission	12/31/2027
Kirk Bellavance	Kennebec Valley Community Action Corporation	12/31/2025
Dana Knapp	Concord Coach Lines	12/31/2026
Rep. Lydia Crafts	Transportation Committee, Democratic Party	12/4/2027
Sen. Brad Farrin	Transportation Committee, Republican Party	12/4/2027
Catherine Kruglak	Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority	12/31/2027
Susan Lessard	Town of Bucksport	12/31/2025
Nick Mavadones	Casco Bay Island Transit District	12/31/2026
Katherine Freund	ITNAmerica	12/31/2025
Rebecca Grover	Maine Turnpike Authority / GO Maine	12/31/2025
Barbara Schneider	Citizen	12/31/2026
Duane Scott	Augusta Age-Friendly Advisory Committee	12/31/2027
Amanda Dioszeghy	The Jackson Laboratory	12/31/2026
Josh Caldwell, Vice Chair	Natural Resources Council of Maine	12/31/2026
Sandy Buchanan	Western Maine Transportation Services	12/31/2026
Chad Heid, Chair	Greater Portland Transit District	12/31/2025
Omolola Achuba	Maine Department of Labor	12/31/2026
Cheryl Harkins	Statewide Homeless Council	12/31/2025
Cole Cochrane	Maine Youth Action	12/31/2025

Transportation Needs in Maine

Data Brief

Prepared for the John T. Gorman Foundation

By Maine Applied Research

January 2025

CONTENTS

Prepared for

JOHN T. GORMAN FOUNDATION

Building brighter futures for Maine children and their families.

Cover Photo: Andy Thrasher, 2014

KEY FINDINGS

Every day across Maine, thousands of people face challenges getting to work, school, and appointments, running errands, and maintaining social connections because they lack reliable transportation. This paper summarizes the publicly available data about these individuals and their households. Several key findings emerge from this review:

Detailed, public information about who needs to go where and when does not exist.

There is no public repository of specific information about who in Maine needs to go where and when. Without this, it is hard for transportation providers to efficiently design, operate, and grow public transportation services.

Thousands of Maine households lack a vehicle.

In 2018-2022, nearly 40,000 Maine households did not have access to a vehicle. This represents approximately 50,000 individuals of all ages. Many "zero-car" households are renters and people living by themselves. An estimated 15,000 employed workers lack a vehicle and another 52,000 live in households where the number of workers exceeds the number of vehicles.

There are racial and ethnic disparities in vehicle availability.

In 2020, about 7% of White non-Hispanic households (38,000 households) lacked a vehicle. They account for the majority of zero-car households, but householders of other races and ethnicities were more likely to lack a vehicle on a percentage basis. This ranged from 10% of Asian householders to 20% of Native American householders.

Thousands of Mainers rely on public transportation.

In 2018-2022, approximately 3,000 Mainers regularly commuted using public transportation. National surveys show that "transit passengers are primarily people in the most economically active years of their lives, from 25 to 64."[1] Workers who take public transportation were the most likely to have long commutes; one in four (25%) spent 60 minutes or more on their one-way journey to work.

Thousands of Mainers do not have a driver's license.

Nearly 90,000 Maine residents do not hold a driver's license. They include an estimated 15,200 people in their 20s, roughly equal to the 14,600 people age 75 or older who lack a license.

Cost is a significant barrier to licensure and vehicle ownership.

Vehicles are expensive. In addition to their purchase cost and financing charges, they require fuel, oil, maintenance, repairs, and insurance. These expenses are even higher for older cars and households with poor credit. Studies find that transportation budgets for most Maine households exceed $1,000 per month. The high cost of getting a license is an additional deterrent for some young people and new Mainers.

Maine public transportation providers are currently meeting about 11% of need.

A conservative estimate of unmet transportation need suggests that Maine's current providers are meeting about 11% of total need (3 million out of 28 million trips per year). Reaching just 20% would mean growing current services by about 75% (an additional 2.4 million trips).

NOTES

This data brief presents publicly available, quantifiable information on the transportation needs and barriers faced by Maine residents, with a focus on low-income households. It draws heavily from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), as well as a variety of other federal, state, academic, and non-profit sources.

- The ACS provides one- and five-year estimates for most of the statistics in this report. One-year estimates offer a more recent snapshot of conditions but are not available for smaller geographies and have larger margins of error (MOE), especially for relatively small population subsets. Five-year estimates are available for all regions and have smaller margins of error. For example, the number of Maine workers whose commute on public transportation was 60 minutes or more was estimated to be 1,129 with an MOE of 569 (50%) for the single year of 2022 and 759 with an MOE of 168 (22%) for the five years from 2018 to 2022. For this reason, most ACS data used herein is 2018-2022.

- The ACS reports its estimates to the ones digit (e.g., 28,895 renter households lack a vehicle, with MOE of 1,434). Rather than include the MOEs for all statistics in this report, or create a false sense of precision by excluding them, we have rounded estimates to the nearest thousand or hundred when referenced in the text. Some percentages have also been rounded.

- The COVID-19 pandemic started in 2020, squarely in the middle of the ACS's most recent five-year estimates (2018-2022). It created unprecedented disruptions in the daily lives of Maine households and significantly increased the cost of housing and vehicles. Therefore, 2018-2022 averages may not reflect the full extent to which these events have changed the conditions and choices of Maine households.

- This report draws on the Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey, developed during COVID-19 to capture real-time information on critical issues facing households. Its most recent iteration (Phase 4.2) asks several questions about transportation. This survey's sample size is small and the Census Bureau calls it "experimental", urging users to be cautious when interpreting estimates of small sub-populations.

- This data brief presents information on "households" and "householders". The Census Bureau defines a "household" as all the people who occupy a housing unit.[2] They may be related family members or not. The Census Bureau defines "householder" as the person in whose name the housing unit is owned or rented. If the unit is owned or rented by a couple, then either partner may be designated as the householder.

- The Census Bureau defines "workers" as household members who did any work for pay in the week prior to the survey, or who had a job but did not work the previous week due to an illness, vacation, or another reason, or who did unpaid work for their family business.

- The ACS includes one question about vehicles: "How many automobiles, vans, or trucks of one-ton capacity or less are kept at the home for the use of members of this household?"[3] If the answer is one or more, then the household is said to have a vehicle "available." (The survey does not include any other questions about the ownership, condition, or use of the vehicle.)

- The term "zero-car" household refers to households that lack any vehicle, including cars, vans, and trucks. It is widely used in the transportation community and, therefore, is used in this report.

HIGH-NEED POPULATIONS

According to the Transportation Research Board, the factors that most restrict American's daily movements are lack of access to a vehicle and poverty, followed by disability and age.[4] Maine providers report additional obstacles, such as not having a driver's license, the cost of owning or operating a vehicle, and cultural barriers. This section presents data on zero-car households and several other populations with high transportation needs.

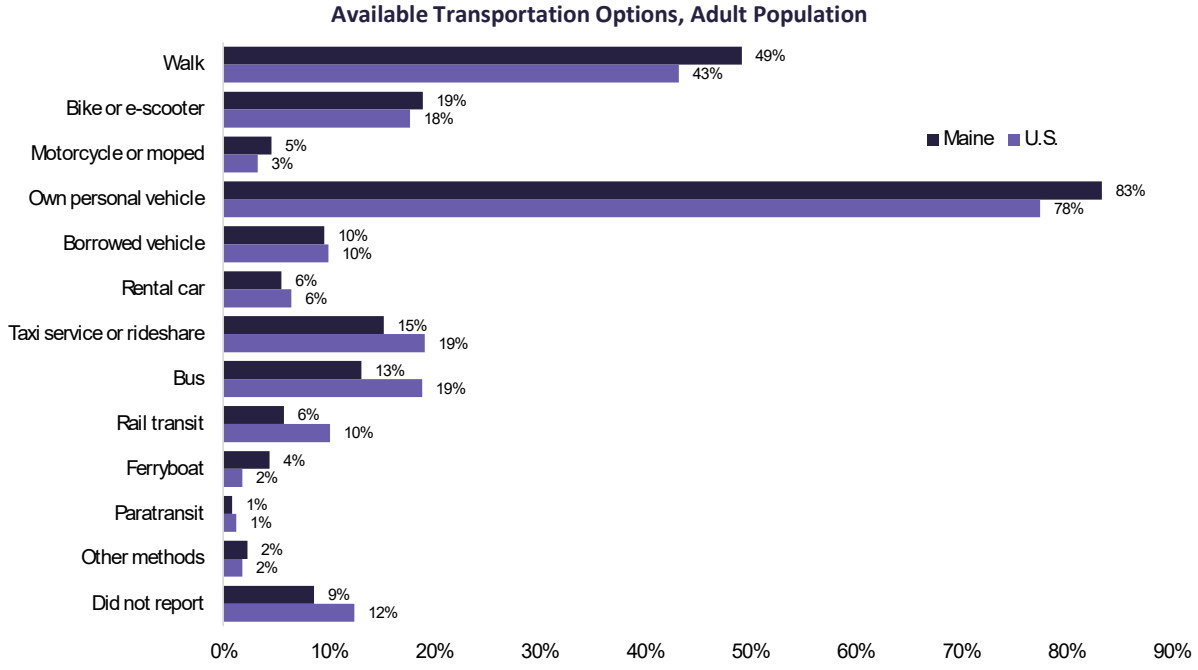
Households and Workers Without Vehicles

About 40,000 Maine households, accounting for about 50,000 individuals, lack a vehicle.

In 2018-2022, 7% of Maine households (nearly 40,000) did not have access to a vehicle. This represents approximately 50,000 individuals for whom getting to work, the grocery store, or a medical appointment requires walking, biking, public transit, or getting a ride from family or friends. This estimate aligns with another survey, which finds that in August and September 2024 about 50,000 Maine adults "always" or "often" lacked enough transportation to meet their needs and another 37,000 "sometimes" lacked enough.[5]

Even households with a vehicle may be dependent on other means if household members need to be in different places at the same time and coordinated travel is not possible. For instance, 11,000 households (about 43,000 individuals) have four or more members and one vehicle. Anecdotal evidence suggests that these households also face challenges. If one member needs the car to get to work, others may be stranded. The chart below shows the estimated percentage of Maine adults with access to various forms of transportation. Compared to the U.S. average, Mainers are less likely to have access to buses, trains, and paratransit and more likely to have ferry access.[6] Car ownership is higher in Maine than elsewhere in the U.S. (83% compared to 78%).

Many zero-car households are renters and people living by themselves.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey, August-Septemer 2024

Nearly three out of four zero-car households (73%) are one-person households, and a similar share (72%) are renters. This means the share of zero-car households will be higher in places with robust rental markets and more one-person households. Young adults age 25 to 34 and older adults age 65 and older are most likely to live alone.[7] The age of householders who lack a vehicle is fairly evenly distributed, with most being age 35 to 64 (46%) or 65 and older (42%).

Share of Maine zero-car households that are…	
1-person households	73%
2-person households	17%
3-person households	5%
4-or-more-person households	4%
Householder 15 to 34 years	12%
Householder 35 to 64 years	46%
Householder 65 years and over	42%
Owner-occupied housing units	28%
Renter-occupied housing units	72%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018-2022

Vehicle availability by household characteristics, 2018-2022						
	United States			Maine		
		No vehicle			No vehicle	
	Total	Number	Percentage	Total	Number	Percentage
Households	125,736,353	10,474,870	8.3%	580,172	39,867	6.9%
By household size						
1-person	35,550,232	6,302,040	17.7%	178,884	29,240	16.3%
2-person	42,558,406	2,226,146	5.2%	224,979	6,787	3.0%
3-person	19,451,108	932,293	4.8%	81,908	2,060	2.5%
4-or-more-person	28,176,607	1,014,391	3.6%	94,401	1,780	1.9%
By age of householder						
15 to 34 years	23,882,491	2,188,378	9.2%	89,538	4,902	5.5%
35 to 64 years	68262086	4459517	6.5%	305,909	18,352	6.0%
65 years and over	33,591,776	3,826,975	11.4%	184,725	16,613	9.0%
By housing tenure						
Owner-occupied	81,497,760	2,560,689	3.1%	426,239	10,972	2.6%
Renter-occupied	44,238,593	7,914,181	17.9%	153,933	28,895	18.8%
By race and ethnicity of householder (2020)*						
White alone	83,715,168	6,482,186	7.7%	506,586	37,776	7.5%
Black of African American alone	11,977,309	2,848,615	23.8%	1,952	275	14.1%
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	765,474	113,710	14.9%	2,735	542	19.8%
Asian alone	3,117,356	397,455	12.7%	2,191	219	10.0%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander alone	98,739	11,053	11.2%	88	15	17.0%
Other race alone	3,835,590	691,659	18.0%	647	86	13.3%
Two or more races	1,970,465	316,389	16.1%	4,001	552	13.8%
Hispanic or Latino	9,179,764	1,579,077	17.2%	2,267	262	11.6%
White Alone, Not Hispanic or Latino	79,086,566	5,767,146	7.3%	504,979	37,590	7.4%
Individuals**	331,097,593	15,382,631	4.6%	1,366,949	49,329	3.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates.

*U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census

**Author's calculations based on household size; "4 or more" households counted as four individuals.

There are racial and ethnic disparities in vehicle availability.

In 2020, about 7% of White non-Hispanic households lacked a vehicle. They account for the majority of zero-car households, but householders of other races and ethnicities were more likely to lack a vehicle on a percentage basis. This ranged from 10% of Asian householders to 20% of Native American householders.

Maine households by race and ethnicity of householder			
		No vehicle	
	Total	Number	Percentage
White alone	506,586	37,776	7.5%
Black of African American alone	1,952	275	14.1%
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	2,735	542	19.8%
Asian alone	2,191	219	10.0%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander alone	88	15	17.0%
Other race alone	647	86	13.3%
Two or more races	4,001	552	13.8%
Hispanic or Latino	2,267	262	11.6%
White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino	504,979	37,590	7.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2020

Over 15,000 Maine workers lack access to a vehicle.

In 2018-2022, an estimated 15,000 employed Maine workers did not have a vehicle. This represented about 2% of all workers, below the national rate of 4%. Another 52,000 workers live in households that have a vehicle, but where the number of workers exceeds the number of vehicles. For instance, a three-worker household with one or two vehicles. These workers may be able to coordinate vehicle travel, but only if their schedules and employer-locations allow it.

About 3,000 Maine workers regularly take public transportation to work, sometimes enduring commutes of over one hour.

In 2018-2022, most Mainers (84%) usually drove to work alone. Ten percent carpooled, 4% walked, and 0.5% (approximately 3,000 workers) used public transportation. In other words, about 1 in 200 Maine workers (0.5%) commuted using public transportation, compared to about 1 in 25 nationwide (4%). Workers who take public transportation were the most likely to have long commutes; one in four (25%) spent 60 minutes or more on their one-way journey to work.

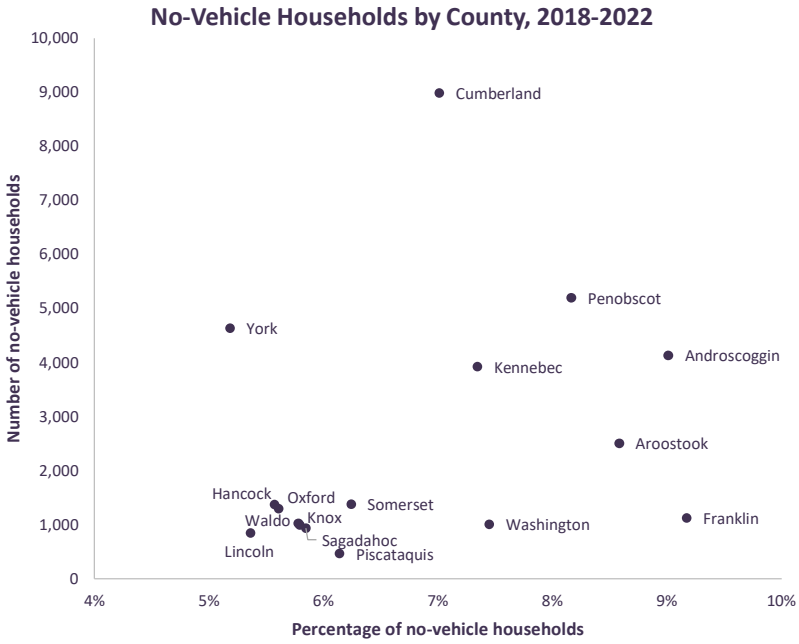
National surveys show that, “transit passengers are primarily people in the most economically active years of their lives, from 25 to 64.”[8] One study found that in 2017, 79% of transit riders were in this age group, 7% were older, and 14% were younger.[9] Almost half (49%) of all public transit rides were people going to or from work.

Vehicle availability and means of transportation to work for workers age 16 and older, 2018-2022						
	United States			Maine		
		No vehicle			No vehicle	
	Total	Number	Percentage	Total	Number	Percentage
Workers	155,201,468	6,626,478	4.3%	661,334	15,209	2.3%
Male	82,664,654	3,408,871	4.1%	341,810	7,517	2.2%
Female	72,536,814	3,217,607	4.4%	319,524	7,692	2.4%
Workers in households with a vehicle, but with fewer vehicles than workers*						
Total workers		14,452,671	9.3%		51,607	7.8%
Means of transportation to work (workers who did not work from home)						
Total workers		138,386,938			587,492	
Drove alone		112,314,702	81.2%		492,292	83.8%
Carpooled		13,388,082	9.7%		58,505	10.0%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)		5,945,723	4.3%		2,999	0.5%
Walked		3,807,792	2.8%		24,157	4.1%
Those within each category whose commute was 60 or more minutes (one way)						
Drove alone		8,288,546	7.4%		32,324	6.6%
Carpooled		1,354,679	10.1%		5,331	9.1%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)		2,264,502	38.1%		759	25.3%
Walked		63,407	1.7%		248	1.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates.
* Author's calculations based on household size; "3 or more worker" households counted as three individuals.

There are zero-car households in every Maine county.

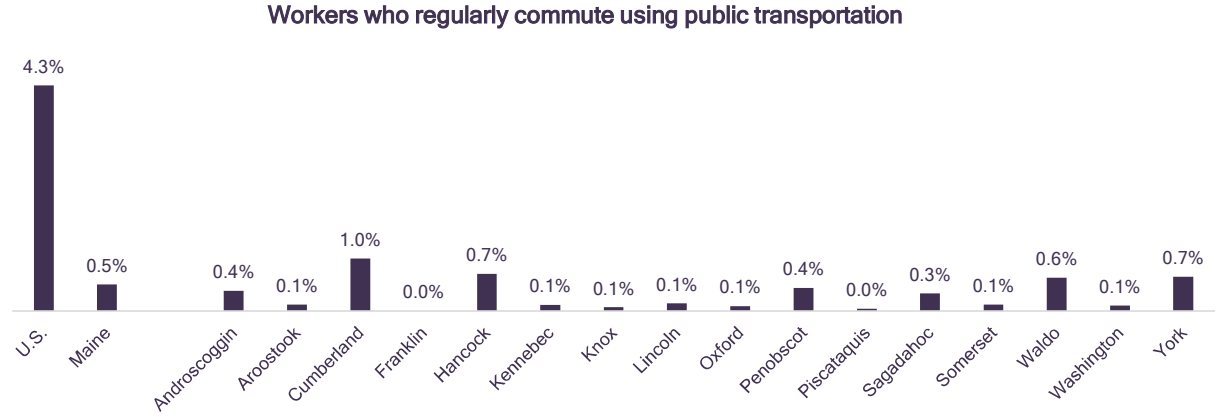
Statewide, the share of zero-car households ranges from 5% in York County to 9% in Franklin County. There are at least 1,000 zero-car households in all but three Maine counties (Lincoln, Piscataquis, and Sagadahoc) and five counties have more than 3,000 (Androscoggin, Cumberland, Kennebec, Penobscot, and York). The greatest numbers are in counties with the largest population centers: Cumberland (Portland), Penobscot (Bangor), York (Biddeford-Saco and Sanford), Androscoggin (Lewiston-Auburn), and Kennebec (Augusta). These places tend to have large rental housing stock and larger populations of low-income households, New Mainers, and younger individuals who lack vehicles.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018-2022 five-year estimates

Workers in Cumberland, Hancock, Waldo, and York counties are most likely to use public transportation.

Just 0.5% of Maine workers commuted using public transportation in 2018-2022, but the percentage was higher in four counties: Cumberland, which has the state's largest public transit system by ridership; Hancock, which has a transit offerings through Acadia National Park and the Jackson Laboratory; Waldo; and York, which has Biddeford-Saco-Old Orchard Beach Transit and offerings connected to Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018-2022 five-year estimates

Vehicle availability and means of transportation to work by county, 2018-2022								
	Androscoggin	Aroostook	Cumberland	Franklin	Hancock	Kennebec	Knox	Lincoln
Total households	45,825	29,237	128,184	12,276	24,660	53,452	17,780	15,848
No vehicle available	4,130	2,510	8,988	1,126	1,374	3,926	1,028	850
	9.0%	8.6%	7.0%	9.2%	5.6%	7.3%	5.8%	5.4%
Total population	111,532	67,237	303,357	29,839	55,851	124,003	40,729	35,466
Individuals in households with no vehicle available*	4,866	3,107	11,594	1,380	1,714	5,278	1,320	991
	4.4%	4.6%	3.8%	4.6%	3.1%	4.3%	3.2%	2.8%
Total owner-occupied housing units	30,450	21,495	89,627	9,290	19,411	38,739	14,084	13,122
No vehicle available	572	574	2,180	358	409	846	384	376
	1.9%	2.7%	2.4%	3.9%	2.1%	2.2%	2.7%	2.9%
Total renter-occupied housing units	15,375	7,742	38,557	2,986	5,249	14,713	3,696	2,726
No vehicle available	3,558	1,936	6,808	768	965	3,080	644	474
	23.1%	25.0%	17.7%	25.7%	18.4%	20.9%	17.4%	17.4%
Total workers age 16 years and over who did not work from home	48,763	26,302	137,372	12,400	24,241	52,142	16,488	14,779
Drove alone	40,356	22,174	111,388	10,269	19,138	44,922	13,499	12,339
	82.8%	84.3%	81.1%	82.8%	78.9%	86.2%	81.9%	83.5%
Carpooled	5,884	2,890	12,827	1,273	3,324	4,820	1,828	1,900
	12.1%	11.0%	9.3%	10.3%	13.7%	9.2%	11.1%	12.9%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	188	33	1375	0	172	60	12	22
	0.4%	0.1%	1.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Walked	1,740	741	8,920	526	1,182	1,708	929	383
	3.6%	2.8%	6.5%	4.2%	4.9%	3.3%	5.6%	2.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates.
* Author's calculations based on household size; "4 or more" households counted as four individuals.

Vehicle availability and means of transportation to work by county, 2018-2022								
	Oxford	Penobscot	Piscataquis	Sagadahoc	Somerset	Waldo	Washington	York
Total households	23,183	63,687	7,654	16,060	22,074	17,263	13,585	89,404
No vehicle available	1,300	5,200	470	939	1,378	1,000	1,012	4,636
	5.6%	8.2%	6.1%	5.8%	6.2%	5.8%	7.4%	5.2%
Total population	58,276	152,640	16,936	36,868	50,656	39,772	31,096	212,691
Individuals in households with no vehicle available*	1,685	6,238	537	1,102	1,606	1,392	1,206	5,343
	2.9%	4.1%	3.2%	3.0%	3.2%	3.5%	3.9%	2.5%
Total owner-occupied housing units	18,627	44,498	5,909	12,319	16,954	13,911	10,645	67,158
No vehicle available	549	1,294	156	372	540	403	317	1,642
	2.9%	2.9%	2.6%	3.0%	3.2%	2.9%	3.0%	2.4%
Total renter-occupied housing units	4,556	19,189	1,745	3,741	5,120	3,352	2,940	22,246
No vehicle available	751	3,906	314	567	838	597	695	2,994
	16.5%	20.4%	18.0%	15.2%	16.4%	17.8%	23.6%	13.5%
Total workers age 16 years and over who did not work from home	22,907	65,428	6,426	16,412	19,945	15,674	11,322	96,891
Drove alone	19,822	55,613	5,332	14,050	16,827	13,524	9,422	83,617
	86.5%	85.0%	83.0%	85.6%	84.4%	86.3%	83.2%	86.3%
Carpooled	2,052	5,496	648	1,436	2,366	1,289	1,420	9,052
	9.0%	8.4%	10.1%	8.7%	11.9%	8.2%	12.5%	9.3%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	21	290	3	55	25	99	12	632
	0.1%	0.4%	0.0%	0.3%	0.1%	0.6%	0.1%	0.7%
Walked	717	2,477	355	626	521	527	406	2,399
	3.1%	3.8%	5.5%	3.8%	2.6%	3.4%	3.6%	2.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates.
* Author's calculations based on household size; "4 or more" households counted as four individuals.

Low-Income Households

Transportation may be especially difficult for the 31,000 employed Mainers living below the poverty line.

In 2022, about 1 in 9 Mainers (11% or 147,000 residents) lived in a household with income below the federal poverty line.[10] These include approximately 31,000 employed workers (based on 2018-2022 data). For these individuals, transportation is key to reaching the jobs and earnings they so critically need. If they own a vehicle, one car repair or unpaid bill can undermine their ability to get to work. The table below shows that almost two in three employed Maine workers live in the counties with its largest cities: Portland, Bangor, Augusta, Lewiston-Auburn, Biddeford, Saco, and Sanford.

Employed workers, 2018-2022

		Household income below poverty line	
	Total	Number	Percentage
United States	157,913,626	8,929,884	5.7%
Maine	675,139	30,864	4.6%
Cumberland County	164,741	5,412	3.3%
Penobscot County	72,130	4,522	6.3%
York County	112,170	4,027	3.6%
Kennebec County	59,433	2,640	4.4%
Androscoggin County	55,267	2,354	4.3%
Somerset County	22,560	1,728	7.7%
Aroostook County	28,539	1,637	5.7%
Hancock County	27,588	1,602	5.8%
Oxford County	26,049	1,403	5.4%
Waldo County	18,265	1,087	6.0%
Knox County	19,392	895	4.6%
Sagadahoc County	19,067	855	4.5%
Franklin County	13,495	849	6.3%
Washington County	12,627	842	6.7%
Lincoln County	16,748	657	3.9%
Piscataquis County	7,068	354	5.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates.

In August-September 2024, the U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey suggested that about 10,500 Mainers were unemployed due to a lack of transportation, and about 31,500 had insufficient access to food due to a "transportation, mobility, or health limitation".[11]

Community Action Agencies regularly evaluate the top challenges facing Maine's low-income households. In their most recent needs assessment, transportation was one of the top five needs of Mainers with low incomes (along with affordable housing, childcare, health care, and overcoming generational poverty).[12] In particular, the agencies found that transportation "…remains a persistent barrier for young people finding better jobs, and those needing to travel for treatment."[13]

Maine Equal Justice Partners (MEJP) found transportation to be a top challenge of low-income parents enrolled in the Higher Opportunity Pathways for Education (HOPE) program. HOPE provides scholarships and supports to parents as they pursue postsecondary education and training. MEJP provides additional financial support to individuals in the program. In a 2023 survey of participants, transportation was the top "pressing need" for which participants sought assistance, ahead of many other utilities and expenses, and 85% said transportation expenses were "regularly difficult to cover".[14] "Study participants reported relying almost solely on their car not only to get to their educational program but to also bring their children to school, appointments, therapy, and to shop for food, clothing and other necessities. Without a car, most are stuck, especially the 60.0% of survey respondents who live in rural and semi-rural areas."[15]

People With Mobility Limitations

About 44,000 working-age Mainers have a disability that limits independent living.

According to the Transportation Research Board, individuals with a disability that causes difficulty living independently "are thought to be the group most likely to require passenger transportation services."[16] The ACS asks a very specific question on this topic: "Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, does this person have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping?"[17] In 2023, about 5% of Mainers age 18-64 had this type of disability. This is slightly above the U.S. average of 4% and represents about 44,000 Mainers.

Older Residents

Maine has a growing population of older residents, who may benefit from public transit.

Maine's status as one of the oldest U.S. states is well known. In 2020, 21% of residents were age 65 and older, and this is projected to rise to 30% by 2040.[18] In some places, the share of older residents will be even higher – in Hancock, Knox, Lincoln, Piscataquis, and Sagadahoc counties, more than one in three people of will be age 65 or older.

Older householders are more likely not to have a vehicle than their younger neighbors, so an increase in the percentage of older residents will likely increase the number of zero-car households. The table below shows the number of zero-car households by age of householder in 2018-2022, the projected change of these age groups from 2020 to 2040, and the resulting projection of zero-car households in 2040. These projections do not account for changes in patterns of household formation, vehicle use and ownership, or licensure that may occur during this period. Based on these conditions, the number of zero-car households in Maine may grow 15%, from about 40,000 in 2018-2022 to 46,000 in 2040 simply due to the aging of the population.

Projection of 2040 zero-car households			
		No vehicle	
	Total	Number	Percentage
2018-2022: Age of householder			
15 to 34 years	89,538	4,902	5.5%
35 to 64 years	305,909	18,352	6.0%

65 years and over	184,725	16,613	9.0%
Total	580,172	39,867	6.9%
Projected change of age group, 2020-2040[19]			
15 to 34 years	-11%		
35 to 64 years	-6%		
65 years and over	46%		
2040: Age of householder			
15 to 34 years	79,971	4,378	5.5%
35 to 64 years	287,073	17,222	6.0%
65 years and over	269,201	24,210	9.0%
Total	636,246	45,811	7.2%
Change in zero-car households (2018-2022 to 2040)			
Number	56,074	5,944	
Percentage	9.7%	14.9%	

Source: Author's calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, ACS, 2018-2020 five-year estimates and demographic projections from the State of Maine, Department of Administrative and Financial Services, 2023.

New Mainers

Costs and cultural barriers pose unique challenges for residents arriving from other countries.

In 2023, Maine had an estimated 24,000 foreign-born residents who had entered the U.S. in 2010 or later.[20] An estimated 5,800 have arrived since 2020.[21] In addition to the financial and logistical barriers of owning a vehicle, some of these residents come from places and circumstances where driver's licenses and vehicle ownership were either unnecessary or unobtainable. Moreover, Maine is one of 31 states that does not allow unauthorized workers to obtain driver's licenses.[22] This creates an additional hurdle for some immigrants. The number of unauthorized workers in Maine is not known but one estimate put it at less than 1% of workers.[23]

Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers

Transportation can be a challenge for farmworkers and their families.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in 2022, Maine farms employed 7,267 seasonal workers (those who work for less than 150 days) and 1,919 migrant workers (those who work at jobs over 75 miles apart or traveled over 75 miles for work in the past 12 months).[24] There is little documentation of the challenges faced by these workers and their families, but anecdotal evidence suggests that transportation is one of them. Without access to a personal vehicle, many workers must rely on farmers, farmers' families, or other workers for rides to shop for groceries or other personal items; to access medical, educational, or legal services; or to attend social functions. These logistical barriers are complicated by economic factors. Nationwide, 21% of crop workers had family incomes below the poverty line in 2021-2022.[25] This share was even higher for migrant workers (41%) and workers with larger families (as high as 36% for families with six or more members).[26]

People Without Driver's Licenses

Nearly 90,000 Maine residents do not hold a driver's license. They include about 15,200 people in their 20s, which roughly equals the 14,600 people age 75 or older who lack a license.

The vast majority (92%) of Maine adults hold a driver's license but the 8% who do not represent nearly 90,000 individuals spanning every age group. While this characteristic is often mentioned in connection with older residents, a comparison of license holders and Maine residents by age shows the number of people in their 20s who lack a license may exceed the number of people age 75+.

Maine driver's license holders by age, 2023

Age	Residents	License holders		Non-license holders	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Under 19*	62,281	36,094	58%	26,187	42%
20-24*	73,788	64,101	87%	9,687	13%
25-29	79,660	74,106	93%	5,554	7%
30-34	89,061	85,819	96%	3,242	4%
35-39	88,353	87,922	100%	431	0%
40-44	84,752	82,408	97%	2,344	3%
45-49	77,974	76,022	97%	1,952	3%
50-54	88,811	84,651	95%	4,160	5%
55-59	97,083	91,490	94%	5,593	6%
60-64	109,409	103,452	95%	5,957	5%
65-69	103,987	99,143	95%	4,844	5%
70-74	86,440	82,497	95%	3,943	5%
75-79	62,098	59,752	96%	2,346	4%
80-84	36,617	33,957	93%	2,660	7%
85+	31,699	22,070	70%	9,629	30%
Total	1,172,013	1,083,484	92%	88,529	8%
20-29	153,448	138,207	90%	15,241	10%
75+	130,414	115,779	89%	14,635	11%

Sources: State of Maine, Bureau of Motor Vehicles, driver license information for 2023; U.S. Census Bureau, annual estimates of the resident population by single year of age, July 1, 2023; National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, residence and migration of first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates by state, fall 2022.
*Resident count of 18-21-year-olds reduced to account for out-of-state college students.

The cost of getting a driver's license is a barrier for some young people and new Mainers.

Since at least the 1980s, the rate at which U.S. teenagers get driver's licenses has fallen for a variety of reasons, one of which is cost.[27] An informal web search of driver's education classes around Maine found prices ranging from $500 to $600. The State of Maine charges $35 for a learner's permit, $70 for a license

exam, and requires drivers under age 21 to log 70 hours of practice driving with a more experienced driver. These financial and logistical hurdles can be difficult or impossible for families that lack a vehicle or have a vehicle but lack the time to use it for practice driving.

COST OF VEHICLE DEPENDENCY

Living in a rural state, vehicle access is essential for many Maine households, but purchasing, operating, and maintaining a vehicle is costly.[1] This section presents estimates of these costs from two sources.

Owning and operating a vehicle is expensive.

One estimate of the cost of vehicle dependency comes from the United Way. This organization identifies a category of Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained ("ALICE") households with incomes above the federal poverty line but below the level of financial stability.[28] To determine which households fall into this category, the United Way constructs "survival" and "stability" budgets that draw from an extensive collection of national datasets.[29] The "survival budget" covers the minimum expenses of the average low-income household and does not allow for any savings that could be used in an emergency. The "stability budget" allows for 10% savings and higher spending across other categories. Both budgets are broken into eight categories: housing, childcare, food, transportation, technology, health care, taxes, and miscellaneous. Transportation includes the costs of gas, oil, maintenance, minimal insurance, and depreciation, but not the cost of major repairs or car payments.[2] The table above shows the transportation costs for each budget. United Way notes that this likely underestimates costs for households with low credit scores, which may be charged higher insurance rates. [30]

Monthly household transportation costs, Maine 2022

	"Survival budget"	"Stability budget"
Single adult	$396	$801
One adult, one child	$529	--
Two adults	$636	$1,076
Two adults, two children	$1,046	$1,559

Source: United for ALICE

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Living Wage Institute publishes a similar "basic needs" budget based on actual transportation expenditures of households earning 80% of a region's median income, as reported on national surveys.[31] These estimates include the cost of vehicle financing and repairs, and are higher than the ALICE estimates. They reflect the use of public transportation where available.

"Basic needs" transportation budget, Maine, 2023

		Monthly	Annual
1 Adult	0 Children	$865	$10,378
	1 Child	$1,001	$12,011
	2 Children	$1,261	$15,129
	3 Children	$1,451	$17,408
2 Adults (1 working)	0 Children	$1,001	$12,011
	1 Child	$1,261	$15,129
	2 Children	$1,451	$17,408
	3 Children	$1,449	$17,388
2 Adults (both working)	0 Children	$1,001	$12,011
	1 Child	$1,261	$15,129
	2 Children	$1,451	$17,408
	3 Children	$1,449	$17,388

Source: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Living Wage Institute, 2024

[1] In 2018-2022, Maine ranked 32nd of the 50 states for the percentage of households with access to a vehicle and 31st for the number of motor vehicles registered per capita. Source: Valentine, Ashlee, "Car Ownership Statistics 2024," Forbes Advisor, 28 March 2024.

[2] The ALICE transportation budget includes public transportation in places where at least 8% of the metro-region or county population uses public transportation to commute to work. Since no region in Maine has reached this threshold, the ALICE budget for Maine is assumed to reflect only vehicle transportation.

Transportation expenses are highest in rural counties.

The Living Wage Institute's analysis shows higher transportation costs in Maine's rural counties, and lower costs in more populated areas with some level of public transportation. In 2023, the estimated expenses of an adult in rural Oxford or Franklin counties was 20% (nearly $2,000) more than someone in more urban Androscoggin county.

"Basic needs" transportation budget for 1 adult and 0 children, by county (lowest to highest), 2023			
	Monthly	Annual	Comparison to state average
Androscoggin	$791	$9,491	-9%
Penobscot	$831	$9,967	-4%
Kennebec	$835	$10,017	-3%
Aroostook	$836	$10,026	-3%
Cumberland	$848	$10,178	-2%
Washington	$858	$10,301	-1%
Knox	$867	$10,409	0%
Somerset	$870	$10,440	+1%
Piscataquis	$888	$10,661	+3%
Lincoln	$890	$10,681	+3%
Waldo	$896	$10,749	+4%
Hancock	$904	$10,853	+5%
York	$913	$10,951	+6%
Sagadahoc	$913	$10,955	+6%
Oxford	$947	$11,362	+9%
Franklin	$948	$11,376	+10%

Source: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Living Wage Institute, 2024

CALCULATION OF UNMET NEEDS

This section uses a methodology developed by the Transportation Research Board (TRB) to estimate unmet need for public transit in rural places.[32] The Maine Public Transit Advisory Council's (PTAC) 2019 report also utilized this approach.[33] The TRB's methodology involves calculating the "mobility gap" which is "the total number of trips not taken because members of zero-car households do not have the ease of mobility available to members of households with ready access to a car."[34] Calculating the gap involves comparing the number of trips taken by zero-car and one-car households, as reported in the Federal Highway Administration's National Household Transportation Survey (NHTS).

The PTAC 2019 report used mobility gaps derived from the 2009 NHTS. The following calculation updates the estimates using 2017 NHTS results.[3] It utilizes nationwide results based on county size and Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) classification as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. National results are used because the margins of error for New England were very high for some variables (e.g., over 50% for trips taken by zero-car households in MSAs of less than 250,000 people). Cumberland, Sagadahoc, and York counties are in the Portland-South Portland MSA, which has a population of over 500,000. Androscoggin and Penobscot counties constitute the Lewiston-Auburn and Bangor MSAs, respectively, with populations below 250,000. All other Maine counties are not in an MSA.

Maine Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs)	Population (2023)	Counties
Lewiston-Auburn	113,765	Androscoggin
Bangor	155,312	Penobscot
Portland-South Portland	566,329	Cumberland, Sagadahoc, York

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates: Vintage 2023.

The calculations below result in mobility gaps ranging from 1.4 daily person-trips for rural counties not in an MSA to 2.9 for counties in MSAs with populations of 250,000-499,999. "Person trips" are trips from one address to another address taken by a single person. Two people traveling in one vehicle would count as two person-trips.

[3] The Federal Highway Administration conducted the NHTS again in 2022 but with a much smaller sample, so the results have much higher margins of error.

Mobility gap calculation							
			Population of MSA in which household is located				
		Not in MSA	< 250,000	250,000 - 499,999	500,000 - 999,999	1,000,000 - 2,999,999	≥ 3 million
Total annual person-trips*							
Household vehicles	0	1,947,366,170	1,085,551,519	799,447,520	1,562,344,222	3,337,634,508	10,184,183,379
	1	11,401,551,223	8,537,827,795	8,545,308,567	10,665,567,783	20,442,445,480	34,372,901,088
Number of households*							
Household vehicles	0	1,205,832	773,481	619,474	1,044,135	1,804,827	5,119,009
	1	5,318,684	3,711,235	3,652,024	4,633,728	8,714,194	13,617,708
Annual person-trips per household (trips divided by households)							
Household vehicles	0	1,615	1,403	1,291	1,496	1,849	1,989
	1	2,144	2,301	2,340	2,302	2,346	2,524
Daily person-trips per household (annual divided by 365)							
Household vehicles	0	4.4	3.8	3.5	4.1	5.1	5.5
	1	5.9	6.3	6.4	6.3	6.4	6.9
Daily mobility gap (difference in daily person-trips between 0- and 1-vehicle households)							
		1.4	2.5	2.9	2.2	1.4	1.5

*Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, 2017 National Household Transportation Survey.

The next step is to apply these mobility gap estimates to the number of zero-car households in each county. In the table below, the number of zero-car households in each county is multiplied first by the daily mobility gap and then by 365 days. The 2019 PTAC report multiplied the daily need by 300 to account for reduced travel on weekends. For the current calculation, these reduced travel days are already reflected in the annual person-trips reported in the 2017 NHTS, so multiplying by 300 would result in an undercount.

Need calculation				
County	**Households***	**Zero-car households***	**Daily mobility gap**	**Annual need (trips)**
Androscoggin	45,825	4,130	2.5	3,768,625
Aroostook	29,237	2,510	1.4	1,282,610
Cumberland	128,184	8,988	2.2	7,217,364
Franklin	12,276	1,126	1.4	575,386
Hancock	24,660	1,374	1.4	702,114
Kennebec	53,452	3,926	1.4	2,006,186
Knox	17,780	1,028	1.4	525,308
Lincoln	15,848	850	1.4	434,350
Oxford	23,183	1,300	1.4	664,300

Penobscot	63,687	5,200	2.5	4,745,000
Piscataquis	7,654	470	1.4	240,170
Sagadahoc	16,060	939	2.2	754,017
Somerset	22,074	1,378	1.4	704,158
Waldo	17,263	1,000	1.4	511,000
Washington	13,585	1,012	1.4	517,132
York	89,404	4,636	2.2	3,722,708
Total				**28,370,428**

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018-2022 five-year average

The table above suggests that the total trips needed by Maine's zero-car households is over 28 million. This is likely an underestimate of total need because many other households would likely benefit from and utilize public transportation. These include households where the number of workers exceeds the number of vehicles, low-income households that would prefer a less expensive alternative to vehicles, older residents, and people with mobility limitations.

The total trip-need calculated in the 2019 PTAC report was 36,785,091, about 30% higher. This may be because the mobility gaps used in the 2019 calculation were higher: 1.7 for "rural areas" and 5.2 for "urban areas". Neither the author nor NHTS staff were able to verify or replicate these figures using 2009 survey data. NHTS staff noted that the 2009 NHTS survey results were revised once after their initial release. Therefore, it is possible the mobility gaps used in 2019 were calculated using unrevised data that is no longer available.

The table below shows the number of unlinked trips provided by Maine's public transit providers in 2022 as reported in the National Transit Database (NTD). It does not include ferry services, in keeping with the methodology of the 2019 PTAC report. Nor does it include the Amtrak Downeaster train.

Trips provided	
Provider	**Unlinked trips (2022)**
Aroostook Regional Transportation Systems, Inc.	46,767
Biddeford-Saco-Old Orchard Beach Transit	171,828
City of Bangor	404,263
City of Bath	10,525
Downeast Community Partners, Inc.	32,934
Downeast Transportation, Inc.	326,246
Greater Portland Transit District	1,260,110
Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians	270
Kennebec Valley Community Action Program	118,518
Lewiston-Auburn Transit Committee	207,779
Penquis Community Action Program	238,379
Regional Transportation Program, Inc.	48,929
City of South Portland	150,653
Waldo Community Action Partners	44,561
West's Transportation, Inc.	4,719

Western Maine Transportation Services, Inc.	123,829
York County Community Action Corporation	61,393
Total	**3,251,703**

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, National Transit Database, 2022 agency profiles.

The 3.3 million trips provided by Maine transit providers in 2022 correspond to about 11% of estimated trip need. The TRB notes that levels of need calculated with this methodology generally exceed the number of trips observed in rural transportation systems.[35] Many trips are either not taken or fulfilled by rides from family or friends. The TRB advises planners to set a percentage target of need to be met: "In the testing of these suggested methodologies with a number of rural transit agencies, it was found that, at best, only about 20% of the mobility gap trip-based need was met."[36] The table below shows a hypothetical target of 20%, equivalent to 5.7 million trips. The remaining unmet need is 2.4 million trips. This is equivalent to increasing the capacity of the current system by about 75%.

100% of trip need (2018-2022)	20% of trip need (2018-2022)	Trips provided (2022)	Trip gap (2022)	Percent of need being met by current trips
28,370,428	5,674,086	3,251,703	2,422,383	11%

Source: Author's calculations based on TRB methodology and data from the NHTS, ACS, and NTD.

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Appendix C

Try to Imagine it's You

HOW TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS ARE HURTING MAINE AND HOW WE MOVE FORWARD

APRIL 2025

A REPORT FROM THE

MOVING MAINE NETWORK
Improving transportation access for all

About the Moving Maine Network:

The Moving Maine Network is a statewide coalition powered by individuals, organizations, and communities. We prioritize participation by people with lived expertise around transportation barriers. We offer a forum for learning, connection, and action that is open to everyone who cares about better transportation access for Maine.

About this Report:

This report was made possible by the Maine Health Access Foundation and a generous supporter. The document was written by Zoe Miller, MPH, Executive Director, Moving Maine Network. Photographs are courtesy of Tom Bell, Kathryn Violette, Zoe Miller, and the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center photo archive. Graphic Design is by Polychrome Collective. Transportation Security Index survey analysis was conducted by Abraham Dailey. This report is available online at movingmaine.org. To request translations, printed copies, or a large print version, please contact Moving Maine Network at info@movingmaine.org.

Unless otherwise noted, data is from the 2024 Moving Maine Network Transportation Security Index Survey. Other sources are noted below.

- Vehicle ownership: U.S. Census – American Community Survey 2023 5-year estimates
- Household income spent on transportation: U.S. Deparment of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics
- Cost of vehicle ownership: AAA
- Travel distance to primary care: Maine Shared Health Needs Assessment

WE ADVANCE

QUALITY AFFORDABLE RIDES

SAFE STREETS & ROADS

ROBUST POLICIES & PRACTICES

WHAT WE DO

Moving Maine Network works to:

1. **Increase the quality and availability of public and community transportation** – We work to connect people to all the places they need and want to go, using the services that work best for their geography and needs.

2. **Ensure that traveling outside of a motor vehicle is safe and convenient** - We work to make Maine's streets and roads great places for people who are walking, wheeling, cycling, or using other mobility devices.

3. **Advance policies and practices that improve mobility for the most people possible** - We center the unique needs of nondrivers in addressing affordability and accessibility at the local, regional, and state level.

INTRODUCTION

Transportation plays a central role in so many aspects of our lives. Dependable rides and safe routes to walk and wheel make it possible to get to work, see a doctor, pick up groceries and prescriptions, visit family and friends, and gather for community events.

However, many families and individuals in Maine lack safe, affordable, and reliable transportation. As a result, people are missing out on jobs and training, going without medical care and food, and missing social connections because they lack safe, affordable, and appropriate transportation.

In the past, data has not been available to tell us how many Mainers are experiencing transportation barriers and how it is impacting their health and quality of life. The difficulty measuring this problem has contributed to it being minimized and overlooked.

In 2024, the Moving Maine Network set out to address the gap in knowledge by collecting qualitative and quantitative data. Our goal is to educate decision-makers and the public about how transportation barriers are affecting Maine's economy and holding back prosperity.

This report summarizes what we learned through fielding a statistically significant survey using the Transportation Security Index, conducting a data scan of national and state sources, and leading our story collection campaign. This is the first time ever that statewide data has been collected in Maine using the full Transportation Security Index.

What does it mean to be transportation insecure?

Transportation insecurity is defined as “the condition in which people face material, systemic, and relational issues that contribute to their inability to access needed services or destinations comfortably, conveniently, and affordably.” Symptoms of transportation insecurity include missing healthcare appointments or access to food; experiencing stress and uncertainty about how one will get places; taking a long time to plan out everyday trips; and limiting social outings because of not wanting to ask friends and family for additional rides.

ABOUT THE TRANSPORATION SECURITY INDEX

Developed by researchers from the University of Michigan, the Transportation Security Index (TSI) is the first validated tool that offers insights into how transportation insecurity impacts quality of life. Modeled after the Food Security Index, the TSI is a 16-question survey composed of items that focus on the symptoms of transportation insecurity. These include taking a long time to plan out everyday trips and rescheduling appointments. The TSI offers insights into who experiences transportation insecurity and enables researchers and practitioners to determine both the causes and consequences of transportation insecurity as well as identify which interventions can improve this condition.

ADMINISTERING THE TRANSPORTATION SECURITY INDEX SURVEY IN MAINE

In Fall 2024, the Moving Maine Network worked with market research specialist Ipsos to field a survey of people across Maine. Our goal was to identify the prevalence of transportation insecurity in Maine and to reveal differences based on rural location, income, disability, age, and health status. We gathered nearly 700 responses. Ipsos uses the KnowledgePanel, the largest online panel that is representative of the adult US population. This means results can be applied to the general population of Maine.

Who experiences transportation insecurity?

2 in 5

adults in Maine experience transportation insecurity

MAINERS WHO EXPERIENCE TRANSPORTATION INSECURITY ARE ...

MORE LIKELY TO BE EXPERIENCING POVERTY

37%

of people experiencing transportation insecurity are living in poverty

MORE LIKELY TO BE BLACK

85%

of Black Mainers

experience transportation insecurity

MORE LIKELY TO BE YOUNG ADULTS

89%

of adults ages 18-24 experience transportation insecurity

MORE LIKELY TO HAVE A DISABILITY

74%

of blind Mainers

63%

of Mainers with mobility disability

experience transportation insecurity

How Transportation Barriers are Hurting Maine

SOCIAL ISOLATION

MAINERS WHO EXPERIENCE TRANSPORTATION INSECURITY ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE STUCK AT HOME AND/OR TO FEEL LEFT OUT.

Because of a problem with transportation...

10%
often are not able to leave the house

12%
often feel stuck at home

40,000 Maine households lack a vehicle

This includes **8.5%** of older adult households

NEGATIVE HEALTH OUTCOMES

MAINERS WHO EXPERIENCE TRANSPORTATION INSECURITY ARE MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE POOR HEALTH

Among Mainers who experience transportation insecurity...

8%
often have to reschedule an appointment because of a problem with transportation

9%
experience poor health

20% of Mainers live in areas where they need to travel

30 miles or more to be seen by a primary care provider

LACK OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

MAINERS WHO EXPERIENCE TRANSPORTATION INSECURITY ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE UNEMPLOYED AND LESS LIKELY TO OWN A HOME

Among Mainers who experience transportation insecurity...

33%
are not working

50%
are renters

Across incomes, transportation spending accounts for a third or more of family budgets

MAINE HOUSEHOLDS WITH 2 PARENTS AND 2 CHILDREN SPENT AN AVERAGE OF

28%
OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME ON TRANSPORATION

IN MAINE'S MOST RURAL COUNTIES, AVERAGE SPENDING IS EVEN HIGHER:

33% **IN WASHINGTON** **AND** **36%** **IN PISCATAQUIS**

COST OF VEHICLE OWNERSHIP...

$12,297
PER YEAR AVERAGE COST OF OWNERSHIP IN 2024

30%
INCREASE FROM 2020 ($9,561)

STORIES

In July 2024, MMN began collecting stories from people across Maine. We invited people to submit stories through our website, by email, text, and during virtual forums hosted in October 2024. We asked people: **"Do you have a story about how transportation challenges are affecting your life?"** This could be feeling unsafe wheeling or walking, struggling to get rides or car repairs, or facing problems with the transportation services they use. We collected over 200 stories. The following are a sampling of stories from across the state.

"

Without any access to a car nor public transportation connecting Norway, ME with the rest of the county, state, country, and the world, I feel like my life quality is diminished, especially in the winter where I have almost no way of going anywhere. If I need to go to the doctor, I rely on someone else that can give me a ride. **We need public transporation in Oxford County, urgently!**

"

"

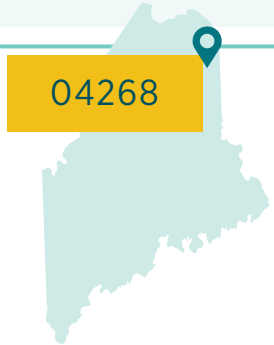
I am an elderly man who relies on my daughter in law who is struggling with scheduling work and my appointments. I am almost blind and deaf with no cell. I have had Lynx show up many times but **since I am almost blind I didn't know they were there and lost my ride.**

"

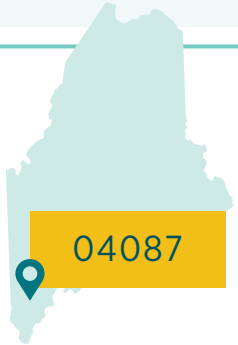
We are lucky enough to be close to our kids school, but the only road to the school is super narrow with a sidewalk *right* next to the road, with bus and car traffic inches away going both directions. **I would love to be able to bike with the kids or take a scooter down, but it just doesn't feel safe.**

I am a visually impaired individual who uses a white cane. I live in an area where access to transportation is extremely limited and that which is available is very costly to individuals living on disability. The lack of available and affordable transportation for individuals such as myself is disheartening. It makes getting to appointments, seeking medical attention when needed, being social, getting basic needs or wants met, or work opportunities extremely difficult. **The impact goes beyond the immediate need individuals are trying to achieve**; it affects autonomy, creates anxiety, stress, and depression.

I realized soon after [my father] was diagnosed with cancer that **my mom was transporting him to doctors appointments and it was about 55 miles each way** from their house to Presque Isle. She had to take time off and then to travel as far as they did in the winter time, they would have to leave early because the roads were horrible. So I began to realize that when somebody has cancer it's not just impacting them it's their entire family and friends. They're all impacted in the sense that we need to stick together.

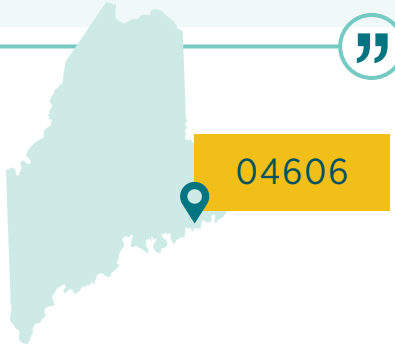


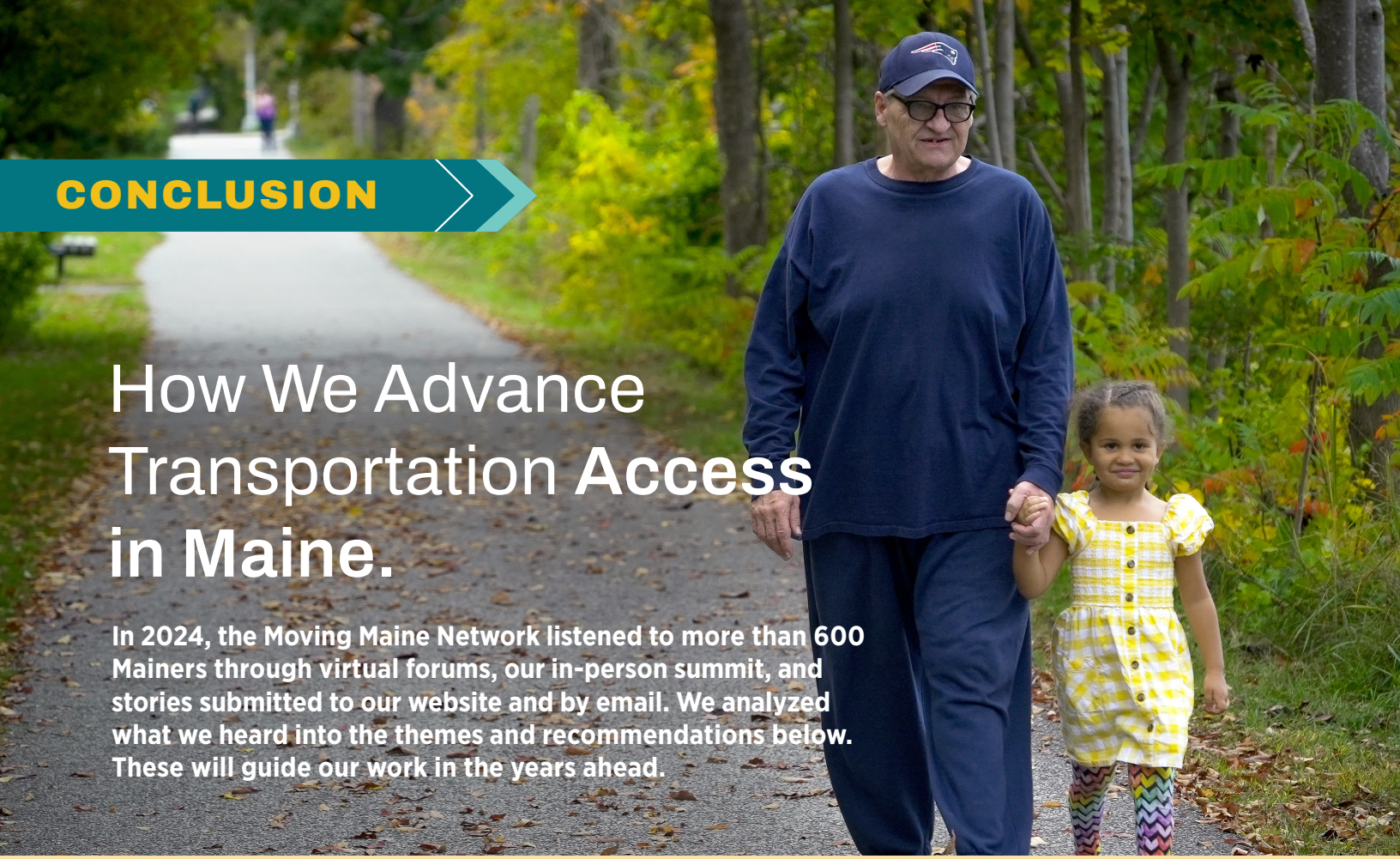
There are no public transportation options in the area. Many of our [Massabesic Adult and Community Education] students are trying to get their high school equivalency in order to get a better job and become more financially stable, and many do not currently have their own transportation. **I am looking for ways to combat this barrier to education.**



I live in rural Somerset county. **Our transportation options are either too expensive or nonexistent.** I currently have a 14-year-old car and the cost of repairs are very hard for me. It's starting to become impossible for me to keep a car on the road and that's deeply concerning.

As a young, university student I rely on my mother's support for transportation. I use her car to get to work, to socialize, and to get basic necessities. It is ridiculous that if I did not have her support, I would need to come up with at least $6,000 just to get a vehicle to get to work or school. How can rural youth build any type of wealth or savings without some kind of generational wealth or going into debt? **This is indicative to me that the car-centric infrastructure is yet another mechanism of our environment that keeps the poor, poor.**





CONCLUSION

How We Advance Transportation **Access in Maine.**

In 2024, the Moving Maine Network listened to more than 600 Mainers through virtual forums, our in-person summit, and stories submitted to our website and by email. We analyzed what we heard into the themes and recommendations below. These will guide our work in the years ahead.

Easily Accessible Mobility Information & Support

Information about transportation services and supports (including financial) is not readily available and apparent, let alone interconnected. People want it to be easier and more streamlined to access information on the services and supports that are available and many people want to connect with a human being who can listen and guide them.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *A streamlined and user-friendly trip planner and information portal developed using universal design principles*
- *Increased availability of Mobility Navigators across the state*

Ongoing Support for Community-Based Solutions

Community-based solutions – like mutual aid and volunteer drivers – are playing a critical role and yet lack adequate funding and capacity. Maine's community organizations are best positioned to solve community problems. They just need more support to sustain and grow.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Mobility Management programs to help strengthen efficiency, accessibility, and sustainability of transportation in regions across the state*

A Real Voice in Transportation Decisions

People who use transportation services have experience and expertise that is often not being factored into planning and decision-making. Many people feel confused about where and how to provide feedback and complaints – and frustrated at a sense that input doesn't matter.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Transparent and inclusive transportation decision-making*

Cross-Sector Coordination

Transportation is not well integrated or coordinated with other sectors - like housing, health care, and workforce development. People are frustrated by having to interface with many different providers and agencies to get and pay for rides for different purposes. The ability to "braid" transportation funding from private, state, and federal sources results in more options overall and leads to a more efficient and cost-effective system.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Greater access to mobility navigation supports for people across the state*
- *Stronger coordination between organizations that fund transportation – especially at the state level*

Safer Walking & Wheeling

When it comes to walking and wheeling, safety is the top concern and a major deterrent barrier to walking and wheeling. Too many streets and roads lack accessible and user-friendly facilities for people to travel outside of motor vehicles.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *A larger investment in safe and complete streets for Maine*
- *Advancing ADA accessible infrastructure across the state*

More and Better Public and Community Transportation

Throughout rural, suburban, and urban parts of the state, people who cannot drive or struggle to afford a personal vehicle are desperate for rides. Better quality medical rides are especially a concern for people who depend on MaineCare (Medicaid) transportation services. There are also many Mainers who are ineligible for MaineCare and lack affordable - or any - transportation options.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *A larger investment in public and community transportation for Maine*
- *Improved quality and accountability for MaineCare Transportation*

MOVING MAINE
NETWORK
Improving transportation access for all

Appendix D

State Funding Sources for Transit		
Revenue Type	**Number of States**	**States**
State Gas Tax	25	CA, CT, DE, FL, IL, KS, LA, MD, MA, MI, MT, NE, NM, NY, NC, OK, OR, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, VT, VA, WI
State General Sales Tax	19	CA, CT, GA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, MD, MA, MO, NE, NY, OH, PA, RI, UT, VA, WV
State Vehicle Registration and Title Fees	19	CO, CT, DE, FL, IA, KS, MD, MA, MI, NM, NY, NC, ND, OR, TX, VT, VA, WA, WI
State Vehicle Sales Tax	14	CT, KS, MA, MI, MN, MO, NE, NM, ND, PA, VT, VA, WA, WI
State Bond Proceeds	9	CO, CT, IL, ME, MA, NH, PA, RI, VA
State Interest Income	8	AZ, CT, GA, MI, PA, VA, WV, WY
State Individual income Tax	8	GA, IN, MN, MS, NY, OH, OK, WV
State Rental Vehicle Fees and Taxes	7	AR, ME, MT, NY, PA, VA, WA
State Retail Sales Tax	6	IL, MN, MS, MO, VA, WV
State Permit Fees	5	CT, KS, KY, NM, WA
State Corporate Income Tax	5	GA, MD, MN, NY, WV
State Property Tax	4	ID, IN, MN, WV
Transportation Development Credits	4	IL, MA, OH, WA
State Lottery Proceeds	3	AZ, PA, RI

Source: American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Survey of State Funding for Public Transportation – Final Report 2024, Based on FY 2022 Data

Local Funding Sources for Transit		
Revenue Type	**Number of States**	**States**
Fare Revenue	46	AK, AZ, AR, CA, CO, CT, DE, DC, FL, GA, HI, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, MS, MO, MT, NE, NV, NH, NJ, NM, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VA, WA, WV, WI, WY
City/County General Funds	42	AK, AZ, AR, CO, DC, FL, GA, HI, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, LA, ME, MA, MI, MN, MS, MO, MT, NV, NH, NM, NY, NC, ND, OH, OK, OR, PA, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, VA, WA, WV, WI, WY
Advertising	38	AL, AK, AZ, CO, CT, DE, DC, FL, HI, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MA, MI, MN, MO, MT, NH, NJ, NY, NC, ND, OH, OK, OR, PA, SC, SD, TX, VA, WV, WI, WY
Service Contracts	35	AL, AK, AZ, CO, FL, HI, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MI, MN, MS, MO, MT, NE, NH, NJ, NM, NY, NC, ND, OH, OK, OR, SC, SD, TN, TX, VA, WV
Donations	30	AL, AK, AZ, AR, CO, FL, HI, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, ME, MI, MO, MT, NV, NH, NY, NC, ND, OH, OK, OR, SC, SD, TX, UT, VT, WY
Local Property Tax	25	AK, CA, CO, FL, IL, IN, IA, KY, ME, MI, MN, MT, NE, NH, NY, NC, OH, OR, SC, SD, TN, TX, VT, VA, W
Local Sales Tax	21	AK, AZ, CA, CO, FL, GA, IL, LA, MN, MO, NM, NY, NC, OH, OK, SC, SD, TX, UT, VA, WA
Local Vehicle Registration Fees	10	FL, HI, IA, MI, NH, NC, SC, VT, VA, WI
Local Gas Tax	7	FL, GA, HI, NV, UT, VT, VA
Local Income Tax	6	CO, OH, OK, OR, UT, WI
Local Rental Vehicle Fees	4	MT, NY, NC, VA

Source: American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Survey of State Funding for Public Transportation – Final Report 2024, Based on FY 2022 Data

State Funding Distribution Methods		
Distribution Method	**Number of States**	**States**
Formula Based Method	35	AR, CA, CO, DE, FL, GA, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, LA, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, MO, MT, NY, NC, ND, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, VA, WA, WV, WI
Discretionary Based Method	29	AZ, CA, CO, DC, FL, IL, IA, KS, KY, ME, MD, MA, MI, NE, NJ, NM, NC, OH, OR, PA SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, VA, WA, WV, WY
Legislative Earmark or Directive	18	AK, AZ, CA, CT, DE, IL, IN, MA, MN, MT, NY, NC, OH, PA, RI, UT, VA, WA
Historical Allocation Method	2	AK, MS
Other Methods	8	GA, ME, MI, MS, NH, OR, PA, VA

Source: American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Survey of State Funding for Public Transportation – Final Report 2024, Based on FY 2022 Data

Appendix E

Potential Revenue Sources for Public Transportation

The strategies below are presented for consideration by the legislature based on research into solutions other peer states have identified to close transit funding gaps.

Strategy A: The fuel tax is the predominant source of revenue in Maine's Highway Fund currently, totaling **$438.9 million (42.6%)**. Fuel tax revenue projections in other states have consistently shown serious decline. The Tax Foundation, a center-right think tank, projects a **more than half decline in real fuel tax revenues** over the next 20 years, and by two-thirds by 2050. This poses a significant fiscal risk to the state if it does not adopt alternative sources of revenue to diversify the Highway Fund portfolio and moreover substitute the obsolete fuel tax.

There are several options to supplement declining gas tax revenues, including indexing the gas tax to inflation, implementing a mileage-based user fee, implementing a weight-based user fee, or a tire tax. Several of these options were considered in the 2020 Blue Ribbon Commission study to recommend funding solutions for the transportation system, but none have since been implemented. It would be within the best interest of the state to start exploring new options, such as through a pilot program.

Alternatively, the state could revamp its income tax structure and direct a portion of the proceeds to go towards the Highway Fund. In this case, a 4% surtax on incomes in excess of $1,000,000 could be a viable option. According to the Maine Center for Economic Policy, a millionaire's tax would generate roughly $108 million annually. It would have little impact on working Mainers, and be less of an administrative burden than implementing user fees. Massachusetts implemented a 4% surcharge on taxable income above $1,000,000, and the tax generated over $2 billion last year, including over $500 million for transportation funding while impacting less than 0.6% of the state's residents.

However, these general Highway Fund revenue solutions must have statutory guarantees of supporting transit operations. An effective method to ensure state commitment to such funding would be a statutory minimum transfer (SMT). Colorado implemented a **10% SMT for transit** expenditures under SB 09-228, which took effect for a 5-year period contingent on certain increases in income. Colorado required a minimum 10% of all funds appropriated to the Department of Transportation, including bond financing, to be dedicated towards transit purposes. This led to historic capital and operating investments, expanding bus and rail operations across the state. A 10% SMT for transit in Maine would guarantee sustainable funding for critical services with hopes of expanding in the future to accommodate a constantly evolving workforce.

Strategy B: Alternatively, the Legislature could pursue introducing several minor sources of revenue, which would be statutorily directed to the Multimodal Fund. It would also be beneficial to impose a SMT for Multimodal Fund transfers as well. The legislature should consider the following courses of action:

- **Increase fees on rental cars**. Maine currently has a rental vehicle excise tax, which generates funding for the Multimodal Fund. Currently, seven states across the country also have a rental vehicle fee of some sort. Maine could levy an additional $3 per day for car leases less than 30 days (primarily targeting tourists). Colorado recently passed a $3 rental car fee, which will generate approximately **$60 million for their state**.

- **Levy a ride share tax.** **Five states have implemented a ride share tax**, with three types of taxation: local options (Maryland), a percentage on revenue (Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, South Carolina), and fee per ride (Massachusetts). These taxes usually range from 1% to 7%.
- **Establishing a retail e-delivery fee.** States have considered e-delivery fees between $0.28 and $0.50 per transaction, which have potential to generate **tens of millions in revenue**. States have commonly restricted this fee to certain e-delivery activities.
- **Increase the vacation rental tax.** An additional cent on the current 9% tax could be dedicated towards the Multimodal Fund.
- **Flex more federal highway funding toward transit.** Maine directs less than 2% of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding to transit projects, but other states such as Vermont flex up to 8% of FHWA funding toward transit.
- **Utilize toll credits to cover state and local match for federally funded transit projects.** Federal law permits States with toll facilities to earn credits that can be applied towards the non-Federal share requirement on Federal-aid projects. At the end of FY23, Maine's toll credit balance was reported at $571,775,798.
- **Levy a surtax on second homes, and earmark revenue towards transit-related expenditures.** Maine has one of the highest percentages of second homes in the country. A tax on second homes would not negatively affect working Mainers and would increase available dollars for public services such as transit.
- **Permit municipalities to have a local option sales tax to finance transportation-related needs.**
- **Flexible sales tax considerations.** Maine's sales tax generates $2.2 billion annually and is the second largest source of state revenue.
    - Permit municipalities to have a local option sales tax to finance transportation-related needs. Maine does not currently have a local option sales tax.
    - Consider a seasonal sales tax, a proportion of which could be used to finance transportation-related needs. Maine legislators have considered a seasonal sales tax in the past to maximize the benefit of summer tourism dollars.

If these potential revenue streams were dedicated towards the Multimodal Fund, it would be prudent to place a SMT for transit operating expenditures to ensure sufficient funding levels.

Strategy C: Lastly, minor sources of revenue could be earmarked for transit operating expenditures, similar to that of Maine's rental vehicle excise tax. Potential sources of revenue outlined in Strategy B could also be applicable to this strategy but could generate a smaller amount since it is not intended to shore up gaps in the Multimodal Fund or Highway Fund.

40,000 Maine households lack reliable access to a vehicle

Monthly transportation expenses for most Maine households exceed **$1,000**

3,000 Mainers regularly commute by public transportation

90,000 Maine adults DO NOT have a driver's license

$1 = $5

Spent on transit — Economic return

1,500 people are employed by transit providers in Maine.

Maine public transit provides **14,500** trips per day and **5.2 Million** trips per year

Sources of operating funds for public transportation in Maine