

## Town of Gorham

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April 3, 2025

**Testimony of Ephrem Paraschak, Thomas Poirier  
Town of Gorham  
Before the 132<sup>nd</sup> Legislature, Joint Standing Committee on Transportation**

**In Opposition to**

LD 1020

*An Act to Repeal the Laws Providing for the Construction of a Connector to Gorham and to Resell Land Taken Under Those Laws to Previous Property Owners*

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Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, House Chair, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, I, Ephrem Paraschak, Town Manager and Thomas Poirier, Director of Community Development are here in representation of The Town of Gorham. The Town of Gorham is in opposition to LD 1020.

Increased road capacity is needed now more than ever to better handle residential, commercial, and industrial growth west of Portland. There are no transportation options by themselves that will address traffic congestion as our region continues to expand. Town of Gorham residents have long requested traffic and congestion relief to enhance our village areas and protect our rural nature. Centrally located on major road networks west of Portland, Gorham bears the brunt of congestion in our village as well as the route 22 corridor. This congestion drastically reduces our economic viability as well as deterring the Town's efforts to institute smart growth principles. Gorham understands that any proposed new road capacity will have impacts and is fully supportive of the Maine Department of Transportation's efforts to review and update Gorham East West Corridor study data. This will help to ensure that any new improvements proposed for road capacity takes into account updated data as well as public input on the first proposal for an east west corridor. We ask that the committee vote ought not to pass on LD 1020 allowing more time for the issue to be studied while leaving as many options as possible on the table to address this regional issue.

Although we believe this legislation does not easily lend itself to being amended in any meaningful way, the Town would be willing to participate in any workshop session to hopefully allow for meaningful progress towards studying the road capacity aspect of this transportation issue.

2. **Water Resources:** The project could impact local water bodies through stormwater runoff, sedimentation, and potential contamination from construction activities.
3. **Wildlife and Habitat Disruption:** The development may encroach upon habitats, leading to displacement of local wildlife and potential disruption of ecosystems.
4. **Noise Pollution:** Construction and increased vehicular movement may lead to elevated noise levels affecting nearby residential and commercial areas.
5. **Land Use and Vegetation:** Clearing land for roadways may result in deforestation and loss of green spaces, affecting biodiversity.

### **Proposed Mitigation Strategies**

To address these environmental concerns, the following solutions have been proposed:

1. **Air Quality Control:** Implementing emission control measures on construction equipment, encouraging the use of electric or hybrid vehicles, and incorporating green infrastructure to absorb pollutants.
2. **Stormwater Management:** Using permeable pavement, retention ponds, and vegetated swales to manage runoff and prevent water contamination.
3. **Wildlife Conservation Measures:** Establishing wildlife corridors, using eco-friendly construction techniques, and conducting environmental assessments to minimize habitat disruption.
4. **Noise Reduction Strategies:** Installing noise barriers, scheduling construction during appropriate hours, and using low-noise construction equipment.
5. **Sustainable Land Use Practices:** Implementing reforestation programs, preserving existing green spaces, and integrating landscaping features that support biodiversity.

### **Integration with the Three Legs Approach of the Gorham East-West Corridor Study**

The project aligns with the three legs approach of the Gorham East-West Corridor Study, which focuses on transit, road capacity, and smart growth land use principles:

1. **Transit:** The East-West Connector can incorporate public transit enhancements such as bus lanes, park-and-ride facilities, and multimodal transportation options to reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and decrease emissions. According to the 2012 Gorham East-West Corridor Feasibility Study, expanding transit options, such as bus rapid transit and improved shuttle services, is critical for reducing traffic congestion along Routes 22 and 114.
2. **Road Capacity:** The project aims to alleviate congestion by improving road capacity through strategic infrastructure enhancements, such as expanding lanes, optimizing traffic signals, and implementing intelligent transportation systems to improve traffic flow. The study identified that daily traffic volumes on key corridors are expected to increase by over 40% by 2035 if no improvements are made, necessitating additional capacity.
3. **Smart Growth Land Use Principles:** The development will integrate land use planning strategies that promote mixed-use development, pedestrian-friendly environments, and sustainable urban growth patterns. The study emphasized that without coordinated smart growth strategies, uncontrolled suburban expansion would exacerbate congestion and environmental degradation. Zoning policies will encourage higher-density development near transit hubs, reducing urban sprawl and preserving natural areas.

### **Additional Considerations from the Gorham East-West Corridor Feasibility Study**