

[Historic garage to be demolished for midcoast traffic project](#)



Abigail W. Adams | Lincoln County News

The Haggett Garage on Water Street in Wiscasset.

By [Beth Brogan](#), BDN Staff • August 31, 2018 11:20 am

Demolition of a historic building taken last year by eminent domain will begin Tuesday as the Maine Department of Transportation moves forward with a controversial traffic project in downtown Wiscasset.

Pike Industries, contractors for the MDOT, will salvage the sign on the front of the 103-year-old Haggett Building for preservation, according to a release from the state.

Demolition is expected to be completed by Sept. 9.

The demolition is part of a controversial \$6.8 million project to address traffic congestion along Route 1 through Wiscasset.

In November, [the town sued the state](#) in an effort to stop the \$5 million project. Residents objected to the plan, which in addition to demolishing the historic building, calls for eliminating Main Street parking. Town officials said the state misled voters about two proposals prior to a vote that endorsed the plan and objected to a decision by the MDOT to forego \$4 million in federal funding, which allowed the state to skirt historic preservation laws.

But in April, the [board of selectmen voted](#) to dismiss the lawsuit.

According to the MDOT, Water Street has already been paved, and granite curbs have been installed, with sidewalks on Railroad Avenue and Water Street expected to be completed soon.

Follow [BDN Bath-Brunswick on Facebook](#) for the latest news from the Bath-Brunswick area and Lincoln and Sagadahoc counties.

Once again—it's the DOT's way or the "highway". DOT officials lack the empathy to understand how one can disagree with these often ill-thought-out projects, even when community leaders firmly disagree as was the case in Wiscasset and Brewer (Brewer unanimously resolved 2B-2 non-support 3 times since 2012). The DOT looks at private property as a mere physical thing, when in fact the psychological anguish caused by eminent domain is completely ignored. At the June 2018 public meeting, a DOT official gleefully talked about how several families asked to be bought out early—THE STATE COULD LEGALLY SEIZE THEIR HOMES—WHAT ELSE COULD THEY DO!?!? As I now have personally witnessed over two long days helping a friend move out of his home "seized" by 2B-2, the DOT feels that offering a "fair" value for the home is their only responsibility and act stunned when one dares to question DOT plans and show emotion over their personal losses. How can anyone, no matter what the political affiliation, approve of taking private property as is the case in Wiscasset, and now Brewer, Eddington and Holden? When you witness one's life so easily placed at the curb by your own government, it makes one question what kind of a state we live in. Shame on the DOT for using eminent domain on these controversial projects—many consider both these projects as just another DOT ill-thought-out plan against the wishes of the citizenry.

Are we the only ones that think the DOT's plans are suspect along with their lack of listening to the citizenry? Here is what our state legislators think as the following quote is actually within Maine State Statute governing Transportation Policy: "The people further find that the decisions of state agencies regarding transportation needs and facilities are often made in isolation, without sufficient comprehensive planning and opportunity for meaningful public input and guidance." <http://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/23/title23sec73.html>