

The Cost Of Getting There: Buffalo Niagara's Deteriorating Roadways

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By [Press Release Desk, News Partner](#)

Press release from the Buffalo Niagara Partnership:

How Western New York travels can change where the region is headed.

The quality of our transportation network has a daily economic impact and Buffalo-Niagara is in need of serious improvements.

According to [TRIP](#), a national transportation research nonprofit based in Washington, DC, the average driver in the [Buffalo-Niagara](#) region loses \$1,765 annually as a result of driving on roads and bridges that are deteriorated, congested, and lack desirable safety features. At a time when employers and small businesses cannot afford to lose a single dollar of investment or commerce, the condition of Western New York's roads and bridges are deterring economic development.

BNP joined TRIP for the release of its [New York Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State's Need for Safe, Smooth and Efficient Mobility Report](#) on [December 8, 2020](#). The comprehensive report finds that throughout New York, nearly half of major locally and state-maintained roads are in poor or mediocre condition, ten percent of locally and state-maintained are rated poor/structurally deficient, and 5,127 people lost their lives on the state's roads from 2014-2018. Overall, New York's major urban roads are congested, causing significant delays and choking commuting and commerce.

Specifically, TRIP's report shows that 17 percent of major locally and state-maintained roads in Buffalo-Niagara's urban areas are in poor condition and another 21 percent are in mediocre condition, costing the average motorist an additional \$431 each year in

extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear. Further, eight percent of regional bridges are rated poor/structurally deficient, with significant deterioration to the bridge deck, supports or other major components.

Traffic congestion in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls region causes 48 annual hours of delay for the average motorist and costs drivers \$965 annually in lost time and wasted fuel. The region's drivers waste approximately 14.1 million gallons of fuel each year due to traffic congestion, an average of 23 gallons per motorist. Statewide, drivers lose \$14.2 billion annually as a result of lost time and wasted fuel due to traffic congestion.

The efficiency and condition of New York's transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state's economy. Annually, \$1.3 trillion in goods are shipped to and from New York, relying heavily on the state's network of roads and bridges. Increasingly, companies are looking at the quality of a region's transportation system when deciding where to re-locate or expand. Approximately 3.5 million full-time jobs in New York in key industries like tourism, retail sales, agriculture and manufacturing are dependent on the quality, safety and reliability of the state's transportation infrastructure network.

Deferring transportation investment leads to further deterioration, costing drivers more time and money and making the eventual repairs much more costly. As the regional chamber of commerce, BNP supports comprehensive local, state and federal investment into our transportation system to improve overall travel conditions and spur additional private sector economic activity that will put more people to work and benefit our community. TRIP's report once again provides a detailed justification for why robust public investment in our transportation infrastructure would add quantifiable value to Buffalo Niagara's employers and taxpayers.