

MDI Tomorrow Transportation Meeting 03/01/02

Attending (Incomplete): Airport and Harbor Taxi, Chris Andreas (Vermont Transit), Linda Belfiore (WHCA), Stephanie Clement (Friends of Acadia), Dawn Coffin (MDOT), Fred Cook (Downeast Acadia Regional Tourism), Tom Crikelair (Tom Crikelair Associates), Jim Fisher (Hancock County Planning Commission), Tom Johnston (MDOT), Risteen Masters (Bay Ferries) Molly Pheminster (Jackson Lab), Joe Robinson (Waldo Community Action), Sharon Tate (Jackson Lab), Clare Wood (Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce)

I. Review of MDI Tomorrow

Stephanie reported that this meeting is part of the MDI Tomorrow project. Ten years ago, the citizens of Mount Desert Island started a community visioning/planning project to address concerns related to growth and development. Diverse issues were identified including, attracting year-round businesses, maintaining MDI's traditional community character, increasing public transportation, etc. Stephanie displayed a report that was published as a newspaper insert that identified preferred futures for the island. Several projects came out of MDI Tomorrow, including the Island Explorer bus system, the MDI Community Health Plan, a student internship program for MDI highschool students, and Island Connections.

Several non-profit organizations, businesses, and interested citizens have re-initiated the MDI Tomorrow process. Transportation has once again been listed as one of the issue areas of interest – hence, the formation of this working group. Other working groups have formed around community design/land use, the economy, affordable housing, youth and family issues, and health.

The goal for the meeting was to develop a list of issues and opportunities related to transportation on MDI, to begin developing the scope of the problem, and to discuss who else needed to be included in the working group. Stephanie distributed copies of a worksheet from which all the MDI Tomorrow working groups are proceeding.

II. Issue Identification

Stephanie asked each committee member to list their top three concerns related to transportation and their top three opportunities or exciting developments related to transportation.

A. ISSUES

1. Traffic volume
2. Congestion in Route 3 Corridor
3. Cardiovascular health (i.e. too much dependence on cars)
4. Lack of public transportation
5. Congestion related to commuter rush
6. Need to continue and expand ferry services for MDI
7. Need funding for year round transportation (transit, incentives for employees to ride)
8. Road conditions - cost of maintenance, deterioration due to traffic
9. State roads do not meet MDOT standards
10. Lack of parking facilities
11. Lack of safe bikeways and walkways
12. Year-round transit needed
13. Lack of funding for para-transit for disabled and elderly passengers
14. Lack of work-related transportation for persons without vehicles
15. Seasonal nature of transportation needs (i.e. greater in summer because more people)
16. Cost of housing and land on MDI causes longer commutes (off-island)

17. Need a ferry to Schoodic peninsula
18. Infrastructure doesn't accommodate RV's and Tour Buses
19. Seasonal housing needed close to or in employment centers
20. Need better intermodal connectivity - connections between intermodal centers
21. Need to retain commercial air service at BH/HC Airport
22. Environmental impact of de-icing procedures on roads
23. Bike safety
24. Safety at crosswalks
25. Inadequate land use and access management policies, regulations, and practices
26. Expanding economy and population create greater transportation demands
27. Better signage
28. Better road striping
29. Need municipal parking requirements that are appropriate for the future
30. How many Cruise ships can we accommodate/do we want to accommodate?
31. Land purchase for park and ride needed
32. Expand facilities for pleasure and work boats
33. Insufficient information for drivers about what they are getting into when coming to

MDI

34. People drive fast; need more and improved training
35. Need more enforcement
36. Diversion of traffic to back roads
37. Need to expand capacity and season of Island Explorer
38. Need to protect ANP from too many cars
39. Concerns about posting weight limits
40. Ellsworth Bypass?
41. Need a new breakwater
42. Enforcement of shipping lines for cruise ships
43. Difficulty obtaining insurance for taxi services
44. Little or no off-season bus linkage to Boston
45. Air quality

B. OPPORTUNITIES

1. Jackson Lab is planning for growth
2. CHIP - Collector Road Highway Improvement Program - Major collectors (Routes 3, 102, and 198) are 100% state funded; RRI - Rural Road Initiative - minor collectors (Route 233, 102A, Pretty Marsh Road) are 67% funded by the state, 33% match required by towns. In 2003, the Pretty Marsh Road will have some work done and 102A is possible. The goal for these road improvements is to include shoulders wherever possible; the traffic volume of the road dictates the width of the shoulder.
3. MDOT will be doing a bridge (Strut) replacement in Somesville on Route 102 in 2003, along with a possible asphalt overlay on 198/3
4. MDOT will be doing a thin asphalt overlay on the Eagle Lake Road and Route 230 in Trenton (Bayside Road)
5. Train to Boston from Portland with connections to bus service
6. Project Graduation - helps prevent kids from drinking and driving
7. Have embarked on study for year round transportation needs, especially for commuters
8. Volpe Study - transportation study in and around Schoodic
9. Wilbur Smith Study - statewide study on accessibility needs and expanding/adding fixed routes

10. BH Chamber working with park to act as a clearinghouse for tour buses information needs
11. BH Chamber is participating in a cruise ship coalition - to speak with one voice to the cruise ships operators
12. BH Chamber lists cruise ship visits to Bar Harbor on the Chamber's web site—this helps prevent multiple ship days because the cruise ships are not allowed under law to consult with each other about when they plan to be in a port.
13. BH Chamber is seeking smaller cruise ships
14. BH Chamber would like to sell park permits - on the web site and visitor centers – thereby helping to fund the Island Explorer
15. An intermodal transportation center/visitor center is being planned which will provide park and ride facilities as well as improved outreach to visitors
16. Bar Harbor Master Plan—addresses bicycles and pedestrians down Eden Street
17. Possible rail service to our area from Bangor
18. Possible trail development on Calais Branch Railway
19. Intercity bus companies would like to provide year round bus service to Bar Harbor if economically feasible - need to house drivers and buses.
20. MDOT putting construction information on AAA website
21. Bicycle coalition of Maine - looking to bring more bike tourists
22. Opportunities for boaters - car free visit if ride Island Explorer
23. New Downeast Transportation bus maintenance facility is being planned
24. Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technologies will be placed on the Island Explorer this summer
25. Town and Chamber will not support any more peak season events - focus on shoulder events
26. Maine Port Authority has \$200K grant opportunity for harbor improvements
27. Rt. 3 through Bar Harbor and the Park Loop Road have been designated an All American Road providing grant opportunities and more local control
28. Visitors here don't need a car
29. Bar Harbor Parking Review Committee and the Planning Board are considering possible changes in parking requirements which might create additional transit funding
30. MDOT has put forward a state legislative bill which would allow towns to receive more funding for road improvements if they contribute a greater amount to public transportation options
31. Trenton Challenge Grant - Trenton has received funding to help them plan
32. MDI has a bicycle plan with identified priorities, waiting for implementation
33. Acadia National Park is one of six transportation demonstration parks across the National Park System
34. Friends of Acadia, Village Improvement Associations, Conservation Commissions, Acadia National Park and others are working on village connector trails – trails connecting villages to the park.

III. Next steps

Stephanie asked everyone to look at their listings on the contact sheet and get back to her with changes. Also, to suggest anyone who was missing from the list.

Next meeting is Friday, April 5th at 1:00 pm at the Friends of Acadia Conference Room - 43 Cottage Street, Bar Harbor, in the basement of the Swan Agency Building. Stephanie will send out an agenda.