

TRIP Finds 62% of Connecticut Roads Poor, Mediocre



TRIP's report on Connecticut transportation infrastructure labels 62 percent of the state's major locally and state-maintained roads as poor or mediocre. It said 6 percent of its locally or state-maintained bridges are poor/structurally deficient.

The report, "Transportation's Vital Role in Connecticut's Recovery," put the annual cost to the state's drivers at \$6 billion due to roads and bridges that are deteriorated, congested, or lack some desirable safety features. Those costs include higher vehicle operating costs (VOC), traffic crashes, and congestion-related delays.

The report includes regional pavement and bridge conditions, highway safety data, and cost breakdowns for the Bridgeport-Stamford, Hartford, and New Haven urban areas, as well as statewide. A breakdown of the costs per motorist in the state's largest urban areas, along with a statewide total, is below.

The TRIP report finds poor and mediocre roads in Connecticut cost the state's motorists an additional \$1.9 billion each year in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear. Some 17 percent of the state's major roads are in fair condition, and the remaining 21 percent are in good condition.

The 6 percent of Connecticut's bridges rated poor/structurally deficient show significant deterioration to the bridge deck, supports, or other major components. Two-thirds of the state's bridges are rated in fair condition, and the remaining 29 percent are in good condition. Most bridges are designed to last 50 years before major overhaul or replacement, although many newer bridges are being designed to last 75 years or longer. In Connecticut, 62 percent of the state's bridges were built in 1969 or earlier – the fourth highest share in the nation.

"It's hardly news that Connecticut's transportation infrastructure needs improvements," said Connecticut State Senator Will Haskell, senate chair of the Connecticut General Assembly Transportation Committee, in a prepared statement. "But this report sheds light on the depth and breadth of the problem. Now that we can see a light at the end of the tunnel, it's time to redouble our commitment to getting Connecticut moving again. More specifically, we know that investing in public transit will create jobs and reduce carbon emissions. In my new role as the Senate Chair of the Transportation Committee, I look forward to advocating for a 21st century infrastructure network."

Said Amy Parmenter, spokesperson for the AAA Allied Group, in a statement:

"As the advocacy organization for the motoring public, the TRIP report findings that the majority of Connecticut's roadways are in 'poor or mediocre condition' are extremely troubling. AAA research indicates that one third of U.S. drivers are unable to pay for unexpected vehicle repairs, suggesting that thousands of dollars in damage would leave them stranded, without transportation that may be critical to their livelihood. Connecticut must do better."

From 2015 to 2019, 1,380 people were killed in traffic crashes in Connecticut. In 2019, Connecticut had 0.79 traffic fatalities for every 100 million miles traveled, lower than the national average of 1.11. The traffic fatality rate on Connecticut's rural, non-Interstate roadways in 2019 was approximately two-and-a-half times higher than on all other roads (1.70 per 100 million vehicle miles of travel vs. 0.70). From 2015 to 2019, there were 267 pedestrian and 16 bicycle fatalities in Connecticut, 21 percent of the total number of traffic fatalities in the state. Traffic crashes imposed a total of \$4.5 billion in economic costs in Connecticut in 2019 and traffic crashes in which a lack of adequate roadway safety features were likely a contributing factor imposed \$1.5 billion in economic costs.

The efficiency and condition of Connecticut's transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state's economy. Annually, \$306 billion in goods are shipped to and from Connecticut, 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. Regions with congested or poorly maintained roads may see businesses relocate to areas with a smoother, more efficient and more modern transportation system. Approximately 731,000 full-time jobs in Connecticut 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. Source: TRIP