

MaineDOT's Municipal Partnership Initiative

Municipal Guide

Purposes of the Initiative

MaineDOT's Municipal Partnership Initiative (MPI) is intended to be a demand response program, which can rapidly react to Municipal requests, such as responding to changing local transportation needs on State and State-Aid highways, developing economic opportunities, and safety concerns on or adjacent to these highways.

The program is designed to promote partnerships between MaineDOT and municipalities, public utilities, private businesses and other entities by leveraging additional resources on a voluntary basis to match limited state resources. It will make improvements to State and State-Aid highways often utilizing more flexible project delivery methods when the nature of the highway and project allow.

MPI Grant Requirements

In order to be eligible, each project must meet the following criteria:

- √ *Professional Engineer Certified:* Unless waived by MaineDOT's Chief Engineer, all projects must be designed by an engineer licensed in Maine and once constructed, the engineer of record must certify that the project was constructed in accordance with the plans and specifications.
- √ *10-Year Useful Life:* Unless waived by MaineDOT's Chief Engineer, the work must have a minimum 10-Year useful life.
- √ *Deliverability:* Usually construction will be administered by the municipality, when this is the case the municipality must demonstrate to MaineDOT that they have the ability or can obtain the ability to administer the project. Construction must commence within twelve (12) months and construction must be certified complete in twenty four (24) months from when a Cooperative Agreement is signed. If timelines are not met MaineDOT may reallocate funding to other eligible projects in other communities.
- √ *Public Involvement:* The municipality is responsible to lead the public involvement process consistent with all laws, including Maine's Sensible Transportation Policy Act. The value and extent of documented community support will be considered a project benefit.
- √ *Betterment to the State Transportation System:* The work covered must be betterment to the state transportation system above and beyond the requirement of any law or permit condition. For instance, investments must be improvements above and beyond mitigation for a traffic movement permit or above and beyond the legal requirements of a highway opening permit.
- √ *Multiple Party Agreements:* The municipality and all involved parties must be willing to enter into an agreement whereby the MPI Grant amount is capped based on project estimates prior to construction. This agreement will also list future maintenance responsibilities.
- √ *Right-of-Way Acquisition:* MPI grants will only reimburse for the right of way required for the transportation betterment. Most projects are expected to be within existing right of way, however, the municipality may be asked to secure any needed property rights in accordance with all applicable State and Federal Law.

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Funding

Unless waived by the Commissioner, the MaineDOT MPI funding contribution for a project will be capped at \$500,000. If a MPI project is an add-on to an existing MaineDOT project (other than Maintenance Surface Treatment) the MPI funding portion will only count as MaineDOT's additional contribution beyond what was previously programmed.

State funding for the MPI is limited by available state funding, which is impacted by revenue projections, Legislative budget deliberations, bid prices, and the severity of winter weather. For the FY-12-13 biennium, MaineDOT anticipates having about \$7 million for the MPI. Funding shares will be negotiated on a case by case basis, depending on the extent of regional or statewide benefits. Generally, MaineDOT's share will be capped at 50% or less. Consideration will be given to the impact a project has on eliminating the need for current and future projects and maintenance needs. Municipalities may propose shifting long-term maintenance responsibilities as part of their share.

Project Selection

MaineDOT will continuously accept project applications and eligible projects will be selected on a first come first serve basis. Additional project selection factors include the following:

- *Safety*: The improvement will impact a direct safety need such as infrastructure improvements that address an area with a high crash history or potential for hazardous conditions.
- *Economic Development & Job Creation*: Preference will be given to projects that allow for job growth and facilitate economic development.
- *Degree of Betterment*: Projects that provide a greater infrastructure benefit than others such as reducing maintenance costs, ride quality, or increasing mobility will be given a higher priority.
- *Percentage of Local Match*: The greater the percentage of non-state funding, the greater the likelihood the project will be selected.
- *Record of Requests*: The proposed project is something that the municipality has requested MaineDOT to improve over a number of years but State transportation resources have not been sufficient to make the improvement.
- *Customer Benefit*: Preference will be given to projects based on the amount and degree of benefit that travelers will realize from the benefit.
- *Prior MPI Awards*: MaineDOT will seek to fund eligible projects in all interested municipalities prior to issuing multiple grants to the same one.

Project Administration

Project administration will be project specific and detailed in the Cooperative Agreements. In general, projects are intended to be administered by a municipality, as a grant, with MaineDOT reviewing products at key milestones such as completion of

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design and construction. The focus of MaineDOT's review will be insuring that the project will achieve the benefits listed in the above bullets and will not degrade safety. MaineDOT will reimburse entities once the work is complete to the satisfaction of MaineDOT. For large projects and subject to available funding, MaineDOT will consider partial payments based on project progress.

Application Process

To apply for a grant simply:

- √ Review the program criteria in this guide.
- √ Be prepared to discuss each item at some detail, and
- √ Contact the Region Engineer or Region Manager in your local field office
(see http://www.maine.gov/mdot/aboutmainedot/pdf/Region_page_2010a.pdf or call (207)624-3600 for contact information)