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# Self-Sustaining Transportation Options for Rural Communities

presented by  
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## Introduction: TIGER 2

Eastern Maine Development Corporation is working on a two-year TIGER planning grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation/Federal Transit Administration to explore new and expanded transportation options for rural residents seeking access to the greater Bangor area. (TIGER is an acronym for Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery.)



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## Transportation options matter

Transportation is an important factor in:

- Economic health of communities
- Well-being of residents
- Quality of place



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## Economic health

“Access to stable, well-paying jobs is a household’s most reliable defense against poverty. Finding and keeping those jobs depends on many factors, including educational attainment, health, family structure, **access to transportation** and childcare, and the strength of the economy overall.”—Maine State Planning Office, *2011 Report on Poverty*

“A large number of TANF families lack access to transportation. Nearly 46% of respondents did not own a vehicle. Of those, 80% had difficulty getting transportation when they needed it.”—Maine Equal Justice Partners, “Lessons from a 2010 Survey”



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## Physical health

"A vision of healthy communities cannot disregard or devalue transportation. A healthy community is one in which people have access to healthy foods, feel safe, have opportunities for physical activity, breathe clean air, have access to gainful employment and feel connected to opportunity. Transportation is access, thus, transportation is opportunity."—The Convergence Partnership, "Health People, Healthy Places"



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## Quality of place

"Quality of Place initiatives embrace landscape protection, downtown revitalization, historic preservation, the creative economy, outdoor recreation, nature- and heritage-based tourism, and local and regional planning initiatives. By implication, it also touches upon affordable housing, transportation, education, and health care."—Maine State Planning Office, "Place and Prosperity"



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## Transportation choices matter

Who is affected by lack of transportation options?

Everyone. (Cars break down; gas prices go up; weather happens; schedules change....)

But especially:

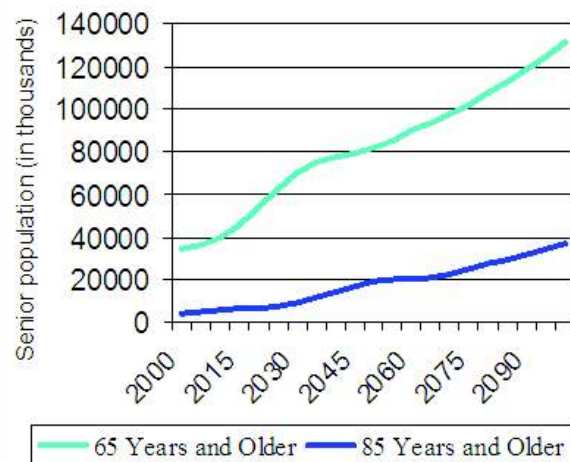
- Non-drivers
- Elderly and disabled people and those with chronic health conditions
- People with little or no income



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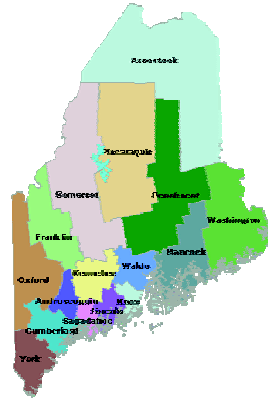
## Aging

### Elderly Population Growing in US 2000-2100



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## Challenges



- Geography
- Cost
- Resistance
- Tradeoff between covering more places and getting people where they want to go in a timely way



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## Possible Solutions

- Filling empty seats in private vehicles.
- Marketing and expanding on existing transit options.
- Adding new kinds of service.



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## Filling empty seats

- Shared car rides—informal arrangements between family, friends, neighbors
- Ride boards—notices (moderated or not) at public locations, such as municipal offices, churches, schools
- Electronic ride boards using social media, such as Facebook or Twitter
- Organized carpools arranged through employers or GoMaine



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## Marketing/expanding

There are transportation options available, but they may be limited by funding restrictions or lack of visibility.

Two Community Action Programs operate transportation programs in the Mid-Coast area: Penquis ([www.penquis.org](http://www.penquis.org)) in Knox County and Waldo Community Action Partners ([www.waldocap.org](http://www.waldocap.org)) in Waldo County. Both offer some services to the general public, in addition to providing non-emergency medical transportation through Medicaid.



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## Marketing/expanding

GoMaine specializes in ridesharing and vanpools for all of Maine.

“GO MAINE provides information on, and access to, healthy, economical and eco-friendly modes of transportation for Maine commuters: Carpools, vanpools, transit, bicycling and walking to work. We work with commuters, employers, business groups, planning agencies, transit operators, and other local and regional partners throughout the state to build demand and advance the mutual goals of improved air quality, reduced traffic congestion, energy conservation and lower commuting costs.” ([www.gomaine.org](http://www.gomaine.org))



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## Creating new services

**Subscription buses** are similar to vanpools, except they rely on paid drivers who are employees of regional transit agencies. Subscription drivers typically park vans or buses overnight at or near their homes. They are employed at the destination job site, so they are paid only for their inbound trip in the morning and their outbound trip at the end of the workday. Vehicles are parked at the job site during the day to minimize cost. Passengers typically sign up for a minimum of 30 days and pay a fixed fee regardless of the number of times they actually ride. This option works well when a number of people regularly travel to the same place, and especially when they are subsidized by a business.



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## Creating new services

**Smart Jitneys** rely on cell phones and satellite global positioning technology. It combines these with an automated electronic ride board system and pre-paid individual transportation accounts. Drivers are dispatched via cell phone to respond to trip requests from individuals who are located nearby and who share desired travel routes.



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## An innovative examples

The Explorer bus system is a model public-private partnership, using tourism as a basis for a bus system that serves residents as well as visitors. The Island Explorer, for example, was developed in response to congestion and pollution in Acadia National Park. Maine DOT, Acadia National Park, and the communities and businesses of the Bar Harbor/Mt. Desert area worked together to create a bus service to reduce park-area car traffic. LL Bean joined the partnership, making it possible to extend service by the Island Explorer into the fall months.



Source: <http://www.downeasttrans.org/>

The Mountain Explorer is a partnership between Maine DOT, Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce, Sunday River, and other businesses.

The Shoreline Explorer is a partnership among three private and one public trolley companies; the municipalities of York, Wells, Kennebunkport; and Ogunquit; and Maine DOT.



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## And an old-school solution



**Mobility at 103**

"If it were up to Octavio Orduño, he'd still be cruising Long Beach on a two-wheeled bicycle. But his wife insisted he get a tricycle. The city wants to make him an ambassador for cycling: 'He's our poster boy for healthy, active living around here.'"—LA Times, March 14, 2011



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## TIGER II Website

For more information on the TIGER project, visit our website at [www.emdc.org](http://www.emdc.org) and look for TIGER 2 under the Community tab,

or email  
[dmartel@emdc.org](mailto:dmartel@emdc.org).



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