12.0 Public Outreach

The objective of this study is to make Route 1 safer and more accessible for all modes of travel, including motor vehicles, public transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. Consequently, the public outreach program was designed to identify travelers’ safety and access concerns for all modes, reach out to businesses for which access management changes are recommended, and provide the public with an opportunity to specifically comment on draft recommendations for each community.

Creating Awareness of the Study

A detailed press release was sent to local media announcing the first set of public meetings, once of which took place in Saco and the other in Scarborough. The release included information about study objectives, timing, and data inputs, as well as directing people to a customized web page on both the Scarborough and the Saco web sites, which included an online survey to identify safety and access concerns. The webpage also included an overview of Complete Streets and access management principles, general study and public meeting information, and the opportunity to sign up for email updates.

Both communities employed social media to increase awareness of the study, the survey, and the meeting. Information on the study appeared in the Portland Press Herald, Forecaster, Mainebiz, and the Journal Tribune, with WGME-TV attending and covering both initial public meetings. The TV coverage provided the opportunity to flash the URL for the survey onscreen, driving significant response.

Online Survey

The objective of the survey was to generate feedback regarding the portion of Route 1 that passes through Saco and Scarborough, from just north of the Route 1/Routes 112 junction in Saco to the Scarborough-South Portland line. The survey was created on SurveyMonkey, launched on November 30, 2018 and closed on December 29, 2018. It included questions about vehicle, bicycle, pedestrian and transit usage. As noted above, media coverage, along with multiple online messaging from both municipalities, publicized availability of the survey, and the survey was easily accessible by smartphone. A total of 376 individuals participated.

A Summary of Survey Highlights

- **Road Usage:** Respondents were heavy vehicle users of Route 1, with almost 70% indicating daily use of the road and another 22% using it at least 3 times a week. Bike and pedestrian usage, as expected, was much less: 84% never bike and 74% never walk along Route 1. 8 percent bike monthly; 11% walk monthly. Transit use was almost non-existent with respondents: 98% never take transit along the corridor.

- **Bikes:** Route 1 is not considered a safe place for bikes at this time. What was surprising is that many people – as many as half – didn’t think it could ever be safe and advocated for bike lanes on other roads, and/or for only short distances on sections of Route 1 that will connect them to destinations on the other side of the road. Other respondents specified that bike lanes would be needed in order to make them ride more on Route 1; a majority of these specified that a wide, separated bike lane would be necessary in order to feel comfortable. Many others noted that the East Coast Greenway provides a safe and pleasant north-south route for those who want to commute by bike and again, did not feel Route 1 needed bike amenities along its entire length.

- **Pedestrians:** Other than in areas such as Dunstan Corner, Oak Hill and the Thornton Academy section of Saco, there did not seem to be much interest in pedestrian amenities on Route 1. Similar to above, there were many comments such as, “Why would I choose to walk on Route 1 when there are other, more hospitable places to walk?” There was real fear shown in terms of the speed and scofflaw activities of drivers in terms of running red lights and not stopping for pedestrians in crosswalks. However, thoughts regarding the more densely commercial areas were different, there we heard many requests for crosswalks, sidewalks, and for enforcement of vehicle infractions.

- **Transit:** This was a very suburban audience. Lots and lots of, “No,” “Never,” “I have a car, I don’t need transit,” responses here. Other comments included those of not wanting to stand and wait for a bus on Route 1 because it is noisy and dangerous, that if a bus route was offered there would have to be parking available on Route 1 so as to be able to drive to the bus stop, and a comment on if parents don’t put their kids on school buses, why would we expect them to ride a bus? It was clear that many were unaware that any bus service was available now, and that level of service would have to be much better for transit to be considered a reliable mode of transport along this corridor.

Scarborough meeting. Attendees were engaged and asked multiple questions.

Saco officials noted that their major concern is the increasing amount of pedestrian activity taking place in the community. Town officials and planners want to make the corridor safe for multi-modal travelers before increasing vehicle activity along the corridor could potentially make that too difficult. Concerns from Saco residents included the difficulty of navigating the stretch by Hannaford and Thornton Academy, where traffic backs up, cars are stopped to make a left turn across traffic, and it is just generally unsafe. Also noted were the challenges of coming out of side streets with a vehicle into Route 1 traffic, and how crashes on the Turnpike negatively affect Route 1 in terms of traffic congestion. Questions were asked regarding timing of the study, and how far out traffic numbers were projected. A resident wondered if Route 1 would get increasing traffic compared to the Turnpike as hybrid cars are more common. She noted that she will often take Route 1 because the braking patterns give her battery more of a charge than the vehicle would get on the Turnpike.

In Scarborough, the message was similar, with the Planning Director noting that the road is getting increasingly busy and as Scarborough continues to grow, this will not change. Many people have concerns with the safety aspects of the road, and safety is a major focus of the study. He explained that the town wants to make the corridor safe for all travelers, including bikes, pedestrians, and transit users.

Scarborough comments included questions on the study timing, study area and future traffic projections, the role of MaineDOT in the study, why traffic signals are not timed to work together, local versus regional traffic on Route 1, and how the new development at Scarborough Downs will affect Route 1. Scarborough attendees also provided written comments on maps provided for that purpose.

Detailed meeting minutes can be found in the appendix.

**Asset Management Outreach**

(To Come)

**Final Public Meetings**

(To Come)