

Maine Sierra Club-Railroad Transportation information page:

Latest news for Maine and region:

1. **Amtrak Portland to Brunswick:** Latest update: \$35 million for the *Downeaster* extension from Portland to Brunswick from either the \$1.5 billion for FHWA Competitive Grants for surface transportation, or possibly from the \$8 billion for High Speed / Intercity Passenger Rail. **(Economic Stimulus money to pay for this instead of the below proposed state bond 3/25/09)**

Downeaster Intercity Passenger Rail Investments Proposed funding in Gov Baldacci Bond Package \$6,750,000. The success of the current Downeaster passenger rail operation along with the anticipated addition of a 5th round trip necessitate for an enhanced rail equipment and servicing layover facility in Maine. The current temporary facility was designed to meet service startup demands and is now clearly in efficient and over extended. A layover facility will reduce operating costs and improve the efficiency of the service. This \$6,000,000 investment is critical to the maintenance of equipment and efficient operation of this system. \$1,000,000 in federal funding is available to begin the environmental process for improving trackage and access north of Portland in preparation for commuter and intercity rail service to Auburn. \$250,000 state funds in this bond will be used to complete this need from Yarmouth to Brunswick and will match the \$1 million in federal funds already earmarked. This will enable Maine to become eligible for, and seek Federal Transit Administration "New Starts" funds when the program and regulatory process is complete. \$500,000 of these combined funds will enable the initiation of preliminary engineering and design work necessary to extend service north of Portland. Future federal funds will have to be appropriated by Congress to the FTA New Starts program to support the capital

1. **Mt Division Railroad Revitalization:** Here is the summary of the project. Not sure what is happening yet on this as far as funding and getting started.
<http://maine.gov/mdot/freight/pdf/Mtn%20Div%20Executive%20Summary.pdf> The state completed acquisition of this line through Westbrook and to Portland. 5/1/09-There is a Gorham East-West Corridor Study that is being funded by the Maine Turnpike and DOT and they are considering rail in that study. We should be certain to make certain rail is properly represented in this. We would prefer upgrading the rail then paving another turnpike extension.
2. **Brunswick to Rockland Revitalization** Rockland Branch \$750,000, Proposed funding in Gov Baldacci Bond Package. The state owned Brunswick to Rockland rail corridor has seen resurgence in passenger rail operations, and has served as a critical freight rail corridor for companies like Dragon Cement. Passenger rail operations are now playing a key role in support of tourism and will also contribute to reducing the demand for the automobile throughout the corridor particularly during the traditional

festival season. However continuous improvements to stations, parking facilities and passenger amenities are needed in order to sustain a safe and reliable seasonal service and bring economic development to their regions. This \$1,000,000 investment will help address those needs in the corridor station communities of Brunswick, Bath and Rockland.

3. Brunswick to Augusta Revitalization

4. Here is a very informative slide show on the **Portland North** Stakeholders meeting:

<http://www.maine.gov/mdot/portlandnorth/presentations/Portland%20North%202011-FEB-09%20Stakeholder%20Meetings.pdf>

5. Gov Baldacci Bond Proposals for Rail

<http://www.mbtaonline.org/docs/narrative.pdf>

6. High Speed Passenger service from Portland to Montreal.

Androscoggin Transportation Resource Center (ATRC) will continue to seek federal designation of the SLR corridor between Auburn and Canada as a High-Speed Rail Corridor. Design and upgrade needs to occur on the rail from Portland to the New Hampshire border to meet passenger rail standards. The corridor from Portland to Montreal must be designated by the Federal Rail authority as a High-Speed Rail Corridor in order to facilitate the development of passenger rail service between Maine and Montreal. Market studies indicate a strong demand for the service.

7. **Lewiston Lower Branch (MEC)** – Lewiston to Brunswick ATRC will continue to seek funding for the state’s acquisition and preservation of the Lewiston Lower Branch of the Maine Central Railroad from Lewiston to Lisbon Falls. The importance of this rail line as a future transportation corridor to the ATRC region cannot be overstated. The railroad runs parallel to Route 196, a congested major eastwest arterial highway linking Maine’s second largest urban area to the coast. This railroad line directly links two interstate highways (I-295 and the Maine Turnpike); five MaineDOT Park & Ride lots; industrial parks in Lewiston, Lisbon and Topsham; and retail centers in Lewiston, Topsham and Brunswick.

8. **Mainline Rail Connection** MaineDOT passenger plan calls for the development of a passenger Intermodal facility in the Auburn-Lewiston Municipal Airport area to meet current and future demands for the traveling and commuting public. In order to preserve current and future freight and passenger rail options, approximately one mile of new rail needs to be laid on an old Maine Central Line.

9. **Bangor Area Transportation Study** including Rail recommendations:

[http://www.bactsmmpo.org/Files/BACTS 2004 Long Range Plan Final.pdf](http://www.bactsmmpo.org/Files/BACTS%202004%20Long%20Range%20Plan%20Final.pdf)

Recommendations: The BACTS Policy and Technical Committees have identified several strategies to improve rail transportation in the BACTS area:

- The BACTS Policy Committee should encourage MaineDOT to preserve the existing railroad right-of-way from east Augusta to Winslow.

Preservation of the rail corridor is necessary to ensure the viability of restoring passenger rail service to the Bangor area and will help strengthen BGR's role as a regional hub for tourism.

- MaineDOT should obtain trackage rights to a small section of the Calais Branch in Brewer currently owned by Guilford Industries. Guilford has exclusive ownership of a small section of track in Brewer that, without any trackage rights, would prevent the State or any other operator from operating between the Calais Branch and Northern Maine Junction. MaineDOT should enter into an agreement with Guilford Industries whereby the State will provide funding toward the replacement of the rail bridge over the Penobscot River in exchange for trackage rights in Brewer.
- A new rail bridge across the Penobscot River should be constructed downstream of the existing rail crossing, in the vicinity of the I-395 Veterans Remembrance Bridge. Placing the bridge at this location will eliminate the alignment deficiencies at the existing river crossing, shorten the distance between Northern Maine Junction and the branch line to the paper mills in Brewer and Bucksport, and provide a more direct rail link to the Calais Branch in the eventuality of restored service on that rail line.

10. **Bangor - Trenton Transportation Alternatives Study Phase 1** Final Report <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/major-planning-studies/pdf/bangor-trenton.pdf>
11. **Calais-Bangor Branch Line:** Recent article on shut down of service (due to mill closure) of freight. Line runs from Canadian Border to Baileyville, on Pan AM Lines Track:
<http://www.bangordailynews.com/detail/104895.html>

Links:

www.thedowneaster.com National Association of Railroad Passengers (Amtrak)

www.amtrak.com Guilford Transportation, Inc.

www.gpcog.org Greater Portland Council of Governments

<http://www.pactsplan.org/> Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System

<http://www.atrcmpo.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=pub.home>

[Androscoggin Transportation Resource Center \(ATRC\)](http://www.atrcmpo.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=pub.home)

<http://www.bactsmmpo.org> Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System (BACTS)

www.trainridersne.org TrainRiders Northeast

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rail_tracks#Rail_classification_.28weight.29 Rail Weight Classification

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Track_class **United States Rail
Classification**

Maps:

<http://www.maine.gov/mdot/portlandnorth/rs.htm> **Portland North:**
Portland to Yarmouth, and Portland to Brunswick, Portland to Auburn

http://www.maine.gov/mdot/portlandnorth/images/z_portland_map_1.jpg **Portland Regional Rail Map**