



City of Presque Isle, Maine
The Department of Planning and Development
Kenneth C. Arndt, Director
Email: karndt@presqueisleme.us

March 10, 2014

Good Afternoon!

There will be a joint meeting of the Presque Isle City Council & Planning Board to be held as follows:

Date: **March 13, 2014**

Time: 6:30- 8:30 pm

Place: Presque Isle City Council Chambers, 3rd Floor of City Hall

Attached you will find the relevant and most current transportation section of the 2008 City Comprehensive Plan to help you frame your thoughts regarding transportation issues and needs within our community. Should you desire any other information, please advise.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth C. Arndt, Director of Planning & Development
City of Presque Isle, Maine
760-2727

Transportation:

Lastly, the "Future Land Use Plan for the City of Presque Isle, Maine" must address the issue of transportation needs and potential impacts on future land uses.

As described in the Transportation section of this comprehensive plan update, a heavy truck corridor/connector to the north of the urban area along Rt. #163/167 and then connecting overland to the Conant Road into Easton, Maine is the top transportation priority for the City of Presque Isle. The effort is to reduce or eliminate east/west truck traffic from the downtown area and to establish a complete east/west heavy truck connection from Rt. 163 coming into the community from Mapleton, Maine and around the city center to the major industrial facilities on the Skyway Industrial Park and the industrial complex in Easton, Maine

- A "Heavy Truck Corridor/connector" going west to east would greatly improve mobility by reducing travel time and expenses for through east/west traffic;
- A "Heavy Truck Corridor/connector" would improve east/west traffic flow and public safety by removing longstanding heavy truck trips, for both short term and long term, from the downtown pedestrian and vehicular traffic;
- A "Heavy Truck Corridor/connector" would reduce or eliminate vehicular conflicts in the downtown Presque Isle area caused by an undesirable mixture of local/through traffic and pedestrian/car/truck conflicts;

This proposed truck corridor moving west/east traffic is the primary, priority transportation project applicable to this comprehensive plan during the 10-15 year planning period.

In addition, The City of Presque Isle recognizes the importance of a strong multi-model transportation system to insure future economic development and growth, both within and around the City and region. The City also recognizes that roadways are in integral part of the transportation system. As such, the City sets a high priority not only to maintain its current transportation system but to improve and expand it.

One of the City's priorities is to provide improvements to existing roadways and to seek the construction of new roadways to efficiently move regional, north/south and east/west traffic through and around the City with the combination of a by-pass and a truck route.

To address these transportation priorities the city establishes several goals:

- That the location and alignment of any by-pass be fully evaluated by the City Council, City Planning Board, Maine Department of Transportation, Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency and other state and federal agencies to minimize, to the greatest extent possible, the impact upon prime farmland and the economic impact to merchants located along and near the Route 1 corridor, the City's downtown area and City in general.
- That any by-pass be fully evaluated by the City Council and Planning Board to insure that, to the greatest extent possible, that future development in the City's designated growth areas is not adversely impacted.
- That roadways which support traffic to a by-pass are adequately upgraded to maximize safety and enhance traffic flow. That these improvements be done simultaneously to the by-pass construction.
- That the City pursue evaluating and funding a truck route, outside of the efforts of the Aroostook County Transportation Study, to address the need to safely move heavy truck traffic in an east/west route from the Mapleton Road (Route 163) to Parsons Street and then towards Easton.
- That the City also pursue evaluating and seek funding for a new or improved transportation route, which would eventually connect from US. Rt.#1, just south of the M. M & A. railroad overpass, traveling northerly parallel to the railroad ROW, crossing the Presque Isle stream and connecting to Rt. 163 near its intersection with the planned Parsons St. to Rt. 163 "Heavy Truck Connector".

TRANSPORTATION

State Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria for Transportation

State Goal: To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.

Northern Maine Overview

Roads and Bridges

There are 1125 miles of roadway in northern Maine not including the interstate system. Of that roadway mileage, approximately 35 percent is 50 or more years old. Since the early 1960's new road construction in Maine has been on a steady decline.

The condition of the existing roadways in northern Maine, and the rest of the state, had deteriorated at an alarming rate in the 1990s. In May 2000, the 119th legislature enacted a law that required the Maine Department of Transportation (Maine DOT) to present annual budgets that will result in the improvements of the rural arterial highway system to modern design standards within 10 years. This represents the most ambitious highway program undertaken by Maine DOT. According to Maine DOT, Region 5 has 205 miles of National Highway System/Principal Arterial mileage of which 16.4 miles (8 percent) are considered deficient. In addition, there are 174 miles of minor arterial (18% deficient), and 488 miles of major collector (32% deficient). Maine DOT estimated that the cost of removing all of the backlog projects in Region 5 could exceed \$87 million. Maine DOT defines deficient as needing to bring the condition of the road to modern safety standards and adequate structural capacity.

Houlton is the northern terminus for the Interstate 95 system in the United States, before it connects with the Trans-Canada Highway System (Route 2) in New Brunswick, Canada. Along with the Trans-Canada Highway, all of these routes provide the necessary infrastructure to serve forest products industries, agricultural industries connect population centers, encourage tourism, and to provide access to and from Canada. These various highways also provide vital connections to the remainder of Maine, New England, and the Atlantic Provinces of Canada.

There are 351 bridges in the northern Maine area. Of the 351 bridges, 74 percent are the responsibility of the state, 15 percent are town, 8 percent are city, and 1 percent is the responsibility of the Maine Forest Service. There are 334 rural bridges and 17 urban bridges. 227 bridges need no improvements at this time, 43 are in need of replacement, 30 need to be widened, and 41 need to be rehabilitated.



Freight Routes

In 2001, the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) and Maine DOT designated certain routes in the region as heavy haul truck routes. Heavy haul truck routes are a highway network that carries the most significant heavy haul truck traffic into and out of the region. Heavy haul trucks are those with three or more axles. Routes designated in the central Aroostook area include: Route 161 (Allagash to Fort Fairfield), Route 1 (Fort Kent to Danforth), Route 1-A (Van Buren to Mars Hill), Route 89 (Caribou to Limestone), and Route 163 (Ashland to Easton).

Airports

Maine is broken down for aviation planning purposes into eleven (11) regions in the Maine Aviation Systems Plan (MASP) prepared by the Department of Transportation, Office of Passenger Transportation (2005). Region 11, which covers all of Aroostook County, has four (4) system airports. These airports include: Northern Maine Regional, Northern Aroostook Regional, Caribou Municipal, and Houlton International. The existing airside facilities at Loring AFB and other smaller privately owned air strips are not included in the MASP analysis.

Northern Maine Regional Airport

The Northern Maine Regional Airport (PQI), located in Presque Isle, is one of only three fully certificated airports in the State operating under Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 139. The airport has two large paved runways measuring 7,440' x 150' and 5,994' x 150'. PQI has been designated an economic development airport and provides Aroostook County with daily commuter flights as well as scheduled flights operated by three (3) overnight freight companies. Principal facilities on the airport include an air terminal building, a general aviation terminal and hangar facility, a crash rescue and maintenance building, and an office and hangar complex. NMRA offers a full line of aviation services including air charter, aircraft maintenance, flight instruction, fuel services, aircraft deicing, and on-call customs and agricultural clearance services. The facility offers a full instrument landing system (ILS) and a variety of additional current technology navigational aids. The airport, although not currently used on a regular basis by larger commercial jet aircraft, has the capacity to handle such craft.

Northern Maine Regional Airport is operated by the Airport Department. The Department is run by an Airport Manager and employs an administrative assistant as well as 7-8 grounds persons. The Department's goal is to obtain long term sustainable growth in revenues, aircraft operations, and aviation services. The growth will be managed in such a way that it reduces the dependence on local and county taxpayers. The Airport department's vision is as follows:

- Install self service fueling terminal.
- Promote the establishment of a military/government aviation presence.
- Increase enplanements and deplanements.

- Maintain, at a minimum, cabin class service with the long term goal of establishing regional jet service.
- Enlarge security hold room as enplanements warrant.
- Develop partnerships with community organizations such as Chambers of Commerce.
- Reduce the financial obligations of taxpayers to support airport to zero.
- Establish an Air Show Committee.
- Secure federal funding to implement the 20 year Airfield Capital improvement Plan.
- Implement capital Improvement Plan to maintain airfield and buildings.
- Expand upon general aviation services.
- Attract additional aviation related businesses.

Overall, the facilities are in excellent condition and the Department has developed a Capital Improvements Plan that highlights large capital investments out to 2014. In total, Presque Isle expects the Federal Aviation Administration's Airport Improvements Program to fund approximately 95 percent of the planned capital investments. The department is planning the following capital improvements through 2014:

Year	Project Description	Total Cost	Federal Funds including Discretionary	State Funds	Local Funds	% total of Federal funds
2007	Reconstruct Runway 1-19	\$4,881,848	\$4,021,680	\$624,634	\$235,534	
2008	Reconstruct Runway 10-28	\$5,495,000	\$5,220,250	\$137,375	\$137,375	82.4
2009	Fencing Improvements	\$1,105,501	\$1,050,225	\$27,638	\$27,638	95.0
2010	Vehicle replacement and Master Plan	\$1,050,000	\$997,500	\$26,250	\$26,250	95.0
2011	Expand GA Apron	\$750,500	\$713,000	\$18,750	\$18,750	95.0
2012	Extend taxiway	\$1,395,000	\$1,325,250	\$34,875	\$34,875	95.0
2013	Extend taxiway	\$1,050,000	\$997,500	\$26,250	\$26,250	95.0
2014	Reconstruct taxiway and apron	\$2,550,000	\$2,422,500	\$63,750	\$63,750	95.0
Total		\$18,277,849	\$16,747,905	\$959,522	\$570,422	91.6

Source: City of Presque Isle, 2007



Airport officials are working towards the increased marketing of the airport and the services provided. There has been a concerted effort to obtain regional jet service that could potentially open other hub cities for fliers in the region. A recent study indicated that approximately 10 percent of the enplanements at Bangor International Airport were from residents of Aroostook County. Being able to attract these fliers back to PQI may make it more attractive to a regional carrier that provides jet service. Airport officials are working with the present carrier to examine pricing and service issues.

Radar Facilities

The Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) operates a long-range radar facility (ARSR 4) on the Albert Road in Caribou. The radar has an operational radius of 250 miles and services air traffic from airports located in Presque Isle, Caribou, Houlton, and Frenchville. There are two full-time and one part-time federal employees located at the site that oversees the day to day operation.

There is a Doppler weather radar system in Hodgdon which indicates areas of active precipitation and fills a previously existing gap in the nationwide coverage of weather service. The local TV and radio weather sources use the reports and advise people (travelers) of weather conditions.

Rail

Montreal, Maine, and Atlantic (MM&A) purchased 436 miles of Class 2 main and branch rail lines from the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad (BAR) within Maine. The Ashland branch was upgraded to main line status and has concentrated used primarily to transport forest products. The two largest customers, Irving Woodlands in Nashville Plantation and Fraser Paper in Madawaska, remain its important base in this industry. Lumber traffic, fed by the Pinkham and Levesque mills in the Ashland area, add to the traffic. Two wafer board mills, Louisiana Pacific in New Limerick and J.M. Huber in Easton, represented additional base. MM&A lines also service the intermodal facility located in the City. MM&A maintains the line to the Mapleton Road where the Presque Isle Industrial Council then assumes ownership.

In order to become a more viable transportation provider in the region, MM&A needs to invest in its infrastructure. There are sections of the main line where trains can only travel at 5 to 10 miles per hour due to poor track conditions and other locations where derailments have occurred on a regular basis. MM&A receives approximately \$1 million annually from Maine DOT for infrastructure improvements. Most of this funding is being spent between Brownville and Jackman.

MM&A has had difficulty in meeting the needs of the region. Shippers have cited such issues as waiting for cars that sometimes never arrive, inability to supply the types and volumes of cars requested or needed, and a general lack of responsiveness from the provider to the customer. Rail is a key component in the region's economic development plan and one that could greatly enhance the region's economic development potential especially if fuel prices continue to climb. However, shippers have shifted to more reliable alternative shipping modes because of these problems, which exacerbate the issue of declining rail service by reducing revenues for MM&A. If these issues could be resolved shippers have expressed a willingness to utilize rail again.

Intermodal Facilities

Presque Isle Industrial Council operates an intermodal facility located in the industrial park. This facility enables cargo containers to be transferred to train flatbeds via a piggy packer. Since the economy of northern Maine is based on natural resources, which tend to be high volume and low value, this facility was designed to open new opportunities for economic growth and enhances the ability of northern Maine farmers and manufacturers to ship products throughout the United States. Rail lines connect with another intermodal facility located in southern Maine.

According to PIIC staff, the \$3.3 million dollar facility is in excellent condition with no renovations planned for the foreseeable future. PIIC currently carries no debt and maintains the yard, equipment, and trackage. There is ample land for any potential needs that may arise at the facility. PIIC maintains rail and equipment that can meet projected future needs at the facility while Logistics Management Systems (LMS) of Bangor currently operates the yard. There were no reported lifts in 2006.

The major issue with the intermodal facility is lack of use. As stated previously, the facility is in excellent condition and available at a competitive cost to the region's manufactures. However it is underutilized due to a variety of reasons. Shippers, as stated in the rail section above, do not have the confidence in the rail provider which puts the city in a catch 22 position. City officials recognize the need to continue to work with the shippers and rail provider to ensure that products are moved in a timely and efficient manner. PIIC staff is also working to market the services to the region's shippers.

Public Transportation

Bus Station/Bus Stops

A small bus station and one or more designated "bus stops", with canopies, should be considered within the City of Presque Isle for greater convenience of the traveling public.

Aroostook Regional Transportation System (ARTS)

The Aroostook Regional Transportation System provides general public transportation throughout Aroostook County with its main office located in Presque Isle. Services are provided from each town in the County at least once a week to the nearest commercial center. Services are available to all members of the general public from outlying towns to the commercial center and pick-up services are available in-town to the elderly and handicapped only. Fares are charged to members of the general public and half fare is charged to the elderly and handicapped. No fare is charged to Medicaid clients going to Medicaid covered services or to the elderly and handicapped going to a medical appointment. Services are provided to individuals with special needs who attend daily work or rehabilitation programs. These daily runs are also available to the general public, but no deviation from the special runs can take place due to time limitations.

Cyr Bus Lines

Cyr Bus Lines provides daily regional bus service from northern Maine to Bangor and points south with connections to the major national bus lines. The northern most pick-up point for the bus line is in Caribou and Cyr has a stop located on Main Street in Presque Isle.

Strategic Investments

In 2006, Maine DOT with assistance from NMDC and the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) identified and prioritized strategic transportation investment needs along transportation corridors of regional significance. The goal is to focus on transportation investments that will benefit the entire region, can begin within the next 10 years, and be part of the Maine DOT's Long Range Plan. Transportation investments may include, but may not be limited to, projects and needs that would not be expected to be funded through traditional transportation funding or programs.

The following five (5) investments were identified by the RPO as being regionally significant and transcend all of the transportation corridors in the region:

- Improve north-south mobility to include projects listed in the Aroostook County Transportation Study (ACTS) EIS. This investment includes improving mobility on Routes 1 and 161. EIS has identified by-passes around Caribou and Presque Isle as well as the implementation of the corridor management plan between Presque Isle and Caribou.
- Upgrades to the Montreal, Maine, and Atlantic rail system including infrastructure, service, and intermodal facilities.
- Increasing weight limits on Interstate 95 from 80,000 to 100,000 pounds.
- Implementation of the Air Service Redevelopment Plan at the Northern Maine Regional Airport (PQI) which includes seeking regional jet service and improved air service (pricing and increased frequency).
- Improve access to Maine's seaports.

The following investments are specific to the Presque Isle or central Aroostook area and were included in the Long Range Plan.

- Route 10 reconstruction to allow for improved access to industrial areas in Presque Isle and Easton.
- Eliminate turning radii issues in Presque Isle. Upgrade all intersections to allow efficient traffic flow and truck traffic to pass efficiently and safely.
- Upgrade all multi-season multi use trail crossings located in the region to improve safety.



Presque Isle's Road System

The road system in Presque Isle links residents of the community with the rest of Maine, Canada, and beyond. They are generally in good condition for present levels of traffic with the roads in the worst condition being State routes. With continued routine maintenance, the scraping back of the shoulder build-up, and the cleaning of the ditches, the life of the roadway surface can be prolonged and save the City money. It is important to note in this comprehensive plan that there are a number of gravel roads in the City, which should be targeted for upgrading from gravel roads to paved ways. These gravel roads should be improved to paved ways during the term of this comprehensive plan. Should continued development pressure occur, a thorough look at transportation systems, design, construction, and maintenance will be necessary.

Funding for local projects is obtained from several sources, these include:

- The Urban-Rural Initiative Program (URIP), which consists of both the Rural Road Initiative and the Urban Road Initiative, municipalities receive regularly scheduled payments from DOT for capital improvements to local roads and rural State Aid minor collector roads. Rural Road Initiative funds are distributed at the rate of \$600 per year per lane mile for all rural state aid minor collector roads and all local roads located outside urban compact areas as defined in section 754, except that the rate is \$300 per year per lane mile for seasonal town ways. Since July 1, 2000 funds may be used only for capital improvements. "A Capital improvement" means "any work on a road or bridge that has a life expectancy of 10 years or restores the load-carrying capacity". Urban Road Initiative funds are distributed at the rate of \$2,500 per year per lane mile for summer maintenance performed by the municipalities on state and state aid highways in compact areas. For each lane mile beyond the second lane on a highway with more than two lanes, municipalities also are reimbursed at the rate of \$1,250 per lane mile for summer maintenance in the compact area. In addition, Urban Road Initiative funds are distributed at the rate of \$1,700 per year per lane mile for winter maintenance performed by the municipalities on state highways in compact areas regardless of the number of lanes. These funds may be used only for maintenance and improvements of public roads.
- The City of Presque Isle can also utilize The Indian Reservation Roads program available through the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (25 CFR 170.200 Subpart C) to fund certain transportation facilities and services recognized as transportation facilities and services "that support and sustain the transportation needs of the tribes and the traveling public". Local governments, such as the City of Presque Isle can include their roads/facilities into the Indian Reservation Roads Inventory, thus acknowledging that their transportation systems contribute to the transportation network affecting the local tribe(s).



Public roads in Maine are classified by Maine DOT into three functional classifications based on the needs served by those roads. They are arterial, collector, and local roads. Arterial roads are roads that Maine DOT defines as the most important in the state. These are designed to carry significant high-speed long distance traffic. When improvements or upgrades are necessary to these roads, substantial Federal funding is usually available. Collector roads that collect and distribute ("feed") traffic to arterial roads are called collector roads. As a general rule, they serve places of lower population density. The State provides routine maintenance to these roads, and the City has the winter responsibility for plowing and sanding the roads and the numbered routes within the Urban Compact Area. And finally local roads are roads that the Maine DOT defines as all roads not in the first two categories. These roads are maintained by the City for local use and provide service to adjacent land areas and usually carry low volumes of traffic. There are 106.9 miles of local roads in Presque Isle.

Potential Problem Areas

The following areas have been observed as potential trouble spots or issues and should be reviewed in the context of this comprehensive plan. Improperly designed intersections, drainage problems, and/or snow drifting issues have been identified and through the drafting of policies and the application of strategies these potential problem areas could be eliminated. These areas include:

Like many communities that have a major arterial that also serves as Main Street, heavy truck traffic in the downtown is one of the major problem areas identified by City officials. Trucks have a difficult time turning onto Academy Street from Route 1 and onto Main Street from Route 163. These issues lead to the discussion concerning by-passes around Presque Isle. Many of the trucks are coming from the commercial forestlands located west of Presque Isle and from agricultural areas and attempting to access mills and plants located in Easton. City officials feel that a western connector from Routes 227 and 163 along the Parsons Road to Maysville Road would significantly reduce the truck issues from trucks entering downtown from the west. Road. This connector along with the "industrial" connector from Maysville to the Conant Road would greatly enhance traffic movement in the downtown. See the section entitled "Presque Isle/Easton Industrial Connector Road", which follows for more details about the importance of an east/west by-pass and its priority to our community.

Several other issues were also identified:

- Lathrop Road is a gravel road leading to the landfill. It must be partially posted during the Spring thaw. Plan is to reconstruct this road so that it can carry loads all season long.
- Williams Road was never constructed to a standard. It needs right of way work, drainage, curbs, and reconstruction.
- Academy Street needs complete rebuild. This is the State's responsibility as Presque Isle maintains the road (Summer) and performs winter maintenance. Project would include sidewalk rebuilds also.
- Harmony Way. Needs to be constructed to City standards before being turned over to Presque Isle.
- Upgrading of approximately 12 miles of local gravel roads to paved ways within the life of this comprehensive plan.

Speed Limits

Speed limits have been identified on the Transportation Map located at the end of this section. For the most part speed limits within the urban compact area are 25 mph and increase as one moves away from the more populated area of the community. City officials need to be aware that as development occurs and is encouraged along arterials and major collectors, such as Route 1, 163, 10, and 227 that traffic impacts can have a detrimental impact to the economic development potential in that area. At the present time, development does not appear to be impacting traffic in other areas.

Bridges

There are 30 structures under this definition, which run the gamut from culverts to major bridges such as the Aroostook River Bridge. The responsibility for maintenance and repair also varies from full State responsibility for major bridges to shared responsibility between the state and Presque Isle, and full responsibility by the City for the rest. The bridges are in good condition.

Sidewalks

There are approximately 24 miles of sidewalks in Presque Isle that are in fair to good condition. Several projects that should be considered including:

1. Extending sidewalks on Academy Street to Erskine Street.
2. Extend sidewalks on Route 1 from the County Federal Credit Union to the Aroostook River Bridge (east side of Route 1).

City officials are also currently seeking ways of getting pedestrians off of busy roads in an effort to improve safety. Solutions include better access to the pedestrian and bike paths in town and the extension of sidewalks in the around the IGA. City officials will continue to work with Health Maine Partnerships to seek funding for the completion of these projects.

Parking

Parking in the downtown and the shopping areas on Main Street appears to be adequate at this time. As part of a larger downtown revitalization plan, it is suggested that the revitalization Committee review parking at the Riverside Inn lot in back of Main Street. Suggestions could include the lot being remarked and reconfigured. Since this is part of a larger effort involving downtown revitalization and since parking has been deemed very important to that revitalization effort, "refurbished and redesignated" parking is a high priority project for Presque Isle. As other projects are investigated and completed regarding parking, City officials will seek funding for the completion of this project.

There are certain time periods when parking may occur on the roadway shoulders, such as at the churches during Sunday services and during peak user hours at public buildings. This should be monitored by the City and additional parking planned when appropriate. If additional commercial or industrial development were to take place, the location, kind, dimensions, and quantity of the parking on those lots should be reviewed.

Handicapped parking is available at the City Office, the schools, library, at strategic locations in the downtown, the shopping centers (i.e. The Aroostook Centre Mall/Lowe's, Graves Shop & Save, Wal-mart, North Street Plaza), and post office. There is an adequate number of handicap parking spaces located at the Hospital.

Concern was raised on the issue of accidents in the parking lots, especially at Wal-Mart and the shopping center. The Maine DOT does not maintain statistical data on these accidents. During the implementation phase of this Plan, this issue should be reviewed in more depth to determine if certain design and construction standards need to be revised or drafted.

Gateways.

The entrance to a community provides an important first impression to the resident and visitor alike. The City of Presque Isle is currently working to beautify and revitalize its downtown. Presque Isle also has several major transportation corridors located within the community. These corridors are used by visitors to the region and city officials should consider applying for funding to enhance the gateways to Presque Isle. Gateway funding can provide the framework for making a positive first impression as visitors and residents enter the community. City officials may wish to consider looking at developing gateway projects on Route 1 near the Westfield and Caribou town lines. Grant programs through the Maine Tourism Marketing Program and Maine Dot's Community Gateway Program can fund these projects either partially or fully.

Access Management

The 119th Maine Legislature approved LD 2550, An Act to Ensure Cost Effective and Safe Highways in Maine. The purpose of the act is to assure the safety of the traveling public and protect highways against negative impacts of unmanaged drainage. The law is intended to ensure safety, manage highway capacity, conserve state highway investment, enhance economic productivity related to transportation; and conserve air, water, and land resources. The Access Management Program for Maine includes Access Management Rules and Corridor Planning and Preservation Initiatives.

The Act specifically directs MDOT and authorized municipalities to promulgate rules to assure safety and proper drainage on all state and state aid highways with a focus on maintaining posted speeds on arterial highways outside urban compact areas. The law also requires that the rules include standards for avoidance, minimization, and mitigation of safety hazards along the portions of rural arterials where the 1999 statewide average for driveway related crash rates is exceeded. Those rural arterials are referred to in the rules as "Retrograde Arterials". U.S. Route 1 in Presque Isle is considered to be a retrograde arterial.



The following major state corridors in Presque Isle that fall under the rules include:

- Route 1
- Route 163
- Route 10
- Route 227
- Route 167
- Route 164

In addition, the following state aid roads fall under the rules:

Conant Road	Parsons Road	Craig Road	Mountain Road
Reach Road	Spragueville Road	Route 205	

Industrial Connector Route between Presque Isle and Easton

The continuous movement of raw and finished products over the streets and roads of the City of Presque Isle, to and from manufacturing plants in Easton, constitutes a serious compromise of pedestrian and vehicular safety and results in the accelerated deterioration of the community's infrastructure. The City of Presque Isle sees, as its #1 priority transportation project, the need to proceed with the construction of a freestanding "industrial" connector route/segment between Station Road in Easton, the Conant Road in Presque Isle and State Routes 163/167 (Fort Road) in Presque Isle. This project need is completely separate from, and is a priority over, the proposed "North/South" highway alignment. A second priority is a connector from the Mapleton Road (Rt 163) following approximately parallel to the railroad spur serving the Presque Isle Industrial Park and connecting onto the Parsons Road connector is an essential part of this project east./west by-pass. Such an east/west by-pass or heavy truck connector route will re-route heavy truck traffic away from and around the City's commercial center.

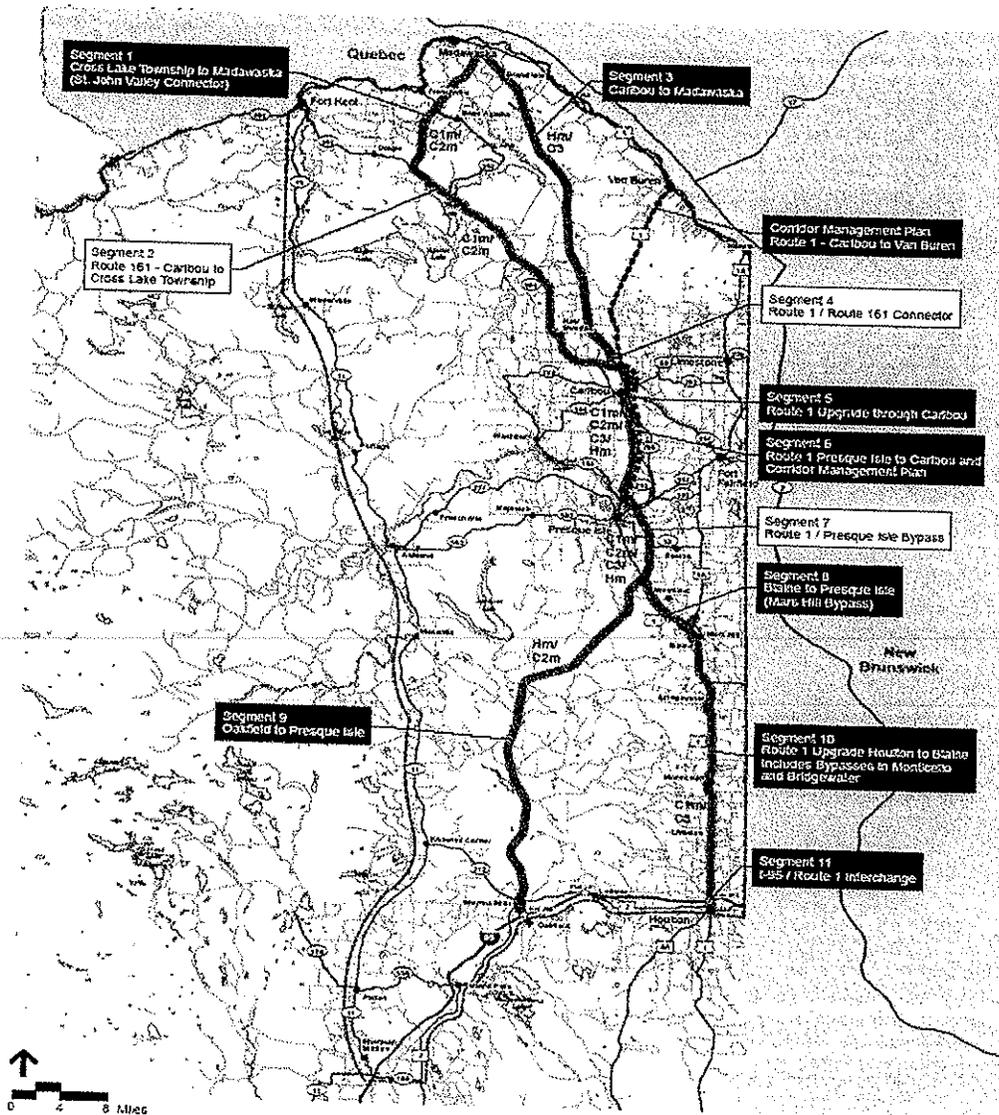
The City of Presque Isle's Planning Board recommends the design and construction of a westerly by-pass running north and south connecting to the Skyway Industrial Park and the Parsons Street "Heavy Truck" Connector route to U.S.Rt. #1, south of the Bangor & Aroostook railroad trestle. Such a westerly By-pass could parallel the B&A rail line & thereby reduce impacts to a reasonable level.

A third transportation priority for the City of Presque Isle is a North/South By-Pass to the westerly side of the City's downtown with connection to the Skyway Industrial Park. This north/south by-pass should be aligned, as proposed in the early 1990' by Louis Berger & Associates and consistent with preliminary environmental assessments. It should be noted that since the 1960's, city officials have planned for a westerly by-pass of the city. As such, appropriate growth within the city has been directed to the west (industrial parks, airport, and commercial development) while high end housing has been encouraged east of the downtown. Present alignments outlined in the SDEIS do not meet the needs of the city and as of the writing of this plan; Maine DOT and FWHA have been unresponsive to the city's request to review a westerly by-pass. The westerly by-pass would accomplish 2 important issues within Presque Isle, reduce or eliminate both the east-west issues and the north south and protect the growth that has occurred within the city. City officials strongly urge Maine DOT and FWHA to reconsider the western by-pass option.



North/South Highway

A limited access highway, running north and south through the Central Aroostook County area, as originally proposed by L.E.A.D and the Maine Department of transportation should continue to be explored and supported outside of this local comprehensive planning effort. At the same time, the North/South Highway should not be combined or confused with the City's need for and interest in constructing a westerly "By-Pass" which would connect from Rt.1 south of the University of Maine, paralleling the Bangor & Aroostook rail lines and connecting to Rt. 163. The City does not currently favor the Easterly By-pass/North-South Highway proposed by MDOT, and continues to prefer a Westerly By-pass/North-South Highway as originally proposed.



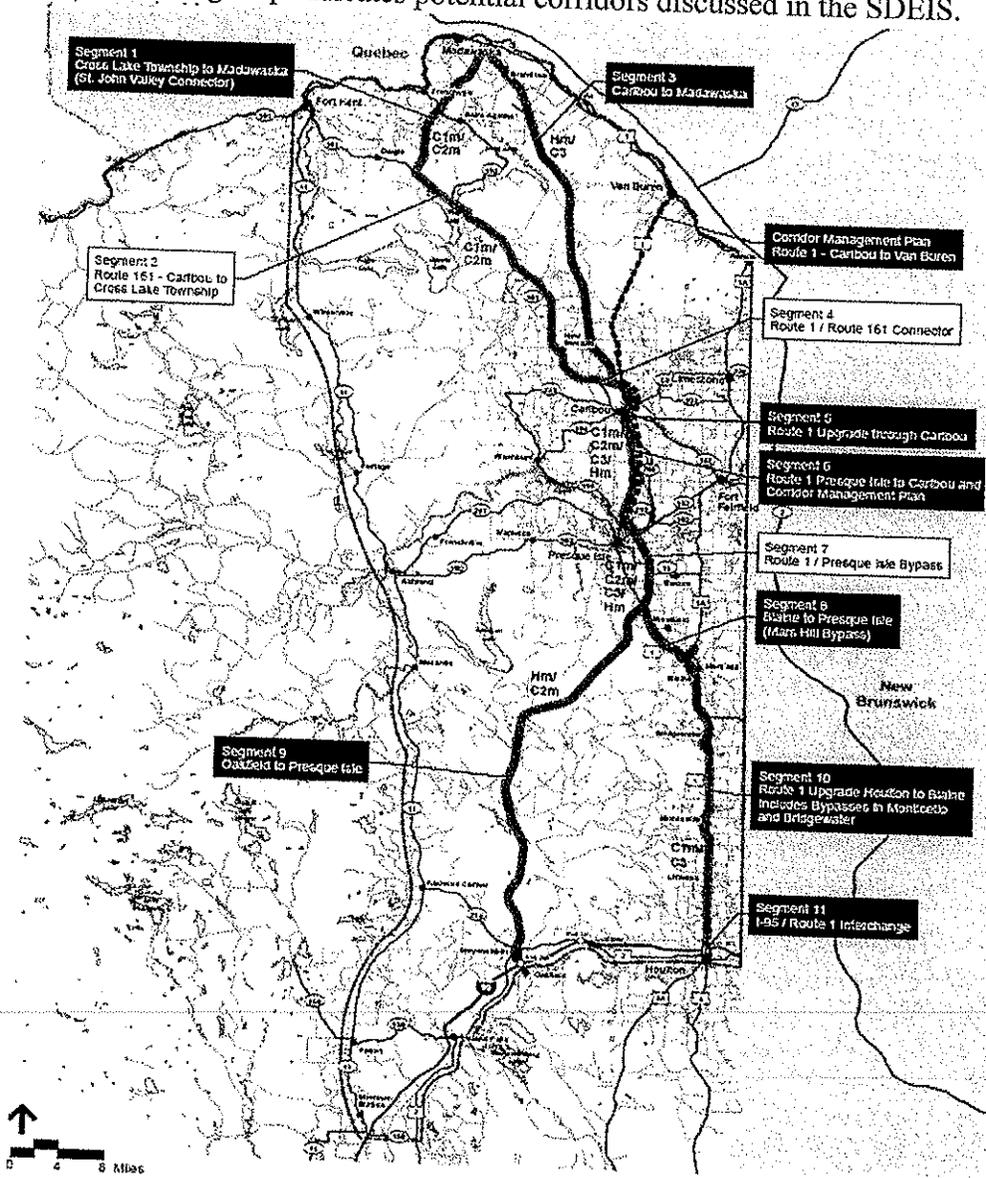
Aroostook County Transportation Study

The Maine Department of Transportation has submitted a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) to the Federal Highway Authority that is designed to improve the transportation system in northeastern Aroostook County. Presently there are four corridors under consideration of this study. The most specific alignments are located in the central Aroostook area with no specific north-south corridor from the St. John Valley to I-95 being identified at this time. According to Maine DOT, it could take decades to design, acquire permits, and secure funding to build a new 90-100 mile corridor with the potential for many things to change during that time frame that would require a new EIS be developed. Maine DOT plans to phase construction of a new North-South corridor during the time period. The Federal Highway Authority is expected to issue a Record of Decision (ROD) in early 2008.

Presque Isle is located at the hub of each of the corridors identified in the SDEIS. Since it is appears likely that several projects listed in the document could commence within the next several years, Presque Isle has taken a proactive role in working with the Maine DOT to ensure that the city's desires are addressed. Projects listed include by-passes around the downtown, corridor management planning on US Route 1, and potential new intersections on the Maysville Road.



The following map indicates potential corridors discussed in the SDEIS.



Source: Maine Department of Transportation, 2006

Corridor Management Planning

The Aroostook County Transportation Study recommends that the proposed North-South controlled access highway between Caribou (Route 1/164) and Presque Isle (Route 1/Brewer Road) be located to the greatest extent practicable on the existing Route 1 alignment. This vision would be realized over an extended period of time through the implementation of a Corridor Management Plan. The Cities of Caribou and Presque Isle through a joint memorandum of understanding have expressed a willingness to pursue this alternative vision by working together to draft and implement the Corridor Management Plan.



This project benefits from the work accomplished in the Aroostook County Transportation Study and presented in draft, August 2005 as the Route 1 Corridor Management Plan – Presque Isle to Caribou. That report contains valuable information on existing conditions covering physical features of the road, traffic characteristics, adjacent land use considerations and environmental conditions. The report suggests strategies to consider incorporating into a CMP and it makes implementation recommendations. The work to be performed on behalf of Maine DOT and the Cities of Caribou and Presque Isle will not replicate this effort but rather it will build upon it. The primary purpose of this project is to prepare a Corridor Management Plan that the two Cities will adopt and implement.

The Caribou-Presque Isle Corridor Management Planning Initiative is a project of statewide significance. Through this initiative, a primary artery with no unique limits on access (South of Rt. 1/164 jct. in Caribou) will transition to an artery with limited access and ultimately, over an extended period of time, transition to a totally controlled access highway. This has not been attempted anywhere else in Maine on this scale. The results of this initiative are expected to provide valuable insights as to the applicability of this approach elsewhere in Maine. In particular, the results of this initiative will be instructive to the future selection of a north-south highway location south of Presque Isle.

This initiative is also significant to the extent that the leadership for the effort is shared between Maine DOT and the communities of Caribou and Presque Isle. Given the sensitivity of the land use decisions that must be made, this initiative would be difficult to advance if driven principally by State or State/Federal parties. By emphasizing the importance of local decision-making, this initiative respects the tradition of having land use planning subject to local control. Nevertheless, since Route 1 is a State highway, there must be a partnership between Maine DOT, Caribou and Presque Isle and furthermore there must be FHWA participation since Route 1 at this location is part of the National Highway System. Other key participants must be the landowners along this portion of Route 1 with unique consideration given to the Aroostook Band of MicMacs.

Finally, it is underscored that the North-South highway has been advanced through various plans for roughly fifty years and little has been accomplished. The initiative that is the subject of this proposal has no known local, state or federal opponents. In fact, recent federal comments on the SDEIS, propel this initiative because it focuses on upgrading the utility of an existing alignment.

This project will adopt the same study area definition as used in the Aroostook County Transportation Study. That area begins in the south in the proximity of the Route 1/163 intersection in Presque Isle and ends to the north in Caribou in the proximity of the Route 1/89 intersection. The proposed planning effort will result in recommendations, which, if implemented, will yield over time, at a minimum, a two lane limited access highway comparable to Route 1 just north of the Caribou Motor Inn. The plan will recommend steps to acquire sufficient right-of-way to protect the option of ultimately transitioning to a four lane, divided highway comparable to an urban interstate design standard. Based on local discussions, it is anticipated that right-of-way will be secured over time only on a willing seller basis.

Maysville Project

The proposed study area boundaries are the intersection of Routes 1/210/164 north of the Aroostook River, Route 1 (North Maine Street) and the intersection with Rice Street, Maysville Street (Route 163) and its intersection with Fort Fairfield Road (Route 167) and the Parsons Street Connector through its intersection with Parsons Street.

The City of Presque Isle has applied for a grant to use in evaluating the engineering feasibility of mobility enhancements within the defined study area. The purpose of the study is to analyze improvements that would optimize the unrestricted flow of through traffic while simultaneously enhancing local access to the Presque Isle downtown business district. The mobility enhancements to be analyzed will build upon access controls already in place within the study area and seek to add further access controls where feasible. The merit of grade separated interchanges, dedicated through lanes, the addition of local service roads, restricted right in right out turns and other traffic management techniques will be considered.

Maine DOT will work collaboratively with the City to consider the optimal long range strategy for the City and the region relative to future crossings of the Aroostook River to either replace the existing Route 1 structure or to provide redundancy and improved service through construction of an additional bridge. In this context, Maine DOT will assist the City by making available rough construction cost estimates of the alternatives presented for crossing the Aroostook River. The City of Presque Isle will provide Maine DOT its position on a preferred outcome taking into account the relative costs and benefits to be realized from the various options presented.

Trails

Old logging roads, railroad rights-of-way, and trails serve as cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, and snowmobile trails in the winter; hiking and nature trails during the non-winter months; and access for fire control year round. The continued maintenance of these trails for recreation and transportation pursuits will enhance recreational and transportation programs and economic development in the area.

There are approximately 125 miles of State supported snowmobile trails in the Presque Isle area. These include: ITS 83 (north-south) and ITS 88 (east-west) and 74, 76, 76A, 81A, 81B, and 81C. ITS 83 runs from just south of Hodgdon to the north up through Caribou and ITS 88 from just west of Fort Fairfield and heads west to Ashland. The other feeder trails in the area are fully maintained by the Snowmobile Clubs, these include: 74, 76, 76A, 81A, 81B, and 81C which also have services provided in the area. Under a State grant, Presque Isle receives funds to cover 70% of the maintenance cost of this portion of the State System. The actual maintenance is performed by the Presque Isle Snowmobile Club. The State funds are derived from the gas tax and snowmobile registrations.



Presque Isle should consider seeking Recreational Trails Program grant to that helps improve access to the downtown and local vendors. Such a project will accomplish at least two desirable objectives:

1. Allow easier access for recreational riders to Presque Isle rather than bypassing the community.
2. Help promote economic vitality in Presque Isle by enabling recreational riders to access business establishments located on US Route 1 and conversely, enabling people to "park and drop" their vehicles at these same establishments and access the trail system.

Presque Isle, because of its location, would benefit from the year-round use of trails as recreational and transportation resources. In addition, with proper and compatible trail development and tourism promotion, small scale year-round economic development could be realized. Issues which should be reviewed by this plan include, among others; compatible use of the trails; alternative trails for incompatible uses; need for additional trails or connectors; trail maintenance; and private property rights.

Biennial Capital Work Plan FY 2006-2007

The Biennial Capital Work Plan is a dynamic document, and projects listed within may change over the next two fiscal years to reflect both the readiness of projects for construction, and changes in the fiscal resources available to support Maine's transportation program. The CWP for 2006-2007 includes nine (9) projects in Presque Isle:

- State Street: Grade Crossing Improvements; \$160,000, No local match required
- Reach Road: 3.4 miles of maintenance paving; \$62,900, No local match required
- Route 1: 5.67 miles of pavement rehabilitation \$2.5 million, No local match required.
- Route 163: 1.04 miles of highway resurfacing. \$250,000, No local match required.
- Route 1: Academy to Blake Street resurfacing, \$200,000 No local match required.
- Route 1; Rice Street to Rt. 210 highway resurfacing; \$221,000, No local match required.
- Phase 2 Runway reconstruction: \$5.1 million with \$193,392 in local match.
- Pedestrian Improvements on Edgemont and Skyway Dr.; \$140,000 with \$28,000 local match.
- Route 205: 10.79 miles of maintenance paving; \$219,595; No local match.

Presque Isle should continue to submit any potential future projects to MDOT for inclusion in the next 6-year plan. Typical projects could include rail crossing improvements, pedestrian enhancements, landscaping and curbing, or general road surface and structural improvements



Transportation Impacts on Downtown Revitalization

Despite the initial efforts of the Quality Main Street Advisory Committee, active in and around 1995, as well as the Strategic Study produced during their tenure, the committee eventually disbanded and the study and its goals sat on a shelf.

In early 2006, members of Presque Isle's downtown businesses and interested business people, in cooperation with the Presque Isle Area Chamber of Commerce and the city of Presque Isle, announced the creation of the Downtown Revitalization Committee. Initially formed under the direction of the Chamber, the group currently serves as an ad-hoc committee for the City.

The mission of the Committee, *to encourage our community to preserve and reinvest in the economic, aesthetic, and cultural future of Presque Isle by promoting viability and vitality of downtown*, will be implemented using the 4-Point Approach, developed by the National Main Street Center, via sub-committee formation. The four points include: Organization, Design, Economic Restructuring, and Promotion.

The 4-Point Approach has been used successfully by several communities in Maine to promote positive change within their downtown areas. The objective of the Downtown Revitalization Committee is to build upon the past successes of the city while establishing a structure to address the immediate needs of the downtown district, as well as ensuring a sustainable, long-term, economic vitality. As such, each sub-committee will be utilizing the 1995 Strategic Study to evaluate how the analysis and goals apply to Presque Isle today.

At this writing, each sub-committee is developing a list of specific immediate, short-, and long-term goals; however, several primary goals exist at this time: restructuring as a non-profit organization; hiring a "downtown manager"; improving the in-town parking with the design and construction of off-street parking areas, including signage, lighting, and landscaping; re-introducing culture and music to the community with a gazebo/amphitheatre structure; and improving the facades and signage of each building in the target area to create a cleaner, cohesive, and more inviting downtown.

Transportation Analysis

Presque Isle is a transportation hub for Aroostook County and contains transportation systems of regional and statewide significance. Roads have been the top priority in transportation planning in the region for many years and Presque Isle has been extremely proactive in its pursuit of maintaining a safe and efficient road system and is more advanced in thinking and programs than many communities in Maine. One of the major north/south corridors serves also as Presque Isle's Main Street (U.S.Rt.#1) with reduced speed limits, a variety of traffic types, business, and industry, pedestrians, and bicyclists utilizing the corridor. As a result traffic is oftentimes congested in these areas making it difficult for through traffic to reach destinations in a timely manner.



- City officials have recognized that unrestricted access to this arterial roadway, in particular Route 1, can ultimately result in increased traffic congestion and safety problems. Officials also have recognized that growth has occurred along Main Street between Rice Street and Maysville Road and are encouraging infill development in this area. However, they have also recognized that Route 1 is strategically important to the region and have begun to take steps to protect the capacity of the route. A Corridor Management Plan and Implementation strategy is being pursued in the portion of Rt.1 north of the Aroostook River bridge.
- There is a community transportation project, an industrial connector road from Presque Isle to Easton, which is a priority over other City by-passes. A connector road from the Conant Road to the Fort Road on the north side of the City is a priority for moving heavy truck traffic from north/south and east/west. This Industrial Access Road is described more detailed in the Draft Environmental Assessment dated 2/4/02 prepared by the FHA & MDOT (PIN 6462.11, HP 6462 (11)E. This project also includes a connector from Rt. 163 (Mapleton Rd.) to the Parsons Road connector, which then connects to the Maysville Rd. and Rt.1.
- The City of Presque Isle places a third transportation priority on a westerly by-pass, as outlined in early 1990's engineering studies by Louis Berger & Associates, Inc. Such a westerly by-pass would have a positive impact on both Central Business District commuters, businesses & pedestrians, as well increasing the economic development benefits & impacts to the Skyway Industrial Park. This is the preferred by-pass alignments over all others preferred to date.
- The North/South Transportation Study which began in early 1999 has not yet been completed. This study was designed to be an economic development study as this region does not have the congestion or traffic problems normally associated with environmental impact statement. The completion of this plan will allow the region to work within the present funding system and seek alternatives for additional funds to complete identified priority highway segments. City officials are aware that by-passing Presque Isle in a north/south direction may not be in the City's or the region's best interest. City officials need to be watchful of the eventual outcome of this study and continue to articulate Presque Isle's position to the MDOT and FHWA.
- Northern Maine Regional Airport is also an asset that if developed to its full potential could have a significant positive impact on the region. This airport contains a wealth of infrastructure that is not found north of Bangor and is in excellent condition. Completion of projects listed the CIP will ensure that the facility remain a viable and important resource to the region. Airport officials are working towards the increased marketing of the airport and the services provided. There has been a concerted effort to obtain regional jet service that could potentially open other hub cities for fliers in the region. City officials should continue to seek funding to update and maintain the infrastructure at the facility.

- As stated previously, MM&A also has gained the reputation of not meeting the needs of the region. However, it is a key component in the region's economic development plan one that could greatly enhance the economic development potential especially if fuel prices continue to climb. City officials may want to assist MM&A through the Industrial Rail Access Program (IRAP) in which \$2 million is used to improve access to the line. This is matched with \$2 million from other sources. This program can provide much needed funding to assist business and industry with the development of sidings and other access options.
- A pedestrian transportation study should be funded and conducted to help determine what sorts of transportation facilities and improvements could be made within the City to encourage further pedestrian traffic & accessibility to necessary services.

