

2019 ACEC of Maine Engineering Excellence Awards

At the ACEC of Maine Fall Forum on October 25, 2019, HNTB was awarded an **Honor Award for Transportation Master Planning** for its Portland Area Mainline Needs Assessment Study.

The Maine Turnpike through Greater Portland is an essential component of the regional and statewide transportation system and provides safe and efficient mobility for regional through-traffic, as well as quick and convenient access to local businesses. The Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA) is responsible for maintaining and improving the Turnpike to meet revenue projections pledged for investors, while providing a safe and reliable travel experience to the public. To assist the MTA in future planning projects that will provide long-term safety and capacity, HNTB performed an existing and future needs assessment of this corridor from Exit 44 in Scarborough through Exit 53 in Falmouth. This study included the development and assessment of 19 alternatives to determine their effectiveness towards the study goal.

As part of this study, HNTB looked toward the future of transportation with regards to the fields of connected and automated technologies, as well as electric vehicles. Nationally recognized subject matter experts including local HNTB toll systems expert, Todd Pendleton, PE; HNTB's intelligent transportation systems (ITS) Practice Leader, Jim Barbaresso; and economist Charlie Colgan, PhD, were engaged to determine the effects of these developing technologies on future capacity needs, potential safety improvements, and increased air quality.

Ultimately, recommendations developed provided guidance towards a phased approach to increase capacity on the Turnpike while promoting travel demand management and transportation system management improvements that would reduce trips on the road, helping to increase the life-span of these improvements.



L-R: Ariel Greenlaw, HNTB; Carolyn Bird, ACEC-ME President

Due to the regional significance of this corridor, diverse public participation was a critical element of this assessment. A Public Advisory Committee (PAC) was put together containing members from regional municipalities; municipal planning organizations and transit leaders; Maine Department of Transportation; Bicycle Coalition of Maine; emergency services; and government and environmental agencies.

"HNTB did an excellent job guiding both the PAC and Turnpike staff throughout the study process," said Erin Courtney, MTA Public Outreach and Marketing Manager. "When PAC members asked for additional alternatives to be evaluated, HNTB staff was responsive and delivered results given limited turnaround time. Without their thorough examination of the alternatives and ability to present technical information in a clear, straight-forward manner, the outcome may have been different."

In July 2018, the MTA Board voted to approve the recommendations provided in the PAM Study, and HNTB immediately began preliminary design of the widening. Construction is anticipated to be complete for the first phase in 2022, and will include 11 construction contracts for an estimated cost of \$146 million. The PAM Study successfully identified the appropriate alternatives to address growing safety and congestion issues, while identifying opportunities to enhance local and regional transit through partnerships established during the study process.

HNTB is an infrastructure solutions firm with more than 4,100 employees serving public and private owners and contractors, delivering a wide range of services including planning, design, program, and construction management.