

**Wiscasset Route 1 Corridor Study**  
**Synopsis of Past Efforts & Projected Additional Work**  
**December 3, 2010**

**MaineDOT seeks Guidance on whether to proceed with the Wiscasset Route 1 Corridor Study:**

- Army Corps of Engineers issued a LEDPA permit in May 2010 for one of three remaining bypass options – namely, the long bridge option (N8c).
- The LEDPA is one of the final steps in a decades-long process that completes the EIS and secures a Record of Decision (ROD) from FHWA that would allow the MaineDOT to begin securing and protecting the Right-Of-Way corridor for eventual construction.
- MaineDOT immediately issued a press release informing property owners on all but this option that their property was no longer in consideration for acquisition as part of the future transportation corridor.
- In June 2010, MaineDOT was alerted that an eagle's nest may exist in the approved alignment; MaineDOT immediately confirmed the existence of the undocumented nest and began working with ACOE and USF&WS to ascertain permitting options in view of the finding.
  - This included looking at ways to adjust alignment to avoid impacts to the eagle's nest
  - A preliminary guidance meeting among the parties was held in late September; that guidance led to more analysis during October
- On November 1, MaineDOT, FHWA, ACOE and USF&WS meet to review considerations.
  - SF&WS confirmed the eagle nest is protected by federal law and MaineDOT does not meet any of the criteria that would allow it to remove the nest;
  - ACOE indicated it will need to re-issue the LEPDA on a previously-dismissed alternative from the DEIS and encouraged MaineDOT to submit any documentation it considers would be beneficial to guide the selection and issuance of a new LEDPA.
- Including the necessary public outreach, additional work required will be in the range of \$65,000
- An additional 6 months is estimated to conduct outreach, prepare and submit revised documentation to ACOE and receive a revised ACOE decision.

**Implications:**

- Since the early summer LEDPA Determination press release, when the cloud of uncertainty was lifted, it is very likely that some "no longer affected" land owners have made economic decisions - this redirection will be unwelcomed news.

**Recommendations:**

- Hold a Midcoast Bypass Task Force Meeting on the evening of December 15, 2010. The public is welcome to attend and observe. The agenda will be to review the current status and to obtain Task Force input as to the desire to continue the study, followed by a 30-minute period for limited public comment. A 30-day written comment period will follow for anyone to submit further comments.
- Following the 30-day public comment period, MaineDOT will seek from the new administration guidance on whether to proceed with the Wiscasset Route 1 Corridor Study.

## Wiscasset Route 1 Corridor Study

### History

- 1958: Wiscasset Master Plan identified Route 1 congestion and need for a bypass
- 1972: MaineDOT preliminary engineering and environmental report on bypass options
- 1979: MaineDOT re-examining northerly routes; halted for Route 1 bridge replacement
- 1984: Davey Bridge completed
- 1991: MaineDOT planned study suspended upon enactment of STPA
- 1993: MaineDOT report noted low-cost measures (Bath to Belfast) would have low impact
- 1997: MaineDOT report per STPA, building on the 1993 report; bypass in recommendations
- 1998: MaineDOT began an Environmental Assessment for bypass alternatives
- 2002: FHWA determined an Environmental Impact Statement was required
- Oct. 2007: Draft Environmental Impact Statement released for comments
- Dec. 2007: End DEIS comment period
- Jan. – Dec. 2008: Discuss significant comments with the Midcoast Bypass Task Force
- Dec. 2008: Phase II Alternatives Analysis submitted to US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE)
- Mar. 2009: ACOE letter of request for further information on Phase II submittal
- Jun 2009: Responses to DEIS Substantive Comments submitted by Gannett-Fleming
- Sep. 2009: MaineDOT Supplement to Phase II Alternatives submitted to ACOE
- May 2010: Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) issued for N8c
- Jun. 2010: Eagle nest discovered along the N8c alignment on Davis Island
- Jun. – Nov. 2010: MaineDOT fact-finding and discussions with regulatory agencies
- Oct. 2010: MaineDOT considers deviations of N8c to avoid the eagle nest; none look suitable
- Nov. 2010: Agencies advise DEIS alternatives be reconsidered (including N2a, N2f, and N2h)

### Expenditures to date in developing environmental documents

- \$2,535,000 programmed (PIN 7991.00, beginning with \$500,000 in 1998-99 BTIP)
- \$24,406 remaining

### New Work Required - Reassess alternatives N2h and N2f-2 in view of new N8c constraints

- Revise alignments: N8c Variances completed; Revise N2h alignment to behind the historic railroad bridge at Clark Point, Revise other DEIS alternatives based on new information
- Impacts Analysis of N8c variances and potentially revised DEIS alternatives
- ACOE Meetings, Revised Phase II Submittal, LEDPA Reassessment & Determination
- Complete FEIS
- Public Involvement throughout (6 months estimated)

### Projected Costs and Timelines for new work

- Estimated Costs: Gannett-Fleming = \$45,000; Carol Morris = \$4,000; MaineDOT = \$15,000; Total estimated cost = \$64,000
- Timeline: 6 months from authorization to proceed

**Projected Bypass Cost = \$85 - \$100 Million (includes engineering, right-of-way and construction)**

### Economic Impacts to Highway Users (if Study is Dropped and Bypass not pursued)

- MaineDOT repays FHWA for its investment to date (\$2.535M)
- Current congestion (speeds under 25 mph)
  - Rte. 1 NB at Birch Point Road: 110 Hrs/Summer (2009 and 2010 data)
  - Route 1 SB at Route 27 Edgecomb: 90 Hrs/Summer (2009 only – data gaps in 2010)
- Future economic impacts
  - Passenger Vehicles: \$7,000,000 annually at projected 2030 traffic volumes
  - Commerce (Truck Traffic): \$5,000,000 annually at projected 2030 traffic volumes
  - Safety Impact = \$600,000/Year
  - Total Impact from congestion in 2030 = \$12.6 Million/Year