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**DEFICIENT ROADWAYS COST EACH RALEIGH-DURHAM DRIVER MORE THAN \$1,000 ANNUALLY, A TOTAL OF \$6.5 BILLION STATEWIDE. COSTS WILL RISE AND TRANSPORTATION WOES WILL WORSEN WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT FUNDING BOOST**

*Eds.: The report includes regional pavement condition, congestion and highway safety data, and cost breakdowns for Asheville, Charlotte, the Piedmont Triad, Raleigh-Durham and Wilmington.*

**Raleigh, NC** – Roads and bridges that are deficient, congested or lack desirable safety features cost North Carolina motorists a total of \$6.5 billion statewide annually - more than \$1,000 per driver in the Raleigh-Durham area - due to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes and congestion-related delays. Increased 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 North Carolina, according to a new report released today by [TRIP](#), a Washington, DC based national transportation organization. The report is being released in conjunction with the [North Carolina Chamber Foundation](#).

The TRIP report, “[North Carolina Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State’s Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility](#),” finds that throughout North Carolina, 11 percent of major roads and highways are in poor condition. Nearly one-third of North Carolina bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. The state’s major urban roads are becoming increasingly congested, with drivers wasting significant amounts of time and fuel each year. And North Carolina’s rural non-interstate traffic fatality rate is nearly four times higher than the fatality rate on all other roads in the state.

Driving on deficient roads costs Raleigh-Durham drivers \$1,005 annually 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 cost of traffic crashes in which roadway features likely were a contributing factor. The TRIP report calculated the cost to motorists of insufficient roads in North Carolina’s largest urban areas: Asheville, Charlotte, Piedmont Triad (including Greensboro, High Point and Winston-Salem), Raleigh-Durham and Wilmington. A breakdown of the costs per motorist in each area along with a statewide total is below.

Location	VOC	Congestion	Safety	TOTAL
Asheville	\$ 251	\$ 380	\$ 318	\$ 949
Charlotte	\$ 378	\$ 898	\$ 237	\$ 1,513
Raleigh-Durham	\$ 268	\$ 502	\$ 235	\$ 1,005
The Triad	\$ 315	\$ 465	\$ 289	\$ 1,069
Wilmington	\$ 461	\$ 360	\$ 532	\$ 1,353
<b>North Carolina - Statewide Total</b>	<b>\$1.8 Billion</b>	<b>\$2 Billion</b>	<b>\$2.7 Billion</b>	<b>\$6.5 Billion</b>

The TRIP report finds that a total of 26 percent of major roads in the Raleigh-Durham urban area are in either poor or mediocre condition, costing the average Raleigh-Durham motorist an additional \$268 each year in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear. Traffic congestion in the area is worsening, causing 23 annual hours of delay for the average Raleigh-Durham motorist and costing each driver \$502 annually in lost time and wasted fuel.

“As North Carolina’s population increases, we must invest in the future and continue to grow our economy – sufficient transportation infrastructure is key. It’s impossible to argue against the critical importance of transportation not only to businesses, but to the everyday quality of life and the safety of our families,” said Jake Cashion, North Carolina Chamber director of government affairs and TRIP board member. “The statewide business community, especially industries like manufacturing and logistics, rely on a strong transportation network and supply chain to move their products efficiently in and out of the state marketplace. This report underscores the critical nature of meeting the state’s need for safe and efficient mobility, as additional demands are placed on the current transportation system.”

A total of 30 percent of North Carolina’s bridges show significant deterioration or do not meet modern design standards. Twelve percent of North Carolina’s bridges are structurally deficient, with significant deterioration to the bridge deck, supports or other major components. An additional 18 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.

Traffic crashes in North Carolina claimed the lives of 6,585 people between 2008 and 2012. North Carolina’s traffic fatality rate of 1.23 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel is higher than the national average of 1.13. The traffic fatality rate on North Carolina’s non-Interstate rural roads was 2.44 traffic fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel, nearly four times higher than the 0.64 traffic fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel on all other roads and highways in the state.

The efficiency of North Carolina’s 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.

“It is critical that we make targeted, strategic investments in our transportation system for our region to successfully address our ongoing population growth and maintain our region’s competitive edge,” said Joe Milazzo II, PE, Executive Director of the Regional Transportation Alliance business leadership group in the Triangle. “The RTA applauds the NC Chamber for coordinating the TRIP study, as this report provides a timely reminder of the importance of mobility improvements for commerce and our quality of life today and for our future economic development.”

“The TRIP report highlights the safety, maintenance, and congestion challenges in our region’s transportation system and across the state,” said Sam Nichols with First Citizens Bank, Freeway and Streets Chair for the Regional Transportation Alliance. “Sustained, focused investments in critical transportation priorities will help our customers, clients, and associates in the Triangle and across North Carolina get to work and appointments on time and help us attract the top talent we need to be successful.”

The Federal surface transportation program is a critical source of funding in North Carolina. But a lack of adequate funding of the federal program may result in a significant cut in federal funding for the state's roads, highways and bridges. In fact, the impact of inadequate federal surface transportation revenues could be felt as early as summer of 2014, when the balance in the Highway Account of the federal Highway Trust Fund is expected to drop below \$1 billion, which will trigger delays in the federal reimbursement to North Carolina and other states for road, highway and bridge projects, which would likely result in states delaying or postponing numerous projects. And if a lack of adequate revenue into the Federal Highway Trust Fund is not addressed by Congress, funding for highway and transit improvements in North Carolina could be cut by \$1 billion for the federal fiscal year beginning October 1, 2014.

“These conditions are only going to get worse if greater funding is not made available at the state and federal levels,” said Will Wilkins, TRIP’s executive director. “Unless Congress acts this year to adequately fund the Federal Highway Trust Fund, North Carolina is going to see its federal funding decrease dramatically starting this summer. This will result in fewer road repair projects, loss of jobs and a burden on the state’s economy.”