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LANSING ROADS RECEIVE FAILING GRADE IN NEW REPORT, REGION'S BRIDGES EARN GRADE OF 'D-'; DETERIORATED ROADS AND BRIDGES MAY HAMPER MOBILITY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN LANSING

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 LANSING AREA ARE INCLUDED IN THE REPORT.

LANSING, February 27, 2006 – More than a fifth of major roads in the Lansing metro area are in poor condition and one-third of bridges in the region are deficient, according to a new report released today by TRIP, a national nonprofit transportation research group. The report also evaluates and assigns grades to traffic congestion and traffic safety in the Lansing metro area.

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 21 percent of major roads in the Lansing urban area are rated in poor condition, earning the area a failing grade of ‘F’ for its road conditions. The report assigns a grade of ‘D-’ to bridge conditions in Lansing, noting that 33 percent of the area’s bridges are rated as structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. The Lansing area also receives a grade of ‘C’ for traffic safety, with an average of 45 fatalities occurring per year in the area. Congestion levels in Lansing earn the area a grade of ‘B’, with 11 percent of major urban roads congested during peak travel times.

“The TRIP report confirms what Lansing residents have known for a long time – our roads are in terrible shape and it will require a major financial commitment to get them back on track.”

said Lansing Mayor Virg Bernero. “We must be able to invest in Lansing’s critical infrastructure if we want to grow this economy and it will be tough to do while we are dealing with an \$11 million budget deficit. We need more help from our state and federal governments to get the job done.”

According to the TRIP report, 21 percent of major roads in the Lansing metro area are rated in poor condition and an additional 28 percent are in mediocre condition. Fifteen percent of bridges in the Lansing area are rated as structurally deficient, showing significant deterioration to decks and other major components. An additional 18 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.

“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-five percent of Lansing’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.
- 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.