

Transportation

This chapter describes the transportation system and identifies deficiencies within the transportation facilities serving Brighton Plantation. It provides general recommendations for meeting the existing and future needs for those facilities. This chapter also addresses how Brighton Plantation can provide the most cost-effective transportation choices, while the Future Land Use Plan and Local Economy chapter address how the Plantation can manage development to make the best use of the system.

There is no major traffic generators located in Brighton Plantation (i.e. schools, major retailers, event venues, etc.) and there is no plan for any in the foreseeable future. Brighton Plantation has no planned or recently built subdivisions. There are no large impending residential developments that would disrupt traffic flow. Brighton Plantation has no sidewalks. The Plantation has one small village center, but otherwise there is little in Brighton Plantation to connect with sidewalks.

With such a low population and so few businesses, the town does not have high demand for public parking. The few public parking areas are concentrated around public recreation areas such as water access sites but are not being used over capacity. As such, Brighton Plantation does not place any sort of regulations on public parking.

Brighton Plantation residents have no access to public transportation such as buses, vans, or trains. With the overall trend in Brighton, Somerset County, and Maine being towards an aging population, the need for van services or ride shares for senior citizens to access necessary services may become necessary. The closest interstate bus service is in Waterville and the closest interstate train service is in Brunswick. The closest private airport is in Bingham and the closest public airport is located in Augusta. Citizens rely heavily on automotive vehicles for transportation.

Bicycling is not very popular in Brighton. There are no facilities dedicated to biking and there is not an urgent need for bike infrastructure. Snowmobiles are a common alternative form of transportation for residents in the winter and as a recreational activity as is ATVing. Snowmobile and ATV trails also bring visitors to Brighton Plantation from elsewhere. Use of public and private motor vehicle roadways by ATVs has become a problem not just in Brighton Plantation, but throughout the region, as ATV trails become more connected across the state.

Maine DOT Road Classification:

Roads in Maine are classified in two ways: Highway Functional Classification and State Highway System. The Highway Functional Classification is a federal classification that describes the functionality and geographical characteristics of the road based on federal guidelines, while the State Highway System identifies which entity (State or local) is responsible for maintenance and capital expenditure of that road.

Functional classification classifies roads by the role they serve in the overall

transportation network. The principal classifications are:

Arterials: These are the most important travel routes in the state. Arterial roads are designated for their capacity to carry large volumes of traffic efficiently between commercial or service centers. The DOT has restrictive access standards on arterial roads to preserve this mobility function. These highways generally carry a federal route number designation, such as U.S. 201 which is a Principal Arterial. Route 201A and Route 8 are Minor Arterials as they come out of Norridgewock.

Collectors: These are the roads that collect and distribute traffic from areas of lower population density onto arterials and service centers. Collectors are further divided into “major” and “minor,” depending on the proportions of federal, state, and local money available for maintenance and improvements. In Brighton Plantation, Route 151 south of the village center is classified as a major collector, but Route 151 north of the village is a minor collector as is Route 154.

Local Roads: These roads provide direct access to residential neighborhoods, local businesses, agricultural properties and timberland. Traffic volumes typically range from less than 100 to possibly 1,000 vehicles trips per day. Solon Road is a local road and Brighton Plantation’s busiest road as of the latest traffic counts from Maine DOT in 2021 when it saw an annual average daily traffic volume of 507. Roads not classified as arterials or collectors are considered local roads.

The State Highway System determines maintenance responsibility. The State Highway System is grouped into three categories:

State Highways: These roads form a system of connected routes throughout the state that primarily serve intra- and interstate traffic. The State Highway category generally corresponds with the federal ‘arterial’ classification. The a few exceptions, Maine DOT is responsible for year-round maintenance of state highways. In Brighton Plantation, Route 151 falls under the State Highway classification.

State Aid Highways: These roads connect local roads to the State Highway System and generally serve intra-county rather than intrastate traffic movement. The State Aid Highway category generally corresponds with the federal ‘collector’ classification. Except for compact areas, state aid roads are usually maintained by MDOT in the summer and by municipalities in the winter. Route 151 is classified as a State Aid Highway.

Town Ways: These roads are all other roads not included in the State Highway or State Aid Highway classifications that are maintained by municipalities or counties. These roads are classified as federal ‘local’ roads. Solon Road is

a town way.

Maintenance and improvement projects done by MDOT are programmed into the state budget through a Biennial Transportation Improvement Program (BTIP). This program outlines transportation projects (including non-road projects) that have been funded with a combination of federal and state funds.

Brighton Plantation’s Highway System:

Maine State Route 151: The principal highway through Brighton Plantation, Route 151 is a state highway that travels from U.S. Route 2 in Palmyra. It intersects State Route 154 in Brighton Plantation center and continues north before ending at an intersection with State Route 16 in Mayfield Corner. It is classified as a “major collector.” Light capitol paving was completed on 151 through Brighton Plantation in September 2024 and the road is in good condition.

Maine State 154: Another principal route through the Plantation, Route 154 begins at Brighton Plantation center at the junction with Route 151 and ends in Ripley. It is classified as a “minor collector.” Light capitol paving was completed on 154 through Brighton Plantation in September 2024 and the road is in good condition.

Traffic Volumes:

The volume of traffic is a measure of the intensity of road use and the potential for traffic delays, congestion, or unsafe conditions. Economic developers also use traffic volumes to determine potential customer base. Historic traffic count data, measured in Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT), equivalent to vehicles per day, is compiled by MDOT for state roads in several locations throughout Brighton Plantation.

TABLE 1: AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRAFFIC COUNT

Location	2018	2021
IR 334 (SOLON RD) W/O SR 151 @ BR# 5194	-	60
SR 151 (MAYFIELD RD) N/O SR 154 (MAIN)	250	370
SR 151 (MAYFIELD) S/O SR 154 @ BR# 5826	320	510
SR 151 @ MAYFIELD TWP TL	-	330
SR 151 S/O IR 334 (SOLON RD)	-	570
SR 154 (MAIN ST) @ WELLINGTON TL	-	80
SR 154 (MAIN) SE/O IR 1055 (MCCROSS LN)	90	150

Source: Maine DOT Traffic Volume annual report, 2023

KEY FOR TABLE 1:

SW/O= southwest on
SE/O= southeast on
S/O= south on
NW/O= northwest on

NE/O= northeast on
N/O= north on
W/O= west on
E/O= east on

SR= state route
IR= inventory road
EB= eastbound
WB= westbound

The data provided in the DOT's 2023 report only included data for Brighton Plantation from 2021 and some data for certain locations from 2018. While the daily traffic volume is increasing, none of these roads are in danger of exceeding their capacity. But more traffic means more wear and tear and conflicts for road users.

Traffic Safety:

A critical element in management of the transportation system is the safe movement of traffic. Records are kept of vehicle accidents and areas along the highway system which are marked as High Crash Locations (HCL). MDOT defines an HCL as a roadway intersection or segment which experiences eight or more accidents in a 3-year period and has a Critical Rate Factor (CRF) more than 1.00. The CRF is a measure of the actual number of accidents compared to the theoretical accident experience that would normally be expected in that situation.

Brighton Plantation has no HCLs. Between the years of 2020 and 2023, Brighton Plantation has had nine motor vehicle accidents in total. The two most common causes of accidents were "went off road" (five crashes caused by this) and "deer" (caused three). Time of day, weather, and time of year did not seem to play a factor. All of Brighton Plantation's roadways are rural with little to no street lighting, surrounded by forest making wildlife a dangerous challenge for motorists who are either distracted or impaired.

Support Infrastructure for the Road System:

To function efficiently, the highway system needs certain additional elements of infrastructure. These include bridges, traffic controls (signals, directional controls), and parking.

Bridges: Brighton Plantation's road system out of necessity includes a large number of stream crossings. Many of these are small culverts, which are the responsibility of the town to maintain. Culverts are cleaned and inspected regularly and replaced as necessary. There are also a number of bridges. Bridges are usually the responsibility of the state, although when they are replaced on local roads, a portion of the costs must be contributed by the town. A summary of the DOT bridge inventory follows:

Local Name	Bridge ID #	Location	Year Built	Length (ft)	Major Deficiencies	Federal Sufficiency Rating
Clough	5124	Main St	1929	10'	Yes	60.8
Corson	5194	Solon Rd	1948	10'	No	77.4
Brighton	5826	Brighton Rd	1975	16.3'	No	86.3

Source: MDOT

The Federal Sufficiency Rating is required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and is determined through a formula involving load rating in conjunction with other bridge inventory and inspection information. Each span receives a Federal Sufficiency Rating – based out of 100 points this numerical score that indicates the health based off four categories:

1. Structural Adequacy and safety
2. Serviceability and Functional Obsolescence
3. Essentiality for Public Use
4. Special Reductions.

Regulation for Development and Traffic Growth

The Maine DOT has established a set of regulations for new development impacting state highways. Traffic Movement Permits are required for major developments, such as shopping centers or large subdivisions (though this is unlikely to happen in Brighton Plantation in the foreseeable future). For all other developments on state highways, driveway access permits are required. Permitting rules contain different standards based on road classification. Route 151 has the tightest access rules; the remaining roads have relatively moderate rules. All the rules have some standards for sight distance, driveway width, spacing, safety, and drainage.

Development also increases the number of driveways and intersections, contributing to traffic conflicts and safety concerns. Brighton Plantation has standards for the location of the construction and maintenance of new roads, culverts and bridges, and minimal parking review. Brighton Plantation is also planning on revising and updating their land use ordinance in 2025.

There are several other ways in which the town can further soften the impact of development on transportation. They include:

- i. Updating local road design and construction standards to reflect current best practices.
- ii. Offering different road design options based upon anticipated use and traffic volume.
- iii. Rear lot access options to reduce road frontage development.
- iv. Proper design and location of major land use activities.
- v. Implementation of the ongoing road maintenance plan.

Financial Stability

The majority of money Brighton Plantation budgets for road maintenance is spent on plowing. Brighton Plantation budgeted \$91,000 in 2023 for winter road maintenance and maintained a separate line item for plowing Kingsbury Road for \$1,500. In 2023, Brighton Plantation budgeted \$15,000 for summer road maintenance. Brighton Plantation also maintains an account of approximately \$80,000 for general road maintenance. In 2023, \$12,000 was expended from this account.

Checklist question: What is the community's current and approximate future budget for road maintenance and improvement?

Regional and Statewide Trends

State and regional transportation plans have limited direct impact on Brighton Plantation due to its small population, rural character, and limited road network. However, Brighton is indirectly affected by regional trends, such as increased residential development in neighboring towns like Athens and Harmony, and broader infrastructure priorities set by Somerset County and the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT). Brighton's proximity to Route 154 and other collector roads means any future upgrades or changes in regional traffic flow could influence maintenance needs and safety concerns locally. While no major state-led transportation projects are currently planned within the plantation, continued awareness of regional transportation initiatives is important to ensure Brighton remains prepared for future development pressures or shifts in traffic patterns.

Scenic and Environmental Impacts

The varying effects of roads and transportation infrastructure on the natural environment are an important consideration for Brighton Plantation. While the existing road system has not caused significant negative impacts to wildlife or water quality, the Plantation remains attentive to potential erosion and runoff concerns. One area of note is near the Heart of Maine property, which experiences occasional flooding due to poor drainage. Although there are no known major drainage systems causing ongoing erosion, the Plantation follows Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) Best Management Practices for all ditching, culvert work, and earth-moving activities to minimize environmental harm. Road design, construction, and maintenance are overseen by the appointed Road Commissioner, who ensures that both public and private roads meet basic standards for safe travel, proper drainage, and minimal environmental disruption. The Plantation does not have formal written road policies but relies on field knowledge, MDOT guidance, and site-specific decision-making for road-related projects.

Trails

Brighton Plantation is home to a robust network of recreational trails, primarily catering to

snowmobiles and ATVs, which are a vital aspect of the local transportation and tourism infrastructure. The plantation is situated in an area renowned for its outdoor recreational activities, and the trails serve as essential routes for both residents and visitors seeking access to the surrounding natural landscapes. Unlike many urban areas that prioritize connections to activity centers such as parks or commercial hubs, the trail network in Brighton Plantation is primarily focused on linking various public and private roads, allowing seamless travel between neighboring municipalities and access to rural properties.

The extensive snowmobile and ATV trail system forms an integral part of the local transportation infrastructure, providing routes that enhance mobility and promote economic activity, especially in the winter months. These trails connect to key public roads and provide access to neighboring communities, facilitating cross-municipal travel. The design of the trail network takes into account the unique geography of the region, with trails winding through forests, across fields, along existing roadways, and through power line corridors. These trails are carefully maintained to ensure safety and usability throughout the year, especially during peak snowmobile and ATV seasons.

While Brighton Plantation lacks a centralized activity center or urban commercial nodes, the trail system remains an important means of linking users to essential services, recreational areas, and other municipalities. It is an attractive feature for tourists seeking outdoor experiences and for locals who use the trails for commuting or recreation. There is a focus on ensuring that these trails connect with larger regional networks, allowing for extended routes that span beyond the plantation's borders. In future planning, efforts may be made to further integrate these trails with surrounding areas, improving access to broader recreational opportunities, enhancing public safety, and supporting sustainable tourism.

The current and future development of trails will continue to be driven by community needs and opportunities for collaboration with adjacent municipalities, ensuring the continued integration of Brighton Plantation into the broader regional trail network. By maintaining and expanding these routes, the area can increase its appeal as a destination for outdoor recreation while maintaining its character as a rural and connected community.

Summary of Analysis:

The transportation system in Brighton Plantation is characterized by minimal infrastructure and low traffic demand, reflecting the plantation's small population and lack of major commercial or residential developments. The plantation does not have sidewalks, public transportation, or major traffic generators, with most residents relying on personal vehicles. Snowmobiles and ATVs are important alternative modes of transportation and play a key role in the local economy and recreational tourism.

The road network, which includes state highways and local roads, is generally in good condition, thanks to recent paving of key routes like Route 151. Traffic volumes are low,

with no immediate congestion concerns; however, increased traffic may lead to road wear and safety issues, especially related to wildlife. There is minimal public parking demand, concentrated around recreation areas, and no significant conflicts between road uses at present.

The extensive network of snowmobile and ATV trails is a critical element of the transportation system, connecting residents and visitors to neighboring municipalities and natural areas. These trails support both mobility and tourism, enhancing regional connectivity. Future planning should focus on maintaining and expanding these trails, improving road design standards, and integrating the town more fully into the regional transportation network. Additionally, addressing long-term maintenance funding will be essential to sustaining the transportation system as the community continues to evolve.