



New report identifies Buffalo-Niagara Falls bridges most in need of repair or replacement

Approximately half a million vehicles per day cross what reports cites as poor/structurally deficient bridges; 8% of local bridges rated poor/structurally deficient while 45% rated fair.

Eight percent of bridges in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls area are rated in poor/structurally deficient condition, according to a new report released today by TRIP, a Washington, D.C.-based national transportation research nonprofit. This includes bridges 20 feet or longer and encompasses Erie and Niagara counties.

A bridge is rated poor/structurally deficient if there is significant deterioration of the bridge deck, supports or other major components.

The TRIP report, "Preserving Buffalo-Niagara Falls Bridges: The Condition and Funding Needs of Buffalo-Niagara Falls Aging Bridge System," found that, in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls area, 91 of the 1,164 bridges are rated in poor/structurally deficient condition – 8%. Bridges in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls area that are poor/structurally deficient carry approximately half a million (501,684) vehicles per day.

Poor/structurally deficient bridges may be posted for lower weight limits or closed if their condition warrants such action. Deteriorated bridges can have a significant impact on daily life.

Restrictions on vehicle weight may cause many vehicles – especially emergency vehicles, commercial trucks, school buses and farm equipment – to use alternate routes to avoid weight-restricted bridges. Redirected trips also lengthen travel time, waste fuel and reduce the efficiency of the local economy.

Forty-five percent (525 of 1,164) of locally and state-maintained bridges in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls area have been rated in fair condition. A fair rating indicates a bridge's structural elements are sound, but minor deterioration has occurred to the bridge's deck, substructure or superstructure. The remaining 47% (548 of 1,164) of the area's bridges are rated in good condition.

Statewide, 10% (1,757 of 17,521) of bridges are rated poor/structurally deficient, while 53% (9,364 of 17,521) are rated in fair condition, and the remaining 37% (6,400 of 17,521) are in good condition.

"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. "As the regional chamber of commerce, we know the safe and efficient movement of goods, services and people is at the core of our economy. Buffalo Niagara Partnership members continue to identify the lack of resources to adequately address our infrastructure needs now – and in the future – as a major impediment to economic growth and investment in Buffalo Niagara."

The chart below details the 10 most heavily traveled poor/structurally deficient bridges in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls area – according to the report. 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.

The chart also indicates whether the bridge is open to traffic; posted, which restricts use to lighter vehicles; or closed to traffic.

Table with 10 columns: Rank, County, City, Facility Carried, Feature Intersected, Location, Year Built, Lanes, ADT, Open, Closed, Posted. Lists 10 bridges with their respective details.

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 – per the report. Each major component of a bridge is rated on a scale of zero to nine, with a score of four or below indicating poor condition.

Table with 10 columns: Rank, County, City, Facility Carried, Feature Intersected, Location, Year Built, Lanes, ADT, Open, Closed, Posted. Lists 10 bridges with their respective details.

If a bridge receives a rating of four or below for its deck, substructure or superstructure, it is rated 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.

"Maintaining safe and stable infrastructure is critically important to all New Yorkers. Every day, thousands of people travel through our state on what are often poor and structurally deficient roads and bridges," said Sen. Tim Kennedy, chairman of the New York State Senate Committee on Transportation. "Now more than ever we need to ensure that we're dedicating resources to local infrastructure that is desperately in need of repair and maintenance. Taxpayer dollars must be put to work to improve our local community. I will continue to work with local stakeholders and continue to fight for additional funding to improve our roads and bridges."

"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."

"New York's bridges are a critical component of the state's transportation system, providing connections for personal mobility, economic growth and quality of life," said Will Wilkins, TRIP's executive director. "Without increased and reliable transportation funding, numerous projects to improve and preserve aging bridges in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls area and statewide will not move forward, hampering New York's ability to efficiently and safely move people and goods."