

City Potholes a Jolting Reminder of Rough Winter

By Rocco Vertuccio



The harsh winter has taken its toll on city streets, creating thousands of potholes. An advocacy group warned Thursday that the problems on city roads and bridges are far deeper. NY1's Rocco Vertuccio filed the following report.

It's a bumpy ride on city streets lately. Potholes are everywhere.

"The potholes are ridiculous they are horrendous they are terrible I feel like it's a conspiracy," said one New York driver.

While potholes are usually a seasonal issue, terrible street conditions in the city have become a year-round problem.

The not-for-profit group TRIP paints a bleak picture. The organization, financed by contractors, unions and insurance companies, promotes policies to improve traffic conditions.

In a report released Thursday, TRIP says that 30 percent of city streets are in mediocre condition; 43 percent are in poor condition; and only 16 percent are in good shape. Problems include potholes, cracks and rough surfaces. TRIP says money is the issue.

"Unless New York can increase transportation funding at the local, state and federal levels, many critically needed transportation improvement projects will be left stranded on the drawing board," said Carolyn Bonifas Kelly, associate director of TRIP.

TRIP says poor street conditions increase car repair, fuel and tire costs by almost \$700 a year.

"I've actually had three flat tires so far," said one driver.

Taxpayers are taking a hit too. TRIP says it's 19 times more expensive to repair streets in poor condition than doing preventive maintenance.

The group also paints a bleak picture for bridges. Almost half of city bridges no longer meets current highway design standards because of narrow lanes, inadequate clearance or poor alignment.

"Currently our mindset as a society is infrastructure is someone's responsibility. That mindset needs to change," said Felice Farber of the General Contractors Association of New York.

Councilman Ydanis Rodriguez says he wants the city to increase the amount of streets repaired from a 1,000 miles per year to 1,300.

"This administration is very committed and the DOT commissioner is also very interested in continue improving the safety of our streets," Rodriguez said.

Transportation advocates say city state and federal governments need to act quickly because a healthy transportation system is critical to the economy.

City transportation crews have repaired about 160,000 potholes so far this season, but they still have a long way to go.

New Yorkers can report potholes by calling 311 or on the Transportation Department's website at nyc.gov/dot.