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DETROIT ROADS AND BRIDGES RECEIVE FAILING GRADE IN NEW REPORT, TRAFFIC CONGESTION EARNS REGION GRADE OF ‘D’; DETERIORATED ROADS AND BRIDGES AND RISING CONGESTION LEVELS MAY HAMPER MOBILITY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN DETROIT

ADDITIONAL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING NEEDED TO IMPROVE ROAD AND BRIDGE CONDITIONS, RELIEVE TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND IMPROVE SAFETY

EDS.: LISTS CONTAINING DETERIORATED SECTIONS OF ROAD, STRUCTURALLY DEFICIENT BRIDGES AND SIGNIFICANTLY CONGESTED ROADWAYS IN THE DETROIT AREA ARE INCLUDED IN THE REPORT.

DETROIT, February 27, 2006 – More than a third of major roads in the Detroit metro area are in poor condition, four out of ten bridges in the region are deficient, and more than half of major urban roads in the area are congested during peak travel times, according to a new report released today by TRIP, a national nonprofit transportation research group.

The report, entitled “Making the Grade in Michigan: An Analysis of the Ability of Michigan’s Transportation System to Meet the State’s Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility,” finds that 36 percent of major roads in the Detroit urban area are rated in poor condition, earning the area a failing grade of ‘F’ for its road conditions. The report also assigns a grade of ‘F’ to bridge conditions in Detroit, noting that 41 percent of the area’s bridges are rated as structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. Congestion levels in Detroit earn the area a grade of ‘D’, with 54 percent of major urban roads congested during peak travel times. The Detroit area also receives a grade of ‘C’ for traffic safety, with an average of 362 fatalities occurring per year in the area.

“The TRIP report highlights the benefits of creating an efficient, well-maintained and adequately funded transportation system,” said Detroit Regional Chamber, Senior Director, Transportation Policy, Claudia Berry. “Investing in the state’s transportation system is good for public safety, it’s good for the economy, and it’s good for the quality of life in Michigan.”

According to the TRIP report, the average rush hour trip in Detroit takes 38 percent longer to complete than during non-rush hour – the ninth longest delay in the nation among cities of similar size.

“Without an increase in transportation investment, Michigan will not be able to move forward with numerous projects that would enhance safety, improve road and bridge conditions and attract economic development,” said William M. Wilkins, TRIP’s executive director.

Additional findings of the TRIP report:

- Thirty-six percent of Detroit’s major roads are rated in poor condition, and an additional 37 percent are rated in mediocre condition.
- Twenty-one percent of Detroit’s major roads are in good condition. A desirable goal for state and local organizations that are responsible for road maintenance is to keep 75 percent of major roads in good condition.
- Eighteen percent of bridges in the Detroit area are rated as structurally deficient, showing significant deterioration to decks and other major components. An additional 23 percent of the region’s bridges are functionally obsolete. These bridges do not meet modern design standards or are no longer adequate for the volume of traffic that they carry.
- An average of 1,286 people were killed each year in motor vehicle accidents in Michigan over the last five years.
- Vehicle travel in Michigan increased by 27 percent from 1990 to 2004, and is expected to increase another 25 percent by the year 2020.
- Michigan’s extensive network of roads and bridges is maintained by a combination of state, local and municipal governments.
- The deficiencies cited in this report are not a reflection of the effectiveness of state and local transportation agencies, but of a lack of adequate funding