

TRIP report reveals Oklahoma infrastructure needs

By: [Jeanette Quezada](#) | Wednesday, Jun 16, 2021



TULSA, Okla. — Over the last few years, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation has made significant improvements on state bridges, but a new report found Oklahoma lacks the funding to continue infrastructure improvements on its roads and bridges accomplished over the last several years.

The National Transportation Non-profit group "TRIP" released the report Wednesday. It evaluates the state's roads and bridges and assesses the need for state funding to make further improvement

projects possible. The report revealed the statewide transportation needs are outpacing the funding available.

According to the TRIP report, right now ODOT only has enough funds to complete 15 percent of the improvement projects needed.

TRIP said more federal and state money would not only help improve road and bridge conditions but also boost safety and economic growth in the state.

"The Oklahoma Department of Transportation, in their 8-year long-range plan looking at the repairs that they need to make and also recognizing that increasingly with older pavements and older bridges you need to start doing more costly long-term repairs because the short-term repairs are seeing a point of diminishing return, where unless you do the more thorough repairs... it's not going to last very long," Rocky Moretti, director of policy and research for the non-profit TRIP said.

ODOT agrees with the TRIP report. In a statement released to 2 News is said, "...Oklahoma has certainly come a long way in improving highway bridge conditions, but many critical transportation needs still remain like addressing pavement conditions, rural two-lane highways with deficient shoulders, and urban area traffic congestion."

The statement continued stating, "Adequate and sustained state and federal funding will be necessary as ODOT continues to make much-needed improvements to the highway system especially with recent harsh winters accelerating the deterioration of older and already stressed pavements as the state's population continues to grow.

Moretti said when it comes to bridges, it's crucial to keep up with their maintenance.

"The danger is not that these are bridges in danger of collapse, the danger is an economic danger," he said.

He said if the state falls behind on bridge maintenance, it becomes an even greater burden to fund the necessary improvements.

"If you don't fund those improvements, you have to start closing bridges, you have to start restricting bridges for emergency vehicles, for large trucks, and that is a real danger," Moretti said.

Moretti said while additional resources are important, flexibility is too so that Oklahomans can decide the best use for additional federal transportation dollars.

[For a full report on the reports findings click here. CLICK HERE](#)