

The Journal News

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Study: New York interstates in rough condition



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They're the 10th worst when it comes to pavement conditions and the 4th worst for bridge conditions, according to TRIP



Interstate 95 in New Rochelle. A repaving project is in the works for the highway. (Photo: File photo/The Journal News)

New York's interstate highways are in rough shape, according to a national report released on the eve of the system's 60th birthday.

In its report "The Interstate Highway System Turns 60," TRIPS, a non-profit transportation research group sponsored by insurance companies, construction outfits, labor unions and other transit-related organizations found 17 percent of pavement on New York interstate highways was in either poor or mediocre condition and 8 percent of bridges were structurally deficient.

Those numbers are good for 10th and fourth worst in the country, respectively.

"The long-term vision that helped establish the current Interstate system 60 years ago is needed again today," said Will Wilkins, TRIP's executive director. "In order to maintain personal and commercial mobility, transportation investment and a sustainable, long-term funding source for the federal surface transportation program must remain a priority."

Poor pavement condition means there are visible cracks, rutting and potholes.

Mediocre-rated pavement has the same characteristics, but not as severe.

For bridges, structurally deficient means there has been major deterioration on major components of bridge, requiring significant repairs or replacement. Bridges rated structurally deficient are still safe to cross.

The study said that \$59 billion was needed for pavement repairs, \$30 million for bridges and \$100 billion for enhancements nationally. Currently, TRIP said, funding is at 61 percent of what is needed to make those improvements.

"As we start contemplating where we're going to put our money for the next 50 years, we're going to have to shift our resources to transportation projects," said Nadine Lemmon, director of New York and federal policy for the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a transportation reform group.



Pothole repairs jam traffic on the southbound Thruway in Rockland County. (Photo: File photo/The Journal News)

Lemmon counted initiatives that take into account walking, biking and public transportation among those projects. She said including those options would make projects cheaper to maintain, reduce congestion and meet demand as more

and more people see non-car transportation as viable.

"I think the bottom line is, if we spend the next 60 years plowing money into the same roads we built 60 years ago, we're going to be facing the same problems we're facing now," Lemmon said. "The way around it is not to build bigger roads, which we do have a tendency to do."

In New York, interstate highways are maintained either by the state Thruway Authority or the state Department of Transportation.

[Both agencies have summer road work planned.](#) On interstate highways, the Thruway Authority will undertake road and bridge work on the New England Thruway (I-95) from the Bronx line to Rye in Westchester and bridge repair in Rockland for a 6-mile stretch of the state Thruway (I-87) from Exit 14 to 14B.

The state DOT said its \$21.1 billion capital program — [\\$100 million of which was recently doled out in road-paving grants](#) — gives it "the resources to not only safely maintain the state's transportation system, but make strategic investments to modernize and expand a network that supports the needs of all users," according to Communications Director Gary Holmes.

The Thruway is working with a new asset management program to track the status of roads, bridges and canals.

"Year after year, the New York State Thruway remains one of the safest superhighways in the country and, with the construction of the New NY Bridge to replace the Tappan Zee well underway on time and on budget, we continue to wisely invest our toll dollars to support our system," Thruway Authority spokeswoman Jennifer Givner said in a statement.