

Report: Thruway faces \$1.2 billion funding gap

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(WHAM file photo)

The New York State Thruway is facing a rocky financial road.

The Thruway is facing a funding gap of \$1.2 billion through 2031, according to [a new report from TRIP](#), a national transportation research nonprofit.

The report found that the number of annual trips on the Thruway increased by 8 percent from 2012 to 2019, dropped 19 percent in 2020 due to the pandemic, returned near pre-pandemic levels in 2021 and is project to increase by 9 percent from 2022 to 2031.

Despite increasing revenue from tolls and rest-stop sales, projected to increase by 36 percent from 2012 to 2031, the report found "additional investment in system rehabilitation coupled with an increased reliance on borrowing" would lead to a 171 percent increase in annual debt service.

The report cited "significant increases in the cost of highway and bridge improvements" that "could threaten the ability of the Thruway Authority to improve the condition, safety and reliability of the Thruway."

"We also took a look at the life cycle of the Thruway's roads and bridges," said Rocky Moretti, director of policy and research for TRIP. "Unfortunately, the report finds that, based on current funding, the current condition of

highways and bridges on the Thruway system are actually anticipated to deteriorate over the next decade."

The Thruway Authority shared a statement with 13WHAM.

"Today's report by TRIP is another indication of how critical it is for the Thruway Authority to increase revenue, especially seeing we do not receive any dedicated federal, state, or local tax dollars to cover the costs of operating and maintaining the Thruway.

"The fact of the matter is the average age of the Thruway's 815 bridges is 55 years old. More than 85 of those bridges will need to be replaced within the next decade and the projected cost is roughly \$800 million. Hundreds of more bridges will need to be addressed in the following decade. At the same time, the Thruway's roadway base, most of which dates back to the 1950s, requires constant maintenance. The longer we wait, the more expensive all of this critical work becomes.

Meanwhile, the Thruway Authority is looking to raise tolls. If approved, the Thruway Authority said the cost of traveling the Thruway from Exit 44 (Canandaigua) to Exit 47 (LeRoy) would increase from the current rate of \$1.40 to \$1.48 in 2024 and \$1.54 in 2027. A virtual public hearing is scheduled for June 5 from 4-7 p.m.

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