

# Congestion Continues to Increase in the South Western Region

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The Bridgeport-Stamford urban area experiences the highest levels of congestion in Connecticut. This congestion costs the urban area hundreds of millions of dollars each year, in addition to the amount of excess fuel consumed and harmful pollutants emitted. The region already experiences high levels of air pollution and is classified as a moderate non-attainment area for ozone. Increased congestion continues to exacerbate these problems. Measures must be taken to encourage and promote multi-modal transportation initiatives to ensure that the transportation network in the Bridgeport-Stamford urban area will effectively meet the needs of those who work and live there.

The congestion data for the Bridgeport-Stamford urban area paints a dismal picture. This area is the most congested urban area in the State of Connecticut. The amount of traffic experiencing congested conditions during peak travel times in the Bridgeport-Stamford urban area is significantly greater than in other urban areas of the State and is on par with congested traffic conditions in the New York Metropolitan Area. **In 2002, 70 percent of peak time travelers experienced congested conditions in the Bridgeport-Stamford urban area, while only 40 percent of peak time travelers experienced congestion in 1985.** This means that 2 of every 3 cars experience significant congestion during the peak hours of the day, namely the morning and evening commute.

### Traffic Congestion and Delay during Peak Travel Hours: 2002

Urban Area	Congested Travel (% of Peak Vehicle Miles Traveled)	Number of Rush Hours (Hours per day when congestion may occur)	Annual Delay per Peak Traveler (person-hours)	Annual Delay (person-hours)	Congestion Cost (per year)
Bridgeport-Stamford, CT	70%	7.4	33	14,958,000	\$ 250,000,000
New Haven, CT	40%	6.4	22	6,285,000	\$ 104,000,000
Hartford, CT	39%	5.6	17	7,936,000	\$ 132,000,000
New York-Newark, NY-NJ-CT	69%	7.4	50	397,660,000	\$ 6,493,000,000

Source: Texas Transportation Institute, 2004 Urban Mobility Study, <http://mobility.tamu.edu/ums/>. Updated with data from the 2005 Urban Mobility Study.

Congested conditions exist in the Bridgeport-Stamford urban area for 7.4 hours of the day on major road systems. While congestion may not occur on all road segments, it effects most major roadways. The number of rush hours for the urban area is the same for that of the New York Metropolitan area, both higher than other cities in Connecticut. The urban area annual delay experienced per peak traveler was 8 hours in 1985. **A peak traveler in the Bridgeport-Stamford urban area is now delayed 33 hours each year due to congested traffic conditions.** This represents a 313 percent increase in travel time delay from 1985 to 2002. The annual delay for this urban area is 14,958,000 person-hours, nearly twice that of any other urban area in the State. Based on a calculation of estimated extra travel time and excess fuel consumed, **travel delay cost the region approximately \$250 million in 2002.** The cost of congestion is \$554 a year per peak traveler.

Every year, the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) releases a study that examines the relative mobility levels of the transportation systems in 85 urban areas across the country. The Urban Mobility Report provides a comparison of transportation systems, including a measure of congestion for urban areas and time lost to those snarled in congestion.