3000 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 208 ● Washington, DC 20008 ● 202.466.6706 ● tripnet.org

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Contact: Rocky Moretti (202) 262-0714 (cell)
Carolyn Bonifas Kelly (703) 801-9212 (cell)
TRIP office (202) 466-6706

DEFICIENT ROADWAYS COST EACH SOUTH COAST AREA DRIVER MORE THAN $1,600 ANNUALLY, A TOTAL OF $8.3 BILLION STATEWIDE. COSTS WILL RISE AND TRANSPORTATION WOES WILL WORSEN WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT AND RELIABLE LEVEL OF FUNDING

Eds.: The report includes regional pavement condition, bridge condition, congestion and highway safety data, and cost breakdowns for Boston, South Coast, Springfield and Worcester.

New Bedford, MA – Roads and bridges that are deficient, congested or lack desirable safety features cost Massachusetts motorists a total of $8.3 billion statewide annually – more than $1,600 per driver in the South Coast urban area - due to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes and congestion-related delays. Significant investment in transportation improvements at the local, state and federal levels could relieve traffic congestion, improve road and bridge conditions, boost safety, and support long-term economic growth in Massachusetts, according to a new report released today by TRIP, a Washington, DC based national transportation organization.

The TRIP report, "*Massachusetts Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility*" finds that throughout Massachusetts, approximately one-fifth of major roads and highways are in poor condition and more than half of Massachusetts' bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. The state's major urban roads have high levels of congestion, with drivers wasting significant amounts of time and fuel each year. And, Massachusetts' rural non-interstate traffic fatality rate is more than three-and-a-half times higher than the fatality rate on all other roads in the state.

Driving on deficient roads costs each South Coast area driver $1,608 per year in the form of extra vehicle operating costs (VOC) as a result of driving on roads in need of repair, lost time and fuel due to congestion-related delays, and the financial cost of traffic crashes. The TRIP report calculated the cost to motorists of insufficient roads in Massachusetts' largest urban areas: Boston, South Coast, Springfield and Worcester. A breakdown of the costs per motorist in each area and a statewide total is below.

Location	VOC	Congestion	Safety	TOTAL
Boston	$468	$1,147	$298	$1,913
South Coast	$429	$425	$754	$1,608
Springfield	$514	$575	$553	$1,642
Worcester	$541	$677	$515	$1,733
Massachusetts	**$2.3 Billion**	**$3.9 Billion**	**$2.1 Billion**	**$8.3 Billion**

The TRIP report finds that a total of two percent of major roads in the South Coast urban area are rated in poor condition and an additional 86 percent are rated in mediocre condition, costing the average South Coast motorist an additional $429 each year in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

A total of 52 percent of Massachusetts' bridges show significant deterioration or do not meet modern design standards. Nine percent of Massachusetts' bridges are structurally deficient, with significant deterioration to the bridge deck, supports or other major components. An additional 43 percent of the state's bridges are functionally obsolete, which means they no longer meet modern design standards, often because of narrow lanes, inadequate clearances or poor alignment. In the South Coast area, 11 percent of bridges are structurally deficient and 40 percent are functionally obsolete.

Traffic congestion in the South Coast area is causing 22 annual hours of delay for the average South Coast motorist and costing each driver $425 annually in lost time and wasted fuel.

"The TRIP report is a wake-up call to residents in New Bedford and across the South Coast that the public safety threat from ignoring our infrastructure is real, and that the consequences include spiraling costs and deteriorating roadway conditions," said Roy Nascimento, president & CEO of the New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce. "Particularly for those supporting South Coast Rail, this report underscores the economic importance of having a safe and well-maintained transportation infrastructure in our region."

Traffic crashes in Massachusetts claimed the lives of 1,697 people between 2008 and 2012. In the South Coast area, an average of 50 people lost their lives on area roads each year from 2010 to 2012. Traffic crashes on Massachusetts' non-Interstate rural roads are particularly deadly, with a fatality rate in 2012 of 2.07 traffic fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel, more than three-and-a-half times the fatality rate of 0.58 on all other roads and highways in the state.

"This report highlights the need for safe, reliable transportation in our region and projects like the South Coast Rail can help meet that need," said Steve Smith, Executive Director of the New Bedford South Coast SRPEDD. "Our citizens and transportation infrastructure in this state are severely harmed by the lack of critical funding that is needed to grow our economy."

The efficiency of Massachusetts' transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state's economy. A 2007 analysis by the Federal Highway Administration found that every $1 billion invested in highway construction would support approximately 27,800 jobs.

In 2013 the Massachusetts legislature passed the Transportation Finance Act of 2013 that is projected to raise an estimated $600 million annually. However, this much-needed infusion of additional funding falls $400 million short of fully addressing additional funding needs – estimated at $1 billion per year over the next 20 years – for Massachusetts' roads, rails, and public transit systems. A report released earlier this year by Transportation for Massachusetts found that the 2013 state funding package has been very helpful in providing additional funds for the state's public transit agencies as well as more than 75 additional road and bridge projects in the state, including the I-91 Viaduct in Springfield.

"Improving these conditions in Massachusetts and reducing transportation costs to the public will require significant and reliable funding at the state and federal levels," said Will Wilkins, TRIP's executive director.