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REPORT: 500K vehicles cross structurally deficient bridges in Buffalo-Niagara daily

By Marian Hetherly

A new report from a national transportation research nonprofit says half a million vehicles cross "poor/structurally deficient" bridges in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls region every day.

The report, “Preserving Buffalo-Niagara Falls Bridges: The Condition and Funding Needs of Buffalo-Niagara Falls Aging Bridge System,” issued by Washington, D.C.-based TRIP finds less than 50% of local bridges - or 548 of 1,164 - are rated in "good" condition. That is actually much better than the statewide average, which rates only 37% of New York bridges as in "good" condition.

TRIP says the bridge carrying the I-290 at Sweet Home Road is the most heavily traveled poor/structurally deficient one in Erie and Niagara counties.

“AAA is appalled over the TRIP report showing that so many bridges across the state, and in the local region, are deemed to be in poor condition,” said Elizabeth Carey, public relations director at AAA Western and Central New York. “As an advocate for traffic safety, AAA is calling on elected officials to protect motorists by improving the quality of our infrastructure. The quality of road and bridge conditions should be a top priority.”

“Economic development does not happen without well-designed, well-maintained and well-funded infrastructure,” said Dottie Gallagher, president and CEO of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership. “Buffalo Niagara Partnership members continue to identify the lack of resources to adequately address our infrastructure needs now — and in the future.”

TRIP says the chart below details the 10 most heavily traveled poor/structurally deficient bridges in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls area. A list of the 25 most heavily traveled poor/structurally deficient bridges in the region can be found in the report. The report's Appendix also includes the ratings for each bridge’s deck, substructure and superstructure.

TRIP says the following 10 poor/structurally deficient bridges in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls area (carrying a minimum of 500 vehicles per day) have the lowest average rating for deck, substructure and superstructure. A score of 4 or below out of 10 indicates poor condition. A rating of 4 or below for its deck, substructure or superstructure indicates a rating as poor/structurally deficient. A list of the 25 bridges in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls area with the lowest average rating for major bridge components is included in the report.