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## TRIP Report Examines Missouri's Infrastructure Progress, Challenges

Additional funding in recent years has allowed Missouri to accelerate needed bridge repairs and replacement, pavement improvements, and safety upgrades but significant challenges still exist for the state's surface transportation infrastructure, the nonprofit transportation research organization TRIP concluded in a report released Thursday.

Transportation funding through voter approval of Amendment 3 in 2004 allowed Missouri to reclaim money that had been diverted to other programs. That approved funding also allowed for the sale of \$2 billion in bonds to launch numerous critical projects.

"However, this progress will be reversed in the coming years, as state spending on needed projects decreases sharply in the future and transportation spending in the state drops drastically," according to the report. As a result, TRIP states, Missouri will not be able to move forward with as many projects to modernize the state's transportation system.

Notwithstanding Missouri's surface transportation infrastructure improvements in recent years, the state ranks seventh nationwide when it comes to structurally deficient bridges, TRIP notes. Overall, 17% of the state's bridges were rated in that category last year, while another 12% were deemed functionally obsolete.

The Missouri Department of Transportation forecasts a net decrease of 300 structurally deficient and functionally obsolete bridges owned by the agency between 2008 and 2014 due its Safe and Sound Bridge Improvement Program. Unless additional funding is made available, however, MoDOT projects that those strides will be erased by 2018 and the share of structurally deficient and functionally obsolete bridges will return to 2008 levels.

"With funding from our construction budget cut in half, we are facing a transportation crisis in Missouri," MoDOT Director Kevin Keith said in a statement. "We will soon be at risk of losing millions of dollars for state road and bridge projects because we'll be unable to match federal funding. Without additional funding for transportation, we won't be able to deliver the projects that make our highways safer, create jobs, and help grow our local communities."

Missouri has 14% of its major state and locally maintained roads rated in poor condition. In addition, the state's roads are becoming increasingly congested and traffic tie-ups are posing huge challenges on major urban roads, according to TRIP. In 2008, 44% of Missouri's urban highways were congested during peak travel times.

TRIP also found that Missouri's drivers lose more than \$4 billion annually as the result of traffic crashes, extra vehicle operating expenses, and the cost of lost time and wasted fuel due to congestion.

The 35-page report, "Future Mobility in Missouri: Meeting the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility," is available at [bit.ly/Missouri-Report](http://bit.ly/Missouri-Report).