

LOUISIANA'S INTERSTATES ARE 5TH WORST IN THE NATION, REPORT SAYS

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In Bossier City, complaining about the poor condition of I-20 likely outranks grumbling about the weather. We can't do anything about the weather — and sometimes we wonder if anyone will do anything about our stretch of Interstate highway.

But our complaining has merit: A new report says Louisiana's Interstate system ranks fifth in the nation for pavement in poor condition, behind Hawaii, Delaware, Wyoming and New Jersey.

Meanwhile, traffic on Louisiana's Interstates increased 60% from 2000 to 2018, the second fastest rate in the nation.

The report issued today by TRIP, a national transportation research nonprofit, ranks the states whose Interstate systems are the most congested, have experienced the greatest increase in vehicle miles of travel since 2000, carry the greatest share of commercial trucks, have the largest share of pavement in poor

condition and bridges in poor/structurally deficient condition, and have the highest fatality rate.

According to a 2019 report prepared by the Transportation Research Board, the U.S. Interstate system has a persistent and growing backlog of physical and operational deficiencies as a result of age, heavy use and deferred reinvestment, and is in need of major reconstruction and modernization.

That's no surprise to Bossier City drivers.

The TRB report concludes that the annual investment in the Interstate Highway System should be increased approximately two-and-a-half times, from \$23 billion in 2018 to \$57 billion annually over the next 20 years.

"TRIP's report must serve as a wake-up call for Louisiana Legislators," said Erich Ponti, who serves as the president of the Louisiana Coalition to Fix Our Roads. "Louisiana is leading the nation in putting a lot more traffic on the same bad roads we've had for the last thirty-five years. We cannot build a robust post-COVID-19 economy atop a crumbling foundation of roads and bridges."

The TRIP report found that since 2000, travel on the U.S. Interstate system has increased at a rate nearly triple that at which new lane capacity is being added.

"Our Interstate highway system, which was once the envy of the world, is in serious need of modernization," said Ed Mortimer, vice president of transportation infrastructure, U.S. Chamber of Commerce. "The Interstate system plays a key national role in economic success and quality of life for every American, and we continue to urge bipartisan solutions to address this critical issue. "

As the aging system's foundations continue to deteriorate, most Interstate highways, bridges and interchanges will need to be rebuilt or replaced.

According to the TRIP report, pavement on 7% of Louisiana's Interstate highways are in poor condition, the fifth highest share in the nation. Three percent of Louisiana's Interstate bridges are rated in poor/structurally deficient condition, the 17th highest share in the U.S. And 17% of Louisiana's Interstate bridges are in need of repair or replacement.

Some help for our stretch of I-20 is apparently on the way.

In November 2019, DOTD spokeswoman Erin Buchanan told *BossierNow* that the often-cursed stretch of interstate in Bossier City was on the 2021 agenda.

"We have a project in active development to reconstruct the eastbound and westbound lanes of I-20 from Hamilton Road to Industrial Drive. At this time, it is scheduled to go to bid in March 2021," Buchanan said.

"Included in that project are additional repairs to the I-20 corridor stretching from Pines Rd. in Shreveport to the I-220 interchange in Bossier," she added.

"There is no change to that timeline at this time. It's still scheduled to go to bid in March 2021," Buchanan recently told *BossierNow*.

[See the TRIP report here.](#)