



January 24, 2024

Good afternoon, Senator Krueger, Assemblymember Weinstein and other members of the Legislature. Rebuild NY Now appreciates the opportunity to discuss the third year of the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Five-Year Capital Program as proposed in the Governor's 2024-25 Executive Budget. More specifically, the Capital Plan's funding levels and its impact on the conditions of the state and local highway systems.

My name is Fred Hiffa, I am here today representing the Rebuild NY Now Coalition. Previously, I worked in state service for two decades, rising to the position of First Deputy Commissioner of the NYSDOT. In that and other roles at the NYSDOT, I helped develop and implement the agency's capital program. Since leaving the state I have represented transportation interests in almost every major sector of the industry.

President John F. Kennedy said, "It is not our wealth that built our roads, but it is our roads that built our wealth." No where does that statement ring truer than in New York State. A report by the American Road & Transportation Builders Association found that the design, construction and maintenance of transportation infrastructure in New York supports approximately 319,000 full-time jobs across all sectors of the state's economy. These workers earn \$9.8 billion annually. Approximately 3.5 million full-time jobs in New York in key industries like tourism, manufacturing, retail sales and agriculture are completely dependent on the state's transportation infrastructure network.

The Legislature has routinely recognized that our road system is critical to both the state's economy and quality of life for all New Yorkers. You take your oversight responsibility of that system very seriously. In 2021, you passed A.4010-B/S.199 into law requiring NYSDOT to submit its Annual Highway and Bridge Condition Report to you, the Legislature, annually by June 1st. You did this because the agency as of 2020 had not released system condition reports for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 the last available report was from 2015 – five years earlier.

Thanks to you and your legislative colleagues these reports are now being released annually and you can utilize them as a benchmark to see if the funding proposed the Executive's Budget Proposal for NYSDOT's Five-Year Capital Plan is adequate to at least maintain these critical public

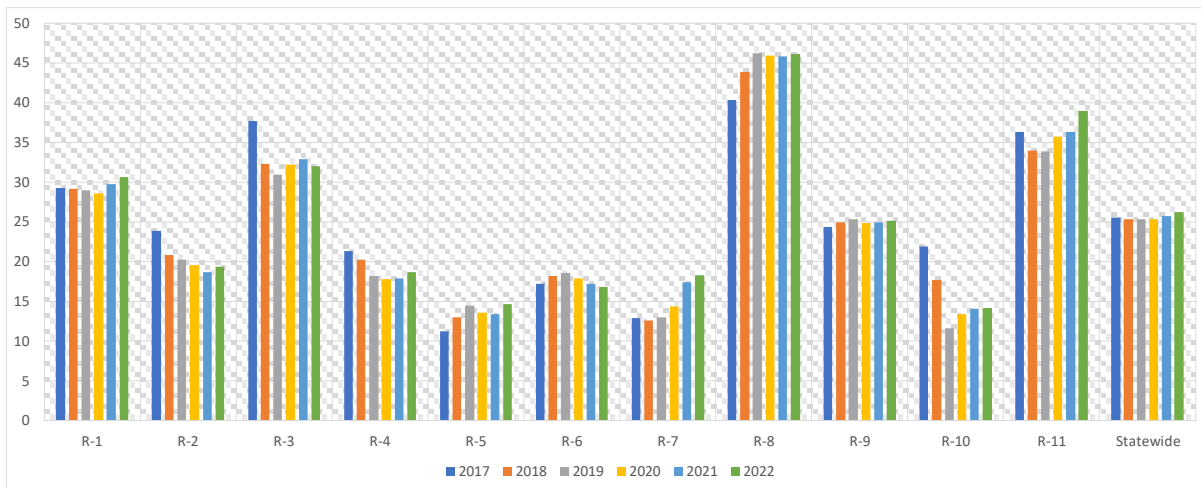
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assets. I am here today to explain that these reports clearly show the Governor’s Executive Budget funding levels for highway and bridge maintenance are woefully inadequate.

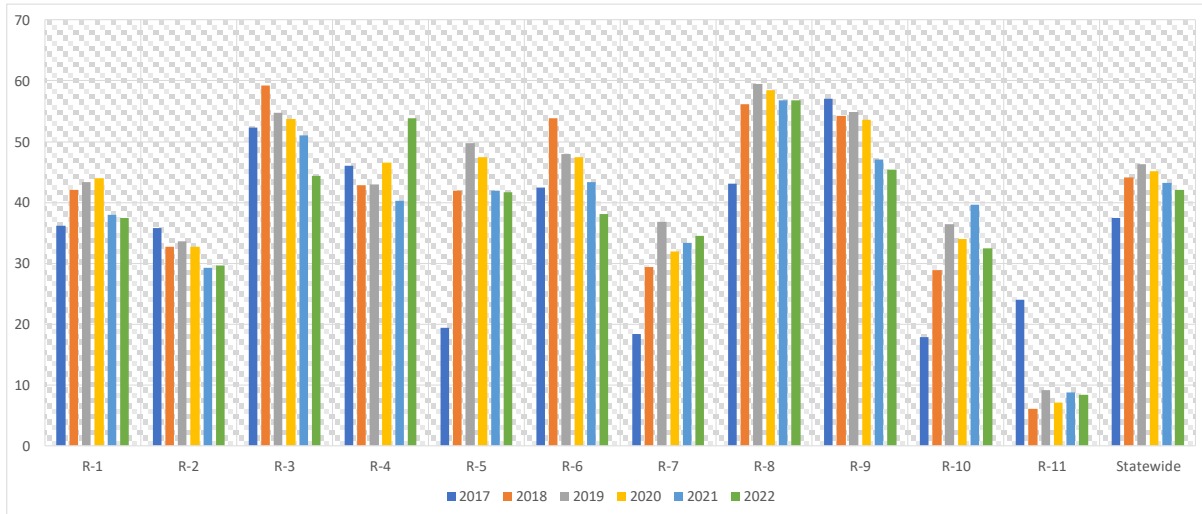
The agency’s latest condition reports are alarming at best, in my thirty years in the transportation sector I have never seen a greater decline in conditions. Due to this insufficient investment, from 2021 to 2022, all of the state’s 10 NYSDOT Regions but one saw an increase the number of its deficient bridges. Again, 10 of the state’s 11 NYSDOT regions saw declines in bridge conditions and to be clear these are not just state owned bridges but both state and local bridges – ratings for almost all the bridges New Yorkers drive over every day. In 2022, 4,264 bridges were deficient (26.2% of the system’s bridges). The fifth worst of bridge conditions of any state in the nation.

Pavement conditions don’t fare any better, from 2017 to 2022, the majority of regions saw declines in pavement conditions. During that six-year period nearly 2,000 lane miles of road went from good/excellent to fair/poor – 14,479 to 16,225. More than 4 out of 10 of the state’s lane miles are in fair or poor condition.

### 2017 – 2022 Bridge Conditions Percentage Fair + Poor



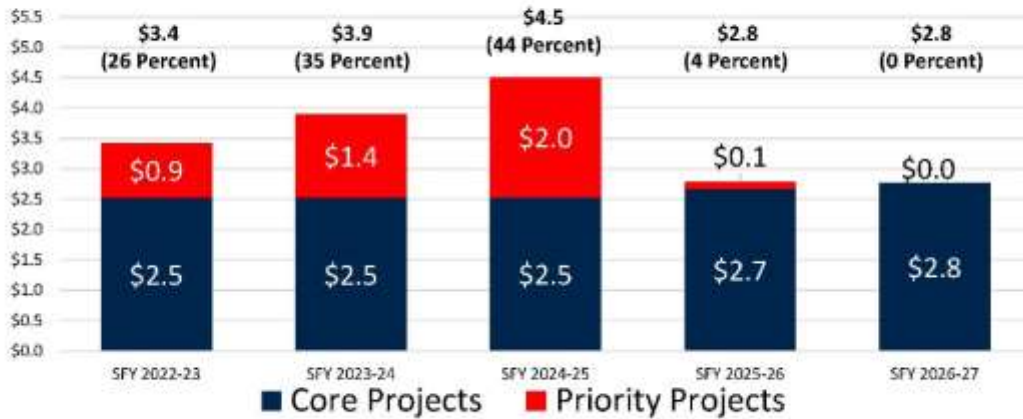
## 2017 – 2022 Pavement Conditions Percentage Fair + Poor



The Governor and her transportation team certainly recognize and understand this data. They know, that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has calculated that construction costs have escalated 58.6 percent over the past 30-months. They understand without the identification of additional resources NYSDOT and local governments will be forced to delay or defer critical infrastructure projects resulting in significant further deterioration of our state’s highway system.

So how do they propose turning around the decline of these vital systems in the Executive Budget? First, they propose eliminating the \$100 million in local infrastructure support added by you and your colleagues in the 2023-24 Budget. Next, they propose virtually no increase for core highway and bridge construction funding, when I say virtually no increase, they raised core funding from \$2.529 billion to \$2.533 billion – a .02% increase. The one area where they do propose an increase is for priority projects. A \$500 million funding increase is proposed for signature in the original five-year capital program. Unfortunately, the delivery of the priority projects has fallen far behind schedule. In the first two years of the enacted five-year plan \$2.3 billion was programed to be let and awarded. As of today, just over 60 days from the end of that second fiscal year only \$1.1 billion has been let, this amounts to less than 50 percent of what is programmed. I can guarantee you, if that \$500 million is appropriated it will not be spent in this coming fiscal year and most likely not in the next fiscal year either.

## Highway and Bridge Program - Construction (\$ in billions)



NYS DOT Capital Program (in Million \$s)	SFY Enacted 2023-24	SFY Executive 2024-25	SFY Request 2024-25
State/Local Construction	\$2,599	\$2,603	\$3,003
Signature	\$1,300	\$1,900	\$1,900
State/Local Construction/Signature	\$3,899	\$4,503	\$4,503
Engineering/Administration	\$1,041	\$1,042	\$1,042
Preventative Maintenance	\$391	\$391	\$391
Right of Way	\$75	\$75	\$75
Facilities/Equipment	\$37	\$37	\$37
Other Federal	\$26	\$26	\$26

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<b>Rail</b>	<b>\$90</b>	<b>\$90</b>	<b>\$90</b>
<b>Aviation</b>	<b>\$27</b>	<b>\$27</b>	<b>\$27</b>
<b>Non-MTA Transit</b>	<b>\$160</b>	<b>\$140</b>	<b>\$140</b>
<b>CHIPS/Marchiselli</b>	<b>\$637.8</b>	<b>\$577.8</b>	<b>\$737.8</b>
<b>Local PAVE-NY</b>	<b>\$150</b>	<b>\$150</b>	<b>\$150</b>
<b>Local POP</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$100</b>
<b>EWR</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$190</b>
<b>Local BRIDGE-NY</b>	<b>\$200</b>	<b>\$200</b>	<b>\$200</b>
<b>Local State Touring Routes Program</b>	<b>\$140</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$100</b>
<b>Airport Program</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>NYSDOT Plan Total</b>	<b>\$7,074</b>	<b>\$7,559</b>	<b>\$8,209</b>

The NYSDOT's staff does an outstanding job of tracking the system's conditions and knowing the level of funding necessary to maintain these public assets. Regrettably, there is currently no correlation in the Executive Budget between funding levels and system needs. The NYSDOT's roads and bridges are in significantly worse condition today than they were just five years ago.

Please consider the conditions and the true needs of the state and local highway system when you determine what is an adequate level of funding in this year's budget – data matters.

- In 2016, NYS Comptroller Tom DiNapoli reported the total estimated cost to make needed repairs to all highway bridges in the State came to \$75.4 billion – in 2022-23 NYSDOT spent about 2 percent of that amount to maintain New York's 17,462 bridges.
- NYSDOT estimates that it will need an additional \$6.7 billion to just bring 13 percent of its roads to state of good repair. In the 2022-23 fiscal year NYSDOT spent less than a fifth of that amount on its roads. More miles of roads are deteriorating than miles of roads being actually repaired.

In conclusion, I'd like to reiterate that while the Governor's Executive Budget transportation funding levels may be well intentioned, it will directly lead to further declines in the state's road and bridge conditions. ReBuild NY Now requests that you and your legislative colleagues provide the funding levels necessary to stop these condition declines in the Enacted 2024-25 Budget. We urge you to add \$400 million of funding for construction on NYSDOT's core highways and bridges, restore the \$100 million cut to local roads and add an additional \$150 million for the local system. We look forward to working with you to ensure our state's transportation systems are getting the funding it needs. Again, on behalf of the Rebuild New York Now membership, thank you very much for addressing these important issues.