

MEMORANDUM

To: Bowdoinham Selectboard
From: Community Development Advisory Committee
Date: October 3, 2023
Re: Recommendation for DOT VPI Letter of Intent

Recommendation

CDAC unanimously recommends that the Town of Bowdoinham submit a letter of intent for a Maine DOT Village Partnership Initiative planning grant to design and publicly vet permanent solutions to safely move pedestrians across Rt. 24 at the Main Street intersection, as well as in between the two waterfront parks. The extent of sidewalks down lower Main Street and along Rt. 24 in front of Three Robbers will be addressed in this process. Other elements that may include flashing beacons, islands, speed tables, and other gateway treatments at both locations will also be considered. Lastly, a study on the impacts of creating a one-way for lower Main Street and parking needs along that road will be incorporated. This work is supported by the feedback received in the survey results from the demonstration project this summer and in the 2010 Walkable Village Plan. We recommend a motion to allow the committee to apply for this grant. We recommend utilizing the CMP TIF to fund this project, which will not entail any outlay of town money to launch the project as transportation is an approved use for the fund.

Background

We have an opportunity to apply for a Maine DOT Village Partnership Initiative planning grant for the design work needed to construct permanent solutions to safely move pedestrians across Rt. 24 at the Main Street intersection, as well as in between the two waterfront parks, and to consider other safety, parking, and access recommendations in that block of the village center. The Maine DOT Village Partnership Initiative principally supports locally initiated projects that improve the community transportation environment, economic vibrancy, safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, and downtown revitalization initiatives.

We are requesting to apply for a grant award estimated around \$25,000 and for approval of our local match requirement of 50% which is \$25,000, for a total project cost of around \$50,000. Our match would be reimbursed after project completion.

This total project costs are based on estimates from previous work. DOT's program supports projects with a total project cost of up to \$150,000 which we believe is exorbitant for the scope of this project, but without bids in hand, it is possible that a greater match may be required depending on our contract amount to accomplish the work. This match would be an authorized expense in our CMP TIF Program.

Grant Information

Maine DOT Village Partnership Initiative planning grant is a new program under the Mills administration which accepts applications on a rolling basis. We have been advised to take advantage of the program while it is in place. There is a companion VPI implementation grant program we could also apply following the planning grant completion to implement the plans. This additional grant program is also open on a rolling basis with a maximum project cost of \$500,000 with a 50% match.


Proposed Scope

January – March 2024: Upon award draft and issue an RFP for the project, interview applicants, and award a contract for the design consultant of the project.


April – November 2024: The consultant will develop three project concepts to share with the public. The consultant will design a public engagement process to acquire feedback on the designs. A second round of engagement will be held to address a revised design based on feedback from the first round. A third public engagement process will focus around public education on the project design and next steps.

Community Development Advisory Committee


Jean de Bellefeuille, Chair


Ian McConnell


Lee Parker, Secretary


Wendy Rose, Co-Chair


John Scribner