

A BUMPY RIDE: crumbling thoroughfares and potholes cost New York drivers about \$8.7 billion last year

Thomas C. Zambito



New York State Team
New York's crumbling roads and potholes cost the state's drivers \$8.7 billion — an average of \$715 — in repairs, fuel and wear and tear last year, according to an annual report by a national transportation research group.

The TRIP report used state and federal data to calculate the economic impact poorly maintained roads have on drivers in urban centers across the state, from Buffalo to New York City.

When congestion-related delays (\$16.8 billion) and traffic crashes in which roadway safety was a contributing factor (\$11.2 billion) are added in, the tab for New York motorists jumps to \$36.7 billion.



A pothole in the middle of Rt. 303 in West Nyack Jan. 25, 2022. Peter Carr/The Journal News

The report lays much of the blame on road conditions. Some 43% of the state's major roads are in poor or mediocre condition while 9% of its bridges are rated structurally deficient, the report notes.

Washington, D.C.-based TRIP, which represents insurance companies, parts manufacturers, engineering firms and others, says the state needs to invest more in its roads and bridges.

"Long-term, sustained transportation funding is needed to allow New York to move forward with necessary 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.



A toll entry with EZ Pass lane in 2021. Observer-Dispatch

What's it costing drivers?

The New York City region had the highest average vehicle operating costs -- the tab for repairs, lost time and fuel due to congestion delays -- with an average of \$880. The report included the New Jersey cities of Newark and Jersey City in its calculations.

The next highest was Syracuse (\$604) followed by Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown (\$587); Rochester (\$465); Buffalo-Niagara Falls (\$463); Albany-Schenectady-Troy (\$462) and Utica (\$353).

Binghamton (\$262) had one of the lowest costs among urban centers.

Where are roads the worst?

The New York City region had the highest percentage of roads in poor condition at 44%, followed by Syracuse (29%); Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown (17%); Albany-Schenectady-Troy (15%); Buffalo-Niagara Falls (14%) and Rochester (13%).

Utica and Binghamton tied with 7% of roads in poor condition.

How much time is lost?

The New York City region led the way again with 91 hours lost to congestion, costing drivers \$2,459 in lost time and extra fuel.

Buffalo-Niagara Falls and Albany-Schenectady-Troy were tied at 46 hours. Annual costs for drivers in the Buffalo region was \$1,203 and \$890 for Albany.

Rochester drivers lost 39 hours to congestion at a cost of \$960; Poughkeepsie-area drivers lost 34 hours at a cost of \$716 while Binghamton drivers came in at 19 hours lost at a cost of \$526. Syracuse and Utica were tied at 17 hours lost with costs of \$468 and \$449 respectively.

How many drivers die in crashes?

Traffic fatalities jumped 23% between 2019 and 2022, even though fewer cars were on the road. In 2019, the state tallied 921 traffic fatalities. Three years later the total was 1,148. Between 2018 and 2022 5,207 people were killed in traffic crashes in New York. To read more about why there have been more traffic fatalities go [here](#).

What's the state's response?

Gov. Kathy Hochul declared war on potholes when she took office in 2022.

This year's budget includes \$7.6 billion to fix highways, bridges, rail and aviation infrastructure. It's the third installment in a five-year \$33 billion capital plan.



Blauvelt fourth graders celebrate being 'published' in THE SCHOOLS, AA

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Appeals court: No immunity for Trump

Rules ex-president can be prosecuted for role in '20 election interference

Eric Tucker and Athena Durkin Richter

WASHINGTON — A federal appeals court ruled Tuesday that Donald Trump can face criminal charges that he defied its orders in the months before the 2020 election, rejecting the former president's claims that he is immune from prosecution and sending him back into a landmark prosecution that had been effectively frozen while the court considered the arguments.

The ruling ends the uncertainty in as many months that judges have warned Trump's immunity arguments and held that he can be prosecuted for actions undertaken while in the White House and in the run-up to Jan. 6, 2021, when a mob of his supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol. But it also sets the stage for additional appeals from the Republican ex-president that could reach the U.S. Supreme Court and result in further delays.

The one-month gap between when the appeals court heard arguments and when it issued its ruling has already created uncertainty about the timing of any trial in a calendar-jammed election year, with the judge overseeing the case last week concluding the matter will be heard in July.

The trial date carries obvious and concrete political ramifications, with special counsel Jack Smith's team hoping to prosecute Trump this year and the Republican primary field-runner

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Harrison's Dionisio can stay in office, court rules

Eric Tucker

A state appeals court has ruled the newly confirmed Harrison Dionisio's case, ruling Monday that incumbent Richard Dionisio, a Republican, can remain in office.

The second Department of the Appellate Division rejected a legal challenge by Ron Belmont, a long-shot writer in competition, holding that Belmont was improperly excluded from office because of a newly enacted term limits law.

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Martin Luther King III to speak at Rockland events

Alexandra Rivers

ROCKLAND COUNTY — Civil rights leader and community activist Martin Luther King III will be making two appearances in Rockland County on Monday.

He'll be the guest speaker at a reception for new inductees to the Rockland County Civil and Human Rights Hall of Fame at 9 a.m. at Rockland County Health Complex in Pomona. The event is open to the public, but an RSVP is appreciated.

Later that day, King will speak at a Black History Month Family Chat at 2 p.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas College in



Spessell. The invitation-only event is for college students. King will speak with the assistance of the intersection of social justice and community building, the college said.

King, the eldest son of Dr. King, died in 1991.

King was the first of his family to be elected to political office in 1980, winning a seat on the Public County Commission in Georgia. He was also the president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a civil rights organization his father founded in 1957, from 1997 to 2004. King spoke at the Democratic National Convention in 2008.

Since the start of his career, King has spoken on many civil and human rights issues, including South African apartheid, the death penalty, war and fair labor rights. He has also spoken against police brutality — notably in 2014 when Michael Brown was killed in Ferguson, Missouri, and when George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis.

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It includes \$100 million for the Pave our Potholes program and \$200 million for a bridge improvement program.

Several large-scale road projects are planned this year. Among them is the \$2.25 billion Interstate 81 Viaduct Project, which will reconnect Syracuse neighborhoods cut off from one another when the viaduct was built in the 1950s and 1960s.



Syracuse's I-81 viaduct is a 1.4-mile elevated stretch that cuts the city in half. On one side is the Pioneer Homes housing project, on the other side is Upstate Medical University. Robert Bell/Rochester Democrat And Chronicle.

For more information on next year's projects go [here](#).