

# MaineDOT's Virtual Public Involvement Process

- On-Demand Public Meetings

MAINEDOT - ACEC JOINT  
TRANSPORTATION TASKFORCE  
MEETING

September 20, 2021



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## AGENDA

- Brief Recap
- Updates since February Meeting
- Lessons Learned
- Post-Pandemic



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# RECAP - ON-DEMAND PROCESS

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**VPI**

Projects Home  
Public Meeting Library

**Virtual Public Involvement (VPI)**


MaineDOT is pleased to be able to provide on-demand virtual meetings. These meetings will be in place of in-person meetings and will consist of on-demand video presentations and other documentation describing the project. We see this as a safe way of obtaining your input and comments, and we hope you take the time to review and provide us your feedback.

Please review the video further describing this process and then click on the projects listed below that are currently accepting comments. We look forward to hearing from you!

**Sign Up for Email Alerts**

enter email

**Sign Up!**



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

The links below will lead to different methods of connecting to the information, based on the device being used to access the information. Google Chrome is the recommended browser to access information for both mobile and desktop sites.

**Current On-Demand Public Meetings**

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# RECAP - MEETING SIGN-IN

**MaineDOT** Select Language

**Buckfield, Hall Bridge**  
Desktop Public Meeting  
This is a bridge replacement project on Route 117 over the Nezinscot River in Buckfield, Maine.

WELCOME!  
So that we can keep you informed regarding any future meetings related to this project, please fill out your contact information.

**Tell us about yourself:**

Zip Code  \* Required    Last Name  \* Required    Email  \* Required

Counting yourself, how many people are attending this meeting?  
 - +

[CONTINUE](#) 1 of 3

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# RECAP - ON-DEMAND MEETING

## Buckfield, Hall Bridge

WIN: 21876.00

Maine Department of Transportation

Meeting Introduction   Meeting Presentation   Schedule   We Want to Hear From You!


### Meeting Introduction

Please scroll down to move through this on-demand public meeting.

This is a bridge replacement project on Route 117 over the Nezinscot River in Buckfield Maine. The existing bridge will be replaced with a 150' single span bridge that will be eight feet wider than the existing bridge. Traffic will be maintained on a temporary bridge with one lane of alternating traffic controlled with temporary signals. The Construction duration is estimated to be two years.

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### Meeting Presentation



#### Desktop Public Meeting

1. Please enter your comment below:

Please do not provide any personally identifiable information such as names, phone numbers, or email addresses within this text and be aware that any comment you provide in this text will be available for public consumption.  
**Comment is required.**


2. Select any of the following topics that apply to your comment: (Select up to 3)

Safety    Property Owner/Right of Way    Construction    Traffic    Road/Design


3. Do you have a specific question or concern that you would like a response to?

Do Not Send me a Response

4. Is this comment about a specific location? If so, zoom and pan the map, then add a pin by selecting the location that relates to your comment.



5. What is your level of support for the project you are commenting about? Click on the dot to drag it along the scale.



You can alternatively respond to this question via the map's toolbar.

6. How did you hear about us?: (Select up to 3; At least one choice is required)

Television    Print    News Outlet    Word of Mouth    Twitter    Facebook

**At least one choice is required.**


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# RECAP - ON-DEMAND BENEFITS

- Better for limited connectivity
- Can be viewed anytime, anywhere
- Can control the message
- Single page
- Short descriptive videos
- Better engagement

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# RECAP - INCREASE ENGAGEMENT



**Notice of Preliminary  
ON-DEMAND PUBLIC  
MEETING  
Jefferson**

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Due to COVID 19 precautions, this public meeting will be conducted on-demand.

**To Discuss the Proposed Replacement of  
Davis No. 1 Bridge (#2218) over Brann Brook  
Located 0.51 of a mile east of Route 32**

**Access to this and other meetings are  
available through our website: [www.mainedot.gov/vpi](http://www.mainedot.gov/vpi)**

**This meeting provides the opportunity for public comment.**

MaineDOT will have an online presentation available starting September 10, 2020 that will act as our Preliminary Public Meeting. This presentation gives information on the Davis No. 1 Bridge (#2218) over Brann Brook, located 0.51 of a mile east of Route 32.



The Department is conducting this public meeting to inform and invite public comments. We are particularly interested in learning local views, discovering local resources, and identifying local concerns and issues. Anyone with interest is asked to view the presentation at the link above and take the opportunity to provide comments within the presentation.

MaineDOT invites and encourages you to review the website and share your thoughts on this project until October 1, 2020.

Accommodations will be made for persons with disabilities.


Questions, comments, or inquiries can be made directly through the project website or directed to the attention of Mackenzie Kersbergen, Project Manager, Maine Department of Transportation, Bridge Program, 24 Child Street, 16 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0016. Phone: 207-215-3820.  
Email: [Mackenzie.A.Kersbergen@maine.gov](mailto:Mackenzie.A.Kersbergen@maine.gov)

**Work Identification Numbers 023092.00**

**MaineDOT**  
Sponsored · 🌐

Farmington Falls Bridge Replacement | This on-demand public meeting is live on our website! Want to learn more? Click below to view the presentation and leave questions/comments. We look forward to hearing from you!



**Farmington Falls  
Bridge Replacement  
Open for Public Comment**

MAINEDOT.GOV/VPI  
**Virtual Public Involvement**  
Click here to view the presentati... [LEARN MORE](#)

👍👎👤 Amy Gin... 20 Comments 42 Shares

👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share

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# RECENT UPDATES

- Public Involvement Plan
- Peer Exchange/Webinars
- Increasing Engagement

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# RECENT UPDATES

- 71 Projects
- 672 Written Comments
- 2867 Stakeholders
- 68% Favorability Overall




## Public Involvement Plan

March 2021

### Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making

Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT)

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**4.0 Public Involvement Tools and Techniques**

**4.1 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. Many of the tools below were utilized to create this method.

During initial discussions, MaineDOT determine its best choice would be to create on-demand public meetings as opposed to trying to hold live virtual meetings over Zoom or some other live-streaming program. The on-demand process consists of recording videos of the types of presentations that would typically be given at an in-person meeting. The videos, along with other documentation helpful for the public to understand the project, are loaded into a StoryMap accessed by the MaineDOT website. A StoryMap is an ArcGIS product that helps to tell stories using text, videos, maps, and other content. The StoryMap allows members of the public to view all the presentations or only those parts that are relevant to them. As an example, a property owner on the project may wish to view the complete presentation, especially the section on the right-of-way. In contrast, someone who travels through the project area may only want to consider the areas related to traffic impacts. The StoryMap was developed to allow for use by desktop, tablets, and mobile phones. Below is an example of a StoryMap describing a project. A recent integration between ArcGIS StoryMaps and the Public Involvement Management Application (PIMA), to be discussed in more detail below, allows for the ability to comment from within the StoryMap.



On-demand public meetings have numerous benefits over live-streamed and in-person meetings. The on-demand meeting allows the members of the public to view the meeting at any time that is convenient for them. It does not



require them to log in or attend at a specific time. Neither department staff members nor members of the public need to travel to a physical location. On-demand public meetings also provide for a consistent message regarding the project by posting the information and leaving it posted even after the comment period ends. One potential downside of not having a dialogue during a live or streamed meeting is resolved by the ability for the public to comment and for MaineDOT staff to respond through the Public Involvement Management Application (PIMA). This tool will be discussed further below.



The public notices for each project direct people to the MaineDOT Virtual Public Involvement website: [www.maine.gov/mdot/vpi/](http://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/](http://www.maine.gov/mdot/vpi/library/).

As this new process was being developed, it was determined that we 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.

**4.2 MaineDOT Website**

# INCREASE ENGAGEMENT

## VPI FLYER

Another way to try to increase engagement, especially of underserved populations



# We Want Your Input!

## Virtual Public Involvement



The Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) has instituted a new way of holding public meetings to obtain public input.

All public meetings are now being held as on-demand virtual meetings. These meetings will help MaineDOT get more public input and increase engagement.



This new format will also be more convenient for the public by allowing viewing and commenting anytime from anywhere. We may still hold in-person public meetings for some projects also.

These meetings will feature short videos, explaining the various aspects of the project. The interface allows for two-way communication: members of the public can comment, and MaineDOT staff members can respond.



Scan here with your phone camera

Or visit [mainedot.gov/vpi](http://mainedot.gov/vpi)



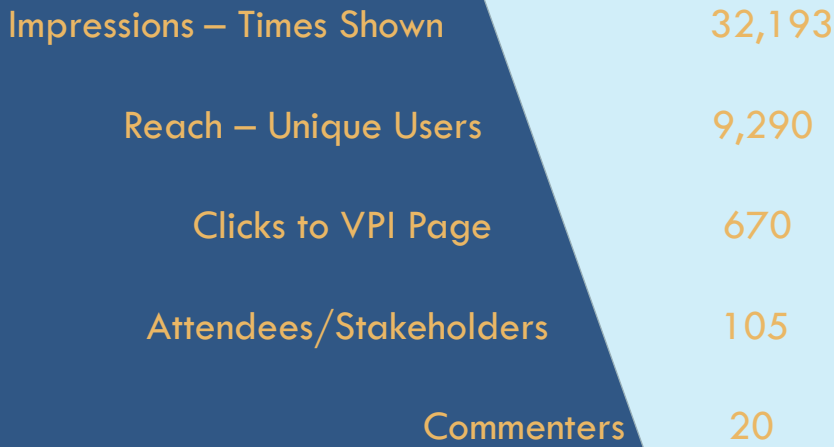
# RESULTS

- Engagement Numbers
- Comparison of On-Demand vs Live and In-Person

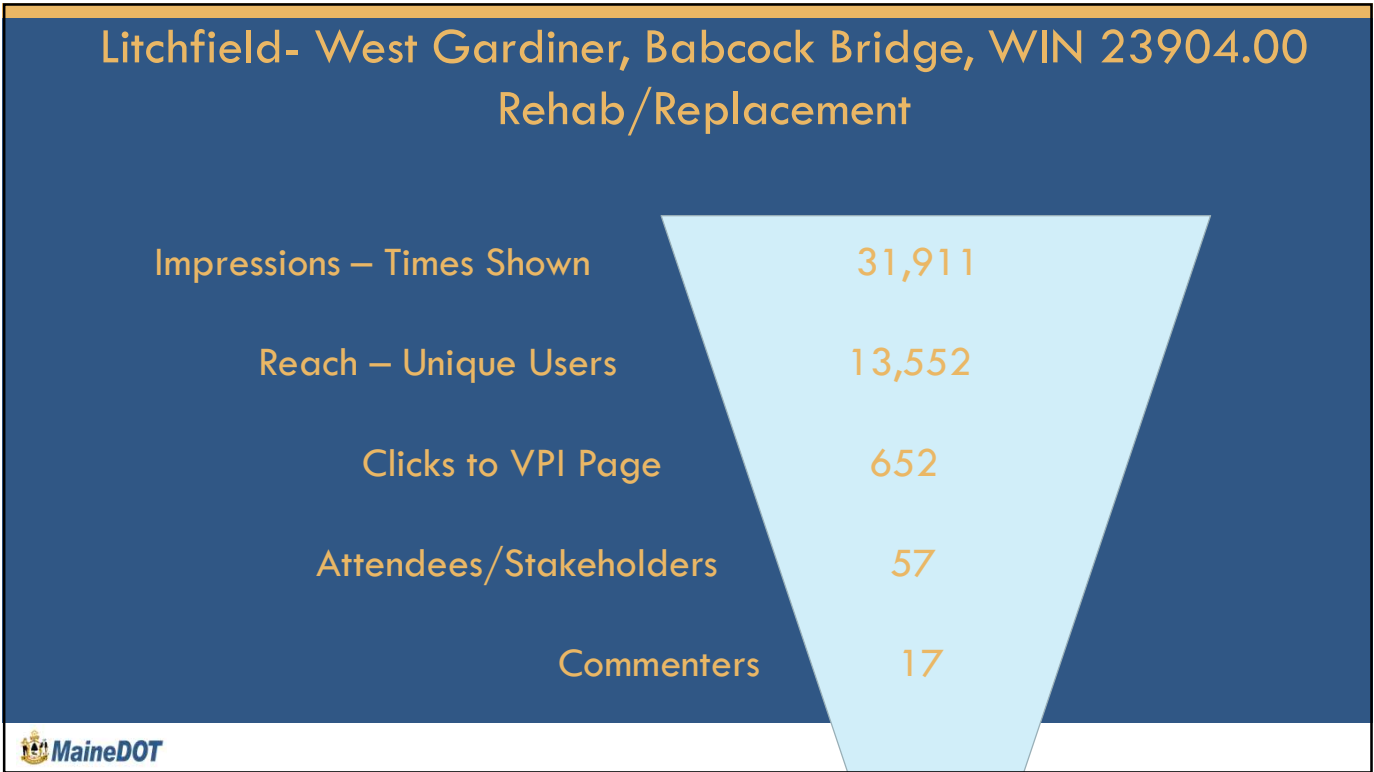


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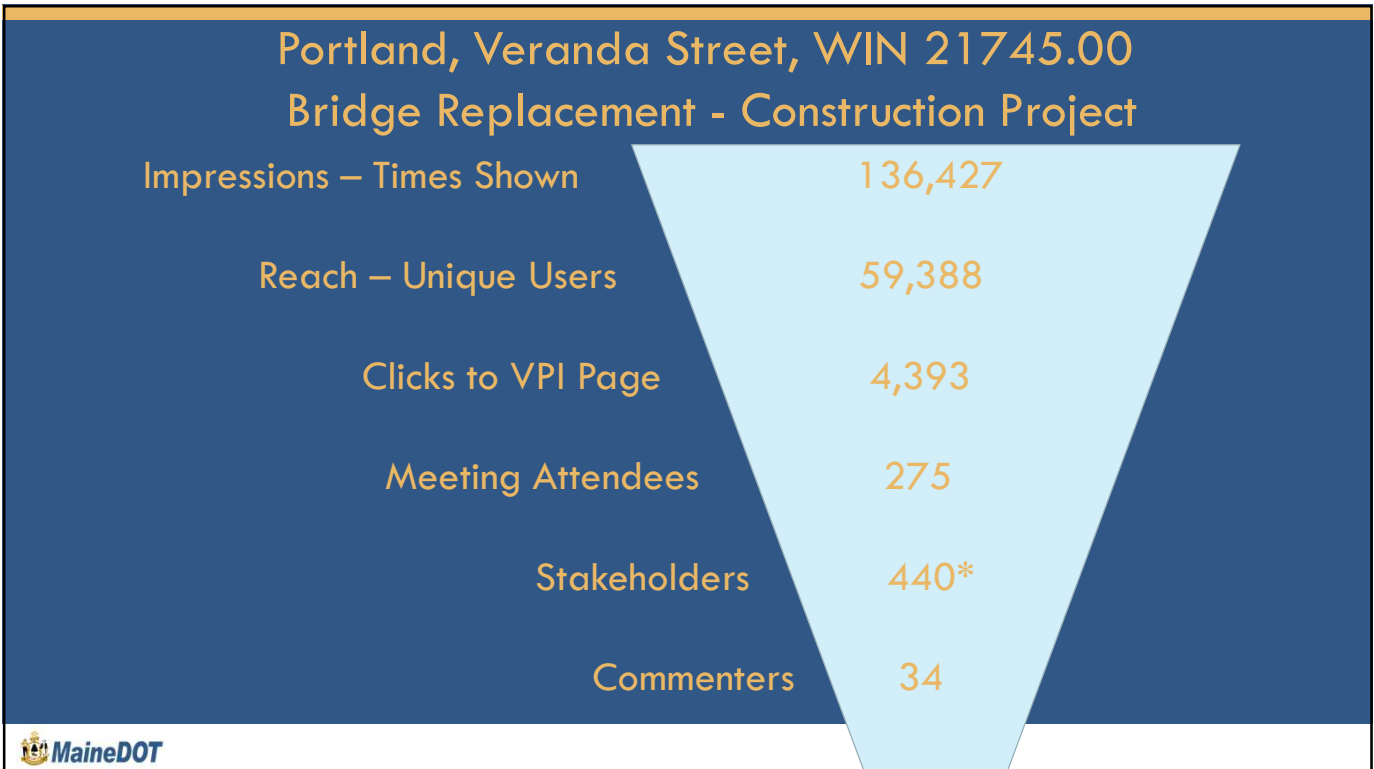
## Searsport, Route 1, WIN 17281.00 Highway Reconstruction



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## ON-DEMAND VS OTHER TYPES

### What were the results?

	York	Lewiston	Saco		On-demand
Date/Time	August 3, 6pm	August 5, 6pm	August 4, 6pm		July 19 <sup>th</sup> -August 20 <sup>th</sup>
Type	In-person	In-person	In-person	Online live – PIMA/Podium	Online 'on-demand' – PIMA/StoryMap
Attendance	3	4	2	12	Approx. 170
Comments Received	2	3	1	2	Approx. 120



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## PEER EXCHANGE/WEBINARS

### New England States Peer Exchange

- July and August
- Learning and working with others
- Information will go on FHWA site soon
  
- FHWA PIMA Innovations Webinar with MassDOT and IowaDOT. Oct 26th



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## OTHER LESSONS LEARNED

### Video Length

- Shift paradigm of what and how much we present compared to in-person
- Need short videos to retain viewers
- 60% view duration (Based on 5–7-minute videos)
- Cover high points in short videos
- Provide back-up documentation to help dive deeper



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## POST PANDEMIC

- On-Demand VPI will continue to our primary method
- Specific Criteria Developed for supplementing with an In-Person
  - Significant Public Concern
  - Varied Stakeholder Groups
  - Limited Broadband/Cellular Coverage
  - Title VI Compliance
  - Municipal/Legislative Requests
- Needs Bureau Concurrence



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- 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. Many projects involve two public meetings and the opportunity for public engagement. With the onset of COVID-19 in 2020, MaineDOT instituted On-Demand Virtual Public Meetings as described in Section 4.1 of this document. Those On-Demand Virtual Meetings have proven to be more effective and allow greater public engagement than the previous in-person live meetings did. Also, these new meetings provide time and cost savings for both staff and the public by not requiring attendees to travel to a site and by giving members of the public the ability to learn and comment about the project at their convenience. 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.

# Questions?