

# **Interstate 95 Trafton Road Interchange**

**City of Waterville and Town of Sidney  
Kennebec County, Maine**

## **Final Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact**

**Submitted Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 4332 (2),  
23 U.S.C. 138 and 23 CFR 771**

**U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration**



**Maine Department of Transportation**



**August 2014**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**INTERSTATE 95 TRAFTON ROAD INTERCHANGE**  
**CITY OF WATERVILLE AND TOWN OF SIDNEY**  
**KENNEBEC COUNTY, MAINE**

**Description of Action**

The Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) proposes to construct a new interchange along Interstate 95 at Trafton Road, located in the City of Waterville and the Town of Sidney in Kennebec County, Maine. Trafton Road currently bridges over Interstate 95, with no connection or interchange existing between the two routes. Currently, traffic accesses the interstate system in the Sidney and Waterville areas either by using the Exit 127 interchange located at Kennedy Memorial Drive (approximately 3 miles north of the proposed project), or by using Exit 120 interchange located at Lyons Road (approximately 4 miles south of the proposed project).

The purpose of the proposed Interstate 95 Trafton Road interchange is to improve regional mobility, reduce further deterioration of Kennedy Memorial Drive (KMD) traffic flow, complement and support existing land, water, sewer, electric and natural gas investments south of KMD, and expand freight and passenger transportation connectivity.

The proposed interchange on Interstate 95 at Trafton Road will consist of a partial cloverleaf type facility with ramp access to and from Interstate 95 both northbound and southbound, accommodating all potential traffic movements between the highway facilities. Work along Interstate 95 will include the addition of ramp terminal auxiliary lanes. Other components of the proposed project include the realignment of Eight Rod Road with Junction Road, and construction of right-turn lanes on Trafton Road and West River Road where they intersect. The proposed interchange would utilize the existing two-lane Trafton Road Bridge crossing Interstate 95. Trafton Road, presently designated as a local/town way, will be designated a state aid collector highway upon completion of this project.

The proposed project appears in the City of Waterville's Comprehensive Plan and has been recognized in the most recent Kennebec Valley Council of Governments Corridor Management Plan for the Lower Kennebec Route 201 Corridor. The project has been assigned a MaineDOT Work Plan Identification number of 018129.10. Additionally, the project is funded in the current MaineDOT Statewide Transportation Improvement Program for Federal Fiscal Years 2014-2015-2016-2017 for the Preliminary Engineering, Right-of-Way, and Construction/Construction Engineering phases.

**Summary of Environmental Impacts**

The proposed project will require the acquisition of approximately 23.62 acres of right-of-way to accommodate the new interchange ramps. This includes acquisition of approximately 2.9 acres of farmland zoned for commercial development. The Preferred Alternative will require no

commercial or residential relocations. All acquisition will follow Public Law 91-646, the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

The Preferred Alternative will permanently impact approximately 68,272.66 square feet or 1.57 acres of wetlands. Of this total, approximately 65,223.25 square feet (1.50 acres) will be permanently filled and approximately 3,049.41 square feet (0.07 acres) will be permanently cleared.

There is one unnamed intermittent stream within the footprint of the Preferred Alternative that conveys seasonal flows east to Trafton Brook, and includes several areas of emergent marsh with no defined channel. This stream originates near an old farm pond and associated wetland in the western portion of the project area. This stream impacted by the project will flow under the proposed Interstate 95 ramps through in new culverts with a minimum of 1.2 times bankfull width and will reflect the latest stream crossing Best Management Practices (BMPs) (e.g., not perched or undersized and would leave existing natural substrate) per USFWS guidelines.

During the preparation of the Environmental Assessment, MaineDOT was advised by the US Army Corps of Engineers that wetland mitigation in the form of a payment to the Maine In Lieu Fee Compensation Program (ILFP) would be acceptable for the unavoidable impacts to wetlands on this project. MaineDOT proposes to make an In-Lieu fee payment of approximately \$247,848.35 to the ILFP to satisfy all State and Federal mitigation requirements for this proposed project's wetland impacts. This fee is based on rates for Kennebec County listed on the current fee schedule (effective 7/1/13 thru 6/30/15) and a resource multiplier.<sup>1</sup>

Further avoidance and minimization of wetland and stream impacts will be an objective during final design activities. Construction impacts to project area wetlands and streams will be further minimized by implementation of MaineDOT Best Management Practices for Erosion and Sediment Control.

### **Public Hearing and Open House**

A public hearing and open house was held on May 8, 2014 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Spann Student Commons Summit Room at Thomas College, located at 180 West River Road, Waterville, ME. The hearing presented the pertinent engineering, environmental and socio-economic aspects of the proposed improvement project, including the results of the Environmental Assessment, and provided an opportunity to obtain feedback from the public concerning these matters. The Environmental Assessment was available for review prior to the hearing beginning April 14, 2014 at City of Waterville (One Common Street, Waterville), the Town of Sidney (2986 Middle Road, Sidney), the Maine Department of Transportation Main Office Library (24 Child Street, 16 State House Station, Augusta), the Federal Highway Administration Maine Division Office, (Edmund S. Muskie Federal Building, 40 Western Avenue, Room 614, Augusta), and the Maine State Library (230 State Street, Augusta). Copies of the Environmental Assessment were also available upon request from MaineDOT and the

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Wetland compensation fee methodology = (direct wetland impact/sq. ft. x (natural resource enhancement & restoration cost/sq. ft. + assessed land valuation/sq. ft.) x (resource multiplier)) \$247,848.35 = 65,223.25 sq. ft. x (\$3.65 + \$0.15)) x (1)

Environmental Assessment was made available for viewing on the MaineDOT website at <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/planningdocs/waterville-i95-traftonrd/index.htm>.

Public notice of the public hearing and open house was published in the local section of the *Kennebec Journal and Morning Sentinel* on April 15, 2014 and by mail directed to area property owners on Trafton Road and Eight Rod Road in the City of Waterville and on Junction Road and Town Farm Road in the Town of Sidney. Emails were sent to resource agencies to announce the availability of the Environmental Assessment and to solicit comments from these agencies. Additionally, notice of the public hearing was published on MaineDOT's public meeting website at <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/publicmeetings/index.htm>.

Approximately 54 people registered their attendance at the public hearing held on May 8, 2014. The public had the opportunity to comment verbally or in writing during the hearing, or by sending comments to FHWA and MaineDOT separately, after the meeting. A review and comment period was established for receipt of comments on the Environmental Assessment, ending on May 22, 2014. All substantive comments were considered, addressed, and responded to and are contained in Attachment 9.

**FHWA Decision**

The FHWA has determined that the Preferred Alternative, the partial cloverleaf interchange, will result in no significant impact on the natural or human environment. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is based on the project's Environmental Assessment and associated studies. These documents have been independently evaluated by the FHWA and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the need, environmental issues, and impacts of the proposed project and appropriate mitigation measures. The Environmental Assessment provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The FHWA takes full responsibility for the accuracy, scope, and content of the attached document.

For FHWA:

Cheryl B. Martin      8/25/14  
Cheryl B. Martin                      Date

Assistant Division Administrator

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Project Identification Number	<b>18129.10</b>
Project Description/Termini	<b>Interstate 95 Trafton Road Interchange</b>

## PURPOSE AND NEED

### Existing Conditions:

The City of Waterville is a Maine Service Center located along the west bank of the Kennebec River in Kennebec County with a 2010 population of 15,722 and covering an area of approximately 14.1 square miles. It ranks 7th among municipalities in Maine for total taxable retail sales and 9th for total employment. Development is generally concentrated in the northern half of the City and east of I-95. To the south of Waterville lies the Town of Sidney with a 2010 population of 4,208, an area of 45.51 square miles and a small employment base of 320 jobs in 2010. Sidney is rural in character and serves today as a bedroom community for neighboring job centers. An Area of Interest Map, depicting the locations of Waterville and Sidney within the state of Maine, is shown in Figure 1 below. Figure 2 shows the Study Area for the proposed Trafton Road Interchange.

Interstate 95 (I-95) traverses Waterville south to north along the western side of the City. Based on 2012 traffic counts recorded by the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), just north of the Sidney, Lyons Road interchange, I-95 carries an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) rate of 13,680 southbound and 13,540 northbound. Running parallel to I-95 and just west of the Kennebec River is State Route 104, the West River Road, with an AADT just north of Trafton Road of 3,120 in 2011.

The proposed full access Trafton Road I-95 Interchange location is in proximity to the Waterville-Sidney boundary. There is an interchange approximately 3 miles to the north that intersects with Kennedy Memorial Drive (KMD) at milepost 127. I-95 Exit 127 provides access to KMD (State Route 11) easterly into downtown Waterville and westerly to downtown Oakland. KMD provides access to several major commercial/retail facilities, the Inland Hospital, the Lafleur Airport, the Airport Business Park, Thomas and Colby Colleges, First Park and Winslow business parks to the east using the Donald Carter Bridge crossing the Kennebec River.

A previous traffic study conducted in 2010 for the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) indicated that KMD would be at capacity by 2015 during the weekday PM peak hour at the I-95 ramps and at the Cool Street/Colette Street, West River Road, and Carter Memorial Drive signalized intersections. These projections assumed certain planned developments would occur that have not materialized in full as yet. Still, as a result of these projections, traffic signals on KMD were modernized and synchronized to mitigate traffic congestion. Even with these improvements and the added traffic capacity provided, the projected traffic capacity at the Exit 127, I-95 interchange with KMD remains a concern.

Approximately four miles to the south of the proposed Trafton Road interchange at milepost 120 is the Lyons Road interchange in the Town of Sidney. Lyons Road AADT in 2011 was 1,600 just west of West River Road.

Trafton Road is a City road that travels in an east/west direction connecting two State collector highways, Middle Road and State Route 104, West River Road. Just west of West River Road, the 2012 AADT recorded on Trafton Road was 510. At the corner of Trafton Road and West River Road is a fully occupied 227,000 sq. ft. light industrial complex. The current owners in November 2011 secured a Maine Traffic Movement Permit (02-00068A-N) to expand by 450,000 sq. ft. Along the southern portion of Trafton Road, the City zoning for the land adjacent to the proposed interchange is Commercial D, a district principally for establishments which require exposure to a major highway and large areas of land on which to conduct their operations (CoW, 2013), while land closer to West River Road is zoned Industrial Park. Along the north side of Trafton Road, zoning includes more Commercial D as well as Rural Residential. Land to the south in Sidney is in a general growth district.

Public water service was provided in the 1970's to the Trafton Road light industrial facility by the Department of Housing and Urban Development signaling intent to support economic growth in southern Waterville. Public sewer service was recently installed by the Town of Oakland with assistance from USDA along nearby Webb Road to make a connection into the Waterville Sanitary District. The District in 2013 upgraded and expanded the capacity of the pumping station in the proximity of Webb and West River Roads. Also in 2013/2014, natural gas

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transmission and distribution came to the area with construction of a service connection to Thomas College. Three-phase power is available at Trafton Road. All of these services do not extend further south into the Town of Sidney nor are they available in proximity to the Lyons Road I-95 interchange.

With the support of the City of Waterville and the Town of Sidney, on January 22, 2013 the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) conditionally approved the draft Interchange Justification Report, I-95 Trafton Road Interchange Project, Waterville, Maine (DIJR) for the proposed Trafton Road Interchange. The DIJR is conditioned upon receiving approval under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The DIJR documents the feasibility of the proposed interchange and reviews several project alternatives including the no-action alternative. The DIJR identifies a partial clover leaf interchange as the preferred design and discusses the rationale for dismissing alternatives. It also provides a preliminary summary of potential impacts resulting from the proposed interchange.

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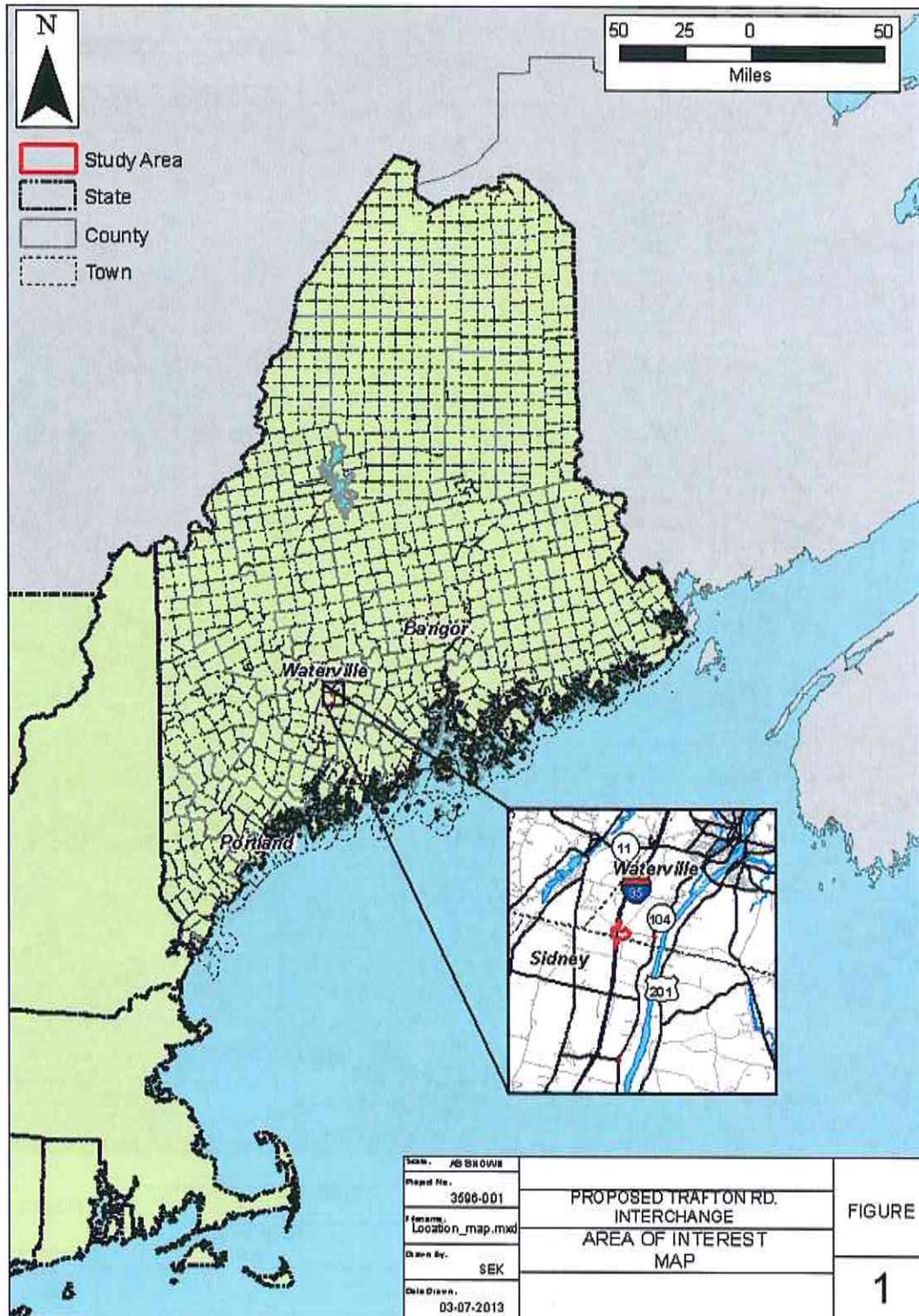
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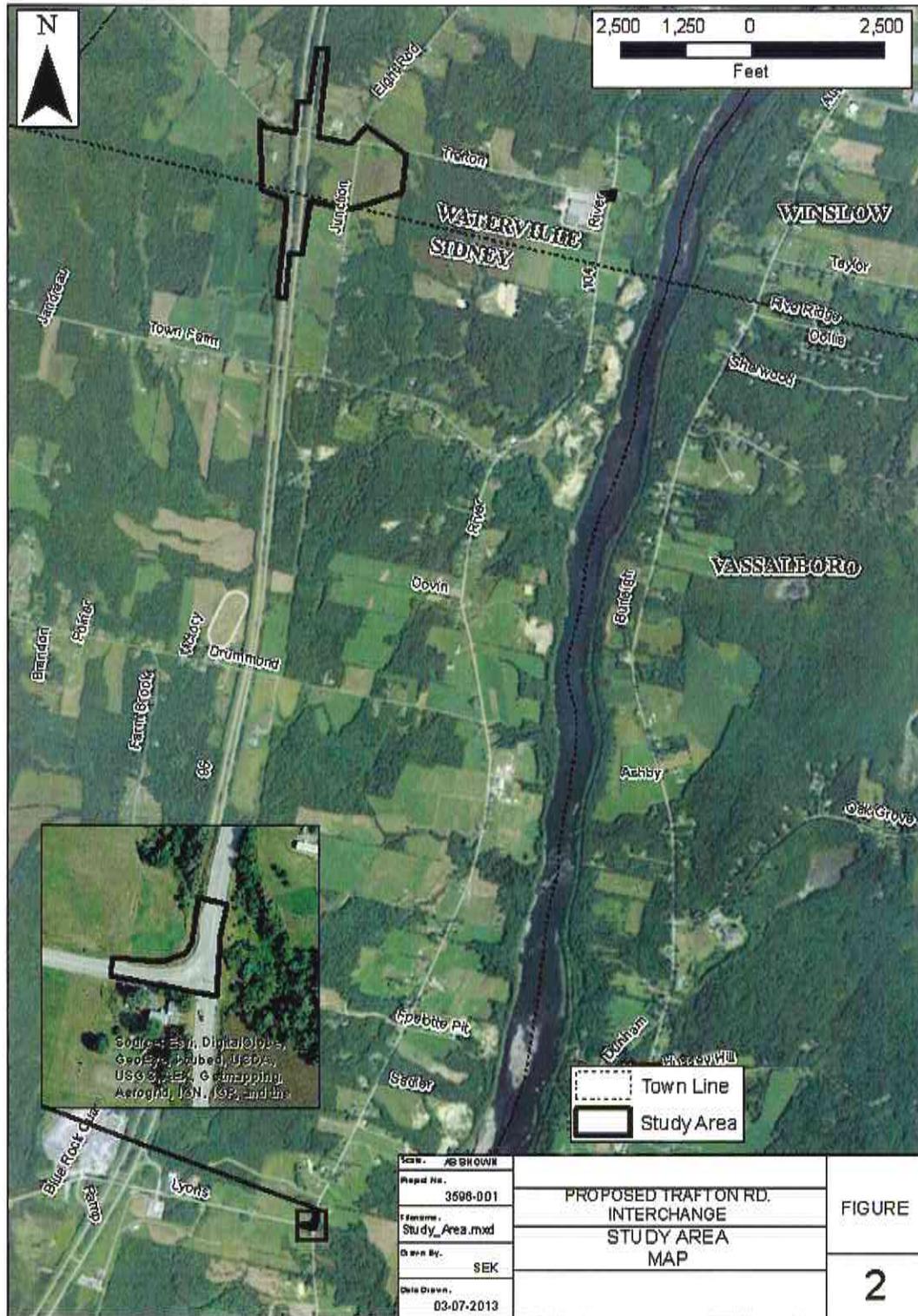
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**Purpose and Need:**

The I-95 Exit 127 interchange at Kennedy Memorial Drive (KMD) is the transportation focal point for the regional economy. AADT counts just west of Washington Street on KMD were 14,230 in 1984 growing to 22,470 in 2009 and again to 24,140 in 2011. All of these counts were recorded by MaineDOT as part of their annual traffic count program. A new MaineDOT count for KMD is not scheduled until the Fall of 2014. Therefore, to update the traffic data, Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers conducted a traffic recorder count on KMD just west of Washington Street that took place between June 10 and 14, 2014 and provided three full days of data gathering. Additionally, peak hour turning movement counts were undertaken on June 12, 2014.

The results revealed, in part, a daily count high of 28,261 on Friday June 13th and a three day average of 27,847. Using MaineDOT methodology, this three day average was adjusted to calculate an AADT of 25,062. The growth rate in AADT from 2009 to 2014 is 2.2% per year. To put this most recent AADT count in perspective, KMD at this location would rank as the highest volume east of Brunswick and would be the 47th highest count off of the interstate of the approximate 13,000 count locations administered by MaineDOT. This count and comparative information underscores the reliance the region places on the reliable functioning of the KMD Exit 127 interchange.

With the new counts discussed above yielding a revised growth rate of 2.2%, the traffic analysis was refreshed and new traffic modeling using the more sophisticated SimTraffic analysis software was conducted. Two scenarios were modeled. The first assumed the 2.2% growth rate with no new growth at First Park or Airport Business Park. There was no growth at either business park between 2009 and 2014, even as a 2.2% growth rate was experienced on KMD. The second scenario assumed this same growth rate but also included a 62% utilization of permitted traffic at First Park and a 50% utilization of permitted traffic at the Airport Business Park both to occur within the 2036 project design year. The higher allowance for First Park is due to existing on site employment approximating 900 already.

In the first scenario, that has FirstPark and the Airport Business Park not attracting a single tenant between now and 2036, traffic conditions deteriorate in the PM peak hour to a Level of Service (LOS) E overall by 2036 for the I-95 Northbound/KMD traffic intersection and reach a LOS F specifically for the westbound KMD traffic at this location. In the second scenario, traffic conditions deteriorate to a LOS E for the KMD westbound traffic approaching the northbound off ramp in the year 2028. By the design year of 2036, under this scenario, the I-95 Northbound/KMD intersection reaches LOS E overall for the AM peak hour and a LOS F for the PM peak hour. In both scenarios, queuing backs up to Washington Street resulting in the degradation of access to businesses and public ways located between Washington Street and the northbound off ramp. A similar but less severe problem arises for eastbound KMD traffic seeking to access businesses south of the FirstPark entrance. Also, FirstPark exiting traffic under the second scenario attains a LOS F in the PM peak hour by the design year. These queues may cause additional degradation of the LOS that is not reflected in the calculations.

The new turning movement counts conducted revealed that the combination of westbound and eastbound KMD right turning traffic onto I-95 southbound in the AM peak hour grew from 352 in 2010 to 484 in 2014, a 37.5% increase. Also in the AM, the combined westbound and eastbound KMD right and left turning traffic onto I-95 northbound grew from 368 in 2010 to 401 in 2014. This data indicates a shifting emphasis between 2010 and 2014 to the southbound interstate traffic both in rate of growth and overall volumes. While the AM peak hour is experiencing the most growth, the PM peak hour appears to be where capacity issues will first become problematic. For traffic safety reasons, there is particular interest in the backups observed on the northbound off-ramp that now approach the mainline of I-95. This was not only reported in public comments on the draft EA but also observed in the field on June 12, 2014.

It was also noted in field observations on June 12, 2014 that queues extended at times in the westbound KMD lanes from the signalized intersection with First Park back to the signalized intersection at the southbound off ramp resulting in difficulties for traffic entering KMD from the southbound off ramp. It was also noted that west bound traffic on KMD between Washington Street and the northbound on-off ramps backs up to obstruct business entrances on KMD as well as access to Jackson/Jefferson Streets. Finally, public comments on the draft EA noted

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that left turns either out of the Hampton Inn onto KMD or out of the Airport Road onto KMD are difficult for motorists. This condition was also cited in the First Park and Airport Business Park Traffic Movement permits issued back in 2000.

Another consideration is the need for an emergency alternative to Exit 127 to reroute traffic coming from or destined to I-95 south. The public comment from the Hampton Inn noted this need particularly in the winter when closures occur due to accidents on the Exit 127 northbound off ramp.

At this point, it is important to step back and consider the area road network and its connectivity. In recent decades, development has often occurred in a linear pattern as illustrated by KMD and similar routes in many of Maine's larger communities. Often this linear development is spurred by connections to an interstate interchange as again is illustrated by KMD and similar routes in many other communities. This pattern of concentrating traffic on a strip or at a node contrasts with the more traditional roadway grid systems exemplified by downtowns which did a better job of dispersing traffic and providing interconnectivity. The negative consequences of continuing to concentrate regional traffic demand at Exit 127 and along KMD are important considerations to future economic development, public safety and transportation mobility.

I-95 and the Donald Carter Bridge are regionally significant transportation assets with substantial remaining traffic carrying capacity. The developing choke point at the Exit 127 interchange is expected to increasingly inhibit the flow of connecting traffic moving between these two assets. Redistributing some of the Exit 127 traffic load to rebalance the transportation network would improve function and efficiency by increasing options for the movement of freight, improving emergency response times and providing alternates on those occasions when crash events reduce function at Exit 127. The City of Waterville through its comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance and economic development initiatives seeks further development south of Kennedy Memorial Drive. As stated above, in November 2011, MaineDOT granted a Traffic Movement Permit for a proposed addition of 450,000 sq. ft. of industrial facilities along Trafton Road. This Permit was conditioned on improvements being made to add traffic capacity to the existing roadway network. With considerable available land, favorable zoning, public water, the presence of three phase power, nearby sewer service and the arrival of natural gas service to this area, existing transportation infrastructure deficiencies stand out as a notable omission in public investment policy.

The **purpose** of the proposed project is to:

- Improve regional mobility
- Reduce further deterioration of Kennedy Memorial Drive (KMD) traffic flow
- Complement and support existing land, water, sewer, electric and natural gas investments south of KMD
- Expand freight and passenger transportation connectivity

The effectiveness of the proposed project is judged by the following **need** criteria:

- Address the traffic congestion forecasted for the I-95/KMD interchange
- Optimize freight and passenger connectivity and balance area traffic distribution
- Minimize emergency response times generally and provide alternates to Exit 127 when closed
- Maximize truck freight traffic onto the Interstate and off of secondary roads

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## ALTERNATIVES

### Proposed Alternatives:

#### No-Action Alternative

The No-Action Alternative presumes that existing I-95 and its interchange configuration would remain unchanged, except for regular maintenance activities (e.g., resurfacing, traffic lane markings, spot shoulder and drainage improvements, or signage). Physical changes to increase system capacity would not occur except as noted below. This alternative would not result in any additional environmental impacts or loss of wetlands associated with I-95. Under the No-Action Alternative, traffic capacity is expected to increase, Levels of Service at KMD are expected to decline, and proposed development otherwise dependent upon KMD would be limited under Maine's Traffic Movement law.

First Park provides an illustration of the impact one planned development in the area could have on KMD capacity. It is not offered as a prediction but it is relevant to forecasting volumes on KMD and is an important consideration for the future issuance of traffic movement permits by MaineDOT. The First Park traffic movement permit issued in 2000 anticipates trip generation at full build-out of 2,730 in the AM peak hour and 2,557 in the PM peak hour. To date, even with 900 employees working in FirstPark, less than a third of the permitted traffic capacity is utilized. Nevertheless, the additional, as yet unrealized volumes allowed under the First Park permit and, for that matter, the Airport Business Park permit, must be assumed in the baseline when any new development contributing traffic to KMD is reviewed for a traffic movement permit. This means new development would be limited under the traffic movement law unless the KMD Exit 127 interchange was upgraded to accommodate additional traffic volumes.

If the proposed expansion of industrial facilities at the corner of West River Road and Trafton Road proceeds under this No-Action Alternative, the owner, under the terms of its Traffic Movement Permit, is obligated to construct:

- o a 12' wide, 100' long right turn with taper from Trafton Road onto West River Road
- o a 12' wide, 100' long right turn from West River Road onto Trafton Road with taper
- o a 12' wide, 100' long right turn lane from southbound West River road onto the Lyons Road with taper
- o a 12' wide, 100' long left turn lane from northbound West River Road onto Trafton Road with taper
- o a 12' wide, 100' long left turn lane from West River Road onto their existing industrial driveway

These results of the No-Action Alternative include impacts to a stream crossing. The stream runs parallel to West River Road at the intersection with Lyons Road. The recommended addition of a right turn lane from West River Road to Lyons Road under this scenario is expected to impact approximately 136 feet of the stream and would likely necessitate rerouting of the stream. The bank alongside the Road, where the stream runs and where the right turn lane would be located, is very steep. Wetland impacts at this location would amount to an estimated 0.06 acres.

To accommodate trip generation from Trafton Road and points north, Route 104 (West River Road) serves as the primary conveyance to the Lyons Road interchange. West River Road is improved with wider shoulders in Waterville than in Sidney. Road and shoulder width correlate with the incidence of traffic crashes. The narrower the road, the higher the expected incidence of crashes. MaineDOT crash data document this finding and also reveal that the best traffic safety performance is provided on the interstate system. Therefore, moving traffic away from narrow roads and onto I-95 as directly as possible is beneficial to public safety.

In addition to road width, the land uses along West River Road in Sidney are mostly residential and agricultural and differ from those in Waterville that reflect a mix of commercial, institutional, industrial and residential. This distinction is important to determine the best approach to accommodate traffic generators while minimizing traffic impacts. The Sidney agricultural uses regularly generate the movement of slow, over dimension farm equipment and cattle crossings along West River Road. The proposed Trafton interchange alternative avoids and minimizes this traffic safety conflict. It also reduces traffic impacts on residential uses while simultaneously reducing travel

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times and/or distances for the primary traffic generators to the north. To access I-95 from the intersection of Trafton Road and West River Road would require four less miles of travel using a Trafton Road interchange versus the existing Lyons Road interchange. This distance savings translates to time savings due to the speed limits allowed on I-95 compared to West River Road. The Lyons Road interchange provides important service to Sidney but for the developed areas of southern Waterville and Winslow its use requires more miles and time traveling on roads that are less safe with more negative effects on adjacent land uses compared with the proposed Trafton Road interchange.

The No-Action Alternative does not satisfy the Purpose and Need identified.

- o The no-action alternative does not reduce traffic congestion forecast for the I-95/KMD interchange.
- o The no-action alternative does not optimize freight and passenger connectivity and balance regional traffic distribution.
- o The no-action alternative does not minimize emergency response times generally or provide emergency alternates to Exit 127 for I-95 traffic coming from the south other than the Lyons Road interchange seven miles distant.
- o The no-action alternative does not maximize truck freight traffic onto I-95 and off of secondary roads.

The No-Action Alternative represents the baseline condition to which all other alternatives were compared.

#### **Diamond Interchange at Trafton Road**

This Alternative, based on Chapter 9 of the MaineDOT Highway Design Guide (MaineDOT, 2007), involved developing a diamond interchange at the existing Trafton Road overpass. A full design was not completed, and for the analysis an impact width of 60 feet was used to approximate impacts to natural resources. Anticipated impacts related to the alternative are shown in Table 1 below. A preliminary drawing of this alternative is included in Attachment 1 (Alternative Plans).

- This alternative satisfies the Purpose and Need identified. It was, however, dismissed from further consideration for these reasons:
  - o Greater impacts (acquisition) to adjacent properties (as compared to the preferred alternative).
  - o Greater disruption of area residences.
  - o Impact to wetland and non-wetland features (based on a review of NWI and USGS stream data, this alternative would result in 2.2 acres of wetland impact and 2 stream crossings).

#### **Re-routing of the Sidney Town Farm Road**

This alternative, based on Chapter 9 of the MaineDOT Highway Design Guide (MaineDOT, 2007), involved the removal of two bridges (Town Farm Road and Trafton Road) as well as re-routing Town Farm Road and portions of Eight Rod Road as well as the construction of a new overpass located to the south of the existing Trafton Road overpass. A full design was not completed, and for the analysis an impact width of 60 feet was used to approximate impacts to natural resources. Anticipated impacts related to the alternative are shown in Table 1 below. A preliminary drawing of this alternative is included in Attachment 1 (Alternative Plans).

- The re-routing of Town Farm Road satisfies the Purpose and Need identified. It was, however, dismissed from further consideration for these reasons:
  - o Greater impacts (acquisition) to adjacent properties and structures (as compared to the preferred alternative).
  - o Greater disruption of area residences.
  - o A much larger disturbance footprint.
  - o The preliminary opinion of probable construction cost estimate (2014 dollars) exceeded that of the preferred alternative (approximately \$17.1 million compared to approximately \$4.4 million under the

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preferred alternative). This preliminary cost estimate does not include cost for right of way, utility relocations, environmental mitigation, etc. (GPCE, 2014)

- o Greater impact to wetland and non-wetland features (based on a review of NWI and USGS stream data, this alternative would result in 4.0 acres of wetland impact and 6 stream crossings).

### **Preferred Alternative**

Based on extensive collaboration at the local level and a coordinated effort between MaineDOT and FHWA, the Preferred Alternative is a partial cloverleaf design located at Trafton Road near the Waterville-Sidney boundary. Proposed grading limits include 40' from the edge of pavement for portions of the ramp parallel with I-95, 60' total grading width for single lane ramps, and 90' of total width for two-lane ramps. The proposed interchange would utilize the existing two-lane Trafton Road Bridge crossing I-95. That bridge has a 24' width and is similar to the Lyons Road Bridge with a 26' width that is in use at the Lyons Road I-95 interchange.

The Preferred Alternative (Figure 3) Includes:

- A new I-95 Interchange of a partial clover leaf design located in the southern quadrants
- Widening under Trafton Road Bridge to accommodate acceleration and deceleration lanes.
- Retention of the City of Waterville portion of Junction Road by locating the footprint of the northbound on-off ramps closer to I-95
- Realignment of the southern tip of Eight Rod Road to opposite Junction Road
- Adding a 12' wide, 100' long right turn lane from Trafton Road to West River Road with taper
- Adding a 12' wide, 100' long right turn lane from West River Road to Trafton Road with taper

The new interchange is proposed to utilize typical parallel single lane entrance and exit ramps meeting the requirements in Chapter 9 of the MaineDOT Highway Design Guide (MaineDOT, 2007). There are small exceptions required in order to maintain the existing bridge which will require the shoulder width to be reduced to 3 feet under the bridge, this design exception is noted in the IJR (2012).

The Preferred Alternative also minimizes impacts to natural resources, compared to other build alternatives at Trafton Road, by limiting impacts to area wetlands and reducing the number of intermittent stream crossings as a result of the proposed alignment. The majority of this alternative occurs on lands previously disturbed by historical agricultural activities or cut/fill from the construction of the I-95 corridor. Impacted wetlands are degraded systems with modified functions and values (Kleinschmidt, 2013). The Preferred Alternative occurs entirely on vacant lands and therefore no relocations are required (Table 1).

A design drawing of the Preferred Alternative appears in Attachment 1.

### **Mitigation measures to be used to "minimize harm":**

The Preferred Alternative was selected based on several criteria, as shown in Table 1 below. Of the 1.57 acres of wetland impacts, the largest single wetland impact area (0.7 acres) occurs in wetland 01SKN, which is a large emergent wetland within an area previously in and adjacent to agricultural uses to the west of I-95. The design limits the impacts to the eastern fringe of this wetland. Other wetland and stream impacts occur within wetlands that are actively mowed or hayed during the drier months of the summer. The intermittent stream crossings (Shown on Figure 3) occur at portions of the stream which are narrow and result in a lesser amount of linear feet of impact. Other alternatives considered as part of the alternatives analysis result in more impacts to wetland and upland habitats. In addition, MaineDOT will ensure best management practices (BMPs) will be used for sediment and erosion control, to further minimize impacts to any streams and wetland habitat. MaineDOT will also ensure that specific stormwater BMPs will be implemented to avoid direct run-off into nearby streams.

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**Restoration and landscaping of disturbed areas:**

While there is an overall increase in impervious surfaces, a reduction in impervious surface is expected due to the realignment of Eight Rod Road of 1,230 sq. ft.

**Table 1. Comparison of impacts for the alternatives analysis.**

Alternative	Length (Ft.)	Wetland Impact (Acres)	Stream Crossings		Vernal Pools (Amphibian breeding)	Structures <sup>1</sup>	Farmland Impacts (Acres)
			Intermittent	Perennial			
Partial Clover-leaf (Preferred)	8,900	1.57	3	0	0	0	2.9
Diamond Interchange	11,650	2.2	2	0	0	2	2.2
Re-Route of Town Farm Rd.	19,400	4.0	4	2	0	0	4.8

<sup>1</sup>Structures pertains to the potential need for the removal of commercial space or residences. This does not include property (i.e., land).

Based on a review of the potential environmental impacts resulting from the No Action, Diamond Interchange, Re-routing of Town Farm Road, and Preferred (partial clover-leaf) alternatives, the Preferred Alternative addresses the project purpose and need as well as limits the potential for environmental impacts.

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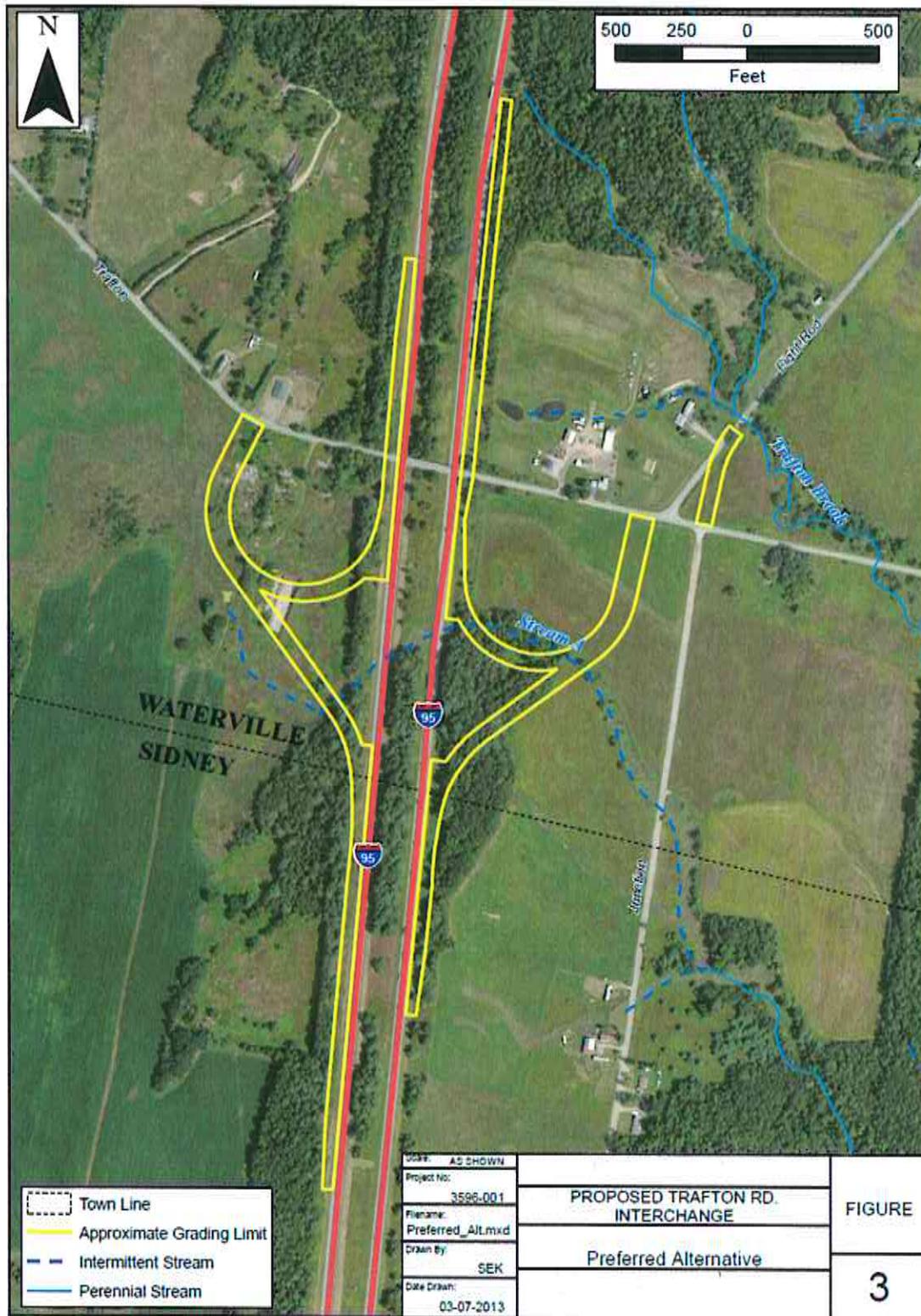
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**Other Preliminary Concepts Considered:**

The following preliminary concepts were considered during the initial analysis, but presented issues that did not allow them to be reviewed further.

**KMD Upgrade**

To keep the KMD/Exit 127 interchange functioning at a LOS D or better into the 2036 design year, modifications are recommended including adding a left turn auxiliary lane for eastbound KMD traffic turning left onto FirstPark, dual right turns on the northbound off-ramp (there is one right turn lane presently), an additional westbound through lane starting before the northbound on/off ramps and extending past the FirstPark access drive and the addition of a divided highway due to safety concerns associated with left turns out of adjacent roadways. The recommendation to add a lane westbound on KMD would require replacement of the two I-95 bridges over KMD to accommodate the new KMD width underneath. These bridges received substructure repairs in 2008. With these two bridges receiving deck replacements within the next 5-10 years, their remaining service life is estimated by MaineDOT to be 35-40 years. The southbound I-95 bridge includes a third lane on the bridge deck to accommodate merging traffic for the southbound on ramp. The replacement of these bridges is estimated to cost approximately \$9,500,000 (2014 dollars) and this estimate excludes approach work on the mainline necessitated by an expected increase in height of the bridge deck. Also excluded from this cost estimate are the additional turning lanes and through lane mentioned previously. Implementing the additional recommendations noted above would add to this estimate. Given the already high traffic levels at this interchange, construction management of traffic would be complex and costly.

While this alternative compares favorably as to impacts on the natural environment with few anticipated, it was dismissed due to not sufficiently meeting purpose and need, the relatively high associated cost and the potential disruption of access for existing businesses if a divided highway section is created. This alternative does address traffic congestion forecasted for the I-95/KMD interchange but will not relieve traffic growth along the KMD corridor. KMD has received considerable attention and investment in recent years involving the implementation of a series of transportation system management (TSM) actions, most recently a signalization synchronization project. Potential further TSM actions are not considered feasible. This alternative is similar in most respects to the no-action alternative. The disadvantages of this alternative include:

- It does not optimize freight and passenger connectivity and balance area traffic distribution
- It does not minimize emergency response times generally or provide emergency alternates to Exit 127 for I-95 traffic coming from the south other than the Lyons Road interchange seven miles distant.
- It does not maximize truck freight traffic onto I-95 and off of secondary roads.
- It does not accommodate existing development south of KMD

As a result, the KMD Upgrade Alternative did not sufficiently meet the purpose and need of the project and was dismissed early from further consideration.

**Waterville Webb Road Interchange**

The Webb Road alternative was dismissed from consideration, as the City of Waterville previously stated they are not in favor of an interchange at Webb Road. In addition, this alternative would not meet the desirable minimum interchange spacing. The interchange spacing between Webb Road and KMD was estimated to be approximately 1.4 miles. According to "A Policy on Design Standard Interstate System" published by AASHTO in January 2005 and adopted by FHWA in accordance with 23 CFR 625.4, the recommended interchange spacing is 3 miles in rural situations and 1 mile in urban situations based on crossroad to crossroad spacing. In urban areas, spacing of less than one mile may be developed by grade-separated ramps or by collector-distributor roads. In Augusta, a collector-distributor was constructed in 2013 between northbound Exit 112 and Exit 113 to allow for merging/diverging and accelerating/decelerating traffic and qualifies for urban spacing, while Webb Road does not.

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**Town Farm Road Interchange**

An interchange at Town Farm Road would impact relatively more property owners and residences, when compared with the Preferred Alternative. The Town of Sidney was not a proponent of the Town Farm Road Interchange. It was not a competitive alternative for meeting Purpose and Need since it was furthest from Exit 127 of all alternatives considered and would therefore offer the least traffic relief to KMD. Further, this alternative would offer the least benefit in moving trucks efficiently onto the interstate and would offer the least improvement to balancing area traffic distribution.

**Sidney-Waterville Interchange Accessing Junction Road to the East and a new Service Road to the West Connecting Town Farm Road and Trafton Road**

This alternative was rejected by MaineDOT in consultation with FHWA due to design inconsistencies with other area I-95 interchanges. Additionally, this alternative was not favored by Waterville or Sidney. This alternative involved a degree of separation between the northbound and southbound on-off ramps of approximately one mile. This alternative relied upon the existing bridges at Town Farm Road and Trafton Road but placed the ramps in between these two structures. Northbound on-off traffic would access the interstate from an improved Junction Road while southbound on-off traffic would access the interstate from a new road connecting Trafton and Town Farm Roads west of I-95. From this concept arose the "Rerouting of the Sidney Town Farm Road" alternative discussed previously which was rejected in part due to unacceptable relative environmental impacts. This concept would have a similarly large footprint and similar environmental impacts to the "Rerouting of the Sidney Town Farm Road" alternative.

**Roundabout Design at Trafton Road**

This alternative included the location of roundabouts on Trafton Road on either side of the existing bridge crossing I-95 with the ramps to I-95 located south of Trafton Road. The alternative was considered and rejected as unnecessarily, limiting design flexibility if and when the existing Trafton I-95 overpass bridge reaches its useful life and needs to be replaced. This alternative did not offer any advantage over the preferred alternative. It would meet Purpose and Need but to no greater degree than the preferred alternative. It would involve more takings and impacts to three residences and one commercial structure.

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**Impacts Checklist:**

	No	Yes
<b><u>Public Involvement</u></b> – Is there substantial public opposition to proposed action?	X	
<b><u>Right-of-Way/Land Use</u></b> – Does the preferred alternative include a residential or commercial displacement, or acquisition of property rights that will result in substantial abutter impacts?	X	
<b><u>Hazardous Materials</u></b> – Are there any known State or Federal Uncontrolled Oil and Hazardous Material sites within or adjacent to the action?	X	
<b><u>Cultural Resources (Section 106)</u></b> – Has the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concurred that the preferred alternative will have other than “no effect” on the properties eligible for or listed in the National Register of Historic Places?	X	
<b><u>Section 4(f) or Section 6(f)</u></b> – Does preferred alternative require use of any property protected by Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act (except for Transportation Enhancement requisitions and preservation of historic sites), or Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act?	X	
<b><u>Wetlands</u></b> – Does action require an Army Corps of Engineers Programmatic Category III (Individual) Permit?	X	
<b><u>Water Quality/Sole Source Aquifers</u></b> – Is the proposed action over or within a recharge area of a sole source aquifer and/or does the proposed action adversely impact the quality of adjacent surface water resources?	X	
<b><u>Wild and Scenic Rivers</u></b> – Is preferred alternative in, across or adjacent to a river designated as a component or proposed to be included in the National System of Wild and Scenic Rivers?	X	
<b><u>Scenic Byways</u></b> – If preferred alternative is proposed on or adjacent to any State or Federal designated Scenic Byway, has MaineDOT determined that the action would have an adverse effect on the Byway (according to the Scenic Byways Coordinator, Scenic Byways Board, and Corridor Management Committee/Plan, as appropriate)?	X	
<b><u>Noise</u></b> – Do impacts of the preferred alternative fail to conform to the Noise Abatement Criteria levels (as stated in 23 CFR 772) and MaineDOT’s Noise Policy?	X	
<b><u>Air Quality</u></b> – Does the preferred alternative fail to meet Air Quality and/or Conformity requirements?	X	
<b><u>Threatened or Endangered Species (Section 7)</u></b> – If preferred alternative is proposed in an area known to have Federally listed Endangered Threatened Species or Critical Habitat, will the action affect any of these resources?	X	
<b><u>Essential Fish Habitat</u></b> – Is expanded consultation required for substantial adverse effects to EFH as a result of the proposed action and has the National Marine Fisheries Service issued their conservation recommendations?	X	
<b><u>Other</u></b> – Does preferred alternative adversely impact any known critical or unique natural resource, the quality of adjacent surface water resources, community cohesiveness, planned community growth, or beneficial land use patterns?	X	

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## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

### Public Involvement:

The following public involvement occurred during the preparation of the Trafton Road Interchange Project, Interchange Justification Report (IJR, 2012) and this Environmental Assessment. All written comments received on the project were requested of the Town of Sidney, the City of Waterville and the MaineDOT. The one written comment on file for these entities in opposition to the project is noted below. Favorable comments received are noted as well. Based on the comments received to date, there is not an indication of substantial public opposition to the project. The proposed preferred alternative takes into account concerns raised through public engagement.

January 4, 2010 Meeting of the Sidney Board of Selectmen: Initial briefing on project proposal

January 19, 2010 Public Meeting Convened by the Sidney Board of Selectmen: Public provided an overview of the proposed project given by Trafton Properties. Comments were received on community land use preferences. Meeting resulted in a March 29, 2010 letter from the Board of Selectmen in support of reviving the I-95 Trafton Road interchange project proposal.

February 2010 Board of Directors Meeting of the Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce: Trafton Properties presented the need for improved access to Trafton Road via I-95. Meeting resulted in a March 4, 2010 letter of support to the Waterville Mayor.

March 9, 2010 Meeting with the Waterville Development Corporation: Trafton Properties presented the proposed project to the WDC and provided briefing materials. The WDC voted unanimously to support the project and sent a letter of support to the Waterville Mayor on March 23, 2010.

March 16, 2010 Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Central Maine Growth Council: Trafton Properties presented the proposed project to the CMGC and provided briefing materials. The CMGC voted to support the project and sent a letter of support to the Waterville Mayor on March 30, 2010.

April 6, 2010 Waterville City Council Meeting: City Council Resolution 45-2010 passed unanimously by the Council in support of an interchange at Trafton Road. Approved by the Mayor April 8, 2010.

September 7, 2010 City Council Meeting: City Council Resolution 118-2010 passed unanimously by the City Council to form an I-95 Interstate Access Project Advisory Committee. Approved by the Mayor September 10, 2010.

October 20, 2010 Trafton Interchange Project Advisory Committee Meeting, City Council Chambers: Discussion of project purpose and need, alternatives analysis, and next steps moving forward.

November 15, 2010 Meeting of the Town of Sidney Planning Board: Briefing provided by Trafton Properties on the project proposal, project development process, design concept alternatives and representation on the Project Advisory Committee.

November 17, 2010 Trafton Interchange Project Advisory Committee Meeting, City Council Chambers: Discussion of November 4<sup>th</sup> meeting with MaineDOT officials including then Commissioner David Cole, Kat Beaudoin, Dave Bernhardt, and Tom Gorrill of Gorrill Palmer Consulting Engineers.

December 8, 2010 Trafton Interchange Project Advisory Committee Meeting, City Council Chambers: Review of meeting with the MaineDOT and FHWA. A determination was made that the project requires completion of an Interstate Justification Report (IJR). Consensus was reached on the purpose and need for the project and the preferred alternative to recommend to the City.

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January 11, 2011 Public Meeting, Waterville City Council Chambers: Public informational meeting providing an overview of the proposed interchange project prior to City Council meeting of January 18, 2011. A public notice was provided as well as notification to property owners in the vicinity of the project in Oakland, Waterville and Sidney.

Written comment dated January 16, 2011 transmitted by email from Greg and Sandy Cormier to the City and MaineDOT: The letter raised seven objections pertaining to increased traffic and related noise and lights, project proximity, undesired growth, anticipated reduced property values and anticipated widening of Trafton Road. In response, the current project concept design (southbound on-off ramp) is relocated approximately 200 feet east of the Cormier house, no widening of Trafton Road is proposed, the predominant traffic generated by the proposed interchange is expected to travel east away from the Cormier house and property values typically rise for properties located in proximity to an interchange.

January 18, 2011 City Council Meeting, Waterville Council Chambers: Public comments were received in support of the project as a means to relieve KMD traffic, reroute heavy trucks onto shorter routes to the Interstate and generally support economic development. Opponents expressed concern for the cost to upgrade Trafton Road, undesired changes to the rural character of the area, increased truck traffic, adverse impacts on property values and whether the economy would be stimulated as a result. Following public comments, the Council voted to accept the Project Advisory Committee's recommendations as to the purpose and need and proposed alternatives for MaineDOT to consider. City Council Resolution 19-2011 passed (6 for, 1 against) and was approved by the Mayor on January 19, 2011.

Letter to the Editor, Morning Sentinel, January 19, 2010 expressing skepticism as to the economic benefits of the project and concerns over the City paying to widen Trafton Road.

May 24, 2011 Trafton Properties and MaineDOT Traffic Movement Permit Scoping Meeting, Waterville City Council Chambers: Discussion and general questions related to proposed expansion of light manufacturing, distribution and warehousing space by Trafton Realty, LLC. Public provided opportunity to comment on scope of traffic movement study. Public notice and mail notice to abutters provided. Minutes recorded.

April 8, 2013 Sidney Board of Selectmen Meeting: Project update provided and request made for additional Town representative to serve on Project Advisory Committee. Input requested on approach to potential discontinuation of Junction Road.

May 6, 2013 I-95 Interchange Project Advisory Committee, Waterville City Council Chambers: Committee reconstituted and reconvened. Discussion of project background and review of project status, alternatives, purpose and need revisions and options for Junction Road.

November 19, 2013. Waterville City Council briefing with public notice and invitation to Project Advisory Committee: Discussion addressed project financing alternatives and proposed use of the MaineDOT Development Partnership Initiative.

May 8, 2014, Public Hearing and Open House at Thomas College: Public notice was provided and the proceedings were recorded and available in Attachment 9 of this EA.

### **Right-of-Way / Land Use:**

All property required to complete the preferred alternative, that is not already owned by the State of Maine as part of the existing I-95 right-of-way, is owned by the City of Waterville, Trafton Realty LLC, or Trafton Properties. The estimated permanent acreage not already owned by the State that is needed to construct the preferred alternative totals an estimated 23.62 acres of which all is owned by Trafton Realty LLC and/or Trafton Properties. No temporary right-of-way (ROW) is anticipated to be needed. The estimated cost to acquire this additional right-of-way is \$67,000.

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Current zoning for the study area (site of preferred alternative) is Contract Zoned-Commercial (D) by the City of Waterville. The Town of Sidney does not have zoning. Rural Residential zones will not be impacted as a result of the preferred alternative, but are adjacent to the north of Trafton Road. Construction of the preferred alternative will occur on commercially zoned properties (owned by Trafton Realty, LLC and Trafton Properties). This zone is designated as commercial for business that requires close proximity to the interstate (e.g., truck stops, warehouses, etc.). The area where ROW is needed is bisected by I-95 and is dominated by agriculture and forest lands. No relocations are required. All ROW acquisition will follow Public Law 91-646, the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970.

**Hazardous Materials:**

A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment (Phase 1) was completed in the spring and summer of 2013 with a final report issued on October 23, 2013 (AEH, 2013). It was conducted to determine the presence or absence of environmental contaminants within the study area. Based on findings outlined in the Phase 1 (AEH, 2013), the environmental liability risk associated with the study area is low and it is unlikely that any hazardous materials will be encountered during any construction activities. A detailed search of State and Federal databases as well as a thorough review of historic maps and property deeds found no evidence of hazardous materials on the site. A copy of this report is included as Attachment 2 (Phase 1 Environmental Investigation Report).

**Cultural Resources (Section 106):**

An investigation of cultural resources was completed within the study area (Figure 4) in 2013. The Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) noted that archaeological sites are unlikely to be impacted by the proposed project, based on a conditional exclusion area (personal communication, MHPC, July 18, 2013). Correspondence related to cultural resources is included as Attachment 3. In addition, the MaineDOT reviewed this project pursuant to the Maine Programmatic Agreement (PA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. In a letter dated August 28, 2013, the Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with the MaineDOT finding that the proposed project would not have an effect on historic properties. In accordance with 36 CFR Part 800.4, the following identification efforts of historic properties were made:

- 800.4(a)(1) - The Area of Potential Effect (APE) includes properties/structures adjacent to the road and within the project limits. The project limits are defined by the footprint of the preferred alternative and the immediately adjacent area. Properties/structures adjacent to this project limit are considered to be within the APE. The APE is shown as a defined polygon in Figure 4.
- 800.4(a)(2) – Review of existing information consisted of researching the National Register and MHPC survey databases. MHPC archaeological staff has also reviewed the undertaking.
- 800.4(a)(3) – The City of Waterville was contacted via letter and asked to comment on knowledge of, or concerns with, historic properties in the area, and any issues with the undertaking's effect on historic properties. The City was also requested to provide information regarding local historic societies or groups and has not identified any issues.
- 800.4(a)(4) – Letters outlining project location and scope were sent to the four federally recognized Tribes in Maine. The Penobscot Indian Nation and the Aroostook Band of Micmacs provided the only responses and both indicated the proposed project appeared to have no impact of significance to them. Their entire responses appear in Attachment 3. The Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and the Passamaquoddy Tribes have not replied nor identified any issues to date.
- 800.4(c) – The MaineDOT conducted historic architectural surveys within the APE, and determined that no buildings or other structures, eligible for the National Register, were located within the area of potential effect for the proposed project. MHPC archaeological staff also reviewed this undertaking and recommended 'no archaeological properties affected conditional on an exclusion area'.

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In accordance with 36 CFR Part 800.4(d), *the Maine DOT has determined, and the Maine State Historic Preservation Commission has concurred, that no historic or prehistoric archaeological properties or historic architectural properties will be effected by the undertaking. In addition, no work will take place within the identified exclusion area.*

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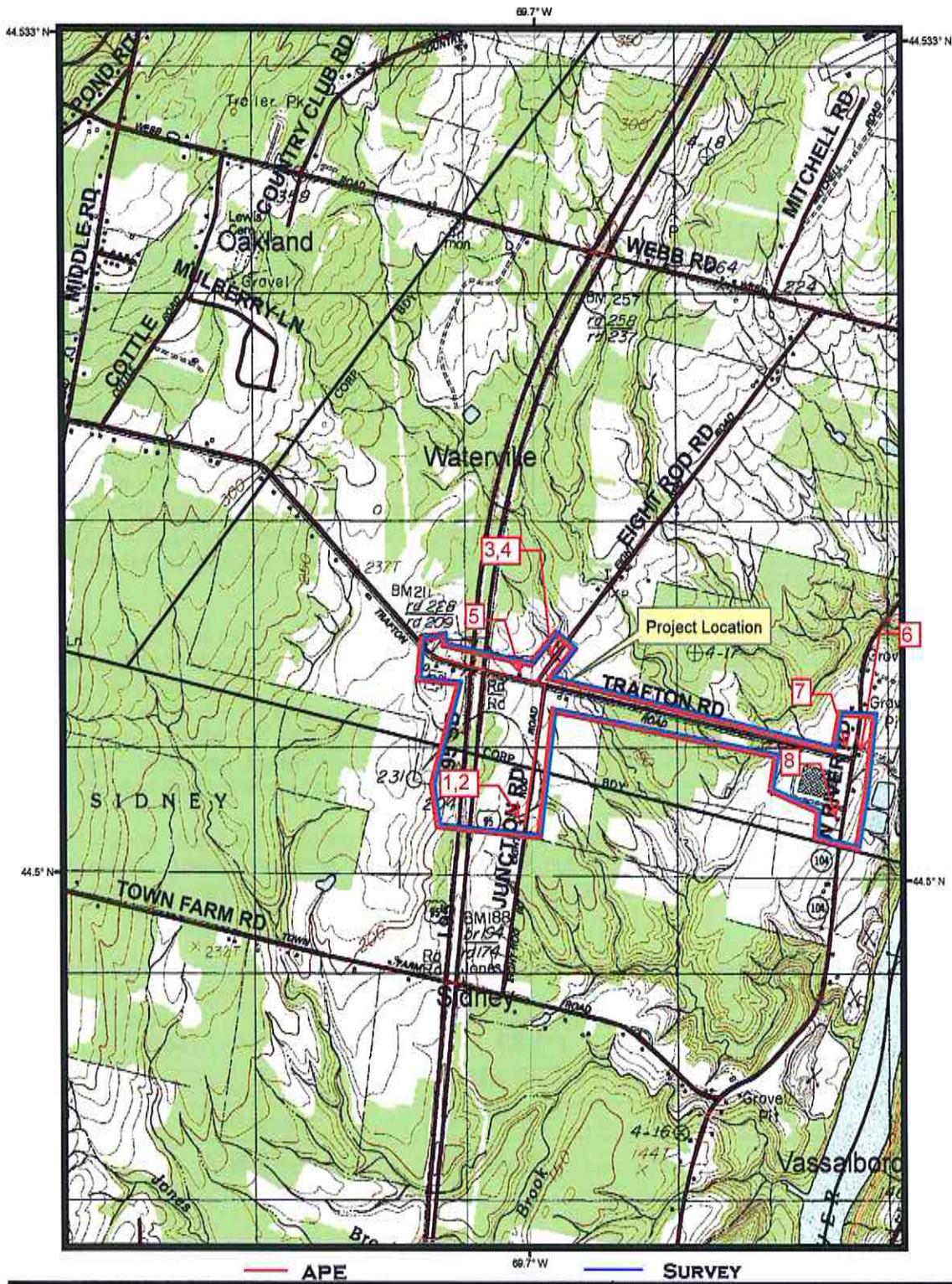


Figure 4. Area of Potential Project Effect

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**Section 4(f) and Section 6(f):**

The proposed action does not require the use of any properties protected under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act. The proposed action also does not require any acquisition of property protected under Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act.

**Wetlands:**

The Trafton Interchange Natural Resource Existing Conditions Report (Attachment 4) contains an in depth analysis of aquatic resources within the study area (Kleinschmidt, 2013). Wetlands are primarily palustrine emergent marsh (PEM). Most of the PEM is wet meadow where agricultural uses and mowing have prevented succession to palustrine scrub-shrub (PSS). Smaller areas of palustrine forested wetlands (PFO) occur in pockets just outside of the I-95 cleared ROWs. Very little PSS occurs in the study area. Several wetlands have been partially filled or modified by historic land use, associated with agriculture (e.g., excavated farm ponds). The principle functions of the PEM wetlands on the site are limited due to wetland size and disturbance and function mostly to filter/retain sediment and retain and transform nutrients from surrounding agricultural activities and roads. The largest wetland (01SKN) located to the west of the I-95 corridor functions primarily to retain sediments and nutrients and may offer some flood flow retention. The PFO wetlands primarily offer wildlife habitat as a principle function (Kleinschmidt, 2013). No vernal pools or amphibian breeding areas will be impacted as a result of the preferred alternative and none were identified within the study area during the spring of 2013 field work. Tables 2 and 3 below present impact calculations associated with the preferred alternative. Additional information on natural resources is presented in the Natural Resource Assessment (Attachment 4).

One intermittent stream occurs within the footprint of the preferred alternative. This intermittent stream is unnamed and conveys seasonal flows east to Trafton Brook. The stream becomes perennial prior to entering Trafton Brook, but is intermittent within the project area. Trafton Brook and Lowes Brook cross Trafton Road to the east of the proposed interchange. The preferred alternative has unavoidable impacts to Stream A (unnamed intermittent stream) associated with the construction of the partial cloverleaf interchange. For all stream crossings, the culvert widths will be a minimum of 1.2 (1.17) times bankfull width and will reflect the latest stream crossing Best Management Practices (BMPs) (e.g., not perched or undersized and would leave existing natural substrate).

Based on analysis of potential impacts, the preferred alternative disturbs the least amount of environmental resources of the build alternatives studied while still meeting the purpose and need. There is no practicable alternative to the preferred alternative and the proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands.

**Table 2. Wetland Impacts Resulting from the Preferred Alternative**

Wetland Type	Existing Wetland Acres	Permanent Fill (sq.ft.)	Permanent Clearing (sq.ft.)	Impact (Acres)
PEM	18.0	51,606.66	N/A	1.19
PFO	2.6	13,616.59	3,049.41	0.38
<b>Total</b>	<b>20.6</b>	<b>65,223.25</b>	<b>3,049.41</b>	<b>1.57</b>

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**Table 3. Linear Distance of Stream A Crossings under the Preferred Alternative**

Location	Proposed Crossing Type	Linear Ft.
Near the merge of the NB off and on ramps	7' diameter RCP <sup>1</sup>	96
Near the NB on ramp gore	7' diameter RCP	60
SB on ramp	7' diameter RCP	60
<b>Total</b>		<b>216</b>

<sup>1</sup>Reinforced Concrete Pipe

**Water Quality/Sole Source Aquifers:**

The proposed action is not over or within a recharge area of a sole source aquifer. The proposed action also does not adversely impact the quality of adjacent surface water resources. All work for the project, as proposed, will be completed using accepted BMPs for sedimentation and erosion control (MaineDOT, 2008). Water quality will not be affected as a result of the proposed interchange.

**Wild and Scenic Rivers:**

There are no Wild and Scenic Rivers within the study area.

**Scenic Byways:**

There are no Scenic Byways within the study area.

**Noise:**

A highway traffic noise analysis was prepared to determine the potential noise impacts associated with the construction of a new full-service I-95 interchange at Trafton Road in Waterville. The highway traffic noise levels were predicted for the existing condition (2011) and the future No-action and Build Alternatives for the design year (2036). This report is included as Attachment 5.

The noise analysis was conducted in accordance with the following FHWA and MaineDOT regulatory and policy guidelines:

- Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 772 Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise. (23 CFR 772);
- FHWA Highway Traffic Noise: Analysis and Abatement Guidance, December 2011, and;
- MaineDOT Highway Traffic Noise Policy, July 18, 2012.

Traffic noise levels were predicted at five receptors within the study area for the existing condition (2011) and design-year (2036) no-action and build conditions. Noise receptors were located at 255, 263, and 229 Trafton Road as well as 599 Eight Rod Road and 102 Junction Road. The receptors included a vacant commercial property and residences. The results of the traffic noise analysis demonstrate that traffic noise impacts are not expected to reach the Impact Criteria baseline at any receptors under all three modeled scenarios. Table 4 shows

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the results of the traffic noise analysis completed by the MaineDOT. Based on the results of the traffic noise analysis, highway traffic noise impacts are not expected to exceed regulatory thresholds and evaluation of abatement measures is not warranted (MaineDOT, 2013).

**Table 4. Results of Traffic Noise Analysis (dBA)**

Receptor ID	Impact Criteria	Existing 2011 Noise Levels	No-action 2036 Noise Levels	Build 2036 Noise Levels	Exceeds Thresholds?
R1	71	59	61	64	No
R2	66	56	59	61	No
R3	66	59	62	64	No
R4	66	54	55	55	No
R5	66	55	56	56	No

**Air Quality:**

The Clean Air Act established National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for six priority pollutants to protect public health and the environment. Areas that do not meet the NAAQS are designated as nonattainment areas and, as a result, are subject to transportation conformity. Maintenance areas are geographic regions that were previously designated as nonattainment, but are now consistently meeting the NAAQS. Transportation conformity requires non-attainment and maintenance areas to demonstrate that all future transportation projects will not hinder the area from reaching and maintaining its attainment goals.

On July 20, 2012, the entire State of Maine was designated as attainment for the 2008 8-hour ozone NAAQS, thus transportation conformity is not required for the 2008 NAAQS.

The project is located within Kennebec County, an area that has been identified as being in attainment for the 8-hour ozone standard and all other NAAQS; therefore, transportation conformity does not apply.

**Threatened and Endangered Species (Section 7):**

Routine letters of inquiry were sent to the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW), Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR), and Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) to identify potentially rare or State protected species that may occur within the study area. No state listed species were identified by these agencies in responses received (Attachment 6).

Pursuant to an agreement between FHWA, MaineDOT, USFWS, USACE and NOAA-NMFS dated 1/15/2014, MaineDOT has reviewed in house database layers accepted by all the signatories as the best scientific and commercial data available and has found that the only federally listed threatened or endangered species that may be in the area is the Endangered Atlantic salmon and it's designated critical habitat, and the only federally proposed species that may be in the area is the Northern Long-Eared Bat.

**Atlantic Salmon**

Streams within and adjacent to the project action area are within designated critical habitat for Atlantic salmon and within the Distinct Population Segment of Atlantic salmon. Because the preferred alternative only crosses one intermittent stream and MaineDOT has committed to implementing stormwater BMPs which will ensure that there is no direct linkage between stormwater runoff (e.g., sediment mobilization or elevated water temperatures) and Trafton Brook (note that the intermittent stream flows into Trafton Brook), the proposed project will result in no effect to both Atlantic salmon and its designated critical habitat.

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**Northern Long-Eared Bat**

On October 2, 2013, the USFWS announced its proposal to list the northern long-eared bat (NLEB) (*Myotis septentrionalis*) as an endangered species throughout its range under the Endangered Species Act (USFWS, Federal Register, October 2, 2013). The NLEB requires sheltered locations with high humidity and above freezing temperatures for overwintering habitat and their summer roosts often consist of snags and large-diameter trees. As a result of recent and historic agricultural activity within the immediate area, these habitat characteristics are not common in this project location. Based on field work, conducted during the summer of 2013, large diameter trees within the forested portion of the site are limited. The remaining trees on the site are approximately 50-60 years of age and likely represent natural succession from site clearing during the construction of I-95. Tree species within forested areas include sugar maple, red maple, green ash, and hemlock. During field work, there were few large diameter species identified with flaking bark or cavities sufficient enough to provide roosting opportunities. NLEB emerge at dusk to fly through the understory of forested hillsides and ridges feeding on insects, which they catch while in flight. These general habitat types would remain unaffected by the proposed project at the landscape scale. The Trafton Road bridge will not be modified as part of the preferred alternative. The NLEB, while generally thought of as a gleaner bat, uses both gleaning and hawking as a method of prey capture (Ratcliffe and Dawson, 2003). Research related to noise avoidance in the greater mouse-eared bat (*Myotis myotis*), a gleaner species native to Europe, concluded that foraging areas located close to highways or other locations with a high degree of noise are degraded in suitability as foraging areas. In addition, North American species such as the NLEB may also be affected by acoustic habitat degradation (Schuab et al, 2008). The proposed interchange will not have a substantial impact on the available habitat for the northern long-eared bat and therefore, the proposed action will not jeopardize the continued existence of the Northern Long-Eared Bat.

On June 30, 2014, the USFWS published a 6-month extension to the final determination of whether or not to list the Northern Long-Eared Bat as endangered under the Endangered Species Act, delaying the final rule and determination to April 2, 2015. Section 7 consultation will be initiated should new information reveal effects of the proposed action that may affect the Northern Long-Eared Bat in a manner or to an extent not previously considered, or, if the Northern Long-Eared Bat becomes listed under the ESA and may be affected by the proposed action.

**Essential Fish Habitat:**

In accordance with 50 CFR 600, Sections 305(b)(2) and 305(b)(4)(B) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and management Act, and the August 28, 2012 FHWA Memorandum designating MaineDOT as the non-federal representative to conduct EFH consultations for the Federal-Aid Highway Program in Maine, MaineDOT has determined that the proposed action will have no effect on Essential Fish Habitat and therefore Essential Fish Habitat consultation is not required.

**Other:**

The preferred alternative does not adversely impact any known critical or unique natural resources, the quality of adjacent surface water resources, community cohesiveness, planned community growth, or beneficial land use patterns. The preferred alternative was supported by the City and the Town of Sidney by formal vote of the elected officials. (City resolution 1/18/11 and Town of Sidney 3/29/10 letter from Board of Selectmen) The project has been a policy objective of the City of Waterville since the 1980's and appears as such in the current Comprehensive Plan adopted in 1997. The project is also recognized in the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments Corridor Management Plan, MaineDOT STIP, and the MaineDOT 2014-2016 Work Plan.

A mapped Deer Wintering Area occurs just north of the proposed interchange. Communication with the MDIFW (Attachment 6) concluded that the project, as proposed, would not impact this area.

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## SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

### Early Coordination:

Early coordination with the Federal and State resource agencies was conducted at the May 14, 2013 MaineDOT monthly interagency meeting. The agencies indicated that primary concerns included the identification and analysis of indirect and cumulative impacts on natural resources and the need for an alternatives analysis. Attending agencies included: MaineDOT, Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Maine Department of Environmental Protection (Maine DEP), and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

### Flood Plain Encroachments/Stream Channel/Waterway/Groundwater/Water Table:

One intermittent stream (Stream A in Figure 3) and two first order perennial streams occur within the study area. The intermittent stream is an unnamed drainage that conveys flows during high water periods, and includes several areas of emergent marsh with no defined channel. This intermittent drainage does become perennial (outside and downstream of the study area) and is a tributary to Trafton Brook, which is the first perennial stream encountered along Trafton Road traveling east of I-95. The preferred alternative does not cross over Trafton Brook or Lowes Brook, the perennial streams within the study area. Trafton Brook includes some area of forested and scrub-shrub floodplain. MaineDOT and the FHWA are required by law to comply with Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management. To ensure compliance, MaineDOT evaluates each project to assess and reduce long-term and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains. Flood plains, stream channels, waterways, and the water table will not be affected by the preferred alternative. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodmap for the area is included as Attachment 7.

### Farmland/Agriculture:

The study area contains areas of prime farmland as well as farmland of statewide importance. Based on soil survey information, the study area includes 13.2 acres of farmland of statewide importance and 0.4 acres of prime farmland. Under the preferred alternative approximately 2.9 acres of farmland will be converted. Conversion will occur within the construction limits of the project.

On July 22, 2014 form BRCS-CPA-106 for the proposed interchange build alternatives was submitted to the Kennebec Valley Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) for the consideration of farmland impacts.

The Farm Land Conversion Impact Rating Sheet is provided as Attachment 8. The preferred alternative, as proposed, will result in no substantial impacts to farmlands.

### Economic:

Waterville ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in Maine for taxable retail sales and 9<sup>th</sup> for jobs with a very substantial portion of this activity dependent upon the free flow function of the KMD I-95 interchange. In spite of these economic rankings, Waterville is characterized as a community in economic distress with low median household incomes. It has a high property tax rate driven by relatively low residential property valuations and a high incidence of tax exempt property. Compounding Waterville's economic dilemma is that it is relatively small geographically with only 14.1 square miles with the opportunity for further growth lying primarily to the south of KMD. The proposed action is located to the south of KMD within an area of Waterville currently zoned for commercial and light industrial uses in proximity to public water, sewer and natural gas utilities. A new interchange will provide an alternative to the KMD I-95 interchange thereby supporting existing Waterville economic activity even as new development is accommodated to the south that builds the City's tax base and supports job creation.

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**Environmental Justice:**

The project, as proposed, would be situated on privately owned lands and will not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects to minority or low income populations.

**Other Construction Projects:**

There are no known roadway projects within the vicinity of the proposed interchange at this time.

**Construction Impacts:**

Based on the location of the proposed interchange and through adherence to best management practices, the project will not have adverse air, water, noise, traffic or safety construction impacts.

Most of the construction activities required to develop the partial clover leaf interchange will occur outside of the roadway, and will therefore largely avoid impacts to traffic. The work of consequence on Trafton Road will be at the intersection of the proposed on and off ramps with Trafton Road, the realignment of the southern tip of Eight Rod Road with Junction Road and the addition of right turn lanes at the Trafton-West River Road intersection. Trafton Road currently carries low traffic volumes. Alternate east-west routes are available to the north on Webb Road and to the South on Town Farm Road. No road closures or detours are expected during the construction of the project.

**Permits/Mitigation:**

The final design of the project will require state and federal environmental permits which include a Tier 3 Natural Resources Protection Act Permit (NRPA) (due to wetland impacts of greater than one acre and the crossing of an intermittent stream) and a USACE Category 2 section 404 permit resulting from unavoidable impacts to jurisdictional wetlands.

Property adjacent to the project site offers the potential for on-site mitigation for unavoidable impacts to existing wetlands on the site. In the event that on-site mitigation is not possible, the alternative is Maine's In Lieu Fee program (ILF). The final mitigation plan will be developed in cooperation with the USACE.

As an alternative to on-site mitigation, ILF offers applicants the opportunity to pay into the program rather than complete conventional mitigation projects. Based on the proposed impact of 65,223.25 sq. ft. to freshwater wetlands resulting from the proposed interchange, the ILF amount was calculated as \$247,848.35 using the following formula (MAINE DEP, 2013):

Wetland Compensation Fee = (Direct wetland impact/sq. ft. x (natural resource enhancement & restoration cost/sq. ft. + avg. assessed land valuation/sq. ft.) x (resource multiplier)

$$\text{Wetland Compensation Fee} = (65,223.25 \text{ sq. ft.} \times (\$3.65 + \$0.15)) \times (1)$$

$$\text{Wetland Compensation Fee} = \$ 247,848.35$$

**Topography/Geology:**

To the east, the area is dominated by glaciomarine-derived surficial materials and to the west glacial till is the dominant parent material. The underlying bedrock of the area is a combination of the Sangerville Formation and unnamed sulfidic pelite (MGS, 2002). In general, the overall topography includes gentle slopes with ravines forming to the east approaching the Kennebec River with finer surface materials. Topography in the study area

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generally ranges from 100-300 feet above sea level. The entire site of the proposed interchange is generally level topography. To the east, and away from the proposed interchange, the landscape slopes more steeply toward the Kennebec River.

**Secondary Impacts/Cumulative Impacts/Others:**

Secondary, or Indirect, impacts are defined as reasonably foreseeable consequences to the environment that are related to the proposed action, that would occur either in the future or in the vicinity of the direct impacts (40 CF Part 1508.8, CEQ Regulations). The baseline for evaluating potential secondary impacts is the existing environment as described in the No-Action Alternative. Cumulative impacts are defined as impacts on the environment that result from incremental impact of the action when added to past, present, or future (reasonably foreseeable) development (40 CFR Part 1508.7, CEQ Regulations). The areas outlined in Figure 5 are based on watershed boundaries (for environmental impacts) as well as zoning and transportation access within the Waterville area. A start date of 1993 was selected, based on development associated with retail space along KMD and an end date of 2036 consistent with the design year.

The secondary impacts resulting from the construction of the interchange are limited, as most projects within the vicinity are planned regardless of the construction of the interchange. There is the potential for impacts to occur as a result of the interchange as most of the commercially zoned land along Trafton Road is currently undeveloped, and the interchange may either increase the amount of development or encourage a quicker rate of development in these suitably zoned areas near the interchange (see Figure 5 showing secondary impact area). It is important to note that upland areas are present in this area and therefore impacts resulting from development can be minimized during subsequent permitting of construction projects. Development related to existing industrial zoned properties owned by Trafton Properties LLC are considered secondary impacts, though a portion of these impacts will likely occur in the No Action alternative as well.

Cumulative impacts resulting from the proposed interchange were analyzed in the region generally between Lyons Road and Kennedy Memorial Drive (Figure 5). Work completed as part of the Thomas College expansion, the Waterville Robert LaFleur Airport, the potential expansion and development of the Airport Business Park, and the Brownfield site are all cumulative impacts which will occur regardless of the presence of the interchange. It is important to note that while these projects may include impacts to natural resources, that impacts will be avoided and minimized during project specific permitting that will occur for each project on an individual basis.

Based on a review of data provided by the MAINE DEP (Personal communication, MAINE DEP, November 20, 2013) within the past 5-10 years approximately 20 Permit By Rule Projects and approximately 31 other projects (Natural Resource Protection Act, Stormwater, etc.) have been permitted within the cumulative impacts area (Figure 5). Permit-by-Rule regulations (Chapter 305) apply to certain activities covered under the Natural Resources Protection Act. The regulations identify activities taking place in or adjacent to wetlands and waterbodies that should not substantially affect the environment if carried out according to the standards contained in the regulations. Other projects may be permitted through more complete processes (NRPA, Site Law, etc.), but these permits also include safeguards to reduce potential impacts to the environment.

The USACE notes (personal communication, USACE, June 12, 2014) that for most cumulative impact assessments, the USACE reviews available databases for past permit actions in the project area. In this case, a radius of 6 miles from the project site was selected for a search of USACE permit actions. A six mile radius encompasses the City of Waterville as well as large portions of Winslow, Oakland, and Sidney. A total of 139 USACE permit actions were identified dating back to 1989. From a broad perspective, these actions authorized small to moderate sized commercial or residential development, transportation improvement projects, aerial transmission line installations/upgrades, sewer/water utility improvements, hydropower facility upgrades, and boat ramps. The majority of these actions were for inland development projects of small to moderate scale that are scattered around the communities with no relationship to the proposed project. All of these actions were eligible for general or individual permits. The USACE has determined that the cumulative effect of these projects to aquatic

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resources has been minimal due to their small individual size, their widely-distributed locations, the length of time between actions, and the application of case-by-case avoidance, minimization, and compensation measures.

During the course of the analysis, efforts were made to reach out to Waterville, Oakland, and Sidney in order to fully understand the potential for future development within the cumulative impact area.

### Waterville

The City of Waterville is a Maine Service Center with a 2010 population of 15,722 and covering an area of approximately 14.1 square miles. It ranks 7th among municipalities in Maine for total taxable retail sales and 9th for total employment. Since 1960, the City population has declined by 2,973 although in the most recent census the City reversed the downward trend and experienced a small growth of 117.

Within the Waterville portion of the study area, lies a diverse mix of land uses including;

1. Commercial, business and institutional uses along Kennedy Memorial Drive (KMD)
2. A compact housing subdivision adjacent to the KMD and West River Road intersection
3. The LaFleur Airport and Airport Business Park (with Foreign Trade Zone status) situated between KMD and Webb Road
4. Thomas College, a Junior High School, the Pine Tree Golf Course, various business and commercial uses, the Woodlands assisted living center and mobile home parks all along West River Road
5. The closed City landfill located off Webb Road to the south of it and just west of I-95.
6. An EPA Brownfield site under City ownership now being remediated and located to the east of the West River Road - Trafton Road intersection
7. A 227,000 sq. ft. light industrial complex located at the southwest corner of the Trafton Road - West River Road intersection
8. Agricultural lands and forest predominately along and between Webb and Trafton Roads with a scattering of larger lot single family homes.
9. I-95 traveling north-south with an interchange at KMD
10. The Donald Carter Bridge crossing the Kennebec River with a spur on the Waterville side crossing the Messalonskee Stream and connecting to West River Road.

Public water service was provided in the 1970's along West River Road to the Trafton Road light industrial facility by the Department of Housing and Urban Development signaling intent to support economic growth in southern Waterville. Public sewer service was recently installed by the Town of Oakland with assistance from USDA along nearby Webb Road to make a connection into the Waterville Sanitary District. The District in 2013 upgraded and expanded the capacity of the pumping station in the proximity of Webb and West River Roads. During 2013-2014, natural gas transmission and distribution came to the area with construction of a service connection to Thomas College on West River Road and the transmission line extending on Webb Road into Oakland.

Noteworthy plans for future development include Trafton Realty's intent to expand the existing light industrial facility on Trafton Road by 450,000 sq. ft. and Thomas College's master plan for a near doubling of their campus. The City recently acquired a 64 acre parcel on the southwest corner of the airport that facilitates a potential connection of Airport and Mitchell Roads with Webb Road to the south and KMD to the north. The City presently has no definitive plans for this property.

Along the southern portion of Trafton Road, the City zoning for the land adjacent to the proposed interchange is Commercial D while land closer to West River Road is zoned Industrial Park including the area where the EPA Brownfield site is located. Along the north side of Trafton Road, zoning includes more Commercial D but between Trafton and Webb Roads the Rural Residential zone dominates. The City of Waterville is currently updating its 1997 comprehensive plan but is presently not recommending changes to the zoning map.

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**Oakland**

Within the Oakland portion of the project study area, land use is characterized to the north by commercial and business development along Kennedy Memorial Drive (KMD) while elsewhere, there is considerable open space consisting of long standing forestry and agricultural uses and the Waterville Country Club golf course. New development is mostly in the form of single-family housing and housing subdivisions particularly between Webb and Trafton Roads and along Middle Road. Oakland's census population grew from 3,075 in 1960 to 6,240 in 2010. The population grew by 2,087 between 1960 and 1980 but tapered off since then. The population grew in the last decade by 281. In consultation with the Town of Oakland, it was determined that there was no known planned or proposed development of significance within the cumulative impact study area in Oakland such as major subdivisions, commercial or industrial development or public investments like schools or new roads. First Park, now approximating 900 jobs is located on KMD adjacent to the I-95 interchange. At full build out it projects to add an additional 950 jobs.

Residential development is expected to continue throughout the study area while commercial and business development is expected to continue concentrating along Kennedy Memorial Drive. The recently installed sewer connection to the Waterville Sewer District following Country Club and Webb Roads to West River Road is not expected to spur new development in this area of Oakland due to the capacity limits of this sewer line and the reasonable expectation that this limited capacity will be reserved for higher and better uses elsewhere in the community. There is no current expectation that public water service will be expanded within the study area in Oakland. That service presently extends a short distance off of Kennedy Memorial Drive onto Country Club Road and also extends southerly along South Alpine Road onto a small portion of Libby Hill Road. The anticipated installation of natural gas transmission lines in the area opens the potential for placement of distribution lines where densities and market demand warrant the provision of service such as along Kennedy Memorial Drive.

If public water, sewer and natural gas were made available on Trafton Road in Oakland, new development other than residential could be anticipated there. However, such service offerings are not anticipated in the foreseeable future and therefore current development trends are expected to continue. Oakland does not have a zoning ordinance. There are shore land zoning, subdivision and site review ordinances. The community's 1990 comprehensive plan expired in 2012.

**Sidney**

Within the Sidney portion of the study area, land use is characterized by long standing forestry and farming practices. New development is dominated by the addition of single-family housing units and housing growth in general. Sidney's population has grown from 988 in 1960 to 4,208 in the 2010 census. This pattern of development is expected to continue for the foreseeable future due to the lack of infrastructure in Sidney to foster more intense land use patterns. Within Sidney's portion of the study area, there are no plans for providing public water or sewer services. Current plans for bringing natural gas to Waterville do not appear to include extensions to Sidney which lacks a major consumer or the density of development required to attract a natural gas provider. To the extent that public water, sewer and natural gas are made available in the vicinity of the proposed Trafton Road interchange new development other than residential could be anticipated southwest of the interchange in Sidney between Trafton Road and Town Farm Road. This area falls within Sidney's General Growth District. The growth stimulated by the construction of the I-95 Lyons Road Interchange in Sidney 54 years ago serves as an indicator of foreseeable development in Sidney in proximity to Trafton Road should an interchange be built without the availability of public water and sewer service.

Sidney Town officials were consulted and indicated they were not aware of any planned or proposed major residential subdivisions, commercial or industrial development or public investments like new roads or facilities within the cumulative impact study area. They did not anticipate any specific development to be induced by the proposed interchange within the secondary impacts study area.

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**CONCLUSION:**

The I-95 Trafton Road Interchange will not cause substantial secondary effects nor will the incremental impact result in substantial cumulative effects.

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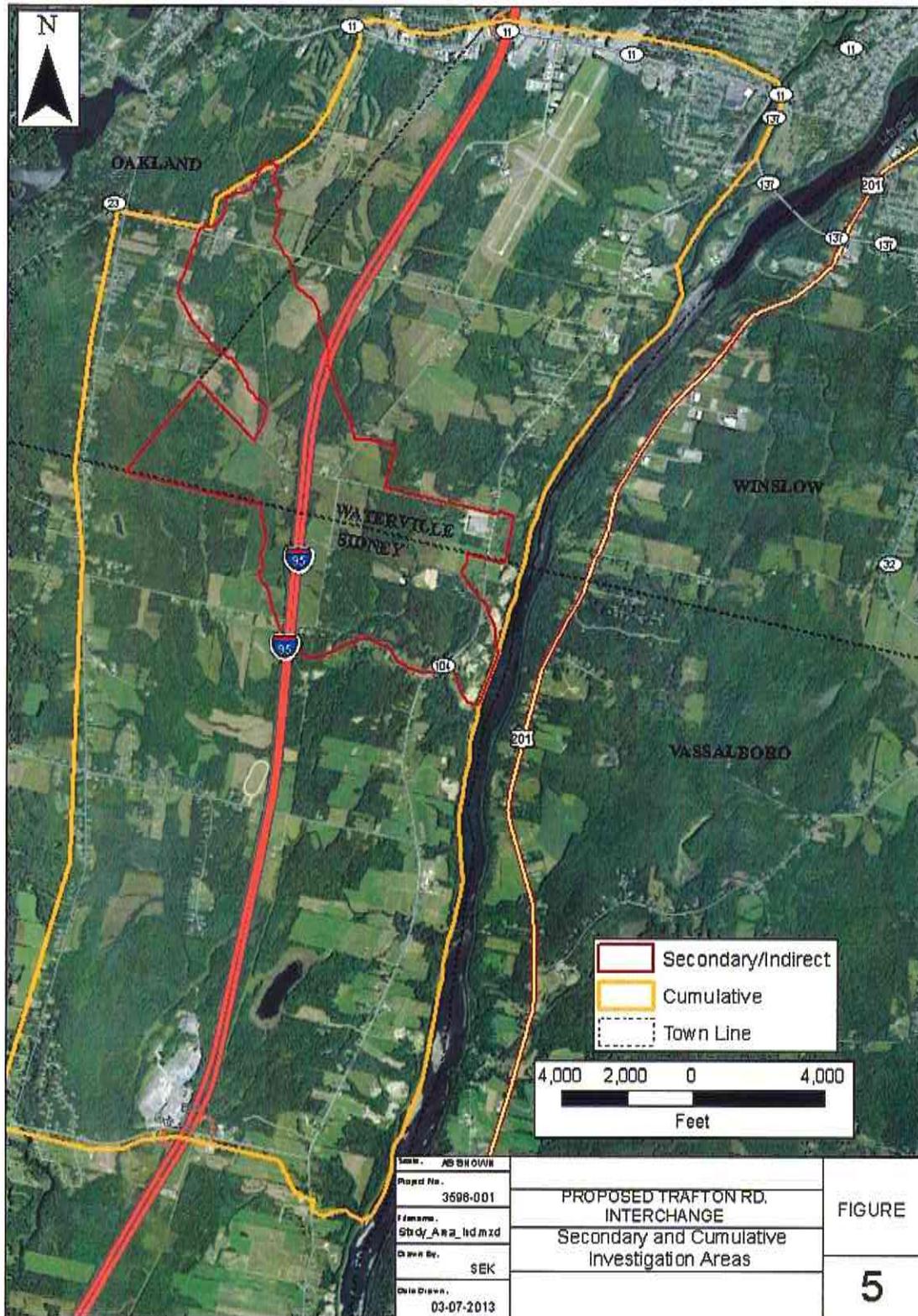
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**Coastal Zone Management Plan:**

The proposed interchange is not within Maine's Coastal Zone.

**Clean Water Act Section 401 Certification:**

Pursuant to An Order Designating the State Agencies Responsible for Water Quality Certification, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection has been designated by the Governor as the certifying agency for issuance of Section 401 water quality certification which, in this case, recognizes the issuance of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection's Natural Resource Protection Act permit as constituting State of Maine water quality certification. The permit is expected to be filed in 2014.

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