

Three-Year Work Plan

2020 Edition

January 14, 2020

Highlights of the 2020-2021-2022 DOT Work Plan:

\$25-million INFRA grant for the I-395/Route 9 Connector, providing a quarter of the estimated total project cost. (Page v.) Does that mean the \$79.25 million cost in 2017 will end up costing \$100 million? AND—does the project remain viable in the Benefit/Cost ratio?

“C. Unmet Needs The needs of the transportation system in Maine continue to outpace available resources. Maine’s large land area, relatively low population, high number of state highway miles, and high construction inflation have all exacerbated the extent of this challenge for Maine. At MaineDOT, we do the best we can with the funding we are provided. By using objective, data-driven, asset management principles, all MaineDOT Work Plans are designed to achieve our mission of responsibly providing our customers with the safest and most reliable transportation system possible, given available resources. The challenge of inadequate available resources was particularly acute this year. Lower levels of capital project production due to higher costs required us to prioritize even more, rely on less reliable bond and competitive federal grant funding for basic needs, and **essentially spread what used to be two years of capital projects over three years.** We focused on essential safety needs, bridges, maintaining the level of Light Capital Paving (skinny mix) program as long as Highway Fund revenues allow, and implementing low-cost holding actions to even higher priority roads. Even with these efforts, **the fiscal reality is that MaineDOT is now competently managing a slow decline of our transportation system** until bipartisan funding solutions materialize.

Thankfully, Maine has acknowledged the problem and taken the first steps to address it. The Legislature, with the support of the Governor, established the Blue Ribbon Commission to Study and Recommend Funding Solutions for the State's Transportation Systems. See Resolve 2019, Chapter 97 (formerly LD 945). This bipartisan Commission of legislators, transportation professionals, and stakeholders was charged with studying how to reform and adequately supplement funding for the state's transportation infrastructure. In December 2019, after meeting throughout the Fall of 2019, the Commission issued a report that contained the following unanimous findings to date:

Finding #1: Assuming an annual \$100-million general obligation bond package, the current unmet annual transportation funding need in Maine is approximately \$232 million.

<i>Annual Shortfall</i> (millions of \$)				
Work Group	Annual Need	Anticipated Annual Funding	\$ Shortfall	% Shortfall
Bridge Projects	\$188	\$120	-\$67	-36%
Paving Projects (including LCP)	\$141	\$120	-\$21	-15%
Safety and Spot Imp. (including Partnerships)	\$61	\$35	-\$26	-43%
Traffic/Mobility/Capacity/ITS Improvements	\$41	\$13	-\$28	-68%
Highway Reconstruction/Rehab	\$118	\$63	-\$55	-47%
Multimodal Improvements	\$91	\$56	-\$35	-38%
Totals	\$640	\$407	-\$232	-36%

Finding #2: The federal government should be challenged to continue providing one third of Maine's transportation funding need.

Finding #3: Given findings #1 and #2, the pragmatic state level funding target that Maine should address is approximately \$160 million, about two thirds of \$232 million.

Finding #4: Once the annual transportation funding need is met, Maine's reliance on bonding to supplement transportation funding should be reduced in a fiscally-responsible manner.

ID/Year	Municipality	Scope	Name	Description	Funding
018915.20 2020 HCP 1	Brewer	Highway-Bridges Bridge Replacement	Route 1A	Wilson Street/I-395 Bridge (#1564) over Interstate 395. Located 0.35 of a mile west of Dirigo Drive. FHWA INFRA Grant recipient.	\$13,500,000
018915.20 2019 HCP 1	Brewer	Highway-Bridges Bridge Replacement	Wilson Street	Wilson Street/I395 Bridge (#1564). Located 0.35 of a mile west of Dirigo Drive.	\$11,900,000

1.6 million more than last year??!!

018915.00 2021/22 HCP 1, 2, 6	Brewer, Eddington, Holden	Highway Construction/Rehabilitation Rural Highways New Construction	Interstate 395/Route 9 Connector	Beginning 0.25 of a mile west of Interstate 395 and Route 1A, roughly paralleling the Brewer-Holden town line, extending 6.00 miles to Route 9 west of Chemo Pond Road (in the vicinity of Lois Lane). FHWA INFRA Grant recipient; partial CON funding.	\$57,300,000
018915.00 2020/21 HCP 1, 2, 6	Brewer, Eddington, Holden	Highway Construction/Rehabilitation Rural Highways New Construction	Interstate 395/Route 9 Connector	Beginning 0.25 of a mile west of Interstate 395 and Route 1A, roughly paralleling the Brewer-Holden town line, extending 6.00 miles to Route 9 west of Chemo Pond Road (in the vicinity of Lois Lane). This project is only partially funded for construction.	\$31,400,000

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“This year is not typical. Due to cost increases arising from workforce challenges, work constraints, and other factors, making the old projects whole has required an extraordinary amount of funding. Therefore, even though total estimated funding will increase (largely due to increased levels of federal competitive grant funds), higher unit costs will yield substantially lower levels of capital project production in terms of miles of paving, numbers of bridges, etc. Accordingly, **this Work Plan largely consists of spreading what used to be two years of capital projects over three years to stay within funding and cost constraints.** This fiscal challenge required us to prioritize even more and rely on less-reliable bond and competitive federal grant funding for basic needs. With lower levels of capital project production, we are focusing on essential safety needs, bridges, maintaining the level of Light Capital Paving (skinny mix) program as long as Highway Fund revenues allow, and implementing low-cost holding actions to

even higher priority roads, consisting of patching until normal treatments become fiscally possible. Even with these efforts, **the fiscal reality is that we are now competently managing a slow decline of our transportation system** until bipartisan funding solutions materialize.

The system will not fail immediately, and we will do our best to avoid any serious safety impacts. But holding actions only work for a short time, and **the reliability of the system will suffer. Maine deserves better.** Transportation is fundamental to our safety, economic prosperity, and quality of life. It is fundamental to everything we do and who we are. Not only do we need adequate funding to maintain the system we have, but we also need to improve the system. We need to make targeted capacity improvements, reduce the impact of transportation on climate, improve downtowns and villages, increase programs for municipalities, and gradually reduce our dependence upon bonding and extraordinary federal funding to meet basic needs.” Commissioner Van Note.

And, even after all of that – the DOT will be going ahead with replacing a bridge that only needs replacing because of 2B-2 – at a cost of \$13.5 million to support the \$100 million connector that many do not want – Maine does deserve better!!