

LONG ISLAND BUSINESS NEWS

LI traffic costs region \$1.9B and 93M hours of delay: Study

By: [Adina Genn](#) September 24, 2020 (or view online w subscription [here](#))

Before so many of Long Islanders began working from home amid the COVID crisis, the region’s traffic jams cost drivers big. They spent \$1.9 billion and as many as 93 million hours in delays each year, according to a new study.

The report was released Thursday by TRIP, a national nonprofit that focuses on transportation.

The report broke down the hours and gallons of fuel consuming Long Islanders who sit in traffic.

The delays cause drivers to spend 41.5 million gallons of additional fuel. And Long Island commuters annually spend an additional 81 hours annually stuck in traffic, losing \$1,684 in wasted time and fuel.

And as Long Islanders return to the roads, experts expect more delays.

Daily rush hour vehicle hours of delay on Long Island are projected to increase by 57 percent by 2045, according to report.

The study, “Keeping Long Island Mobile: Accomplishments and Challenges in Improving Accessibility on Long Island to Support Quality of Life and a Strong Economy,” looks at the mobility and efficiency of the region’s transportation system. It also points to the improvements needed to improve access.

Without the kind of intervention brought forward by infrastructure improvements, Long Island traffic is expected to increase by 57 percent by 2045, prompted by population growth and an additional commuters in individual cars.

The study revealed that Long Island commuters overwhelmingly favor private vehicles for commuting, with 74 percent indicating they drove alone as their means of transportation to work and eight percent indicating they used carpools. Most New York metro trips that originate in Nassau or Suffolk County terminate at destinations on Long Island, with 73 remaining in the same county and 24 percent traveling to other locations on Long Island, including Queens and Brooklyn.

The chart below revealed the most congested portions of Long Island roadways, based on a 2017 report from the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council.

Rank	County	Corridor	From	To	Length (Miles)	Daily Rush Hour Traffic
1	Nassau, Suffolk	Long Island Expressway	Queens County Line	William Floyd Parkway	45	118,289
2	Nassau, Suffolk	Southern State Parkway	Queens County Line	5th Avenue	26	210,889
3	Nassau, Suffolk	Sunrise Highway	Queens County Line	William Floyd Parkway	31	97,890
4	Nassau, Suffolk	Northern State Parkway	Queens County Line	Sunken Meadow State Parkway	26	122,364
5	Suffolk	Jericho Turnpike	Northern State Parkway	Echo Ave.	6.5	60,834
6	Nassau	Northern Boulevard	Queens County Line	Shelter Rock Road	2.7	44,404
7	Suffolk	Main Street	Hauppauge Road	St. Johnland Rd.	4	64,414
8	Nassau	Meadowbrook State Parkway	NY 25	Zeckendorf Boulevard	1.6	143,155
9	Suffolk	Sagtikos/Sunken Meadow State Parkways	NY 27	Jericho Turnpike	5.4	117,177
10	Nassau	Hempstead Turnpike	Queens County Line	Wantagh State Parkway	10	48,641

“No Long Islander would be surprised to hear that the traffic we deal with every single day is bad for our quality of life and worse for our region’s economic vitality, yet the staggering statistics in the TRIP report are a real wake-up call that we need to make big investments in improving our infrastructure, and we need to find innovative solutions to the problems we’ve ignored for far too long,” New York State Senator Anna Kaplan, member of the Senate Transportation Committee, said in a statement.

“Additionally, as we look to jumpstart our economy and recover from the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on our community, there is no better economic driver than big, sustained investments in infrastructure improvements,” she added. “The time to act is now and the situation is critical, so I am urging our federal representatives to continue fighting for Long Island to get the resources we need and deserve, and I urge the federal administration to step up and do the right thing.”

In addition to personal mobility, the reliable movement of freight on Long Island is critical to the health and efficiency of the region’s economy. Mounting traffic congestion on Long Island resulted in 3 million hours of delay to large commercial trucks (a subset of the overall 93 million hours of annual congestion-related delays) and an annual economic cost of \$162 million (a subset of the overall \$1.9 billion cost).

“A safe and efficient transportation system helps spur economic growth and thus it is critical that we continue to invest in projects to reduce and manage congestion in our region,” Kevin Law, president and CEO of the Long Island Association, said in a statement.

Reducing and managing traffic congestion on Long Island will require that the region proceed with projects, improvements or programs to increase the capacity or efficiency of the region’s transportation system or reduce peak-hour demand on the system. These projects, improvements or programs include expanding the capacity of the system, improving efficiency and managing demand on the system.

“A safe and well-maintained transportation system can strengthen America’s economy, enhance personal mobility and facilitate more efficient movement of goods, but the future of this network could be in jeopardy without increased federal investment,” Robert Sinclair, Jr., AAA Northeast manager of media relations, said in a statement. “The need for investment in transportation across the nation remains urgent.

Long Island and all states benefit from a modern, accessible transportation system. AAA urges Congress and the current administration to prioritize transportation investments to ensure safe, efficient and reliable mobility across the United States.”

The TRIP report includes a list of the most needed projects, improvements or programs to improve mobility on Long Island, provided via a TRIP survey of Nassau and Suffolk Counties. These needed mobility projects include improvements to critical interchanges and intersections including Seaford Oyster Bay Expressway and Old Country Road, Wantagh Parkway and Old Country Road and Stewart Avenue and Clinton Road; the extension of the region’s trail system; and, expanded rail and bus rapid transit facilities.

“The importance of a reliable transportation system has been reinforced on Long Island during the COVID-19 pandemic, which placed increased importance on the ability of a region’s transportation network to support a reliable supply chain and safely move people,” said Dave Kearby, TRIP’s executive director. “In order to restore and sustain Long Island’s economy, maintain personal and commercial mobility, and improve quality of life, adequate transportation investment must remain a priority.”