



TRIP Report Assails Condition of Ohio's Infrastructure

Tuesday, April 19, 2011

A new report finds that 26 percent of Ohio's major roads are in need of repair, 24 percent of its bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, 45 percent of the state's urban highways are congested, and Ohio's rural traffic fatality rate is nearly four and a half times that of all other roads in the state.

According to The Road Information Program (TRIP) report, "Future Mobility in Ohio: Meeting the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility," nine percent of Ohio's major roads are rated in poor condition and an additional 17 percent are in mediocre condition. Ten percent of the state's bridges are structurally deficient and 14 percent are functionally obsolete. These bridges are inspected regularly and are safe for travel, but many are in need of rehabilitation.

TRIP recently held a press conference in Columbus, Ohio, to release the results of the report. In the Columbus metro area, the state's largest, 22 percent of major roads are in either poor or mediocre condition.

In addition to deteriorating road and bridge conditions, the state's roads are also becoming increasingly crowded, as commuting and commerce are constrained by growing traffic congestion on Ohio's major urban highways. In 2008, 45

percent of the state's urban highways were congested during peak travel times. And, although the state's overall traffic fatality rate of 0.92 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel (VMT) in 2009 was lower than the national average of 1.14 fatalities per 100 million VMT, the TRIP report finds that Ohio's rural, non-Interstate roads have a traffic fatality rate that is nearly four and a half times higher than that on all other roads in the state (2.20 vs. 0.50 fatalities per 100 million VMT).

TRIP estimates that Ohio roadways that lack some desirable safety features, have inadequate capacity to meet travel demands or have poor pavement conditions, cost the state's drivers approximately \$6.5 billion annually in the financial cost of traffic crashes, additional vehicle operating costs (VOC) due to driving on deteriorated roads, and time and fuel lost due to congestion-related delays. In the Columbus metro area this cost is \$835 per motorist each year.

"The data in the new report underscores how businesses in Ohio need well-maintained transportation systems to be successful," said Janet Kavinoky, vice president of Americans for Transportation Mobility, a coalition of national business and labor organizations. "Improving roads, maintaining bridges, and expanding transit options will

save the state's employers billions and help create thousands of new jobs."

A 2007 analysis by the Federal Highway Administration found that every \$1 billion invested in highway construction would support approximately 27,800 jobs, including approximately 9,500 in the construction sector, approximately 4,300 jobs in industries supporting the construction sector, and approximately 14,000 other jobs induced in non-construction related sectors of the economy. The federal surface transportation program, which expires on September 30, 2011, remains a critical source of funding for road and bridge repairs and transit improvements in Ohio.

"Ohio's deficient transportation system is hitting the state's drivers in the wallet at a time when many can ill afford it. It is much more cost effective to invest in building a sound transportation system than to pass along the cost of a deteriorated system to the state's motorists," said Will Wilkins, executive director of TRIP. "It is critical that Ohio adequately fund its transportation system and that Congress produces a timely and adequately funded federal surface transportation program. Thousands of jobs and the state's economy are riding on it."