

***Restoring Interstate Durability for the Economy and Safety 4 Maine
(RIDES 4 ME) Network of Projects***
Maine Department of Transportation

U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)
FY 2026 Nationally Significant Multimodal Freight and Highways Projects
(INFRA) Grant Program

Funding Opportunity Number: NSMFHP-26-INFRA

PROJECT READINESS

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Planning and Constructability

All four components are programmed in MaineDOT's *Three-Year Work Plan (2026 Edition)* under the following WIN identification numbers: Interstate 295 resurfacing (WIN 26338.00 and 26344.00), I-95 resurfacing from Newport to Pittsfield (WIN 26468.00), and I-95 resurfacing from Argyle to Howland (WIN 29472.00).²¹ The I-295 work has been in the *Work Plan* for approximately three years and is coordinated with concurrent I-295 bridge replacements (Yarmouth, Exit 17, completed around November 2025). The Project is included in the *State Transportation Improvement Program* and advances the *Maine State Freight Plan* and *Strategic Highway Safety Plan*. MaineDOT will be able to begin Project construction well in advance of the obligation deadline of September 30, 2027, however, the Department will not begin work prior to execution of an obligation agreement. Upon notification of an INFRA grant award, MaineDOT will update all public documentation, including the state's *Transportation Improvement Plan*, to include all components of the Project.

Design Status

Scopes for I-295 and I-95 Newport to Pittsfield are at a conceptual level informed by completed 2025 testing and LiDAR; the Federal request is for Construction and Construction Engineering, with Preliminary Engineering funded through Other Federal Funds and state funds.

Programmatic Agreements

MaineDOT will utilize the NEPA Assignment Program (Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program) to innovatively accelerate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and permitting measures. This program formally assigns the Federal Highway Administration's NEPA responsibilities to a state department of transportation. Through the program, MaineDOT has assumed responsibility from FHWA for all classes of NEPA (Categorical Exclusions, Environmental Assessments, and Environmental Impact Statements) and also assumes responsibility for environmental laws, regulations, Executive Orders, and interagency consultation in Maine. The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for the Project will be carried out by MaineDOT pursuant to either:

- 23 U.S.C. 326 and Memorandum of Understanding executed by FHWA and MaineDOT dated October 9, 2024
- 23 U.S.C. 327 and Memorandum of Understanding executed by FHWA and MaineDOT dated January 30, 2026

Maine is the 9th state in the nation to receive NEPA Assignment Program approval from the Federal government.

²¹ MaineDOT 2026 Work Plan (three-year).

Project Schedule

Project Milestone	Completion Date
Project Kickoff	June 2026
Preliminary Engineering	August 2026
NEPA	January 2027
Obtain Permits/Approvals	April 2027
STIP/TIP Inclusion	July 2026
Final Design	April 2027
Anticipated Finalization of Grant Agreement	January 2027
Anticipated Obligation of Grant Funds	March 2027
Construction	June 2030

The Project phases that comprise this BUILD application consist of Construction Engineering and Construction. The above dates are contingent on the date of signed grant agreement and may adjust as needed. The Project kickoff date is also the MaineDOT internal kickoff date.

NEPA and Permitting

Anticipated class of action: Categorical Exclusion, in process, administered by MaineDOT under § 327 NEPA Assignment. I-295 impacts are minimal, with no right-of-way acquisition and no utility relocation because the work is within the existing right-of-way on a previously constructed corridor. The I-95 segments may require stream-crossing permits, addressed through MaineDOT's standing agency agreements, typically within six to seven months. No final NEPA action occurred more than three years before application, so no reconsideration analysis is required. FHWA will not release construction funds until NEPA is complete, and the schedule reflects that sequence.

MaineDOT recognizes that transportation infrastructure can exist while simultaneously assuring the sustainability of environmental habitats and ecosystems. The Department exercises stewardship over natural resources and transportation infrastructure when examining aspects of a proposed transportation project.

MaineDOT is 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 and thoroughly review environmental impacts from projects.

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MaineDOT will take advantage of the following up-to-date agreements, where applicable, to streamline the environmental review and approval process:

1. Programmatic Agreement among Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Maine State Historic Preservation Officer, and Maine Department of Transportation Regarding Implementation of the Federal Aid Highway and Federal Transit Programs in Maine
2. Cooperative Agreement between U.S. Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), FHWA and the MaineDOT for State Transportation Reviews by the USFWS in Maine
3. Programmatic Agreement for the State of Maine concerning identification of listed and proposed species and designation of non-federal representative under the Federal Endangered Species Act between FHWA, Maine Division USACE, and MaineDOT
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5. Memorandum of Agreement for Stormwater Management Between the MaineDOT, MTA and Maine Department of Environmental Protection
6. Memorandum of Agreement between United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New England District and MaineDOT for Expediting Permit Application Evaluations under Section 214 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000, as amended, and Section 139(j) of Title 23, United States Code, Assistance to Affected State and Federal Agencies, July 2022.

Readiness Proof Table

Item	Status	Risk	Remaining action
NEPA	Most Likely a Categorical Exclusion	Low	Complete CE before obligation
Design	Conceptual; informed by 2025 NDT/LiDAR	Low-Med	Advance to advertisement
Right-of-Way	Within existing MaineDOT ROW	Low	None
Permits	I-95 stream crossings via standing MOUs	Low-Med	Confirm per component
Agreements	MaineDOT owns, builds, maintains	Low	None
Match	20% State (gas-tax)	Low	Match-commitment letter (early next week)
Schedule	Obligation April/May 2027	Low	Hold to Work Plan
Procurement	MaineDOT standard advertisement	Low	None

Applicant Capacity Review

MaineDOT is an accomplished, experienced, and responsible recipient of past successful INFRA, TIGER, FASTLANE, CRISI, RAISE, and BUILD grants and can be relied upon to fully fund and commence the Project well in advance of the obligation deadline and to complete the Project well in advance of the expenditure deadline without risk.

MaineDOT also adheres to Administrative and National Policy Requirements during all phases of all projects. The Department's Federal grant and formula funds experience includes managing numerous infrastructure projects and associated Federal requirements and regulations, such as compliance with Buy America, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Davis Bacon Act, and the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act.

MaineDOT understands the requirement of Section 3(C)(iv) of Executive Order *Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity*. As part of the grant agreement phase, MaineDOT will provide documentation of past, current and ongoing compliance, as it has with previous grants.

MaineDOT follows all applicable domestic preference laws including Executive Order 14005, *Ensuring the Future Is Made in All of America by All of America's Workers* (86 FR 7475) and ensures the use of products and materials produced in the United States for all infrastructure projects.

Since enactment of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), MaineDOT has successfully managed more than \$585 million in various grant program funding.

Financial Completeness. The full project budget identifies all funding sources: INFRA (\$50M), other federal (\$30M), and the State match (\$20M). The State match is from gas-tax funds; a State match-commitment letter is in preparation. A 15 percent contingency is carried, with the source identified in the budget, to address cost overruns. Secured funds will be characterized as secured and anticipated funds as anticipated.

Public Involvement. The Project follows MaineDOT's public-involvement practice for interstate work, including advance public notice of construction staging, coordination with the affected municipalities (Topsham, Brunswick, Freeport, Yarmouth, Cumberland, Falmouth, Portland, and the I-95 communities), and traveler information during overnight closures and detours.

MaineDOT's Public Involvement Plan is located here:

<https://www.maine.gov/dot/sites/maine.gov.dot/files/inline-files/pip0321.pdf>.

Risks and Mitigations

During Project development, risks were contemplated but each has a comprehensive mitigation strategy. Coordination between Project designers, the City, and the environmental team will continue to ensure that Project goals and community needs are met while avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating potential negative environmental impacts.

Project Risks	Mitigations
Overpass clearance and profile limits at bridges	Transition profile at fixed-elevation points; coordinate with concurrent bridge replacements
Night-work productivity and traffic impact	Night work with daytime reopening; optional overnight closures with U.S. Route 1 detours
Environmental permitting (I-95 stream crossings)	Standing agency MOUs; six-to-seven-month NEPA cycle; § 327 Assignment
Cost escalation	15 percent contingency; phased bundles; recent MaineDOT delivery experience
Multi-year, seasonal schedule	Two-package plan; single construction obligation; bundles advertised within weeks
Benefit-cost ratio sensitivity	Conservative central case; unlocked workbook; safety and SGR benefits firm as data arrives

Performance Measures

MaineDOT will report measurable outcomes tied to the Project:

Measure	Target / basis
Pavement condition	Move the rehabilitated segments to Good; advance toward the 35 percent statewide SGR target
Ride quality	Improve measured ride quality on the rehabilitated corridor