



Report notes Alaska transportation funding shortfall

State faces shortfall of \$9 billion through 2016

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Nearly half of major roads in Alaska are in poor or mediocre condition, and more than a quarter of the state's bridges are deficient. These deteriorated conditions come at a time when the state faces a transportation funding shortfall of \$9 billion through 2016 for needed repairs and improvements to its highway transportation system, according to a new report released Nov. 7 by TRIP.

The study by The Road Information Program, a national nonprofit transportation research group, reported that if this funding shortfall is not addressed, numerous critical projects to repair the state's roads and bridges will be left unfunded or unable to proceed, causing further deterioration and hampering economic development.

Voters will consider a \$450 million general obligation bond package for transportation improvements Nov. 11.

According to the TRIP report, titled *Future Mobility in Alaska: Meeting the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility*, the state needs a total of \$10.9 billion through 2016 to maintain, rehabilitate and rebuild its deteriorated highway system and provide additional lane capacity to meet growing travel demand. However, only \$1.9 billion will be available, leaving a shortfall of approximately \$9 billion for needed improvements to the state's transportation system.

Further compounding Alaska's transportation funding shortfall is the escalation of the cost of roadway improvements due to rapid increases in the price of key materials needed for highway and bridge construction. Over the five-year period from August 2003 to August 2008, the average cost of materials used for highway construction, including asphalt, concrete, steel, lumber and diesel, increased by 75%.

The Alaska Department of Transportation has compiled a list of needed projects in the state that currently lack sufficient funding, at least through 2011, to proceed through construction. These projects include the following: a Glenn Highway / Seward Highway freeway connection in Anchorage, Richardson Highway reconstruction and bridge replacement in Delta Junction, and safety and capacity improvements to Parks Highway and Glenn Highway in Core Matanuska-Susitna Valley.

Source: AASHTO November 7, 2008