

BETTER ROADS

At 65, Interstate System Needs Rebuild, Double Current Funding, TRIP Report Says



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The intersection of Interstates 10 and 610 in Houston, Texas, during evening rush hour.

Source: Getty Images

The U.S. Interstate System faces a persistent and growing backlog of reconstruction needs that funding has failed to keep up with for years, according to a new report.

The report by TRIP, a national transportation research nonprofit, calls for more than doubling the annual federal allotment for the system – from \$23 billion in 2018 to \$57 billion – over the next 20 years. The report also ranks the states for [traffic congestion](#) and travel conditions, a chart of which can be seen at the end of this article.

The report says the system's foundation needs to be rebuilt and more lanes added to handle the congestion that continues to grow. Travel from 2000 to 2019 has jumped 26%, three times the rate of new lane capacity. Almost half of all urban interstate highways are considered congested during peak hours, the report says.

Much of that additional traffic has been due to more tractor trailers on the road. The report says tractor trailer travel has risen 43% from 2000 to 2019 versus 19% for overall vehicle travel.

Repaving has helped the system, but the gains are diminishing as the foundation deteriorates.

TRIP reports that 11% of interstate highway pavements are in poor or mediocre condition. Meanwhile, 3% of interstate bridges are rated in poor condition, and 57% are rated fair.

The [TRIP report](#) makes the following recommendations:

- Reconstruct foundations of interstate highways, bridges and interchanges
- Improve safety features
- Right-size the system, including upgrading some corridors to interstate standards
- Add highway capacity on existing routes
- Add corridors
- Modify “some urban segments to maintain connectivity while remediating economic and social disruption.”

“The long-term vision that helped establish the current Interstate Highway System 65 years ago is needed again today,” said Dave Kearby, TRIP’s executive director.

Here is the report’s ranking of states for congestion and other travel conditions on the interstate system:

RANK	Congested Urban Interstates		2000-19 Interstate VMT Increase		Daily Interstate Travel per Lane Mile		Interstate Pavement in Poor Condition		Interstate Bridges Poor/Structurally Deficient	
	State	%	State	%	State	Value	State	%	State	%
1	California	87%	Nevada	69%	California	20,957	Hawaii	23%	West Virginia	13%
2	Maryland	83%	Louisiana	61%	Maryland	20,214	Delaware	9%	Rhode Island	12%
3	New Jersey	81%	North Carolina	57%	Hawaii	17,864	New Jersey	9%	Illinois	8%
4	Delaware	71%	Utah	57%	Colorado	17,702	Louisiana	7%	Massachusetts	7%
5	Florida	70%	Colorado	53%	Florida	17,145	New York	6%	New York	6%
6	Massachusetts	68%	Texas	49%	Texas	17,123	Colorado	6%	Michigan	6%
7	Rhode Island	65%	Mississippi	45%	Rhode Island	16,644	Michigan	6%	Colorado	5%
8	Connecticut	63%	Idaho	44%	Massachusetts	16,326	California	6%	Maine	5%
9	Hawaii	60%	Wisconsin	42%	Washington	16,251	Maryland	5%	Washington	5%
10	Washington	58%	Florida	41%	New Jersey	16,053	Indiana	5%	Missouri	5%
11	Texas	58%	North Dakota	41%	Delaware	15,956	Pennsylvania	5%	Idaho	4%
12	Georgia	57%	South Carolina	39%	Connecticut	15,514	Washington	5%	Pennsylvania	4%
13	Colorado	57%	New Jersey	36%	Georgia	15,325	South Carolina	4%	Wyoming	3%
14	Minnesota	56%	Arkansas	35%	Virginia	15,207	Arkansas	4%	Montana	3%
15	New Hampshire	54%	Montana	34%	Nevada	15,130	Illinois	4%	Louisiana	3%
16	Virginia	52%	Alabama	33%	Arizona	15,016	Oklahoma	4%	California	3%
17	Kentucky	51%	Tennessee	33%	Tennessee	14,718	Minnesota	4%	Connecticut	3%
18	South Carolina	50%	South Dakota	30%	Louisiana	14,452	Alabama	4%	New Mexico	3%
19	Utah	49%	Iowa	27%	Kentucky	14,404	Ohio	3%	New Jersey	3%
20	Ohio	48%	Kentucky	26%	Minnesota	14,236	West Virginia	3%	North Carolina	3%
	U.S Average	47%	U.S Average	26%	U.S Average	14,742	U.S Average	3%	U.S Average	3%

How the states rank for congestion and road and bridge conditions for their sections of the Interstate Highway System. (Note: VMT stands for vehicle miles traveled.) Source: TRIP