

***CONDITIONS AND SAFETY OF NEW YORK'S
ROADS AND BRIDGES***

MARCH 2015



Founded in 1971, TRIP © of Washington, DC, is a nonprofit organization that researches, evaluates and distributes economic and technical data on surface transportation issues. TRIP is sponsored by insurance companies, equipment manufacturers, distributors and suppliers; businesses involved in highway and transit engineering and construction; labor unions; and organizations concerned with efficient and safe surface transportation.

Executive Summary

New York's extensive system of roads, bridges and highways provides the state's residents, visitors and businesses with a high level of mobility, while acting as the backbone that supports the state's economy. New York's transportation system enables the state's residents and visitors to travel safely to work and school, visit family and friends, and frequent tourist and recreation attractions while providing businesses with reliable access to customers, materials, suppliers and employees.

However, the state's locally and state-maintained roads, highways and bridges face a significant challenge in the need to improve conditions and traffic safety. As New York works to retain its quality of life, maintain its level of economic competitiveness and achieve further economic growth, the state will need to preserve, maintain and modernize its roads, highways and bridges by improving the physical condition and safety of its transportation network, thus enhancing the system's ability to provide efficient and reliable mobility for motorists and businesses. Making needed improvements to New York's roads, highways and bridges could also provide a significant boost to the state's economy by creating jobs in the short term and stimulating long term economic growth as a result of reduced vehicle operating costs, improved safety and enhanced mobility.

Meeting New York's need to modernize and maintain its system of roads, highways and bridges will require significant local, state and federal funding.

The federal government is a critical source of funding for New York's surface transportation system. In July 2014, Congress approved an eight-month extension of the federal surface transportation program, MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act), which provides states with road, highway, bridge and transit funding through May 31, 2015.

New York's major roads have significant deterioration which provides motorists a rough ride and increases the cost of operating a vehicle. Repairing roads and highways while they are in good or fair condition greatly reduces long-term preservation costs because of the high cost of repairing roads in poor condition.

- More than a third – 37 percent – of New York's major locally and state-maintained urban roads and highways have pavements in poor condition. An additional 43 percent of the state's major urban roads have pavements in mediocre or fair condition, and the remaining 20 percent are in good condition.
- The following chart details the percentage of major locally-and state-maintained roads and highways in poor, mediocre, fair and good condition in each of the state's largest urban areas.

Urban Area	Poor	Mediocre	Fair	Good
Albany	25%	26%	27%	22%
Buffalo	12%	20%	15%	53%
New York City	43%	30%	11%	16%
Rochester	21%	16%	24%	40%
Syracuse	28%	17%	15%	40%

- Roads in good condition can be maintained by preventive maintenance, which costs approximately \$85,000 per lane mile; roads in mediocre or fair condition require resurfacing, which costs approximately \$575,000 per lane mile; and roads in poor condition require reconstruction to repair the surface and the base under the road, which costs approximately \$1,625,000 per mile – 19 times greater than the cost of preventive maintenance.
- Roads rated in poor condition may show signs of deterioration, including rutting, cracks and potholes. In some cases, poor roads can be resurfaced, but often are too deteriorated and must be reconstructed.
- Driving on rough roads costs all New York motorists a total of \$6.3 billion annually in extra vehicle operating costs (VOC). Costs include accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.
- The following chart details the annual extra vehicle operating costs per motorists as a result of driving on rough roads in each of the following urban areas.

Urban Area	Annual VOC
Albany	\$504
Buffalo	\$294
New York City	\$694
Rochester	\$402
Syracuse	\$477

More than one-third – 39 percent -- of locally and state-maintained bridges (20 feet or longer) in New York show significant deterioration or do not meet current design standards often because of narrow lanes, inadequate clearances or poor alignment.

- Twelve percent of New York’s bridges are structurally deficient. A bridge is structurally deficient if there is significant deterioration of the bridge deck, supports or other major components. Structurally deficient bridges are often posted for lower weight or closed to traffic, restricting or redirecting large vehicles, including commercial trucks and emergency services vehicles.

- Twenty-seven percent of New York’s bridges are functionally obsolete. Bridges that are functionally obsolete no longer meet current highway design standards, often because of narrow lanes, inadequate clearances or poor alignment.
- The following chart details the percentage of bridges in each of the following urban areas that are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.

Urban Area	Structurally Deficient	Functionally Obsolete
Albany	10%	30%
Buffalo	9%	27%
New York City	9%	48%
Rochester	9%	33%
Syracuse	14%	25%

Improving safety features on New York’s roads and highways would likely result in a decrease in traffic fatalities and serious crashes. It is estimated that roadway features are a contributing factor in approximately one-third of all fatal and serious traffic crashes.

- Between 2009 and 2013 a total of 5,892 people were killed in traffic crashes in New York, an average of 1,178 fatalities per year.
- New York’s overall traffic fatality rate of 0.92 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel in 2013 is lower than the national traffic fatality rate of 1.09.
- The fatality rate on New York’s rural non-Interstate roads was 2.15 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel in 2013, more than three-and-a-half times higher than the 0.61 fatality rate on all other roads and highways in the state.
- The following chart indicates the average number of people killed annually from 2011 to 2013 in the following urban areas.

Urban Area	2011-13 Ave. Fatalities
Albany	27
Buffalo	55
New York City	663
Rochester	40
Syracuse	28

- Roadway features that impact safety include the number of lanes, lane widths, lighting, lane markings, rumble strips, shoulders, guard rails, other shielding devices, median

barriers and intersection design. The cost of serious crashes includes lost productivity, lost earnings, medical costs and emergency services.

- Several factors are associated with vehicle crashes that result in fatalities, including driver behavior, vehicle characteristics and roadway features. TRIP estimates that roadway features are likely a contributing factor in approximately one-third of fatal traffic crashes.
- Where appropriate, highway improvements can reduce traffic fatalities and crashes while improving traffic flow to help relieve congestion. Such improvements include removing or shielding obstacles; adding or improving medians; improved lighting; adding rumble strips, wider lanes, wider and paved shoulders; upgrading roads from two lanes to four lanes; and better road markings and traffic signals.
- Investments in rural traffic safety have been found to result in significant reductions in serious traffic crashes. A 2012 report by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) found that improvements completed recently by the Texas Department of Transportation that widened lanes, improved shoulders and made other safety improvements on 1,159 miles of rural state roadways resulted in 133 fewer fatalities on these roads in the first three years after the improvements were completed (as compared to the three years prior). TTI estimates that the improvements on these roads are likely to save 880 lives over the next 20 years.

The efficiency of New York's transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state's economy. Increased deterioration of New York's roads and bridges and the lack of needed transportation improvements to serve economic development threaten the state's economic vitality.

- New York's population reached approximately 19.6 million in 2013, a nine percent increase since 1990. New York had 11,248,617 licensed drivers in 2012.
- Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in New York increased by 21 percent from 1990 to 2013 – from 107 billion VMT in 1990 to 130 billion VMT in 2013. By 2030, vehicle travel in New York is projected to increase by another 10 percent.
- From 1990 to 2013, New York's gross domestic product, a measure of the state's economic output, increased by 46 percent, when adjusted for inflation.
- Annually, \$550 billion in goods are shipped from sites in New York and another \$597 billion in goods are shipped to sites in New York, mostly by truck. Seventy-two percent of the goods shipped annually from sites in New York are carried by trucks and another 22 percent are carried by courier services or multiple mode deliveries, which include trucking.
- Increasingly, companies are looking at the quality of a region's transportation system when deciding where to re-locate or expand. Regions with congested or poorly maintained roads may see businesses relocate to areas with a smoother, more efficient and more modern transportation system.
- Highway accessibility was ranked the number two site selection factor behind only the availability of skilled labor in a 2013 survey of corporate executives by Area Development Magazine.

New Subpoena Seeks Evidence Christie Administration Retaliated Against Mayor - WSJ

By Ted Mann

Federal prosecutors issued a new subpoena to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey this week seeking possible evidence of claims New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie's administration retaliated against the Democratic mayor of Jersey City.

The subpoena seeks records from a broad range of former authority officials regarding their interactions with Jersey City, according to a person familiar with the matter, including two Christie allies who resigned from the authority amid the George Washington Bridge lane closure scandal, David Wildstein and Bill Baroni.

Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop has said that the Christie administration punished him when he failed to endorse the governor's reelection in 2013.

Within an hour of his decision not to provide Mr. Christie a coveted endorsement from across the political aisle, Mr. Fulop has said, meetings his administration had scheduled with state commissioners were abruptly canceled.

Documents uncovered during investigations of the bridge scandal contain indications that Mr. Fulop was considered an enemy of the administration.

They include a message Mr. Wildstein sent ordering "radio silence" in response to requests from the mayor of Fort Lee seeking relief from a week of heavy traffic triggered by the lane closures. "His name comes right after mayor Fulop," Mr. Wildstein wrote.

A person familiar with the latest subpoena to the Port Authority said it was a broad request covering correspondence among aides and allies of Mr. Christie, including Messrs. Wildstein and Baroni, that touched on any efforts to penalize Mr. Fulop or Jersey City over his failure to endorse Mr. Christie.

A spokesman for Mr. Christie declined to comment on the new subpoena. In the past, Mr. Christie has downplayed "friction" with Mr. Fulop, and said his administration is committed to working with Jersey City.

In January, The Wall Street Journal reported federal prosecutors had subpoenaed Mr. Christie's re-election campaign for documents related to the canceled meetings, according to people familiar with the matter.

The latest subpoena comes amid indications U.S. Attorney Paul Fishman could be close to wrapping up all or part of his probes into the lane closures and allegations of malfeasance within the Port Authority.

A spokesman for Mr. Fishman declined to comment on Thursday.

The top policy issues in the 50 states, according to the reporters who cover them

By Niraj Chokshi March 19 at 10:59 AM

Number-One Issues

Budget issues led the list, named as the single-largest issue in no fewer than 10 states. Here are all the top issues that were listed more than once.

