



Portland Area Mainline (PAM) Study
Background Information for Portland City Council
June 11, 2018

Portland Area Mainline Study Purpose Statement: The Maine Turnpike mainline through the Greater Portland area is an essential component of the regional and statewide transportation system. It provides safe and efficient mobility for regional through-traffic, as well as quick and convenient cross-town access to local businesses, municipalities, and other transportation modes.

The purpose of the Portland Area Mainline (PAM) Study is to assess safety and mobility deficiencies on the Maine Turnpike between Scarborough and Falmouth, Maine and, as needed, recommend practicable solutions that preserve and improve long-term highway mobility for the region in a manner that is consistent with the Sensible Transportation Policy Act, enhances the regional transportation system and meets Maine Turnpike Authority responsibilities and reasonable customer expectations.

Q. Where is the Turnpike Mainline and what does it do?

- Goes from Scarborough to Falmouth (Mile 44 to 53)
- Services Greater Portland region – Maine’s economic engine
- Provides primary access to Gray, Western Lakes/Mountains, Lewiston/Auburn, Bath/Brunswick and Downeast, as well as access to Westbrook, Jetport, Maine Mall, UNUM, other area businesses

Q. What is the problem?

- Traffic is growing: 3+% annually for past several years
- Mainline is 2 lanes. Crash rate on 2-lane sections higher than on 3-lane sections
- Road is nearing capacity – causing more slowdowns, crashes
- Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT): 34,000 to 52,000 vehicles; Summer (August) 39,000 to 62,000 vehicles. This represents a 15-20% increase in summer.
- These numbers are similar to those on southern-area Turnpike in mid 1990s prior to widening to three lanes there.

Q. What are existing and future traffic conditions/conclusions?

- Data shows significant overcrowding/capacity issues by 2025; all road sections over capacity by 2040
- MTA is identifying and planning for solutions now
- Some solutions identified would take years to implement

Q. How has the public has been involved?

- Public Advisory Committee (PAC) created (See list of members below*)
- Four PAC meetings to date, final meeting June 19. All open to public comment.

- Municipal meetings with Scarborough, South Portland, Portland, Westbrook, Falmouth in May and June
- Online targeted public feedback May-June; Open House June 7 at Maine Mall
- Feedback from PAC, municipalities, and public part of MTA decision-making

Q. How were solutions were identified?

- In accordance with the Sensible Transportation Policy Act, the MTA is evaluating a full range of reasonable alternatives (solutions) that address need, are cost effective, and can be implemented in a reasonable time. Reasonable alternatives that do not require widening are considered first.
- Study Team initially identified nine alternatives to evaluate
- PAC added ten additional alternatives to evaluate

Q. What are the potential alternatives (solutions)?

- Expand Transportation Demand Management such as rideshare, work at home
- Add Congestion Pricing: charge higher tolls at peak travel times
- Implement Land Use Patterns that reduce transportation demand
- Increase and improve Interstate, Regional and Local Bus Service
- Increase and improve Commuter Rail and Local Freight Rail
- Implement Ramp Metering, which limits traffic entering the Turnpike
- Implement High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) and High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes
- Create a single additional Reversible Lane that moves traffic in a different direction for am and pm commute times
- Widen I-295 from Turnpike to Exit 11
- Widen I-295 with tolls from Turnpike to Exit 11
- Widen I-95 from Exit 44 to 53

The results

- Widen I-95 and HOV/HOT Lanes fully meet Study Purpose
- 11 alternatives partially meet Study Purpose; also show promise to improve regional transportation system
- Of the alternatives that fully meet Study Purpose:
 - Widen I-95 can be readily implemented
 - HOV/HOT lanes have uncertain timeframe; HOTs illegal in Maine
 - Both are cost effective
- Turnpike Authority currently considering effects of a combined alternative

Next steps

- PAC Meeting June 19th to present additional analysis and recommendations
- Final Report in July

***PAC members:** Lt. Eric Baker, State Police; Josh Benthien, Northland; Mike Shaw, Scarborough; Paul Bradbury, *Chair*, Portland Jetport; Chris Branch, City of Portland; Peter Carney, Long Creek Watershed Management District; Jim Cohen, Portland Regional Chamber; Mark Dion, Maine State Representative; Kristina Egan, GPCOG /PACTS; Ed Hanscom, MaineDOT; Greg Jordan, Portland Metro; John Melrose, NNEPRA; Scott Morelli, South Portland; Brian Parke, Maine Motor Transport; Ann Peoples, Westbrook; Nathan Poore, Falmouth; Steve Sawyer, MBTA; Kara Wooldrik, Portland Trails