

Project Identification

1. Primary Application: The Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT)
2. Contact Information: Matthew Drost, Regional Planner

Maine Department of Transportation

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3. Cooperating Partner: Robert Haynes, Coordinator

Old Canada Road Scenic Byway, Inc.

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4. Byway Name(s): Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway
5. Byway Designation Type: National 2000
6. Name of the Project: West Forks Kiosk
7. Project Abstract:

This project creates interpretive Kiosks (3), built to replicate an old logging camp. Two are 10 x 14 feet, and the larger one is 20 x 16 feet. Within the large structure are 18 interpretive panels describing the history, vocations, and culture of North Western Maine, from earliest inhabitants to the present. The larger building is located at the hub of all recreational trails in western Maine and is available for travelers of all modes- bicycle, ATV, snowmobile, cross country skiers, hikers, canoers, white water rafters and of course automobile. All of these trails converge in

West Forks very near the convergence of the Kennebec and Dead Rivers. In addition to these structures, a small universally compliant wildlife blind will be located on Pooler pond. The three smaller structures are located on trailheads leading to the larger one.

8. Primary Project Goal: From NOFO E.2 (page 15)

2. Project Selection Criteria (a) Describe the challenge(s) or issue(s) the proposed project is seeking to mitigate and/or address. Please include data or evidence that supports the existence of the challenge(s) or issue(s) that the project is intended to address.

This project provides information to individuals and groups using the recreational trails in the neighborhood. Old Canada Road has done a fine job for motorists in our many rest areas with bilingual explanations of unique OCR assets. Recreational users, those we are luring to the area for longer stays, have trail maps with point-to-point travel information and the local commercial advertising. The proposed kiosk projects contained in this application immerse the off road traveler with the essence of the Old Canada Road evolution. Beginning with the seasonal travel of native individuals down the Dead River to The Kennebec to Merrymeeting Bay in birch bark canoes and followed by Benedict Arnold on the epic march to Quebec City in 1775. Later during the tenure of Massachusetts, immigrants from Ireland and France traveled to Quebec City and south to the land of opportunity, most with all their possessions on their back. In later years, many provided necessary labor for America's Industrial Revolution.

Regarding evidence that the information is needed, it cannot be measured as there is none for the off road traveler. The rich language that creates a sense of place is not available; and no one else is going to do it. It is the purpose and task of Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway to provide the history and flavor of this great place in the Maine woods, for all to appreciate- not just our highway travelers. The large kiosk located on municipal land in West Forks is the best place to make information available for all users, and potential users.

9. Primary Project Type: From NOFO C.3.a (page 9)

4. Construction along a scenic byway of a facility for pedestrians and bicyclists, rest area, turnout, highway shoulder improvement, overlook, or interpretive facility.

This primary purpose of this project is to provide off road travelers with information not available now from other sources. The style of construction begins to tell the story from afar with its unique design used 150 years ago. Using shape and form as bait, our travelers are drawn to the unique stories told within. Standing in front of the log structure memories are made through photos, perhaps black and white for era effect. This hub of trails is visible from across the Kennebec from the Forks Rest Area, dedicated to auto travelers. Their curiosity can be satisfied by walking across the narrow multi-purpose bridge, or by car on the Rt. 201 Bridge to check out the interior details of this intriguing building. From inside to outside the structure and educational content are unique to the area. Spruce logs cut and peeled from the area with similar tools that would have been used 150 years ago create the frame. Modern parameters of universal compliance and safety are included. The landscaping would not have been in place but for this

larger structure, it provides pollinator plants of native origin. The small kiosks are stark in comparison, true to the original look.

Additional Project Type: From NOFO C.3.a (page 9)

7. Development and provision of tourist information to the public, including interpretive information about a scenic byway

Calling these structures kiosks may be similar to calling a limousine a car, but the function is to provide and house interpretive material and some embellished stories to the traveling public of Old Canada Road. Historic items will be displayed on the walls and upper ceiling. Changeable QR codes will add depth to the interpretive topics, should the viewer decide to get more detail.

Project Description

10. Applicant Information:

Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway has a long history of accomplishment with FHWA grant funds since 2001, from purchase of a signature gateway view and woodland of 140 acres to establishment of interpretive signage in all of the rest areas on the 78-mile route to Quebec City. We are governed by a board of directors of our 501 c 3 corporation formed over 20 years ago.

Our Directors include educators, town officials, and business owners. Our Coordinator is a Director of the National Scenic Byway Foundation keeping up to date on byway actions nation- wide.

11. Project Description:

2. Project Selection Criteria (a) Describe the challenge(s) or issue(s) the proposed project is seeking to mitigate and/or address. Please include data or evidence that supports the existence of the challenge(s) or issue(s) that the project is intended to address

Details, challenges, and how the project addresses challenges

On challenges; let us do the easy part first. The site- a flat field at the center of trail activity in West Forks abutting the most used parking lot in the area is easy to build on and already has a number of users. This parking lot is the primary take out and put in for recreational guides and personal trips on the Kennebec River. In winter, it is filled with snowmobile trailers, proving “you can get there from here”. It is only one hundred yards from Rt. 201- Old Canada Road and visible from a popular riverside rest area. Central Maine Power Company donated the land to the Town of West Forks in 2011, with restrictions on development. Public benefits were part of the restrictions. Environmental issues can be challenging but in this case, our Department of Environmental Protection and Land Use Planning Commission have issued letters that permits are not needed for the type of construction we will be doing. The Town of West Forks has granted permission to use the site for the desired purpose and has agreed to act as owner with Old Canada Road providing maintenance for the next 20 years. Site authorization, building site and regulatory permissions are complete. Now on to the challenges!

As the building sketch shows, the structure is built from locally sourced spruce timbers that have already been located (as standing trees) 30 miles away, and donated. This is not a typical construction process that engineers can stamp using traditional formulas. There is no lumber grade for log construction, aside from commercial log homes made from milled wood. For

longevity, these trees need to be peeled, and that happens best in May and June and then seasoned for a few months making construction happen in the fall of 2023. While logs are seasoning, the foundation of 15-20 inch concrete pads can be installed on compacted 1 inch minus screened gravel. The sills are 8x8 PT timbers, laid down on dimensional blocking with ship lapped and screwed joints. The two -inch rough sawn hemlock floor is fastened to the sills with 4- inch screws to prevent twisting. After building construction is complete, the floor will be lightly sanded to remove thickness inconsistencies and preservative applied to all exposed wood.

Installation of the perimeter posts will involve specialty fasteners. These fasteners will be made of ¼-inch steel plate that is 4 inches wide and 10 inches long welded to a 1-inch thick threaded rod. The rod is inserted into a drilled hole in the floor and sill. The steel plate then reset vertically on the floor. A chainsaw kerf cut into the bottom of the post covers the steel when the post is plumbed the post is drilled through the steel and bolted to it. Then the threaded rod is tightened holding the post in a vertical position. Should any shrinkage occur the nut on the threaded rod can be tightened, pulling the post firmly into the floor. All posts are connected to the floor in this manner. The plate is also connected to the post in this manner to prevent and wind lift. Lateral stability of the posts is achieved with the installation of 2x8s mortised into the posts. These are also the mounting rails for the interpretive panels. The roof purlins are 22 feet long to provide an overhang on each end. They are located directly over the posts and notched into the log gable ends. Roof boards of rough sawn one- inch white pine are attached to the purlins from eave to ridge with 12d nails.

For structural utility, a center post is installed to serve as ridge support and to act as the center of a compass rose etched on the floor to further identify this location as the hub of the trail system in Somerset and other surrounding counties.

The roof has galvanized drip edge installed on all sides and then ice and water shield on the sheathing. The drawing depicts a historic roof of asphalt rolled roofing secured by batten strips. A better product will be cedar shingles that are locally manufactured and longer lasting although more expensive to install. This building will last longer than any woods camp so it is best to go with the longer lasting material. Some historical accuracy is best dealt with in photos.

Panel creation is one of the most challenging processes and a consultant will be hired for this with major input from stakeholders. We have four corners to fill with panels covering a related topic. Topics will be selected from some of the following- River drives, Bingham land purchase, native people, original Canada Road and uses, town settlements and reasons, railroads in the area, water travel, Maine Warden Service, and others as presented and determined most interesting. QR codes located on the panel will take the visitor to more information on the subject.

The two smaller kiosks have the same construction method and materials with the exception of the roof that will be the traditional rolled roofing. The wildlife blind will be of minimal construction with PT timbers set into the ground and cedar boards as siding. Boards on the front-facing the pond and sides provide protection from detection. The back side is open for entrance. Inside a picnic table will be located and holes in the boards and a camera shelf will provide

views of wildlife on the pond- generally ducks, beaver and Moose. The roof is a shed style sloping back from the water so drips do not interfere with photos.

12. Project Selection Criteria:

Description of how each project meets each selection criteria (use language from “High Qualified” Projects in NOFO E.2 (page 15)

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Done above with the exception of addressing the lack of current area knowledge to off road travelers.

(b) Describe how the proposed project will achieve one or more of the four NSBP goals. If the project will achieve more than one goal, identify each goal by name and its subsection listed below, and address the respective goal definition. Please include data (qualitative or quantitative) or evidence (newspaper articles, public meetings etc.) that supports how the project will meet each identified goal(s)

i. **Safety**- this project does not identify safety as a goal. Safety can be elevated with the user obeying the safety signs posted in the facilities, but is not a primary goal of the project.

ii. **Equity and Accessibility** is achieved due to the fact all modes of transportation can get to these kiosks and all have universal access.

iii. **Economic Strength.** Old Canada Road will use all methods possible to purchase local products and labor for the completion of these projects. Our local workforce will complete the projects and depending on timing, we will ask local vocational programs for assistance. With the exception of interpretive panels, asphalt products and the roof breather all materials are sourced within a hundred miles of this use. Some spikes may be made in Canada. Panels may come from Canada or the US depending on if low bid requirements are enforced.

iv. **Climate and Sustainability.** Interesting thought. Summing the tons of solid wood products used in construction could provide a window on preferences for local solid products. Using the tons used we could add a panel on the porch about sustainability and the amount of carbon sequestered within our structures and the lack of distance involved in getting them on site. Hand tools will be the most common on site for construction.

(c) Describe the proposed timeline for the project, including project phases, if applicable. This description should identify any planning or other efforts that have already been put into the project, and the project's readiness for implementation if funding is awarded (e.g., how soon after funding is awarded will funds be matched and obligated). Sufficient information should be provided for reviewers to evaluate the feasibility of the proposed approach as well as the applicant's capability to achieve the proposed outcomes within the designated grant time frame (all awards provided FY 2021 funding must be obligated by September 30, 2024, and expended

by September 30, 2029; FY 2022 funding will have different obligation and expenditure deadlines). Please provide documentation to support readiness for implementation

This project is shovel ready. During the time without funding we have put much thought into how to better serve our off road customers. Timing will be dictated by the market. With current inflation, particularly in building materials, we may be better off to go ahead and build the floors and wildlife blind while waiting for the spring log-peeling season. We will move ahead with planning the panels as soon as funds are available as it is a long process and well suited to winter weather. There is an interesting thing that occurs when money become available- people get interested! Some of this interest may provide cause to make the project better or lead to donated items. Old Canada Road however is dedicated to the statement of purpose.

We will not need to wait on match funds as they are within the control of Old Canada Road. As mentioned earlier, when funding becomes available we can begin the longest task - designing the panels.

The attached budget is quite cursory in category but Old Canada Road has taken the steps to budget every activity and need that require labor or materials in developing the budget. Worksheets are available, but the brevity of the application is also very appreciated! Old Canada Road has provided ample match in excess of the minimum 20%. Maine people are builders and the amount of volunteer time reflects that.

(d) Describe, in detail, the proposed project budget. The description should include a detailed description of the start and end for major project activities, milestones, and deliverables. The

description should include also a detailed project budget with the total project cost. The budget should identify all funding sources, amounts, and percentage of total cost of the project including the NSBP requested grant amount and other funding sources, as appropriate, including Other Federal funds; State funds; Tribal funds; Local funds; and other funds such as private funds

Ball Field Kiosk		\$56,709
Small Kiosks \$16,661.81 x2		\$33,722
Wildlife Blind		\$3,282
Application Total with common items from Project budget sheet		\$108,641

Federal Share 80%

\$86,931

Local Cash	20%	\$21,728
Donations time and materials		\$9,327*

Match Percentage 29%

- **Note** Old Canada Road cash meets requirements of the 20% match. The additional donations of labor and materials is firm on the materials and quite firm on the hours/dollars of labor so it is entered as in addition to project budget.

As the above numbers reveal, Old Canada Road is very appreciative of this funding opportunity.

We have pushed to the limit to keep the percentages reasonable and true to our belief that

beneficiary's must have "skin in the game". This is a project that the neighborhood can rally around. I was so pleased to see the ½ million-dollar project size deleted. Somerset County is the most rural in Maine. Three thousand people live along our 78-mile stretch of road. Announcing a \$500,000 project for tourism in a neighborhood of minimal incomes would have been very counter-productive. This one is the right size and the building shapes and stories within show respect for the past local generations.

Regarding timeline for accomplishment within 30 days of award announcement, we will begin the work of panel design. If announced during suitable building weather we will purchase the basic foundation material and assemble it in order to take advantage of (perhaps) lower material prices. Log peeling has to wait for spring when the sap flows and the bugs' (black flies) are thick. Talking dedicated volunteers here! Once the logs have seasoned the tasks of 1) posts up and braced, 2) purlins installed, 3) and roof on should follow on a weekly basis. Landscaping will follow depending on plant availability and planting suitability. The project should be completed before November 1, 2023. We will try for foliage season to gain another year of fall exposure for this federal benefit in rural Maine.

(e) Describe how the project will benefit the byway community and/or traveler and how it will help manage the intrinsic qualities that support the byway's designation, shape the byway's story, interpret the story for visitors, or improve visitor facilities along the byway.

This project benefits the residents and traveler by reminding residents of the past and travelers by exposing them to forces that shaped different lives. The intrinsic qualities are located throughout

the proposed panels, the building shape creates a sense of place gone by, and unlimited access gives all modes of traveler the chance to learn more about the life and times along this 78-mile national treasure. Our Corridor Management Plan divides the Byway into two sections: Working Woodland and Running River. In West Forks these assets merge making this municipal land a perfect place for our messages.

(f) Describe how you will evaluate the success of the proposed project in meeting its stated purpose and goal(s), including specific metrics that will be used to evaluate to the extent to which the proposed project would be successful in addressing and/or mitigating the identified challenges, or meeting the stated goals. Please be as specific as possible, including descriptions of specific data and project evaluation criteria.

Success can be measured by visits and that may related to how much information is actually retained by a visitor. I suspect a worn floor is a good indicator of visits, but hard to evaluate. What Old Canada Road will be doing to determine effectiveness of the project will be to have a docent onsite several days during tourist season. I am taking a lead here from our byway clan in Rangeley as they have Byway stewards at rest areas during peak visitation time. They do not ask visitors to fill out a questionnaire but record information about the visitor on a tablet as soon the conversation ends. Quick, polite and already entered for evaluation. We will follow this model during summer months- maybe some in foliage season and few in snowmobile season.

Policy Priorities

(b) Project Goal Priorities The FHWA shall give priority consideration to a project that will advance two or more of the NSBP goals.

(c) Policy Considerations. The FHWA will give priority consideration to applications that address one or more of the following priorities: 1. The majority of the project's costs will be spent within (or on the boundary of) a Census-designated rural area. For purposes of this notice, a project is designated as urban if it is located within (or on the boundary of) a Census-designated urbanized area that had a population greater than 50,000 in the 2010 Census. If a project is located outside a Census-designated urbanized area with a population less than 50,000, it is designated as a rural project. A project located in both an urban and a rural area will be designated as urban if the majority of the

3c1 Somerset County, which is where Old Canada Road is located, is always in a tie for last place or second to last economically within the State of Maine. It is definitely rural with only 3,000 residents along the 78-mile byway. Cash poor perhaps, but wealthy in terms of interest in

doing better. Many times that means young people move away to make a livelihood. This project celebrates their roots and may keep memories fresh when they return. Providing information to off road travelers in all seasons may have a small impact on the labor pool.

Regarding expenditure of funds with the local area-, all will be spent within Somerset County, with the exception of the panels. Interpretive design will be done within the State with lamination and panel board coming from either New England or Canada. Materials will all be purchased at Somerset County retail hardware stores, with preference given to items “Made in the USA” if possible. Labor will come from less than twenty miles from the building sites.

3c3 This project has a local match from donation and cash of 29% making it an ideal approval candidate!

In summary, I would like to thank all the reviewers that have looked at a great number of worthy projects and I look forward to doing this process again –soon! Twenty years as a byway manager has been quite an experience, as it is such a unique opportunity for local people to sit down and decide how best to spend their own (and neighbors) tax dollars! Best to all.