

Traffic congestion costing Ontario's economy \$12.8 billion in 2024

By [Robin MacLennan, Editor, Ontario Construction News](#) - December 13, 2024

Traffic congestion is costing the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area more than \$10 billion this year, due to lost economic opportunities, according to a new report. When “social impacts” are factored in, the number soars to \$47 billion.

The study, [Impact of Congestion in-the GTHA-and-Ontario](#), released on Monday, was conducted by the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA) on behalf of the Residential & Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario and the Ontario Road Builders' Association. Provincially, the economy took a \$12.8 billion hit in 2024, and when considering the social impact cost, the study found that the figure rose to \$56.4 billion across Ontario. Social costs include increased stress. Lowered life satisfaction and reduced wellbeing due to extended commute times.

As a result of the findings, the RCCAO and ORBA officials are calling on all three levels of government to prioritize infrastructure expansion with the following measures:

- Increase investment in core public infrastructure—such as roads, bridges, and transit—to mitigate the significant economic and social risks of gridlock, which could cost Ontario up to \$145 billion and 558,000 jobs by 2044.
- Continue collaborating with industries to encourage innovative solutions for congestion, benefiting businesses, commuters, and families.
- Explore ways to expedite the tendering and construction of major transformative transit and transportation projects, such as the Ontario Line, Highway 413, the Bradford Bypass, the Morriston Bypass, and Highway 69 twinning.

“Traffic congestion is strangling our economy and making daily life harder for millions of Ontarians,” said Nadia Todorova, Executive Director of RCCAO. “Beyond the billions of dollars lost each year, congestion underscores an urgent need for continued critical infrastructure investment.

“Without a sustained commitment to improve our infrastructure, Ontario's economic growth and residents' quality of life will continue to be at risk.”

The study also found that the GTHA has seen the number of vehicles on the road rise 37 per cent since 2001, compared to just 17 per cent outside the region.

“The report’s findings likely come as no surprise to everyday people and workers in Ontario who spend hours on their daily commute instead of quality time with their loved ones,” said Walid Abou-Hamde, Chief Executive Officer, ORBA. “While we welcome and support the Ontario government’s historic commitments to building and modernizing the province’s roads, bridges and transit, we call on all levels of government to take immediate action by significantly increasing infrastructure spending and getting projects to market faster across all regions of the province.”

If heavy congestion had been reduced over the past decade to a point where no commuters experienced more than two days a week of congestion, real GDP in the region could have been \$27.9 billion higher today and about 88,000 more jobs could have been supported.

Across Ontario, the number of commuters is expected to grow by 1.9 million in the next 20 years, including 1.1 million within the GTHA, a 33 per cent increase.

“We estimate that if congestion remains the same, there will be an additional 510,000 GTHA commuters experiencing heavy congestion, a 33% increase relative to current levels, and affecting a total of 2.1 million commuters by 2044 in the region,” the report states.