

## Project Readiness

### *Wells Route 1 Community Gateway Beautification and Safety Project in Wells, Maine*

#### **i. Planning and Constructability**

- STIP/TIP/TTIP/TAM Plan

Pending award of this discretionary grant, MaineDOT will coordinate including the Project in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the KACTS MPO TIP. The Project's preliminary engineering component (funded separately from this application) is listed in MaineDOT's 2025 STIP and construction would be added to a future STIP. MaineDOT will comply with all applicable permitting requirements.

- Consistency with Other Plans

Pending award of this discretionary grant, MaineDOT will add this Project to MaineDOT's Three-Year Work Plan.

- Freight Plans: Not Applicable.

- Property Acquisition/ Right-of-Way (ROW)

MaineDOT is the owner of the Route 1 corridor. Most of the improvements are intended to be completed within the existing right-of-way. However, some components of the project, including two new traffic signals, and the stormwater treatment component of the Project may require some ROW acquisition. The MaineDOT Cultural Coordinator will review the project corridor to identify Section 4(f) resources. Project details and right-of-way information will be evaluated to avoid and minimize potential Section 4(f) uses. Any use of 4(f) resources will be reviewed and expedited in accordance with MaineDOT Section 4(f) Guidance pursuant to the NEPA Assignment 326 MOU. Potential impacts will be identified through the plan development process to ensure any right-of-way needs are addressed. Section 4(f) resources process will be completed April 2028.

- Construction Techniques and Phasing

The proposed improvements do not require unique construction techniques and is anticipated to follow the standard design-bid-build process. As the design progresses, specific construction phasing will be considered, however, the project is anticipated to be delivered as one contract.

#### **ii. Proposed Schedule**

The Project Schedule outlines milestones by start date and completion date as presented in the following table:

Project Milestone	Start Date	Completion Date
Project Kickoff	August 2025	
Preliminary Design	August 2025	November 2026
NEPA		March 2027
Obtain Permits/Approvals		April 2028
STIP/TIP Inclusion	TBD	TBD
Final Design	August 2026	April 2028
ROW Acquisition	March 2028	April 2029
Anticipated finalization of grant agreement		March 2028

Anticipated obligation of grant funds		April 2028
Advertise	May 2029	May 2029
Start/End Construction	June 2029	November 2033

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 September 2027 should BUILD funds be awarded. The Project Phases included in this BUILD funding request consists of Construction and related inspection services.

iii. NEPA and Permitting

MaineDOT recognizes that assuring sustainability of habitats, ecosystems and transportation infrastructure can occur in concert rather than in conflict. Toward that end, MaineDOT endeavors to exercise reasonable stewardship over both natural resources and transportation infrastructure through its commitment to addressing aquatic organisms, wildlife habitats, and fish passage in cooperation with natural resource agencies, while weighing all aspects of a proposed project.

- NEPA Class of Action:

The NEPA process will inform and be incorporated into design efforts. The Project can be classified as Categorical Exclusion in accordance with 23 CFR 771.117.

- NEPA Status and Milestones:

MaineDOT is currently reviewing the Project and preparing NEPA documentation in accordance with its 23 U.S.C. § 326 CE Assignment Memorandum of Understanding between FHWA, Maine Division and the Maine Department of Transportation for State Assumption of Responsibility for Categorical Exclusions, dated October 9, 2024.

Should any issues arise, MaineDOT will work directly with the respective agencies to quickly resolve them. Public involvement will be completed in accordance with MaineDOT Public Involvement Plan and the MaineDOT NEPA Public Involvement Plan. These plans can be found at <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/env/NEPA/public/index.shtml>

The anticipated date for NEPA completion is March 2027.

- Link to NEPA Documentation:

As NEPA Documentation has not been drafted yet, this section is not applicable.

- Reevaluation and Post-Approval Changes: This section is not applicable.

- Permits and Approvals:

Historic and Archeological (Anticipated completion January 2027)

MaineDOT and FHWA Maine Division will complete the Section 106 process for all Project elements in accordance with the *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.*

MaineDOT's Historic Coordinator will oversee architectural survey and archaeological review of the Project area. The Project area does include historic properties and a Historic District outside the corridor. The design team will work to avoid and minimize impacts and resolve any adverse effects to these properties in consultation with the municipality of Wells, the MaineDOT Historic Coordinator, and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission as outlined in 36 CFR 800 and the MaineDOT Section 106 Programmatic Agreement.

- Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act (Anticipated completion March 2027)  
The MaineDOT Cultural Coordinator will review the project corridor to identify Section 4(f) resources. Project details and right way information will be evaluated to avoid and minimize potential Section 4(f) uses. Any use of 4(f) resources will be reviewed and expedited in accordance with MaineDOT Section 4(f) Guidance pursuant to the NEPA Assignment 326 MOU.

Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Essential Fisheries Habitat (EFH)

The Project is located within the range of the federally endangered Northern Long-Eared Bat. MaineDOT will complete consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service and will incorporate avoidance and minimization measures into the project design.

This includes designated Essential Fish Habitat. MaineDOT and FHWA will incorporate Conservation Recommendations provided by NMFS for any project elements that require in-water work. (Anticipated completion March 2027)

Section 404 Clean Water Act Permit/Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) (Anticipated completion December 2027)

Freshwater wetland and stream impacts may be required to complete some components of the Project. Project design will avoid and minimize temporary and permanent wetland impacts to the extent practicable. MaineDOT anticipates that wetland impacts, and any in-water work will be eligible for Pre-Construction Notification (PCN) under the Maine Programmatic General Permit. Use of In-lieu fee mitigation payments to the Maine Natural Resources Compensation Program will streamline compensatory mitigation for unavoidable wetland impacts.

Natural Resources Protection Act (Maine Department of Environmental Protection)

Wetlands and waterbodies are regulated by the Maine Natural Resources Protection Act. MaineDOT anticipates that wetland and stream impacts associated with the Project will be permissible under the Individual Permit process. (Anticipated completion December 2027)

Stormwater (Maine Department of Environmental Protection)

The Project will incorporate Best Management Practices for temporary and permanent management of soil erosion and sedimentation. Permanent measures for treatment of stormwater quantity and quality will be incorporated as necessary in accordance 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. (Anticipated completion December 2027)

Floodway/Floodplains

The project will not require encroachment into a designated floodway or floodplain.

- Coordination with DOT:  
The Project sponsors have initiated communication with environmental agencies and interested parties. Preliminary baseline data collection to identify natural and cultural resources potentially affected by the Project is underway. This information will be refined during design and will be used to avoid and minimize impacts while meeting the purpose and need of the Project.

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.

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

1. **23 U.S.C. §326 NEPA Categorical Exclusion Assignment Memorandum of Agreement between FHWA Maine Division and MaineDOT dated 10/9/24.**
2. 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;
3. 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;
4. 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
5. 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.
6. Memorandum of Agreement for Stormwater Management Between the MaineDOT, MTA and Maine Department of Environmental Protection.
7. 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.

iv. **Project Support**

- Public and Agency Involvement Process:

As a Planning Partnership Initiative project, community stakeholders and residents have been included in numerous public outreach efforts since 2022. During that process, three public meetings were held to gather input from community members. MaineDOT and the Town of Wells will continue seeking community feedback during all Project phases, including NEPA. NEPA-related public involvement will be completed in accordance with the MaineDOT [Public Involvement Plan](#) and the [NEPA Public Involvement Plan](#). MaineDOT utilizes a [Virtual Public Involvement](#) platform to present project information on-demand. Through this web-based platform, visitors can view project details, provide feedback, and have access to traditional contact methods for sharing input, such as mailing address, email address, and phone number for the project manager.

The Project team will continue to evaluate the additional formats and techniques to involve the public based on its potential for social, economic, and environmental impacts. MaineDOT will request that any public meeting notices be posted at municipal buildings and public libraries to solicit comments from and accommodate people who may not have internet or mobile access.

- Public and Agency Involvement Results:

Numerous letters of support accompany this application. The Project has received the support of a diverse group of elected officials and stakeholders who understand the significant benefits the Project will generate. MaineDOT will post all support letters on with additional letters posted to the site as they are received.

v. **Risks and Mitigation**

During the development of the BUILD package, numerous risks were contemplated but each has a comprehensive mitigation strategy. Coordination between the design team and the environmental team will continue to ensure that the Project goals and community needs can be met while avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating potential environmental impacts.

<b>Project Risks</b>	<b>Mitigations</b>
Stormwater Management	Develop conceptual stormwater and drainage plans early to ensure adequate right-of-way is identified to accommodate stormwater treatment measures.
National Register eligible historic properties within the project area.	Close coordination with MHPC and the Municipality will be completed regarding potentially affected resources.

vi. **Technical Capacity Assessment**

• **Federal Funding**

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

• **Federal Regulations**

MaineDOT also adheres to Administrative and National Policy Requirements during all phases of all projects. MaineDOT's Federal grant and formula fund experience includes the management of numerous infrastructure projects and the associated Federal requirements and regulations, such as compliance with Title VI/Civil Rights, Buy America, Americans with Disabilities Act, Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act, and Davis Bacon Act. Since the enactment of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), MaineDOT has successfully managed a total of \$292 million in various grants programs. Prior to BIL, MaineDOT has received various awards from TIGER and BUILD and has extensive experience managing projects that meet all Federal requirements and regulations.

• **Project Planning**

MaineDOT consistently works with Regional and Metropolitan Planning Agencies (RPOs and MPOs) throughout the state to incorporate projects into the Long-Range Plan and is adept at adding projects, like this one, to the TIP/STIP when necessary.

• **Project Delivery**

MaineDOT has had success delivering the following three projects that are of similar size, scope, and complexity:

- 1) [Waterville Down Town Improvements](#) – Waterville, ME
- 2) [Route 3 Corridor Improvements](#) – Bar Harbor, ME
- 3) [Hallowell Water Street Reconstruction Project](#) – Hallowell, ME