

TRIP: Traffic Congestion Hampers Long Island, N.Y., Roads

Written by Rock Products News
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The high level of traffic congestion on Long Island hampers the region's economic competitiveness and impacts quality of life in the area, according to a new report released by TRIP, a national transportation research nonprofit. The report, "Keeping Long Island Mobile: Accomplishments and Challenges in Improving Accessibility on Long Island to Support Quality of Life and a Strong Economy," examines the mobility and efficiency of the region's transportation system and identifies improvements needed to enhance access.

Traffic congestion on Long Island results in 93 million hours of delay to occupants of private vehicles and large commercial trucks and costs drivers \$1.9 billion annually in the form of lost time and 41.5 million gal. of additional fuel. TRIP estimates the average Long Island commuter annually spends an additional 81 hours annually stuck in traffic due to congestion and loses \$1,684 in the value of wasted time and fuel. Daily rush hour vehicle hours of delay on Long Island are projected to increase by 57 percent by 2045.

According to TRIP's report, by 2045, Long Island's population is projected to increase 14% and daily vehicle travel during rush hour on Long Island is anticipated to increase 13%. Long Island commuters overwhelmingly use private vehicles for commuting, with 74% indicating they drove alone as their means of transportation to work and eight percent indicating they used carpools.

Most New York metro trips that originate in Nassau or Suffolk counties terminate at destinations on Long Island, with 73% remaining in the same county and 24% traveling to other locations on Long Island (including Queens and Brooklyn).

"No Long Islander would be surprised to hear that the traffic we deal with every single day is bad for our quality of life

and worse for our region's economic vitality, yet the staggering statistics in the TRIP report are a real wake-up call that we need to make big investments in improving our infrastructure, and we need to find innovative solutions to the problems we've ignored for far too long," said New York State Sen. Anna M. Kaplan, member of the Senate Transportation Committee. "Additionally, as we look to jumpstart our economy and recover from the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on our community, there is no better economic driver than big, sustained investments in infrastructure improvements. The time to act is now and the situation is critical, so I am urging our federal representatives to continue fighting for Long Island to get the resources we need and deserve, and I urge the federal administration to step up and do the right thing."

In addition to personal mobility, the reliable movement of freight on Long Island is critical to the health and efficiency of the region's economy. Mounting traffic congestion on Long Island resulted in three million hours of delay to large commercial trucks (a subset of the overall 93 million hours of annual congestion-related delays) and an annual economic cost of \$162 million (a subset of the overall \$1.9 billion cost).

"A safe and efficient transportation system helps spur economic growth and thus it is critical that we continue to invest in projects to reduce and manage congestion in our region," said Kevin S. Law, president and CEO of the Long Island Association.

Reducing and managing traffic congestion on Long Island will require that the region proceed with projects, improvements or programs to increase the capacity or efficiency of the region's transportation system or reduce peak-hour demand on the system. These projects, improvements or programs

include expanding the capacity of the system, improving efficiency and managing demand on the system.

"A safe and well-maintained transportation system can strengthen America's economy, enhance personal mobility and facilitate more efficient movement of goods, but the future of this network could be in jeopardy without increased federal investment," said Robert Sinclair, Jr., AAA Northeast manager of media relations. "The need for investment in transportation across the nation remains urgent. Long Island and all states benefit from a modern, accessible transportation system. AAA urges Congress and the current administration to prioritize transportation investments to ensure safe, efficient and reliable mobility across the United States."

The TRIP report includes a list of the most needed projects, improvements or programs to improve mobility on Long Island, provided via a TRIP survey of Nassau and Suffolk counties. These needed mobility projects include improvements to critical interchanges and intersections including Seaford Oyster Bay Expressway and Old Country Road, Wantagh Parkway and Old Country Road and Stewart Avenue and Clinton Road; the extension of the region's trail system; and, expanded rail and bus rapid transit facilities.

"The importance of a reliable transportation system has been reinforced on Long Island during the COVID-19 pandemic, which placed increased importance on the ability of a region's transportation network to support a reliable supply chain and safely move people," said Dave Kearby, TRIP's executive director. "In order to restore and sustain Long Island's economy, maintain personal and commercial mobility, and improve quality of life, adequate transportation investment must remain a priority."