

## The Price of Inadequate Roads in Virginia Nears \$1,000 A Year Per Driver

Virginia's extensive network of roads and bridges were built to allow the state's 7.5 million residents to travel safely and freely while enabling businesses to efficiently serve their customers. However, continued growth in Virginia's population, vehicle miles traveled, and funding shortfalls is straining the capacity of the state's transportation system and causing further deterioration. As this happens, the added cost of driving on Virginia's roads has increased to almost \$1,000 per licensed driver per year.

Making needed improvements to and properly maintaining Virginia's roads and bridges is crucial to providing a safer, smoother, more efficient transportation system that will save motorists money and time while improving the economic livelihood of the entire state.

**TRIP estimates that Virginia's roadways that lack desirable safety features, have inadequate capacity to meet travel demands or have poor pavement conditions cost the state's drivers approximately \$4.7 billion annually - \$920 per licensed driver - in the form of traffic accidents, additional vehicle operating costs and congestion-related delays.**

- The current level of additional costs to motorists as a result of inadequate roads and highways represents an increase of five percent over 2004, when TRIP found that inadequate roads resulted in an annual cost of \$4.4 billion - \$875 per licensed driver.
- Traffic accidents and fatalities in which roadway design was an important factor cost Virginia motorists approximately \$1.7 billion annually, including medical costs, lost economic and household productivity, property damage and travel delays.
- Congestion in Virginia costs licensed drivers \$1.7 billion annually in delays and wasted fuel.
- Driving on roads in need of repair costs Virginia's motorists approximately \$1.3 billion annually in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

**Pavement conditions on 29 percent of Virginia's major roads are rated in poor or mediocre condition.**

- Statewide, approximately eight percent of Virginia's major roads were rated in poor condition in 2004, the latest year for which data is available, and are in need of resurfacing or reconstruction. An additional 21 percent of the state's major roads were rated in mediocre condition in 2004.
- Fifty percent or more of the roads in the metro Washington, Richmond, Roanoke and Hampton Roads areas are in either poor or mediocre condition.
- The following chart lists the percentage of pavements in poor, mediocre, fair and good condition in each of Virginia's major metropolitan areas:

	Washington Metro	Richmond	Roanoke	Hampton Roads	Virginia
Poor	34	22	12	23	8
Mediocre	30	36	47	27	21
Fair	14	23	16	26	29
Good	22	19	26	24	42

**TRIP**

**a national transportation research group**

**Steady population growth has resulted in increased vehicle travel on Virginia's transportation system, resulting in growing urban traffic congestion and longer commute times.**

- Virginia's population increased by 21 percent from 1990 to 2004, from 6.2 million residents to 7.5 million residents.
- Vehicle travel in Virginia increased by 31 percent between 1990 and 2004, from 60.2 billion vehicle miles of travel (VMT) to 78.9 billion VMT. Vehicle travel in Virginia is projected to increase by another 30 percent by 2020, to 103 billion VMT.

**Improving safety features on Virginia's roads and highways would result in a decrease in fatal traffic accidents.**

- An average of 930 people were killed each year in motor vehicle accidents in Virginia from 2000 through 2004 – an average of approximately one fatality every nine hours.
- The Washington, D.C. metro area averaged 362 fatalities each year, while an average of 92 traffic fatalities occurred annually in the Richmond area. The Roanoke area averaged 57 traffic fatalities per year, and in Hampton Roads, an average of 128 traffic fatalities occurred each year.
- Highway improvements such as adding lanes, removing or shielding obstacles, adding or improving medians, widening lanes, widening and paving shoulders, improving intersection design, and better road markings and traffic signals can reduce traffic fatalities and vehicle accidents.

**A significant increase in construction and maintenance funding would allow Virginia to accelerate key transportation projects and improve conditions and service statewide. If transportation funding remains at current levels, however, many critical highway and public transit improvements will be delayed and traffic congestion will get worse, hampering Virginia's economic development.**

- According to Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) data, in 1996, Virginia's primary, secondary and urban roads received about \$520.7 million in state funding. In fiscal year 2006, these roads - which carry nearly 70 percent of traffic in the state - received only \$373.3 million, more than a 28 percent decline in state funding in 10 years.
- VDOT continues to rely on federal funding to finance a majority of its highway construction program. Seventy percent of Virginia's highway funding comes from federal sources, while the national average is 42 percent.
- The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) maintains 57,515 miles of roadway, the third highest amount in the nation, behind only Texas and North Carolina.
- VDOT must transfer \$450 million from its construction program to fund maintenance needs. Despite this, there is a shortfall of more than \$1 billion for roadway maintenance.
- Overall, the Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP: FY 2007 – 2012) estimates the cost to complete Virginia's primary, secondary and urban road projects is \$8.9 billion, yet the current and projected funding identified for these projects is \$4.5 billion over the next six years. Therefore, an additional \$4.4 billion is needed to complete these projects

*Sources of data for this document include the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), the U.S. Census Bureau, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).*