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INDEPENDENT ENGINEERING STUDY FINDS CENTRAL NEW YORK NEEDS $3.03 BILLION OVER FIVE YEARS TO RESTORE STATE PAVEMENTS

NYSDOT Region 3 accounts for about 10 percent of New York's $29.5 billion five-year need, while deficient roads cost the average Syracuse driver $1,691 a year

ALBANY, N.Y. - As millions of New Yorkers prepare to hit the road for the holidays, a new independent engineering study underscores the deteriorating condition of the highways and roads that families, commuters and businesses rely on every day, particularly in Central New York.

The study, released by Rebuild New York Now, finds that Central New York needs **$3.03 billion from 2027 through 2031** to bring NYSDOT-maintained pavements in Cayuga, Cortland, Onondaga, Oswego, Seneca and Tompkins counties to a state of good repair. That is the fourth-largest need of the 11 NYSDOT regions and about 10 percent of the **$29.5 billion** New York must invest statewide over the same five years to restore State pavements and sustain that condition over the next 20 years. This need does not account for the nearly 87% of pavements maintained by local municipalities and other public entities, underscoring the substantially broader scope of pavement investment required statewide.

Prepared by Applied Pavement Technology, Inc. using NYSDOT's pavement-condition methodology and 2024 condition data, the **full report** evaluates more than 38,000 lane-miles across all 11 NYSDOT regions. It models pavement deterioration, the treatments appropriate for roads in different conditions, regional costs and the investment required to prevent today's backlog from becoming still more expensive.

$3.03B	10%	$1,691	$29.5B
REGION 3 FIVE-YEAR NEED	SHARE OF STATEWIDE NEED	ANNUAL COST PER AREA DRIVER	STATEWIDE FIVE-YEAR NEED

"Central New York drivers experience the consequences of underinvestment every day - rougher roads, higher vehicle costs and a transportation system that becomes more expensive to restore each year we wait," **said Mike Elmendorf, President of Rebuild New York Now.** "This study gives policymakers an engineering-based answer, and it shows what is at stake in Central New York. The next NYSDOT capital plan should include the full $29.5 billion needed for State pavement recovery over five years, including the $3.03 billion needed in Region 3, with funding tied to measurable improvements in road condition. That is how New York stops managing decline and starts rebuilding the system."

Central New York findings

- **Five-Year Need:** $3.03 billion from 2027 through 2031, an average of about $605 million a year and the fourth-largest need of the 11 NYSDOT regions.
- **Share of Statewide Need:** About 10% of the $29.5 billion statewide total.
- **Local Roads:** Region 3 municipalities maintain another 8,106 centerline miles of local roads (4,488 town, 2,504 county and 1,114 city and village) that are not part of the $3.03 billion. A separate August 2026 assessment for the New York State Association of Town Superintendents of Highways puts the 12-year local pavement need at $15.8 billion for the Capital District, Central New York, Genesee Valley and Western New York regions combined.

Statewide key findings

- **Pavement Conditions:** 61% Good, 31% Fair and 8% Poor.
- **Repair Backlog:** More than doubled, from $4.3 billion in 2014 to $10.3 billion in 2024.
- **Construction Inflation:** Highway construction costs have increased by approximately **70%** since 2021.
- **Restoration Needs:** 93.5% of this funding is needed to restore Fair and Poor pavements to Good condition.
- **Long-Term Preservation:** Approximately 3,000 lane-miles resurfaced annually, consistent with a roughly 12-year engineering-based resurfacing cycle once the backlog is addressed.

Scope: The $29.5 billion statewide estimate and the $3.03 billion Region 3 estimate cover NYSDOT-maintained pavements. They exclude local roads, bridges statewide, Thruway pavements, transit or other transportation infrastructure needs. Bridge and local roadway investment needs are assessed separately.

What deficient roads cost drivers

Roads that are deteriorated, congested and lacking some desirable safety features cost New York drivers **$40.3 billion each year**, according to a January 2026 report by TRIP, a national transportation research nonprofit. That is 44 percent more than in 2022. The total includes $8.8 billion in added vehicle operating costs from driving on rough roads, $11.5 billion in the cost of traffic crashes and $20 billion in time and fuel lost to congestion.

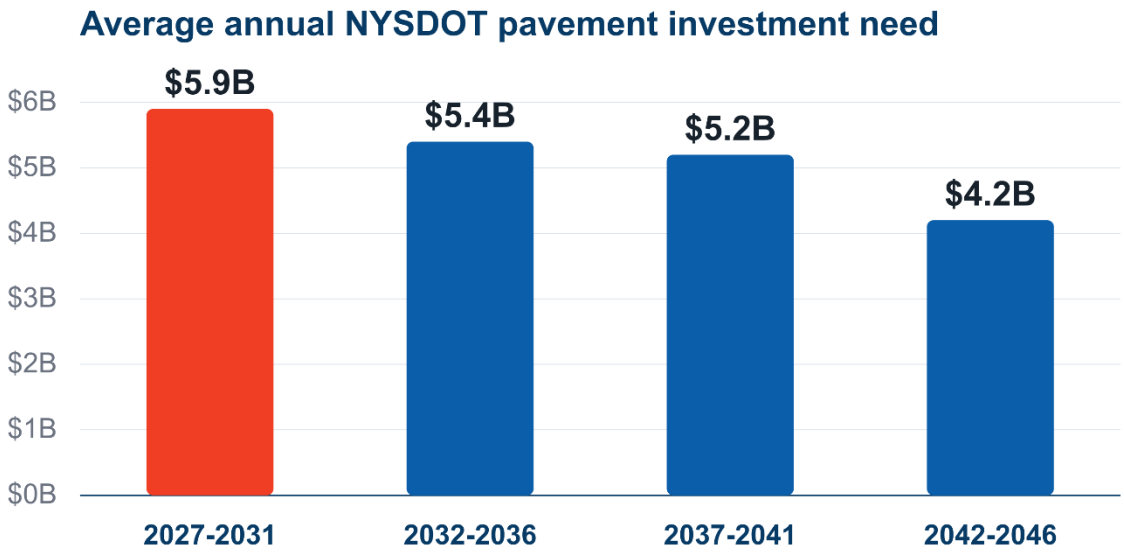
In the Syracuse area, the average driver pays **$1,691 a year**: $537 in added vehicle operating costs, $619 in crash costs and $535 in congestion costs. TRIP also rates 37 percent of major roads in the Syracuse area in poor or mediocre condition.

Source: TRIP, January 2026. Regional figures are annual costs to the average driver in the urban area.

“Upstate families and employers already face some of the highest costs in the country, and deteriorating roads are making New York even more expensive to live and do business in,” **said Justin Wilcox, Executive Director of Upstate United.** “Nearly four in ten NYSDOT-maintained lane-miles are in fair or poor condition. Families pay the price through vehicle repairs, while businesses face higher costs to transport goods, maintain equipment, and deliver services. Those costs ripple throughout the economy, making New York less competitive. Meanwhile, the state’s pavement repair backlog has grown from $4.3 billion to $10.3 billion in just a decade. Every year we delay, construction costs rise and repairs become more expensive. We are turning today’s maintenance needs into tomorrow’s financial liabilities, and taxpayers will ultimately pay the price. If Albany is serious about affordability and economic growth, it needs to fully fund the documented needs in the next NYSDOT capital plan.”

The cost of waiting

The study’s five-year recovery scenario requires an average annual investment of **$5.9 billion from 2027 through 2031**. Once the repair backlog is addressed, average annual funding needs decline in each subsequent five-year period - even with assumed construction-cost inflation of 5% annually after 2027.



Five-year recovery scenario; costs include 5% annual construction inflation after 2027

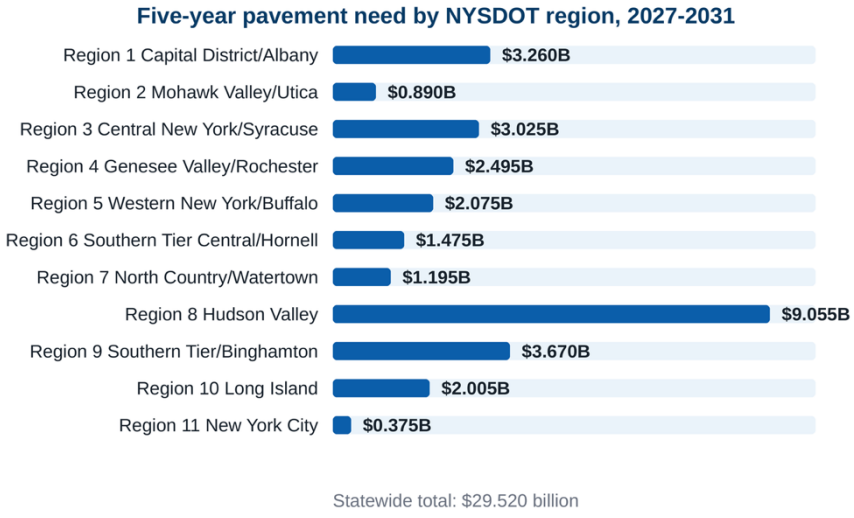
Average annual investment need declines from $5.9 billion in the first five-year recovery period to $4.2 billion in 2042-2046. Source: Applied Pavement Technology, Inc., NY 20-Year Pavement Needs Report.

"This is a pavement-management analysis, not an inflation adjustment or a simple projection of prior spending," **said Fred Hiffa, a consultant to Rebuild New York Now and former NYSDOT First Deputy Commissioner who oversaw the department's 11 regional offices and capital-program delivery.** "It applies NYSDOT's own engineering approach across the State system, models deterioration and selects condition-appropriate treatments region by region. The result is a clear recovery path: make the larger investment now, reduce the backlog and lower the long-term annual cost of preserving the network."

How the study was developed

Applied Pavement Technology used NYSDOT's 2024 pavement-condition dataset obtained through the Freedom of Information Law and applied the agency's condition-rating and treatment framework to the full NYSDOT-maintained network. The model establishes a state-of-good-repair target of no more than 2% Poor Interstate pavement and 5% Poor non-Interstate pavement, estimates the work required to reach that target and then calculates the ongoing preservation needed to sustain it.

The five-year scenario totals **$103.5 billion over 20 years**. Extending the recovery to ten years lowers the initial five-year requirement but raises the modeled 20-year total to **$105.0 billion**, illustrating the long-term cost of delaying necessary renewal work.



A statewide need with regional consequences

Every NYSDOT region faces substantial pavement investment needs over the next five years, including $3.03 billion in Central New York. The study provides a regional roadmap for elected officials and the public to link statewide funding priorities to local roadway conditions, economic activity, and the communities that depend on them.

Five-year modeled pavement need by NYSDOT region, 2027-2031. Figures may not sum because of rounding. Source: Applied Pavement Technology, Inc., NY 20-Year Pavement Needs Report.

“The true measure of a capital plan is not how much it spends, but the results it delivers for New Yorkers,” **said Ron Epstein, former NYSDOT Executive Deputy Commissioner and Chief Financial Officer, who oversaw the department’s financial, policy and planning functions, including the development of multi-year capital plans.** “This study demonstrates that a strategic, front-loaded investment can reverse pavement deterioration, improve highway conditions, enhance safety and strengthen New York’s economic competitiveness - all while reducing long-term infrastructure costs.”

Rebuild New York Now calls for a results-based capital plan

Rebuild New York Now is calling on the Governor and Legislature to use the engineering-based findings as the pavement foundation for the next five-year NYSDOT capital plan. The coalition said the State should fund the full five-year pavement need, publish annual condition and production benchmarks, and report whether investments are reducing the share of roads in Fair and Poor condition.

“New Yorkers depend on a safe and reliable network of roads and highways, and engineers are the ones who design it,” **said John T. Evers, PhD, President and CEO of the American Council of Engineering Companies of New York (ACEC New York).** “Rebuild New York Now’s study makes the case for sustained public investment in the pavements that keep millions of New Yorkers safe every day. We applaud their work and stand ready to help deliver it.”

“This study reinforces what our industry has been saying for years - we cannot afford to continue falling behind on the maintenance and preservation of New York’s highway infrastructure,” **said Bruce Barkevich, President and CEO of the New York Construction Materials Association.** “The longer we defer necessary investments, the more expensive those improvements become, the fewer miles of roadway and bridge maintenance we can address with available funding. As New York develops its next five-year transportation capital plan, it is essential that we establish funding levels based on actual infrastructure needs and a long-term commitment to preserving our highway system. Investing in our roads today is not simply an expense; it is an investment in New York’s economic future.”

About Rebuild New York Now

Rebuild New York Now is a broad coalition of business, labor, transportation and community organizations committed to improving New York’s infrastructure and supporting the jobs, safety and economic growth that depend on it.

Study note: Costs are stated in 2027 dollars with 5% annual construction-cost inflation; regional attainment dates may vary as the model optimizes statewide investment. **Read the full report.**

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