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## TRIP Report Highlights Connecticut's Needs

Connecticut lacks sufficient funding to repair and enhance its surface transportation network, the nonprofit research organization TRIP concluded in a report released Thursday.

"Connecticut must improve its systems of roads, highways, bridges, and public transit to foster economic growth, keep business in the state, and ensure the safe, reliable mobility needed to improve quality of life," the report states.

TRIP found that 9% of Connecticut's bridges are structurally deficient and another 25% are functionally obsolete. In addition, 13% of the Constitution State's major roadways are in poor condition and another 32% are rated mediocre. Overall, those roads in need of repair cost Connecticut drivers about \$2.7 billion annually for expenses such as accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repairs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

Traffic congestion is another ever-growing problem in Connecticut, according to the report. In 2008, 58% of the state's urban highways were clogged during peak travel times.

The report also examines the state's transportation safety needs. Between 2004 and 2008, a total of 1,443 people were killed in motor-vehicle collisions in Connecticut -- an average of 289 fatalities per year.

"Improving safety features on Connecticut's roads and highways would likely result in a decrease in traffic fatalities in the state," according to the report.

TRIP also highlights several key transportation projects that are at a standstill until additional funding is available. These include reconstructing Connecticut 15 from Fairfield to Trumbull, replacing the bridges and approach on Interstate 95 in New Haven over the Quinnipiac River and New Haven Harbor, rebuilding and widening Interstate 84 in Waterbury from Silver Street to Pierpont Road, and improving the New Britain/Hartford Busway.

The American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided Connecticut with \$302 million in funding for highways and bridges plus \$137 million for mass transit. TRIP's report, however, makes clear that those amounts are not enough to cover all of the urgently needed surface transportation expenditures in the state.

"This report is a call to action to put transportation planning on the long-term agenda," said state Sen. Bob Duff, vice chairman of the Connecticut General Assembly's Transportation Committee. "We can't fix the problems overnight, but the state's overall economic vitality is in the crosshairs of doing nothing or having vision for the future."

The 33-page report, "Future Mobility in Connecticut: Meeting the State's Needs for Safe and Efficient Mobility," is available at [tinyurl.com/TRIP-CT](http://tinyurl.com/TRIP-CT).