



WSOC-TV

Report: Charlotte drivers lose 40 hours a year stuck in traffic

By: Greg Suskin | Thursday, May 11, 2017



CHARLOTTE, N.C. - North Carolina must focus on long-term transportation funding to meet the needs of the growing state, according to a new transportation report.

TRIP, a national transportation organization, released a study showing that the current level of transportation funding in North Carolina will not be enough to make the improvements needed to accommodate population, travel and economic growth.

[\[LINK: TRIP report on NC transportation\]](#)

The report examined road and bridge conditions,

travel trends, economic development, highway safety and transportation funding.

Channel 9 obtained the report, which found that since 2000, the state's population has grown 26 percent and is projected to increase another 20 percent by 2035. Charlotte Chamber President Bob Morgan said the Queen City's growth is going to explode.

"Our metropolitan population of 2 1/2 million people is going to double in the next 20-30 years to more than 5 million," Morgan said.

The increasing levels of traffic have caused significant delays in North Carolina, particularly in Charlotte. The average driver in Charlotte loses 40 hours annually as a result of congestion, according to the TRIP report. It also showed that drivers waste a total of 13.8 million gallons of fuel annually because of traffic.

All the cars have also taken a toll on road conditions. The report found that 49 percent of major roads in the Charlotte area are in poor or mediocre condition.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation's 2016 maintenance and performance report said the agency is currently spending \$1.3 billion annually on repairing its roads, highways and bridges, but should be spending a minimum of \$1.6 billion annually. TRIP's report suggests that the NCDOT should be spending \$1.9 billion annually.

Carolyn Kelly, with TRIP, said the group isn't blaming North Carolina for how money is spent, only saying that more funding has to come from somewhere.

"It's much more effective to invest up front and make those improvements now, then to kick the can down the proverbial road," Kelly said.

The group did not offer any solutions on how to get more funding. TRIP said the reason for the report is to raise awareness.