

## TRIP releases report on road, bridge conditions in Pa.

### State faces annual transportation shortfall of \$3.5 billion to meet needs

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Roads and bridges that are deficient, congested or lack desirable safety features cost the average Philadelphia motorist \$1,474 each year, a total of \$8.2 billion statewide, due to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes and congestion-related delays. And Pennsylvania faces an annual transportation-funding shortfall of \$3.5 billion to meet highway, bridge and transit needs. An increased investment in transportation improvements at the local, state and federal level could relieve traffic congestion, improve road, bridge and transit conditions, boost safety, and support long-term economic growth in Pennsylvania, according to a new report released Nov. 22 by TRIP, a Washington, D.C.-based national transportation organization.

The TRIP report, "Future Mobility in Pennsylvania: Meeting the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility," finds that 72% of major roads in Philadelphia are in poor or mediocre condition and half of bridges in the area are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. Fifty-nine percent of major urban roads in the area are congested during peak times, and the average Philadelphia driver loses 38 hours per year due to congestion. Traffic crashes in the Philadelphia area claimed the lives of 113 people in 2008, giving the area a fatality rate of 5.6 fatalities per 100,000 population.

Deficient roads cost the average Philadelphia driver \$1,474 each year in the form of extra vehicle operating costs (VOC) as a result of driving on roads in need of repair, lost time and fuel due to congestion-related delays, and the cost of traffic crashes. The TRIP report calculated the cost to motorists of insufficient roads in Pennsylvania's largest urban areas: Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Scranton / Wilkes-Barre.

Approximately half of bridges and overpasses in Philadelphia show significant deterioration or do not meet current design standards. Twenty-four percent of Philadelphia bridges are structurally deficient, meaning there is significant deterioration to the bridge deck, supports or other major components. Structurally deficient bridges are often posted for lower weight or are closed to traffic, restricting or redirecting large vehicles, including commercial trucks, school buses and emergency service vehicles. An additional 26% of area bridges are functionally obsolete. These bridges no longer meet current highway design standards, often because of narrow lanes, inadequate clearances or poor alignment with the approaching road.

"It is critical that the state adequately fund its surface transportation system so that Pennsylvania drivers and businesses have a safe and reliable system of roads, bridges and public transit. Unless the transportation system is adequately funded, the costs will continue to be passed along to drivers at a time when many can ill afford it," said Will Wilkins, executive director of TRIP.

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