## MERIT CRITERIA

### Project Overview

The *Wells Route 1 Community Gateway Beautification and Safety Project in Wells, Maine* ("Project") will transform a major regional traffic arterial highway, which currently lacks affordable transportation options, into a well-connected, attractive, and efficient corridor. This Project will help achieve the goal of making Wells a more walkable community with a vibrant village atmosphere. The Project will help alleviate seasonal congestion and enhance safety and accessibility for all users of the Route 1 Corridor while focusing on supporting economic growth through the following multimodal transportation improvements:

**State of Good Repair:** Paving of 5.6 miles of U.S. Route 1 to bring the entire corridor into a state of good repair, improve customer service levels, and reduce long-term maintenance costs.

**Signalization and Mobility Improvements:** Installation of two new traffic signals at the intersections of Route 1 with Chapel Road and Route 1 at South Street; upgrades to all signals along the corridor to meet existing MaineDOT specifications and deployment of adaptive traffic signal control to manage congestion; implementation of new signal technology with emergency preemption; improved signal phasing for reliable emergency access to the Wells Public Safety Building at the intersection of Route 1/Route 109; and installation of overhead lane use signage through the Project Area;

**Pedestrian Facilities:** Expansion of the sidewalk network to address existing gaps and improve access, including construction of a 5.5-foot sidewalk along 8.2 miles; installing 10 new Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) at new or existing crossing locations along the corridor; and improving lighting at pedestrian crossings to enhance safety;

**Bicycle Facilities:** Installation of 11.2 miles of continuous five-foot wide bicycle lanes along Route 1;

**Transit Facilities:** Design to accommodate future transit stops (not included in this application), including shelters and signage.

**Roadway Reconfiguration** To improve safety and access for all users at this high crash location while facilitating access to/ from the Wells Public Safety Building which includes the primary Police Department and Fire Department buildings in Wells.

**Stormwater Infrastructure Improvements:** installation of a new drainage system to treat stormwater and improve water quality along the corridor.

The Project aligns with all eight of the Merit Criteria outlined in the BUILD Grant Program, as detailed in the following sections.

### 1. SAFETY

The Project will address known safety issues by protecting non-motorized travelers from safety risks, reducing fatalities and serious injuries, supporting USDOT's priority of making our transportation system safer for all people. Addressing safety challenges is a primary purpose of this project.

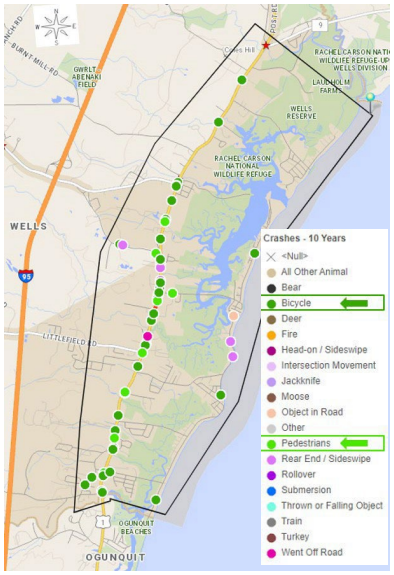
*Protect non-motorized travelers from safety risks*

Improving safety for vulnerable transportation users is a primary purpose of the Project. The Project focuses on enhancing the Route 1 corridor, which serves as the main north-south artery running through Wells, Maine. With no central village or downtown area, the Wells commercial activity follows linear development along Route 1.

Route 1 runs parallel to the Atlantic coastline and experiences a significant increase in traffic and congestion during the summer months due to the influx of summer residents, seasonal tourists, and

workers. The average daily traffic volume on Route 1 is 20,000 vehicles per day, ranging from nearly 17,500 (south of Wells) to 25,500 (north of Mile Road) during the peak summer tourist season, whereas the off-season volumes are significantly lower, to around 7,300 vehicles per day. Bike volumes vary throughout the corridor but average 100 bicyclists per day.

*Figure 1: 10 Year Crash Map*




Route 1 is critical for providing access to local commercial, retail, residential, educational, community, recreational, and healthcare destinations. Visitors traveling southbound from I-95 generally must pass through Wells to reach Ogunquit, which does not have a dedicated I-95 exit and contributes to congestion and safety concerns.

Over a 10-year period spanning 2012-2021, there were 6 crashes involving pedestrians and 30 crashes involving bicyclists along the 5.6-mile Project area as illustrated in Figure 1. Over this same period, the town of Wells ranked 11th in the State for bicycle crashes, and 14th in the State for pedestrian and bicycle crashes combined. From 2022-2024, there were an additional 3 crashes involving pedestrians and 13 crashes involving bicyclists.

*Figure 2: Lack of existing sidewalks along section of Route 1*

The corridor currently lacks consistent pedestrian and bicycle facilities and has limited ADA compliant accommodations, as shown in Figure 2. Bicyclists and pedestrians often share the shoulders and sidewalks without having consistent separated space for both users resulting in a conflicting transportation network. Several locations have midblock crossings that do not connect to sidewalks.

The Road Safety Assessment (RSA) revealed that pedestrian crossings have inconsistent signage, markings, dimensions, and detectable warning field designs. Many crosswalks are excessively long, are missing for all approaches, or lack pedestrian signal heads for safe crossing.

The Project will address these deficiencies by providing 8.2 miles of 5.5-foot sidewalk and 11.2 miles of 5-foot bicycle lanes, ensuring a continuous multimodal corridor along Route 1 to

improve travel for residents, tourists, and workers. Crosswalk improvements and the addition of 10 Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) are expected to increase drivers' awareness of pedestrian crossings, thus increasing motorist yielding rates. Lighting will be added to all crosswalks and other pedestrian routes to improve nighttime visibility and comfort. All of these pedestrian and bicycle improvements will address the safety and accessibility of non-motorized users. As part of a future phase (not included in this application), a new sidewalk or multi-use path connection is intended to be added from the Wells Transportation Center to the Route 1 Corridor via Chapel Road, enhancing multi-modal connectivity and safety for access to Amtrak Rail services, along with the construction of a new sidewalk or multi-use path connecting the York County Community College (YCCC) with Route 1 and Chapel Road.

*Reduce Fatalities and Serious injuries*

Improving safety by reducing fatalities and serious injuries for all users is a primary objective for the Project. When compared to the rest of the U.S, York County ranks "above average" for the concentration of roadway fatalities as shown on the USDOT's *Concentration of Roadway Fatalities Map* under the National Roadway Safety Strategy. There were 98 fatalities in York County between 2017 and 2021 which results in 1.6 times greater than the average U.S county. Figure 3 demonstrates the long-term trends for fatal and serious injury crashes in the region.

Between 2019 and 2021, there were 236 crashes along the Wells Route 1 corridor including 1 pedestrian-vehicle crash and 8 bike related crashes. Of the 236 crashes, there were 63 injury crashes. Below is a detailed analysis of the high crash locations (HCLs) in the corridor based on data collected from 2019 to 2021, as shown in Table 1 and located on Figure 4. Updated data from subsequent assessments through 2023 have demonstrated similar trends in these crash patterns, although not all have retained the HCL designation.

*Figure 3: Long-Term Trends for Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes in the Region. Source: KACTS Regional Safety Action Plan*

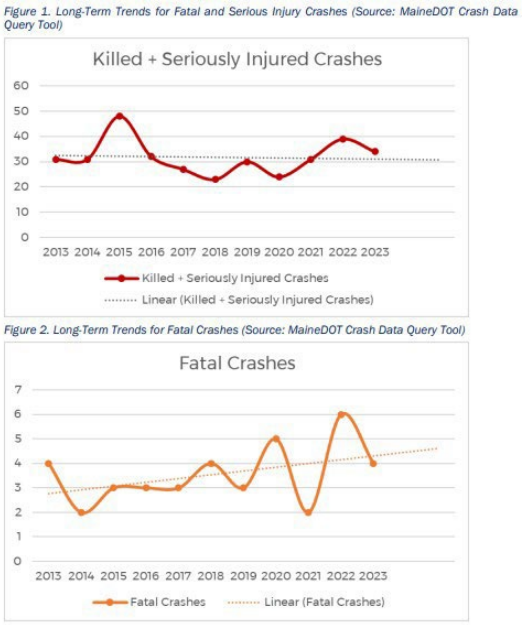
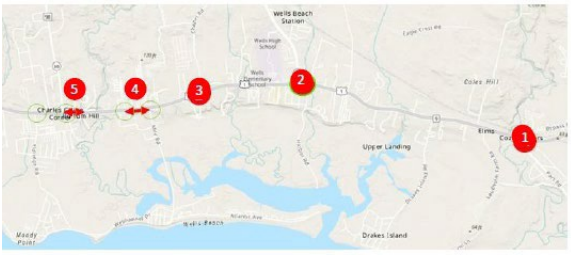



*Table 1: High Crash Locations 2019-2021*

| **Intersection** | **# of Crashes** | **Critical Rate Factor (CRF)** | **% Injury** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rt 1 (Post Rd)/Route 9 | 8 | 1.83 | 0% |
| Rt 1 / Harbor Rd | 8 | 1.54 | 0% |
| Rt 1 / Chapel Rd | 14 | 2.23 | 28.6% |
| **Segment** | **# of Crashes** | **Critical Rate Factor (CRF)** | **% Injury** |
| Rt 1 from Mile Rd to Buzzell Rd | 18 | 1.53 | 22.2% |
| Rt 1 from Littlefield Rd to Brown Ln | 9 | 1.25 | 44.4% |

*Figure 4: High Crash Locations in Study Area 2019-2021*




Safety will be addressed through signalizing the intersections of Route 1 at Chapel Road and Route 1 at South Street with upgrades to all other traffic signals. Route 1 at Chapel Road is an HCL, with a crash pattern that indicates a high prevalence of motorists failing to yield. Signalizing this intersection will improve traffic flow and safety. A section of Harbor Road will be converted to one-way in the eastbound direction to address the safety issues at this HCL.

An optical and AVL based preemption system will be installed to aid emergency vehicles, reduce crashes, and improve travel time to emergencies. This improved preemption along the corridor will benefit other nearby towns through mutual assistance agreements. The intersection of Route 1 at Sanford Road (Route

109) will integrate the Public Safety building approach into the traffic signal phasing for emergency vehicle egress.

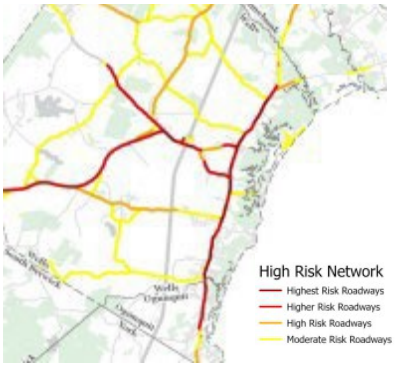
The RSA indicated that Route 1 has a high density of driveways and that motorists' adherence to turning restrictions is low. Several businesses along Route 1 have multiple or wide driveways that increase conflict points. The Town of Wells has discussed considerations to improve access management, including reducing the number of curb cuts on Route 1 and adding raised median islands at select locations to reduce crash frequency resulting in fewer serious injuries. Based on the specific feedback from public safety, the recommended locations for center medians are in very specific and targeted areas with a mountable curb type to accommodate emergency vehicles.

The corridor lacks dedicated space for bus stops along Route 1 as well as adequate signage. The Project will be designed to accommodate future transit service and associated improvements (not included in the Project).

Many of the transportation improvements that will be implemented within the Project are Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) *Proven Safety Countermeasures:*

- Crosswalk Visibility Enhancements: Implementing high-visibility crosswalks can reduce pedestrian injury crashes up to 40%.
- Lighting: Enhanced lighting can reduce crashes up to 42% for nighttime injury pedestrian crashes at intersections.
- Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons: RRFBs can reduce crashes up to 47% for pedestrian crashes.
- Walkways: Sidewalks result in up to a 65-89% reduction in crashes involving pedestrians walking along roadways.
- Bicycle Lanes: The addition of bicycle lanes can reduce crashes up to 30% for total crashes on urban 2-lane undivided collectors and local roads.
- Corridor Access Management: Reducing driveway density can result in up to a 31% reduction in fatal and injury crashes along urban/suburban arterials.

*Figure 5: High-Risk Network. Source: KACTS Regional Safety Action Plan (SS4A)*




Based on this information, MaineDOT and the Town of Wells anticipate that these transportation improvements along Route 1 will lead to a reduction in crashes and serious injuries among all users. The Project improvements support the region's *Vision Zero* initiative as described in the Kittery Area Comprehensive Transportation System (KACTS) recent 2024 *KACTS Regional Safety Action Plan* and the State's goal to reduce roadway fatalities and serious injury crashes in the Strategic Highway Safety Plan. The KACTS Regional Safety Action Plan identifies priority infrastructure and policy improvements across the nine-community regions in Southern Maine to reach vision zero, defined as the elimination of all roadway-related deaths and serious injuries by 2045. KACTS developed a Prioritized Project List and has ranked three sections of Route 1 in Wells as the top three prioritized rankings for safety improvements. The Route 1 corridor has been identified as one of the Highest Risk Roadways in the region as shown in Figure 5 which indicates the need for more targeted safety improvements.

*Incorporate the National Roadway Safety Strategy Plan*

The Project is aligned with the *National Roadway Safety Strategy (NRSS)* plan actions and activities as well as *Maine's 2022 Strategic Highway Safety Plan*. This Project is consistent with the following objectives identified in the NRSS plan:

**Safer Roads:** The Safe System approach focuses on redundancy and implementing infrastructure components that layer protection measures to prevent crashes and reduce serious harm when they occur. The action includes supporting Complete Streets policies to prioritize safety, comfort, and connectivity for all modes of transport. The Project includes components of Complete Streets comprising of continuous walkways, bike lanes, safer crosswalks, and additional pedestrian lighting to enhance safety.

**Safer Speeds:** The Safe System Approach aims to achieve safe speeds through road design and other infrastructure factors. The Project adds "self-enforcing" traffic calming components with consistent pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, crosswalks, and RRFBs.

**2. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

The project is committed to improving Environmental Sustainability as a primary purpose by reducing transportation-related air pollution and avoiding adverse environmental impacts to water quality.

*Reduce transportation-related air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions*

The Project corridor serves as an arterial and the principal roadway to businesses, education, and recreational destinations, but has created seasonal gridlock during summer months for decades. Two new signals and the implementation of adaptive signal control will help reduce delay, congestion, and improve travel times. The *Federal Highway Administration Center for Accelerating Innovation* indicates that adaptive signal control technologies improve travel time by at least 10 percent (or greater) over traditional signal timing. By adjusting signal timings dynamically based on traffic demand, these technology-based optimizations will alleviate traffic delay and decrease idling. These signal enhancements will also make other transportation options safer and corresponding transit options more appealing. The Project reduction in travel delay will contribute to a reduction in vehicle hours traveled, thus reducing local air pollution.

*Avoid adverse environmental impacts to water quality and wetlands*

The Route 1 corridor currently lacks a stormwater treatment management system. The existing drainage system is both ineffective and in poor condition and stormwater runoff is not treated. A recent storm caused catch basins to fail which required emergency repairs. As part of the Project, stormwater management solutions will be implemented to ensure effective and improved water quality. These upgrades, which will include specific measures to be determined during the design process, will comply with Maine Stormwater Laws and Chapter 500 regulations and the Memorandum of Agreement for Stormwater Management Between the MaineDOT, MTA and Maine Department of Environmental Protection. As a result of the Project, stormwater along the corridor will be treated prior to entering waterways, a significant improvement from the lack of treatment today.

**3. QUALITY OF LIFE**

Enhancing the quality of life for Wells residents, tourists and seasonal workers is a primary purpose of the Project. By providing more affordable transportation options along Route 1 (and eventually Route 109/Sanford Road and Chapel Road in a later Phase of the Project), the Project will improve access to daily destinations including regional transportation, jobs, parks, recreational areas, businesses, and healthcare facilities.

*Increase affordable transportation choices*

Increasing affordable transportation choices includes expanding the sidewalk network to provide continuous sidewalks, enhancing crosswalks along Route 1 including 10 new Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) and striping and implementing consistent 5' wide bike lanes. These will provide safe, affordable transportation options for tourists and the large, seasonal workforce that underpins the local tourism economy – many of whom lack private motor vehicles to get to and from their workplace.

As part of a future phase (not included in this application), a new sidewalk or multi-use path connection will be added from Route 1 to the Wells Transportation Center as well as from Route 1 to the York County

Community College to expand other transportation choices in the Project area. These multimodal transportation improvements will expand and further encourage low and no-cost transportation opportunities for residents, tourists and the workforce in Wells.

*Improve access to daily destinations*

The Project will transform the Route 1 corridor, a principal roadway connecting residents and tourists to businesses, amenities, education, regional transportation, housing, hotels, healthcare, and recreation land uses into a complete street. Additionally, the seasonal workforce relies on Route 1 to commute to their jobs along the corridor from their housing. Tourists use Route 1 to visit restaurants, shops, businesses, and recreational destinations. Key daily destinations for residents, tourists, and workers include:

**Churches** – Two churches are located along Route 1 in the Project area.

**Grocery Store** – Hannaford is one of the busiest stores in the State, and the largest grocery store in the study area. It is a large generator of demand along the corridor

**Hotels/Accommodations** – As indicated in the *Town of Wells, Maine Comprehensive Plan Update*, there were 6,617 lodging and seasonal units in Wells (as of 2020). The majority of these accommodations are along Route 1. The total peak population in lodging was estimated to be 24,377 in 2021.

**Other Tourist Destinations** – Aside from lodging, several popular tourist attractions are located in the Project area, including a family-friendly amusement park, a state historic site, and various shopping and commercial destinations.

**Restaurants** – The many restaurants lined up along Route 1 serve both the year-round population as well as the huge influx of tourists during the summer months.

**Schools** –The Wells-Ogunquit School District school system accommodates 1,407 students, including at the Wells Junior High School, located directly on Route 1 in the Project area.

**Walking Trails** – Nature trails are located within both the Wells Reserve at Laudholm as well as the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge at the northern end of the corridor to the east of Route 1 and southeast of Port Road.

**Wells Ogunquit Senior Center** - A social hub for seniors with more than 600 members aged 50-100.

**Wells Public Safety Building** – The combined headquarters for the Town of Wells Fire Department and Police Department.

**Wells Public Library** – A key community center providing access to a wide variety of services and community programs for families and people of all ages.

The York County Community Action Corporation (YCCAC) runs bus service through Wells year-round, offering service every day of the week. The Project will improve last-mile connections for transit users through new bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and the Project design will accommodate future transit stops (not included in this application), including shelters and signage.

*Figure 6: YCCAC Orange Line Bus Route*


The Orange Line route, illustrated in Figure 7, provides an important connection between Sanford and Wells while also providing a link to the Amtrak Downeaster at the Wells Transportation Center, YCCC, Hannaford Shopping Plaza and the beach (seasonally).

Approximately 15,000 riders used the Orange Line bus service in FY24. The peak monthly ridership occurred in August of 2024 with approximately 1,800 riders.

Future transit plans include coordinating with the Amtrak Downeaster schedule to enhance local bus service to Wells and the beach area from the Wells Transportation Center. Buses would run on an hourly schedule throughout summer months. The Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority is currently constructing additional siding, a new second platform, and plans to provide an additional round trip resulting in an increase in future ridership. YCCAC plans to work with the Amtrak Downeaster operator to meet the increased demands and provide enhanced local bus access to Route 1 as well as the beach during the peak tourist summer months. These transit improvements would encourage more visitors and workers to use the local bus route instead of using personal vehicles.

Through the addition of consistent bike lanes, continuous sidewalks, enhanced and safer pedestrian crossings, and lighting, residents, tourists, and workers will have more affordable options for improved multimodal access to vital daily destinations along the Route 1 corridor including jobs, goods/services, recreation, and education.

## 4. MOBILITY AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

Improving Mobility and Community Connectivity is a primary Project purpose. It aims to improve overall system connectivity by ensuring better access to key destinations. Using community input and data, the Project will address gaps in the existing network, increase accessibility for non-motorized travelers through complete streets and improve reliability of last-mile freight.

*Improve mobility and reliability along Route 1*

Route 1 is the main artery of Wells, serving as the principal roadway for local businesses. It provides access to neighborhoods, businesses, education, public safety, tourist spots, and recreational areas. However, the corridor operates inefficiently, especially during peak tourism season when there is significant congestion. Installation of two new traffic signals at key intersections, upgrades to all signals along the corridor, and deployment of adaptive traffic signal control will improve mobility and reduce congestion. Implementation of new signal technology with emergency preemption to improve emergency response times, especially with improved signal phasing for the Wells Public Safety Building.

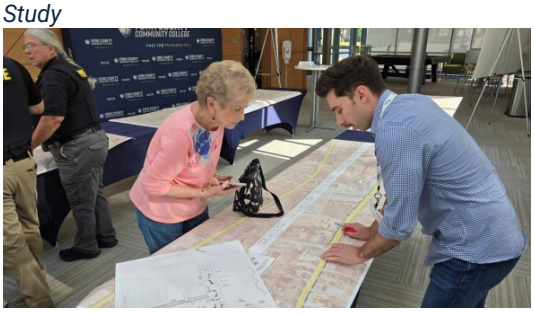
*Improve system-wide connectivity with improved, affordable access*

Currently, the Route 1 corridor lacks consistent pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities. The project will address these deficiencies by constructing new sidewalks to enhance the pedestrian network and improve transit connectivity, closing gaps between existing facilities. Enhanced crosswalks, 10 new RRFBs, and consistent 5- foot-wide bike lanes will further improve connectivity.

*Implement plans, based on community participation and data, that addresses gaps identified in the existing network*

In 2022, the Town of Wells partnered with MaineDOT through a Planning Partnership Initiative (PPI). In 2024, the PPI team completed the *Route 1 Corridor Draft Transportation Feasibility Study*. The study identified improvements along the Route 1 corridor and produced a set of *Draft Concept Plans* that are provided as an attachment. The feasibility study identified gaps within the existing transportation network and deficiencies for all roadway users through public outreach and a Road Safety Assessment (RSA) that took place in November of 2022.

*Figure 7: Public Open House for the Feasibility Study*



The Project included a robust public involvement effort. Three public meetings were held throughout the study process to gather community input. The first meeting on December 14, 2022, focused on presenting the scope of work and solicited public input. Participants emphasized the importance of pedestrian and cyclist safety by advocating for more sidewalks, curbing, and crosswalks

with pedestrian-controlled traffic signals. Participants supported  improvements to the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

The second meeting on June 6, 2023, conducted as a Wells Select Board Meeting and Workshop, covered existing conditions and preliminary recommendations. This included insights from the RSA and initial sidewalk additions.

The third meeting on June 25, 2024, was an open house followed by a public presentation where feedback was gathered through email, online comments, and in-person conversations. Better-marked crosswalks, more sidewalks, and flashing beacons for pedestrian safety, especially in high-traffic areas, were also favored. General safety concerns included the inconsistency of pedestrian connectivity where sidewalks were intermittent, and bike lanes were present in high-speed areas. Goals from the public outreach process included: Ensuring safety for pedestrians and cyclists by creating safer, more consistent infrastructure, including protected bike lanes and clearly marked pedestrian pathways as well as encouraging public transport solutions.

*Figure 8: Public Meeting for the Feasibility Study*

These goals were central to the study's progress, ensuring that community concerns were addressed and integrated into final recommendations for a safer, more efficient, and connected transportation network in Wells, one that provides more affordable transportation options. The recommendations that were developed because of the feasibility study address gaps in the existing pedestrian, bicycle and transit network. This will be accomplished by expanding the existing sidewalks and constructing consistent 5.5-foot sidewalks along 8.2 miles. In addition, installing 11.2 miles of continuous 5-foot bicycle lanes along both sides of the roadway will provide a continuous bicycle facility throughout the corridor. The Project will also be designed to accommodate the addition of improved transit facilities in a future project.

*Increase Accessibility for Non-Motorized Travelers Through Complete Streets*

The Project will significantly enhance transportation opportunities for non-motorized travelers who live, work in, and visit the Town of Wells. It will incorporate various Complete Streets design elements, including continuous 5.5-foot sidewalks, 5-foot bike lanes, improved lighting and crossings. These facilities will allow for more affordable choices and make non-motorized modes of transportation safer, more accessible, and more appealing for all users of the corridor.

*Improve Reliability of Last-Mile Freight*

Given the high concentration of commercial land use along the Route 1 corridor, last-mile freight activity is important, involving deliveries of fuel, food, goods and supplies. Restoring the corridor to a state of good repair and upgrading the traffic signals to adaptive signal control will enhance travel reliability for local deliveries. Safety improvements will reduce conflicts between trucks and other roadway users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicle drivers. These transportation upgrades will provide dedicated spaces for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users through the addition of consistent bike lanes and sidewalks, thus reducing conflicts with heavy vehicles. Overall, the Project improvements will foster a safer and more reliable last-mile freight network.

## 5. ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS AND OPPORTUNITY

Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity is a primary purpose of the Project which will facilitate tourism opportunities, promote long-term economic growth and other broader economic and fiscal benefits, and promote greater public and private investments in land-use productivity, including rural main street revitalization.

*Facilitate tourism opportunities*

The summer destination tourism industry has played a vital role in the economic health of the town for the last century. Hotels and food service are the largest industry for the town, employing nearly 1,000 people. Offering seven miles of coastline, the beach is a primary attraction for seasonal tourism. Route 1 provides access to all of these destinations, services, and accommodations. The town of Wells has a year-round population of 11,855 which increases to 48,409 during the peak summer months. It is expected that by the summer of 2026, the population will reach over 54,000.

Retail sales are tracked in Maine at the Economic Summary Area (ESA) level. Wells is part of the Kittery ESA, along with Kittery, Cape Neddick, Eliot, Ogunquit, York, and South Berwick. During the four-year period from 2015 to 2019, the total taxable sales in the Kittery ESA increased by $15 million or about 15%.

The Maine Office of Tourism reports economic data for the Maine Beaches region that includes the Greater York Region where Wells is located. In 2023, 2,713,500 overnight visitors and 1,082,600 day visitors in the region spent a total of $2,630,443,700. The summer tourism sector supported 34,300 jobs in 2023 and $1,424,161,900 was earned in wages. The total economic impact the tourism sector had on the region was $3,970,318,800 in 2023. Twenty-five percent of the State's Visitation takes place in the Greater York Region.

The Project will facilitate tourism by providing safe, multimodal access to the heavily visited coastal destination of Wells. The Project components will ensure that tourism opportunities continue to grow and compete with other destinations as well as support the future expected growth in the summer population by reducing congestion and improving mobility throughout the corridor. The improvements will allow residents and summer workforce to reliably and efficiently access jobs, businesses, and services. Tourists will be able to safely and efficiently access the Town and once in Wells, can chose to walk, bike and take transit to restaurants and tourist destinations along the corridor.

*Promote long-term economic growth and other broader economic and fiscal benefits*

In 2023, the Town of Wells approved an ordinance to amend Chapter 145 (Land Use) of the Town of Wells Code to create a College District at the current location of York County Community College (YCCC). The zoning change will enable YCCC to build on-campus dormitories for student housing, which received federal funding in 2026. In turn, this will allow YCCC to grow and become more competitive by providing on-campus housing. During the summer months, YCCC also intends to allow the dormitories to serve as housing for seasonal tourism workers. As part of a future phase (not included in this application), a new sidewalk or multi- use path is anticipated on College Drive, connecting it to the improvements along Route 1 provided for in this Project. This important improvement would provide future students living on-campus with a walkable and bikeable connection to the amenities and employment opportunities along the Route 1 corridor, making YCCC and its future on-campus housing more appealing.

*Promote greater public and private investments in land-use productivity, including rural main street revitalization*

The local economy in Wells is directly tied to the capacity of Route 1. Currently without an established village or downtown area, most businesses are situated along Route 1 and other roadways where the necessary infrastructure exists. Consequently, the local economy is influenced by changes in land use and infrastructure. The community has expressed concerns about growth and development, highlighting the need for diverse housing options and more walkable areas with a downtown or village.

This Project will present new opportunities for the community. By identifying and investing in the infrastructure for "village" development areas, this initiative will support higher density development, redevelopment opportunities, and a mix of uses that Wells currently lacks. The transformed multimodal

corridor aligns with the goals identified in the Town's recent Comprehensive Plan Update as businesses and residents recognize the value of being in close proximity to multimodal transportation facilities that offer a variety of options.

**6. STATE OF GOOD REPAIR**

The Project will update and restore the Route 1 corridor infrastructure to a state of good repair through a complete streets approach and will prioritize improving the condition and safety of existing transportation infrastructure within the existing footprint. Keeping this corridor in a State of Good Repair is a primary purpose of this project.

The Route 1 corridor is the main transportation route through Wells, essential for regional mobility and accessibility for daily destinations including jobs, education, amenities, recreation, and services. A Road Safety Assessment (RSA) identified deficiencies in pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure.

Pedestrian deficiencies include poorly maintained sidewalks with inconsistent widths, materials, and locations; midblock ladder crossings disconnected from sidewalks; inconsistent signage and markings; lack of sufficient lighting, excessive crosswalk lengths; and a lack of pedestrian signal heads. Bicycle deficiencies include inconsistent bike lane symbols and narrow bike lanes. Transit deficiencies include the isolation of the Wells Transportation Center from Route 1 and the beach, limited bus frequency and connectivity, and inadequate signage. In addition, the existing roadway drainage system is failing and not in good physical condition.

*Restore and modernize the existing core infrastructure assets that have met their useful life*

The Project will mitigate the aforementioned vulnerabilities by restoring and modernizing the existing core infrastructure assets that are technologically outdated and are evidenced to have caused safety hazards. Complete Streets recommendations include enhancing active transportation options by constructing or rehabilitating 8.2 miles of 5.5-foot sidewalks, 11.2 miles of 5-foot bike lanes and enhanced crossings. The project includes reconstruction of the roadway to install stormwater infrastructure to improve water quality and reduce extreme weather event impacts. Installing new traffic signals and upgrading the overall signal network to adaptive traffic technology will modernize the corridor and reduce congestion. These upgrades will return the roadway to a state of good repair while transforming the corridor into a complete street.

*Prioritize improvement of the condition and safety of existing transportation infrastructure within the existing footprint*

The Project will prioritize enhancements aimed at improving the condition and safety of existing transportation infrastructure, with most of the proposed upgrades occurring within the current infrastructure footprint. Right-of-way impacts may be necessary to accommodate stormwater treatment. Key objectives include increasing safety and accessibility by connecting segmented sidewalks, expanding current walkways, and improving crossing locations with RRFBs.

Additionally, the Project plans to update signal technology, implement raised center medians to reduce conflict points, and add lighting to enhance safety at existing crossings. These upgrades are designed to revitalize and modernize the current infrastructure, ensuring past progress is refined and enhanced.

**7. PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION**

Creating strong partnerships and collaboration is a primary project purpose. Starting in 2022, the town of Wells partnered with MaineDOT through a Planning Partnership Initiative (PPI) and developed the *Route 1 Corridor Draft Transportation Feasibility Study*. Throughout the feasibility study process, the team engaged with residents and community-based organizations to ensure equity considerations were included.

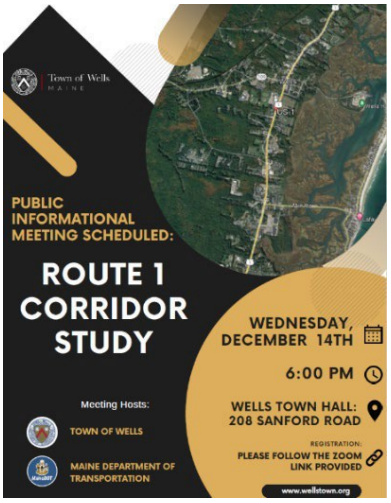
*Engage Residents and Community Based Organizations*

Community engagement and public outreach have been fundamental aspects of the Project from the start. To support the feasibility study, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed consisting of members from the Town of Wells, MaineDOT, Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC), and consultants and included input from local business owners and advocates.

Three public meetings were held during the study period to gather community input for all users of the corridor:

- The first meeting on December 14, 2022, focused on presenting the scope of work and soliciting public input.
- The second meeting, conducted as a Wells Select Board Meeting and Workshop on June 6, 2023, covered existing conditions and preliminary recommendations.
- The third meeting, an open house format, followed by a public presentation on June 25, 2024, collected feedback through emails, online comments, and in-person conversations.

*Figure 9: Public Meeting Flyer*




The town of Wells dedicated a *public website page* on its municipal website to communicate Project information and documents to the public and will continue to update this page to keep residents and stakeholders informed of the ongoing process. The PPI team plans to hold additional public meetings and events for the community and stakeholders to offer comments and voice concerns as the project moves forward into the design phase.

MaineDOT recently updated its *Public Involvement Plan*, which outlines the Department's efforts to ensure disadvantaged populations are afforded meaningful opportunities for public involvement.

*Coordinate with other types of projects*

**York County Community College Dormitory**: As previously described in the Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity merit criteria section, of the York County Community College (YCCC) has received funding for student dormitories that may also serve as housing for seasonal tourism workers during the summer break. As part of a future phase (not included in this application), a new sidewalk or multi-use path is anticipated to be constructed on College Drive, connecting it to the Route 1 improvements provided for in this Project. The Town of Wells has met with the YCCC leadership and will continue to coordinate the Project components that connect the campus to the Route 1 corridor as well the use of the dormitory for seasonal workforce.

**Master Pole Attachment Agreement**: The town of Wells is entering into a Master Pole Attachment Agreement to strengthen cell phone service by adding microcells to existing streetlights. This initiative aims to meet the increased demand caused by the influx of summer residents and tourists, which strains the current service. These microcells will be installed along Route 1, Route 109, and Chapel Road near the Transportation Center. The Master Pole Attachment Project will be coordinated with the Project's lighting component.

**Buffam Bridge Construction**: MaineDOT is actively working on reconstructing the Buffam Bridge in Wells along the Route 1 corridor that spans the Webhannet River (Bridge #2107 Project WIN# 023535.00). The MaineDOT bridge program is coordinating with the Project to ensure that the improvements along the corridor can be accommodated within the bridge. Due to environmental constraints, the existing width of the bridge can only accommodate a sidewalk on one side of the bridge, which will be on the easterly side. The Project will continue to coordinate with the Town and MaineDOT during preliminary design.

*Document support from local, regional, and State levels*

The Project is well supported by the State, York County, and Town of Wells including its residents as well as neighboring communities, transportation organizations, and other individuals as expressed in the attached Letters of Support. The Town of Wells Board of Selectmen approved $2,962,900 in Town funds on January 21, 2025, which was reaffirmed in the attached Wells Commitment Letter dated January 21, 2026.

If awarded a BUILD grant, the Project would be added to *MaineDOT's Three-Year Work Plan* and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Transportation studies aimed at supporting improvements in the Project area date back to the early 2000s:

***Town of Wells Comprehensive Plan*** (2005, Updated 2020-2024) was recently updated over several years and finalized in May 2024 from the original February 2005 version developed by the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission (SMPDC) in conjunction with the Town of Wells Planning Department. The plan is a roadmap for the Town's future growth and development, outlining strategies for preserving open space, protecting natural resources, enhancing infrastructure, promoting economic development, and ensuring a high quality of life for residents. A major recommendation that came from the plan included funding to complete a comprehensive corridor study of land use and transportation for Route 1. The plan recommended the following transportation related goals for the corridor:

- Relief from the congestion on US Route 1 and provision of improved north-south movement
- Improvement of problem intersections on US Route 1
- Additional access to the Maine Turnpike in order to serve vehicles destined for the southern section of Wells and Ogunquit to reduce traffic on US Route 1
- Address access management and traffic calming needs
- Identify opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle travel
- Improved public transportation alternatives

***Wells Sidewalk Development Plan*** (2003) Wells has been studying improvements to sidewalks since January 2003 when a Sidewalk Development Plan was adopted to guide sidewalk construction in the area. The Project included sidewalks along both sides in many locations, including Route 109 from Route 1 to Chapel Road.

*Wells Traffic Inventory and Research for Future Bypass Feasibility* (2018) The Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC) developed the Feasibility study in 2018 to research several different options for alleviating traffic on Route 1 in Wells, with a focus on the segment between Wells Road (Route 109) and Littlefield Road (Route 9B). The study recommended the following (many of which were implemented as part of the *Route 1 Corridor DRAFT Transportation Feasibility Study*).

- Corridor Safety Audit – Conduct a road safety audit.
- Traffic Signals – Reevaluate current signal timings and phasing to ensure signals are optimized to the fullest extent.
- Traffic Data Collection – Updated traffic counts should be conducted to optimize traffic signals.
- Corridor Analysis – Conduct a traffic and safety corridor analysis study with intent of providing recommendations to improve traffic flow.
- Public Transportation – Continue to support transit service and encourage ridership to reduce dependence on personal automobiles.
- Striping and Lane Configuration – Revisit the current lane configuration to ensure lane assignments appropriately reflect current turning movements and travel patterns.

***Central York County Connections Study*** (2010-2016) In 2010 the study was commissioned to identify a series of recommendations designed to preserve or enhance transportation connections between central

York County, US Route 1 and the Maine Turnpike. The study made recommendations that further study should be made for access management improvements in Wells, with the expansion of inter-city bus service.

*KACTS Regional Safety Action Plan* (2024) The Kittery Area Comprehensive Transportation System (KACTS), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region, completed a Regional Safety Action Plan to identify priority infrastructure and policy improvements for nine communities. The region is committed to achieve Vision Zero, which is defined by eliminating all roadway-related deaths and serious injuries by 2045. The plan was funded by the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grant program and aligns with the Safe System Approach. One result of the study was a prioritized project list which identified three of the segments on the Route 1 corridor ranking in the top three spots.

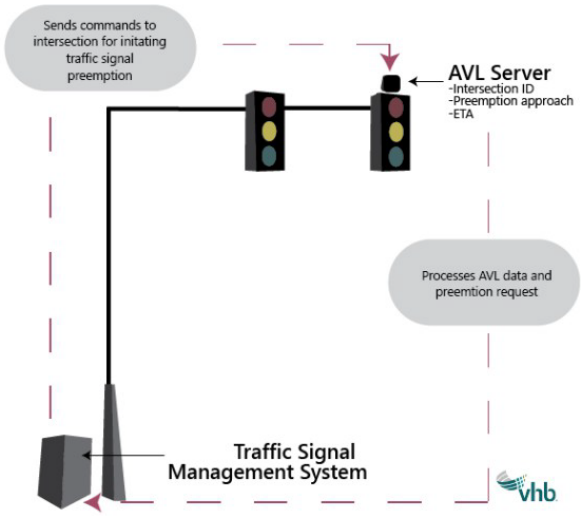
## 8. INNOVATION

A primary purpose of this project is to prioritize innovative technologies through the implementation of adaptive signal control, emergency preemption, improved pedestrian lighting, and parking technology while accelerating Project delivery during the NEPA review process.

*Innovative Technologies*

Outdated signal equipment in the corridor contributes to the congestion experienced along Route 1. During the public outreach process, multiple comments suggested improving the synchronization of traffic lights to ensure a smoother flow of traffic. The Project entails the implementation of innovative technologies at signalized intersections including adaptive signal control, video and radar-based vehicle detection, and emergency/transit preemption that will enhance safety and mobility for drivers along Route 1.

*Figure 10: Emergency Preemptive Signal*




[3] Homeland Security Science and Technology. Tech Note: Automatic Vehicle Locating Systems. https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/AVLSys-TN_0609-508.pdf. June 2009.

Adaptive signal control is a critical aspect of the Project for all roadway users to reach their destinations more efficiently. This technology captures current traffic demand data to adjust traffic signal timing to optimize traffic flow in coordinated traffic signal systems. Adaptive signals are helpful in reducing traffic delay and congestion, improving travel times, decreasing travel time variability, and decreasing emissions. MaineDOT has employed this technology in two corridors in Augusta, two corridors in Waterville, and one corridor in Sanford, with a few other local projects by municipalities statewide.

Emergency preemption traffic signal technology will be installed throughout the corridor, which will also benefit transit vehicles. Advanced Vehicle Location (AVL) and optical based emergency preemption systems use GPS and wireless data communication to provide real-time location information of emergency and transit vehicles to a central system. This system works with hardware on the vehicles that communicates with the traffic signal system to prioritize these vehicles automatically. The central system uses this data to preempt the traffic signals.

In addition to signal technology upgrades, the Project includes improved innovative lighting enhancements at each of the existing and proposed pedestrian crossings based on the most recent design guidance in the *MaineDOT Lighting Design Guideline for Pedestrian Crosswalks*.

To address parking challenges, the Project will utilize portable Variable Message Signs (VMS) to communicate when parking lots are full and help to avoid additional trips in the area and reduce resulting congestion from drivers looking for parking spots when the lot is full. The signs will also note where central parking lots are located and where parking is available. The strategy is 'park once' to reduce area trips and would be combined with local transit. Wells does not currently use this technology, however the town is considering mobile parking applications as a next step, once the proposed VMS improvements have been implemented.

*Innovative Project Delivery*

MaineDOT is also applying an innovative means with respect to NEPA and permitting for this Project through Programmatic Agreements to ensure timely and consistent reviews and accelerate Project delivery. MaineDOT and various other state and federal departments have executed agreements to expeditiously but thoroughly review environmental impacts from projects which is described further in the *Project Readiness* section of this application.

1. 23 U.S.C. §326 NEPA Categorical Exclusion Assignment Memorandum of Agreement between FWHA Maine Division and MaineDOT dated 10/9/24.

Under the MOU, MaineDOT assumes Federal FHWA responsibility for Categorical Exclusion determinations, environmental reviews, consultations, and NEPA Certifications without involvement or oversight from FHWA Maine Division or Headquarters. This includes:

Section 106 Consultation (National Historic Preservation Act) Section 7 Consultation (Endangered Species Act)

Section 4(f) Determinations (Parks, recreation lands, wildlife refuges and historic sites) Section 404 (Clean Water Act)

Approximately 30 other environmental regulations, Executive Orders, etc. covered under the "NEPA Umbrella"

This MOU reduces coordination, review and approval times by allowing MaineDOT to make project-related decisions.