

Ontario's congestion costs \$56B annually, could grow 60% by 2045: Study

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Study is first comprehensive study of Ontario's congestion crisis in over 15 years

OTTAWA — Traffic congestion in Ontario costs \$56 billion every year, according to the first comprehensive study of the problem in the province in over 15 years.

[Released Monday, the report](#) — commissioned by the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO) and the Ontario Road Builders' Association (ORBA) — described traffic gridlock in the province as a “crisis.”

“We knew we were going to get big numbers, but the numbers that we did get were quite staggering,” RCCAO Executive Director Nadia Todorova told *The Toronto Sun*.

“The total impact of congestion right now in 2024 for Ontario is \$56.4 billion, and that includes both economic impacts and also the social impacts of congestion.”

Just under 80% of that impact — \$44.7 billion — is directly felt in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

Congestion directly costs Ontario's economy \$12.8 billion annually, the report states — putting 112,000 jobs at risk due to reduced productivity and stifled job growth.

Transportation now ranks as the second-largest expense for average Ontario households, 23% higher than the cost of food.

According to the study, congestion in the GTHA has grown 37% since 2001, compared to just 17% in other regions.

Truck volumes have likewise grown by 32% across Ontario, largely concentrated along key transportation routes but also on roads not normally known for truck traffic, including Hwy. 12 and the northern portions of Hwy. 404.

Over the past decade, the study concluded, the GTHA's real GDP could have been nearly \$28 billion higher if the problem were addressed — a nearly 5% increase in regional economic growth.

“Congestion has resulted in a \$5 billion reduction in private capital investment, including losses of \$570 million in manufacturing, \$180 million in construction, and \$100 million in professional services,” the study said.

As well, 88,000 more jobs could have been possible had congestion mitigation efforts been launched just 10 years ago.

“It has such a wide reaching impact, both economic and socially, that it really makes the case that we need to see sustained, long term and consistent investment in transit and transportation infrastructure, to ensure that those goods and people are moving and ensure we’re prepared for the future,” Todorova said.

“With population projections over the next 20 years, if we’re not built for the future, we’re really going to suffer incredible and severe consequences.”

She said addressing congestion isn’t about investing in one mode of transportation over another, but expanding and connecting highway and transit networks.

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Both the RCCAO and ORBA are calling on all levels of government to increase investment in core infrastructure, collaborating with industries to encourage innovate solutions for congestion, and quicken the pace on tendering and building large projects like the Ontario Line, Hwy. 413, and twinning Hwy. 69 south of Sudbury.

But more than just throwing money at the problem, governments need the political will to move such projects forward — particularly with large transit builds like the long-delayed Eglinton Crosstown in Toronto.

“The projects that this provincial government have gotten shovels in the ground on aren’t going to be completed in this election cycle, and the choice that this government has made is that these are projects that need to be built, needed to be built yesterday,” said Steven Crombie, of the Ontario Roadbuilders Association.

“But political will really has put shovels in the ground on Bradford (bypass,) and we hope on Hwy. 413 very quickly.”

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