

Here's how bad Toronto traffic is expected to get by 2044

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A new [report conducted by the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis \(CANCEA\)](#) paints a bleak picture of Toronto's economy and quality of life by 2044 if congestion management strategies — such as transportation infrastructure investments — are not implemented.

The [research report](#), which was commissioned by the [Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario \(RCCAO\)](#) and the [Ontario Road Builders' Association \(ORBA\)](#), assesses the economic risks of [worsening traffic congestion in Ontario](#) and The Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).

"With the region housing over half of Ontario's population, the GTHA experiences congestion that significantly increases travel times and diminishes economic productivity," the report reads.

"Travel delays due to congestion profoundly affect residents' quality of life, restrict access to jobs and essential services, and escalate infrastructure costs. As a result, the cumulative effect of congestion undermines the region's capacity to sustain growth and erodes the prosperity of its communities."

The study found that congestion is a core economic and social problem that breaks down business productivity and quality of life, the impact of which is valued at \$56.4 billion annually in Ontario, including \$44.7 billion within the GTHA.

Expanding transit options and enhancing infrastructure project efficiency are crucial to managing congestion in the region, the report argues, finding that since 2001, municipalities in the GTHA have experienced a 37 per cent increase in the number of cars on the road.

In 2024, 49.2 per cent of commuters in the GTHA experienced heavy congestion (three or more times per week), compared to just 19.8 per cent in the rest of Ontario. The study notes that approximately 88,000 more jobs could have been supported in the region if heavy congestion had been mitigated.

Looking forward, the population of Ontario is expected to grow by 4.2 million people over the next 20 years.

"Within Ontario, the GTHA is expected to accommodate half of that growth, with its population increasing by 2.1 million people (or 25.9 per cent)," the report reads.

"We estimate that if congestion remains the same, there will be an additional 510,000 GTHA commuters experiencing heavy congestion, a 33 per cent increase relative to current levels, and affecting a total of 2.1 million commuters by 2044 in the region. In the rest of Ontario, unchanged congestion will generate an additional 186,000 commuters experiencing heavy congestion, a 35 per cent increase relative to current levels, affecting a total of 727,000 non-GTHA commuters by 2044."

However, if congestion worsens, the report found that up to 3.7 million commuters could be experiencing heavy congestion by 2044, which is a 76 per cent increase relative to today, and consisting of a 59 per cent increase within the GTHA.

If congestion were to improve, the study estimates that the increase in the number of commuters experiencing heavy congestion would be limited to just 128,000 province-wide — a 6.1 per cent increase.

If congestion levels remain unchanged, the annual cost of congestion is estimated to rise to \$108 billion by 2044, equivalent to 6.2 per cent of Ontario's potential economic output and representing a 95 per cent increase over today's congestion costs. Of this total cost, almost 80 per cent (\$85.5 billion) would be incurred within the GTHA.

"In a worsening congestion scenario, congestion costs could reach \$145 billion, severely impacting economic growth and quality of life across Ontario. This is more than 2.5 times the current annual cost of congestion in the province," the research found.

"The report underscores the urgent need for targeted transportation infrastructure investments, improved public transit, and effective and innovative congestion management strategies to mitigate both the economic and social impacts of congestion. Immediate action is crucial to prevent further economic losses and to secure a higher quality of life for all Ontarians."