

6 October 2010

RE: Improving Route 1 in Wiscasset, instead of building a \$100 million By-Pass, and Need for comprehensive evaluation of costs & benefits of improving Route 1 in Wiscasset before moving ahead with a By-Pass

David Cole, Commissioner
Maine Dept. of Transportation
16 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0016

Dear Mr. Cole:

This is a long letter, with three sections, but the stakes are high, and the hour is late:

1. Building a By-Pass without further consideration of Improving the Route in downtown Wiscasset would violate the Maine Sensible Transportation Policy Act and the By-Pass would not be the Least Environmentally Damaging Practical Alternative.
2. What's needed is further study and analysis of the costs and benefits of Improving the Route, and comparison to the By-Pass proposal.
3. Additional interim steps are needed and would be cost effective to reduce congestion during the years before the Route is Improved or a By-Pass is built.

1. Building a By-Pass without further consideration of Improving the Route in downtown Wiscasset would violate the Maine Sensible Transportation Policy Act and the By-Pass would not be the Least Environmentally Damaging Practical Alternative.

For many years, it has been thought by many that a by-pass around Wiscasset would be the best solution to the traffic congestion. Such by-passes have been built elsewhere and have been successful, but with varying costs and disadvantages. Wiscasset is different from the other candidates for by-passes for several reasons, including having a wide downtown corridor which used to be the site of the Town Common.

After many years of work by many people, MDOT, together with the LEDPA decision of the Army Corps of Engineers in May 2010, has now determined that the best by-pass route is N8C which will cost approximately \$100 million and destroy 30+ homes and businesses and take land from 70+ owners, thereby depriving the Town of Wiscasset of approximately

\$300,000 annually in property tax revenue. The planned bridge will be the second longest bridge in Maine and will most probably lead to the eventual abandonment of the existing Davey Bridge, although that truth is not yet understood by the public. For none of the other by-passes in the Mid-Coast over the past 60 years, (Newcastle/Damariscotta, Nobleboro, Waldoboro and Route 90 around Thomaston/Rockland) has the result been that the by-passed town has become a dead-end. That "dead-end" result may be desired by some in Wiscasset, but it is not clearly and widely understood today as a necessary or inexorable part of the by-pass proposal. If the Wiscasset downtown were to be redesigned from scratch, it would never include U.S. Route 1 as the "main street." However, it's there now, and the price for relocating that Route 1 with a By-Pass is far too expensive in money and human and environmental damage.

The By-Pass would have only seasonal utility. For 330 days a year, there is no congestion in downtown Wiscasset. For 330 days a year, the Wiscasset By-Pass would be Maine's equivalent of Alaska's "Bridge to Nowhere." It would be a "By-Pass for Nobody."

In short, the proposed Wiscasset by-pass would be very large, and very costly for the seasonal benefits gained; and would have very significant effects on the future of Wiscasset.

During all the consideration of several by-pass routes there has been some consideration of Improving the Route, but such consideration has never been comprehensive; and has never compared such improvements to a single by-pass alternative on a cost/benefit basis. Several of the improvements for the downtown were considered as "INTERIM" steps, and thus were not given full consideration and ways to overcome concerns were not explored. For example, a pedestrian bridge and/or tunnel were dismissed as impracticable without discussion of elevators, for example. The costs were never compared to the costs of a by-pass, which are now finally before us.

Tunnels. In 2005, there was an analysis of many alternatives including four options including tunnels, T1, T2, T3 and T4. The shortest tunnels, T1 and T2, were .6-.7 mile long, whereas the tunneling that is proposed here could be as short as .1 mile. By presenting the length as more than a half-mile and then showing the cost, the MDOT "dismissed" the tunneling option without further analysis. Also, the previous analyses were YES/NO analyses, and standalone. There was little or no flexibility, as, for example with consideration of shorter tunnels and by considering a tunnel together with a pedestrian bridge.

Congestion measurement. There was never an analysis of the level of congestion reduction that each alternative, each with a price tag, might achieve. In addition to the lack of comprehensive analysis of some alternatives and combinations of alternatives, what was also missing from the analysis of the Wiscasset congestion are measurement standards of

congestion, whether by traffic flow volume or traffic delay speed or other measurement, and the degree to which improvements to the downtown flow will measurably reduce that congestion. Such benefits were not measured against a congestion standard and were not paired with costs in any comprehensive way.

One measurement standard might be the number of hours per day, week, month or year that the Route 295 "Wiscasset Congestion" electronic sign is turned on. So far, the MDOT has not been able to provide such data, but we estimate that the sign was "on" for approximately 20 hours in 2009 and 36 hours in 2010. That's three hours per week, usually on Friday evenings, for 12 weeks.

There was no estimate of the percentage of the congestion goal which might be achieved with a pedestrian tunnel or bridge. One of our members estimated that a pedestrian bridge could be constructed for less than \$200,000, but such an alternative was never analyzed, and the percentage reduction of congestion was not estimated. During the Wiscasset By-pass Task Force process in 2008-2009, there was superficial consideration of such a bridge. However, when the issues of the effect on historic resources, or the need to comply with the requirements for handicapped access were raised, the Task Forces simply dropped the idea, instead of going the extra mile to develop designs to address both issues. Again, the Task Force's consideration did not seem to move beyond the one-page memo or phone conversation stage. Other cities and towns in Maine and in the U.S. and around the world have pedestrian bridges. Why not Wiscasset?

An excellent guide to congestion measurement and management is contained in the September 2010 draft of Regional Transportation Plan of the Cape Cod Metropolitan Planning Organization, which can be found on the Internet at

http://www.gocapecod.org/rtp/RTP2011docs/Ch6_congestion09222010.pdf

At section 6.3 "Criteria for Measuring Congestion", one might substitute "Mid-Coast Maine" for "Cape Cod." An excerpt states:

Cape Cod is a unique place with extreme fluctuations in traffic over the course of a year due to the recreational nature of the region. The sensitive ecologic and aesthetic nature of the region have long been cherished and this has been reflected in the goals developed for the RTP.

The philosophy of the Cape Cod RTP is not to build to accommodate the peak season demand but to provide adequate transportation for year-round travel and to provide and promote alternatives to the automobile. This philosophy is different from the majority of the regions in Massachusetts and across the nation. The philosophy of the Plan places much more emphasis on management of traffic and providing alternatives to the automobile for transportation rather than accommodating traffic demand."

Sensible transportation planning for Wiscasset should incorporate this philosophy instead of building an expensive By-Pass which could reduce the "peak season demand" and congestion to zero, but at very high price in money and environmental and human damage.

Overpass. The idea of an overpass, 22.5 feet over the railroad, was not considered in the 2005 "Alternatives Analysis." Since then, your agency has done considerable work in coordinating rail and highway projects with intermodal connections. The idea of an intermodal connection at Wiscasset Village for Route 1 vehicles and busses, and potential ferries and railroad has not been explored.

Red's Eats. Also not considered as a formal option was the relocation of Red's Eats. It is a well-known roadside "lobster shack," but its success is a direct cause of the Wiscasset congestion. The more customers who wait in line at Red's Eats, and clog the sidewalks, the greater the highway congestion. In addition, even when closed as it is for most of the year, Red's Eats is a visual distraction and visual bottleneck which slows traffic. Even when closed, the small building sits apparently in the Route 1 right-of-way, and line of sight, which is far wider south of Red's Eats. The effect of Red's Eats on the congestion is common knowledge and obvious to every visitor to Wiscasset. However, when the sensitive subject is raised, a dismissive answer might be, "Yes, but it's not the WHOLE problem," and the subject is changed. Now, when faced with a \$100 million By-Pass, the MDOT and others, including the owners of Red's Eats, should look more closely at relocating that successful business.

Recent history shows the sensitivity of this "lobster shack." In 2007, the Town of Wiscasset discovered that it owned the land underneath Red's Eats after years of property tax-free operation. The MDOT was fully aware of the potential benefit that could come from using this land to reduce the Route 1 Traffic congestion. First, the visual distraction would be removed. Second, the large source of pedestrian traffic would be eliminated at that location. Third, the land could be used for one of the above-mentioned bridges or tunnels.

Instead of holding the land for the greater good of the public and using it to reduce the traffic congestion, the Town of Wiscasset chose to profit from the congestion-causing establishment and sell the land to the owners of Red's Eats. In addition to the one-time sale price, the Town is now receiving tax payments from Red's Eats. During this ownership determination and sale process, the MDOT did nothing to persuade or require the Town of Wiscasset to continue to hold title to its land, or even sell it to the MDOT or the State of Maine. This land is crucial to solving the Route 1 congestion problem in downtown Wiscasset.

It's as if the Town had decided to erect a toll-booth on Route 1 at Water Street and the MDOT had decided to do nothing. Again, the municipal government of the Town of Wiscasset decided to profit from the congestion and the MDOT did nothing. It appeared that the MDOT was more interested in construction of a by-pass than in the smart or efficient use of existing highways. The slower the traffic in Wiscasset moves, the better appears a by-pass option. The sale of the land does not mean, of course, that the MDOT cannot "take" by eminent domain the property and use it to reduce, rather than increase, traffic congestion. However, that's a difficult process and could easily have been avoided

if the Town had simply kept title to its land, but began charging Red's Eats rent until Red's Eats could be removed from that location.

The choice for Red's Eats is not only between 1) going-out-of business and 2) remaining where it is as the major cause of Route 1 congestion. The other choice is to relocate, just as many growing, successful businesses have done. This organization has written to the family owning Red's Eats to ask that it consider relocating to the building now occupied by Wiscasset Hardware or to the vacant restaurant/medical building on Davis Island or to another suitable location. Either relocation would permit further expansion and would serve the public interest by reducing Route 1 congestion. Surely, with State and Federal incentives and with Wiscasset returning its purchase money from the 2007 sale, a relocation could be financially viable for Red's Eats. The family chose not to respond, but perhaps members are quietly reviewing the socially responsible options.

Significantly, there has never been an analysis of what the percentage reduction of Route 1 congestion which might result from the removal of Red's Eats from that critical Water Street/Route 1 location. R.O.A.D. estimates that the summer, intermittent traffic congestion would be reduced by at least 20% if Red's Eats were no longer at that strategic location. Similarly, a price has never been attached to the relocation option. If an overpass is built from Water Street to the Davey Bridge, then Red's Eats would have to relocate. If any of the "Improve the Route" options is accepted, but without an overpass, then the option of relocating Red's Eats should be explored. If it would cost \$200,000 to relocate, including the return of the purchase price of the land, and if the Route 1 congestion were reduced by 20%, wouldn't that be a worthwhile investment?

"No Build." Most recently, a Wiscasset "Task Force" has considered improvements to Route 1 as an alternative to a By-Pass and called it the "No-Build" alternative. By definition, there were no significant improvements proposed for downtown Wiscasset in the "No-Build" alternative. The "No-Build" alternative was given the appearance of expenditure and positive efforts by including unrelated improvements to the Route 1/Route 27 intersection in Edgecomb. Those improvements will resolve the symptoms of the Wiscasset congestion, but they had nothing to do with the actual causes of that congestion.

Four Stage By-Pass N8C proposal. Of the four stages of the N8C plan, the R.O.A.D. organization has voted to support Stage 2, which includes the above-mentioned improvements in Edgecomb. (R.O.A.D. also supports the planned changes at the Route 1/Route 27 interchange in Wiscasset, which are not officially part of the "four stages" for the By-Pass.)

R.O.A.D. opposes the other three stages and believes that their construction would violate the Sensible Transportation Planning Act, as noted earlier. Stages 3 and 4 are the land and bridge sections of the By-Pass, and are the subject of most of this letter.

Meriting separate consideration is Stage 1, which is the "Connector Road" between Routes 27 and Route 218 in Wiscasset. While its future use as a section of the proposed N8C By-Pass is apparent, there does not appear to be any need for such a connector in the

absence of a By-Pass. Currently, there are several connections between Route 27 and Route 218, before they connect with Route 1. There is Hooper Street, which is close to downtown, which directly connects the two routes. Then there are the two ends of the West Alna Road, and the Cross Road which intersect Route 218 and the West Alna Road then intersects with the Fowle Hill Road to Route 27. Further north is Route 194 which directly connects Routes 27 and 218.

The Maine Sensible Transportation Policy Act states, in part, that "*It is the policy of the State that transportation planning decisions, capital investment decisions and project decisions must:*

- A. Minimize the harmful effects of transportation on public health and on air and water quality, land use and other natural resources;*
- B. Require that the full range of reasonable transportation alternatives be evaluated for all significant highway construction or reconstruction projects and **give preference** to transportation system management options, demand management strategies, improvements to the existing system, and other transportation modes before increasing highway capacity through road building activities; [RR 1991, c. 2, §88 (COR).] [emphasis added]*

Respectfully, the N8C By-Pass proposal does not comply with this Maine Law because the planning process has not sufficiently analyzed "improvements to the existing system." Further, it does not show any kind of a "preference to transportation system management options," and does not include any consideration of "other transportation modes," such as an intermodal connection with the railroad in Wiscasset. The overwhelming "preference" shown so far has been for a by-pass, despite the availability of more cost-effective means of reducing seasonal Wiscasset traffic congestion, i.e. Improving the Current Route.

In addition, the proposed N8C By-Pass does not comply with Federal environmental and highway laws. When compared to Improving the Route, the By-Pass is not the "Least Environmentally Damaging." What is needed is further study to determine if Improving the Route is a "Practical Alternative."

2. What's needed is further study and analysis of the costs and benefits of Improving the Route, and comparison to the By-Pass proposal.

In order to provide the best, cost-effective, solution to the intermittent and seasonal vehicle congestion on Route 1 in Wiscasset and to comply with the requirements of the Maine Sensible Transportation Policy Act (STPA) and applicable Federal laws, we ask that you comprehensively study and review the options for Improving the Route in downtown Wiscasset.

Enclosed is a two-page summary of "Two Visions for Wiscasset." One vision is after Improving the Route and the other, after construction of the N8C By-Pass. It is a very rudimentary summary and requires full study and artistic renditions so people can fully understand each Vision. With each Vision are several descriptive elements.

Also enclosed is a draft "Cost/Benefit Alternatives List" which would provide the cost and benefit, as measured in terms of congestion reduction, for each alternative. For too much of the earlier consideration of alternatives, there was a YES/NO response, rather than a more gradual, shades-of-gray, approach. Also enclosed is a draft "Cost/Benefit Comparison Sheet" for such a comprehensive comparison of the alternatives and combinations at the five different expenditure levels. Again, a single by-pass with a price has never been compared to any level of expenditure for Improving the Route. Shouldn't the public and the legislature know, for example, that a pedestrian bridge costing \$_____ would achieve ___ % of your vehicle flow and congestion reduction goals or that ___ % of your vehicle flow and congestion reduction goals could be achieved for \$_____ million?

At the public meeting in June in Wiscasset to present the LEDPA determination of the Army Corps of Engineers and other next steps, the ACOE representative was very careful to state that the LEDPA analysis, so far, was only of the proposed by-pass alternatives, and did not include what he called the "No-Build" alternative. There can be no question that an "Improve the Route" alternative, at any of the expenditure levels would be less Environmentally Damaging than the proposed N8C by-pass. Every vehicle using the by-pass will travel almost twice the distance of the existing route and use twice the gas and cause twice the pollution, year round. Other environmental issues arise from the construction of a highway and bridge across a major Maine river. That leaves only the question of whether any level of expenditure for "Improving the Route" can be considered a "Practical Alternative." Without a direct comparison of the costs and benefits, as proposed above, such a determination cannot be made.

Such a study of Improving the Route should include up-to-date techniques of "smart" traffic management. At its website, http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/congestion_report/executive_summary.htm#what_is_congestion, the FHA states:

"A vast array of strategies are in the transportation professional's "operations toolbox," most of which use advanced technology to identify problems, manage traffic flow, and relay travel conditions to users. Known as Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), these technologies enable transportation professionals to implement operations strategies targeted specifically at the causes of unreliable travel:

** Incident Management – Identifying incidents more quickly,*

improving response times, and managing incident scenes more effectively;

- * Work Zone Management – Reducing the amount of time work zones need to be used and moving traffic more effectively through work zones, particularly at peak times;*
- * Road Weather Management – Prediction of weather events (such as rain, snow, ice, and fog) in specific areas and on specific roadways, allowing for more effective road surface treatment;*
- * Planned Special Events Traffic Management – Pre-event planning and coordination and traffic control plans;*
- * Freeway, Arterial, and Corridor Management – Advanced computerized control of traffic signals, ramp meters, and lane usage (lanes that can be reversible, truck-restricted, or exclusively for high occupancy vehicles);*
- * Traveler Information – Providing travelers with real-time information on roadway conditions, where congestion has formed, how bad it is, and advice on alternative routes; and*
- * Value Pricing Strategies – Proactively managing demand and available highway capacity by dynamically adjusting the toll paid by users.*

FHWA has strongly promoted operations for improving congestion for several years in the form of grants, education and outreach, technical tools, and standards development. State and local transportation agencies, who are responsible for implementing transportation improvement projects, have embraced operations as a key part of their solutions. Operations strategies in the above categories have been effectively deployed around the country to decrease congestion and improve reliability. Many deployments include combinations of strategies, or congestion relief packages, which have proven to be more effective than simply deploying individual strategies."

With respect to "Special Events Traffic Management," planning could start now for next year's Wiscasset 4th of July parade to minimize disruption to Route 1 traffic.

In conclusion, please conduct, or contract for, or pay for, or help pay for, the necessary study of alternatives, and their comprehensive grouping at five (more or less) projected expenditure levels, to "Improve the Route" and reduce or eliminate Route 1 congestion in Wiscasset.

Such further study will have what no other studies contained, which is a baseline, i.e. the proposed N8C By-Pass, to which to compare.

3. Additional interim steps are needed and would be cost effective to reduce congestion during the years before the Route is Improved or a By-Pass is built.

Enclosed is a 10 June 2008 MDOT document, "Wiscasset Bypass Interim Treatments Action Plan." Please revisit that plan and implement as appropriate. The difference between 2008 and today is that we now have the \$100 million By-Pass proposal, and that expenditure adds perspective to interim proposals costing tens of thousands of dollars each. Some of the measures have been implemented, at least partially, such as the Changeable Message Sign on Route 295. We say "partially," because the sign is underutilized. Please turn the sign on earlier in a Wiscasset traffic congestion cycle and turn it off later in that cycle. If the estimate above of operation of the sign in 2010 for only 36 hours for an entire year is correct, then the case for a \$100 million By-Pass seems weaker. It's in the interest of everybody that the sign be used in an effective manner, and that means turning it on in time to have a real effect in diverting traffic to other routes. Also, the sign could be enhanced to specifically encourage alternate routes.

Other "Interim Treatments" from the 2008 list are planned, such as the design changes for the Route 1/Route 27 intersection in Wiscasset. We support those changes.

In addition to the 2008 list, please implement, the two items below as interim efforts.

A. DAVEY BRIDGE and "SMART" Traffic Management. Upgrade Station 49800 (a Coverage Count station on the Davey Bridge at the Wiscasset town line) to be a Continuous Count station. Have traffic count data from this station available at the MaineDOT website and analyze this data to determine a) which months, weeks, days, and time periods have the most traffic volume, and b) changes in traffic volume from year to year.

Travel time, or transit time, through Wiscasset, is what people want to know - how long will it take me to get through Wiscasset? In addition to collecting traffic volume data, travel time through Wiscasset should be determined and broadcast to travelers using the internet and the 511 system.

One available technology for determining travel time is shown at <http://pipstechnology.com/applications/its>

Analyze travel time data to determine a) the effect of traffic management measures, and b) the effect of specific traffic incidents (disabled vehicles and accidents).

If the Improve the Route option is ultimately chosen, this "Interim" step would become permanent.

Estimated cost. Unknown.

B. TRAFFIC CONTROL. Place uniformed, trained police at Water Street, and perhaps Federal Street, to manage cross-town pedestrian and vehicular traffic and facilitate Route 1 traffic. June 15 through September 15.

Estimated cost. \$20,000 per position, 8 hrs per day, 7 days per week, for 12 weeks with total loaded cost per hour of \$30.00.

FINAL DECISION(S)

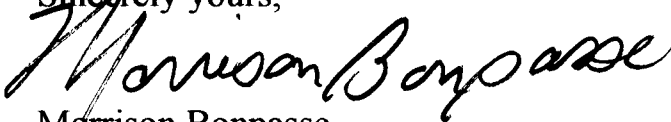
We hope that you will support, with funding or staffing or both, the analyses recommended in this letter. When the "Improve the Route" plans are developed, each with a Cost/Benefit summary, and compared to the proposed N8C by-pass, then Wiscasset, Lincoln County, the Maine State Government (MDOT, DEP, Legislature, Governor, other) and the Federal Government (ACOE, FHA, U.S. Representatives and Senators, other) can decide which of the two remaining alternatives, N8C or "Improve the Route," would be best for Wiscasset and the State of Maine, and make the best use of available State and Federal funds.

There will be a public meeting on Tuesday, 9 November in Wiscasset, at the Lincoln County Communications Center to consider the R.O.A.D. proposals for Improving the Route. Prior to that meeting, we hope the local media will cover the story and the meeting. It would be very helpful if your response to this letter is available by then,

Citizens were told at the public meeting last June that the MDOT had money to begin the acquisition of available properties. Please, before you spend money on a project that is not cost-effective and does not yet comply with the Maine Sensible Transportation Policy Act and is not the least Environmentally Damaging, use that available money for gathering the necessary data to evaluate the Wiscasset traffic congestion and smart alternatives.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests and in the long term solution to the Wiscasset congestion problem.

Sincerely yours,



Morrison Bonpasse

Co-Chair



Frank Risell

Co-Chair

Enclosures:

"Two Visions for Wiscasset"

"Cost/Benefit Alternatives List"

"Cost/Benefit Comparison Sheet for Wiscasset"

June 10 2008 "Wiscasset By-Pass Interim Treatments Action Plans"

CC: Jay Clement, District Engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
675 Western Avenue #3, Manchester, ME 04351
Town of Wiscasset Selectboard
Town of Wiscasset Transportation Committee

R.O.A.D. (ROUTE ONE ALTERNATIVE DECISIONS)

P.O. Box 390, Newcastle, ME 04553 586-6078 (Newcastle) and 882-9781 (Wiscasset)

www.wiscasset-road.org

18 September, 2010

The Choice between Two Visions for Wiscasset:

1. IMPROVE HISTORIC ROUTE ONE.

Where traffic flows unobstructed through the historic downtown, under the old Common and then over the railroad tracks, with restored cross-town pedestrian and vehicle traffic, with an intermodal railroad/vehicle/bus/water connection.

2. BY-PASS.

Where traffic moves around the old downtown and commerce relying on such traffic is diminished, and the Davey Bridge is eventually abandoned.

SUMMARY OF THE ROADS TO EACH OPTION.

1. **IMPROVE HISTORIC ROUTE ONE.** Develop Plans to Improve Downtown Wiscasset Appearance and Prosperity AND Route 1 Traffic Flow, with approximate expenditure levels of \$10, 30, 50, 70 and 90 million, together with goal of reducing congestion to acceptable, agreed-upon, levels. Such plans could include the following options, among others, where necessary, and each plan would contain estimates of congestion relief and other benefits to be attained.
 - A. Construct a short tunnel (.1 mile?) in the Federal Street area allowing cross-town pedestrian and vehicle traffic and creation/restoration of a Common landscape connecting town.
 - B. Construct a longer tunnel to by-pass the "big curve" at the County Courthouse.
 - C. Construct overpass from Water Street area, over railroad, allowing cross-town pedestrian and vehicle traffic and landscaping connecting town and waterfront.
 - D. Straighten Route 1, above ground, in the courthouse area, with optional grade changes.
 - E. Integrate with Wiscasset Railroad Plan for intermodal transportation solution.
 - F. Integrate with Waterfront plan for intermodal transportation solution, and best use of waterfront.
 - G. Restrict turn options for flow-through traffic.
 - H. Increase speed limits, especially for traffic leaving town, north and south.
 - I. Use entire downtown corridor, where necessary, including such options as moving some/all Route One parking to expanded off-Rte 1 areas, and relocation of Red's Eats.
 - J. Use "smart" technology and "demand management" to fully utilize existing routes and alternate routes.
2. **BY-PASS.** MDOT-Plan (N8C) for \$100 Million.
 - A. Destroy 30+ homes and businesses and take land from 70+ owners.
 - B. Eliminate approximately \$300,000 in annual Wiscasset property tax revenue.

- C. Spend \$100 million, which is badly needed for other highway and railroad projects.
- D. Build second longest bridge in Maine, requiring more maintenance.
- E. Force decision to discontinue Davey Bridge, over time, which would isolate downtown Wiscasset.

KEY POINTS ABOUT "IMPROVE THE ROUTE" PLANS. To the greatest extent possible, the "Improve the Route" Plans should

1. Preserve the historic nature of Wiscasset village, both in terms of individual structures and overall ambience, and enhance its role as a service and cultural center for the region's residents. Make it a destination for visitors. [from the Wiscasset Comprehensive Plan]
2. Make the central Wiscasset village waterfront a tourist magnet with additional retailing and lodging centered around rail, tour boat and marina developments.
The village remains one of the gems of Maine, as a place to live or to visit. Maintaining its historic character is essential, while retaining its vital economic role in the town and region.
[from the Wiscasset Comprehensive Plan]
3. Include the Railroad Avenue improvements as envisioned in the Wright Pierce Study (2009) including increased parking capacity and passenger rail/bus drop off facilities in the area along Railroad Avenue North of Route 1.
4. Incorporate the Wiscasset Waterfront Master Plan, which is currently under development by the Waterfront Master Plan Task Force.
5. Comply with the Federal Historic Preservation Act and minimize "adverse impacts" as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations at 36 CFR Part 800.
6. Comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
7. Comply with all other relevant State and Federal laws, including the Maine Sensible Transportation Act and the National Environmental Protection Act.

COST BENEFIT ALTERNATIVES LIST

Required for analysis: Determine the measurement of the two goals:

Goal 1: desired peak traffic capacity (measured as cars per hour?) and/or

Goal 2: vehicle congestion (measured as speed reduction?).

<u>Alternatives</u> and Cost	<u>Goal 1</u> Peak Flow	Percent of Flow Goal Achieved	<u>Goal 2</u> Peak Congestion	Percent of Congestion Goal Achieved
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Pedestrian Bridge(s)
(\$ _____)

Pedestrian Tunnel(s)
(\$ _____)

.1 Mile Vehicle Tunnel
(\$ _____)

.2 Mile Vehicle Tunnel
(\$ _____)

Railroad Overpass
(\$ _____)

Police Traffic Person
(\$ _____ per year)

Left Turn restrictions
(\$ _____)

Reduce Rte 1 Parking/
Develop Off-St. Parking
(\$ _____)

Relocate Red's Eats
(\$ _____)

Straighten Route at "Curve" partially
(\$ _____)

Straighten Route at "Curve" significantly, with cut into Courthouse hill, and cover.

(\$ _____)

Speed Limit increase of 5 mph (together with changes in parking?)

(\$ _____)

Speed Limit increase of 10 mph (together with changes in parking)

(\$ _____)

Speed Limit increase of 15 mph (together with changes in parking)

(\$ _____)

COMPARISON SHEET FOR EVALUATION OF VISIONS FOR WISCASSET

Required for analysis: Determine the measurement of the

Goal 1: desired peak traffic capacity (measured as cars per hour?) and/or

Goal 2: vehicle congestion (measured as speed reduction?).

<u>1. Improve the Route</u>		<u>Goal 1</u>	<u>Goal 2</u>
	Peak Flow	Percent of Flow Goal Achieved	Percent of Congestion Goal Achvd
A. \$10 Million Plan			
B. \$30 Million Plan			
C. \$50 Million Plan			
D. \$70 Million Plan			
E. \$90 Million Plan			
F. \$___ Million Plan		100%	100%
<u>2. Build the By-Pass</u>			
\$100 Million Plan		100%?	100%?
<u>3. Current Measurements</u>			
Summer Peak (date)			
Off-season Peak (date)			

**Wiscasset Bypass
Interim Treatments
Action Plan
June 10, 2008**

Purpose: The Wiscasset Bypass will not be operational for many years to come. Current traffic congestion relief should thus be addressed by other interim means. Alternatives that have been proposed to achieve this goal include (see paragraphs below for further details):

- **Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)**
 1. Install traffic detection and congestion ahead warning sign on Rte. 1 westbound in Edgecomb
 2. Install web-based cameras
 3. Install Changeable Message Signs on the Interstate
 4. Install a permanent traffic counting system to quantify traffic volumes
- **Intersection Safety- or Congestion-Related Concerns**
 5. Review intersection of Lee Street at Bradford Road, Wiscasset (alignment)
 6. Review intersection of Rte. 27 at Rte. 1, Wiscasset (traffic signal to reduce left turn safety and congestion concerns)
- **Downtown Wiscasset Improvements**
 7. Develop an off-street parking plan
 8. Evaluate the feasibility of constructing an underground pedestrian crossing
 9. Develop a (future) traffic calming plan
- **Other Opportunities**
 10. Consider removing the word "Coastal" from Rte. 1 signs, because it is not a coastal route and diverts unknowing motorists who would otherwise use the Interstate.

The following paragraphs provide MaineDOT's approach to addressing these proposals.

1. **Install Rte. 1 Westbound Traffic Detection and Congestion Ahead Warning Sign in Edgecomb**

MaineDOT proposes to install a video-detection-based warning sign located about 500 feet east of Rte. 27 to warn motorists of slow-moving traffic ahead. This sign will provide advance warning of traffic slowdowns, since advance views are limited by a large hill. The project is expected to be advertised for bid by mid-June.

Budget: Fully Funded

Estimated Activation Date: Labor Day

2. **Install cameras to provide web-based traffic information**

Two web cameras will be installed about 3 miles west and east of downtown Wiscasset to provide good visibility of traffic conditions (locations to be field-determined by Paul Giguere of MaineDOT to identify good vantage points). Web cameras will be monitored by Lincoln County Communications Center (LCCC) personnel, who will contact MaineDOT Communications Center personnel when to post and when to remove traffic notes on 5-1-1, MaineDOT's telephone and web-based traveler information system. The web cam images could also be posted on a locally-provided web site if desired. RSS cellular phone feeds are also being explored. See <http://www.maine.gov/portal/subscriptions/rss-help.html> for more on RSS.

Budget: \$20,000 (includes internet service and maintenance)

Estimated Activation Date: To Be Scheduled

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3. **Install Changeable Message Sign (CMS) on I-295 Northbound**
MaineDOT has developed a multi-year Statewide CMS Deployment Plan. A CMS, to be installed by June 16 at mile marker 25 (just south of Brunswick) on the northbound lane of I-295, can be used to advise of traffic issues in Wiscasset. This sign location will allow travelers to decide whether they want to continue on I-295 or take Rte. 1. The CMS priority use will initially be for warnings regarding this summer's I-295 project and road closure, but it can also be used for Wiscasset traffic notices.

It is proposed that the CMS will initially be activated (and deactivated) by MaineDOT through calls received from the Lincoln County Communications Center (LCCC) based on their visual observation, but the web cameras proposed to be installed in Wiscasset and Edgecomb under (2.) above will ultimately be used by MaineDOT to activate the VMS. LCCC will be asked to log the dates and times of CMS activation and deactivation requests for reference purposes. When heavy traffic is observed, the proposed CMS message will read: CONGESTION – RTE 1 – WISCASSET / EXPECT DELAYS. The CMS message could potentially impact businesses throughout the midcoast region, so it is recommended that this proposal be presented to the Gateway-1 Steering Committee or its designees for consideration from a regional perspective.

There is also potential for installation of a CMS at the visitor information center in Bath at a later date to provide a "last minute" chance for travelers to select a different route, pending funding.

Budget: Fully Funded, Bath CMS estimated at \$30,000 (future)

Estimated Activation Date: I-295 CMS Installation expected by mid-June, Bath CMS under consideration for future implementation

- Where*
4. **Install permanent traffic monitors to quantify traffic volumes**
MaineDOT plans to install a permanent traffic counter on Rte. 1 in Wiscasset slightly west of Rte. 27. There has been a public request to post this information online, but MaineDOT does not believe this information will be useful to the general public (note that web cameras are proposed to achieve this purpose).

Budget: Fully Funded

Estimated Activation Date: Summer, 2008

5. **Review Intersection of Lee Street at Bradford Road, Wiscasset**
MaineDOT's Office of Safety, with assistance from Traffic Engineering, will review this intersection to determine if it warrants realignment.
6. **Review Intersection of Rte. 27 at Rte. 1, Wiscasset**
Traffic Engineering, with assistance from MaineDOT's Office of Safety, will review this intersection to determine if it warrants a traffic signal to improve left turn movements from Rte. 27 onto Rte. 1 and left turns from Rte. 1 onto Rte. 27 and to reduce congestion both on Rte. 27 and Rte. 1.
7. **Develop an off-street parking plan**
MaineDOT has provided Wiscasset Town Manager Arthur Faucher aerial photographs for his use in developing off-street parking plans. No further action is anticipated at this time.

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8. Evaluate the feasibility of constructing an underground pedestrian crossing
MaineDOT 's Bureau of Project Development will develop a preliminary cost estimate to compare against the potential benefits this project could derive. A concept plan will be developed if the benefits are found to exceed cost. The cost estimate is expected to be available by June 30.

9. Develop a (future) traffic calming plan
MaineDOT will work with the Town of Wiscasset to develop a traffic calming plan once construction funds are in place, since implementing the traffic calming plan cannot occur until the bypass becomes operational.

10. Consider removing the word "Coastal" from Rte. 1 signs
Since the message content of the COASTAL ROUTE 1 signs could potentially impact businesses throughout the midcoast region, it is recommended that this proposal be presented to the Gateway-1 Steering Committee or its designee for consideration from a regional perspective.