



Report: Sixteen percent of Wilmington-area major roads are in poor condition

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By [Jamie Boulet](#)

WILMINGTON, N.C. (WECT) - A new report from a national nonprofit found that 16 percent of major roads in the Wilmington area are in poor condition, and that more funding sources will be needed to keep up with increasing costs.

TRIP, a National Transportation Research Nonprofit, [published the report](#) and hosted a press conference on Wednesday, April 19. The data used was collected from the N.C. Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration and the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Another 26 percent of major roads in the Wilmington area are in mediocre condition, with the rest in fair or good condition. Statewide, about 10 percent of major roads are in poor condition and 23 percent are in mediocre condition.

Location	Poor	Mediocre	Fair	Good
Asheville	11%	16%	19%	53%
Charlotte Metro	16%	28%	23%	33%
Raleigh-Durham	13%	25%	21%	42%
The Triad	12%	28%	20%	41%
Wilmington	16%	25%	21%	37%
North Carolina Statewide	10%	23%	23%	44%

Major road conditions in North Carolina metropolitan areas, as provided by TRIP's 2023 "Moving North Carolina Forward" report(TRIP)

Wilmington has a relatively low share of poor/structurally deficient bridges: 3 percent vs. 5-6 percent in other metro areas. Rocky Moretti, TRIP's director of policy and research, was unable to comment during the press conference on the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge in particular, deferring to state and local transportation agencies.

Wilmington Chamber of Commerce CCE, President and CEO Natalie Haskins English provided a statement in TRIP's online report.

"The Cape Fear Memorial Bridge (CFMB), which is beyond its 50-year lifespan, is a critical connection to the NC State Ports at Wilmington, to the workforce that commutes into Wilmington, and to the visitors that fuel our tourism economy. A replacement is our top infrastructure priority and is not included in the current State Transportation Improvement Program. We must identify additional funding to make it a reality," English said.

	POOR/STRUCTURALLY DEFICIENT		FAIR		GOOD		TOTAL BRIDGES
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	
Asheville	35	6%	334	61%	180	33%	549
Charlotte Metro	94	5%	947	52%	769	42%	1,810
Raleigh-Durham	51	5%	529	51%	450	44%	1,030
The Triad	108	6%	957	51%	810	43%	1,875
Wilmington	3	3%	42	37%	70	61%	115
North Carolina Statewide	1,303	7%	9,728	52%	7,791	41%	18,822

Bridge conditions in North Carolina metropolitan areas, as provided by TRIP's 2023 "Moving North Carolina Forward" report(TRIP)

The report found that, while drivers in the Wilmington area lose about 26 hours and \$646 each year to congestion, drivers in other urban areas experienced similar or increased delays.

Urban Area	Hours Lost to Congestion	Annual Cost Per Driver	Gallons of Fuel Wasted Per Driver
Asheville	26	\$687	10
Charlotte Metro	47	\$1,342	19
Raleigh-Durham	36	\$897	14
The Triad	26	\$580	11
Wilmington	26	\$646	11

Consequences of congestion in North Carolina metropolitan areas, as provided by TRIP's 2023 "Moving North Carolina Forward" report(TRIP)

Traffic fatalities in the state continue to increase each year, from about 1,412 in 2017 to 1,627 in 2021.

The press conference focused on a need to shift funding sources for road maintenance. While the NCDOT spent \$656 million on road preservation in 2022, the department had recommended spending about \$341 million more.

“The state’s long-term transportation funding sustainability is threatened by a significant increase in highway construction, inflation, and also by the increasing fuel efficiency of vehicles, and also the increasing adoption of electric vehicles, which is going to reduce the effectiveness of the state and federal motor fuel taxes in terms of raising revenue for transportation,” said Moretti, TRIP’s director of policy and research.

Moretti and NC Chamber President and CEO Gary Salamido both spoke on the need for new sources of transportation. The report cites efforts like N.C. HB 103 passed in 2022, which allocated state sales tax revenue to road and highway projects and is expected to provide \$7.2 billion in highway funding in the next decade. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act signed in 2021 will also allow the N.C. Department of Transportation to increase its annual investment in road and bridge preservation by 17 and 22 percent respectively.

But as efforts continue to put more electric vehicles on the road, fuel taxes won’t be able to bear the weight of highway funding as they have in the past.

“Our transportation funding formula is heavily on our motor fuels tax. And as we all know, that’s gonna be dwindling over time. And so we have to continue to look for alternative ways to diversify our revenue sources to pay for these key transportation infrastructure investments,” said Salamido.

You can find the news release on the Wilmington area on the [TRIP website](#), along with the [full report](#).