

Deficient Long Island Roads Cost Drivers \$3,200 Annually According to New Report

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The TRIP report finds that 34 percent of state-maintained roads on Long Island are in poor or fair condition and 66 percent are in good and excellent condition.



Roads and bridges that are deteriorated, congested or lack some desirable safety features cost New York motorists a total of \$28 billion statewide annually - \$3,192 per driver on Long Island - due to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes and congestion-related delays. Increased investment in transportation improvements at the local, state and federal levels could relieve traffic congestion, improve road, bridge and transit conditions, boost safety, and support long-term economic growth in New York, according to a new report released by TRIP, a Washington, DC based national transportation research nonprofit.

The TRIP report, "New York Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State's Need for Safe, Smooth and Efficient Mobility," finds that throughout New York, nearly half of major locally and state-maintained roads are in poor or mediocre condition, ten percent of locally and state-maintained bridges (20 feet or more in length) are rated poor/structurally deficient, and 5,019 people lost their lives on the state's roads from 2015-2019. New York's major urban roads are congested, causing significant delays and choking commuting and commerce. The TRIP report includes statewide and regional pavement and bridge conditions, congestion data, highway safety data, and cost breakdowns for the Albany-Schenectady-Troy, Binghamton, Buffalo-Niagara Falls, New York-Newark-Jersey City, Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, Rochester, Syracuse and Utica urban areas. Unless otherwise noted, Long Island data is part of the larger New York-Newark-Jersey City data set.

Driving on Long Island roads costs the average driver \$3,192 per year in the form of extra vehicle operating costs (VOC) as a result of driving on roads in need of repair, lost time and fuel due to congestion-related delays, and the costs of traffic crashes in which the lack of adequate roadway safety features, while not the primary factor, likely were a contributing factor.

The TRIP report finds that 34 percent of state-maintained roads on Long Island are in poor or fair condition and 66 percent are in good and excellent condition (this includes only

Nassau and Suffolk Counties). Driving on roads in poor condition costs the average Long Island motorist an additional \$759 each year in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear. Statewide, 26 percent of New York's major roads are in poor condition and 19 percent are in mediocre condition.

"TRIP's report once again highlights the desperate need for continued funding for our roads, highways and bridges on Long Island. The numbers speak for themselves," said Marc Herbst, executive director of the Long Island Contractors' Association. "Thirteen percent of Long Island's bridges are rated in poor or fair condition. The average cost per Long Island driver totals \$3,192 due to rough and unsafe roads. Drivers experience an estimated 92 hours annually in traffic, instead of being at home with their family and loved ones. We look forward to working with TRIP and continuing to advocate for safer, better roads that will bring Long Island and New York into a new era of transportation. This report will help guide that process."

Thirteen percent of Long Island's bridges are rated in poor and fair condition, while 87 percent are in good and excellent condition (this includes only Nassau and Suffolk Counties). Statewide, ten percent of New York's bridges are rated poor/structurally deficient.

Traffic congestion on Long Island causes 92 annual hours of delay for the average motorist and costs the average driver \$2,107 annually in lost time and wasted fuel. Long Island drivers waste approximately 324 million gallons of fuel each year due to traffic congestion, an average of 38 gallons per motorist. Statewide, drivers lose \$15.4 billion annually as a result of lost time and wasted fuel due to traffic congestion. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, vehicle travel in New York dropped by as much as 45 percent in April 2020 compared to vehicle travel during the same month the previous year, but rebounded to eight percent below October 2019 levels by October 2021.

"These latest findings by TRIP shed more light on the continued need to address the countless roads and bridges causing businesses and employees time and money," said Melvin Norris, senior director of government affairs for The Business Council of New York State, Inc. "These careful studies can be used as a roadmap to finally address and solve these problems altogether. We are hopeful that the federal infrastructure package will help in solving this ongoing problem."

Traffic crashes in New York claimed the lives 5,019 people between 2015 and 2019. New

York's overall traffic fatality rate of 0.75 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel in 2019 is lower than the national average of 1.11. In the greater New York-Newark-Jersey City urban area, 600 people were killed in traffic crashes each year from 2015 to 2019. The financial impact of traffic crashes in which the lack of adequate roadway safety features, while not the primary factor, were likely a contributing factor was an average of \$326 annually per each area driver.

Improvements to New York's roads, highways and bridges are funded by local, state and federal governments. Annual investment in roads, highways and bridges by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) increased by 37 percent from 2018 to 2021 from approximately \$4.3 billion to \$6 billion. The level of NYSDOT highway investment is likely to increase further as a result of the five-year federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), signed into law in November 2021, which will increase annual federal funding for New York roads, highways and bridges by 52 percent from an average of approximately \$1.8 billion annually to \$2.7 billion. Federal funds currently provide 38 percent of the revenue used by NYSDOT to fund highway and bridge improvements.

The efficiency and condition of New York's transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state's economy. Annually, \$1 trillion in goods are shipped to and from New York, relying heavily on the state's network of roads and bridges. Increasingly, companies are looking at the quality of a region's transportation system when deciding where to re-locate or expand. Regions with congested or poorly maintained roads may see businesses relocate to areas with a smoother, more efficient and more modern transportation system. The design, construction and maintenance of transportation infrastructure in New York supports approximately 319,000 full-time jobs across all sectors of the state economy. Approximately 3.5 million full-time jobs in New York in key industries like tourism, retail sales, agriculture and manufacturing are dependent on the quality, safety and reliability of the state's transportation infrastructure network. "Additional federal funding from the IIJA will allow New York to move forward with needed improvements to its transportation network that will make the state's roads and bridges smoother, safer and more efficient while boosting the economy and creating jobs," said Dave Kearby, TRIP's executive director. "In addition to the federal investment, it will be critical that New York State continue to increase its level of transportation investment."