

Maine DOT calls off \$45M in roadwork as costs surge



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State transportation officials planned to put the replacement the Ohio Street bridge over I-95 in Bangor out to bid this year. It's one of **11** projects the state has pulled from consideration this year amid surging road construction costs.

By [Eesha Pendharkar](#), BDN Staff • May 9, 2019 4:35 pm

The Maine Department of Transportation has called off more than \$45 million in roadwork that it planned to advertise to construction firms this year.

Among the projects the department is putting off are the replacement of interstate highway overpasses in Bangor and Brewer, road resurfacing in Portland and the reconstruction of about 3 miles each of major state roads in Abbot and Van Buren.

The department said Thursday that most of the **11** projects on the list will be completed in future years, but that there's no guarantee the work will happen.

"Prudent fiscal management requires us to make this revision," the department said in a statement released Thursday. "We cannot pay the prices we have been seeing."

The cancellations come as the state is receiving unexpectedly high cost estimates from construction firms bidding for state roadwork. Already this year, the department [has](#)

rejected four bids for separate projects — in the Bangor and Portland areas and Rockland — after quotes from interested construction firms exceeded the Department of Transportation’s project cost estimates by at least 60 percent.

“Every project in Maine DOT’s plan represents needed work; there are no easy choices,” the department said in its statement.

Bridge replacements in Bangor and Brewer are two of the 11 infrastructure projects the Maine Department of Transportation is calling off this year.

The department expected to advertise the work of replacing the Ohio Street bridge over I-95 in Bangor, a project the state estimated would cost \$6.2 million. It also expected to advertise the replacement of the Wilson Street bridge over the end of I-395 in Brewer, which was expected to cost \$11.9 million.

Even though the department hadn’t yet advertised that work to construction firms, transportation officials said they removed projects similar to ones for which they had received unexpectedly high bids. They also considered the priority of the work, impact on safety and drivers and the condition of the existing infrastructure.

A shortage of available workers is a primary cause of the surging construction prices, the department said based on conversations with construction firms.

Aside from the Bangor and Brewer overpasses, the called-off road projects off are:

- Portland: India Street resurfacing, estimated at \$400,000
- Abbot: 3 miles of Route 6 reconstruction on Route 6, \$7.1 million
- Waterville: 1.3 miles of Trafton Road rehabilitation, \$3.7 million
- Van Buren: 2.7 miles of Route 1 reconstruction, \$7.9 million
- Hampden: replacement of Twin Bridge over Souadabscook Stream, \$1.3 million
- Auburn: replacement of Taylor Brook Bridge, \$1.7 million
- Belfast: replacement of Sheldon Bridge, \$700,000
- Belfast: replacement of Goose River Bridge, \$2.4 million
- Fort Kent: replacement of Perley Brook Bridge, \$2.2 million