

LATEST UPDATES



September 6, 2024

Welcome to Maine Turnpike Authority's (MTA) first newsletter for the proposed Gorham Connector Project. As part of MTA's efforts to inform and engage the public and local stakeholders about this project, we will be distributing newsletters via email to those who have signed up to receive updates using the project webpage. We will also post newsletters on the project webpage.

Project Update

As we highlighted at the MTA Board meeting on September 5th, 2024, the project is being reset to ensure we thoroughly engage the public. While the project is still in the planning phase and no permits have been filed, the significant input from the community has reshaped our approach to public engagement. We realize we may not have done enough to inform the public about the extensive studies conducted over nearly four decades. Moving forward, our goal is to bridge this gap and more clearly share what work has been done to date, and what the findings support.

Our goals for the remainder of 2024 and into 2025 are as follows:

1. Scope of Additional Analysis: There has been significant criticism that the 2012 Gorham East-West Feasibility Study is outdated, relying on data and assumptions that may no longer be valid. Since the study was conducted, several new factors have emerged-such as the housing crisis, the impacts of COVID-19, and Maine's climate action plan ("Maine Won't Wait")-which were not considered in the original analysis.

Given these changes, we plan to assess how they impact the need for additional transportation capacity in the region. This involves identifying the specific areas where further analysis is required, determining who will lead these efforts, and deciding who will be involved in reviewing and reaffirming the findings of the 2012 study.

2. Developing a Comprehensive Public Engagement Plan: A new public engagement plan will be developed for 2025, allowing ample time and opportunity for thorough community involvement. There is no fixed timeline for permit submission, so the focus will be on thoughtfully advancing through the work ahead and engaging the public at key stages.

The engagement plan will revolve around three critical milestones:

- **Assessing the traffic issue:** Is there a clear, existing traffic problem that needs to be addressed?
- **Exploring alternative solutions:** Are spot improvements (e.g., minor road adjustments) or increased transit options sufficient to resolve the congestion?
- **Determining the need for new road capacity:** If additional capacity is required, should it involve widening existing roads or constructing a new roadway altogether?

3. Keep the Public Informed: Updating the public on the progress of the project and providing better context on the historical work are essential. Doing so will help ensure that the public and community leaders have a complete and balanced understanding of the project's history, need and development.

Until a new public engagement plan is finalized, the following communication strategies will be used to keep the public informed and to encourage ongoing feedback:

- **Regular updates:** Provide timely progress reports on the project's analysis and engagement efforts.
- **Contextual information:** Share background information on the history and need for the project to more clearly communicate what has already been studied and accomplished.
- **Input opportunities:** Clearly outline how the public can continue to provide feedback and participate in the process.

Get Involved

We appreciate your engagement and feedback! It helps us improve the project. If you have suggestions for future content, please submit a comment and let us know!

To share your feedback, please use the [MTA comment form](#). Public feedback will be reviewed by the Gorham Connector Project Team and considered by the MTA Board before making decisions about the Gorham Connector.

The Gorham Connector is a proposed new toll road that would link the Maine Turnpike at Exit 45 to the Gorham Bypass off Route 114 in Gorham. To learn more about the project, please check out the links at the bottom of this email.

CONTACT US

For any immediate needs:

Contact Erin Courtney at ecourtney@maineturnpike.com.

Or please submit a comment using the [MTA comment form](#).

To learn more about the Gorham Connector Project, please see the links below.

