

# MaineDOT Complete Streets Policy

## Purpose and Intent

The Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) considers the needs of all transportation system users as the department plans, builds and maintains state-jurisdiction streets and highways. (For purposes of this Complete Streets Policy, “streets and highways” is intended to include all public roads). MaineDOT works with its partners and stakeholders to ensure a safe, efficient, multimodal transportation system that balances the needs of the system’s many and varied users. This “Complete Streets Policy” formalizes the department’s goals and current practices for providing safe and accessible streets and highways for all users, thus supporting prosperous businesses, villages, downtowns, neighborhoods and rural areas.

The Complete Streets policy intends to ensure safe and efficient access to the street and highway system for users of passenger and commercial vehicles, transit riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians—for people of all ages and abilities that use any transportation mode. Consideration of the needs of all users early and throughout the transportation planning and project-development process is cost-effective, efficient, and essential for provision of a safe and balanced transportation system.

This policy is consistent with state of Maine and federal laws and policies related to streets and highways, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and civil rights.

## Policy

**It is the policy of the Maine Department of Transportation to consider the needs of all users in the planning and development of street and highway improvement projects.** This policy applies to new construction, reconstruction, and rehabilitation projects funded partially or in full through MaineDOT, and includes projects programmed by Metropolitan Planning Organizations, or through the department’s [Local Project Administration Program](#).

Examples of applicable projects include, but are not limited to, bridge, highway, intersection, safety, transit, lane and shoulder widths/markings during paving, privately-initiated projects, and new-capacity street and highway projects.

**MaineDOT and/or its project partners will document the process by which the needs of all users are considered in the planning and development of street and highway improvement projects.** This documentation will include analysis of how the various users of the transportation system will have safe access to the completed street and highway project, where warranted and feasible or, if certain user accommodations are determined not to be warranted or feasible, the basis for that determination.

Documentation of the process that has been followed to consider the needs of all users will be included in project scoping reports and preliminary design reports.

## **Determining Project Merit and Feasibility**

This policy establishes a process to consider and document the needs of all users during the planning and development of street and highway improvement projects. In this process MaineDOT, or its project partners, will determine whether accommodations are warranted and feasible. MaineDOT will determine whether and how the project presents an opportunity to incorporate safe accommodations for the anticipated users, whether the improvements can be made at a reasonable cost, and whether benefits of the project justify the costs.

In making the determination, MaineDOT, or its project partners, shall exercise their best professional judgment and may rely upon any technical sources they deem useful and appropriate including Department policies, legal requirements, and engineering standards and guidance.

MaineDOT, or its project partners, will consider relevant factors including, but not limited to safety benefits and impacts, the needs of persons with disabilities and the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, mobility benefits and impacts, public input, the functional classification of the roadway, roadway dimensions, traffic volumes and speeds, existing rights of way, the context and setting of the facility, existing uses on and adjacent to the roadway, potential and likely future users of the facility, costs associated with proposed alternatives, environmental impacts, local preferences, and municipal plans, policies, and regulations affecting transportation and land use.

Specific accommodations may not be warranted or feasible in a given location, such as but not limited to, where:

- Pedestrians or bicyclists are prohibited
- Current and future need for specific accommodations is not warranted due to low use, low population density in the vicinity of the project, or limited public support
- Engineering, financial, or environmental constraints exist
- Substantial public opposition exists
- Local financial commitment is insufficient

Project merit and feasibility will be determined on a case-by-case basis, documented by the Project Manager and, if necessary, approved by a MaineDOT Program Manager.

## **Providing Alternative Facilities**

Facility alternatives, such as sidewalks, bicycle lanes, separated facilities, transit stops, ADA-accessible routes, and travel lanes are unique to each project, and must also be considered on a case-by-case basis.

System preservation projects (pavement preservation) are intended to maintain the existing system and do not typically provide opportunities to increase roadway width, or to add sidewalks or other facilities to the street and highway system. These projects may offer opportunities to improve conditions by use of signage, or by restriping,

reducing travel-lane widths, or other non-widening options. System preservation projects should not diminish safety for any road users.

### **Assignment of Financial Responsibility**

MaineDOT's [Local Cost Sharing Policy](#) includes local match requirements for new facilities (where warranted) and for local-interest project elements. MaineDOT's [Bicycle and Pedestrian Program](#), which funds bicycle and pedestrian improvements in communities throughout the state through a federally funded competitive program, also includes local match requirements.

### **Implementation**

MaineDOT implements this policy by developing and updating relevant design manuals and guidance; by documenting the process for considering the needs of all users in project scoping and preliminary design reports, and by providing training necessary to ensure that individuals and entities involved in planning, scope development, design, project development, and construction of the improvements have the tools, knowledge, and direction necessary to successfully implement this policy.

### **Amendments**

MaineDOT will periodically review this and other related policies, design guidance, and training and, when warranted, may propose changes through the MaineDOT Engineering Council. As part of such review MaineDOT may provide appropriate opportunities for participation and input from stakeholders representing all users of Maine's transportation system including, but not limited to, users of passenger and commercial vehicles, transit riders and operators, bicyclists and pedestrians—for people of all ages and abilities that use any of these transportation modes. All policy changes shall be approved by MaineDOT senior management.

This policy statement and relevant guidelines are available on the MaineDOT website at <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/completestreets/>.

