

THE WILTON BULLETIN

SUNDAY, JULY 10, 2016

Connecticut highways and bridges among worst in the nation

By [Wilton Bulletin](#) in [Connecticut](#), [Lead News](#), [Lead News](#), [News](#), [Transportation](#)



Connecticut has the eighth most congested interstate system and the fifth most structurally deficient interstate bridges in the nation, according to national transportation research group TRIP's [2016 Highway System report](#).

According to the report, 60% of Connecticut's urban interstates experience congestion during peak hours and 7% of the state's interstate bridges are structurally deficient, which means they "require significant maintenance, rehabilitation or replacement" and "must be inspected at least every year," according to the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE).

The percentage of Connecticut highways deemed to be in "poor or mediocre" condition is 2% higher than the 12% national average. Connecticut's bridge deficiency is 4% higher than the 3% national average.

Rhode Island has the highest percent of structurally deficient bridges in the nation (15%), followed by West Virginia and Wyoming, which tie for the No. 2 spot with 9%.

According to the report, 19% percent of Connecticut's bridges are considered functionally obsolete, which means they "no longer meet the current standards that are used today," according to the ASCE. The national average of functionally obsolete bridges is 18%.

Since 2000, interstate travel has been increasing two times faster than new lane capacity is being added, according to the report, and the average annual amount of travel per interstate lane mile increased 11% between 2000 and 2014.

With a 15,391 rate of vehicle travel per interstate lane mile each day — the third highest in the nation — 60% of Connecticut's urban interstate highways are congested during peak hours. The national interstate congestion rate during these hours is 43%, according to the report.

California has the nation's highest rates of urban interstate congestion (85%) and daily interstate travel per lane mile (19,424).

The design of the interstate — which includes a separation from other roads and rail lines, a minimum of four lanes, paved shoulders and median barriers — makes it more than twice as safe to travel on as all other roadways, according to the report.

Nationwide, the fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles of travel on the Interstate in 2014 was 0.54, compared to 1.26 on non-interstate routes. According to the report, Connecticut's non-Interstate fatality rate (0.98) was more than double the interstate fatality rate (0.41).

Based on the number of additional fatalities that would have occurred had interstate traffic been carried by other major roadways, TRIP estimates that the Interstate Highway System saved 5,359 lives nationwide in 2014 and 59 lives in Connecticut.

[Click here](#) to read TRIP's 2016 Highway System report.