

# NEVADA CONTRACTOR

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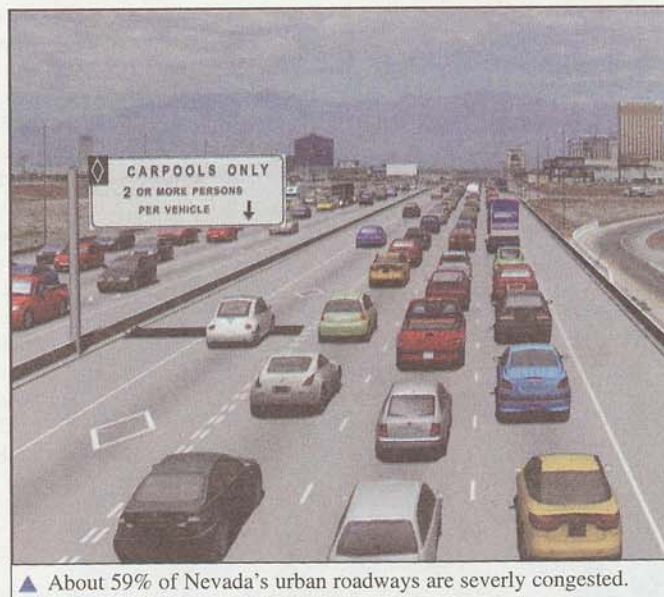
## Report: Road congestion to worsen amid economy recovery

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Nevada's congested urban roads and highways are likely to worsen as the state's economy recovers, but an increased transportation investment could relieve traffic while stimulating the state's long-term economic growth, reports The Road Information Program, a Washington, DC-based transportation group. In the past decade, Nevada has used a combination of federal and state funding to improve its surface transportation network, but many sorely needed transportation projects still remain unfunded.

A new TRIP finds that 59% of the state's major urban roadways are considered congested during peak travel times and that congestion levels in the Las Vegas and Reno areas are expected to increase significantly in the future, unless significant upgrades are made. Roughly 12% of state bridges are deficient and 13% of major state roads are either in poor or mediocre condition. The average Las Vegas motorist, as a result, loses \$1,481 each year from extra operating costs due to lost time and added

"The TRIP report quantifies the very real costs to drivers when funding for highways doesn't keep up with the needs," said State Senator Bill



▲ About 59% of Nevada's urban roadways are severely congested.

Raggio. "Our highway budget has been going down while demands on the system have been steadily increasing."

Without a significant boost in funding, numerous needed transportation projects will not proceed, including expanding portions of I-515/US-

95 and I-15 in Las Vegas to ten lanes, and the completion of a monorail extension to McCarran International Airport. Despite the current economic downturn Nevada remains the fastest-growing state in the nation, with its population and level of vehicle travel more than doubling since 1990. Vehicle travel in Nevada is forecasted to increase by another 70% by 2030.

The federal surface transportation program, which expires on October 31, remains a critical source of funding for road and bridge repairs and transit improvements in Nevada. While the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides \$201 million in state roadway funds, it still only serves only as a down payment on needed improvements.

"While the state has put this combination of federal and state funds to good use in the past, in the coming years, many additional needed projects will remain stranded on the drawing board because of insufficient funding," TRIP Executive Director Will Wilkins said. "It is critical that the state adequately fund its transportation system and that Congress produces a timely and adequately funded federal surface transportation program this year." ■