



Cooperative Planning Process for Non- Metropolitan Local Officials

July 2022

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1.0 Background and Federal Regulations

On May 27, 2016 the FHWA and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) jointly issued an [updated Final Rule](#) in the Federal Register changing the Code of Federal Regulations (23 CFR Part 450) in several ways, including adding a new emphasis on the non-metropolitan transportation planning process. Critically, the required level of state engagement with local, non-metropolitan officials was changed from “consultation” to “cooperation.”

Regulations related to state involvement with non-metropolitan transportation planning can be found in 23 CFR [§450.208](#), [§450.210](#), [§450.216](#), and [§450.218](#). Key elements of the regulation are included below:

1. In carrying out the statewide transportation planning process, **each state shall, at a minimum, cooperate with affected local elected and appointed officials with responsibilities for transportation.**
2. The State shall provide for nonmetropolitan local official participation in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP. The State shall have a documented process(es) for cooperating with nonmetropolitan local officials representing units of general-purpose local government and/or local officials with responsibility for transportation that is separate and discrete from the public involvement process and provides an opportunity for their participation in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP.
 - a. At least once every 5 years, the State shall review and solicit comments from nonmetropolitan local officials and other interested parties for a period of not less than 60 calendar days regarding the effectiveness of the cooperative process and any proposed changes. The State shall direct a specific request for comments to the State association of counties, State municipal league, regional planning agencies, or directly to nonmetropolitan local officials.
 - b. The State, at its discretion, is responsible for determining whether to adopt any proposed changes. If a proposed change is not adopted, the State shall make publicly available its reasons for not accepting the proposed change, including notification to nonmetropolitan local officials or their associations.
3. To carry out the transportation planning process required by this section, a Governor may establish and designate RTPs to enhance the planning, coordination, and implementation of the long-range statewide transportation plan and STIP, with an emphasis on addressing the needs of nonmetropolitan areas of the State.
 - a. Maine has not established RTPs as outlined in this section, but MaineDOT does contract with the state's Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs) for planning and technical assistance for municipalities.

A draft of this 2022 update of the MaineDOT Cooperative Planning Process for Non-Metropolitan Local Officials was available for public comment via MaineDOT's Virtual Public Involvement page from April 26 through June 25, 2022. Links to the plan were also shared with the Maine Municipal Association, Regional Planning Organizations, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and other municipal officials. Comments received during this process were reviewed and addressed in the final version of the plan.

The term “**non-metropolitan local official**” is defined as “the elected and appointed officials of general-purpose local government, in non-metropolitan areas, with jurisdiction/responsibility for transportation.” This may include counties, cities, towns, townships, and villages. For purposes of the rule, **non-metropolitan area** applies to everywhere in Maine exclusive of the 4 Metropolitan Planning Areas.

2.0 Related State Legislation

2.1 Planning and Land Use Regulation Act

In 1989, the Planning and Land Use Regulation Act (30-A M.S.R.A., sub-section 4301) was passed requiring every Maine municipality to develop a comprehensive plan. In coordination with the Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs), MaineDOT reviews municipal comprehensive plans for consistency with State transportation goals and law. Therefore, developing a comprehensive plan which thoroughly addresses the municipality’s transportation system is a principal opportunity for municipal involvement in transportation decision-making.

2.2 Sensible Transportation Policy Act

The State of Maine’s Sensible Transportation Policy Act (STPA) was enacted by voter referendum in November 1991. The STPA and MaineDOT’s associated Rule created a planning process that provides meaningful public involvement opportunities and gives proper consideration to the diverse transportation needs of the people of the State and to transportation efficiency, energy conservation, and the effects of transportation on the environment.

The original Rule that was created to achieve the goals of the STPA required MaineDOT to use Regional Transportation Advisory Committees (RTAC) created by the Transportation Policy Advisory Committee. RTACs played a significant role in facilitating a higher degree of public participation and worked well for over a decade. MaineDOT expanded upon the success of the RTAC process by broadening the scope of its public outreach and involvement process in 2004. To this end, MaineDOT partnered with the State’s 11 Regional Planning Councils (RPCs) to develop public outreach strategies.

The STPA law and its associated Rule were rewritten through a public involvement process and enacted by the legislature in 2008 to address the disconnection between land use, which is the responsibility of municipalities, and transportation decision-making, a State responsibility administered by MaineDOT. The Maine Turnpike Authority owns and operates the Maine Turnpike and also must coordinate with municipalities and their roles in land use planning. The STPA Rule therefore also updated and clarified the MaineDOT and Maine Turnpike Authority roles and responsibilities. The Rule also incorporated a new chapter on municipal and multi-municipal planning. The Rule further added incentives for municipalities that conduct a higher level of transportation planning and improve their land use management efforts towards the preservation of transportation facilities.

The STPA law is located at <http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/23/title23sec73.html>.

The latest version of the STPA Rule can be found at
<https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/17/229/229c103.doc>.

3.0 Transportation Planning Process

3.1 Transportation Planning Documents

The *Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan*, the *Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)*, and the *Three Year Work Plan* are MaineDOT's principal planning and programming documents.

Other planning documents guide transportation decision-making and serve as supporting documents. Examples include the *Maine Aviation Systems Plan*, *Airport Master Plans (local)*, the *Statewide Active Transportation Plan*, the *Integrated Freight Strategy*, the *Maine State Rail Plan*, *Keeping Our Bridges Safe*, the *Roads Report*, the *Transportation Asset Management Plan*, and several transit plans, including the *Statewide Strategic Transit Plan*, the *State Management Plan (transit)*, and the *Locally Coordinated Plan*.

3.2 Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan

Federal and state laws require that every state develop a long-range statewide transportation plan (LRTP) to set out a vision for the future of the state transportation system, to identify the needs of the system, and to propose how best to meet those needs. The LRTP must be developed cooperatively with MPOs and nonmetropolitan local officials.

Maine's next long-range statewide transportation plan—[Maine's Long-Range Transportation Plan 2050 \(LRTP\)](#)—will be a statewide, comprehensive, multimodal transportation plan that sets forth goals, objectives and strategies for MaineDOT to pursue in response to Maine's transportation needs. The LRTP will tie together the department's "family of plans"—the various modal plans developed by the department—to plan for future investment and to satisfy federal and state requirements. The LRTP will be primarily a policy document and, in general, does not identify specific transportation improvement projects. Development of the 2050 LRTP is ongoing and scheduled for completion in late 2022.

MaineDOT will update the LRTP periodically to meet the state requirement of a long-range multimodal plan with a planning horizon of at least 10 years and the federal (FHWA and FTA) requirements of a long-range plan with a planning horizon of at least 20 years. MaineDOT's LRTP will evaluate and make recommendations for investments in Maine's transportation systems:

- Highways and bridges
- Public transportation, including local and intercity buses, passenger rail, ferries, and airports
- Active Transportation, including sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities and bicycle lanes and other bicycle facilities

- Marine facilities, including access to them
- Freight rail and motor carriers
- Transportation system management, such as ridesharing
- Scenic, historic, and natural resource connections with transportation systems
- Current and emerging technological innovations relative to transportation

MaineDOT will provide notice to the public of its intent to publish or update the LRTP. The notice will be posted online at www.mainedot.gov and by mailings or e-mail notices to municipal officials and known parties of interest. Notices will also be sent to the applicable Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), and Tribal governments.

In early 2015, the department's Outreach Office conducted statewide listening sessions – “Talking Transportation” – to gather public input for the LRTP as well as to pioneer a format for periodic, non-project-specific interactions with the general public. Meetings were held at convenient times and at a variety of locations that were accessible and selected to attract a cross section of citizens, business representatives, and municipal stakeholders. Notices were also sent to RPOs, MPOs, and tribal governments, and these groups were also engaged to inform other interested parties about the meetings.

Throughout 2018, MaineDOT conducted a public MetroQuest survey and met with numerous state agencies and stakeholder groups to obtain input on Maine's Long-Range Transportation Plan 2050. These sessions served as forums to discuss the condition of the state's transportation system (all modes), to define system deficiencies, and to identify alternative solutions and overall transportation system priorities, all in the context of anticipated funding availability. As MaineDOT continues development of the LRTP 2050, the Bureau of Planning will continue outreach efforts to the RPOs for additional input.

In 2022, MaineDOT will make the draft LRTP available to RPOs, MPOs, Tribal governments, MaineDOT Region Offices, and state depository libraries—as well as the general public—for additional comment. After giving due consideration to all the comments received, MaineDOT will publish the final LRTP and will post it on the department's website.

3.3 Three Year Work Plan

MaineDOT's annual Work Plan is developed each year to describe all projects and work activities planned by the department for a three-year period. On an ongoing basis, input from public officials, members of transportation stakeholder organizations, and the general public are incorporated in development of the Work Plan. Municipal officials are encouraged to submit project ideas through MaineDOT Regional Planners or their RPO, and RPO staff are also included in MaineDOT's regional Work Plan “Synergy Meetings.” RPOs are encouraged to share information with and gather input from affected communities, if applicable.

At any time, non-metropolitan officials can reach out to MaineDOT in the form of letters, emails, phone calls, and petitions. The DOT Regional Planners are the leads in their respective regions for receiving project ideas and requests from municipalities and other organizations. These requests and comments are evaluated by appropriate MaineDOT staff and considered in the development of the Work Plan. MaineDOT publishes the Work Plan on the MaineDOT website and accepts comments and questions about the plan on a continuing basis. After the Work Plan is completed, MaineDOT Regional Planners reach out to municipalities in their regions and provide project information and answer any questions from municipal staff.

The public and non-metropolitan officials can also influence the Work Plan through participation in development of the department's long-range plan—the LRTP. During development of the LRTP, regional or virtual meetings are held across the state to obtain public and municipal input on proposed transportation projects, major development proposals, studies, and department initiatives.

For additional information and the current Work Plan, please visit

<https://www.maine.gov/mdot/projects/workplan/>

3.4 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

The [Statewide Transportation Improvement Program \(STIP\)](#) is a federally required document that lists federally funded transportation projects for a four-year time period. All projects funded by either the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must be listed in an approved STIP before they can be eligible for federal funding. The STIP demonstrates fiscal constraint and compliance with the Clean Air Act. The STIP must be developed cooperatively with MPOs and nonmetropolitan local officials. The STIP provides an additional opportunity for local official input for all projects included in the department's Work Plan. MaineDOT solicits public input specific to the STIP by making a draft document available for public comment for a period of 10 calendar days. Notice of the draft STIP is posted on the MaineDOT website.

Changes in project schedules, funding needs, priorities, and project scopes invariably occur as projects proceed. These changes require revising the approved STIP. Administrative modifications are not significant changes to the existing STIP, and therefore, no public involvement is required for those modifications. Amendments to the STIP *are* required for major changes, and for those amendments, a public involvement process is required. The STIP amendment process must provide a "reasonable opportunity" for public comment. This may include public meetings, public hearings, Public Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings, and municipal meetings. STIP amendments are posted on MaineDOT's website and the comment period is open for 10 calendar days. Once the public involvement period ends, MaineDOT will respond to or address all substantive comments received. When the STIP change affects a project in an MPO area, the respective MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) must be amended in conjunction with the STIP. MaineDOT may revise the STIP concurrently with the MPO's TIP revision and public involvement processes.

Beginning in 2016, MaineDOT transitioned to an annually developed and published STIP.

More information about the STIP, including the current STIP and the STIP Revision Guidelines, can be found on MaineDOT's STIP webpage: <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/stip/>

3.5 Major Studies

MaineDOT conducts major studies to evaluate potential new or expanded transportation facilities when potential investments could result in significant environmental impacts or when directed by the Maine State Legislature. Major studies must be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Maine Sensible Transportation Policy Act (STPA), and if any project phase relies on federal funds or requires a federal action, with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Major studies include transportation feasibility studies, Environmental Assessments (EA), and Environmental Impact Statements (EIS). Each major study will have a project-specific public involvement process. Examples of public involvement techniques used for major studies include steering and stakeholder advisory committees, Internet sites, business surveys, formal public meetings, and newsletters.

MaineDOT will contact municipal representatives, RPOs, MPOs, Tribal governments, environmental and historic groups, and others within the project study area to identify customers and stakeholders wanting to be involved in the study. A steering committee may be convened to provide meaningful input to MaineDOT throughout the study effort. The steering committee identifies potential stakeholders who may then be invited to serve on the study-specific stakeholder committee. A formal study-specific Public Involvement Plan is developed, and frequently, a neutral public involvement facilitator is retained to ensure complete and continuous public involvement throughout the study.

3.6 Enhanced Project Scoping

Enhanced Project Scoping (EPS) is a coordinated process for engaging stakeholders regarding a specific transportation matter. The EPS process is used on a limited number of projects each year to help decide the best course of action when the project is complex or controversial. Through the EPS process, the department strives to clearly define a project's purpose and need, assess alternatives to achieve the stated purpose and need, and ultimately to develop a clear scope of work for candidate projects for the Work Plan. EPS is often initiated as a result of customer concerns about potential project impacts to residents, businesses, and travelers.

The public process for EPS is unique to the characteristics of each project. Scoping efforts can range from a 15-minute presentation at a select board meeting to utilization of websites, advisory committees, design charrettes, and multiple project-specific meetings. Since EPS efforts are primarily stakeholder partnerships, MaineDOT often defers to the host municipalities regarding the specific public involvement processes that will work best for them. These communities typically sponsor the public processes, meetings, and other activities, and EPS staff are invited as participants.

3.7 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is a procedural statute that requires an assessment of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of proposed Federal actions. NEPA is a decision-making process that engages with the public on potential social, economic, and environmental impacts; collects and integrates public feedback in decision-making; and informs the public of how decisions are made with regards to proposed impacts. The NEPA process involves an evaluation of a set of alternatives and their associated impacts. MaineDOT is obligated to satisfy a federal requirement for public involvement and opportunities for public hearings in the NEPA process, including FHWA requirements to maintain a public involvement process, and it is the department's practice to satisfy the law and its underlying intent.

MaineDOT conscientiously observes the NEPA-related FHWA requirements for planning processes, studies, development of road and bridge improvement projects.

For more information about NEPA's public involvement requirements, please see the [MaineDOT Public Involvement Plan, Section 5.4](#).

3.8 Community-Based Initiatives

MaineDOT has a long history of partnering with local communities to develop programs and deliver projects that bring out a shared vision and accentuate shared priorities. MaineDOT currently has four main [Community-Based Initiatives](#): the [Planning Partnership Initiative \(PPI\)](#), the [Municipal Partnership Initiative \(MPI\)](#), the [Village Partnership Initiative \(VPI\)](#), and the [Business Partnership Initiative \(BPI\)](#). These projects generally require a certain level of matching funds from local communities. Matching requirements are regularly reviewed by MaineDOT and can systematically evolve as needed to better achieve the Department's mission, given available resources.

You can find more information about the PPI, MPI, and VPI programs below.

3.8.a Planning Partnership Initiative (PPI)

Focus

The Planning Partnership Initiative is intended to address time-sensitive, locally initiated planning and feasibility studies. The 2022-2024 work plan set aside \$200,000 in state funding to match a like amount in local funding, annually. The approach is to study, evaluate, plan and scope transportation projects on or adjacent to the state and state aid highway system or for FHWA-eligible trail connections that are requested by a community. These are intended to be an administrative and financial partnership between the community requesting the study and MaineDOT. These are also intended to be simple, flexible, and fast-moving for new economic development and other high-priority proposals. These types of studies will be key in preparing projects for special federal funding applications such as grants under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Some of these may be linked to future Village Partnership Initiative grant applications.

Types of Studies

The following is a list of some of the types of studies that can be conducted under this program:

- Economic development, land use, and transportation planning
- Identification and evaluation of potential transportation alternatives
- Transportation resiliency and transportation greenhouse gas emission reduction strategies
- Build-out analyses and analysis of transportation impacts of undeveloped or underdeveloped land
- Multimodal planning efforts to identify transportation deficiencies and strategies to address those deficiencies
- Conceptual renderings of transportation alternatives
- Cost estimating for potential future transportation improvements

For more information about the PPI, including funding and how to apply, please visit:

<https://www.maine.gov/mdot/pga/cbi/planning/index.shtml>

3.8.b Municipal Partnership Initiative (MPI)

Focus

MaineDOT's Municipal Partnership Initiative is intended to be a streamlined program to address municipal requests that deal with transportation infrastructure issues on state and state aid highways, encourage economic opportunities, and make improvements to infrastructure to increase its life or correct safety deficiencies.

The program is designed to promote partnerships between MaineDOT and municipalities by leveraging additional resources on a voluntary basis to match limited state resources. The goal is to make improvements to state and state aid highways by utilizing more flexible project delivery methods.

The 2022-2024 Work Plan set aside \$8 million in state funding, which is anticipated to leverage another \$8 million in local funds annually.

Types of Projects

This program is focused on the road core and may include surface treatments, road reconstruction, drainage improvements, intersection improvements, and more.

For more information about the MPI, including eligibility, funding, and how to apply, please visit:

<https://www.maine.gov/mdot/pga/cbi/municipal/index.shtml>

3.8.c Village Partnership Initiative (VPI)

The Village Partnership Initiative is designed to be available to all willing communities that have or can agree upon a local vision. Village projects can vary from small, spot improvements to large, once-in-a-lifetime investments if we can successfully partner to access federal discretionary funds. Working with other agencies, these communities should have access to broadband, as good internet connections are as important as physical connections are today.

There are two VPI types: Large Transformative and Small Spot Improvements.

3.8.c.i Large Transformative:

Focus

This program is new for 2022. In the 2022-2024 Work Plan, MaineDOT has set aside \$4 million in state seed monies in the first year and \$4 million in each of the subsequent years as matching funds for investment in Maine village and downtown centers. MaineDOT will work in partnership with local officials to reinvest and revitalize one of the distinguishing features of New England: our iconic village centers. Depending upon the vision of each individual municipality, we can look to make once-in-a-lifetime investments in the lower-speed areas where people meet, shop, and do business. These village areas need to be built on a human scale: walkable, bicycle-friendly, and business-friendly. In sum, this can be bigger than just transportation; it is potentially place-making. These investments, when coupled with broadband if currently unavailable, will create an incentive for businesses to want to locate, people to live, and others to visit and possibly relocate. We believe these projects will improve pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular safety and have the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by allowing people to do more business locally.

Types of Projects

MaineDOT has had success with projects like this in the past. A look at Naples, Bridgton, and now Fryeburg on the Route 302 corridor provides examples in western Maine. Woodford's Corner in Portland and the downtown in Ogunquit show our vision in more urban areas. The downtowns and villages of Hallowell and Belgrade also show realized potential. To build on these successes, MaineDOT has been designing and standing up a Village Partnership Initiative on a modest scale, using state and local funds. The federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), through various grant opportunities, has the potential to expand that vision many times by allowing the state and local funds to be used as match to federal grant funding. We believe we will be able to truly partner with communities to envision, plan, and revitalize their villages.

Due to their complexity, it is anticipated that most of these projects will be designed and constructed by MaineDOT and its contractors.

3.8.c.ii Small Spot Improvements:

Focus

MaineDOT has set aside \$1 million in state monies in all three years of the 2022-2024 Work Plan for the development of small village improvements. This program is new for 2022 and is designed to make spot improvements to existing villages. This program will be used by communities to better define the limits of their villages and improve safety, using gateway treatments, traffic calming, and pedestrian enhancements. In 2022, this program will invest \$1 million in state funds, leveraging another \$1 million in local funding. This program is intended to create safer and more inviting villages on state and state aid highways across Maine.

Types of Projects

These projects can range from gateway treatments, marking the beginning of a village area to help slow traffic, to improving pedestrian crossings and ADA compliance. They may also be used to enhance on-street parking, improve sidewalks, etc.

For more information about the VPI, including eligibility, funding, and how to apply, please visit:

<https://www.maine.gov/mdot/pga/cbi/village/index.shtml>

3.8.d Business Partnership Initiative (BPI)

Focus

If a municipality and a local business or businesses feel that state highway or state aid highway infrastructure are impediments to them being able to reach their economic potential, this program will allow them to improve a portion of state or state aid highway to enhance the business climate, create new opportunities, or to allow for expansion. The 2022-2024 Work Plan set aside \$2 million in state funding which anticipates leveraging another \$4 million in local and business funding, annually.

This program is designed to promote public/private 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 allows.

Types of Projects

Typical projects under this program include improved access to and from state and state aid highways to businesses; improving vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian access and safety; improving local access; and mitigating traffic constraints related to economic development. Projects must provide for:

- Economic development & job creation
- Improved safety
- Transportation customer benefit

For more information about the BPI, including eligibility, funding and how to apply, please visit:

<https://www.maine.gov/mdot/pga/cbi/business/index.shtml>

4.0 Additional Cooperation Opportunities

In addition to participating in the selection of projects through MaineDOT's main transportation planning and programming processes, there are several other opportunities for nonmetropolitan officials to engage with MaineDOT. The Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs) coordinate and collaborate with MaineDOT on regional and local planning issues and serve as key links between MaineDOT staff and municipal officials. Municipal officials also have substantial access and input as transportation projects are developed and also may advise MaineDOT on certain maintenance and operations activities. MaineDOT's Community Services Division (CSD), within the Bureau of Planning, also provides technical support and training to municipal officials.

4.1 Regional Planning Organizations

Regional Planning Organizations were established by Maine State Statute (i.e. Planning Commissions, Councils of Governments) and receive funds from the Maine Legislature and Maine Coastal Program to provide general planning assistance to municipalities within their respective regions. The organizations are private nonprofits that cooperate with MaineDOT and other state agencies per contract assignment letters. Those contracts include tasks and activities that support MaineDOT's staff and regional offices with municipal outreach, safety planning, tribal liaison work, bicycle and pedestrian planning, transit planning, ADA data collection, comprehensive plan assistance, traffic data collection, traffic management collection, and public works.

Funding allocations will be mutually agreed upon based upon the amount of work capacity anticipated for each selected task annually with contracts beginning on the first day of the new calendar year. This assistance is available upon request to the extent that the funding allows. At a minimum, this assistance will include answering general questions, advising on committee formation, explaining the Growth Management Act and the Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule, and providing presentations on interlocal resource planning. MaineDOT also regularly meets with the RPO executive committees, which provide another opportunity for RPOs to engage.

Contact information for the 7 RPOs that MaineDOT contracts with, as well as the BACTS Penobscot County Rural Transportation Program, is listed on the next page. Please note that these are subject to change, and the Regional Planners in the MaineDOT Bureau of Planning (207-624-3300) can provide current updates as needed.

Maine Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs) as of 2022*

- **Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments (AVCOG).** Principally serves communities in Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford counties.
 - 125 Manley Road, Auburn, ME 04210
 - (207) 783-9186
 - www.avcog.org
- **Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System (BACTS) Penobscot County Rural Transportation Planning Program.** The BACTS MPO provides rural transportation planning services to communities in Penobscot County.
 - 12 Acme Road, Suite 104, Brewer, Maine 04412
 - (207) 974-3111
 - info@bactsmpo.org
- **Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG).** Serves communities in the Greater Portland area, principally in Cumberland County.
 - 970 Baxter Boulevard, Suite 201, Portland, ME 04103
 - (207) 774-9891
 - info@gpcog.org
 - www.gpcog.org
- **Hancock County Planning Commission (HCPC).** Principally serves communities in Hancock and Washington Counties.
 - 395 State Street, Ellsworth, ME 04605
 - (207) 667-7131
 - www.hcpcmec.org
- **Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG).** Principally serves communities across Kennebec, Somerset, Piscataquis, and western Waldo Counties.
 - 17 Main Street, Fairfield, ME 04937
 - (207) 453-4258
 - info@kvcog.org
 - www.kvcog.org
- **Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission (LCRPC).** Principally serves communities in Lincoln County.
 - 297 Bath Road, Wiscasset, ME 04578
 - (207) 882-5188
 - info@lcrpc.org
 - www.lcrpc.org
- **Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC).** Principally serves communities in Aroostook County.
 - 11 West Presque Isle Road, PO Box 770, Caribou, ME 04736
 - www.nmdc.org
- **Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC).** Principally serves communities in York and southwestern Oxford and Cumberland Counties.
 - 110 Main Street, Suite 1400, Saco, ME 04072
 - (207) 571-7065
 - www.smpdc.org

* Subject to change. Contact the Regional Planners in the MaineDOT Bureau of Planning (207-624-3300) for updates.

4.2 MaineDOT Tribal Consultation Policy

MaineDOT maintains a Tribal Consultation Policy that seeks to foster and facilitate positive government-to-government relations with Maine's Native American Tribal Governments. This policy establishes the position of a MaineDOT Tribal Liaison and lays out MaineDOT's specific commitments to consult and collaborate with the Tribal Governments on transportation policy, plans, and projects. Specifically:

1. The [MaineDOT] Commissioner shall designate a tribal liaison, who reports directly to the Commissioner, to:
 - a. Ensure implementation of the communication policy established herein; and,
 - b. Serve as a contact person who shall maintain ongoing communication between MaineDOT and Maine's Native American Tribes.
2. MaineDOT will provide early notification to Tribal Governments about decisions that may affect them.
3. MaineDOT will communicate with Tribal governments to provide meaningful and timely input into the development of legislation, rules, policies, plans, and projects that significantly or uniquely affect these Tribes.
4. MaineDOT will collaborate with Tribal Governments during the development of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, the Capital Workplan, and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) in accordance with the policies of federal transportation agencies.
5. MaineDOT will inform the tribes of competitive state and federal grant opportunities for transportation investments.
6. MaineDOT, in partnership with the appropriate federal agency, will consult with the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) or other contact designated by the tribe for all federal undertakings (e.g., federally funded projects, permit approvals, etc.) which may affect properties of religious and cultural significance, on or off Tribal lands, subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).
7. MaineDOT supports the strengthening of the tribal capacity for planning, development, construction, maintenance, and operation of transportation facilities under tribal jurisdiction.
8. MaineDOT also supports the inclusion of tribal representatives in the statewide transportation planning process and metropolitan transportation planning process, where applicable.
9. MaineDOT is committed to developing cooperative, collaborative relationships with Tribal Governments in Maine, and will respect and consider tribal transportation concerns.
10. MaineDOT will maintain and operate State owned-transportation infrastructure within Tribal lands in the best interest of the State, while considering and respecting the perspectives of Tribal Governments and local communities.

4.3 Public and Municipal Involvement During the Design Phase

As a transportation improvement project moves from the planning phase into the design phase, ongoing public involvement is essential to maintain customer support for the project and to obtain meaningful input on the design elements. This public outreach is handled by MaineDOT's Bureau of Project Development, and is often a public meeting or series of public meetings, but it may also include less-formal dialogues with municipal officials, interested parties, and other stakeholders.

The public involvement process may differ for each effort as projects vary in size, scope, and length of time required for design and construction. Design projects generally follow one of the public processes shown below. The project team determines the appropriate level based on the anticipated public interest from the scope and complexity of the project.

1. ***Letter to the Municipality Only***—For any project that has minimal impact on abutters and the traveling public, letters may be sent to the affected municipalities only. The letter content will include the project description, schedule, an explanation of expected impacts, and an offer of public process if the municipality requests it. If there will be minor impacts to abutters, property owners along the project may also receive letters. This type of public involvement is infrequent and typically only occurs for minor projects such as a paving project with no impacts beyond the existing pavement.
2. ***Public Meetings***—Any project where impacts to abutters or the traveling public are expected to be more than minor will involve one or more public meeting(s). The majority of MaineDOT projects involve at least one form of a public meeting. With the onset of COVID-19 in 2020, MaineDOT instituted On-Demand Virtual Public Meetings. MaineDOT will continue with the On-Demand Virtual Public Meetings even after the pandemic while including the option for having a Live Virtual Meeting or even including an In-Person Meeting in certain circumstances. The criteria for those inclusions will be developed in the near future. More information about On-Demand Virtual Public Meetings can be found in [Section 5.2 Virtual Public Involvement/On-Demand Public Meetings](#) and in the MaineDOT [Public Involvement Plan](#).

The typical public involvement process for the Bureau of Project Development is outlined below.

- Kick-Off – This stage is when a project that is funded in the Work Plan is handed off to the Bureau of Project Development to begin preparing the project team.
- Preliminary Work - During this initiation of preliminary design, where the team begins gathering information regarding the project and location, the project manager or appropriate team members reaches out to municipalities, utilities, MPOs, or other stakeholders to obtain initial feedback on the proposed project. For more complex projects, this may include a Preliminary Public Meeting. At this meeting, information such as project purpose and need, existing conditions, traffic data, accident data, funding and budget, and a tentative schedule are shared with the public. Potential design solutions may also be discussed. These meetings are intended to provide balanced, objective information on the project and obtain feedback on challenges, needs, opportunities, and solutions. The project manager, designer, and other team members as deemed appropriate contribute and provide information for the meeting. In some cases, this meeting may determine whether additional public/informational meetings are necessary.
- Project Design – Using the obtained public input along with engineering judgement, the team begins the process of designing the project to meet the purpose and need of the project to address the infrastructure need adequately.

- Informational Meeting – If the project is identified as having a “substantial public interest,” an informational meeting may be necessary to update the public on the project’s progress. This could also include forming a Design Advisory Group and holding meetings with that group. Based on the type, complexity, or public interest, an Informational Meeting may be held at any point throughout the design process.
- Public Meeting to Present the Preliminary Design Report – This is also known as the Formal Public Meeting. At this meeting, the project details, as shown in the Preliminary Design Report (PDR), are presented to the public by the project manager and other team members as appropriate. The purpose of this meeting is to share the design and receive buy-in from the public regarding the preferred alternative/design. This should include the reason and factors influencing the chosen design. This meeting is typically the final opportunity for public input into the scope of the project, the chosen alternative, and significant design features. MaineDOT incorporates input from public meetings in its design decisions. By involving the public early in the planning process and throughout the development and implementation of projects, MaineDOT provides its customers with the opportunity for coordination and participation before the approval of final designs. When appropriate, traffic control, construction staging and timing, and proposed detours may be discussed at public meetings during the design phase.

More information about MaineDOT Project Development's Public Process Guidelines is available on the [Highway Program's website](#).

4.4 Regional Offices and Maintenance and Operations

MaineDOT uses a data-driven approach in its [Transportation Asset Management Plan](#) to maintain the state's existing transportation assets. However, opportunities for input from local officials also exist through MaineDOT's Region Offices. These offices regularly hold workshops where Senior Staff are available to answer questions from local officials about pending or future projects, salt/sand storage and use, capital improvements and planning. The Region Offices also routinely send out maintenance and operation surveys to better understand municipal concerns and meet municipalities' needs.

Please find information about MaineDOT's regions and Region Offices below, or online [here](#).

1. Southern Region (Region 1)

Phone: 207-885-7000

Address: 51 Pleasant Hill Road, Scarborough, ME 04070-0358

Hours: 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM

2. Midcoast Region (Region 2)

Phone: 207-624-8200

Address: 66 Industrial Drive, Augusta, ME 04330

Hours: 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM

3. Western Region (Region 3)

Phone: 207-562-4228

Address: 932 U.S. Route 2 East, Wilton ME 04294

Hours: 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM

4. Eastern Region (Region 4)

Phone: 207-941-4500

Address: 219 Hogan Road, Bangor, ME 04401

Hours: 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM

5. Northern Region (Region 5)

Phone: 207-764-2200

Address: 41 Rice St., Presque Isle, ME 04769

Hours: 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM

4.5 Community Services Division (CSD)

MaineDOT's Community Services Division (CSD), part of the Bureau of Planning, provides services that relate directly to Maine's municipalities and counties. Their primary function is to provide training and technical assistance to Maine's towns, cities, and counties through the Maine Local Roads Center (MLRC). They also manage the Local Road Assistance Program (LRAP), handle all issues relative to highway classifications, federal urban area boundaries, urban compact boundaries, and state and US route numbering. The Adopt-A-Highway Program is also administered here, along with Maine's former municipal sand/salt facility program.

For more information about the CSD, please visit <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/csd/>

1. Maine Local Roads Center (MLRC)

The Maine Local Roads Center provides training, technical assistance, and information to those municipal and county personnel who are responsible for constructing, maintaining, and managing local roads and bridges in Maine. The Maine Local Roads Center is one of over 50 "technology transfer" centers established by the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) of the Federal Highway Administration.

In an effort to recognize local road officials for their desire to learn and improve their skills, the Maine Local Roads Center has established the "[Maine Roads Scholar Program](#)". The goal of this program is to provide the opportunity for municipal officials to achieve a solid foundation in local road technical and management skills. These skills will help municipalities save tax dollars through more cost effective techniques and products. While this is not a degree or certification program, participants can attend an excellent basic program available nowhere else at such low cost.

A full list of services provided by the MLRC, as well as contact information, can be found on the [MLRC webpage](#).

4.6 Locally Administered MaineDOT Projects

A Locally Administered Project (LAP) is any MaineDOT project in which a municipality administers the design and construction of the project. Any municipal official or municipal engineer with decision-making authority can locally administer a MaineDOT project, with approval, if they are LAP certified by MaineDOT. If the project has federal funding, the person in charge must be a full-time employee of the municipality. MaineDOT provides LAP certification training annually to municipal officials and municipal engineers on federal and State requirements involved with transportation projects.

More information about LAP training and certification can be found here:

<https://www.maine.gov/mdot/lpa/>

5.0 Select MaineDOT Consultation Practices

For a more comprehensive guide of MaineDOT public involvement tools and techniques, please refer to the MaineDOT [Public Involvement Plan](#).

5.1 State Process to Compile Transportation Needs

During the development of the Capital Work Plan, MaineDOT solicits candidate transportation improvement projects and priorities from municipalities, Maine Tribal Nations (via the Tribal Consultation Policy), county commissioners, and provides official notification to all State agencies.

5.2 MaineDOT's Approach to Transportation Equity

MaineDOT believes the essence of equity in transportation is to ensure that all Maine people have access to safe and reliable transportation options that support economic opportunity and quality of life regardless of a person's economic, social, ethnic, racial, age sexual, physical, mental, or geographic circumstance. The MaineDOT is committed to equitable delivery of its programs and services.

MaineDOT is finalizing an official statement on the Department's approach to transportation equity, which will inform future MaineDOT policies and plans to ensure that the Department is fulfilling its mission "to support economic opportunity and quality of life by responsibly providing our customers the safest and most reliable transportation system possible, given available resources" for all Maine people. As federal, state, and Department policies regarding transportation equity evolve, MaineDOT will strive to share updates with all of our partners, including RPOs and other non-metropolitan officials.

5.3 Virtual Public Involvement/On-Demand Public Meetings

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, MaineDOT stopped holding in-person public meetings in March 2020. The department had already been evaluating tools and techniques related to supplementing existing public involvement processes with virtual public involvement tools; the pandemic accelerated that need and resulted in the quick development of virtual meetings.

The public notices for each project direct people to the MaineDOT Virtual Public Involvement website: www.maine.gov/mdot/vpi/. The Virtual Public Involvement site has a video explaining the process and lists all projects with an active Virtual Public Meeting. For each project, the site lists the timeframe (typically two weeks) that the project is accepting comments. After that comment period, the project information can still be viewed at the Public Meeting Library page: www.maine.gov/mdot/vpi/library/.

As this new process was being developed, it was determined that MaineDOT should be able to accommodate comments from people who may not have Internet or mobile access. While all public notices now include a link directing people to view the virtual meeting, the notices still include contact information (mailing address, email address, and phone number) for the project manager. Additionally, MaineDOT posts physical meeting notices in town halls, libraries, and schools. This allows those without Internet and mobile access to contact the project manager via multiple methods to learn about the project.

While this process still accommodates people who may have limited technological access, this new method helps to engage and include many more people, allowing MaineDOT to learn more information from the public and to make better decisions. Having all active public meetings on one page allows members of the public to see projects they may not have known about in any other way and enables them to see the brief presentation and make applicable comments. Also, in addition to the typical notices and the website, each virtual meeting now will be listed on MaineDOT's social media platforms and will include targeted ads to reach users who may have comments. These methods have already resulted in significant increases in both the number of people reached and the number of comments received compared to previous in-person meetings. Because of the benefits of the on-demand meetings, this method will still be the primary way of holding public meetings after the pandemic.

More information on virtual public meetings can be found in the MaineDOT [Public Involvement Plan](#).

5.4 Presentations and Attendance at Local Meetings

Presentations are made to local officials through a number of venues (virtual and in-person), such as town meetings, State legislative hearings, Corridor Planning Advisory Committees, and various Regional Planning Organization Transportation Advisory Committees. In addition, MaineDOT seeks input through attendance at annual Regional Planning Organization board meetings, municipal workshops, and attendance at Maine Municipal Association meetings.

5.5 MaineDOT Website

[MaineDOT's website](#) offers extensive resources for local officials, including:

- News and updates
- Project information
- Resources for municipalities
- Programs and grants

- Processes and data
- Plans and policies
- Publications, including brochures, guides, plans, reports, design guides, and technical manuals
- MaineDOT's Public Map Viewer
- Information for Maine residents, including traffic info, active transportation resources, commuter resources, public involvement opportunities, permitting information, and other information
- Information for residents and visitors on exploring Maine, including scenic areas and transportation options
- Contact information for MaineDOT's bureaus and offices

5.6 Other MaineDOT Communications and Outreach

- Email updates on federal and state funding and programs to municipal officials via the CSD municipal contact list
- Regular posts featuring MaineDOT news and projects on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#)
- Sign up for email or SMS alerts from MaineDOT [here](#)
- Mailings, informational videos, newsletters, newspapers, television
- MaineDOT also utilizes the Maine Municipal Association's newsletter "Maine Town and City"

6.0 Periodic Review of the Cooperative Planning Process

In compliance with 23 CFR §450.210, every 5 years MaineDOT will review and solicit comments from non-metropolitan local officials and other interested parties regarding the Cooperative Planning Process for Non-Metropolitan Officials. MaineDOT is then responsible for deciding whether to adopt any proposed changes and updating the Cooperative Planning Process.