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MDOT prepares for Great Falls Bridges Project in Windham

By Ed Pierce

After a meeting in Windham in February about the upcoming Great Falls Bridges work and receiving public comments about the project, the Maine Department of Transportation is preparing to launch wearing surface replacement work for the bridge starting later this spring,

The project was first unveiled on MDOT's list of road and bridge projects in its annual Three-Year Plan in January 2023.

According to MaineDOT Commissioner Bruce A. Van Note, the state's Three-Year Plan is the primary way the department delivers on its mission to support economic opportunity and quality of life by responsibly providing residents with the safest and most reliable transportation system possible, given available resources.

Van Note said that the preliminary scope of work for this bridges project consists of replacing

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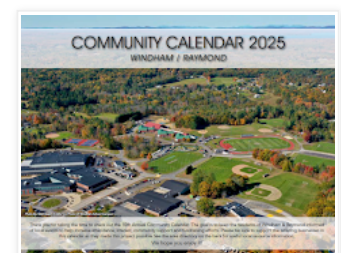
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the wearing surfaces on the Great Falls Bridges. The east and west bridges span the Presumpscot River between North Gorham and Dundee Ponds.

The replacement of the wearing surfaces will preserve the longevity of the bridges' existing deck and superstructure, Van Note said.

According to an MDOT study, the average daily traffic crossing the Great Falls Bridges between Windham and Gorham is 1,910 vehicles per day with about 8 percent of that traffic consisting of heavy trucks.

The reason MDOT cites for the project is to improve the condition of the existing structure while preserving the existing deck and superstructure longevity of the bridges. The project intends to minimize impacts to the traveling public and minimize impacts to adjacent properties and utilities during the project and implement a cost-effective solution to fixing the bridge's wearing problem.

Maintenance of traffic during construction will be achieved either by using a closure and detour or by using staged construction.

The closure and detour alternatives would require all traffic to detour around the site on by using an alternate route.

Van Note said that the staged construction alternative would have one-half of the bridge under construction at a time, while a single lane of alternating one-way traffic would use the other half of the bridge.

"Transportation will always be a big job in Maine. Our state is almost the size of all five other New England states combined, yet our small population, about 1.41 million people, is about the same as that of New Hampshire, making us the least densely populated state east of the Mississippi River," Van Note said. "Maine's natural features and weather, while varied and beautiful, present additional challenges from an infrastructure perspective. To connect us all, Maine has an extensive, statewide, multimodal transportation system. That system includes 8,800 miles of state highways, 2,800 bridges and minor spans, six commercial airports, more than 1,300 miles of active railroad, 15 bus transit providers, passenger rail service, a state ferry service, three major seaports, and miles of active transportation corridors. Simply put, Maine has more transportation infrastructure per capita than most other states do."

The Great Falls Bridges are located on Windham Center Road over the Presumpscot River and connect Windham to North Gorham.

Both bridges were constructed in 1970 and following recent MDOT inspections, they both show signs of cracking and rutting on deck and surfaces.



The Maine Department of Transportation will be reducing traffic to one lane crossing the Great Falls Bridges connecting Windham and Gorham for wearing surface replacement work later this spring. PHOTO BY ED PIERCE

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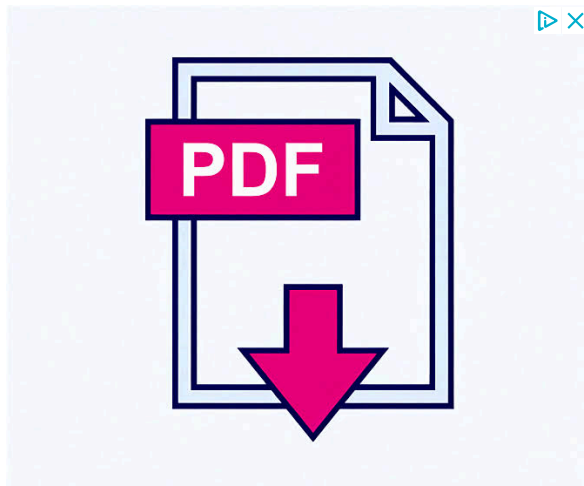
Summer Guide



The bridge site is located near the Great Falls Dam, which was one of the first sources of hydroelectric power in the Lakes region of Maine. Use of hydroelectric power was implemented by early settler Zebulon Trickey, who constructed bridges and mills on both sides of the Presumpscot River in Great Falls.

When a fire swept through the Great Falls area in 1872 and destroyed the mills and a bridge built by Trickey, and settlement of the Great Falls site declined.

Estimated Funding for the Great Falls Bridges Wearing Replacement Project is \$500,000. Work is expected to be finished by this summer. <



Posted by [Ed Pierce](#) at [2:32 AM](#)



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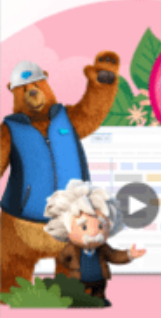
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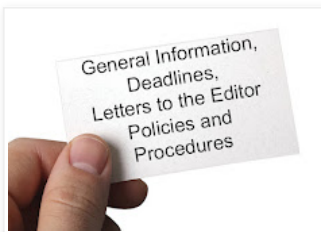
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