

New TRIP Report Highlights Deteriorated New York Infrastructure

Written by Rock Products News

Roads and bridges that are deteriorated, congested or lack some desirable safety features cost New York drivers \$24.8 billion per year – as much as \$2,768 per driver – due to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes and congestion-related delays.

Adequate investment in transportation improvements at the local, state and federal levels is needed to relieve traffic congestion, improve road, bridge and transit conditions, boost safety, and support long-term economic growth in New York, according to a new report released by TRIP, a Washington, D.C.-based national nonprofit transportation research organization.

The TRIP report, “New York Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State’s Need for Safe, Smooth and Efficient Mobility,” finds that throughout the state, nearly half of major locally and state-maintained roads are in poor or mediocre condition and 10 percent of locally and state-maintained bridges (20 feet or longer) are in poor condition.

The report also finds that the state’s major urban roads are becoming increasingly congested, causing significant delays and choking commuting and commerce. In addition to the statewide report, TRIP has produced customized regional reports for the Albany-Schenectady-Troy, Binghamton, Buffalo-Niagara Falls, New York-Newark-Jersey City, Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, Rochester, Syracuse and Utica areas.

Driving on deficient New York roads costs state’s drivers a total of \$24.8 billion annually in extra vehicle operating costs (VOC) as a result of driving on rough roads, lost time and fuel due to congestion-related delays, and the costs of traffic crashes in which roadway features likely were a contributing factor.

The TRIP report finds that 28 percent of major locally and state-maintained roads in New York are in poor condition and another 21 percent are rated in mediocre condition, costing the state’s motorist an additional \$7 billion each year in extra vehicle operating costs. These costs include accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

“Many New Yorkers know the poor road conditions in our state lead to wear and tear on our cars and wallets; but now we have irrefutable evidence of the real cost of failing roads and bridges that continue to be ignored,” said Gib Gagnon, chairman of Rebuild NY Now. “Every dollar of deferred maintenance on our roads and bridges will cost taxpayers an additional four to five dollars in future repairs. These shocking figures are no longer ‘hidden costs.’ They are an alarming call to action to our representatives around the state. Simply patching our roads and bridges will not do the job; now is the time to rebuild our economy and infrastructure for a better New York.”

Traffic congestion in New York is worsening, causing up to 74 annual hours of delay for the average motorist in the largest urban areas and costing the state’s drivers a total of \$13 billion each year in lost time and wasted fuel.

In New York, 10 percent of bridges (1,771 of 17,444) are in poor condition, with significant deterioration to the bridge deck, supports or other major components and another 53 percent (9,313 of 17,444) are rated in fair condition, indicating some deterioration to major components of the bridge. This includes all bridges that are 20 feet or more in length. More than half – 52 percent – of New York’s bridges are at least 50 years old.

From 2012 to 2016, a total of 5,552 people were killed in traffic crashes in New York. The financial impact of traffic crashes costs New York drivers a total of \$4.8 billion. New York’s overall traffic fatality rate of 0.83 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel is lower than the national average of 1.18. The fatality rate on New York’s non-interstate rural roads is approximately three and a half times higher than on all other roads in the state (2.11 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel vs. 0.60).

The efficiency and condition of New York’s transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state’s economy. Annually, \$1.3 trillion in goods are shipped to and from sites in New York, mostly by trucks, relying heavily on the state’s network of roads and bridges. Increasingly, companies are looking at the quality of a region’s transportation system when deciding where to relocate or expand. Regions with congested or poorly maintained roads may see businesses relocate to areas with a smoother, more efficient and more modern transportation system. Approximately 3.5 million full-time jobs in New York in key industries like tourism, retail sales, agriculture and manufacturing are completely dependent on the state’s transportation network.

“Driving on deficient New York roads comes with a \$24.8 billion yearly price tag for the state’s motorists,” said Will Wilkins, TRIP’s executive director. “Adequate funding for the state’s transportation system would allow for smoother roads, more efficient mobility, enhanced safety, and economic growth opportunities while saving New York’s drivers time and money.”