TRIP | A National Transportation Research Nonprofit

SAVING LIVES, TIME, AND MONEY

MAINTAINING THE ENDURING VALUE OF AMERICA'S GREATEST INFRASTRUCTURE ACHIEVEMENT, THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM AT 70

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Founded in 1971, TRIP ® of Washington, DC, is a nonprofit organization that researches, evaluates and distributes economic and technical data on surface transportation issues. TRIP is sponsored by insurance companies, equipment manufacturers, distributors and suppliers; businesses involved in highway and transit engineering and construction; labor unions; and organizations concerned with efficient and safe surface transportation.

Executive Summary

At seventy, the Interstate Highway System continues to provide significant safety and reliability benefits, but is deteriorating, experiencing increased congestion as vehicle travel grows quickly, and is aging rapidly yet there is no adequate plan for its long-term health. While it remains the workhorse of American travel as the U.S. celebrates its 250th year, the Interstate Highway System is suffering from severe wear and escalating congestion. To meet future demands, the system urgently requires sweeping modernization, capacity expansion, and foundational reconstruction.

In 2019, the Transportation Research Board (TRB) provided Congress with a report that found that the nation's Interstates are heavily congested and aging, with large portions of the system in need of major rebuilding and comprehensive upgrades. The report found that addressing the needs of the Interstate Highway System will require more than a doubling of current investment to adequately improve the system's condition, reliability and safety, and that the restoration of the nation's Interstate Highway System should be based on a strong collaborative effort between federal leadership and the states.

TRIP's *America's Interstate Highway System at 70* report provides the latest information on the Interstate System, including its benefit in saving lives, time and money, pavement conditions, bridge conditions, travel trends, traffic congestion levels, truck use, and traffic safety. It reviews the findings of the TRB Interstate report and concludes with recommended actions - based on the findings of the TRB report - to ensure that the system can meet the nation's transportation needs.

INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS SAVE LIVES, TIME AND MONEY

The annual benefit of the Interstate Highway System to Americans is estimated to be $65 billion annually as a result of improved traffic safety and reduced traffic congestion.

- Travel on the nation's Interstate highways is nearly two and a half times safer than travel on all other roadways due to improved roadway safety features resulting in an annual benefit of $28 billion in reduced economic costs as a result of fewer serious and fatal traffic crashes.

- The Interstate Highway System reduces traffic congestion by providing more efficient and reliable travel, which provides $37 billion annually in benefits due to reduced delays and fuel consumption.

- The following chart indicates the states that receive the largest annual benefit from its Interstate System in reduced safety and congestion costs. Data for all states can be found in the Appendices.

RANK	STATE	Annual Safety and Congestion Benefits (in Billions)
1	California	**$7.2**
2	Texas	**$6.1**
3	Florida	**$3.7**
4	Georgia	**$2.9**
5	Illinois	**$2.7**
6	Tennessee	**$2.4**
7	Ohio	**$2.4**
8	North Carolina	**$2.1**
9	New York	**$2.1**
10	Virginia	**$2.0**
11	Arizona	**$1.7**
12	Pennsylvania	**$1.7**
13	Michigan	**$1.7**
14	South Carolina	**$1.6**
15	Maryland	**$1.5**
16	Washington	**$1.5**
17	Kentucky	**$1.5**
18	New Jersey	**$1.5**
19	Louisiana	**$1.5**
20	Indiana	**$1.3**

TRB INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM REPORT REQUESTED BY CONGRESS

In 2019, the Transportation Research Board (TRB), a division of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine prepared a report evaluating the condition of the Interstate Highway System and providing recommendations on actions required to restore and upgrade the System to meet the growing and shifting transportation demands of the 21st Century. The findings of the TRB report include:

- The Interstate Highway System has a persistent and growing backlog of physical and operational deficiencies because of age, heavy use and deferred reinvestment, and is in need of major reconstruction and modernization.

- Most roadway segments of the Interstate Highway System retain their original underlying foundations and need to be completely rebuilt from the subbase up.

- The repeated resurfacing of Interstate highways is not addressing the deterioration of roadway subbases. Repeated resurfacing -rather than addressing underlying foundational issues - provides diminishing returns as additional resurfacing results in increasingly shorter periods of pavement smoothness and is likely to result in higher lifecycle costs than periodic reconstruction.

- The modernization of the Interstate Highway System needs to include the following: reconstruction of the majority of Interstate highways and bridges, including their foundations; the upgrade of most interchanges to improve their function and safety; the addition of capacity along existing corridors, the construction of new routes, and the conversion of some existing routes to Interstate standards; the modification of some urban segments to maintain connectivity while remediating economic and social disruption; and, further improvement of highway safety features.

- To address the physical and operational deficiencies identified in the TRB report, annual investment in the Interstate Highway System should be increased by approximately two-and-a-half times, from its level of $23 billion in 2018 to $57 billion annually over the next 20 years.

INTERSTATE USE AND CHARACTERISTICS

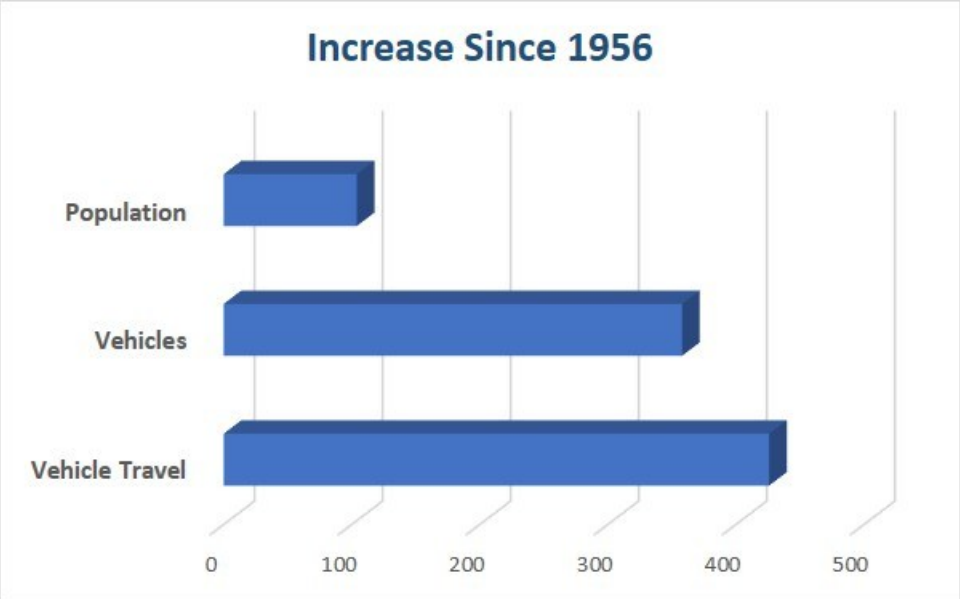
The Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, which has been called the most ambitious public works project built since the Roman Empire, is the most critical link in the nation's transportation system.

- The Interstate Highway System, which includes 2.6 percent of all roadway lane miles in the U.S., carries 24 percent of the nation's vehicle travel.

- The 48,830-mile Interstate Highway System includes 10 transcontinental routes and highways varying in length from 18 miles to more than 3,000 miles.

- Since funding of the Interstate system was approved in 1956 to 2024, annual vehicle miles of travel (VMT) in the U.S. increased by 426 percent, from 626 billion miles driven, to approximately 3.3 trillion miles driven.

- From 1956 to 2024, the number of vehicles in the nation increased by 358 percent, from 65 million vehicles to 298 million vehicles. The nation's population increased by 104 percent, from 168 million to 343 million during this time.



INTERSTATE HISTORY

The need for a transcontinental highway system in the U.S. was recognized as early as 1919, and an initial Interstate plan was completed in the late 1930s. But it was not until Congress approved a suitable funding mechanism in 1956 that the Interstate Highway System became a reality.

- In 1919, Lieutenant Dwight D. Eisenhower participated in the U.S. Army's first transcontinental motor convoy, from Washington, DC, to San Francisco, California. The trip took 62 days, largely due to inadequate roads and highways.

- In 1954, President Eisenhower appointed a committee to draft a proposal to fund a national system of Interstate Highways. The initial proposal, subsequently dismissed by Congress, called for financing a national Interstate System through bond financing.

- Nationwide construction of the Interstate Highway System began in 1956 following the approval of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. Some segments of urban and regional highways built prior to 1956 were later incorporated into the Interstate Highway System.

- The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, signed into law by President Dwight Eisenhower on June 29, 1956, called for the construction of a 41,000-mile system of Interstate highways. The Act called for the Interstates to be paid for by taxes on motorists, such as the federal motor fuel tax, with the federal government paying 90 percent of the initial construction costs.

- The federal motor fuel tax was set at three cents-per-gallon in 1956. Last increased in 1993, the tax is currently 18.4 cents-per-gallon.

- The first Interstate construction project under the provisions of the 1956 Interstate legislation was in Missouri on August 13, 1956, on a portion of Interstate 70 in St. Charles County.

INTERSTATE RECONSTRUCTION

After being the first state to start an Interstate construction project under the provision of the 1956 Interstate legislation, Missouri is again leading the nation by undertaking the re-construction of its Interstate highways, starting with Interstate 70, which spans the entire width of the state from St. Louis to Kansas City.

- Nearly 70 years after being the first state to begin construction on the Interstate highway system, Missouri is again leading the country in being the first state to commit to a full re-construction of its Interstate highway system, starting with the $2.8 billion re-construction and expansion of Interstate 70 from St. Louis to Kansas City to three-lanes in each direction.

INTERSTATE ROAD AND BRIDGE CONDITIONS

While pavement smoothness and bridge conditions on the Interstate system are acceptable, as the aging system's foundations continue to deteriorate, most Interstate highways, bridges and interchanges will need to be reconstructed or replaced.

- Pavements on 11 percent of Interstate highways are in poor or mediocre condition, with three percent rated in poor condition and eight percent rated in mediocre condition. Another nine percent of Interstate pavements are in fair condition, and the remaining 80 percent are in good condition.

- The chart below shows the states with the greatest share of their Interstate highways with pavements in poor condition. Data for all states can be found in Appendix A.

RANK	STATE	Pct. In Poor Condition
1	Hawaii	**16%**
2	Louisiana	**8%**
3	Colorado	**8%**
4	California	**7%**
5	New York	**6%**
6	Delaware	**6%**
7	Washington	**5%**
8	Maryland	**5%**
9	New Mexico	**5%**
10	New Jersey	**5%**
11	Michigan	**4%**
12	Pennsylvania	4%
13	Indiana	**4%**
14	Arizona	**3%**
15	Arkansas	**3%**
16	Mississippi	**3%**
17	Massachusetts	**3%**
18	Illinois	**3%**
19	Oklahoma	**3%**
20	Virginia	**3%**

- Three percent of the nation's Interstate bridges are rated in poor/structurally deficient condition, and 59 percent are rated in fair condition. A bridge is rated in poor/structurally deficient condition if there is significant deterioration of the bridge deck, supports or other major components.

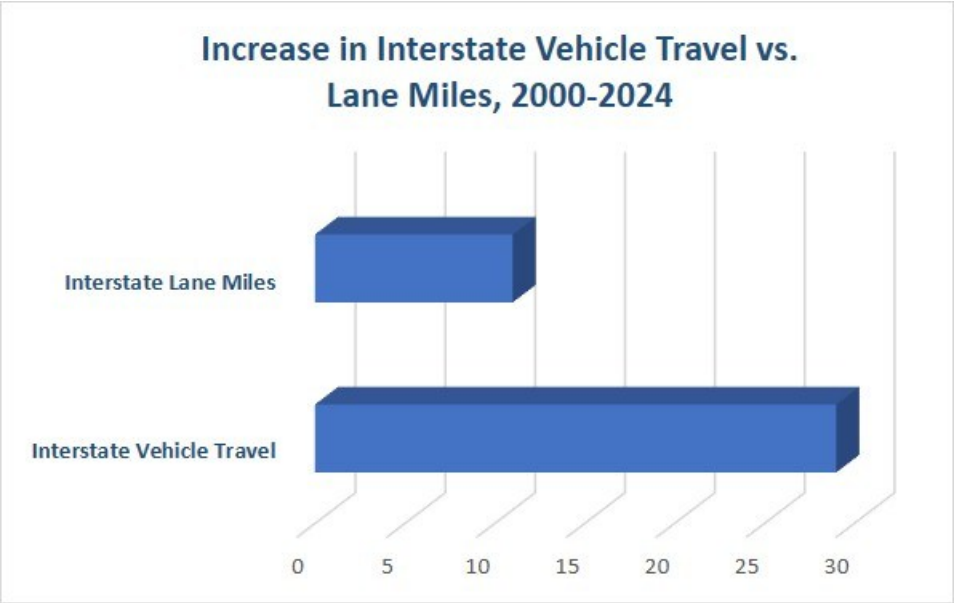
- The chart below shows states with the greatest share of Interstate bridges rated poor/structurally deficient. Data for all states can be found in Appendix A.

RANK	STATE	Percent Interstate Bridges Rated Poor
1	WEST VIRGINIA	10%
2	NEW YORK	8%
3	MASSACHUSETTS	7%
4	ILLINOIS	7%
5	RHODE ISLAND	7%
6	WASHINGTON	7%
7	MAINE	6%
8	MICHIGAN	5%
9	MISSOURI	5%
10	WYOMING	5%
11	COLORADO	5%
12	CALIFORNIA	4%
13	VERMONT	4%
14	KENTUCKY	3%
15	PENNSYLVANIA	3%
16	TENNESSEE	3%
17	CONNECTICUT	3%
18	NEW MEXICO	3%
19	NEW HAMPSHIRE	3%
20	NEW JERSEY	3%

INTERSTATE CONGESTION

With vehicle travel growth significantly outpacing new lane additions, traffic congestion on the Interstate Highway System is steadily escalating. Consequently, nearly 50% of the nation's urban Interstates are now congested.

- Travel on the nation’s Interstate highways is increasing at a rate nearly triple the rate that new lane capacity is being added. From 2000 to 2024, vehicle travel on Interstate highways increased 29 percent, from 662 billion miles traveled annually to 854 billion miles. From 2000 to 2024, lane miles of Interstates increased 11 percent, from 208,499 to 231,104 miles.



- Forty-nine percent of the nation's urban Interstate highways (9,427 of 19,368 miles) are considered congested because they carry traffic levels that result in significant delays during peak travel hours. The chart below shows the states with the greatest share of their urban Interstate highways considered congested. Data for all states can be found in Appendix A.

RANK	STATE	Congested Urban Interstates
1	California	**88%**
2	Maryland	**83%**
3	New Jersey	**81%**
4	Florida	**79%**
5	Georgia	**69%**
6	Massachusetts	**68%**
7	Delaware	**66%**
8	Connecticut	**65%**
9	Texas	**64%**
10	Hawaii	**61%**
11	Washington	**57%**
12	New Hampshire	**57%**
13	Minnesota	**55%**
14	Utah	**54%**
15	Colorado	**54%**
16	Rhode Island	**53%**
17	Arizona	**52%**
18	Kentucky	**52%**
19	North Carolina	**50%**
20	Tennessee	**49%**

- The chart below shows the states with the greatest increase in vehicle miles of travel on their Interstate highways from 2000 to 2024. Data for all states can be found in Appendix A.

RANK	STATE	2000-24 VMT Increase
1	Nevada	**91%**
2	Utah	**75%**
3	North Carolina	**67%**
4	Louisiana	**63%**
5	Texas	**61%**
6	Idaho	**58%**
7	Colorado	**57%**
8	Florida	**55%**
9	Arkansas	**49%**
10	South Dakota	**48%**
11	Mississippi	**47%**
12	Wisconsin	46%
13	North Dakota	**45%**
14	Arizona	**44%**
15	South Carolina	**44%**
16	Montana	**43%**
17	Oklahoma	**41%**
18	Tennessee	**41%**
19	Alabama	**40%**
20	New Jersey	**36%**

- Based on analysis from the Texas Transportation Institute at Texas A & M University, TRIP estimates that the Interstate Highway System, which provides improved access and reduced congestion, annually reducing total vehicle delays by 1.3 billion hours and reduces gasoline consumption by 369 million gallons.

- The chart below shows the states with the busiest urban Interstates, as measured by average daily traffic per lane mile. Data for all states can be found in the Appendix A.

RANK	STATE	Daily 2024 Interstate Travel Per Urban Lane Mile
1	California	19,006
2	Maryland	18,250
3	Florida	17,152
4	New Jersey	15,999
5	Georgia	15,901
6	Texas	15,880
7	Delaware	15,756
8	Rhode Island	15,468
9	Connecticut	15,350
10	Massachusetts	15,089
11	Tennessee	14,926
12	Arizona	14,912
13	Hawaii	14,851
14	Washington	14,551
15	Louisiana	14,466
16	Colorado	14,428
17	Virginia	14,219
18	Utah	13,896
19	Kentucky	13,882
20	North Carolina	13,867

INTERSTATE FATALITY RATES AND SAFETY

The Interstate Highway System provides a network of highways with a variety of safety designs that greatly reduce the likelihood of serious crashes. Travel on the nation's Interstate highways is more than twice as safe as travel on all other roadways.

- The Interstate Highway System, which carried 24 percent of the nation's travel in 2024, accounted for only 12 percent of the nation's traffic fatalities as a result of superior safety features.

- The features that make Interstates safer than other roads include separation from other roads and rail lines, a minimum of four-lanes, gentler curves, paved shoulders, median barriers, and rumble strips to warn drivers when they are leaving the roadway.

- Travel on the nation's Interstate highways is nearly two and a half times as safe as travel on all other roadways. The fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles of travel on the Interstate System in 2024 was 0.57, compared to 1.39 on non-Interstate routes. Data for all states can be found in the Appendices.

- TRIP estimates that the Interstate Highway System saved 6,990 lives in 2024, based on an estimate of the number of additional fatalities that would have occurred had Interstate traffic been carried by other major roadways, which often have higher traffic fatality rates and may lack the safety features common to Interstate routes.

- Based on TRIP estimates, the chart below shows the states where the most lives were saved in 2024 due to the increased traffic safety provided by the Interstate Highway System. Data for all states can be found in the Appendix B.

RANK	STATE	LIVES SAVED BY INTERSTATES IN 2024
1	California	616
2	Texas	600
3	Florida	355
4	Tennessee	319
5	Illinois	315
6	Arizona	272
7	Georgia	270
8	Ohio	263
9	South Carolina	243
10	Pennsylvania	234
11	North Carolina	227
12	Kentucky	215
13	Virginia	206
14	Michigan	203
15	New York	189
16	Louisiana	180
17	Washington	172
18	Alabama	135
19	Maryland	134
20	Colorado	133

INTERSTATE TRAVEL AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Interstate Highway System is the backbone of the nation's economy and has played a critical role in improving the country's business productivity. Since 2000, the amount of combination truck travel on Interstates has increased at a rate more than double that of total travel on the system.

- The Interstate system carried 57 percent of all large commercial truck travel in the U.S. in 2024.
- Travel by combination trucks on the Interstate Highway System increased 61 percent from 2000 to 2024, while overall vehicle travel increased 29 percent.
- Travel by combination trucks, which are the large trucks that carry the majority of freight shipped in the U.S., accounted for 13 percent of all vehicle miles of travel on the Interstate Highway System in 2024.
- The chart below shows the states with the greatest share of Interstate vehicle travel by combination trucks. Data for all states can be found in Appendix A.

RANK	STATE	Percent Interstate Vehicle Travel by Combination Trucks
1	Wyoming	38%
2	Arkansas	26%
3	Indiana	25%
4	Nebraska	23%
5	Iowa	22%
6	Nevada	20%
7	Tennessee	20%
8	Mississippi	19%
9	Montana	19%
10	North Dakota	19%
11	Illinois	18%
12	Missouri	18%
13	Idaho	18%
14	West Virginia	17%
15	Kentucky	16%
16	South Dakota	16%
17	Pennsylvania	16%
18	Oregon	16%
19	Arizona	16%
20	New Mexico	15%

- Every year, $18.9 trillion in goods are shipped from sites in the U.S.

- Seventy-two percent of the goods shipped annually from sites in the U.S. are carried by trucks and another 14 percent are carried by courier services, which use trucks for part of the deliveries.

- The completion of the vast majority of the Interstate system by the 1980s, and the deregulation of the U.S. trucking industry, resulted in a significant improvement in the competitiveness of U.S. business. The cost of moving freight, as measured by U.S. business logistics costs, dropped from 16 percent of U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1980 to nine percent in 2025.

- The TRB report found that U.S. counties either on an Interstate highway or within 20 miles of an Interstate are anticipated to grow in population through 2060 at a rate approximately seven times greater than counties that are at least 20 miles from an Interstate highway.

- The Interstate Highway System has reduced travel times between destinations throughout the U.S. The improved mobility provided by the Interstate Highway System has given Americans greater choices about where they live, work, shop and spend their leisure time.

- Forty-nine of the 50 top truck bottlenecks identified by the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) in its 2026 annual list of the nation's top 100 truck bottlenecks are on Interstate Highways. The top 20 truck bottlenecks are listed below.

RANK	STATE	TOP BOTTLENECKS
1	IL	Chicago, IL: I-294 at I-290/I-88
2	NJ	Fort Lee, NJ: I-95 at SR 4
3	GA	Atlanta, GA: I-285 at I-85 (North)
4	TX	Houston, TX: I-45 at I-69/US 59
5	GA	Atlanta, GA: I-75 at I-285 (North)
6	GA	Atlanta, GA: I-20 at I-285 (West)
7	TN	Nashville, TN: I-24/I-40 at I-440 (East)
8	TX	Houston, TX: I-10 at I-69/US 59
9	OH	Cincinnati, OH: I-71 at I-75
10	GA	McDonough, GA: I-75
11	TX	Dallas, TX: I-45 at I-30
12	CA	Ontario, CA: I-10 at I-15
13	TX	Houston, TX: I-45 at I-610 (North)
14	CT	Hartford, CT: I-84 at I-91
15	GA	Atlanta, GA: I-20 at I-285 (East)
16	CA	Los Angeles, CA: SR 60 at SR 57
17	IN	Indianapolis, IN: I-65 at I-70 (North)
18	DC	Washington, DC: I-495 (West Side)
19	TN	Nashville, TN: I-40 at I-65 (East)
20	LA	Baton Rouge, LA: I-10 at I-110

INTERSTATE FUNDING CHALLENGES

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has determined that the nation faces a significant backlog in needed Interstate highway repairs and improvements.

- The current backlog of needed improvements on the nation's Interstate Highway System is estimated by the USDOT to be $196 billion.

- The backlog on the nation's Interstate Highway System includes $58 billion needed to improve pavement conditions, $65 billion to improve bridges and $73 billion for needed system expansion and enhancement.

The primary source of revenue for the Interstate Highway System is the federal surface transportation program, which was set to expire on September 30, 2026.

- A primary funding source for the Interstate Highway System is the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), enacted in November 2021. While the IIJA offers a major opportunity to upgrade the safety and reliability of America's roads, bridges, and transit, its upcoming expiration on September 30, 2026, creates a pressing deadline for reauthorization of the program.

- The federal Highway Trust Fund is primarily financed by federal fuel taxes, specifically an 18.4 cents-per-gallon tax on motor fuel and a 24.4 cents-per-gallon tax on diesel. In turn, the Trust

Fund distributes this revenue to state and local governments to pay for highway and bridge repairs, public transit, and facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESTORING THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

Restoring and upgrading the Interstate Highway System to meet 21st Century transportation needs will require strong federal leadership and a robust federal-state partnerships to reestablish the Interstate Highway System as the nation's premier transportation network. The TRB Interstate report notes that "the scale and scope of the Interstate reinvestment imperative is daunting."

- The following recommendations, based on the findings and recommendations of the TRB Interstate report, provide a roadmap for the restoration of the Interstate Highway System:
    - Reconstruct the nation's Interstate Highway System, including pavements, bridges and interchanges
    - Improve safety features on Interstate highways
    - Right-size the Interstate Highway System by:
        - ✓ upgrading some existing roadways to Interstate standard
        - ✓ adding needed additional highway capacity on existing routes to maintain and improve mobility
        - ✓ adding additional corridors to accommodate demographic and economic growth
        - ✓ modifying some urban segments to maintain connectivity while remediating economic and social disruption

The findings and statistics presented in this report are based on the latest available data. Sources of information for this report include: The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Transportation Research Board (TRB), the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) and the U.S. Census Bureau. Cover photo credit: U.S. Geological Survey.

Introduction

Stretching from South Florida to the Canadian border in Maine, straddling the Puget Sound region of Washington State and reaching the Mexican border south of San Diego, the Interstate Highway System connects the United States, providing its citizens and visitors with an unrivaled level of access and mobility.

The Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, built at a cost of $114 billion ($250 billion in current dollars), has been called the most ambitious public works project built since the age of the Roman Empire, and is the backbone of America's economy and the most critical element of the nation's transportation system. Today, as the nation celebrates its 250th birthday, the Interstate Highway System continues to provide Americans with economic growth, improved traffic safety, and convenient access, while also playing a role in the nation's military defense strategy. In fact, TRIP estimates that the benefit to Americans of the Interstate Highway System in improved traffic safety and reduced congestion is $65 billion annually.

Concerned with the decline in the condition, reliability, and safety of the nation's preeminent transportation system, Congress asked the Transportation Research Board (TRB), a division of the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, to develop the "Renewing the National Commitment to the Interstate Highway System: A Foundation for the Future," report, included an examination of the condition of the Interstate Highway System and provided recommendations on actions necessary to restore and upgrade the system to meet the transportation needs of the 21st Century. The findings of TRB's report, confirmed Congress' fears for the nation's Interstate highways.

"The Interstate Highway System's physical condition and operating performance continue to exhibit deficiencies, and much of the Interstate System is already past due for major reconstruction and modernization as a result of heavy use and the effects of age, exacerbated by escalating use and deferred reinvestment," notes the report.[1] " These aging and intensely used segments, whose numbers are expected to grow over the next 20 years, are poorly positioned to accommodate even modest projections of future traffic growth, much less the levels of growth actually experienced over the past 50 years."[2]

This report examines the benefits, history and impact of the Interstate Highway System, its current use and condition, and the future needs of the nation's most critical transportation system. It concludes with a set of recommendations to restore, renew and upgrade the nation's most critical transportation system.

Development of the U.S. Interstate System

In 1919, Lieutenant Dwight D. Eisenhower participated in the U.S. Army's first transcontinental motor convoy, from Washington, DC, to San Francisco, California. During the 62 days it took to cross the country, the convoy experienced many difficulties, including roads that were muddy, narrow or otherwise inadequate, and bridges that often could not support the vehicles in the convoy.

A generation later, General Eisenhower saw firsthand how an efficient, effective highway transportation system benefited a nation when the German Autobahn network, opened in 1935, provided a significant military advantage to Germany.

The United States also began looking at the feasibility of constructing a series of interregional highways in the late 1930s. In 1938 Congress directed the then Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) to prepare a study on the possibility of building a national system of toll highways. The resulting 1939 BPR report concluded that it would be impossible to finance a national system of highways strictly through charging tolls but did recommend that the U.S. build a system of approximately 26,700 miles of transcontinental highways. The BPR report also called for many of the design elements found on

modern Interstate highways, including limited access, which separates highway traffic from other traffic and from trains. The report also suggested that the nation's highways should connect with the center of large cities, including beltways around large urban areas, and bypass small towns.

Further attempts to develop a national highway system were interrupted by World War II. But, as the Allies gained the upper hand in the war, Congress started to turn its attention to post-war challenges, including consideration of a modern highway system to support the nation's growing economy and improve safety and mobility. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944 authorized the BPR to designate a system of approximately 40,000 miles of Interstate highways, which proved very similar to the routes ultimately approved as the national Interstate System. But, the 1944 highway bill did not specify any additional funds for construction of the highways, other than the small amount of funds made available by the federal government for highway construction.

The 1944 Highway Act identified the need for a national system of interconnected highways but left out a key piece of the puzzle – how to fund a uniformly designed national highway system, which would have significant differences in construction costs and traffic volume, depending on location. Even without significant federal funding available, cities and states began to move forward on their own, with some additional highway networks being built or planned in current Interstate corridors, under various financing mechanisms. These early highway projects included toll highways, such as the Pennsylvania Turnpike and the New York Thruway, and early urban highways including the Los Angeles Freeway System and the Detroit Expressway System. However, for most motorists and businesses, the inadequate roadway system of the late 1940s and early 1950s contributed to growing human and economic losses, as cars and trucks jostled for position on the nation's inadequate, narrow and winding roads and streets.

In 1954 President Eisenhower appointed a committee to draft a proposal to fund a national system of Interstate Highways. Eisenhower noted that the nation's obsolete highway system penalized Americans through increased traffic deaths, the waste of time caused by traffic delays, the increased cost of freight movement, and the inability of the nation's highways to meet the mobility demands that would be caused by a regional catastrophe or national defense emergency.

The initial plan prepared at President Eisenhower's request called for funding a national Interstate System through bond financing, but Congress dismissed the use of bond revenue as the primary source of Interstate highway financing. In 1956, Congress overwhelmingly approved the construction of a national Interstate Highway System when the financing was changed to a pay-as-you-go format that would collect a series of user fees -- most notably a three cents-per-gallon tax on motor fuel -- into a national Highway Trust Fund.

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 called for the construction of a 41,000-mile Interstate Highway System, which was to be completed by 1970 at a cost of approximately $27 billion. The design of the system was very similar to the initial 1944 plan, which called for connecting large urban areas, including routing highways into central cities, largely at the request of mayors and other local politicians who feared that their communities would be left behind without modern highway access. The Interstate system was designated to incorporate approximately 2,000 miles of existing highways, including the Pennsylvania Turnpike and the New York Thruway. The highways were to be built to high design standards that would reduce traffic deaths and increase the amount and speed of traffic that could be carried. These design standards included: full access control to limit entrance and exit to on and off ramps, a minimum of four lanes, medians to separate oncoming lanes, and moderate curves.

Construction of the Interstate System

Following President Eisenhower's signing of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 on June 29, 1956, the nation moved quickly to orient its highway program toward the enormous task of planning and constructing the nation's eventual 48,830-mile Interstate System.

The first Interstate construction project under the provisions of the 1956 Interstate legislation launched in Missouri on August 13, 1956 on a portion of Interstate 70 in St. Charles County.[3] The first section of Interstate highway on which construction was completed under the provisions of the Federal -Aid Highway Act of 1956 was a portion of Interstate 70 in Northeast Kansas, which was completed in November, 1956.[4] The majority of the nation's Interstate system was completed by 1986, when 87 percent of the Interstate system's current length and 71 percent of lane miles were complete. By 1996, 94 percent of the Interstate system's current length and 88 percent of lane miles were complete.[5]

The Interstate Highway System

Today, the 48,830-mile Interstate Highway System includes 10 transcontinental routes and highways varying in length from 18 miles to more than 3,000 miles. The Interstate Highway System includes three east-west transcontinental routes: Interstate 10 from Los Angeles, California to Jacksonville, Florida; Interstate 80 from San Francisco, California to Teaneck, New Jersey; and, Interstate 90 from Seattle, Washington to Boston, Massachusetts.

The Interstate Highway System also includes seven north-south transcontinental routes: Interstate 5 from San Diego, California to Blaine, Washington; Interstate 15 from San Diego, California to Sweetgrass, Montana; Interstate 35 from Laredo, Texas to Duluth, Minnesota; Interstate 55 from New Orleans, Louisiana to Chicago, Illinois; Interstate 65 from Mobile, Alabama to Gary, Indiana; Interstate 75 from Miami, Florida to Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan; and, Interstate 95 from Miami, Florida to Houlton, Maine.

The longest Interstate route, excluding three-digit urban routes, is Interstate 90 from Seattle, Washington to Boston, Massachusetts, which is 3,021 miles in length. The shortest Interstate route, excluding three-digit urban routes, is Interstate 97 in Maryland, which runs 18 miles from Annapolis to Baltimore.

The Interstate route that traverses the most states is Interstate 95, which passes through 15 states: Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine.

Missouri: First to Build and First to Rebuild Its Interstates Highways

Nearly 70 years after being the first state to begin construction on the Interstate highway system, Missouri is again leading the country in being the first state to commit to a full re-construction of its Interstate highway system, starting with the re-construction and expansion of Interstate 70 from St. Louis to Kansas City to three-lanes in each direction.

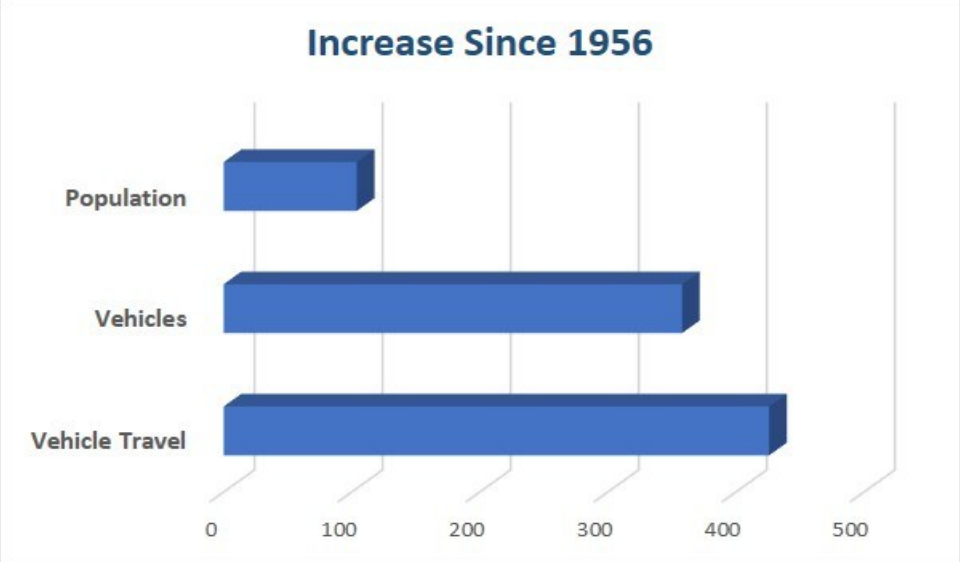
When completed in 2030, the $2.8 billion re-construction, modernization and widening of Interstate 70 will improve highway and bridge conditions, upgrade interchanges, enhance safety and improve reliability on the state's most critical transportation corridor, improving service for the millions of travelers, freight carriers, and communities that rely on this route every year.

Missouri has also begun to proceed with projects to rebuild and modernize portions of Interstate 44, another vital east-west travel and freight corridor in the state.

Trends in Interstate Travel and Capacity

Since the beginning of the Interstate era 70 years ago, the U.S. has seen enormous increases in population, motor vehicles and vehicle travel. From 1956 to 2024, the nation's population increased by 104 percent, from 168 million to 343 million.[6] From 1956 to 2024, the number of motor vehicles increased by 358 percent, from 65 million to 298 million[7], and vehicle travel increased by 426 percent, from 626 billion miles driven annually to approximately 3.3 trillion.[8]

Chart 1. Increase since 1956 in Population, Vehicles and Vehicle Travel in the U.S. (1 = 1956 level).

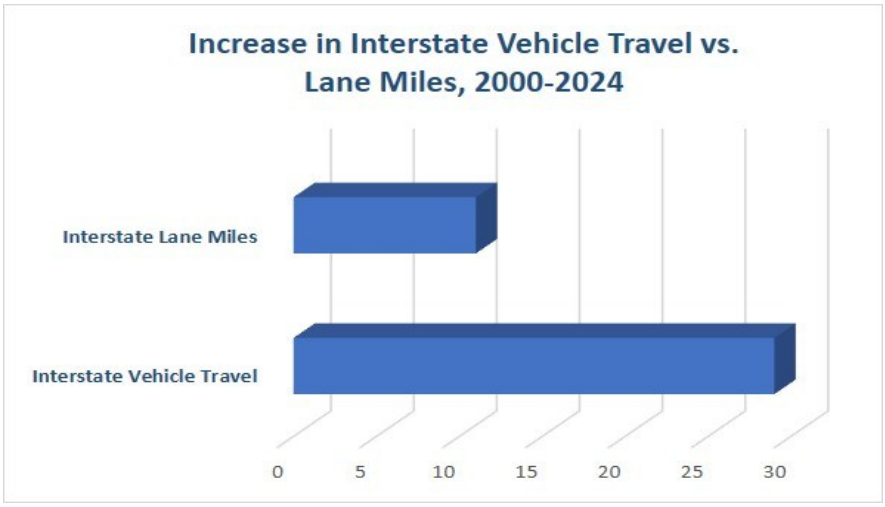


Source: TRIP analysis of U.S. Census and Federal Highway Administration data.

The Interstate Highway System remains the most critical component of the nation's transportation system. While Interstate highways account for only 2.6 percent of all lane miles of roads in the U.S., they carry 24 percent of all travel.[9]

Travel on Interstate highways is growing at nearly triple the rate that new lane capacity is being added. From 2000 to 2024, vehicle travel on Interstate highways increased 29 percent, from 662 billion miles traveled annually to 854 billion miles.[10] Yet, during the same period, total lane miles on the nation's Interstate system increased by 11 percent, from 208,499 miles to 231,129.[11]

Chart 2. Increase in Interstate vehicle travel vs. lane miles from 2000 to 2024.



Source: TRIP analysis of FHWA data.

As a result of the increase in travel on the nation's Interstate system without a corresponding increase in Interstate lane mileage, these highways are more crowded than in the past. The average annual amount of travel per Interstate lane-mile increased 16 percent from 2000 to 2019.[12]

The chart below shows the states with the greatest increase in vehicle miles of travel (VMT) on their Interstate highways from 2000 to 2012. Data for all states can be found in Appendix A.

Chart 3. States with Largest Increase in Interstate Vehicle Travel from 2000 to 2024.

RANK	STATE	2000-24 VMT Increase
1	Nevada	**91%**
2	Utah	**75%**
3	North Carolina	**67%**
4	Louisiana	**63%**
5	Texas	**61%**
6	Idaho	**58%**
7	Colorado	**57%**
8	Florida	**55%**
9	Arkansas	**49%**
10	South Dakota	**48%**
11	Mississippi	**47%**
12	Wisconsin	46%
13	North Dakota	**45%**
14	Arizona	**44%**
15	South Carolina	**44%**
16	Montana	**43%**
17	Oklahoma	**41%**
18	Tennessee	**41%**
19	Alabama	**40%**
20	New Jersey	**36%**

Source: TRIP analysis of FHWA data

Pavement Conditions on the Interstate System

The lifecycle of highway pavements is greatly affected by a transportation agency's ability to perform timely maintenance and upgrades to ensure that surfaces remain smooth as long as possible. The pavement condition of major roads is evaluated and classified as being in poor, mediocre, fair or good condition.

In 2019, pavement on 11 percent of the nation's Interstate highways was rated in poor or mediocre condition, with three percent rated poor and eight percent rated mediocre.[13] Roads rated poor often have pavements that are cracked or broken. In some cases, poor roads can be resurfaced but often are too deteriorated and must be reconstructed. Roads rated in mediocre condition show signs of significant wear and may also have some visible pavement distress. Most pavements in mediocre condition can be repaired by resurfacing, but some may need more extensive reconstruction to return them to good condition. An additional nine percent of Interstate pavements are rated in fair condition, and the remaining 80 percent are rated in good condition.[14]

Pavement deterioration is caused by a combination of traffic, moisture and climate. Moisture often works its way into road surfaces and the materials that form the road's foundation. Road surfaces at intersections are even more prone to deterioration because the slow-moving or standing

loads occurring at these sites subject the pavement to higher levels of stress. It is critical that roads are fixed before they require major repairs because reconstructing roads costs approximately four times more than resurfacing them.[15]

The chart below shows the states with the greatest share of their Interstate highways with pavements in poor condition. Data for all states can be found in Appendix A.

Chart 4. States with greatest share of Interstate highways with pavements in poor condition (2024).

RANK	STATE	Pct. In Poor Condition
1	Hawaii	**16%**
2	Louisiana	**8%**
3	Colorado	**8%**
4	California	**7%**
5	New York	**6%**
6	Delaware	**6%**
7	Washington	**5%**
8	Maryland	**5%**
9	New Mexico	**5%**
10	New Jersey	**5%**
11	Michigan	**4%**
12	Pennsylvania	4%
13	Indiana	**4%**
14	Arizona	**3%**
15	Arkansas	**3%**
16	Mississippi	**3%**
17	Massachusetts	**3%**
18	Illinois	**3%**
19	Oklahoma	**3%**
20	Virginia	**3%**

Source: TRIP analysis of FHWA data.

The 2019 TRB Interstate report found that more than half a century of intensive use has taken a toll on the system, and that most segments of the system need to be rebuilt from the subbase up. The report found that most of the nation's Interstate miles have been subject to age and wear with only periodic resurfacing, resulting in a significant backlog of needed reconstruction of the roadway's original underlying structure.[16] The TRB report found that the repeated resurfacing of Interstate highways is not addressing the deterioration of subbases of the roadways and results in diminishing returns. This leads to shorter periods of serviceability between successive overlays and can produce higher life-cycle costs relative to full-depth periodic pavement reconstruction.[17]

Interstate Bridge Conditions

Of the 58,665 bridges on the U.S. Interstate system, three percent are rated in poor/structurally deficient condition and 59 percent are rated in fair condition.[18]

Bridges that are rated poor/structurally deficient show significant signs of deterioration as a result of use and exposure. The FHWA defines a poor/structurally deficient bridge as one that requires immediate rehabilitation to remain open, is restricted to carrying lighter-weight vehicles, or is closed.

The chart below shows states with the greatest share of Interstate bridges in poor/structurally deficient condition. Data for all states can be found in Appendix A.

Chart 5. States with greatest share of Interstate bridges rated poor/structurally deficient (2025).

RANK	STATE	Percent Interstate Bridges Rated Poor
1	WEST VIRGINIA	10%
2	NEW YORK	8%
3	MASSACHUSETTS	7%
4	ILLINOIS	7%
5	RHODE ISLAND	7%
6	WASHINGTON	7%
7	MAINE	6%
8	MICHIGAN	5%
9	MISSOURI	5%
10	WYOMING	5%
11	COLORADO	5%
12	CALIFORNIA	4%
13	VERMONT	4%
14	KENTUCKY	3%
15	PENNSYLVANIA	3%
16	TENNESSEE	3%
17	CONNECTICUT	3%
18	NEW MEXICO	3%
19	NEW HAMPSHIRE	3%
20	NEW JERSEY	3%

Source: TRIP analysis of National Bridge Inventory data.

Traffic Congestion on the Interstates

The Interstate Highway System was initially designed to provide transportation between the nation's urban areas and to support national defense. While initially designed to connect distant urban areas and support national defense, Interstate highways were ultimately built around and through many cities, becoming the nation's most critical transportation corridors both between and within urban centers.

The continued increase in Interstate highway travel has resulted in a surge in traffic congestion levels. Forty-nine percent of the nation's urban Interstates (9,427 of 19,368 miles) are considered congested because they carry traffic levels that result in delays during peak travel hours.[19] The chart below shows the states with the greatest share of congested urban Interstates.[20] Data for all states can be found in Appendix A.

Chart 6. States with Greatest Share of Urban Interstates That Experience Congestion during Peak Hours, 2024.

RANK	STATE	Congested Urban Interstates
1	California	**88%**
2	Maryland	**83%**
3	New Jersey	**81%**
4	Florida	**79%**
5	Georgia	**69%**
6	Massachusetts	**68%**
7	Delaware	**66%**
8	Connecticut	**65%**
9	Texas	**64%**
10	Hawaii	**61%**
11	Washington	**57%**
12	New Hampshire	**57%**
13	Minnesota	**55%**
14	Utah	**54%**
15	Colorado	**54%**
16	Rhode Island	**53%**
17	Arizona	**52%**
18	Kentucky	**52%**
19	North Carolina	**50%**
20	Tennessee	**49%**

Source: TRIP analysis of FHWA data.

The chart below details states with the busiest urban Interstates, as measured by the number of vehicles carried daily per Interstate lane mile.[21] Data for all states can be found in Appendix A.

Chart 7. States with Greatest Daily Travel Per-Lane-Mile on Urban Interstates, 2024.

RANK	STATE	Daily 2024 Interstate Travel Per Urban Lane Mile
1	California	19,006
2	Maryland	18,250
3	Florida	17,152
4	New Jersey	15,999
5	Georgia	15,901
6	Texas	15,880
7	Delaware	15,756
8	Rhode Island	15,468
9	Connecticut	15,350
10	Massachusetts	15,089
11	Tennessee	14,926
12	Arizona	14,912
13	Hawaii	14,851
14	Washington	14,551
15	Louisiana	14,466
16	Colorado	14,428
17	Virginia	14,219
18	Utah	13,896
19	Kentucky	13,882
20	North Carolina	13,867

Source: TRIP analysis of FHWA data.

And while approximately half of the nation's urban Interstate System is congested, it continues to provide significant reliability to commuters, consumers and businesses. Based on analysis from the Texas Transportation Institute at Texas A & M University, TRIP estimates that the Interstate Highway System, by providing improved access, reduces total vehicle delays by 1.3 billion hours annually and reduces gasoline consumption by 369 million gallons.[22]

Freight Shipment by Large Trucks on Interstates

Every year, $18.9 trillion in goods are shipped from sites in the U.S., to domestic and international destinations.[23] Seventy-two percent of the goods shipped annually from sites in the U.S. are carried by trucks and another 14 percent are carried by courier services, which use trucks for part of their deliveries.[24]

The Interstate Highway System is the nation's most critical set of highways for goods shipment. Interstate highways carried 57 percent of all combination truck travel, measured by vehicle miles of travel in the U.S. in 2024.[25]

Travel by combination trucks, which are the large trucks that carry the majority of freight shipped in the U.S., accounted for 13 percent of all vehicle miles of travel on the Interstate Highway System in 2024.[26] The chart below shows states with the largest share of Interstate vehicle miles of travel attributed to combination trucks in 2023.[27] Data for all states can be found in Appendix A.

Chart 8. States with Largest Share of Vehicle Miles of Travel Attributed to Combination Trucks (2024).

RANK	STATE	Percent Interstate Vehicle Travel by Combination Trucks
1	Wyoming	38%
2	Arkansas	26%
3	Indiana	25%
4	Nebraska	23%
5	Iowa	22%
6	Nevada	20%
7	Tennessee	20%
8	Mississippi	19%
9	Montana	19%
10	North Dakota	19%
11	Illinois	18%
12	Missouri	18%
13	Idaho	18%
14	West Virginia	17%
15	Kentucky	16%
16	South Dakota	16%
17	Pennsylvania	16%
18	Oregon	16%
19	Arizona	16%
20	New Mexico	15%

Source: TRIP analysis of FHWA data.

Travel by combination trucks on the Interstate Highway System increased 61 percent from 2000 to 2024, while overall vehicle travel increased 29 percent during the same time.[28]

The American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) prepares an annual list of the nation's top 100 truck bottlenecks, based on the analysis of a massive database of truck GPS data, to quantify the impact of traffic congestion on truck-borne freight. Forty-nine of the 50 top truck bottlenecks rated by ATRI, based on congestion levels, are on Interstate Highways. The chart below includes the top 20 truck bottlenecks.

Chart 9. ATRI Top 20 Freight Bottlenecks (2026).

RANK	STATE	TOP BOTTLENECKS
1	IL	Chicago, IL: I-294 at I-290/I-88
2	NJ	Fort Lee, NJ: I-95 at SR 4
3	GA	Atlanta, GA: I-285 at I-85 (North)
4	TX	Houston, TX: I-45 at I-69/US 59
5	GA	Atlanta, GA: I-75 at I-285 (North)
6	GA	Atlanta, GA: I-20 at I-285 (West)
7	TN	Nashville, TN: I-24/I-40 at I-440 (East)
8	TX	Houston, TX: I-10 at I-69/US 59
9	OH	Cincinnati, OH: I-71 at I-75
10	GA	McDonough, GA: I-75
11	TX	Dallas, TX: I-45 at I-30
12	CA	Ontario, CA: I-10 at I-15
13	TX	Houston, TX: I-45 at I-610 (North)
14	CT	Hartford, CT: I-84 at I-91
15	GA	Atlanta, GA: I-20 at I-285 (East)
16	CA	Los Angeles, CA: SR 60 at SR 57
17	IN	Indianapolis, IN: I-65 at I-70 (North)
18	DC	Washington, DC: I-495 (West Side)
19	TN	Nashville, TN: I-40 at I-65 (East)
20	LA	Baton Rouge, LA: I-10 at I-110

Source: ATRI.

The approximately 15,000 Interstate highway interchanges are a significant source of traffic delays and are the location of almost all the nation's worst bottlenecks. Reconstructing and reconfiguring these interchanges would result in improved physical conditions, reduced travel delays and improved traffic safety.[29]

Traffic Safety on Interstate Highways

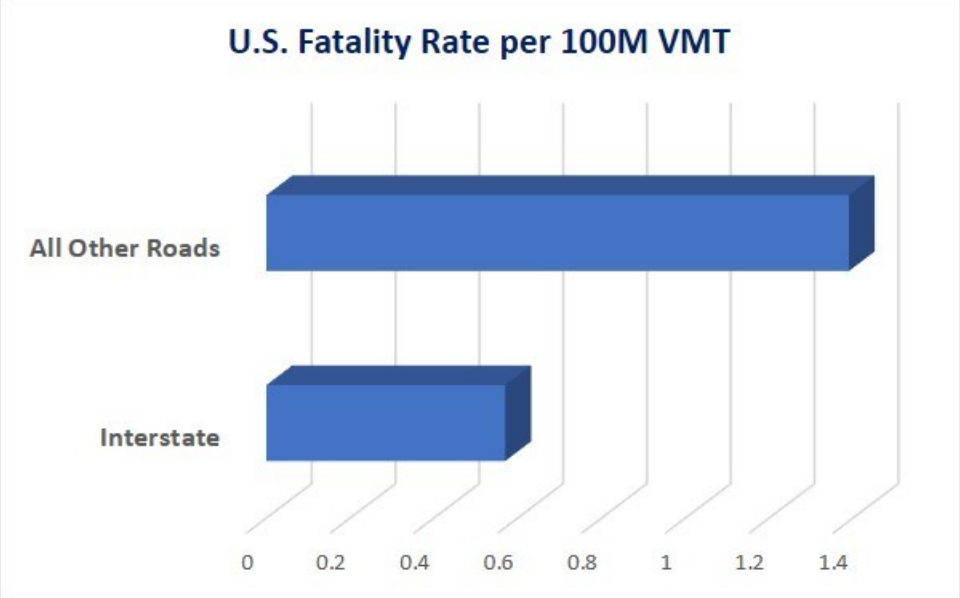
Perhaps the most significant benefit of the Interstate system is that it has greatly improved traffic safety throughout the nation by providing travelers with a network of highways with a variety of safety designs that significantly reduce the likelihood of serious accidents.

The safety features that are required on Interstates include separation from other roads, streets and rail lines; access limited to on and off ramps; a minimum of four-lanes to prevent the need to enter oncoming lanes for passing; and, gentler curves. Most Interstate highways also have paved shoulders, and many have median barriers to avoid cross-over crashes and rumble strips to warn drivers if they are leaving the roadway. The result of the high level of safety design standards on the Interstate is that travel on the nation's Interstate highways is more than twice as safe as travel on all other roads and highways.

The Interstate Highway System, which carried 24 percent of the nation's travel in 2024, accounted for only 12 percent of the nation's traffic fatalities as a result of superior safety features.[30] There were 4,878 traffic fatalities on the nation's Interstate highways in 2024 – 12 percent of the 39,254 traffic fatalities that occurred in the U.S. in 2024.[31]

The traffic fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles of travel on Interstate highways was 0.55 in 2019.[32] The fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles of travel in 2019 on non-Interstate routes was 1.30 – nearly triple the rate on the nation's Interstates. [33] Data for all states can be found in Appendix A.

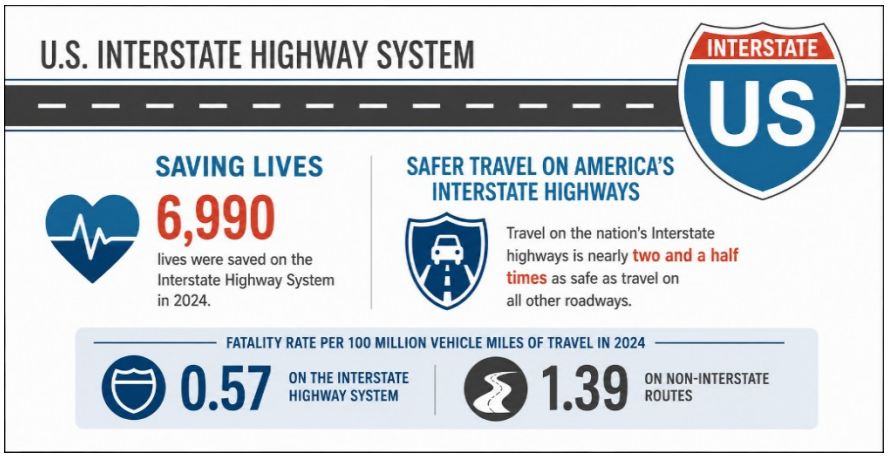
Chart 10. Fatality rate per 100 Million Vehicle Miles of Travel for Interstate and Non-Interstate roadways, 2024.



Source: TRIP analysis of FHWA data.

Lives Saved by Interstate Highway System

Because it carries significant volumes of traffic on roadways with higher safety standards and lower traffic fatality rates, the Interstate Highway System saves thousands of lives annually. TRIP estimates that the Interstate Highway System saved 6,990 lives in 2024.[34] This estimate is based on a comparison of the annual fatality rate on the nation's Interstate highways compared to the fatality rate each year on other major roads in the state. Interstate safety benefits were estimated by calculating the additional fatalities that would have occurred each year if the travel that occurred on Interstate highways had instead been carried by other major roads, many of which often lack some of the safety features found on Interstate highways and have a significantly higher traffic fatality rate. The annual economic benefit of this reduction in traffic fatalities is estimated to be $28 billion.[35] According to a 2023 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) report, the tangible economic costs of traffic crashes can be estimated through empirical measurements, including medical care, lost productivity, legal and court costs, insurance administrative costs, workplace costs, congestion impacts (travel delay, excess fuel consumption and pollution), emergency services, and property damage.[36]



The chart below shows states that TRIP estimates had the most lives saved in 2024 due to the increased traffic safety provided by the Interstate Highway System.[37] Data for all states can be found in Appendix B.

Chart 11. States with the greatest number of lives saved in 2024 as a result of the increased traffic safety provided by the Interstate Highway System.

RANK	STATE	LIVES SAVED BY INTERSTATES IN 2024
1	California	616
2	Texas	600
3	Florida	355
4	Tennessee	319
5	Illinois	315
6	Arizona	272
7	Georgia	270
8	Ohio	263
9	South Carolina	243
10	Pennsylvania	234
11	North Carolina	227
12	Kentucky	215
13	Virginia	206
14	Michigan	203
15	New York	189
16	Louisiana	180
17	Washington	172
18	Alabama	135
19	Maryland	134
20	Colorado	133

Source: TRIP estimate based on FHWA and NHTSA data.

Economic Benefits of the Interstate System

The construction of the Interstate Highway System has had a profound impact on the nation's development, affecting the quality of life of Americans in numerous ways including increased safety, expanded lifestyle choices and an enhanced standard of living.

By greatly increasing the number of areas that are within a reasonable driving distance, the Interstate system has significantly increased access to jobs, housing, recreation, healthcare, shopping and other amenities.

Similarly, the construction of the Interstate Highway System has benefited the nation's economy by reducing the costs of and increasing the speed of goods movement. The ability to cheaply and quickly ship products to or from domestic and international sites has resulted in lower costs and greater selection to consumers, while opening up new markets to U.S. businesses. The completion of the vast majority of the Interstate system by the 1980s, and the deregulation of the U.S. trucking industry, resulted in a significant improvement in the competitiveness of U.S. business. The cost of moving freight, as measured by U.S. business logistics costs, dropped from 16 percent of U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1980 to nine percent in 2025.[38]

Interstate access has a significant impact on the competitiveness of a region's economy Increasingly, companies are looking at the quality of a region's transportation system when deciding

where to re-locate or expand. Regions with congested or poorly maintained roads may see businesses relocate to areas with a smoother, more efficient and more modern transportation system. Highway access has a significant impact on the competitiveness of a region's economy.

The TRB report found that U.S. counties either on an Interstate highway or within 20 miles of an Interstate are anticipated to grow in population through 2060 at a rate approximately seven times greater than counties that are at least 20 miles from an Interstate highway (36 percent versus five percent).[39]

While additional segments have been added to the Interstate Highway System to provide access to more communities, 37 urban areas with populations of at least 50,000 did not have access to the Interstate Highway System, defined as being at least 25 miles from an Interstate.[40]

Chart 12. Urbanized Areas with a Population 50,000 or Greater that are more than 25 Miles from an Interstate Highway.

Urban Area	Population
Fresno, CA	654,628
Oxnard, CA	367,260
Santa Rosa, CA	308,321
Atlantic City, NJ	248,402
Visalia, CA	219,454
Myrtle Beach–Socastee, SC–NC	215,304
Santa Barbara, CA	195,861
Salinas, CA	184,809
College Station–Bryan, TX	171,345
Panama City, FL	143,280
Merced, CA	139,969
Santa Maria, CA	130,447
Greenville, NC	117,798
Seaside–Monterey, CA	114,237
Salisbury, MD–DE	98,081
Bend, OR	83,794
Madera, CA	78,413
Florence, AL	77,074
Lake Jackson–Angleton, TX	74,830
Porterville, CA	70,272
Dothan, AL	68,781
Dubuque, IA–IL	67,818
El Paso de Robles (Paso Robles)–Atascadero, CA	65,088
Victoria, TX	63,683
Kokomo, IN	62,182
Sherman, TX	61,900
Sebring–Avon Park, FL	61,625
San Luis Obispo, CA	59,219
Lexington Park–California–Chesapeake Ranch Estates,	58,875
Mankato, MN	57,584
Kahului, HI	55,934
Farmington, NM	53,049
Arroyo Grande–Grover Beach, CA	52,000
Lewiston, ID–WA	51,924
Lompoc, CA	51,509
Villas, NJ	51,291
New Bern, NC	50,503

Source: TRB.

The tremendous increase in freight deliveries over recent years has been partly fueled by improved communications and the need for greater economic competitiveness. Improved communications provided by the Internet are integrating producers, wholesalers, retailers and consumers. Businesses have responded to improved communications and the necessity to cut costs with a variety of innovations, including just-in-time delivery, increased small package delivery, demand-side inventory management and e-commerce.

The result of these changes has been a significant improvement in logistics efficiency as businesses move away from a push-style distribution system, which relies on large-scale warehousing of materials, to a pull-style distribution system, which relies on smaller, more strategic movement of goods. These improvements have made mobile inventories the norm, resulting in the nation's trucks literally becoming rolling warehouses.

Funding the Interstate System

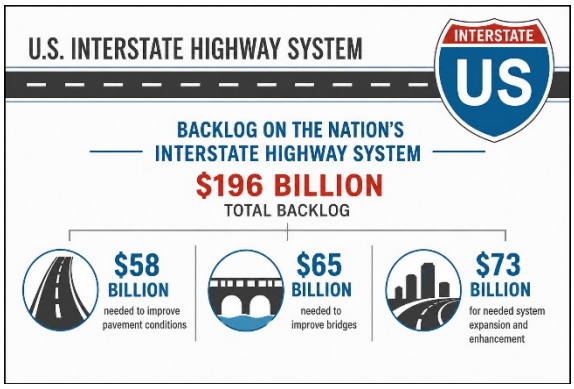
A major source of funding for the nation's Interstate Highway System is the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which was signed into law in November 2021, and provides a significant boost in federal investment in roads, bridges and transit, and offers an opportunity for the nation to make progress in improving the safety, reliability and condition of America's transportation system, including the Interstate system. The IIJA expires on September 30, 2026. Revenue collected from the 18.4 cents-per-gallon federal motor fuel tax and the 24.4 cents-per-gallon federal diesel fuel tax are the primary sources of funding for the federal Highway Trust Fund, which distributes funds to state and local governments for highway and bridge repairs and other surface transportation improvements, including public transit, pedestrian and bicycling facilities.

Meeting Future Interstate Travel Needs

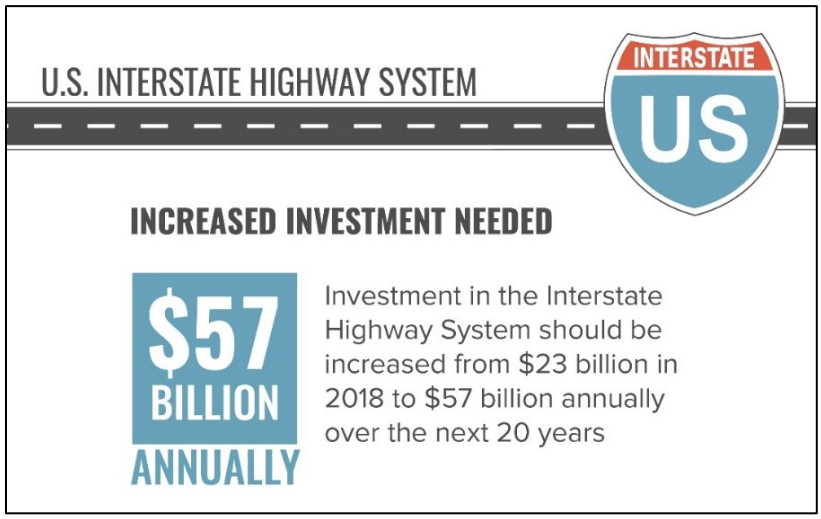
The U.S. faces a significant challenge in maintaining and rebuilding its aging Interstate Highway System and providing additional lane capacity to meet growing travel demand.

The most recent U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) analysis of the condition of the nation's surface transportation system found that the nation faces a significant backlog in needed improvements to the Interstate Highway System.

The U.S. Department of Transportation, in its report, Status of the Nation's Highways, Bridges, and Transit, 25rd Edition, submitted to Congress in 2024, determined that the current backlog in needed improvements on the nation's Interstate Highway System is estimated to be $196 billion.[41] The backlog on the nation's Interstate Highway System includes $58 billion needed to improve pavement conditions, $65 billion to improve bridges and $73 billion for needed system expansion and enhancement.[42]



The TRB report evaluated future Interstate Highway System investment that will be necessary to: address the need to rebuild the majority of the system's pavements and bridges; address current and future deterioration; improve traffic safety features and expand the capacity of the system to handle future traffic levels, particularly in urban areas; and, to connect growing urban areas that are not well connected to the Interstate System.



The TRB report estimated that approximately $57 billion should be spent on Interstate Highway System renewal and modernization annually over the next 20 years, a 146 percent increase from the approximately $23 billion spent on Interstate highways in 2018.[43]

Because of the lack of analytical tools and adequate databases, the TRB needed funding estimate does not include the funding needed to reconfigure and reconstruct many of the Interstate system's approximately 15,000 interchanges.[44]

Recommendations for Restoring and Renewing the Interstate Highway System

Restoring and upgrading the Interstate Highway System to meet the nation's 21st Century transportation needs will take significant resolve to reestablish the Interstate Highway System as the nation's premier transportation network. The TRB Interstate report notes that "the scale and scope of the Interstate reinvestment imperative is daunting."[45] The TRB report also noted that the renewal and restoration of the Interstate Highway System will require strong federal leadership and a robust partnership between the states and the federal government.[46]

The following recommendations, based on the findings and recommendations of the TRB Interstate report, provide a roadmap for the restoration of the Interstate Highway System:

- Reconstruct the nation's Interstate Highway System, including pavements, bridges and interchanges
- Improve safety features on Interstate highways
- Right-size Interstate system by:
  - ✓ upgrading some existing roadways to Interstate standard
  - ✓ adding needed additional highway capacity on existing routes to maintain and improve mobility
  - ✓ adding additional corridors to accommodate demographic and economic growth
  - ✓ modifying some urban segments to maintain connectivity while remediating economic and social disruption

Conclusion

Seventy years after President Eisenhower articulated a vision for the nation's 20th Century transportation system, which today is saving Americans lives, time and money. But while the Interstate Highway System continues to serve as the backbone of the nation's transportation system, a Congressionally mandated report has found that the U.S. faces a "daunting" task in restoring and renewing its most important transportation system.

The nation's Interstate Highway System is beset with growing traffic congestion, increasing car and truck travel, and aging pavements, bridges and interchanges that need to be reconstructed and modernized.

Today, the Interstate Highway System continues to save Americans time, lives and money while playing a critical role in supporting economic growth and enhancing the lifestyle choices of the nation's residents and visitors.

If Americans are to continue to enjoy the benefit of the unparalleled level of access and mobility provided by the Interstate Highway System, which has enabled the nation's unprecedented development and growth, the U.S. will need to commit to a well-funded program of Interstate restoration, modernization and renewal.

Ensuring that the Interstate Highway System plays the same role in supporting the nation's development in the 21st Century will require a significant boost in investment in an Interstate restoration program based on strong federal leadership of a robust federal-state partnership.

While the nation's 250th anniversary offers a moment to honor the transportation system's historic role in America's development, it is equally a call to action to modernize the Interstate Highway System for the future. Former President Dwight D. Eisenhower once observed that the Interstate project "would change the face of America" more than any single government action since World War II. Today, 70 years after its inception, that vision has been fully realized. The Interstate System did more than just connect cities across the physical landscape; it served as a primary engine for the social, cultural, and economic transformation of the United States.

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ENDNOTES

[1] Transportation Research Board (2019). Renewing the National Commitment to the Interstate Highway System: A Foundation for the Future. P. 199. http://www.trb.org/Main/Blurbs/178485.aspx
[2] Ibid. P. 200
[3] Public Roads, 1996. "Three States Claim First Interstate Highway." Federal Highway Administration.
[4] Ibid.
[5] TRIP analysis of Highway Statistics 1986, 1996 and 2024, Federal Highway Administration.
[6] TRIP analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data.
[7] U.S. Census Bureau data, Federal Highway Administration data. See chart MV-1. Additional historical data from Highway Statistics Summary to 1995.
[8] U.S. Census Bureau data, Federal Highway Administration data. See chart VM-2. Additional historical data from Highway Statistics Summary to 1995.
[9] TRIP analysis of Highway Statistics, 2024, Federal Highway Administration. Data is from charts VM-2 and HM-20.
[10] TRIP analysis of 2000 and 2024 Federal Highway Administration data. See chart VM-2 in Highway Statistics 2000 and Highway Statistics 2024..
[11] TRIP analysis of 2000 and 2024 Highway Statistics, Federal Highway Administration. See charts HM-60 and VM-2.
[12] Ibid.
[13] TRIP analysis of 2024 Federal Highway Administration data. See chart HM-64 in Highway Statistics.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Selecting a Preventative Maintenance Treatment for Flexible Pavements. R. Hicks, J. Moulthrop. Transportation Research Board. 1999. Figure 1.
[16] Transportation Research Board (2019). Renewing the National Commitment to the Interstate Highway System: A Foundation for the Future. P. 51. http://www.trb.org/Main/Blurbs/178485.aspx
[17] Ibid. P. 54
[18] Federal Highway Administration, 2026. National Bridge Inventory data.
[19] Highway Statistic 2024. Federal Highway Administration.
[20] TRIP analysis of Federal Highway Administration, Highway Statistics 2024, chart HM-37.
[21] Federal Highway Administration. TRIP analysis of Highway Statistics 2024, charts VM-2, HM-60.
[22] TRIP (2026). TRIP estimate is based on Texas Transportation Analysis.
[23] TRIP analysis of Federal Highway Administration's Freight Analysis Framework data (2026). Data is for 2024. https://faf.ornl.gov/fafweb/
[24] Ibid.
[25] Highway Statistic 2024. Federal Highway Administration. See chart VM-1.
[26] TRIP analysis of 2024 FHWA data. See chart VM-4 in 2014 Highway Statistics.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Highway Statistics 2000 and 2024. Federal Highway Administration.
[29] Transportation Research Board (2024). Renewing the National Commitment to the Interstate Highway System: A Foundation for the Future. P. 166. http://www.trb.org/Main/Blurbs/178485.aspx
[30] TRIP analysis of 2024 FHWA data. See charts FI-20, VM-2 in 2024 Highway Statistics.
[31] TRIP analysis of 2024 FHWA data. See chart FI-20 in 2024 Highway Statistics.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] TRIP analysis of 2024 FHWA data. See charts FI-20, VM-2 in 2024 Highway Statistics.
[34] Ibid.
[35] TRIP estimate based on National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimate of the economic costs serious and fatal traffic crashes.
[36] The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019 (Revised) (2023). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/
[37] Ibid.
[38]Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (2025). State of Logistics Report. https://cscmp.org/CSCMP/CSCMP/Educate/State_of_Logistics_Report.aspx

[39] Transportation Research Board (2019). Renewing the National Commitment to the Interstate Highway System: A Foundation for the Future, 25th Edition. P. 89. http://www.trb.org/Main/Blurbs/178485.aspx
Additional analysis provided by TRIP.
[40] Ibid. P. 68
[41] United States Department of Transportation (2024). Status of the Nation's Highways, Bridges, and Transit: Conditions and Performance. Chapter 7. Exhibit 7-11. https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/25cpr/pdf/CP25_Full_Report.pdf

[42] Ibid.
[43] Transportation Research Board (2019). Renewing the National Commitment to the Interstate Highway System: A Foundation for the Future. P. 4. http://www.trb.org/Main/Blurbs/178485.aspx The recommended funding is based on the funding needs estimated by TRB assuming an annual 1.5 percent annual average increase in travel. From 2013 to 2019, the average annual increase in vehicle miles of travel was 2.1 percent.
[44] Ibid. P. 5
[45] Ibid. P. 266.
[46] Ibid. P. 5.