

MISSOURI NEWS

Missouri's interstates need funding if they're going to serve the future, data shows



Highway traffic to Kansas City, Missouri, USA

by: [Heidi Schmidt](#) | Friday, August 13, 2021

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — It's been 65 years since crews broke ground in St. Charles, Missouri, on what eventually became America's interstate system.

A new report by [TRIP](#), a national transportation research nonprofit, shows just how much Missouri relies on highways like Interstate 70 and Interstate 35. At the same time, the analysis points to the funding that's needed to repair bridges and highways, while implementing traffic control measures.

TRAFFIC

The study shows what anyone who drives across Missouri on the interstate already knows. Interstates are the primary connection between and within communities.

- About 2% of all highway miles in Missouri are made up of interstates
- Interstates carry 27% of the state's traffic
- 47% of Missouri's urban interstate highways are congested
 - Congestion is when the volume of traffic on the interstate causes significant delays during peak travel hours

BRIDGES

TRIP's report also ranked interstate bridges. The group said 56% of the state's bridges are at least 50 years old with the average age being 46 years old.

- 5% of the bridges on Missouri's interstates are rated poor or structurally deficient
 - That means there's significant deterioration of the bridge deck, supports or other components
 - Only 9 other states have more bridges with structural issues
- 71% of the bridges on Missouri's interstates are rated fair
- 25% of the bridges on Missouri's interstates are in good condition

PAVEMENT

According to TRIP, Missouri's interstate system is made up of 1,380 miles.

- 89% of Missouri's interstate miles have pavement that's considered in good condition.
- 5% of the state's interstates have pavement in fair condition.
- 4% of Missouri's interstates have pavement rated in mediocre condition.
- 1% of the state's interstates have pavement in poor condition. (The national average is 3%.)

SAFETY

TRIP's analysis found that the design of Missouri's interstates is safer to travel on than all other roads in the state. The interstates include a minimum of four lanes, paved shoulders, median barriers and other separation from other roads.

- In 2019, the fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles was 0.69 on Missouri's interstates. That compares to 1.27 on all other routes.
- Interstates carried 27% of state's traffic in 2019, but accounted for just 17% of traffic deaths.
- TRIP's estimated additional safety features on Interstates in Missouri saved 137 lives in 2019.

THE FUTURE

TRIP said restoring and upgrading the Interstate Highway System needs to be a priority moving forward. The group said it will require a significant boost in funding to achieve the projects needed to move forward.

TRIP credits [Senate Bill 262](#), which Gov. Mike Parson recently signed into law. The group said it's a critical step toward addressing funding for Missouri's highways and roads. It's expected to provide an additional \$450 million annually once fully implemented

TRIP also provided a list of recommendations based on the findings of a 2019 report by the [Transportation Research Board](#) that was requested by Congress.

Those recommendations 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.
- Modifying some urban segments to maintain connectivity while remediating economic and social disruption.

TRIP is a private, nonprofit organization that researches and distributes data on transportation issues. You can read more about the [group and its study](#).