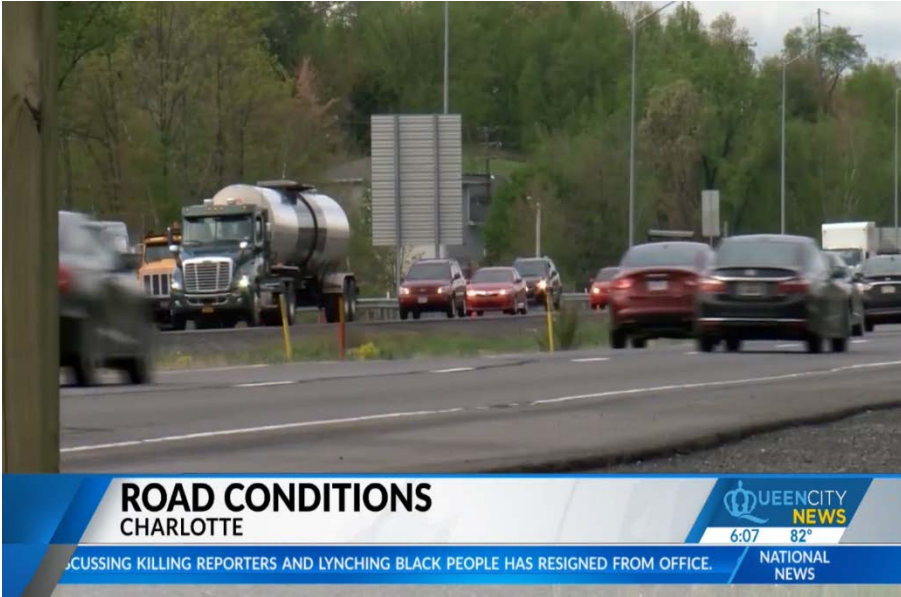




MONEY MATTERS

Data shows 44% of roads in major North Carolina city are in 'poor' condition

By Taylor Young | April 20, 2023



CHARLOTTE, N.C. (QUEEN CITY NEWS) – As North Carolina continues to be one of the fastest-growing states in the country, roadways are feeling an unprecedented amount of wear and tear.

“While we drive on the road, we prefer to have a nice ride instead of hitting the potholes,” truck driver Dilshod said while at a West Charlotte truck stop.

In Charlotte, researchers say 44 percent of major roads in Charlotte are in poor or mediocre condition.

“North Carolina faces a significant challenge in providing a reliable, safe, and well-maintained transportation

system,” Director of Police and research with TRIP Rocky Moretti said.

The transportation research team out of Washington used data from the N.C. Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and the United States Department of Transportation to understand better how road conditions impact drivers.

It found that poorly paved roads and congestion cost Charlotte drivers nearly \$560 a year. Statewide, travelers are spending \$3.7 billion on repair costs and increased fuel consumption a year.

“It would be nice if our tax dollars went towards fixing up roads, a lot of our systems around here,” Charlotte driver Alex Haas said.

Last year, N.C. passed a bill to provide a portion of the state’s sales tax revenue to improve roadways and highways.

While the additional money is expected to help, researchers say construction costs have increased by 50 percent in recent years. On top of inflation, the rise of fuel-efficient cars like hybrids and electric vehicles is reducing the state and federal motor fuel tax effectiveness.

“The roads have to be there, they have to be safe, they have to be reliable, and they have to be affordable, and diversifying our revenue sources further is essential to making all of that happen,” Gary Salamido said, president and CEO of N.C. Chamber.

The national transportation research nonprofit found that, on average, drivers spent 47 hours a year sitting in traffic.

Researchers say poor road conditions are also a safety concern. Traffic fatalities from 2019 to 2021 increased by 18 percent.

“Unfortunately, what we have seen in North Carolina, we have seen across the country with traffic fatalities actually increasing,” Moretti said.