

## Report examines worsening travel infrastructure in Massachusetts

### State must increase transportation investment, TRIP report finds

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The condition of Massachusetts' highways, bridges and transit system are likely to worsen, leading to further deterioration, increased travel delays, and increased costs to drivers, unless the state is able to increase transportation investment, according to a new report released on June 23 by TRIP, a national nonprofit transportation research group.

According to the report, titled "Future Mobility in Massachusetts: Meeting the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility," the Massachusetts Transportation Finance Commission estimates the state faces a \$10.5 billion gap in road and bridge funding over the next 20 years and a transit funding shortfall of between \$4.8 and \$9 billion. This shortfall covers only preservation of the transportation system and does not include the cost of needed expansion or major reconstruction of the current system.

If unaddressed, numerous critical projects to repair and modernize the state's transportation system will be left unfunded or unable to proceed. The TRIP report includes a list of needed transportation projects in the state that will not move forward unless additional funding is secured.

"It is critical that Massachusetts find the resources to develop and maintain a transportation system that can carry the state into the 21st century. Further deterioration of the state's roads, highways and transit system will diminish quality of life in Massachusetts and hinder economic development," said Will Wilkins, TRIP's executive director.

The report found that 52% of Massachusetts' bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete and conditions are expected to worsen in the future under current transportation funding projections. In 2007, the latest year for which data is available, 12% of the state's bridges were structurally deficient, and 40% were functionally obsolete. This includes all state, municipal and local bridges 20 feet and longer. A total of 35% of

Interstate bridges in Massachusetts are within one rating point of being considered structurally deficient. The TRIP report contains a list of the 100 most heavily traveled structurally deficient bridges in the state.

Massachusetts' roads and highways are increasingly deteriorated, too, with more than one-third of the state's major roads and highways in poor or fair condition. According to the report, 9% of the state's major roads are rated in poor condition, and an additional 27 percent are in fair condition. This includes Interstates, highways, connecting urban arterials and key urban streets that are maintained by state or local governments.

Driving on roads in need of repair costs Massachusetts' motorists \$718 million annually in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs and increased fuel consumption and tire wear. Included in the TRIP report is a list of 100 segments of deteriorated roads that are most in need of repair or replacement.

Because of inadequate funding for maintenance and expansion, Massachusetts' transit system is increasingly in disrepair. Approximately 38% of Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) buses are in poor or marginal condition and 82% of rapid transit rail cars are in poor or marginal condition. In addition, 69% of commuter rail locomotives and a total of 84% of commuter rail coaches are rated in poor or marginal condition, while nearly 1 in 5 miles of rail track need immediate repair.

According to TRIP's calculations, Massachusetts' major roads and highways are among the busiest in the nation and face growing congestion due to increases in population and vehicle travel.

Source: TRIP June 23, 2008