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## Report: Critical next step needed to improve Charleston roads and bridges



By [Cameron Bopp](#) | Wednesday, September 22, 2021

CHARLESTON, S.C. (WCSC) - Charleston drivers use over 20 gallons of gas and spend over 50 hours stuck in traffic each year, costing the average driver over \$1,000 annually, according to a new report.

With vehicle travel in South Carolina now rising 4% above pre-pandemic levels, traffic congestion is also up. The report from TRIP, a national transportation research nonprofit based in Washington D.C., is called Moving South Carolina Forward. It examines the condition, use, safety and efficiency of South Carolina roads and bridges.

The report also identifies the state's most congested interstate segments, with Charleston and Berkeley County taking five of the top 10 slots, all five being on either I-26 or I-526. This congestion doesn't just affect driver's timeliness but their safety, according to TRIP officials.

"The report points out that from 2015 to 2019, that there were 5,018 traffic fatalities in SC, approximately 1,000 people per year," Director of Policy and Research Rocky Moretti said at a virtual news conference Wednesday. "The traffic fatality rate in South Carolina is the highest in the nation."

With South Carolina's population expected to increase 22% by 2040, TRIP emphasizes its hope for current and future legislation to be a reliable source of funds.

Currently, 16% of Charleston's roads are in poor condition, and 28% are in mediocre condition, according to the report. Bridge conditions show 7% in poor condition and 61% in fair condition.

The Passage of Act 40 in 2017 raises additional funds to improve the state's existing roads and bridges, helping the state to move forward with 4,000 miles of paving projects, according to Moretti. Even with this, he says there is still a critical next step in addressing South Carolina's transportation needs.

"In Washington, if the legislatures are able to move forward with an infrastructure package and a long-term reauthorization of the federal surface transportation program, that will be the critical next step," Moretti said.