

TRIP's Top 50 Transportation Projects to Support Economic Growth and Quality of Life in Maine

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Founded in 1971, [TRIP](#)® of Washington, DC, is a nonprofit organization that researches, evaluates and distributes economic and technical data on surface transportation issues. TRIP is sponsored by insurance companies, equipment manufacturers, distributors and suppliers; businesses involved in highway and transit engineering and construction; labor unions; and organizations concerned with efficient and safe surface transportation.

Executive Summary

Maine's transportation system has played a significant role in the state's development, providing mobility and access for residents, visitors, businesses and industry. The state's roads, highways, rails, ports and public transit systems remain the backbone of the Pine Tree State's economy. Maine's transportation system also provides for a high quality of life and makes the state a desirable place to live and visit. The condition and quality of its transportation system will play a critical role in Maine's ability to continue to recover from the recession, capitalize on its economic advantages and meet the demands of the 21st Century.

To achieve sustainable economic growth, Maine must proceed with numerous projects to improve key roads, bridges, ports and public transit systems. Enhancing critical segments of Maine's transportation system will boost the state's economy in the short-term by creating jobs in construction and related fields. In the long-term these improvements will enhance economic competitiveness and improve the quality of life for the state's residents and visitors by reducing travel delays and transportation costs, improving access and mobility, improving safety, and stimulating sustained job growth.

In this report, TRIP examines recent transportation and economic trends in Maine and provides information on the transportation projects in the state that are most needed to support economic growth. Sources of data include the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), and the U.S. Census Bureau. All data used in the report is the latest available.

TRIP has identified and ranked the 50 transportation projects that are most needed to support Maine's economic growth. These projects are located throughout the state.

- The most needed transportation improvements in Maine include 35 projects to build, expand or modernize highways or bridges, five projects to improve rail or public transportation, five maritime or port projects, three multi-modal projects, one aviation project and one project to improve the state's trail system. These improvements would enhance economic development opportunities throughout the state by increasing mobility and freight movement, easing congestion, and making Maine an attractive place to live, visit and do business.
- TRIP ranked each transportation project based on a rating system that considered the following: short-term economic benefits, including job creation; the level of improvement in the condition of the transportation facility, including safety improvements; the degree of improvement in access and mobility; and the long-term improvement provided in regional or state economic performance and competitiveness.

- Maine's 10 most needed transportation projects to support economic development in the state as determined by TRIP follow. Additional details on these and the other projects that make up the 50 most needed projects in Maine for economic recovery and growth are included in the report's [Appendix](#).
1. **New Controlled Access Highway between I-395 and Route 9 in Penobscot County** This \$70-100 million project will facilitate East-West traffic and alleviate congestion, serving as the primary route for moving people and goods throughout the entire state. It will also reduce travel time and fuel costs for Maine shippers, citizens and visitors.
 2. **Rehabilitating the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge in York County** This \$105-115 million project would rehabilitate one of three critical bridges connecting Maine and New Hampshire at Kittery-Portsmouth. The Sarah Mildred Long Bridge also provides the only rail crossing in the vicinity of the Portsmouth Naval Ship Yard in Kittery. Without these improvements, the bridge will only be open to bicycle and pedestrian traffic. The bridge improvements will maintain businesses on both sides of the river that rely on passerby traffic, in addition to strengthening efforts by both communities to improve their downtown areas and attract more visitors.
 3. **Construction of New East-West Route.** Stretching from near Calais to near Coburn Gore, this new route would expand Maine's economic activity and accelerate recession recovery. It would link Halifax, Nova Scotia to mid-US markets via Maine. This major construction project, unrivaled since Interstate construction in Maine, would provide long-term opportunities for expanded markets and more efficient delivery of goods. The state legislature will consider a bill to fund an initial study for the road in the 2012 session. Cost of the study is \$300,000, while construction would likely top \$1 billion.
 4. **Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of Route 3 in Hancock County** Stretching from near Sand Point Road to Route 233, this \$5-10 million project would improve 4.3 miles of roadway, which is currently inadequate given the vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian traffic it carries. Route 3 serves as the gateway to Acadia National Park and is one of the most important highways in Maine. The project would improve safety, potentially leverage private investments and enhance the visitor experience in Acadia.
 5. **Development of a Cargo Port at Sears Island** This \$225-250 million project would improve international freight connections to the North American freight infrastructure, making it critical for freight movement, both locally and internationally. It would reduce the costs of local freight movement by piggybacking onto international freight movements and would also add construction jobs. A portion of the island, which is owned by the State of Maine, has been set aside to develop the port.

6. **Replacement of the Martins Point Bridge in Portland** This \$30-35 million project would replace the Martins Point Bridge between Portland and Falmouth. This bridge carries coastal US Route 1, which carries significant local and tourist traffic. Completion of this project would add construction jobs, facilitate regional tourism and alleviate congestion on the Portland peninsula.
7. **Rehabilitating the West Approach Bridge in Bath** This \$15 million project will rehabilitate the bridge, which is reaching the end of its useful life. Route 1 in the mid-coast is one of Maine's most important highways for both commerce and tourism. It is also adjacent to Bath Iron Works, one of Maine's largest employers.
8. **East-West Facility in Gorham** A planning study is currently underway to design a project to relieve congestion and improve safety west of I-95 in Cumberland County (the fastest growing area of Maine). The project would create jobs during the construction phase and allow for improved access to I-95, which will position the area for increased economic development and efficiencies in transporting goods and people.
9. **Replacing the Kennebec River Bridge between Richmond and Dresden** This \$20-30 million project would replace the bridge, which is rapidly approaching the end of its useful life and can no longer be rehabilitated. This bridge provides a significant regional crossing of the Kennebec River. Closing or posting the bridge would result in traveler delays in excess of 45 minutes each way. Completion of the project would create or sustain construction jobs while improving safety and connectivity.
10. **Intermodal Facility and Acadia National Park Welcome Center in Trenton** This \$12 million project at the Gateway Center was designed to improve safety and to reduce traffic congestion and the demand for parking at Acadia National Park. The facility will be constructed on Route 3, the only highway leading to Acadia National Park, and will encourage the use of an alternative mode both at the site, and for future travel, to and from the park. Following completion, the Town of Trenton will become a destination as a site to learn more about Acadia National Park and the region. The bus system will also create improved transportation options for Trenton residents.

Transportation projects that improve the efficiency, condition or safety of a highway or transit route provide significant economic benefits by reducing transportation delays and costs associated with a deficient transportation system. Some benefits of transportation improvements include the following.

- Improved business competitiveness due to reduced production and distribution costs as a result of increased travel speeds and fewer mobility barriers.

- Improvements in household welfare resulting from better access to higher-paying jobs, a wider selection of competitively priced consumer goods, additional housing and healthcare options, and improved mobility for residents without access to private vehicles.
- Gains in local, regional and state economies due to improved regional economic competitiveness, which stimulates population and job growth.
- Increased leisure/tourism and business travel resulting from the enhanced condition and reliability of a region's transportation system.
- A reduction in economic losses from vehicle crashes, traffic congestion and vehicle maintenance costs associated with driving on deficient roads.
- The creation of both short-term and long-term jobs.
- Transportation projects that expand roadway or transit capacity produce significant economic benefits by reducing congestion and improving access, thus speeding the flow of people and goods while reducing fuel consumption.
- Transportation projects that maintain and preserve existing transportation infrastructure also provide significant economic benefits by improving travel speeds, capacity, load-carry abilities and safety, and reducing operating costs for people and businesses. Such projects also extend the service life of a road, bridge or transit vehicle or facility, which saves money by either postponing or eliminating the need for more expensive future repairs.
- [Site Selection magazine's 2010 survey](#) of corporate real estate executives found that transportation infrastructure was the third most important selection factor in site location decisions, behind only work force skills and state and local taxes.
- A [2007 analysis by the Federal Highway Administration](#) found that every \$1 billion invested in highway construction would support approximately 27,800 jobs, including approximately 9,500 in the construction sector, approximately 4,300 jobs in industries supporting the construction sector, and approximately 14,000 other jobs induced in non-construction related sectors of the economy.
- The [Federal Highway Administration estimates](#) that each dollar spent on road, highway and bridge improvements results in an average benefit of \$5.20 in the form of reduced vehicle maintenance costs, reduced delays, reduced fuel consumption, improved safety, reduced road and bridge maintenance costs, and reduced emissions as a result of improved traffic flow.

While Maine's diverse economy has been impacted by the recession, the state's transportation system will need to accommodate projected future growth.

- From 1990 to 2010, Maine's population increased by seven percent, from approximately 1.2 million to approximately 1.3 million. Maine's population is expected to increase to 1.4 million by 2030.
- From 1990 to 2009, annual vehicle-miles-of-travel (VMT) in the state increased by 22 percent, from approximately 11.9 billion VMT to 14.5 billion VMT. Based on travel and population trends, TRIP estimates that vehicle travel in Maine will increase another 25 percent by 2030, reaching approximately 18.1 billion VMT.
- Maine's unemployment rate rose from 4.9 percent in October 2007 to 7.3 percent in October 2011. The national unemployment rate was 9.0 percent in October 2011.
- In 2011, Maine is projected to experience a 1.8 percent increase in real gross state product (GSP), which is factored for price changes, less than the forecast national average of 2.1 percent.
- In 2012, Maine is projected to have a 3.3 percent rate of economic growth, measured in real GSP, which is factored for price changes. This rate of growth is lower than the forecast 3.4 percent increase in national real GSP in 2012.
- Maine has benefited from a diverse economy, which includes significant employment in the following sectors: agriculture, forest products, manufacturing, commercial fishing, bio-technology, naval ship building and construction, tourism and outdoor recreation.

Maine's economy is served by an extensive surface transportation system that has some deficiencies and experiences severe congestion in key areas. Roads carry the majority of freight shipped in the state.

- Maine's system of 22,839 miles of roads and 2,393 bridges, maintained by local, state and federal governments, carry 14.5 billion vehicle miles of travel annually.
- Twenty-seven percent of Maine's major roads are deficient, with 10 percent rated in poor condition and an additional 17 percent rated mediocre in 2008. An additional 17 percent of the state's major roads were rated in fair condition and 55 percent were rated in good condition.
- Fifteen percent of Maine's bridges were rated structurally deficient in 2010. A bridge is structurally deficient if there is significant deterioration of the bridge deck, supports or other major components. Structurally deficient bridges are often posted for lower weight or closed to traffic, restricting or redirecting large

vehicles, including commercial trucks, school buses and emergency services vehicles.

- In 2010, 17 percent of Maine's bridges were rated as functionally obsolete. Bridges that are functionally obsolete no longer meet current highway design standards, often because of narrow lanes, inadequate clearances or poor alignment.
- Every year, approximately \$30.9 billion in goods are shipped annually from sites in Maine and another \$41.1 billion in goods are shipped annually to sites in Maine, mostly by truck.
- Eighty-one percent of the goods shipped annually from sites in Maine are carried by trucks and another 10 percent are carried by parcel, U.S. Postal Service or courier services, which use trucks for part of the deliveries.

Sources of data for this report include the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), the Bureau of Economic Analysis and the U.S. Census Bureau. All data used in the report is the latest available.

Introduction

Maine's transportation system serves as the backbone of the Pine Tree State's economy, providing mobility to the state's residents, visitors and businesses. Maine's transportation system has allowed the state's residents to travel to work and school and to access recreation, healthcare, social and commercial activities. The system has also allowed the state's businesses to access customers, suppliers and employees.

But Maine's transportation system has significant deficiencies that could prevent the state from reaching its full economic potential. In order to insure that the state's economy recovers from the recession and returns to significant and sustained growth, Maine must improve and expand key highway, port and transit routes, which will ease congestion, improve traffic safety and enhance access throughout the state.

Maine's economic climate has not been immune to the national economic downturn, and the state must make infrastructure investments that will stimulate job growth and support the state's long-term economic goals by improving access for the state's diversified economy. Maine's economy and quality of life could be adversely affected if its transportation system cannot provide for the efficient movement of goods and people. The completion of needed transportation improvements is a key component of any region's ability to induce sustained economic growth.

Because it impacts the time it takes to transport people and goods, as well as the cost of travel, the reliability and physical condition of a region's transportation system plays a significant role in long-term economic growth, productivity and competitiveness. Numerous studies have concluded that investment in expanding the capacity or

improving the condition of existing transportation facilities is critical to a region's ability to stimulate short-term and long-term economic growth.

In this report, TRIP identifies and ranks the 50 transportation projects in Maine that are most needed to spur and assist in the state's economic growth. The most needed transportation improvements in Maine include 35 projects to build, expand or modernize highways or bridges, five projects to improve rail or public transportation, five maritime or port projects, three multi-modal projects, one aviation project and one project to improve the state's trail system. Information on these projects, such as location, the estimated cost of the project and an explanation of the importance of the project and how it would improve Maine's economy can be found in the report with additional details available in the [Appendix](#).

Transportation Projects Impact the Economy

When a state or region's surface transportation system lacks adequate capacity, is deteriorated or lacks some desirable safety features, it impedes economic performance by slowing commerce and commuting, increasing transport costs and burdening an economy with future transportation investment needs.

Local, regional and state economic performance is improved when a region's surface transportation system is expanded or repaired. This improvement comes as a result of the initial job creation and increased employment created over the long-term because of improved access, reduced transport costs and improved safety. [Site Selection magazine's 2010 survey](#) of corporate real estate executives found that transportation

infrastructure was the third most important selection factor in site location decisions, behind only work force skills and state and local taxes.¹

To prepare this report, TRIP analyzed data provided by the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), which consulted with the state's largest regional transportation agencies, on the transportation projects in the state most needed to support economic growth. The projects include the reconstruction, expansion, or improvement of existing transportation facilities or the construction of new transportation facilities.

The agencies provided information on projects including route, location, current level of use, the type of improvement needed, the estimated cost of the improvement, a description of the importance of the facility to regional mobility and an explanation of the economic benefits provided by the project.

The 50 Transportation Projects Most Needed to Support Maine's Economy

TRIP has ranked the 50 transportation projects that are most needed to support Maine's economic recovery and growth. TRIP ranked the projects by assigning each transportation segment or facility an overall score, based on a scale that provided points for the following categories:

- ✓ Short-term economic benefits, including job creation.
- ✓ Improvement in the condition of transportation facility, including safety improvements.
- ✓ Improved access and mobility.

- ✓ Long-term improvement in regional or state economic performance and competitiveness.

Maine's 20 most needed transportation projects for economic recovery as determined by TRIP follow. A listing of all 50 most needed transportation projects to support economic growth, including additional details, such as the status of each project, is included in the report's [Appendix](#).

- 1. New Controlled Access Highway between I-395 and Route 9 in Penobscot County** This \$70-100 million project will facilitate East-West traffic and alleviate congestion, serving as the primary route for moving people and goods throughout the entire state. It will also reduce travel time and fuel costs for Maine shippers, citizens and visitors.
- 2. Rehabilitating the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge in York County** This \$105-115 million project would rehabilitate one of three critical bridges connecting Maine and New Hampshire at Kittery-Portsmouth. The Sarah Mildred Long Bridge also provides the only rail crossing in the vicinity of the Portsmouth Naval Ship Yard in Kittery. Without these improvements, the bridge will only be open to bicycle and pedestrian traffic. The bridge improvements will maintain businesses on both sides of the river that rely on passerby traffic, in addition to strengthening efforts by both communities to improve their downtown areas and attract more visitors.
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- 4. Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of Route 3 in Hancock County** Stretching from near Sand Point Road to Route 233, this \$5-10 million project would improve 4.3 miles of roadway, which is currently inadequate given the vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian traffic it carries. Route 3 serves as the gateway to Acadia National Park and is one of the most important highways in the state of Maine. The project would improve safety, potentially leverage private investments and enhance the visitor experience in Acadia.

- 5. Development of a Cargo Port at Sears Island** This \$225-250 million project would improve international freight connections to the North American freight infrastructure, making it critical for freight movement, both locally and internationally. It would reduce the costs of local freight movement by piggybacking onto international freight movements and would also add construction jobs. A portion of the island, which is owned by the State of Maine, has been set aside to develop the port.
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- 10. Intermodal Facility and Acadia National Park Welcome Center in Trenton** This \$12 million project at the Gateway Center was designed to improve safety and to reduce traffic congestion and the demand for parking at Acadia National Park. The facility will be constructed on Route 3, the only highway leading to Acadia National Park, and will encourage the use of an alternative mode both at the site, and for future travel, to and from the park. Following completion, the Town of Trenton will become a destination as a site to learn more about Acadia National Park and the region. The bus system will also create improved transportation options for Trenton residents.

- 11. Improvements at Mack Point** This \$35 million project will include west side fender installation, connecting rail and trucks to the Pier and the construction of a new truck bypass. It will stabilize the pier and improve efficiencies at the port. Mack Point is one of Maine's three most significant commercial points of entry. Project completion will allow for better port capacity, including the capability to handle larger ships.
- 12. Reconstruction of Route 4 in Franklin County** This \$2.9 million project will reconstruct 1.25 miles of Route 4, a principal artery highway that is in inadequate condition. Route 4 is the principal source of access to Maine's Rangeley Lakes Region and plays a significant role in Maine's tourism industry. Once the project is completed, Route 4 will be adequate from Auburn to beyond Farmington. Localized flooding during heavy rain will also be minimized due to drainage upgrades.
- 13. Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Along Route 201 from Skowhegan to the Canadian Border** Despite being arguably the most important highway for over 20 percent of Maine, considering the traffic carried, multiple sections of Route 201 are in inadequate condition. Should any slopes along Route 201 fail, the international economic costs will be significant due to a lack of optimal bypass routes. Route 201 in the western Maine area is a critical link between Québec City, and central and southern Maine. This \$7-10 million project will create, or sustain, construction jobs as it is undertaken, and will improve safety. It will also prevent an economic catastrophe by mitigating the potential for slope and rock wall failures.
- 14. Reconstruction and Rehabilitation on Route 1 in Knox County** This \$4-7 million project would rehabilitate nearly 2.5 miles along this major tourism route, which connects coastal Maine communities. This is one of the final sections of Route 1 in Mid-Coast Maine that is inadequate given its condition and the traffic carried by this route. This project will improve safety and potentially leverage additional investments for improvements to Thomaston village.
- 15. Reconstructing and Rehabilitating Route 1 in Knox County** Stretching 1.4 miles from Route 97 and extending east, this \$3-5.5 million project would improve the condition and capacity of this stretch of Route 1. This project will potentially complete the Route 1 corridor in mid-coast Maine and would help protect the nearby dam and local recreation area.
- 16. Rehabilitation of County Road in Washington County** This inadequate highway connects the Port of Eastport to Maine and the rest of the country. Completion of the project will facilitate a safer flow of materials and commodities through the Port of Eastport, one of Maine's most important commercial ports.
- 17. Modification of the I-295 Interchange at Exit 15** This \$8.3 million project would improve safety, site distance and mobility where I-295, one of the state's

most principal regional highways, connects with Route 1. This project will also increase safety and include a new Park & Ride facility, which will aid in congestion alleviation.

- 18. Transportation Improvements Associated with the Redevelopment of Brunswick Naval Air Station.** Improvements to Route 1, Route 196 and I-295 will increase regional mobility and make the Naval Station more favorable to prospective businesses.
- 19. Replacement of the Route 1 Bridge between Fort Kent and Canada** This \$8.5-9 million project would replace the bridge at the Fort Kent Border Crossing, which is nearing the end of its useful life. The bridge is an important factor in northern Maine's economy, as it allows for Canadian tourists to enter the United States. In addition to creating construction jobs, this project will increase security and safety at this international border crossing.
- 20. New I-95 Interchange at Trafton Road in Kennebec.** This privately funded project will promote economic development along one of Maine's most principal regional and statewide highways.

Population, Travel and Economic Trends in Maine

While Maine's current unemployment rate is lower than the national average, the state's diverse economic sectors have not been immune to the effects of the recession. Maine's economy relies on significant employment in the following sectors: agriculture, forest products, manufacturing, commercial fishing, bio-technology, naval ship building and construction, tourism and outdoor recreation.

The state's unemployment rate rose from 4.9 percent in October 2007 to 7.3 percent in October 2011.² Maine's current unemployment rate is lower than the national average of nine percent in October 2011.³

In 2011, Maine is projected to experience modest economic growth, with a 1.8 percent increase in real gross state product (GSP).⁴ Total real GSP in the U.S. is forecast to increase by 2.1 percent in 2011.⁵ In 2012, Maine is projected to have a 3.3

percent rate of economic growth, measured in real GSP, which is factored for price changes. This rate of growth is slightly lower than the forecast 3.4 percent increase in national real GSP in 2012.⁶

From 1990 to 2010, Maine's population increased by seven percent, from approximately 1.2 million to approximately 1.3 million.⁷ Maine's population is expected to increase to approximately 1.4 million by 2030.⁸

The continued increase in population has resulted in significant increases in vehicle travel in Maine. From 1990 to 2009, annual vehicle-miles-of-travel (VMT) in the state increased by 22 percent, from approximately 11.9 billion VMT to 14.5 billion VMT.⁹ Based on travel and population trends, TRIP estimates that vehicle travel in Maine will increase another 25 percent by 2030, reaching approximately 18.1 billion VMT.

Maine's Surface Transportation System

Maine is served by a system of 22,839 miles of roads and 2,393 bridges. This system is maintained by local, state and federal governments and carries 14.5 billion vehicle miles of travel each year.¹⁰

Maine's roads, highways and bridges have some deficiencies. Twenty-seven percent of the state's major roads are deficient, with 10 percent rated in poor condition in 2008 and another 17 percent rated in mediocre condition.¹¹ In 2010, 15 percent of Maine's bridges were rated structurally deficient because they are in need of repair or replacement, and another 17 percent of the state's bridges were rated as functionally obsolete because they do not meet modern design standards.¹²

The Importance of Transportation to Maine's Economy

Supporting Maine's economic growth will require that the state build and maintain a transportation system that provides reliable and safe mobility to enhance business competitiveness.

Highways, rail, ports and public transit are vitally important to fostering economic development in Maine. As the economy expands, creating more jobs and increasing consumer confidence, the demand for consumer and business products grows. In turn, manufacturers ship greater quantities of goods to market to meet this demand, a process that adds to truck traffic on the state's highways and major arterial roads.

Every year, \$30.9 billion in goods are shipped from sites in Maine and another \$41.4 billion in goods are shipped to sites in Maine, mostly by trucks.¹³ Eighty-one percent of the goods shipped annually from sites in Maine are carried by trucks and another 10 percent are carried by parcel, U.S. Postal Service or courier services, which use trucks for part of the deliveries.¹⁴

How Transportation Improvements Support Economic Growth

Because it impacts the time it takes to transport people and goods, as well as the cost of travel, the level of mobility provided by a transportation system and its physical condition play a significant role in determining a region's economic effectiveness.

Maine's businesses are dependent on an efficient, safe and modern transportation system. Today's business culture demands that an area have a well-maintained and efficient system of roads, highways, bridges and public transportation if it is to be economically competitive. The advent of modern national and global communications and the impact of free trade in North America and elsewhere have resulted in a significant increase in freight movement. Consequently, the quality of a region's transportation system has become a key component in a business's ability to compete locally, nationally and internationally.

Businesses have responded to improved communications and the need to cut costs with a variety of innovations including just-in-time delivery, increased small package delivery, demand-side inventory management and by accepting customer orders through the Internet. The result of these changes has been a significant improvement in logistics efficiency as firms move from a push-style distribution system, which relies on large-scale warehousing of materials, to a pull-style distribution system, which relies on smaller, more strategic movement of goods. These improvements have made mobile inventories the norm, resulting in the nation's trucks literally becoming rolling warehouses.

The economic benefits of a well-maintained, efficient and safe transportation system can be divided into several categories, including the following.

Improved competitiveness of industry. An improved transportation system reduces production and distribution costs by lowering barriers to mobility and increasing travel speeds. Improved mobility provides the manufacturing, retail and service sectors improved and more reliable access to increased and often lower-cost sources of labor, inventory, materials and customers.¹⁵ An increase in travel speeds of 10 percent has been

found to increase labor markets by 15 to 18 percent. A 10 percent increase in the size of labor markets has been found to increase productivity by an average of 2.9 percent.¹⁶

Improved household welfare. An improved transportation system gives households better access to higher-paying jobs, a wider selection of competitively priced consumer goods, and additional housing and healthcare options. A good regional transportation system can also provide mobility for people without access to private vehicles, including the elderly, disabled and people with lower incomes.¹⁷

Improved local, regional and state economies. By boosting regional economic competitiveness, which stimulates population and job growth, and by lowering transport costs for businesses and individuals, transportation improvements can bolster local, regional and state economies. Improved transportation also stimulates urban and regional redevelopment and reduces the isolation of rural areas.¹⁸

Increased leisure/tourism and business travel. The condition and reliability of a region's transportation system impacts the accessibility of activities and destinations such as conferences, trade shows, sporting and entertainment events, parks, resort areas, social events and everyday business meetings. An improved transportation system increases the accessibility of leisure/tourism and business travel destinations, which stimulates economic activity.¹⁹

Reduced economic losses associated with vehicle crashes, traffic congestion and driving on deficient roads. When a region's transportation system lacks some desirable safety features, is congested or is deteriorated, it increases costs to the public and businesses in the form of traffic delays, increased costs associated with traffic crashes, increased fuel consumption and increased vehicle operating costs.

Transportation investments that improve roadway safety, reduce congestion and improve roadway conditions benefit businesses and households by saving time, lives and money.

Transportation investment creates and supports both short-term and long-term jobs. A [2007 analysis by the Federal Highway Administration](#) found that every \$1 billion invested in highway construction would support approximately 27,800 jobs, including approximately 9,500 in the construction sector, approximately 4,300 jobs in industries supporting the construction sector, and approximately 14,000 other jobs induced in non-construction related sectors of the economy.²⁰

Needed transportation projects that expand capacity and preserve the existing transportation system generate significant economic benefits. Transportation projects that provide additional roadway lanes, expand the efficiency of a current roadway (through improved signalization, driver information or other Intelligent Transportation Systems), or provide additional transit capacity, produce significant economic benefits by reducing congestion and improving access, thus speeding the flow of people and goods.²¹

Similarly, transportation projects that maintain and preserve existing transportation infrastructure also provide significant economic benefits. The preservation of transportation facilities improves travel speed, capacity, load-carry abilities and safety, while reducing operating costs for people and businesses.²² Projects that preserve existing transportation infrastructure also extend the service life of a road, bridge or transit vehicle and save money by postponing or eliminating the need for more expensive future repairs.²³

The [Federal Highway Administration estimates](#) that each dollar spent on road, highway and bridge improvements results in an average benefit of \$5.20 in the form of

reduced vehicle maintenance costs, reduced delays, reduced fuel consumption, improved safety, reduced road and bridge maintenance costs and reduced emissions as a result of improved traffic flow.²⁴

Conclusion

Maine's transportation system continues to play a critical role as the backbone of the state's economy by providing mobility to residents, visitors and businesses. As Maine looks to rebound from the recession, the improvement of its system of highways, rail and public transit will allow the state to support further economic growth. Needed transportation improvements will provide Maine's residents with a high quality of life and afford its businesses and industries a high level of economic competitiveness.

In order to realize Maine's potential for economic growth, the state will need to improve the condition and increase the capacity of its highways, rails and public transit systems.

Making needed improvements to Maine's surface transportation system will support future economic growth and competitiveness and help ensure that Maine remain an attractive place to live, visit, work and do business.

Endnotes

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- ¹ One Piece at a Time (November 2010). Site Selection magazine.
- ² Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor (2011). Local Area Unemployment Statistics.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ USgovernmentspending.com. Comparison of State and Local Government Spending and Debt in the United States Fiscal Year 2011.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ USgovernmentspending.com. Comparison of State and Local Government Spending and Debt in the United States Fiscal Year 2012.
- ⁷ TRIP analysis based on U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Interim State Population Projections, 2005 to 2030.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ TRIP analysis of Federal Highway Administration statistics.
- ¹⁰ Federal Highway Administration (2010). Highway Statistics 2008.
- ¹¹ TRIP analysis of Federal Highway Administration data (2008). Highway Statistics 2008, HM-63, HM-64.
- ¹² National Bridge Inventory (2010), Federal Highway Administration.
- ¹³ Bureau of Transportation Statistics (2010), U.S. Department of Transportation. 2007 Commodity Flow Survey, State Summaries. http://www.bts.gov/publications/commodity_flow_survey/2007/states/
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ National Cooperative Highway Research Program. Economic Benefits of Transportation Investment (2002). p. 4.
- ¹⁶ The Transportation Challenge: Moving the U.S. Economy (2008). National Chamber Foundation. p. 10.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Federal Highway Administration, 2008. Employment Impacts of Highway Infrastructure Investment.
- ²¹ The Transportation Challenge: Moving the U.S. Economy (2008). National Chamber Foundation. p. 5.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ FHWA estimate based on its analysis of 2006 data. For more information on FHWA's cost-benefit analysis of highway investment, see the 2008 Status of the Nation's Highways, Bridges, and Transit: Conditions and Performance.