

Transportation

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

As Solon becomes more complex and interwoven with neighboring communities, the need for a quality transportation system becomes more critical. Businesses need transportation to move products and attract 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 here.

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. 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.

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 Solon, Route 201A from Embden is classified as a Major 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 Solon, Routes 201 and 201A fall 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 sometimes corresponds with the federal 'collector' classification. Apart from compact areas, state aid roads are usually maintained by MDOT in the summer and by municipalities in the winter. Solon does not have any roads classified as State Aid Highways.

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.

Solon's Highway System

U.S. Route 201: The principal highway through Solon, Route 201 is also one of the state's major highway corridors. It is roughly 157 miles and spans from Brunswick to the Canadian border in Sandy Bay Township. Route 201 runs parallel with the Kennebec River for most of its route and offers great views. Starting in Solon at Robbins Hill Scenic Overlook and continuing 78 miles to the Canadian Border, Route 201 is recognized as the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway, offering stunning views of Wyman Lake, forests and mountains.

The Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway follows a historic 78-mile travel corridor that has served as a transportation route for thousands of years. Indigenous peoples used the Dead, Moose, and Kennebec Rivers to travel between the St. Lawrence River and coastal Maine, and the corridor later became an important route for trade, settlement, and immigration. Massachusetts funded the original Canada Road to facilitate commerce with Quebec, while thousands of immigrants traveled the route in the late 1800s in search of economic opportunity.

FIGURE 1: OLD CANADA ROAD NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY MAP

Today, the Byway showcases the region's rich cultural and natural heritage through scenic overlooks, interpretive signage, historic markers, and recreational opportunities. The corridor highlights Maine's Native American history, logging traditions, early settlement patterns, Benedict Arnold's 1775 expedition to Quebec, and the rise of the state's timber and paper industries.

The Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway follows Route 201 from Solon north to the Canadian border (Figure 1). Designated a National Scenic Byway in 2000, it remains a significant tourism asset, attracting visitors interested in



outdoor recreation, history, and scenic travel. As a community located along the Byway, Solon is well positioned to benefit from visitor spending at local businesses.

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

One of the transportation concerns within Solon is that Route 201 serves as the town's primary transportation corridor and passes directly through the village center. While this provides visibility and accessibility for local businesses, the volume and speed of through traffic can create challenges for pedestrian safety and walkability.

This heavily used travel corridor through the middle of Solon presents several other issues. One noted concern is increasing amount of heavy truck traffic. This combined with the speed and traffic volume in general is a potential safety concern.

Another concern is vehicles that are slowing down in preparation for turning off Route 201, particularly the turn into the Robbins Hill Recreation Area. This is known to be an unsafe area for vehicles to turn due to the speed and volume of traffic. The Town of Solon has been involved with the Dot in several discussions about the creation of a turning lane in this area, but nothing has been done about this yet.

Town Ways/Local Roads

The Solon Public Works Department employees consist of an annually elected, working Road Commissioner and another individual as road crew. Both are full-time employees. In addition, seasonal employees are hired as needed to assist with street sweeping, plowing, maintenance, or for other tasks depending on weather.

Solon is in the process of building a new Town Garage on School Street to house public works equipment and provide an office for the Road Commissioner. The previous, old Town Garage on Brook Street was antiquated and needed many updates. The salt/sand pile will eventually be moved to the new location on School Street for easy access.

The expenses related to maintaining the roadway are second only to the cost of education in the amount of tax dollars expended annually. To offset that cost, Solon has a 10–12-year plan for road maintenance including repaving. This road maintenance plan has allowed the town to budget and plan for road maintenance. This road maintenance plan includes ditching as well as culvert repair and replacement. While the town plans and budgets for paving, they contract with a company to do the actual paving on local roads.

The town maintains 46 miles of town ways. The function and condition of these roads vary, from downtown side streets to narrow, rural roads. Failing culverts, flooding, and drainage are the most prominent transportation system concerns for town roads. The town maintains a complete inventory of these roads. Significant roads are listed in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: SOLON TOWN ROADS AND WAYS

Road Name	Status	Milage	Type	Notes
Berry Road	Town	0.20	Gravel	
Boardman Road	Town	1.20	Gravel	
Brighton Road	Town	2.41	Paved	
Brook Street	Town	0.20	Paved	
Brown Farm Road	Town	0.50	Gravel	
Cross Street	Town	0.17	Paved	
Drury Road	Town	1.72	Paved & Gravel	
Eaton Hill Road	Town	2.40	Gravel	
Falls Road	Town	0.47	Paved	
French Hill Road	Town	2.20	Paved	
Grant Road	Town	0.65	Paved	
Hole in the Wall Road	Town	4.20	Paved & Gravel	
McCarty Road	Town & Private	0.20	Gravel	
McQuilkin Road	Town	0.32	Gravel	
Meader Farm Road	Town	0.12	Gravel	
Meeting House Road	Town	1.40	Paved	
Padham Road	Town	0.59	Gravel	
Parkman Hill Road	Town	3.40	Gravel	
Pleasant Street	Town	0.60	Paved	
River Road	Town	3.40	Paved	Culvert at Michael Stream replaced with 18" metal culvert 1959
Rowell Mtn. Road	Town & Private	3.11	Gravel	Town road to Hilltop Lane then private; portion south of S Solon Rd was formerly known as Molunkus Rd
School Street	Town	0.23	Paved	
South Main	MDOT		Paved	
South Solon Road	Town	6.39	Paved	
West Road	Town	1.47	Gravel	A portion was formerly known as North Rd
York Street	Town	0.13	Paved	

Source: Solon Town Office

The town's primary traffic concerns occur at intersections with Route 201, where higher traffic volumes increase delays and safety concerns. The top three tricky intersections noted during this discussion were:

- South Solon Road and Boardman Road
- River Road and Route 201
- Pleasant Street, Ferry Street (Route 201A), and Route 201
-

In general, the transportation system concerns are typical of any small town in rural Maine- there are no major or unexpected problems.

Other/Private Roads

Due to the numerous camps throughout Solon, the town has an abundance of private roads, for which the town has no responsibility.

Traffic Volumes

Traffic volumes have generally increased over time. The region has experienced a notable rise in freight truck traffic, and many residents now commute an hour or more each way to work. While truck traffic can have a disproportionate impact on road wear, overall vehicle traffic accounts for most of the roadway use. Most trips originate from residential areas and are destined for employment centers, schools, shopping, and services. As development becomes more dispersed, residents often must travel greater distances to reach these destinations, contributing to increased traffic volumes and longer commute times.

Traffic volume is an important indicator of roadway use and can help identify the potential for congestion, delays, and safety concerns. It is also used by economic developers to assess market visibility and potential customer traffic. The Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) collects traffic data on state roads at several locations throughout Solon, reporting volumes as **Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)**, which represents the average number of vehicles traveling a roadway each day.

TABLE 2: AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRAFFIC COUNT

Location	2020	2021	2023
West Rd w/o US 201 (S Main St)			180
Hole in Wall e/o Parkman Hill Rd		140	97
Pleasant St e/o School St	680		690
Pleasant St e/o US 201 (S. Main)	520		520
French Hill e/o Brighton	310		300
River Rd s/o West Rd			400
River Rd sw/o US 201	530		530
River Rd (0.5 mile) n/o West Rd			530
Parkman Hill se/o Pleasant St	230		250
S Solon Rd se/o US 201 (S Main St)	230		250
Brighton Rd ne/o French Hill	220		250
Ferry St sw/o US 201 (S Main St)	2,150		2,320
US 201 (N Main St) n/o Cross St			4,590
US 201 (N Main St) nw/o Pleasant St			5,146
US 201 (N Main St) se/o Cross St	3,770		4,600
US 201 (S Main St) se/o Pleasant St			4,810
US 201 (S Main St) s/o S. Solon Rd	3,750		3,960
US 201 (S Main St) se/o School St	4,570		4,680

Source: Maine DOT Traffic Volume annual report, 2024

KEY FOR TABLE 2:

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

Table 2 Highlights:

- Due to significant gaps in the MDOT Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) data, it is difficult to identify reliable trends or draw meaningful conclusions.
- Based on the information provided, the volume of traffic increased in nearly every location between 2020 and 2024.

One of the most notable transportation trends in Solon is increased traffic on local roads, driven in part by residential growth in the town's rural areas. As has occurred throughout the region, more people have chosen to live in rural locations, increasing traffic on roads that were originally designed for lower volumes.

This growth has also led to changing expectations for road maintenance. Many newer residents are accustomed to more urban or suburban road standards and may expect gravel roads to be paved or maintained at a higher level than is practical given the town's financial resources and rural character.

Traffic Controls and Calming

Several design strategies can help calm traffic and improve pedestrian safety. For example, "neckdowns" extend curbing into the roadway at crosswalks, visually narrowing the road and encouraging drivers to slow down while reducing crossing distances for pedestrians. Street trees, landscaping, and other streetscape improvements can also make roadways feel less like highways and more like community spaces. Another strategy is painting crosswalks in high pedestrian traffic areas, which is something that would be beneficial and easily achievable in Solon. However, painting crosswalks is not as simple as it sounds. Since Rt 201 is a state road, anything related to crosswalks there would require state approval and the requirements and standards are numerous.

Speeding is a concern throughout Solon, affecting neighborhoods, major travel corridors, and rural roads alike. Despite the presence of a heavily traveled state highway, traffic controls remain limited, with only one blinking light at the intersection of Route 201, Pleasant Street, and Ferry Street.

While speed limit enforcement can be effective, it is also resource intensive. Dedicating a full-time police officer to traffic enforcement could help address speeding concerns, but enforcement alone may not be sufficient to significantly reduce speeds across the community, and it is prohibitively expensive for the community. Further, traffic enforcement, as with all law enforcement in Solon, is provided by the Somerset County Sheriff's department, which covers the entire county.

Traffic Safety

With the hub of most of Solon' traffic passing through the most built-up and busiest part of town, traffic safety is an important and legitimate concern.

Solon 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.

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.

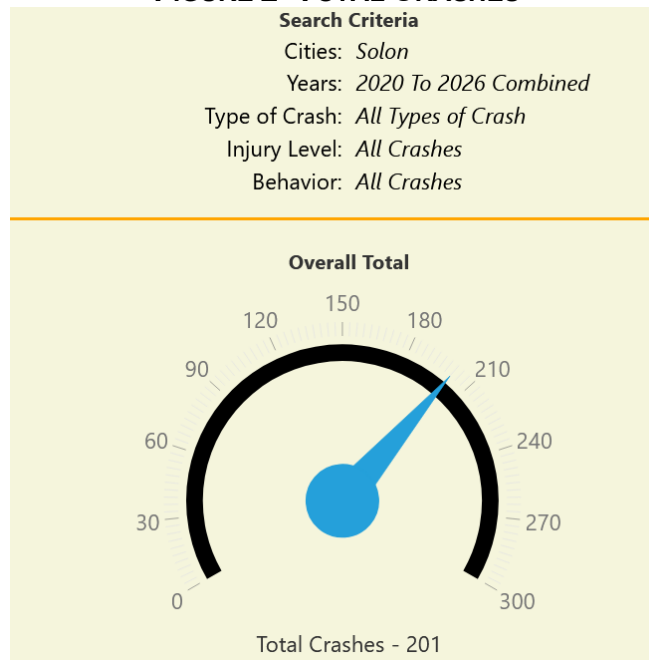
According to MDOT's Public Crash Query Tool, between 2022 and 2024 there were two segments of road that qualified as High Crash Locations due to the number of accidents that occurred. Those segments are:

- Segment 1- From the intersection of South Main Street and School Street to the four-way intersection of Ferry Street, North Main Street, South Main Street, and Pleasant Street.
 - 8 total crashes
 - 6 injuries
- Segment 2- From the intersection of McCarty Road and South Main Street to the intersection of School Street and South Main Street.
 - 15 total crashes
 - 2 injuries

Though not explicitly stated, essentially, the segment of Route 201 from McCarty Road north to the intersection of Route 201A can be considered a continuous High Crash Location since these two segments cover that whole stretch of road. It is also worth noting that that these crash numbers are not just vehicle on vehicle crashes; they also include vehicle collisions with deer or other animals.

With the volume of traffic and major intersections in Solon, it is inevitable that there will be crashes. According to Maine Department of Transportation's Public Crash Query Tool, between 2020 and June 2026, there were 201 total crashes in Solon. Some of the specifics on those crashes are detailed below.

FIGURE 2- TOTAL CRASHES



Source: [Maine DOT- Public Crash Query Tool](#)

FIGURE 3: CRASHES BY MONTH

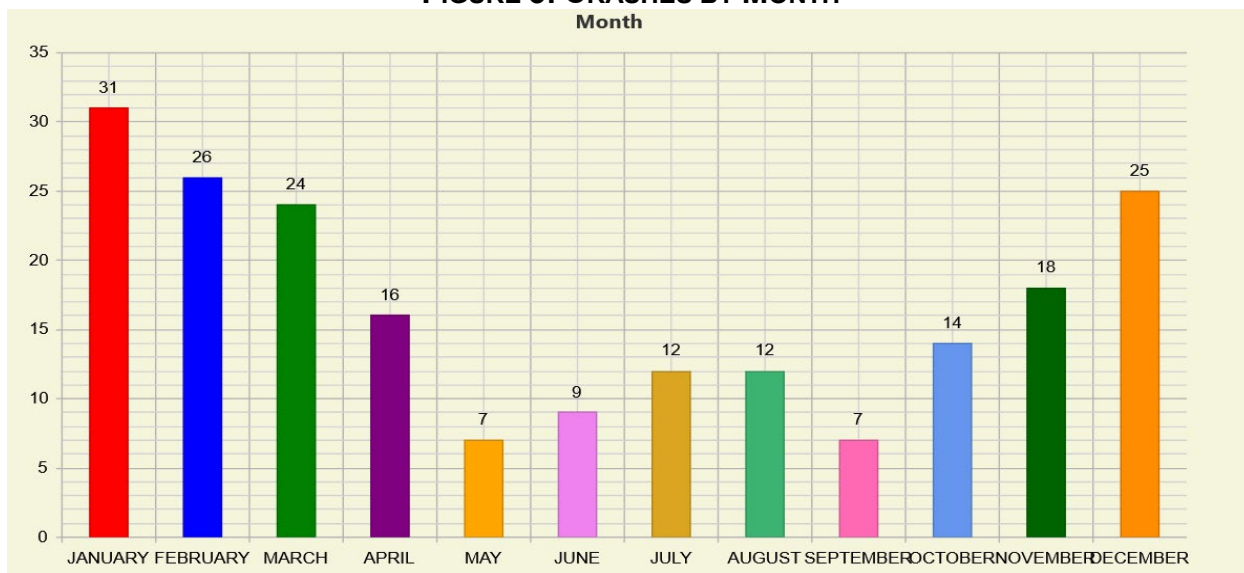


Figure 3 Highlights:

- The fewest number of crashes occurred in May and September (7 both months).
- January (31), February (26), December (25), and March (24) experienced the highest number of crashes.
- The increased number of crashes in the winter are likely related to weather conditions and more instances of driving in the dark due to shortened days.

FIGURE 4: CRASHES BY DAY OF THE WEEK

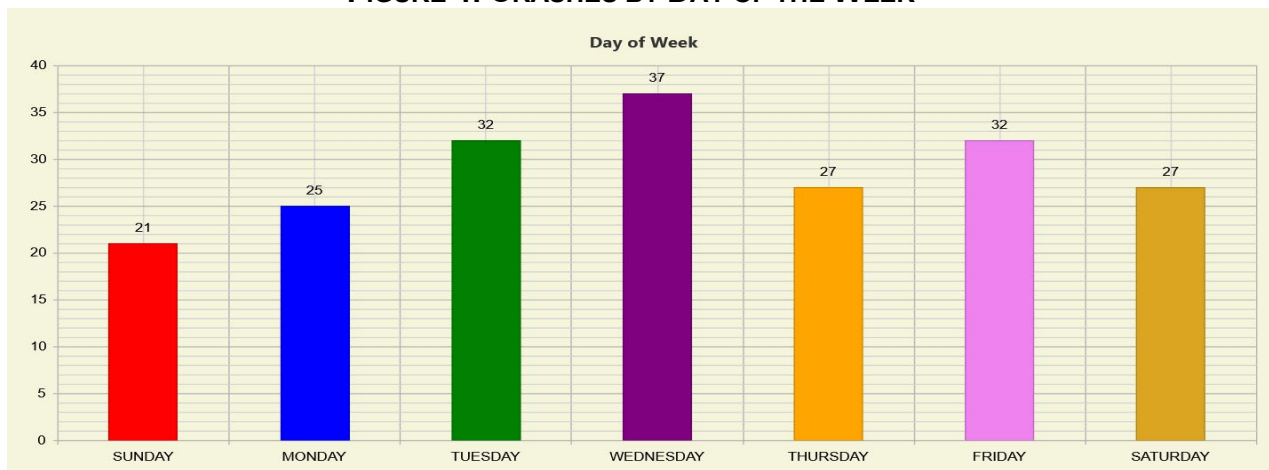


Figure 4 Highlights:

- The most accidents occurred on Wednesdays (37), followed by Tuesday and Friday (both 32).
- There were only slightly more accidents during the week than on weekends. This is likely because Solon is a four-season travel destination and nonresidents either travel to or through Solon in their recreational pursuits.

FIGURE 5: CRASHES BY TIME OF DAY

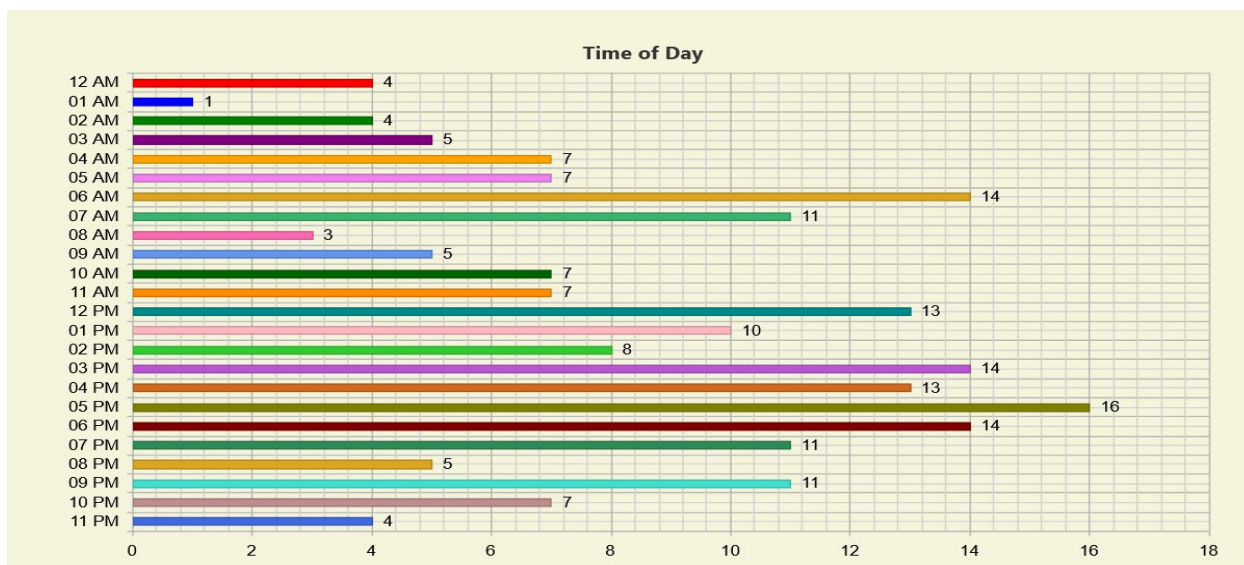


Figure 5 Highlights:

- Most accidents occurred starting at 3pm (14) and reaching a peak at 5pm (16), followed by a sharp decline at 7pm. This coincides with most folks' evening commute home from work.
- Other peak times for increased crashes were between 6am (14) and 7am (11)- the morning commute and 12pm (13)- lunch break for Solon's workforce.

FIGURE 6: CRASHES BY TYPE

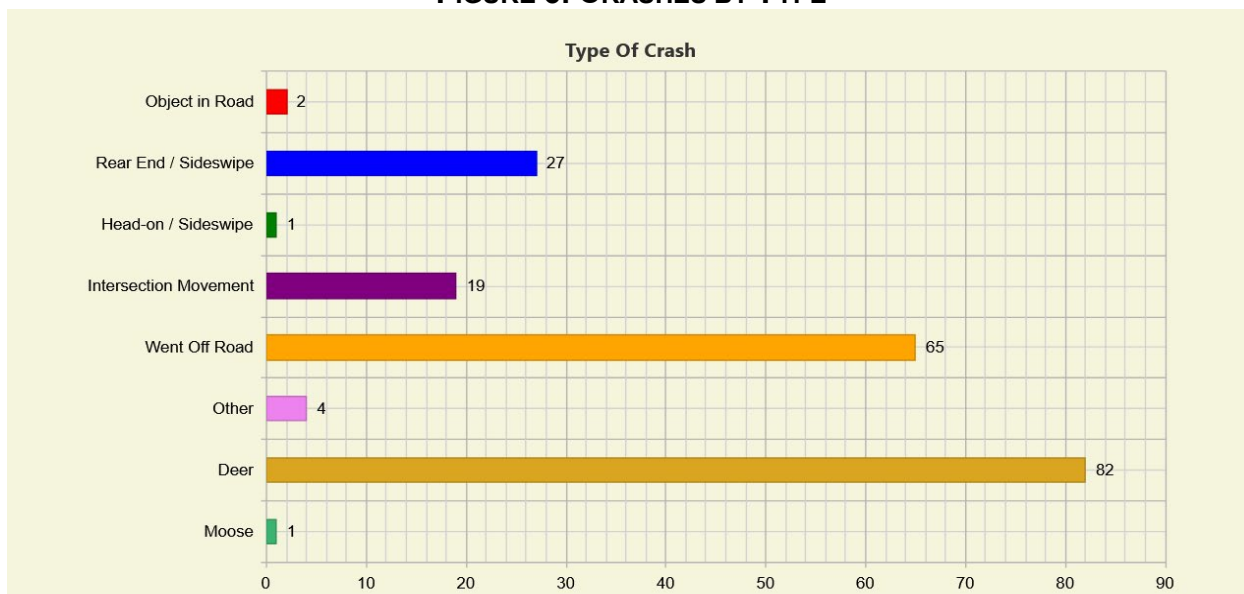


Figure 6 Highlights:

- By far, the most common type of collision was deer related (82), followed by vehicle going off the road (65).

FIGURE 7: CRASHES BY VEHICLE TYPE

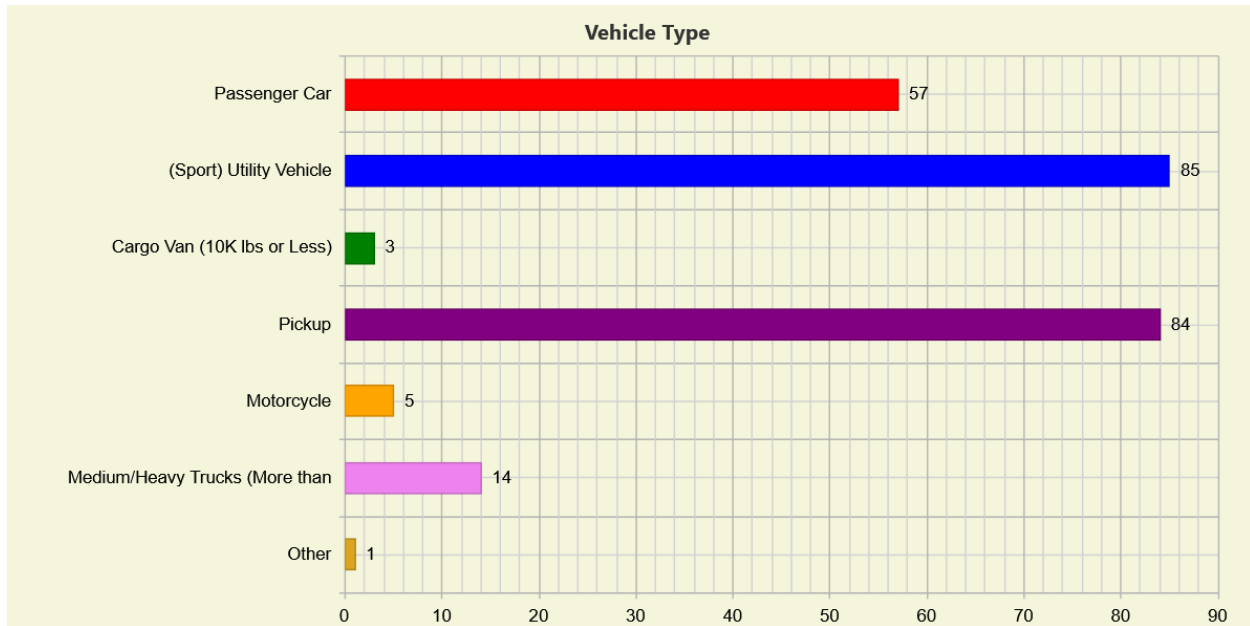


Figure 7 Highlights:

- Pickups (84) and SUVs (85) were nearly tied for being the vehicle most frequently involved in crashes. Passenger cars were third (57).
- The medium/heavy trucks came in 4th with 14 crashes during this time period.

Support Infrastructure for the Road System

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

Bridges, Minor Spans, Culverts

Out of necessity, Solon's road system includes many water crossings. The crossing infrastructure is defined by the Maine Bridge Law (23 MRSA, Chapter 9, Subchapter 4-A). Effective July 1, 2001, bridges were classified by size:

- A "Bridge" is defined as having a span length of at least 20 feet, in accordance with federal law.
- A "Minor Span" is defined as having a span length of at least 10 feet but less than 20 feet.
- A "Culvert" has a span less than 10 feet or is multiple pipes or other structures with a combined opening of less than 80 square feet in area.

Many of these small culverts are the responsibility of the town to maintain. Culverts are cleaned and inspected regularly and replaced as necessary.

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

A Federal Sufficiency Rating under 40 is cause for concern.

TABLE 3: STATE-MAINTAINED CROSSINGS

Local Name	Bridge ID #	Location	Year Built	Federal Sufficiency Rating
Michael Stream	2548	S Main Street	1952	79/100
Parkman	1025	Parkman Hill Rd	2007	97.6/100
Embden Solon	2267	Ferry Street	1955	78.5/100
Main Street	2504	N Main Street	2024	77/100
Williams	1024	River Rd	2004	97.5/100

Source: *Maine DOT Bridge Inventory 2025*
<https://www.maine.gov/dot/sites/maine.gov.dot/files/documents/bridges/bridgereports/Solon.pdf>

Table 3 Highlights:

- Solon's bridges are in remarkably good condition.
- The new bridge on North Main Street replaced a bridge that was nearly 100 years old (photo to right).

No work is planned on any bridges in the current published Maine DOT workplans. The location and maintenance responsibility of bridges is shown on the Transportation Map.



In the 2025 Solon Annual Report, culvert replacement work was planned for South Solon Road and Meeting House Road in conjuncture with the paving project. Culvert replacement is an ongoing and frequent task for the Road Commissioner. Solon participates in the bulk purchasing program through Kennebec Valley Council of Governments which offers several sizes of HDPE culvert pipes.

Several roads with sizable culvert spans include River Road for Padham Brook, Parkman Hill Road, Hole in the Wall Road for Michael Stream, and River Road for Michael Stream. All are in decent shape and are inspected regularly by the state.

Parking

Solon's ordinances regulate parking minimally. Solon does have a standalone Parking Ordinance that is essentially a parking ban for North Main Street, though it is quite antiquated. There are no specified public or municipal parking lots in Solon. Most of the public parking is along Route 201 in locations where the shoulders are wide enough to accommodate a vehicle.

Griswold's Country Store allows people visiting the ATV and snowmobile trails to use their ample parking lot, as well as tractor trailers. This is a tradeoff, as folks parking there typically go in the store to buy goods, food, or gas.

Parking availability is generally considered adequate for the existing commercial development. Parking issues are not typically an issue, unless there is a special event in town, such as the 4th of July celebration, but large special events occur infrequently.

Regulation for Development and Traffic Growth

Solon's Subdivision Ordinance, although quite outdated, allows the Planning Board the discretion to mandate a 20-foot-wide easement at the end of dead-end street to provide continuation of pedestrian traffic or utilities to the next street. This language could be changed slightly to allow the Planning Board the discretion to require connectivity to other roads or to shorten dead end streets, where feasible. As currently written, this language gives the Planning Board the purview to increase walking paths from newly created subdivision roads.

The Subdivision Ordinance also details the town's relatively high road design standards for a private road to be accepted by the town. To be considered for acceptance, a road must be a three-rod road and in excellent condition, amongst other criteria. These local road design standards support the town's desired land use pattern because prevents the town from accepting roads in poor condition that would be expensive to maintain and bring up to current standards. This keeps the town from becoming responsible for costly repairs and maintenance.

While local road design standards do not specifically support bicycle and pedestrian transportation, this type of infrastructure is prohibitively expensive to install and maintain. Additionally, the newer roads that have been constructed are primarily in the rural parts of town where walking and biking are not a priority and so few new public roads have been built in such a long time that this has not been a consideration. However, the town is considering ways to create a lower maintenance, functional walking/bike path in certain parts of town.

The Maine DOT has established a set of regulations for new developments impacting state highways. Traffic Movement Permits are required for major developments, such as shopping centers or large subdivisions. For all other developments on state highways, driveway access permits are required. Permitting rules contain different standards based on road classification. Route 201 has the tightest access rules, while the remaining roads have relatively moderate rules. All the rules have some standards for sight distance, driveway width, spacing, safety, and drainage, in line with state standards.

Both residential and commercial development increases the number of driveways and intersections, contributing to traffic conflicts and safety concerns. The town has standards for the location of driveways and requires the applicant to obtain a driveway permit.

Solon does not regulate parking for private residences or businesses. However, under the Site Plan Review Ordinance, the Planning Board may require a traffic study when a proposed development is expected to have a significant impact on local traffic conditions.

Most of the town's businesses and the school are located along Routes 201 and 201A, two heavily traveled corridors. Major traffic generators include Solon Elementary School, Griswold's Country Store, the Town Office, the Solon Hotel, logging operations, Solon Corner Market, the women's shelter behind the Evangelical church, the church itself, and seasonal tourism.

Sidewalks exist along both sides of Route 201; however, they lack curbing and lighting and have deteriorated due to years of deferred maintenance. In some locations, utility poles and mailboxes obstruct the pedestrian way, creating accessibility and safety concerns.

Traffic generated by major destinations places varying demands on the transportation network. In the village area along Route 201, higher traffic volumes contribute to congestion and slower traffic flow, while frequent driveway access and turning movements associated with businesses create potential conflict points and safety concerns for motorists and pedestrians.

Financial Stability and Road Maintenance

The transportation system is costly to maintain. The system is in a constant state of deterioration, and deferring maintenance accelerates the pace and costs of repair. Even without improvements, the roads in Solon require close to \$300,000 dollars a year in upkeep.

TABLE 4: SOLON'S ROAD MAINTENANCE APPROPRIATION AND CAPITAL RESERVE

Activity	Appropriated/Reserve Amount
Winter road maintenance	\$149,000
Summer road maintenance	\$146,500
Road paving reserve	\$210,000
Gravel road reserve	\$10,000
Highway equipment reserve	\$25,000
Public Works garage reserve	\$20,000
Sidewalk repair reserve	\$10,000

Source: Solon's 2025 Annual Report

Solon's paving plan allows the town to maintain a road paving budget in a reserve account, so the town does not have to borrow. Each year, the funding in the reserve account is earmarked for maintenance and paving of predetermined roads. Maintenance can include culvert work, as needed. This plan and reserve account designates money for the maintenance of gravel roads, as well.

Solon is sensitive to potential erosion or runoff problems and follows best management practices provided by the MDOT for all ditching, culvert, and earth-moving activities.

Regional and Statewide Trends

More than any other public service, Solon's transportation system is influenced by conditions and trends beyond the town's boundaries. Commercial and residential growth in nearby communities such as Madison, Skowhegan, and Bingham affects traffic volumes on local roads. Understanding these regional influences will help the town plan for future transportation needs.

One of the most significant trends affecting Solon is the steady increase in traffic volumes, particularly along Route 201. Increased use of this major corridor has implications for roadway safety, maintenance, and mobility.

Another growing challenge is the increasing frequency and intensity of storm events. Winter storms with more frequent freeze-thaw cycles and ice conditions require additional applications of sand and deicing materials, while temperature fluctuations contribute to frost heaves, potholes, and pavement deterioration.

Heavy rainfall events have also placed greater strain on the transportation system. Culverts and drainage infrastructure that were designed for historic conditions are increasingly unable to accommodate larger storm flows, resulting in washouts, overtopped roads, and more frequent repairs. Recovery efforts are often delayed until floodwaters recede and soils become stable enough to support construction equipment, leading to extended road closures and disruptions to travel.

Transportation Options

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 vehicles to get around. The increasing costs and environmental impacts of motor vehicles are reasons to consider options for reducing 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.

Public Transit

Solon's public transit is limited, as is that of all other towns in the Central Maine region. Further, Solon does not have enough development density to support public transit, bus, van, or rail service, as are the most common alternatives. There is no railroad line in Solon, nor are there bus or van services.

Public and private transit is not readily available in Solon. Taxi services, Lyft, and Uber are not available in Solon. Informal ride-sharing arrangements are common, but undocumented.

For special needs services, or lower income individuals, Kennebec Valley Community Action Program (KVCAP) provides an on-demand bus service, but their capacity is not adequate to meet the needs of the region. And reservations must be made well in advance. Similarly, Penquis C.A.P., Inc. is limitedly available for providing transportation services.

To meet public transportation needs, some other towns have set up a volunteer organization called Neighbors Driving Neighbors; however, this is dependent upon people's schedules and availability.

There is no quick or easy solution for the lack of public transportation. While there is an identifiable need, the problem needs to be addressed on a regional level, as providing such a service is far outside the scope of any individual municipality.

Air Travel

The closest airport is Gadabout Gaddis Airport in Bingham. This is a privately owned and operated airport, and 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.

There are no public or private airfields in Solon. The closest commercial airport is in Augusta approximately 53 miles from Solon. There is also a public airport in Bangor, the Bangor International Airport, approximately 65 miles from Solon.

There is a small public airport, the Central Maine Regional Airport, in Norridgewock, located at 603 Airport Road, about four miles west of the town center. It is publicly owned by the Town of Norridgewock and supports local general aviation.

For the purposes of the LifeFlight, there is a helipad in the back of the Solon Elementary School in the recreation field.

Bicycle Amenities

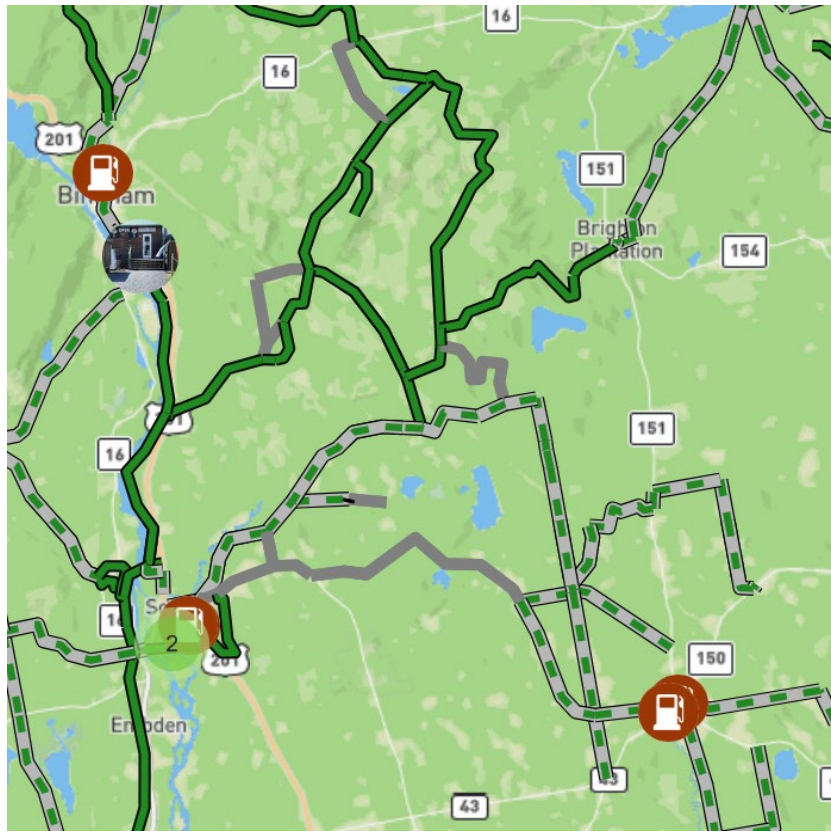
Bicycle amenities are currently integrated minimally into Solon's transportation network. The existing road design standards do not support bicycle or pedestrian transportation; however, no new roads have been created in Solon in many years.

The town is in the process of taking slow incremental steps to improve and increase bicycling and walkability, though. For example, the development of a walking/bike lane is in discussion for Pleasant Street and School Street for the next time those roads are to be repaved. The walking/bike lane would be instead of a sidewalk, as it is anticipated to require far less maintenance, thus less costly to residents in tax dollars.

Off Road Vehicles (ATVs and Snowmobiles)

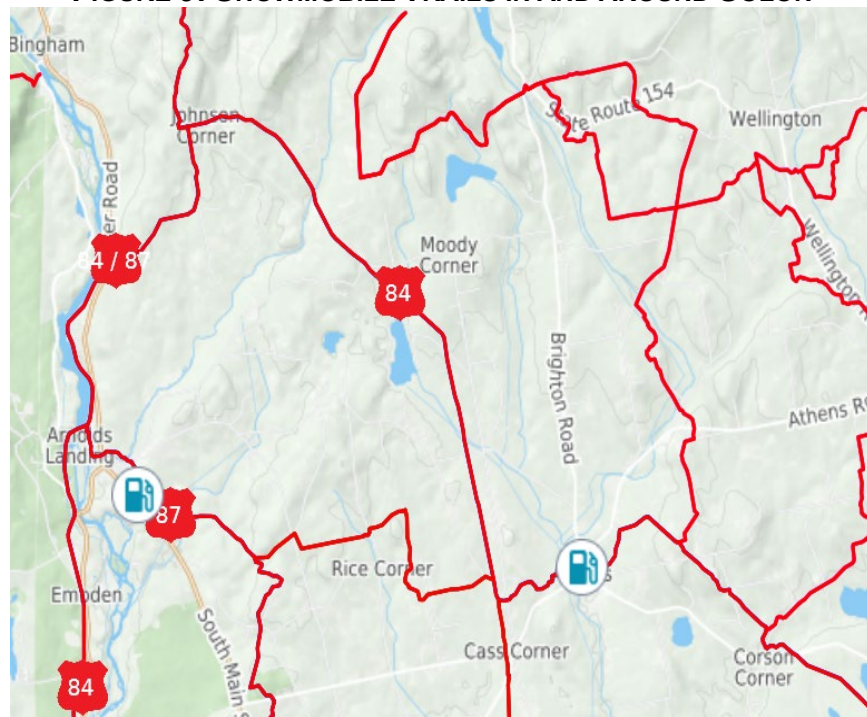
Solon hosts a robust seasonal population and the town's abundant outdoor recreational offerings attract a plethora of tourists during all four seasons. Perhaps one of the most significant draws is the extensive Interconnected Trail System (ITS) for off road vehicles (ATVs- Figure 8 and snowmobiles- Figure 9). In addition to these formal trails, there are numerous, lesser-known trails through town.

FIGURE 8: ATV TRAILS IN AND AROUND SOLON



Source: <https://app.trailintel.com/map#10.0000/45.0224/-69.5380>

FIGURE 9: SNOWMOBILE TRAILS IN AND AROUND SOLON



Source: The Maine Snowmobile Association

While Solon does not want to limit ATV access, concerns have been raised about road safety. Currently, ATVs are only allowed on certain roads, not town-wide, but there have been conflicts where they are allowed. Too often, tourists and residents alike take for granted that they share the road and that people live there. There has been an increase in speeding on residential streets and/or disrespecting the generosity of landowners who allow the trails to cross their property.

Pedestrian Modes and Sidewalks

Pedestrian activity in Solon is constrained by traffic volumes, no crosswalks, and inadequate sidewalk infrastructure. The primary area of concern is along Route 201 through the village, where most commercial development is located. This corridor provides access to the elementary school, post office, Town Office, fire station, churches, library, and nearby neighborhoods. Heavy vehicle traffic, including trucks, can make walking and crossing the roadway challenging, particularly in areas without sidewalks.

Sidewalk connectivity between key destinations and residential areas is limited. Sidewalks on the south side of town are primarily connected to the school. Sidewalks on the north side of town connect to the town center. High traffic volumes, combined with the town's limited capacity to construct and maintain pedestrian infrastructure, have hindered the development of a more connected sidewalk network. Existing sidewalks, which were originally installed by the state, have deteriorated over time and are in poor condition in several locations.

Many sidewalks are not ADA-compliant and there are no crosswalks. Minimally, crosswalks should be installed for the school areas and ideally near major pedestrian generators. The Town of Solon could request permission from that state to install crosswalks, but then the town would be entirely responsible for the cost of installation and maintenance, which is prohibitive. As a result, pedestrian infrastructure plays only a minor role in the town's transportation system. Improving walkability would require significant investment and present a long-term challenge for the community.

Some of the major pedestrian traffic generators in town are the Solon Elementary School, Griswald's Country Store, the Town Office, the Solon Hotel, Solon Corner Market, the food cupboard, the women's shelter behind the church, and the Evangelical church.

Trails and Walking Paths

There are no known walking paths in town that connect neighborhoods, schools, or other activity centers. The walking paths that exist are more hiking trails or part of a larger recreation area, such as Williams recreation area, Somerset Woods trails, and trails on the Old Canada Road scenic byway.

Analysis

- Route 201 through Solon is federally classified as a Principal Arterial. Route 201A is federally classified as a Major Collector. Both Route 201A and 201 are classified by the state as a State Highway.
- Route 201, starting at Robbin's Hill in Solon, is the beginning of the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway, which travels 78 miles north to the Canadian border.
- The Town of Solon maintains around 46 miles of town roads.
- Road Safety
 - There are two segments of Route 201 through the middle of Solon village that are noted as High Crash Locations between 2022 and 2024.
 - Between 2020 and June 2026, there were 201 total car crashes in Solon.
 - Most of those crashes occurred in the months of January, February, December, and March.
 - Crashes were more likely to occur on Wednesdays, Tuesdays, or Fridays, during regular commuting times.
 - Collisions with deer were the most common occurrence.
 - SUVs and pickup trucks were the most common vehicles involved in accidents.
- There are five bridges documented by the DOT in Solon- all are in good condition.
- Parking for commercial establishments in Solon is primarily onsite or along Route 201.
- Solon has minimal regulatory oversight related to road development and parking.
- The most prominent regional and statewide trend is the need to upsize culverts to accommodate increased precipitation events.
- The closest airport is the private airport- Gadabout Gaddis Airport in Bingham. The closest commercial airport is in Augusta.
- Solon hosts numerous snowmobile and ATV trails that are part of the larger Interconnected Trail System. The ITS connects to a substantial trail network statewide.
- Solon's sidewalks offer minimal connectivity. They are in severe disrepair in many locations.