



TRIP Report: NEW YORK STATE MOTORISTS LOSE \$28 BILLION ANNUALLY – UP TO \$3,200 PER DRIVER – ON ROADS THAT ARE DETERIORATED, CONGESTED & LACK SOME DESIRABLE SAFETY FEATURES

Posted on [January 12, 2022](#) by [Greg](#)



A National
Transportation
Research
Nonprofit

Roads and bridges that are deteriorated, congested or lack some desirable safety features cost New York motorists a total of \$28 billion statewide annually – as much as \$3,192 per driver in some urban areas – 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 today 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.

Driving on deficient roads costs New York State motorists a total of \$28 billion each 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. A breakdown of the costs per motorist in the state’s largest urban areas, along with a statewide total, is below.

The TRIP report finds that 26 percent of major locally and state-maintained roads in New York State are in poor condition and another 19 percent are in mediocre condition, costing

the state’s motorists an additional \$7.7 billion each year in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

“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.”

Statewide, ten percent of New York’ bridges are rated poor/structurally deficient with significant deterioration to the bridge deck, supports or other major components. Fifty-four percent of the state’s bridges are rated in fair condition and the remaining 36 percent are in good condition.

Congested roads choke commuting and commerce and cost New York drivers \$15.4 billion each year in the form of lost time and wasted fuel. In the most congested urban areas, drivers lose up to \$2,107 and as many as 92 hours per year 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.

“Year after year this report highlights the terrible condition of our roads and bridges,” said Mark Eagan, president and CEO of the Capital Region Chamber. “The lack of infrastructure investment has real consequences for the traveling public and for our region’s economy. Thankfully with Congress’ approval of the infrastructure bill, New York State will have increased funding to improve our crumbling roads and bridges. Importantly, during her recent State of the State, Governor Hochul said that New Yorkers deserve 21st century infrastructure. I could not agree with her more.”

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. From 2015 to 2019, there were 1,400 pedestrian and 197 bicycle fatalities in New

York, 32 percent of the total number of traffic fatalities in the state. Traffic crashes imposed a total of \$13.9 billion in economic costs in New York in 2019 and traffic crashes in which a lack of adequate roadway safety features, while not the primary factor, were likely a contributing factor imposed \$4.6 billion in economic costs.

“All motorists deserve safe roads and bridges while strong infrastructure also has a direct impact on New York’s economy. AAA is pleased that the state legislature has secured record transportation investments and has created new programs to help support cities across the state including Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse in 2022,” said Elizabeth Carey, director of public relations at AAA Western and Central New York. “AAA urges lawmakers to continue to prioritize transportation investments to ensure safe and efficient mobility across the state.”

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’ 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."

New York Transportation by the Numbers Meeting the State's Needs for Safe, Smooth and Efficient Mobility



NEW YORK KEY TRANSPORTATION FACTS

THE HIDDEN COSTS OF DEFICIENT ROADS

Driving on New York roads that are deteriorated, congested and that lack some desirable safety features costs New York drivers a total of \$28 billion each year. TRIP has calculated the cost to the average motorist in the state's largest urban areas in the form of additional vehicle operating costs (VOC) as a result of driving on rough roads, the cost of lost time and wasted fuel due to congestion, and the financial cost of traffic crashes in which the lack of adequate safety features, while not the primary factor, were likely a contributing factor. The chart below details the cost of efficient roads statewide and for the average driver in the state's largest urban areas.

NEW YORK ROADS PROVIDE A ROUGH RIDE

Due to inadequate state and local funding, nearly half of major locally and state-maintained roads and highways in New York are in poor or mediocre condition. Driving on rough roads costs the average New York driver \$632 annually in additional vehicle operating costs – a total of \$7.7 billion statewide. The chart below details pavement conditions on major roads in the state's largest urban areas and statewide.

NEW YORK BRIDGE CONDITIONS

Ten percent of New York's bridges are rated in poor/structurally deficient condition, the eleventh highest share in the nation. Bridges that are rated poor/structurally deficient have significant deterioration of the bridge deck,

supports or other major components. Fifty-four percent of the state's bridges are rated in fair condition and the remaining 36 percent are in good condition. The chart below details bridge conditions statewide and in the state's largest urban areas.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN NEW YORK CAUSES DELAYS

In 2020, the state's transportation system carried 102 billion annual vehicle miles of travel (VMT). Congested roads choke commuting and commerce and cost New York drivers \$15.4 billion each year in the form of lost time and wasted fuel. In the most congested urban areas, drivers lose up to \$2,107 and as many as 92 hours per year 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 (as compared to vehicle travel during the same month the previous year), but rebounded to eight percent below October 2019 volume by October 2021. The chart below shows the annual number of hours and gallons of fuel lost to congestion per driver and the average cost per driver of lost time and wasted fuel due to congestion in the state's largest urban areas.

NEW YORK TRAFFIC SAFETY AND FATALITIES

A total of 5,019 people were killed in traffic crashes in New York from 2015-2019. In 2019, New York had 0.75 traffic fatalities for every 100 million miles traveled, lower than the national average of 1.11. The fatality rate on New York's non-interstate rural roads is more than two and a half times higher than on all other roads in the state (1.59 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel vs 0.59). From 2015 to 2019, there were 1,400 pedestrian and 197 bicycle fatalities in New York, 32 percent of the total number of traffic fatalities in the state.

Traffic crashes imposed a total of \$13.9 billion in economic costs in New York in 2019 and traffic crashes in which a lack of adequate roadway safety features, while not the primary factor, were likely a contributing factor imposed \$4.6 billion in economic costs. The chart below details the average number of people killed in traffic crashes in the state's largest urban areas between 2015 and 2019, and the cost of traffic crashes per driver.

NEW YORK TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

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 ability of revenue from New York's motor fuel tax – a critical source of state transportation funds – to keep pace with the state's future transportation needs is likely to erode as a result of increasing vehicle fuel efficiency and the increasing use of electric vehicles. The average fuel efficiency of U.S. passenger vehicles increased from 20 miles per gallon in 2010 to 24.5 miles per gallon in 2020. Average fuel efficiency is expected to increase another 31 percent by 2030, to 32 miles per gallon, and increase 51 percent by 2040, to 37 miles per gallon. The share of electric vehicles of total passenger vehicle sales in the U.S. is expected to increase to five percent by 2023 and to 60 percent by 2040, by which time they will represent approximately 30 percent of the passenger vehicle fleet.

TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The health and future growth of New York's economy is riding on its transportation system. Each year, \$1 trillion in goods are shipped to and from sites in New York, mostly by truck. Increases in passenger and freight movement will place further burdens on the state's already deteriorated and congested surface transportation system. The value of freight shipped to and from sites in New York, when adjusted for inflation, is expected to increase by 154 percent by 2045, and by 108 percent by 2045 for goods shipped by trucks.

A [report](#) by the [American Road & Transportation Builders Association](#) found that 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. These workers earn \$9.8 billion annually.

Approximately 3.5 million full-time jobs in New York in key industries like tourism, manufacturing, retail sales and agriculture are completely dependent on the state's transportation infrastructure network.

Highway and bridge spending multiplies through the economy by stimulating additional output. A 2021 macroeconomic [analysis](#) by [IHS Markit](#) found that that every dollar spent on highway and bridge improvements results in \$3.4 dollars in combined direct, indirect and induced output from industries throughout the economy, resulting in a multiplier for highway and bridge investment of 3.4

Sources of information for this report include the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), the U.S. Census Bureau, the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA), HIS Markit and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Cover page photo credit: David Golub.