

On behalf of the Yarmouth Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, I am writing to urge to the Committee to support LD 511 which would enable an interim trail from Portland to Auburn.

An interim trail from Portland to Auburn through Yarmouth is a major priority for residents in our town and surrounding communities because it would support regional connectivity, reduce traffic, stimulate local economic development, help Maine achieve its climate goals, and promote healthy active transportation options.

It's critically important that the trail be authorized all the way to Auburn because it will provide a safe connection for youth and residents beyond the village who live in the Northern part of town. For example, a large group of elementary and middle school youth recently wrote to town officials asking for a safe route to bike and walk to school from neighborhoods that could be served by this trail.

This proposed pathway will encourage residents and visitors, of all ages and abilities, to commute, shop, recreate, and go to school by walking and/or riding a bike. Long-term planning for connectivity and active transportation reduces motorized traffic, road wear and tear, pollution, and congestion. Building the pathway will also reduce traffic along the Route 1 and 295 corridors, as well as local roads.

We also support LD 30 but would encourage you to amend it to authorize a trail all the way to Auburn for the reasons mentioned above. For the health of our communities, I encourage you to move swiftly to advance a bill to authorize an interim trail from Portland to Auburn so we can realize this important piece of transportation infrastructure for the region.