

# Road work continues during COVID-19 pandemic

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PAWTUCKET, R.I. (WLNE) — For nearly 200 infrastructure projects across the state, it's still full speed ahead.

Road crews are considered essential workers in the pandemic.

"They're not skipping a beat," said RIDOT Director Peter Alviti.

He says says COVID-19 is reducing traffic volumes by about half statewide.

That means nighttime operations can be moved to daytime, like the rehabilitation of the Broadway Bridge in Pawtucket — which requires noisy sandblasting and bringing a busy stretch of I-95 down to one lane.

"Under normal circumstances, with full traffic volume, would not be able to do that for sure," Alviti said, "because we would have delays approaching one, two hours."

But Alviti notes reduced traffic does have downsides for his department.

"That reduces gas usage, and therefore the gas tax revenue that we use for our transportation funding is going to be impacted considerably," he said.

And this Work Zone Safety Week, Alviti has a message for drivers on those wide open roads... tempted to speed through construction zones.

"A friend, a relative, someone you know is working on the other side of those barriers," he said. "And we want to keep them safe."

Work on the Broadway Bridge project is set to begin Thursday morning around 6 and last until about 8 PM.

Drivers are encouraged to take alternate routes like I-295 or Route 146 if possible.