

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

## **An Act To Promote Transportation Planning, Increase Efficiency and Reduce Sprawl**

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

**Sec. 1. 23 MRSA §4210-E** is enacted to read:

### **§ 4210-E. Transportation planning incentive grants**

In order to encourage sound transportation planning and prevent or reduce the need for future highway improvement expenditures associated with uncontrolled development along state highway corridors, the department shall administer a program of transportation planning incentive grants as described in this section.

**1. Community corridor plan.** To be eligible for a grant under this section, a municipality must adopt a community corridor plan covering new development along state highways in the municipality and incorporate any land use development restrictions recommended in the plan in local ordinances. The community corridor plan and related ordinances must be designed to control new development along state highways within the municipality in a manner that maintains current speed limits and reduces the need to make costly highway improvements in the future. The department shall provide technical assistance to municipalities in developing a community corridor plan.

**2. Transportation incentive grants.** A municipality may apply for a grant under this section by filing with the department a copy of its community corridor plan and related ordinances, an application for a grant on a form provided by the department and a proposal describing the corridor improvements the grant will be used to fund. Authorized improvements include, but are not limited to, purchase of development rights or access along the state highway corridor, landscaping and bicycle or pedestrian facilities. The department shall award grants, within funds available, based on a competitive rating system established by the department by rule. A grant may be awarded in an amount between \$250,000 and \$750,000 based on the merits of a plan. The projected cost savings from implementation of the plan must exceed the amount of the grant as determined by the department. A municipality must pay back the original amount of the grant to the department if it repeals or revises its plan or related ordinance provisions within 10 years of a grant award without department approval.

**3. Rules.** The department may adopt rules to implement this section. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

**Sec. 2. Funding.** The Department of Transportation shall use \$1,500,000 each year from transportation enhancement funds or other suitable sources to fund transportation planning incentive grants on a pilot project basis during fiscal year 2007-08 and fiscal year 2008-09.

## **SUMMARY**

This bill establishes a program within the Department of Transportation, which is to be funded on a pilot project basis, to provide technical assistance and incentive grants to municipalities to prevent new development along state highways and reduce the cost of future highway improvement projects.