



"One angry man
with a laptop"

Welcome to 2021, the 21st year of this I-395/Route 9 connector boondoggle. The first phase of this controversial project, the Wilson Street Bridge over I-395, is proceeding. The \$61 million total project construction cost in 2012 has ballooned by \$43 million to \$104 million—a 70.49% increase!!

- 22% of Maine's roads are now rated poor by the ASCE.
- 13%—one in every seven or 326—of our 2,458 bridges, over 20 feet long, are rated as structurally deficient by the ASCE. 58% of Maine's bridges are over 50 years old and 470 bridges that were once rated functionally obsolete by the U.S. Department of Transportation, a rating of 19.3% that was eliminated at the end of 2015. At the end of 2015, 34.1% of Maine's 2431 bridges were rated as deficient (structurally deficient + functionally obsolete) and magically 19.3% were removed from the 2016 ratings making it look like our bridges were not as bad as once reported—but they still are just as bad!!
- Our poor road conditions cost each Maine driver an average \$543/year in vehicle operating costs (ASCE).
- The DOT has already spent bond money in 2020 that was supposed to fund 2021's road and bridge projects.

What's wrong with you MAINE—we have no money!!

Starting the year with a \$28.6 million shortfall!!

Updated 12/01/2020

HIGHWAY FUND STATUS - FUND BALANCE SUMMARY

With December 2020 Revenue Forecast ¹

	FY 20	FY 21
AVAILABLE FUNDS		
Highway Fund Revenue:		
December 2018 Base Revenue Estimate	\$341,236,119	\$343,162,586
May 2019 Revenue Forecast	\$97,127	\$62,666
129-1 Other Enacted Bills ²	(\$10,500)	(\$28,080)
December 2019 Revenue Forecast	\$3,112,768	\$900,533
March 2020 Revenue Forecast	\$895,810	(\$83,605)
August 2020 Revenue Forecast	0	(\$30,776,958)
December 2020 Revenue Forecast	0	\$11,433,265
Revenue Variance	(\$18,154,754)	\$0
Subtotal - Undedicated Revenue	\$327,176,570	\$324,670,407
Transfers/Adjustments to Balance:		
Through 128th Legislature	\$0	\$0
2020-2021 Biennial Budget (LD 1002 - PL 2019 c. 415)	(\$6,345,967)	(\$6,404,253)
Unbudgeted Lapsed Balances	\$1,926,465	\$0
Other Accounting Adjustments	\$265,780	\$0
Subtotal - Transfers/Adjustments to Balance	(\$4,153,722)	(\$6,404,253)
TOTAL PROJECTED RESOURCES	\$323,022,848	\$318,266,154
Highway Fund Allocations		
2020-2021 Biennial Budget (LD 1002 - PL 2019 c. 415) Baseline	\$330,970,766	\$337,927,926
2020-2021 Biennial Budget (LD 1002 - PL 2019 c. 415) Adjustments	\$10,976,355	\$415,384
129-R1 Other Enacted Bills ³	(\$13,828)	\$25,201
Statutory Year-End Transfers	\$4,347,010	\$0
129-R2 Bills Enacted ⁴	\$1,960	\$21,910
TOTAL Highway Fund Allocations	\$346,282,263	\$338,390,421
NET CHANGE (Resources less Allocations)	(\$23,259,415)	(\$20,124,267)
BEGINNING BALANCE	\$14,790,015	(\$8,469,400)
NET CHANGE (FROM ABOVE)	(\$23,259,415)	(\$20,124,267)
ENDING BALANCE	(\$8,469,400)	(\$28,593,667)

Notes:

¹ Reflects all actions through the close of the 129th Legislature, 2nd Regular Session with FY 20 end-of-year closing transactions, the August 2020 Revenue Forecast and the December 2020 Revenue Forecast.

Prepared by the Office of Fiscal and Program Review



Three-Year Work Plan

2021 Edition

January 2021

[Click here to view complete document online.](#)

C. Unmet Need

As outlined in the Commissioner's cover letter to this Work Plan, transportation needs in Maine continue to far outpace available resources for several reasons. These reasons include Maine's large land area and expansive transportation system, relatively low and widely dispersed population, limited contractor competition in some areas, and geography and weather that – while beautiful – are challenging when it comes to transportation infrastructure.

The precise amount of our unmet need is a moving target, especially in the midst of a pandemic and during the time of change in which we find ourselves, but it is clear the funding shortfall is daunting. In March of 2020, the members of the nonpartisan Blue Ribbon Commission to Study and Recommend Funding Solutions for the State's Transportation Systems (a group made up of legislators, transportation professionals, and other stakeholders) found that Maine's unmet transportation need was about \$232 million per year. That figure was calculated *after* assuming that state bonding of \$100 million or more will continue annually. This shortfall was broken down as follows:

<i>Annual Shortfall</i> <i>(millions of \$)</i>				
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/TTS Improvements	\$41	\$13	-\$28	-68%
Highway Reconstruction/Rehab	\$118	\$63	-\$55	-47%
Multimodal Improvements	\$91	\$56	-\$35	-38%
Totals	\$640	\$407	-\$232	-36%

There are numerous factors that could impact the magnitude of this shortfall:

1. **MaineDOT Policies.** In a continuation of its *MacGyver* approach, MaineDOT is again evaluating its highway corridor priorities, specifications, and standards to attempt to reduce costs. These efforts are expected to result in an expansion of the Light Capital Paving (LCP) program; simplified paving specifications and treatments to increase paving competition; and standardized corridor improvement strategies using safety data,

customer expectations, and realistic funding constraints. Although important, these efforts alone cannot solve the fundamental funding challenge.

2. State HF Revenues. As noted above, state Highway Fund (HF) revenue is down due to the pandemic (currently down \$30 million or 4.4% from the previous biennium). Will Maine drivers return after the pandemic? What will be the lasting impact of telework? Will new friends from away start an in-migration that could increase travel? The answers to these and other questions are unclear, but they will determine how long and how much HF revenues will stay down.
3. Federal Funding. At the federal level, the winds of change are gusting. More federal funding through additional economic stimulus or a large federal infrastructure package may have renewed viability. *If* any such funding materializes – and that is a significant question given past experiences on transportation funding discussions – its effect on Maine’s unmet transportation funding need will depend upon amounts and whether it is one-time or ongoing in nature.

The factors outlined above show that the amount of unmet need is especially dynamic right now. Some factors could make Maine’s transportation funding situation better; others could make it worse. Furthermore, less than a year has passed since the Blue Ribbon Commission issued its final report, although it admittedly seems like it has been much longer than that. Still, the Commission’s unmet need estimate remains a good one. Finally, as noted above, the pandemic dictates that state policy priorities focus on restoring the health of Maine citizens and the health of our economy. For all these reasons, MaineDOT has not updated the finding of the Blue Ribbon Commission relating to unmet transportation funding need. There will be plenty of time to perform such an update as developments unfold. In the meantime, MaineDOT can confidently state that the amount of the annual unmet transportation funding need is generally consistent with the Blue Ribbon Commission report.

For the next couple of years, as we defeat the virus and address its impacts, MaineDOT will continue to do the best it can with the resources provided, which means maintaining essential services while competently managing a slow decline of our transportation system.

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. After we resolve the chronic transportation revenue challenge, we need to maintain the system we have, but we also need to improve the system. We need to make targeted capacity improvements, improve villages and downtowns, and reduce the impact of transportation on the climate. Investing in transportation will help move Maine forward.

“For all these reasons, MaineDOT has not updated the finding of the Blue Ribbon Commission relating to unmet transportation need.” (page xxi)

Is this a new tactic of the DOT? They won't tell you how bad things really are so they won't have to answer to wasting another \$90.3 million on a worthless project like the connector as other projects go unfunded? The unmet transportation need annual shortfall data as mentioned in this document, with a March 2020 date, was actually presented to the Blue Ribbon Commission by the DOT in October of 2019 – MONTHS BEFORE THE PANDEMIC!!

Two questions: Does the DOT really not know how bad the shortfall is –OR– do they know how bad it is and won't tell us?

<i>Annual Shortfall</i> (millions of \$)				
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Page XX of 2021 Edition of Work Plan.

Portland Press Herald

Pandemic's impacts leave some Maine road projects in limbo

The Maine Department of Transportation's latest construction plan is clouded by uncertainties around funding and whether more drivers will return to the roads.

BY [EDWARD D. MURPHY](#) STAFF WRITER | 1.25.2021 | [CLICK HERE TO VIEW ONLINE.](#)

Maine's transportation planners are getting ready to work on construction and maintenance projects for 2021, but with a lot more questions than normal.

How will finances be affected by the coronavirus pandemic? Will traffic on Maine roads rebound as more people get vaccinated? When should the state Department of Transportation and its contractors schedule work to avoid inconveniencing commuters, residents and visitors?

The department has even coined a term for all the uncertainty: "business unusual."

MaineDOT Commissioner Bruce Van Note said his department had to be nimble to adjust to changes in 2020. Construction prices were originally so high that much of the work planned for last year was stretched out over two years.

Then, when the pandemic hit and traffic plummeted – often to half its normal level – the department found that it could change construction schedules to save money. Work done during the day is cheaper and usually more efficient, and some projects that were planned for the offseason could be done during warmer weather because the roads weren't as clogged.

The pandemic even helped put a lid on construction price increases, and a drought allowed the department to stretch the construction season into the fall.

"One thing we've learned is to stay agile," Van Note said when unveiling the department's latest three-year work plan.

The department said transportation needs in Maine “continue to far outpace available resources.” The pre-pandemic estimate of MaineDOT’s unmet need was \$232 million per year, it said. That shortfall was calculated after assuming that state bonding of \$100 million or more would continue annually.

The economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic, including drops in traffic volumes and highway fund revenue, have only exacerbated MaineDOT’s funding challenges, it said.

“In the short term, we must focus on defeating the virus, restoring our economy, helping Maine people and businesses in need, and addressing budget shortfalls,” Van Note said. “In the long term, we have great opportunities to make a real difference for the people of Maine after we resolve the chronic funding challenges in our transportation system. By investing in transportation, we can move Maine forward.”

Van Note said he expects legislators to send a \$150 million bond package to voters, and he is hoping the Biden administration’s focus on rebuilding the country’s infrastructure and getting the economy growing again will mean more federal aid for road work.

Last year, voters approved a \$100 million transportation bond package in July. Van Note said the earlier-than-usual vote – transportation bonds are more often on the November ballot – meant work could begin in 2020 and give the state economy a bit of a boost.

This year, some of the major projects planned for 2021 mean that drivers in southern Maine can expect to see work on two bridges carrying traffic on I-295 over Route 1 in Yarmouth, reconstruction of the Congress Square intersection in Portland, work on the Eastern Trail in Scarborough and improvements to the railroad siding and platform for Amtrak Downeaster rail service in Wells. Those four projects alone will cost more than \$54 million.

To help pay for that work, Van Note said he’s hoping that driving will pick up, perhaps when people get vaccinated and feel the urge to get out after spending months at home. That would mean they would buy more gas, boosting the state’s share of highway taxes built into the price of a gallon.

MaineDOT officials said the curtailment of driving means that revenues for the current two-year period, ending in June, are expected to drop by about \$30 million, or 4.4 percent, from the previous two years. That source of money is expected to partially

recover in the 2021-2023 biennium, but will still remain below where it was four years ago, the department said.

Despite the funding uncertainty, MaineDOT's three-year plan still calls for continued improvement of the state's transportation network, Van Note said. That includes 166 bridge projects at an estimated cost of \$504 million, 100 miles of highway construction or repairs expected to cost \$212 million, more than 3,000 miles of paving at a cost of \$429 million, and nearly \$400 million for transit, aviation, freight rail, ferries, marine infrastructure and bicycle and pedestrian projects.

Also, the plan includes \$23 million for an Acadia Gateway Center project in Trenton, replacement of two state ferry vessels at a cost of more than \$19 million, and a dredge of Searsport Harbor.

But Van Note cautioned that any plans during these times can't be considered set in concrete.

"Anybody who claims to know what's going to happen either lacks humility or honesty, and I try to have both," he said.

News Release for January 25, 2021

For more Information:

Paul Merrill, Public Information Officer - 207-624-3355 or 207-215-9297

AUGUSTA - Today, the Maine Department of Transportation released the 2021 Edition of its three-year Work Plan. This Work Plan includes all capital projects and programs, maintenance and operations activities, planning initiatives, and administrative functions for calendar years 2021, 2022, and 2023. This plan contains 2,180 individual work items with a total value of \$2.71 billion.

Despite significant challenges arising from the pandemic, this Work Plan maintains essential service and provides for solid capital programs. It does so with robust and prudent state bonding made possible by historically low interest rates and by fully utilizing discretionary and extraordinary federal funding. It also seeks to expand partnership programs, support existing and emerging businesses, refocus investment in our villages, and confront climate change.

This Work Plan includes nearly \$1.4 billion for highway and bridge capital projects over the next three years. That includes:

- 166 bridge projects (estimated cost: \$504 million).
- 100 miles of highway construction and rehabilitation (estimated cost: \$212 million).
- 222 highway safety and spot improvements (estimated cost: \$122 million).
- 893 miles of preservation paving (estimated cost: \$321 million).
- 2,175 miles of Light Capital Paving (estimated cost: \$108 million).

Notable projects in this Work Plan include:

- Construction of the I-395/Route 9 Connector in Brewer/Eddington (estimated cost: \$90.8 million). *Partially funded by \$25 million in federal grant money.*
- Replacement of two bridges that carry I-295 in Yarmouth and two that cross I-295 in Freeport (estimated cost of all four projects: \$38.8 million). *Partially funded by \$18.9 million in federal grant money.*
- Replacement of the Route 1 (Station 46) Bridge in Woolwich (estimated cost: \$32.5 million). *Partially funded \$25 million in federal grant money.*
- Bridge replacements and intersection improvements in Old Town and Stillwater (estimated cost: \$20 million). *Partially funded by \$10.7 million in federal grant money.*
- A railroad siding and platform project to improve Downeaster service in Wells (estimated cost: \$23 million). *Partially funded by \$16.2 in federal grant money.*
- Continued work on the Acadia Gateway Center project in Trenton (estimated cost: \$23 million). *Partially funded by \$12.8 million in federal grant money.*

- Two Maine State Ferry Service vessel replacements (estimated cost: \$19 million).
- Heavy rehabilitation work on U.S. Route 1 in Machias and East Machias (estimated cost: \$6 million).
- Dredging Searsport harbor (estimated cost: \$5.3 million).
- Improvements to the Eastern Trail in Scarborough (estimated cost: \$4.8 million).

This Work Plan, like all such plans, is dependent upon funding assumptions involving state Highway Fund revenue, state bonding, and federal funds. Should funding sources not materialize, the work items within this plan will need to be adjusted to reflect funding changes.

Despite experiencing a year like no other, MaineDOT continues to deliver at an extraordinary rate. The on-time delivery rate for our capital program was a record-breaking 94 percent in 2020. Our essential mission remains unchanged: to support economic opportunity and quality of life by responsibly providing our customers with the safest and most reliable transportation system possible, *given available resources*.

Transportation needs in Maine continue to far outpace available resources. The pre-pandemic estimate of MaineDOT's unmet need was **\$232 million per year**. That shortfall figure was calculated after assuming that state bonding of **\$100 million or more** will continue annually. The economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic including drops in traffic volumes and, subsequently, Highway Fund revenue have exacerbated MaineDOT's funding challenges.

"In the short term, we must focus on defeating the virus, restoring our economy, helping Maine people and businesses in need, and addressing budget shortfalls," said MaineDOT Commissioner Bruce Van Note. "In the long term, we have great opportunities to make a real difference for the people of Maine after we resolve the chronic funding challenges in our transportation system. By investing in transportation, we can move Maine forward."

View and search the 2021 Edition of the MaineDOT Work Plan by visiting www.mainedot.gov.

###

Work on controversial I-395 connector to Route 9 to begin in September



by [Judy Harrison](#) 3 hours ago | 1.25.2021 | [Click here to view online.](#)



In this Feb. 20, 2019, file photo, the ramp at the eastern end of I-395 in Brewer. Credit: Gabor Degre / BDN

Construction on a controversial \$90 million project to extend Interstate 395 through Brewer, Holden and Eddington to connect it to Route 9 is scheduled to begin in September, according to the Maine Department of Transportation's new three-year work plan released Monday.

The extension would start where I-395 currently ends at the Brewer-Holden town line and run six miles northeast until it reaches Route 9, also known as the Airline.

By price tag, it's the largest of 2,180 individual work items the Department of Transportation has put on its plan for 2021, 2022 and 2023. Those projects have a total value of \$2.71 billion.

Both the value and number of projects are up slightly compared with the last three-year plan released in 2020 due to an increase in federal funding that offset a \$30 million dip in money from the state's Highway Fund. The plan also assumes \$150 million in borrowing this year.

The Highway Fund has been challenged for years as a flat gas tax has become an increasingly outdated way to fund roads and bridges. It's been especially challenged over the past year as travel has dropped in Maine and across the country during the coronavirus pandemic. A legislative panel formed to propose a long-term funding fix failed to propose a specific solution last year over thorny conversations about raising the gas tax.

The state has been planning the I-395 project for nearly two decades. It began acquiring properties in early 2019 to make way for the road, which is expected to affect dozens of property owners with land on or near the proposed route in Brewer, Holden and Eddington. The project would allow truck traffic from Down East Maine and Canada to access I-395 without using Route 46, which passes through Holden and Eddington, and Route 1A.

The state received a \$25 million federal grant to pay for the project in 2018.

Aside from the I-395 extension, other projects in the three-year plan include bridge replacements in Old Town and Stillwater; continued work on the Acadia Gateway Center in Trenton; the replacement of two Maine State Ferry Service vessels; dredging in Searsport harbor; and rehabilitation work on U.S. Route 1 in Machias and East Machias.

To view and search the 2021 work plan, visit mainedot.gov.

BDN politics editor Mike Shepherd contributed to this report.

To: Larry Adams;

Good afternoon Mr. Adams,

Your below email was sent to Commissioner Van Note by Representative O'Connell and Commissioner Van Note asked that I respond on his behalf.

As you point out in your email, in March of 2020 the Blue Ribbon Commission to Study and Recommend Funding Solutions for the State's Transportation System issued their final report. This report outlined that Maine's unmet transportation funding need is more than \$230 million. The finding in their report is consistent with previous estimates made by MaineDOT. It is true those numbers were identified prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying decrease in traffic volumes and Highway Fund revenues we have experienced. However, as stated in the Work Plan, there are a number of funding and revenue relief scenarios in discussion and possible, such as the late December federal Covid relief package that will see \$46M coming to Maine for transportation uses. With so much in flux, we have determined it is prudent to hold the current unmet need figure as is for now.

With that being said, MaineDOT's intention to move forward with the I-395 Connector project is based on the regional benefits that completion of this project will have to this area. There are several reasons for proceeding, the most important being the need to improve this connection along Maine's National Highway System. The I-395 connector, once built, will serve as a vital link for freight transportation between the interstate system in Bangor to areas reached by Route 9 and beyond.

Any delay or suspension of work will have serious financial implications. The State of Maine received a \$25 million federal discretionary INFRA grant for the I-395 connector project. The grant is specifically for this project, which requires that bids be solicited by the end of September 2021. We are currently on schedule to meet that timeframe, however, any suspension of the project would jeopardize that schedule and the \$25 million. MaineDOT has a reputation of delivering all projects with federal grants of this type and failure to do so could put future MaineDOT applications for federal discretionary funding at risk.

New highway alignments like this are expensive, but MaineDOT has found a way to fully fund the project and we stand by its purpose and need. This is the only project of this caliber that MaineDOT has undertaken in many years. Once completed, the I-395 Connector will have multiple positive impacts on this major freight corridor.

Thank you, please let me know any additional questions you might have.

Best,

Meghan

Meghan M. Russo

Manager of Legislative and Constituent Services

MaineDOT, 16 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333

207-624-3002



----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Larry Adams** <lgradams@roadrunner.com>

Date: Mon, Jan 25, 2021, 11:34 AM

Subject: New DOT Work Plan

To: Representative Kevin O'Connell <kevinocconnell1978@gmail.com>, Steve Bost <sbost@brewermaine.gov>

Good morning gentleman – hope you're doing good and you and your family remains healthy. My wife and I were one of the 1,000 people that got their first dose of vaccine this weekend at the EMMC.

The new [DOT work plan](#) came out today; been following these work plans and shortfalls since 2012 and it seems the DOT is now using a new tactic. They are using the same \$232 million per year shortfall as the DOT presented to the Blue Ribbon Commission in October 2019.

Not only is this \$232 million per year unmet transportation need shortfall outdated by over a year – it is pre-pandemic by several months.

DOT's explanation on page xxi is precious and the Blue Ribbon Commission date of March 2020, that they cite on page xx, is misleading. That shortfall was given to the Commission in a briefing by the DOT on October 2019 – not the other way around.

This raises two questions: does the DOT really not know how bad the shortfall is or do they know how bad it is and are keeping that a secret so they can continue unchecked? Don't you wish you could run your household like that?

The connector appears to be fully funded at \$90.3 million for 2021 (I'm guessing the \$10.7 million for the Wilson Street bridge is not included in that figure). This would put them on track for a bid this fall as previously announced.

So – once again – the DOT has no money and they continue to go ahead with this boondoggle...

Amazing!!

Larry

News Release: Bangor Area Motorists Lose Nearly \$1,600 per Year on Roads that are Rough, Congested & Lack Some Safety Features...

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, February 4, 2021

Contact:

Carolyn Bonifas Kelly 703.801.9212 (cell)
Rocky Moretti 202.262.0714 (cell)

[Click here](#) for the full report, infographics and video interview footage with report authors.

BANGOR AREA MOTORISTS LOSE NEARLY \$1,600 PER YEAR ON ROADS THAT ARE ROUGH, CONGESTED & LACK SOME SAFETY FEATURES – \$1.3 BILLION STATEWIDE. LACK OF FUNDING WILL LEAD TO FURTHER DETERIORATION, INCREASED CONGESTION AND HIGHER COSTS TO MOTORISTS

Bangor, ME – Roads and bridges that are deteriorated, congested or lack some desirable safety features cost Maine motorists a total of \$1.3 billion statewide annually – \$1,561 per driver in the Bangor urban area – due to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes and congestion-related delays. Increased investment in transportation improvements at the local, state and federal levels could relieve traffic congestion, improve road, bridge and transit conditions, boost safety, and support long-term economic growth in Maine, according to a new report released today by [TRIP](#), a Washington, DC based national transportation research nonprofit.

The TRIP report, “*Maine Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State’s Need for Safe, Smooth and Efficient Mobility*,” finds that throughout Maine, 44 percent of major locally and state-maintained roads are in poor or mediocre condition, 13 percent of locally and state-maintained bridges (20 feet or more in length) are rated poor/structurally deficient, and 783 people lost their lives on the state’s roads from 2015-2019. Maine’s major urban

roads are becoming increasingly congested, causing significant delays and choking commuting and commerce.

Driving on roads in the Bangor urban area costs the average driver \$1,561 per year in the form of extra vehicle operating costs (VOC) as a result of driving on roads in need of repair, lost time and fuel due to congestion-related delays, and the costs of traffic crashes in which the lack of adequate roadway features likely were a contributing factor. The report includes regional pavement and bridge conditions, a list of the most congested corridors, highway safety data, and cost breakdowns for the Bangor, Lewiston-Auburn and Portland urban areas and statewide. A breakdown of the costs per motorist in the state's largest urban areas, along with a statewide total, is below.

Location	VOC	Congestion	Safety	TOTAL
Bangor	\$522	\$541	\$498	\$1,561
Lewiston-Auburn	\$374	\$451	\$448	\$1,273
Portland	\$531	\$568	\$293	\$1,392
Maine Statewide	\$563 Million	\$250 Million	\$497 Million	\$1.3 Bilion

The TRIP report finds that 24 percent of major locally and state-maintained roads in the Bangor urban area are in poor condition and another 17 percent are in mediocre condition, costing the average motorist an additional \$522 each year in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear. Statewide, 23 percent of Maine's major roads are in poor condition and 21 percent are in mediocre condition.

“Transportation is fundamental to our safety, economic prosperity, and quality of life,” said Maine Department of Transportation Commissioner Bruce Van Note. “The challenges we face due to our chronic funding shortfall have been made worse by the recent drops in travel due to COVID-19 and the resulting reductions in Highway Fund and other transportation-related revenues. Once we have defeated the virus and dealt with the resulting economic fallout, we must work to resolve our structural transportation revenue problems so that we can not only maintain our transportation system, but also improve it with targeted capacity improvements, improvements to villages and downtowns, and measures to address climate change. Investing in transportation is key to moving Maine forward.”

In the Bangor urban area, 13 percent of bridges are rated poor/structurally deficient, with significant deterioration to the bridge deck, supports or other

major components. Statewide, 13 percent of Maine's bridges are rated poor/structurally deficient and 55 percent are rated in fair condition.

"Transportation is so critical to the city, region and state. The impacts of slim budgets, climate change and now the pandemic have greatly impacted our ability to keep up with infrastructure development and maintenance," said Bangor City Manager Cathy Conlow. "Our economic future is dependent on long term reliable funding for infrastructure.

Traffic congestion in the Bangor urban area is worsening, causing 26 annual hours of delay for the average motorist and costing the average Bangor driver \$541 annually in lost time and wasted fuel. Statewide, drivers lose \$250 million annually as a result of lost time and wasted fuel due to traffic congestion. The TRIP report identifies and ranks the 20 most congested corridors in Maine based on an analysis of delays during typical morning and evening peak travel periods.

Traffic crashes in Maine claimed the lives 783 people from 2015 to 2019. Maine's overall traffic fatality rate of 1.06 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel in 2019 is slightly lower than the national average of 1.11. In the Bangor urban area, on average, 18 people were killed in traffic crashes each year from 2015 to 2019. The financial impact of traffic crashes in which the lack of adequate roadway safety features were likely a contributing factor was an average of \$498 annually per each Bangor area driver.

"The pandemic has cast a spotlight on trucking's importance to our state, as our members have delivered the essential goods and services needed for Mainers to lead their daily lives and for businesses to bring their goods and services to market," said Timothy Doyle, vice president of the Maine Motor Transport Association. "Having a safe, reliable, and efficient transportation system is vital to our members and to the economy of Maine."

The efficiency and condition of Maine's transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state's economy. Annually, \$80.5 billion in goods are shipped to and from Maine, relying heavily on the state's network of roads and bridges. Increasingly, companies are looking at the quality of a region's transportation system when deciding where to re-locate or expand. Regions with congested or poorly maintained roads may see businesses relocate to areas with a smoother, more efficient and more modern transportation system. Approximately 283,000 full-time jobs in Maine in key industries like tourism, retail sales, agriculture and

manufacturing are dependent on the quality, safety and reliability of the state's transportation infrastructure network.

The Maine State Legislature's [Blue Ribbon Commission to Study and Recommend Funding Solutions for the State's Transportation System](#) found the state faces an annual transportation funding shortfall of approximately \$232 million. Assuming the federal government continues to provide approximately one-third of Maine's transportation funding need, the state will need to address a funding gap of approximately \$160 million. If the annual transportation funding need is met, the Commission recommended that Maine's existing reliance on bonding to supplement transportation funding should be reduced in a fiscally responsible manner.

"These conditions are only going to get worse, increasing the additional costs to motorists, if greater investment is not made available at the federal, state and local levels of government," said Dave Kearby, TRIP's executive director. "Without adequate funding, Maine's transportation system will become increasingly deteriorated and congested, hampering economic growth, safety and quality of life."

SHARE THIS ARTICLE

Back when J. Wellington Wimpy was featured alongside Popeye, the idea of receiving something today and paying for it later was completely absurd.



Waiting on next Tuesday is no way to pay for Maine's unmet transportation needs, exacerbated by record shortfalls carried forward into 2021 and unknown losses in Highway Fund revenues from the ongoing covid-19 pandemic. The \$104 million I-395/Rt. 9 connector, a controversial project lacking local support, is moving forward even though:

- DOT Commissioner Van Note suggests an annual \$232 million unmet transportation need shortfall, as briefed by DOT officials to the Blue Ribbon Commission in October 2019, is "generally consistent" with annual shortfalls in the 2021 Edition of the 3 Year MaineDOT work plan as the DOT appears to not be able to –OR– refuses to update that pre-pandemic shortfall they themselves identified 15 months ago;
- TRIP [2.04.2021] "In the Bangor urban area, 13 percent of bridges are rated poor/structurally deficient, with significant deterioration to the bridge deck, supports or other major components";
- "The TRIP report [2.04.2021] finds that 24 percent of major locally and state-maintained roads in the Bangor urban area are in poor condition and another 17 percent are in mediocre condition, costing the average motorist an additional \$522 each year in extra vehicle operating costs..."

There's no money for unmet transportation needs today and our fiscal woes will only worsen as the DOT waits for Tuesday to come!

Study finds transportation problems cost Maine motorists over \$1 billion annually

Higher operating costs, collisions and delays cost Portland-area drivers an average of almost \$1,400 a year each, according to a national transportation nonprofit.

BY [PETER MCGUIRE](#) | STAFF WRITER | 2.05.2021 | [CLICK HERE TO VIEW ONLINE.](#)

Maine's battered and congested road system costs motorists across the state a total of \$1.3 billion annually in maintenance, repair and wasted time and fuel, according to a new analysis from a national advocacy group.

Higher operating costs, traffic collisions and delays cost Portland-area drivers an average of nearly \$1,400 a year each, according to a report issued this week by TRIP, a national transportation research nonprofit based in Washington, D.C.

Maintenance and repair to Maine's roads and bridges are chronically underfunded, and the state Department of Transportation estimates unmet highway funding is at least \$232 million a year.

"These conditions are only going to get worse, increasing the additional costs to motorists, if greater investment is not made available at federal, state and local levels of government," said TRIP Executive Director Dave Kearby in a news release. "Without adequate funding, Maine's transportation system will become increasingly deteriorated and congested, hampering economic growth, safety and quality of life."

Almost half the roads in Greater Portland are in poor or mediocre condition, the research group reported. About 27 bridges, 8 percent of them in the Portland region, are rated structurally deficient, it added.

Bad roads and bridges cost each Portland-area motorist an average of about \$531 a year in extra vehicle operating costs and \$293 a year in safety-related costs, TRIP reported.

Congestion is worse in and around Portland than anywhere else in the state, researchers found. More than three-quarters of the 20 most congested traffic corridors in the state are in Greater Portland, including parts of Interstate 295, Congress Street, Route 302 and roads around Gorham. Traffic congestion costs Portland-area drivers an average of \$568 and 28 hours a year, according to a 2019 report from the Texas Transportation Institute.

Statewide, 23 percent of Maine's major roads are in poor condition, and 21 percent are in mediocre condition, according to TRIP's report.

Traffic congestion has decreased in Maine during the coronavirus pandemic, falling by almost half during a statewide lockdown last April. Many motorists have returned to the roads since then, but in November, vehicle travel remained 12 percent below the same period a year earlier, according to TRIP researchers.

Declining traffic and depressed fuel tax revenue has put Maine's underfunded highway budget in a tougher position. A three-year road and bridge work plan estimates revenues will be down \$30 million in the fiscal year ending in June. The department expects lawmakers to send a \$150 million transportation bond to voters this year to pay for projects.

Maine Transportation Commissioner Bruce Van Note said in a statement that once the state is through the coronavirus pandemic and its economic fallout, it will have to resolve the structural revenue problems to maintain and make targeted improvements to the state's transportation system.

"Investing in transportation is key to moving Maine forward," Van Note said.



Janet T. Mills
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
16 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0016

Bruce A. Van Noy
COMMISSIONER

PUBLIC NOTICE:

NOTICE OF INTENT TO FILE

Please take notice that The Maine Department of Transportation; 16 State House Station, Augusta, ME; 207-624-3000; is intending to file a Natural Resources Protection Act permit application with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection pursuant to the provisions of 38 M.R.S. §§ 480-A thru 480-BB on or about February 19, 2021. The application is for construction of the Route 9 Connector and associated wetland impacts and new stream crossings in Brewer, Eddington, and Holden, Maine (Penobscot County). A request for a public hearing or a request that the Board of Environmental Protection assume jurisdiction over this application must be received by the Department in writing, no later than 20 days after the application is found by the Department to be complete and is accepted for processing. A public hearing may or may not be held at the discretion of the Commissioner or Board of Environmental Protection. Public comment on the application will be accepted throughout the processing of the application.

The application will be filed for public inspection at the Department of Environmental Protection's website at: <https://www.maine.gov/dep/projects.html>. A copy of the application may also be seen at the municipal offices in Brewer, Eddington, and Holden, Maine. Written public comments may be sent to the regional office in Bangor where the application is filed for public inspection: MDEP, Eastern Maine Regional Office, 106 Hogan Road, Bangor, Maine 04401.



Bridge Condition by Functional Classification Count 2020

12/31/2020

[Click here to view complete report:](#)

Condition of Bridges in Maine per the Federal Highway Administration:

2,472 total urban and rural bridges in Maine

726 Bridges in good condition/ 29.37% of total

1,431 bridges in fair condition/57.79% of total

315 bridges in poor condition/12.74% of total

1,746 bridges in poor to fair condition/70.63% of total

At a time when the DOT cannot (or refuses to) predict the existing shortfall in the budget due to the corona virus and subsequent loss of revenues, but admit that it is probably around \$232 million per year, they see no problem in spending \$104 million on a connector that many of us see no need for and doesn't meet the original purpose and needs requirement of providing a limited-access connection from I-395 to the east of Route 46 on Route 9. That \$104 million could have gone a long way to fund the unmet needs of Maine's roads and bridges.