

# What is the real cost of the connector in 2020 and beyond?

January 14, 2020: total project cost is \$100 million (maybe).

A clue to the current cost of the I-395/Route 9 connector can be found in the following statement on page v. of the MaineDOT's [2020-2021-2022 Work Plan](#): “\$25-million INFRA grant for the I-395/Route 9 Connector, providing a quarter of the estimated total project cost;”

- Cost increased from \$79.25 million in the October 23, 2017 INFRA Grant to \$100 million by January 14, 2020; a \$20.75 million (26.2%) increase in cost over that 26.7 month period—an average increase of 0.98% per month. The overall 26.2 % cost increase actually appears low when compared to the 46% and 60% cost increases reported by the MaineDOT and the MTA.

Note: Since the DOT has chosen non-transparency as their means of public involvement, the dates referenced above are dates with bona fide references and not necessarily when a specific action occurred. Study updates aren't a normal occurrence and real-time facts are virtually non-existent.

- In October, the [gridlocked blue-ribbon commission](#) was informed of the [\\$232 million shortfall](#) for road and bridge maintenance—a [46% increase](#) (\$73 million) from estimates in March mostly attributed to rising costs of construction—AND—the estimated cost of the [Gorham Connector](#) has increased by as much as 60% (\$87 million) over the past two years.

The connector's project cost has increased by 26.2% as the DOT/MTA reported increased construction costs of 46% over an eight month period and as much as 60% over a two year period, almost the same two year period as the 26.2% increase in the connector's cost. Could it be that the cost is as high as \$115.705 to \$126.8 million with unviable BCR's of 0.81 to 0.89?

Assuming the benefit remains unchanged from Oct. 2017 when the BCR was 1.3 and the cost was \$79.25 million, the resulting benefit is still \$103.025 million. The project becomes unviable when the cost exceeds \$103.025 million; this project is only \$3 million away from unviability—right now—and that is if the cost is really only \$100 million, and the cost may already surpass the benefits. The BCR may already be below 1.0 and thus the I-395 connector is no longer a viable project and must be immediately suspended.

If you choose to ignore the increases of 46% to 60% that both the DOT/MTA have experienced and would rather use the presumptive 0.98%/month increased cost experienced with the connector from 2017 to 2020, assuming the costs increase at that same rate, **by January 2022 the connector could easily cost \$123,520,000.**

**The BCR with a projected cost of \$123.52 million by January 2022 would be 0.83 and that is unviable**—how does the MaineDOT spin that? Will they say that the benefits have also increased when it is a fact that the cost has increased mainly due to construction costs—how would that affect the benefits—wouldn't the benefits remain relatively constant? **I contend that the benefits will not change if the costs consist of mostly labor costs and not something that could affect both cost and benefits, such as the price of fuel.**

**The cost in January 2022 may easily double the original \$61 million cost referenced in the March 2012 DEIS—with change left over.**

**Why does the MaineDOT continue to promote a controversial project, that doesn't meet the original purpose and needs, when the project may no longer even be viable—when Maine has unmet transportation needs?**

Once again—when it comes to the connector—the DOT stonewalls—staying mum even after multiple media reports referencing the work plan's -\$232 million shortfall, after letters to the editor published in the [BDN](#) and the [PPH](#), nothing—nada, only one mention lately in the report about the [\\$13.5 million Wilson Street/I-395 Bridge replacement](#). The Turnpike authority went to the media when the [Gorham Bypass](#) construction costs had increased by as much as 60% over the past two years, voicing their concerns, arguing in favor of the project and advising how they planned to pay for it. Yet, the MaineDOT stays quiet about the I-395 connector—what are they hiding?

**Do we trust the MaineDOT to let us know when the cost makes this project unviable—OR—will the DOT just keep throwing money at a project we do not support?** Why are they so willing to promote this one single controversial project when the results will not meet the original system linkage need of a limited-access connection from I-395 to Route 9 east of Route 46?

- What's the total cost and the BCR now in 2020, and the projected cost and BCR at the start of construction in 2021 and commissioning in 2024?
- As construction costs increase due to labor costs, is it SOP to disregard the BCR parameter that allowed the project to be initially approved?

If we were still in the study with such a high a cost and an underwhelming BCR (lower 1.0's), would it still be approved? I contend NO and there should be no difference today. **If the costs are too high and the BCR is no longer viable—this project needs to be revalidated or cancelled immediately before construction starts on the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the project: the Wilson Street bridge.**

### History of costs from December 2011 to 2020 and 2022:

- \$93.24 million on 12.06.2011 per [FOAA #000391 and #000392](#)
- \$<65.0 million on 1.13.2012 per [FOAA #000364](#) (“no greater than \$65 M”)
- \$62.19 million on 1.30.2012 per Memo [FOAA # 000431](#) (“reduced by one third”)
- \$61.0 million on 3.07.2012 per the [DEIS](#) (s15/s18)
- \$79.25 million on 10.23.2017 per the [INFRA grant application](#)
- \$100.0 million on 1.14.2020 per the [2020-2022 work plan](#) (26.2% increase)
- \$115.7 to \$126.8 million on 1.14.2020 based on DOT/MTA increases of 46-60%
- \$123.52 million in two years based on 26.2% cost increase from 2017 to 2020

The DOT has offered no explanation on 2B-2's costs over the history of this project. **We have been treated to intentional misinformation, outright lies, fuzzy math, months and months of quiet, resulting in a questionable, controversial project with ever-changing needs for \$61 million in 2012—that connector has turned into a \$100 million boondoggle in 2020.**

Alternatives	Description	Meets Purpose		Meets Needs		
		Study Purpose	USACE Purpose	System Linkage	Safety Concerns	Traffic Congestion
Alternative 2B-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfies design criteria</li> <li>• Length: 6.1 mi. of new alignment, 4.2 mi. of Route 9 without additional improvements</li> <li>• Bridge length: 2,232 ft.</li> <li>• Earthwork: 2.2 mcy (1.2 mcy cut, 1.0 mcy fill)</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	In the near-term (Year 2035)	Yes	Yes

**The I-395/Route 9 Connector is nothing more than a band-aid fix; a near-term project with no long-term benefits, no funding and no plans. Please view the**

**the Draft EIS [page 258 of Appendix C](#) and note the highlighted “less than YES” answer under the Meets Needs System Linkage column: “In the near-term (Year 2035)”. **Is this alternative worthy of a \$100 million expenditure?****

This project does not meet the long-term needs and thus does not provide long-term benefits; the MaineDOT can't have it both ways—in MaineDOT's own words, **this project is a near-term (short-term) project and thus does not meet Governor Mills' Infrastructure Policy to "invest in projects that will show a long-term benefit, versus short-term appearances."**

2B-2 is the ultimate photo-op and nothing more; unplanned and unfunded long-term needs have been punted 20 years into an unknown future for your children to pay for. **If Maine can't afford to fix the roads we already have, how will they afford to rehabilitate this boondoggle twenty years from now?**

**It's about time that the MaineDOT comes to the City of Brewer** and explain how they plan to pay for this connector when they can't even pay to maintain our existing roads and bridges.

**The fact is, actions over the past ten years have given us no reason to trust the MaineDOT and yes, I have lost faith in our government. I believe today's \$100 million cost is probably low, and may be more likely as high as \$115.705 to \$126.8 million using similar cost increases (46% and 60%) that the DOT/MTA have recently experienced.**

**The DOT cannot keep pouring our limited dollars into this project as the cost overwhelms the project's limited benefits.**

The blue-ribbon commission is [deadlocked](#); 142 projects will not be funded; the amount of bridge repairs are reduced; road paving may be downgraded to light paving or patching or nothing at all, as the annual shortfall in the roads and bridge maintenance budget is -\$232 million. AND—the governor just gave \$10 million of G.O. money to the DOT—when I contend the DOT should be investigated for mismanagement of the state's infrastructure program.

**DOT's priority must be the maintenance and repair of our existing roads and bridges, not another north of Augusta bypass-boondoggle.**