

MaineDOT Solar RFP
RFI Responses

1. Would the MaineDOT consider providing an extension to the proposal due date to allow time to assimilate the responses to the bidders' questions more fully into proposals? Given that responses to bidders' questions will be provided less than two weeks prior to the proposal submission date, the extra time would be helpful in generating a more thorough proposal with more accurate pricing from subcontractors.

No.

2. Can you provide a copy of the Augusta Airport Maine DEP Site Location of Development Permit that is currently in place and that will require amending for the solar PV system installation?

Recent amendments and modifications to the Site Location of Development permit are posted to the MEDOT website (RFI Attachment 1).

3. Page 12 of the RFP states that "All parties joining in a partnership to submit a bid proposal must submit a letter with the submitted proposal indicating their intent to participate in the project and their and their role therein." Can you clarify whether this letter is the same as the Cover Letter in item A of the proposal submission requirements? Or is this a separate letter in addition to the Cover Letter Requirement?

This is a separate letter indicating the nature of the partnership and the roles of the partners in the project.

4. Can you confirm that proposals are to be submitted to David Gardner at David.gardner@maine.gov?

Confirmed.

5. For the Exit 109 site, can you clarify that all vegetation has been cleared despite the fact that it may look like the vegetation is still there on aerial imagery?

The site is cleared. Please view the recent site video footage provided in Appendix G of the RFP.

6. Can you provide the name of the Airport's FAA consultant? Is it possible for bidders to work with this consultant?

There is no FAA Consultant currently under contract. The successful bidder will be provided contact information with Airport FAA contacts and MaineDOT staff that coordinate with the Airport and FAA.

7. For the exit 109 and exit 112 sites, can you describe the preferred method of connecting the arrays across the highways to the interconnection points? (i.e. directional drilling, other)?

Directional drilling is required for all highway crossings at the Exit 109 sites. Please review the one-line diagrams and site design maps included as part of the interconnection applications in Appendix B to view underground and overhead connections for each site (noted as UGU and OHU respectively). MaineDOT permits are required for all proposed highway crossings.

8. Does "Completed - Proposal Cover Page (Appendix 1)", as stated on page 1 of the RFP, refer to "A. Cover Letter", as stated on page 12 of the RFP, or does this refer to something else? If this is not referring to "A. Cover Letter", could you please specify what you would like to be submitted as "Completed - Proposal Cover Page (Appendix 1)"?

Yes, 'Completed - proposal cover page' refers to the cover letter requirements outlined on page 12.

9. Could you please clarify the "RFP Submittal Requirements" 1.b., as stated on page 1 of the RFP? Would you like "Appendix 1" and "Appendix 2" to be submitted as two (2) separate PDF files within "File #1"?

DOT Appendix 1 and 2 can be submitted as either one or two separate PDFs within file #1.

10. Page 1 of the RFP states "PDF format preferred". Would you like the completed Pricing Sheet, provided as Appendix D to the RFP, to be submitted as an Excel file or as a PDF file?

The Excel Pricing Sheet in Appendix D may be submitted as an Excel file.

11. Page 12 of the RFP references a 30-page proposal limit. Can you please specify which sections of the proposal count and do not count towards the 30-page limit? Does the proposed land lease agreement, cut sheets for proposed equipment, licensure/certification documentation, team resumes, etc. count towards the 30-page limit?

Because this is an all-electronic submission, the 30-page limit is waived.

12. Please elaborate on the awarded points methodology described on pages 18/19 for determining how many points projects will be awarded for their pricing. Please describe the numerical calculation that will be used to determine how “proposals with lower scores will be awarded proportionately fewer points in comparison with the highest scoring bid”.

Based on MaineDOT’s review of Bidders’ written submissions detailing the feasibility of each proposed host site and the net present value of each proposal forecasted by the independent consultant, MaineDOT will select which host site(s) it wants to move forward to finalist review. For the selected host site(s), the proposal with the highest net present value forecasted for MaineDOT will be awarded 50 points. The other proposals will be scored proportionally, with the proposal with the lowest net present value forecasted for MaineDOT being awarded 10 points.

13. Per page 6 of the RFP, regarding the lump sums to be paid to MaineDOT at land lease execution, the RFP states “the lump sum payment made to MaineDOT upon execution of the Land Lease, will not be reimbursed in the case the Bidder’s due diligence of the selected Site(s) produces unacceptable results that lead to the Bidder terminating development of the Site (s). In the pre-bid meeting, it was suggested that if projects do not go forward, reimbursement will not be required. Please clarify.

The lump sum payment made to DOT by the selected Bidder following the execution of the Land Lease will not be reimbursed back to the Bidder should the Bidder terminate the agreement.

14. Re Augusta Airport- Can we use the land in the south west part of the parcel (west of the CMP distribution corridor)?

Site information provided in Appendix A: Solar Array Site Summaries and Appendix B: Interconnection Applications outline the land available and the site design submitted to CMP for study. Additional adjacent areas may be considered if required to achieve targeted MW generation.

15. Re Augusta Airport - There is an existing road on the left side of the array, can we use that road as an access road during the construction of the PV system? Can the road be used as an access road for O&M during the system’s operational years?

Access and perimeter roads need to remain open and cannot be encroached upon or blocked. Access during construction via Bond Brook Road/Tall Pines way is preferred, however access from other areas is possible with coordination between the successful

bidder, MaineDOT and the City of Augusta. Access for operation and maintenance must be via Tall Pines Road.

16. Re Augusta Airport- Please provide the existing SLODA permit.

Please see answer to Question 2.

17. Re I-95 Sites- The RFP mentions that Solar PV components shall not be allowed within 50 ft of the highway. Are these setbacks for the fence or the array?

The 50-foot setback applies to fencing.

18. Re I-95 Sites – The RFP indicates wetlands at the 109 and 112 exit sites. What are the required setbacks from them in accordance with permitting work and conversations with MaineDEP to date? Has MaineDEP provided guidance on placing the system within the 75ft wetland buffer areas?

There are no setback requirements for wetlands at the Exit 109 and 112 sites. Temporary and permanent fill in the wetland in Exit 109 Interchange West loop shall not exceed 15,000 square feet. All temporary wetland fill shall be removed upon completion of construction. Temporary and permanent fill must meet the conditions of the Category 1 General Conditions of the General Permit of the State of Maine (Appendix H). Fill is considered the posts of the solar module and not the panel.

19. Re I-95 Exit 109 Site- There is a “non-jurisdictional ditch” inside the eastern loop. Do we need to avoid this ditch, or can we develop this area?

No natural resource permits are required to develop this area. Development in this area is allowed if existing drainage patterns are maintained.

20. Are Environmental Site Assessments available for the parcels and can they be made available?

Environmental Site Assessments are not available.

21. Please provide interconnection pre-application results from CMP.

MaineDOT did not submit pre-applications to CMP.

22. Appendix A provides interconnection cost estimates for the I95 109 and 112 sites. Should bidders use these estimates in our cost assumptions? If so, please provide an estimate for the Airport Site and break out for separate interconnections for the exit 109 sites.

Cost estimates and feasibility findings presented in Appendix A are advisory only, and subject to the individual Bidder's independent review and assessment.

23. The RFP only requires a COD of 12/31/2021 for Site 2. Are there COD requirements or expectations for CODs for sites 1 and 3?

There are no specific COD requirements or expectations for the other sites, however selected Bidder(s) will be required to adhere to commercially reasonable project milestones laid out in an executed Land Lease and BCA.

24. With respect to the Interconnection Applications and studies:

- a. The RFP suggests that the Interconnection Applications can be assigned to the successful bidder. The original applications were based upon specific inverters and equipment and usually when equipment is different, as may be the case with the successful bidder, the Applications have to be resubmitted and the process restarted. Can you confirm that CMP will not require re-submittals and will accept the assignments?

Bidders should submit proposals consistent with the system designs provided in Appendix B. If Bidder has concerns with or cannot fulfill these requirements, Bidder shall specify its reasoning in the written submission.

CMP has indicated in its High Level Process Review for Level 4 Applications that modifications to the technical parameters associated with project technology, including a change of inverters may be permitted, however no changes to AC system sizing may be made.

- b. Will the results of the Interconnection studies (due 6/16) be posted on the website at the same time as RFI responses are due (6/17)?

Final Reports of the Distribution Interconnection Impact Study Results for Exit 109 West, 109 East, and the Airport site have been posted to the MaineDOT website (RFI Attachments 2, 3, and 4). The information is provided for bidder information but is subject to the final results meeting with CMP, which has not yet been scheduled.

- c. Is there an estimated interconnection cost for Site 1 at the airport?

See Answer to Question 22.

25. The Report of the "Commission to Study the Economic, Environmental and Energy Benefits of Energy Storage to the Maine Electricity Industry" dated December 2019 encourage the inclusion of energy storage in renewable procurements ["the commission recommends that the State enhance opportunities for energy storage under the long-

term contracts (procurements) for renewable resources and distributed generation (DG) resources"]. If energy storage is included in a bidder's response, how will that value be considered in the bid evaluation?

MaineDOT is not seeking proposals for energy storage at this time.

26. For Site 1, what is the weight limit on the Bond Brook bridge accessing the property?

Bond Brook Bridge Plans have been posted to the MaineDOT website (RFI Attachment 5). The load rating for the bridge is estimated at 15 tons or less. An analysis has not been conducted since 2008.

27. For the Site 2 West Interchange where the stream is presenting a concern, when will the redesign of the 500 KW site be posted?

An updated one-line diagram has been posted to the MaineDOT website (RFI Attachment 7). There is still 500 kW AC output but with a reduced overdrive. DC power went from 682.6KW to 597.2KW.

28. Environmental Permits:

- a. What is the status of the permits for Sites 2 and 3? Is there an expectation of the receipt of the permits?

MaineDOT anticipates filing the Natural Resources Protection Act Permit and The Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit applications the week of June 15, 2020. All other permits are the responsibility of the bidder. See Part II C 3 of the RFP: Project Requirements and Bidder Cost Responsibilities.

- b. Will the DOT also apply for the permits for Site 1?

No. See Part III C 3d of the RFP: Project Requirements and Bidder Cost Responsibilities

29. Has MDOT submitted pre applications for each site? If so, can you provide the pre application results?

Please see answer to Question 21.

30. Can MDOT provide system impact study results once the studies are complete and this information is available?

Yes. See question 24b.

31. If MDOT performs an early buyout, will they be purchasing entire system, or only their % of the system?

MaineDOT would purchase the entire system.

32. Can MDOT provide the environmental permits for the I-95 site if available?

Natural Resources Protection Act and Section 404 permits will be provided when received. Please refer to the RFP Part II, C, 3.

33. Will the costs of environmental permitting for the I-95 sites be covered by MDOT, or will this be re-paid like the interconnection costs?

Costs are part of the lump sum.

34. To confirm, the Pollinator Seeding Plan work and costs will fall under the developers scope of work?

Confirmed.

35. Can MDOT share site characteristic plans/topography for each site?

Topographic survey and natural resource delineation have not been completed for the airport site. Conceptual designs for the I-95 sites were informed by field delineation of natural resources and USGS topographic information. Additional topographic information was obtained from drone footage at Exit 109 and has been posted on the MaineDOT website (RFI Attachment 6). See also Appendix G: Interstate Site Video Footage of the RFP.

36. Can you provide any more details on the access requirements and plans for the I-95 sites?

The locations of the access points have been approved by FHWA. MaineDOT conducted a safety analysis to determine the best location for these access points. The Bidder will be required to construct the entrances and use only these points to enter the I-95 sites.

37. For I-95 exit 109: Can electrical cables span the stream?

Electric cables may be permitted to span the stream upon review of site plan.

38. Can we transfer/assign the name for the current interconnection applications/agreement?

Yes, DOT will transfer the interconnection to the selected Bidder's name upon execution of a Land Lease.

39. For the Airport: Do we have to pass through security to access the site? Will all personnel be required to have any special security clearances to work on the site?

Access from Tall Pines Road will not require security. Access from the west side of the airport during construction will require security clearance, protocol, and training.

40. Is there a soils report available for us to review? Old reports or nearby reports to the airport site.

Soil reports are not available.

41. Is there an environmental report we can review? Old reports or nearby reports.

Environmental Site Assessments are not available.

42. Are the PV systems required to have curtailment devices?

PV systems must be designed per CMP requirements.

43. Can we change or substitute the PV materials specified on the interconnection application?

Please see answer to Question 24a.

44. Do they have any target pricing for the solar energy purchase agreement?

No, Bidders should propose their strongest economic proposals for all price and project options.

45. Will additional RFP points be given during the review process if the bidder utilizes minority certified contractors (MBE) for the construction of the PV system? (and provides documents)

No.

46. Would MaineDOT consider clearing the Airport site of the major vegetation prior to construction of the PV system?

No.

47. The RFP describes the airport site as approximately 35 acres on the northeasterly side of the airport. Can MEDOT provide a figure with the location and dimensions of the available airport site?

Please see answer to Question 14.

48. Has MaineDOT conducted a preliminary screening of the airport solar project with respect to airspace obstruction analysis (runway protection zones, etc.) and Solar glare impacts?

No, this is the responsibility of the successful bidder.

Does the proposed solar project comport with the airport's current Airport Master Plan

Not currently. A pen and ink change will be submitted to the FAA when the location of the solar site is finalized, but before construction.

49. We understand that the airport is operated and managed by the City of Augusta, and that the City has an active Airport Advisory Committee. What role will the City play in the review and approval of the project and the lease at the airport site?

The City will not play a role in evaluation of proposals at the Airport site. MaineDOT expects the Selected Bidder(s) to comply with applicable local zoning or permitting.

50. The RFP indicates that MaineDOT will obtain environmental permits for the I-95 sites. What is the developer's expected role in supporting this effort and will the developer be required to reimburse MaineDOT for the associated permitting costs?

Please see answer to question 33.

51. For clarity please confirm that environmental permitting at the airport site will be the responsibility of the developer

Confirmed.

52. Please clarify the approved construction and long-term access point(s) for Exit 112 and explain any requirements that the developer must satisfy prior to & during construction and use of this access.

The Bidder will be required to construct and access the Exit 112 solar site at the approved location. The Bidder must submit traffic control/safety plans for construction that will be approved in advance by MaineDOT's Region Engineer.

53. Will projects at all three sites be subject to City of Augusta zoning or other land use approval?

MaineDOT expects the Selected Bidder(s) to comply with applicable local zoning or permitting. MaineDOT takes the position that the I-95 interchange sites, which are under federal jurisdiction, are not subject to local zoning.

54. In Appendix H, the maps of Exit 109 show a stream and various wetlands. The setback from the stream was mentioned (panels can go to the edge of the stream) but is there a setback from the wetlands?

There are no setback requirements for wetlands. Temporary and permanent fill in the wetland in Exit 109 Interchange West loop shall not exceed 15,000 square feet. All temporary wetland fill shall be removed upon completion of construction. Temporary and permanent fill must meet the conditions of the Category 1 General Conditions of the General Permit of the State of Maine (Appendix H). Fill is considered the posts of the solar module and not the panel.

55. Appendix A, last page shows “site 2 approx. 35 acres” in the bottom left corner. Can you clarify what this is?

This area was not included in Site 1. However additional areas adjacent to Site 1 may be considered if required to achieve target MW generation.

56. Is the applicant required to follow any page-formatting guidelines other than what is already stated in the Request for Proposals (RFP)? If so, would you kindly elaborate?

No.

57. Since the submission is broken down into multiple files, may you kindly elaborate how the 30 page proposal limit is applied to the applicant’s proposal submission?

See response to Question 11.

58. What are the small business subcontracting goals set-aside for this particular opportunity with the MaineDOT?

Not applicable.

59. Will the MaineDOT be open to considering Equivalent or Equal Products? If so, would you kindly elaborate upon any additional submission requirements for considering Equivalent or Equal Products?

In addition to the RFP’s minimum bid requirements, MaineDOT is open to considering proposals for other compensation structures in which MaineDOT can realize financial savings from hosting Solar PV on its proposed properties and can advance reductions in the agency’s greenhouse gas emissions.

60. Will the MAINEDOT be able to provide warehousing options?

No.

61. For the conceptual layouts put together, was a proper wetlands and topographic survey completed for those designs, specifically on the vegetated Augusta State Airport site?

Topographic survey and natural resource delineation has not been completed for the airport site. Conceptual designs for the I-95 sites were informed by field delineation of natural resources and USGS topographic information. Additional topographic information was obtained from drone footage at Exit 109 and has been posted as a .kmz file on the MaineDOT website (RFI Attachment 6).

62. In the event that such a wetlands and topographic delineation was not procured for this design, will any sort of a grace period be allowed to perform these delineations be provided to a developer before having to compensate the town of Augusta for the interconnection payments?

Lump sum payment for compensation of interconnection payments will be made to MaineDOT, not to the City of Augusta. MaineDOT anticipates that this lump sum payment will be made directly to MaineDOT upon execution of a Land Lease. For further information, please refer to response 68.a.

63. Has CMP provided any indication regarding how the projects connecting to the Capitol Street Substation will be impacted by the ASO Studies that the substation currently falls under?

No.

64. Will the selected developer be provided to pay prevailing wages or other enhanced compensation with respect to construction of the projects?

Not required.

65. Will the selected developers be required to post payment and/or performance bonds with respect to the construction of the projects?

MaineDOT may require that a decommissioning bond be posted that will ensure that funds are available, upon termination of the lease, to decommission and remove all Solar PV system components from the site and restore the site to a condition consistent with that described in Part II, Section C.6. of the RFP.

66. As a public works project, will the governing authority be required to appropriate funds on an annual basis for the lease payment and purchase of NEB credits?

MaineDOT anticipates receiving lease payments, not making lease payments, so the appropriation process does not apply to a lease arrangement. No legislative approvals

will be necessary. As for the NEB credits, because it is anticipated that they will be acting as a substitute for existing energy expenditures, no special appropriation is necessary.

67. Does MEDOT have a form BCA it intends to use for these projects?

MaineDOT is reviewing a form BCA to recommend to selected finalist(s) but is also open to considering other formats. MaineDOT will have standard language requirements that must be included in any negotiated BCA.

68. Questions regarding the Leases:

- a. Is the term of the lease expected to begin at the start of construction or start of operation?

The lease is expected to be negotiated and signed as soon as practicable after the Project is awarded. If requested, MaineDOT will consider incorporating a due diligence period, and anticipates negotiating provisions that cover the commencement of lease payments. The twenty-year lease term is anticipated to begin upon the solar facility's start of operation to coincide with the twenty-year term of the BCA.

- b. Is there a minimum lease payment that MEOT would consider? By being the beneficiary of both the lease payment and purchasing NEB bill credits, minimizing the lease payment will reduce the NEB credit purchase rate.

Bidders should craft their project proposals to maximize financial value to DOT.

- c. There is no field to enter an escalator in Appendix D for the lease payment. Is only a fixed monthly lease payment to be considered?

If Bidders wish to add an escalator for lease payments, this must be clearly described.

- d. Will the selected developer be allowed to complete its diligence with respect to, for instance, environmental and geotechnical site conditions, interconnection study and upgrade costs, site hydrology and drainage issues, etc. before signing the leases?

See response to 68.a. above

- e. Is there any additional information that MEDOT can provide with respect to those issues?

No. MaineDOT anticipates a negotiation process in connection with the lease.

69. Questions regarding the lump sum payment

- a. Are bidders allowed to spread out the lump sum payments as milestone payments in the interest of increasing potential lease payment or decreasing the potential NEB credit purchase rate?

No, these are expected to be upfront payments upon agreement execution.

- b. Are these payments refundable if MEDOT – not the selected developer – terminates development of the sites?

Bidders should not anticipate the return of the lump sum reimbursement. It is possible that, in certain extraordinary circumstances, MaineDOT may explore the possibility of some level of reimbursement in the unlikely event that MaineDOT is compelled by public exigency to terminate development of the site.

- c. Will MEDOT provide a breakdown of the lump sum payments and describe how much was spent on interconnection applications vs. other costs? This will help determine how much of the cost is ITC eligible.

| Site | Engineering Costs | Interconnection Costs (prep/application/study) |
|----------|-------------------|--|
| Exit 109 | \$3,750.00 | \$34,250.00 |
| Exit 112 | \$3,750.00 | \$25,625.00 |
| Airport | \$4,750.00 | \$28,215.00 |

70. Questions regarding the Pollinator Seeding Requirements

- a. Would MEDOT consider exchanging the meadowlands restoration at the end of the project life for some other environmental incentive, such as a one-time contribution to a land bank or habitat fund?

No.

- b. Would MEDOT consider directly subcontracting the Seeding Plan to a landscape restoration contractor once an initial 90% coverage is achieved by the solar developer?

No.

71. What is the load limit of Tall Pines Way Bridge?

See response to Question 26.

73. Will MaineDOT require the developer to pave any portion of the access entrance from I-95 to the solar facility?

Paving would not be necessary, but it will be the bidder's responsibility to ensure that gravel, mud, etc. does not get tracked onto the ramp. If it is, then the bidder will need to fix it.

74. Will crash barriers be required as part of the traffic control/safety plan at the I-95 solar access points?

Yes. To protect workers, equipment, and traveling public.