

A SAFER ROAD TO TOMORROW

June 2016

Ten-Year Transportation Improvement Plan Passes Legislature

At the beginning of 2016, Governor Maggie Hassan pitched a \$3.7 billion transportation plan, HR 2016. The bill went to a Committee of Conference in May, which reported a few recommendations: removal of a reference to regional planning commissions' use of toll credits, addition of language requiring toll credits to be approved as part of the ten-year program as well as requiring approval from the joint legislative capital budget overview committee for any other toll credits, and limitation of the expenditure for the Balsams road project to \$2.5 million. The report also stated that additional funding will allow construction of the fourth lane on I-93. The committee members agreed on all recommendations.

The issue of the Capitol Corridor Rail project dominated the discussions surrounding the Ten Year Plan. Governor Maggie Hassan initially proposed a \$4 million amendment for the engineering phase of the commuter rail project. The \$4 million was eventually nixed from the plan, and despite a proposal of using toll credits to fund the study, the amendment failed in the House by 130-175 and in the Senate by 11 to 13. Given the amount of public support for the rail project along the rail corridor, there will likely be more legislation proposed next year.

Other highlights from the Ten-Year Plan include:

- Pavement preservation
- Bridge preservation
 - Increased funding to address State Red List Bridge backlog
- Dedicated TIFA pledged funds for rural roads and bridges
 - Funding allocated for paving poor and very poor (1160 miles) Tier 3 and 4 roads
 - Funding allocated for 23 Red List Bridges
- Completion of I-93 and funding for exit 4A
- Heightened financial constraint
 - FAST Act federal funding through FY20, level federal funding FY21-FY26
 - Fully funded, fully financially constrained TYP

General Projected Outputs of the Ten Year Plan:

- Pavement resurfacing 350 mi/year (estimated)
 - Preserve 150 mi/yr.; Rehabilitate 16 mi/yr.; Maintain 185 mi/yr.
- TIFIA-pledged pavement resurfacing
 - Additional 200 mi/year (estimated)
 - Maintenance and roughness paving on poor and very poor roads
- State-owned bridges
 - Rehabilitate/replace 124 bridges (57 red list bridges)
 - Bridge Maintenance (110 red list bridges over 10-year period)
- TIFIA-pledged bridge work
 - Rehabilitates/replaces additional 23 red list bridges

Overall, the new plan includes a slightly higher investment than the previous plan two years ago. This year's plan may be more fiscally sound for the next five years, taking into account the passage of the federal FAST Act and the TIFIA bond that was signed at the end of May.



**A SAFER ROAD
TO TOMORROW**
Safety • Quality of Life • Economic Development

Safer Road Partners

Associated General Contractors of New Hampshire

The Associated General Contractors is a non-profit trade organization of general contractors, subcontractors, and industry professionals dedicated to improving industry standards.

NH Good Roads Association

NH Good Roads Association is a non-profit trade organization established to encourage the development of a safe, efficient and environmentally sound highway transportation system.

Safety and Health Council of Northern New England

The Council's mission is to educate and promote safety & health policies, practices and procedures that prevent and mitigate human economic losses arising from unintended causes.

NH Association of Chiefs of Police

The Association secures a close relationship among commanding officers all over the state, to encourage a cooperative relationship among all police officials.

NH Lodging & Restaurant Association

The Association is a non-partisan organization to promote, protect and educate the food service and lodging industries and to ensure positive business growth for our members.

Business & Industry Association

The Association is NH's leading business trade association. It advocates for business interests with state and federal legislators and regulators.

Additional I-93 Lanes Will Remain Closed Until State Resolves Environmental Concerns

While construction continues on a fourth lane between Manchester and Salem on I-93, the state isn't being allowed to pave or open it. A lawsuit filed by the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) regarding salt runoff and water quality is the reason. I-93 is located between four watersheds and each has a maximum daily salt limit defined by the EPA.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) is permitted to move soil and shape the road for the fourth lane, but for the time being, the department is only paving and operating three. Project officials believe that the environmental concerns will be addressed by the time the new lane is ready to be paved and built.

Over the past ten years, average salt usage by the state and private firms has been reduced by 20 percent. The department will have to combine salt rations with municipalities and private entities. State officials are working to resolve the concerns and move forward with construction as soon as possible.

The project ultimately envisions doubling the 19.8 mile stretch between Manchester and Salem to four lanes in each direction. Today, a 7.5 mile stretch each way between the Massachusetts border and the Windham weigh station has three open lanes. Opening a third lane north of that section won't happen until at least 2018, according to Jay Levine, DOT supervisor for the I-93 corridor.

In addition to being restricted to a three-lane highway, the DOT is also required to study strategies to manage congestion that wouldn't require a fourth lane. Bill Boyton, spokesperson for the DOT, has said that the department will work with regional planning commissions and other state agencies to grow other means of public transportation in the area of the I-93 corridor.

Source: "I-93: Lanes stay closed and pricetag grows while state, activists wrangle over salt" by David Lane of the Union Leader.

Eleven States Increase Gas Tax

The federal government hasn't raised the national gas tax since 1993, and despite the recent passing of a federal highway funding bill, states are taking it upon themselves to raise their own fuel taxes as a way of increasing revenue. According to a report by *Equipment World Magazine* in March, eleven states increased their gas tax in 2015. Those states include:

- **Washington (7 cents):** Raised gas tax to 44.5 cents on August 1, with another increase coming this year. The state plans to spend \$8.8 billion on state and local roads, \$1.4 billion on maintenance.
- **Nebraska (1.5 cents this year and every year for 3 additional years):** Will raise about \$75 million to be shared among cities, counties, and the state for road maintenance and repairs.
- **Maryland (1.8 cents):** Though seeing an increase in the gas tax, commuters will benefit from lower toll road fees.
- **Georgia (6.7 cents):** Increased to 26 cents per gallon, and added a \$50 to \$100 heavy truck impact fee and a \$200 to \$300 electric vehicle fee. All taxes will be used for transportation purposes and infrastructure improvements.
- **South Dakota (6 cents):** Additionally, the state will increase the excise tax on vehicle sales by 1% (to 4%) and increase license plate fees by 20%.
- **Michigan (7.3 cents/12.3 cents):** Raised gas tax by 7.3 cents per gallon and diesel tax by 12.3 cents per gallon beginning in 2017.
- **Idaho (7 cents):** Vehicle registration fees will also increase.
- **Utah (5 cents):** This raises the state gas tax to 24.5 cents in a formula that increases the tax as the price of gas increases. An additional local option tax of 0.25 cents per gallon would give cities, counties, and transit districts money for local projects if approved by voters.
- **Iowa (10 cents):** Will raise \$215 million for city, county, and state roads.
- **Rhode Island (1 cent):** Gas tax will also be adjusted to inflation every two years.
- **Vermont:** The greater of \$0.134 per gallon or 4 percent of the tax-adjusted retail price, or \$0.18 per gallon, whichever is less.

According to the latest report released by the American Petroleum Institute (API), the average state gasoline tax is 48.03. API collects motor fuel tax information for all 50 states and compiles a quarterly report and chart detailing changes and calculating a nationwide average. At number 33 in the country, New Hampshire remains the lowest ranked New England state, with an average of 42.23. Connecticut has the highest rate in New England at 55.91, which is the sixth highest state nationwide. The next highest state in the region is Rhode Island, followed by Vermont, Maine, and Massachusetts.

Governor Hassan & NHDOT Accept Federal TIFIA Funds

\$200 Million Agreement will Allow New Hampshire to Complete I-93, Fix 23 Red List Bridges, Pave Nearly 1,100 Additional Miles of State Roads



According to a press release issued on May 25th, Governor Maggie Hassan and New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) Commissioner Victoria Sheehan accepted \$200 million in federal funds from a Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan from the United States Department of Transportation at an event today overlooking an Interstate 93 construction project.

The long-term, low interest federal loan – which is backed by the bipartisan transportation funding plan that Governor Hassan signed in 2014, Senate Bill 367 – will allow the State to complete the remaining construction of Interstate 93, fix 23 Red List bridges across the state and pave nearly 1,100 additional miles of State roads.

“A solid, modern transportation infrastructure is critical to the success of our people and businesses, and this loan agreement with the federal government will build on our bipartisan progress over the last three years by allowing us to complete the expansion of Interstate 93, fix nearly two dozen Red List bridges across the state and pave approximately 1,100 additional miles,” Governor Hassan said.

Because the additional paving will help NHDOT pave approximately 40 percent of the State’s rural roads, New Hampshire qualified for the rural interest rate on the TIFIA loan, which is one half of the Treasury rate or 1.09 percent. During the first nine years of the TIFIA loan, NHDOT will pay only interest, saving approximately \$20 million in taxpayer funds as opposed to financing through capital markets, which will allow NHDOT to invest the majority of the revenue from Senate Bill 367 in other parts of the state.

“This is a fiscally responsible, low-interest loan agreement that will save New Hampshire taxpayers \$20 million while also allowing us to reinvest in critical road and bridge projects in every corner of the state,” Governor Hassan said. “I want to thank Commissioner Sheehan and our hard-working employees at the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, as well as our Congressional delegation and the Executive Council for their efforts to make this agreement possible.”

“In transportation many times the expansion of major facilities comes at the expense of investing in existing infrastructure”, said NHDOT Commissioner Sheehan. “TIFIA is allowing us to do both. Due to the low interest rate and structure of the debt service, this loan will allow us to complete I-93, replace nearly two dozen ‘Red List’ bridges and pave over 1,100 miles across New Hampshire. We are the first state to use TIFIA in this manner, with the 1.09 percent interest rate resulting in approximately \$20 million in financing savings.”

The 23 Red List bridges that will be fixed through this agreement are in communities across the state, such as: Tamworth, Acworth, Conway, Ossipee, Lancaster, Allenstown, Troy, Warner, Shelburne, Pelham, Claremont, Deerfield, Swanzey, Nottingham, Thornton, Woodstock, Littleton, New Boston and Marlow.

“Safe, reliable transportation infrastructure is critical to the economic well-being of the Granite State,” said Senator Jeanne Shaheen. “Many of our citizens, communities and businesses rely on Interstate 93 and on rural roads and bridges, and it’s our job as elected officials to ensure they are maintained. I’m glad to see that years of hard work will benefit the reconstruction of I-93, a critical thoroughfare for our state, and allow us to direct funds towards our rural roads and bridges in need of repair. This will have a lasting impact for New Hampshire.”

“A robust and well maintained transportation network is essential to the health, safety and economic well-being of the Granite State,” said Congresswoman Annie Kuster, who worked for nearly two years to ensure these federal funds for New Hampshire. “From the completion of the I-93 expansion project to the restoration of rural roads and bridges, these TIFIA funds will have a deep impact all across the state for years to come. I am proud to have worked from the start with the N.H. Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and Governor Hassan to bring the TIFIA program to New Hampshire, and I look forward to continuing our work together in support of our transportation system and the Granite State economy.”



A Safer Road to Tomorrow
48 Grandview Road
Bow, NH 03304

700 Miles of Paving and Pavement Preservation

The NH Department of Transportation reports that for the third straight year, motorists on New Hampshire highways should notice an increased level of paving work across the state. In May, the Executive Council approved the awarding of paving projects totaling approximately \$34 million. A total of 700 miles of state highways are scheduled to receive paving or pavement preservation work in 2016. The additional paving is due to increased funding made possible by the passage of a 4 cent a gallon gas tax increase in 2014, which increased state transportation funding by an estimated \$33 million a year.

According to NHDOT Director of Operations David Rodrigue, “This year’s program is a great combination of preservation work (keeping good roads good), rehabilitation work (improving poor roads to like new condition roads), and service paving (providing a smooth, serviceable surface on a poor road). About 253 miles of this year’s paving program are funded with more than \$19 million of SB 367 funds. The remaining 443 miles are funded with State, Federal, and Turnpike funds.”

For detailed information on the NHDOT’s planned resurfacing work in 2016, including a map and specific segments and treatments, go to the following link: http://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/planning/amps/documents/map_2016_prop_paving.pdf

Brought to you by the Safer Roads Partners:

