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STUDY: STAMFORD REGION NEEDS WORK

Traffic investments can pay off

Safer roads, less traffic would help commuters save money

By Ken Dixon



Jason Rearick / Hearst Connecticut Media file photo
Congestion in the Greenwich/Stamford area is getting worse, leaving more motorists sitting on the roads for longer periods. Above is Interstate 95 in Stamford

HARTFORD — Nearly three quarters of major roads in the Bridgeport and Stamford region are in poor or mediocre condition, according to a new report that estimates the average extra cost to motorists is more than \$2,200 a year in repairs, tires and additional fuel consumption.

Congestion in the region is also worsening, saddling motorists with an extra 49 hours a year, sitting in backups, plus \$1,174 in lost time and wasted fuel, states the [report](#) presented Tuesday to state lawmakers.

“Our congested roads and antiquated transportation system is creating real costs for drivers, families, and businesses in Connecticut,” said state Senate Majority Leader [Bob Duff](#).

“Improving our transportation network is critically important to our economic future and our quality of life,” said Duff, D-Norwalk, who often tweets about transportation incidents in Southwestern Connecticut. “The [General Assembly](#) is working to improve

these conditions and this year made a once-in-a-generation investment in our transportation infrastructure. We must continue to invest at the local, state, and federal levels to make our roads safer, reduce traffic, and improve the lives of those using our roads.”

The report, prepared by TRIP, a Washington-based national transportation organization, which said that more local, state and federal investments in improved transit could alleviate road congestion, improve rail, highway and bridge conditions, increase public safety and help the state’s economic growth.

Overall, drivers in the Bridgeport-Stamford region spend more than \$700 a year in extra “vehicle operating costs” that result from lost time in traffic, extra fuel burned in backups and repairs. Crashes are also contributing factors.

About one in three state bridges are “structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.” In the Bridgeport-Stamford region, 11 percent of bridges are structurally deficient, while 41 percent are functionally obsolete.

“These conditions are only going to get worse if greater funding is not made available at the local, state and federal levels,” said [Will Wilkins](#), TRIP’s executive director, in a statement Tuesday. “Without additional transportation funding Connecticut’s transportation system will become increasingly deteriorated and

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congested, the state will miss out on opportunities for economic growth and quality of life will suffer.”

Statewide, 1,274 people died in traffic crashes between 2009 and 2013, for a fatality rate of 0.89 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled. The national fatality average is higher at 1.09 fatalities per 100 million miles.

More Information

Breakdown: Extra costs per motorist

Location	vehicle operating costs	congestion	safety	total
Bridgeport/Stamford	\$701	\$1,174	\$347	\$2,222
New Haven	\$707	\$932	\$411	\$2,050
Connecticut	\$1.6B	\$2.3B	\$1.2B	\$5.1B

Source: Washington-based national transportation organization TRIP