

**From:** [Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov](mailto:Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov)  
**To:** [Howard, Nathan](#)  
**Subject:** Lower Road Public Comments  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 26, 2023 12:22:57 AM

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The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Wednesday, 26-Apr-2023 00:08:21 EDT  
Name: Lucy Dawson  
Organization(if applicable):  
Phone: 207-615-2618  
Email: [lucyolson@hotmail.com](mailto:lucyolson@hotmail.com)

Topic:

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Comments:

I am writing in support of the lower rail trail through Topsham. I love the my kids will have a safe place to bike to friends houses, downtown Topsham and/or downtown Bowdoinham. I live on a back road in Topsham and watch people drive fast around curves and don't feel comfortable letting my children bike or even walk on the road. It means the I would have a safe place to walk my dog , meet friends and enjoy the town I live. I encourage you to help make this a reality. Thank you

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If required, please respond as soon as possible.

**From:** [Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov](mailto:Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov)  
**To:** [Howard, Nathan](#)  
**Subject:** Lower Road Public Comments  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 25, 2023 12:52:48 PM

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The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Tuesday, 25-Apr-2023 12:34:29 EDT  
Name: Annette Mott  
Organization(if applicable):  
Phone: 2077378853  
Email: mottengler@yahoo.com

Topic:  
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Comments:

I fully support the creation of the Merrymeeting Trail, and I look forward to using it to maintain good health and enjoy the beauty of our state.

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If required, please respond as soon as possible.

**From:** [Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov](mailto:Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov)  
**To:** [Howard, Nathan](#)  
**Subject:** Lower Road Public Comments  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 25, 2023 11:17:46 AM

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The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Tuesday, 25-Apr-2023 11:03:01 EDT  
Name: Jim Deming  
Organization(if applicable):  
Phone: 615-438-7133  
Email: jimbodeming@gmail.com

Topic:

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Comments:

Positive reasons for a rail to trail conversion:

1. Provides a SAFE space for children, seniors, and families to walk, bike, and socialize.
2. Sparks small supportive business development along the corridor.
3. Stimulates new housing development for those who want to exercise and maintain a healthy lifestyle nearby.
4. Provides a current transportation corridor and preserves it for any future uses.
5. Adds another very attractive link to the East Coast Greenway that will attract tourist dollars.
6. Gives every community along the way a source of pride and a place to gather.

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If required, please respond as soon as possible.

**From:** [Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov](mailto:Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov)  
**To:** [Howard, Nathan](#)  
**Subject:** Lower Road Public Comments  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 25, 2023 11:12:43 AM

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The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Tuesday, 25-Apr-2023 11:11:01 EDT  
Name: Mary G Malia  
Organization(if applicable):  
Phone: 2074501611  
Email: mgmalia@gmail.com

Topic:

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Comments:

Merrymeeting Trail should be supported. It is too expensive to make that a working passenger railroad. We need to walking and biking trails for the citizens of Maine!!

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If required, please respond as soon as possible.

**From:** [Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov](mailto:Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov)  
**To:** [Howard, Nathan](#)  
**Subject:** Lower Road Public Comments  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 19, 2023 7:40:47 PM

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The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Wednesday, 19-Apr-2023 19:32:28 EDT  
Name: Debra Lonergan  
Organization(if applicable):  
Phone: 6039180098  
Email: kizmet2@comcast.net

Topic:

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Comments:

As I just wanted to voice my support for a Merrymeeting rail trail. Such an excellent use of the space for so many reasons!

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If required, please respond as soon as possible.

**From:** [Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov](mailto:Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov)  
**To:** [Howard, Nathan](#)  
**Subject:** Lower Road Public Comments  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 18, 2023 4:45:24 PM

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The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Tuesday, 18-Apr-2023 16:31:40 EDT  
Name: Debra DeCrausaz  
Organization(if applicable):  
Phone: 9703940017  
Email: decrausazdeb@gmail.com

Topic:

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Comments:

This trail would be an amazing community connection. It's a beautiful area and people want to walk, ride, recreate along some very busy roads along this corridor that do not have adequate pedestrian designs. I live on Cathance Road and regularly see cyclists and kids on bikes carrying fishing poles dodging cars, walkers having to step into the ditch to avoid traffic, etc. Not only would it provide wonderful trail access to locals, it would be an amenity that may attract tourists to these communities. Even more, developing the trail would just repurpose the previous railroad bed and not greatly impact the surrounding forested areas. This trail would provide trail and river access in a minimally impactful way that is true to the Maine way of life.

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If required, please respond as soon as possible.

**From:** [Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov](mailto:Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov)  
**To:** [Howard, Nathan](#)  
**Subject:** Lower Road Public Comments  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 5, 2023 10:26:13 AM

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The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Wednesday, 05-Apr-2023 10:25:09 EDT  
Name: Anne Marisic  
Organization(if applicable):  
Phone: 207-558-2211  
Email: [anne@bikemaine.org](mailto:anne@bikemaine.org)

Topic:

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Comments:

The Bicycle Coalition of Maine is closely monitoring conversations about how Maine might repurpose unused rail corridors around the state. At stake is whether these state-owned corridors such as the Lower Road Rail might be:

Returned to active rail use, or  
Converted to interim trail use until such time as rail operations are feasible, or  
Converted to combined rail-with-trail use.

As the state considers what the best immediate use of these corridors might be, the Bicycle Coalition of Maine wants to make its perspective clear on each of the three options.

In general, the BCM believes that the interim conversion of rail corridors into trails for active transportation users is the best and highest-impact use of these public resources. The utilization of the long unused "Lower Road" railroad corridor would provide a connection between towns and existing trails joining Augusta to Brunswick.

Some recent efforts to encourage rail on unused corridors have been unsuccessful. For example, in 2008 train tracks went back down on segments of the Mountain Division Line, but no trains have ever been used on those tracks. The reinstallation of tracks appears to be a poor use of taxpayer dollars, and it shut down an important active transportation connection between Sebago Lake and Westbrook.

In the absence of any interest from a rail operator to bring back rail service within five years, the BCM does not support the continued upkeep of rail on unused corridors that have incredible value as active transportation routes.

Under Maine's State Railroad Preservation Act (Title 23, Chapter 615 §7107), all conversions of state owned rail corridors into trails are considered "interim," and "the rail corridor[s] will be preserved for future rail use." State law makes it clear that creating a trail on any state-owned corridor is temporary until such time as the corridor is needed for rail use.

Among all the options available, with an aggregate surface, the conversion of rail corridors to interim trail use is generally the least expensive option available to the state with enormous public health and active transportation benefits. It may even be possible to let the railroad ties stay down and simply cover them with a packable crushed gravel that permits rapid access for the reinstallation of tracks when rail operations become feasible again.

In addition, the creation of multi-use paths is a proven economic and tourism driver, as demonstrated by the Eastern Trail and Downeast Sunrise Trail

Given the clarity in state law, and in the absence of any evidence of momentum towards rail service resumption in a

five year window, the BCM believes that the interim conversion of rail corridors into trails for active transportation users is the best and highest-impact use of these public resources.

Rail with trail may appear to be a solution that allows for both uses, however economic feasibility studies repeatedly show this to be the most expensive option and therefore the least likely to be funded. In all likelihood, the high price tag would result in neither rail nor trail being built and the corridor left in limbo.

The State Active Transportation Plan includes cost estimates for rail corridor options that indicate similar costs for other lines. Rail with trail is so expensive to implement that we believe it would not happen in a reasonable timeframe, if at all.

For this reason, the BCM opposes most recommendations of rail with trail, as we see it as a false compromise that only preserves the current unused state of the corridors. Furthermore, the moment to consider rail with trail is when rail service is feasible to return, even if a trail has been in place for a decade. At that point, the community support for an expenditure that both preserves a valuable active transportation asset and restores a valuable rail asset may be more feasible. As a reminder, Maine law requires all conversions of state owned rail corridors into trails to be “interim,” and “the rail corridor[s] will be preserved for future rail use.” Therefore, converting to trail until rail becomes feasible would allow Maine to benefit from active transportation corridors that provide mobility, encourage tourism, and stimulate economic growth.

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If required, please respond as soon as possible.



**From:** [Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov](mailto:Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov)  
**To:** [Howard, Nathan](#)  
**Subject:** Lower Road Public Comments  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 25, 2023 9:37:53 PM

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The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Tuesday, 25-Apr-2023 20:12:12 EDT  
Name: Rylan Hynes  
Organization(if applicable):  
Phone: 207-939-6929  
Email: rylanhynes@gmail.com

Topic:

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Comments:

Hello! I'm a Hallowell resident who closely neighbors the old railroad (it's about 50 ft from our house), and I'd like to advocate for its use as a walking trail. I was very excited to hear about the Merrymeeting trail proposal, as I think that an enhanced walking trail connecting our communities would be an asset to the region. Where we live along the current Rail Trail and the existing railroad tracks is a very popular walking area, and I see many Hallowell residents using the old tracks daily as a means of access to the rest of the trail. It seems like common sense to increase access to the trail by making it even more pedestrian friendly by utilizing the train tracks in this way. The current rail trail diverges from the tracks at several key points, leading walkers and bikers into much more high-traffic areas in town, whereas the train tracks lead to a much more pleasant route that would most certainly be taken advantage of. Connecting it to other cities and towns in Maine like Brunswick, etc. via the Merrymeeting trail would be wonderful for those looking for an extended journey. My spouse and I have seen the impact trails like this have had on other communities around the country (like the High Line in New York and the 606 in Chicago) and can attest to the positive impacts these trails have had on their areas.

I am not in favor of the proposal to develop the tracks into a passenger rail service to Brunswick and Augusta. This seems like an impractical route that would serve few residents of these areas, and though I do support public transportation infrastructure in Maine, I think it would be more logical to explore opportunities to connect Augusta, Portland, and Bangor rather than Augusta to the Midcoast at this time. Perhaps other modes of transportation (like buses) would better suit the needs of the population and be lower cost to residents.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration, and we hope to see the Rail Trail continue to flourish as a connector of our communities!

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If required, please respond as soon as possible.

**From:** [Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov](mailto:Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov)  
**To:** [Howard, Nathan](#)  
**Subject:** Lower Road Public Comments  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 25, 2023 9:32:56 PM

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The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Tuesday, 25-Apr-2023 21:11:22 EDT  
Name: Ben Richmond  
Organization(if applicable):  
Phone: 2244064638  
Email: bendavidrichmond@gmail.com

Topic:

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Comments:

To Whom It May Concern

My name is Ben and last year my spouse and I bought our first home right here in Hallowell. We had dreamed of joining this community and fell in love with it a few years back when we were thinking of a place to settle down. Now that our dream has come true, we want to do all we can to help our little city of Hallowell thrive!

Our house is on about a third of an acre and is directly next to the railroad tracks. The thought of a train bustling through our backyard was not a prospect that thrilled us. However, the proposed idea of a walking/biking trail sounds wonderful.

I am originally from Chicago, and like New York with the High Line, Chicago has been repurposing defunct railroad lines with pedestrian walk/bike routes. This has totally revitalized the surrounding areas where these routes are. Additionally, commerce has grown, along with real estate value and general public and cultural health.

I strongly believe that expanding the current rail trail to go through the proposed section would have a similar affect on our community. The worst part of the rail trail is the stretch between the end of the path on the old Bridge side to the beginning of downtown. Creating a separate part of the trail would allow for a safer route for children, the elderly, and bicyclists, thereby attracting more people to the downtown area.

Thank you for considering my feedback on this matter. I hope that the counsel considers the positive aspects of this walking and biking trail and how helpful it would be to so many people.

Sincerely,  
Ben

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If required, please respond as soon as possible.

**From:** [Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov](mailto:Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov)  
**To:** [Howard, Nathan](#)  
**Subject:** Lower Road Public Comments  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 25, 2023 9:02:54 PM

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The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Tuesday, 25-Apr-2023 20:57:08 EDT  
Name: Ben Whatley  
Organization(if applicable):  
Phone: 2078440381  
Email: [btwhatley@gmail.com](mailto:btwhatley@gmail.com)

Topic:

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Comments:

I read the report on the transit study about Brunswick-Bangor rail, and I think it makes the Merrymeeting Trail look like the best option for the Lower Road. We operate a farmstand close to the rail line in Topsham and think that the trail will bring more customers to our farm, and provide great opportunities for people to get outside.

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If required, please respond as soon as possible.

**From:** [Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov](mailto:Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov)  
**To:** [Howard, Nathan](#)  
**Subject:** Lower Road Public Comments  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 25, 2023 7:37:53 PM

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The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Tuesday, 25-Apr-2023 19:35:36 EDT  
Name: Lynne Sanford  
Organization(if applicable):  
Phone:  
Email: [lyssanford@gmail.com](mailto:lyssanford@gmail.com)

Topic:

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Comments:

I am glad this committee is working on a trail for us in Bowdoinham. I am a walker and a member of two loosely formed walking groups here in town.

When we started a project to create sidewalks in town several years ago, there were many people who had all sorts of reasons why we should not do the sidewalks. However now that they are here, even the critics are walking on them along with lots of people in town. I am sure that when the trail comes to Bowdoinham, lots of people here will use it. People from out of town will be welcome to use it as well.

Please continue your work to create this trail for the people of Maine. Thank you. Lynne Sanford

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If required, please respond as soon as possible.



**From:** [Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov](mailto:Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov)  
**To:** [Howard, Nathan](#)  
**Subject:** Lower Road Public Comments  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 25, 2023 6:27:52 PM

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The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Tuesday, 25-Apr-2023 18:19:08 EDT  
Name: Joan Mitchell  
Organization(if applicable):  
Phone: 2077516972  
Email: foxden98@gmail.com

Topic:

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Comments:

The Merrymeeting Rail trail is very important for people to have access for trails to hike, bike or ride horseback. The private landowners are continuing to close their land , trails that have previously been available for these activities. As more woodlands and open land are turned into housing projects it reduces areas for hiking, riding bikes or horses. The rail trails would provide areas away from road traffic and encourage more physical exercise.

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If required, please respond as soon as possible.

**From:** [Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov](mailto:Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov)  
**To:** [Howard, Nathan](#)  
**Subject:** Lower Road Public Comments  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 25, 2023 2:37:48 PM

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The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Tuesday, 25-Apr-2023 14:30:51 EDT  
Name: Steve Eagles  
Organization(if applicable):  
Phone: 2077378023  
Email: seagles4@gmail.com

Topic:

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Comments:

I have lived in Richmond or Dresden the last 50 years and believe that a rail trail along Merrymeeting Bay has been my wish for many years. No freight has gone through town in many years and the excursion train was not successful. The roads either side of the Bay are narrow and heavily used. It would be a major attraction for riders from away which would bring tourist dollars into our little towns.

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If required, please respond as soon as possible.

**From:** [Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov](mailto:Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov)  
**To:** [Howard, Nathan](#)  
**Subject:** Lower Road Public Comments  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 25, 2023 1:47:45 PM

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The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Tuesday, 25-Apr-2023 13:38:20 EDT  
Name: Henry McCorkle  
Organization(if applicable):  
Phone:  
Email: [hlmccorkle@gmail.com](mailto:hlmccorkle@gmail.com)

Topic:

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Comments:

As a Maine resident I strongly support the construction of the Merrymeeting Trail. Constructing this trail will have a positive impact on the future health of Mainers from the Brunswick region to the Augusta region, and would provide a safe alternative for bikers, runners, and pedestrians in the region to recreate.

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If required, please respond as soon as possible.



**From:** [Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov](mailto:Communications.MaineDOT@maine.gov)  
**To:** [Howard, Nathan](#)  
**Subject:** Lower Road Public Comments  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 26, 2023 8:08:00 AM

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EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

The following message was submitted from your MaineDOT website contact form .

Date: Wednesday, 26-Apr-2023 07:32:01 EDT  
Name: Linda Sadoff  
Organization(if applicable):  
Phone: 2074410982  
Email: lindasadoff@gmail.com

Topic:

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Comments:

I reside in Hallowell, and use the Kennebec River Rail Trail regularly. I have observed the past three meetings of the Lower Rail Use Advisory Committee with mounting concern. (I am unable to observe the meeting on 5/26/23.) While I incline toward supporting initiatives where there has been a demonstration of favorable environmental and economic impacts, there has been no such data presented to the Advisory Council. I am aware of MaineDOT's recently released report , determining that passenger rail service to Bangor is not viable at this time. Unless there is a study which persuasively and unequivocally demonstrates the favorable environmental and economic impacts of the restoration of freight service, and such impacts outweigh the other considerable adverse effects of having freight trains plowing through residential communities, closely adjacent to our walking and biking trails, and through our environmentally vital meadows and forests and along our rivers and streams, the Advisory Committee should soundly reject any proposal for the restoration of freight service. In truth, as an observer, it has been staggering to learn that the Advisory Council members have been asked to consider that option, given the dearth of data on any favorable effects. While I will observe future meetings, and read any future draft reports and recommendations with interest, at the present time I urge the Advisory Council to unanimously reject the restoration of both freight and passenger service, in light of the harms they will cause, and the lack of data thus far on favorable effects.

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If required, please respond as soon as possible.