Transportation

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

As Bingham becomes more complex and interwoven with neighboring communities, the need for a quality transportation system becomes more and more critical. Businesses need transportation to move products and draw customers. Commuters need a way to get to their jobs out of town, and employers need a way to get out of town workers here. Families need transportation to schools, services, shopping, and recreation. And tourists and summer residents need a way to get to Bingham.

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 Route 201 which is a principal arterial.

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 Bingham, State Route 16 is classified as Minor Collector.

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. 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, MaineDOT is responsible for year-round maintenance of state highways. In Bingham, Route 201 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 16 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.

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.

Bingham's Highway System:

US Route 201: This is the principal corridor through Bingham and is also one the state's major highway corridors through this part of the state. It traverses about seven miles through Bingham and continues north to the Canadian border. This road carries large volumes of traffic mostly in the form of truck and tourist traffic. Route 201 connects the busier service centers of Madison and Skowhegan to the south. North of Bingham, Route 201 (Rt 201) continues to travel through the state and ends at the Canadian border.

For the most part, Route 201 is a high-speed highway with wide shoulders, except where it convenes with State Route 16 (SR 16) in the middle of Bingham and bisects the town through the village. This stretch of road through the village is known as Main Street and is quite congested. The speed of truck traffic on Main Street is a concern.

North of Bingham Village, Route 201 (Canada Road) received crack sealing in 2017 and ultra-thin bonded wearing course in 2022 to preserve the road's surface. Route 201 south of Bingham Village (Bingham Road) nearly all the way to Skowhegan received ultra-thin bonded wearing course in 2018 and crack sealing in 2017, both to preserve the roadway.

State Route 16: This road, extending approximately half a mile in Bingham, is another primary corridor through Bingham and sees high volumes of traffic, running parallel to Rt 201 on the opposite side of the Kennebec River. Route 16 enters Bingham via Moscow from the north, then follows Rt 201 through the downtown area (Main Street) and exits Bingham across the bridge into Concord Township.

The convergence of SR16 with Route 201 has long been known as a dangerous intersection due to the long steep grade from Moscow, ending at a stop sign at the Route 201 junction.

SR16 north of Bingham (Mayfield Road) received light capital paving for roadway preservation in 2017. South of Bingham, SR 16 (Bridge Street) received light capital paving for road preservation in 2016.

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 roads in several locations throughout Bingham.

TABLE 1: AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRAFFIC COUNT

Location	2014	2017	2018
GOODRICH RD @ BR# 1017		110	
GOODRICH RD E/O US 201 (MAIN ST)		200	
IR 308 (MAHONEY HILL RD) E/O US 201		60	
IR 308 (MAHONEY HILL) W/O IR 313 @BR#5254		10	
IR 313 1.8MI SE/O IR308(KAMYS LN@BR#1018		20	
MEADOW ST E/O SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST)	280		
MURRAY ST E/O SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST)	310	330	
NICHOLS HILL RD W/O US 201 @ BR# 5214			70
OLD CANADA RD SE/O US 201 @ BR# 2845			
OWENS ST E/O SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST)	460		
PREBLE ST W/O SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST)		330	
ROLLINS ST E/O SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST)	110		
SIDNEY ST E/O SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST)	160		
SR 16 (BRIDGE ST) W/O US 201 (MAIN ST)	1,040	820	
16XSR 16 NE/O AUSTIN DR	1,120		
SR 16 NE/O US 201 (JACKMAN RD)	1,140	1,120	1,000
SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST) N/O PREBLE ST		4,310	
SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST) N/O SR 16(BRIDGE)	5,370	4,790	
SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST) NE/O MEADOW ST	5,150	4,550	
SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST) S/O BATES	4,860	4,070	
SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST) S/O PREBLE ST		4,420	
SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST) SW/O RIVER ST	5,350		
US 201 (MAIN ST) S/O SR 16 (BRIDGE ST)	4,840	4,520	
US 201 (MAIN ST) SE/O GOODRICH RD	4,750	4,380	
US 201 N/O IR 1040 (OAK ST)	3,450		
US 201 N/O OLD CANADA RD @ MOSCOW TL	3,130	2,900	2,680
US 201 S/O IR 308 (MAHONEY HILL RD)	3,840	3,480	
US 201(JACKMAN RD) NW/O SR 16 @ BR# 2027 II	3,570	3,330	3,380

Source: Maine DOT Traffic Volume annual report, 2019

KEY FOR TABLE 1:

SW/O= southwest on	NE/O= northeast on	SR= state route
SE/O= southeast on	N/O= north on	IR= inventory road
S/O= south on	W/O= west on	EB= eastbound
NW/O= northwest on	E/O= east on	WB= westbound

Unfortunately, no 2019 annual traffic count data was available for Bingham. As expected, State Route 16 and Rt 201 carry the most traffic based on Table 1. This is not surprising, as they are connecting roads; however, it is surprising to see that the traffic volumes have not increased significantly. In many locations, traffic counts even decreased between 2014 and 2017. Since 2018 is the most recent data available for Bingham, it is not possible to evaluate more recent traffic counts.

Part of the declining traffic counts could be attributed to the stable or stagnant economic conditions from 2015 – 2018, combined with the aging and decreasing local populations. Economic conditions also affect the volume of materials shipped from numerous working forests in Bingham and further north. Tourism plays a part in increased or decreased traffic on Rt 201, as that is the main travel corridor from Canada.

While some of the traffic is a result of commuters those numbers are likely minimal compared with the amount from tourism and logging. Once updated Average Annual Traffic Count data is available, there will likely be a further decrease in traffic counts between 2020 and 2021 due to the impacts from Covid 19.

Maine DOT has permitting requirements for new driveway entrances onto all state roads, which includes both SR 16 and Rt 201, with extensive review of major development. This increases the cost of development to maintain the mobility of the road. Route 201 has been and continues to be the focus of Bingham's commercial development corridor.

Traffic on Main Street, where SR 16 and Rt 201 run together through Bingham Village, is a concern due to the high volume of truck traffic, speed, congestion in that area, and pedestrians. That part of the street is characterized by many driveways, on-street parking, and pedestrian crossings.

Bingham has a Parking Ordinance, enacted in 1968, that restricts parking in certain areas to prevent unsafe conditions caused by parking on the side of the road in and around the village area. The Parking Ordinance needs to be reviewed and updated to ensure it is viable and meets the purposes for which it was intended. Aside from this ordinance, Bingham does not have any other local access management or traffic permitting measures in place.

Most of Bingham's year-round residential development has been in the village area over the years. The rural area has experienced some development; however, nearly all of it has been for seasonal uses. The transportation system is not stressed by this development for seasonal uses in rural areas. The town should be mindful if year-round residential development increases in the rural areas, as this type of development does

not result in efficient use of the road system, requiring a larger percentage of road budget per capita for maintenance and overstressing the back roads which were not designed for heavy use.

Traffic Controls:

Despite having a major highway and a busy downtown area, Bingham has not yet been overwhelmed with traffic controls. In fact, Bingham's only traffic control measures are numerous crosswalks in the village area.

Due to the hilly nature of the town's topography, in previous years, there were discussions about a runaway truck ramp on SR 16; however, this never came to fruition, likely due to the cost involved in implementation.

The speed of traffic, especially trucks, on Main Street is the primary traffic concern in Bingham. The only viable way to address this is better enforcement of speed limits, which requires additional law enforcement in the area. In an attempt to counteract the speed of trucks, the town had MDOT lower the speed limit in the southern part of town for safety purposes. While strict enforcement of speed limits is effective, it is also expensive. Assigning a police officer to work full-time in the downtown would be beneficial; however, one full-time officer may not have enough impact on traffic speeds.

Bingham is committed to using the standard, federally established traffic control practices and devices identified in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), as amended. Further consideration is being given to other forms of traffic control devices and traffic calming measures as speeds and volumes of traffic both increase.

Traffic Safety:

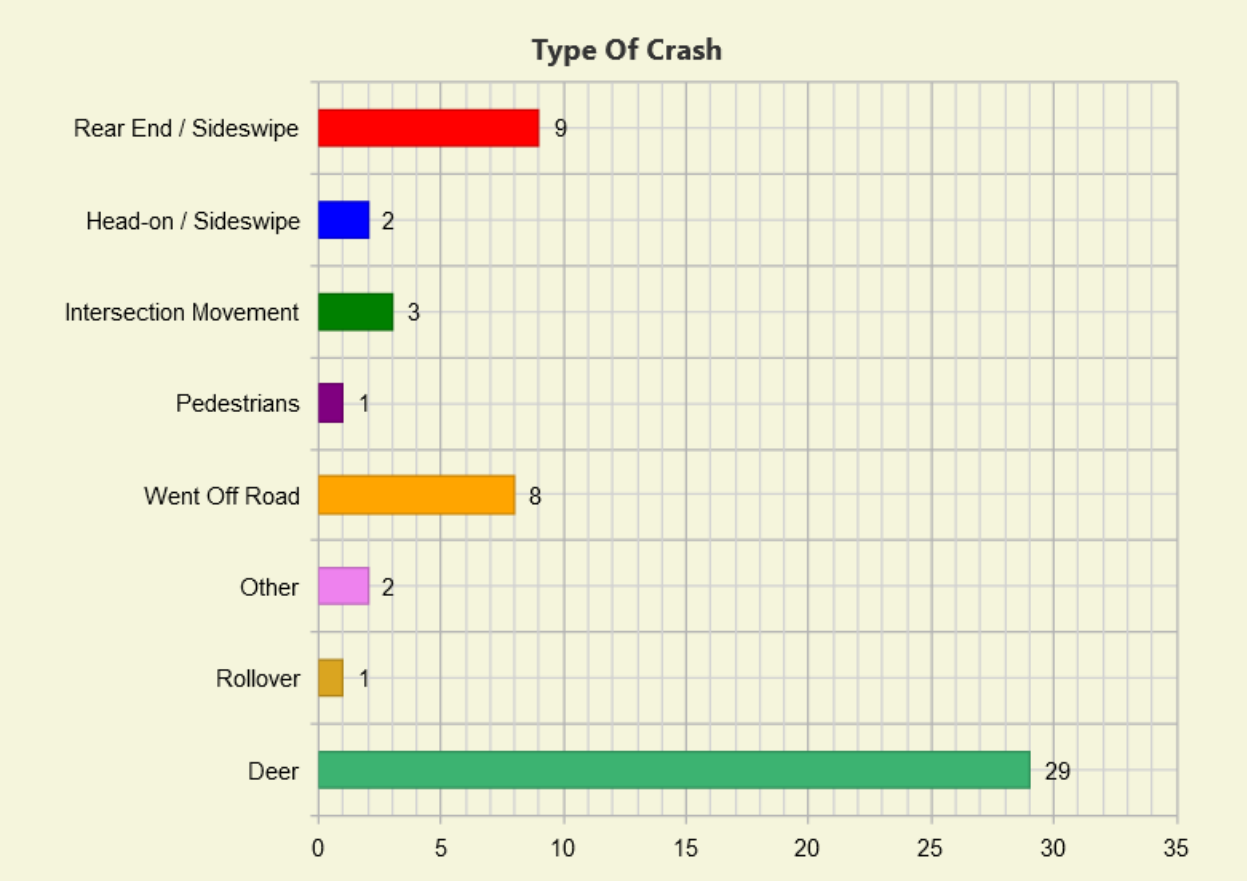
A critical element in management of the transportation system is the safe movement of traffic. Records are kept of vehicle accidents and areas along the highway system are marked as High Crash Locations (HCL). MDOT defines an HCL as a roadway intersection or segment, which experiences eight or more accidents in a 3-year period and has a Critical Rate Factor (CRF) of 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.

Meeting both criteria (eight or more crashes in a three-year period and a CRF of more than 1.00) on many rural roads in Bingham would be difficult – because of the lack of traffic, a high CRF may not be statistically valid. Many roads in Bingham do not produce a volume of traffic that meets the criteria for HCLs. But that means there may be some curves or intersections that are dangerous without being identified as an HCL.

According to MDOT's Maine Public Crash Query Tool, between 2020 and 2023, no High Crash Locations were documented in Bingham. Even between 2017 to 2020, there were no HCLs documented in Bingham, most likely because there is not enough traffic volume to meet the criteria.

That does not mean there were not any crashes at all, in fact between 2020 and 2023 there were 55 crashes. According to MDOT, the category of 'crashes' is rather broad and includes all types of crashes. By large, motor vehicle collisions with deer were the most common in Bingham, with 29 incidents in that three-year period. Figure 1 shows the counts for the other types of crashes documented.

FIGURE 1: CRASH TYPES BETWEEN 2020 AND 2023



Source: Maine Department of Transportation, Public Crash Query Tool

Even though MDOT does not have any High Crash Locations documented in Bingham, which does not mean there are no other potential traffic concerns. As noted in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, the dual role of Route 201 as Main Street and the principal travel corridor for the region has proven to be problematic. While this situation is not unique to Bingham, it is an issue, nonetheless.

Unavoidably, Main Street in Bingham is one of the most traveled corridors in the town, if not the most traveled corridor. This volume of traffic can be leveraged as an asset to bolster the local economy; however, the speed and sheer volume of traffic isolates the two sides of the street and present safety concerns for crossing.

There are other issues with the downtown area and Main Street in Bingham. One of them is that a high percentage of the traffic on Main Street is tractor trailers, which only furthers the perception that crossing the street is not safe. Another issue is that since most of the buildings along Main Street were built during a time when parking and traffic issues were not a consideration, off-street parking is limited. Most of the available parking is on the wide shoulder of Main Street, which leads to congestion. While Bingham does have a Parking Ordinance, it is outdated and needs review and revision to bring it to today's standards.

Several structural techniques could "calm" traffic in the downtown area, though they are less effective or appropriate in areas outside of the downtown. Shifting the curbing out into the roadway at pedestrian crossings is called a "neckdown" because drivers feel they must slow down to fit through a tighter space, even though the driving lanes are the same width. Pedestrians, meanwhile, feel safer with a shorter distance to cross the road. Stamped pavement (imitation cobblestones) and speed tables (not speed bumps) also ensure drivers slow down at pedestrian crossings. Street trees are another option that can make Main Street feel less like a highway. Although, with the amount of truck traffic, none of these may be viable options.

Traffic and Development:

The quality of the transportation system depends not only on its physical condition, but on the usage it receives. Town government is generally responsible for the infrastructure itself but has little control over how it is used. Traffic levels are a function of the location of trip points ("traffic generators"); traffic conflicts ("crashes") are often the unintended consequence of those locations.

Major traffic generators in Bingham, such as the Main Street area, and the schools, tax the capacity of roads. The impacts are different depending on the area, for example in the downtown area, high traffic locations result in congestion and slow travel whereas on Route 201, local traffic generators produce potential conflict points.

Bingham's major traffic generators include the schools, logging operations, and seasonal visitors. Other traffic generators can include the occasional events held at the former Quimby school and the durational traffic from Blu Roc Corridor employees.

In terms of road use, automobile traffic has the greater impact. Most trips originate in the residence and move to employment centers, schools, or shopping. The transportation impact of living in rural locations is that residents drive longer distances to get to their destinations, something entirely unavoidable in Bingham. Statistically, this would show up as increased use of roads leading into rural areas and stable or declining use of urban

roads. This is not readily apparent in Table 1- Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts, because the data has not been collected consistently.

Town Ways:

The Town of Bingham is responsible for maintaining slightly under 20 miles of town ways, the majority of which are paved and in the village area. The function and condition of these roads varies, from downtown side streets to narrow, rural roads. The town maintains a complete inventory of these roads. Significant roads are listed in Table 2, below.

TABLE 2: BINGHAM'S ROAD SYSTEM

Road Name	Condition	Priority	Paved/Gravel	Funding Source/Responsible Party
Austin Drive	Poor	L	Paved	
Baker Street	Good	L	Paved	Paved in 2020
Bates Street	Poor	M	Paved	
Bridge Street	Good	L	Paved	DOT- heavy maintenance
Brighton Road	Fair	M	Gravel/dirt	Needs ditching and gravel. Usually graded spring and fall.
Collins Street	Fair	L	Paved	
Dinsmore Street	Fair	L	Paved	
Dutton Road	Good	L	Gravel	Usually graded spring and fall.
Frank Savage Road	Fair	L	Gravel	Usually graded spring and fall.
Goodrich Road	Good	M	Paved	Damage in 2023, paved in 2018
High Street	Excellent	L	Paved	Paved in 2017
James Street	Good	L	Paved	Paved in 2017
Lane Road	Good	L	Paved/Gravel	Paved in 2016
Lander Avenue	Poor	M	Paved/gravel	NRBC Grant 2024
Mahoney Hill Road	fair	H	Paved/gravel	Needs some work. Some parts were done in 2018. Usually graded spring and fall. Work proposed for 2024.
Matheson Street	Fair	L	Paved	
Meadow Street	Good	M	Paved	Paved in 2021. Sidewalk redone in 2022.
Milford Avenue	Excellent	L	Paved	Paved in 2018
Murray Street	Good	M	Paved	
Nichols Hill Road	Fair	L	Paved	
Old Cananda Road*	Good	L	Paved	Bridge needs a patch on concrete
Old Church Street	Poor	L	Paved	
Owens Street	Good	L	Paved	Redone 2016 I believe
Pat Cassidy Road	Fair	L	Gravel	Usually graded spring and fall.
Preble Street	Fair	M	Paved	Need sewer work so will repave after sewer work completed
River Street	Good	L	Paved	Paved around 2019
Rollin Street	Good	L	Paved	TIF eligible?
Route 16 East	Excellent	H	Paved	DOT maintains
Sidney Street	Good	L	Paved	Refurbish sidewalks, not feasible
Tanglewood Drive				
Taylor Avenue	Good	L	Paved	Redone recently
Whitney Street	Fair	L	Paved	
Wing Street	Good	M	Paved/dirt	TIF eligible
Wood Pond Lane	Good	L	Paved	Redone within last 15 years

Source: Bingham Town Office
** Old Canada Road in this list is the old Old Canada Road, not Route 201.*

Priority Key for Table 2:
H= High Priority M= Medium Priority L= Low Priority

Bingham allocates $2,000 ($1,000 taxation and $1,000 TIF) a year towards sidewalk maintenance, sweeping, and weed control. The town has a capital fund for future sidewalk projects aside from maintenance. Bingham tracks necessary road maintenance by keeping a road maintenance sheet, updated annually, to track which roads need the most immediate attention. The 2024-2025 budget is made up of contributions from various sources, including:
$90,000 Tower
$85,000 TIF
$20,356 DOT URIP
$145,000 taxes

These contributions amount to a total of $340,256 for the 2023-2024 road maintenance budget. This budget covers all summer maintenance, maintenance on back roads, and winter road maintenance. The determination of which road will receive maintenance priority is based on which roads are in the worst condition, as well as available time and money.

The town relies less on policies and standards for the design, construction, and maintenance of public and private roads; instead, roads must meet state standards, or the town will not accept them as public roads. This ensures all roads adopted by the town meet the minimum qualifications.

Since Bingham is a rural town with no specified land use patterns aside from maintaining its rural nature, adopting and utilizing the state's minimum requirements for road standards aligns with the rural character of the town.

Bingham does not promote or restrict dead ends on recently built subdivision roads (either residential or commercial). So few subdivision have been created in Bingham in recent years that this is not a major concern for the town.

Support Infrastructure for the Road System:

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

Bridges: There are seven significant bridges in Bingham which are the responsibility of the Maine Department of Transportation (DOT), including the posting of bridges.

Culvert maintenance is contracted out, including ditching and culvert inspection. The box culvert bridge on Mahoney Hill Road is also maintained via the contractor.

Road Maintenance:

The town is responsible for maintaining all roads except for Routes 16 and 201. Road maintenance is done by a private contractor, on an as needed basis. The contractor is responsible for not just winter maintenance on roads, but also removing snow from sidewalks. While winter road maintenance is performed under the specified contract, typically the same contractor also performs summer road maintenance, though without a contract.

Due to the recent increased severity of storms, the town has determined that all the culverts need to be replaced. The culverts throughout town now are 18 inches, but that has proven insufficient to accommodate the stormwater in the last several storms. Bingham is currently working to replace and upsize all existing culverts or install box culverts. Due to the classification and severity of recent storms, Bingham has been working with FEMA on the culvert project.

Facilities and Services:

The Town of Bingham does not own a significant amount of road equipment. The town does now have a town garage and salt bin (it did not, in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan). The garage is used by the contractor who provides the road maintenance. Other equipment owned by Bingham includes a rock rake, and a 1-ton dump truck.

Bingham has plans to upgrade and expand the town garage to include a break room and the construction of a new sand shed.

Other Roads:

Other roads include over 100 privately owned roads throughout town. The most common of these are camp roads. Camp roads generally provide access to waterfront properties, or off-the-grid camps, and do not form a part of the public road network. Other privately owned roads in Bingham include roads inside of approved subdivisions that have not been offered to or accepted by the town. The Town of Bingham has no legal right or obligation to maintain private subdivision roads, including culvert replacement or snowplowing.

Transportation Choices:

Even with the overwhelming reliance on motor vehicles, there is still demand for alternative forms of transportation. Some segments of the population (notably youth and some elderly) cannot operate motor vehicles to get around. The increasing costs and environmental impacts of motor vehicles are reason to consider options for reduced their use, where feasible. While a shift in demand for transportation alternatives is not anticipated in the next 10 years, these alternative options require a significant amount of planning efforts both in funding and time, resulting in the need for consideration well in advance.

Bingham currently does not have any transit services for the community. KVCAP provides a taxi service on demand for those in need, but their availability is limited. The most common way residents who cannot drive get around is by the courtesy and generosity of their neighbors. Luckily, the residents of Bingham still have enough sense of community to provide transportation to elderly neighbors who may need a ride to go shopping or to the doctor's office.

The demand for this type of transportation is anticipated to increase due to the population of older residents and lack of other public transportation options. So far, aside from neighbors providing each other rides, there are no other anticipated ways this demand will be met.

Public Transportation:
Bingham does not have a large enough population density to support either rail or public transit services. Public transit, including bus and van services, are not available in Bingham. Bingham is not alone in lacking any viable public transportation options, particularly in the region in which it is located.

A variation on public transit is neighbors offering to provide rides for their neighbors in need, as detailed above.

Bicycling:
Bicycle travel in Bingham is mostly limited to on-street routes or cross-country trails. Because Bingham has a downtown area with schools, stores, and other attractions, there is plenty of demand for in-town cycling, but it has not materialized into projects. Preliminary discussions on developing and increasing bike-ability have taken place between Bingham and the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway, though nothing has come to fruition yet.

The town should consider identifying bicycle-friendly destination points and prioritize them for storage facilities. Any significant, new developments near the downtown should be required to provide convenient bicycle and pedestrian access.

Ideally, newly implemented bike routes would connect destinations of particular importance and interest throughout town and the bike corridors would be stand-alone, not just extensions of highway shoulders. Currently, Bingham does not have any stand-alone bike corridors. As bicycle touring is a growing component of tourism, consideration should be given to promoting bicycling throughout Bingham in the future.

Currently, local road design standards do not support bicycle or pedestrian transportation; however, in the last decade the town has taken significant efforts to set aside funding for sidewalk maintenance.

Sidewalks:
There is an extensive sidewalk system in Bingham Village and throughout the downtown area, which the town has taken great strides in maintaining and improving. Bingham has a capital fund designated for future sidewalk projects and designates approximately $2,000 a year for sidewalk maintenance alone ($1,000 through taxes and the Capital Fund, and $1,000 through the TIF distrcit).

The recently redone sidewalk by the high school extends all the way to the recreation field. Additionally, the sidewalks along Main Street were redone to improve walkability. Overall, the sidewalk system does a sufficient job of connecting points of interest, such as the high school, recreation field, residential neighborhoods along Main Street and all Main Street.

There are, however, parts of the downtown area that are lacking sidewalks. From Goodrich Road south along Rt 201 (Main Street), there are no sidewalks. This part of town includes apartments and Jimmy's Market, the local grocery store, both of which attract foot traffic. Due to the logging trucks traveling along this main corridor, walking on the shoulder of the road is dangerous.

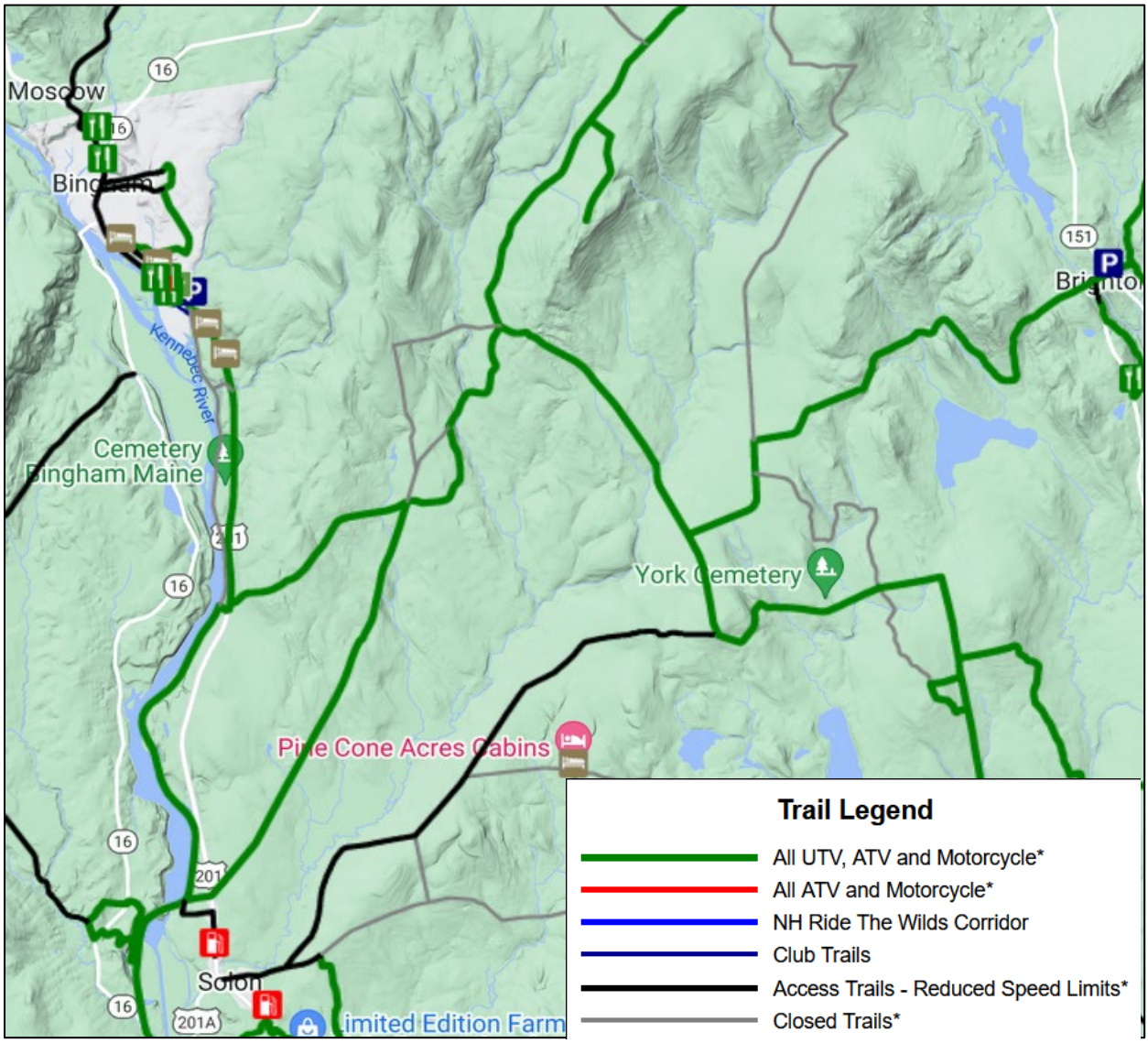
There are also numerous off-roads trails that cross-cross throughout Bingham. These trails are accessible via bike, foot, snowmobiles, and all-terrain vehicles and provide connections to many different points of interest, including neighborhoods, waterfront, schools, and more. Depending on ownership, these trails could be maintained in several ways. Though they are less conspicuous than the network of sidewalks, they are well-known amongst locals.

Airports:
Bingham is the site of the Gadabout Gaddis Airport, located just north of Bingham Village. This is a privately owned and operated airport, as such, it is not part of the state-sponsored airport network. It is used exclusively for recreational access; although Bingham has a longstanding agreement allowing the town use of the airport, as needed, in perpetuity.

The Town of Bingham has a good relationship with the owners of the airport and all needs of either party are communicated and accepted readily. Since the Gadabout Gaddis Airport is a private airstrip with public use, little coordination on behalf of the town is required. As such, Bingham does not have or need any airspace ordinances or airport zoning.

All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs):
Bingham hosts a robust seasonal population and attracts a plethora of tourists for the town's abundant outdoor recreational offerings during all four seasons, one of which is the extensive Interconnected Trail System (ITS) for all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). See Figure 2 below. In addition to these formal trails, there are numerous, lesser-known trails through town.

FIGURE 2: TRAIL MAP OF BINGHAM



Source: 201 Power Sports

While the town does not want to limit ATV access, concerns have been raised about road safety and lack of signage for sharing roads with ATVs. Signage to regulate ATV speed, direction of travel, flow of traffic, and other standard road safety signs would be beneficial to those traveling by car, truck, and ATV. In other towns where roads are shared with ATVs as frequently as they are in Bingham, signage is much more prevalent.

In addition to the need for more traffic signs for ATVs, there is an increasing need for traffic law enforcement for ATVs. Too often, tourists visiting the area while on vacation to access the trail system take for granted that they are sharing the road with cars and trucks. To prevent any type of catastrophic tragedy, there is a need for increased law enforcement presence to encourage people in cars, trucks, and ATVs to obey signage and traffic laws.

Parking:

While parking is traditionally provided by the entity responsible for generating the demand, downtown areas such as Bingham's were built before motor vehicles existed and have little space available for parking.

Parking has historically been inadequate in the village area resulting in on-street parking. The shoulder of Rt 201 is wide enough to accommodate on-street parking, although that was not the original intent or design of the wide shoulders. The 2000 Comprehensive Plan notes that it was estimated that there were approximately 120 parallel parking spaces along Route 201 in the village area and about 210 spaces would be needed to accommodate parking demand if all commercial buildings were occupied.

Bingham has a Parking Ordinance that regulates on-street parking, although the ordinance is out of date and needs an update. In addition to the Parking Ordinance, there is a parking ban along Rt 201 during snowstorms for snow removal purposes. Unfortunately, neither the Parking Ordinance nor the parking ban are adequately enforceable for several reasons. The Parking Ordinance does not include any enforcement action with which to leverage compliance, such as imposing penalties. If this ordinance is updated, clear consequences and repercussions should be included.

The parking ban is ineffective for much the same reasons; although the town has a plan to remediate these issues beginning in 2025. The issue is compounded by the town's inability to find a towing company to tow vehicles that were not removed during snowstorms to accommodate the plow truck because tow truck operators feared doing so would have negative connotations for their business. Ideally, language should be added to the existing Parking Ordinance that would include the parking ban during snowstorms. This language should detail specific enforcement actions such as setting a fine as a penalty for those who do not adhere to the specified parking requirements.

Aside from the Parking Ordinance and parking ban during snowstorms, there are no parking standards which would limit or discourage development in the downtown area.

Parking in the downtown area causes challenges in both the winter and summer for several reasons. Since the parking along Main Street is on-street, the town requires vehicles to be moved off the street for snow removal, but this mandate is often ignored making snow removal difficult or impossible. In the summer months, parking is even more limited due to the number of tourists visiting the area.

To remediate these parking issues, Bingham has made off-street parking available on several side roads and around the municipal office, but few people choose to use this off-street parking as it requires parking then walking to Main Street.

The town has worked to reduce the parking issues in the downtown area as much as possible. More parking has been made available along roads just off Main Street but not many people use these parking areas because they do not want to walk. There is little else the town can do to fix the parking issue.

Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway:

The Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway traverses 78 miles of Route 201, starting south of Bingham in the Town of Solon and running to the Canadian border. As such, Bingham is part of the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway. The Byway offers stunning scenic views, pull offs, informational kiosks, and historic markers.

Designated as a National Scenic Byway in 2000, the Old Canada Road is a prominent tourist attraction and as a town on the Byway, Bingham is perfectly situated to entice visitors traveling the route to shop at local businesses.

FIGURE 2: OLD CANADA ROAD NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY MAP

Bingham collaborates with the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway on projects such as developing and increasing bike paths and trails through town.

Summary of Analysis:

Bingham's two main travel corridors are Route 201 and State Route 16, both of which are maintained by the state. Both routes are in good condition as they travel through Bingham. Where SR 16 and Rt 201 converge through Bingham Village is called Main Street. In this location, there are issues with congestion, truck traffic, parking, and speeding which are exacerbated by on-street parking.

Traffic speed on Main Street is a concern, predominantly with truck traffic. The town worked with MDOT to lower the speed limit in the southern part of town, but without additional police enforcement, there is little that can be done to reduce traffic speed. Traffic control measures in this area consist of multiple crosswalks. The amount of truck traffic makes other traffic control measures impossible. Bingham should continue to collaborate with MDOT in exploring ways to slow truck traffic in this area.

Parking has long been an issue in the downtown area and while the town has taken measures to provide off-street parking on roads off Main Street, few people take advantage of them. Bingham has a Parking Ordinance; however, it is out of date and needs to be updated. The town also has a parking ban along Main Street during snowstorm for snow removal; however, few people obey this parking ban. Bingham should consider updating the existing Parking Ordinance to include the parking ban and adopt appropriate enforcement action to gain compliance.

Bingham budgets for road maintenance each year and maintains a running list of town roads, their condition, and upcoming needs. The roads in the worst condition receive priority maintenance, time and money permitting. Road maintenance is contracted on a yearly basis. An outside entity provides all road maintenance, including snow removal on a contract basis, culvert inspection and maintenance, and ditching in the spring and fall.

Sidewalk projects and maintenance have their own budget through a capital improvement fund. Maintenance for the network of sidewalks throughout town is provided under the sidewalk budget. Bingham's sidewalks provide adequate connectivity to multiple points of interest throughout town. There is a need for continued connectivity of sidewalks south of Goodrich Road. Apartments and Jimmy's Market result in foot traffic along Main Street, which can be dangerous due to the traffic volume, speed, and logging trucks.

There are a plethora of off-street trails available throughout town for walking or bicycling. Additional bike paths and trails will be created soon as part of a collaborative effort between Bingham and the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway.

Bingham's reputation for excellent outdoor recreation, specifically ATV trails, means that roads are often shared between cars, trucks, and ATVs. Better traffic signage and traffic enforcement is needed to reduce the chances of any accidents.