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Midcoast Bypass Task Force : Bypass Update Meeting, December 15, 2010

Maine Department of Transportation

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Midcoast Bypass Task Force Bypass Update Meeting

Maine Department of Transportation

December 15, 2010

Agenda

- Meeting Purpose
- Timeframe of Events: History
- Eagle Nest Data
- MaineDOT Recent Activities
- Next Steps
- Task Force Discussion
- Public Comments and Questions

Meeting Purpose

- Update the Midcoast Bypass Task Force
 - N8c No Longer the LEDPA
 - Practicable Alternatives Exist
- New Political Realities
 - New Administration
 - Major Transportation Funding Issues Continue
- Broad-Based Regional Support Necessary to Complete the Study
- No Discussion on Alternatives Tonight

Transportation Needs, Funding

- Overall: \$3.3+ Billion 10-Year Shortfall
- Sample Major Competing Needs
 - Kittery Bridges \$200 to \$300 M, Immediate
 - \$110 M/Year Bridge Needs vs. \$40 M per Year Funding
 - Arterial Highways
 - Collector Highways
- Future Federal Funding Program Unknown
- Dwindling Fuel Tax Revenues
- Little Political Will to Increase Fuel Taxes or Consider Other Funding (Federal & State)

Sample of Other Major Studies

- Gorham East-West Connector
- Central York County Connections
- Aroostook County Transportation Study
- Augusta Exit 113
- BNAS Connections
- Franklin Street Arterial
- Gateway-1
- Portland North Study Transit Options
- I-295 Portland
- I-95 Exit 80, I-95 Bangor
- I-395/Route 9 Connection

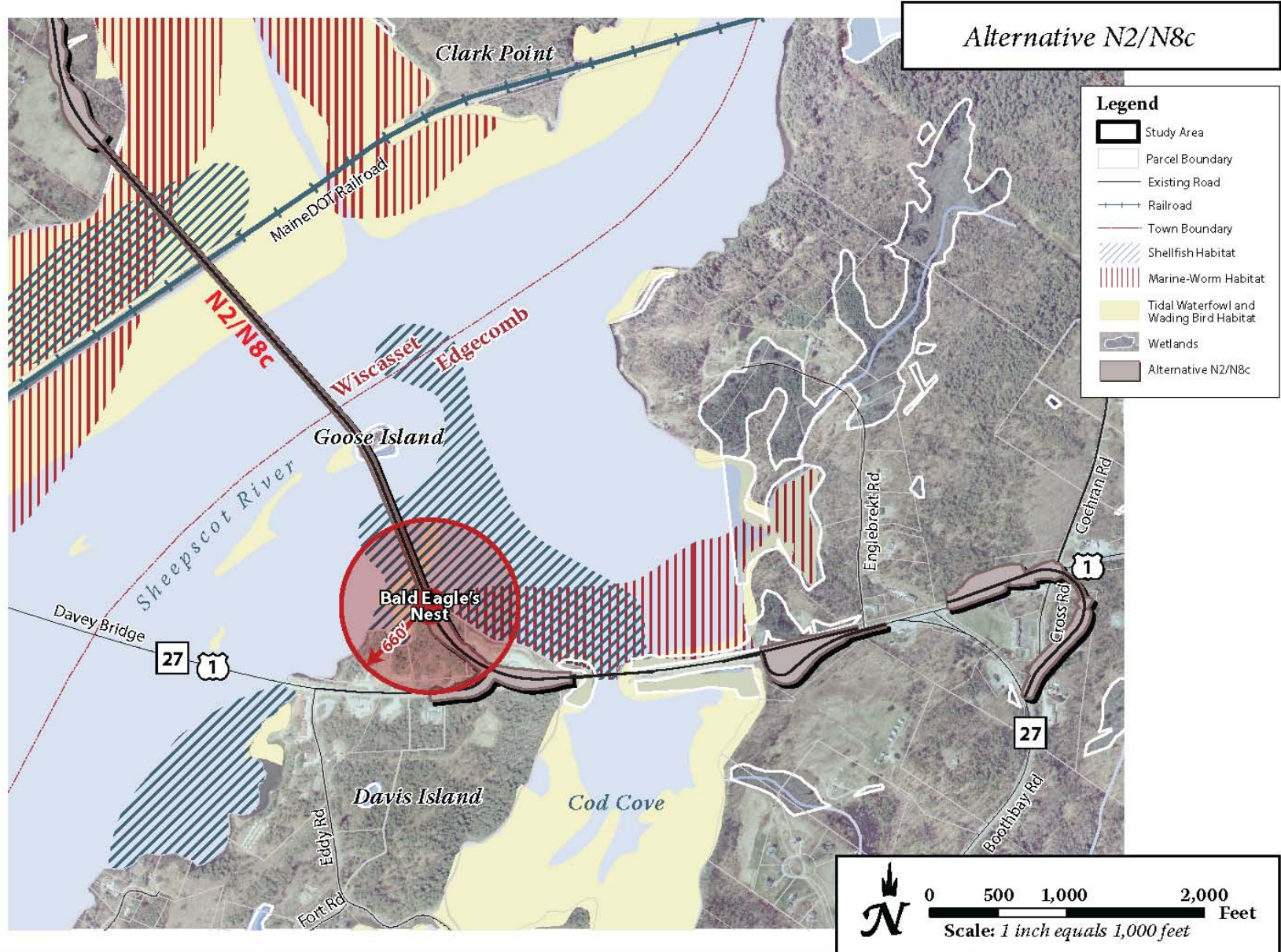
History of the Rte. 1 Bypass Study

- 1958: Wiscasset Master Plan call for Bypass
- 1972: Report on Bypass Options
- 1979-1984: Route 1 Bridge replaced
- 1991: STPA enacted
- 1993: Bath-to-Belfast Report
- 1997: Report per STPA
- 1998: Environmental Assessment (EA)
- 2002: FHWA requirement for an EIS

Recent History

- Oct. 2007: DEIS Issued
- Dec. 2007: End DEIS Comment Period
- 2008: Task Force meetings on major issues
- Dec. 2008: Phase II Application to ACOE
- Mar. 2009: ACOE request for more info
- Sep. 2009: Submitted Phase II Supplement & Responses to DEIS Comments to ACOE
- May 2010: LEDPA announced (N8c)
- Jun 2010: Eagle Nest discovered on N8c

N2/N8c – Bald Eagle's Nest, Davis Island



December 1, 2010

Bald Eagle Nest



View from Wiscasset Treatment Plant

Bald Eagle Nest



View East across cove on Davis Island

Bald Eagle 2010 12 10



Bald & Golden Eagle Protection Act & Migratory Bird Treaty Act

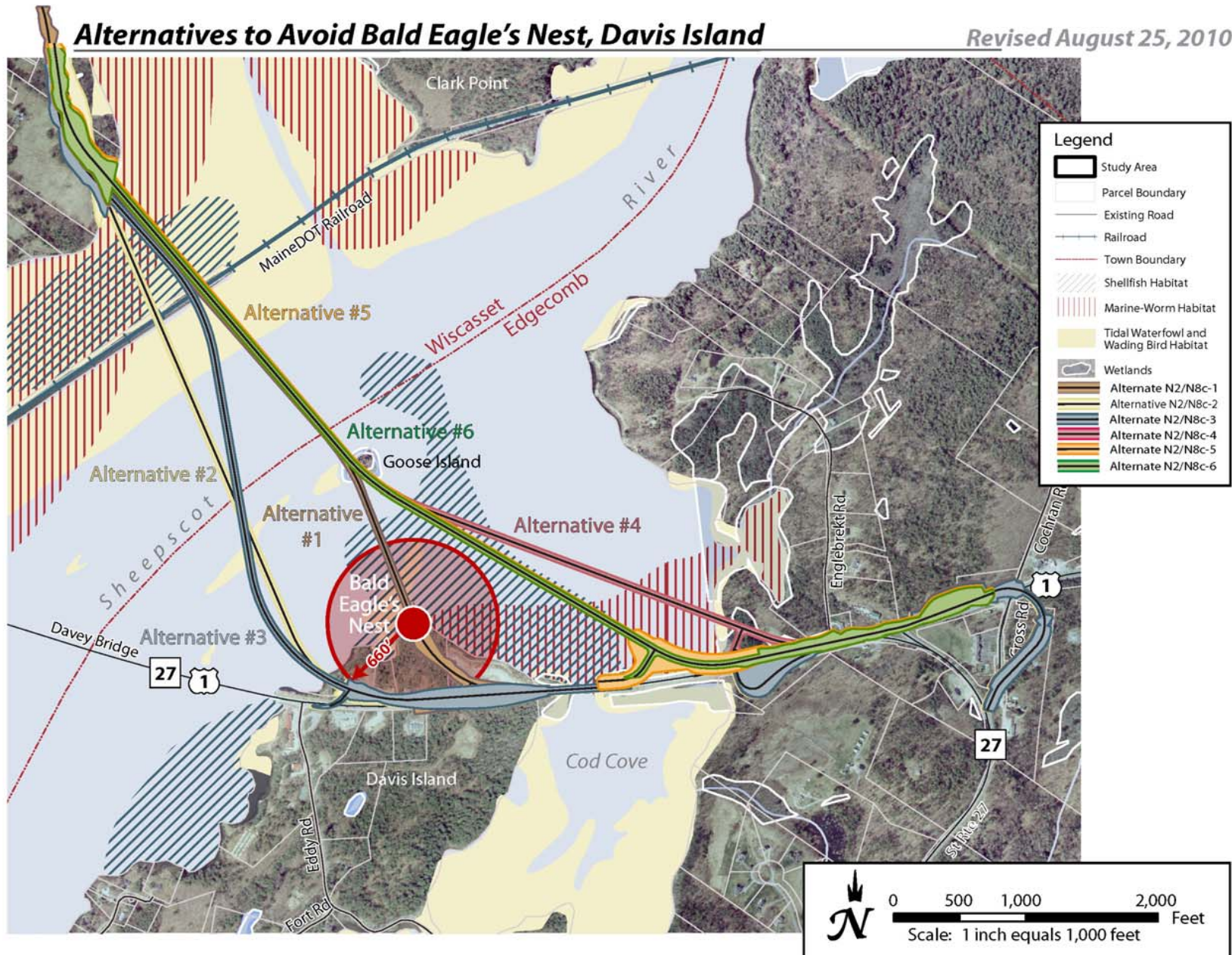
- Eagles no longer endangered, but still protected
- Taking of nests prohibited unless by permit
- Permits granted under very limited circumstances
 - To alleviate a safety hazard to people or eagles
 - Necessary to ensure public health or safety
 - Nest prevents use of pre-existing man-made structure
 - Activity or mitigation will provide a net benefit to eagles
 - Only nests not being used by breeding bald eagles may be taken - except in safety emergencies
 - Permits for nest removal cannot be issued unless all practicable alternatives to avoid or minimize the impact to eagles have been exhausted

Recent Activities

- MaineDOT met with ACOE and USF&WS
 - Eagle Nest protected by federal law
 - Practicable Alternatives exist to avoid the nest
 - 660' minimum buffer radius required
- MaineDOT evaluated 5 deviations of N8c
 - All have significant environmental and/or engineering issues
 - None are acceptable as a revised N8c alignment

Alternatives to Avoid Bald Eagle's Nest, Davis Island

Revised August 25, 2010



Analysis of N8c Deviations

- Westerly alignments cause traffic problems & Business Displacements
 - Connection Near Davey Bridge, Through Business District, & Impact Commercial Properties
 - Traffic signal required, reducing bypass capacity
 - Potential Eelgrass Impacts
- Easterly alignments result in additional and significant environmental impacts
 - Shellfish Habitat Impacts
 - Marine Worms Habitat Impacts

Subsequent Meeting with ACOE and USF&WS

- N8c deviations not acceptable as LEDPA
- Reiterated - Must avoid the eagle nest
- Practicable Bypass Alignments exist (e.g., N2a, N2f, N2h)
- Re-evaluation of DEIS Alternatives Required

Next Steps

- Seek Task Force and Public Support
 - Is there regional support to continue the study?
 - **NOT** about pros and cons of the alternatives
 - Process
 - Tonight – verbal comments
 - Through Jan. 14 – Written Comments
- MaineDOT will make a recommendation to the new Administration - Complete the Wiscasset Route 1 Corridor study?

If Public & Administration Support

- Update and Re-evaluate DEIS alignments
 - Task Force to Assist in Minimizing Impacts
 - ACOE Determines the LEDPA
- Complete FEIS
- Receive FHWA Record of Decision (6-12 months)
- Obtain Funding for Design & Initial R-O-W Acquisition

Next Task Force Meeting

- Following Administration Guidance
- Expect by End of January

Letters of Support

- Submit Letters of Support (or not) to MaineDOT
- No Discussion of Alternatives at this time
- Submit letters by Jan. 14, 2011
- MaineDOT to present to new Governor to seek Commitment to Complete the Study & to Eventually Fund the Bypass

Submit Written Comments to:

Gerry Audibert, P.E.

Maine Department of Transportation

16 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333-0016

or

gerry.audibert@maine.gov

Discussion – Continue the Study?

- Midcoast Bypass Task Force
- Followed by Public Comments Relative to Continuing the Study (30 minutes)

DEIS Alternatives (Updating Needed)

Summary

