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# Getting Maine Back on Track

## Improved rail transportation throughout the state can:

- a. Help meet state climate goals by decreasing Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) on roads.
- b. Mitigate excessive road maintenance costs burdening state and local budgets.
- c. Assist workers who are employed in Portland and other cities who live in communities with more affordable housing while reducing VMT.
- d. Prevent loss of tourism and visitation in Portland due to high parking costs and increasing traffic congestion downtown.
- e. Provide meaningful alternatives for college students and teens, seniors, disabled and mobility-impaired citizens who cannot or do not wish to drive.
- f. Encourage active transportation by allowing bicycles on board trains, expanding commuting and recreational opportunities.
- g. Expand opportunities for transit connections with active transportation multimodal greenways including “rail with trail” allowing existing rail corridors as well as bike paths in downtown areas.
- h. Enable tourists to visit Acadia National Park with dedicated bus service connecting the train station in Bangor to the Acadia National Park explorer bus to enjoy the park without a car.

## Priority One

### Extend Amtrak service beyond Portland to serve Central and Northern Maine

- The CSX active rail freight line (former Maine Central) continues north from Portland through Auburn, Lewiston, Waterville, Bangor and Orono, home of the University of Maine. This line serves the first, second and third largest cities in Maine, and 90% of Maine’s population lives less than an hour away.
- Such an expanded service qualifies as a corridor extension for existing Amtrak Downeaster service and can receive federal funding for planning and construction.
- In 2024, the Maine Senate approved legislation to apply for the necessary federal funds, but the measure failed in the House. A new bill will be introduced for the 2025 session.

## Priority Two

### With six hundred miles of state-owned rail,

### Maine can restore passenger service on other routes and branch lines

- The “Lower Road” diverging from the CSX main line runs from Brunswick to Waterville, a scenic route along the Kennebec River that runs through the capital city of Augusta. Freight and Amtrak or commuter trains could serve Bowdoinham, Richmond, Gardiner, Hallowell as well as Augusta.
- The Rockland Branch runs through Bath, Woolwich, Wiscasset, Damariscotta/Newcastle, Waldoboro, and Thomaston, terminating in Rockland. Maine has proposed seasonal extension of the Downeaster to Rockland, supplemented with commuter rail off-season.

### Lines directly serving greater Portland include:

- The Mountain Division connects Portland’s industrial port with the Portland Transportation Center, then proceeds through rapidly growing Westbrook, Gorham, and Standish, and on through Hiram, Brownfield, and Fryeburg. The New Hampshire segment features active passenger excursion service by the Conway Scenic Railroad. By linking Portland to the White Mountains, the line offers Maine opportunities for freight, commuter rail and tourism excursion trains, as well as direct connections to the Downeaster. It offers an important alternative to expensive new toll roads like the proposed Gorham Connector.
  - The St. Lawrence & Atlantic line runs from the Ocean Gateway Terminal in Portland through the new Roux Institute campus on through Falmouth and Yarmouth to Auburn, offering direct connections between a bustling ferry and cruise ship port to the Downeaster and points north.
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