

According to a March 25th [Bangor Daily News article](#): "Traffic on the Maine Turnpike has fallen drastically — by about half — in recent days...Nonetheless, construction work is continuing. Mills said this week the authority is likely to approve the first phase of a widening project in Greater Portland. It will add a third lane in each direction from the Interstate 295 exit in Scarborough into South Portland. Mills said decisions can be made this fall and winter on the second and third phases of the widening project."

One may argue that the first phase of the turnpike project should also be delayed, however the Maine Turnpike Authority is at least cognizant that decisions on the next two phases will need to be made this fall because of the effects of the ongoing pandemic.

Once again, an article from the Turnpike Authority explaining an upcoming project while the DOT remains silent on the I-395 connector project.

I'm not sure there's anyone that can tell us what this pandemic will do to Maine coffers, especially if it continues for months as some think. The length of the pandemic will adversely affect all services provided by our state government and seriously hurt local communities. Maine is essentially closed until at least the end of April as Governor Mills has issued just today a [stay-at-home order](#); businesses are shuttered and many people are out of work; the traffic count is down as evidenced by the MTA and even though the price of gas is cheaper - there's no place to go - we have to stay home - thus gas revenues will also be decreasing resulting in a shrinking of the State Highway Fund that the DOT depends on.

From page iii of the 2020-2021-2022 Work Plan: "State Highway Fund revenue sources, shown as the two green wedges in Figure 1, are derived largely from state per-gallon fuel fees and motor vehicle fees. Those total an estimated \$875 million and represent about 33% of the total value of Work Plan items. These revenue levels are based upon projections by the Revenue Forecasting Committee created pursuant to 5 MRSA §1710-E. Highway Fund revenues are still a primary funding source of MaineDOT work plans. Article IX, Section 19 of the Maine Constitution requires that Highway Fund revenues be used for specified highway- and bridge-related

activities. Even so, these revenues provide some of MaineDOT's most flexible funding, allowing us to fund almost all of our maintenance and operations activities and other work without federal or bond-related restrictions."

The first stage of the I-395/Route 9 connector project – the \$13.45 million Wilson Street/I-395 bridge – is scheduled to go out to bid on May 6th.

At such a time of upheaval – at the start of a pandemic, with an unknown financial outcome – does it make any sense to go ahead with this controversial \$100 million connector project when many other transportation projects, in addition to the 142 projects already cancelled in January due to rising construction costs, may have to be cancelled due to the loss of revenues during the pandemic?

It can't be business as usual with the DOT as Mainers are suffering.

Hope you and your families are healthy and remain so.

Larry Adams