

Freeport U.S. Route 1 Partnership Envisions a Main Street Corridor of the Future



*The Innovative Joint Planning Partnership Initiative with
MaineDOT Will Advance Transportation, Housing
Development, and Downtown Placemaking Goals*

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Contact: Brett Richardson

brichardson@freeportmaine.com

(207) 865-4743, ext 117

FREEPORT, MAINE. Freeport leaders are taking the next step to implement the community's vision for diverse transportation options, new housing development, and downtown vitality with support from the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT). Through a collaborative Planning Partnership Initiative (PPI), the Town of Freeport and MaineDOT will retain an engineering consultant to analyze the U.S. Route 1 corridor and design a Main Street for the future.

The Town issued a Request for Proposals today in partnership with MaineDOT to identify a qualified consultant to carry out the PPI planning project. The Route 1 study is the next step of planning and community engagement that has happened over the last several years and will culminate with a newly updated Comprehensive Plan later in 2025.

“We know that our community wants to maintain Freeport’s charm, while also paving the way for active lifestyles and new housing options for our local elders, workers, young people, and visitors,” said Freeport Town Council Chair, Joanna Benoit. “We’re excited to partner with MaineDOT to design a transportation network in and around our downtown that works for everyone.”

MaineDOT’s PPI program offers simple, flexible, and fast-moving planning resources to Maine communities. State PPI funds are matched one-to-one with municipal dollars to advance locally led transportation initiatives that support economic development and other high-priority proposals. In addition to analyzing transportation upgrades along Route 1 through the heart of Freeport’s village center, the Freeport PPI is going the extra mile to also analyze housing development opportunities on adjacent land that is served by infrastructure and utilities.

“Safe and vibrant downtown areas are part of what makes Maine special,” said MaineDOT Commissioner Bruce Van Note. “Our successful partnership with the Town of Freeport will help realize a vision for the future of the Main Street corridor. We look forward to continuing this work, that combines transportation and land use planning, to support economic opportunity and quality of life.”

The Freeport PPI calls for a “coordinated development design” for land within 1,000 feet of Route 1. The design will identify appropriate locations for housing projects, public ways, utilities, environmental services, wildlife corridors, and bike and pedestrian connections that make efficient use of scarce land to achieve town, regional, and state housing goals. This design was a central recommendation of the [Dog Bone transit-oriented development implementation initiative](#) (TOD) that was unanimously endorsed by Freeport’s Town Council on January 7, 2025.

Freeport is well-served by the Metro Breez bus and Amtrak Downeaster, and the TOD report is an implementation strategy that integrates Freeport’s [Downtown Vision Plan](#), [Climate Action Plan](#), and Active Living Plan. These plans call for Town investment to create a dynamic village center with new housing development, diverse local businesses, and pedestrian amenities that allow residents and visitors to safely navigate Freeport’s offerings on foot or bicycle.

“New housing is key to Freeport’s future,” said Councilor John Egan, who Chairs the Town’s Housing Task Force. “We want to be top of mind for Maine’s development community as an inviting place. Partnerships and good planning like the PPI are how we put out that welcome mat.”

Freeport’s Planning Board, Town Council, and staff have enacted policy changes to remove barriers to new housing development. In January, the Town exempted multifamily housing projects from subdivision review to streamline the approval process for new projects. Due to regulatory changes in recent years designed to increase flexibility for housing projects, Freeport’s downtown zoning requires zero land per dwelling unit and one parking space or less per apartment. The TOD report recently endorsed by the Town Council calls for expanding this flexibility throughout the PPI study area.

The PPI study area focuses on Main Street (Route 1) from approximately the Park and Ride near Maine Beer Company at the south end of the study area and the intersection with Upper Mast Landing Road at the north end of the study area and includes adjacent parcels within 1,000 feet of the right-of-way.

The Town will accept PPI proposals from qualified consultants until March 26th. The request for proposals is available at www.freeportmaine.com. Interested parties should contact Development Director Brett Richardson at brichardson@freeportmaine.com.

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