

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Wells is a rural, historic coastal town in York County, Maine with a population of approximately 11,855. Covering 57.66 square miles situated along the southern coast of Maine and bordering the Atlantic Ocean, Wells has experienced significant population growth over the past decade, increasing by 18% from 2010 to 2020 and an additional increase of 5% to 2023. During peak summer tourism season, population increases to 48,409 with over 6,600 lodging and seasonal units, most along Route 1, placing increased burdens on this rural transportation network.

Wells Route 1 Community Gateway: Implementing a Multimodal Vision for Transportation in Wells, ME

The Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) requests \$23,703,200 in FY2025 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Program funds for the “*Wells Route 1 Community Gateway: Implementing a Multimodal Vision for Transportation in Wells, Maine Project*” (Project), a complete streets project that will reimagine this congested, vehicle-focused roadway into a safer multimodal corridor that supports a vibrant summer tourist destination. The Project will make safe connections that don't exist today enabling thousands of trips without the need for motor vehicles within a reasonable walking distance.

Key elements of the project include:

- › Construction of 5.0 miles of new sidewalk and reconstruction and/or rehabilitation of 3.2 miles of existing sidewalks and 11.2 miles of consistent bike lanes along the corridor to create safe, affordable alternatives to vehicle travel and improve access to daily destinations for residents and visitors travelling along Route 1;
- › Implementation of several safety measures including enhancement of crosswalks, two new signalized intersections, and improved pedestrian lighting along the corridor;
- › Deployment of new adaptive signal technology to address congestion and safety;
- › Upgrade transit stops to include shelters and signage to improve safety and comfort for transit riders; and
- › Installation of gateway treatments at both ends of the corridor to enhance aesthetic appeal and improve functionality at these critical entrance points.

These improvements align closely with the priorities and goals of the BUILD program, will mitigate several high crash locations, and collectively will transform Route 1 into a more continuous, connected multimodal transportation network that provides expanded travel choices for roadway users in Wells while supporting economic growth, improving safety, and quality of life in this rural community.

The Project supports the [*Maine State Active Transportation Plan*](#) (AT Plan) vision to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety; expand mobility; support economic development; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and enhance community vibrancy, quality of life, and public health for Maine residents and visitors alike. The Project also supports the State of Maine [*Strategic Highway Safety Plan \(SHSP\)*](#) goals to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety, reduce vehicle speeds, address intersection crashes, and enhance the safety of first responders.

1.1 Statement of Work

Technical and Engineering Aspects of the Project

This application includes construction, associated traffic control, temporary soil erosion, water and pollution control, construction inspection, and the contractor’s mobilization.

The Project will completely reimagine 5.6 miles of Route 1 in Wells, from the Ogunquit River to Bypass Road to create a multimodal transportation corridor. The Project will tie into existing

sidewalk and bicycle lanes that extend an additional two miles south through Ogunquit. As illustrated in the attached conceptual plans, the technical aspects of the Project include:

- › **Pedestrian Facilities:** Expansion of the sidewalk network to address existing gaps and improve access, including construction or reconstruction 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:** Addition and improvement of six bus stops, with pull-offs and shelters along the roadway and improved signage;
- › **Signalization and Signal 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 the Wells Public Safety Building at the intersection of Route 1/Route 109; and installation of overhead lane use signage through the Project Area;
- › **Roadway Reconfiguration** to convert a section of Harbor Road from a two-way road to one-way in the eastbound direction to improve safety at this high crash location along with implementing several policy recommendations to improve access management along the corridor, including curb cut reductions and installation of raised median islands at select locations;
- › **Aesthetic Enhancements:** implement gateway improvements including new “Welcome to Wells Signage” along the corridor from the north and south, and a new Welcome Center;
- › **Stormwater Infrastructure Improvements:** installation of a new drainage system to treat stormwater and improve water quality along the corridor.

Current Design Status

MaineDOT and the Town of Wells completed the [Route 1 Corridor DRAFT Transportation Feasibility Study](#) in August of 2024 which resulted in a set of Draft Concept Plans. The team is currently embarking on the Preliminary Engineering phase of the project. Permitting and design is expected to be completed in April 2028 should BUILD funds be awarded. The grant funding would be used to complete the construction and associated inspection costs for the project.

Transportation Challenges and Solutions

As part of the *Route 1 Corridor DRAFT Feasibility Study*, a Road Safety Assessment (RSA) was performed in November of 2022 to evaluate and document the safety challenges and High Crash Locations (HCLs) within the study area. Several challenges and proposed mitigation strategies were identified and are described in Table 1.

Table 1: Transportation Challenges and Proposed Mitigation Strategies.	
Challenge #1: Vehicle Centric Design with a lack of multimodal infrastructure.	
› Lack of adequate pedestrian infrastructure: The Study Area is missing sidewalks in several critical segments along the corridor. As a	• Provide continuous sidewalk on the east side of Route 1 for the length of the Project and expand sidewalk on the west side.

<p>result, automobile travel is more prevalent, and pedestrians are using shoulders adjacent to the vehicular travel lane where sidewalks are not present. Existing sidewalks do not always meet ADA compliance and are generally 5 feet or less in width.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement sidewalks or path along Route 109 between Route 1 and the Wells Transportation Center and/or Chapel Road (Future phase). • Ensure that future projects meet ADA standards and create a plan for upgrading deficient facilities to bring them up to current standards. Providing accessible routes ensures that all pedestrians are able to use the facilities as intended and also provides a benefit to the greater community – such as those using strollers or pushing carts.
<p>› Lack of Consistent Bicycle Infrastructure: Wells ranks 11th in the state for bicycle crashes; bicycle amenities along Route 1 are narrow (four feet), and striping and signage is inconsistent, resulting in some cyclists using narrow sidewalks or the roadway to travel the corridor; high vehicle travel speeds make bicycling uncomfortable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide consistent 5-foot bicycle lanes throughout the Route 1 corridor to improve safety for cyclists. • Implement traffic calming measures, including narrowing travel lanes and center medians.
<p>› Lack of Sufficient Transit Stops: Transit stops along the corridor are difficult with limited signage to identify them and lack basic amenities such as shelters and pull-offs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve visibility of the transit stops by installing new signs at bus stop locations as well as pullout areas with dedicated space for loading and unloading of passengers. • Implement transit stop enhancements and incorporating branding/wayfinding to make stops more visible. • Addition of transit shelters at new and proposed stops to increase pedestrian comfort and usage.
<p>Challenge #2: Safety</p>	
<p>› Lack of Safe and Consistent Pedestrian Crossings: While the Project Area contains several existing pedestrian crossings, they are inconsistent and inadequately lit in many places, creating a safety risk and confusing conditions. Additionally, crossings are missing at several critical intersections to connect to popular origins and destinations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance lighting, particularly at pedestrian crossing locations to improve safety for pedestrians, particularly during night conditions. • Install or upgrade RRFBs at crossing locations without signals. • Install additional crosswalks at existing traffic signal locations to improve safety for pedestrians at critical locations.
<p>› Unsafe and Improperly Controlled Intersections: Several permissive left-turns are not exclusive, which creates confusion for drivers unfamiliar with the area and results in unsafe conditions. Signal timings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade to exclusive left-turn phasing. • Install adaptive signal technology throughout corridor. • Signalize two intersections: Route 1 at Chapel Road and Route 1 at South Street. • Convert a section of Harbor Road to one way eastbound to improve traffic operations,

creative extreme gridlock along the corridor during peak tourism seasons.	including unsignalized approach of public safety building.
Challenge #3: Roadway Configuration	
› Inconsistent Lane and Shoulder Widths Along the Corridor: Varying lane and shoulder widths along Route 1 inhibit the ability to accommodate multimodal infrastructure and impede traffic operations during peak tourism season.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide consistent travel lane widths to 11' with 5' shoulders/bike lanes. Add sidewalk throughout the corridor and fill in existing gaps so that walkers are safely accommodated outside of the roadway area.
› Inconsistent Access Management Practices: Driveways are often close together and have widths that exceed standards. Additionally, driver compliance is low with existing turn signage limitations for accessing destinations along the corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on their recent Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Wells will implement Access Management strategies to ensure that change in land uses or new proposed developments provide safe and efficient access to their driveways while maintaining travel operations for vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit trolleys along Route 1. • Install raised median treatments at key locations with a history of associated crashes.
› Parking: During summer months, more beach parking is sold than is available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed variable message signs to provide information on parking (to get people to park and ride locations, and to direct people to lots with availability). • Future consideration of mobile parking apps.
Challenge #3: Lack of Stormwater Infrastructure along the roadway.	
› Stormwater Systems are lacking or insufficient along the Corridor: There is no stormwater treatment system in the Project Study Area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing and proposed stormwater drainage design to identify potential areas for improvement and stormwater treatment.
Challenge #4: Lack of Consistent Aesthetics along the roadway.	
› No Sense of Place: There is no sense of a defined gateway or Village area when traveling into Wells northbound and southbound.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gateway recommendations include the use of large Welcome signs at the town line with Ogunquit, and north of the Route 1 and Bypass Road intersection. Add other amenities, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian oriented lighting to let people know they have arrived in a more multi-modal friendly and safe space.

Project History

The Town of Wells has been focused on the transportation challenges and opportunities along the Route 1 corridor for decades, completing several studies focused on improving the transportation network along Route 1 and nearby roadways.

Transportation Network and Investment Context

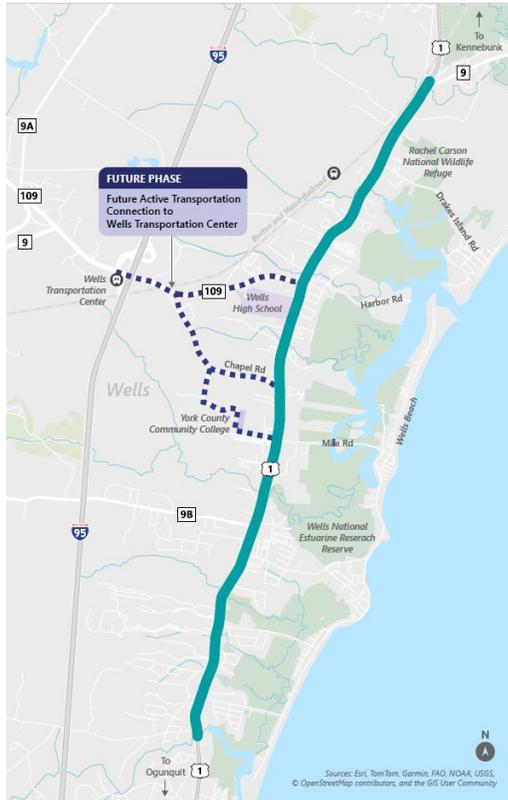
This project will advance the goals of several state, local and county public plans, including:

- › [Maine State Active Transportation Plan](#)
- › [Town of Wells Comprehensive Plan](#)
- › [Wells Sidewalk Development Plan](#)
- › [Wells Traffic Inventory and Research for Future Bypass Feasibility](#)
- › [Central York County Connections Study](#)
- › [Strategic Highway Safety Plan](#)

Project Location

The Project study area comprises of a corridor along Route 1 that extends 5.6 miles from the Ogunquit River to Bypass Road running parallel to the Atlantic Ocean to the east and I-95 to the west, as shown in Figure 1: Project Location Map. Route 1 is an urban minor arterial roadway and carries an average daily traffic volume of 20,000 vehicles per day, ranging from nearly 17,500 (south of Wells) to 25,500 (north of Mile Road) during summer months. Traffic volumes in the off-season are much lower, averaging around 7,300 vehicles per day (per data from the MaineDOT Continuous Count Station at the Wells/Ogunquit town line in January 2022). Lacking a downtown village, Route 1 serves as a linear downtown providing commercial and retail services throughout. Sanford Road (Route 109) connects the Route 1 corridor with points north and south via I-95 and points west and leads to the Wells Transportation Center which offers Downeaster Amtrak Service to Boston, Massachusetts and Portland, Maine and beyond, as well as regional bus service. Chapel Road provides a connection between I-95 from Sanford Road (Route 109) to Route 1 and provides access to York County Community College via College Drive.

The median household income in Wells was \$83,900 and around 8.3% of the town’s population was in poverty in 2023. Wells, located on the east coast of Southern Maine, has access to the



Atlantic Ocean, making summer tourism an essential part of the town’s economic vitality. Within the Maine Beaches region, which includes Chamber of Commerce from the Greater York Region, summer visitors spent \$2,630,443,700 in 2023. This Project will enhance transportation amenities along the project corridor and help bolster the critical tourism economy in Wells.

Wells is a member of the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC), a nonpartisan council that assists member municipalities with transportation planning, environmental sustainability, resource management, smart growth, and land use. Figure 1 identifies the limits of improvements within the Project Area.

- The Project is located in York County, Maine in Census Tracts 340.05, 340.04 and 340.03.
- The Project is in Maine’s 1st Congressional District, represented by Chellie Pingree (D-ME). The state is represented by U.S Senators Susan Collins and Angus King.
- Rural Project: The project is not located in a *Census-Designated Urbanized Area*
- The Project is not located in an *Area of Persistent Poverty*.
- The Project is not located in a *Historically Disadvantaged Community*.

Figure 1: Project Location Map