



Testimony of Zoe Miller, Executive Director of the Moving Maine Network in support of LD 1835

May 9, 2025

Good morning Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Zoe Miller. I am the Executive Director of the Moving Maine Network. We work to advance transportation access – especially for people who cannot drive or struggle to afford transportation.

We are proud to be a partner in bringing forward LD 1835. We appreciate Senator Bennett’s leadership on this issue and his efforts to help advance this bill.

The Moving Maine Network is involved in this issue and championing this bill because of the overwhelming number of stories we've heard from people who depend on MaineCare transportation.

While we acknowledge that MaineCare transportation is a lifeline for many people, when it doesn’t work, the stakes are high. According to the state’s own member surveys from 2020, only 50-60% of users are satisfied. And the avenues for addressing the problems are minimal. Which is why LD 1835 is needed.

Today, you will hear and read testimony from folks today who have firsthand experiences with the challenges faced by MaineCare Transportation users. They will talk about:

- Confusion and stress at the many steps needed to get approvals for the type of rides needed. This includes members with anxiety disorders repeatedly being told to use the bus and having to appeal since it’s not feasible. As well as pressure to use the “family and friends” option despite the reality that this doesn’t work for most people. (Only 27.5 percent of DHHS survey respondents indicated that there are family or friends available to help all the time).
- Bus passes mailed to MaineCare members that do not arrive until after the appointment
- Frequent last minute cancellations of rides



- Failing to successfully request rides because the automated phone system repeatedly hangs up on people with a speech impediment due to aphasia or new to speaking English

I'll close by sharing that Moving Maine Network has been paying attention to this issue since we formed in 2019 – around the same time that Maine DHHS launched an evaluation of its transportation programs. Moving Maine followed with great interest in 2021 when the state released its Maine DHHS Transportation Programs Evaluation report, developed by consultants from RLS and AECOM. What's most pertinent to this bill are two of the top recommendations:

- First, that the state implement a protocol to verify resolution of transportation-related complaints across all programs
- That the state make and monitor improvements in performance and cost effectiveness

We have not seen any information indicating whether and how these recommendations are moving forward. And we have asked.

Thus, we believe that legislative action is needed. LD 1835 will advance a more efficient, responsive, and equitable NEMT system in Maine.

Along with my testimony, I have given each of you a copy of Moving Maine's new report "Try to Imagine it's You: How Transportation Barriers are Hurting Maine and How We Move Forward." The report includes results from our 2024 statewide survey which concluded that two in five Maine adults are experiencing transportation insecurity, along with recommendations gleaned from our story collection campaign.

On behalf of our 900+ members, Moving Maine Network urges you to support LD1835.

Sincerely, Zoe Miller
Executive Director
Moving Maine Network



Try to Imagine it's

You

**HOW TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS ARE HURTING
MAINE AND HOW WE MOVE FORWARD**

APRIL 2025

A REPORT FROM THE

MOVINGMAINE
— NETWORK —
Improving transportation access for



About the Moving Maine Network:

The Moving Maine Network is a statewide coalition powered by individuals, organizations, and communities. We prioritize participation by people with lived expertise around transportation barriers. We offer a forum for learning, connection, and action that is open to everyone who cares about better transportation access for Maine.

About this Report:

This report was made possible by the Maine Health Access Foundation and a generous supporter. The document was written by Zoe Miller, MPH, Executive Director, Moving Maine Network. Photographs are courtesy of Tom Bell, Kathryn Violette, Zoe Miller, and the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center photo archive. Graphic Design is by Polychrome Collective. Transportation Security Index survey analysis was conducted by Abraham Dailey. This report is available online at movingmaine.org. To request translations, printed copies, or a large print version, please contact Moving Maine Network at info@movingmaine.org.

Unless otherwise noted, data is from the 2024 Moving Maine Network Transportation Security Index Survey. Other sources are noted below.

- Vehicle ownership: U.S. Census – American Community Survey 2023 5-year estimates
- Household income spent on transportation: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics
- Cost of vehicle ownership: AAA
- Travel distance to primary care: Maine Shared Health Needs Assessment

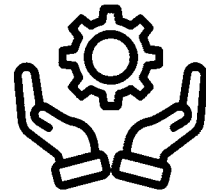
WE ADVANCE



QUALITY AFFORDABLE RIDES



SAFE STREETS & ROADS



ROBUST POLICIES & PRACTICES

WHAT WE DO

Moving Maine Network works to:

- 1 Increase the quality and availability of public and community transportation** - We work to connect people to all the places they need and want to go, using the services that work best for their geography and needs.
- 2 Ensure that traveling outside of a motor vehicle is safe and convenient** - We work to make Maine's streets and roads great places for people who are walking, wheeling, cycling, or using other mobility devices.
- 3 Advance policies and practices that improve mobility for the most people possible** - We center the unique needs of nondrivers in addressing affordability and accessibility at the local, regional, and state level.

INTRODUCTION



Transportation plays a central role in so many aspects of our lives. Dependable rides and safe routes to walk and wheel make it possible to get to work, see a doctor, pick up groceries and prescriptions, visit family and friends, and gather for community events.

However, many families and individuals in Maine lack safe, affordable, and reliable transportation. As a result, people are missing out on jobs and training, going without medical care and food, and missing social connections because they lack safe, affordable, and appropriate transportation.

In the past, data has not been available to tell us how many Mainers are experiencing transportation barriers and how it is impacting their health and quality of life. The difficulty measuring this problem has contributed to it being minimized and overlooked.

In 2024, the Moving Maine Network set out to address the gap in knowledge by collecting qualitative and quantitative data. Our goal is to educate decision-makers and the public about how transportation barriers are affecting Maine's economy and holding back prosperity.

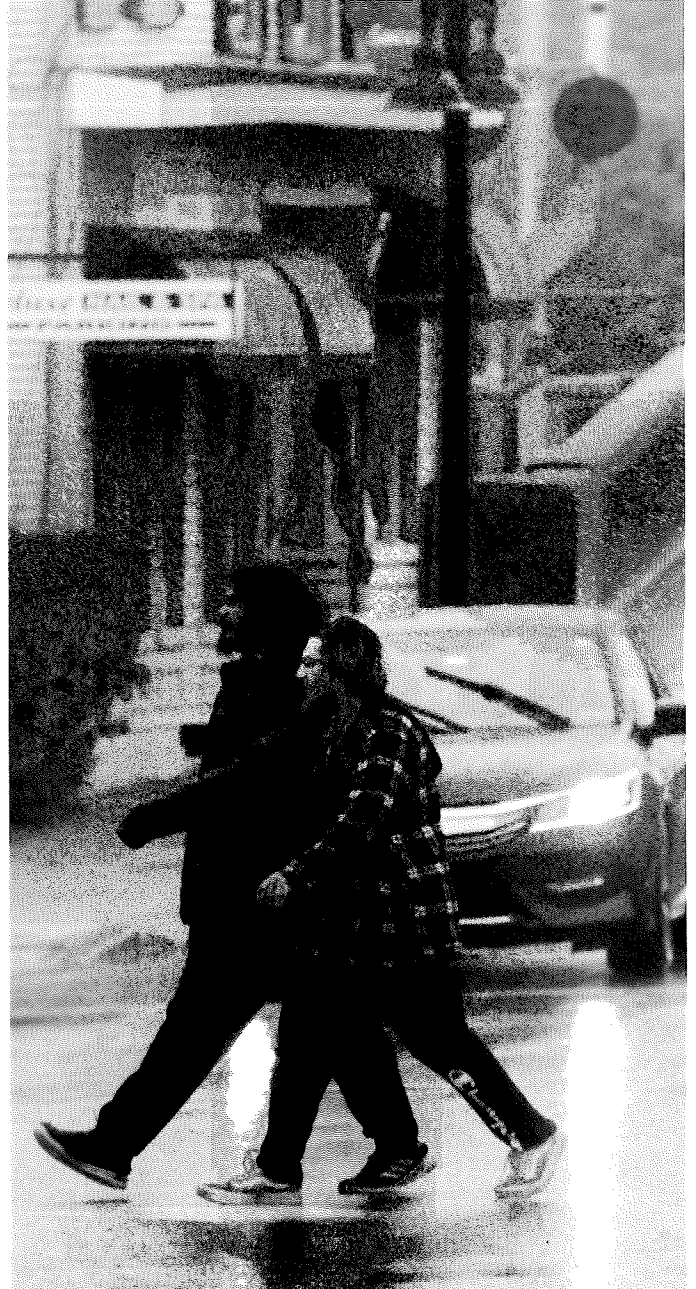
This report summarizes what we learned through fielding a statistically significant survey using the Transportation Security Index, conducting a data scan of national and state sources, and leading our story collection campaign. This is the first time ever that statewide data has been collected in Maine using the full Transportation Security Index.

What does it mean to be transportation insecure?

Transportation insecurity is defined as “the condition in which people face material, systemic, and relational issues that contribute to their inability to access needed services or destinations comfortably, conveniently, and affordably.” Symptoms of transportation insecurity include missing healthcare appointments or access to food; experiencing stress and uncertainty about how one will get places; taking a long time to plan out everyday trips; and limiting social outings because of not wanting to ask friends and family for additional rides.

ABOUT THE TRANSPORTATION SECURITY INDEX

Developed by researchers from the University of Michigan, the Transportation Security Index (TSI) is the first validated tool that offers insights into how transportation insecurity impacts quality of life. Modeled after the Food Security Index, the TSI is a 16-question survey composed of items that focus on the symptoms of transportation insecurity. These include taking a long time to plan out everyday trips and rescheduling appointments. The TSI offers insights into who experiences transportation insecurity and enables researchers and practitioners to determine both the causes and consequences of transportation insecurity as well as identify which interventions can improve this condition.



ADMINISTERING THE TRANSPORTATION SECURITY INDEX SURVEY IN MAINE

In Fall 2024, the Moving Maine Network worked with market research specialist Ipsos to field a survey of people across Maine. Our goal was to identify the prevalence of transportation insecurity in Maine and to reveal differences based on rural location, income, disability, age, and health status. We gathered nearly 700 responses. Ipsos uses the KnowledgePanel, the largest online panel that is representative of the adult US population. This means results can be applied to the general population of Maine.



**Who experiences
transportation insecurity?**

2 in **5**

adults in Maine experience
transportation insecurity



**MAINERS WHO EXPERIENCE
TRANSPORTATION INSECURITY ARE ...**

MORE LIKELY TO BE EXPERIENCING POVERTY



37%

of people experiencing
transportation insecurity
are living in poverty

MORE LIKELY TO BE BLACK

85%

of Black Mainers

experience transportation
insecurity

MORE LIKELY TO BE YOUNG ADULTS

89%

of adults ages 18-24
experience transportation
insecurity



**MORE LIKELY TO HAVE
A DISABILITY**

74%

of blind Mainers

63%

of Mainers with mobility disability

experience transportation insecurity

How Transportation Barriers are Hurting Maine

SOCIAL ISOLATION

MAINERS WHO EXPERIENCE TRANSPORTATION INSECURITY ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE STUCK AT HOME AND/OR TO FEEL LEFT OUT.

Because of a problem with transportation...

10%

often are not able to leave the house

12%

often feel stuck at home

40,000 Maine households lack a vehicle

This includes **8.5%** of older adult households

NEGATIVE HEALTH OUTCOMES

MAINERS WHO EXPERIENCE TRANSPORTATION INSECURITY ARE MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE POOR HEALTH

Among Mainers who experience transportation insecurity...

8%

often have to reschedule an appointment because of a problem with transportation

9%

experience poor health

20% of Mainers live in areas where they need to travel

30 miles or more to be seen by a primary care provider

LACK OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

MAINERS WHO EXPERIENCE TRANSPORTATION INSECURITY ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE UNEMPLOYED AND LESS LIKELY TO OWN A HOME

Among Mainers who experience transportation insecurity...

33%
are not working

50%
are renters

Across incomes, transportation spending accounts for a third or more of family budgets

MAINE HOUSEHOLDS WITH 2 PARENTS AND 2 CHILDREN SPENT AN AVERAGE OF

28%

OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME ON TRANSPORTATION

IN MAINE'S MOST RURAL COUNTIES, AVERAGE SPENDING IS EVEN HIGHER:

33%

AND

36%

IN WASHINGTON

IN PISCATAQUIS

COST OF VEHICLE OWNERSHIP...

\$12,297

PER YEAR AVERAGE COST OF OWNERSHIP IN 2024

30%

INCREASE FROM 2020 (\$9,561)

STORIES

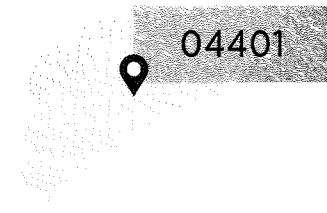
In July 2024, MMN began collecting stories from people across Maine. We invited people to submit stories through our website, by email, text, and during virtual forums hosted in October 2024. We asked people: **“Do you have a story about how transportation challenges are affecting your life?”** This could be feeling unsafe wheeling or walking, struggling to get rides or car repairs, or facing problems with the transportation services they use. We collected over 200 stories. The following are a sampling of stories from across the state.



Without any access to a car nor public transportation connecting Norway, ME with the rest of the county, state, country, and the world, I feel like my life quality is diminished, especially in the winter where I have almost no way of going anywhere. If I need to go to the doctor, I rely on someone else that can give me a ride. **We need public transportation in Oxford County, urgently!**



I am an elderly man who relies on my daughter in law who is struggling with scheduling work and my appointments. I am almost blind and deaf with no cell. I have had Lynx show up many times but **since I am almost blind I didn't know they were there and lost my ride.**





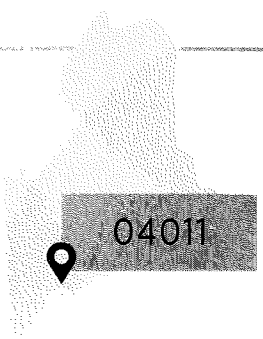
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We are lucky enough to be close to our kids school, but the only road to the school is super narrow with a sidewalk *right* next to the road, with bus and car traffic inches away going both directions. **I would love to be able to bike with the kids or take a scooter down, but it just doesn't feel safe.**

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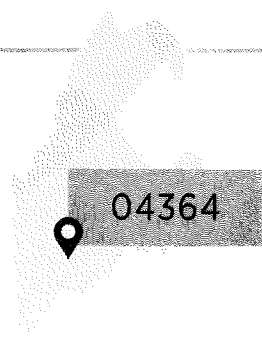
I am a visually impaired individual who uses a white cane. I live in an area where access to transportation is extremely limited and that which is available is very costly to individuals living on disability. The lack of available and affordable transportation for individuals such as myself is disheartening. It makes getting to appointments, seeking medical attention when needed, being social, getting basic needs or wants met, or work opportunities extremely difficult. **The impact goes beyond the immediate need individuals are trying to achieve;** it affects autonomy, creates anxiety, stress, and depression.

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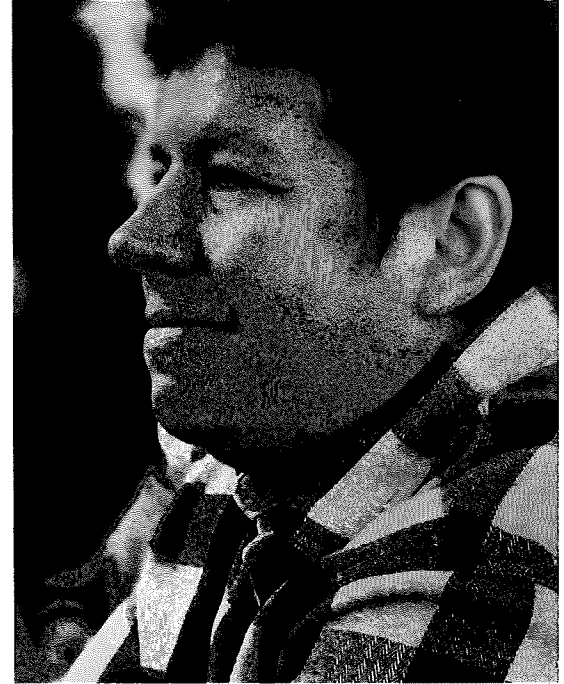
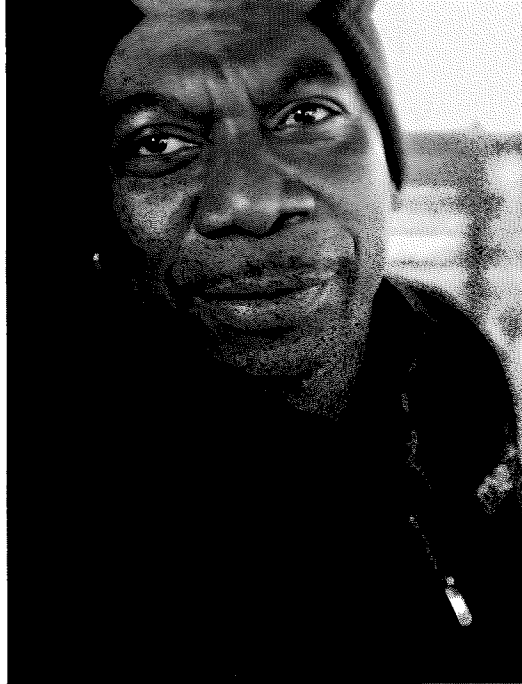
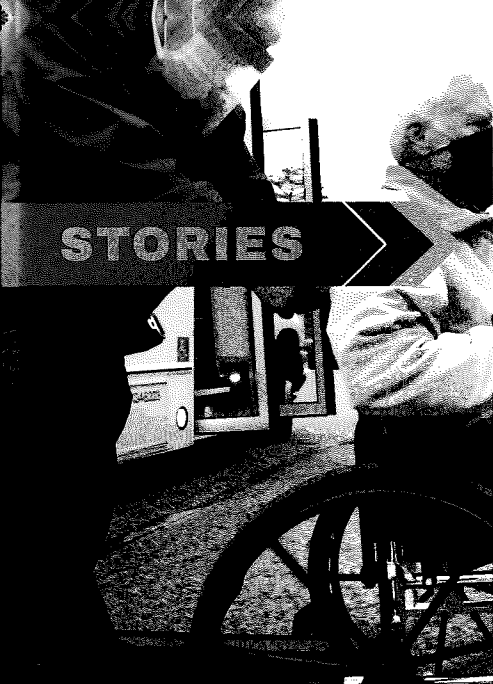


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I realized soon after [my father] was diagnosed with cancer that **my mom was transporting him to doctors appointments and it was about 55 miles each way** from their house to Presque Isle. She had to take time off and then to travel as far as they did in the winter time, they would have to leave early because the roads were horrible. So I began to realize that when somebody has cancer it's not just impacting them it's their entire family and friends. They're all impacted in the sense that we need to stick together.



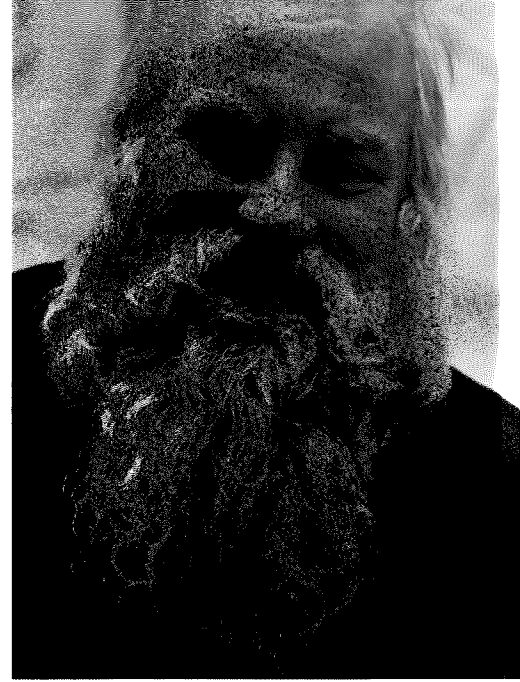
There are no public transportation options in the area. Many of our [Massabesic Adult and Community Education] students are trying to get their high school equivalency in order to get a better job and become more financially stable, and many do not currently have their own transportation. **I am looking for ways to combat this barrier to education.**



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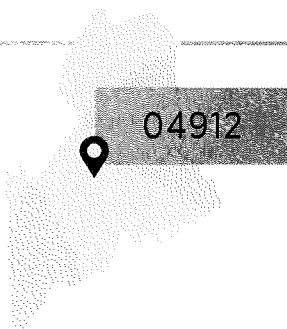
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I live in rural Somerset county. **Our transportation options are either too expensive or nonexistent.** I currently have a 14-year-old car and the cost of repairs are very hard for me. It's starting to become impossible for me to keep a car on the road and that's deeply concerning.

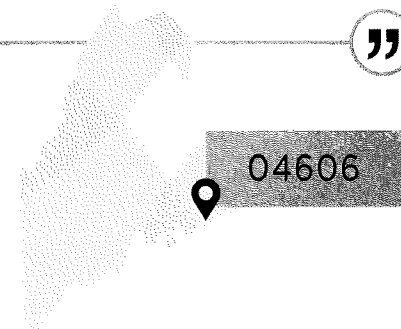
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As a young, university student I rely on my mother's support for transportation. I use her car to get to work, to socialize, and to get basic necessities. It is ridiculous that if I did not have her support, I would need to come up with at least \$6,000 just to get a vehicle to get to work or school. How can rural youth build any type of wealth or savings without some kind of generational wealth or going into debt? **This is indicative to me that the car-centric infrastructure is yet another mechanism of our environment that keeps the poor, poor.**

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CONCLUSION

How We Advance Transportation Access in Maine.

In 2024, the Moving Maine Network listened to more than 600 Mainers through virtual forums, our in-person summit, and stories submitted to our website and by email. We analyzed what we heard into the themes and recommendations below. These will guide our work in the years ahead.

Easily Accessible Mobility Information & Support

Information about transportation services and supports (including financial) is not readily available and apparent, let alone interconnected. People want it to be easier and more streamlined to access information on the services and supports that are available and many people want to connect with a human being who can listen and guide them.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ▶ *A streamlined and user-friendly trip planner and information portal developed using universal design principles*
- ▶ *Increased availability of Mobility Navigators across the state*

Ongoing Support for Community-Based Solutions

Community-based solutions – like mutual aid and volunteer drivers – are playing a critical role and yet lack adequate funding and capacity. Maine's community organizations are best positioned to solve community problems. They just need more support to sustain and grow.

RECOMMENDATION:

- ▶ *Mobility Management programs to help strengthen efficiency, accessibility, and sustainability of transportation in regions across the state*

A Real Voice in Transportation Decisions

People who use transportation services have experience and expertise that is often not being factored into planning and decision-making. Many people feel confused about where and how to provide feedback and complaints - and frustrated at a sense that input doesn't matter.

RECOMMENDATION:

- ▶ *Transparent and inclusive transportation decision-making*

Cross-Sector Coordination

Transportation is not well integrated or coordinated with other sectors - like housing, health care, and workforce development. People are frustrated by having to interface with many different providers and agencies to get and pay for rides for different purposes. The ability to "braid" transportation funding from private, state, and federal sources results in more options overall and leads to a more efficient and cost-effective system.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ▶ *Greater access to mobility navigation supports for people across the state*
- ▶ *Stronger coordination between organizations that fund transportation - especially at the state level*

Safer Walking & Wheeling

When it comes to walking and wheeling, safety is the top concern and a major deterrent barrier to walking and wheeling. Too many streets and roads lack accessible and user-friendly facilities for people to travel outside of motor vehicles.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ▶ *A larger investment in safe and complete streets for Maine*
- ▶ *Advancing ADA accessible infrastructure across the state*

More and Better Public and Community Transportation

Throughout rural, suburban, and urban parts of the state, people who cannot drive or struggle to afford a personal vehicle are desperate for rides. Better quality medical rides are especially a concern for people who depend on MaineCare (Medicaid) transportation services. There are also many Mainers who are ineligible for MaineCare and lack affordable - or any - transportation options.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ▶ *A larger investment in public and community transportation for Maine*
- ▶ *Improved quality and accountability for MaineCare Transportation*

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- NETWORK -
Improving transportation access for all

