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NEARLY ONE-THIRD OF MAJOR ROADS IN WASHINGTON, D.C. METRO AREA IN POOR CONDITION, COSTING EACH DRIVER MORE THAN \$450 ANNUALLY

URBAN PAVEMENT CONDITIONS LIKELY TO WORSEN AS TRAFFIC VOLUMES RISE WHILE HIGHWAY REVENUE FALLS SHORT; GREATER INVESTMENT NEEDED TO ENSURE SMOOTHER RIDES AND LONGER-LASTING ROADS

Washington, DC- May 8, 2009 –Major urban roadways in the Washington, D.C. metro area are among the roughest in the nation, costing area drivers \$458 each year in extra vehicle operating costs. Among large urban areas, the D.C. metro region (including the Maryland and Virginia suburbs) ranks 25th in the nation in the percentage of roads in poor condition. According to a new report released today by TRIP and the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), 31 percent of the area’s major urban roads are in poor condition, and an additional 30 percent are in mediocre condition.

The AASHTO / TRIP report, entitled “Rough Road Ahead: Fix Them Now or Pay for it Later,” evaluated pavement conditions on major urban roadways in the nation’s largest urban areas and calculated the extra vehicle operating cost (VOC) to motorists of driving on roads in poor condition. Extra vehicle operating costs include accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs and increased fuel consumption and tire wear. The report found that the continued increase in urban traffic is putting significant wear and tear on urban roads at a time when transportation funding is inadequate to keep pace with the rate of deterioration on the roads.

The report found that the twenty large urban regions (500,000+ population), with the greatest share of major roads and highways with pavements in poor condition are: Los Angeles, 64%; San Jose, 61%; San Francisco-Oakland, 61%; Honolulu, 61%; Concord, CA, 54%; New York – Newark, 54%; San Diego, 53%; New Orleans, 49%; Tulsa, 47%; Palm Springs – Indio, CA, 47%; Riverside-San Bernardino, 44%; Baltimore, 44%; Sacramento, 44%; Omaha, 41%; Oklahoma City, 41%; San Antonio, 38%; Mission Viejo, CA, 37%; Albuquerque, 36%; Philadelphia, 36%; and Detroit, 36%.

“Our nation has invested \$1.75 trillion in our public highway system over the past 50 years,” said John Horsley, AASHTO Executive Director. “We hope Congress will make it possible for the federal government to sustain its share of the increased investment needed to keep America’s roads in good condition. If not, it will cost the American people billions more later.”

While the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 will provide a total of \$27 billion nationwide for highway projects (\$124 million in Washington, D.C., \$431 million in Maryland and \$694 million in Virginia), the nation’s highway transportation system will still be in dire need of additional funding for maintenance, preservation, expansion and reconstruction. The current federal transportation program expires on September 30, 2009, requiring Congress to authorize a new federal surface transportation program or extend the current program to allow federal highway dollars to continue to be provided to the states.

“The federal stimulus program is providing a helpful down payment towards repairing some of the nation’s rough roads,” said Will Wilkins, TRIP’s Executive Director. “But it will take a significant long-term boost in investment by all levels of government to provide motorists with a smooth ride. Washington metro area drivers are all too familiar with the region’s legendary traffic jams and jarring potholes. Additional transportation funding could help ensure that traffic moves smoothly and efficiently. ”