



1726 M Street, NW, #401 • Washington, DC 20036 • P: 202.466.6706 • F: 202.785.4722 • www.tripnet.org • trip@tripnet.org

**For immediate release
Monday, June 23, 2008**

**Contact: Frank Moretti 202-262-0714 (cell)
TRIP Office: 202-466-6706**

Report available at: www.tripnet.org

**MASSACHUSETTS' ROADS, BRIDGES AND TRANSIT SYSTEM ARE
DETERIORATED AND LIKELY TO WORSEN DUE TO TRANSPORTATION
FUNDING SHORTFALL; NUMEROUS PROJECTS NEEDED TO REBUILD OR
EXPAND STATE'S KEY HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT SYSTEM REMAIN UNFUNDED**

EDS.: THE REPORT INCLUDES A LIST OF MASSACHUSETTS' MOST DETERIORATED SECTIONS OF ROADWAY AND THE STATE'S MOST HEAVILY TRAVELED STRUCTURALLY DEFICIENT BRIDGES.

Boston, June 23, 2008 – The condition of Massachusetts' highways, bridges and transit system are likely to worsen, leading to further deterioration, increased travel delays, and increased costs to drivers, unless the state is able to increase transportation investment, according to a new report released today by TRIP, a national nonprofit transportation research group.

According to the TRIP report, titled "Future Mobility in Massachusetts: Meeting the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility," the Massachusetts Transportation Finance Commission estimates that the state faces a \$10.5 billion gap in needed road and bridge funding over the next 20 years, in addition to a transit funding shortfall of between \$4.8 and \$9 billion. This shortfall covers only preservation of the transportation system and does not include the cost of needed expansion or major reconstruction of the current system. If this funding shortfall is not addressed, numerous critical projects to repair and modernize the state's transportation system will be left unfunded or unable to proceed. The TRIP report includes a list of needed transportation projects in the state that will not move forward unless additional funding is secured.

"It is critical that Massachusetts find the resources to develop and maintain a transportation system that can carry the state into the 21st Century. Further deterioration of the state's roads, highways and transit system will diminish quality of life in Massachusetts and hinder economic development," said Will Wilkins, TRIP's executive director.

The TRIP report found that more than half – 52 percent – of Massachusetts' bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, with conditions expected to worsen in the future under current transportation funding projections. In 2007 (the latest year for which data is available), 12 percent of Massachusetts' bridges were structurally deficient and 40 percent were functionally obsolete. This includes all state, municipal and local bridges 20 feet and longer. Thirty-five percent (379 of 1,084) of Interstate bridges in Massachusetts are within one rating point of being considered structurally deficient. If nothing is done to stop the current deterioration rate, these 379 bridges could drop into the structurally deficient category in the next several years. The TRIP report contains a list of the 100 most heavily traveled structurally deficient bridges in the state.

In addition to declining bridge conditions, Massachusetts' roads and highways are increasingly deteriorated, with more than one-third of the state's major roads and highways in poor or fair condition. Nine percent of Massachusetts' major roads are rated in poor condition, and an additional 27 percent are in fair condition. This includes Interstates, highways, connecting urban arterials and key urban streets that are maintained by state or local governments. Driving on roads in need of repair costs Massachusetts' motorists \$718 million annually – \$156 per driver – in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs and increased fuel consumption and tire wear. Included in the TRIP report is a list of 100 segments of deteriorated roads that are most in need of repair or replacement.

Because of inadequate funding for maintenance and expansion, Massachusetts' transit system is increasingly in disrepair. Approximately 38 percent of Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) buses are in poor or marginal condition and 82 percent of rapid transit rail cars are in poor or marginal condition. In addition, 69 percent of commuter rail locomotives and a total of 84 percent of commuter rail coaches are rated in poor or marginal condition, while nearly one in five miles of rail track need immediate repair.

According to TRIP's calculations, Massachusetts' major roads and highways are among the busiest in the nation and face growing congestion due to increases in population and vehicle travel. The state's major urban and rural roads carry, on average, 66 percent more traffic than the national average. Massachusetts is ranked fifth nationally in terms of daily traffic volume of its major roads, behind only New Jersey, Maryland, Connecticut and Hawaii. Twenty-seven percent of Massachusetts' urban Interstates and other highways or freeways are considered congested, carrying a level of traffic that is likely to result in delays during peak travel hours.

The TRIP report also examined highway safety in Massachusetts and found that a total of 2,269 people were killed in Massachusetts in traffic accidents from 2002 to 2006, an average of 454 fatalities per year. Motor vehicle crashes cost Massachusetts \$6.3 billion per year -- \$988 for each resident -- in medical costs, lost productivity, travel delays, workplace costs, insurance costs and legal costs.

Additional findings of the TRIP report:

- Massachusetts' population increased from 6 million in 1990 to 6.4 million residents in 2007, and is expected to increase to 6.9 million residents by 2025. Vehicle travel on Massachusetts' major highways increased 20 percent between 1990 and 2005, and is expected to increase by 20 percent by 2025.
- The average rush hour trip in Boston takes approximately 27 percent longer to complete than during non-rush hour. According to a recent report by the Reason Foundation, unless additional highway capacity is added, travel delays in Boston will more than double by 2030, with the average rush hour trip taking 62 percent longer to complete than during non-rush hour.
- Further compounding Massachusetts' transportation funding shortfall is the escalation of the cost of roadway improvements due to rapid increases in the price of key materials needed for highway and bridge construction. Over the five-year period from April 2003 to April 2008 the average cost of materials used for highway construction, including asphalt, concrete, steel, lumber and diesel, increased by 59 percent.