



Report: Mounting congestion, deteriorating conditions in roads and bridges means twice the funding need

By [Liz Carey](#) | July 15, 2020 | [Featured](#)

A new report from a national transportation non-profit shows that the aging U. S. Interstate system faces increased usage, mounting congestion, and deteriorating conditions, that will require more than double the amount of funding to fix.

The report, done by TRIP, found that most interstate systems in the United States need to be reconstructed and modernized.

The 64-year-old U.S. Interstate Highway System faces unprecedented levels of travel, particularly by large trucks, and a lack of sufficient funding to make repairs and improvements, the report found. The report “Restoring the Interstate highway System: Meeting America’s Transportation Needs with a Reliable, Safe and Well-Maintained National



Highway Network, looks at the system’s use and conditions, as well as looking at the findings of a 2019 report by the Transportation Research Board, on the condition and use of the Interstate systems.

The TRIP report confirms what that 2019 TRB report found – that funding of the Interstate Highway System should be nearly \$60 billion annually over the next 20 years, more than double the \$23 billion spent in 2018.

“The report released by TRIP confirms what American businesses experience every day—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. “Commitment to modernization must be shared by federal, state, and local leaders as well as the private sector. 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. “

Since 2000, travel on the Interstate system has increased at a rate of nearly triple the rate at which new lanes are being added, the TRIP report found. As a result, nearly 50 percent of urban Interstate highways are considered congested during peak travel times. Truck travel on the Interstate has increased 45 percent from 2000 to 2018, nearly double the 25 percent rate of travel growth for all vehicle travel during the same period.

But, the aging system continues to deteriorate, highways, bridges, and interchanges will need to be rebuilt or replaced, the report found. According to the TRIP report, pavement on 11 percent of the interstate highways are in poor or mediocre condition, and 27 percent of Interstate bridges are in need of repair or replacement.

And, as states face decreased revenue due to the lack of travel caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, investment into that Interstate system will be hampered. Estimates put state transportation revenues down at least 30 percent – approximately \$50 billion – over the next 18 months.

The report recommends restoring the Interstate Highway System through the foundational reconstruction of Interstate highways, bridges, and interchanges; improving roadway safety features; system right-sizing, including upgrading of some roadway corridors to Interstate standards; adding needed additional highway capacity on existing routes; adding additional corridors; and, modifying some urban segments to maintain connectivity while remediating economic and social disruption.

“The long-term vision that helped establish the current Interstate system nearly 65 years ago is needed again today,” said Dave Kearby, TRIP’s executive director. “In order to rebuild the nation’s economy, maintain personal and commercial mobility, and improve quality of life, adequate transportation investment and a sustainable, long-term funding source for the federal surface transportation program must remain a priority.”