

# 4. TRANSPORTATION

## INTRODUCTION

The transportation system serving a community is one of the key factors affecting its growth and development. A comprehensive plan must examine the transportation conditions within a town and the network that connects the town to the broader region.

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

## OVERVIEW / MILL CLOSURE EFFECTS

While Bucksport has lost its major generator of commercial traffic, flows on major routes such as Routes 1, 46 & 15 remain steady. Though somewhat diminished, Bucksport remains a center of activity with a range of transportation needs. These include improvements to heavily used streets, additional pedestrian facilities, development of alternative modes of transportation and perhaps a multi-modal center.



## KEY FINDINGS AND ISSUES

As observed before the mill closure, traffic increased at much slower rate in recent years than it did in previous decades. There were cases of minor decreases in traffic flow. The area of Route 1/3 between the Verona Island bridge and the Orland town line has seasonal congestion problems. The town has continued to invest in road improvements but still has some outstanding segments in poor condition. There are also some parking problems in the downtown and at the marina.

As the population ages, the town needs to prepare an increasing number of residents unable to drive vehicles. This will make it important to improve the sidewalk system based on the priorities listed in a sidewalk master plan. Further expansion of public transit may also be needed

## HIGHLIGHTS

- ★ Harbor facilities and rail service are valuable assets for mill site redevelopment.
- ★ Interest has rekindled in building a multi-modal transportation facility in Bucksport.
- ★ The town's input into maintenance of State roads (Routes 1/3 and 46) is crucial.
- ★ A left turn lane would ease congestion at Route 1/Nicholson Ave vicinity.
- ★ A plan to connect Broadway to Park Street is still being developed.
- ★ Recreational trails developed recently received grant funds as safe school routes.
- ★ Survey respondents identified sidewalk needs on Nicholson Ave and School St.

## MAJOR FACILITIES

### Harbor Facilities

The Bucksport fuel pier is used to transfer fuel from oceangoing ships via pipeline to a tank farm located about 0.5 miles north on Route 15. The petroleum is transferred and distributed by truck to commercial and retail customers throughout central and coastal Maine. The pier offers 29 feet of depth at mean low water and a berthing capacity of 700 feet. (See also the *Marine Resources* chapter).

*If the community hosts a transportation terminal, such as an airport, passenger rail station, or ferry terminal, how does it connect to other transportation modes (e.g. automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, transit)? If you are a coastal community, are land-side or water-side transportation facilities needed? How will the community address these needs?*

There is a full-service marina on the waterfront. It offers fuel, water, sewage pump-out, supplies, and 50 seasonal or transient slips for vessels up to 90 feet in length. The town maintains a public docking area with pier, floats, and temporary tie-ups.

The waterfront is connected to the downtown by a mile-long scenic walkway. There is presently one small cruise ship operator that stops in Bucksport during the season. The Penobscot Narrows plan suggests ways to improve connectivity for cruise ship visitors including a water taxi to Fort Knox.

### Rail Service

The only commercial rail in Hancock County is freight service on the 17.5-mile branch line between the mill site in Bucksport and Orrington. It has seven level-grade crossings over Route 15, in addition to level-grade crossings on several local roads. There is no passenger rail service in Bucksport. Rail service and line conditions had seriously deteriorated, resulting in a drop in usage by the mill well before the mill closure. The availability of a rail line is a valuable asset for the future redevelopment of the mill site.



### Airports

The only facilities for airplanes in town are a private air strip off Millvale Road and various opportunities for float plan landings. The area is served by Bangor International Airport, 23 miles to the north from Main Street and Hancock County-Bar Harbor Airport 28 miles to the east.

*If the community hosts or abuts any public airports, what coordination has been undertaken to ensure that required airspace is protected now and in the future? How does the community coordinate with the owner(s) of private airports?*

## STREETS

### Traffic flow

While traffic flows smoothly in most of the town, there are congestion problems on Route 1/3 between the Verona Island bridge and the Orland town line. Transportation planners rank roads according to their Level of Service (LOS). These range from Level A, which is characterized by free-flowing traffic to Level F, which refers to heavily congested roads with frequent delays in traffic, slow travel times, and highest risk of accidents. While most of Bucksport has a LOS A, a small portion of Main Street and Route 1/3 between the Verona Island bridge and the Orland town line is at LOS D. A lane for left turning traffic would ease congestion on Route 1 at Nicholson Ave and Dunkin Donuts.

*What are the transportation system concerns in the community and region? What, if any, plans exist to address these concerns?*

### High crash locations

(HCL's) are another way to identify traffic problems. HCL's are ranked by their critical rate factor (CRF), which measures the extent to which a given road segment has more accidents than comparable road segments. MaineDOT records for 2010 – 2012 showed two HCL's in Bucksport (see Table 4.1). The Hinks Street-Route 1 intersection had a CRF of 1.34 and ranked as the seventh highest CRF in the county. The Millvale-Silver Lake-Williams Pond area had a CRF of 1.25 and ranked tenth in the county.

<b>Table 4.1 High Crash Locations, Bucksport, 2010 -2012</b>			
<b>Location</b>	<b>Total crashes/ (percent injuries)</b>	<b>CRF</b>	<b>Rank in County</b>
Millvale Rd, Silver Lake Rd, Williams Pond Rd	14 (35.7)	1.25	10
Hinks St & Route 1	8 (25)	1.34	7
<b>SOURCE:</b> MaineDOT			

The 2003 plan reported increased flows of traffic in Bucksport. In 1998, the highest reported average annual daily traffic (AADT) was 14,310 on Route 1/3 at the Verona Island town line. In 2011, the highest AADT reported was 15,030 on Route 1/3 west of the Hannaford entrance (see Table IV.2). The data also show that traffic flows decreased at several locations. The volume of left turns from Route to adjacent business slows traffic. A center-turn lane could ease the congestion.

Since traffic count data are collected irregularly and at different locations, it is difficult to establish definite trends. There is a national trend toward less travel and the 2008 data probably reflect the recession. By comparison, data from the permanent counter in Frankfort show a AADT of 5,050 in 2008, 5180 in 2009, 5120 in 2010, 5060 in 2011 and 5,010 in 2012. Based on these short-term trends, the area is not experiencing the rapid increases in traffic it has in recent decades.

<b>Location</b>	1991	1998	2008	2011
Rte. 1/3 at Verona town line	9,150	14,310	13,380	-----
Rte. 1/3 at Hannaford's	-----	-----	15,030	-----
Rte. 1/3 Main St. at culvert	-----	13,190	----	-----
Rte. 15 at Main St. at culvert	-----	4,980	4,080	----
Rte. 15 NW/o Franklin St.	-----	5,670	4,530	4,710
Rte. 15 at Orrington town line	4,060	4,960	4,260	-----
Rte. 46 NE of Mast Hill Rd.	-----	1,990	1,230	-----
Route 46 SW of Stubbs Brook	-----	1,960	-----	----
Main Street w/o Bridge Street	----	-----	10,470	10,100
Bucks Mill Rd. NE of Millville	-----	1,170	1,120	----
Central St. NE of Rte. 15	-----	1,200	1,220	1,320
McDonald St. at culvert	-----	950	----	---
McDonald St. north of Main St.	-----	700	640	660
<b>SOURCE:</b> MaineDOT				

### Road Mileage

Bucksport has about 75 miles of public road. The road types are summarized on Table 4.3. These include the following:

**State Highways** are usually arterials and are comprised of a system of connected highways throughout the state, which serve arterial, or through traffic. The state is responsible for all construction/reconstruction and maintenance on the 11 miles of arterial highway in Bucksport. Arterials are further divided in principal arterials (1 mile of US Route 1,) and minor arterials (10 miles of State Route 15)

**State Aid Highways** are usually collectors and are roads that are not included in the system of state highways, but which serve as feeder routes connecting local service roads to the state highway system. The state is responsible for construction, reconstruction, and summer maintenance of 12.6 miles of State Aid collectors in Bucksport. Collectors in Bucksport include Central Street, part of Bucksmills Road, and Route 46.

**Local Roads** include all other public roads not included in the state highway or state aid classification system. These roads are maintained entirely by the municipality and, based on the state road classification system, serve primarily as local service roads that provide access to adjacent land. There are 52 miles of local roads in Bucksport. The local roads are further divided into rural roads (40 miles) and town streets (11 miles in the compact area).

Type	Mileage
Local	51.84
Urban collector	9.96
Minor collector	2.61
Minor arterial	9.49
Principal arterial	1.15
<b>Total</b>	<b>75.05</b>
<b>*NOTE:</b> Town and MaineDOT est. of local road mileage differ.	
<b>SOURCE:</b> Maine Department of Transportation, 2013	

### Major Traffic Generators

Traffic in Bucksport comes from several sources. The Verso mill was the town's single largest employer, generating both freight and employee traffic. There is also a high rate of through traffic especially in the summer months due to the influx of tourists headed toward Acadia National Park and other vacation destinations. Other sources of traffic include the schools and areas with a concentration of commercial development on Route 1/3. There is additional traffic during special events such as festivals.

### Road, Street, and Bridge Conditions

According to the Bucksport Public Works Department Fiscal Year 2014 road evaluation, there are 1.40 miles of unpaved public roads in town. Other road deficiencies are poor base (2.30 miles), poor drainage (1.75 miles), and poor pavement (6.37 miles). The department's top priority is a one-third mile segment of Town Farm Road. It has exposed rock ledge in the ditches. The travel way has an inadequate gravel base overlaying the ledge. The pavement has failed.

Another priority is to pave the remaining unpaved segments. Paved roads require less maintenance. The upfront cost of paving is soon paid off since annual gravel spreading and other road repair costs are no longer needed.

The street evaluation noted about 0.78 miles with poor drainage, 0.04 miles with poor pavement, and 0.27 miles of poor base. Both the roads and the streets are evaluated annually and ranked for improvements. These improvements are included in the capital improvement program. The Public Works Department updates its road inventory annually to reflect changes in road conditions. Damage to roads during a bad winter or water or sewer line emergency replacement may require a shift in improvement priorities.

*Notes: Due to the ongoing changes in road conditions, some of the priorities noted in this section may have changed by the time this plan is adopted.*

*More transportation data and maps are available at [bucksportmaine.gov](http://bucksportmaine.gov).*

## Parking Areas

There are a total of 650 public parking spaces in Bucksport and an additional 381 spaces in lots adjacent to the downtown. The town owns 343 of the on-street spaces and 180 of the off-street spaces. The town has lease or maintenance agreements with the owners of most of privately-owned lots that are available for public use.



These data indicate an increase in the number of parking spaces since 2002. The 2003 comprehensive plan reported a total of 146 town spaces compared to 343 in 2014. This increase may be due in part to a different counting methodology. The total number of parking spaces may be adequate, but their locations may not always be convenient.

Specific parking issues include the following:

1. There is insufficient parking in the Elm-Main-Mechanic Block area;
2. There are presently thirteen parking spaces at the marina, which is not adequate. More spaces could be created if the restrooms were relocated;
3. Residential parking can create problems in the downtown. While spaces in public parking lots can be used to meet the parking space requirements of the land use ordinance, this complicates snow removal during the winter;
4. Some potential parking areas face drainage problems;
5. Parking problems continue along Franklin Street in the area beginning at Mechanic Street and extending to School Street. The parking demand is caused by functions at the Public Safety Building, area churches, and a funeral home.
6. Another lot could be developed in the Central Street-Community Pharmacy area.

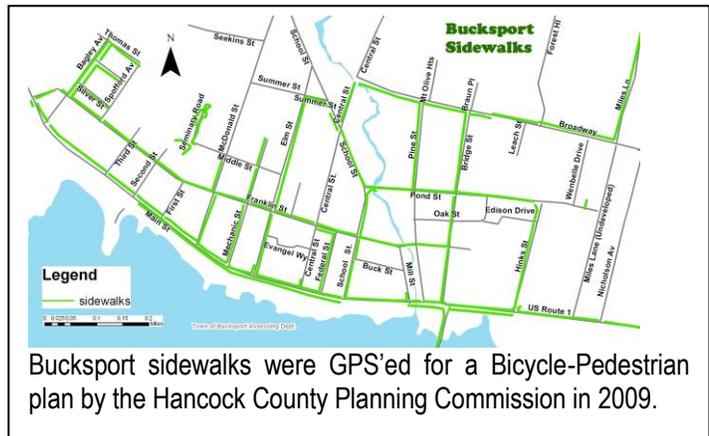
## Parking Standards

The land use ordinance standards for the downtown have provisions to encourage development. The reviewing authority has the discretion to consider off-site parking areas in determining the total number of required spaces. Section 13.15.8.7 states that “public parking spaces in the DT and DTS Districts are deemed sufficient for any proposed commercial or noncommercial use of an existing building on Main Street that is not provided with an on-site.”

*If there are parking standards, do they discourage development in village or downtown areas?*

**Sidewalks**

There are 45,303 feet of sidewalk in 2014 compared to 44,616 feet in 2002, and to 27,111 feet in 1990. Approximately 12,300 feet are located along Route 15 and Route 1, and are owned by the state with maintenance handled by the town. This amount does not include the various walkways and pedestrian paths in the Silver Lake, Miles Lane, and waterfront areas.



The current sidewalk system faces several deficiencies. These include poor connections between certain segments of town and limited wheelchair accessibility. There have been complaints from residents of uneven paving that makes walking difficult. The situation is worsened in the winter when snow removal may be delayed since priority is given to the schools. Due to the aging of the population it is important to address sidewalk hazards and assure adequate wheelchair access. The proportion of people without cars is likely to increase. The town needs to develop a sidewalk prioritization plan. This plan would promote safe and efficient pedestrian passage that meets ADA standards. It would also address snow removal and the needs of merchants for adequate pedestrian access.

**Access Management**

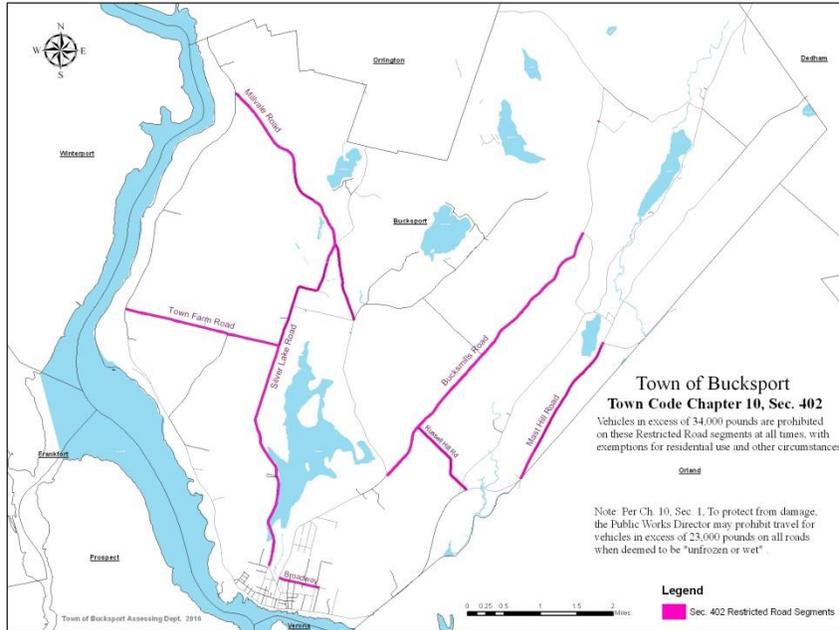
The land use ordinance and Chapter 10 of the Bucksport Town Code have driveway entrance standards. Chapter 10 requires an entrance permit on any town road, while entrance permits on state roads are subject to Maine DOT requirements. The Planning Board has the authority to require a traffic study for a proposed development, under certain circumstances.

*Does the community have local access management or traffic permitting measures in place?*

**Road Design Standards**

While Chapter 10 of the land use ordinance addresses arterial, collector, residential and rural streets, the code enforcement department reports that these standards need further clarification. Recently approved subdivision roads have dead-end streets, but possible expansions would continue from the road's end. In one subdivision, the street was accepted by the town, and there are now plans to connect it with another public street. Standards for bicycle or pedestrian travel paths are not included in the current road design requirements.

*Do the local road design standards support the community's desired land use pattern? Do the local road design standards support bicycle and pedestrian transportation?*



Chapter 10 of the land use ordinance cites local road segments that are closed to through travel of large trucks. It also authorizes the Public Works Director to post roads during times when wet conditions would leave roads vulnerable. The language in this section needs to be updated.

The map and ordinance are available on the town website.

## ALTERNATIVE MODES

*How are walking and bicycling integrated into the community's transportation network (including access to schools, parks, and other community destinations)?*

### Bicycle-Pedestrian Facilities

Bucksport has expanded its bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Major accomplishments include the mile-long walkway along the waterfront and a three-mile walking/jogging trail on the Miles Lane and Middle School properties. There are also walking trails at the Silver Lake recreation area. (See Chapter 6 Recreation for more information). The town has installed bicycle racks at some key locations around the built-up area of town, including the schools. Many road shoulders do not offer adequate space for safe passage of bicycles.



Bicycles are welcomed at Miles Lane Trails

One option for assessing the adequacy of sidewalks, pathways and pedestrian cross-walks is to conduct a "walkability" survey. There are guidelines available from groups such as the American Association of Retired Persons ([www.ite.org/Ped/Audits](http://www.ite.org/Ped/Audits)) and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center ([www.walkinginfo.org](http://www.walkinginfo.org)). The survey allows walkers to identify potential problems such as overly narrow sidewalks, missing segments, and poorly marked cross-walks. It also notes obstacles such as low hanging tree branches, placement of signs, and dumpsters.

### Public Transit

Downeast Transportation provides a Wednesday Shuttle between 9:30 AM and 1:30 PM serving the more densely populated areas of the town. It has an average ridership of 24 passengers. There is also Wednesday September-June service between Blue Hill and Bucksport. Washington Hancock Community Agency (WHCA) provides bus service between Bucksport and Bangor one day a month.

*Do available transit services meet the current and foreseeable needs of community residents? If transit services are not adequate, how will the community address the needs?*

The community is working to expand transit services for aging and disabled residents. This is important since this segment of the population is increasing. Bucksport Bay Healthy Communities is particularly active in promoting volunteer driver networks to meet local needs. WHCA provides on-demand transportation services to medical appointments for eligible clients. As of mid-2014, there is a reduced fee Wednesday taxi service that picks up clients in rural parts of town and takes them to the shuttle bus.

Given the changes occurring in the local economy, more commuting to jobs out of town is likely. This means that there may be potential for more ride sharing and van pooling services.



As described above, some public transit services are available in Bucksport...

The biggest mass transit provider however, is RSU 25!



## TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

### Conflict Resolution

Route 1/3 serves local and through freight and tourist traffic. This leads to congestion, particularly in the summer months. There are also conflicts between through traffic, including truck traffic, on Route 15 and local traffic on Main Street. Rail and pedestrian crossings are other sources of conflict that are eased through adequate markings. Bicycle traffic conflicts on major roads can be mitigated by providing wider shoulders.

*Are conflicts caused by multiple road uses, such as a major state or U.S. route that passes through the community or its downtown and serves as a local service road as well?*



RR crossings at back roads offer little to warn motorists.

### Fiscal Planning

The Bucksport Public Works Department’s planned capital investments are included in the town’s capital improvement plan (CIP). The CIP includes the capital improvements for all town departments. Funding is provided in part through an anticipated \$120,000 annual appropriation to a highway department reserve fund plus annual transfers from surplus that range from \$10,000 to \$240,000. Actual funding is subject to town council approval. The total public works FY-14 annual budget was \$949,133.

*What is the community’s current and approximate future budget for road maintenance and improvement?*

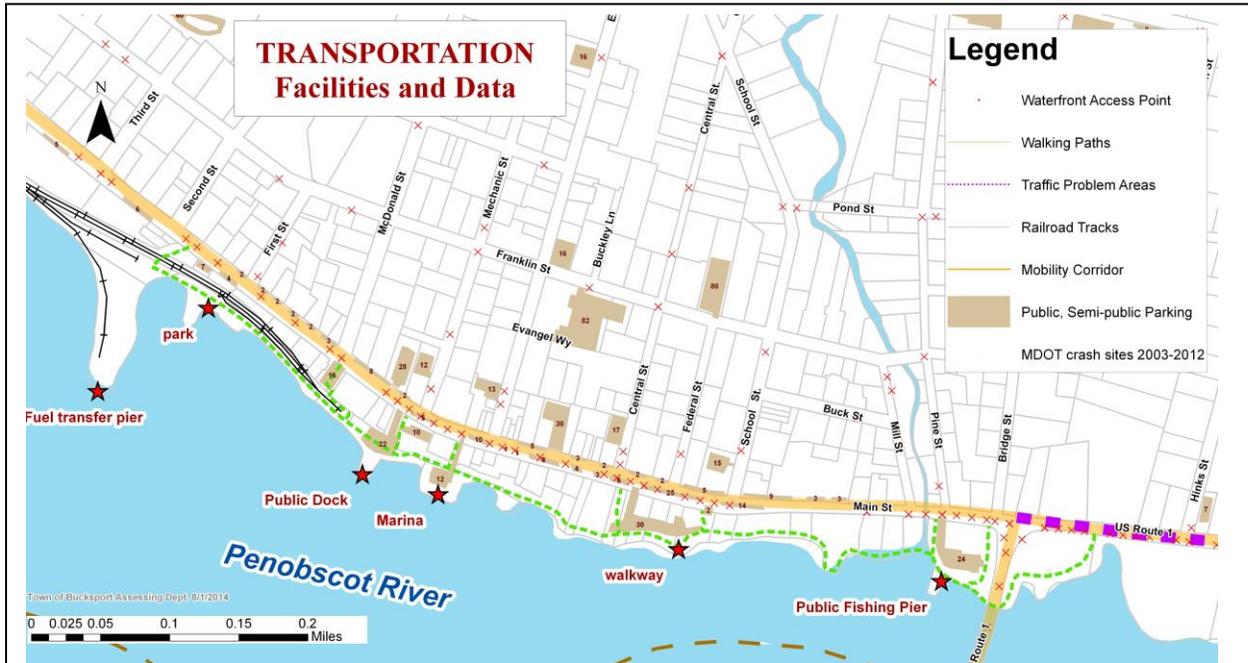
### Regional Planning

Bucksport has been an active participant in regional transportation planning. The **2010 Downeast Coastal Multi-Modal Corridor Management Plan** analyzes the major east-west connections crossing Hancock County, southern Washington County and a portion of Penobscot County as a group. Included in this broad corridor are Route 1 from Bucksport to Calais, Route 9 from Bangor to Calais, the Calais Branch Railway from Bangor to Calais as well as major collector highways that serve as connectors and short-cuts. It provides an overview of transportation needs for the broader region. Goals relevant to Bucksport include addressing traffic bottlenecks on Route 1/3 and improving winter maintenance on roads such as Routes 15 and 46. It also supports expanded transit service and improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

*How do state and regional transportation plans relate to your community?*

The **2011 Multi-Modal Corridor Management Plan for the Penobscot River Corridor** addresses transportation needs of the greater Bucksport, Bangor and Belfast area. Its goals include improvements to the flow of highway, rail, and marine traffic. Specific recommendations relevant to Bucksport include improvements to Routes 15 and 46 and addressing congestion along Route 1/3.

The 2006 *Penobscot Narrows Study: Passenger Transportation Options* focuses on the immediate Bucksport-Verona Island-Orland-Prospect area. Its recommendations include integrating pedestrian and bicycle facilities in Bucksport with those in adjoining towns. It also proposed a bicycle-pedestrian trail along the Penobscot River connecting Brewer to Bucksport. The study urged the promotion of cultural tourism and the expansion of public transit.



The Maine Department of Transportation provided a tremendous amount of data for this Comprehensive Plan. Much of the information and other facilities are shown on maps at [bucksportmaine.gov](http://bucksportmaine.gov). Other GIS data, in Shapefile format, would need a more intensive set of maps to display. These include crashes and problem areas.



The Highway Maintenance Garage at 360 Central Street