

## TRIP Report Examines Interstate Conditions in Missouri



A new report released by Washington, DC-based [TRIP](#), the national transportation research nonprofit, examines Interstate roads, bridges, and funding in Missouri.

Entitled “Restoring Missouri’s Interstate Highway System: Meeting Missouri’s Transportation Needs with a Reliable, Safe & Well-Maintained National Highway Network,” the report covers pavement and bridge conditions, congestion, safety, and travel trends on Missouri’s interstate system.

At 65 years old, Missouri’s 1,380-mile Interstate Highway System remains the workhorse of the state’s surface transportation network: heavily traveled and providing the most important link in the supply chain, and the primary connection between and within urban communities. The importance of the Interstate Highway System and the reliable movement of goods it provides has been heightened during the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, TRIP says. But many Interstate highways are wearing out and showing signs of their advanced age, often heavily congested, and in need of significant reconstruction, modernization, and expansion.

While Missouri’s Interstate Highway System accounts for two percent of all roadway lane miles in the state, it carries 27 percent of the state’s vehicle travel—21.5 million vehicle miles of travel annually. Due to the pandemic, vehicle travel on Missouri’s roads dropped by as much as 38 percent in April 2020 (as compared to vehicle travel during the same month the previous year) but rebounded to three percent above May 2019 (the previous pre-Covid-19 May) levels by May 2021.

The TRIP report finds that 47 percent of Missouri’s urban Interstate highways are considered congested because they carry traffic levels that result in significant delays during peak travel hours. Travel by combination trucks accounted for 17 percent of all vehicle miles of travel on Missouri’s Interstate Highway System in 2019, the ninth highest rate in the nation.

According to TRIP’s report, five percent of Missouri’s Interstate bridges are rated in poor/structurally deficient condition, the tenth highest rate in the nation. A bridge is

rated in poor/structurally deficient condition if there is significant deterioration of the bridge deck, supports, or other major components.

Seventy-one percent of the state’s Interstate bridges are rated in fair condition and the remaining 25 percent are in good condition. Fifty-six percent of Missouri’s Interstate bridges are at least 50 years old, and the average age of the state’s Interstate bridges is 46 years. One percent of Missouri’s Interstates have pavement in poor condition, lower than the national average of three percent. Four percent of Missouri’s Interstate pavements are rated in mediocre condition, five percent are in fair condition and the remaining 89 percent are in good condition.

Restoring and upgrading the Interstate Highway System to meet the nation’s 21st Century transportation needs will require a significant boost in funding, strong federal leadership and a robust federal-state partnership to reestablish the Interstate Highway System as the nation’s premier transportation network.

The July 2021 legislative approval of SB 262, which was subsequently signed into law by Governor Parson, provides a critical first step towards addressing the underfunding of Missouri’s Interstate Highway System and is expected to provide an additional \$450 million annually once fully implemented. Another critical source of Interstate funding in Missouri is the current federal surface transportation program, Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST Act), which expires on September 30, 2021. Reauthorization of a new long-term, adequately and reliably funded long-term [federal program](#) will provide another critical step towards ensuring that a strong federal program supports the restoration of the Interstate system.

Based on the findings of a 2019 report by the Transportation Research Board (TRB) that was requested by Congress, TRIP has provided a set of recommendations for the restoration of the Interstate Highway System, which include: the foundational reconstruction of Interstate highways, bridges and interchanges; improvement to roadway safety features; system right-sizing, including upgrading of some roadway corridors to Interstate standards; adding needed additional highway capacity on existing routes; adding additional corridors; and, modifying some urban segments to maintain connectivity while remediating economic and social disruption.

Source: TRIP