

New commission has been tasked with transportation funding



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AUGUSTA, Maine (WABI) - The newly formed Blue Ribbon Commission is beginning work on creating a new transportation budget.

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**Representative Andrew McLean
Chair 129th JSC Transportation**

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**Rep Andrew McLean/Senator Bill Diamond
Chairs 129th JSC Transportation**

"Everyone who drives on Maine roads knows that the condition of them is pretty poor, and so we have to find a way to fix our infrastructure, and this commission is beginning that conversation," said Representative Andrew McLean.

Tuesday's meeting was held to better understand the road that's in front of them.

"The department of highway transportation is underfunded we just learned by two hundred million dollars. One hundred million of that could be made up if the bond passes in November, but there's a serious shortfall. We've learned today about the bridges, how many of them are in poor shape, and we're also learning that we're not keeping up with the maintenance and construction. We're getting by, but that's about it," said State Senator Bill Diamond.

"Every single year, the DOT says we need an additional roughly \$110 million dollars just to keep up with our basic maintenance. All that becomes deferred maintenance every single year. So that doesn't even include any sort of transformational projects, building of new roads, any sort of emergency that comes up. So we have to figure out a way to find an additional, at a minimum \$110 million dollars each year to keep up with maintaining our infrastructure," said McLean.

Lawmakers would not comment about any plans or ideas to come up with the approximately one hundred million dollars needed.

The next meeting of the Blue Ribbon Commission is scheduled for October 1st.