

Forecasting Bumpy Roads Ahead

AN ASSESSMENT OF ILLINOIS' TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

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Executive Summary

While transportation is a crucial component of the lives of every Illinois resident, employee, and business, Illinois leaders have failed to provide adequate funding. From roads to transit systems, maintenance is being deferred and new projects to address safety or congestion needs are increasingly unlikely. The following [report](#) by the [Illinois Economic Policy Institute](#) examines existing transportation conditions and assesses funding shortfalls.

Road, bridge, and transit maintenance is lacking.

- The number of “backlog” IDOT roadway miles – indicating deterioration that requires immediate maintenance – has increased by 85%, from 1,700 in 2000 to over 3,300 in 2015.
- 20% of all IDOT roadways are currently in “poor” condition compared to only 8% in 2001.
- If current funding strategies continue, the number of “backlog” road miles and bridges are expected to increase by 101% and 64%, respectively, by the year 2023.
- Less than 60% of systems and 70% of guideway elements in the Regional Transportation Authority’s systems are considered to be in “good repair” or within their useful life.

Additional investment will improve congestion issues and contribute to needed safety improvements.

- The average peak hour commuter in the Chicago region experienced 61 hours of delay annually due to congestion, compared to only 52 hours in 2000.
- Over 12,600 fatal and serious injuries were witnessed on state and local roadways from vehicle crashes in 2014.

Over \$4.6 billion per year is necessary to bring all roads, bridges, and transit systems into a state of good repair.

- IDOT requires *an additional* \$10 billion between 2018 and 2023 to bring all road miles into an acceptable condition and repair all backlog bridges.
- Total capital needs for statewide transit systems total over \$41 billion to bring to a state of good repair through the next 10 years, including \$2.72 billion per year above existing funding for the Regional Transit Authority and \$0.20 billion per year for downstate transit.

Unsustainable funding sources are leading to existing poor conditions.

- The state motor fuel tax generated nearly \$1.8 billion in 1999, but only \$1.3 billion in 2015 (2017\$).
- On average, each Illinois driver paid \$158 in motor fuel taxes per year in 2015, \$65 less than 1999 (in 2017\$) – a 29% decrease.

Massive changes are needed and Illinois cannot depend on federal sources to supply needed funding.

- President Trump’s infrastructure plan emphasizes the need for state and local funds to support minimal federal funds.
- The gasoline and special fuel tax rates would need to be increased to \$0.85 and \$1.00 per gallon, respectively, to generate the additional \$4.6 billion needed per year – increases of 347% and 365%.
- A vehicle miles traveled fee can produce similar revenues, with a study completed in 2015 estimating over \$3.7 billion in revenues for 2016.

Transportation fees are minimal compared to added vehicle maintenance costs from poorly maintained roadways and average utility expenses.

- Drivers in Chicago are estimated to pay an additional \$627 per year from vehicle maintenance due to the inferior roadway system.
- At most, an average Illinois driver currently pays \$360 a year – or approximately \$30 a month – in state and federal transportation fees.
- The average annual electricity and cable bills are almost 4 times the typical transportation fees.

Illinoisans have gotten used to pothole-filled roads, narrow bridges, significant congestion, and delayed trains, but these experiences should be a rarity, instead of the norm. The state’s transportation network is too important to allow it to continue to deteriorate. It is time for lawmakers to seriously discuss viable funding options to address these severe shortfalls so that all current and future Illinoisans can count on a dependable and efficient transportation network that serves their needs.