

What Lies Ahead?

Road and Bridge Projects in NJDOT's 2015 Transportation Capital Program



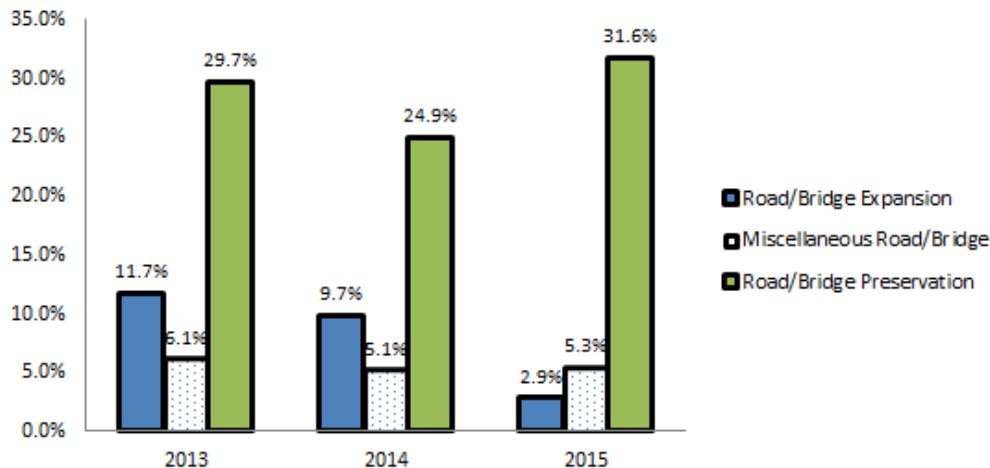
The New Jersey Department of Transportation's (NJDOT) yearly transportation capital program lays out the agency's planned investments for the state's roads, bridges, transit and all other transportation-related capital projects for one year. Examining the projects in these documents provides insight into the agency's transportation priorities.

NJDOT's 2015 transportation capital program totals \$3.7 billion, with \$1.2 billion going to New Jersey Transit (NJT) and \$2.5 dedicated to NJDOT.¹

FINDINGS

- The percentage of dollars dedicated to road and bridge expansion projects has dropped significantly.** In 2014, road and bridge expansion projects comprised almost 10 percent of the NJDOT capital program's funds; in the 2015 capital program, **expansion projects make up only 3 percent of funds. This is the lowest percentage in recent years.**
- Fix-it-first** projects that maintain or fix the state's roads and bridges **make up a larger share of the 2015 capital program** than they did in the previous two years. In 2015, these projects will comprise nearly 32 percent of the capital program's funds. In 2014, they totaled 25 percent of the funds and 30 percent of the funds in 2013.
- Funds dedicated to expansion projects are likely to increase in future capital programs. From 2016-2024, NJDOT will spend nearly \$575 million on Direct Connection and Manahawkin Bay Bridges alone.

Share of Dollars Going to Road and Bridge Projects in NJDOT's 2013, 2014 and 2015 Capital Programs



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The Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a non-profit organization working toward a more balanced, transit-friendly and equitable transportation system in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

For Every Dollar Spent on a Road or Bridge Project ...

	2015 Capital Program	2014 Capital Program	2013 Capital Program
Expansion*	.072 cents	.245 cents	.246 cents
Miscellaneous Road/Bridge*	.133 cents	.128 cents	.128 cents
Preservation*	.795 cents	.626 cents	.626 cents
Total	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00

*For definitions of terms, see Methodology section.

New Jersey's Maintenance Needs Result in Higher Costs for Drivers

According to a July 2014 White House report, 35 percent of New Jersey's roads are in poor condition and 36 percent of the state's bridges are deficient or structurally obsolete.

The White House report estimates that driving on the state's roads costs drivers an additional \$604.88 a year just for vehicle repair and operating costs.²

What is Fix-it-First?

A fix-it-first policy prioritizes maintenance and preservation of existing roads and bridges over building new infrastructure. This emphasis reduces the backlog of deficient roads and bridges, which cost travelers time and money while ensuring the road network remains safe. Additionally, a focus on existing roads and bridges means state DOTs are not adding new roads and bridges that require additional maintenance. As part of the 2000 Transportation Trust Fund reauthorization, the New Jersey legislature passed a fix-it-first mandate. The past three capital programs show varying adherence to a fix-it-first policy; while expansion projects comprise only 3 percent of the funds in 2015, in 2013, these projects consumed nearly 12 percent of the capital program's dollars.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Instead of adding lane capacity, roads, or bridges, NJDOT should prioritize other efficiencies that are less capital intensive such as monitoring traffic flow with traffic signals and signal timing.
- As the state explores new transit options, such as bus rapid transit in Bergen County and the Glassboro-Camden Light Rail, it should consider expanding transit and improving intermodal connectivity (such as walking and biking infrastructure around bus and rail hubs) in corridors with significant traffic congestion.
- Commit to keeping road and bridge expansion projects to four percent of capital program funds.

Sources and Footnotes

TSTC analysis of the NJDOT portion of the *Transportation Capital Program Fiscal Year 2015, 2014, 2013*. TSTC analysis of the NJT portion of the *Transportation Capital Program Fiscal Year 2015*.

Images: Robert Sciarrino, *The Star Ledger* and David Gard, *New Jersey Local News Service*.

1 NJDOT's \$2.5 billion portion of the capital program contains projects that are not administered by the agency but must be in the capital program because they are funded with federal funds. These "non-DOT" projects include the Port Authority's Goethals Bridge replacement and the Bayonne Bridge Navigational Clearance Project. TSTC's analysis of the NJDOT portion of the capital program takes out these projects in order to paint a more clear picture of NJDOT's planned spending. The FY 2015 NJDOT portion has \$616.5 million in non-DOT projects; the FY 2014 NJDOT portion has \$862.8 million and FY 2013 NJDOT portion has \$128.7 million.

2 "An Economic Analysis of Transportation Infrastructure Investment." National Economic Council and President's Council of Economic Advisors. July 2014. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/economic_analysis_of_transportation_investments.pdf>.

Methodology

For analysis of the NJDOT portion of the capital program, TSTC classified each project in one of 12 categories: bicycle/pedestrian, freight, local aid, miscellaneous road/bridge, non-NJDOT, other, Port Authority Project Program, road/bridge expansion, road/bridge preservation, safety, smart growth and transit (not NJT). Projects that are “non-DOT” are not included in the analysis. Road and bridge projects that also included bicycle or pedestrian components in their project descriptions were noted as having “bike/ped components.” For analysis of the NJT portion of the capital program, TSTC classified each project as a rail, bus, rail and bus, or other. TSTC then assigned each project to as many of the categories listed below as the project warranted.

NJDOT	Bicycle/Pedestrian	Sidewalks, bike lanes, pedestrian improvements such as bulb-outs and ADA crosswalks. Recreational trails funding and other bicycle/pedestrian lump sums included.
	Freight	Funding for NJ's Freight Program and maritime industry.
	Local Aid	Funds dedicated to counties, urban areas and metropolitan planning organization for unspecified projects.
	Miscellaneous Road/Bridge	Road and bridge projects that do not add to the road network significantly. Projects include operational improvements, intersection improvements such as adding turn lanes, road drainage projects, dams and culvert projects.
	Non-NJDOT and NJT projects	Projects undertaken by agencies other than NJDOT or NJT and over which NJDOT or NJT have no control. These projects are listed in the capital program due to reporting requirements.
	Other	Includes ITS, general funds for planning and research, studies, lump sums for unanticipated needs, etc.
	Port Authority Project Program	Port Authority funds represent funds from the canceled Access to the Region's Core project. NJDOT uses this money to pay for five NJDOT projects, Route 7 Hackensack River (WittPenn) Bridge, Route 139 (Hoboken and Conrail Viaducts), Route 1&9 Extension, Route 1&9 Pulaski Skyway and Route 1&9 Pavement. From 2012 through 2016, the Port Authority will give NJDOT a total of \$1.8 billion.
	Road/Bridge Expansion	Significant increase in capacity and/or significant increase in infrastructure to be maintained. Examples: adding to the road network such as a flyover project, extending a road, adding additional lane miles, or adding to the bridge network such as adding additional a lane to a bridge, or creating a new bridge (while keeping an old bridge).
	Road/Bridge Preservation	Bridge replacements, rehabilitation without added capacity, road reconstruction, repaving without added capacity.
	Safety	Improvements that focus on vehicular safety concerns, including rockfall mitigation, traffic signal replacements and rail-highway grade crossings. This category addresses statewide, county-wide or route-wide safety improvements, and does not include individual projects that NJDOT undertakes for operational and safety reasons (e.g. changes to an intersection to improve safety).
	Smart Growth	Projects that link transit and development.
	Transit (not NJT)	Transit capital investments, funds for transit improvements, transit vehicle purchases, ferry projects.
Road or Bridge with Bike/Ped	Addition of bike lanes, sidewalks and other bike/ped facilities to roads and bridges, whether in a preservation, miscellaneous or expansion project. Projects described as "proposed to be bicycle and pedestrian compatible" are also included. This category is a sub-category of the expansion, preservation and miscellaneous road/bridge categories.	
NJT	Rail Maintenance	Rail station maintenance, rail car maintenance and track work.
	Rail Expansion	Expansion of the rail network.
	Rail Maintenance and Expansion	Rail projects that have both maintenance and expansion of rail network.
	Debt Service	Payment for borrowing.
	Access to Transit	Improvements that help people use transit, such as park and rides, ADA projects and programs serving vulnerable populations such as the elderly or disabled.
	New Buses	New bus purchases or new bus leases.
	New Rolling Stock	New rolling stock purchases or leases.
	Bus Maintenance	Necessary maintenance for buses.
	Bus Expansion	Expansion of bus service.
	Bus Maintenance and Expansion	Bus projects that have both maintenance and expansion of service.
	Bus Enhancements	Improvements that are not required maintenance, but additions that improve bus riders' experiences.
	Rail Enhancements	Improvements that are not required maintenance, but additions that improve rail riders' experiences.
	Rail and Bus Enhancements	Improvements that are not required maintenance, but additions that improve rail and bus riders' experiences.