

Project Identification

1. Primary Application: The Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT)
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Maine Department of Transportation

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4. Byway Name(s): Bold Coast National Byway /Blackwoods State Byway
5. Byway Designation Type: National Scenic Byway / State Scenic Byway
6. Name of the Project: Cherryfield Riverwalk and Calais Waterfront Park
7. Project Abstract:

Cherryfield and Calais are both byway gateway communities that exemplify key intrinsic assets of the Bold Coast National Scenic Byway – history, culture, recreation, scenic beauty, and natural resources. The two proposed byway projects create interpretive walking and scenic viewing areas in parks located in riverside villages that intersect with several driving, biking, and paddling routes. Calais is an international gateway and intersects with complimentary assets in New Brunswick, Canada; Cherryfield is a National Historic District with 55 contributing structures that intersects with a State Scenic Byway.

Both projects include gateway kiosks, interpretive stations, confidence markers and wayfinding signage, safety improvements for all roadway users, and landscape elements for scenic viewing and picnic areas along the rivers. The Cherryfield project includes a Story Map based around the National Historic District and an interactive historic railroad interpretation. The Calais project includes installation of bicycling infrastructure and creation of a mural in the park by Passamaquoddy youth.

- 8. Primary Project Goal: Safety; Equity and Accessibility; Economic Strength
- 9. Primary Project Type: Construction along a Scenic Byway
- 10. Additional Project Type: Safety Improvements; Interpretive Facilities

Project Description

11. Applicant Information:

The Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) is a cabinet-level state agency with primary responsibility for statewide transportation by all modes of travel and maintains more than 8,800 miles of road. Maine's All-American Road, six Nationally-designated Byways, and seven additional State-designated Byways cover more than 700 miles of MaineDOT's managed road network and are present in half of Maine's 16 counties.

The Bold Coast National Scenic Byway is managed by representatives from DownEast Acadia Regional Tourism (DART) and Sunrise County Economic Council (SCEC). SCEC is a 501c3 whose mission is to initiate and facilitate the creation of jobs and prosperity in Washington County, Maine, by working with a consortium of community-minded businesses, not-for-profit organizations, municipalities, and citizens. SCEC works closely with the Maine Department of Transportation to plan and implement transportation and

byways related programs within the Bold Coast region. SCEC will administrate and coordinate the projects described in this proposal in partnership with state, regional, and local entities.

12. Project Description:

Both projects create an attractive destination at primary gateways of a National Scenic Byway to boost visitation and economic return. The Bold Coast is a newly designated National byway, and currently lacks gateway or interpretive features or wayfinding information to attract or guide travelers or connect them with place. Both projects include installation of wayfinding signage and confidence markers and interpretation of intrinsic assets of the byway, creation of scenic areas, and improvements to bike/ped infrastructure. The Cherryfield Historic Riverwalk connects visitors with primary intrinsic assets of both a National and State scenic byway through elevation of a 75-acre National Historic District with storytelling, and safety improvements at two major bike/ped crossings along the Riverwalk. The Calais Waterfront Walkway improves bike/ped connections between downtown communities separated by an international border, and between the park and the Wabanaki Cultural Center and State Visitor Center; and elevates the gateway experience of long-distance national and international scenic driving and bicycling routes.

13. Project Selection Criteria:

The Cherryfield Historic Riverwalk will immediately support local initiatives to improve local quality of life and strengthen the economy through enhancing and preserving intrinsic byway resources to create a safe, educational, and enjoyable experience of a scenic and historic village.

The Calais Waterfront Walkway will immediately support local initiatives to improve local quality of life and strengthen the economy through enhancing and preserving internationally shared cultural and natural heritage, scenic beauty, and outdoor recreation assets.

13a. Describe challenges that the project is seeking to address:

Maine Office of Tourism (MOT) 2021 data shows that the tourism region of which Cherryfield and Calais are part attracted over 2 million visitors who spent over 1 billion dollars; the majority of these visitors do not travel beyond Acadia National Park – about 15-20% pass through Cherryfield and Calais annually. Over-tourism in the National Park requires a regional effort to move people further east to less traveled areas, which benefits these more rural communities through increased visitor spending. MOT 2021 data shows that visitors to this tourism region primarily come for assets which the Bold Coast region exemplifies- sightseeing/touring (45%), to relax and unwind (43%), and for nature and bird watching (33%). 2019 data (prior to pandemic-caused international border closures) shows that day visitors to the region are more likely to be from Canada, especially New Brunswick, than from the US, 17% of overnight visitors traveled from eastern Canada. Primary visitor activities are sightseeing/touring and active outdoor activities.

Developing the Cherryfield Historic Riverwalk and Calais Waterfront Walkway as attractive destinations along the Bold Coast National Scenic Byway provides another incentive for travelers to explore beyond Acadia and contributes to sustainable tourism and positive economic impacts across the entire region. Both projects elevate the start and end point of several major motor vehicle and bicycling routes to destination status and contribute to local downtown revitalization efforts.

13b. Describe how the project will achieve one or more of the four NSBP goals:

Both the Cherryfield Historic Riverwalk and Calais Waterfront Walkway will achieve economic strength by attracting more visitors to businesses in small towns along the Bold Coast National Scenic Byway. These projects will strengthen existing local momentum and municipal support for continued downtown revitalization that ultimately results in further business development and establishment of long-term residents. Two new eateries have opened in the Cherryfield Historic District in the past 2 years, and 8-10 residences have changed hands – several of which have been empty for years. Home sales in Calais also achieved record numbers since early 2020. Increased traffic in these rural downtowns will provide better opportunities for new businesses to thrive; thriving downtowns will help retain and attract residents and businesses; interpretive information will help new residents connect more deeply with place and local heritage.

Cherryfield is known for its historic architecture, deep-rooted ancestry, and long-standing natural resources industries. Activating the National Historic District as a scenic educational historic walk will connect visitors with the unique history of the Bold Coast. Calais is a destination and gateway for 4 long-distance bicycling routes along the Bold Coast - the Bold Coast Scenic Bikeway (211 miles); East Coast Greenway (3,000 miles); US Bike Route 1 (1,525 miles); and in Canada, the Coastal Link Trail (106 miles). Activating the existing park as a destination and exciting stop or start point for these long-distance routes will attract more visitors to travel the region by bicycle – Bicycle Coalition of Maine (BCM) data shows that bicycle travelers spend more money locally and stay longer in a region than those traveling by motor vehicle. Since creation of the Bold Coast Scenic Bikeway in 2008 (the Bikeway was designed to follow the Byway with some detours onto local roads), the

number of touring bicyclists in the region has increased (BCM website analytics also show an increased interest).

Both projects create safe and equitable transportation systems through bike/ped infrastructure improvements and ADA accessibility. The north and south ends of the Cherryfield Riverwalk are at intersections of a major state route (US 1) and two primary state-aid routes (182 and 193), and two primary local roads. Each of these intersections are challenged by poor line-of-sight for vehicles, lack of ADA access, degraded sidewalks, lack of marked travel lanes, and unsafe road crossings. Route 193 is slated to become a major entrance to the Bold Coast region when construction of the Interstate 395 Bypass is complete. Private development currently in planning proposes to triple current visitation numbers for the entire region, and exponentially increase workforce commuter traffic. Both visitors and commuters would travel these routes through downtown Cherryfield. Increased traffic along the byway will exacerbate existing safety challenges; resolving them now is key to preventing increased safety issues and to ensuring that downtown Cherryfield remains a safe place to bike, walk, and drive. The Calais Waterfront Walkway proposal extends existing bike/ped infrastructure to create a more direct connection between transportation routes and destination points, and addresses Equity and Accessibility through improving bike/ped access and infrastructure at a primary gateway facility, and by installing ADA picnic/seating infrastructure at a waterfront park.

13c. Describe the project timeline, including project phases, if applicable:

Both the Calais and Cherryfield projects are coordinated by Sunrise County Economic Council and DownEast Acadia Regional Tourism in partnership with local economic development and community organizations, and the Towns of Calais and Cherryfield.

The project in Cherryfield will be implemented in three phases by the Town and volunteers from local organizations, in partnership with the Maine DOT. The initial planning and design phase will begin immediately upon release of NSBP funds and includes the following project components: compile and distill existing historic and other heritage information from project partners; design the primary gateway kiosk and interpretive materials for intrinsic stories as outlined in the Bold Coast Corridor Management Plan; assess/engineer solutions for needed safety improvements as identified through recent local and municipal planning processes. Phase 2 includes construction and installation of the gateway kiosk, interpretive panels and interactive train station display, Cherryfield Historic District signs, and confidence markers and wayfinding signage; phase 2 will be completed by MaineDOT, the Town of Cherryfield, and local volunteers during the first construction season after Phase 1 is complete. Phase 3 includes installation of identified pedestrian safety improvements. Phase 1 and 2 local match projects will occur simultaneously and include establishment of scenic rest and picnic areas already identified by local organizations; transformation of an existing printed Historic District tour into a digital Historic Riverwalk Story Map by DownEast Acadia Regional Tourism and the Cherryfield/Narraguagus Historical Society; and repair or replacement of Cherryfield municipal boundary signs by the Town of Cherryfield and local organizations.

The Calais project will be implemented in two phases by the City and local organizations and the East Coast Greenway Alliance in partnership with the Maine DOT. The initial planning and design phase will begin immediately upon release of NSBP funds and includes the following project components: compile and distill existing historic and other heritage information from project partners; finalize master landscape design for the project

area; design the primary gateway kiosk and interpretive materials for intrinsic stories; and engage Passamaquoddy youth, educators, and artists in planning the cultural mural. Phase 2 begins during the first construction season after Phase 1 is complete and includes construction and installation of the bike/ped trail extension, bike repair station, landscaping, gateway kiosk, interpretive panels, confidence markers and wayfinding signage for bicycling and byway routes and painting the youth-designed mural.

13d. Describe, in the detail, the project budget:

Local coordination for the Cherryfield project is already in progress, and professional coordination will continue throughout the process through local cash-match and partner organization staff. Local in-kind match is already committed, and cash-match fundraising is in progress. All aspects of Phase 1, Planning and Design, will be completed within one year of award notice. Projects will move into phase 2, Construction and Implementation, depending on Phase 1 completion, and will be completed within one full construction season. Phase 3, safety improvements, will occur within two full construction seasons of completion of Phase 1. Depending on the timing of funding commitments, all aspects of Phases 1 and 2 will be complete by the end of 2025; the entire project will be completed by the close of the construction season in 2026. The total project cost for NSBP funds is \$175,500. Local cash and in-kind match is \$35,800, 21.63% match to the requested NSBP funds.

Local coordination and funds commitment for the Calais Waterfront Walkway project is already in progress, and professional coordination will continue throughout the process through local cash-match and partner organization staff. All aspects of Phase 1, Planning and Design, will be completed within one year of award notice. Projects will move into

phase 2, Construction and Implementation, upon completion of all aspects of Phase 1, and will be completed within two full construction seasons. Depending on the timing of funding commitments, all aspects of Phases 1 and 2 will be complete by the end of 2025. The total project cost for NSBP funds is \$152,000. Local cash and in-kind match is \$31,500, 20.65% match to the requested NSBP funds.

13e. Describe how the project(s) will benefit the byway community and traveler:

The Cherryfield Historic Riverwalk project supports a long-time community vision to boost economic development through preservation and enhancement of heritage assets. Project partners have collaborated on this vision through documented community efforts such as comprehensive planning, downtown beautification, historic preservation, environmental restoration, marketing and promotion, and downtown redevelopment planning. The project will enhance and preserve existing resources through interpretation of the heritage story of a community built on the wealth of natural resources industries - timber, fisheries, wild blueberries, outdoor recreation, and shipbuilding, and of the maritime and then railroad transportation that enabled more significant export of these resources. Showcasing these important assets will connect byway travelers and community members more directly with the place and will support long term stewardship and economic growth based on local heritage.

Similarly, the Calais Waterfront Walkway project supports a long-time community vision to boost economic development by enhancing an existing public space for residents and visitors and strengthening international collaborations through transportation connections with the sister city of St. Stephen, New Brunswick, Canada. Project partners have collaborated on this vision through documented community efforts such as comprehensive

planning, downtown beautification, historic preservation, environmental restoration, marketing and promotion, and downtown redevelopment planning. The project benefits byway visitors by enhancing the Waterfront Walkway and St. Croix River as a space to enjoy the beauty of the scenic and cultural assets, learn about the unique international and Wabanaki history, and access both land and water based outdoor recreation.

13f. Describe how you will evaluate the success of the project in meeting the purposed and goal:

The Cherryfield Historic Riverwalk project seeks to engage community members in heritage stewardship to enhance the quality of life and visitor experience of Cherryfield through scenic byways assets. Success is measured in three ways: by the number of individual volunteers and organizations who contribute to completing this project, by the number of businesses that establish themselves downtown during the first 5 years after completion, and by the engagement of visitors utilizing the digital Story Map tour.

The Calais Waterfront Walkway seeks to establish downtown Calais as an international gateway and destination point for the Bold Coast National Scenic Byway and several long-distance bicycling routes through shared cultural heritage and outdoor recreation assets. Success is measured in three ways: by the number of individual volunteers and organizations who contribute to completing this project, by the number of visitors to the Waterfront Walkway Park (through visitor documentation at the State Visitor Center and Wabanaki Cultural Center), and through online visitor engagement, primarily analytics of East Coast Greenway social media and website, and the DiscoverBoldCoast.com and Discover DownEast Acadia.com visitor websites.

Statutory Priority and Policy Considerations

Statutory Priority:

These projects are associated with a highway designated as a National Scenic Byway and are consistent with the corridor management for the Byway.

Project Goal Priorities:

The majority of the project's costs will be spent outside of a Census-designated urban area and is located in an economically distressed county.



Economic Distress Criteria

24-month Avg. BLS Unemployment Rate ending **April 2022**

2020 Per Capita Personal Income (BEA PCPI)

2019 Per Capita Money Income (ACS 5-year PCMI)

	24 Month Unemployment	Threshold Calculation	BEA PCPI	Threshold Calculation	ACS 5-Year PCMI	Threshold Calculation
Washington County, ME	6.00	-0.25	\$45,558	76.6	\$45,558	76.6
U.S.	6.25	0.00	\$59,510	100.0	\$59,510	100.0