

With two major bridges providing access to Waterville (and Interstate 95), and U.S. Route 201 providing convenient access to Augusta, Winslow residents can now live anywhere in town and easily commute to major employment centers. The majority of vehicles on these corridors carry people passing through Winslow to Waterville or the interstate, or coming in to Winslow for work, school, or shopping. With most traffic confined to the major roads leading through town, several issues are raised: What is the impact of continuing development along existing roads? Will development lead to congestion and reduced traffic capacity? What are future alternatives to the highway system?

The transportation system is the lynchpin of land use and development in Winslow, and the two areas complement and conflict with each other. To the extent that commercial development requires access to customers, or to move freight, major roads in close proximity are essential. Any form of development, even single family homes, will generate new traffic, eventually overcoming the capacity of existing roads. At several hundred thousand dollars per mile, new roads are a rare construction project. The issue is: Can we continue to engage in current or projected land use patterns without creating unsustainable conditions within the transportation system?

### The Road System

Transportation management is the responsibility of state and town governments. The Maine Department of Transportation (DOT) is responsible for State Roads outside of the Urban Compact Area, which is a point on the state roads indicating the boundary between urban and rural development densities. The DOT is responsible for all maintenance on the non-compact portion of US 201. The DOT is responsible for all but winter maintenance on non-compact portions of Routes 32, 137, Carter Memorial Drive, 100A, the Garland Road and Albion Road.

The Town of Winslow is responsible for winter maintenance on all but the non-compact portion of US 201, and is responsible for all maintenance on approximately 67 miles of local roads. The State provides partial funding for local road improvements.

A few privately-owned and managed roads exist in Winslow. These are primarily providing access to properties around Pattee's Pond, or serving small subdivisions, and there is little likelihood of them ever becoming public roads.

State roads are generally in good condition. The Town has requested improvements on Garland Road, to eliminate a sight distance problem. Projects on the State's workplan for the current biennium include:

- Crack Sealing on Monument Street
- Resurfacing of one mile of Route 32, from Dunbar Road to Route 137
- Crack sealing on US 201 between Route 137 and Clinton Ave.

Significant improvements have been made to the highway system since the writing of the current Comprehensive Plan (1995). Construction of the Carter Memorial Bridge and its access to the China Road has relieved the Town's major congestion point on Bay Street. The bridge

now carries more traffic than any other road in town, except for Bay Street. Bay Street itself recently underwent a reconstruction project, widening the Sebasticook Bridge and portions of the road to establish an additional northbound lane. Together, these projects brought the level of service on Bay Street to acceptable levels.

These improvements have to some extent moved the congestion problem upstream. The most significant congestion now occurs in the morning at the intersection of Route 137 with Route 32 and the Garland Road.

The 67 miles of local roads include almost the entire in-town grid, and several rural and subdivision roads. The town uses a road surface management system (RSMS) to gauge the condition and maintenance needs of these roads, but funding is insufficient to meet the assessed needs. Many roads require maintenance overlays, but some have been deferred. The Winslow Public Works Director estimates 17-20 percent of the road system needs full reconstruction.

The Town issued a \$3.5 million bond for road improvements in 1997. In its Capital Improvement Plan in 2006, the Town proposed allocating \$350,000 per year to paving until the bond expired (in 2007), then raising the amount to \$500,000 from the savings in bond payments. The current sense in town is that another shot of funding, in the form of a new bond, may be necessary to reduce the backlog of maintenance needs. The town also receives about \$425,000 a year in URIP (Urban-Rural Initiative Program) funds from the state, earmarked for capital improvements.

The town is responsible for several municipal parking lots. Some of these are associated with the schools or the town office, and contain sufficient capacity and are in good condition. The parking lot at Fort Halifax Park, however, is a concern because the lot is to be re-located, at an expected cost of \$75,000, to improve recreational park utilization. If the new parking lot functions properly, it may increase traffic along Bay Street, perhaps requiring that that entire area be assessed for major road safety enhancements.

Use of the road system is generally measured in vehicle volumes. The Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) is estimated (based on sampling) for arterial and collector roads in Winslow. These figures, particularly when viewed over time, are a good indicator of highway system use.

The table below gives historic data on traffic levels at critical points in Winslow. The table shows that several points on the system have experienced a decline in traffic, most notably Bay Street and Route 137. These numbers, of course, are skewed by construction of the Carter Memorial Bridge. As of 2005, traffic levels on the bridge topped 10,400, so that should be added into the equation. Route 137 east of Dunbar Road probably reflects actual traffic growth the best: about a 10 percent growth over ten years.

## Traffic Levels and Growth along the Winslow Road System

Location	Base Year (1996 or other)	Most Recent (2006 or other)	Net Change
32/137 east of Bay St. light	16,790	15,230	- 1,560
32 south of 137 junction	6,070	4,990	- 1,080
137 east of 32 junction	11,160	7,950	- 3,210
Albion Road	1,580	1,440 (2003)	- 140
Garland Road south of Albion Road	2,230	2,110	- 120
Halifax St. east of Bay Street light	4,530	4,990	460
Bay St. north of Halifax St. light	21,180	14,040	- 7,140
201 north of Carter Memorial Bridge	6,080 (1993)	7,200	1,120
Benton Ave.	7,110 (1993)	8,610	1,500
137 east of Dunbar Road junction	6,500	7,260	760

The critical links to Waterville – the two bridges – carry nearly 30,000 vehicles per day. Some rural roads, such as Benton Avenue, are gaining traffic at the rate of 15 percent per decade, while others, such as Albion Road, show a decline in traffic.

Winslow's transportation system is heavily influenced by I-95, even though it does not run through the town. Interstate highways are traditionally magnets for big box establishments and the attendant sprawling retail. Since freight is now largely shipped by truck, interstate highways across the nation are dotted with massive industrial parks and warehouses. This actually increases the burden on the transportation system, since many individuals now travel through Winslow to central retail locations on I-95 to work and shop.

Because Interstate 95 does not pass through Winslow, residents were spared consideration of where and how to control development at the interchanges. However, since relatively little industrial and commercial development occurs away from interstate highways, Winslow residents are left with the land use quandary of how to maintain a sustainable town with few prospects for commercial and industrial development. Particularly vexing is the situation where Interstate 95 is far enough away from Winslow to make large industrial and commercial development unlikely, yet close enough to encourage significant residential development in an economy now accustomed to half-hour drives to everything.

Potentially unsafe road locations are identified by the DOT as High Crash Locations. These are locations known to have a high number and rate of accidents, but are not necessarily the only safety problems in town (Transportation Map at end of chapter identifies High Crash Locations). Threats to safety include poorly designed or maintained roads, congested areas, and a proliferation of private driveways:

- **Poor Road Design:** Roads in Winslow are relatively flat and straight. Some exceptions include a blind hill on North Reynolds Road and narrow segments on several of the minor town roads.

- **Congested Areas:** The most congested area of Winslow is in the Bay Street/China Road area. However, congestion on Bay Street has diminished dramatically since the opening of the Carter Bridge. The point of greatest congestion has drifted “upstream,” somewhat, according to the Public Works Director. Morning congestion problems now occur occasionally at the China Road intersections with Route 32 and Garland Road.
- **Driveway Proliferation:** Residential and commercial driveways create points of conflict, where traffic slows and crosses lanes. A greater density of driveways creates multiple conflicts. This is evident along Bay Street and the lower portion of China Road. New development creates additional driveways. Areas of existing or planned growth include Benton Avenue, Augusta Road, and China Road.

### Bridges

Bridges are a critical, though often overlooked, link in the road system. Bridges that exceed 20 feet in length are the responsibility of the State, regardless of ownership of the road. Bridges under 20 feet and culverts are generally the responsibility of the Town.

The following table lists the bridges in Winslow:

Winslow Bridge Inventory (2002)

Route	Bridge Name	Water Body	Length (ft)	Federal Sufficiency Rating
Route 100/201	Bay Street	Sebasticook	371	77.7
Route 32	Shoddy Hollow	Mile Brook	29	98.4
Albion Road	Erskin	Pattee’s Pond Brook	23	76.4
Garland Road	Fish	Pattee’s Pond Brook	23	64.6
Augusta Road	Chaffee Brook	Chaffee Brook	11	96.7
Albion Road	Martin	Wilson Brook	23	79.4
Garland Road	Mile Brook	Mile Brook	359	60.1
Bassett Road	Mast	Mile Brook	92	88.8
Route 137	Hayden	Outlet Stream	34	69.4
Eames Road	Eames Road	Pattee’s Pond Brook	20	87.8
Quimby Lane	Quimby	Wilson Stream	17	97.9

This inventory dates from prior to the re-decking of the bridge on Bay Street, which would have raised its score. All the remaining bridges have acceptable scores, except for the Mile Brook Bridge on Garland Road, which is listed as needing re-decking and new paint. The only bridges on the list that are town responsibility are Chaffee Brook and Quimby Lane, both of which have very good scores.

This inventory does not include the Two-cent Bridge, which is a pedestrian-only bridge linking Winslow with downtown Waterville over the Kennebec River. Having been repaired and strengthened as a result of some damage in 1990, the Two-cent Bridge is now in good condition.

### Sidewalks and Bicycle Routes

The town has an extensive sidewalk system, to serve that portion of the population that needs to go short distances, cannot drive, or desires physical exercise. The older, grid-layout portion of town has sidewalks throughout, and some of the newer subdivision roads have them as well. The only pedestrian routes not directly associated with a road are the Two-Cent Bridge access path, and an informal pathway from the school complex to the Smiley Acres residential development.

The town's sidewalks are in highly variable condition. Money for sidewalk improvements tends to be a lower priority than road improvements, and little has been done in recent years for any but the most dramatic problems.

Bicycle usage is growing in Maine, both as a form of transportation and recreation. While most bicycle travel occurs on roads, Winslow is fortunate in having under development a multi-use trail extending along the Kennebec River from the Two-cent Bridge north to Benton. This trail gives cyclists an off-road option both along the riverside and, eventually, to several destinations in Waterville.

Winslow is also now on the interim route of the East Coast Greenway, a multi-thousand mile trail network running from Florida to Calais, ME. The route now runs along Route 201 from Augusta, with a rest stop at Fort Halifax. From there, it turns up Halifax Street and onto Outer Clinton Ave., with a spur to link up with the trail at the Two-cent Bridge.

### Rail, Air, and Public Transportation

Though a huge majority of transportation now occurs by private vehicles on the highway system, other forms of transportation constitute alternatives for the future.

The rail line through Winslow, the former Maine Central "Lower Road," runs from Augusta up the east side of the Kennebec River, alongside Bay Street, crossing into Waterville just north of the Waterville-Winslow Bridge. Originally used to access the Scott Paper Mill through a spur running north into the mill, since the closure of the mill there has been a decrease in freight service. Nonetheless, Pan Am Railways still owns the track and right-of-way from Winslow to Augusta, and there remains a possibility for more commercial train traffic on this line. In addition, this particular line continues from Augusta to Brunswick (the State of Maine owns the track and right-of-way on this southern section). Expanded Amtrak passenger rail service has been approved from Portland to Brunswick, and those trains are expected to begin carrying passengers in 2010. If the service from Portland to Brunswick is as popular as the Portland to Boston passenger service, calls for expansion will likely continue. The logical extension of passenger rail service from Brunswick to Augusta, Winslow, Waterville, and eventually Bangor is on this "Lower Road" rail line.

There are no public airports within Winslow but general aviation services are available at Waterville's LaFleur Airport. There is also one private hanger in Winslow. Limited passenger service is available at Augusta State Airport, and full passenger service at Portland and Bangor.

The Waterville area is served by local transit provider Kennebec Valley Community Action Program (KVCAP). The fixed route service was recently extended into Winslow. Currently, there is one fixed route (on Mondays and Thursdays) traveling from Winslow to Waterville (see KV Transit schedule at end of chapter). Outside of this fixed route service, anyone may contact KVCAP for door-to-door transit service.

## **Analysis and Key Issues**

### *Financial Stability*

The transportation system is very costly to maintain. The system is in a constant state of deterioration, and deferring maintenance accelerates the pace and costs of repair. Even without improvements, the roads in Winslow require over a million dollars a year in upkeep.

The roads and bridges for which the state is responsible are generally in good condition; however, funding for transportation needs statewide is in decline. Maintenance will be impacted, and improvements are not to be expected. Locally, the Town has a good system for identifying maintenance needs (RSMS), but not the funding to support it. A paving program is funded annually through the town's CIP, but it is insufficient to do more than hold the line. It is possible that another road improvement bond will be necessary to "catch up."

### *Development and Traffic Growth*

Traffic continues to increase overall, driven in part by new residential and commercial development. Major traffic generators include the school complex, the cluster of businesses at the lower end of China Road, and the Winslow Industrial Park. Continued development of rural areas and commercial growth along the Augusta Road, supported in part by the Carter Memorial Bridge, will accelerate traffic growth throughout town.

A general growth in traffic, and particularly commercial traffic, accelerates the deterioration of the highway system. Little can be done about this in the short term. In the long term, new development can be directed into existing well-served areas, and away from narrow or poorly-constructed rural roads.

Development also increases the number of driveways and dead end roads, contributing to traffic conflicts and safety concerns. The town has strong access management standards for location of those driveways, though this only provides for a case-by-case approach.

The town should consider encouraging more interconnection between developments. The older sections of town have very high development density but quiet streets, because the grid

pattern gives people options. Newer subdivisions on dead-end roads tend to funnel traffic onto main roads, creating more conflict. The town should seek out opportunities to imitate the old grid system with interconnections between existing and proposed roads. This principle can be applied to commercial developments as well, requiring connections between adjoining parking lots, so cars need not travel on public roads for trips of just a few hundred feet. Though the town's design standards contain these provisions, few commercial and residential developments implement them.

### *Regional and Statewide Trends*

More than any other public service, the transportation system is heavily connected to trends and events outside the town's boundaries. Suburban growth in China and Albion affects Winslow's road system, as does commercial development in Waterville. Sensitivity to these trends – and what others are doing about them – will help in preparing Winslow's own plans.

Much of Winslow's transportation problem was "solved" with the construction of the Carter Bridge. It allowed the sprawling development in eastern Winslow access to businesses and the interstate. The bridge also, to some extent, changed traffic patterns and reduced overall traffic in the most congested areas. The Waterville downtown area is undergoing some new growth, however, with the redevelopment of the Hathaway building and other projects, which could change the new traffic patterns.

Regional and statewide planning documents do not focus on Winslow, being more concerned with the service center of Waterville. The exceptions are plans for establishing and growing alternative travel modes. Winslow is involved in development of the Kennebec Messalonskee Trail network, which provides walking and biking alternatives. Passenger or even freight rail service may someday be re-established through Winslow. It remains to be seen how popular the new fixed route bus service connecting Waterville and Winslow will become. Perhaps with the growing price of gasoline, this service can be extended into a daily commuter route.

### *Bay Street*

Even though traffic and the resulting congestion has greatly declined with the new bridge and the addition of another lane, Bay Street and the lower end of the China Road continue to be the most difficult transportation situation in Winslow. Challenges include:

- Railroad tracks abutting Bay Street inhibit development and constrain future expansion
- Properties along Bay Street are constantly being re-developed. Increased interest in the Kennebec River overall could make these properties more valuable as commercial or high-end residential uses
- Proliferation of commercial entrances on China Road, between the main intersection and Garland Road, contribute to conflicts and congestion
- Emergence of Fort Halifax as an historic and recreational attraction increases traffic

- Opportunities for new commercial development on China Road and Augusta Road contribute to the potential for traffic and congestion

Bay Street is a prime example of how land use planning can impact the transportation system. The level of service of the road system has been restored to satisfactory, but continued focus on this area as the “commercial center” of town will gradually eat away at the gains in mobility and safety. Smart planning can minimize conflict points, improve site designs, and allow for alternative modes.

### *Scenic and Environmental Impacts*

We tend to overlook the fact that roads and other forms of transportation can have an effect on our natural environment as well as our built one, ranging from interfering with wildlife movements to providing improved access to riverfront for bikers and walkers.

The existing road system has not resulted in any significant negative effects on wildlife or water quality. The town is sensitive to potential erosion or runoff problems and fixes them as soon as they are identified. Similarly, there are no known issues with noise or street lighting associated with the road system.

The construction of the Carter Bridge has created a scenic vista in Winslow (although no stopping is permitted on the bridge). The re-opening of the Two-cent Bridge and development of the Kennebec Messalonskee Trail has encouraged more residents to appreciate and visit the riverfront. Fort Halifax Park achieves the same purpose, in addition to providing access to an important historic site.

### **Policies**

- The town should prioritize community and regional needs associated with safe, efficient, and optimal use of the transportation system.
- The town should safely and efficiently preserve and improve the transportation system.
- The town should promote public health, protect natural and cultural resources and enhance livability by managing land use in ways that maximize the efficiency of the transportation system and minimize increases in vehicle miles traveled.
- The town should meet the transportation needs of all users by providing a diverse, safe, efficient and adequate transportation network.
- The town should promote fiscal prudence by maximizing the efficiency of the state or state-aid highway network.

## **Strategies**

- ✓ The town should continue updating the transportation section of the Capital Improvements Plan.

The Town Manager should work with the Planning Board and Public Works Director on submitting updates to the transportation section of the Town Capital Improvements Plan. Prior to submitting updates, this Comprehensive Plan should be consulted.

- ✓ The town should continue participating in regional and state transportation planning efforts.

The Town Council should continue participating in regional organizations, such as the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments and MaineDOT. MaineDOT has funds available to support a wide variety of improvements under the Safe Routes to School Program. The Town Manager should also contact alternative transportation organizations, such as Kennebec Messalonskee Trails and the Kennebec Valley Community Action Program for periodic updates.

- ✓ The town should amend local ordinances to reflect policies and issues identified in this Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee should review street connection and design requirements, and identify areas where the regulations should be modified to enhance more efficient use of the transportation network. The Committee should make recommendations to the Planning Board by 2011.

The Planning Board should rigorously review the transportation component of every new development proposal, specifically identifying ways in which the proposed development can better connect to the existing transportation network, and enhance future transportation options.